



A Few Sighs From Hell  
JOHN BUNYAN

A Few Sighs From Hell,

or

The Groans of the Damned Soul

by

John Bunyan

Preface

It is sad to see how the most of men neglect their precious souls, turning their backs upon the glorious gospel, and little minding a crucified Jesus, when, in the meanwhile, their bodies are well provided for, their estates much regarded, and the things of this present life are highly prized, as if the darling was of less value than a clod of earth; an immortal soul, than a perishing body; a precious Saviour, than unsatisfying creatures. Yea, though they have been often wooed with gracious entreaties, glorious promises, and fresh bleeding wounds, to make choice of the better part, that shall never be taken from them; yet, alas! such influence hath this world, and the pleasures of it, and such is the blindness of their understandings, that they continue still to hunt after those things which cannot profit, nor be a help to them in the worst hour. Yea, that will prove no better than poison to their souls, and refuse that would be (if embraced) their happiness here, and their glory hereafter. Such a strange stupidity hath seized upon the hearts of men, that they will venture the loss of their immortal souls for a few dying comforts, and will expose themselves to endless misery for a moment's mirth, and short-lived pleasures. But, certainly, a barn well fraught, a bag well filled, a back well clothed, and a body well fed, will prove but poor comforts when men come to die, when death shall not only separate their souls from their bodies, but both from their comforts. What will it then avail them that they have gained much? Or what will they give in exchange for their souls? Be wise, then (O reader, to whose sight this may come), before it be too late, and thou repent, when repentance shall be hid from thine eyes; also it will be as a dagger to thine heart one day, to remember what a Christ, what a soul, what a heaven thou hast lost for a few pleasures, a little mirth, a short

enjoyment of this present world; yea, and that after many warnings against many reproofs, and, notwithstanding the many tenders of a full Christ, instead of those empty vanities which thy soul closed with, hunted after, and would by no means be persuaded to part withal. No, but thou wouldst take thy time, and swim in this world's delights, though thy soul thereby was drowned in perdition and destruction (1 Tim 6:9).

True, few there are that will be persuaded that this course they take, though their daily conversations do bear witness to it; for how much time is spent, and how much care is the hearts of men filled withal, after attaining, keeping, and increasing these things? And how seldom do they trouble their heads, to have their minds taken up with thoughts of the better? Cumbering themselves with many things, but wholly neglecting the one thing necessary; yea, whereby do they measure their own or other men's happiness, but by the large incomes of this world's good, accounting this the greatest, if not the only blessedness, to have their corn, wine, and oil increase in abundance, and reckoning those that are most serious about, and earnest after the world to come, men of foolish spirits, giddy brains, and worthy to be branded in the forehead for simple deluded ones. But surely he is the most fool that will be one at last; and he that God calls so (Luke 12:20) will pass for one in the end; yea, within a short time, they themselves shall change their notes. Ask the rich man spoken of in the ensuing treatise, who was the fool—he or Lazarus? and he will soon resolve the question, that he now sees, and by woeful experience finds (whatsoever his former thoughts were), that he, not Lazarus, was the silly deluded one; for he, fool-like, preferred the worse things before the better, and refused that which once might have been had; but now he hath slipped the time, it cannot be gained, when this poor man, knowing the day of his visitation, was making sure of that glory which he now enjoys, and shall enjoy for evermore.

So that in this parable (if I may so call it) thou shalt find that Scripture confirmed, 'That the triumphing of the wicked is short' (Job 20:5). Together with that, 'That the temptations (or afflictions) of the righteous, which cause heaviness, are but for a season' (1 Peter 1:6). And in this treatise, both of these are largely opened and explained. Behold, here a rich man clothed in silks, fed with delicates, and faring deliciously every

day; but look a little farther, and lo! this man clothed with vengeance, roaring under torments, and earnestly begging for a drop of water to cool his tongue; a sad change. On the other hand, here thou shalt see a poor, but a gracious man, with a pinched belly, naked back, and running sores, begging at the rich man's gate for a morsel to feed his belly, a sad state, yet but short; for look again, and behold this beggar gloriously carried, as in a chariot of triumph, by the angels into Abraham's bosom, shining in glory, clothed with beautiful garments, and his soul set down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of the Father; his rags are gone, his sores healed, and his soul filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; the one carried not his costly fare, and his gorgeous apparel with him into hell; nor the other his coarse diet, mouldy bread, filthy rags, and ulcerous body into heaven; but the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other, took their leaves at the grave; the worldly man's portion was but for his life, and the godly man's afflictions lasted no longer; 'For mark the perfect, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace; but the end of the wicked shall be cut off' (Psa 37:37,38).

His present comforts, his future hopes, and his cursed soul together; yea, though he lives many days, and rejoices in them all, yet the days of darkness will overtake him, and his eye shall see no more good; in his life time he enjoyed his good things, and, at the hour of death, legions of devils will beset him, innumerable evils will befall him; and then shall he pay full dear for all the pleasures of sin, that have carried away his heart from closing with, and following the Lord in the day of his prosperity. Ungodly men, because they feel no changes now, they fear none hereafter, but flatter themselves with dying as the godly, though their life is consumed in wickedness, and their strength in providing for and satisfying the lusts of the flesh. But as it fared with wicked Balaam, so shall it fare with these, and their vain hopes will prove a feeding upon ashes through their deceived heart, that hath turned them aside (Isa 44:20). 'For they that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption' (Gal 6:8). 'And they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, shall reap the same' (Job 4:8; Hosea 8:7). But they that sow to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Say ye then to the righteous, 'It shall go well with him; however it goes with him now, a few days will produce a happy change.'

'It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord' (Eccl 8:12). Go on then, O soul, thou that hast set thy face towards heaven, though the east wind beats upon thee, and thou find trouble and sorrow; these shall endure but for a night, joy will undoubtedly come in the morning; besides those sweet visits thou shalt have from thy precious Saviour, in this thy day of darkness, wait but a while, and thy darkness shall be turned into light. 'When the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire, wherewith he warmed himself, shall not shine' (Job 18:5). 'Grudge not to see the wicked prosper, and their steps washed with butter, but rather put on bowels of mercy and pity, as the elect of God, knowing that they are set in slippery places' (Psa 73:18). And their day is coming, when fearful horror shall surprise them, and hell be opened to receive them; nor yet be disquieted in thy mind, that troubles and afflictions do beset thee round; for, as a worser thing is reserved for them, so a better is prepared for thee. Do they drink wine in bowls? and dost thou mingle thy tears with thy drink? Do they live in pleasures, and spend their days in wealth? and dost thou sigh and mourn in secret? Well, there is a cup for them in the hand of the Lord, the wine whereof is red, and full of mixture, which they must drink up the dregs (Psa 75:8). And the Lord hath a bottle for thy tears (Psa 56:8). And a book for thy secret sighs, and ere long thy brinish tears shall be turned into the sweetest wine, which thou shalt drink new in the kingdom of the Father, and thy secret sighs into glorious praises; when thy mouth shall be filled with laughter, and thy eyes see the King in his glory.

Now, considering that these lines may be brought to the sight both of the one sort and the other, I shall lay a few things before the thought of each; and first to the worser sort.

First. Consider what an ill bargain thou wilt make, to sell thy precious soul for short continuance in thy sins and pleasures. If that man drives but an ill trade, who, to gain the world, should lose his soul (Matt 16:26), then, certainly, thou art far worse that sells thy soul for a very trifle. O it is pity that so precious a thing should be parted withal, to be made a prey for the devouring lion, for that which is worse than nothing! If they were branded for desperate wretches that caused their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, surely thou much more that gives thy soul to devouring flames, to be fuel for the everlasting fire, upon so unfit terms; what meanest thou, O

man, to truck with the devils? Is there no better merchandise to trade in than what comes from hell, or out of the bowels of the earth? and to be had upon no lower rates than thy immortal soul? Yes, surely the merchandise of wisdom, which is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold (Prov 3:14, 8:19), is exposed to sale (Rev 3:18), and to be had without money or price; and if thou shouldest part with anything for it, it is such that it is better to part withal than to keep. The wise merchant that sought a goodly pearl, having found one, sold all that he had, not himself, not his soul, and all that he sold was in itself not worth a farthing, and yet obtained the pearl (Matt 13:45,46). Paul made the like exchange when he threw away his own righteousness, which was but rags, yea, filthy rags (Isa 64:6), and put on the garment of salvation, and cast away to the dunghill that which was once his gain, and won Christ (Phil 3:8). Thou needest not cast away thy soul for puddle pleasures; behold the fountain of living water is set open, and thou invited to it, to take and drink thy belly, thy soul full, without price or money (Isa 55:2).

Secondly. Take a short (yet let it not be a slight) view of the best of the things men prize so high, that for the love of, they lose their souls: what are they?

Even painted nothings, promising vanities (like the apples of Sodom, fair to the eye, but being touched, turn to dust; or like our mother Eve's, that had a beautiful look, but, being tasted, brings forth death), which, from the most part, have proved snares to the owners, and always miserable comforters at the parting; they cannot satisfy in life, for the more of these things are had, the more (with a disquieted spirit) are they reached after, and what comes in serves but to whet up the greedy unsatisfied appetite after more. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof (1 John 2:17). Though most men content themselves with these, yet it is not in these to satisfy them, and had they but one glimpse of the world to come, one cranny of light to discern the riches of Christ, and the least taste of the pleasures that are at the right hand of God (Psa 16:11), they would be as little satisfied without a share in them, as they are now with what of worldly things they enjoy; much less can they ease from pain at death. Clap a bag of gold (as one once did) to thy sinking spirit, pained body, and tormented conscience, and it can neither cheer up the one, nor appease the

other, least of all can they deliver from, or yield comfort after death; those cannot serve as a bribe to death to pass thee by, nor yet bring comfort to thy soul when thou art gone. The rich fool's large crop and great increase could not procure one night's respite, nor one moment's comfort.

Besides, God regards them so little, that frequently he gives the largest share of them to whom he hateth most (Psa 17:14), and the least to them who are the excellent in the earth, in whom his soul delights, although he hath made them heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5). Yet doth he bestow such a small portion of these worldly things upon them, hereby declaring to all how little he sets by those things which most set so much by, and to draw up our hearts, minds, and affections to the things above; yea, His own Son that he appointed heir of all things (Heb 1:2) shall come forth neither of rich kindred, nor attended with gallants, nor yet accoutered with the world's glory, but in a low, mean, and abject condition, at whose birth a manger received him; and through his life sorrows, wants, and sufferings did attend, and at the end a shameful death, in the world's esteem, befalls him, and by all this he shows his contempt of the worldly man's darling. Cast not away thy soul then, O man, in seeking after, solacing thyself in, and contenting thyself with this present world; for though thou mayest make gold thy hope, and put thy confidence in thy wealth, yet when this thy hope shall fail, and thy confidence slip from thee (as sure it will ere long), glad wouldst thou be of the least drop of the water of life, and the least filing of that precious gold (that thou art now called upon to drink of, and to buy for thyself); but, alas, they shall not be had. Then, O then, what profit will thy treasures of wickedness yield thee; and whereto will thy thick clay that thou hast hoarded up, and thy carnal pleasures which thou hast drunk down, as the fish drinks down water; whereto, I say, will they serve, unless to weigh thee the deeper into hell, and increase the fire, when it shall be kindled upon thee?

Thirdly. Look upon thy loss, too, which is such that ten thousand worlds cannot repair—thy soul, thy body, thy comforts, thy hopes, thy share in a crucified Jesus, the crown of life, and everlasting communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit, blessed angels, and glorified saints, and a soul-satisfying, soul-saving Christ, who came from the bosom of love, and gave himself to open a way to everlasting glory, by the sacrifice of himself, to

whom thou art called, invited, and persuaded to come; whose heart is open, arms spread, and who hath room enough in his bosom to receive thee, grace enough to pardon thee, blood enough to justify thee, treasures enough to enrich thee, pleasures enough to delight thee (Psa 36:8), and glory enough to crown thee; in whom it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell (Col 1:19); to make them perfectly blessed that come to him, so that there is no need to seek happiness among the creatures, which most do, and thereby lose true happiness, and their souls too. Turn in hither, and thou shalt eat of his bread, and drink of the wine which he hath mingled (Prov 9:4,5).

Wouldst thou fare deliciously every day, and have thy soul delight itself in fatness? (Isa 55:2). Hearken diligently, and come to the wedding; the oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready (Matt 22:5). I tell thee, whatsoever food thou feedest upon else, will prove no better to thee than the prodigal's husks (Luke 15:16). That will starve thee whilst thou feedest on them; and if thou drinkest of other wine, it will prove as a cup of wine mixed with poison, which though it be pleasant to the taste, it will be the death of thy soul. Wilt thou, then, lose this Christ, this food, this pleasure, this heaven, this happiness, for a thing of nought? Wilt thou drink out of a puddle, a broken cistern which leaks out the water, and holds nothing but mud, and refuse the fountain of living water, which, whosoever tastes of, shall live for ever?

Fourthly. Beware of persuading thyself into a conceit of the poor man's end, if thou livest the rich man's life, and diest his death. It is strange to see how many run swift by the very way to hell, yet are full of confidence of going to heaven, though Scripture everywhere shuts them out, and Christ at last will certainly shut them out for ever hereafter, living and dying in their present state. Let none, therefore, deceive you, neither deceive yourselves, for none such can enter into the kingdom of heaven. But for these things' sake cometh the wrath of God on the children of disobedience (1 Cor 6:9; Eph 5:5,6). And how sad will thy disappointment be, that goest on securely fearing nothing, being fully, yet falsely, persuaded of eternal life at last, and then drop down into the bottomless pit! Like wicked Haman, that dreamed of greater honour, but behold a gallows; or our mother Eve, who conceited to be as God, but became a

cursed creature. Though the devil may persuade thee thou mayest live as in hell here, yet in heaven hereafter, believe him not, for he endeavours to keep thee in his snares, that he may drag thee to hell with him; and the better to effect his devilish design upon thee, he will present (and through his cursed subtlety knows how to do it) thy sins and this world in as lovely and taking a guise as may be, but will hide the evil consequences from thine eyes, that thou mightest be inveigled by gazing on the one, and not be affrighted by beholding the other; his bait shall be pleasant, but his hook hid, like the strumpet in Proverbs 7, that entices the simple with fair words, but conceals that the way to her house leads to the chambers of death; nothing appears but a bed richly furnished, and a promise of solacing him with loves; but he that followeth after her, goeth as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks.

Fifthly. This is thy day to prevent the loss of the one, and to get an interest in the other; this is the day of salvation, the accepted day of the Lord (2 Cor 6:2). Let the sun of this day be set before this work be done, and an everlasting night of darkness will close thee in, wherein thou, thou shalt have time enough indeed to bemoan thy folly, but none to learn to grow wiser. It is a sad thing, especially in soul concerns, to be wise too late, and to cry out when time is past, O that I had improved it when it was present. Then will the remembrance of thy former misspent time, and thy despair of ever gaining more, be like poisoned arrows drinking up thy spirit. Amongst all the talents God hath entrusted man withal, this is not the least, because on it depends eternity; and according to the use we make of this, will our eternal condition be, though the most of men live at such a rate as if it was given them to no other end than to waste in wickedness, and consume in pleasures. What means else their spending days, weeks, months, years, yea, their whole life, in whoring, swearing, playing, coveting, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, so that when they come to die, the great work that they were sent to do is then to be done; their souls, Christ, eternity, was scarce thought on before; but now, when merciless death begins to gripe them, then do they begin to bethink themselves of those things which they should have got in readiness before, and that is the reason why we so often hear many that lie upon their deathbeds to cry out for a little longer time; and no wonder, for they have the salvation of their souls to seek. O sad case! to have their work to do when the night is come,

and a Christ to seek when death hath found them; take therefore the counsel of the Holy Ghost (Heb 3:7), 'To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Mark, it is the Spirit's counsel. True, the devil and thine own heart will tell thee another tale, and be ready to whisper in thine ears, Thou mayest have time enough hereafter; what need of so much haste, another day may serve as well; let thy soul be filled with pleasure a little longer, and thy bags filled a little more; thou mayest have time for this and that too. O, but this is the suggestion of an enemy, that would cause thee to defer so long, that thy heart may grow too hard, and thine ear too heavy to hear at all; but, certainly, this being the greatest business, challengeth the first and greatest care (Matt 6:33). And let this be done; then, if thou shalt either have so much time to spare, or a heart to do it, take thy time for the other.

Sixthly. This day of thy mercy and Christ's importunity will not last long; it is but a day, and that a day of visitation. Indeed it is rich grace that there should be a day, but dally not because it is but a day. Jerusalem had her day, but because therein she did not know the things of her peace, a pitch night did overtake (Luke 19:42,43). It is a day of patience, and if thou despisest the riches of God's goodness, patience, and long-suffering towards thee, and art not thereby led to repentance (Rom 2:5), a short time will make it a day of vengeance. Though now Christ calls, because he is willing to save sinners, yet he will not always call; see then that thou refuse not him that speaks from heaven in this gospel day (Heb 12:25). But seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near (Isa 55:6), lest thou criest after him hereafter, and he refuse thee. It is not crying, Lord, Lord, when the day of grace is past, that will procure the least crumb of mercy (Matt 7:21). No, if thou comest not when called, but stayest while supper is ended, thou shalt not taste thereof (Luke 14:24), though a bit would save thy life, thy soul; if thou drinkest not of the fountain while it is opened, thou shalt not when it is shut, though thou beggest with tears of blood for one drop to cool thy scorching flaming heart; thou that mightest have had thy vessel full, and welcome, shall not now have so much as will hang on the tip of a finger. O! remember, the axe is laid to the root of the tree (Matt 3:10). And although three years' time may be granted, through the vine-dresser's importunity, that will soon be expired, and then the axe that is now laid, shall cut up the tree by its roots,

if it bring not forth good fruit. Seest thou not that many of late have been snatched away, on each side of thee (by that hand that hath been stretched out and is so still)? and though thou mayest escape a while, yet hast thou no assurance that the destroying angel will long pass by thy door. O then, neglect thy soul no longer, but consider time is short, and uncertain, eternity long, thy work great, thy soul immortal, this world vanishing, Christ precious, hell hot, and heaven desirable.

And if thou beest a Christian (to whom this may come) that hast not only had a prize in thy hands, but wisdom given thee from above to make use of it, and art one who (whilst others are seeking to make this world and hell together sure to themselves) spendest thy time, and makest it thy only business, to make sure of the one thing necessary, and heaven to thy soul, I shall lay two or three things before thy thoughts.

First. Walk with a fixed eye upon the world to come. Look not at the things that are seen, that are temporal, but at the things which are not seen, that are eternal (2 Cor 4:18). A Christian's eye should be upon his journey's end, as our Lord Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross (Heb 12:2). When the stones flew about Stephen's ears, his eyes were lifted up to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55,56). What though thou at present mayest lie at the rich man's gates, yet a few days will translate thee into Abraham's bosom. Though Israel had a sharp voyage through the wilderness, yet Caleb and Joshua, men of excellent spirits, had their eye upon the good land they were going to. Though graceless souls are too dull sighted to see afar off (2 Peter 1:9), yet thou that hast received the unction from above, dost in some measure know what is the hope of thy calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

Secondly. Be satisfied with thy present condition, though it be afflictive, for it shall not last always. Thy sorrows shall be short, and thy joys long; roll thyself upon the Lord, for there is a heaven will pay for all; Christ first endured the cross before he wore the crown. David, before he was a king, was a shepherd. The poor man spoken of in this ensuing treatise, before he was carried into heaven, had experiences of sorrow and sufferings on earth. Let the flesh be silent in passing judgment on the dispensations of

God towards thee, and the men of this world, in this present life. David, by prying too far herein with his own wisdom, had almost caught a fall (Psa 73). Though God's judgments may be too deep for our reason to dive into, yet are they always righteous, and his paths mercy and truth to those that keep his covenants (Psa 25:10). When Jeremiah would debate with the Lord concerning his judgments in the wicked's prosperity, he would lay this down as an indubitable truth, that his judgments were righteous (Jer 12:1). And his end was not to charge God, but to learn understanding of him in the way of his judgments; and although the ways of his providence may be dark to his people, that they cannot discern his footsteps, yet are they always consistent with his everlasting covenant, and the results of the favour he bears to them. If the wicked flourish like the grass, it is that they should be destroyed for ever (Psa 92:7). And if the godly have many a wave beating upon them, yet will the Lord command his loving-kindness in the day time (Psa 42:7,8). And, after a little while being tossed to and fro in these boisterous waves, they shall arrive at the heavenly haven, this world being not their resting-place, but there remains one for them (Heb 4:9).

Thirdly. Let the faith and hopes of a glorious deliverance get thy heart up above thy present sufferings, that thou mayest glory in tribulation who hast ground of rejoicing in hope of the glory of God (Rom 5:2,3). For whatsoever thy present grievances are, whether outward afflictions, or inward temptations, this may be thy consolation that a few days will rid thee of them; when thou shalt sigh no more, complain no more, but those shall be turned into praises. Thou hast (if I may so call it) all thy hell here; let thy life be expired, and thy misery is ended; thy happiness begins, where wicked men's end; and when thine is once began, it shall have no more end.

Reader, I have an advertisement to thee concerning the following discourse, and the author of it. Thou hast in the discourse many things of choice consideration presented to thee in much plainness, evidence, and authority; the replications are full, the applications are natural. Be not offended at his plain and downright language, it is for the discharge of the author's conscience, and thy profit, besides the subject necessarily leads him to it. It is a mercy to be dealt thoroughly and plainly with in the

matters of thy soul. We have too many that sow pillows under men's elbows, and too few who, dealing plainly, divide to every man his portion. Read it not to pick quarrels with it, but to profit by it; and let not prejudice either against the author, or manner of delivery, cause thee to stumble and fall at the truth. Prejudice will both blind the eye that it shall not see the truth, and close it in with it, and make them too quick-sighted, either to make faults where there is none, or to greaten them where they are; and so cause the reader to turn the edge against the author or his work, that should be turned upon his own heart. It is marvellous to see how the truth is quarrelled at that comes from one, that would be easily received if it did drop from another; and I doubt not, if this book had some other hand at it, there is scarce any expression that may be now carpt at by some, but would have been swallowed without straining. We are now fallen into such an age (the good Lord help us) that truth, upon its own account, can challenge but little acceptance, except the author be liked, or his lines painted with his own wit. But certainly truth is of so excellent a nature, of such singular advantage, and of so royal a descent, that it deserves entertainment for itself, and that not in our houses or heads only, but in our hearts too. Whatsoever the hand is that brings it, or the form that it appears in, men account gold worth receiving, whatsoever the messenger is that brings it, or the vessel that holds it.

If thou meetest (reader) with any passage that seems doubtful unto thee, let love that thinks no evil put the best construction upon it, and do not hastily condemn what thou canst not presently yield to; or if any expression thou meetest with may (haply) offend thee, do not throw aside the whole, and resolve to read of it no more; for though some one may offend thee, yet others (I hope) may affect thee; or if there be that which some may call tautology, be not displeased at it; for that word that may not fasten upon thy heart in one page, may in another; and although it may be grievous to thy eye (if thou beest nice and curious), yet bear with it, if it may be profitable to thy soul.

Concerning the author (whatsoever the censures and reports of many are) I have this to say, that I verily believe God hath counted him faithful, and put him into the ministry; and though his outward condition and former employment was mean, and his human learning small, yet is he one that

hath acquaintance with God, and taught by his Spirit, and hath been used in his hand to do souls good; for to my knowledge there are divers who have felt the power of the word delivered by him; and I doubt not but that many more may, if the Lord continue him in his work; he is not like unto your drones, that will suck the sweet, but do no work. For he hath laid forth himself to the utmost of his strength, taking all advantages to make known to others what he himself hath received of God, and I fear this is one reason why the archers have shot so sorely at him; for by his and others' industry in their Master's work, their slothfulness hath been reproved, and the eyes of many have been opened to see a difference between those that are sent of God and those that run before they are sent. And that he is none of those light fanatic spirits that our age abounds withal, this following discourse, together with his former, that have been brought to public view, will testify; for among other things that may bear record to him herein, you shall find him magnifying and exalting the Holy Scriptures, and largely showing the worth, excellency, and usefulness of them.

And yet surely if thou shalt (notwithstanding this) stumble at his meanness and want of human learning, thou wilt declare thine unacquaintance with God's declared method, who to perfect his own praise, and to still the enemy and avenger, makes choice of babes and sucklings, and in their mouths ordaineth strength (Psa 8:2). Though men that have a great design, do, and must make use of those that in reason are most likely to effect it, yet must the Lord do so too? Then instruments (not himself) would carry away the praise; but that no flesh should glory in his presence, he hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise, and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen (1 Cor 1:27-29). Cast thine eye back to the beginning of the gospel dispensation (which surely, if at any time, should have come forth in the wisdom and glory of the world), and thou shalt see what method the Lord did take at the first to exalt his son Jesus: he goes not amongst the Jewish rabbis, nor to the schools of learning, to fetch out his gospel preachers, but to the trades, and those most contemptible too; yet let not any from hence conceive that I undervalue the gifts and graces of such who have been, or now are endued with them, nor yet speak against learning being kept in its place; but my meaning is, that those that are learned should not despise

those that are not; or those that are not, should not despise those that are, who are faithful in the Lord's work: and therefore being about to leave thee, I shall leave with thee two Scriptures to be considered of. The one is John 13:20, Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send (mark whomsoever) receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. The other is Luke 10:16, He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

John Gifford (John Bunyan's Pastor).

The Author to the Reader

Friend, because it is a dangerous thing to be walking towards the lace of darkness and anguish; and again, because it is (notwithstanding) the journey that most of the poor souls in the world are taking, and that with delight and gladness, as if THERE was the only happiness to be found, I have therefore thought it my duty, being made sensible of the danger that will befall those that fall therein, for the preventing of thee, O thou poor man or woman! to tell thee, by opening this parable, what sad success those souls have had, and are also like to have, that have been, or shall be found persevering therein.

We use to count him a friend that will forewarn his neighbour of the danger, when he knoweth thereof, and doth also see that the way his neighbour is walking in doth lead right thereto, especially when we think that our neighbour may be either ignorant or careless of his way. Why friend, it may be, nay twenty to one, but thou hast been, ever since thou didst come into the world, with thy back towards heaven, and thy face towards hell; and thou, it may be, either through ignorance or carelessness, which is as bad, if not worse, hast been running full hastily that way ever since. Why friend? I beseech thee put a little stop to thy earnest race, and take a view of what entertainment thou art like to have, if thou do in deed and in truth persist in this thy course. Friend, thy way leads 'down to death,' and thy 'steps take hold on hell' (Prov 5:5). It may be the path indeed is pleasant to the flesh, but the end thereof will be bitter to thy soul. Hark, dost thou not hear the bitter cries of them that are but newly gone before, saying, Let him 'dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my

tongue; for I am tormented in this flame?' (Luke 16:24). Dost thou not hear them say, Send out from the dead, to prevent my father, my brother, and my father's house, from coming 'into this place of torment?' Shall not then these mournful groans pierce thy flinty heart? Wilt thou stop thine ears, and shut thy eyes? And wilt thou not regard?

Take warning and stop thy journey before it be too late. Wilt thou be like the silly fly, that is not quiet unless she be either entangled in the spider's web, or burned in the candle? Wilt thou be like the bird that hasteth to the snare of the fowler? Wilt thou be like that simple one named in the seventh of Proverbs, that will be drawn to the slaughter by the cord of a silly lust? O sinner, sinner, there are better things than hell to be had, and at a cheaper rate by the thousandth part! O! there is no comparison, there is heaven, there is God, there is Christ, there is communion with an innumerable company of saints and angels. Hear the message then that God doth send, that Christ doth send, that saints do bring, nay, that the dead do send unto thee: 'I pray thee, therefore, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house'; 'if one went unto them from the dead they would repent.' 'How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? And the scorers delight in their scorning? And fools hate knowledge?' 'Turn you at my reproof: behold,' saith God, 'I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.' I say, hear this voice, O silly one, and turn and live, thou sinful soul, lest he make thee hear that other saying, But, 'because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh' (Prov 1:22-26).

O poor soul, If God and Christ did [thus] with thee for thine harm, it would be another matter; then if thou didst refuse, thou mightest have some excuse to make, or fault to find, and ground to make delays. But this is for thy profit, for thy advantage, for the pardoning of thy sins, the salvation of thy soul, the delivering of thee from hell fire, from the wrath to come, from everlasting burnings, into favor with God, Christ, and communion with all happiness, that is so indeed.

But it may be thou wilt say, All that hath been spoken to in this discourse is but a parable, and parables are no realities. I could put thee off with this

answer, That though it be a parable, yet it is a truth, and not a lie; and thou shalt find it so too, to thy cost, if thou shalt be found a sligher of God, Christ, and the salvation of thy own soul.

But secondly, know for certain, that the things signified by parables are wonderful realities. O what a glorious reality was there signified by that parable, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea,'

&c. Signifying, that sinners of all sorts, of all nations, should be brought into God's kingdom, by the net of the gospel. And O! how real a thing shall the other part thereof be, when it is fulfilled, which saith, And 'when it was full they drew to shore, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away'

(Matt 13:47,48). Signifying the mansions of glory that the saints should have, and also the rejection that God will give to the ungodly, and to sinners. And also that parable, what a glorious reality is there in it, which saith, 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit' (John 12:24). To signify that unless Jesus Christ did indeed spill his blood, and die the cursed death, he should abide alone; that is, have never a soul into glory with him; but if he died, he should bring forth much fruit; that is, save many sinners. And also how real a truth there was in that parable concerning the Jews putting Christ to death, which the poor dispersed Jews can best experience to their cost; for they have been almost ever since a banished people, and such as have had God's sore displeasure wonderfully manifested against them, according to the truth of the parable (Matt 21:33-41). O therefore, for Jesus Christ's sake, do not slight the truth, because it is discovered in a parable! For by this argument thou mayest also, nay, thou wilt slight almost all the things that our Lord Jesus Christ did speak; for he spake them for the most part, if not all, in parables. Why should it be said of thee as it is said of some, These things are spoken to them that are without 'in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand?' (Luke 8:10). I say, take heed of being a quarreller against Christ's parables, lest Christ also object against the salvation of thy soul at the judgment day.

Friend, I have no more to say to thee now. If thou dost love me pray for me, that my God would not forsake me, nor take his Holy Spirit from me; and that God would fit me to do and suffer what shall be from the world or devil inflicted upon me. I must tell thee, the world rages, they stamp and shake their heads, and fain they would be doing; the Lord help me to take all they shall do with patience; and when they smite the one cheek, to turn the other to them, that I may do as Christ hath bidden me; for then the Spirit of God, and of glory, shall rest upon me. Farewell.

I am thine, if thou be not ashamed to own me, because of my low and contemptible descent in the world.

A Few Sighs from Hell;

OR

The Groans of a Damned Soul.

Luke 16:19-31.

There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And, beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto

him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

This Scripture was not spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ to show you the state of two single persons only, as some, through ignorance of the drift of Christ in his parables, do dream; but to show you the state of the godly and ungodly to the world's end; as is clear to him that is of an understanding heart. For he spake them to the end that after generations should take notice thereof, and fear, lest they also fell into the same condition. Now in my discourse upon these words I shall not be tedious; but as briefly as I may, I shall pass through the several verses, and lay you down some of the several truths contained therein. And the Lord grant that they may be profitable, and of great advantage to those that read them, or hear them read.

The 19th and 20th verses also, I shall not spend much time upon, only give you three or four short hints, and so pass to the next verses; for they are the words I do intend most especially to insist upon.

The 19th, 20th, and 21st verses run thus:—"There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared' deliciously or

'sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores.'

First. If these verses had been spoken by Jesus Christ, and no more, all the world would have gone near to have cast a wrong interpretation on them. I say, if Jesus had said only thus much, 'There was a certain rich man' which

'fared sumptuously daily, and a certain beggar laid at his gate full of sores'; the world would have made this conclusion of them—the rich man was the happy man; for, at the first view, it doth represent such a thing; but take all together, that is, read the whole parable, and you shall find that there is no man in a worse condition than he; as I shall clearly hold forth afterward.

Second. Again, if a man would judge of men according to outward appearance, he shall oftentimes take his mark amiss. Here is a man to outward appearance appears the only blessed man, better by half than the beggar, inasmuch as he is rich, the beggar poor; he is well clothed, but peradventure the beggar is naked; he hath good food, but the beggar would be glad of dog's meat. 'And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.' The rich man fares well every day, but the beggar must be glad of a bit when he can get it. O! who would not be in the rich man's state? A wealthy man, sorts of new suits and dainty dishes every day; enough to make one who minds nothing but his belly, and his back, and his lusts, to say, O that I were in that man's condition! O that I had about me as that man has! Then I should live a life indeed; then should I have heart's-ease good store; then I should live pleasantly, and might say to my soul, 'Soul,' be of good cheer, 'eat, drink, and be merry' (Luke 12:19). Thou hast everything plenty, and art in a most blessed condition.

I say, this might be, aye, and is, the conclusion with them that judge according to outward appearance. But if the whole parable be well considered, you will see (Luke 16:15), that which is had in high estimation with men is an abomination in the sight of God. And again (John 16:20-22), that condition, that is the saddest condition, according to outward appearance, is oftentimes the most excellent; for the beggar had ten thousand degrees the best of it, though, to outward appearance, his state was the saddest;[4] from whence we shall observe thus much:—1. That those who judge according to outward appearance, do for the most part judge amiss (John 7:24). 2. That they who look upon their outward enjoyments to be token of God's special grace unto them, are also deceived (Rev 3:17). For as it is here in the parable, a man of wealth and a child of the devil may make but one person; or a man may have abundance of outward enjoyments, and yet be carried by the devils into eternal burnings (Luke 12:20). But this is the trap in which the devil hath caught many thousands of poor souls, namely, by getting them to judge according to outward appearance, or according to God's outward blessings.

Do but ask a poor, carnal, covetous wretch, how we should know a man to be in a happy state, and he will answer, those that God blesseth, and giveth abundance of this world unto; when, for the most part, they are they that

are the cursed men. Alas! poor men, they are so ignorant as to think that because a man is increased in outward things, and that by a small stock, therefore God doth love that man with a special love, or else he would never do so much for him, never bless him so, and prosper the work of his hands. Ah! poor soul, it is the rich man that goes to hell. And 'the rich man died,' and in hell, mark, 'in hell he lift up his eyes,' &c.

Methinks to see how the great ones of the world will go strutting up and down the streets sometimes, it makes me wonder. Surely they look upon themselves to be the only happy men; but it is because they judge according to outward appearance; they look upon themselves to be the only blessed men, when the Lord knows the generality are left out of that blessed condition.

'Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called' (1 Cor 1:26). Ah! did they that do now so brag, that nobody dare scarce look on them, but believe this, it would make them hang down their heads and cry, O give me a Lazarus' portion.

I might here enlarge very much, but I shall not; only thus much I shall say to you that have much of this world, Have a care that you have not your portion in this world. Take heed that it be not said to you hereafter, when you would very willingly have heaven, Remember in your lifetime you had your portion (Psa 17:14).

And friend, thou that seekest after this world, and desirest riches, let me ask this question, Wouldst thou be content that God should put thee off with a portion in this life? Wouldst thou be glad to be kept out of heaven with a back well clothed, and a belly well filled with the dainties of this world? Wouldst thou be glad to have all thy good things in thy lifetime, to have thy heaven to last no longer than while thou dost live in this world? Wouldst thou be willing to be deprived of eternal happiness and felicity? If you say no, then have a care of the world and thy sins; have a care of desiring to be a rich man, lest thy table be made a snare unto thee (Psa 19:22). Lest the wealth of this world do bar thee out of glory. For, as the apostle saith, 'They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition' (1 Tim 6:9). Thus much in general; but now more particularly.

These two men here spoken of, as I said, do hold forth to us that state of the godly and ungodly; the beggar holdest forth the godly, and the rich man the ungodly. 'There was a certain rich man.'

But why are the ungodly held forth under the notion of a rich man? 1. Because Christ would not have them look too high, as I said before, but that those who have riches should have a care that they be not all their portion (James 1:10-12; 1 Tim 6:17). 2. Because rich men are most liable to the devil's temptations; are most ready to be puffed up with pride, stoutness, cares of this world, in which things they spend most of their time in lusts, drunkenness, wantonness, idleness, together with the other works of the flesh; for which things sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience (Col 3:6). 3. Because he would comfort the hearts of his own, which are most commonly of the poorer sort; but God hath chosen the poor, despised, and base things of this world (1 Cor 1:26). Should God have set the rich man in the blessed state, his children would have concluded, being poor, that they had no share in the life to come.

And again, had not God given such a discovery of the sad condition of those that are for the most part rich men, we should have had men concluded absolutely that the rich are the blessed men. Nay, albeit the Lord himself doth so evidently declare that the rich ones of the world are, for the most part, in the saddest condition, yet they, through unbelief, or else presumption, do harden themselves, and seek for the glory of this world as though the Lord Jesus Christ did not mean as he said, or else that he will say more than shall assuredly come to pass; but let them know that the Lord hath a time to fulfil that he had a time to declare, for the scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35).

But again, the Lord by this word doth not mean those are ungodly who are rich in the world, and no other, for then must all those that are poor, yet graceless and vain men, be saved and delivered from eternal vengeance, which would be contrary to the Word of God, which saith that together with the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, there are bondmen or servants, and slaves, that cry out at the appearance of the Almighty God, and his Son Jesus Christ, to judgment (Rev 6:15).

So that though Christ doth say, 'There was a certain rich man,' yet you must understand he meaneth all the ungodly, rich or poor. Nay, if you will not understand it so now, you shall be made to understand it to be so meant at the day of Christ's second coming, when all that are ungodly shall stand at the left hand of Christ, with pale faces and guilty consciences, with the vials of the Almighty's wrath ready to be poured out upon them. Thus much in brief touching the 19th verse. I might have observed other things from it, but now I forbear, having other things to speak of at this time.

Verse 20.—'And there was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores.'

This verse doth chiefly hold forth these things; 1. That the saints of God are a poor contemptible people; 'There was a certain beggar.' If you understand the word beggar to hold forth outward poverty, or scarcity in outward things, such are saints<sup>[5]</sup> of the Lord, for they are for the most part a poor, despised, contemptible people. But if you allegorize it and interpret it thus, They are such as beg earnestly for heavenly food; this is also the spirit of the children of God, and it may be, and is a truth in this sense, though not so naturally gathered from this scripture. 2. That 'he was laid at his gate, full of sores.'

These words hold forth the distempers of believers, saying he was 'full of sores,' which may signify the many troubles, temptations, persecutions, and afflictions in body and spirit which they meet withal while they are in the world, but also the entertainment they find at the hands of those ungodly ones who live upon the earth. Whereas it is said, he was 'laid at his gate, full of sores.'

Mark, he was laid at his gate, not in his house—that was thought too good for him—but he was laid at his gate, full of sores. From whence observe, (1.) That the ungodly world do not desire to entertain and receive the poor saints of God into their houses. If they must needs be somewhere near unto them, yet they shall not come into their houses; shut them out of doors; if they will needs be near us, let them be at the gate. And he 'was laid at his gate, full of sores.' (2.) Observe that the world are not at all touched with the afflictions of God's children for all they are full of sores; a despised, afflicted, tempted, persecuted people the world doth not pity, no, but rather

labour to aggravate their trouble by shutting them out of doors; sink or swim, what cares the world? They are resolved to disown them; they will give them no entertainment: if the lying in the streets will do them any good, if hard usage will do them any good, if to be disowned, rejected, and shut out of doors by the world will do them any good, they shall have enough of that; but otherwise no refreshment, no comfort from the world. And he 'was laid at his gate, full of sores.'

Verse 21.—'And he desired to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: the dogs came also and licked his sores.'

By these words our Lord Jesus doth show us the frame of a Christian's heart, and also the heart and carriage of worldly men towards the saints of the Lord. The Christian's heart is held forth by this, that anything will content him while he is on this side glory. And 'he desired to be fed with the crumbs'; the dogs'

meat, anything. I say a Christian will be content with anything, if he have but to keep life and soul together; as we used to say, he is content, he is satisfied; he hath learned—if he hath learned to be a Christian—to be content with anything; as Paul saith, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content' (Phil 4:11). He learns in all conditions to study to love God, to walk with God, to give up himself to God; and if the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table will but satisfy nature and give him bodily strength, that thereby he may be the more able to walk in the way of God, he is contented. And he

'desired to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table.'[6] But mark, he had them not; you do not find that he had so much as a crumb, or a scrap allowed unto him. No, then the dogs will be beguiled, THAT must be preserved for the dogs. From whence observe that the ungodly world do love their dogs better than the children of God.[7] You will say that is strange. It is so indeed, yet it is true, as will be clearly manifested; as, for instance, how many pounds do some men spend in a year on their dogs, when in the meanwhile the poor saints of God may starve for hunger? They will build houses for their dogs, when the saints must be glad to wander, and lodge in dens and caves of the earth (Heb 11:38). And if they be in any of their houses for the hire thereof, they will

warn them out or eject them, or pull down the house over their heads, rather than not rid themselves of such tenants.[8]

Again, some men cannot go half a mile from home but they must have dogs at their heels, but they can very willingly go half a score miles without the society of a Christian. Nay, if when they are busy with their dogs they should chance to meet a Christian, they would willingly shift him if they could. They will go on the other side the hedge or the way rather than they will have any society with him; and if at any time a child of God should come into a house where there are but two or three ungodly wretches, they do commonly wish either themselves or the saint out of doors; and why so? because they cannot down[9] with the society of a Christian; though if there come in at the same time a dog, or a drunken swearing wretch, which is worse than a dog, they will make him welcome; he shall sit down with them and partake of their dainties. And now tell me, you that love your sins and your pleasures, had you not rather keep company with a drunkard, a swearer, a strumpet, a thief, nay, a dog, than with an honest-hearted Christian? If you say no, what means your sour carriage to the people of God? Why do you look on them as if you would eat them up? Yet at the very same time if you can but meet your dog, or a drunken companion, you can fawn upon them, take acquaintance with them, to the tavern or ale house with them, if it be two or three times in a week. But if the saints of God meet together, pray together, and labour to edify one another, you will stay till doomsday before you will look into the house where they are. Ah! friends, when all comes to all, you will be found to love drunkards, strumpets, dogs, anything, nay, to serve the devil, rather than to have loving and friendly society with the saints of God.

Moreover, 'the dogs came and licked his sores.' Here again

you may see, not only the afflicted state of the saints of God in this world, but also that even dogs themselves, according to their kind, are more favourable to the saints than the sinful world; though the ungodly will have no mercy on the saints, yet it is ordered so that these creatures, dogs, lions, &c. will. Though the rich man would not entertain him into his house, yet his dogs will come and do him the best good they can, even to lick his running sores. It was thus with Daniel when the world was mad

against him, and would have him thrown to the lions to be devoured, the lions shut their mouths at him, or rather the Lord did shut them up, so that there was not that hurt befel to him as was desired by the adversaries (Dan 6). And this I am persuaded of, that would the creatures do as some men would have them, the saints of God should not walk so quietly up and down the streets and other places as they do. And as I said before, so I say again, I am persuaded that, at the day of judgment, many men's conditions and carriages will be so laid open, that it will evidently appear they have been very merciless and mad against the children of God, insomuch, that when the providence of God did fall out so as to cross their expectation, they have been very much offended thereat, as is very evidently seen in them who set themselves to study how to bring the saints into bondage, and to thrust them into corners, as in these late years (Psa 31:13). And because God hath in his goodness ordered things otherwise, they have gnashed their teeth thereat.[10] Hence then let the saints learn not to commit themselves to their enemies; 'beware of men' (Matt 10:17). They are very merciless men, and will not so much favour you, if they can help it, as you may suppose they may. Nay, unless the overruling hand of God in goodness do order things contrary to their natural inclination, they will not favour you so much as a dog.

Verse 22.—'And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.'

The former verses do briefly hold forth the carriage of the ungodly in this life toward the saints. Now this verse doth hold forth the departure, both of the godly and ungodly, out of this life.

Where he said, 'And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried - into Abraham's bosom,' and 'the rich man also died';—the beggar died, that represents the godly; and the rich man died, that represents the ungodly. From whence observe, neither godly nor ungodly must live always without a change, either by death or judgment; the good man died and the bad man died. That scripture doth also back this truth, that good and bad must die, marvellous well, where it is said, 'And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment' (Heb 9:27).

Mark, he doth not say it is so that men by chance may die; which might beget, in the hearts of the ungodly especially, some hope to escape the bitterness of it. But he saith it is a thing most certain, it is appointed; mark, 'it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.' God hath decreed it, that since men have fallen from that happy estate that God at the first did set them in, they shall die (Rom 6:23). Now when it is said the beggar died and the rich man died, part of the meaning is they ceased to be any more in this world; I say partly the meaning, but not altogether. Though it be altogether the meaning when some of the creatures die, yet it is but in part the meaning when it is said that men, women, or children die; for there is to them something else to be said, more than barely agoing out of the world. For if when unregenerate men and women die there were an end of them, not only in this world but also in the world to come, they would be happy over they will be now, for when ungodly men and women die there is that to come after death that will be very terrible to them, namely, to be carried by the angels of darkness from their death-beds to hell, there to be reserved to the judgment of the great day, when both body and soul shall meet and be united together again, and made capable to undergo the uttermost vengeance of the Almighty to all eternity. This is that, I say, which doth follow a man that is not born again, after death, as is clear from that in 1 Peter 3:18, 19, where, before speaking of Christ being raised again, by the power of his eternal Spirit, he saith, By which, that is, by that Spirit, 'he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.' But what is the meaning of this? Why, thus much, that those souls who were once alive in the world in the time or days in which Noah lived, being disobedient in their times to the calls of God by his Spirit in Noah, for so I understand it, was, according to that which was foretold by that preacher, deprived of life and overcome by the flood, and are now in prison. Mark, he preached to the spirits in prison; he doth not say, who were in prison, but to them in, that is, now in prison, under chains of darkness, reserved, or kept there in that prison, in which now they are, ready, like villains in the jail, to be brought before the judgment-seat of Christ at the great day. But of this I shall speak further by and by.

Now if this one truth, that men must die and depart this world, and either enter into joy or else into prison, to be reserved to the day of judgment, were believed, we should not have so many wantons walk up and down the

streets as there do, at least it would put a mighty check to their filthy carriages, so that they would not, could not walk so basely and sinfully as they do. Belshazzar, notwithstanding he was so far from the fear of God as he was, yet when he did but see that God was offended and threatened him for his wickedness, it made him hang down his head and knock his knees together (Dan 5:5,6). If you read the verses before you will find he was careless, and satisfying his lusts in drinking and playing the wanton with his concubines. But so soon as he did perceive the finger of a handwriting, 'then,' saith the scripture, 'the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.' And when Paul told Felix of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, it made him tremble. And let me tell thee, soul, whosoever thou art, that if thou didst but verily believe that thou must die and come into the judgment, it would make thee turn over a new leaf. But this is the misery, the devil doth labour by all means as to keep out other things that are good, so to keep out of the heart, as much as in him lies, the thoughts of passing from this life into another world; for he knows, if he can but keep them from the serious thoughts of death, he shall the more easily keep them in their sins, and so from closing with Jesus Christ; as Job saith, 'Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.' Which makes them say to God, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways' (Job 21:14). Because there is no fear of death and judgment to come, therefore they do put off God and his ways, and spend their days in their sins, and in a moment, that is, before they are aware, go down to the grave (Job 21:17). And thus it fared also with the man spoken of in Luke 12:20. The man, instead of thinking of death, he thought how he might make his barns bigger. But, in the midst of his business in the world, he lost his soul before he was aware, supposing that death had been many years off. But God said unto him, 'Thou fool,' thou troublest thyself about things of this life, thou puttest off the thoughts of departing this world, when this night thy soul shall be taken from thee; or, this night, they, that is, the devil, will fetch away thy soul from thee. And here it comes to pass, men's not being exercised with the thoughts of departing this life, that they are, so unexpectedly to themselves and their neighbours, taken away from the pleasures and profits, yea, and all the enjoyments they busy themselves withal while they live in this world. And hence it is again, that you have

some in your towns and cities that are so suddenly taken away, some from haunting the ale-houses, others from haunting the whore-houses, others from playing and gaming, others from the cares and covetous desires after this world, unlooked for as by themselves or their companions. Hence it is also that men do so wonder at such tidings as this.

There is such a one dead, such a one is departed; it is because they do so little consider both the transitoriness of themselves and their neighbours. For had they but their thoughts well exercised about the shortness of this life, and the danger that will befall such as do miss of the Lord Jesus Christ, it would make them more wary and sober, and spend more time in the service of God, and be more delighted and diligent in inquiring after the Lord Jesus, who is the deliverer 'from the wrath to come' (1 Thess 1:10). For, as I said before, it is evident, that they who live after the flesh in the lusts thereof, do not really and seriously think on death, and the judgment that doth follow after: neither do they indeed endeavour so to do; for did they, it would make them say with holy Job, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come'

(Job 14:14). And as I said before, that not only the wicked, but also the godly have their time to depart this life. And the beggar died. The saints of the Lord, they must be deprived of this life also, they must yield up the ghost into the hands of the Lord their God; they must also be separated from their wives, children, husbands, friends, goods, and all that they have in the world. For God hath decreed it; it is appointed, namely, by the Lord, for men once to die, and 'we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,' as it is, 2

Corinthian 5:10, 11.

But it may be objected, if the godly do die as well as the wicked, and if the saints must appear before the judgment-seat as well as the sinners, then what advantage have the godly more than the ungodly, and how can the saints be in a better condition than the wicked?

Answ. Read the 22d verse over again, and you will find a marvellous difference between them, as much as is between heaven and hell, everlasting joy and everlasting torments; for you find, that when the

beggar died, which represents the godly, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, or into everlasting joy (Psa 1). But the ungodly are not so, but are hurried by the devils into the bottomless pit, drawn away in their wickedness (Prov 14:32), for he saith, 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.'

When the ungodly do die, their misery beginneth, for then appear the devils, like so many lions, waiting every moment till the soul depart from the body. Sometimes they are very visible to the dying party,[11] but sometimes more invisible; but always this is certain, they never miss of the soul if it do die out of the Lord Jesus Christ; but do hale it away to the prison, as I said before, there to be tormented and reserved until that great and general day of judgment, at which day they must, body and soul, receive a final sentence from the righteous Judge, and from that time be shut out from the presence of God into everlasting woe and distress. But the godly, when the time of their departure is at hand, then also are the angels of the Lord at hand; yea, they are ready waiting upon the soul to conduct it safe into Abraham's bosom. I do not say but the devils are oftentimes very busy doubtless, and attending the saints in their sickness: ay, and no question but they would willingly deprive the soul of glory. But here is the comfort, as the devils come from hell to devour the soul, if it be possible, at its departure, so the angels of the Lord come from heaven, to watch over and conduct the soul, in spite of the devil, safe into Abraham's bosom.

David had the comfort of this, and speaks it forth for the comfort of his brethren (Psa 34:7), saying, 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' Mark, the angel of the Lord encampeth round about his children, to deliver them. From what? From their enemies, of which the devil is not the least. This is an excellent comfort at any time, to have the holy angels of God to attend a poor man or woman; but especially it is comfortable in the time of distress, at the time of death, when the devils beset the soul with all the power that hell can afford them. But now it may be, that the glorious angels of God do not appear at the first, to the view of the soul; nay, rather hell stands before it, and the devils ready, as if they would carry it thither. But this is the comfort, the angels do always appear at the last, and will not fail the soul,

but will carry it safe into Abraham's bosom. Ah friends, consider, here is an ungodly man upon his death-bed, and he hath none to speak for him, none to speak comfort unto him; but it is not so with the children of God, for they have the Spirit to comfort them. Here is the ungodly, and they have no Christ to pray for their safe conduct to glory; but the saints have an intercessor (John 17:9). Here is the world, when they die, they have none of the angels of God to attend upon them; but the saints have their company. In a word, the unconverted person, when he dieth, he sinks into the bottomless pit; but the saints, when they die, do ascend with, and by the angels, into Abraham's bosom, or into unspeakable glory (Luke 23:43).

Again, it is said, that the rich man when he died was buried or put into the earth; but when the beggar died, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The one is a very excellent style, where he saith he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom: it denotes the excellent condition of the saints of God, as I said before; and not only so, but also the preciousness of the death of the saints in the eyes of the Lord (Psa 116:15). That aftergenerations may see how precious in the sight of the Lord the death of his saints is, when he saith they are carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Thus many times the Lord adorneth the death and departure of his saints, to hold forth unto after-generations, how excellent they are in his eyes. It is said of Enoch, that God took him; of Abraham, that he died in a good old age; of Moses, that the Lord buried him; of Elijah, that he was taken up into heaven; that the saints sleep in Jesus; that they die in the Lord; that they rest from their labour, that their works follow them; that they are under the altar; that they are with Christ; that they are in light; that they are to come with the Lord Jesus to judge the world. All which sayings signify thus much, that to die a saint is very great honour and dignity. But the ungodly are not so. The rich or ungodly die and are buried; he is carried from his dwelling to the grave, and there he is buried, hid in the dust; and his body doth not so fast moulder and come to nought there, but his name doth stink as fast in the world, as saith the holy scripture: 'The name of the wicked shall rot' (Prov 10:7). And indeed, the names of the godly are not in so much honour after their departure, but the wicked and their names do as much rot. What a dishonour to posterity was the death of

Balaam, Agag, Ahithophel, Haman, Judas, Herod, with the rest of their companions?

Thus the wicked have their names written in the earth, and they do perish and rot, and the name of the saints do cast forth a dainty savour to following generations; and that the Lord Jesus doth signify where he saith the godly are

'carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom'; and that the wicked are nothing worth, where he saith the ungodly die and are buried.

Verse 23.—'And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.'

The former verse speaks only of the departure of the ungodly out of this life, together with the glorious conduct[12] that the godly have into the kingdom of their Father. Now our Lord doth show, in this verse, partly what doth and shall befall to the reprobate after this life is ended, where he saith, 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.' That is, the ungodly, after they depart this life, do lift up their eyes in hell.

From these words may be observed these things, First. That there is a hell for souls to be tormented in, when this life is ended. Mark, after he was dead and buried, 'In hell he lifted up his eyes.' Second. That all that are ungodly, and do live and die in their sins, so soon as ever they die, they go into hell: he died and was buried; 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.' Third. That some are so fast asleep, and secure in their sins, that they scarce know well where they are till they come into hell; and that I gather from these words, 'In hell he lifted up his eyes.' He was asleep before, but hell makes him lift up his eyes.

[First.] As I said before, it is evident that there is a hell for souls, yea, and bodies too, to be tormented in after they depart this life, as is clear, first, because the Lord Jesus Christ, that cannot lie, did say that after the sinner was dead and buried, 'In hell he lifted up his eyes.'

Now if it be objected that by hell is here meant the grave, that I plainly deny: 1. Because there the body is not sensible of torment or ease; but in

that hell into which the spirits of the damned depart, they are sensible of torment, and would very willingly be freed from it, to enjoy ease, which they are sensible of the want of; as is clearly discovered in this parable, 'Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.' 2. It is not meant the grave, but some other place, because the bodies, so long as they lie there, are not capable of lifting up their eyes, to see the glorious condition of the children of God, as the souls of the damned do. 'In hell he lifted up his eyes.' 3. It cannot be the grave, for then it must follow that the soul was buried there with the body, which cannot stand with such a dead state as is here mentioned; for he saith, 'The rich man died'; that is, his soul was separated from his body. 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.'

If it be again objected that there is no hell but in this life; that I do also deny, as I said before: after he was dead and buried, 'In hell he lifted up his eyes.'

And let me tell thee, O soul, whoever thou art, that if thou close not in savingly with the Lord Jesus Christ, and lay hold on what he hath done and is doing in his own person for sinners, thou wilt find such a hell after this life is ended, that thou wilt not get out of again for ever and ever. And thou that art wanton, and dost make but a mock at the servants of the Lord, when they tell thee of the torments of hell, thou wilt find that when thou departest out of this life, that hell, even the hell which is after this life, will meet thee in thy journey thither; and will, with its hellish crew, give thee such a sad salutation that thou wilt not forget it to all eternity. When that scripture comes to be fulfilled on thy soul, in Isaiah 14:9, 10, 'Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they,' that is, that are in hell, shall say, 'Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?' O sometimes when I have had but thoughts of going to hell, and consider the everlastingness of their ruin that fall in thither, it hath stirred me up rather to seek to the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver me from thence, than to slight it, and make a mock at it. 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.'

[Second.] The second thing I told you was this, that all the ungodly that live and die in their sins, so soon as ever they depart this life, do descend into hell. This is also verified by the words in this parable, where Christ said, He

'died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes.' As the tree falls, so it shall be, whether it be to heaven or hell (Eccl 11:3). And as Christ said to the thief on the cross, 'Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.' Even so the devil in the like manner may say unto thy soul, To-morrow shalt thou be with me in hell. See then what a miserable case he that dies in an unregenerate state is in; he departs from a long sickness to a longer hell; from the gripings of death, to the everlasting torments of hell. 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.' Ah friends! If you were but yourselves, you would have a care of your souls; if you did but regard, you would see how mad they are that slight the salvation of their souls. O what will it profit thy soul to have pleasure in this life, and torments in hell? (Mark 8:36). Thou hadst better part with all thy sins, and pleasures, and companions, or whatsoever thou delightest in, than to have soul and body to be cast into hell. O then do not now neglect our Lord Jesus Christ, lest thou drop down to hell (Heb 2:3). Consider, would it not wound thee to thine heart to come upon thy death-bed, and instead of having the comfort of a well spent life, and the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the comforts of his glorious Spirit: to have, first, the sight of an ill-spent life, thy sins flying in thy face, thy conscience uttering itself with thunder-claps against thee, the thoughts of God terrifying of thee, death with his merciless paw seizing upon thee, the devils standing ready to scramble for thy soul, and hell enlarging herself, and ready to swallow thee up; and an eternity of misery and torment attending upon thee, from which there will be no release.

For mark, death doth not come alone to an unconverted soul, but with such company, as wast thou but sensible of it would make thee tremble. I pray consider that scripture (Rev 6:8), 'And I looked and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him.' Mark, death doth not come alone to the ungodly, no, but hell goeth with him. O miserable comforters! O miserable society! Here comes death and hell unto thee. Death goeth into thy body, and separates body and soul

asunder; hell stands without, as I may say, to embrace, or rather, to crush thy soul between its everlasting grinders. Then thy mirth, thy joy, thy sinful delights will be ended when this comes to pass. Lo it will come. Blessed are all those that through Christ Jesus his merits, by faith, do escape these soul-murdering companions. 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.'

[Third.] The third thing you know that we did observe from these words was this, That some are so fast asleep, and secure in their sins, that they scarce know where they are, until they come into hell. And that I told you I gather by these words, 'In hell he lifted up his eyes.' Mark, it was in hell that he lift up his eyes. Now some do understand by these words that he came to himself, or began to consider with himself, or to think with himself in what an estate he was, and what he was deprived of; which is still a confirmation of the thing laid down by me. There it is that they come to themselves, that is, there they are sensible where they are indeed. Thus it fares with some men that they scarce know where they are, till they lift up their eyes in hell. It is with those people as with those that fall down in a swoon; you know if a man do fall down in a swoon in one room, though you take him up and carry him into another, yet he is not sensible where he is till he cometh unto himself, and lifteth up his eyes.

Truly thus, it is to be feared, it is with many poor souls, they are so senseless, so hard, so seared in their conscience (1 Tim 4:2), that they are very ignorant of their state; and when death comes it strikes them as it were into a swoon, especially if they die suddenly, and so they are hurried away, and scarce know where they are till in hell they lift up their eyes: this is he who 'dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet' (Job 21:23).

Of this sort are they spoken of in Psalm 73, where he saith, 'There are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.' 'They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.' And again, 'they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment,' mark, 'in a moment,' before they are aware, they 'go down to the grave' (Job 21:13).

Indeed this is too much known by woeful and daily experience; sometimes when we go to visit them that are sick in the towns and places where we

live, O how senseless, how seared in their consciences are they! They are neither sensible of heaven nor of hell, of sin nor of a Saviour; speak to them of their condition, and the state of their souls, and you shall find them as ignorant as if they had no souls to regard. Others, though they lie ready to die, yet they are busying themselves about their outward affairs, as though they should certainly live here, even to live and enjoy the same for ever. Again, come to others, speak to them about the state of their souls, though they have no more experience of the new birth than a beast, yet will they speak as confidently of their eternal state, and the welfare of their souls, as if they had the most excellent experience of any man or woman in the world, saying, 'I shall have peace' (Deut 29:19). When, as I said even now, the Lord knows they are as ignorant of the new birth, of the nature and operation of faith, of the witness of the Spirit, as if there were no new birth, no faith, no witness of the Spirit of Christ in any of the saints in the world. Nay, thus many of them are, even an hour or less before their departure. Ah, poor souls! though they may go away here like a lamb, as the world says, yet, if you could but follow them a little, to stand and listen soon after their departure, it is to be feared, you should hear them roar like a lion at their first entrance into hell, far worse than even did Korah, &c., when they went down quick into the ground (Num 16:31-35).

Now, by this one thing doth the devil take great advantage on the hearts of the ignorant, suggesting unto them that because the party deceased departed so quietly, without all doubt they are gone to rest and joy; when, alas! it is to be feared the reason why they went away so quietly, was rather because they were senseless and hardened in their consciences; yea, dead before in sins and trespasses. For, had they had but some awakenings on their death-beds, as some have had, they would have made all the town to ring of their doleful condition; but because they are seared and ignorant, and so depart quietly, therefore the world takes heart at grass,[13] as we use to say, and make no great matter of living and dying they cannot tell how; 'therefore pride compasseth them as a chain' (Psa 75:6). But let them look to themselves, for if they have not an interest in the Lord Jesus now, while they live in the world, they will, whether they die raging or still, go unto the same place; 'and lifted up their eyes in hell.'

O, my friends, did you but know what a miserable condition they are in that go out of this world without an interest in the Son of God, it would make you smite upon your thigh, and in the bitterness of your souls cry out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?' (Acts 16:29-31). And not only so, but thou wouldst not be comforted until thou didst find a rest for thy soul in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 23. 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.'

Something, in brief, I have observed from the first part of this verse, namely, from these words, 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes.' And, indeed, I have observed but something, for they are very full of matter, and many things might be taken notice of in them. There is one thing more that I might touch upon, as touched in this saying, and that is this:—Methinks the Lord Jesus Christ doth hereby signify that men are naturally unwilling to see or take notice of their sad state, I say by nature; but though now they are willingly ignorant, yet in hell they shall lift up their eyes. That is, in hell they shall see and understand their miserable condition; and, therefore, to these words: 'In hell he lifted up his eyes,' he adds, 'being in torments.' As if he had said, though once they shut their eyes, though once they were willingly ignorant (2

Peter 3:5), yet, when they depart into hell, they shall be so miserably handled and tormented, that they shall be forced to lift up their eyes. While men live in this world, and are in a natural state, they will have a good conceit of themselves, and of their condition—they will conclude that they are Christians, that Abraham is their father, and their state to be as good as the best (Matt 3:7-9). They will conclude they have faith, the Spirit, a good hope, and an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ; but then, when they drop into hell, and lift up their eyes there, and behold first their soul to be in extreme torments; their dwelling to be the bottomless pit; their company thousands of damned souls; also the innumerable company of devils; and the hot scalding vengeance of God, not only to drop, but to fall very violently upon them; then they will begin to be awakened, who all their lifetime were in a dead sleep. I say, when this comes to pass, lo it

will; then in hell they shall lift up their eyes, in the midst of torments they shall lift up their eyes.

Again, you may observe in these words, 'And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments,' that the time of the ungodly men's smarting for their sins will be in the torments of hell. Now here I am put to a stand, when I consider the torments of hell into which the damned do fall. O unspeakable torments! O

endless torments! Now that thy soul might be made to flee from those intolerable torments into which the damned do go, I shall show you briefly what are the torments of hell. First. By the names of it. Second. by the sad state thou wilt be in, if thou comest there.

First. The names. It is called a never-dying worm (Mark 9). It is called an oven fire, hot (Mal 4:1). It is called a furnace, a fiery-furnace (Matt 13). It is called the bottomless pit, the unquenchable fire, fire and brimstone, hell fire, the lake of fire, devouring fire, everlasting fire, eternal fire, a stream of fire (Rev 21).

[Second. By the sad state thou wilt be in, if thou comest there.]

1. One part of thy torments will be this, thou shalt have a full sight of all thy ill spent life, from first to last; though here thou canst sin today and forget it by to-morrow, yet there thou shalt be made to remember how thou didst sin against God at such a time, and in such a place, for such a thing, and with such a one, which will be a hell unto thee. God will 'set them in order before thine eyes' (Psa 51:21).

2. Thou shalt have the guilt of them all lie heavy on thy soul, not only the guilt of one or two, but the guilt of them all together, and there they shall lie in thy soul, as if thy belly were full of pitch, and set on a light fire. Here men can sometimes think on their sins with delight, but there with unspeakable torment; for that I understand to be the fire that Christ speaketh of, which shall never be quenched (Mar 9:43-49). While men live here, O how doth the guilt of one sin sometimes crush the soul! It makes a man in such plight that he is weary of his life, so that he can neither rest at home nor abroad, neither up nor in bed.[14] Nay, I do know that they have

been so tormented with the guilt of one sinful thought, that they have been even at their wits' end, and have hanged themselves. But now when thou comest into hell, and hast not only one or two, or an hundred sins, with the guilt of them all on thy soul and body, but all the sins that ever thou didst commit since thou camest into the world, altogether clapped on thy conscience at one time, as one should clap a red hot iron to thy breasts, and there to continue to all eternity: this is miserable.

3. Again, then thou shalt have brought into thy remembrance the slighting of the gospel of Christ; here thou shalt consider how willing Christ was to come into the world to save sinners, and for what a trifle thou didst reject him. This is plainly held forth in Isaiah 28, where, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, the foundation of salvation, verse 16, he saith of them that reject the gospel, that, when the overflowing scourge doth pass through the earth, which I understand to be at the end of the world, then, saith he, it shall take you morning by morning, by day and by night shall it pass over you; that is, continually, without any intermission. 'And it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.' 'A vexation,' that is, a torment, or a great part of hell only to understand the report, to understand the good tidings that came into the world by Christ's death for poor sinners. And you will find this verily to be the mind of the Spirit, if you compare it with Isaiah 53:1, where he speaks of men's turning their backs upon the tenders of God's grace in the gospel, he saith, 'Who hath believed our report?' or the gospel declared by us? Now this will be a mighty torment to the ungodly, when they shall understand the goodness of God was so great that he even sent his Son out of his bosom to die for sinners, and yet that they should be so foolish as to put him off from one time to another; that they should be so foolish as to lose heaven and Christ, and eternal life in glory, for the society of a company of drunkards; that they should lose their souls for a little sport, for this world, for a strumpet, for that which is lighter than vanity and nothing; I say this will be a very great torment unto thee.

4. Another part of thy torment will be this: Thou shalt see thy friends, thy acquaintance, thy neighbours; nay, it may be thy father, thy mother, thy wife, thy husband, thy children, thy brother, thy sister, with others, in the kingdom of heaven, and thyself thrust out (Luke 13:28). 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham (your father),

and Isaac, and Jacob, (together with your brethren), and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourselves thrust out.' Nay, saith he, 'they shall come from the east, and from the west'—that is, those that thou didst never see in all thy life before, and they shall sit down with thy friends, and thy neighbours, thy wife and thy children, in the kingdom of heaven, and thou, for thy sins and disobedience, shall be shut, nay, thrust out. O wonderful torment!

5. Again, thou shalt have none but a company of damned souls, with an innumerable company of devils, to keep company with thee. While thou art in this world, the very thoughts of the devils appearing to thee makes thy flesh to tremble, and thine hair ready to stand upright on thy head. But O! what wilt thou do, when not only the supposition of the devils appearing, but the real society of all the devils in hell will be with thee howling and roaring, screeching and roaring in such a hideous manner, that thou wilt be even at thy wits' end, and be ready to run stark mad again for anguish and torment?

6. Again, that thou mightest be tormented to purpose, the mighty God of heaven will lay as great wrath and vengeance upon thee as ever he can, by the might of his glorious power. As I said before, thou shalt have his wrath, not by drops, but by whole showers shall it come, thunder, thunder, upon thy body and soul so fast, and so thick, that thou shalt be tormented out of measure. And so saith the Scripture (2 Thess 1:9), speaking of the wicked,

'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,' when the saints shall be admiring his goodness and glory. Again, this thou shalt have, as I said before, without any intermission; thou shalt not have any ease so long as while a man may turn himself round; thou shalt have it always every hour, day and night; for their worm never dies, but always gnaws, and their fire is never quenched; as it is written in Mark 9.

7. Again, in this condition thou must be for ever, and that is as sad as all the rest. For if a man were to have all his sins laid to his charge, and communion with the devils, and as much wrath as the great God of heaven can inflict unto him; I say, if it were but for a time, even ten thousand

years, and so end, there would be ground of comfort, and hopes of deliverance; but here is thy misery, this is thy state for ever, here thou must be for ever: when thou lookest about thee, and seest what an innumerable company of howling devils thou art amongst, thou shalt think this again, this is my portion for ever. When thou hast been in hell so many thousand years as there are stars in the firmament, or drops in the sea, or sands on the sea-shore, yet thou hast to lie there for ever. O this one word EVER, how will it torment thy soul!

Friends, I have only given a very short touch of the torments of hell. O! I am set, I am set, and am not able to utter what my mind conceives of the torments of hell. Yet this let me say to thee, accept of God's mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ, lest thou feel THAT with thy conscience which I cannot express with my tongue, and say, I am sorely tormented in this flame.

'And seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.'

When the damned are in this pitiful state, surrounded with fears, with terrors, with torment and vengeance, one thing they shall have, which is this, they shall see the happy and blessed state of God's children. He seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; which, as I said before, is the happy state of the saints when this life is ended. This now shall be so far from being an ease unto them, that it shall most wonderfully aggravate or heighten their torment, as I said before. There shall be weeping, or cause of lamentation, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and themselves thrust out.

1. Observe, Those that die in their sins are far from going to heaven; he seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And, indeed, it is just with God to deal with them that die in their sins according to what they have done; and to make them who are far from righteousness now, to stand far from heaven to all eternity. Harken to this, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness, and that are resolved to go on in your sins, when you die you will be far from heaven; you will see Lazarus, but it will be afar off.

Again, he 'seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.'

These are some of the things the damned do behold, so soon as they come into torment. Mark, and he 'seeth Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.' Lazarus, who was he? Why even he that was so slighted, so disregarded, so undervalued by this ungodly one while he was in the world, he seeth Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.

From whence observe, That those who live and die the enemies of the saints of God, let them be never so great, or stout, let them bear never so much sway while they are in the world, let them brag and boast never so much while they are here, they shall, in spite of their teeth, see the saints, yea, the poor saints, even the Lazaruses or the ragged ones that belong to Jesus, to be in a better condition than themselves. O! who do you think was in the best condition? who do you think saw themselves in the best condition? He that was in hell, or he that was in heaven? He that was in darkness, or he that was in light? He that was in everlasting joy, or he that was in everlasting torments?

The one with God, Christ, saints, angels, the other in tormenting flames, under the curse of God's eternal hatred, with the devils and their angels, together with an innumerable company of howling, roaring, cursing, ever-burning reprobates? Certainly, this observation will be easily proved to be true here in this world, by him that looks upon it with an understanding heart, and will clear itself to be true in the world to come, by such as shall go either to heaven or to hell.

2. The second observation from these words, 'And seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom,' is this; they that are the persecutors of the saints of the Lord now in this world, shall see the Lord's persecuted ones to be they that are so highly esteemed by the Lord, as to sit or to be in Abraham's bosom, in everlasting glory, though they, the enemies to the children of God,[15] did so lightly esteem them, that they scorned to let them gather up the dog's meat that falls under their table. This is also verified, and held forth plainly by this parable. And therefore be not grieved, O you that are the tempted, persecuted, afflicted, sighing, praying saints of the Lord, though your adversaries look upon you now with a disdainful, surly, rugged, proud, and haughty countenance, yet the time shall come when they shall spy you in Abraham's bosom!

I might enlarge upon these things, but shall leave them to the Spirit of the Lord, which can better by ten thousand degrees enlarge them on thy heart and conscience, than I can upon a piece of paper. Therefore, leaving these to the blessing of the Lord, I shall come to the next verse, and shall be brief in speaking to that also, and so pass to the rest.

Verse 24.—'And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

You know I told you that verse 22 is a discovery of the departure of the godly and the ungodly out of this life; where he saith the beggar died, and the rich man also died. The 23d verse is a discovery of the proper places, both of the godly and the ungodly after death; one being in Abraham's bosom, or in glory, the other in hell. Now this 24th verse is a discovery of part of the too late repentance of the ungodly, when they are dropped down into hell; 'And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me.' From these words, 'And he cried,' we may observe,

First. What a change the ungodly will have when they come into hell. 'He cried.' It is like he was laughing, jesting, jeering, drinking, mocking, swearing, cursing, prating, persecuting of the godly in his prosperity, among his filthy companions. But now the case is otherwise, now he is in another frame, now his proud, stout, currish carriage, is come down; 'And he cried.' The laughter of the ungodly will not last always, but will be sure to end in a cry; 'The triumphing of the wicked is short' (Job 20:5). Consider, you must have a change either here or in hell. If you be not new creatures, regenerate persons, new-born babes, in this world, before you go hence, your note will be changed, your conditions will be changed; for if you come into hell, you must cry. O did but the singing drunkards, when they are making merry on the ale bench,[16] think on this, it would make them change their note, and cry, What shall I do? Whither shall I go when I die? But, as I said before, the devil, as he labours to get poor souls to follow their sins, so he labours also to keep the thoughts of eternal damnation out of their minds; and, indeed, these two things are so nearly linked together, that the devil cannot well get the soul to go on in sin with

delight unless he can keep the thoughts of that terrible after clap out of their minds.

But let them know that it shall not always be thus with them; for if, when they depart, they drop down into eternal destruction, they shall have such a sense of their sins, and the punishment due to the same, that it shall make them to cry; 'And he cried.' O what an alteration will there be among the ungodly when they go out of this world? It may be a fortnight, or a month before their departure, they were light, stout, surly, drinking themselves drunk, slighting God's people, mocking at goodness, and delighting in sin, following the world, seeking after riches, faring deliciously, keeping company with the bravest;[17]

but now, they are dropped down into hell, they cry. A little while ago they were painting their faces, feeding their lusts, following their whores, robbing their neighbours, telling of lies, following of plays and sports, to pass away the time; but now they are in hell, they do cry. It may be last year they heard some good sermons, were invited to receive heaven, were told their sins should be pardoned if they closed in with Jesus; but, refusing his proffers, and slighting the grace that was once tendered, they are now in hell, and do cry.

Before, they had so much time, they thought that they could not tell how to spend it, unless it were in hunting, and whoring, in dancing, and playing, and spending whole hours, yea, days, nay, weeks, in the lusts of the flesh; but when they depart into another place, and begin to lift up their eyes in hell, and consider their miserable and irrecoverable condition, they will cry.

O what a condition wilt thou fall into, when thou dost depart this world; if thou depart unconverted, and not born again, thou hadst better have been smothered the first hour thou wast born; thou hadst better have been plucked one limb from another; thou hadst better have been made a dog, a toad, a serpent, nay, any other creature in the visible world, than to die unconverted;[18] and this thou wilt find to be true, when in hell thou dost lift up thine eyes, and dost cry.

Here then, before we go any further, you may see that it is not without good ground that these words are here spoken by our Lord, that when any of the ungodly do depart into hell, they will cry. Cry, why so? 1. They will cry to think that they should be cut off from the land of the living, never more to have any footing therein. 2. They will cry to think that the gospel of Christ should be so often proffered them, and yet they are not profited by it. 3. They will cry to think that now, though they would never so willingly repent and be saved, yet they are past all recovery. 4. They will cry to think that they should be so foolish as to follow their pleasures, when others were following of Christ (Luke 13:28). 5. They will cry to think that they must be separated from God, Christ, and the kingdom of heaven, and that for ever. 6. To think that their crying will now do them no good. 7. To think that, at the day of judgment, they must stand at the left hand of Christ, among an innumerable company of the damned ones. 8. They will cry to think that Lazarus, whom once they slighted, must be of them that must sit down with Christ to judge; or together with Christ, to pass a sentence of condemnation on their souls for ever and ever (1

Cor 6:2,3). 9. Cry to think that when the judgment is over, and others are taken into the everlasting kingdom of glory, then they must depart back again into that dungeon of darkness from whence they came out, to appear before the terrible tribunal. There they shall be tormented so long as eternity lasts, without the least intermission or ease.

How sayest thou, O thou wanton, proud, swearing, lying, ungodly wretch, whether this be to be slighted and made a mock at. And again tell me now, if it be not better to leave sin, and to close in with Christ Jesus, notwithstanding that reproach thou shalt meet with for so doing, than to live a little while in this world in pleasures and feeding thy lusts, in neglecting the welfare of thy soul, and refusing to be justified by Jesus; and in a moment to drop down to hell and to cry? O! consider, I say, consider betimes, and put not off the tenders of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest you lift up your eyes in hell, and cry for anguish of spirit.

'And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus,' &c.

[Second.] These words do not only hold forth the lamentable condition of the damned, and their lamentable howling and crying out under their anguish of spirit, but also they do signify to us, as I said before, their too late repentance; and also that they would very willingly, if they might, be set at liberty from that everlasting misery that by their sins they have plunged themselves into. I say, these words do hold forth a desire that the damned have, to be delivered from those torments that they now are in: O 'Father Abraham,' saith he, 'have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.' These words, 'Father Abraham,' may have some difficulty in them. It is possible that some may think them to be meant of Abraham; and those, or him that crieth out here, to be the Jews. Or it may be some may understand it to be God, or Jesus Christ his Son, which I rather suppose it may be, that is here cried out unto; because you find the same cry to him as it were uttered by the ungodly in other places of the Scripture; as in Luke 13:25, 26. Then shall they say, 'Lord, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.'

Nay more, 'In thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works' (Matt 7:22). This was just at their rejection. And again, in Matthew 25:11, they cry again to him, even to Jesus, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.'

And he there again gives them a repulse, as also in this parable.

But however or whosoever Abraham is, yet these truths may be observed from the words. 1. That the damned, when in an irrecoverable estate, will seek for, or desire deliverance from the wrath that they are and shall be in for eternity. 'Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him' (Psa 32:6). 2. That they will pray, if I may so call it, earnestly for deliverance from their miserable estate. These two things are clear from the words. For mark, he not only said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me'; but

'he CRIED,' and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me.' 3. From whence take a third observation; and that is, there is a time coming wherein, though men shall both cry and pray, yet they are like to have no

mercy at the hands of God; for so was this man served, as I shall further show by and by when I come to it.

Some people are so deluded by the devil as to think that God is so merciful as to own or regard anything for prayer; they think anything will go for current and good satisfaction, while they are here in this world, through ignorance of the true nature of the mercy of God, and the knowledge in what way God is satisfied for sinners. Now I say, through ignorance they think, that if they do but mutter over some form of prayers,[19] though they know not what they say, nor what they request, yet God is satisfied, yea, very well satisfied with their doings; when, alas! there is nothing less. O friends, I beseech you to look about you, and seek in good earnest for the Spirit of Christ so to help you now, to strive and pray, and to enable you to lay hold of Christ, that your souls may be saved, lest the time come that though you cry and pray, and wish also that you had laid hold on the Lord Jesus, yet you must and shall be damned.

Then again, you may see that though God be willing to save sinners at some time, yet this time doth not always last. No, he that can find in his heart to turn his back upon Jesus Christ now, shall have the back turned upon him hereafter, when he may cry and pray for mercy, and yet go without it. God will have a time to meet with them that now do not seek after him. They shall have a time, yea time enough hereafter to repent their folly, and to befool themselves, for turning their backs upon the Lord Jesus Christ. 'I will laugh at your calamity,' saith he, and 'mock when your fear cometh' (Prov 1:26).

Again, this should admonish us to take time while it is proffered, lest we repent us of our unbelief and rebellion when we are deprived of it. Ah friends!

Time is precious, an hour's time to hear a sermon is precious. I have sometimes thought thus with myself, Set the case, the Lord should send two or three of his servants, the ministers of the gospel, to hell among the damned, with this commission; Go ye to hell, and preach my grace to those that are there. Let your sermon be an hour long, and hold forth the merits of my Son's birth, righteousness, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession, with all my love in him, and proffer it to them, telling them

that now once more, and but once, do I proffer the means of reconciliation to them. They who are now roaring, being past hope, would then leap at the least proffer of mercy. O they that could spend whole days, weeks, nay, years, in rejecting the Son of God, would now be glad of one tender of that mercy. 'Father,' saith he, 'have mercy on me.'

Again, from these words you may observe, that mercy would be welcome when souls are under judgment. Now his soul is in the fire, now he is under the wrath of God, now he is in hell, there to be tormented; now he is with the devils and damned spirits; now he feels the vengeance of God. Now, O now, have mercy on me! Here you may see, that mercy is prized by them that are in hell, they would be glad if they could have it. Father, have mercy on me; for my poor soul's sake, send me a little mercy.

'And send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.'

[Third.] These words do not only hold forth that the ungodly have a desire of mercy, but what those mercies are, what these poor creatures would be glad of. As, 1. to have the company of a Lazarus granted to them. Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus. Now Lazarus was he that was beloved of God, and also he that was hated of them. Therefore, 2. Observe, that those saints, that the world in their lifetime could not endure, now they are departed, they would be glad to have society with them. O now send Lazarus! Though the time was when I cared not for him, yet now let me have some society with him.

Though the world disregard the society of God's children now, yet there is a time coming in which they would be glad to have the least company with them. Nay, do but observe, those of the saints that are now most rejected by them, even from them shall they be glad of comfort, if it might be. Send Lazarus; he that I slighted more than my dogs, he that I could not endure should come into my house, but must lie at my gate, send him. Now Lazarus shall be welcome to me, now do I desire some comfort from him; but he shall go without it.

From whence again observe, that there is a time coming, O ye surly dogged persecutors of the saints, that they shall slight you as much as ever

you slighted them. You have given them many an hard word, told many a lie of them, given them many a blow. And now in your greatest need and extremity they shall not pity you, the righteous shall rather 'rejoice when he seeth the vengeance' of God upon thee (Psa 58:10).

Again, Send Lazarus. From whence observe, that any of the saints shall then be owned by you to be saints. Now you look upon them to be the sect with Hymeneus and Philetus, but then you shall see them to be the Lazaruses of God, even God's dear children. Though now the saints of the Lord will not be owned by you, because they are beggarly, low, poor, contemptible among you; yet the day is coming that you shall own them, desire their company, and wish for the least courtesy from them.

'Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

Thus shall the souls that abide in their sins cry out in the bitterness of their spirits, with wonderful anguish and torment of conscience, without intermission; 'That he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.' That he, namely, the man who before I scorned should eat with the dogs of my flock, that before I slighted and had no regard of, that I shut out of door; send him, 'that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.'

Now these words, 'that he may dip the tip of his finger in water,' &c., do hold forth the least friendship or favour; as if he should have said, Now I would be glad of the least mercy, now I would be glad of the least comfort, though it be but one drop of cold water on the tip of his finger. One would have thought that this had been a small request, a small courtesy—ONE DROP OF

WATER—what is that? Take a pail full of it if that will do thee any good. But mark, he is not permitted to have so much as one drop, not so much as a man may hold upon the tip of his finger; this signifies that they that fall short of Christ shall be tormented even as long as eternity lasteth, and shall not have so much as the least ease, no not so long as while a man may turn himself round, not so much leave as to swallow his spittle, not a drop of cold water.

O that these things did take place in your hearts, how would it make you to seek after rest for your souls before it be too late, before the sun of the gospel be set upon you! Consider, I say, the misery of the ungodly that they shall be in, and avoid their vices, by closing in with the tenders of mercy; lest you partake of the same portion with them, and cry out in the bitterness of your souls, One drop of cold water to cool my tongue.

'For I am tormented in this flame.'

Indeed, the reason why the poor world does not so earnestly desire for mercy, is partly because they do not so seriously consider the torment that they must certainly fall into if they die out of Christ. For let me tell you, did but poor souls indeed consider that wrath, that doth by right fall to their shares because of their sins against God, they would make more haste to God through Christ for mercy than they do; then we should have them say, It is good closing with Christ to-day, before we fall into such distress.

But why is it said, Let him 'dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue?' Because that, as the several members in the body have their share in sin, and committing of that, so the several members of the body shall at that time be punished for the same. Therefore, when Christ is admonishing his disciples, that they should not turn aside from him, and that they should rather fear and dread the power of their God than any other power, he saith, 'Fear him,' therefore, that can cast both body and soul into hell (Luke 12:4). And again, 'Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matt 10:28). Here is not one member only, but all the body, the whole body of which the hands, feet, eyes, ears, and tongue are members. And I am persuaded, that though this may be judged carnal by some now, yet it will appear to be a truth then, to the greater misery of those who shall be forced to undergo that which God, in his just judgment, shall inflict upon them. O then they will cry, One dram of ease for my cursing, swearing, lying, jeering tongue. Some ease for my bragging, braving, flattering, threatening, dissembling tongue. Now men can let their tongues run at random, as we used to say; now they will be apt to say, Our tongues are our own, who shall control them? (Psa 12:4). But then they will be in another mind. Then, O that I might have a little ease for my deceitful tongue? Methinks sometimes to consider how some men do let

their tongues run at random, it makes me marvel. Surely they do not think they shall be made to give an account for their offending with their tongue. Did they but think they shall be made to give an account to him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead, surely they would be more wary of, and have more regard unto their tongue.

'The tongue,' saith James, 'is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison'; 'it setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell' (James 2). The tongue, how much mischief will it stir up in a very little time! How many blows and wounds doth it cause! How many times doth it, as James saith, curse man!

How oft is the tongue made the conveyer of that hellish poison that is in the heart, both to the dishonour of God, the hurt of its neighbours, and the utter ruin of its own soul! And do you think the Lord will sit still, as I may say, and let thy tongue run as it lists, and yet never bring you to an account for the same? No, stay. The Lord will not always keep silence, but will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thine eyes, O sinner. Yea, and thy tongue, together with the rest of thy members, shall be tormented for sinning. And I say, I am very confident, that though this be made light of now, yet the time is coming when many poor souls will rue the day that ever they did speak with a tongue. O, will one say, that I should so disregard my tongue! O that I, when I said so and so, had before bitten off my tongue! That I had been born without a tongue! my tongue, my tongue, a little water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame; even in that flame that my tongue, together with the rest of my members, by sinning, have brought me to. Poor souls now will let their tongues say anything for a little profit, for two-pence or three-pence gain. But, O what a grief will this be at that day when they, together with their tongue, must smart for that which they by their tongues have done while they were in this world. Then, you that love your souls, look to your tongues, lest you bind yourselves down so fast to hell with the sins of your tongues, that you will never be able to get loose again to all eternity. 'For by thy words thou shalt be condemned,' if thou have not a care of thy tongue. For 'I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment' (Matt 12:36).

Verse 25.—'But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

These words are the answer to the request of the damned. The verse before, as I told you, is a discovery of the desires they have after they depart this world. Here is the answer, 'Son, remember,' &c.

The answer signifies this much, that, instead of having any relief or ease they are hereby the more tormented, and that by fresh recollections, or by bringing afresh their former ill-spent life, while in the world, into their remembrance. Son, remember thou hadst good things in thy lifetime; as much as if he had said, Thou art now sensible what it is to lose thy soul; thou art now sensible what it is to put off repentance; thou art now sensible that thou hast befooled thyself, in that thou didst spend that time in seeking after outward, momentary, earthly things, which thou shouldst have spent in seeking to make Jesus Christ sure to thy soul; and now, through thy anguish of spirit, in the pains of hell thou wouldst enjoy that which in former time thou didst make light of; but alas! thou art here beguiled and altogether disappointed, thy crying will now avail thee nothing at all; this is not the acceptable time (2 Cor 6:2). This is not a time to answer the desires of damned reprobates; if thou hadst cried out in good earnest whilst grace was offered, much might have been; but then thou wast careless, and didst turn the forbearance and goodness of God into wantonness. Wast thou not told, that those who would not hear the Lord when he did call, should not be heard, if they turned away from him, when they did call. But contrariwise he would laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear did come (Prov 1:24-28).

Now, therefore, instead of expecting the least drop of mercy and favour, call into thy mind how thou didst spend those days which God did permit thee to live; I say, remember that in thy lifetime thou didst behave thyself rebelliously against the Lord, in that thou wert careless of his word and ordinances, yea, and of the welfare of thine own soul also. Therefore, now I say, instead of expecting or hoping for any relief, thou must be forced to call to remembrance thy filthy ways, and feed upon them, to thine everlasting astonishment and confusion.

From these words, therefore, which say, 'Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst **THY GOOD THINGS**,' there are these things to be taken notice of,

First. They that, by putting off repentance and living in their sins, lose their souls, shall, instead of having the least measure of comfort when they come into hell, have their ill-spent life always very fresh in their remembrance. While they live here they can sin and forget it, but when they depart they shall have it before them; they shall have a remembrance, or their memory notably enlightened, and a clearer, and a continual sight of all their wicked practices that they wrought and did while they were in the world. 'Son, remember,' saith he; then you will be made to remember: 1. How you were born in sin, and brought up in the same. 2. Remember how thou hadst many a time the gospel preached to thee for taking away of the same, by him whom the gospel doth hold forth. 3. Remember that out of love to thy sins and lusts, thou didst turn thy back on the tenders of the same gospel of good tidings and peace. 4. Remember that the reason why thou didst lose thy soul, was because thou didst not close in with free grace, and the tenders of a loving and free-hearted Jesus Christ. 5. Remember how near thou wast to turning at such and such a time, only thou wast willing to give way to thy lusts when they wrought; to drunkards when they called; to pleasures when they proffered themselves; to the cares and incumbrances of the world, which, like so many thorns, did choke that or those convictions that were set on thy heart. 6. Remember how willing thou wast to satisfy thyself with a hypocrite's hope, and with a notion of the things of God, without the real power and life of the same. 7. Remember how thou, when thou wast admonished to turn, didst put off turning and repenting till another time. 8. Remember how thou didst dissemble at such a time, lie at such a time, cheat thy neighbour at such a time, mock, flout, scoff, taunt, hate, persecute,[20] the people of God at such a time, in such a place, among such company. 9. Remember that while others were met together in the fear of the Lord to seek him, thou wast met with a company of vain companions to sin against him; whilst the saints were a praying, thou wert a cursing; while they were speaking good of the name of God, thou wast speaking evil of the saints of God. O then thou shalt have a scalding hot remembrance of all thy sinful thoughts, words, and actions, from the very first to the last of them that ever thou

didst commit in all thy life-time. Then thou wilt find that scripture to be a truth, 'The Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even!

for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see' (Deut 28:65-67). Nay, thou wilt find worse things to thy woe than this scripture doth manifest. For, indeed, there is no tongue able to express the horror, terror, torment, and eternal misery that those poor souls shall undergo, without the least mitigation of ease, and a very great part of it shall come from that quick, full, and continual remembrance of their sins that they shall have. And, therefore, there is much weight in these words, 'Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.'

From these words you see this is to be observed, That the ungodly shall remember, or have in remembrance, the misspending their lives; 'Remember that in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things.' You may take these words, good things, either simply for the things of this world, which in themselves are called, and may be called good things; or else with these words, namely, the things of this life, all the pleasures, delights, profits, and vanities, which the ignorant people of the world do count their good things, and do very much cheer themselves therewith. Soul, soul, eat, drink, and be merry; for thou hast much goods laid up for many years (Luke 12:19,20). Now I say, God, according to his glorious power and wisdom, will make poor creatures have always in their minds a fresh and clear remembrance of their ill-spent life; he will say unto them, Remember, remember, that in thy lifetime it was thus and thus with thee, and in thy lifetime thy carriage was so and so.

If sinners might have their choice, they would not have their sins and transgressions so much in the remembrance, as it is evident by their carriages here in this world; for they will not endure to entertain a serious thought of their filthy life, they 'put far away the evil day' (Amos 6:3; Eze 12:27); but will labour by all means to put the thoughts of it out of their mind; but there they shall be made to remember to purpose, and to think

continually of their ungodly deeds. And therefore it is said, that when our Lord Jesus Christ comes to judgment, it will be to convince the ungodly world of their wicked and ungodly deeds; mark, 'to convince' them (Jude 14,15). They will not willingly take notice of them now. But then they shall hereafter, in spite of their teeth. And also, between this and then, these that die out of Christ shall be made to see, acknowledge, and confess, do what they can, when they lift up their eyes in hell, and remember their transgressions. God will be a swift witness against them (Mal 3:5), and will say, Remember that thou didst in thy lifetime, how thou didst live in thy lifetime. Ha, friend! if thou dost not in these days of light 'remember the days of darkness' (Eccl 11:8), the days of death, hell, and judgment, thou shalt be made in the days of darkness, death, hell, and at the judgment too, to remember the days of the gospel, and how thou didst disregard them too, to thy own destruction, and everlasting misery. This is intimated in that 25th of St. Matthew.

'Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things.'

The great God, instead of giving the ungodly any ease, will even aggravate their torments; first, by slighting their perplexities, and by telling of them what they must be thinking of. Remember, saith he, O ye lost souls, that you had your joy in your lifetime, your peace in your lifetime, your comforts, delights, ease, wealth, health, your heaven, your happiness, and your portion in your lifetime.

O miserable state! Thou wilt then be in a sad condition indeed, when thou shalt see that thou hast had thy good things, thy best things, thy pleasant things; for that is clearly signified by these words, 'Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,' or all the good things thou art like to have.

Second. From whence take notice of another truth, though it be a dreadful one, which is this; there are many poor creatures, who have all their good, sweet, and comfortable things in this life, or while they are alive in this world;

'Remember,' saith he, 'that in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things' (Psa 17:14).

The wicked's good things will shortly have an end; they will last no longer with them than this life, or their lifetime. That scripture was not written in vain; it is like the crackling of thorns under a pot, make a little blaze for a sudden, a little heat for a while; but come and consider them by and by, and instead of a comfortable heat, you will find nothing but a few dead ashes; and instead of a flaming fire, nothing but a smell of smoke.

There is a time coming, that the ungodly would be glad of a better portion, when they shall see the vanity of this, that is, when they shall see what a poor thing it is for a man to have his portion in this world. It is true, while they are here on this side hell, they think there is nothing to be compared with riches, honours, and pleasures in this world; which makes them cry out, 'Who will shew us any good?' (Psa 4:6). That is comparable to the pleasures, profits, and glory of this world? But then they will see there is another thing that is better, and of more value than ten thousand worlds. And seriously, friends, will it not grieve you, trouble, perplex, and torment you, when you shall see that you lost heaven for a little pleasure and profit in your lifetime? Certainly, it will grieve you and perplex you exceedingly, to see what a blessed heaven you left for a dunghill-world. O! that you did but believe this! that you did but consider this, and say within yourselves, What! shall I be contented with my portion in this world! what! shall I lose heaven for this world! I say, consider it while you have day-light, and gospel-light, while the Son of God doth hold out terms of reconciliation to you, lest you be made to hear such a voice as this is,

'Son, remember that in thy lifetime thou receivedst thy good things'; thy comforts, thy joys, thy ease, thy peace, and all the heaven thou art like to have. O poor heaven! O short pleasures!

What a pitiful thing it is to be left in such a case? Soul, consider, is it not miserable to lose heaven for twenty, thirty, or forty years' sinning against God? When thy life is done, thy heaven is also done? when death comes to separate thy soul and body, in that day also thou must have thy heaven and happiness separated from thee, and thou from that. Consider these things betimes, lest thou have thy portion in thy lifetime. 'For if in this life only we have hope,' our portion, 'we are of all men most miserable' (1 Cor 15:19). Again consider, that when other men, the saints, are to receive

their good things, then thou hast had thine. When others are to enter into joy, then thou art to leave and depart from thy joy. When others are to go to God, thou must go to the devil. O miserable! Thou hadst better thou hadst never been born, than to be an heir of such a portion; therefore, I say, have a care it be not thy condition.

'Remember that thou receivedst thy good things, and LAZARUS EVIL

THINGS.'

These words do not only hold forth the misery of the wicked in this life, but also great consolation to the saints; where he saith, 'And Lazarus evil things'; that is, Lazarus had his evil things in his lifetime, or when he was in the world. From whence observe,

1. That the life of the saints, so long as they are in this world, is attended with many evils or afflictions; which may be discovered to be of divers natures; as saith the Scripture, 'Many are the troubles<sup>[21]</sup> of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all' (Psa 34:19).

2. Take notice, that the afflictions or evils that accompany the saints, may continue with them their lifetime, so long as they live in this vale of tears; yea, and they may be divers, that is, of several sorts; some outward, some inward, and that as long as they shall continue here below, as hath been the experience of all saints in all ages; and this might be proved at large, but I only hint in these things, although I might enlarge much upon them.

3. The evils that do accompany the saints will continue with them no longer than their lifetime; and here indeed lies the comfort of believers, the Lazaruses, the saints, they must have all their bitter cup wrung out to them in their lifetime. Here must be all their trouble, here must be all their grief; Behold, saith Christ, 'the world shall rejoice, but ye shall lament; but your mourning' shall, mark, it 'shall be turned into joy' (John 16:20). You shall lament, you shall be sorrowful, you shall weep in your lifetime; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man, let him be what he will, no man shall take away from you. Now if you think, when I say the saints have all their evil things in their lifetime, that I mean, they have nothing else but trouble in this their lifetime, this is your mistake. For let

me tell you, that though the saints have all their evil things in their lifetime, yet even in their lifetime they have also joy unspeakable, and full of glory, while they look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen. The joy that the saints have sometimes in their heart, by a believing consideration of the good things to come, when this life is ended, doth fill them fuller of joy, than all the crosses, troubles, temptations, and evils, that accompany them in this life can fill them with grief (2 Cor 4).

But some saints may say, My troubles are such as are ready to overcome me. Answ. Yet be of good comfort, they shall last no longer than thy lifetime. But my trouble is, I am perplexed with a heart full of corruption and sin, so that I am much hindered in walking with God. Answ. It is like so, but thou shalt have these troubles no longer than thy lifetime. But I have a cross husband, and that is a great grief to me. Well, but thou shalt be troubled with him no longer than thy lifetime, and therefore be not dismayed, be not discomfited, thou shalt have no trouble longer than this lifetime. Art thou troubled with cross children, cross relations, cross neighbours? They shall trouble thee no longer than this lifetime.

Art thou troubled with a cunning devil, with unbelief; yea, let it be what it will, thou shalt take thy farewell of them all, if thou be a believer, after thy lifetime is ended. O! excellent! 'Then God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more death nor sorrow, neither crying, nor any more pain; for the former things are passed away' (Rev 21:4). But now on the contrary, if thou be not a right and sound believer; then, though thou shouldest live a thousand years in this world, and meet with sore afflictions every day, yet these afflictions, be they never so great and grievous, they are nothing to that torment that will come upon thee, both in soul and in body, after this life is ended.

I say, be what thou wilt, if thou be found in unbelief, or under the first covenant, thou are sure to smart for it at the time when thou dost depart this world. But the thing to be lamented is, for all this is so sad a condition to be fallen into, yet poor souls are, for the most part, senseless of it, yea, so senseless, at some times, as though there was no such misery to come hereafter. Because the Lord doth not immediately strike with his sword,

but doth bear long with his creature, waiting that he might be gracious. Therefore, I say, the hearts of some of the sons of men are wholly set upon it to do mischief (Eccl 8:11). And that forbearance and goodness of God, that one would think should lead them to repentance; the devil hardening of them, by their continuing in sin, and by blinding their eyes, as to the end of God's forbearance towards them, they are led away with a very hardened and senseless heart, even until they drop into eternal destruction.

But poor hearts, they must have a time in which they must be made sensible of their former behaviors, when the just judgments of the Lord shall flame about their ears, insomuch, that they shall be made to cry out again with anguish, I am sorely 'tormented in this flame.'

'But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.' As if he should say, Now hath God recompensed both Lazarus and you, according to what you sought after while you were in this world. As for your part, you did neglect the precious mercy and goodness of God, you did turn your back on the Son of God, that came into the world to save sinners; you made a mock of preaching the gospel; you was admonished over and over, to close in with the loving kindness of the Lord, in his Son Jesus Christ. The Lord let you live twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years; all which time you, instead of spending it 'to make your calling and election sure' (2 Peter 1:10), did spend it in making of eternal damnation sure to thy soul (Job 21:29,30). And also Lazarus, he in his lifetime did make it his business to accept of my grace and salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. When thou wast in the ale-house, he frequented the word preached; when thou wert jeering at goodness, he was sighing to the sins of the times (Eccl 9:4-6). While thou wert swearing, he was praying; in a word, while thou wert making sure of eternal ruin, he, by faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, was making sure of eternal salvation. Therefore, 'Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.'

Here, then, you may see, that as the righteous shall not be always void of comfort and blessedness; so neither shall the ungodly go always without their punishment. As sure as God is in heaven, it will be thus. They must have their several portions. And, therefore, you that are the saints of the Lord, follow on, be not dismayed, forasmuch as ye know that your labour

is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58). Your portion is eternal glory. And you that are so loth now to close in with Jesus Christ, and to leave your sins to follow him, your 'day is coming' (Psa 37:13), in which you shall know, that your sweet morsels of sin, that you do so easily take down (Job 20:12-14), and it scarce troubles you, will have a time so to work within you to your eternal ruin, that you will be in a worse condition than if you had ten thousand devils tormenting of you. Nay, you had better have been plucked limb from limb a thousand times, if it could be, than to be partakers of this torment that will, assuredly without mercy, lie upon you.

Verse 26.—'And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.'

These words are still part of that answer, that the souls in hell shall have for all their sobbings, sighings, grievous cries, tears, and desires, that they have, to be released out of those intolerable pains they feel, and are perplexed with. And O! methinks the words at the first view, if rightly considered, are enough to make any hard-hearted sinner in the world to fall down dead. The verse I last spake to was and is a very terrible one, and aggravates the torments of poor sinners wonderfully. Where he saith, 'Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things,' &c. I say, these words are very terrible to those poor souls that die out of Christ. But these latter words do much more hold out their sorrow. They were spoken as to the present condition then upon the sinner. These do not only back the former, but do yet further aggravate their misery, holding forth that which will be more intolerable. The former verse is enough to smite any sinner into a swoon, but this is to make him fall down dead. Where he saith, 'And beside all this.' There is still something to aggravate thy misery yet far more abundantly. I shall briefly speak to the words as they have relation to the terror spoken of in the verses before. As if he had said, Thou thinkest thy present state unsupportable, it makes thee sob and sigh, it makes thee to rue the time that ever thou wert born. Now thou findest the want of mercy; now thou wouldst leap at the least dram of it: now thou feelest what it is to slight the tenders of the grace of God; now it makes thee to sob, sigh, and roar exceedingly for the anguish that thou art in. 'But beside all this,' I have

other things to tell thee of, that will break thine heart indeed. Thou art now deprived of a being in the world; thou art deprived of hearing the gospel; the devil hath been too hard for thee, and hath made thee miss of heaven; thou art now in hell among an innumerable company of devils, and all thy sins beset thee round; thou art all over wrapped in flames, and canst not have one drop of water to give thee any ease; thou criest in vain, for nothing will be granted. Thou seest the saints in heaven, which is no small trouble to thy damned soul; thou seest that neither God nor Christ takes any care to ease thee, or speak any comfort unto thee. 'But beside all this,' there thou art, and there thou art like to lie, never think of any ease, never look for any comfort; repentance now will do thee no good, the time is past, and can never be called again, look what thou hast now, thou must have for ever.

It is true, I spoke enough before to break thine heart asunder; 'But beside all this,' there lie and swim in flames for ever. These words, 'Beside all this,' are terrible words indeed. I will give you the scope of them in a similitude. Set the case you should take a man, and tie him to a stake, and with red-hot pinchers, pinch off his flesh by little pieces for two or three years together, and at last, when the poor man cries out for ease and help, the tormentors answer, Nay,

'but beside all this,' you must be handled worse. We will serve you thus these twenty years together, and after that we will fill your mangled body full of scalding lead, or run you through with a red-hot spit; would not this be lamentable? Yet this is but a flea-biting to the sorrow of those that go to hell; for if a man were served so there would, ere it were long, be an end of him. But he that goes to hell shall suffer ten thousand times worse torments than these, and yet shall never be quite dead under them. There they shall be ever whining, pining, weeping, mourning, ever tormented without ease; and yet never dissolved into nothing. If the biggest devil in hell might pull thee all to pieces, and rend thee small as dust, and dissolve thee into nothing, thou wouldst count this a mercy. But here thou mayst lie and fry, scorch, and broil, and burn for ever. For ever, that is a long while, and yet it must be so long.

'Depart from me, ye cursed,' saith Christ, 'into everlasting fire,' into the fire that burns for ever, 'prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matt 25:41). O! thou that wast loth to foul thy foot if it were but dirty, or did but rain; thou that was loth to come out of the chimney-corner, if the wind did but blow a little cold; and was loth to go half-a-mile, yea, half-a-furlong to hear the word of God, if it were but a little dark; thou that wast loth to leave a few vain companions, to edify thy soul; thou shalt have fire enough, thou shalt have night enough, and evil company enough, thy bellyfull, if thou miss of Jesus Christ; and 'beside all this,' thou shalt have them for ever, and for ever.

O thou that dost spend whole nights in carding and dicing, in rioting and wantonness; thou that countest it a brave thing to swear as fast as the bravest, to spend with the greatest spendthrift in the country; thou that lovest to sin in a corner when nobody sees thee! O thou that for bye-ends dost carry on the hypocrite's profession, because thou wouldst be counted somebody among the children of God,[22] but art an enemy to the things of Christ in thine heart. Thou that dost satisfy thyself, either with sins, or a bare profession of godliness, thy soul will fall into extreme torment and anguish, so soon as ever thou dost depart this world, and there thou shalt be weeping and gnashing thy teeth (Matt 8:12). 'And beside all this,' thou art like never to have any ease or remedy, never look for any deliverance, thou shalt die in thy sins, and be tormented as many years as there are stars in the firmament, or sands on the seashore; 'and beside all this,' thou must abide it for ever.

'And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.' 'There is a great gulf fixed.' You will say, what is that? Answ. It is a nice question; therefore,

1. See thou rather to enter in at the strait gate, than curiously to inquire what this gulf is. But,
2. If thou wouldst needs know if thou do fall short of heaven, thou wilt find it this, namely, the everlasting decree of God; that is, there is decree gone forth from God, that those who fall short of heaven in this world, God is resolved they shall never enjoy it in the world to come. And thou

wilt find this gulf so deep, that thou shalt never be able to wade through it as long as eternity lasts. As Christ saith, 'Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him' (Matt 5:25); 'lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. I tell thee thou shalt by no means come out thence,' there is the gulf, the decree, 'thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the' utmost farthing, or 'very last mite' (Luke 12:58,59). These words therefore, 'there is a great gulf fixed,' I do understand to be the everlasting decree of God. God hath decreed that those who go to heaven shall never go from thence again into a worse place; and also those that go to hell, and would come out, they shall not come out thence again. And friend, this is such a gulf, so fixed by him that cannot lie, that thou wilt find it so, which way soever thou goest, whether it be to heaven or hell.

Here therefore thou seest how secure God will make those who die in the faith; God will keep them in heaven; but those that die in their sins, God will throw them to hell and keep them there; so that they that would go from heaven to hell, cannot; neither can they come from hell that would go to heaven. Mark, he doth not say, they would not—for, O how fain would these who have lost their souls for a lust, for two-pence, for a jug of ale, for a strumpet, for this world, come out of that hot scalding fiery furnace of God's eternal vengeance, if they might—but here is their misery, they that would come from you to us, that is, from hell to heaven, cannot, they must not, they shall not; they cannot, God hath decreed it, and is resolved the contrary; here therefore lies the misery, not so much that they are in hell, but there they must lie for ever and ever. Therefore, if thy heart would at any time tempt thee to sin against God, cry out, No, for then I must go to hell, and lie there for ever. If the drunkards, swearers, liars, and hypocrites did but take this doctrine soundly down, it would make them tremble when they think of sinning. But poor souls, now they will 'make a mock of sin' (Prov 14:9), and play with it as a child doth play with a rattle; but the time is coming, that these rattles that now they play with will make such a noise in their ears and consciences, that they shall find, that if all the devils in hell were yelling at their heels, the noise would not be comparable to it. Friend, thy sins, as so many bloodhounds, will first hunt thee out (Num 32:23), and then take thee and bind thee, and hold thee down for ever (Prov 5:22). They will gripe thee and gnaw thee as if thou

hadst a nest of poisonous serpents in thy bowels (Job 20:14). And this will not be for a time, but, as I have said, for ever, for ever, for ever.

Verse 27.—'Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house.'

The verses before, I told you, were spoken partly to hold forth the desire that the damned have to be freed of their endless misery. Now this verse still holds forth the cries of those poor souls very vehement, they would very fain have something granted to them, but it will not be; as will more clearly appear afterward.

'Then he said, I PRAY THEE THEREFORE, FATHER,' &c. As if he should say, seeing I have brought myself into such a miserable condition, that God will not regard me, that my exceeding loud and bitter cries will not be heard for myself; seeing I must not be admitted to have so much as one drop of cold water, nor the least help from the poorest saints. And seeing, 'beside all this,'

here my soul must lie to all eternity, broiling and frying; seeing I must, whether I will or no, undergo the hand of eternal vengeance, and the rebukes of devouring fire; seeing my state is such, that I would not wish a dog in my condition, 'send him to my father's house.' It is worthy to be taken notice of, again, who it is he desired to be sent, namely, Lazarus. O friend, see here how the stout hearts and stomachs of poor creatures will be humbled, as I said before, they will be so brought down, that those things that they disdained and made light of in this world, they would be glad of in the life to come. He who by this man was so slighted, as that he thought it a dishonour that he should eat with the dogs of his flock. What, shall I regard Lazarus, scrubbed, beggarly Lazarus! what, shall I so far dishonour my fair, sumptuous, and gay house, with such a scabbed creep-hedge as he! No, I scorn he should be entertained under my roof. Thus in his lifetime, while he was in his bravery; but now he is come into another world, now he is parted from his pleasures, now he sees his fine house, his dainty dishes, his rich neighbours and companions, and he, are parted asunder; now he finds instead of pleasures, torments; instead of joys, heaviness; instead of heaven, hell; instead of the pleasures of sin, the horror and guilt of sin; O now send Lazarus!

Lazarus, it may be, might have done him some good, if he might have been entertained in time past, and might have persuaded him, at least not to have gone on so grievously wicked, but he slights him, he will not regard him, he is resolved to disown him, though he lose his own soul for so doing. Ay, but now send Lazarus, if not to me, yet to my father's house, and let him tell them, from me, that if they run on in sin, as I have done, they must and shall receive the same wages that I have received.

Take notice of this, you that are despisers of the least of the Lazaruses of our Lord Jesus Christ; it may be now you are loth to receive these little ones of his, because they are not gentlemen, because they cannot, with Pontius Pilate, speak Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.[23] Nay, they must not, shall not speak to them, to admonish them, and all because of this.

Though now the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ may be preached to them freely, and for nothing; nay, they are now desired to hear and receive it: though now they will not own, regard, or embrace these Christian proffers of the glorious truth of Jesus, because they come out of some of the basest earthen vessels; yet the time is coming, when they will both sigh and cry, Send him to my father's house (1 Cor 1:26). I say, remember this, ye that despise the day of small things; the time is coming, when you would be glad, if you might enjoy from God, from Christ, or his saints, one small drop of cold water, though now you are unwilling to receive the glorious distilling drops of the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

Again, see here the lamentable state they are in, that go to hell from their fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, &c. While they are in this world, men delight to set their children ill examples; and also children love to follow the wicked steps of their ungodly parents; but when they depart this life, and drop down into hell, and find themselves in irrecoverable misery, then they cry, send some body to my father's house, to my brother's house. Tell them my state is miserable, tell them I am undone for ever; and tell them also, that if they will be walking in these ungodly steps wherein I left them, they will assuredly fall into this place of torments.

'I pray thee - SEND HIM TO MY FATHER'S HOUSE.' Ah, friends and neighbours, it is like you little think of this, that some of your friends and

relations are crying out in hell, Lord, send some body to my father's house, to preach the gospel to them, lest they also come into these torments.

Here, men while they live, can willingly walk together in the way of sin, and when they are parted by death, they that are living, seldom or never consider of the sad condition that they that are dead are descended into. But ye ungodly fathers, how are your ungodly children roaring now in hell? And you ungodly children, how are your ungodly parents that lived and died ungodly, now in the pains of hell also? And one drunkard is singing on the ale bench, and another roaring under the wrath of God, saying, O that I was with him, how would I rebuke him, and persuade him by all means to leave off these evil courses. O! that they did but consider what I now suffer for pride, covetousness, drunkenness, lying, swearing, stealing, whoring, and the like. O! did they but feel the thousandth part thereof, it would make them look about them, and not buy sin at so dear a rate as I have done; even with the loss of my precious soul.

'Send him to my father's house.' Not to my father, but to my 'father's house.' It may be there is ungodly children, there is ungodly servants, wallowing in their ungodliness; send him therefore to my father's house. It is like they are still the same that I left them; I left them wicked, and they are wicked still; I left them slights of the gospel, saints, and ways of God, and they do it still;

'send him to my father's house,' it is like there is but a little between them and the place where I am; send him to-day, before to-morrow, 'lest they also come into the same place of torment. I pray thee that thou wouldst send him.'

I beg it on my bended knee, with crying and with tears, in the agony of my soul. It may be they will not consider, if thou do not send him. I left them sottish enough, hardened as well as I; they have the same devil to tempt them, the same lusts and world to overcome them; 'I pray thee therefore, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house'; make no delay, lest they lose their souls, lest they come hither: if they do, they are like never to return again. O! little do they think how easily they may lose their souls; they are apt to think their condition to be as good as the best, as I once through ignorance did; but send him, send him without delay, 'lest they

also come into this place of torment.' O that thou wouldst give him commission, do thou send him thyself; the time was when I, together with them, slighted those that were sent of God; though we could not deny but that he spake the word of God, and was sent of him, as our consciences told us; yet we preferred the calls of men before the calls of God. For though they had the one, yet because they had not the other in that antichristian way which we thought meet, we could not, would not, either hear him ourselves, nor yet give consent that others should. But now a call from God is worth all. Do THOU 'therefore send him to my father's house.'

The time was, when we did not like it, except it might be preached in the synagogue; we thought it a low thing to preach and pray together in houses. We were too high-spirited, too superstitious; the gospel would not down with us, unless we had it in such a place, by such a man; no, nor then neither effectually. But now, O that I was to live in the world again; and might have that privilege to have some acquaintance with blessed Lazarus, some familiarity with that holy man; what attendance would I give unto his wholesome words! How would I affect his doctrine, and close in with it! How would I square my life thereby! Now therefore, as it is better to hear the gospel under a hedge than to sit roaring in a tavern, it is better to welcome God's begging Lazaruses than the wicked companions of this world. It is better to receive a saint in the name of a saint, a disciple in the name of a disciple, than to do as I have done (Luke 10:16). O! it is better to receive a child of God, that can by experience deliver the things of God, his free love, his tender grace, his rich forbearance, and also the misery of man, if without it, than to be 'daubed with untempered mortar' (Eze 13:10). O! I may curse the day that ever I gave way to the flatteries and fawning of a company of carnal clergymen,[24] but this my repentance is too late; I should have looked about me sooner, if I would have been saved from this woeful place. Therefore send him, not only to the town I lived in, and unto some of my acquaintance, but to my father's house.

In my lifetime I did not care to hear that word that cut me most, and showed me mine estate aright. I was vexed to hear my sins mentioned, and laid to my charge; I loved him best that deceived me most—that said, Peace, peace, when there was no such thing (Jer 5:30,31). But now, O that I had been soundly told of it! O that it had pierced both mine ears and heart,

and had stuck so fast that nothing could have cured me, saving the blood of Christ! It is better to be dealt plainly with, than that we should be deceived; they had better see their lost condition in the world, than stay while they be damned, as I have done. Therefore send Lazarus, send him to my father's house. Let him go and say I saw your son, your brother, in hell, weeping and wailing, and gnashing his teeth. Let him bear them down in it, and tell them plainly it is so, and that they shall see their everlasting misery, if they have not a special care. 'Send him to my father's house.'

Verse 28.—'For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

These words are, if I may so say, a reason given by those in hell why they are so restless and do cry so loud; it is that their companions might be delivered from those intolerable torments which they must and shall undergo if they fall short of everlasting life by Jesus Christ. 'Send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren.' Though, while they lived among them in the world, they were not so sensible of their ruin, yet now they are passed out of the world, and do partake of that which before they were warned of; they can, I say, then cry out, Now I find that to be true indeed, which was once and again told and declared to me that it would certainly come to pass.

'FOR I HAVE FIVE BRETHREN.' Here you may see that there may be, and are, whole households in a damnable state and condition, as our Lord Jesus doth by this signify. 'Send him to my father's house,' for they are all in one state, I left all my brethren in a pitiful case. People, while they live here, cannot endure to hear that they should be all in a miserable condition; but when they are under the wrath of God they see it, they know it, and are very sure of it; for they themselves, when they were in the world, lived as they do, but they fell short of heaven, and therefore, if they go on, so shall they. O, therefore, send him quickly to my father's house, for all the house is in an undone condition, and must be damned if they continue so.

The thing observable is this, namely, that those that are in hell do not desire that their companions should come thither; nay rather, saith he,

send him to my father's house, and let him testify to them that are therein, lest they also come, &c.

Quest. But some may say, What should be the reason that the damned should desire not to have their companions come into the same condition that they are fallen into, but rather that they might be kept from it, and escape that dreadful state?

Answ. I do believe there is scarce so much love in any of the damned in hell as really to desire the salvation of any. But in that there is any desire in them that are damned, that their friends and relations should not come into that place of torment, it appears to me to be rather for their own ease than for their neighbour's good; for, let me tell you, this I do believe, that it will aggravate the grief and horror of them to see their ungodly neighbours in the like destruction with them. For where the ungodly do live and die, and descend into the pit together, the one is rather a vexation to the other than any thing else. And it must needs be so, because there are no ungodly people that do live ungodly together but they do learn ill examples one of another, as thus: If there live one in the town that is very expert and cunning for the world, why now the rest that are of the same mind with him, they will labour to imitate and follow his steps: this is commonly seen.

Again, if there be one given to drunkenness, others of the town, through his means, run the more into that sin with him, and do accustom themselves the more unto it because of his enticing them, and also by setting such an ill example before them. And so if there be any addicted to pride, and must needs be in all the newest fashions, how do their example provoke others to love and follow the same vanity; spending that upon their lusts which should relieve their own and others' wants. Also if there be any given to jesting, scoffing, lying, whoring, backbiting, junketing, [25] wantonness, or any other sin, they that are most expert in these things do oftentimes entangle others, that peradventure would not have been so vile as now they are, had they not had such an example, and hence they are called corrupters (Isa 1:4).

Now these will, by their doings, exceedingly aggravate the condemnation of one another. He that did set his neighbor an ill example, and thereby

caused him to walk in sin, he will be found one cause of his friend's destruction, insomuch that he will have to answer for his own sins and for a great part of his neighbour's too, which will add to his destruction; as that scripture in Ezekiel showeth, where, speaking of the watchman that should give the people warning, if he did not, though the man did die in his sins, yet his blood shall be required at the watchman's hand (Eze 33).

So here let me tell thee that if thou shouldst be such a one, as by thy conversation and practices shall be a trap and a stumbling-block to cause thy neighbour to fall into eternal ruin—though he be damned for his own sins—yet God may, nay he will charge thee as being guilty of his blood, in that thou didst not content thyself to keep from heaven thyself, but didst also, by thy filthy conversation, keep away others, and cause them to fall with thee. O, therefore, will not this aggravate thy torment? Yea, if thou shouldst die and go to hell before thy neighbour or companions, besides the guilt of thine own sins, thou wouldst be so laden with the fear of the damnation of others to be laid to thy charge, that thou wouldst cry out, O send one from the dead to this companion and that companion with whom I had society in my lifetime, for I see my cursed carriage will be one cause of his condemnation, if he fall short of glory.

I left him living in foul and heinous offences; but I was one of the first instruments to bring him to them. O! I shall be guilty both of my own and his damnation too! O that he might be kept out hence, lest my torment be aggravated by his coming hither!

For where ungodly people do dwell together, they being a snare and stumbling-block one to another by their practices, they must needs be a torment one to another, and an aggravation of each other's damnation. O

cursed be thy face, saith one, that ever I set mine eyes on thee. It was long of thee. I may thank thee. It was thee that did entice me and ensnare me. It was your filthy conversation that was a stumbling-block to me. It was your covetousness, it was your pride, your haunting the ale-house, your gaming and whoring. It was long of you that I fell short of life; if you had set me a good example, as you did set me an ill one, it may be I might have done better than now I do; but I learned of you, I followed your steps, I took counsel of you. O

that I had never seen thy face! O that thou hadst never been born to do my soul this wrong, as you have done! O, saith the other, and I may as much blame you, for do not you remember how at such a time, and at such a time, you drew me out, and drew me away, and asked me if I would go with you, when I was going about other business, about my calling; but you called me away, you sent for me, you are as much in the fault as I; though I were covetous, you were proud; and if you learned covetousness of me, I learned pride and drunkenness of you. Though I learned you to cheat, you learned me to whore, to lie, to scoff at goodness. Though I, base wretch, did stumble you in some things, yet you did as much stumble me in others. I can blame you as you blame me; and if I have to answer for some of your most filthy actions, you have to answer for some of mine. I would you had not come hither, the very looks of you do wound my soul, by bringing my sins afresh into my mind, the time when, the manner how, the place where, the persons with whom. It was with you, you! Grief to my soul! Since I could not shun thy company there, O that I had been without thy company here!

I say, therefore, for those that have sinned together to go to hell together, it will very much perplex and torment them both; therefore I judge this is one reason why they that are in hell do desire that their friends or companions do not come thither into the same place of torment that they are in. And therefore where Christ saith that these damned souls cry out, Send to our companions, that they may be warned and commanded to look to themselves, O send to my five brethren! it is because they would not have their own torments heightened by their company; and a sense, yea, a continual sense of their sins, which they did cause them to commit when they were in the world with them. For I do believe that the very looks of those that have been beguiled of their fellows, I say their very looks will be a torment to them: for thereby will the remembrance of their own sins be kept, if possible, the fresher on their consciences, which they committed with them; and also they will wonderfully have the guilt of the others sins upon them, in that they were partly the cause of his committing them, being instruments in the hands of the devil to draw them in too. And, therefore, lest this come to pass, 'I pray thee send him to my father's house.' For if they might not come hither, peradventure my torment might have some mitigation; that is, if they might be saved, then their sins will

be pardoned, and not so heavily charged on my soul. But if they do fall into the same place where I am, the sins that I have caused them to commit will lie so heavy, not only on their souls, but also on mine, that they sin me into eternal misery, deeper and deeper. O therefore send him to my father's house, to my five brethren, and let him testify to them, lest they come into this place of torment.

These words being thus understood, what a condition doth it show them to be in then, that now much delight in being the very ringleaders of their companions into sins of all sorts whatsoever?

While men live here, if they can be counted the cunningest in cheating, the boldest for lying, the archest for whoring, the subtilest for coveting and getting the world; if they can but cunningly defraud, undermine, cross, and anger their neighbours, yea, and hinder them from the means of grace, the gospel of Christ, they glory in it, take a pride in it, and think themselves pretty well at ease, and their minds are somewhat quiet, being beguiled with sin.

But, friend, when thou hast lost this life, and dost begin to lift up thine eyes in hell, and seest what thy sins have brought thee to; and not only so, but that thou, by thy filthy sins, didst cause others, devil-like, to fall into the same condemnation with thee; and that one of the reasons of their damnation was this, that thou didst lead them to the commission of those wicked practices of this world, and the lusts thereof; then, O that somebody would stop them from coming, lest they also come into this place of torment, and be damned as I am! How ill it torment me! Balaam could not be contented to be damned himself, but also he must, by his wickedness, cause others to stumble and fall. The Scribes and Pharisees could not be contented to keep out of heaven themselves, but they must labour to keep out others too. Therefore theirs is the greater damnation.

The deceived cannot be content to be deceived himself; but he must labour to deceive others also. The drunkard cannot be content to go to hell for his own sins, but he must labour to cause others to fall into the same furnace with him. But look to yourselves, for here will be damnation upon damnation, damned for thy own sins, and damned for thy being a partaker with others in their sins; and damned for being guilty of the damnation of

others. O how will the drunkards cry for leading their neighbours into drunkenness! How will the covetous person howl for setting his neighbour, his friend, his brother, his children and relations, so wicked an example! by which he hath not only wronged his own soul, but also the souls of others. The liar, by lying, learned others to lie; the swearer learned others to swear; the whoremonger learned others to whore.

Now all these, with others of the like sort, will be guilty, not only of their own damnation, but also of the damnation of others. I tell you, that some men have so much been the authors of the damnation of others, that I am ready to think that the damnation of them will trouble them as much as their own damnation. Some men, it is to be feared, at the day of judgment, will be found to be the authors of destroying whole nations. How many souls do you think Balaam, with his deceit, will have to answer for? How many Mahomet? How many the Pharisees, that hired the soldiers to say the disciples stole away Jesus? (Matt 18:11-15); and by that means stumbled their brethren to this day; and was one means of hindering them from believing the things of God and Jesus Christ, and so the cause of the damnation of their brethren to this very day.

How many poor souls hath Bonner to answer for, think you, and several filthy blind priests? How many souls have they been the means of destroying by their ignorance and corrupt doctrine? Preaching, that was no better for their souls than ratsbane to the body, for filthy lucre's sake (O ye priests, this word is for you). They shall see, that they, many of them it is to be feared, will have whole towns to answer for; whole cities to answer for. Ah, friend, I tell thee, thou that hast taken in hand to preach to the people, it may be thou hast taken in hand thou canst not tell what. Will it not grieve thee to see thy whole parish come bellowing after thee to hell, crying out, This we may thank thee for, this is long of thee, thou didst not teach us the truth; thou didst lead us away with fables, thou wast afraid to tell us of our sins, lest we should not put meat fast enough in thy mouth. O cursed wretch, that ever thou shouldst beguile us thus, deceive us thus, flatter us thus! We would have gone out to hear the word abroad, but that thou didst reprove us, and also tell us that that which we see now is the way of God was heresy, and a deceivable doctrine; and wast not contented,

blind guide as thou wert, to fall into the ditch thyself, but hast also led us thither with thee.[26]

I say, look to thyself, lest thou cry out when it is too late, Send Lazarus to my people, my friends, my children, my congregation to whom I preached, and beguiled through my folly. Send him to the town in which I did preach last, lest I be the cause of their damnation. Send him to my friends from whence I came, lest I be made to answer for their souls and mine own too (Eze 33:1-6).

O send him therefore, and let him tell them, and testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Consider this, ye that live thus in the world, while ye are in the land of the living, lest you fall into this condition. Set the case thou shouldest by thy carriage destroy but a soul, but one poor soul, by one of thy carriages or actions, by thy sinful works; consider it now, I say, lest thou be forced to cry, 'I pray thee therefore, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

If so, then I shall not only say to the blind guides, Look you to yourselves, and shut not[27] out others; no, but this doth reach unto all those that do not only keep souls from heaven by preaching and the like, but speaks forth the doom of those that shall any ways be instrumental to hinder others from closing in with Jesus Christ. O what red lines will those be against all those rich ungodly landlords, that so keep under their poor tenants that they dare not go out to hear the word, for fear their rent should be raised, or they turned out of their houses! What sayest thou, landlord, will it not cut thy soul, when thou shalt see that thou couldest not be content to miss of heaven thyself, but thou must labour to hinder others also? Will it not give thee an eternal wound in thy heart, both at death and judgment, to be accused of the ruin of thy neighbour's soul, thy servant's soul, thy wife's soul, together with the ruin of thy own? Think on this, you drunken, proud, rich, and scornful landlords; think on this, you mad-brained blasphemous husbands, that are against the godly and chaste conversation of your wives; also you that hold your servants so hard to it that you will not spare them time to hear the word, unless it be where and when your lusts will let you. If you love your own souls, your tenants'

souls, your wives' souls, your servants' souls, your children's souls; if you would not cry, if you would not howl, if you would not bear the burden of the ruin of others for ever, then I beseech you to consider this doleful story, and labour to avoid the soul-killing torment that this poor wretch groaneth under, when he saith, 'I pray thee therefore, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house,[28]

For I have five brethren, THAT HE MAY TESTIFY,' mark, 'that he may testify UNTO THEM, lest they also come into this place of torment.'

These words have still something more in them than I have yet observed from them; there are one or two things more that I shall briefly touch upon, and therefore, mark, he saith, 'That he may testify unto them,' &c. Mark, I pray you, and take notice of the word TESTIFY. He doth not say, And let him go unto them, or speak with, or tell them such and such things. No, but let him testify, or affirm it constantly, in case any should oppose it. 'Let him testify unto them.' It is the same word the Scripture uses to set forth the vehemency of Christ, his telling of his disciples of him that should betray him. And he testified, saying, One of you shall betray me. And he testified, that is, he spake it so as to dash or overcome any that should have said it shall not be. It is a word that signifies, that in case any should oppose the thing spoken of, yet that the party speaking should still continue constant in his saying. And he commanded them to preach, 'and to testify, that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.' To testify, mark, that is, to be constant, irresistible, undaunted, in case it should be opposed and objected against. So here, let him testify to them, lest they come into this place of torment.

From whence observe, that it is not an easy matter to persuade them who are in their sins alive in this world, that they must and shall be damned if they turn not, and be converted to God. 'Let him testify to them,' let him speak confidently, though they frown upon him, or dislike his way of speaking. And how is this truth verified and cleared by the carriages of almost all men now in the world toward them that do preach the gospel; and show their own miserable state plainly to them, if they close not with it? If a man do but indeed labour to convince sinners of their sins and lost condition by nature, though they must be damned if they live and die in

that condition, O how angry are they at it! Look how he judges, say they, hark how he condemns us; he tells us we must be damned if we live and die in this state. We are offended at him, we cannot abide to hear him, or any such as he; we will believe none of them all, but go on in the way we are agoing. 'Forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten,' said the ungodly king to the prophet, when he told him of his sins (2 Chron 25:16).

I say, tell the drunkard he must be damned if he leaves not his drunkenness, the swearer, liar, cheater, thief, covetous, railers, or any ungodly persons, they must and shall lie in hell for it, if they die in this condition; they will not believe you, not credit you.

Again, tell others that there are many in hell that have lived and died in their conditions, and so are they like to be, if they convert not to Jesus Christ, and be found in him, or that there are others that are more civil and sober men, who, although we know that their civility will not save them, if we do but tell them plainly of the emptiness and unprofitableness of that, as to the saving of their souls, and that God will not accept them, nor love them, notwithstanding these things, and that if they intend to be saved, they must be better provided than with such a righteousness as this; they will either fling away, and come to hear no more, or else if they do come, they will bring such prejudice with them in their hearts, that the word preached shall not profit them, it being mixed not with faith, but with prejudice in them that hear it (Heb 4:1,2). Nay, they will some of them be so full of anger that they will break out and call, even those that speak the truth, heretics; yea, and kill them (Luke 4:25-29). And why so?

Because they tell them, that if they live in their sins that will damn them; yet if they turn and live a righteous life, according to the holy, and just, and good law of God, that will not save them.

Yea, because we tell them plainly that unless they leave their sins and [self]

righteousness too, and close in with a naked Jesus Christ, his blood and merits, and what he hath done, and is now doing for sinners, they cannot be saved; and unless they do eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, they have no life abiding in them, they gravel[29] presently, and are

offended at it, as the Jews were with Christ for speaking the same thing to them (John 6:53,60).

And fling away themselves, their souls and all, by quarrelling against the doctrine of the Son of God, as indeed they do, though they will not believe they do; and therefore, he that is a preacher of the Word, had need not only tell them, but testify to them, again and again, that their sins, if they continue in them, will damn them, and damn them again. And tell them again, their living honestly according to the law, their paying every one their own, their living quietly with their neighbours, their giving to the poor, their notion of the gospel, and saying they do believe in Christ, will do them no good at the general day of judgment. Ha, friends! How many of you are there at this very day, that have been told once and again of your lost undone condition, because you want the right, real, and saving work of God upon your souls! I say, hath not this been told you, yea, testified unto you from time to time, that your state is miserable, that yet you are never the better, but do still stand where you did; some in an open ungodly life, and some drowned in a selfconceited holiness of Christianity? Therefore, for God's sake, if you love your souls, consider, and beg of God for Jesus Christ's sake, that he would work such a work of grace in your hearts, and give you such a faith in his Son Jesus Christ, that you may not only have rest here, as you think, not only think your state safe while you live here, but that you may be safe indeed, not only here, but also when you are gone, lest you do cry in the anguish and perplexity of your souls, Send one to my companions that have been beguiled by Satan as I have been, and so, by going on, come into this place of torment as I have done.

Again, one thing more is to be observed from these words, Let him 'testify to them, LEST THEY ALSO COME INTO THIS PLACE OF TORMENT.'

Mark, lest they come in. As if he had said, Or else they will come into this place of torment, as sure as I am here. From whence observe, that though some souls do for sin fall into the bottomless pit of hell before their fellows, because they depart this world before them, yet the other, abiding in the same course, are as sure to go to the same place as if they were there already. How so? Because that all are condemned together, they have all fallen under the same law, and have all offended the same justice, and

must for certain, if they die in that condition, drink as deep, if not deeper, of the same destruction. Mark, I pray you, what the Scriptures say, 'He that believeth not, is condemned already' (John 3:18).

He is condemned as well as they, having broken the same law with them; if so, then what hinders but they will partake of the same destruction with them?

Only the one hath not the law yet so executed upon them, because they are here; the other have had the law executed upon them, they are gone to drink that which they have been brewing, and thou art brewing that in this life which thou must certainly drink.[30] The same law, I say, is in force against you both, only he is executed and thou art not. Just as if there were a company of prisoners at the bar, and all condemned to die; what, because they are not all executed in one day, therefore shall they not be executed at all? Yes, the same law that executed its severity upon the parties now deceased, will for certain be executed on them that are alive in its appointed time. Even so it is here, we are all condemned by nature; if we close not in with the grace of God by Jesus Christ, we must and shall be destroyed with the same destruction; and 'therefore send him,' saith he, 'LEST,' mark, 'lest they also come into this place of torment.

Again, 'Send him to my father's house,' and let him 'testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' As if he had said, It may be he may prevail with them, it may be he may win upon them, and so they may be kept from hence, from coming into this grievous place of torment. Observe again, that there is a possibility of obtaining mercy, if now, I say, now in this day of grace, we turn from our sins to Jesus Christ; yea, it is more than possible. And therefore, for thy encouragement, do thou know for certain, that if thou shalt in this thy day accept of mercy upon God's own terms, and close with him effectually, God hath promised, yea, made many promises, that thy soul shall be conducted safe to glory, and shall for certain escape all the evils that I have told thee of; aye, and many more than I can imagine. Do but search the Scriptures, and see how full of consolation they are to a poor soul that is minded to close in with Jesus Christ. 'Him that cometh to me,' saith Christ, 'I will in no wise cast out.' Though he be an old sinner, 'I will in no wise cast him out'; mark, in no

wise, though he be a great sinner, I will in no wise cast him out, if he come to me. Though he have slighted me neve

so many times, and not regarded the welfare of his own soul, yet let him now come to me, and notwithstanding this, 'I will in no wise cast him out,' nor throw away his soul (John 6:37). Again, saith the apostle, 'Now,' mark now, 'is the accepted time, now is the day of their salvation.' Now here is mercy in good store, now God's heart is open to sinners; now he will make you welcome; now he will receive anybody if they do but come to Christ. 'He that cometh to me,' saith Christ, 'I will in no wise cast out.' And why? Because 'NOW is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation' (2 Cor 6:2). As if the apostle had said, If you will have mercy, have it now, receive it now, close in with it now.

God hath a certain day to hold out his grace to sinners. Now is the time, now is the day. It is true, there is a day of damnation, but this is a day of salvation. There is a day coming, wherein sinners must cry to the mountains to fall on them, to the hills to cover them from the wrath of God; but now, now is the day in which he doth hold out his grace. There is a day coming, in which you will not be admitted to have the privilege of one drop of water to cool your tongue, if now, I say, if now you slight his grace and goodness which he holds out to you. Ah, friends, consider there is now hopes of mercy, but then there will not; now Christ holds forth mercy unto you, but then he will not (Matt 7:23). Now there are his servants that do beseech you to accept of his grace, but if thou lose the opportunity that is put into thine hand, thou thyself mayest beseech hereafter, and no mercy be given thee. 'And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.' And thee was none given. Therefore let it never be said of thee, as it will be said of some, 'Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool, seeing he hath no heart to it?' Seeing he hath no heart to make a good use of it (Prov 17:16). Consider therefore with thyself, and say, It is better going to heaven than hell; it is better to be saved than damned; it is better to be with saints than with damned souls; and to go to God is better than to go to the devil. Therefore 'seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near' (Isa

55:6). Lest in thy trouble he leave thee to thyself, and say unto thee plainly, Where I am, thither 'ye cannot come' (John 8:21).

O if they that are in hell might but now again have one such invitation as this, how would they leap for joy! I have thought sometimes should God send but one of his ministers to the damned in hell, and give him commission to preach the free love of God in Christ extended to them, and held out to them, if now while it is proffered to them they will accept of his kindness; O how welcome would they make this news, and close in with it on any terms! Certainly they would say, we will accept of grace on any terms in the world, and thank you too, though it cost life and limbs to boot; we will spare no cost nor charge, if mercy may be had. But poor souls, while they live here they will not part from sin, with hell-bred devilish sin. No, they will rather lose their souls than lose their filthy sins.

But, friend, thou wilt change thy note before it be long, and cry, O simple wretch that I am that I should damn my soul by sin! It is true, I have had the gospel preached to me, and have been invited in. I have been preached to, and have been warned of this; but 'how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me' (Prov 5:12,13). O therefore, I say, poor soul! Is there hope? Then lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and kiss the dust, and close in with the Lord Jesus Christ, and make much of his glorious mercy; and invite also thy companions to close in with the same Lord Jesus Christ, lest one of you do go to hell beforehand, and expect with grief of heart your companions to come after; and in the mean time, with anguish of heart, do sigh and say, O send him to my companions, and let him testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

USE AND APPLICATION Of the Preceding portion of the Parable.

Now then, from what hath been said, there might many things be spoken by way of use and application; but I shall be very brief, and but touch some things, and so wind up. And, First, I shall begin with the sad condition of those that die out of Christ, and speak something to that. Secondly, To the latter end of the parable, which more evidently concerns the Scripture, and speak somewhat to that.

[First. I shall begin with the sad condition of those that die out of Christ.]

1. Therefore you see that the former part of the parable contains a sad declaration of the state of one living and dying out of Christ; how that they lose heaven for hell, God for the devil, light for darkness, joy for sorrow.
2. How that they have not so much as the least comfort from God, who in the time they live here below neglect coming to him for mercy; not so much as one drop of cold water.
3. That such souls will repent of their folly, when repentance will do them no good, or when they shall be past recovery.
4. That all the comfort such souls are like to have, they have it in this world.
5. That all their groanings and sighs will not move God to mitigate in the least his heavy hand of vengeance that is upon them, for the transgression they have committed against him.
6. That their sad state is irrecoverable, or they must never, mark, never come out of that condition.
7. Their desires will not be hard for their ungodly neighbours. From these things then, I pray you consider the state of those that die out of Christ Jesus; yea, I say, consider their miserable state; and think thus with thyself, Well, if I neglect coming to Christ, I must go to the devil, and he will not neglect to fetch me away into those intolerable torments.

Think thus with thyself, What, shall I lose a long heaven for short pleasure?

Shall I buy the pleasures of this world at so dear a rate as to lose my soul for the obtaining of that? Shall I content myself with a heaven that will last no longer than my lifetime? What advantage will these be to me when the Lord shall separate soul and body asunder, and send one to the grave, the other to hell, and at the judgment-day, the final sentence of eternal ruin must be passed upon me?

1. Consider, that the profits, pleasures, and vanities of this world will not last for ever, but the time is coming, yea, just at the doors, when they will give thee the slip, and leave thee in the suds,[32] and in the brambles of all that thou hast done. And therefore to prevent this,

2. Consider thy dismal state, think thus with thyself, It is true, I do love my sins, my lusts and pleasures; but what good will they do me at the day of death and of judgment? Will my sins do me good then? Will they be

able to help me when I come to fetch my last breath? What good will my profits do me? And what good will my vanities do, when death says he will have no nay? What good will all my companions, fellow-jesters, jeerers, liars, drunkards, and all my wantons do me? Will they help to ease the pains of hell? Will these help to turn the hand of God from inflicting his fierce anger upon me? Nay, will not they rather cause God to show me no mercy, to give me no comfort; but rather to thrust me down in the hottest place of hell, where I may swim in fire and brimstone.

3. Consider thus with thyself, Would I be glad to have all, every one of my sins to come in against me, to inflame the justice of God against me? Would I be glad to be bound up in them as the three children were bound in their clothes, and to be as really thrown into the fiery furnace of the wrath of Almighty God as they were into

Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace?

4. Consider thus, Would I be glad to have all, and every one of the ten commandments, to discharge themselves against my soul? The first saying, Damn him, for he hath broken me; the second saying, Damn him, for he hath broken me, &c. Consider how terrible this will be, yea, more terrible than if thou shouldest have ten of the biggest pieces of ordnance in England to be discharged against thy body, thunder, thunder, one after another! Nay, this would not be comparable to the reports that the law, for the breach thereof, will give against thy soul; for those can but kill the body, but these will kill both body and soul; and that not for an hour, a day, a month, or a year, but they will condemn thee for ever.

Mark, it is for ever, for ever. It is into everlasting damnation, eternal destruction, eternal wrath and displeasure from God, eternal gnawings of conscience, eternal continuance with devils. O consider, it may be the thought of seeing the devil doth now make thine hair to stand right up on thine head. O but this, to be damned, to be among all the devils, and that not only for a time, as I said before, but for ever, to all eternity! This is wonderfully miserable, ever miserable; that no tongue of man, no, nor of angels, is able to express it.

5. Consider much with thyself, Not only my sins against the law will be laid to my charge, but also the sins I have committed in slighting the gospel, the glorious gospel. These also must come with a voice against me. As thus, Nay, he is worthy to be damned, for he rejected the gospel, he slighted the free grace of God tendered in the gospel; how many times was thou, damned wretch, invited, intreated, beseeched to come to Christ, to accept of mercy, that thou mightest have heaven, thy sins pardoned, thy soul saved, and body and soul glorified, and all this for nothing but the acceptance, and through faith forsaking those imps of Satan, which by their embracements have drawn thee downward toward the gulf of God's eternal displeasure? How often didst thou read the promises, yea, the free promises of the common salvation! How oft didst thou read the sweet counsels and admonitions of the gospel, to accept of the grace of God! But thou wouldst not, thou regardst it not, thou didst slight all.

Second. As I would have thee to consider the sad and woeful state of those that die out of Christ, and are past all recovery, so would I have thee consider the many mercies and privileges thou enjoyest above some, peradventure, of thy companions that are departed to their proper place. As,

1. Consider, thou hast still the thread of thy life lengthened, which for thy sins might seven years ago, or more, have been cut asunder, and thou have dropped down amongst the flames.

2. Consider the terms of reconciliation by faith in Christ are still proffered unto thee, and thou invited, yea, entreated to accept of them.

3. Consider the terms of reconciliation are but—bear with me though I say but—only to believe in Jesus Christ, with that faith that purifies the heart, and enables thy soul to feed on him effectually, and be saved from this sad state.

4. Consider the time of thy departure is at hand, and the time is uncertain, and also that for ought thou knowest the day of grace may be past to thee before thou diest, not lasting so long as thy uncertain life in this world. And if so, then know for certain that thou art as sure to be damned as if thou wast in hell already; if thou convert not in the meanwhile.

5. Consider it may be some of thy friends are giving all diligence to make their calling and election sure, being resolved for heaven, and thou thyself endeavourest as fast to make sure of hell, as if resolved to have it; and together with this, consider how it will grieve thee that while thou wast making sure of hell thy friends were making sure of heaven; but more of this by and by.

6. Consider what a sad reflection this will have on thy soul, to see thy friends in heaven, and thyself in hell; thy father in heaven, and thou in hell; thy mother in heaven, and thou in hell; thy brother, thy sister, thy children in heaven, and thou in hell. As Christ said to the Jews of their relations according to the flesh, so may I say to thee concerning thy friends, 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' when you shall see your fathers and mothers, brethren and sisters, husbands and wives, children and kinsfolk, with your friends and neighbours in the kingdom of heaven, and thou thyself thrust out (Luke 13:27-29).

But again, because I would not only tell thee of the damnable state of those that die out of Christ, but also persuade thee to take hold of life, and go to heaven, take notice of these following things.

(1.) Consider that whatever thou canst do, as to thy acceptance with God, is not worth the dirt of thy shoes, but is all 'as filthy rags' (Isa 64:6).

(2.) Consider that all the conditions of the new covenant, as to salvation, are and have been completely fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that for sinners.

(3.) Consider that the Lord calls to thee, for to receive whatsoever Christ hath done, and that on free cost (Rev 22:17).

(4.) Consider that thou canst not honour God more than to close in with his proffers of grace, mercy, and pardon of sin (Rom 4).

Again, that which will add to all the rest, thou shalt have the very mercy of God, the blood of Christ, the preachers of the word, together with every sermon, all the promises, invitations, exhortations, and all the counsels and threatenings of the blessed word of God. Thou shalt have all thy

thoughts, words, and actions, together with all thy food, thy raiment, thy sleep, thy goods, and also all hours, days, weeks, months and years, together with whatsoever else God hath given thee. I say, thy abuse of all these shall come up in judgment against thy soul; for God will reckon with thee for everything, whether it be good or bad (Eccl 12:14).

(5.) Nay further, it is so unreasonable a thing for a sinner to refuse the gospel, that the very devils themselves will come in against thee, as well as Sodom, that damned crew. May not they, I say, come in against thee, and say, O thou simple<sup>[33]</sup> man! O vile wretch! That had not so much care of thy soul, thy precious soul, as the beast hath of its young, or the dog of the very bone that lieth before him. Was thy soul worth so much, and didst thou so little regard it? Were the thunder-claps of the law so terrible, and didst thou so slight them? Besides, was the gospel so freely, so frequently, so fully tendered to thee, and yet hast thou rejected all these things? Hast thou valued sin at a higher rate than thy soul, than God, Christ, angels, saints, and communion with them in eternal blessedness and glory? Wast thou not told of hell-fire, those intolerable flames? Didst thou never hear of the intolerable roarings of the damned ones that are therein? Didst thou never hear or read that doleful saying in Luke 16, how the sinful man cries out among the flames, 'One drop of water to cool my tongue?' Thus, I say, may the very devils, being ready to go with thee into the burning furnace of fire and brimstone, though not for sins of so high a nature as thine, trembling say, O that Christ had died for devils, as he died for man! And, O that the gospel had been preached to us as it hath been to thee! How would we have laboured to have closed in with it! But woe be to us, for we might never have it proffered; no, not in the least, though we would have been glad of it. But you, you have it proffered, preached, and proclaimed unto you (Prov 8:4). Besides, you have been intreated, and beseeched to accept of it, but you would not. O simple fools! that might have escaped wrath, vengeance, hell-fire, and that to all eternity, and had no heart at all to do it.

(6.) May not the messengers of Jesus Christ also come in with a shrill and terrible note against thy soul, when thou standest at the bar of God's justice, saying, Nay, thou ungodly one, how often hast thou been forewarned of this day? Did we not sound an alarm in thine ears, by the

trumpet of God's word day after day? How often didst thou hear us tell thee of these things? Did we not tell thee sin would damn thy soul? Did we not tell thee that without conversion there was no salvation? Did we not tell thee that they who loved their sins should be damned at this dark and gloomy day, as thou art like to be? Yea, did we not tell thee that God, out of his love to sinners, sent Christ to die for them, that they might, by coming to him, be saved? Did not we tell thee of these things? Did we not run, ride, labour, and strive abundantly, if it might have been, for the good of thy soul, though now a damned soul? Did we not venture our goods, our names, our lives? Yea, did we not even kill ourselves with our earnest intreaties of thee to consider of thine estate, and by Christ to escape this dreadful day? O sad doom! When thou shalt be forced full sore against thy will to fall under the truth of this judgment, saying, O 'How have I hated instruction, and how hath my heart despised reproof!' for, indeed, 'I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me' (Prov 5:12,13).

(7.) May not thy father, thy mother, thy brother, thy sister, thy friend, &c., appear with gladness against thee at the terrible day, saying, O thou silly wretch! how rightly hath God met with thee! O how righteously doth his sentence pass upon thee! Remember thou wouldst not be ruled nor persuaded in thy lifetime. As thou didst not care for us and our admonitions then, so neither do we care for thy ruin, terror, and damnation now. No, but we will stand on God's side in sentencing of thee to that portion which the devils must be partakers of. 'The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked' (Psa 58:10). O

sad! It is enough to make mountains tremble, and the rocks rend in pieces, to hear this doleful sound. Consider these things, and if thou wouldst be loth to be in this condition, then have a care of living in sin now. How loth wilt thou be to be thrust away from the gates of heaven! And how loth wilt thou be to be deprived of the mercy of God! How unwillingly wilt thou set foot forward towards the lake of fire! Never did malefactor so unwillingly turn off the ladder when the halter was about his neck, as thou will turn from God to the devil, from heaven to hell, when the sentence is passed upon thy soul.

O how wilt thou sigh and groan! How willingly wouldst thou hide thyself, and run away from justice! But alas! as it is with them that are on the ladder ready to be executed, so it will be with thee. They would fain run away, but there are many halbert-men[34] to stay them. And so the angels of God will beset thee round, I say round on every side; so that thou mayest indeed look, but run thou canst not. Thou mayest wish thyself under some rock, or mountain (Rev 6:15,16), but how to get under, thou knowest not.

O how unwilling wilt thou be to let thy father go to heaven without thee! thy mother or friends, &c., go to heaven without thee! How willingly wouldst thou hang on them, and not let them go! O father! cannot you help me? Mother, cannot you do me some good? O how loth am I to burn and fry in hell, while you are singing in heaven! But alas! the father, mother, or friends reject them, slight them, and turn their backs upon them, saying, You would have none of heaven in your lifetime, therefore you shall have none of it now. You slighted our counsels then, and we slight your tears, cries, and condition now. What sayest thou, sinner? Will not this persuade thine heart, nor make thee bethink thyself? This is now before thou fall into that dreadful place, that fiery furnace. But O consider how dreadful the place itself, the devils themselves, the fire itself will be! And this at the end of all, Here thou must lie for ever! Here thou must fry for ever, and for ever! This will be more to thee than any man with tongue can express, or with pen can write. There is none that can, I say, by the ten thousandth part, discover the state and condition of such a soul.

I shall conclude this, then, with

#### A FEW CONSIDERATIONS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

First Encouragement.] Consider, for I would fain have thee come in, sinner, that there is way made by Jesus Christ for them that are under the curse of God, to come to this comfortable and blessed state of Lazarus I was speaking of. See Ephesians 2.

[Second Encouragement.] Consider what pains Christ Jesus took for the ransoming of thy soul from all the curses, thunder-claps, and tempests of the law; from all the intolerable flames of hell; from that soul-sinking

appearance of thy person, on the left hand, before the judgment-seat of Christ Jesus, from everlasting fellowship, with innumerable companies of yelling and soulamazing devils, I say, consider what pains the Lord Jesus Christ took in bringing in redemption for sinners from these things.

'In that though he was rich, yet he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be' made 'rich' (2 Cor 8:9). He laid aside his glory (John 17), and became a servant (Phil 2:7). He left the company of angels, and encountered with the devil (Luke 4; Matt 4). He left heaven's ease for a time, to lie upon hard mountains (Luke 6:12; John 8:1). In a word, he became poorer than they that go with flail and rake; yea, than the very birds or foxes, and all to do thee good. Besides, consider a little of these unspeakable and intolerable slightings and rejections, and the manifold abuses that came from men upon him. How he was falsely accused, being a sweet, harmless, and undefiled lamb. How he was undervalued, so that a murderer was counted less worthy of condemnation than he. Besides, how they mocked him, spit on him, beat him over the head with staves, had the hair plucked from his cheeks. 'I gave my back to the smiters,' saith he, 'and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting' (Isa 50:6). His head crowned with thorns, his hands pierced with nails, and his side with a spear; together with how they used him, scourged him, and so miserably misusing him, that they had even spent him in a great measure before they did crucify him; insomuch that there was another fain to carry his cross. Again,

[Third Encouragement.] Not only this, but lay to heart a little what he received from God, his dear Father, though he were his dear and tender Son.

1. In that he did reckon<sup>[35]</sup> him the greatest sinner and rebel in the world. For he laid the sins of thousands, and ten thousands, and thousands of thousands of sinners to his charge (Isa 53). And caused him to drink the terrible cup that was due to them all; and not only so, but did delight in so doing. 'For it pleased the LORD to bruise him.' God dealt indeed with his son, as Abraham would have dealt with Isaac; ay, and more terribly by ten thousand parts. For he did not only tear his body like a lion, but made his soul an offering for sin. And this was not done feignedly, but really—for

justice called for it, he standing in the room of sinners. Witness that horrible and unspeakable agony that fell on him suddenly in the garden, as if all the vials of God's unspeakable scalding vengeance had been cast upon him all at once, and all the devils in hell had broken loose from thence at once to destroy him, and that for ever; insomuch that the very pangs of death seized upon him in the same hour. For, saith he, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful' and 'sore amazed,' even 'unto death'

(Mark 14:34).

2. Witness also that strange kind of sweat that trickled down his most blessed face, where it is said: 'And he sweat, as it were, great drops' or clodders 'of blood,' trickling 'down to the ground.' O Lord Jesus! what a load didst thou carry! What a burden didst thou bear of the sins of the world, and the wrath of God! O thou didst not only bleed at nose and mouth with the pressure that lay upon thee, but thou wast so pressed, so loaden, that the pure blood gushed through the flesh and skin, and so ran trickling down to the ground. 'And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood,' trickling or 'falling down to the ground' (Luke 22:44). Canst thou read this, O thou wicked sinner, and yet go on in sin? Canst thou think of this, and defer repentance one hour longer? O

heart of flint! yea, harder. O miserable wretch! What place in hell will be hot enough for thee to have thy soul put into, if thou shalt persist or go on still to add iniquity to iniquity.

3. Besides, his soul went down to hell, and his body to the bars of the grave (Psa 16:10; Acts 2:31). And had hell, death, or the grave, been strong enough to hold him, then he had suffered the vengeance of eternal fire to all eternity. But, O blessed Jesus! how didst thou discover thy love to man in thy thus suffering! And, O God the Father! how didst thou also declare thy purity and exactness of thy justice, in that, though it was thine only, holy, innocent, harmless, and undefiled Son Jesus, that did take on him our nature, and represent our persons, answering for our sins, instead of ourselves! Thou didst so wonderfully pour out thy wrath upon him, to the making of him cry out,

'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And, O Lord Jesus! what a glorious conquest hast thou made over the enemies of our souls, even wrath, sin, death, hell, and devils, in that thou didst wring thyself from under the power of them all! And not only so, but hast led them captive which would have led us captive; and also hast received for us that glorious and unspeakable inheritance that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man' to conceive; and also hast given thine some discovery thereof through thy Spirit.

And now, sinner, together with this consider,

4. That though Jesus Christ hath done all these things for sinners, yet the devils make it their whole work, and continually study how they may keep thee and others from enjoying of these blessed privileges that have been thus obtained for sinners by this sweet Jesus. He labours, I say, (1.) To keep thee ignorant of thy state by nature. (2.) To harden thy heart against the ways of God. (3.) To inflame they heart with love to sin and the ways of darkness. And, (4.) To get thee to continue herein. For that is the way, he knows, to get thee to be a partaker with him of flaming hell-fire, even the same that he himself is fallen into, together with the rest of the wicked world, by reason of sin. Look to it therefore.

[Fourth Encouragement.] But now, in the next place, a word of encouragement to you that are the saints of the Lord.

1. Consider what a happy state thou art in that hast gotten the faith of the Lord Jesus into thy soul; but be sure thou have it, I say, how safe, how sure, how happy art thou! For when others go to hell, thou must go to heaven; when others go to the devil, thou must go to God; when as others go to prison, thou must be set at liberty, at ease, and at freedom; when others must roar for sorrow of heart, then thou shalt also sing for the joy of heart.

2. Consider thou must have all thy well-spent life to follow thee instead of all thy sins and the glorious blessings of the gospel instead of the dreadful curses and condemnations of the law; the blessing of the father, instead of a fiery sentence from the judge.

3. Let dissolution come when it will, it can do thee no harm; for it will be but only a passage out of a prison into a palace; out of a sea of troubles into a haven of rest; out of a crowd of enemies, to an innumerable company of true, loving, and faithful friends; out of shame, reproach, and contempt, into exceeding great and eternal glory. For death shall not hurt thee with his sting, nor bite thee with his soul-murdering teeth; but shall be a welcome guest to thee, even to thy soul, in that it is sent to free thee from thy troubles which thou art in whilst here in this world dwelling in the tabernacle of clay.

4. Consider however it goes with friends and relations, yet it will go well with thee (Eccl 8:12). However it goes with the wicked, yet 'surely I know'; mark,

'yet surely I know,' saith he, 'that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him.' And therefore let this,

(1.) In the first place, cause thee cheerfully to exercise thy patience under all the calamities, crosses, troubles, and afflictions that may come upon thee; and, by patient continuance in well-doing, to commit both thyself and thine affairs and actions into the hands of God, through Jesus Christ, as to a faithful Creator, who is true in his word, and loveth to give unto thee whatsoever he hath promised to thee.

(2.) And, therefore, to encourage thee while thou art here with comfort to hold on for all thy crosses in this thy journey, be much in considering the place that thou must go into so soon as dissolution comes. It must be into heaven, to God the judge of all, to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and to Jesus, to the redeemer, who is the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things for thee than Abel's did for Cain (Heb 11:22-24).

(3.) Consider that when the time of the dead that they shall be raised is come, then shall thy body be raised out of the grave and be glorified, and be made like to Jesus Christ (Phil 3:21). O excellent condition!

(4.) When Jesus Christ shall sit on the throne of his glory you also shall sit with him, even when he shall sit on the throne of his glory. O will not this be glorious, that when thousands, and thousands of thousands shall be arraigned before the judgment-seat of Christ, then for them to sit with him upon the throne, together with him to pass the sentence upon the ungodly (1

Cor 6:2,3). Will it not be glorious to enjoy those things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive?

Will it not be glorious to have this sentence, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world?' Will it not be glorious to enter then with the angels and saints into that glorious kingdom? Will it not be glorious for thee to be in glory with them, while others are in unutterable torments? O then, how will it comfort thee to see thou hast not lost that glory; to think that the devil hath not got thy soul, that thy soul should be saved, and that not from a little, but from an exceeding danger;[36]

not with a little, but a great salvation. O, therefore, let the saints be joyful in glory, let them triumph over all their enemies. Let them begin to sing heaven upon earth, triumph before they come to glory, salvation, even when they are in the midst of their enemies, for 'this honour have all his saints' (Psa 149:9).

Verse 29.— 'Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.'

In the verses foregoing you see there is a discovery of the lamentable state of the poor soul that dies out of Christ, and the special favour of God. And also how little the glorious God of heaven doth regard and take notice of their most miserable condition.

Now in this verse he doth magnify the word which was spoken to the people by the prophets and apostles, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' As if he should say, thou askest me that I should send Lazarus back again into the world to preach to them that live there, that they might escape that doleful place that thou art in. What needs that?

Have they not Moses and the prophets? Have they not had my ministers and servants sent unto them and coming as from me? I sent Enoch and Noah, Moses and Samuel. I sent David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, and the rest of the prophets, together with Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, James, Jude, with the rest; 'Let them hear them.' What they have spoken by divine inspiration I will own, whether it be for the damnation of those that reject, or the saving of them that receive their doctrine. And, therefore, what need have they that one should be sent unto them in another way? 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' Let them receive their word, close in with the doctrine declared by them. I shall not at this time speak anything to that word

'Abraham,' having touched upon it already; but shall tell you what is to be understood by these words, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' The things that I shall observe from hence are these:—

[First.] That the scriptures spoken by the holy men of God are a sufficient rule to instruct to salvation them that do assuredly believe and close in with what they hold forth. 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' That is, if they would escape that doleful place, and be saved indeed from the intolerable pains of hell-fire, as they desire, they have that which is sufficient to counsel them. 'They have Moses and the prophets'; let them be instructed by them, 'Let them hear them.' For 'all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness'; why? 'That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works' (2 Tim 3:16,17). Do but mark these words, 'All scripture is profitable.' ALL; take it where you will, and in what place you will,

'All is profitable': For what? 'That the man of God,' or he that is bound for heaven, and would instruct others in their progress thither.

It is profitable to instruct him, in case he be ignorant; to reprove him, in case he transgress; to correct him, if he hath need of it; to confirm him, if he be wavering. It is profitable for doctrine, and all this in a very righteous way—that the poor soul may not only be helped, but thoroughly furnished, not only to some, but to all good works. And when Paul would counsel Timothy to stick close to the things that are sound and sure, presently he

puts him upon the scripture, saying, 'From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.'

The scripture holds forth God's mind and will, of his love and mercy towards man, and also the creature's carriage towards him from first to last; so if thou wouldst know the love of God in Christ to sinners, then 'search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of him.'

Wouldst thou know what thou art, and what is in thine heart? Then search the Scriptures and see what is written in them (Rom 1:29-31, 3:9-18; Jer 17:9; Gen 6:5, 8:21; Eph 4:18, with many others). The Scriptures, I say, they are able to give a man perfect instruction into any of the things of God necessary to faith and godliness, if he hath but an honest heart seriously to weigh and ponder the several things contained in them. As to instance in things more particular for the further clearing up of this. And first, if we come to the creation of the world.

Wouldst thou know somewhat concerning that? Then read Genesis 1 and 2, and compare them with Psalm 33:6; also Isaiah 66:2; Proverbs 8 towards the end.

Wouldst thou know whether he made them of something or nothing? Read Hebrews 11:3.

Wouldst thou know whether he put forth any labour in making them, as we do in making things? Read Psalm 33:9.

If thou wouldst know whether man was made by God corrupt or upright, read Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:10, 18, 25, 31.

Wouldst thou know where God did place man after he had made him? Read Genesis 2:15.

Wouldst thou know whether that man did live there all his time or not? Then read Genesis 3:23, 24.

If thou wouldst know whether man be still in that state by nature that God did place him in? Then read Ecclesiastes 7:29, and compare it with Romans 5:16; Ephesians 2:1-3. 'God made men upright, but they have sought out many inventions.'

If thou wouldst know whether the man were first beguiled, or the woman that God made an help-mate for him? Read Genesis 3:6, and compare with 1

Timothy 2:14.

Wouldst thou know whether God looked upon Adam's eating [the fruit of] the forbidden tree to be sin or no? Read Romans 5:12-15, and compare it with Genesis 3:17.

Wouldst thou know whether it were the devil who beguiled them, or whether it was a natural serpent, such as do haunt the desolate places? Read Genesis 3:13, with Revelation 20:1-3.

Wouldst thou know whether that sin be imputed to us? Read Romans 5:12-15, and compare it with Ephesians 2:2.

Wouldst thou know whether man was cursed for his sin? Read Galatians 3:10; Romans 5:15.

Wouldst thou know whether the curse did fall on man, or on the whole creation with him? Compare Genesis 3:17, with Romans 8:20-22.

Wouldst thou know whether man be defiled in every part of him by the sin he hath committed? Then read Isaiah 1:6.

Wouldst thou know man's inclination so soon as he is born? Read Psalm 58:3. 'The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born.'

Wouldst thou know whether man once fallen from God by transgression, can recover himself by all he can do? Then read Romans 3:20,23.

Wouldst thou know whether it be the desire of the heart of man by nature, to follow God in his own way or no? Compare Genesis 6:5, and Genesis 8:21, with Hosea 11:7.

Wouldst thou know how God's heart stood affected toward man before the world began? Compare Ephesians 1:4, with 2 Timothy 1:9.

Wouldst thou know whether sin were sufficient to draw God's love from his creatures? Compare Jeremiah 3:7, and Micah 7:18, with Romans 5:6-8.

Wouldst thou know whether God's love did stil abide towards his creatures for anything they could do to make him amends? Then read Deuteronomy 11:58.

Wouldst thou know how God could still love his creatures, and do his justice no wrong? Read Romans 3:24-26. 'Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation' for sin, 'through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.'

That is, God having his justice satisfied in the blood, and righteousness, and death of his own Son Jesus Christ for the sins of poor sinners, he can now save them that come to him, though never so great sinners, and do his justice no wrong, because it hath had a full and complete satisfaction given it by that blood (1 John 1:7,8).

Wouldst thou know who he was, and what he was, that did out of his love die for sinners, then compare John 3:16, 17,; Romans 5:8, with Isaiah 9:6.

Wouldst thou know whether this Saviour had a body of flesh and bones before the world was, or took it from the Virgin Mary? Then read Galatians 4:4.

Wouldst thou know whether he did in that body bear all our sins, and where?

Then read 1 Peter 2:24. 'Who bare our sins in his own body on the tree.'

Wouldst thou know whether he did rise again after he was crucified, with the very same body? Then read Luke 24:38-41.

Wouldst thou know whether he did eat or drink with his disciples after he rose out of the grave? Then read Luke 24:42, and Acts 10:41.

If thou wouldst be persuaded of the truth of this, that that very body is now above the clouds and stars, read Acts 1:9-11, and Luke 24 toward the end.

If thou wouldst know that the Quakers hold an error that say the body of Christ is within them;<sup>[37]</sup> consider the same scripture.

Wouldst thou know what that Christ that died for sinners is doing in that place whither he is gone? Then read Hebrews 7:24.

Wouldst thou know who shall have life by him, read 1 Timothy 1:14, 15, and Romans 5:6-8, which say, 'Christ died' for sinners, 'for the ungodly.'

Wouldst thou know whether they that live and die in their sins shall go to heaven or not? Then read 1 Corinthians 6:10; Revelation 21:8, 27, which saith, 'They shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.'

Wouldst thou know whether man's obedience will obtain that Christ should die for them, or save them? Then read Mark 2:17; Romans 5:6, 7.

Wouldst thou know whether righteousness, justification, and sanctification do come through the virtue of Christ's blood? Compare Romans 5:9 with Hebrews 12:12.

Wouldst thou know whether natural man can abstain from the outward act of sin against the law, merely by a principle of nature? Then compare well Romans 2:14, with Philippians 3:6.

Wouldst thou know whether a man by nature may know something of the invisible things of God? Compare seriously Romans 1:20, 21 with 2:14, 15.

Wouldst thou know how far a man may go on in a profession of the gospel, and yet fall away? Then read Hebrews 6:4-6. 'They may taste the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come.' They may taste 'the heavenly gift, and be partakers of the Holy Ghost,' and yet so fall as never to be recovered, or renewed again unto repentance. See also Luke 13.

Wouldst thou know how hard it is to go to heaven? Read Matthew 7:13, 14; Luke 13:24.

Wouldst thou know whether a man by nature be a friend to God, or an enemy? Then read Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21.

Wouldst thou know what, or who they are that shall go to heaven? Then read John 3:3-7, and 2 Corinthians 5:17. Also, wouldst thou know what a sad thing it is for any to turn their backs upon the gospel of Jesus Christ? then read Hebrews 10:28, 29, and Mark 16:16.

Wouldst thou know what is the wages of sin? Then read Romans 6:23. ['The wages of sin is death.']

Wouldst thou know whither those do go that die unconverted to the faith of Christ? Then read Psalm 9:17, and Isaiah 14:9.

Reader, here might I spend many sheets of paper, yea, I might upon this subject write a very great book, but I shall now forbear, desiring thee to be very conversant in the Scriptures, 'for they are they which testify of Jesus Christ' (John 5:39). The Bereans were counted noble upon this account:

'These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily,' &c. (Acts 17:11). But here let me give thee one caution, that is, have a care that thou do not satisfy thyself with a bare search of them, without a real application of him whom they testify of to thy soul, lest instead of faring the better for thy doing this work, thou dost fare a great deal the worse, and thy condemnation be very much heightened, in that though thou didst read so often the sad state of those that die in sin, and the glorious estate of them that close in with Christ, yet thou thyself shouldest be such a fool

as to lose Jesus Christ, notwithstanding thy hearing, and reading so plentifully of him.

'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.'

As if he should say, what need have they that one should be sent to them from the dead? Have they not Moses and the prophets? Hath not Moses told them the danger of living in sin? (Deut 27:15-26, 28:15-68, 29:18-22). Hath he not there told them, what a sad state those persons are in that deceive themselves with the deceit of their hearts, saying they shall have peace though they follow their sins, in these words: 'And when he heareth the words of this curse, he blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I' go on, or 'walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven.'

Again, Did not Moses write of the Saviour that was to come afterwards into the world? (Deut 18:18). Nay, have not all the prophets from Samuel, with all those that follow after, prophesied, and foretold these things? Therefore what need have they that I should work such a miracle, as to send one from the dead unto them? 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.'

[Second.] From whence observe again, that God doth honour the writings of Moses and the prophets, as much, nay more, than if one should rise from the dead: 'Should not a people seek unto their God?' What, seek 'for the living among the dead? To the law, and to the testimony,' saith God, 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them' (Isa 8:19,20). And let me tell you plainly, I do believe that the devil knows this full well, which makes him labour to beget in the hearts of his disciples and followers light thoughts of them; and doth persuade them, that even a motion from their own beguiled conscience, or from his own wicked spirit, is to be observed and obeyed before them. When the very apostle of Jesus Christ, though he heard a voice from the excellent glory, saying, 'This is my beloved Son,' &c., yet writing to the churches, he commends, the writing of the prophets before it, saying, 'We have also a more sure word of the prophets, to which ye do well to take heed,' &c. (2 Peter 1:17-19).[38] Now if thou doubtest whether that place be meant the scriptures, the words of the prophets or no, read but the next verse, where he addeth for a certain confirmation thereof, these words,

'Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

And therefore what a sad thing is it for those that go about to disown the Scriptures! I tell you, however they may slight them now, yet when they come into hell, they will see their folly: 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.'

Further, who are they that are so tossed to and fro, with the several winds of doctrine that have been broached in these days, but such for the most part, as have had a light esteem of the scriptures; for the ground of error, as Christ saith, is because they know not them (Mark 12:24). And indeed, it is just with God to give them over to follow their own dark blinded consciences, to be led into errors, that they might be damned into hell, who did not believe that the things contained in the Scripture were the truth, that they might be saved and go to heaven. I cannot well tell how to have done speaking for, and on the Scriptures' side; only this I consider, a word is enough to the wise; and therefore I shall commit these things into

the hands of them that are of God; and as for the rest, I shall say to them, rather than God will save them from hell with the breach of his holy Word, if they had a thousand souls apiece, God would destroy them all; for 'the Scripture cannot be broken' (John 10:35).

Verse 30.— 'And he said, Nay, Father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.'

The verse before, you know, as I told you, it was part of an answer to such as lose their souls; so it is a vindication of the Scriptures of Moses and the prophets, 'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.'

Now this verse is an answer to what was said in the former; and such an one as hath in it a rejection of the former answer. 'Nay, father Abraham.' Nay, saith he, do not say so, do not put them off with this; send one from the dead, and then there will be some hopes. It is true thou speakest of the Scripture, of Moses and the prophets, and sayest, 'let them hear them'; but these things are not so well as I could wish, I had rather thou wouldst send one from the dead. In these words therefore, Nay, father Abraham, there is a repulse given; nay, let it not be so; nay, I do not like of that answer. Hear Moses and the prophets, nay. The same expression is used by Christ, Luke 13:2, 3. Think you that they upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, were sinners above others?

'I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' So here, Nay, father Abraham, &c.

By this word Nay, therefore, is signified a rejecting the first answer.

Now observe, I pray you, the reason why he says Nay, is, because God doth put over all those that will be saved, to observe and receive the truth contained in Scripture, and believe that. To have a high esteem of them, and to love and search them, as Christ saith, 'Search the Scriptures,' for 'they are they which testify of me' (John 5:39). But the damned say, Nay; as if he had said, This is the thing. To be short, my brethren are unbelievers, and do not regard the Word of God. I know it by myself, for when I was in the world, it was so with me; many a good sermon did I hear, many a time was I admonished, desired, entreated, beseeched,

threatened, forewarned of what I now suffer; but alas! I was ignorant, self-conceited, surly, obstinate, and rebellious. Many a time the preacher told hell would be my portion, the devil would wreck his malice on me; God would pour on me his sore displeasure; but he had as good have preached to the stock, to the post, to the stones I trod on; his words rang in mine ears, but I kept them from mine heart. I remember he alleged many a Scripture, but those I valued not; the Scriptures, thought I, what are they? A dead letter, a little ink and paper, of three or four shillings' price.[39] Alas! What is the Scripture? Give me a ballad, a newsbook, George on horseback, or Bevis of Southampton; give me some book that teaches curious arts, that tells of old fables;[40] but for the holy Scriptures I cared not. And as it was with me then, so it is with my brethren now, we were all of one spirit, loved all the same sins, slighted all the same counsels, promises, encouragements and threatenings of the Scriptures; and they are still, as I left them, still in unbelief, still provoking God, and rejecting good counsel, so hardened in their ways, so bent to follow sin, that let the Scriptures be showed to them daily, let the messengers of Christ preach till their hearts ache, till they fall down dead with preaching, they will rather trample it under foot, and swine-like rend them, than close in with those gentle and blessed proffers of the gospel.

'Nay, father Abraham, but if one should rise from the dead, they would repent.'

Though they have Moses and the prophets, the Scriptures, they will not repent and close in with Jesus Christ, though the Scriptures do witness against them. If therefore there be any good done to them, they must have it another way. I think, saith he, it would work much on them 'if one should rise from the dead.' And this truth indeed is so evident, that ungodly ones have a light esteem of the Scriptures, that it needs not many strong arguments to prove it, being so evidently manifested by their every day's practice, both in words and actions, almost in all things they say and do. Yet for the satisfaction of the reader, I shall show you by a scripture or two, though I might show many, that this was and is true, with the generality of the world. See the words of Nehemiah in his 9th chapter concerning the children of Israel, who though the Lord offered them mercy upon mercy, as it is from verse 19-25, yet verse 26, saith he, 'Nevertheless

they were disobedient' for all thy goodness towards them, 'and rebelled against thee.' But how? 'And cast thy law behind their backs; slew thy prophets which testified against them, to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.'

Observe, 1. They sinned against mercy. And then, 2. They slighted the law, or Word of God. 3. They slew the prophets that declared it unto them. 4. The Lord counts it a great provocation. See Hebrews 3:10-19; Zechariah 7:11, 12.

'But they refused to hearken,' saith he, there of the wicked, 'and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear' the law. 'Yea, they made their hearts' hard as 'an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent' unto them 'in his Spirit by the former prophets,' &c.

Mark, I pray you, here is also, (1.) A refusing to hearken to the words of the prophets. (2.) That they might so do, they stopped their ears. (3.) If anything was to be done, they pulled away their shoulder. (4.) To effect his, they labour to make their hearts hard as an adamant stone. (5.) And all this, lest they should hear and close in with Jesus, and live, and be delivered from the wrath to come. All which things do hold out an unwillingness to submit to, and embrace the words of God, and so Jesus Christ which is testified of by them. Many other scriptures I might bring in for confirmation of the thing, as that in Amos 7:12, 13; also 1 Samuel 2:24, 25; 2 Chronicles 25:15, 16; Jeremiah 7:23-28, 16:12. Read also seriously that saying in 2 Chronicles 36:15, where he saith, 'And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place.' And did they make them welcome? No, but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words. And was that all? No, they

'misused his prophets.' How long? 'Until the wrath of the Lord arose against them. Till there was no remedy.' See also Jeremiah 29:19, 25:3-7; Luke 11:49.

And besides, the conversion of almost all men doth bear witness to the same, both religious and profane persons, in that they daily neglect, reject,

and turn their backs upon the plain testimony of the Scriptures. As,

First. Take the THREATENINGS laid down in holy writ, and how are they disregarded? There are but a few places in the Bible but there are threatenings against one sinner or other; against drunkards, swearers, liars, proud persons, strumpets, whoremongers, covetous, railers, extortioners, thieves, lazy persons. In a word, all manner of sins are reprov'd, and without faith in the Lord Jesus, there is a sore punishment to be executed on the committers of them; and all this made mention of in the Scriptures.

But for all this, how thick, and by heaps, do these wretches walk up and down our streets?[41] Do but go into the alehouses, and you shall see almost every room besprinkled with them, so foaming out their own shame, that it is enough to make the heart of a saint to tremble, insomuch that they would not be bound to have society with them any long while for all the world. For as the ways of the godly are not liked of by the wicked, even so the ways of the wicked 'are an abomination to the just' (Prov 29:27; Psa 120:5,6).

1. The Scripture says, 'Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD' (Jer 17:5).

And yet how many poor souls are there in the world, that stand in so much awe and dread of men, and do so highly esteem their favour, that they will rather venture their souls in the hands of the devil with their favour, than they will fly to Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls? Nay, though they be convinced in their souls, that the way is the way of God; yet how do they labour to stifle conviction, and turn their ears away from the truth, and all because they will not lose the favour of an opposite neighbour? O! I dare not for my master, my brother, my landlord, I shall lose his favour, his house of work, and so decay my calling. O, saith another, I would willingly go in this way, but for my father, he chides and tells me he will not stand my friend when I come to want; I shall never enjoy a pennyworth of his goods; he will disinherit me. And I dare not, saith another, for my husband, for he will be a railing, and tells me he will turn me out of doors, he will beat me, and cut off my legs. But I tell you, if any of these, or any other things be so prevalent with thee now, as to keep thee from seeking after Christ in his ways, they will also be so prevalent with God against

thee, as to make him cast off thy soul, because thou didst rather trust man than God; and delight in the embracing of man rather than in the favour of the Lord.[42]

2. Again, the Scripture saith, 'He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy' (Prov 29:1). Yet many are so far from turning, though they have been convinc'd of their wretched state a hundred times, that when convictions or trouble for sin comes on their consciences, they go on still in the same manner resisting and choking the same, though remediless destruction be hard at their heels.

3. Again thou hast heard say, 'Except a man be born again,' 'he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John 3:3-7). And yet thou goest on in a natural state, an unregenerate condition; nay, thou dost resolve never to turn nor be changed, though hell be appointed on purpose to swallow up such (Isa 14:9).

'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God' (Psa 9:17).

4. Again, the Scripture saith plainly that he that loveth and maketh a lie shall have his part 'in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone' (Rev 21:8,27). And yet thou art so far from dreading it, that it is thy delight to jest and jeer, and lie for a penny, or twopence, or sixpence, again. And also if thou canst make the rest of thy companions merry, by telling things that are false, of them that are better than thyself, thou dost not care a straw. Or if thou hearest a lie from, or of another, thou wilt tell it, and swear to the truth of it, O

miserable!

5. Thou hast heard and read, that 'He that believeth not shall be damned'

(Mark 16:16). And that 'all men have not faith' (2 Thess 3:2). And yet thou dost so much disregard these things, that it is like thou didst scarce ever so much as examine seriously whether thou wast in the faith or no; but dost content thyself with the hypocrite's hope, which at the last God will cut

off, and count it not better than the spider's web (Job 8:13,14), or the house that is builded on the sands (Luke 6:49). Nay, thou peradventure dost flatter thyself, and thinkest that thy faith is as good as the best of them all; when, alas, poor soul, thou mayest have no saving faith at all; which thou hast not, if thou be not born again, and made a new creature (2 Cor 2:17).

6. Thou hast heard, that he that neglects God's great salvation shall never escape his great damnation (Heb 2:3, compared with Luke 14:24, and Rev 14:19,20). And yet when thou art invited, intreated, and beseeched to come in, thou wilt make any excuse to serve the turn (Luke 14:17,18; Rom 12:1; 2

Cor 5:19,20). Nay, thou wilt be so wicked as to put off Christ time after time, notwithstanding he is so freely proffered to thee; a little ground, a few oxen, a farm, a wife, a twopenny matter, a play; nay, the fear of a mock, a scoff or a jeer, is of greater weight to draw thee back, than the salvation of thy soul to draw thee forward.

7. And thou hast heard, that whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (James 4:4). But thou regardest not these things, but contrariwise; rather than thou wilt be out of the friendship and favour of this world, thou wilt sin against thine own conscience, and get thyself into favour by fawning and flattering of the world. Yea, rather than thou wilt go without it, thou wilt dissemble, lie, backbite thy neighbour, and an hundred other tricks thou wilt have.

8. You have heard that the day of judgment is near, in which you and I, all of us, must appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and there be made to give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead; even of all that ever we did, yea, of all our sins in thought, word, and deed, and shall certainly be damned for them too, if we close not in with our Lord Jesus Christ, and what he hath done and suffered for eternal life; and that not notionally or traditionally, but really and savingly, in the power, and by the operation of the Spirit, through faith (Eccl 11:9, 12:14; Acts 10:42, 17:30,31; 2

Cor 5:10; Heb 9:27; Rev 20:12). 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was

opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books.' There is the book of the creatures, the book of conscience, the book of the Lord's remembrance, the book of the law, the book of the gospel (Rom 1:20, compare with Rom 2:12,15; Rev 6:17; John 12:48).[43] Then 'he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep on the right hand, but the goats on his left' (Matt 25:30-32).

'And shall say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed' (v 34). But to the other, go, or 'Depart, ye cursed' (v 41). Yet, notwithstanding the Scriptures do so plainly and plentifully speak of these things, alas! who is there that is weaned from the world, and from their sins and pleasures, to fly from the wrath to come? (Matt 3:7). Notwithstanding the Scripture saith also that heaven and earth shall pass away, rather than one jot, or one tittle of the word shall fail, 'till all be fulfilled,' they are so certain (Luke 21:33; Matt 5:18).

[Second PROMISES.] But leaving the threatenings, let us come to THE

PROMISES, and speak somewhat of them, and you may see how light men make of them, and how little they set by them, notwithstanding the mouth of the Lord hath spoken them. As

1. 'Turn,' ye fools, ye scorers, ye simple ones, 'at my reproof'; and 'behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you' (Prov 1:23). And yet persons had rather be in their foolishness and scorning still, and had rather embrace some filthy lust, than the holy, undefiled, and blessed Spirit of Christ, through the promise, though by it, as many as receive it, 'are sealed unto the day of redemption'

(Eph 4:30), and although he that lives and dies without it, is none of Christ's (Rom 8:9).

2. God hath said, if thou do but come to him in Christ, 'Though your sins be as' red as 'scarlet, they shall be as white as snow'; and he will by no means cast thee away. Compare Isaiah 1:18 with John 6:37. Yet poor souls will not come to Christ that they might have life (John 5:40), but rather after their hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto themselves

wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom 2:5).

3. Christ Jesus hath said in the Word of truth that if any man will serve and follow him, where he is, 'there shall also his servant be' (John 12:26). But yet poor souls choose rather to follow sin, Satan, and the world, though their companions be the devils and damned souls for ever (Matt 25:41).

4. He hath also said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all' other 'things shall be added.' But let whoso will seek after the kingdom of heaven first for them; for they will take the first time, while time serves to get the things of this life. And if it be so, that they must needs seek after heaven, or else be damned, they will stay till they have more leisure, or till they can better attend to it; or till they have other things handsome about them, or till they are older; when they have little else to do, or when they come to be sick, and to die. Then, Lord, have mercy upon them! though it be ten thousand to one but they perish for ever.

For commonly the Lord hath this way to deal with such sinners, who put him off when he is striving with them, either to laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh (Prov 1:26,28). Or else send them to the gods they have served, which are the devils (Judg 10:13,14). Go to the gods you have served, and 'let them deliver you,' saith he; compare this with John 8:44.

5. He hath said, 'There is no man that forsaketh father, or mother, wife, or children, or lands, for his sake and the gospel's, but shall have a hundred fold in this world, with persecution, and in the world to come life everlasting' (Mark 10:29,30).

But men, for the most part, are so far off from believing the certainty of this, that they will scarce lose the earning of a penny to hear the Word of God, the gospel of salvation. Nay, they will neither go themselves, nor suffer others to go, if they can help it, without threatening to do them a mischief, if it lie in their way. Nay, further, many are so far from parting from any worldly gain for Christ's sake, and the gospel's, that they are still striving, by hook and by crook, as we say, by swearing, lying, cozening, stealing, covetousness, extortion, oppression, forgery, bribery, flattery, or

any other way to get more, thou they get together with these, death, wrath, damnation, hell, the devil, and all the plagues that God can pour upon them. And if any do not run with them to the same excess of riot, but rather for all their threats will be so bold and careless, as they call it, as to follow the ways of God; if they can do no more, yet they will whet their tongues like a sword to wound them, and do them the greatest mischief they can, both in speaking against them to neighbours, to wives, to husbands, to landlords, and raising false reports of them. But let such take heed lest they be in such a state, and woeful condition as he was in, who said, in vexation and anguish of soul, One drop of cold water to cool my tongue.

Thus might I add many things out of the holy Writ, both threatenings and promises, besides those heavenly counsels, loving reproofs, free invitations to all sorts of sinners, both old and young, rich and poor, bond and free, wise and unwise. All which have been, now are, and is to be feared, as long as this world lasts, will be trampled under the feet of those swine, I call them not men, who will continue in the same. But take a review of some of them:—

### 1. Counsel.

What heavenly counsel is that where Christ saith, 'buy of me gold tried by the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear' (Rev 3:18). Also that,

'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price' (Isa 55:1). 'Hear, and your soul shall live' (v 3). 'Take hold of my strength, that you may make peace with me, and you shall make peace with me' (Isa 27:5).

### 2. Instruction.

What instruction is here?

'Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me,' saith Christ, 'watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts

of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord' (Prov 8:33-35). Take heed that no man deceive you by any means.

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life' (John 6:27). 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate' (Luke 13:24). 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved' (Acts 16:31).

'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits.' 'Quench not the Spirit.' 'Lay hold on eternal life.' 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Matt 5:16). Take heed, and beware of hypocrisy; 'watch and be sober,' 'learn of me,' saith Christ, 'come unto me.'

### 3. Forewarning.

What forewarning is here?

'Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee' (Job 36:18). 'Be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong, for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, a consumption even determined upon the whole earth' (Isa 28:22). 'Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you that is written, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish. For I work a work in your days, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you' (Acts 13:40,41). 'Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall' (1 Cor 10:12). 'Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation' (Matt 26:41). 'Let us therefore fear lest a promise being made, and left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it' (Heb 4:1). 'I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not' (Jude 5). 'Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown' (Rev 3:11).

### 4. Comfort.

What comfort is here?

'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out' (John 6:37). 'Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt 11:28).

'Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee' (Matt 9:2). 'I will never leave, nor forsake thee,' for 'I have loved thee with an

everlasting love' (Jer 31:3). 'I lay down my life for the sheep.' I lay down my life that they may have life. 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' 'I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee' (2 Cor 6:2). 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' 'For I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgression, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee' (Isa 44:22).

5. Grief to those that fall short.

O sad grief!

'How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me' (Prov 5:11-13). They shall 'curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness' (Isa 8:21,22). 'He hath dispersed' abroad, 'he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever. - The wicked shall see it, and be grieved, he shall gnash his teeth, and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish' (Psa 112:9,10). 'There shall be weeping, - when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out' (Luke 13:28). All which things are slighted by the world.

Thus much, in short, touching this, That ungodly men undervalue the Scriptures, and give no credit to them, when the truth that is contained in them is held forth in simplicity unto them, but rather cry out, Nay, but if one should rise from the dead then they think something might be done; when alas, though signs and wonders were wrought by the hands of those

that preach the gospel, these poor creatures would never the sooner convert, though they suppose they should, as is evident by the carriages of their forerunners, who albeit the Lord Jesus Christ himself did confirm his doctrine by miracles, as opening blind eyes, casting out of devils, and raising the dead, they were so far from receiving either him or his doctrine, that they put him to death for his pains! Though he had done so many miracles among them, yet they believed not in him (John 12:37).

But to pass this, I shall lay down some of the grounds of their rejecting and undervaluing the Scriptures, and so pass on.

1. [Ground.] Because they do not believe that they are the Word of God, but rather suppose them to be the inventions of men, written by some politicians, on purpose to make poor ignorant people to submit to some religion and government.[44] Though they do not say this, yet their practices testify the same; as he that when he hears the words of the curse, yet blesseth himself in his heart, and saith he shall have peace, though God saith he shall have none (Deut 29:18-20). And this must needs be, for did but men believe this, that it is the Word of God, then they must believe that he that speak it is true, therefore shall every word and tittle be fulfilled. And if they come once to this, unless they be stark mad, they will have a care how they do throw themselves under the lash of eternal vengeance. For the reason why the Thessalonians received the Word, was, because they believed it was the Word of God, and not the word of man, which did effectually work in them by their thus believing.

'When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us,' saith he, 'ye received it not as the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe' (1 Thess 2:13). So that did a man but receive it in hearing, or reading, or meditating, as it is the Word of God, they would be converted. 'But the Word preached did not profit, - not being mixed with faith in them that heard it' (Heb 4:2).

2. [Ground.] Because they do not indeed see themselves by nature heirs of that exceeding wrath and vengeance that the Scriptures testify of. For did they but consider what God intends to do with those that live and die in a natural state, it would either sink them into despair, or make them fly for refuge to the hope that is set before them. But if there be never such sins

committed, and never so great wrath denounced, and the time of execution be never so near, yet if the party that is guilty be senseless, and altogether ignorant thereof, he will be careless, and regards it nothing at all. And that man, by nature, is in this condition, it is evident. For, take the same man that is senseless, and ignorant of that misery he is in by nature, I say, take him at another time when he is a little awakened, and then you shall hear him roar, and cry out so long as trouble is upon him, and a sense of the wrath of God hanging over his head, Good sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Though the same man at another time, when his conscience is fallen asleep, and grown hard, will lie like the smith's dog at the foot of the anvil, though the fire-sparks fly in his face. But, as I said before, when any one is a little awakened, O what work will one verse, one line, nay, one word of the holy Scriptures make in his heart.[45] He cannot eat, sleep, work, keep company with his former companions, and all because he is afraid that the damnation spoken of in Scripture will fall to his share, like Balaam, who said, 'I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord' (Num 22:18). So long as he had something of the word of the Lord with authority, severity, and power on his heart; but at another time he could teach 'Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel' (Rev 2:14).

3. [Ground.] Because the carnal priests do tickle the ears of their hearers with vain philosophy and deceit, and thereby harden their hearts against the simplicity of the gospel and Word of God, which things the apostle admonished those that have a mind to close in with Christ to avoid, saying,

'Beware lest any man,' be he what he will, 'spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, and rudiments of the world, and not after Christ' (Col 2:8). And you who muzzle up your people in ignorance with Aristotle, Plato, and the rest of the heathenish philosophers, and preach little, if anything, of Christ rightly; I say unto you, that you will find you have sinned against God, and beguiled your hearers, when God shall, in the judgmentday, lay the cause of the damnation of many thousands of souls to your charge, and say, He will require their blood at your hands (Eze 33:6).

4. [Ground.] Another reason why the carnal unbelieving world do so slight the Scriptures and Word of God, is, because the judgment spoken of in the Scripture is not presently executed on the transgressors. 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil' (Eccl 8:11). Because God doth not presently strike the poor wretch as soon as he sins, but waits, and forbears, and is patient, therefore the world judging God to be unfaithful, go to it again and again, and every time grow harder and harder, till at last God is forced either to stretch out his mighty power to turn them, or else send death, with the devil and hell, to fetch them. 'Thou thoughtest,' saith God, 'that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver' (Psa 50:21,22).

5. [Ground.] Another reason why the blind world do slight the authority of Scripture, is, because they give ear to the devil, who, through his subtilty, casteth false evasions and corrupt interpretations on them, rendering them not so point blank the mind of God, and a rule for direction to poor souls, persuading them that they must give ear and way to something else besides, and beyond that; or else he labours to render it vile and contemptible, by persuading them that it is a dead letter, when indeed they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. For the Scripture is not so dead but that the knowledge of it is able to make any man wise unto salvation, through faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 3:15); and is profitable for instruction, reproof, and correction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished to all good works (v 17).

And where it is said the letter killeth, he meaneth the law, as it is the ministration of damnation, or a covenant of works, and so indeed it doth kill, and must do so, because it is just, forasmuch as the party that is under the same is not able to yield to it a complete and continual obedience. But yet I will call Peter and Paul to witness that the Scriptures are of a very glorious concernment, inasmuch as in them is held forth to us the way of life; and also in that they do administer good ground of hope to us. 'For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope' (Rom 15:4). And again, 'Now to him that is of power to stablish you

according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith' (Rom 16:25,26). And therefore whosoever they be that slight the Scriptures, they slight that which is no less than the Word of God; and they who slight that, slight him that spake it; and they that do so, let them look to themselves, for God will be revenged on such. Much more might be said to this thing, but I would not be tedious.

A word or two more, so I have done with this. Consider the

danger of slighting the words of the prophets or apostles, whether they be correction, reproof, admonition, forewarning, or the blessed invitations and promises contained in them.

1. [Consider] Such souls do provoke God to anger, and to execute his vengeance on them. 'They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear' the law, and 'they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of Hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets; therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of Hosts' (Zech 7:11,12).

2. [Consider] God will not regard in their calamity. 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me' (Prov 1:24-28).

3. [Consider] God doth commonly give up such men to delusions, to believe lies. 'Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved,'

therefore 'God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned' (2 Thess 2:10-12).

4. [Consider] In a word, they that do continue to reject and slight the Word of God, they are such, for the most part, as are ordained to be damned. Old Eli, his sons not hearkening to the voice of their father reprovng them for their sins, but disobeying his voice, it is said, It was 'because the Lord would slay them' (1 Sam 2:25). Again see in 2 Chronicles 25:15, 16. Amaziah having sinned against the Lord, he sends to him a prophet to reprove him; but Amaziah says, 'Forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten?' He did not hearken to the word of God, 'Then the prophet forbore, saying, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast - not hearkened unto my counsel.' Read, therefore, and the Lord give thee understanding. For a miserable end will those have that go on sinning against God, rejecting his Word.

Other things might have been observed from this verse, which at this time I shall pass by; partly because the sum of them hath been touched already, and may be more clearly hinted at in the following verse; and therefore I shall speak a few words to the next verse, and so draw towards a conclusion.

Verse 31.— 'And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.'

'And he said'; that is, and God made answer to the words spoken in the verse before, 'And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses,' &c. As if he had said, Moses was a man of great renown, a man of worthy note, a man that talked with God face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. The words that Moses spake were such as I commanded him to speak. Let who will question them, I will own them, credit them, bless them that close in with them, and curse those that reject them.

I myself sent the prophets, they did not run of their own heads, I gave them commission, I thrust them out, and told them what they should say. In a word, they have told the world what my mind is to do, both to sinners and to saints;

'They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.' Therefore he that shall reject and turn his back either upon the threatenings, counsels, admonitions, invitations, promises, or whatsoever else I have commanded

them to speak as to salvation and life, and to directions therein, shall be sure to have a share in the many curses that they have spoken, and the destruction[46] that is pronounced by them. Again, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets,' &c. As if he had said, Thou wouldst have me send one from the dead unto them; what needs that? They have my mind already, I have declared unto them what I intend to stand to, both for saving them that believe, and damning them that do not. That therefore which I have said I will make good, whether they hear or forbear. And as for this desire of yours, you had as good desire me to make a new Bible, and so to revoke my first sayings by the mouth of my prophets. But I am God and not man, and my Word is immutable, unchangeable, and shall stand as fast as my decrees can make it; heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of my Word shall not pass (Matt 5:18). If thou hadst ten thousand brethren, and every one in danger of losing his soul, if they did not close in with what is contained and recorded in the Scriptures of truth, they must even every one of them perish, and be for ever damned in hell, for the Scriptures cannot be broken. I did not send them so unadvisedly to recall it again by another consideration. No, for I speak in righteousness and in judgment (Isa 63:1-3), and in much wisdom and counsel. It being therefore gone out of my mouth in this manner, it shall not return in vain, until it hath accomplished the thing whereto I have sent it (Isa 55:11).

But again, thou supposest that miracles and wonders will work more on them, which makes thee say, Send one from the dead. But herein thou art mistaken, for I have proved them with that once and again, by more than one, or two, or three of my servants. How many miracles did my servant Moses work by commandment from me in the land of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness! Yet they of that generation were never the sooner converted for that; but, notwithstanding, rebelled and lusted, and in their hearts turned back into Egypt (Acts 7). How many miracles did Samuel, David, Elias, Elisha, Daniel, and the prophets, together with my Son, who raised the dead, cast out devils, made them to see that were born blind, gave and restored limbs! Yet for all this, as I said before, they hated him, they crucified him. I raised him again from the dead, and he appeared to his disciples, who were called, and chosen, and faithful, and he gave them commandment and commission to go and testify the truth of this to the world; and to confirm the same he enabled them to speak with divers

tongues, and to work miracles most plentifully, yet there was great persecution raised against them, insomuch that but a few of them died in their beds. And, therefore, though thou thinkest that a miracle will do so much with the world, yet I say no. For if they will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should rise from the dead.

From these words, therefore, take notice of this truth, namely, that those who reject and believe not Moses and the prophets are a very hard-hearted people, that will not be persuaded though one rise from the dead. They that regard not the holy Scriptures to turn to God, finding them to testify of his goodness and mercy, there is but little hopes of their salvation; for they will not, mark, they will not be persuaded though one should rise from the dead. This truth is confirmed by Jesus Christ himself. If you read John 5, where the Lord is speaking of himself that he is the very Christ, he brings in four or five witnesses to back what he said. 1. John Baptist. 2. The works that his Father gave him to do. 3. His Father speaking from heaven. 4. The testimony of the Scriptures. When all this was done, seeing yet they would not believe, he lays the fault upon one of these two things:—(1.) Their regarding an esteem among men. (2.) Their not believing of the prophets' writings, even Moses and the rest. 'For had ye believed Moses,' saith he, 'ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?'

Now, I say, he that shall slight the Scriptures, and the testimony of the prophets in them concerning Jesus Christ, must needs be in great danger of losing his soul, if he abide in this condition; because he that slights the testimony doth also slight the thing testified of, let him say the contrary never so often. For as Jesus Christ hath here laid down the reason of men's not receiving him, so the apostle in another place lays down the reason again with a high and mighty aggravation (1 John 5:10), saying, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record,' mark, 'the record that God gave of his Son.' The record, you will say, what is that? Why even the testimony that God gave of him by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:18-20). That is, God sending his holy Spirit into the hearts of his servants, the prophets and apostles, he,

by his Spirit in them, did bear witness or record of the truth of salvation by his Son Jesus, both before and after his coming. And thus is that place also to be understood which saith,

'There are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood.' That is, the Spirit in the apostles which preached him to the world, as is clear if you read seriously 1 Thessalonians 4:8. The apostle, speaking of Jesus Christ and obedience to God through him, saith thus, Now 'he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God.' But it is you that speak; true, but it is by and through the Spirit, 'He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.' This is therefore a mighty confirmation of this truth, that he that slights the record or testimony that God, by his Spirit in his prophets and apostles, hath testified unto us, slights the testimony of the Spirit who moved them to speak these things; and if so, then I would fain know how any man can be saved by Jesus Christ that slights the testimony concerning Christ, yea, the testimony of his own Spirit concerning his own self? It is true men may pretend to have the testimony of the Spirit, and from that conceit set a low esteem on the holy Scriptures; but that spirit that dwelleth in them and teacheth them so to do, it is no better than the spirit of Satan, though it calls itself by the name of the Spirit of Christ. 'To the law,'

therefore, 'and to the testimony,' try them by that; 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

The apostle Peter, when he speaks of the glorious voice that he had from the excellent majesty, saying of Christ, 'This is my beloved Son, hear him,' saith thus to them whom he wrote unto, 'You have also a more sure word of prophecy,' or of the prophets, for so you may read it, 'unto which ye do well that ye take heed.' That is, though we tell you that we had this excellent testimony from his own mouth evidently, yet you have the prophets. We tell you this, and you need not doubt of the truth of it; but if you should, yet you may not, must not, ought not to question them. Search therefore into them, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. That is until by the same Spirit that gave forth the Scripture you find the truth confirmed to your souls, which you have recorded in the Scriptures— that this word of prophecy, or of the prophets, is the

Scriptures. Read on; for, saith he, 'knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation,' &c. (2 Peter 1:20).

[Object.] But, you will say, What needs all this ado, and why is all this time and pains spent in speaking to this that is surely believed already? This is a thing received by all, that they believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, that sure word of prophecy; and therefore you need not spend your time in proving these things, and the truth of them, seeing we grant and confess the truth of it before you being to speak your judgment of them.

Answ. The truths of God cannot be borne witness unto too often; you may as well say, 1. You need not preach Jesus Christ so much, seeing he hath been, and is received for the true Messias already. 2. Though many may suppose that they do believe the Scriptures, yet if they were but well examined, you will find them either by word of mouth, or else by conversation, to deny, reject, and slight the holy Scriptures. It is true, there is a notional and historical assent in the head. I say, in the head of many, or most, to the truth contained in Scripture. But try them, I say, and you shall find but a little, if any, of the faith of the operation of God in the hearts of poor men, to believe the Scriptures, and things contained in them. Many, yea, most men believe the Scriptures as they believe a fable, a story, a tale, of which there is no certainty! But alas! there are but few do in deed and in truth believe the Scriptures to be the very Word of God.

Object. But you will say, This seems strange to me.

Answ. And it seems as true to me, and I doubt not but to make it manifest, that there are but few, yea, very few, that do effectually, for that I aim at, believe the Scriptures and the truths contained in and spoken of by them.

But to make this appear, and that to purpose, if God will, I shall lay you down the several operations that the Scriptures have on them who do effectually believe the things contained in them.

First. He that doth effectually believe the Scriptures, hath in the first place been killed, I say killed by the authority of the holy Scriptures; struck stark dead in a spiritual sense, by the holy Scriptures, being set home by

that Spirit, which gave them forth, upon the soul. 'The letter killeth'; the letter strikes men dead (2 Cor 3:6). And this Paul witnessed and found, before he could say, I believe all that the prophets have spoken. Where he saith, 'I was alive without the law once.' That is, in my natural state, before the law was set on my heart with power; 'But when the commandment came, sin revived and I died' (Rom 7:9). 'And that law which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death; for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me' (v 11). Now that which is called 'the letter' in 2 Corinthians, is called the law in Romans 7, which by its power and operation, as it is wielded by the Spirit of God, doth in the first place kill and slay all those that are enabled to believe the Scriptures. I kill, saith God: that is, with my law I pierce, I wound, I prick men into the very heart, by showing them their sins against my law (Deut 31:26; Acts 2:37). And he that is ignorant of this, is also ignorant of, and doth not really and effectually believe the Scripture.

But you will say, How doth the law kill and strike dead the poor creatures?

Answ. The letter or law doth kill thus. It is set home upon the soul, and discovers to the soul its transgressions against the law, and shows the soul also, that it cannot completely satisfy the justice of God, for the breach of his law, therefore it is condemned (John 3:18). Mark, 'He that believeth not, is condemned already.' To wit, by the law, that is, the law doth condemn him; yea, it hath condemned him already for his sins against it; as it is written,

'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal 3:10). Now all men as they come into the world are in this condition, that is, condemned by the law. Yet not believing their condemnation by the law really, they do not also believe really and effectually the law that doth condemn them. For as men have but a notion of the one, that is, their condemnation, because of sins against the law: so they have but a notion of the condemning, killing, and destroying power of the law. For, as the one is, so in these things always is the other. There is no man that doth really believe the law or gospel, further than they do feel the power and authority of them in their hearts. 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.' Now this

letter or law, is not to be taken in the largest sense, but is strictly to be tied to the ten commandments, whose proper work is only by showing the soul its sin against this law, to kill, and there leaves him stark dead, not giving him the least life, or support, or comfort, but leaves the soul in a helpless and hopeless condition, as from itself, or any other mere creature.

It is true the law hath laid all men for dead, as they come into the world; but all men do not see themselves dead, until they see that law that struck them dead, striking in their souls, and having struck them that fatal blow. As a man that is fast asleep in a house, and that on fire about his ears, and he not knowing of it because he is asleep; even so, because poor souls are asleep in sin, though the wrath of God, the curse of his law, and the flames of hell have beset them round about, yet they do not believe it, because they are asleep in sin. Now, as he that is awakened and sees this, sees that through this he is a dead man; even so they that do see their state by nature, being such a sad condition, do also see themselves by that law to be dead men naturally.

But now, when didst thou feel the power of this first part of the Scripture, the law, so mighty as to strike thee dead? If not, thou dost not so much as verily believe that part of the Scripture that doth contain the law in it, to be the truth of God. Yet if thou shouldst have felt something, I say, something of the killing power of the law of God in thine heart, this is not an argument to prove that thou believest all the things contained in Scripture, for there is gospel as well as law, and therefore I shall speak to that also, that is, whether thou hast felt the power of the gospel, as well as something of the power of the law.

Second. Then thou hast found the power of the gospel, and so believed it, thou hast found it thus with thy soul.

1. Thou hast been showed by the Word or truth of the gospel, in the light of the Spirit of Christ, that by nature thou wert without the true faith of the Son of God in thy soul. For when He, the Spirit, is come, he shall show men that 'they believe not in me,' saith Christ (John 16:9). Mark, though thou hast, as I said before, felt somewhat of the power of the law, letter, or ten commandments, yet, as thou hast not been brought to this, to see by the Spirit in the gospel, that thou art without faith by nature, thou hast not yet

tasted, much less believed, any part of the gospel. For the gospel and the law are two distinct covenants. And they that are under the law or first covenant, and yet in the meantime to be a stranger to the covenant of promise, that is, the gospel, and so have no hope in them (Eph 2:12). There is not any promise that can be savingly believed, until the soul be by the gospel converted to Jesus Christ. For though men do think never so much that they believe the things or the Word of the gospel of our salvation; yet unless they have the work of grace in their souls, they do not, cannot rightly believe the things contained in the Scriptures. Again,

2. As the law killeth those that believe it, even so the promises contained in the gospel do, through faith, administer comfort to those that believe it aright. My words, saith Christ, My words, 'they are Spirit, and they are life' (John 6:63). As if he had said, the words contained in the law as a covenant of works, they wound, they kill, they strike dead those that are under them. But as for me, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.'

That is, whosoever doth receive them believably, shall find them full of operation, to comfort, quicken, and revive their soul. For as I did not come into the world to destroy men's lives, so the words that I speak, as I am sent to preach the gospel, they have no such tendency unto those that believe them. The promises that are in the gospel, O how do they comfort them! Such a promise, and such a promise, O how sweet is it! How comfortable to those that believe them! Alas! there are many poor souls that think they believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and yet they never enjoyed anything of the life and promises; they come in upon the heart to quicken, to revive thee, to raise thee from the sentence of death that is passed on thee by the law. And through the faith that is wrought in thy soul, by the operation of God's Holy Spirit, though once killed by the law or letter, thou art made alive in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is presented to thy soul in the promises.

Third. Dost thou in deed and in truth believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God? Then the things contained in them, especially the things of the gospel, are very excellent to thy soul; as the birth of Christ, the death, resurrection, intercession, and second coming. O how precious and

excellent are they to thy soul! insomuch that thou regardest nothing in comparison of them! O! it is Christ's birth, death, blood, resurrection, &c., according to the Scriptures, that thou dost rejoice in exceedingly, and abundantly desire after! 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom thou now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory' (1 Cor 15:1-6, compared with Phil 3:68; 1 Peter 1:8).

Fourth. Dost thou believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God? Then thou standest in awe of, and dost much reverence them. Why, they are the Word of God, the true sayings of God; they are the counsel of God; they are his promises and his threatenings. Poor souls are apt to think, if I could hear God speak to me from heaven with an audible voice, then sure I should be serious and believe it. But truly, if God should speak to thee from heaven, except thou wert converted, thou wouldst not regard, nor really believe him. But if thou dost believe the Scriptures, thou seest that they are the truth as really as if God should speak to thee from heaven through the clouds, and therefore never flatter thyself, foolishly thinking, that if it were so and so, then thou couldst believe. I tell thee, saith Christ, If they believe 'not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one should rise from the dead.' But,

Fifth. Dost thou believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God? Then, through faith in Christ, thou endeavourest to have thy life squared according to the Scriptures, both in word and practice. Nay, this I say, thou mayest have though thou do not believe them all. My meaning is, that if thou believe none but the ten commandments, thy life may be, according to them, a legal holy life; and if thou do believe the gospel too, then thy life will be the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, either thou wilt live in the blessed and holy enjoyment of what is testified in the Scripture concerning the glorious things of the Lord Jesus Christ, or else thou wilt be exceedingly panting after them. For the Scriptures carry such a blessed beauty in them to that soul that hath faith in the things contained in them, that they do take the heart and captivate the soul of him that believeth them into the love and liking of them, believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets, and have hope towards God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men' (Acts 24:14-16).

Sixth. He that believes the Scriptures to be the Word of God, if he do but suppose that any one place of Scripture doth exclude him, and shut him out of, and from a share in the promises contained in them, O it will trouble him, grieve him, perplex him. Yea, he will not be satisfied until he be resolved, and the contrary sealed to his soul; for he knows that the Scriptures are the word of God, all truth; and therefore he knows that if any one sentence doth exclude or bar him out for want of this or the other qualification, he knows also that not the word alone shuts him out, but he that speaks it, even God himself. And, therefore, he cannot, will not, dare not be contented until he find his soul and Scripture together, with the things contained therein, to embrace each other, and a sweet correspondency and agreement between them. For you must know that to him that believes the Scriptures aright, the promises, or threatenings, are of more power to comfort or cast down, than all the promises or threatenings of all the men in the world. And this was the cause why the martyrs of Jesus did so slight both the promises of their adversaries, when they would have overcome them, with proffering the great things of this world unto them, and also their threatenings, when they told them they would rack them, hang them, burn them (Acts 20:24). None of these things could prevail upon them, or against them; because they did most really believe the Scriptures, and the things contained in them, as is clearly found, and to be seen in Hebrews 11, and also in Mr. Fox's records of their brethren.

Seventh. He that believeth the Scriptures to be the Word of God, believeth that men must be born again, and also be partakers of that faith which is of the operation of God, according as he hath read and believed, or else he must and shall be damned. And he that believeth this aright will not be contented until, according as it is written, he do partake of and enjoy the new birth, and until he do find, through grace, that faith that is wrought by the operation of God in his soul. For this is the cause why men do satisfy themselves with so slender a conceited hope that their state is good, when it is nothing so, namely, because they do not credit the Scripture; for did they, they would look into their own hearts, and examine seriously whether

that faith, that hope, that grace which they think they have be of that nature, and wrought by that spirit and power that the Scripture speaketh of. I speak this of an effectual believing, without which all other is nothing unto salvation.

#### FIVE USES BY WAY OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

Now then, because I would not be too tedious, I shall at this time lay down no more discoveries of such an one as doth savingly believe the Scriptures, and the things contained in them, but shall speak a few words of examination concerning the things already mentioned. As,

First USE. Thou sayest thou dost in deed and in truth effectually believe the Scriptures: I ask, therefore, wast thou ever killed stark dead by the law of works contained in the Scriptures—killed by the law or letter, and made to see thy sins against it, and left in a helpless condition by that law? For, as I said, the proper work of the law is to slay the soul, and to leave it dead in a helpless state. For it doth neither give the soul any comfort itself when it comes, nor doth it show the soul where comfort is to be had; and therefore it is called 'the ministration of condemnation,' as in 2 Corinthians 3:9, 'the ministration of death,' verse 7. For though men may have a notion of the blessed Word of God, as the children had, yet before they be converted it may truly be said of them, Ye err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God (Mark 12:24).

Second USE. You say you do believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God. I say again, Examine, wast thou ever quickened from a dead state by the power of the Spirit of Christ, through the other part of the Scripture; that is to say, by the power of God in his Son Jesus Christ, through the covenant of promise? I tell thee from the Lord, if thou hast, thou hast felt such a quickening power in the words of Christ (John 6) that thou hast been lifted out of that dead condition that thou before wast in. And that when thou wast under the guilt of sin, the curse of the law, and the power of the devil, and the justice of the great God, thou hast been enabled, by the power of God in Christ, revealed to thee by the Spirit through and by the Scripture, to look sin, death, hell, the devil, and the law, and all things that are at enmity with thee, with boldness and comfort in the face, through the

blood, death, righteousness, resurrection, and intercession of Christ, made mention of in the Scriptures. And,

Third USE. On this account, O how excellent are the Scriptures to thy soul! O

how much virtue dost thou see in such a promise, in such an invitation! They are so large as to say, Christ will in no wise cast me out! My crimson sins shall be white as snow! I tell thee, friend, there are some promises that the Lord hath helped me to lay hold of Jesus Christ through and by, that I would not have out of the Bible for as much gold and silver as can lie between York and London piled up to the stars; because through them Christ is pleased by his Spirit to convey comfort to my soul. I say, when the law curses, when the devil tempts, when hell-fire flames in my conscience, my sins with the guilt of them tearing of me, then is Christ revealed so sweetly to my poor soul through the promises that all is forced to fly and leave off to accuse my soul. So also, when the world frowns, when the enemies rage and threaten to kill me, then also the precious, the exceeding great and precious promises do weigh down all, and comfort the soul against all. This is the effect of believing the Scriptures savingly; for they that do so have by and through the Scriptures good comfort, and also ground of hope, believing those things to be its own which the Scriptures hold forth (Rom 15:4).

Fourth USE. Examine, Dost thou stand in awe of sinning against God, because he hath in the Scriptures commanded thee to abstain from it? Dost thou give diligence to make thy calling and election sure, because God commanded it in Scripture? Dost thou examine thyself whether thou be in the faith or no, having a command in Scripture so to do? Or dost thou, notwithstanding what thou readest in the Scripture, follow the world, delight in sin, neglect coming to Jesus Christ, speak evil of the saints, slight and make a mock at the ordinance of God, delight in wicked company, and the like? Then know that it is because thou dost not in deed and in truth believe the Scriptures effectually. For, as I said before, if a man do believe them, and that savingly, then he stands in awe, he looks to his steps, he turns his feet from evil, and endeavours to follow that which is good, which God hath commanded in the Scriptures of truth; yet not

from a legal or natural principle; that is, to seek for life by doing that good thing, but knowing that salvation is already obtained for him by the blood of that man Christ Jesus on the cross because he believes the Scriptures, therefore, mark I pray, therefore, I say, he labours to walk with his God in all well-pleasing and godliness, because the sweet power of the loves of Christ, which he feels in his soul by the Spirit, according to the Scriptures, constrain him so to do (2 Cor 5:14).

Fifth USE. Examine again, Dost thou labour after those qualifications that the Scriptures do describe a child of God by? That is, faith, yea the right faith, the most holy faith, the faith of the operation of God. And also, dost thou examine whether there is a real growth of grace in thy soul, as love, zeal, self-denial, and a seeking by all means to attain, if possible, to the resurrection of the dead? That is, not to satisfy thyself until thou be dissolved and rid of this body of death, and be transformed into that glory that the saints shall be in after the resurrection-day. And in the meantime dost labour and take all opportunities to walk as near as may be to the pitch, though thou know thou canst not attain it perfectly. Yet, I say, thou dost aim at it, seek after it, press towards it, and to hold on in thy race; thou shunest that which may any way hinder thee, and also closest in with what may any way further the same; knowing that that must be, or desiring that it should be, thine eternal frame, and therefore out of love and liking to it thou dost desire and long after it, as being the thing that doth most please thy soul.

Or how is it with thy soul? Art thou such an one as regards not these things, but rather busy thy thoughts about the things here below, following those things that have no scent of divine glory upon them? If so, look to thyself, thou art an unbeliever, and so under the wrath of God, and wilt for certain fall into the same place of torment that thy fellows have fallen into before thee, to the grief of thy own soul, and thy everlasting destruction.

Consider and regard these things, and lay them to thy heart before it be too late to recover thyself, by repenting of the one, and desiring to close in with the other. O! I say, regard, regard, for hell is hot. God's hand is up, the law is resolved to discharge against thy soul! The judgment-day is at hand, the graves are ready to fly open, the trumpet is near the sounding, the

sentence will ere long be passed, and then you and I cannot call time again.

#### USE AND APPLICATION.

But again, seeing they are so certain, so sure, so irrevocable and firm, and seeing the saving faith of the things contained therein, is to reform the soul, and bring it over into the things of God, really conforming to the things contained therein, both to the point of justification, and also an impartial walking, and giving up thy soul and body to a conformity to all the commands, counsels, instructions, and exhortations contained therein; this then will learn us how to judge of those who give up themselves to walk in the imaginations of their own hearts, who slight and lay aside the Scriptures, counting them but empty and uncertain things, and will live every day in open contradiction to what is contained, commanded, and forbidden therein. As

FIRST. This will show us that all your drunkards, whoremasters, liars, thieves, swearers, backbiters, slanderers, scoffers at goodness, &c. I say, we may see by this that they that live in such things, have not the faith of these things contained in their hearts, seeing they delight to practise those things that are forbidden by and in them. And so, they continuing living and dying in this state, we may conclude without fear that these portions of holy Scripture belong unto them, and shall for certain be fulfilled upon them: 'He that believeth not shall be damned' (Mark 16:16). 'The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor 6:9,10). 'But the abominable, the unbelieving, the whoremongers, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone' (Rev 21:8). 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels' (Matt 25:41). Depart, depart from me, for I will not save you. Depart, for my blood shall not at all wash you. Depart, for you shall not set one foot into the kingdom of heaven.

'Depart, ye cursed,' ye are cursed of God, cursed of his law, cursed of me, cursed by the saints, and cursed by the angels; cursed all over, nothing but cursed, and therefore depart from me; and whither? into everlasting fire—fire that will scald, scorch, burn, and flame to purpose. 'Fire that shall

never be quenched' (Mark 9). Fire that will last to all eternity. And must we be all alone?

No, you shall have company, store of company with you. Namely, all the raging, roaring devils, together with an innumerable company of fellowdamned sinners, men, women, and children. And if the Scriptures be true, as they will one day wonderfully appear to be, then this must and shall be thy portion, if thou live and die in this state; and of all them who continue in sinning against the truth contained in the Scriptures. As,

First. Dost thou delight to sin against plain commands? THOU ART GONE.

Second. Dost thou slight and scorn the counsels contained in the Scriptures, and continue in so doing? THEN THOU ART GONE.

Third. Dost thou continually neglect to come to Christ, and usest arguments in thine own heart to satisfy thy soul with so doing? THEN THOU ART GONE. (Luke 14:17,18, compared with v 24, and Heb 2:3). 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' How shall we escape, that is, there is no way to escape.

(1.) Because God hath said we shall not (Heb 12:25). 'See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth,' that was Moses, 'much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.'

(2.) Because he hath not only said they shall not, but also hath bound it with an oath, saying, 'So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest'

(Heb 3:11). To whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest?

Answer, 'to them that believed not.' So we see, that they could not enter in because of unbelief (vv 18,19).

SECOND. This will teach us what to think and conclude of such, who, though they do not so openly discover their folly by open and gross sins

against the law, yet will give more heed to their own spirits, and the movings thereof, though they be neither commanded nor commended for the same in Scripture; nay, though the Scripture command and commend the contrary, than they will to the holy and revealed will of God (Isa 8:20). I say, such men are in as bad a state as the other to the full, being disobedient to God's will revealed in his Word, as well as they, though in a different manner; the one openly transgressing against the plain and well-known truths revealed in it; the other, though more close and hidden, yet secretly rejecting and slighting them, giving more heed to their own spirits, and the motions thereof, although not warranted by the Scriptures.

A few words more, and so I shall conclude. And,

First. Take heed that you content not yourself with a bare notion of the Scriptures in your heads, by which you may go far, even so far as to be able to dispute for the truth, to preach the gospel, and labour to vindicate it in opposition to gainsayers, and yet be found at the left hand of Christ at the judgment-day, forasmuch as thou didst content thyself with a notion or traditional knowledge of them.[48]

Second. Have a care that thou own the whole Scripture, and not own one part and neglect another, or slight it; as thus: To own the law, and slight the gospel; or to think that thou must be saved by thy good doings and works; for that is all one, as if thou didst thrust Christ away from thee; or else so to own the gospel, as if by it thou wert exempted from all obedience to the ten commandments, and conformity to the law in life and conversation; for in so doing thou wilt for certain make sure of eternal vengeance.

Third. Have a care that thou put not wrong names on the things contained in the Scriptures, as to call the law, Christ, and Christ, the law, for some having done so, in my knowledge, have so darkened to themselves the glorious truths of the gospel, that in a very little time they have been resolved to thwart and oppose them, and so have made room in their own souls for the devil to inhabit, and obtained a place in hell for their own souls to be tormented for ever and ever.

Against this danger therefore in reading and receiving the testimony of Scripture, learn to distinguish between the law and the gospel, and to keep







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also receive thy strength from him who hath bought thee, to walk before him in all well-pleasing. Being enabled thereto by virtue of his Spirit, which hath revealed to thy soul that thou art delivered already from wrath to come, by the obedience, not of thee, but of another man, viz., Jesus Christ.

2. Then if the law thou readest of, tell thee in thy conscience thou must do this and the other good work of the law, if ever thou wilt be saved; answer plainly, that for thy part thou art resolved now not to work for life, but to

believe in the virtue of that blood shed upon the cross, upon Mount Calvary, for the remission of sins. And yet because Christ hath justified thee freely by his grace, thou wilt serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life, yet not in a legal spirit, or in a covenant of works; but mine obedience, say thou, I will endeavour to have it free, and cheerful, out of love to my Lord Jesus.

3. Have a care thou receive not this doctrine in the notion only, lest thou bring a just damnation upon thy soul, by professing thyself to be freed by Christ's blood from the guilt of sin, while thou remainest still a servant to the filth of sin. For I must tell you, that unless you have the true and saving work of the faith and grace of the gospel in your hearts, you will either go on in a legal holiness, according to the tenor of the law; or else through a notion of the gospel, the devil bewitching and beguiling thy understanding, will, and affections, thou wilt, Ranter-like, turn the grace of God into wantonness, and bring upon thy soul double, if not treble damnation, in that thou couldest not be contented to be damned for thy sins against the law, but also to make ruin sure to thy soul, thou wouldst dishonour the gospel, and turn the grace of God, held forth and discovered to men by that, into licentiousness.[49]

But that thou mightest be sure to escape these dangerous rocks on the right hand and on the left, see that thy faith be such as is spoken of in Scripture. And that thou be not satisfied without that, which is a faith wrought by the mighty operation of God, revealing Christ to and in thee, as having wholly freed thee from thy sins by his most precious blood. Which faith, if thou attain unto, will so work in thy heart, that first thou wilt see the nature of the law, and

[secondly] also the nature of the gospel, and delight in the glory of it; and also thou wilt find an engaging of thy heart and soul to Jesus Christ, even to the giving up of thy whole man unto him, to be ruled and governed by him to his glory, and thy comfort, by the faith of the same Lord Jesus.

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