RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. *Dr. Bates' Account of the Author, and this useful Treatise, in his Sermon at Mr. Baxter's Funeral.——He thus says:*

"His Books of Practical Divinity have been effectual for more conversions of sinners to God than any printed in our time; and while the Church remains on earth, will be of continual efficacy to recover lost souls. There is a vigorous pulse in them that keeps the Reader awake and attentive. His *Call to the Unconverted:* how small in bulk, but how powerful in virtue? Truth speaks in it with that authority and efficacy, that it makes the Reader to lay his hand upon his heart, and find that he has a soul and a conscience; though he lived before as if he had none. He told some friends that six brothers were converted by reading that *Call*, and that every week he received letters of some being converted by his books. This he spake with most humble thankfulness that God was pleased to use him as an instrument for the salvation of souls.

2. *Dr. Calamy's Account of this Treatise. His words are,*

"In 1657 Mr. *Baxter* published a *Call to the Unconverted;* a book blessed by God with marvellous success in reclaiming persons from their impieties. Twenty thousand of them were printed and dispersed in little more than a year. It was translated into *French* and *Dutch*, and other *European* languages; and Mr. *Elliott* translated it into the *Indian* language; and Mr. *Cotton Mather*, in his life, gives an account of an *Indian* Prince, who was so well affected with this book, that he sat reading it with tears in his eyes till he died."

CALL

TO THE WORK.

UNCONVERTED,

TO TURN AND LIVE:

AND

ACCEPT OF MERCY, WHILE MERCY MAY BE HAD, AS EVER THEY WILL FIND MERCY IN THE DAY OF THEIR EXTREMITY, FROM THE LIVING GOD.

By the Rev. and Pious

MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

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I

1. Dr. B.

THE

REASON OF THIS WORK.

In that ſhort acquaintance I had with that reverend learned ſervant of Chriſt, Biſhop Uſher, he has often, from firſt to laſt, been importuning me to write a Directory for the ſeveral ranks of profeſſed Chriſtians, which might diſtinctly give each one their portion; beginning with the Unconverted, and then proceeding to the babes in Chriſt, and then to the Strong, and mxing ſome ſpecial helps againſt the ſeveral ſins that they are addicted to. By the ſuddenneſs of his motion at our firſt congreſs, I perceived it was on his mind before: and I told him, both that it was abundantly done by many already, and that his unacquaintedneſs with my weakneſs, might make him think me fitter for it than I was. But this did not ſatisfy him, but ſtill he made it his requeſt. I confeſs I was not moved by his reaſons, nor did I apprehend any great need of doing more than is done in that way; nor that I was likely to do more: And therefore I parted from him without the leaſt purpoſe to anſwer his deſire. But ſince his death his words often came into my mind, and the great reverence I bore him, did the more incline me to think with ſome complacency of his motion. And having of late intended to write a

Family Directory, I began to apprehend how congruouſly the forementioned work ſhould lead the way; and the ſeveral conditions of men's ſouls be ſpoken of, before we come to the ſeveral relations. Hereupon I reſolved, by God's aſſiſtance, to proceed in order following:

Firſt, To ſpeak to the Impenitent Unconverted ſinners, who are not yet ſo much as purpoſing to turn, or at leaſt are not ſetting about the work. And with theſe I thought a wakening perſuaſive was a more neceſſary means than mere directions. For directions ſuppoſe men willing to obey them: but the perſons we have firſt to deal with, are wilful and faſt aſleep in ſin, and as men that are paſt feeling, having given themſelves over to ſin with greedineſs, Eph. iv. 19. My next work muſt be for thoſe that have ſome purpoſes to turn, and are about the work, to direct for a thorough and true converſion that they miſcarry not in the birth. The third part muſt be directions for the younger and weaker ſort of Chriſtians, that they may be eſtabliſhed, built up and perſevere. The fourth part, Directions for lapſed and backſliding Chriſtians, for their ſafe recovery. Beſides theſe, there is intended ſome Perſuaſions and Directions againſt ſome ſpecial errors of the times, and againſt ſome common killing ſins; as for directions to doubting troubled conſciences, that is done already. And the ſtrong I ſhall not write directions for, becauſe they are ſo much taught in God already. And then the laſt part is intended more eſpecially for

Families; as ſuch, directing the ſeveral Relations in their Duty; ſome of theſe are already written: whether I ſhall have life and leiſure for the reſt, God only knoweth. And therefore I ſhall publiſh the ſeveral parts by themſelves as I write them: and the rather becauſe they are intended for men of different ſtates, and becauſe I would not deter them by the bulk or price, from reading what is written for their benefit.

The uſe that this part is publiſhed for is, 1. For Maſters and Parents to read often in their Families, if they have ſervants or children that are yet Unconverted. 2. For all ſuch unconverted perſons to read and conſider of themſelves. 3. For the richer ſort that have any pity for ſuch miſerable ſouls, to give to the unſanctified that need them, (if they have not fitter at hand to uſe or give.)

The Lord awaken us to work, while it is day, for the ſaving of our own and others ſouls, in ſubſerviency to the bleſſed God, the Maker, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of Souls.

RICHARD BAXTER.

A

CALL

TO THE

UNCONVERTED.

EZEK. xxii. 11.

Say unto them, As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?

IT hath been the aſtoniſhing wonder of many a man as well as me, to read in the holy Scriptures how few will be ſaved, and that the greateſt part even of thoſe that are *called*, will be everlaſtingly ſhut out of the kingdom of Heaven, and be tormented with the Devils in Eternal fire. Infidels believe not this when they read it, and therefore they muſt feel it; thoſe that do believe it, are forced to cry out with Paul, Rom. xi. 13. "O the depth of the riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out!" But Nature itſelf doth teach us all to lay the blame of evil works upon the doers; and therefore when we ſee any heinous thing done, a principle of juſtice doth

provoke us to enquire after him that did it, that the evil of the work may return the evil of ſhame upon the author. If we ſaw a man killed and cut in pieces by the way, we would preſently aſk, Oh! who did this cruel deed? If the town was wilfully ſet on fire, you would aſk, What wicked wretch did this? So when we read that the moſt will be firebrands of Hell forever, we muſt needs think with ourſelves, How comes this to paſs? and who is it long of? Who is it that is ſo cruel as to be the cauſe of ſuch a thing as this? and we can meet with few that will own the guilt. It is indeed confeſt by *all, that Satan* is the cauſe; but that doth not reſolve the doubt, becauſe he is not the principal cauſe. He doth not force men to ſin, but tempts them to it, and leaves it to their own wills whether they will do it or not. He doth not *carry* men to an alehouſe and force open their mouths and pour in the drink; nor doth he hold them that they cannot go to God's ſervice; nor doth he force their hearts from holy thoughts. It lieth therefore between God himſelf and the ſinner; one of them muſt needs be the principal cauſe of all this miſery, which ever it is, for there is no other to call it upon and God diſclaimeth it, *he* will not take it upon him; and the *wicked* diſclaim it uſually, and they will not take it upon them, and this is the controverſy that is here managing in my text.

The Lord complaineth of the *People*, and the *People* think it is long of *God*. The ſame controverſy is handled, chap. xviii. verſe 25. they plainly ſay, "that the way of the Lord is not equal." So here they ſay, ver. 19, "if our tranſgreſſions and our ſins be upon us, and we pine away in them how ſhall we then live?" As if they ſhould ſay, If we muſt die, and be miſerable, how can we help it? as if it were not long of them, but God. But God, in my text, doth clear himſelf of it, and telleth them how they may help it if they will, and perſuadeth them to uſe

the means, and if they will not be perſuaded, he lets them know that it is long of themſelves; and if this will not ſatisfy them, he will not forbear to puniſh them. It is he that will be the Judge, and he will judge them according to their ways; they are no judge of him or of themſelves, as wanting authority, and wiſdom, and impartiality, nor is it the cavilling and quarrelling with God that ſhall ſerve their turn, or ſave them from the execution of juſtice which they murmur at.

The words of this verſe contain, 1. God's purgation or clearing himſelf from the blame of their deſtruction. This he doth not by diſowning his law, that *the wicked ſhall die*, nor by diſowning his judgments and execution according to that law, or giving them any hope that the law ſhall not be executed; but by profeſſing that it is not their death that he takes pleaſure in, but their *returning*, rather that they may live; and this he confirmeth to them by his oath. 2. An expreſs exhortation to the wicked to return; wherein God doth not only command, but perſuade and condeſcend alſo to reaſon the caſe with them. Why will they die? The direct end of this exhortation is, that they may turn and live. The ſecondary or reſerved ends upon ſuppoſition that this is not attained, are theſe two: Firſt to convince them by the means which he uſed, that it is not long of God if they be miſerable. Secondly to convince them from their manifeſt wilfulneſs in rejecting all his commands and perſuaſions, that it is long of themſelves, and they die, even becauſe they will die.

The ſubſtance of the text doth lie in theſe obſervations following:

Doct. 1. *It is the unchangeable Law of God, that wicked men muſt turn or die.*

Doct. 2. *It is the promiſe of God, that the wicked ſhall live if they will but turn.*

Doct. 3. *God takes pleaſure in men's converſion and*

Salvation, but not in their death or damnation; he had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

Doct. 4. *This is a most certain truth, which because God would not have men to question, he hath confirmed it to them solemnly by his oath.*

Doct. 5. *The Lord doth redouble his commands and persuasions to the wicked to turn.*

Doct. 6. *The Lord condescendeth to reason the case with them; and asketh the wicked why they will die?*

Doct. 7. *If after all this the wicked will not turn, it is not long of God that they perish, but of themselves; their own wilfulness is the cause of their own damnation; they therefore die because they will die.*

Having laid the text open before your eyes in these plain propositions, I shall next speak somewhat of each of them in order, though very briefly.

Doct. 1. *It is the unchangeable Law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.*

If you will believe God believe this: There is but one of these two ways for every wicked man, either conversion or damnation; I know the wicked will hardly be persuaded either of the truth or equity of this: No wonder, if the guilty quarrel with the law. Few men are apt to believe that which they would not have to be true, and fewer would have that to be true which they apprehend to be against them. But it is not quarrelling with the law, or with the judge, that will save the malefactor; believing and regarding the law might have prevented his death, but denying and accusing it will but hasten it. If it were not so, an hundred would bring their *reason against* the law, for one that would bring his reason to the law, and

men would rather choose to give their reasons why they should not be punished, than to hear the commands and reasons of their governors which require them to obey. The law was not made for you to judge, but that you might be ruled and judged by it.

But if there be any so blind as to venture to question either the truth or the justice of this Law of God, I shall briefly give you that evidence of both; which, methinks, should satisfy a reasonable man.

And first, if you doubt whether this be the word of God or not, besides an hundred other texts, you may be satisfied by these few.—Matth. xviii. 3. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John iii. 3. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 2 Cor. v. 17. "If a man be in Christ, he is a new creature; Old things are past away, behold all things are become new." Col. iii. 9, 10. "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness none shall see God." Rom. viii. 8, 9. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." 1 Pet. i. 3. "According to his abundant grace he hath begotten us to a lively hope." Ver. 23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speaking; as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." Psalm ix. 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Psalm xi. 4. "And

the Lord loveth the righteous, but the wicked his ſoul hateth."

As I need not ſtay to open theſe texts which are ſo plain, ſo I think I need not add any more of that multitude which ſpeak the like. If thou be a man that doſt believe the word of God, here is already enough to ſatisfy thee, that the wicked muſt be Converted or Condemned. You are already brought ſo far, that you muſt either confeſs that this is true, or ſay plainly, you will not believe the word of God. And if once you be come to that paſs, there is but ſmall hopes of you, look to yourſelves as well as you can, for it is like you will not be long out of hell. You would be ready to fly in the face of him that ſhould give you the lie; and yet dare you give the lie to God? But if you tell God plainly you will not believe him, blame him not if he never warn you more, or if he forſake you, and give you up as hopeleſs; for to what purpoſe ſhould he warn you, if you will not believe him? Should he ſend an angel from heaven to you, it ſeems you would not believe. For an angel can ſpeak but the Word of God; and if an angel ſhould bring you any other goſpel, you are not to receive it, but to hold him accurſed. Gal. i. 8. And ſurely there is no angel to be believed before the Son of God, who came from the Father to bring us this doctrine. If he be not to be believed, then all the angels in heaven are not to be believed. And if you ſtand on theſe terms with God, I ſhall leave you till he deal with you in a more convincing way. God hath a voice that will make you hear. Though he entreat you to hear the voice of his goſpel, he will make you hear the voice of his condemning ſentence, without intreaty: We cannot make you believe againſt your wills: But God will make you feel againſt your wills.

But let us hear, what reaſon you have, why will you not believe this Word of God, which tells us that the wicked muſt be "converted or condemned?"

I know your reaſon; it is becauſe that you judge it unlikely that God ſhould be ſo unmerciful: you think it cruelty to damn men everlaſtingly for ſo ſmall a thing as a ſinful life. And this leads us up to the ſecond thing, which is to juſtify the equity of God in his laws and judgments.

And firſt, I think you will not deny but that it is moſt ſuitable to an immortal ſoul, to be ruled by laws that promiſe an immortal reward and threaten an endleſs puniſhment. Otherwiſe the law ſhould not be ſuited to the nature of the ſubject, who will not be fully ruled by any lower means than the hopes or fears of everlaſting things: As it is in caſe of temporal puniſhment, if a law were now made that the moſt heinous crimes ſhall be puniſhed with an hundred years captivity, this might be of ſome efficacy, as being equal to our lives. But if there had been no other penalties before the flood, when men lived eight or nine hundred years, it would not have been ſufficient becauſe men would know that they might have ſo many hundred years impunity afterwards. So it is in our preſent caſe.

2. I ſuppoſe that you will confeſs that the promiſe of an endleſs and inconceivable glory is not ſo ſuitable to the wiſdom of God, or the caſe of man: And why then ſhould you not think ſo of the threatening of an endleſs and unſpeakable miſery!

3. When you find it in the Word of God that 'ſo it is,' and 'ſo it will be,' do ye think yourſelves fit to contradict this Word? Will you call your Maker to the bar, and examine his word upon the accuſation of falſehood? Will you ſit upon him, and judge him by the law of your conceits! Are you wiſer, and better, and more righteous than he? Muſt the God of Heaven come to ſchool to you to learn wiſdom? Muſt infinite wiſdom learn of folly, and infinite Goodneſs be corrected by a ſwiniſh ſinner, that cannot keep himſelf an hour clean? Muſt the Almighty ſtand at the

bar of a worm? Oh horrid arrogancy of ſenſeleſs duſt! ſhall ever mole, or clod, or dunghill, accuſe the ſun of darkneſs, and undertake to illuminate the world? Where were you when the Almighty made the laws, that he did not call you to his counſel; ſurely he made them before you were born, without deſiring your advice, and you came into the world too late for to reverſe them; if you could have done ſo great a work, you ſhould have ſtept out of your nothingneſs and have contradicted Chriſt when he was on earth, or Moſes before him, or have ſaved Adam and his ſinful progeny from the threatened death, that ſo there might have been no need of Chriſt! And what if God withdraw his patience and ſuſtentation, and let you drop into hell while you are quarrelling with his word, will you then believe that there is an hell?

4. If ſin be ſuch an evil that it requireth the Death of Chriſt for its expiation, no wonder if it deſerve our everlaſting miſery.

5. And if the ſin of the devils deſerved an endleſs torment, why not alſo the ſin of man?

6. And methinks you ſhould perceive that it is not poſſible for the beſt of men, much leſs for the wicked, to be competent judges of the deſert of ſin. Alas, we are all both blind and partial. You can never know fully the deſert of ſin, till you fully know the evil of ſin; and you can never fully know the evil of ſin, till you fully know, 1. The excellency of the ſoul which it deformeth. 2. And the excellency of holineſs which it doth obliterate. 3. And the reaſon and excellency of the law which it violateth. 4. The excellency of the glory which it doth deſpiſe. And 5. The excellency and office of reaſon which it treadeth down. 6. No, nor till you know the infinite excellency, almightineſs and holineſs of that God againſt whom it is committed. When you fully know all theſe, you ſhall fully know the deſert of ſin beſides. You know that the offender is too partial to judge the law, or the

proceeding of his judge. We judge by feeling, which binds our reaſon. We ſee in common worldly things that moſt men think the cauſe is right which is their own, and that all is wrong that's done againſt them; and let the moſt wiſe or juſt impartial friends perſuade them to the contrary, and it is all in vain. There are few children but think the father is unmerciful, or dealeth hardly with them if he whip them. There's ſcarce the vileſt ſwiniſh wretch but thinketh the church doth wrong him if they excommunicate him: or ſcarce a thief or murderer that is hanged, but would accuſe the law and judge of cruelty, if that would ſerve their turn.

7. Can you think that an unholy ſoul is fit for heaven? Alas, they cannot love God here, nor do him any ſervice which he can accept. They are contrary to God; they loath that which he moſt loveth, and love that which he abhorreth: They are incapable of that imperfect communion with him which his ſaints here do partake of. How then can they live in that perfect love of him, and full delights and communion with him, which is the bleſſedneſs of heaven? You do not accuſe yourſelves of unmercifulneſs, if you make not your enemy your boſom counſellor? or if you take not your ſwine to bed and board with you: no, nor if you take away his life, though he never ſinned; and yet will you blame the abſolute Lord, the moſt wiſe and gracious Sovereign of the world, if he condemn the unconverted to perpetual miſery.

USE.

I Beseech you now all that love your ſouls, that, inſtead of quarrelling with God and with his word, you will preſently ſtoop to it, and uſe it for your good. All you that are yet unconverted in this aſſembly, take this as the undoubted truth of God;

you muſt, ere long, be converted or condemned; there is no other way but turn or die. When God, that cannot lie, hath told you this; when you hear it from the Maker and Judge of the world, it is time for him that hath ears to hear; by this time you may ſee what you have to truſt to. You are but dead and damned men except you will be converted. Should I tell you otherwiſe I ſhould deceive you with a lie. Should I hide this from you, I ſhould undo you, and be guilty of your blood, as the verſes before my text aſſure me, verſe 8. "When I ſay to the wicked man, O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." You ſee then, though this be a rough and unwelcome doctrine, it is ſuch as we muſt preach and you muſt hear. It is eaſier to hear of hell than to feel it. If your neceſſities did not require it, we would not gall your tender ears with truths that ſeem ſo harſh and grievous. Hell would not be ſo full if people were but willing to know their caſe, and to hear and think of it. The reaſon why ſo few eſcape it is, becauſe they ſtrive not to enter in at the ſtrait Gate of Converſion, and go the narrow way of Holineſs while they have time: and they ſtrive not, becauſe they be not awakened to a lively feeling of the danger they are in; and they be not awakened becauſe they are loth to hear or think of it; and that is partly through fooliſh tenderneſs and carnal ſelf love, and partly becauſe they do not well believe the word that threateneth it. If you will not thoroughly believe this truth, methinks the weight of it ſhould force you to remember it, and it ſhould follow you, and give you no reſt till you are converted. If you had but once heard this word by the voice of an angel, "thou muſt be converted," or "condemned: turn, or die;" Would it not ſtick in your minds, and haunt you night and day? ſo that in your ſinning you would remember it,

as if the voice were ſtill in your ears: "turn, or die?" O happy were your ſouls if it might thus work with you, and never be forgotten, or let you alone till it have driven home your hearts to God.—But if you will caſt it out by forgetfulneſs or unbelief, how can it work to your converſion and ſalvation? But take this with you to your ſorrow, though you may put this out of your minds you cannot put it out of the Bible, but there it will ſtand as a ſealed truth, which you ſhall experimentally know forever, that there is no other way but "turn or die."

O what is the matter then that the hearts of ſinners be not pierced with ſuch a weighty truth? A man would think now that every unconverted ſoul that hears theſe words ſhould be pricked to the heart, and think with themſelves, 'this is my own caſe,' and never be quiet till they found themſelves converted. Believe it, Sirs, this drowſy careleſs temper will not laſt long. Converſion and condemnation are both of them awakening things, and one of them will make you feel ere long. I can foretel it as truly as if I ſaw it with my eyes, that either grace or hell will ſhortly bring theſe matters to the quick, and make you ſay, 'What have I done? what a fooliſh wicked courſe have I taken?' The ſcornful and the ſtupid ſtate of ſinners will laſt but a little while; as ſoon as they either turn or die, the preſumptuous dream will be at an end, and then their wits and feeling will return.

But I foreſee there are two things that are like to harden the unconverted, and make me loſe all my labour except they can be taken out of the way; and that is the miſunderſtanding of thoſe two words (The wicked) and (Turn.) Some will think to themſelves, it is true the wicked muſt turn or die; but what is that to me, I am not wicked, though I am a ſinner, as all men be: Others will think, 'it is true that we muſt turn from our evil ways, but I am turned long

ago, I hope this is not now to do.' And thus while wicked men think they are not wicked, but are already converted, we lose all our labour in persuading them to turn. I shall therefore before I go any further, tell you here who are meant by the wicked; and who they be that must turn or die; and also what is meant by turning, and who they be that are truly converted: And this I have purposely reserved for this place, preferring the method that fits my end.

And here you may observe, that in the sense of the text, a wicked man and a converted man are contraries. No man is a wicked man that is converted; and no man is a converted man that is wicked; so that to be a wicked man and to be an unconverted man, is all one; and therefore in opening one, we shall open both.

Before I can tell you what either wickedness or conversion is, I must go to the bottom and fetch up the matter from the beginning.

It pleased the great Creator of the World to make three sorts of living creatures: Angels he made pure spirits without flesh, and therefore he made them only for heaven, and not to dwell on earth. Brutes were made flesh without immortal souls, and therefore they were made only for earth, and not for heaven. Man is of a middle nature, between both, as partaking of both flesh and spirit, and therefore he was made both for heaven and earth. But as his flesh is made to be but a servant to his spirit, so is he made for earth but as his passage or way to heaven, and not that this should be his home or happiness. The blessed state that man was made for, was to behold the glorious majesty of the Lord, and to praise him among his Holy Angels, and to love him, and be filled with his love forever. And as this was the end that man was made for, so God did give him means that were fitted to the attaining of it. These means were principally two: For the right inclination and disposition of the

mind of man. Secondly, The right ordering of his life and practice. For the firſt, God ſuited the diſpoſition of man unto his end, giving him ſuch knowledge of God as was fit for his preſent ſtate, and an heart diſpoſed and inclined to God in holy love. But yet he did not ſin or confirm him in this condition, but, having made him a free agent, he left him in the hands of his own free will. For the ſecond, God did that which belonged to him; that is, he gave him a perfect law, required him to continue in the love of God and perfectly to obey him. By the wilful breach of this law, man did not only forfeit his hopes of everlaſting life, but alſo turned his heart from God, and fixed it on theſe lower fleſhly things, and hereby did blot out the ſpiritual image of God from his ſoul; ſo that man did both fall ſhort of the glory of God, which was his end, and put himſelf out of the way by which he ſhould have attained it, and this both as to the frame of his heart, and of his life. The holy inclination and love of his ſoul to God he loſt, and inſtead of it he contracted an inclination and love to the pleaſing of his fleſh, or carnal ſelf, by earthly things! growing ſtrange to God and acquainted with the creature: And the courſe of this life was ſuited to the bent and inclination of his heart; he lived to his carnal ſelf, and not to God; he ſought the creature for the pleaſing of his fleſh inſtead of ſeeking to pleaſe the Lord. With this nature or corrupt inclination we are all now born into the world; for "for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4. As a lion hath a fierce and cruel nature before he doth devour; and an adder hath a venomous nature before ſhe ſting, ſo in our infancy we have thoſe ſinful natures or inclinations, before we think, or ſpeak, or do amiſs, And hence ſpringeth all the ſin of our lives; and not only ſo, but when God hath of his mercy, provided us a remedy, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to be the Saviour of our ſouls, and bring us back to God again, we naturally

love our present state, and are loth to be brought out of it, and therefore are set against the means of our recovery, and though custom hath taught us to thank Christ for his good will, yet carnal self persuadeth us to refuse his remedies, and to desire to be excused when we are commanded to take the medicines which he offereth, and are called to forsake all and follow him to God and glory.

I pray you read over this leaf again, and mark it, for in these few words you have a true description of our natural state, and consequently of a wicked man; for every man that is in this state of corrupted nature is a wicked man, and in a state of death.

By this also you are prepared to understand what it is to be converted; to which end you must further know, that the mercy of God, not willing that man should perish in his sin, provided a remedy, by causing his Son to take our nature, and being, in one person, God and man, to become a Mediator between God and man, and by dying for our sins on the cross, to ransom us from the curse of God, and the power of the devil; and having thus redeemed us, the Father hath delivered us into his hands as his own. Hereupon the Father and the Mediator do make a new law and covenant for man, not like the first, which gave life to none but the perfectly obedient, and condemned man for every sin; but Christ hath made a Law of Grace, or a promise of Pardon and Everlasting Life to all that, by true repentance, and by faith in Christ, are converted unto God; like an act of oblivion, which is made by a prince to a company of rebels, on condition they will lay down arms and come in, and be loyal subjects for the time to come.

But, because the Lord knoweth that the heart of man is grown so wicked that, for all this, men will not accept of the remedy if they be left to themselves, therefore the Holy Ghost hath undertaken it as his office to inspire the Apostles and seal up the Scriptures

by miracles and wonders, and to illuminate and convert the ſons of the elect.

So that by this much you ſee, that as there are Three Perſons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, ſo each of theſe perſons have their ſeveral works, which are eminently aſcribed to them.

The Father's works were, to create us, to rule us, as his rational creatures, by the law of nature, and judge us thereby, and in mercy to provide us a Redeemer when we are loſt, and to ſend his Son and accept his ranſom.

The works of the Son, for us were theſe: To ranſom and redeem us by his ſuffering and righteouſneſs, to give out the promiſe or law of grace, and rule and judge the world as their Redeemer on terms of grace, and to make interceſſion for us that the benefits of his death may be communicated, and to ſend the Holy Ghoſt (which the Father alſo doth by the Son.)

The works of the Holy Ghoſt, for us, are theſe, to indite the holy Scriptures, by inſpiring and guiding the Apoſtles and ſealing the word, by his miraculous gifts and works, and the illuminating and exciting the ordinary miniſters of the goſpel, and ſo enabling them and helping them to publiſh that word; and by the ſame word illuminating and converting the ſouls of men. So that as you could not have been reaſonable creatures, if the Father had not created you, nor have had any acceſs to God if the Son had not redeemed you, ſo neither can you have a part in Chriſt, or be ſaved except the Holy Ghoſt do ſanctify you.

So that by this time you may ſee the ſeveral cauſes of this work: The Father ſendeth the Son, the Son redeemeth us and maketh the promiſe of grace: the Holy Ghoſt inditeth and ſealeth this goſpel; the Apoſtles are the ſecretaries of the ſpirit to write it; the preachers of the goſpel to proclaim it and perſuade them to open it; and the Holy Ghoſt doth make

their preaching effectual, by opening the hearts of men to entertain it. And all this to repair the image of God upon the ſoul, and to ſet the heart upon God again, and take it off the creature and carnal ſelf to which it is revolted, and ſo to turn the current of the life into an heavenly courſe, which before was earthly; and all this by the entertainment of Chriſt by faith, who is the phyſician of the ſoul.

By this which I have ſaid you may ſee what it is to be wicked, and what it is to be converted; which, I think, will be yet plainer unto you, if I deſcribe them as conſiſting of their ſeveral parts: And for the firſt, a wicked man may be known by theſe three things!

Firſt, He is one who placeth his chief content on earth, and loveth the creature more than God, and his fleſhly proſperity above the heavenly felicity: He favoureth the things of the fleſh, but neither diſcerneth nor favoureth the things of the ſpirit; though he will ſay, that heaven is better than earth, yet doth he not really ſo eſteem it to himſelf. If he might be ſure of earth, he would let go heaven, and had rather ſtay here than be removed thither. A life of perfect holineſs in the ſight of God, and in his love and praiſes for ever in heaven, doth not find ſuch liking with his heart as a life of health, and wealth, and honour here upon earth: And though he falſely profeſs that he loveth God above all, yet indeed he never felt the power of Divine Love within him, but his mind is more ſet on the world or fleſhly pleaſures than on God. In a word, whoever loveth earth above heaven, and fleſhly proſperity more than God, is a wicked unconverted man.

On the other ſide, a converted man is illuminated to diſcern the lovelineſs of God, and ſo far believeth the glory that is to be had with God, that his heart is taken up to it and ſet more upon it than any thing in this world. He had rather ſee the face of God,

and live in his everlasting love and praises, than have all the wealth or pleasure of the world. He seeth that all things else are vanity, and nothing but God can fill the soul; and therefore let the world go which way it will, he layeth up his treasures and hopes in heaven, and for that he is resolved to let go all. As the fire doth mount upward, and the needle that is touched with the loadstone still turneth to the north, so the converted soul is inclined unto God. Nothing else can satisfy him: nor can he find any content and rest but in his love. In a word, all that were converted do esteem and love God better than all the world, and the heavenly felicity is dearer to them than their fleshly prosperity. The proof of what I have said you may find in these places of Scripture, Phil. iii. 18, 21. Matth. vi. 19, 20, 21. Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Rom. viii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 18, 23. Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Secondly, A wicked man is one that maketh it the principal business of his life to prosper in the world, and retain his fleshly ends. And though he may read, and hear, and do much in the outward duties of religion, and forbear disgraceful sins, yet this is all but on the by, and he never makes it the trade and principal business of his life to please God and attain everlasting glory, and puts off God with the leavings of the world, and gives him no more service than that the flesh can spare, for he will not part with all for heaven.

On the contrary, a converted man is one that makes it the principal care and business of his life to please God, and to be saved, and takes all the blessings of this life but as accommodations in his journey towards another life, and useth the creature in subordination unto God; he loveth an holy life, and longeth to be more holy; he hath no sin but what he hateth and longeth and prayeth, and striveth to be rid of it. The drift and bent of his life is for God, and if he sin, it is

contrary to the very bent of his heart and life, and therefore he rifes again and lamenteth it, and dare not wilfully live in any known fin. There is nothing in this world fo dear to him but he can give it up to God, and forfake it for him and the hopes of glory. All this you may fee in Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Matth. vi. 20, 33. Luke xviii. 22, 23, 29. Luke xiv. 18, 24, 26, 27. Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 24. Luke xii. 21, &c.

Thirdly, the foul of a wicked man did never truly difcern and relifh the myftery of redemption, nor thankfully entertain an offered Saviour, nor is he taken up with the love of the Redeemer, nor willing to be ruled by him as Phyfician of his foul, that he may be faved from the guilt and power of his fins, and recovered unto God; but his heart is infenfible of this unfpeakable benefit, and is quite againft the healing means by which he fhould be recovered. Though he may be willing to be carnally religious, yet he never refigneth up his foul to Chrift, and to the motions and conduct of his word and fpirit.

On the contrary, the converted foul having felt himfelf undone by fin, and perceiving that he hath loft his peace with God and hopes of heaven, and is in danger of everlafting mifery, doth thankfully entertain the tidings of redemption, and believing in the Lord Jefus as his only Saviour, refigneth up himfelf to him for wifdom, righteoufnefs, fanctification, and redemption. He taketh Chrift as the life of his foul, and liveth by him, and ufeth him as a falve for every fore, admitting the wifdom and love of God in this wonderful work of man's redemption. In a word, Chrift doth even dwell in their heart by faith, and the life that he now liveth is by the faith of the Son of God, that hath loved him, and gave himfelf for him, yea, it is not fo much he that liveth, as Chrift in him. For thefe, fee Job i. 11, 12. and iii. 19, 20. Rom. viii. 9. Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9, 10. Gal. ii. 20. Job xv. 2, 3, 4. 1 Cor. i. 20. and ii. 2.

You ſee now in plain terms, from the Word of God, who are the wicked and who are the converted. Ignorant people think, that if a man be no ſwearer, nor curſer, nor railer, nor drunkard, nor fornicator, nor extortioner, nor wrong any body in their dealings, and if they come to church and ſay their prayers, theſe cannot be wicked men. Or if a man that hath been guilty of drunkenneſs, ſwearing or gaming, or the like vices, do but forbear them for the time to come, they think that this is a converted man. Others think if a man that hath been an enemy, and ſcorner at Godlineſs, do but approve it, and be hated for it by the wicked, as the godly are, that this muſt needs be a converted man. And ſome are ſo fooliſh as to think that they are converted, by taking up ſome new and falſe opinion; and falling into ſome dividing party, as Anabaptiſts, Quakers, Papiſts or ſuch like. And ſome think, if they have but been affrighted by the fears of hell, and had convictions, and gripes of conſcience; and thereupon have purpoſed, and promiſed amendment, and take up a life of civil behaviour, and outward religion, that this muſt needs be true converſion. And theſe are the poor deluded ſouls that are like to loſe the benefit of all our perſuaſions: and when they hear that the wicked muſt turn or die, they think that this is not ſpoken to them; for they are not wicked but are turned already. And therefore it is that Chriſt told ſome of the rulers of the Jews who were greater and civiler than the common people, that "publicans and harlots do go into the kingdom of Chriſt before them," Mat. xxi. 31. Not that an harlot or groſs ſinner can be ſaved without converſion; but becauſe it was eaſier to make theſe groſs ſinners perceive their ſin and miſery, and the neceſſity of a change, when the civiler ſort do delude themſelves by thinking that they are converted already, when they be not.

O Sirs, converſion is another kind of work than moſt

are aware of: It is not a ſmall matter to bring an earthly mind to heaven, and to ſhew man the amiable excellencies of God, till he be taken up in ſuch love to him that can never be quenched; to break the heart for ſin, and make him fly for refuge unto Chriſt, and thankfully embrace him as the life of his ſoul; to have the very driſt and bent of the heart and life to be changed; ſo that a man renounceth that which he took for his felicity, and placeth his felicity where he never did before; and liveth not to the ſame end, and driveth not on the ſame deſign in the world, as formerly he did: In a word, he that is in Chriſt is a "new creature: old things are paſt away, behold all things are become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. He hath a new underſtanding, a new will and reſolution, new ſorrows, and deſires and love, and delight; new thoughts, new ſpeeches, new company (if poſſible) and a new converſation. Sin, that before was a jeſting matter with him is now ſo odious and terrible to him, that he flies from it as from death. The world that was ſo lovely in his eyes, doth now appear but as vanity and vexation; God, that was before neglected, is now the only happineſs of his ſoul: before he was forgotten, and every luſt preferred before him; but now he is ſet next the heart, and all things muſt give place to him: and the heart is taken up in the attendance and obſervance of him; and is grieved when he hides his face; and never thinks itſelf well without him. Chriſt himſelf that was wont to be ſlightly thought of is now his only hope and refuge, and he lives upon him as on his daily bread; he cannot pray without him, nor rejoice without him, nor think, nor ſpeak, nor live without him. Heaven itſelf, that before was looked upon but as a tolerable reſerve, which he hoped might ſerve his turn better than hell, when he could not ſtay any longer in the world, is now taken for his home, the place of his only hope and reſt, where he ſhall ſee, and love and praiſe that God that

hath his heart already. Hell, that did ſeem before but as a bugbear to frighten men from ſin, doth now appear to be a real miſery, that is not to be ventured on, nor jeſted with. The works of holineſs which before he was weary of, and ſeemed to be more ado than needs, are now both his recreation, and his buſineſs, and the trade that he lives upon. The Bible which was before to him but almoſt as a common book, is now as the law of God; as a letter written to him, and ſubſcribed with the name of the Eternal Majeſty, it is the rule of his thoughts, and words, and deeds; the commands are binding, the threats are dreadful, and the promiſes of it ſpeak life to his ſoul. The godly that ſeemed to him but like other men, are now the excellenteſt and happieſt on earth. And the wicked that were his play-fellows, are now his grief: and he that could laugh at their ſin, is readier now to weep for their ſin and miſery, Pſal. xvi. 3. and xv. 4. Phil. iii. 18. In ſhort he hath a new end in his thoughts, and a new way in his endeavours and therefore his heart and life is new. Before his carnal ſelf was his end: and his pleaſure and worldly profits and credit were his way: And now God and everlaſting glory is his end; and Chriſt, and the ſpirit and word, and ordinances. Holineſs to God, and righteouſneſs and mercy to men; theſe are his way. Before ſelf was the chiefeſt ruler, to which the matters of God and conſcience muſt ſtoop and give place; and now God, in Chriſt, by the ſpirit, word and miniſtry, is the chief ruler, to whom both ſelf, and all the matters of ſelf muſt give place. So that this is not a change in one or two, or twenty points, but in the whole ſoul, and the very end and bent of the converſation. A man may ſtep out of one path into another, and yet have his face the ſame way, and be ſtill going towards the ſame place, but it is another matter to turn quite back again, and take his journey the clean contrary way, to a contrary place. So it is here, a man may

turn from drunkenneſs to thriftineſs, and forſake his good fellowſhip, and other groſs diſgraceful ſins, and ſet upon ſome duties of religion, and yet be ſtill going to the ſame end as before, intending his carnal ſelf above all, and giving it ſtill the government of his ſoul, but when he is converted, this ſelf is denied, and taken down, and God is ſet up, and his face is turned the contrary way: and he that before was addicted to himſelf, and lived to himſelf, is now by ſanctification, devoted to God, and liveth unto God: before he aſked himſelf, what he ſhould do with his time, his parts, and his eſtate, and for himſelf he uſed them: but now he aſketh God what he ſhall do with them, and uſeth them for him. Before he would pleaſe God ſo far as might ſtand with the pleaſure of his fleſh, and carnal ſelf: but not to any great diſpleaſure of them. But now he will pleaſe God, let fleſh, and ſelf be never ſo much diſpleaſed. This is the great change that God will make upon all that ſhall be ſaved.

You can ſay, that the Holy Ghoſt is our ſanctifier, but do you know what ſanctification is? Why this is it that I have now opened to you; and every man and woman in the world muſt have this, or be condemned to everlaſting miſery. They muſt turn or die.

Do you believe all this, Sirs, or do you not? Surely you dare not ſay, you do not: For it is paſt a doubt or denial: Theſe are not controverſies, where one learned pious man is of one mind, and another of another; where one party ſaith this, and the other ſaith that. Papiſts and Anabaptiſts and every ſect among us, that deſerve to be called Chriſtians, are all agreed in this that I have ſaid, and if you will not believe the God of Truth, and that in a caſe where every ſect and party do believe him, you are utterly inexcuſable.

But if you do believe this, how comes it to paſs that you live ſo quietly in an unconverted ſtate? do you know that you are converted? And can you find this wonderful change upon your ſouls? Have you been

thus born again and made anew? Be not these strange matters to many of you, and such as you never felt upon yourselves? if you cannot tell the day or week of your change, or the very sermon that converted you; yet do you find that the work is done; and such a change indeed there is; and that you have such hearts as are before described: Alas, the most do follow their worldly business, and little trouble their minds with such thoughts. And if they be restrained from scandalous [illegible], and can say, "I am no whoremonger, nor thief, nor curser nor swearer, nor tippler, nor extortioner, I go to church and say my prayers," they think that this is true conversion, and they shall be saved as well as any. Alas, this is foolish cheating of yourselves. This is too much contempt of an endless glory; and too gross neglect of your immortal souls. Can you make so light of heaven and hell? Your corpse will shortly lie in the dust, and angels or devils will presently seize upon your souls, and every man or woman of you all, will shortly be among other company, and in another case than now you are; you will dwell in those houses but a little longer; you will work in your shops and fields but a little longer; you will sit in these seats and dwell on this earth but a little longer; you will see with these eyes, and hear with those ears, and speak with those tongues but a little longer, till the resurrection day; and can you make shift to forget this? O what a place will you shortly be in of joy or torment! O what a sight will you shortly see in heaven or hell! O what thoughts will shortly fill your hearts with unspeakable delight or horror! What work will you be employed in! to praise the Lord with saints and angels, or to cry out in fire unquenchable with devils; and should all this be forgotten? And all this will be endless, and sealed up by an unchangeable decree. Eternity, eternity will be the measure of your joys or sorrows, and can this be forgotten: And all this is true, Sirs, most cer-

tainly true; When you have gone up and down a little longer, and ſlept and awakened a few times more, you will be dead and gone, and find all true that now I tell you, and yet can you now ſo much forget it! You ſhall then remember that you heard this ſermon, and that this day or this place, you were remembered of theſe things; and perceive them matters a thouſand times greater than either you or I could here conceive; and yet ſhall they be now ſo much forgotten?

Beloved friends, if the Lord had not awakened me to believe and lay to heart theſe things myſelf, I ſhould have remained in the dark and ſelfiſh ſtate, and have periſhed for ever; but if he have truly made me ſenſible of them, it will conſtrain me to compaſſionate you as well as myſelf. If your eyes were ſo far opened as to ſee hell, and you ſaw your neighbours, that were unconverted, dragged thither with hideous cries; though they were ſuch as you accounted honeſt people on earth, and feared no ſuch matter by themſelves, ſuch a ſight would make you go home and think of it, and think again, and make you warn all about you, as that damned worldling in Luke xvi. 28. would have had his brethren, warned, leſt they come to that place of torment. Why, faith is a kind of ſight; it is the eye of the ſoul, the evidence of things not ſeen; If I believe God, it is next to ſeeing: And therefore I beſeech you excuſe me, if I be half as earneſt with you about theſe matters, as if I had ſeen them. If I muſt die to-morrow, and it were in my power to come again from another world, and tell you what I had ſeen, would you not be willing to hear me? And would you not believe, and regard what I ſhould tell you? If I might preach one ſermon to you after I am dead, and have ſeen what is done in the world to come, would you not have me plainly ſpeak the truth, and would you not croud to hear me, and would you not lay it to heart? But this muſt not be; God hath his appointed way of teaching you by Scripture and Mini-

ſters, and he will not humour unbelievers ſo far as to ſend men from the dead to them, and to alter his eſtabliſhed way; if any man quarrel with the ſun, God will not humour him ſo far as to ſet up a clearer light. Friends, I beſeech you regard me now, as you would do if I ſhould come from the dead to you; for I can give you as full aſſurance of the truth of what I ſay to you, as if I had been there and ſeen it with my eyes; for it is poſſible for one from the dead to deceive you; but Jeſus Chriſt can never deceive you; the Word of God delivered in ſcripture, and ſealed up by miracles, and holy workings of the Spirit, can never deceive you. Believe this or believe nothing. Believe and obey this or you are undone. Now as ever you believe the word of God, and as ever you care for the ſalvation of your ſouls, let me beg of you this reaſonable requeſt, and I beſeech you deny me not: That you would without any more delay when you are gone from hence, remember what you heard, and enter into an earneſt ſearch of your hearts, and ſay unto yourſelves—It is ſo indeed! Muſt I turn or die! Muſt I be converted or condemned! It is time for me then to look about me before it be too late. O why did not I look after this till now? Why did I venturouſly poſt off or ſtubber over ſo great a buſineſs? Was I awake, or in my wits? O bleſſed God, what a mercy it is that thou didſt not cut off my life all this while, before I had any certain hope of Eternal Life! Well, God forbid that I ſhould neglect this work any longer. What ſtate is my ſoul in? Am I converted, or am I not? Was ever ſuch a change or work done upon my ſoul? Have I been illuminated by the word and ſpirit of the Lord, to ſee the odiouſneſs of ſin, the need of a Saviour, the love of Chriſt, and the excellencies of God and Glory? Is my heart broken, or humbled within me for my former life? Have I thankfully entertained my Saviour and Lord, that offered himſelf with pardon and life for my ſoul? Do I hate my former ſinful life, and the remnant of

every ſin that is in me? Do I fly from them as my deadly enemies? Do I give up myſelf to a life of holineſs and obedience to God? Do I love it, and delight in it? Can I truly ſay that I am dead to the world and carnal ſelf, and that I live for God and the glory which he hath promiſed? Hath heaven more of my eſtimation and reſolution than earth? And is God the dereſt and higheſt in my ſoul? Once, I am ſure, I lived principally to the world and fleſh, and God had nothing but ſome heartleſs ſervices, which the world could ſpare, and which were the leaving of the fleſh. Is my heart now turned another way? Have I a new deſign and a new end, and a new train of holy affections? Have I ſet my hopes and heart in heaven? And is it not the ſcope, and deſign, and bent of my heart, and to get well to heaven and ſee the glorious face of God and live in his love and praiſe? And when I ſin is it againſt the habitual bent and deſign of my heart? And do I conquer all groſs ſins, and am I weary and willing to be rid of my infirmities. This is the ſtate of unconverted ſouls. And this muſt be with me, or I muſt periſh. Is it thus with me indeed, or is it not? It is time to get this doubt reſolved before the dreadful judge reſolve it. I am not ſuch a ſtranger to my own heart and life, but I may ſomewhat perceive whether I am thus converted or not: If I be not, It will do me no good to flatter my ſoul with falſe conceits and hopes. I am reſolved no more to deceive myſelf; but endeavour to know truly off or on, whether I be converted, yea or no: that if I be, I may rejoice in it, and glorify my gracious Lord, and comfortably go on till I reach the Crown: and if I am not, I may ſet myſelf on, beg and ſeek after the grace that ſhould convert me, and may turn without any more delay: For, if I find in time that I am out of the way, by the help of Chriſt I may turn and be recovered, but if I ſtay till either my heart be forſaken of God in blindneſs or hardneſs, or till I be catched away by death, it is

then too late. There is no place for repentance and conversion then; I know it must be now or never.

Sirs, this is my request to you, that you will but take your hearts to task, and thus examine them till you see, if it may be, whether you are converted or not? And if you cannot find it out by your own endeavours, go to your ministers, if they be faithful and experienced men, and desire their assistance. The matter is great, let not bashfulness, nor carelessness hinder you. They are set over you, to advise you, for the saving of your soul, as physicians advice you for the curing of your bodies. It undoes many thousands that they think they are in the way to salvation, when they are not; and think that they are converted when it is no such thing. And then when we call to them daily to turn, they go away as they came; and think that this concerns not them; for they are turned already, and hope they shall do well enough in the way that they are in, at least if they do pick the fairest path, and avoid some of the foulest steps, when, alas, all this while they live but to the world, and flesh, and are strangers to God and eternal life; and are quite out of the way to heaven. And all this is much because we cannot persuade them to a few serious thoughts of their condition, and spend a few hours in the examining of their states: Is there not many a self deceiving wretch that hears me this day, that never bestowed one hour, or quarter of an hour in all their lives, to examine their souls, and try whether they are truly converted or not? O merciful God, that will care for such wretches that care no more for themselves, and that will do so much to save them from hell, and help them to heaven, who will do so little for it themselves! If all that are in the way to hell, and in the state of damnation, did but know it, they durst not continue in it. The greatest hope that the devil hath of bringing you to damnation without a rescue, is by keeping you blindfold, and ignorant of

your ſtate, and making you believe that you may do well enough in the way that you are in. If you knew that you were out of the way to heaven, and were loſt for ever if you ſhould die as you are; durſt you ſleep another night in the ſtate that you are in? Durſt you live another day in it? Could you heartily laugh, or be merry in ſuch a ſtate! What! And not know but you may be ſnatched away to hell in an hour! Sure it would conſtrain you to forſake your former company, and courſes; and to betake yourſelves to the ways of holineſs, and the communion of the ſaints. Sure it would drive you to cry to God for a new heart, and to ſeek help of thoſe that are fit to counſel you. There are none of you ſure *that cares not* for being damned. Well, then, I beſeech you preſently make enquiry into your hearts, and give them no reſt till you find out your condition, that if it be good, you may rejoice in it, and go on; and if it be bad, you may preſently look about you for recovery, as men that believe they muſt *turn* or *die*. What ſay you, Sirs! Will you reſolve and promiſe to be at thus much labour for your own ſouls? Will you fall upon this ſelf-examination when you come home? Is my requeſt unreaſonable? Your conſciences know it is not. Reſolve on it then, before you ſtir; knowing how much it concerneth your ſouls. I beſeech you for the ſake of that God that doth command you, at whoſe bar you will ſhortly all appear; that you will not deny me this reaſonable requeſt. For the ſake of thoſe ſouls that muſt *turn* or *die*, I beſeech you deny me not; even but to make it your buſineſs to underſtand your own conditions, and build upon ſure ground, and know, off or on, whether you are converted or no; and venture not your ſouls on negligent ſecurity.

But perhaps you will ſay, What if we ſhould find ourſelves yet unconverted, what ſhall we do then? This queſtion leadeth me to my ſecond Doctrine;

which will do much to the anſwering of it, to which I ſhall now proceed.

Doct. 2. *It is the promiſe of GOD, that the wicked ſhall Live, if they will but Turn, Unfeignedly and Thoroughly Turn.*

THE Lord here profeſſeth that this is it that he takes pleaſure in, that the wicked *turn and live.* Heaven is made as ſure to the converted, as hell is to the unconverted. *Turn and live*, is as certain a truth as *Turn or die.* God was not bound to provide us a Saviour, nor open to us a Door of Hope, nor call us to Repent and Turn, when once we had caſt ourſelves away by ſin. But he hath freely done it to magnify his mercy: Sinners, there are none of you ſhall have cauſe to go home, and ſay I preach deſparation to you. Do we uſe to ſhut the door of mercy againſt you? O that you would not ſhut it up againſt yourſelves? Do we uſe to tell you that God will have no mercy on you, though you turn and be ſanctified? When did you ever hear a preacher ſay ſuch a word? You that bark at the preachers of the goſpel for deſiring to keep you out of hell, and ſay, that they preach deſparation; tell me if you can, when did you ever hear any ſober man ſay, That there is no hope for you though you repent, and be converted? No, it is the clean contrary that we daily proclaim from the Lord; and whoever is born again: and by faith and repentance doth become a new creature, ſhall certainly be ſaved; and ſo far are we from perſuading you to deſpair of this, that we perſuade you not to make any doubt of it. It is life, not death, that is the firſt part of our meſſage to you; our commiſſion is to offer ſalvation; certain ſalvation; a ſpeedy, glorious, everlaſting ſalvation, to every one of you: To the pooreſt beggar, as well as the greateſt lord; to the worſt of you, even to drunkards, ſwearers,

worldlings, thieves, yea to the despisers and reproachers of the holy way of salvation. We are commanded by the Lord our Master, to offer you a pardon for all that is past, if you will but now at last return and live; we are commanded to beseech and intreat you to accept the offer, and return to tell you what preparation is made by Christ; what mercy stays for you; what patience waiteth on you; what thoughts of kindness God hath towards you; and how happy, how certainly and unspeakably happy you may be if you will. We have indeed also a message of wrath and death: yea, of a two-fold wrath and death; but neither of them is our principal message: We must tell you of the wrath that is on you already, and the death that you are born under, for the breach of the law of works; but this is but to shew you the need of mercy, and to provoke you to esteem the Grace of the Redeemer. And we tell you nothing but the truth which you must know; for who will seek out for physic, that knows not that he is sick? Our telling you of your misery, is not it that makes you miserable, but driveth you out to seek for mercy. It is you that have brought this death upon yourselves. We tell you also of another death, even remediless, and much greater torment, that will fall on those that will not be converted. But as this is true, and must be told you; so it is but the last and saddest part of our message. We are first to offer you mercy, if you will turn; and it is only those that will not turn, nor hear the voice of Mercy, that we must foretell damnation to. Will you but cast away your transgressions, delay no longer, but come away at the call of Christ, and be converted, and become new creatures, and we have not a word of damning wrath, or death to speak against you. I do here, in the name of the Lord of Life, proclaim to you all that hear me this day, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation, if you will but turn. There is mercy in God, there

is ſufficiency in the ſatisfaction of Chriſt, the promiſe is free, and full, and univerſal; you may have life, if you will but turn. But then, as you love your ſouls, remember what turning it is that Scripture ſpeaks of. It is not to mend the old houſe, but to pull down all, and build anew, on Chriſt the Rock and ſure Foundation. It is not to mend ſomewhat in a carnal courſe of life, but to mortify the fleſh, and live after the Spirit. It is not to ſerve the fleſh and the world, in a more reformed way, without any ſcandalous diſgraceful ſins, and with a certain kind of religiouſneſs; but it is to change your maſter, and your works, and end; and to ſet your face the contrary way, and do all for the life that you never ſaw; and dedicate yourſelves, and all you have, to God. This is the change that muſt be made, if you will live.

Yourſelves are witneſſes now, that it is ſalvation, and not damnation, that is the great doctrine I preach to you; and the firſt part of my meſſage to you. Accept of this, and we ſhall go no further with you; for we would not ſo much as affright, or trouble you with the name of damnation, without neceſſity.

But if *you* will not be ſaved, there is no remedy, but damnation muſt take place. For there is no middle place between the two: You muſt have either life or death.

And we are not only to offer you life, but to ſhew you the grounds on which we do it, and call you to believe that God doth mean, indeed, as he ſpeaks; that the promiſe is true, and extendeth conditionally to *you*, as well as others; and that heaven is no fancy, but a true felicity.

If you aſk, Where is your commiſſion for this offer? Among an hundred texts of ſcripture, I will ſhew it unto you in theſe few.

Firſt, you ſee it here in my text, and the following verſes; and in the 18th of Ezek. as plain as can be ſpoken; and in 1 Cor. v. 17. xviii. 16. xx. 21. you

have the very ſum of our commiſſion; *If any man be in Chriſt he is a new creature; old things are paſt away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf; not imputing their treſpaſſes to them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation: Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconciled unto God; for he hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.* So Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go ye into the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature; he that believeth,* (that is, with ſuch a converting faith as is expreſſed) *and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved: and he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* And Luke xxiv. 46, 47. *Thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day, and that repentance* (which is converſion) *and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name among all nations.* And Acts v. 30, 31. *The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree, him hath God exalted with his right-hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins.* And Acts xiii. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, That through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins; and by him all that believe, are juſtified from all things, from which you could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.* And leſt you think this offer is reſtrained to the Jews, ſee Gal. vi. 15. *For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature.* And Luke xiv. 17. *Come, for all things are now ready.* And ver. 22, 24.

You ſee by this time that we are commanded to offer life to you all, and to tell you from God, that if you will *turn*, you may *live*.

Here you may ſafely truſt your ſouls; for the Love of God is the fountain of this offer, John iii. 16. and the Blood of the *Son* of God hath purchaſed it; the faithfulneſs and truth of God is engaged to make the promiſe good; miracles oft ſealed up the truth of it; preachers are ſent through the world to proclaim it; the ſacraments are inſtituted and uſed for the ſolemn delivery of the mercy offered to them that will accept it; and the ſpirit doth open the heart to entertain it, and is itſelf the earneſt of the full poſſeſſion. So that the truth of it is paſt controverſy, that the worſt of you all, and every one of you, if you will but be *converted*, may be *ſaved*.

Indeed, if you will needs believe that you ſhall be ſaved without *converſion*, then you believe a falſehood; and if I ſhould preach that to you, I ſhould preach a lie: This were not to believe God, but the devil and your own deceitful hearts. God hath his promiſe of life, and the devil hath his promiſe of life. God's promiſe is, *Return and live:* The devil's promiſe is, *You ſhall live whether you turn or not.* The words of God are, as I have ſhewed you, *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xviii. 3. *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 3, 5. *Without holineſs none ſhall ſee God*, Heb. xii. 14. The devil's word, *You may be ſaved without being born again and converted, you may do well enough without being holy, God doth but frighten you, he is more merciful than to do as he ſaith, he will be better to you than his word.* And alas, the greateſt part of the world believe this word of the devil, before the word of God; juſt as our firſt ſin and miſery came into the world. God ſaid to our firſt parents, *If ye eat ye ſhall die:* And the devil contradicted him, and ſaith, *Ye ſhall not die*; and the woman believeth the devil before God. So now the Lord ſaith, *Turn or die:* And the devil ſaith, *You ſhall not die, if you do but*

cry God's mercy at laſt, and give over the acts of ſin when you can practiſe it no longer. And this is the word that the world believes. O heinous wickedneſs, to believe the devil before God!

And yet that is not the worſt; but blaſphemouſly they call this *a Believing and Truſting in God*, when they put him in the ſhape of *Satan*, who was a liar from the beginning; and when they believe that the Word of God is a lie, they call this a *Truſting God*, and ſay they believe in him, and truſt on him for ſalvation: Where did ever God ſay, That the unregenerate, unconverted, unſanctified, ſhall be ſaved? Shew ſuch a word in ſcripture. I challenge you if you can. Why this is the *devil's* word, and to believe it is to believe the *devil*, and the ſin that is commonly called *preſumption*; and do you call this a *Believing and Truſting in God?* There is enough in the Word of God to comfort and ſtrengthen the hearts of the ſanctified; but not a word to ſtrengthen the hands of wickedneſs, nor to give men the leaſt hope of being ſaved, though they be never ſanctified.

But if you will *turn*, and come into the way of mercy, the mercy of the Lord is ready to entertain you. Then truſt God for ſalvation, boldly and confidently; for he is engaged by his word to ſave you. He will be a father to none but his children, and he will ſave none but thoſe that forſake the world, the devil, and the fleſh, and come into his family to be members of his Son, and have communion with his ſaints. But if they will not come in, it is long of themſelves: His doors are open; he keeps none back; he never ſent ſuch a meſſenger as this to any of you; 'It is now too late: I will not receive thee, though thou be converted.' He *might* have done ſo, and done you no wrong; but he *did* not: he *doth* not to this day: He is ſtill ready to receive you, if you were but ready unfeignedly, and with all all your hearts to *turn*. And the fulneſs of this truth will yet more *appear* in the two

following Doctrines, which I shall therefore next proceed to, before I make any further application of this.

Doct. 3. *God taketh Pleasure in Mens Conversion and Salvation, but not in their Death or Damnation: He had rather they would Return and Live, than go on and Die.*

I SHALL first teach you how to understand this, and then clear up the truth of it to you:

And for the first, you must observe these following things; 1. A *simple willingness or complacency* is the first act of the *will* following the *simple apprehension* of the *understanding*, before it proceedeth to compare things together; but the *choosing* act of the *will* is a following act, and supposeth the *comparing practical* act of the *understanding*, and these two acts may often be carried to *contrary* objects, without any fault at all in the person.

2. An unfeigned willingness may have divers degrees; some things I am so far willing of as that I will do all that lyeth in my power to accomplish it, and some things I am truly willing *another* should do, when yet I will not do all that ever I am able to procure it, having many reasons to dissuade me therefrom, though yet I will do all that belongs to me to do.

3. The will of a *Ruler, as such*, is manifested in *making and executing laws*; but the will of a *man* in his *simple natural capacity*, or as *absolute lord* of his *own*, is manifested in desiring or resolving of *events*.

4. A ruler's will, as *law giver*, is first and principally that his *laws be obeyed*, and not at all that the penalty be executed on any, but only on supposition that they *will not obey his people*; but a *ruler's* will, as judge, supposeth the law already either kept or broken, and therefore he resolveth our reward or punishment accordingly.

Having given you thoſe neceſſary diſtinctions, I ſhall next apply them to the caſe in hand, in theſe following propoſitions:

1. It is the *gloſs* of the *word and creatures*, that in this life we muſt know God, and ſo according to the nature of man we aſcribe to him *underſtanding and will*, removing all the imperfections that we can, becauſe we are capable of no higher poſitive conceptions of him.

2. And on the ſame grounds we do, with the ſcripture, *diſtinguiſh* between the *acts of God's will*, as diverſified from the reſpects or the objects, though as to God's *eſſence* they are all one.

3. And the bolder, becauſe that when we ſpeak of Chriſt, we have the more ground for it from his human nature.

4. And thus we ſay, that the *ſimple complacency, will* or *love* of God *is* to all that is *naturally* or *morally good*, according to the *nature* and *degree* of its goodneſs, and ſo he hath pleaſure in the converſion and ſalvation of all, which yet will never come to paſs.

5. And God, as *Ruler* and *Law-giver* of the world, had ſo far a *practical will* for their ſalvation, as to make them a free *deed of gift of Chriſt and Life*, and an act of oblivion for all their ſins, ſo be it they will not unthankfully reject it, and to command his meſſengers to offer this gift to all the world, and perſuade them to accept it. And ſo he doth *all* that, *as Law-giver or Promiſer*, belongs to him to do for their ſalvation.

6. But yet he reſolveth, as *Law-giver*, that they that will not turn ſhall die; and as *Judge*, when their day of grace is paſt, he will execute that decree.

7. So that he thus unfeignedly willeth the converſion of thoſe that never will be converted, but not as *abſolute Lord* with the *fulleſt efficacious reſolution*, nor as a thing which he reſolveth ſhall undoubtedly come to paſs, or would engage all his power to accompliſh.

It is in the power of a prince to ſet a guard upon a murderer, to ſee that he ſhall not murder and be hanged; but if, upon good reaſon, he forbear this, and do but ſend to his ſubjects, and warn and intreat them not to be murderers, I hope he may well ſay that he would not have them murder and be hanged; he takes no pleaſure in it, but rather that they forbear and live; and if he do more for ſome, upon ſome ſpecial reaſon, he is not bound to do ſo by all. The King may well ſay to all murderers and felons in the land, 'I have no pleaſure in your death, but rather that you would obey my laws and live; but if you will not, I am reſolved, for all this, that thou ſhalt die.' The Judge may truly ſay to the thief, or a murderer, 'Alas man, I have no delight in thy death; I had rather thou hadſt kept the law and ſaved thy life; but ſeeing thou haſt not, I muſt condemn thee, or elſe I ſhould be unjuſt.' So though God have no *pleaſure* in your *damnation*, and therefore calls upon you to *return and live*, yet he hath *pleaſure of the demonſtration of his own juſtice*, and the executing his laws, and therefore he is, for all this, fully reſolved, that if you *will not be converted*, you ſhall be condemned. If God were ſo much againſt the death of the wicked, as that he were reſolved to do all that he can to hinder it, then no man ſhould be condemned, whereas Chriſt telleth you, that few will be ſaved. But ſo far God is againſt your damnation, as that he will teach you, and warn you, and ſet before you life and death, and offer you your choice, and command his Miniſters to intreat you not to damn yourſelves, but accept his mercy, and ſo to leave you without excuſe; but if this will not do, and if ſtill you be unconverted, he profeſſeth to you, he is reſolved of your damnation, and hath commanded us to ſay to you in his name, verſe 8. *O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die!* And Chriſt hath little leſs than ſworn it, over and over, with a *verily, verily, except ye be converted, and born again, ye cannot enter*

into the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. Mark that he ſaith [*you cannot*] It is in vain to hope for it, and in vain to dream that God is willing of it; for it is a thing that cannot be.

In a word, you ſee then the meaning of the text, that God, the great Lawgiver of the world, doth take no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn and live; though yet he be reſolved that none ſhall live but thoſe that turn; and as a Judge even delighteth in juſtice, and manifeſting his hatred of ſin, though not in their miſery which they have brought upon themſelves, in itſelf conſidered.

2. And for the proofs of the point, I ſhall be very brief in them, becauſe I ſuppoſe you eaſily believe it already.

1. The very gracious nature of God proclaimed; Exod. xxiv. 6. and xxvi. 6. and frequently elſewhere, may aſſure you of this; that he hath no pleaſure in your death.

2. If God had more pleaſure in thy death, than in thy converſion and life, he would not have ſo frequently commanded thee in his word, to turn; he would not have made thee ſuch promiſes of life, if thou wilt but turn; he would not have perſuaded thee to it by ſo many reaſons. The tenor of his goſpel proveth the point.

3. And his commiſſion that he hath given to the Miniſters of the goſpel, doth fully prove it. If God had taken more pleaſure in thy damnation, than in thy converſion and ſalvation, he would never have charged us to offer you mercy, and to teach you the way of life, both publicly, and privately; and to intreat, and beſeech you to turn and live; to acquaint you with your ſins, and fore-tell you of your danger; and to do all that poſſibly we can for your converſion, and to continue patiently ſo doing, though you ſhould hate or abuſe us for our pains. Would God have done

this, and appointed his ordinances for your good, if he had taken pleaſure in your death?

4. It is proved alſo by the courſe of his providence. If God had rather you were damned than converted and ſaved, he would not ſecond his word with his works, and entice you by his daily kindneſs to himſelf, and give you all the mercies of this life, which are his means *to lead you to repentance*, Rom. ii. 4. and bring you ſo often under his rod to force you into your wits, he would not ſet ſo many examples before your eyes, no nor wait on you ſo patiently as he doth from day to day, and year to year. Theſe be not ſigns of one that taketh pleaſure in your death. If this had been his delight, how eaſily could he have had thee long ago in hell? How oft, before this, could he have catched thee away in the midſt of thy ſins with a curſe, or oath, or lie in thy mouth, in thy ignorance, and pride, and ſenſuality? When thou wert laſt in thy drunkenneſs, or laſt deriding the ways of God, how eaſily could he have ſtopt thy breath, and tamed thee with his plagues, and made the ſober in another world! Alas, how ſmall a matter is it for the Almighty to rule the tongue of the prophaneſt railer, and tie the hands of the moſt malicious perſecutor, or calm the fury of the bitterest of his enemies, and make them know that they are but worms? If he would but frown upon thee thou wouldſt drop into thy grave. If he gave commiſſion to one of his angels to go and deſtroy ten thouſand ſinners, how quickly would it be done! how eaſily can he lay thee upon the bed of languiſhing, and make thee lie roaring there in pain, and make thee eat the words of reproach which thou haſt ſpoken againſt his ſervants, his word, his worſhip, and his holy ways, and make thee ſend to beg their prayers whom thou didſt deſpiſe in thy preſumption? How eaſily can he lay that fleſh under gripes and groans, and make it too weak to hold thy ſoul, and make it more loathſome than the dung of the earth? That fleſh which

now muſt have what it loves, and muſt not be diſpleaſed, though God be diſpleaſed, and muſt be humoured in meat, and drink, and cloaths, whatever God ſay to the contrary, how quickly would the frowns of God conſume it? When thou was paſſionately defending thy ſin, and quarrelling with them that would have drawn thee from it, and ſhewing thy ſpleen againſt the reprover, and pleading for the works of darkneſs; how eaſily could God have ſnatched thee away in a moment, and ſet thee before his dreadful Majeſty, where thou ſhouldſt ſee ten thouſand times ten thouſand glorious angels waiting on his throne, and have called thee there to plead thy cauſe, and aſked thee, 'What haſt thou now to ſay againſt thy Creator, his truth, his ſervants, or his holy ways? Now plead thy cauſe, and make the beſt of it thou canſt? Now what canſt thou ſay in excuſe of thy ſins? Now give account of thy worldlineſs and fleſhly life, of thy time, of all the mercies thou haſt had.' O how thy ſtubborn heart would have melted, and thy proud looks be taken down, and thy countenance be appalled, and thy ſtout words turned into ſpeechleſs ſilence, or dreadful cries, if God had but ſet thee thus at his bar, and pleaded his own cauſe with thee, which thou haſt here ſo maliciouſly pleaded againſt! How eaſily can he at any time ſay to thy guilty ſoul, *come away and live in that fleſh no more till the reſurrection*, and it cannot reſiſt. A word of his mouth would take off the poiſe of thy preſent life, and then all thy parts and powers would ſtand ſtill; and if he ſay unto thee, *live no longer*, or *live in hell*, thou couldſt not diſobey.

But God hath yet done none of this, but hath patiently forborn thee, and mercifully upheld thee, and give thee that breath, which thou didſt breathe out againſt him, and give thoſe mercies which thou didſt ſacrifice to thy fleſh, and afforded thee that proviſion which thou ſpenteſt to ſatisfy thy greedy throat: he gave thee every minute of that time which thou didſt

waſte in idleneſs, or drunkenneſs, or worldlineſs; and doth not all his patience and mercy ſhew that he deſired not thy damnation? Can the candle burn without the oil? Can your houſes ſtand without the earth to bear them? as well as you can live an hour without the ſupport of God. And why did he ſo long ſupport thy life, but to ſee when thou wouldſt bethink thee of the folly of thy ways, and return and live? Will any man purpoſely put arms into his enemies hands to reſiſt him, or hold a candle to a murderer that is killing his children, or to an idle ſervant that plays or ſleeps the while? Surely it is to ſee whether thou wilt at laſt return and live, that God hath ſo long waited on thee.

5. It is further proved by the ſufferings of his Son, that God taketh no pleaſure in the death of the wicked: Would he have ranſomed them from death at ſo dear a rate? Would he have aſtoniſhed angels and men by his condeſcenſion? Would God have dwelt in fleſh, and have come in the form of a ſervant, and have aſſumed humility into one perſon with the Godhead? and would Chriſt have lived a life of ſuffering, and died a curſed death for ſinners, if he had rather taken pleaſure in their death? Suppoſe you ſaw him but ſo buſy in preaching and healing of them, as you find him in Mark iii. 21. or ſo long in faſting as in Matt. iv. or all night in prayer, as in Luke vi. 12. or praying with the drops of blood trickling from him inſtead of ſweat, as Luke xxii. 44. or ſuffering a curſed death upon the croſs and pouring out his ſoul as a ſacrifice for our ſins. Would you have thought theſe the ſigns of one that delighteth in the death of the wicked!

And think not to extenuate it by ſaying, that it was only for his elect; for it was thy ſin, and the ſin of all the world that lay upon our Redeemer, and his ſacrifice and ſatisfaction is ſufficient for all, and the fruits of it are offered to one as well as another; but it is

true, that it was never the intent of his mind to pardon and ſave any that would not by faith and repentance be converted. If you had ſeen and heard him weeping and bemoaning the ſtate of diſobedience in impenitent people, Luke xix. 41, 42. or complaining of their ſtubbornneſs, as Matt. xxiii. 37. *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?* Or if you had ſeen and heard him on the croſs, praying for his perſecutors *(Father forgive them, for they know not what they do)* would you have ſuſpected that he had delighted in the death of the wicked; even of thoſe that periſh by their wilful unbelief? When *God hath ſo loved* (not only loved, but *ſo loved) as to give his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him,* (by an effectual faith) *ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life:* I think he hath hereby proved againſt the malice of men and devils, that he takes no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but had rather that they would *turn* and *live.*

6. Laſtly, If all this will not yet ſatisfy you, take his own word, that knoweth beſt his own mind, or at leaſt believe his oath: but this leadeth me up to the fourth doctrine.

Doct. 4. *The Lord hath confirmed to us by his Oath, that he hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn and live: that he may leave Man no pretence to queſtion the truth of it.*

If you dare queſtion his word, I hope you dare not queſtion his oath. As Chriſt hath ſolemnly proteſted that the unregenerate and unconverted cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. So God hath ſworn that his pleaſure is not in their death, but in their converſion and life. And as the Apoſtle ſaith, Heb. vi. 13, 16, 17, 18.

Becauſe he can ſwear by no greater than himſelf, he ſaith, *As I live*, &c. 'For men verily ſwear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of ſtrife: wherein God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lie, we might have ſtrong conſolation, who had fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us, which we have as an anchor of the ſoul both ſure and ſtedfaſt.' If there be any man that cannot reconcile this truth with the doctrine of predeſtination, or the actual damnation of the wicked, that is his own ignorance; he hath no pretence left to queſtion or deny therefore the truth of the point in hand; for this is confirmed by the oath of God, and therefore muſt not be diſtorted, to reduce it to other points: but doubtful points muſt rather be reduced to it, and certain truths muſt be believed to agree with it, though our ſhallow brains do hardly diſcern the agreement.

USE.

I DO now intreat thee, if thou be an unconverted ſinner that heareſt theſe words, that thou wouldſt ponder a little upon the forementioned doctrines, and bethink thyſelf awhile, who it is that takes pleaſure in thy ſin, and damnation? Certainly, it is not God: he hath ſworn for his part, that he takes no pleaſure in it. And I know it is not the pleaſing of him that you intend. You dare not ſay, that you drink, and ſwear, and neglect holy duties, and quench the motions of the ſpirit, to pleaſe God. That were as if you ſhould reproach the prince, and break his laws, and ſeek his death, and ſay, you did all this to pleaſe him.

Who is it then that takes pleaſure in your ſin and

death? Not any that bear the image of God, for they muſt be like minded to him. God knows, it is ſmall pleaſure to your faithful teachers to ſee you ſerve your deadly enemy, and madly venture your eternal ſtate, and wilfully run into the flames of hell. It is ſmall pleaſure to them to ſee upon your ſouls (in the ſad effects) ſuch blindneſs, and hard heartedneſs, and careleſſneſs, and preſumption; ſuch wilfulneſs in evil and ſuch unteachableneſs and ſtiffneſs againſt the ways of life and peace; they know theſe are marks of death, and of the wrath of God, and they know from the word of God what is like to be the end of them, and therefore it is no more pleaſure to them, than to a tender phyſician to ſee the plague-marks broke out upon his patient. Alas, to foreſee your everlaſting torments, and know not how to prevent them! To ſee how near you are to hell, and we cannot make you believe it and conſider it. To ſee how eaſily, how certainly you might eſcape, if we knew but how to make you willing? How fair you are for everlaſting ſalvation, if you would but turn and do your beſt, and make it the care and buſineſs of your lives! but you will not do it; if our lives lay on it we cannot perſuade you to it. We ſtudy day and night what to ſay to you, that may convince you and perſuade you, and yet it is undone: we lay before you the word of God, and ſhew you the very chapter and verſe where it is written, that you cannot be ſaved except you be converted; and yet we leave the moſt of you as we find you: We hope you will believe the word of God, though you believe not us, and regard it when we ſhew you the plain ſcripture for it; but we hope in vain, and labour in vain as to any ſaving change upon your hearts. And do you think that this is a pleaſant thing to us: Many a time, in ſecret prayer, we are fain to complain to God with ſad hearts ('Alas, Lord, we have ſpoken it to them in thy name, but they little regard us: we have told them what thou bidſt us tell them concerning the

danger of an unconverted ſtate, but they do not believe us: we have told them that thou haſt proteſted that there is no peace to the wicked,' Iſa. xlviii. 2. and lvii. 21. 'But the worſt of them all will ſcarce believe that they are wicked; we have ſhewed them thy word, where thou haſt ſaid, that if they live after the fleſh they ſhall die,' Rom. viii. 13. 'But they ſay, they will believe in thee, when they will not believe thee, and that they will truſt in thee, when they give no credit to thy word; and when they hope that the threatenings of thy word are falſe, they will yet call this a hoping in God; and though we ſhew them where thou haſt ſaid, that when a wicked man dieth all his hopes periſh, yet cannot we perſuade them from their deceitful hopes,' Prov. xi. 7. 'We tell them what a baſe unprofitable thing ſin is, but they love it, and therefore will not leave it. We tell them how dear they buy this pleaſure, and what they muſt pay for it in everlaſting torment, and they bleſs themſelves and will not believe it, but will do as the moſt do; and becauſe God is merciful, they will not believe him, but will venture their ſouls, come on it what will. We tell them how ready the Lord is to receive them, and this doth but make them delay their repentance and be bolder in their ſin. Some of them ſay they purpoſe to repent, but they are ſtill the ſame; and ſome ſay they do repent already, while yet they are not converted from their ſins. We exhort them, we intreat them, we offer them our help, but we cannot prevail with them; but they that were drunkards, are drunkards ſtill; and they that were voluptuous fleſh-pleaſing wretches, are ſuch ſtill; and they that were worldlings, are worldlings ſtill; and they that were ignorant, and proud, and ſelf-conceited, are ſo ſtill. Few of them will ſee and confeſs their ſin, and fewer will forſake it, but comfort themſelves, that all men are ſinners, as if there were no difference between a converted ſinner and an unconverted: Some of them

will not come near us, when we are willing to inſtruct them, but they know enough already, and need not our inſtruction; and ſome of them will give us the hearing and do what they liſt; and moſt of them are like dead men that cannot feel; ſo that when we tell them of the matters of everlaſting conſequence, we cannot get a word of it to their hearts. If we do not obey them, and humour them in baptizing the children of the moſt obſtinately wicked, and giving them the Lord's Supper, and doing all that they would have us, though never ſo much againſt the Word of God, they will hate us, and rail at us; but if we beſeech them to confeſs, and forſake their ſin, and ſave their ſouls, they will not do it. We tell them, if they will but turn, we will deny them none of the Ordinances of God, neither baptiſm to their Children, nor the Lord's Supper to themſelves, but they will not hear us; they would have us to diſobey God, and damn our own ſouls, to pleaſe them; and yet they will not turn and ſave their own ſouls to pleaſe God. They are wiſer in their own eyes than all their teachers; they rage and are confident in their own way, and if we would never ſo fain we cannot change them. Lord, this is the caſe of our miſerable neighbours, and we cannot help it; we ſee them ready to drop into hell, and we cannot help it; we know if they would unfeignedly turn, they might be ſaved, but we cannot perſuade them; if we would beg it of them on our knees, we cannot perſuade them to it; if we would beg it of them with tears, we cannot perſuade them; and what more can we do?'

Theſe are the ſecret complaints and moans that many a poor miniſter is fain to make. And do you think that he hath any pleaſure in this? Is it a pleaſure to him to ſee you go on in ſin, and cannot ſtop you? to ſee you ſo miſerable, and cannot ſo much as make you ſenſible of it? to ſee you merry, when you are not ſure to be an hour out of hell? to think what you muſt

for ever ſuffer, becauſe you will not turn? and to think what an everlaſting life of glory you wilfully deſpiſe and caſt away? What ſadder thing can you bring to their hearts, and how can you deviſe to grieve them more?

Who is it then that you pleaſure by your ſin and death? It is none of your underſtanding godly friends. Alas, it is the grief of their ſouls to ſee your miſery, and they lament you many a time when you give them little thanks for it, and when you have not hearts to lament yourſelves.

Who is it then that takes pleaſure in your ſin? It is none but three great enemies of God, whom you renounced in your baptiſm, and now are turned falſely to ſerve.

1. The devil indeed takes pleaſure in your ſin and death: For this is the very end of all his temptations; for this he watches night and day; you cannot deviſe to pleaſe him better than to go on in ſin: How glad is he when he ſees thee going into the alehouſe, or other ſin, and when he heareth thee curſe, or ſwear, or rail? How glad is he when he heareth thee revile the Miniſter that would draw thee from thy ſin, and help to ſave thee? Theſe are his delight.

2. The wicked are alſo delighted in it, for it is agreeable to their nature.

3. But I know, for all this, that it is not the pleaſing of the Devil, that you intend, even when you pleaſe him; but it is your own fleſh, the greateſt and moſt dangerous enemy that you intend to pleaſe. It is the fleſh that would be pampered, that would be pleaſed in meat and drink, and cloathing; that would be pleaſed in your company, and pleaſed in applauſe and credit with the world, and pleaſed in ſports and luſts, and idleneſs; this is the gulph that devoureth all. This is the very God that you ſerve, (for the ſcripture ſaith of ſuch, *that their bellies are their gods*, Phil. iii.

18. But I beſeech you ſtay a little and conſider the buſineſs.

1. *Queſt.* Should your fleſh be pleaſed before your Maker? Will you diſpleaſe the Lord, and diſpleaſe your Teacher, and your godly Friends, and all to pleaſe your brutiſh appetites, or ſenſual deſires? Is not God worthy to be the Ruler of your fleſh? If he ſhall not rule it, he will not ſave it; you cannot in reaſon expect that he ſhould.

2. *Queſt.* Your fleſh is pleaſed with your ſin: but is your conſcience pleaſed? Doth not it grudge within you, and tell you ſometimes that all is not well, and that your caſe is not ſo ſafe as you make it to be; and ſhould not your ſouls and conſciences be pleaſed before that corruptible fleſh?

3. *Queſt.* But is not your fleſh preparing for its own diſpleaſure alſo? It loves the bait, but doth it love the hook? It loves the ſtrong drink and ſweet morſels; it loves its eaſe, and ſports, and merriment; it loves to be rich, and well ſpoken of by men, and to be ſome body in the world; but doth it love the curſe of God? Doth it love to ſtand trembling before his bar, and to be judged to everlaſting fire? Doth it love to be tormented with the Devils for ever? Take all together; for there is no ſeparating ſin, and hell, but only by faith and true converſion; if you will keep one, you muſt have the other. If death and hell be pleaſant to thee, no wonder then if you go on in ſin: But if they be not (as I am ſure they be not) then what if ſin were never ſo pleaſant, is it worth the loſs of life eternal? Is a little drink, or meat, or eaſe; is the good word of ſinners; is the riches of this world to be valued above the joys of heaven? Or are they worth the ſufferings of eternal fire? Sirs, theſe queſtions ſhould be conſidered before you go any further, by every man that hath reaſon to conſider, and that believes he hath a ſoul to ſave or loſe.

Well, the Lord here ſweareth that he hath no plea-

ſure in your death, but rather that you would turn and live; if yet you will go on and die rather than turn, remember it was not to pleaſe God that you did it: it was to pleaſe the world, and to pleaſe yourſelves. And if men will damn *themſelves to pleaſe themſelves*, and run into endleſs torments for delight, and have not the wit, the hearts, the grace, to hearken to God, or man, that would reclaim them, what remedy but they muſt take what they get by it, and repent it in another manner, when it is too late! Before I proceed any further in the application, I ſhall come to the next doctrine; which giveth me a fuller ground for it.

Doct. 5. *So earneſt is God for the converſion of ſinners, that he doubleth his commands, and exhortations with vehemency; Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?*

This doctrine is the application of the former, as by a uſe of exhortation, and accordingly I ſhall handle it. Is there ever an unconverted ſinner that heareth theſe vehement words of God. Is there ever a man or woman in this aſſembly that is yet a ſtranger to the renewing ſanctifying work of the Holy Ghoſt? (It is an happy Aſſembly, if it be not ſo with the moſt) hearken then to the voice of your Maker, and turn to him by Chriſt without delay. Would you know the will of God? Why this is his will, that you preſently turn. Shall the living God ſend ſo earneſt a meſſage to his creatures, and ſhould they not obey? 2. Hearken then all you that live after the fleſh; the Lord that gave thee thy breath and being, hath ſent a meſſage to thee from heaven; and this is his meſſage, *turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?* He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Shall the voice of the eternal Majeſty be neglected? If he do but terribly thunder, thou art afraid. O but this voice doth more nearly concern

thee. If he did but tell thee, thou ſhalt die to-morrow, thou wouldſt not make light of it. O but this word concerneth thy life or death everlaſting. It is both a command and an exhortation. As if he had ſaid to thee, ['I charge thee upon the allegiance that thou oweſt to me thy Creator and Redeemer, that thou renounce the fleſh, the world, and the Devil, and turn to me that thou mayeſt live. I condeſcend to intreat thee, as thou either loveſt or feareſt him that made thee; as thou loveſt thine own life, even thine everlaſting life, turn and live: as ever thou wouldſt eſcape eternal miſery, turn, turn, for why wilt thou die?'] And is there a heart in man, in a reaſonable creature, that can once refuſe ſuch a meſſage, ſuch a command, ſuch an exhortation as this! O what a thing then is the heart of man!

Hearken then all that love yourſelves, and all that regard your own ſalvation; here is the joyfulleſt meſſage that ever was ſent to the ears of man, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* You are not yet ſhut up under deſperation. Here is mercy offered you; turn and you ſhall have it. O Sirs, with what glad and joyful hearts ſhould you receive theſe tidings! I know this is not the firſt time that you have heard it; but how have you regarded it, or how do you regard it now? Hear all you ignorant, careleſs ſinners, the word of the Lord! Hear all you worldlings, you ſenſual fleſh-pleaſers; you gluttons, and drunkards, and whoremongers, and ſwearers; you railers and backbiters, ſlanderers and liars; *turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?*

Hear, all you cold and outſide profeſſors, and all that are ſtrangers to the life of Chriſt, and never knew the power of his croſs and reſurrection, and never felt your hearts warmed with his love, and live not on him as the ſtrength of your ſouls; *turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?*

Hear, all that are void of the love of God, whoſe

hearts are not toward him, nor taken up with the hopes of glory, but ſet more by your earthly proſperity and delights, than by the joys of heaven; all you that are religious but a little by the by, and give God no more than your fleſh can ſpare; that have not denied your carnal ſelves, and forſaken all that you have for Chriſt, in the eſtimation and grounded reſolution of your ſouls, but have ſome one thing in the world ſo dear to you, that you cannot ſpare it for Chriſt if he required it, but will rather venture on his diſpleaſure than forſake it; *turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?*

If you never heard it, or obſerved it before, remember that you were told from the word of God this day, that if you will but turn, you may live; and if you will not turn, you ſhall ſurely die.

What now will you do, ſirs? What is your reſolution? Will you turn, or will you not? Halt not any longer between two opinions: If the Lord be God, follow him: If your fleſh be God, then ſerve it ſtill. If heaven be better than earth and fleſhly pleaſures, come away then and ſeek a better country, and lay up your treaſure where ruſt and moths do not corrupt, and thieves cannot break through and ſteal, and be awakened at laſt with all your might, to ſeek the kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. and to employ your lives on a higher deſign, and turn the ſtream of your cares, and labours another way than formerly you have done. But if earth be better than heaven, or will do more for you, or laſt you longer; then keep it and make your beſt of it, and follow it ſtill. Sirs, are you reſolved what to do? if you be not, I will ſet a few more moving conſiderations before you, to ſee if reaſon will make you reſolve.

Conſider firſt, *what preparations mercy hath made for your ſalvation:* and what pity it is that any man ſhould be damned after all this. The time was, when the flaming ſword was in the way, and the curſe of

God's law would have kept thee back; if thou hadſt been never ſo willing to turn to God: The time was when thyſelf, and all the friends that thou haſt in the world, could never have produced thee the pardon of thy ſins paſt, though thou hadſt never ſo much lamented and reformed them. But Chriſt hath removed this impediment, by the reaſon of his blood. The time was that God was wholly unreconciled, as being not ſatisfied for the violation of his law: But now he is ſo far ſatisfied, and reconciled, as that he hath made thee a free act of oblivion, and a free deed of gift of Chriſt and life, and offereth it to thee, and intreateth thee to accept it, and it may be thine if thou wilt. For, *he was in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf, and hath committed to us the word of actual reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. Sinners, we are commanded to do this meſſage to you all, as from the Lord. (*Come, for all things are ready*, Luke xiv. 17.) Are all things ready, and are you unready? God is ready to entertain you, and pardon all that you have done againſt him, if you will but come. As long as you have ſinned, as wilfully as you have ſinned, he is ready to caſt all behind his back, if you will but come. Though you have been prodigals, and run away from God, and have ſtaid ſo long, he is ready even to meet you, and embrace you in his arms, and rejoice in your converſion, if you will but turn. Even the earthly worldling, and ſwiniſh drunkard, may find God ready to bid them welcome, if they will but come. Doth not this turn thy heart within thee? O ſinner, if thou have an heart of fleſh, and not of ſtone in thee, methinks this ſhould melt it. Shall the dreadful infinite Majeſty of heaven, even wait for thy returning, and be ready to receive thee, who haſt abuſed him, and forgotten him ſo long? Shall he delight in thy converſion, that might at any time glorify his juſtice in thy damnation, and yet doth it not melt thy heart within thee, and art thou not yet ready to come in? Haſt thou

not as much reaſon to be ready to come, as God hath to invite thee, and bid thee welcome?

But that is not all; Chriſt hath done his part on the Croſs, and made ſuch way for thee to the Father, that on his account thou mayeſt be welcome, if thou wilt come. And yet art thou not ready?

A pardon is already expreſsly granted, and offered thee in the Goſpel. And yet art thou not ready?

The Miniſters of the Goſpel are ready to aſſiſt thee, to inſtruct thee, and pronounce the abſolving words of peace to thy ſoul; they are ready to pray for thee, and to ſeal up thy pardon by the adminiſtration of the holy Sacrament, and yet art thou not ready?

All that fear God about thee, are ready to rejoice in thy converſion, and to receive thee into the Communion of Saints, and to give thee the right-hand of fellowſhip, yea, though thou hadſt been one that had been caſt out of their ſociety; they dare not but forgive where God forgiveth, when it is manifeſt to them by thy confeſſion and amendment; they dare not ſo much as hit thee in the teeth with thy former ſins, becauſe they know that God will not upbraid thee with them. If thou hadſt been never ſo ſcandalous, if thou wouldſt but heartily be converted and come in, they would not refuſe thee; let the world ſay what they would againſt it. And are all theſe ready to receive thee, and yet art thou not ready to come in?

Yea, Heaven itſelf is ready: the Lord will receive thee into the glory of his ſaints? as vile a beaſt as thou haſt been, if thou wilt but be cleanſed; thou mayeſt have a place before his throne: his angels will be ready to guard thy ſoul to the place of joy, if thou do but unfeignedly come in. And is *God ready, the ſacrifice of Chriſt ready, the promiſe ready, and pardon ready?* Are *miniſters ready, and the people of God ready, and heaven itſelf ready, and angels ready?* And all theſe but waiting for thy converſion; and yet art thou not ready? What not ready to live, when thou

haſt been dead ſo long? Not ready to come to thy right underſtanding, (as the prodigal is ſaid to *come to himſelf*, Luke xv. 17.) when thou haſt been *beſides thyſelf ſo long?* Not ready to be ſaved, when thou art even ready to be condemned. Art thou not ready to lay hold on Chriſt that would deliver thee, when thou art even ready to drown and ſink into damnation? Art thou not ready to be drawn from hell, when thou art even ready to be caſt remedileſsly into it? Alas, man! doſt thou know what thou doſt? If thou die unconverted, there is no doubt to be made of thy damnation: And thou art not ſure to live an hour: And yet art thou not ready to turn, and to come in; O miſerable wretch! Haſt thou not ſerved the fleſh and the devil long enough? Yet haſt thou not enough of ſin? Is it ſo good to thee, or ſo profitable for thee? Doſt thou know what it is, that thou wouldſt yet have more of it? Haſt thou had ſo many calls, and ſo many mercies, and ſo many blows, and ſo many examples? Haſt thou ſeen ſo many laid in the grave, and yet art thou not ready to let go thy ſins, and come to Chriſt? What! after ſo many convictions, and gripes of conſcience, after ſo many purpoſes and promiſes, art thou not yet ready to turn and live? O that thy eyes, thy heart were opened to know how fair an offer is now made to thee! and what a joyful meſſage it is that we are ſent on, to bid thee come, for all things are ready.

2. Conſider alſo what calls thou haſt to turn and live. How many, how loud, how earneſt, how dreadful: and yet what encouraging, joyful calls.

For the principal inviter, it is God himſelf. He that commandeth heaven and earth, commands thee to turn; and preſently without delay to turn: He commands the ſun to run its courſe, and to riſe upon thee every morning; and though it be ſo glorious a creature, and many a time bigger than all the earth, yet it obeyeth him, and faileth not one minute of its

appointed time. He commandeth all the planets, and the orbs of heaven, and they obey: He commandeth the ſea to ebb and flow, and the whole creation to keep its courſe, and all obey him: The angels of heaven obey his will, when he ſends them to miniſter to ſuch ſilly worms as we on earth, Heb. i. 14. And yet if he command but a ſinner to turn, he will not obey him; He only thinks himſelf wiſer than God, and he cavils and pleads the cauſe of ſin, and will not obey. If the Lord Almighty ſay the word, the heavens and all therein obey him: but if he call but a drunkard out of an ale-houſe, he will not obey; or if he call a worldly fleſhly ſinner to deny himſelf, and mortify the fleſh, and ſet his heart on a better inheritance, he will not obey.

If thou hadſt any love in thee, thou wouldſt know the voice, and ſay, *O this is my Father's call? How can I find in my heart to diſobey?* For the *ſheep* of Chriſt *do know and hear his voice, and they follow him, and he giveth them eternal life*, John x. 4. If thou hadſt any ſpiritual life and ſenſe in thee, at leaſt thou wouldſt ſay, *This call is the dreadful voice of God, and who dare diſobey?* For ſaith the prophet Amos iii. 8. *The lion hath roared, who will not fear?* God, is not a man, that thou ſhouldeſt dally, and play with him. Remember what he ſaid to Paul at his converſion, *It is hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks*, Acts ix. 5. Wilt thou yet go on and deſpiſe his word, and reſiſt his ſpirit, and ſtop thine ear againſt his call? Who is it that will have the worſt of this? Doſt thou know whom thou diſobeyeſt, and contendeſt with, and what thou art doing? It were a far wiſer, and eaſier taſk for thee to contend with the thorns, and ſpurn them with thy bare feet, and beat them with thy bare hands, or put thy head into the burning fire. *Be not deceived, God will not be mocked*, Gal. vi. 7. Whoever elſe be mocked, God will not: You had better play with the fire in your thatch, than with the fire of his burn-

ing wrath. *For our God is a consuming fire*, Heb. xii. 29. O how unmeet a match art thou for God! *It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands*, Heb. x. 31. And therefore it is a fearful thing to contend with him, or resist him. As you love your own souls, take heed what you do. What will you say, if he begin in wrath to plead with you? What will you do if he take you once in hand? Will you then strive against his judgment, as now ye do against his grace, saith the Lord, Isa. xxvii. 3, 6. *Fury is not in me:* (that is) I delight not to destroy you: I do it as it were unwillingly: but yet *who will set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.* It is an unequal combat for the briars and stubble to make war with the fire.

And thus you see, who it is that calleth you, that should move you to hear his call, and turn: so consider all by what instruments, and how often, and how earnestly he doth it.

1. Every leaf of the blessed book of God hath as it were a voice, and calls out unto thee, *Turn, and live; turn, or thou wilt die.* How canst thou open it, and read a leaf, or hear a chapter, and not perceive God bids thee turn?

2. It is the voice of every sermon that thou hearest: for what else is the scope and drift of all, but to call and persuade, and intreat thee for to turn.

3. It is the voice of many a motion of the spirit, that secretly speaks over these words again, and urgeth thee to turn.

4. It is likely sometime it is the voice of thy own conscience. Art thou not sometimes convinced that all is not well with thee? And doth not thy conscience tell thee that thou must be a new man, and take a new course, and often call upon thee to return?

5. It is the voice of the gracious examples of the godly: When thou seest them live an heavenly life,

and fly from the ſin which is thy delight, this really calls upon thee to turn.

6. It is the voice of all the works of God: For they alſo are God's books that teach thee this leſſon, by ſhewing thee his greatneſs and wiſdom, and goodneſs, and calling thee to obſerve them, and admire the Creator, Pſalm xiv. 1, 2. 'The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work: Day unto day uttereth ſpeech: Night unto night ſheweth knowledge.' Every time the ſun riſeth upon thee, it really calleth thee to turn, as if it ſhould ſay 'What do I travel and compaſs the world for, but to declare to men the glory of their Maker, and to light them to do his work? And do I ſtill find thee doing the work of ſin, and ſleeping out thy life in negligence? Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light,' Epheſ. v. 14. 'The night is ſpent, the day is at hand: It is now high time to awake out of ſleep: Let us therefore caſt off the works of darkneſs, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honeſtly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs, not in chambering and wantonneſs, not in ſtrife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make no proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſt thereof,' Rom. xiii. 11, 12, 13. 14. (This text was the means of Auſtin's converſion!)

7. It is the voice of every mercy thou doſt poſſeſs; if thou couldſt but hear and underſtand them, they all cry out unto thee, turn: Why doth the earth bear thee, but to ſeek and ſerve the Lord? Why doth it afford thee its fruits, but to ſerve him? Why doth the air afford thee breath, but to ſerve him? Why doth all the creatures ſerve thee with their labours and their lives, but that thou mighteſt ſerve the Lord of them and thee? Why doth he give thee time, and health, and ſtrength, but for to ſerve him? Why haſt thou meat, and drink, and cloaths, but for his ſervice? Haſt thou any thing which thou haſt not received, and if

thou didſt receive them, it is reaſon thou ſhouldſt bethink thee, from whom, and to what end and uſe thou didſt receive them? Didſt thou never cry to him for help in thy diſtreſs, and didſt thou not then underſtand that it was thy part to turn and ſerve him, if he would deliver thee? He hath done his part, and ſpared thee yet longer, and tryed thee another, and another year; and yet doſt thou not turn? You know the parable of the unfruitful fig-tree, Luke xvi. 6, 7, 8, 9. When the Lord had ſaid, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* he was intreated to try it one year longer, and then if it proved not fruitful, to cut it down. Chriſt himſelf there makes the application twice over, verſe 3 and 5. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* How many years hath God looked for the fruits of love and holineſs from thee, and hath found none, and yet he hath ſpared thee? How many a time by thy wilful ignorance, and careleſsneſs, and diſobedience, haſt thou provoked juſtice to ſay, *cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground?* And yet mercy hath prevailed, and patience hath forborne the killing, damning blow to this day. If thou hadſt the underſtanding of a man within thee, thou wouldſt know that all this calleth thee to turn. 'Doſt thou think thou ſhalt ſtill eſcape the judgment of God, or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart treaſureſt up unto thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds,' Rom. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

8. Moreover, it is the voice of every affliction to call thee to *make haſte and turn.* Sickneſs and pain cry turn; and poverty, and loſs of friends, and every twig of the chaſtiſing rod, cry turn, and yet wilt thou not hearken to the call? Theſe have come near thee, and

made thee feel; they have made thee groan, and can they not make thee turn?

9. The very frame of thy nature and being itſelf, beſpeaketh thy return? Why haſt thou reaſon, but to rule thy fleſh, and ſerve thy Lord? Why haſt thou an underſtanding ſoul but to learn and know his will and do it? Why haſt thou an heart within thee, that can love, and fear, and deſire, but that thou ſhouldſt fear him, and love him, and deſire after him?

10. Yea, thine own engagements by promiſe to the Lord, do call upon thee to turn and ſerve him. Thou haſt bound thyſelf to him by a baptiſmal covenant, and renounced the world, the fleſh and the devil: This thou haſt confirmed by the profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and renewed it at Sacraments, and in times of affliction; and wilt thou promiſe and vow, and never perform and turn to God?

Lay all theſe together now, and ſee what ſhould be the iſſue. The holy Scriptures calls upon thee to turn; the Miniſters of Chriſt do call upon thee to turn; the ſpirit cries turn; thy conſcience cries turn; the godly, by perſuaſions and examples, cry turn; the whole world, and all the creatures therein that are preſented to thy conſideration, cry turn; the patient forbearance of God, cries turn; all the mercies which thou received, cry turn; the rod of God's chaſtiſement, cries turn; thy reaſon, and the frame of thy nature beſpeaks thy turning; and ſo do all thy promiſes to God; and yet art thou not reſolved to turn?

3. Moreover, poor hard-hearted ſinner! Didſt thou ever conſider *upon what terms thou ſtandeſt all this while with him that calleth on thee for to turn?* Thou art his own, and oweſt him thyſelf, and all thou haſt; and may he not command his own? Thou art his abſolute ſervant, and ſhouldeſt ſerve no other maſter. Thou ſtandeſt at his mercy, and thy life is in his hand, and he is reſolved to ſave thee upon no other terms; thou haſt many malicious ſpiritual enemies, that would

be glad if God would but forſake thee, and let him alone with thee, and leave thee to their will; how quickly would they deal with thee in another manner? and thou canſt not be delivered from them but by turning unto God. Thou art fallen under his wrath by thy ſin already, and thou knoweſt not how long his patience will yet wait. Perhaps this is the laſt year; perhaps the laſt day; his ſword is even at thy heart, while the word is in thine ear; and if thou turn not, thou art a dead and undone man. Were thy eyes but open to ſee where thou ſtandeſt, even upon the brink of hell, and to ſee how many thouſands are there already that did not turn, thou wouldeſt ſee that it is time to look about thee.

Well, Sirs, look inwards now, and tell me, how are your hearts affected with thoſe offers of the Lord? You hear what is his mind; he delighteth not in your death; he calls to to you, *turn, turn:* it is a fearful ſign if all this move thee not, or if it do but half move thee, and much more if it make thee more careleſs in thy miſery, becauſe thou heareſt of the mercifulneſs of God. The working of the medicine will partly tell us whether there be any hope of the cure. O what glad tidings would it be to thoſe that are now in hell, if they had but ſuch a meſſage from God! what a joyful word would it be to hear this, *turn and live:* Yea, what a welcome word would it be to thyſelf, when thou haſt felt that wrath of God but an hour! Or, if after a thouſand or ten thouſand years torment, thou couldſt but hear ſuch a word from God, *turn and live*, and yet wilt thou neglect it, and ſuffer us to return without our errand?

Behold, ſinners, we are ſent here as the meſſengers of the Lord, to ſet before you life and death: What ſay you? which of them will you chooſe? Chriſt ſtandeth as it were by thee, with heaven in one hand, and hell in the other, and offereth thee thy choice, which wilt thou chooſe? *The voice of the Lord maketh the*

rocks to tremble, Pſal. xxvi. And is it nothing to hear him threaten thee, if thou wilt not turn? Doſt thou not underſtand and feel this voice, *turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* Why? It is the voice of love, of infinite love, of thy beſt and kindeſt friend, as thou mighteſt eaſily perceive by the motion, and yet canſt thou neglect it? It is the voice of pity and compaſſion. The Lord ſeeth whether thou art going better than thou doſt, which makes him call after thee, *turn, turn.* He ſeeth what will become of thee, if thou turn not: He thinketh with himſelf, 'Ah this poor ſinner will caſt himſelf into endleſs torments if he do not turn: I muſt in juſtice deal with him according to my righteous law,' and therefore he calleth after thee, *turn, turn.* O ſinner! If you did but know the thouſandth part as well as God doth, the danger that is near you, and the miſery that you are running into, we ſhould have no more need to call after you to turn.

Moreover, this voice that calleth to thee, is the ſame that hath prevailed with thouſands already, and called all to Heaven that are now there; and they would not now, for a thouſand worlds, that they had made light of it, and not turned to God. Now what are they poſſeſſing that turned at God's call? Now perceive that it was indeed the voice of love that meant them no more harm than their ſalvation, and if thou wilt obey the ſame call, thou ſhalt come to the ſame happineſs. There are millions that muſt for ever lament that they turned not; but there is never a ſoul in heaven that is ſorry that they were converted.

Well, ſirs, are you yet reſolved, or are you not? Do I need to ſay any more to you, what will you do? Will you turn or not? Speak man in thy heart to God, though you ſpeak not out to me: Speak, leſt he take thy ſilence for denial. Speak quickly, leſt he never make thee the like offer more. Speak reſolvedly, and not waveringly; for he will have no indifferents to be his followers. Say in thy heart now without any

more delay, even before thou ſtir hence, 'By the grace of God, I am reſolved preſently to turn. And becauſe I know my own inſufficiency, I am reſolved to wait on God for his grace, and to follow him in his ways, and forſake my former courſes and companions, and give up myſelf to the guidance of the Lord.'

Sirs, you are not ſhut up in the darkneſs of Heathenifm, nor in the deſperation of the damned; life is before you; and you may have it on reaſonable terms, if you will, yea on free-coſt if you will accept it. The way of God lieth plain before you; the church open to you, you may have Chriſt, and pardon, and holineſs, if you will. What ſay you? Will you, or will you not; If you ſay nay; or ſay nothing, and ſtill go on, God is witneſs, and this congregation is witneſs, and your own conſciences are witneſſes how fair an offer you had this day. Remember you might have had Chriſt, and would not; remember, when you have loſt it, that you might have had eternal life, as well as others, and would not: and all becauſe you would not turn!

But let us come to the next doctrine, and hear your reaſons.

Doct. 6. *The Lord condeſcendeth to reaſon the caſe with unconverted ſinners, and to aſk them why they will die?*

A STRANGE diſputation it is, both as to the controverſy, and as to the diſputants.

1. The controverſy, or queſtion propounded to diſpute of, is, *why wicked men will damn themſelves!* or, *why they will rather die than turn*, whether they have any ſufficient reaſon for ſo doing?

2. The diſputants are God and man; the moſt holy God, and wicked unconverted ſinners.

Is it not a ſtrange thing which God doth ſeem here

to ſuppoſe, that any man ſhould be willing to die, and be damned, yea, that this ſhould be the caſe of the wicked; that is, of the greateſt part of the world? but you will ſay, 'this cannot be; for nature deſireth the preſervation and felicity of itſelf; and the wicked are more ſelfiſh than others, and not leſs, and therefore how can any man be willing to be damned?'

To which I anſwer, 1. It is a certain truth that no man can be willing of any evil as evil, but only as it hath ſome appearance of good; much leſs can any man be willing to be eternally tormented. Miſery, as ſuch, is deſired by none. 2. But yet for all that, it is moſt true which God here teacheth us, that the cauſe why the wicked die and are damned, is becauſe *they will die and be damned.* And this is true in ſeveral reſpects.

1. Becauſe they will go the way that leads to hell; though they are told by God and man, whither it goes, and whither it ends; and though God hath ſo often profeſſed in his word, that if they hold on in that way, they ſhall be condemned; and that they ſhall not be ſaved, unleſs they turn, Iſa. xlviii. 22. and lvii. 21. [*There is no peace* (ſaith the Lord) *unto the wicked,* Iſa. lix. 8.] 'The way of peace they know not; there is no Judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths: Whoſoever goeth therein, ſhall not keep peace.' They have the word, and the oath of the living God for it, that if they will not turn, they ſhall not enter into his reſt. And yet, wicked they are, and wicked they will be, let God and man ſay what they will; fleſhly they are, and fleſhly they will be: Worldlings they are, and worldlings they will be, though God hath told them that *the love of the world is enmity to God, and that if any man love the world* (in that meaſure) *the love of the Father is not in him,* Jam. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. ſo that conſequentially theſe men are willing to be damned, though not directly; they are willing of the way to hell, and love the cer-

tain cauſe of their torment; though they be not willing of hell itſelf, and do not love the pain which they muſt endure.

Is not this the truth of your caſe, Sirs? You would not burn in hell, but you will kindle the fire by your ſins, and caſt yourſelves into it; you would not be tormented with devils for ever, but you will do that which will certainly procure it in deſpight of all that can be ſaid againſt it. It is juſt as if you would ſay, 'I will drink this ratſbane, or other poiſon, but yet I will not die. I will caſt myſelf headlong from the top of a ſteeple, but yet I will not kill myſelf: I will thruſt this knife into my heart, but yet I will not take away my life: I will put this fire into the thatch of my houſe, but yet I will not burn it.' Juſt ſo it is with wicked men, they will be wicked, and they will live after the fleſh, and the world, and yet they would not be damned. But do you not know that the means do lead unto the end? and that God hath, by his righteous law, concluded that ye muſt repent or periſh? He that will take poiſon, may as well ſay plainly, *I will kill myſelf*, for it will prove no better in the end; though perhaps he loved it for the ſweetneſs of the ſugar that was mixt with it; and would not be perſuaded that it was poiſon, but that he might take it and do well enough; but it is not his conceits and confidence that will ſave his life. So if you will be drunkards, or fornicators, or worldlings, or live after the fleſh, you may as well ſay plainly, *we will be damned*; for ſo you ſhall be unleſs you turn. Would you not rebuke the folly of a thief or murderer, that would ſay, *I will ſteal, and kill, but I will not be hanged*, when he knows that if he does the one, the judge in juſtice will ſee that the other be done? If he ſay, *I will ſteal and murder*, he may as well ſay plainly, *I will be hanged*; and if you will go on in a carnal life, you may as well ſay plainly, *we will go to hell.*

2. Moreover, *the wicked will not uſe thoſe means*

without which there is no hope of their ſalvation? He that will not eat, may as well ſay plainly he will not live, unleſs he can tell how to live without meat: He that will not go his journey, may as well ſay plainly, he will not come to the end: He that falls into the water, and will not come out, nor ſuffer another to help him out, may as well ſay plainly, he will be drowned. So if you be carnal and ungodly, and will not be converted, nor uſe the means by which you ſhould be converted, but think it more ado than needs, you may as well ſay plainly, you will be damned; for if you have found out a way to be ſaved without converſion, you have done that which was never done before.

3. Yea, this is not all, but the *wicked are unwilling, even of ſalvation itſelf*, though they may deſire ſomewhat which they call by the name of Heaven, yet heaven itſelf, conſidered in the true nature of the felicity, they deſire not; yea their hearts are quite againſt it. Heaven is a ſtate of perfect holineſs, and of continual love and praiſe to God, and the wicked have no heart to this. The imperfect love and praiſe, and holineſs which is here to be attained, they have no mind of; much leſs of that which is ſo much greater; the joys of Heaven are of ſo pure and ſpiritual a nature, that the heart of the wicked cannot truly deſire them.

So that by this time you may ſee on what ground it is that God ſuppoſeth that the wicked are willing of their own deſtruction: They will not turn, though they muſt turn or die; they will rather venture on certain miſery, than be converted; and then to quit themſelves in their ſins, they will make themſelves believe that they ſhall nevertheleſs eſcape.

2. And as this controverſy is matter of wonder (that ever men ſhould be ſuch enemies to themſelves, as wilfully to caſt away their ſouls) ſo are the diſputants too. That God ſhould ſtoop ſo low, as thus to plead the caſe with man, and that man ſhould be ſo ſtrangely blind and obſtinate, as to need all this in ſo

plain a caſe, yea and to reſiſt all this, when their own ſalvation lieth upon the iſſue.

No wonder if they will not hear us, that are men, when they will not hear the Lord himſelf: As God ſaith, Ezek. iii. 7. when he ſent the Prophet to the Iſraelites, [' The Houſe of Iſrael will not hearken unto thee: For they will not hearken unto me: For all the Houſe of Iſrael are impudent, and hard-hearted.'] No wonder if they can plead againſt a miniſter, or a godly neighbour, when they will plead againſt the Lord himſelf, even againſt the plaineſt paſſages of his word, and think that they have reaſon on their ſide: When they *weary the Lord with their words*, they ſay, *wherein have we wearied him?* Mal. ii. 17. The prieſts that deſpiſed his name, durſt aſk, 'wherein have we deſpiſed thy name?' And when they 'polluted his Altar, and made the Tables of the Lord contemptible,' they durſt ſay, 'wherein have we polluted thee,' Mal. i. 6, 7. But ['Wo unto him (ſaith the Lord) that ſtriveth with his Maker! Let the potſherds ſtrive with the potſherds of the earth; ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou?'] Iſa. xiv. 9.

Queſt. *But why is it that God will reaſon the caſe with man?*

Anſw. 1. Becauſe that man being a reaſonable creature, is accordingly to be dealt with; and by reaſon to be perſuaded, and overcome, God hath therefore endowed them with reaſon, that they might uſe it for him. One would think a reaſonable creature ſhould not go againſt the cleareſt, and greateſt reaſon in the world when it is ſet before him.

2. At leaſt, men ſhall ſee that God did require nothing of them that was unreaſonable; but that what he commandeth them, and whatever he forbiddeth them, he hath all the right reaſon in the world on his ſide; and they have good reaſon to obey him, but none to diſobey. And thus even the damned ſhall be

forced to juſtify God, and confeſs that it was but reaſon that they ſhould have turned to him; and they ſhall be forced to condemn themſelves, and confeſs that they had little reaſon to caſt away themſelves by the neglecting of his grace in the day of their viſitation.

USE.

Look upon your beſt and ſtrongeſt reaſon, ſinners, if you will make good your way. You ſee now with whom you have to deal. What ſayeſt thou, unconverted ſenſual wretch? Dareſt thou venture upon a diſpute with God? Art thou able to confute him? Art thou ready to enter the liſts? God aſketh thee, why wilt thou die? Art thou furniſhed with a ſufficient anſwer? Wilt thou undertake to prove that God is miſtaken, and that thou art in the right? O what an undertaking is that? Why, either he or you is miſtaken, when he is for your converſion, and you are againſt it; he calls upon you to turn, and you will not; he bids you do it preſently, even to day, while it is called to day, and you delay, and think it time enough hereafter. He ſaith it muſt be a total change, and you muſt be holy and new creatures, and born again; and you think that leſs may ſerve the turn, and that is enough to patch up the old man, without becoming new. Who is in the right now? God, or you? God calleth you to turn, and to live an holy life, and you will not; by your diſobedient lives, it appears you will not. If you will, why do you not? Why have you not done it all this while? And why do you not fall upon it yet? Your wills have the command of your lives. We may certainly conclude that you are unwilling to turn, when you do not turn. *And why will you not?* Can you give any reaſon for it, that is worthy to be called a reaſon!

I that am but a worm, your fellow-creature, of a ſhallow capacity, dare challenge the wiſeſt of you all, to reaſon the caſe with me, while I plead my Maker's cauſe: and I need not be diſcouraged when I know I plead but the cauſe that God pleadeth, and contend for him that will have the beſt at laſt; had I but theſe two general grounds againſt you, I am ſure that you have no good reaſon on your ſide.

I am ſure it can be no good reaſon, which is againſt the God of truth and reaſon. It cannot be light that is contrary to the ſun. There is no knowledge in any creature, but what it had from God; and therefore none can be wiſer than God. It were damnable preſumption for the higheſt Angel to compare with his Creator: What is it then for a lump of dirt, an ignorant ſot, that knoweth not himſelf nor his own ſoul, that knoweth but little of the things which he ſeeth, yea, that is more ignorant than many of his neighbours, to ſet himſelf againſt the wiſdom of the Lord? It is one of the fulleſt diſcoveries of the horrible wickedneſs of carnal men, and the ſtark-madneſs of ſuch as ſin, that ſo ſilly a mole dare contradict his Maker, and call in queſtion the word of God; yea, that thoſe people in our pariſhes, that are ſo beaſtly ignorant that they cannot give us a reaſonable anſwer concerning the very principles of religion, are yet ſo wiſe in their own conceit, that they dare queſtion the plaineſt truth of God, yea, contradict them and cavil againſt them, when they can ſcarce ſpeak ſenſe, and will believe them no further than agreeth with their fooliſh wiſdom.

2. And as I know that God muſt needs be in the right, ſo I know the caſe is ſo palpable and groſs which he pleadeth againſt, that no man can have reaſon for it. Is it poſſible that a man can have any reaſon to break his Maker's laws, and reaſon to diſhonour the Lord of glory, and reaſon to abuſe the Lord that bought him? Is it poſſible that a man can have any good rea-

ſon to damn his own immortal ſoul? Mark the Lord's queſtion, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* Is eternal death a thing to be deſired? Are you in love with hell? What reaſon have you wilfully to periſh? If you think you have ſome reaſon to ſin, ſhould you not remember that *death is the wages of ſin*, Rom. vi. 23. and think whether you have any reaſon to undo yourſelves, body and ſoul for ever. You ſhould not only aſk whether you love the adder, but whether you love the ſting? It is ſuch a thing for a man to caſt away his everlaſting happineſs, and to ſin againſt God, that no good reaſon can be given for it; but the more any one pleads for it, the madder he ſheweth himſelf to be. Had you a lordſhip, or a kingdom offered you for every ſin that you commit, it were not reaſon, but madneſs to accept it. Could you by every ſin obtain the higheſt thing on earth that fleſh deſireth, it were of no conſiderable value to perſuade you in reaſon to commit it. If it were to pleaſe your greateſt or deareſt friends, or to obey the greateſt prince on earth, or to ſave your lives, or to eſcape the greateſt earthly miſery, all theſe are of no conſideration to draw a man in reaſon to the committing of one ſin. If it were a right-hand, or a right-eye that would hinder your ſalvation, it is the gainfulleſt way to caſt it away, rather than to go to hell to ſave it. For there is no ſaving a part when you loſe the whole. So exceeding great are the matters of eternity, that nothing in this world deſerveth once to be named in compariſon with them; nor can any earthly thing, though it were life, or crowns, or kingdoms, be a reaſonable excuſe for the neglect of matters of ſuch high and everlaſting conſequence. A man can have no reaſon to croſs his ultimate end; heaven is ſuch a thing, that if you loſe it nothing can ſupply the want, or make up the loſs; and hell is ſuch a thing, that if you ſuffer it, nothing can remove your miſery, or give you eaſe and comfort, and therefore nothing can be a valuable conſideration to excuſe you

for neglecting your own ſalvation: For, ſaith our Saviour, *What ſhall it profit a man to win all the world, and loſe his own ſoul?* Mark viii. 36.

O Sirs, that you did but know what matters they are that we are now ſpeaking to you, of the ſaints in heaven, you would have other kind of thoughts of theſe things. If the devil could come to them that live in the ſight and love of God, and ſhould offer them a cup of ale, or a whore, or merry company, or ſports to entice them away from God and glory, I pray you tell me, how do you think they would entertain the motion? Nay, or if he ſhould offer them to be Kings on the earth, do you think this would entice them down from heaven? O with what hatred and holy ſcorn would they reject the motion! And why ſhould not you do ſo, that have heaven opened to your faith, if you had but faith to ſee it? There is never a ſoul in hell but knows, by this time, that it was a mad exchange to let go heaven for fleſhly pleaſure, and that it is not a little mirth or pleaſure, or worldly riches, or honour, or the good will or word of men, that will quench hell fire, or make him a ſaver that loſeth his ſoul. O if you had heard what I believe, if you had ſeen what I believe, and that on the credit of the word of God, you would ſay there can be no reaſon to warrant a man to damn his ſoul; you durſt not ſleep quietly another night, before you had reſolved to turn and live.

If you ſee a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you will marvel at it; but this is a thing that a man may have a reaſon for, as Biſhop Cranmer had when he burnt off his hand for ſubſcribing to popery. If you ſee a man cut off a leg, or an arm, it is a ſad ſight; but this is a thing that a man may have a good reaſon for, as many a man doth to ſave his life. If you ſee a man give his body to be burnt to aſhes, and to be tormented with ſtrappadoes and racks, and refuſe deliverance when it is offered, this is a hard caſe to

flesh and blood; but this a man may have good reason for, as you may see in Heb. xi. 33, 34, 35, 36. and as many an hundred martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, and for a man to run into the fire of hell, when he is told of it, and intreated to turn that he may be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in the world, that is reason indeed, to justify or excuse it. For heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour which we bestow for it; but nothing can pay for the loss of heaven.

I beseech you now let this word come nearer to your heart, as you are convinced that you have no reason to destroy yourselves, so tell me what reason have you to refuse to turn and live to God? What reason hath the veriest worldling or drunkard, or ignorant careless sinner of you all, why you should not be as holy as any youk now, and be as careful for your souls as any other? Will not hell be as hot to you as to others? Should not your own souls be as dear to you as theirs to them? Hath not God as much authority over you? Why then will you not become a sanctified people, as well as they?

O Sirs, when God bringeth the matter down to the very principles of nature, and shews you that you have no more reason to be ungodly than you have to damn your own souls; if yet you will not understand and turn, it seems a desperate case that you are in.

And now either you have reason for what you do, or you have not: If not, will you go on against reason itself? Will you do that which you have no reason for? But if you think you have, produce them, and make the best of your matter. Reason the case a little with me your fellow-creature, which is far easier than to reason the case with God; tell me, man, here before the Lord, as if thou wert to die this hour, why shouldest thou not resolve to turn this day, before thou stir from the place thou standest in, what reason hast

thou to deny, or to delay? Haſt thou any reaſon that ſatisfieth thine own conſcience for it, or any that thou dareſt own and plead at the bar of God: If thou haſt, let us hear them, bring them forth, and make them good. But alas, what poor ſtuff, what nonſenſe, inſtead of reaſons, do we daily hear from ungodly men? But for their neceſſity I ſhould be aſhamed to name them.

1. One ſaith, *If none ſhall be ſaved but ſuch converted and ſanctified ones as you talk of, then heaven would be but empty, then God help a great many.*

Anſw. Why it ſeems you think that God doth not know, or elſe that he is not to be believed! Meaſure not all by yourſelves; God hath thouſands and millions of his ſanctified ones; but yet there are few in compariſon of the world, as Chriſt himſelf hath told us, Matt. vii. 13, 14. Luke xi. 32. It better beſeems you to make that uſe of this truth which Chriſt teacheth you; 'ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for ſtrait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that can find it; but wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be that go in thereat,' Luke xiii. 22, 23, 24. *Fear not little flock* (ſaith Chriſt to his ſanctified ones) *for it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom*, Luke xii. 13.

Object. 2. *I am ſure, if ſuch as I go to hell, we ſhall have ſtore of company.*

Anſw. And will that be any eaſe or comfort to you? Or do you think you may not have company enough in heaven? Will you be undone for company, or will you not believe that God will execute his threatenings, becauſe there be ſo many that are guilty? All theſe are all unreaſonable conceits.

Object. 3. *But all men are ſinners, even the beſt of you all.*

Anſw. But all are not unconverted ſinners. The godly live not in groſs ſins, and their very infirmities

are their grief and burden, which they daily long, and pray, and ſtrive to be rid of. Sin hath not dominion over them.

Object. 4. *I do not ſee that profeſſors are any better than other men; they will over-reach, and oppreſs, and are as covetous as any.*

Anſw. Whatever hypocrites are, it is not ſo with thoſe that are ſanctified. God hath thouſands, or ten thouſands that are otherwiſe, though the malicious world doth accuſe them of what they can never prove, and of that which never entered into their hearts; and commonly they charge them with heart-ſins, which none can ſee but God, becauſe they can charge them with no ſuch wickedneſs in their lives as they are guilty of themſelves.

Object. 5. *But I am no whoremonger, nor drunkard, nor oppreſſor; and therefore why ſhould you call upon me to be converted?*

Anſw. As if you were not *born after the fleſh*, and had not lived after the fleſh as well as others! Is it not as great a ſin as any of theſe, for a man to have an earthly mind, and to love the world above God, and to have an unbelieving unhumbled heart? Nay, let me tell you more, that many perſons that avoid diſgraceful ſins, are as faſt glued to the world, and as much ſlaves to the fleſh, and as ſtrange to God, and averſe to heaven in their more civil courſe, as others are in their more ſhameful notorious ſins.

Object. 6. *But I mean no body any harm, nor do no harm; and why then ſhould God condemn me?*

Anſw. Is it no harm to neglect the Lord that made thee, and the work for which thou cameſt into the world, and to prefer the creature before the Creator, and to neglect grace that is daily offered thee? It is the depth of thy ſinfulneſs to be ſo inſenſible of it; the dead feel not that they are dead. If once thou wert made alive, thou wouldeſt ſee more amiſs in thyſelf, and marvel at thyſelf for making ſo light of it.

Object. 7. *I think you would make men mad, under pretence of converting them; it is enough to rack the brains of sinful people to muse so much on matters so high for them.*

Answ. 1. Can you be madder than you are already, or at least can there be a more dangerous madness than to neglect your everlasting welfare and wilfully undo yourselves?

2. A man is never so well in his wits till he be converted; he never knows God, nor knows sin, nor knows Christ, nor knows the world, nor himself, nor what his business is on earth, so as to to set himself about it, till he be converted. The scripture saith, that the wicked are *unreasonable men*, 2 Thess. iii. 2. and *that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God*, 1 Cor. i. 20. and Luke xv. 17. It is said of the prodigal, *that when he came to himself*, he resolved to return. It is a wise world when men will disobey God, and run to hell for fear of being out of their wits.

2. What is there in the work that Christ calls you to, that should drive a man out of his wits? Is it the loving God, and calling upon him, and comfortably thinking of the glory to come, and the forsaking of our sins, and loving one another, and delighting ourselves in the service of God? Are these such things as should make men mad?

3. And whereas you say that these matters are too high for us; you accuse God himself for making this our work, and giving us his word, and commanding all that will be blessed to *meditate on it day and night*. Are the matters which we are made for, and which we live for, too high for us to meddle with? This is plainly to unman us, and to make beasts of us, as if we were like them that must meddle with no higher matters than what belongs to flesh and earth. If heaven be too high for you to think on and provide for, it will be too high for you ever to possess.

4. If God should sometimes suffer any weak-headed

persons to be distracted by thinking of eternal things, this is because they misunderstand them, and run without a guide; and of the two, I had rather be in the case of such an one, than of the mad unconverted world, that take their distraction to be their wisdom.

Object. 8. *I do not think that God cares so much what men think, or speak, or do, as to make so great a matter of it.*

Answ. It seems then you take the word of God to be false, and then what will you believe? But your own reason might teach you better, if you believe not the scriptures, for you see God sets not so light by us, but that he vouchsafed to make us, and still preserveth us, and daily upholdeth us, and provideth for us, and will any wise man make a curious frame for nothing? Will you make, or buy a clock or watch, and daily look to it, and not care whether it go true or false? Surely, if you believe not a particular eye of Providence observing your hearts and lives, you cannot believe or expect any particular Providence to observe your wants and troubles, or to relieve you; and if God had so little care for you as you imagine, you would never have lived till now, an hundred diseases would have striven which should first destroy you; yea, the devils would have haunted you, and fetched you away alive, as the great fishes devour the less, and as ravenous beasts and birds devour others. You cannot think that God made man for no end or use, and if he made him for any, it was sure for himself; and can you think he cares not whether his end be accomplished, and whether we do the worst that we are made for.

Yea, by this atheistical objection, you make God to have made and upheld all the world in vain: For what are all other lower creatures for, but for man? What doth the earth but bear us, and nourish us, and the beasts do serve us with their labours and lives, and so of the rest. And hath God made so glorious an habitation, and set man to dwell in it, and made all his

ſervants; and now doth he look for nothing at his hands, not care how he thinks, or ſpeaks, or lives? This is moſt unreaſonable.

Object. 9. *It was a better world when men did not make ſo much ado in religion.*

Anſw. It hath ever been the cuſtom to praiſe the times paſt; that world that you ſpeak of was wont to ſay, it was a better world in their forefathers days, and ſo did they of their forefathers. This is but an old cuſtom, becauſe we all feel the evil of our own times, but we ſee not that which was before us.

2. Perhaps you ſpeak as you think: Worldlings think the world is at the beſt when it is agreeable to their minds, and when they have moſt mirth and worldly pleaſure; and I doubt not but the devil, as well as you, would ſay, that then it was a better world, for then he had more ſervice, and leſs diſturbance. But the world is at the beſt when God is moſt loved, regarded, and obeyed; and how elſe will you know when the world is good or bad, but by this?

Object. 10. *There are ſo many ways and religions, that we know not which to be of, and therefore we will be even as we are.*

Anſw. Becauſe they are many, will you be of that way that you may be ſure is wrong? None are further out of the way than worldly, fleſhly, unconverted ſinners; for they do not only err in this or that opinion, as many ſects do, but in the very ſcope and drift of their lives. If you were going a journey that your life lay on, would you ſtop or turn again, becauſe you meet with ſome croſs ways, or becauſe you ſaw ſome travellers go the horſe-way, and ſome the foot-way, and ſome perhaps break over the hedge, yea, and ſome miſs the way? or would you not rather be the more careful to enquire the way? If you have ſome ſervants that know not how to do your work right, and ſome that are unfaithful, would you take it well at any of

the reſt that would therefore be idle and do you no ſervice, becauſe they ſee the reſt ſo bad?

Object. 11. *I do not ſee that it goes any better with thoſe that are ſo godly, than with other men: They are as poor, and in as much trouble as others.*

Anſw. And perhaps in much more, when God ſees it meet. They take not earthly proſperity for their wages; they have laid up their treaſure and hopes in another world; or elſe they are not Chriſtians indeed; the leſs they have, the more is behind, and they are content to wait till then.

Object. 12. *When you have ſaid all that you can, I am reſolved to hope well, and truſt in God, and do as well as I can, and not make ſo much ado.*

Anſw. Is that *doing as well as you can*, when you will not turn to God, but your heart is againſt his holy and diligent ſervice? It is as well as you will, indeed, but that is your miſery.

2. My deſire is, that you ſhould hope and truſt in God: But for what is it that you will hope? Is it to be ſaved, if you turn and be ſanctified? For this you have God's promiſe, and therefore hope for it and ſpare not: But if you hope to be ſaved without converſion and an holy life, this is not to hope in God, but in ſatan, or yourſelves, for God hath given you no ſuch promiſe, but told you the contrary; but it is ſatan and ſelf-love that made you ſuch promiſes, and raiſed you to ſuch hopes.

Well, if theſe, and ſuch as theſe, be all you have to ſay againſt converſion and an holy life, your all is nothing, and worſe than nothing; and if theſe and ſuch as theſe ſeem reaſons ſufficient to perſuade you to forſake God, and caſt yourſelves into hell, the Lord deliver you from ſuch reaſons, and from ſuch blind underſtandings, and from ſuch ſenſeleſs hardened hearts. Dare you ſtand to every one of theſe reaſons at the bar of God? Do you think it will then ſerve your turn, to ſay, 'Lord, I did not turn, becauſe I had ſo much to

do in the world, or becauſe I did not like the lives of ſome profeſſors, or becauſe I ſaw men of ſo many minds.' O how eaſily will the light of that day confound and ſhame ſuch reaſonings as theſe! Had you the world to look after? Let the world which you ſerved now pay you your wages, and ſave you if it can. Had you not a better world to look after firſt, and were ye not commanded to *ſeek firſt God's kingdom and righteouſneſs*, and promiſed that *other things ſhould be added to you?* Matt. vi. 33. And were ye not told, *that godlineſs was profitable to all things, having the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come?* 1 Tim. iv. 8. Did the ſins of profeſſors hinder you? You ſhould rather have been the more heedful, and learned, by their falls, to beware, and have been the more careful, and not to be more careleſs; it was the Scripture, and not their lives, that was your rule. Did the many opinions of the world hinder you? Why, the ſcripture, that was your rule, did teach you but one way, and that was the right way. If you had followed that, even in ſo much as was plain and eaſy, you ſhould never have miſcarried. Will not ſuch anſwers as theſe confound and ſilence you? If theſe will not, God hath thoſe that will. When he aſked the man, Matt. xxii. 12. *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?* that is, what doſt thou in my Church, among profeſſed Chriſtians, without an holy heart and life; what anſwer did he make? Why the text ſaith, *he was ſpeechleſs*, he had nothing to ſay. The clearneſs of the caſe, and the Majeſty of God, will then eaſily ſtop the mouths of the moſt confident of you, though you will not be put down by any thing we can ſay to you now, but will make good your cauſe, be it never ſo bad. I know already that never a reaſon that now you can give me will do you any good at laſt, when your caſe muſt be opened before the Lord, and all the world.

Nay, I ſcarce think that your own conſciences are

well ſatisfied with your reaſons, for if they are, it ſeems then you have not ſo much as a purpoſe to repent. But if you do purpoſe to repent, it ſeems you do not put much confidence in your reaſons which you bring againſt it.

What ſay you, unconverted ſinners? Have you any good reaſons to give why you ſhould not turn, and preſently turn with all your hearts? Or will you go to hell in deſpight of reaſon itſelf? Bethink you what you do in time, for it will ſhortly be too late to bethink you. Can you find any fault with God, or his work, or his wages? Is he a bad maſter? Is the devil, whom you ſerve, a better? or is the fleſh a better? Is there any harm in an holy life? Is a life of worldlineſs and ungodlineſs better? Do you think in your conſciences that it would do you any harm to be converted and live an holy life? What harm can it do to you? Is it harm to you to have the Spirit of Chriſt within you, and to have a cleanſed purified heart? If it be bad to be holy, why doth God ſay, *be ye holy, for I am holy!* 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Lev. xx. 7. Is it evil to be like God? Is it not ſaid that *God made man in his image?* Why this holineſs is his image; this Adam loſt, and this Chriſt by his word and ſpirit would reſtore to you, as he doth to all that he will ſave. Why were you *baptized into the Holy Ghoſt*, and why do you baptize your children into the Holy Ghoſt as your Sanctifier, if you will not be ſanctified by him, but think it an hurt to you to be ſanctified? Tell me truly, as before the Lord, though you are loth to live an holy life, had you not rather die in the caſe of thoſe that do ſo, than of others? If you were to die this day, had you not rather die in the caſe of a converted man, than of the unconverted? of an holy and heavenly man, than of a carnal earthly man? and would you not ſay as Balaam, Numb. iii. 10. *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his!* And why will you not now be of the mind that you will be of then? firſt or

laſt you muſt come to this, either to be converted, or to wiſh you had been, when it is too late.

But what is it that you are afraid of loſing if you turn? Is it your friends; you will but change them: God will be your friend, and Chriſt and the Spirit will be your friend, and every Chriſtian will be your friend. You will get one friend that will ſtand you in more ſtead than all the friends in the world could have done. The friends you loſe would have but enticed you to hell, but could not have delivered you; but the friend you get will ſave you from hell, and bring you to his own eternal reſt.

Is it your pleaſures that you are afraid of loſing? You think you ſhall never have a merry day again if once you be converted. Alas, that you ſhould think it a greater pleaſure to live in fooliſh ſports and merriments, and pleaſe your fleſh, than live in the believing thoughts of glory, and in the love of God, and in righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, in which the ſtate of grace conſiſteth, Rom. xiv. 17. If it be a greater pleaſure for you to think of your lands and inheritance (if you were Lord of all the country) than it is to a child to play for pins; why ſhould it not be a greater joy to you to think of the Kingdom of Heaven being yours, than of all the riches or pleaſures of the world? As it is but fooliſh childiſhneſs that makes children ſo delight in gauds, that they would not leave them for all your lands; ſo it is but fooliſh worldlineſs, and fleſhlineſs, and wickedneſs, that makes you ſo much delight in your houſes and lands, and meat, and drink, and eaſe, and honour, as that you would not part with them for the heavenly delights. But what will you do for pleaſure when theſe are gone? Do you not think of that? When your pleaſures end in horror, and go out with a ſtinking ſnuff, the pleaſures of the Saints are then at the beſt. I have had myſelf but a little taſte of the heavenly pleaſures in the fore-thoughts of the bleſſed approach-

ing day, and in the present persuasions of the love of God in Christ; but I have taken too deep a draught of earthly pleasures, so that you may see, if I be partial, it is on your side; and yet I must profess from that little experience, that there is no comparison; there is more joy to be had in a day (if the sun of life shine clear upon us) in the state of holiness, than in a whole life of sinful pleasures. I had *rather be a doorkeeper, in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*, Psal. lxxxiv. 10. *A day in his courts is better than a thousand any where else.* Psal. lxxxiv. 10. The mirth of the wicked is like the laughter of a madman that knows not his own misery; and therefore Solomon saith of such laughter, *it is mad*; *and of mirth, what doth it?* Eccles. ii. 2. and Eccles. vii. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth: It is better to bear the rebuke of the wise, than to hear the song of fools; for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool.' All the pleasure of fleshly things, is but like the scratching of a man that hath the itch; it is his disease that makes him desire it, and a wise man had rather be without his pleasure than be troubled with his itch. Your loudest laughter is but like that of a man that is tickled; he laughs when he has no cause of joy, and it is a wiser thing for a man to give all his estate, and his life to be tickled to make him laugh, than for you to part with the love of God, and the comforts of holiness, and the hopes of heaven, and to cast yourselves into damnation, that you may have your flesh tickled with the pleasure of sin for a little while. Judge as you are men, whether this be a wise man's part. It is but your carnal unsanctified

nature that makes an holy life ſeem grievous to you, and a courſe of ſenſuality ſeem more delightful; if you will but turn, the Holy Ghoſt will give you another nature and inclination, and then it will be more pleaſant to you to be rid of your ſin, than now it is to keep it; and you will then ſay, that you knew not what a comfortable life was till now, and that it was never well with you, till God and Holineſs were your delight.

Queſt. *But how cometh it to paſs that men ſhould be ſo unreaſonable in the matters of ſalvation? They have wit enough in other matters, what makes them ſo loth to be converted, that there ſhould need ſo many words in ſo plain a caſe, and all will not do, but the moſt will live and die unconverted?*

Anſw. To name them only in a few words, the cauſes are theſe;

1. Men are naturally in love with earth and fleſh, they are born ſinners, and their nature hath an enmity to God and goodneſs, as the nature of a ſerpent hath to a man; and when all that we can ſay goes againſt an habitual inclination of their natures, no marvel if it little prevail.

2. They are in darkneſs, and know not the very things they hear. Like a man that was born blind, and hears a high commendation of the light; but what will hearing do, unleſs he ſees it: They know not what God is, nor what is the power of the croſs of Chriſt, nor what the ſpirit of holineſs is, nor what it is to live in love by faith: They know not the certainty, and ſuitableneſs, and excellency of the heavenly inheritance. They know not what converſion, and a holy mind and converſation is, even when they hear of it. They are in a miſt of ignorance. They are loſt and bewildered in ſin; like a man that has loſt himſelf in the night, and knows not where he is, nor how to come to himſelf again, till the day-light do recover him.

3. They are wilfully confident that they need no converſion, but ſome partial amendment; and that

they are in the way to heaven already; and are converted when they are not. And if you meet a man that is quite out of his way, you may long enough call on him to turn back again, if he will not believe you that he is out of the way.

4. They are become ſlaves to their fleſh, and drowned in the world to make proviſion for it. Their luſts, and paſſions, and appetites have diſtracted them, and got ſuch an hand over them, that they cannot tell how to deny them, or how to mind any thing elſe; ſo that the drunkard ſaith, *I love a cup of good drink, and I cannot forbear it.* The glutton ſaith, *I love good cheer, and I cannot forbear.* The fornicator ſaith, *I love to have my luſt fulfilled, and I cannot forbear.* And the gameſter loves to have his ſports, and he cannot forbear. So that they are become even captivated ſlaves to their fleſh, and their very wilfulneſs is become an impotency, and what they would not do, they ſay they cannot. And the worldling is ſo taken up with earthly things, that he hath neither heart nor mind, nor time for heavenly; but as in Pharaoh's dream, Gen. xli. 4. the lean kine did eat up the fat ones; ſo this lean and barren earth doth eat up all the thoughts of heaven.

5. Some are ſo carried away by the ſtream of evil company, that they are poſſeſſed with hard thoughts of a godly life, by hearing them ſpeak againſt it; or at leaſt they think they may venture to do as they ſee moſt do, and ſo they hold on in their ſinful ways; and when one is cut off, and caſt into hell, and another ſnatched away from among them to the ſame condemnation; it doth not much daunt them, becauſe they ſee not whither they are gone; poor wretches, they hold on in their ungodlineſs, for all this; for they little know that their companions are now lamenting it in torments. In Luke xvi. the rich man in hell would fain have had one to warn his five brethren, leſt they ſhould come to that place of torment. It is

like he knew their minds and lives, and knew that they were hafting thither, and little dreamt that he was there, yea, and would little have believed one that ſhould have told them ſo. I remember a paſſage that a gentleman, yet living, told me he ſaw upon a bridge over Severn. * A man was driving a flock of fat lambs, and ſomething meeting them, and hindering their paſſage, one of the lambs leapt upon the wall of the bridge, and his legs ſlipping from under him, he fell into the ſtream; the reſt ſeeing him, did, one after one, leap over the bridge into the ſtream, and were all, or almoſt all drowned: Thoſe that were behind did little know what was become of them that were gone before; but thought they might venture to follow their companions; but as ſoon as ever they were over the wall, and falling headlong, the caſe was altered. Even ſo it is with unconverted carnal men. One dieth by them, and drops into hell, and another follows the ſame way; and yet they will go after them, becauſe they think not whither they are gone. Oh, but when death hath once opened their eyes, and they ſee what is on the other ſide of the wall; even in another world, then what would they give to be where they were!

6. Moreover, they have a ſubtle malicious enemy, that is unſeen of them, and plays his game in the dark; and it is his principal buſineſs to hinder their converſion; and therefore to keep them where they are, by perſuading them not to believe the ſcriptures, or not to trouble their minds with theſe matters; or by perſuading them to think ill of a godly life, or to think that it is more ado than needs, and that they may be ſaved without converſion, and without all this ſtir; and that God is ſo merciful, that he will not damn any ſuch as they; or at leaſt, that they may ſtay a little longer, and take their pleaſure, and follow the world a little longer yet, and then let it go,

* Mr. R. Rowly, of Shrewſbury, upon Acham-Bridge.

and repent hereafter. And by ſuch juggling, deluding cheats as theſe, the devil keeps the moſt in his captivity, and leadeth them to his miſery.

Theſe, and ſuch like impediments as theſe, do keep ſo many thouſands unconverted, when God hath done ſo much, and Chriſt hath ſuffered ſo much, and Miniſters have ſaid ſo much for their converſion; when their reaſons are ſilenced, and they are not able to anſwer the Lord that calls after them, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die?* yet all comes to nothing with the greateſt part of them; and they leave us no more to do after all, but to ſit down and lament their wilful miſery.

I have now ſhewed you the reaſonableneſs of God's commands, and the unreaſonableneſs of wicked men's diſobedience. If nothing will ſerve turn, but men will yet refuſe to turn, we are next to conſider who it is long of, if they be damned. And this brings me to the laſt doctrine; which is,

Doct. 7. *That after all this men will not turn it is not long of God that they are condemned, but of themſelves, even their own wilfulneſs. They die becauſe they will, that is, becauſe they will not turn.*

If you will go to hell, what remedy? God here acquits himſelf of your blood; it ſhall not lie on him if you be loſt. A negligent miniſter may draw it upon him; and thoſe that encourage you, or hinder you not in ſin may draw it upon them, but be ſure of it, it ſhall not lie upon God. Saith the Lord concerning his unprofitable vineyard, Iſa. v. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard, what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?* When he had *planted it in a fruitful ſoil, and fenced it, and gathered out the ſtones, and planted it with the choiceſt vines:* What ſhould he have done

more to it? He hath made you men, and endowed you with reason; he hath furnished you with all external necessaries, all creatures are at your service; he hath given you a righteous perfect law. When ye had broken it, and undone yourselves, he had pity on you, and sent his Son by a miracle of condescending mercy to die for you, and be a sacrifice for your sins, and he *was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*

The Lord Jesus hath made you a deed of gift of himself, and eternal life with him, on the condition you will but accept it and return. He hath on this reasonable condition offered you the free pardon of all your sins; he hath written this in his word, and sealed it by his spirit, and sent it you by his ministers: they have made the offer to you an hundred and an hundred times, and called you to accept it, and to turn to God. They have in his name intreated you, and reasoned the case with you, and answered all your frivolous objections. He hath long waited on you, and staid your leisure, and suffered you to abuse him to his face. He hath mercifully sustained you in the midst of your sins; he hath compassed you about with all sorts of mercies; he hath also intermixt afflictions, to remind you of your folly, and call you to your wits, and his spirit hath been often striving with your hearts, and saying there, 'Turn sinner, turn to him that calleth thee: Whither art thou going? What art thou doing? Dost thou know what will be the end? How long wilt thou hate thy friends, and love thine enemies? When wilt thou let go all, and turn and deliver up thyself to God, and give thy Redeemer the possession of thy soul? When shall it once be?' These pleadings have been used with thee, and when thou hast delayed thou hast been urged to make haste, and God hath called to thee, *To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not thy heart: Why not now, without any more delay?* Life hath been set before you; the joys of heaven have been opened to you in the gospel; the

God put in any exceptions againſt you in his word, when he invited ſinners to return; and when he promiſed mercy to thoſe that do return? Did he ſay, *I will pardon all that repent, except thee?* Did he ſhut thee out from the liberty of his holy worſhip? Did he forbid you to pray to him any more than others? You know he did not. God did not drive you away from him, but you forſook him, and run away yourſelves, and when he called you to him, you would not come. If God had excepted you out of the general promiſe and offer of mercy, or had ſaid to you, *Stand off, I will have nothing to do with ſuch as you; pray not to me, for I will not hear you; if you repent never ſo much, and cry for mercy never ſo much, I will not regard you.* If God had left you nothing to truſt to but deſperation, then you had had a fair excuſe, you might have ſaid, *to what end do I repent and turn, when I will do no good?* But this was not your caſe, you might have had Chriſt to be your Lord and Saviour; your head and huſband, as well as others, and you would not, becauſe you felt yourſelves not ſick enough for the phyſician, and becauſe you could not ſpare your diſeaſe; in your hearts you ſaid as thoſe rebels, Luke xix. 14. *We will not have this man to reign over us. Chriſt would have gathered you under the wings* of his Salvation, *and you would not*, Matt. xxiii. 37. What deſires of your welfare did the Lord expreſs in his holy word? With what compaſſion did he ſtand over you and ſay, 'O that my people had hearkened unto me, and that they had walked in my ways!' Pſalm xviii. 13. lxxvi. 13. 'O that there were ſuch a heart in this people, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!' Deut. v. 29. 'O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, and that they would conſider their latter end!' Deut. xxxii. 29. He would have been your God, and done all for you that your ſouls could well

thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee,' Deut. xxxii. 6. When he saw that you forsook him, even for nothing, and turned away from your Lord and Life, to hunt after the chaff and feathers of the world, he told you of your folly, and called you to a more profitable employment, Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. 'Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfyeth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,' ver. 6, 7. and so Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. And when you would not hear, what complaints have you put him to, charging it on you as your wilfulness and stubbornness, Jer. ii. 12, 13. 'Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.' Many a time hath Christ proclaimed that free invitation to you, Rev. xxii. 17. *Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* But you put him to complain after all his offers; *They will not come to me that they may have life*, John v. 40. He hath invited you to feast with them in the Kingdom of his Grace, and you have had excuses from your grounds, and your cattle, and your worldly business, and when you would not come, you have said you could not; and provoked him to resolve that you should never *taste of his Sup-*

USE.

FROM what hath been ſaid, you may further learn theſe following things:

1. From hence you may ſee, not only what blaſphemy and impiety it is, to lay the blame of men's deſtruction upon God; but alſo how unfit theſe wicked wretches are to bring in ſuch a charge againſt their Maker. They cry out upon God, and ſay, he gives them not grace, and his threatenings are ſevere, and God forbid that all ſhould be damned that be not converted and ſanctified; and they think it hard meaſure that a ſhort ſin ſhould have an endleſs ſuffering; and if they be damned, they ſay they cannot help it, when in the mean time they are buſy about their own deſtruction, even cutting the throat of their own ſouls, and will not be perſuaded to hold their hands. They think God were cruel, if he ſhould damn them; and yet they are ſo cruel to themſelves, that they will run into the fire of hell, when God hath told them it is a little before them, and neither intreaties, nor threatenings, nor any thing that can be ſaid, will ſtop them. We ſee them almoſt undone; their careleſs, worldly, fleſhly lives do tell us that they are in the power of the devil; we know if they die before they are converted, all the world cannot ſave them, and knowing the uncertainty of their lives, we are afraid every day leſt they drop into the fire; and therefore we intreat them to pity their own ſouls, and not to undo themſelves when mercy is at hand, and they will not hear us. We intreat them to caſt away their ſin, and come to Chriſt without delay, and to have ſome mercy on themſelves, but they will have none; and yet they think that God muſt be cruel if he condemn them. O wilful wretched ſinners! It is not God that is cruel to you, it is you that are cruel to yourſelves; you are told you muſt *turn or burn*, and yet you *turn not*. You

have no mercy on themſelves, nor once regard us. We tell them the end will be bitter; who can dwell with the everlaſting fire? And yet they will have no mercy upon themſelves. And yet will theſe ſhameleſs wretches ſay, that God is more merciful than to condemn them; when it is themſelves that cruelly and unmercifully run upon condemnation, and if we ſhould go to them with our hats in our hands, and intreat them, we cannot ſtop them; if we ſhould fall down on our knees to them, we cannot ſtop them, but to hell they will go, and yet will not believe that they are going thither. If we beg of them for the ſake of God that made them, and preſerveth them; for the ſake of Chriſt that died for them; for the ſake of their own poor ſouls, to pity themſelves, and go no further in the way to hell, but come to Chriſt while his arms are open, and enter into the ſtate of life while the door ſtands open, and now take mercy while mercy may be had, but they will not be perſuaded. If we ſhould die for it we cannot get them ſo much as now and then to conſider with themſelves of the matter, and to turn; and yet they can ſay, *I hope God will be merciful.* Did you never conſider what he ſaith, Iſa. xxvii. 11. *It is a people of no underſtanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will ſhew them no favour.* If another man will not cloathe you when you are naked, and feed you when you are hungry, you will ſay he is unmerciful. If he ſhould caſt you into priſon, or beat and torment you, you would ſay he is unmerciful; and yet you will do a thouſand times more againſt yourſelves, even caſt away both ſoul and body for ever, and never complain of your own unmercifulneſs: Yea, and God that waited upon you all the while with his mercy, muſt be taken to be unmerciful, if he puniſh you after all this. Unleſs the Holy God of Heaven will give theſe wretches leave to trample upon his Son's blood, and with the Jews, as it were again, to ſpit in

phyſical cauſe; and many could be content to acquit God from ſo much cauſing of evil, if they could but reconcile it with his being the chief cauſe of good, as if truths would be no longer truths than we are able to ſee them in their perfect order and coherence; becauſe our ravelled wits cannot ſet them right together, nor aſſign each truth its proper place, we preſume to conclude that ſome muſt be caſt away. This is the fruit of proud ſelf-conceitedneſs, when men receive not God's truth as a child his leſſon, in an holy ſubmiſſion to the omniſcience of our Teacher, but as cenſurers that are too wiſe to learn.

Object. *But we cannot convert ourſelves till God convert us; we can do nothing without his grace; it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that ſheweth mercy.*

Anſw. 1. God hath two degrees of mercy to ſhew; the mercy of converſion firſt, and the mercy of ſalvation laſt; the latter he will give to none but thoſe that will and run, and hath promiſed it to them only. The former is to make them willing that were unwilling, and though your own willing and endeavours deſerve not his grace, yet your wilful refuſal deſerveth that it ſhould be denied to you. Your diſability is your very unwillingneſs itſelf, which excuſeth not your ſins, but maketh it the greater. You could turn if you were but truly willing, and if your wills themſelves are ſo corrupted that nothing but effectual grace will move them, you have the more cauſe to ſeek for that grace, and yield to it, and do what you can in the uſe of means, and not neglect it, and ſet againſt it. Do what you are able firſt, and then complain of God for denying you grace if you have cauſe.

Object. *But you ſeem to intimate all this while that man hath free will.*

Anſw. The diſpute about free-will is beyond your capacity; I ſhall therefore now trouble you with no more but this about it. Your will is naturally a free,

yet when your everlasting life is so far in your own hands under God, that you cannot be undone till you undo yourselves, how few of you will forbear your own undoing? Ah what a silly thing is man! and what a bewitching and befooling thing is sin!

3. From hence also you may learn, that it is no great wonder if wicked men be hinderers of others in the way to heaven, and would have as many unconverted as they can, and would draw them into sin, and keep them in it? Can you expect that they should have mercy on others, that have none upon themselves? and that they should much stick at the destruction of others, that stick not to destroy themselves? They do no worse by others than they do by themselves.

4. Lastly, you may hence learn that the greatest enemy to man is himself, and the greatest judgment in this life that can befal him, is to be left to himself, and that the great work that Grace hath to do, is to save us from ourselves, and the greatest accusations and complaints of men should be against themselves, and that the greatest work that we have to do ourselves, is to resist ourselves, and the greatest enemy that we should daily pray, and watch, and strive against, is our own carnal hearts and wills, and the greatest part of your work, if you would do good to others, and help them to heaven, is to save them from themselves, even from their blind understandings, and corrupted wills, and perverse affections, and violent passions, and unruly senses. I only name all these for brevity sake, and leave them to your further consideration.

Well, Sirs, now we have found out the great delinquent and murtherer of souls (even men's selves, their own wills) what remains but that you judge according to the evidence, and confess this great iniquity before the Lord, and be humbled for it, and do so no more? To these three ends distinctly, I shall add a few words more. 1. Further to convince you. 2. To humble you. And 3. To reform you, if there yet be any hope.

2. It is evident that you are your own deſtroyers, in that you are ſo ready to entertain any temptation almoſt that is offered you. Satan is ſcarce readier to move you to any evil, than you are ready to hear, and to do as he would have you. If he would tempt your underſtanding to error and prejudice, you yield. If he would hinder you from good reſolutions, it is ſoon done. If he would cool any good deſires or affections, it is ſoon done. If he would kindle any luſt or vile affections and deſires in you, it is ſoon done. If he will put you on to evil thoughts, or deeds, you are ſo free, that he needs no rod or ſpur. If he would keep you from holy thoughts, and words, and ways, a little doth it, you need no curb. You examine not his ſuggeſtions, nor reſiſt them with any reſolution, nor caſt them out as he caſts them in, nor quench the ſparks which he endeavoureth to kindle; but you ſet in with him, and meet him half way, and embrace his motions, and tempt him to tempt you. And it is eaſy to catch ſuch greedy fiſh that are are ranging for a bait, and will take the bare hook.

3. Your deſtruction is evidently long of yourſelves, in that you reſiſt all that would help to ſave you, and would do you good, or hinder you from undoing yourſelves. God would help and ſave you by his word, and you reſiſt it, it is too ſtrict for you. He would ſanctify you by his ſpirit, and you reſiſt and quench it. If any man reprove you for your ſin, you fly in his face with evil words; and if he would draw you to an holy life, and tell you of your preſent danger, you give him little thanks, but either bid him look to himſelf, he ſhall not anſwer for you, or elſe, at beſt, you put him off with an heartleſs thanks, and will not turn when you are perſuaded. If Miniſters would privately inſtruct and help you, you will not come at them; your unhumbled ſouls do feel but little need of their help; if they would catechize you, you are too old to be catechiſed, though you are not too old to be igno-

Not conſidering that he came to redeem his people from their ſins, and to ſanctify them a peculiar people to himſelf, and to conform them in holineſs to the image of their heavenly Father, and to their head, Matt. i. 21. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Col. iii. 10, 11. Phil. iii. 9, 10.

6. You alſo fetch your own deſtruction from all the providences and works of God. When you think of his eternal fore-knowledge and decrees, it is to harden you in your ſin, or poſſeſs your minds in quarrelling thoughts, as if his decrees might ſpare you the labour of repentance and an holy life, or elſe were the cauſe of ſin and death. If he afflict you, you repine; if he proſper you, you the more forget him, and are the backwarder to the thoughts of the life to come. If the wicked proſper, you forget the end that will ſet all reckonings ſtraight; and are ready to think, it is as good to be wicked as godly. And thus you draw your death from all.

7. And the like you do from all the creatures and mercies of God to you. He giveth them to you as the tokens of his love and furniture for his ſervice, and you turn them againſt him, to the pleaſing of your fleſh. You eat and drink to pleaſe your appetite, and not for the glory of God, and to enable you for his work. Your cloaths you abuſe to pride. Your riches draw your hearts from heaven, Phil. iii. 18. Your honours and applauſe do puff you up: If you have health and ſtrength, it makes you more ſecure, and forget your end. Yea, other mens mercies are abuſed by you to your hurt. If you ſee their honours and dignity, you are provoked to envy them. If you ſee their riches, you are ready to covet them. If you look upon beauty, you are ſtirred up to luſt. And it is well, if godlineſs be not an eye-ſore to you.

8. The very gifts that God beſtoweth on you, and the ordinances of grace which he hath inſtituted for his church, you turn to ſin. If you have better parts

chriſtian doctrine for them, which is moſt againſt them. And if we would draw you from any ancient rooted error, which can but plead two, or three, or ſix, or ſeven hundred years cuſtom, you are as much offended with a motion for reformation, as if you were to loſe your life by it, and hold faſt old errors, while you cry out againſt new ones. Scarce a difference can ariſe among the miniſters of the goſpel, but you will fetch your own death from it. And you will not hear, or at leaſt not obey the unqueſtionable doctrine of any of thoſe that jump not with your conceits: One will not hear a miniſter, becauſe he ſaith the Lord's Prayer; and another will not hear him becauſe he doth not uſe it. One will not hear them that are for epiſcopacy, and another will not hear them that are againſt it. And thus I might ſhew it you in many other caſes, how you turn all that comes near you to your own deſtruction; ſo clear is it that the ungodly are ſelf-deſtroyers, and that their perdition is of themſelves.

Methinks now upon the conſideration of what is ſaid, and the review of your own ways, you ſhould bethink you what you have done, and be aſhamed and deeply humbled to remember it. If you be not, I pray you conſider theſe following truths.

1. To be your own deſtroyers, is to ſin againſt the deepeſt principle in your natures, even the principle of ſelf-preſervation. Every thing naturally deſireth or inclineth to its own felicity, welfare, or perfection. And will you ſet yourſelves to your own deſtruction? When you are commanded to love your neighbours as yourſelves; it is ſuppoſed that you naturally love yourſelves. But if you love your neighbours no better than yourſelves, it ſeems you would have all the world damned.

2. How extremely do you croſs your own intentions? I know you intend not your own damnation, even when you are procuring it; you think you are but doing good to yourſelves, by gratifying the deſires

tors in hell to think on it, that you brought yourſelves wilfully to that miſery. O what a griping thought it will be for ever to think with yourſelves, that this was your own doing! that you were warned of this day, and warned again, but it would not do; that you wilfully ſinned, and wilfully turned away from God; that you had time as well as others, but you abuſed it; you had teachers as well as others, but you refuſed their inſtruction; you had holy examples, but you did not imitate them; you were offered Chriſt, and grace, and glory, as well as others, but you had more mind of your fleſhly pleaſure; you had a price in your hands, but you had not a heart to lay it out, Prov. xvii. 16. Can it chooſe but torment you to think of this your preſent folly? O that your eyes were opened to ſee what you have done in the wilful wronging of your own ſouls! and that you better underſtood thoſe words of God, Prov. viii. 33, 34, 35, 36. *Hear inſtruction and be wiſe, and refuſe it not: Bleſſed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the poſts of my doors: For whoſo findeth me findeth life, and ſhall obtain the favour of the Lord. But he that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own ſoul: All they that hate me love death.*

And now I am come to the concluſion of this work; my heart is troubled to think how I ſhall leave you, leſt, after this, the fleſh ſhould ſtill deceive you, and the world and the devil ſhould keep you aſleep, and I ſhould leave you as I found you, till you awake in hell. Though, in care of your poor ſouls, I am afraid of this, as knowing the obſtinacy of a carnal heart; yet I can ſay with the prophet Jeremy, xvii. 16. *I have not deſired the woeful day, the Lord knoweth.* I have not with James and John deſired that *fire might come from heaven* to conſume them that refuſed Jeſus Chriſt, Luke ix. 54. But it is the preventing of the eternal fire that I have been all this while endeavouring: And O that it had been a needleſs work!

done. And alas, muſt we loſe our friends, and muſt they loſe their God, their happineſs, their ſouls, for want of this? O God forbid! It is a ſtrange thing to me that men are ſo inhuman and ſtupid in the greateſt matters, that in leſſer things are civil and courteous, and good neighbours. For ought I know, I have the love of all, or almoſt all my neighbours, ſo far, that if I ſhould ſend to ever a man in the town, or pariſh, or country, and requeſt a reaſonable courteſy of them, they would grant it me; and yet when I come to requeſt of them the greateſt matter in the world, for themſelves, and not for me, I can have nothing of many of them but a patient hearing. I know not whether people think a man in the pulpit is in good ſadneſs or not, and means as he ſpeaks; for I think I have few neighbours, but if I were ſitting familiarly with them, and telling them of what I have ſeen or done, or known in the world, they would believe me, and regard what I ſay; but when I tell them, from the infallible word of God, what they themſelves ſhall ſee and know in the world to come, they ſhew by their lives that they do either not believe it, or not much regard it. If I met ever any one of them on the way, and told them yonder is a coal-pit, or there is a quick-ſand, or there are thieves lie in wait for you; I could perſuade them to turn by. But when I tell them that Satan lieth in wait for them, and that ſin is poiſon to them, and that hell is not a matter to be jeſted with, they go on as if they did not hear me. Truly neighbours, I am in as good earneſt with you in the pulpit, as I am in my familiar diſcourſe: and if ever you will regard me, I beſeech you let it be here. I think there is never a man of you all, but if my own ſoul lay at your wills, you would be willing to ſave it (though I cannot promiſe that you would leave your ſins for it.) Tell me, thou drunkard, art thou ſo cruel to me that ſpeak to thee, that thou wouldeſt not forbear a few cups of drink, if thou kneweſt it would ſave my ſoul

eſcape the plagues that are a little before you. And if ever you will do any thing for me, grant me this requeſt, to turn from your evil ways and live. Deny me any thing that ever I ſhall aſk you for myſelf, if you will but grant me this. And if you deny me this, I care not for any thing elſe that you would grant me. Nay, as ever you will do any thing at the requeſt of the Lord that made you and redeemed you, deny him not this; for if you deny him this, he cares for nothing that you ſhall grant him. As ever you would have him hear your prayers, and grant your requeſts, and do for you at the hour of death and day of judgment, or in any of your extremities, deny not his requeſt now in the day of your proſperity. O Sirs, believe it, death and judgment, and heaven and hell, are other matters when you come near them, than they ſeem to carnal eyes afar off; then you would hear ſuch a meſſage as I bring you with more awakened regardful hearts.

Well, though I cannot hope ſo well of all, I will hope that ſome of you are by this time purpoſing to turn and live; and that you are ready to aſk me, as the Jews did Peter, Acts ii. 37. When they were pricked in their hearts, and ſaid, *Men and brethren, what ſhall we do? How might we come to be truly converted? We are willing, if we did but know our duty. God forbid that we ſhould chuſe deſtruction, by refuſing converſion, as hitherto we have done.*

If theſe be the thoughts and purpoſes of your hearts, I ſay of you as God did of a promiſing people, Deut. v. 28, 29. *They have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken; O that there were ſuch an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!* Your purpoſes are good: O that there were but an heart in you to perform theſe purpoſes! And in hope hereof I ſhall gladly give you direction what to do, and that but briefly, that you may the eaſier remember it for your practice.

law, and have the pardon of all the ſins of your whole lives, and be accepted of God, and made his ſons, and have liberty with boldneſs to call him Father, and go to him by prayer in all your needs, with a promiſe of acceptance; you ſhall have the Holy Ghoſt to dwell in you, to ſanctify and guide you: You ſhall have part in the brotherhood, communion and prayers of the ſaints: You ſhall be fitted for God's ſervice, and be freed from the dominion of ſin, and be uſeful and a bleſſing to the place where you live; and ſhall have the promiſe of this life, and that which is to come. You ſhall want nothing that is truly good for you, and your neceſſary afflictions you will be enabled to bear; you may have ſome taſte of communion with God in the Spirit, eſpecially in all holy ordinances, where God prepareth a feaſt for your ſouls; you ſhall be heirs of heaven while you live on earth, and may foreſee by faith the everlaſting glory, and ſo may live and die in peace; and you ſhall never be ſo low, but your happineſs will be incomparably greater than your miſery.

How precious is every one of theſe bleſſings, which I do but briefly name, and which in this life you may receive!

And then, 2. At death your ſouls ſhall go to Chriſt, and at the day of judgment both ſoul and body ſhall be juſtified and glorified, and enter into your Maſter's joy, where your happineſs will conſiſt in theſe particulars:

1. You ſhall be perfected yourſelves; your mortal bodies ſhall be made immortal, and the corruptible ſhall put on incorruption; you ſhall no more be hungry, or thirſty, or weary, or ſick, nor ſhall you need to fear either ſhame, or ſorrow, or death, or hell, your ſouls ſhall be perfectly freed from ſin, and perfectly fitted for the knowledge, and love, and praiſes of the Lord.

2. Your employment ſhall be to behold your glori-

DIRECTION II.

If you will be converted and ſaved, be much in ſecret ſerious conſideration. Inconſiderateneſs undoes the world. Withdraw yourſelves oft into retired ſecreſy, and there bethink you of the end why you were made, of the life you have lived, the time you have loſt, the ſin you have committed, of the love, and ſufferings, and fulneſs of Chriſt, of the danger you are in, of the nearneſs of death and judgment; and of the certainty and excellency of the joys of heaven, and of the certainty and terror of the torment of hell, and eternity of both, and of the neceſſity of converſion and an holy life. Steep your hearts in ſuch conſiderations as theſe.

DIRECTION III.

If you will be converted and ſaved, attend upon the word of God, which is the ordinary means. Read the ſcripture, or hear it read, and other holy writings that do apply it conſtantly; attend on the public preaching of the word. As God will light the world by the ſun, and not by himſelf without, ſo will he convert and ſave men by his miniſters, who are the lights of the world, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Matt. v. 14. When he hath miraculouſly humbled Paul, he ſendeth him to Ananias, Acts ix. 10. and when he hath ſent an angel to Cornelius, it is but to bid him ſend for Peter, who muſt tell him what he is to believe and do.

DIRECTION IV.

Betake yourſelves to God in a courſe of earneſt conſtant prayer. Confeſs and lament your former lives, and beg his grace to illuminate and convert you. Beſeech him to pardon what is paſt, and

DIRECTION VIII.

If you mean indeed to turn and live, do it ſpeedily without delay. If you be not willing to turn to-day, you be not willing to do it at all. Remember you are all this while in your blood, under the guilt of many thouſand ſins, and under God's wrath, and you ſtand at the very brink of hell; there is but a ſtep between you and death. And this is not a caſe for a man that is well in his wits to be quiet in. Up therefore preſently, and fly as for your lives, as you would be gone out of your houſe if it were all on fire over your head. O, if you did but know what continual danger you live in, and what daily unſpeakable loſs you do ſuſtain, and what a ſafer and ſweeter life you might live, you would not ſtand trifling, but preſently turn. Multitudes miſcarry that wilfully delay when they are convinced that it muſt be done. Your lives are ſhort and uncertain; and what a caſe are you in, if you die before you thoroughly turn! You have ſtaid too long already, and wronged God too long. Sin getteth ſtrength and rooting while you delay. Your converſion will grow more hard and doubtful. You have much to do, and therefore put not all off to the laſt, leſt God forſake you, and give you up to yourſelves, and then you are undone for ever.

DIRECTION IX.

If you will turn and live, do it unreſervedly, abſolutely, and univerſally. Think not to capitulate with Chriſt, and divide your heart betwixt him and the world; and to part with ſome ſins, and keep the reſt; and to let go that which your fleſh can ſpare. This is but ſelf-deluding; you muſt in heart and reſolution forſake all that you have, or elſe you cannot be his diſciples, Luke xiv. 26, 33. If you will not take

der it; nor I cannot do God's part, by opening your heart to caufe you to entertain it; nor can I fhew you heaven or hell to your eye-fight, nor give you new and tender hearts. If I knew what more to do for your converfion, I hope I fhould do it.

But O thou that art the gracious Father of Spirits, thou haft fworn thou delighteft not in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn and live; deny not thy bleffing to thefe perfuafions and directions, and fuffer not thine enemies to triumph in thy fight, and the great deceiver of fouls to prevail againft thy Son, thy Spirit, and thy Word. O pity poor unconverted finners, that have no hearts to pity or help themfelves: Command the blind to fee, and the deaf to hear, and the dead to live, and let not fin and death be able to refift thee. Awaken the fecure, refolve the unrefolved, confirm the wavering, and let the eyes of finners, that read thefe lines, be next employed in weeping over their fins, and bring them to themfelves, and to thy Son, before their fins have brought them to perdition. If thou fay but the word, thefe poor endeavours fhall profper to the winning of many a foul to their everlafting joy, and thine everlafting glory. Amen.

FINIS.