

Christian Behaviour
Being the fruits of true
Christianity:
Teaching husbands, wives,
parents, children,
masters, servants, etc.,
how to walk so as to please G O D.

With a word of direction to all
backsliders.

By *J O H N B U N Y A N*.

1674.

*Written in 1663, while imprisoned
in Bedford Prison.
This was John Bunyan's third book
during his first incarceration.*

Edited by George Offor.

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Advertisement by the Editor

This valuable practical treatise was first published as a pocket volume about the year 1674, soon after the author's final release from his long and dangerous imprisonment. It is evident from the last paragraph that he considered his liberty and even his life to be still in a very uncertain state; not from the infirmities of age, for he was then in the prime of life; but from the tyranny of the government, and probably from the effects of his long imprisonment in a damp, unhealthy jail. It is the best and most scriptural guide that has ever appeared to aid us in the duties of family life: written with originality of thought and that peculiar and reverent earnestness which so distinguishes all his works. No one can read this book without finding in it his own portrait truly and correctly drawn. Many have been the heard the word publicly spoken, who have been astonished that a faithful minister has not only opened their outward conduct, but the inward recesses of their hearts and have asked with wonder, 'Where could he get such a knowledge of my heart?' The habits and feelings of every part of the human family - the rich and poor, outward professor or openly unbelieving, God fearers or God defiers - are displayed in the following pages as accurately as if the author had been present in every family on earth, and had not only witnessed the conduct of the happy and of the miserable in every grade; but he goes within and unveils that mystery of iniquity the human heart, its secret springs, feelings, and processes. What mysterious power could this uneducated man have possessed, thus to dive into the most subtle of all secret places, the human heart! If he had left his body at times and his invisible spirit have entered all chambers, still time would have been too short even to have transiently surveyed outward conduct; and then he could not have entered into the thoughts of others. Reader, the fountain of all hidden things was open to him. Shut up for many years in prison, with the key in his possession which unlocks all the mysteries of earth, and heaven, and hell, he diligently used his time and all was revealed to him. He makes the source of his knowledge no secret, but invites you to search, as he did, this storehouse of things new and old. It was the Bible which unfolded to

him all the great events of time and of eternity all the secret springs of states, and families, and individuals; wondrous book! It made an uneducated workman wiser than all the philosophers who have been contented with Plato, Aristotle, Pliny, Plutarch, and the most renowned of human writers. Not only is the real state of human nature revealed with unerring truth, as suffering under a cruel malady, strangely varied in its operations, but all tending to the downward, dark, dreary road to misery here and for eternity: but it also displays the cure; an infallible remedy against all the subtleties of this tortuous disease. Reader, this treasure is in our hands. How great is the responsibility. How blessed are those who with earnest prayer for divine illumination, read, ponder, and, relying on the aid of the Holy Spirit, understand and instantly obey the sacred principles which its pages unfold. Weigh well their nature and tendency, as Bunyan opens them in this invaluable treatise. They lead step by step from darkness to light. It may be a stormy passage in the dim twilight, as it was with him; but it is safe, and leads to the fountain of happiness, the source of blessedness, the presence and smiles of God, and being conformed to his image. As we are thus transformed in our minds, we shall be able to fulfil all our duties and behaviour as befits Christians. We dare not seek to avoid these duties because they are full of anxieties. Blessed are those who know and feel the ties of church fellowship or the nearer union of husband and wife, that type of the mystical union of Christ and his church. Happy are those who reverently discharge parental and filial duties, that figure of the relationship which the Almighty, in infinite mercy, owns between him and his fallen but renewed creatures. We are bound, as those expecting divine approval, not to shrink from duties, but to seek wisdom to fulfil them; and in this little work we have a scriptural guide to which we shall do well to be careful. It is a peculiarly solemn legacy the author's ardent desire is thus expressed; 'Before I die (as the greatest of all the duties he had to perform) let me provoke you to faith and holiness.' Let it be our duty and privilege to examine our conduct faithfully by those parts of scripture which this treatise quotes. It was written in the shadow of suffering and death, and yet how serene was his soul. No cloud, no doubts or fears are seen; his

legacy to us as well as to those who survived him is, 'Love one another when I am deceased.' My labours of love to you are limited to this world. 'Though there I shall rest from my labours, and be in paradise, as through grace, I firmly believe; yet it is not there but here I must do you good.' Consider what he has expressed, and the scriptures by which every sentence is confirmed, and may his concluding and fervent prayer be answered to our souls: 'The Lord give us understanding in all things. Farewell.'

GEO. OFFOR.

A note to the Reader

Courteous Reader,

Having formerly written a little about the teaching of faith, as justification by grace through the faith of Christ's blood, etc., I here present you with a few lines about good works, that I might, as at first I showed you the good and glory of the one, so now show you the beauty and excellency of the other: for though we are justified freely by grace through Christ before God (Rom 3:24); yet we are justified before men by our works (Jas 2:18): a life of holiness flowing from faith in us who are saved by grace justifies that grace before the world, that justifies us before God (2 Cor 6:1,3; 9:12,13; 1 Pet 2:11,12).

I have not here only in general dealt with this teaching of good works, but particularly, after some talk about works flowing from faith, and what makes it truly and gospelly good, I talk of them as we stand under our several relations in this world among men.

As, The duty of the master of a family: Of the husband to his wife; and of hers to him: Of the duty of parents to their children; and of children to their parents: Of masters to their servants; and of the servant again to his master: with a brief touch on good neighbourhood; and a consideration of covetousness, pride, and uncleanness, which are great obstructions to a truly gospel lifestyle.

I know there are many who have dealt with good works in large and learned books; but I am sure that not all contain as much of the gospel as they should, and as the teaching of the grace of God calls for. So I thought I should add this book to those already written, for these reasons.

1. To take away those criticisms that the adversaries cast on our teaching as in the days of Paul, that because we preach justification without works, they accuse us of loose living: 'whose damnation is just' (Rom 3:8).

2. Because, though there is much talk about works in general, yet a detailed talk of them, as before mentioned, is neglected; and thus too much is left unclear regarding their responsibilities in relationships;

which I think is one cause of disorder in families and places where God's people live; to their shame, and the dishonour of God.

3. Because the books that particularly deal with good works, are, I think, now so scarce, or so big, that few have them, and few buy them, especially our new converts, this short talk was written; and indeed, this is one reason for my brevity, that the price might be low, and the reading easy. Too many words drown memory; and wisdom in a few words may be so complete that the reader may find on one page, what some are forced to hunt for in a whole book. The Lord teach us this wisdom.

4. I have written this book, to show that I bear a fellow-testimony and witness, with all who know God, of the work that grace does, and will do, in the heart that has savingly received it.

Lastly, I have thus written, because it is pleasant to God, when Christians keep their rank, relation, and station, doing all as befits their quality and calling. When Christians stand in their right places, and fulfil their responsibilities to each other, then they are like the flowers in the garden that stand and grow where the gardener has planted them, and then they shall both honour the garden where they are planted, and the gardener who has arranged them. From the hyssop in the wall, to the cedar in Lebanon, their fruit is their glory. And seeing the stock into which we are planted is the most fruitful stock, the sap produced the most fruitful sap, and the pruner of our souls the wisest gardener, (John 15:1) how strange it would be, if we were not rich in good works!

So be careful of being painted fire, with is no warmth; and painted flowers, with no smell; and of being painted trees, with no fruit. 'The one who boasts of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain' (Prov 25:14). Farewell.

The Lord be with your spirit, that you may benefit for time to come.

J. BUNYAN.

Chapter 1; Of Faith and Works

'That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.' Titus 3:7,8.

I shall not at this time talk of every detail included in these words; but shall briefly deal with those things that I judge most necessary for the people of God. Neither shall I need to make any great preamble to the words to explain them; they are plain, and need no clarification. The general theme is this, **THAT THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD SHOULD BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS.**

But yet, to achieve what I intend as clearly as I may, I shall in a word or two outline what is to be the main theme of this book.

'This is a faithful saying.' This; Which? Why, the previous verse; 'That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying, and I want you to affirm these things constantly.'

Why so?

Why, 'That those who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.' The meaning is, that the way to provoke others to good works, is constantly to show them in the evidence and demonstration of the spirit the certainty of being made heirs of eternal life by grace.

From this scripture, therefore, I take these to be obvious.

FIRST, Good works flow from faith.

SECOND, Everyone who believes should be careful that their works be good.

THIRD, Every believer should not only be careful that their works be good, and for the present do them, but should also be careful to maintain them; that is, they should carefully study to keep in a constant course of good works.

FOURTH, and lastly, The best way to provoke both ourselves and others to this work is to be often affirm to others the teaching of justification by grace, and believe it ourselves: 'This is a faithful saying, and these things I wish,' says Paul, 'that you affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.'

FIRST.

Good works flow from faith. This is evident in various ways.

First, They cannot flow from anything else; they must either flow from faith, or not at all: 'For whatever is not of faith, is sin' (Rom 14:23). And again, 'Without faith it is impossible to please him' (Heb 11:6). Every man by nature, before faith, is an evil and a corrupt tree; and a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit: 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' (Matt 7:16,17). Now a man is made good by faith, and by that brings forth the fruits that are acceptable to God (Heb 11:4; Col 1:4-6).

So sinners, before faith, are compared to the wilderness, whose fruits are briars and thorns; and whose hearts are the habitation of dragons; that is, of devils. (Isa 35:6,7; Heb 6:7,8).

And so again it is, that they are said to be Godless, Christless, Spiritless, faithless, hopeless; without the covenant of grace, without strength; enemies in their minds by wicked works, and possessed by the spirit of wickedness, as a castle by a conqueror (Eph 2:12; Jude 19; 2 Thess 3:2; Col 1:21; Luke 11:21).

Now, these things being so, it is impossible that anyone under heaven who is unconverted, should be able to produce one truly good work;

as impossible as for all the briars and thorns under heaven to produce one cluster of grapes, or one bunch of figs; for they cannot. A thorn produces no figs, because it lacks the nature of the fig-tree; and the bramble lacks the nature of the vine. Good works must come from a good heart. Now, this the unbeliever lacks, because he lacks faith; for that is what purifies the heart (Luke 6:45; Acts 15:9). Good works must come from love to the Lord Jesus; but this the unbeliever lacks also, because he lacks faith: For faith 'works by love,' and does good by that (Gal 5:6).

And so again it is, that however much so-called good the carnal man does, it is rejected, ignored, and turned as dirt in his face; his prayers are abominable (Prov 15:8), his ploughing is sin (Prov 21:4), and all his righteousness as filthy rags (Isa 64:6).

So you see that without faith there are no good works. Now then, to show you that they flow from faith:

FAITH is the principle of life by which a Christian lives (Gal 2:19,20), a principle of movement, by which it walks towards heaven in the way of holiness (Rom 4:12; 2 Cor 5:7). It is also a principle of strength, by which the soul opposes its lust, the devil, and this world, and overcomes them. 'This is the victory, even our faith' (1 John 5:4,5) Faith, in the heart of a Christian, is like the salt that was thrown into the corrupt fountain, that made the bitter waters sweet, and the barren land fruitful (2 Kings 2:19-22). Faith, when it is made in the heart, is like yeast hid in the flour, (Matt 13:33) or like perfume on stinking leather, turning the smell of the leather into the sweetness of the perfume; faith being then planted in the heart, and having its natural tendency towards holiness. So there follows an alteration of life and lifestyle, which brings forth fruit accordingly. 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good' (Luke 6:45). The treasure is this faith (James 2:5; 1 Peter 1:7). And so it is that faith is called 'the faith according to godliness,' (Titus 1:1) and the 'most holy faith' (Jude 20).

Second, Good works needs to flow from faith, or not at all; because

only that carries in it a force powerful enough to rule our natures, to make them comply with holiness.

Faith shows us that God loves us, that he forgives us our sins, that he accounts us his children, having freely justified us through the blood of his Son (Rom 3:24,25; 4; Heb 11:13; 1 Peter 1:8).

Faith receives the promise, embraces it, and comforts the soul unspeakably with it. Faith is so great an artist in arguing and reasoning with the soul, that it will bring over the hardest heart that it has to deal with. It will remind me at once, both of my vileness before God, and of his goodness towards me; it will show me that though I do not deserve to breathe, yet God will have me an heir of glory.

Now, there is no argument greater than this. This will make a man run through ten thousand difficulties to answer God, though he never could before, because the grace he has given to him.

Further, FAITH will show me how distinctly this love of God has set itself on me; it will show me, that though Esau was Jacob's brother, yet he loved Jacob (Mal 1:2). That though there were thousands more besides me that were as good as me, yet I must be the man that must be chosen.

Now this, is a marvellous argument, and unspeakably prevails with the sinner, as the apostle says: 'For the love of Christ constrains us; because we judge thus, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And he died for all; that those who live,' that is, by faith, 'should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them, and rose again' (2 Cor 5:14,15). 'Love,' says the wise man, 'is strong as death; Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be despised' (Song 8:6,7). Oh! when the broken, dying, condemned soul, can only see, by faith, the love of a tender-hearted Saviour, and also see what he went through to deliver it from that death, guilt, and hell, that now it feels and fears which it knows it has most justly

deserved; 'Then bless the Lord, O my soul' (Psa 103:1,2,3); and 'What shall I repay the Lord for all his benefits?' (Psa 116:1-14).

So faith is a power to the sinner, by which he is rescued from what he was, and made to bend and yield to what before he neither would nor could (1 Cor 2:14; Rom 8:7).

And so it is that gospel obedience is called 'the obedience of faith,' as well as obedience to the faith (Rom 16:26). For it must be by the faith of Christ in my heart that I submit to the word of faith in the Bible, otherwise all is useless: as the apostle says, 'The word preached did not benefit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it' (Heb 4:2). For only faith can see the reality of what the gospel says; and so wins over the heart to embrace it.

Third, Faith is such a grace, as will show all things to the soul in their proper colours. It does not, as do unbelief and ignorance, show us all things out of order; putting darkness for light, and bitter for sweet; but will set every thing in its proper place before our eyes; God and Christ shall be with it the chief good, the most lovely and amiable; a heavenly life shall be of greater value, and more desirable, than all the treasures of Egypt! Righteousness and sanctification will be the thing it will most press after; because it sees not only death and damnation as the fruits of sin, but sin also in itself, distinct from the punishment belonging to it, a detestable, horrible, and awful thing (Heb 11:25-27; Phil 3:7-12; Rom 12:9).

By faith we see that this world has no place in it for us, nor no satisfaction if it had. (Prov 3:35; Heb 11:15,16; 13:14; 1 Cor 7:9-31). And so it is that the people of God have groaned to be gone from from this world into a state that is both sinless and temptationless. And so it is again that they have run through so many trials, afflictions, and adversities, because of that love for holiness of life that faith in their hearts prompted them to, by showing them the worth and durableness of what was good, and the irksomeness and evil of all things else (2 Cor 5:1-8; Heb 11:33-39).

Fourth, Faith lays hold of what can help the soul to produce good works: it lays hold of, and engages the strength of Christ, and by that overcomes what oppresses; 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' (Phil 4:13).

In a word, a life of holiness and godliness in this world so inseparably follows a principle of faith, that it is ridiculous to suppose the contrary. What, shall not he who has life have movement! (Gal 2:20). He that has by faith received the spirit of holiness, shall not he be holy? (Gal 3:2). and he who is called to glory and virtue, shall not he add to his faith virtue? (2 Peter 1:4,5). We are by faith made good trees, and shall not we produce good fruit? (Luke 6:43). Those who believe are created in Christ Jesus to good works; and God has, before the world was created, ordained that we should walk in them; and shall both our second creation, and God's fore-ordination be frustrated? (Eph 1:4; 2:10). Besides, the children of faith are the children of light, and of the day (1 Thess 5:5). Lights on a hill, and candles on a candlestick, and shall not they shine? They are the salt of the earth, shall not they be seasoning? (Matt 5:13-16).

The believer is the man God uses to show the world the power of his grace, the operation of his people's faith, etc. The unbelievers read indeed of the power of grace; of the faith, hope, love, joy, peace, and sanctification of the heart of the Christian; but they feel nothing of that sin-killing power that is in these things; these are to them as a story of Rome or Spain. So to show them in others what they find not in themselves, God works faith, hope, love, etc., in a generation that shall serve him; and by them they shall see what they cannot find in themselves; and by this means they shall be convinced that though sin and the pleasures of this life are sweet to them, yet there is a people who think differently; such a people, that actually see the glory that others read of, and from that sight take pleasure in what they most dislike. To this, I say, are Christians called; thus is God glorified; thus are sinners convinced; and thus the world is condemned (1 Thess 4:7; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:1; Heb 11:7).

Object.

But if faith so naturally causes good works, why do God's people find it so hard to do them?

Answer

1. God's people are fruitful in good works in proportion to their faith; if they be slender in good works, it is because they are weak in faith. Little faith is like small candles, or weak fire, which though they shine and have heat; yet only dim shining and small heat, when compared with bigger candles and greater fire. The reason why Sardis had some in it whose works were not perfect before God was because they did not hold fast by faith the word that they had formerly heard and received (Rev 3:1-3).

2. There may be a great mistake in our judging our own fruitfulness. The soul that indeed is candid and right at heart, is taught by grace to judge itself, though fruitful, yet barren on two accounts.

(1) When it compares its life to the mercy given to it: for when a soul considers the greatness and riches of the mercy given to it, then it must cry out, 'O wretched man that I am,' (Rom 7:24) for it sees itself to fall short of a life that suits one who has received so great a benefit.

(2) It may also judge itself barren, because it falls so far short of what it wants to attain, 'it cannot do the thing that it would' (Gal 5:17).

3. The heart of a Christian is naturally very barren; which naturally tends to produce weeds, though the seed of grace that is the most fruitful of all seeds, be sown (Mat 15:19). Now, to have a good crop from such ground indicates the fruitfulness of the seed. So I summarise.

(1) The seed of faith is a very fruitful seed, that can be fruitful in so barren a soil.

(2) Faith is not in debt to the heart, but the heart to it, for all its fruitfulness.

(3) The way to be a more fruitful Christian is to be stronger in

believing.

SECOND Now for the second thing, that is, That everyone who believes should take care that their works are good. This follows from what went just before; that is, That the heart of a Christian is a heart that tends to produce weeds. There is flesh as well as spirit in the best of saints: and as the spirit of grace will be always putting forth something good, so the flesh will continually be putting forth evil. 'For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh' (Gal 5:17).

Now this is the reason you find in the Scriptures so many cautions to Christians to look to their lives and lifestyles. As, 'Keep your heart with all diligence' (Prov 4:23). 'Watch, stand fast in the faith, fight like men, be strong' (1 Cor 16:13). 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he reap. For he who sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting' (Gal 6:7,8).

All works are not good that seem to be so. It is one thing for a man's ways to be right in his own eye, and another for them to be right in God's. Often 'what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God' (Prov 30:12; Luke 16:15).

Since corruption is not yet out of our natures, there is a proneness in us to build, (even on the right foundation) wood, hay, and stubble, instead of gold and silver, and precious stones (1 Cor 3:11-15). How David the king, Nathan the prophet, and Uzza the priest, were deceived, concerning good works! (1 Chron 17:1-4; 13:9-11). Peter also, in both his defending his Master in the garden, and in trying to persuade him against his sufferings, though both out of love and affection to his Master, was deceived concerning good works. (Matt 16:22,23; John 18:10,11). Many have been mistaken both as to teaching, worship, and the achieving of each.

First, For teaching. Christ tells the Jews, that they taught for the doctrines of God the doctrines and traditions of men (Matt 15:9; Mark

7:7). Also, says the apostle, They teach 'things they should not, for the sake of filthy money' (Titus 1:11).

Second, Also concerning worship, we find how frequently men have mistaken, in time, place, and offering, how they worshipped.

1. Time. It has been what man has devised, not which God has commanded (1 Kings 12:32). They 'change the plan,' says Isaiah, 24:5. They change God's 'judgements into wickedness,' says Ezekiel 5:6.
2. Place. When they should have worshipped at Jerusalem, they worshipped at Bethel, at Gilgal and Dan, in gardens, under poplars and elms. (1 Kings 12:26-30; Hosea 4:13-15; Isa 65:2-5).
3. The offering they brought. Instead of bringing according to the command, they brought the lame, the torn, and the sick; they sanctified themselves in gardens, with swine's flesh and mice, when they should have done it at Jerusalem, with bullocks and lambs (Isa 66:17).

Third, Again, concerning men's pursuing their zeal for their worship, that they think right; how hot has it been, though with no reason at all? Nebuchadnezzar will have his fiery furnace, and Darius his lions' den for Nonconformists (Dan 3:6; 6:7, etc) Again, they have pursued men to foreign cities; have laid traps and snares in every corner, to entrap and to entangle their words; and if they could at any time only kill the persons that dissented from them, they would think they were doing God's will. (Acts 26:11; Luke 11:53,54; John 19:1,2). But we need not look so far from home, when we think about the Papists and their companions. How many have they in all ages hanged, burned, starved, drowned, racked, dismembered, and murdered, both openly and in secret? and all thinking it is for God, his worship, and good works. Thus you see how wise men and fools, saints and sinners, Christians and heathens, have erred in the business of good works; so every one should be careful to see that their works really are good.

Now, then, to prevent, if God will, mistakes in this matter, I shall propose to you what it is for a work to be rightly good. First, A good

work must have the word for its authority. Second, It must flow from faith. Third, It must be both rightly timed and rightly placed. Fourth, It must be done willingly, cheerfully, etc.

First, It must have the word for its authority. Zeal without knowledge is like a horse without eyes, or like a sword in a madman's hand; and there is no knowledge where there is not the word: for if they reject the word of the Lord, and do not act according to that, 'what wisdom is in them?' says the prophet (Jer 8:9; Isa 8:20). So make sure you have the word to authorise what you do.

Second, As there must be the word to authorise what you do, so there must be faith, from which it must flow, as I showed you before: 'for whatever is not of faith is sin;' and 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' Now, I say, without the word there is no faith, (Rom 10:17) as without faith there is no good, whatever men pretend.

Third, As it must have these two mentioned above, so also it must have,

1. Right time; and,
2. Right place.

1. It must be rightly timed. Every work is not to be done at the same time; every time is not suitable for such a work; There is a time for all things, and every thing is beautiful in its time (Eccl 3:11). There is a time to pray, a time to hear, a time to read, a time to confer, a time to meditate, a time to do, and a time to suffer. Now, to hear only, when we should be preaching and doing is not good. Christ was very wary that both his doings and sufferings were rightly timed (John 2:3,4; 13:1,2). And we should follow his steps. To plough the field when I should be hearing the word is not good; and to go out when I should be instructing my family at home is just as bad: 'Whoever keeps the commandment shall meet no evil: 'and a wise man's heart discerns both time and judgement' (Eccl 8:5). Good things mistimed are fruitless and vain.

2. As things must have their right time, so they must be rightly placed; for to misplace a work is as bad as to mistime it. When I say things, if good, must be rightly placed, I mean we should not give to any work more than the word of God allows it, neither should we give it less. Mint, anise, and cummin, are not so weighty as faith and the love of God; as in (Matt 23:23). For a pastor to exercise the office of a deacon, instead of the office of a pastor, is to misplace his work (Acts 6:2). For Martha to make outward provision for Christ, when she should have sat at his feet to hear his word, was to misplace her work; and for her sister to have done it at her request (though the thing in itself was good) would have been her sin also (Luke 10:39-42). Now, to prevent the misplacing of good works,

(1) They misplace works when they set them in Christ's place (Rom 10:1-3).

(2) They also misplace works when they make themselves co-partners with Him (Rom 9:31,32; Acts 15:1). This is setting up ourselves as God's helpers, and man's righteousness by the righteousness of Christ (Ezek 43:7,8). These are said to be teachers of the law, not knowing what they say, nor what they are seeking to prove (1 Tim 1:7).

(3) They also misplace works, who ascribe to a less important work the honour that belongs to a more noble work. And such are

(a) Those who count the ceremonial part of an sacrament as good as the truth and significance of it.

(b) Those who account the dictates and impulses of a mere natural conscience, as good, as high, and divine, as the leadings and movings of the Spirit of Christ. (c) Those also who count it enough to do part of what God has commanded, and that part possibly the least, instead of all, and the more important things.

(d) They also make a big mistake when they count things that are peripheral as important as those that are absolutely necessary in the worship of God.

(e) But the worse, those who place men's traditions above them.

(f) And they greatest of all, who put bitter for sweet, and darkness for

light. All these things we must avoid, as things absolutely obstructive to good works.

So concerning good works; obedience is better than sacrifice; that is, to do things according to the word of God, is better than to do them according to my fancy and opinion (1 Sam 15:22). 'So, let all things be done decently and in order' (1 Cor 14:40).

Fourth, As good works should be ordered and qualified, so they should be done from the heart, willingly, cheerfully, with simplicity and love, according to what a man has (1 John 5:3; 2 Cor 9:7; Rom 12:8; Col 3:12; 1 Cor 10:24; 2 Cor 8:12).

There are three things that a man should bear in mind in every work he does.

1. The honour of God (1 Cor 6:20).
2. The benefit of his neighbour (1 Cor 14:26).
3. The need or otherwise for what I am to do (1 Cor 6:12). And always observe it, that the honour of God is wrapped up in the benefit of your neighbour; and the benefit of your neighbour in the motivation for what you do.

If you would bring benefit to your neighbour, and so to God's honour, in the sight of men, beware,

1st. That in your words and attitudes you keep yourself so lowly that you may clearly speak of Christ in his precious benefits; and be careful not to enter into debate with those who are weak (Rom 15:1). But deal chiefly, lovingly, and wisely, with their consciences about those matters that will strengthen them in the faith of their justification, and deliverance from death and hell. 'Comfort the feeble-minded,' strengthen the weak (1 Thess 5:14).

2ndly. If you are stronger than your brother, be careful not to do things before him, that may offend his weak conscience; I mean, things that in themselves may be lawful. All that is lawful is not beneficial; all that

is lawful does not benefit (1 Cor 6:12). So here is your wisdom and love, that you in some things deny yourself for your brother's sake. 'I will eat no meat while the world stands,' says Paul, 'if it would offend my brother' (1 Cor 8:13). So have this faith to yourself before God (Rom 14:22). But if you walk otherwise, know, you are not walking in love, or for benefit, or for Christ's honour, but you are sinning against Christ, and wounding your weak brother, for whom Christ died (Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 8:12). But all this while keep your eye on the word; be careful of going against that for any reason whatever; for without the word, there is nothing to God's glory, nor your brother's benefit. So, walk 'wisely in a perfect way' (Psa 101:2, 3).

Having thus, in few words, showed you what are truly good works, I beg you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you do them conscientiously, so that you may, while you live here, be vessels of honour, fit for the master's use, and ready for every good work (1 Tim 6:18). Become experienced and skilful in what is excellent, 'that you may be sincere, and without offence, until the day of Christ' (Phil 1:10). Covet communion with God: 'covet earnestly the best gifts' (1 Cor 12:31). Ah! we who are redeemed from among men (Rev 14:4), and who rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Rom 5:2), we who look, I say, for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13), 'what sort of people should we be in all holy life and godliness' (2 Peter 3:11).

To conclude, for your further edification, take a plain rehearsal of your several general duties and works, to which God uses you in his word, according to your places, callings, and relations in this world;

Chapter 2; Duties of the Master of a Family.

If you are responsible for a family, then you are to consider the different roles you have; and realise that you have a work to do for God in each of them, and that he expects you to do every one of them faithfully. So;

DUTY TO THE FAMILY IN GENERAL.

He that is the master of a family, he has, in that respect, a work to do for God; that is, the right governing of his own family. And his work is twofold. First, Regarding the spiritual state of it. Second, Regarding the outward state of it.

First, As concerning the spiritual state of his family; he should be very diligent and careful, doing his utmost both to increase faith where it is begun, and to begin it where it is not. So, with this in mind, he should diligently and often lay before his household such things of God, out of his word, as are suitable for each aspect. And let no man question his obligation in the word of God for such a practice; for if the thing itself were only useful, as tending to civil honesty, it is within the capability of anyone, and should be done; much more things of a higher nature; besides, the apostle exhorts us 'Whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, pure, lovely, and of good report, think of them,' that is, be mindful to do them (Phil 4:8). But to be experienced in this godly exercise in our family is very worthy of praise, and befits all Christians. This is one of the things for which God so highly commended his servant Abraham, which so much affected his heart. I know Abraham, says God, 'I know him' to be a good man indeed, for 'he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord' (Gen 18:19). This was also something that good Joshua designed should be his practice all his life. 'As for me,' says he, 'and my household, we will serve the Lord' (Josh 24:15).

Further, we find also in the New Testament, that those who do not apply themselves to this duty are considered substandard Christians;

yes, so substandard as not fit to be chosen to any office in the church of God. A pastor must be one that rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all seriousness; For if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? 'The deacon' also, says he, must 'be the husband of one wife, ruling their children, and their own house well' (1 Tim 3). Note, the apostle seems to lay down thus much, that a man that governs his family well has one qualification for a pastor or deacon in the house of God, for he who knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? which gives us insight into the work of the master of a family, concerning the governing of his house.

1. A pastor must be sound and uncorrupt in his teaching; and indeed so must the master of a family (Titus 1:9; Eph 6:4).
2. A pastor should be able to teach, to reprove, and to exhort; and so should the master of a family (1 Tim 3:2; Deut 6:7).
3. A pastor must himself be exemplary in faith and holiness; and so should the master of a family (1 Tim 3:2-4; 4:12). 'I,' says David, 'will behave myself in a perfect way; I will walk in my house with a perfect heart' (Psa 101:2).
4. The pastor gets the church together; and when they are so come together, prays among them, and preaches to them. This is also commendable in Christian masters of families.

Object.

But my family is ungodly and unruly. What shall I do?

Answer.

1. Even if this is true, you must still rule them, and not they you! You are set over them by God, and you are to use the authority which God has given you, both to rebuke their vice, and to show them the evil of their rebelling against the Lord. Eli did this, though not enough; so did David (1 Sam 2:24, 25; 1 Chron 28:9). Also, you must tell them how sad your state was when you were in their condition, and so seek to save them from the snare of the devil (Mark 5:19).
2. You should also labour to bring them to public worship, for God may

convert their souls there. Jacob said to his household, and to all around him, 'Let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress' (Gen 35:3). Hannah carried Samuel to Shiloh, that he might abide with God for ever (1 Sam 1:22). Indeed a soul rightly touched, will seek to draw, not only their families, but a whole city after Jesus Christ (John 4:28-30).

3. If they are obstinate, and will not go with you, then you get godly and sound men to your house, and let the word of God be preached there, when you have, as Cornelius, gathered your family and friends together (Acts 10).

You know that the jailor, Lydia, Crispus, Gaius, Stephanus, and others, had not only themselves, but their families, saved by the word preached, and that some of them, if not all, by the word preached in their houses (Acts 16:14-34; 18:7, 8; 1 Cor 1:16). And this, for all I know, might be one reason why the apostles taught in their day not only publicly, but from house to house, so that they might, if possible, bring in those in some family, which remained unconverted, and in their sins (Acts 10:24; 20:20, 21). For some, you know how usual it was in the day of Christ, to invite him to their houses, if they had any afflicted, that either would not or could not come to him (Luke 7:2, 3; 8:41). If this is the way with those who have outward diseases in their families, how much more where there are souls who need Christ to save them from death and damnation!

4. Be careful not to neglect family duties among them yourself; as, reading the word and prayer; if you have one in your family that is gracious, take encouragement; nay, if you are alone, yet know that you have both liberty to go to God through Christ, and also are at that time in a capacity of having the universal church join with you for the whole number of those that shall be saved.

5. Be careful not to allow any ungodly, profane or heretical books, or talk in your house. 'Evil conversations corrupt good manners' (1 Cor 15:33). I mean such profane or heretical books as either tend to provoke to looseness of life, or oppose the fundamentals of the gospel. I know that Christians must be allowed their liberty as to peripheral things; but for those things that strike either at faith or holiness, they

should be abandoned by all Christians, and especially by the pastors of churches, and masters of families; this was prefigured by Jacob, who commanded his household, and all with him, to put away the strange gods from among them, and to change their garments (Gen 35:2). All those in the Acts set a good example for this, who took their magic books and burned them before all men, though they were worth fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19:18, 19). The neglect of this fourth detail has caused ruin in many families, both among children and servants. It is easier for vain talkers, and their deceitful works, to corrupt whole households, than many are aware of (Titus 1:10, 11). Thus much concerning the spiritual state of your household. And now to its outward.

Regarding the outward state of your family, consider these three things.

1. It is your responsibility to ensure they have what they need. 'If any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel' (1 Tim 5:8). But when the Word says, you are to provide for your house, it gives you no license to worry; neither does it allow you grasp the world in your heart, or purse, nor to worry about the future, but so to provide for them, that they may have food and raiment; and if either they or you are not content with that, you are going beyond the rule of God (1 Tim 6:8; Matt 6:34). This is to labour, that you may have enough 'to maintain good works for necessary uses' (Titus 3:14). And never object, that unless you get more, it will not suffice; for that is only unbelief. The word says, 'God feeds ravens, cares for sparrows, and clothes the grass;' which three, to feed, clothe, and care for, is as much as heart can wish for (Luke 12:6-28).

2. So, though you should provide for your family; yet let your labour be mixed with moderation; 'Let your moderation be known to all men' (Phil 4:5). Avoid driving so hard after this world, as to hinder yourself and family from those duties towards God, which you are by grace obliged to; as private prayer, reading the scriptures, and Christian

meetings. It is a degrading thing for men to give themselves and families to this world so much that they separate their heart from God's worship. Christians, 'The time is short: so let those who have wives be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they wept not; and those who rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those who use this world, as not using it wrongly; for the fashion of this world passes away' (1 Cor 7:29-31). Many Christians live and do in this world as if religion were a side issue, and this world the only necessity; when all the things of this world are passing away; and religion is all that is necessary (Luke 10:40-42).

3. If you wish to be such a master of a family, you must ensure that there is such Christian harmony there as befits a house ruled by one who fears God.

(1) You must look that your children and servants obey the word of God; for though only God can rule the heart, yet he expects that you should rule their outward man; if you do not, he may in a short time cut them all off (1 Sam 3:11-14). So make sure that you keep them temperate in all things, in clothing, in language, that they are not greedy, or drinkers; not letting your children domineer over your servants, or to relate foolishly towards each other.

(2) Learn to distinguish between injustice in your family done to you, and what is done to God; and though you should be very zealous for the Lord, and to bear nothing that is disobedience to him; yet here will be your wisdom, to pass by personal offence, and forget: 'Love covers a multitude of sins.' Do not be like those who rage like madmen when they are offended; but laugh, or do not soberly rebuke and warn, when God is dishonoured.

'Rule your own house well, having your children with others in your family in subjection, with all seriousness' (1 Tim 3:4). Solomon was so excellent sometimes this way, that he dazzled the eyes of his beholders (2 Chron 9:3, 4). But to come to details.

Chapter 3; Duty in Relation to the Wife

Do you have a wife? You must consider how you should behave yourself in that role: and to do this right, you must consider the condition of your wife, whether she truly believes or not. First, If she believes, then,

1. You are committed to bless God for her: 'For her price is far above rubies, and she is the gift of God to you, and is for your adorning and glory' (Prov 12:4; 31:10; 1 Cor 11:7). 'Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that fears the Lord shall be praised' (Prov 31:30).

2. You should love her, for two reason:

(1) As she is your flesh and your bone: 'For no man ever yet hated his own flesh' (Eph 5:29).

(2) As she is together with you an heir of the grace of life (1 Peter 3:7). This, I say, should draw you to love her with Christian love; to love her, as believing that you both are dearly beloved of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and as those that will be together with him in eternal happiness.

3. You should so behave yourself with her, as Christ does with his church; so says the apostle: So should men love their wives, 'even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it' (Eph 5:25). When husbands truly behave like husbands, then will they be not only husbands, but such a provision of God to the wife, as will preach to her the attitude of Christ to his spouse. There is a sweet scent wrapped up in the relationships of husbands and wives that believe (Eph 4:32); the wife, I say, signifying the church, and the husband her head and saviour, 'For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church' (Eph 5:23). and he is the Saviour of the body.

This is one of God's chief aims in instituting marriage, that Christ and his church, as a parable, might be seen wherever there is a couple that believe through grace. So the husband that behaves foolishly towards his wife does not only break this rule, but also makes his wife lose the

benefit of such a plan, and spoils the mystery of his relationship with her.

So I say, 'So should men love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife, loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own body; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church:' (Eph 5: 8, 29). Christ laid down his life for his church, covers her weaknesses, communicates to her his wisdom, protects her, and helps her in her life in this world; and so men should do for their wives. Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter had to do this, as you may see in the book of Canticles. So bear with their weaknesses, help their infirmities, and honour them as the weaker vessels, and those of a frailer constitution (1 Peter 3:7).

In a word, be such a husband to your believing wife, that she may say; God has not only given me a husband, but such a husband as preaches to me every day the attitude of Christ to his church.

Second, If your wife is unbelieving or fleshly, then you have also a duty, for two reasons:

1. Because she is liable every moment to eternal damnation.
2. That she is your wife that is in this evil situation.

Oh! how little sense of the worth of souls is there in the heart of some husbands; as is shown by their unchristian attitude to and before their wives! Now, to gain a suitable attitude,

1. Labour seriously after a sense of her miserable state, that your heart may yearn for her soul.
2. Beware that she has no cause, from any bad attitude of yours, to do wrong. And here you have need to double your diligence, for she lies in your bosom, and therefore is capable of seeing the least bad attitude in you.
3. If she behaves herself badly and unruly, as she is likely to, being Christless and graceless, then seek to overcome her evil with

goodness, her recklessness with patience and meekness. It is a shame for you, who have another principle, to do as she does.

4. Take your opportunities to convince her. Observe her, and when she is most likely to hear, then speak to her heart.

5. When you speak, speak to the point. Few words will suffice, provided they be relevant. Job in a few words answers his wife, and stops her foolish talking: 'You speak,' says he, 'as one of the foolish women. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?' (Job 2:10).

6. Let all be done without bitterness, or the least appearance of anger: 'In meekness instructing those that oppose, if perhaps they may escape the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will' (2 Tim 2:25, 26). 'And how do you know, O man, whether you shall save your wife' (1 Cor 7:16).

Chapter 4; Duty of Parents to Children

If you are a parent, then consider your calling under this heading.

Your children have souls, and they must be born of God as well as of you, or they perish. And know also, that unless you are very careful in your behaviour to and before them, they may perish through you: the thoughts of which should provoke you, both to instruct, and also to correct them.

First, Instruct them as the scripture says, and 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'; do this diligently, 'when you sit in your house, when you lie down, and when you rise up' (Eph 6:4; Deut 6:7).

Now to do this effectively:

1. Do it in simple language: be clear, for many words will drown your children. Thus God spoke to his children (Hosea 12:10), and Paul to his (1 Cor 3:2).
2. Be careful not to fill their heads with theories and useless knowledge, for this will more likely teach them to be opinionated and proud than sober and humble. So explain to them the state of man by nature; talk of sin, death and hell; of a crucified Saviour, and the promise of life through faith: 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it' (Prov 22:6).
3. There must be much gentleness and patience in all your instructions, 'lest they be discouraged' (Col. 3:21). And,
4. Seek to convince them by sensible thought that the things you speak of are not fables, but realities; yes, and realities so far above what can be here enjoyed, that all things, were they a thousand times better than they are, are not worthy to be compared with the glory and worthiness of these things.

Isaac was so holy before his children, that when Jacob remembered God, he remembered that he was 'the Fear of his father Isaac' (Gen

31:53).

Ah! when children can think of their parents, and bless God for that instruction and good they have received from them, this is not only profitable for children, but honourable, and encouraging to parents: 'The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he who fathers a wise child shall receive joy' (Prov 23:24, 25).

Second, The duty of correction.

1. See if gentle words will win them from evil. This is God's way with his children (Jer 25:4, 5).

2. Let those words you speak to them in your reproof be both sober, few, and relevant, adding always some suitable sentence of the scripture; eg, if they lie, then such as (Rev 21:8, 27). If they refuse to hear the word, such as (2 Chron 25:14-16).

3. Be careful that they do not associate with wild and ungodly children; showing with soberness a continual dislike of their foolishness; often crying out to them, as God did of old to his, 'Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate' (Jer 44:4).

4. Let all this is mixed with such love, pity, and tenderness of spirit, that if possible they may be convinced you dislike not them, but their sins. This is God's way (Psa 99:8).

5. Seek often to cause them to consider the day of their death, and judgement to come. Thus also God deals with his children (Deut 32:29).

6. If you are driven to the rod, strike carefully and coolly, and soberly show them,

(1) their fault;

(2) how much it is against your heart to deal with them in this way;

(3) and that what you do, you do in obedience to God, and love to their souls;

(4) and tell them, that if gentleness would have done, none of this severity would have happened. This, I have proved, will touch their hearts as well as their bodies; and as it is the way that God deals with

us, it is the most likely to succeed.

7. Follow all this with prayer to God for them, and leave the outcome to him: 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him' (Prov 22:15).

Lastly, Observe these cautions,

1. Be careful that the misdeeds for which you correct your children are not learned from you. Many children are chastised for the misdeeds they have learned from their parents.
2. Be careful not to smile not on them, to encourage them in small faults, lest your attitude to them be an encouragement to them to commit greater.
3. Be careful not to shout at them in frustration while chastising them.
4. Be careful not to get them used to chiding words and threatenings, mixed with lightness and laughter; this will harden them. Speak not much, nor often, but relate to them soberly.

Chapter 5; Duties of Masters to Servants

Masters also have a responsibility to their servants.

Get those who fear God if possibly they can,: 'He that works deceit,' says David, 'shall not dwell within my house; he who tells lies, shall not continue in my presence' (Psa 101:7).

But if only unbelievers can be got to do your labour, then,

1. Know that it is your duty so to behave yourself to your servant, that your service may not only be for your good, but for the good of your servant, both in body and soul. So deal with him, as to admonition, as with your children; give him the same bread of God you give to them; and who knows, if you with spiritual care bring up your servant, he may become your spiritual son in the end (Prov 29:21).

2. Be careful not to turn your servants into slaves, by overworking them through your greediness. To make men serve with rigour is more like Israel's enemies than Christian masters (Exo 1:14). [10]

3. Be careful not to behave towards your servant like Nabal, who was 'such a man of Belial, that his servants could not speak to him.' (1 Sam 25:14-17).

And the apostle forbids you to threaten them, because you also have a Master in heaven (Eph 6:9). For your servants cannot be guilty of so many sins against you, as you are guilty of against Christ. So do with, and to your servants, as you would have your master do with you.

4. Be careful that you neither swindle him when entering your employment, nor at his going out. Servants, when entering employment, may be abused in two ways.

(1) By their masters lying to them, saying, their work is light and easy, when it is indeed, if not too burdensome, yet far beyond what at first was said of it. This is deceitful of them.

(2) The other way is, when masters press their servants to accept wages that are too little for such work and labour. Both these the apostle opposes, where he says, 'Masters give to your servants what is just,' just labour, and just wages, 'knowing that you also have a master

in heaven' (Col 4:1).

As servants may be swindled when entering employment, so also they may be at their going out: which is done by masters that either change their wages, like heathen Laban, (Gen 31:7). or by keeping it back, like those against whom God will be a swift witness (Mal 3:5).

5. Be careful not to profiteer; because you are gracious, and can provide the means of grace.

Servants that are truly godly care not how cheap they serve their masters, provided they may get into godly families, or where they may share the word. But if a master or mistress should use this to take advantage of their servants, this is abominable, this is making a gain of godliness, and merchandise of the things of God, and of the soul of your brother (1 Tim 6:5).

I have heard some poor servants say, That in some carnal families they have had more liberty to God's things, and more fairness of dealing, than among professors. But this stinks. And as Jacob said concerning the cruelty of his two sons, so may I say of such masters, they make religion stink before the inhabitants of the land (Gen 34:30).

In a word, learn from the Lord Jesus to behave well with your servants, that your servants also may learn something of the kindness of Christ by your attitude to them. Servants are goers as well as comers; be careful that you give them no cause to criticise the gospel when they are gone, for what they saw you doing when they were with you. Masters carry it rightly toward their servants, when they labour both in word and life to convince them that the things of God are all that is necessary. What servants are commanded to do, concerning respect, singleness of heart, and doing what they do as to the Lord, and not to men, the master is commanded to do the same to them. (Eph 6:6-9).

Chapter 6; The Duty of Wives

So now I shall speak a word or two to those that are under him.

First, to the wife: The wife is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he lives. (Rom 7:2). So she has her work and place in the family, as well as the rest.

Now there are these important things in the attitude of a wife toward her husband, which she should conscientiously observe.

First, That she look on him as her head and lord. 'The head of the woman is the man' (1 Cor 11:3). And so Sarah called Abraham lord (1 Peter 3:6).

Second, She should be subject to him, as is fitting in the Lord. The apostle says, 'That the wife should submit herself to her husband, as to the Lord' [12] (1 Peter 3:1; Col 3:18; Eph 5:22). I told you before, that if the husband walks towards his wife as he should, he will be such a provision of God to her, besides the relation of a husband, that it will demonstrate to her the attitude of Christ to his church. In the same way the wife, if she walks with her husband as she should, will demonstrate the obedience of the church to her husband. 'So as the church is subject to Christ, let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything' (Eph 5:24). Now in doing this, you must first shun these evils.

1. The evil of a wandering and a gossiping spirit; this is evil in the church, and is evil also in a wife, who represents a church. Christ loves to have his spouse at home; that is, to be with him in the faith and practice of his things, not wandering and meddling with the things of Satan; so wives should not wander around and gossip. You know that Proverbs 7:11 says, 'She is loud and stubborn; she does not stay at home.' Wives should care for their husbands' business at home; as the apostle says, Let them 'be discreet, chaste, housekeepers, good, obedient to their husbands.' And why? Because otherwise 'the word of

God will be blasphemed' (Titus 2:5).

2. Be careful not to have an idle, chattering, or arguing tongue. This also is an evil, either in maids or wives. For the wife should know that her husband is her lord, and is over her as Christ is over the church. Do you think it fitting for the church to answer her husband back? Is she not to be silent before him, and to look to his laws, rather than her own ideas? Indeed, says the apostle, how should the wife behave towards her husband? 'Let the woman,' says Paul, 'learn in silence with all subjection. But I do not allow a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence' (1 Tim 2:11, 12). It is an unseemly thing to see a woman so much as once in all her life to offer to over-rule her husband; she should in everything be in subjection to him, and to do all she does, as having her warrant, licence, and authority from him. Here is her glory, to be under him, as the church is under Christ: Now 'she opens her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness' (Prov 31:26).

3. Be careful not to wear immodest clothing, or strut around; this will be evil both abroad and at home; abroad, it will not only give a bad example, but also tend to lust and temptation; and at home it will give an offence to a godly husband, and ruin ungodly children. So, as says the apostle, Let women's clothing be modest, as befits women professing godliness, with good works, 'not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or expensive clothing' (1 Tim 2:9, 10). And as it is said again, 'Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of expensive clothing: But let it be the hidden person of the heart, in what is incorruptible, the adorning of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For in this way, in the old time, the holy women, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their husbands' (1 Peter 3:3-5).

But yet, do not think that by the subjection I have here mentioned that I intend women should be their husbands' slaves. Women are their husbands' yoke fellows, their flesh and their bone; and no man hates his own body, or is bitter against it (Eph 5:29). So, let every man 'love his wife as himself; and the wife make sure that she reverence her husband' (Eph 5:33). The wife is master next to her husband, and is to rule in his absence; yes, in his presence she is to guide the house, to

bring up the children, provided she does it in such a way that the adversary may have no cause to reproach (1 Tim 5:10, 13). 'Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. A gracious woman retains honour:' and guides her affairs with discretion (Prov 31:10; 11:16; 12:4).

Object.

But my husband is an unbeliever; what shall I do?

Answer.

If so, then what I have said before is so much more important. For,

1. Your husband being in this condition will be looking out for your mistakes, to throw them as dirt in the face of God and your Saviour.
2. He will tend to make the worst of all your words and gestures.
3. And all this will tend to make him harder, prejudiced, and opposing his own salvation; so, as Peter says, 'you wives, be in subjection to your husbands; that, if any do not obey the word, they may also without a word be won by the lifestyle of the wives; while they behold your chaste lifestyle, coupled with fear' (1 Peter 3:1, 2). Your husband's salvation or damnation lies much in your attitude and behaviour before him; so, if you have any fear of God, or love for your husband, seek, by a life full of meekness, modesty, and holiness, and humble behaviour before him, to win him to love his own salvation; and by doing this, how 'how do you know, O wife, whether you shall save your husband?' (1 Cor 7:16).

Object.

But my husband is not only an unbeliever, but one very contrary, irritable, and difficult; so contrary that I know not how to speak to him, or behave before him.

Answer.

Indeed there are some wives greatly oppressed by their ungodly husbands; and as such should be pitied, and prayed for; so they should be so much the more watchful and careful in all their ways.

1. Therefore be very faithful to him in all the things of this life.
2. Bear with patience his unruly and unconverted behaviour; you are alive, he is dead; you are principled with grace, he with sin. Now, then, seeing grace is stronger than sin, and virtue than vice; do not be overcome with his vileness, but overcome that with your virtues (Rom 12:21). It is a shame for those that are gracious to be as uncontrolled as those that lack grace: Those who are 'slow to wrath are of great understanding; but those who are hasty of spirit, exalt folly' (Prov 14:29).
3. If at any time you wish to speak to your husband for his conviction, concerning anything, either good or evil, your wisdom is to choose the right time and opportunity: There is 'a time to keep silence, and a time to speak' (Eccl 3:7). Now to time it right,

(1) Consider his mood; and speak to him when he is farthest off of those filthy passions that are your afflictions. Abigail would not speak a word to her churlish husband till his wine was gone from him, and he was sober (1 Sam 25:36, 37). The lack of this is why so much is spoken, and so little effected.

(2) Speak to him at those times when he is tender to you, and when he shows tokens of love and delight in you. Thus did Esther with the king her husband, and prevailed (Ester 5:3, 6; 7:1, 2).

(3) Notice when his conscience is troubled, and then speak with sound and grave sayings of the Scriptures. Manoah's wife dealt with her husband like this (Judg 13:22, 23). Yet then,

(a) Let your words be few.

(b) And none of them expressing superiority; but speak still as to your head and lord, by way of entreaty and pleading.

(c) And that in such a spirit of sympathy, and heart of affection after his good, that the way you speak may show him that you speak in love, knowing his misery, and stirred in your soul with desire after his conversion.

(d) And follow your words and behaviour with prayers to God for his soul.

(e) Still keeping yourself in a holy, chaste, and modest behaviour before him.

Object.

But my husband is a drunkard, a fool, and one that has not enough sense to follow his job in the world.

Answer.

1. Though all this is true, yet you must know he is your head, your lord, and your husband.
2. So you must be careful of desiring to take authority over him. He was not made for you; that is, for you to rule over him, but to be your husband, and to rule over you (1 Tim 2:12; 1 Cor 11:3, 8).
3. So, though truly you may have more discretion than he, yet you should know that you, with all that is yours, is to be used as under your husband; even 'everything' (Eph 5:24). Be careful therefore, that what you do goes in his name, not yours; his exaltation, not yours; carrying all things so, by your skill and prudence, that you do not show one of your husband's weaknesses to others : 'A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that shames him is as rottenness in his bones.' For then, as the wise man says, 'she will do him good and not evil, all the days of her life' (Prov 12:4; 31:12).
4. So continue, as being under the power and authority of your husband.

Now concerning your attitude to your children and servants. You are a parent, and a mistress, and so you should keep yourself lowly. And besides, seeing the believing woman is a figure of the church, she should, as the church, nourish and instruct her children, and servants, as the church, that fulfil that also; and truly, the wife being always at home, she has great advantage that way; so do it, and the Lord prosper your doing.

Chapter 7; Duties of Children to Parents

Children also have a duty to their parents, which they are bound both by the law of God and nature conscientiously to observe: 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.' And again, 'Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is pleasing to the Lord' (Eph 6:1; Col 3:20).

There are general things in which children should show their parents the honour they are due

First, They should always count them better than themselves. I have noticed a vile spirit among some children; they tend to look down on their parents, and to have slighting and scornful thoughts of them. This is worse than heathen; such a one has got just the heart of a dog or a beast, that will bite those that fathered them, and her that bore them.

Object.

But my father, etc., is now poor, and I am rich, and it will be a hindrance to me, to show that respect to him as otherwise I might.

Answer.

I tell you you talk like an atheist and a beast, and stand in this right against the Son of God (Mark 7:9-13). Must money, and a little of the glory of the butterfly, mean that you shall not honour your father and mother? 'A wise son makes a glad father: but a foolish man despises his mother' (Prov 15:20). Though your parents be never so low, and you yourself never so high, yet he is your father, and she your mother, and you must hold them in great esteem: 'The eye that mocks at his father, and refuses to obey his mother, shall be picked out by the ravens of the valley, and the young eagles shall eat it' (Prov 30:17). Second, You should show honour to your parents, by being willing to help them with what they need. 'If any have children or nephews, let them learn to show piety at home, and to repay their parents:' says Paul, 'for that is good and acceptable before God' (1 Tim 5:4). Joseph

observed this rule to his poor father, though he himself was next to the king in Egypt (Gen 47:12; 41:39-44).

But mark, let them 'repay their parents.' There are three things for which, as long as you live, you will be a debtor to your parents.

1. For your being in this world. They are they from whom, immediately under God, you received it.
2. For their care to you when you were helpless, and could not care for yourself.
3. For the pains they have taken with you to bring you up. Until you have children of your own, you will not know the pains, watchings, fears, sorrow, and affliction, that they have had to bring you up; and when you know it, you will not easily feel that you have repaid enough. How often have they fed you and clothed you? What care have they taken, that you might have what you need to live and do well when they were dead and gone? They possibly have spared it from their own belly and back for you, and have also impoverished themselves, that you might live like a man. All these things you should duly, and like a man, consider; and you should take care to repay them. The Scripture says so, reason says so, and only dogs and beasts deny it. It is the duty of parents to lay up for their children; and the duty of children to repay their parents.

Third, Show, by all humble and son-like attitude, that you do to this day, with your heart, remember the love of your parents. Thus much for obedience to parents in general.

Again, if your parents be godly, and you wicked, (as you are, if you have not a second work or birth from God), then consider that you are more strongly engaged to respect and honour your parents, not now only as a father in the flesh, but as godly parents; your father and mother are now made of God your teachers and instructors in the way of righteousness. So, to refer to Solomon, 'My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not the law of your mother; bind them continually on your heart, and tie them about your neck' (Prov 6:20, 21).

Now, to provoke you to it, consider,

1. This has always been the practice of those who are and have been obedient children; yes, of Christ himself to Joseph and Mary, though he himself was God blessed for ever (Luke 2:51).

2. You have also the severe judgements of God on those that have been disobedient, to awe you. As, (1) Ishmael, for mocking one good attitude of his father and mother, was both thrust out of his father's inheritance and the kingdom of heaven, and that with God's approval (Gen 21:9-14; Gal 4:30). (2) Hophni and Phinehas, for refusing the good advice of their father, provoked the great God to be their enemy: 'They did not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to slay them' (1 Sam 2:23-25). (3) Absalom was hanged, as I may say, by God himself, for rebelling against his father (2 Sam 18:9).

Besides, little do you know how heart-aching a thought it is to your parents, when they think you may be damned! How many prayers, sighs, and tears, are there wrung from their hearts on this account? Every misdeed of yours goes to their heart, for fear God should be caused to shut you up in hardness for ever. How did Abraham groan for Ishmael? 'O,' says he, to God, 'that Ishmael might live before you!' (Gen 17:18). How were Isaac and Rebecca grieved for the misdeeds of Esau? (Gen 26:34, 35). And how bitterly did David mourn for his son, who died in his wickedness? (2 Sam 18:32, 33).

Lastly, And can any imagine, but that all these characteristics of your godly parents, will mean the increase of your torments in hell, if you die in your sins?

Again, if your parents, and you also, are godly, how happy a thing is this? How should you rejoice, that the same faith should dwell both in your parents and you? Your conversion, possibly, is the fruits of your parents' groans and prayers for your soul; and they can only rejoice; you rejoice with them. It is true, in the salvation of a natural son, which is mentioned in the parable: 'This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry' (Luke

15:24). So let this thought, that your parents have grace, as well as you, cause your heart so much the more to honour, reverence, and obey them.

You are better able now to consider the pains and care that your friends have taken, both for your body and soul; so seek to repay them. You are able to respond in some measure: so do not neglect it. It is a double sin in a gracious son not to remember the commandment, the first commandment with promise (Eph 6:1, 2). Be careful not to give your sweet parents one sharp word, or bad attitude. Love them because they are your parents, because they are godly, and because you must be in glory with them.

If you are godly, and your parents wicked, as often it sadly happens; then,

1. Let your heart yearn towards them; it is your parents that are going to hell!
2. As I said before to the wife about her unbelieving husband, so I say to you, Avoid a chattering tongue: speak to them wisely, meekly, and humbly; serve them faithfully without losing heart; and endure, with all respect, their criticisms, their accusing and evil speaking. Look out for opportunities to lay their condition before them. O! how happy a thing would it be, if God should use a child to bring his father to the faith! Then indeed might the father say, God has used my child to convert my soul. The Lord, if he wishes, can convert our poor parents, that they, with us, may be the children of God.

Chapter 8; Concerning Servants

Servants also have a work to do for God in their place and station among men.

The apostles consider three types of master.

First, The believing master.

Second, The unbelieving master.

Third, The difficult master.

Servants are provided with counsel and advice in the word for each of these, to live appropriately under each of them.

But before I speak in detail, I will show you the duty of servants in general.

1. You are to consider yourself as you are; that is, as a servant, not a child, nor a wife; you are below these; so consider yourself below them, and be content. 'For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear.' One is 'a servant when he rules' (Prov 30:21, 22). It is out of your place, either to talk or act as one that rules.
2. Remember that what you work with is not your own but your master's. Now, because it is not your own you should not dispose of it; but because it is your master's, you should be faithful. Thus it was with Joseph (Gen 39:8, 9). But if you do otherwise, know that you shall receive of God for the wrong that you do; and there is with God 'no respect of persons' (Col 3:25). So,
3. Regarding your work, do it as to the Lord, and not for man; and, indeed, then servants do their business as they should, when they do all in obedience to the Lord, as knowing that the place where they now are, it is the place where Christ has put them, and where he expects they should be faithful. 'Servants,' says Paul, 'be obedient to those who are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as to Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart' (Eph 6:5,

6).

Observe a little the word of God to servants.

1. Servants must be obedient; yet,

2. Not with that obedience that will serve man only. Servants must have their eye on the Lord in the work they do for their masters.

3. Their work in this service is the will and plan of God. From which I conclude, that your work as a servant is as truly God's plan, and as acceptable to him in its kind, as is preaching, or any other work for God; and that you are as sure to receive a reward for your labour, as he who hangs or is burnt for the gospel.

So, says the apostle to servants, 'Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ' (Col 3:23, 24).

And now concerning the three sorts of masters mentioned above.

First, For the believing master; says Paul, 'Those who have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather serve them because they are faithful and beloved, and sharers, with the servants, of the heavenly benefit (1 Tim 6:2). Servants, if they do not guard their hearts, will be so aware of the relationship between their masters and them as brethren that they will forget the relationship that is between them as masters and servants. Now, they should remember the one but not forget the other. Know your place, as a servant, aware that your master and you are brethren, and do your work for him faithfully, humbly, and with meekness, because he is a faithful and beloved master, and shares in the heavenly benefit. 'If any man teaches otherwise,' says the apostle Paul, 'and does not accept the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the teaching which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but pre-occupied with questions and wordy strife; from which comes envy, strife, criticisms, evil opinions, and perverse arguments of men of corrupt minds who are destitute of the truth, who suppose that gain is godliness: withdraw from such people' (1

Tim 6:3- 5).

Second, For the unbelieving masters, for of them Paul speaks in 1 Tim 6:1, 'Let as many servants,' says he, 'as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his teaching may not be blasphemed.' Servants living with unbelieving masters are committed to being watchful, faithful, and trusty.

Committed, I say,

1. In view of of the condition of their master; for he being unbelieving, will keep a sharp eye on you, and on what you do, more so because you are a believer; as in the case of Saul and David (1 Sam 18:8, 9 &c).
2. You are responsible because you are known as Christian; for by that you lay both God and his word before your master, and he has no choice but to judge them if you behave badly. So Paul bids Titus 'exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, and to please them in all things, not answering back;' not giving foolish answers, not stealing, but being reliable, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in all things' (Titus 2:9, 10). That servant, who in an unbeliever's family does his work before God, as God's plan, shall adorn the teaching of God, if not save his master by so doing; but if he does otherwise, he shall stumble the unbeliever, dishonour God, offend the faithful, and bring guilt on his own soul.

Third, For the difficult master. I distinguish him from the unbeliever, yet not because he is a believer, but because not every unbeliever is difficult. Now with this difficult and irritable fellow, you are to serve as faithfully for the time you are employed, as with the most pleasant and rational master in the world: 'Servants,' says Peter, 'be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the difficult' (1 Peter 2:18). And if your irritable master is still difficult, either out of spite to your religion, or because he is lacks sense concerning your labour, though you labour faithfully, God then reckons you suffer for well-doing as truly as if you were persecuted for your faith. So Peter adds this encouragement to servants to what he says: 'This is praiseworthy,' says he, 'if a man for conscience toward God endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But if when you

do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God' (1 Peter 2:19, 20). So be comforted concerning your condition, considering that God looks on you as on Jacob in the family of Laban; and will right all your wrongs, and repay you for your faithful, wise, and godly behaviour, before, and in the service of your difficult master. So, be patient, I say, and faithful in your employment, till God makes a way for your escape; and if you are offered freedom, take it (1 Cor 7:21).

Chapter 9; Duties of neighbours to one another

Having in a few words showed you what is your duty in your different relationships, I shall now at last speak a word or two concerning good neighbourhood, and then conclude. There are these things to be considered and practised, if you will excel in the practical part of good neighbourhood.

First, You must be of a good and sound lifestyle in your own family, place, and station, showing to all the power that the gospel and the things of another world have in your heart, 'That you may be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world' (Phil 2:15, 16).

Second, As people who wish to be good neighbours must be of good behaviour at home,, so they must be full of courtesy and love to those who have need about them (Luke 10:36, 37). Right neighbourhood is for men readily to share not only their spiritual, but also their physical resources, such as food, clothing, and help, to those that have need; to give to the poor as you see them go by you, or to ask after them, and help them as you are able (Job 31:15-17, &c).

Third, You must be always humble and meek among them, as also serious and gracious; not frivolous, but by word and attitude bringing 'grace to the hearers' (Eph 4:29). Thus Job honoured God among his neighbours (Job 29:6-12).

Fourth, Your wisdom will be rightly to frown on sin, and reprove your neighbour for it (Lev 19:17), denying yourself in some things, to avoid stumbling him, so that you may please him for his benefit (Rom 15:2).

Fifth, If you would be a good neighbour, be careful of your tongue on two accounts.

1. That it is not offensive to your neighbour, to provoke him to anger. Bear much, put up with wrongs, and say little: 'It is an honour for a man to cease from strife: but every fool will be meddling' (Prov 20: 3). And again, 'He loves sin that loves strife' (Prov 17:19).

2. And as you should be careful that you are not the cause of contention and anger, so also be careful that you are not an instrument to cause it between others, by tale-bearing and a gossiping spirit: 'He that passes by, and meddles with strife belonging not to him, is like one that takes a dog by the ears. As coals are to a furnace, and wood to fire; so contentious man kindles strife' (Prov 26:17-21). I have seen two very bad things in many professors; one is a head-strong and stiff-necked spirit, that insists on its own way; and the other is a great deal of chat and talk about religion, but very little, if anything, of those deeds that carry in them the cross of a Christian and benefit to my neighbour.

(1) When I say a head-strong and stiff-necked spirit, I mean that they please themselves and their own fancies in things of no importance' though doing that is like a knife to the weak conscience of a brother or neighbour. This is bad. A Christian, in all that does not affect matters of faith and worship, should be full of self-denial, and seek to please others rather than himself; 'Give no offence - to the Jews, nor to the Greeks, nor to the church of God: - not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, that they may be saved' (1 Cor 10:32, 33).

(2) The second is as bad, that is, when professors are great gossips and talkers, but do little that speaks of love to the poor, or self-denial in outward things. Some people think religion is made up of words; a very big mistake! Words without deeds is but a half-faced religion: 'Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world' (James 1:27). Again, 'If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' - very fine words -, but do not give them what the body needs, what use is it?' (James 2:15, 16).

Now, before I go any further, I will here touch a little on those sins that are so rife in many believers: covetousness, pride, and uncleanness. They spoil both Christian brotherhood, and civil neighbourhood in so great a measure.

Chapter 10; Of Covetousness

First, For Covetousness.

1. Covetousness; it is all one with desire; he who desires, covets, whether what he desires is evil or good. So what is called coveting, in Exodus 20:17, is called desire, in Deuteronomy 5:21. As the apostle also says, 'I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet' (Rom 7:7). That is, I had not known lust to be a sin, unless the law had forbidden it. So, though lawful desires are good (1 Cor 12:31), and to be commended, yet covetousness, as commonly understood, is to be fled from, and hated, as of the devil.
2. Covetousness, or evil desire, is the first mover, and causes every sin both to begin and act; as was said before, the apostle would not have known sin if the law had not said, You shall not covet; for where there is no desire to sin, there appears no sin.
3. So covetousness carries in it every sin; sins against the second table as well as the first, just as a serpent carries her young ones in her belly. This the scripture affirms, where it says, 'You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is your neighbour's' (Ex 20:17). Covetousness will meddle with anything.

Now, there are these eight notes of covetousness, which hinder good works and a Christian lifestyle among men, wherever they are harboured.

(1) When men, to whom God has given a comfortable income, are not content with it. This is against the apostle, where he says, 'Let your lifestyle be without covetousness; and be content with what you have: for he has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you' (Heb 13:5).

(2) It is covetousness in the seller that causes him to say it is better than it is, that he may raise the price of it; and covetousness in the buyer, that causes him to say it is worse than he really thinks it is to get a lower price. This is what the apostle forbids under the name of

fraud, 1 Cor 6:8, and what Solomon condemns (Prov 20:14).

(3) It is through covetousness that men think a lot of what they deny themselves, even though possibly it goes to those that have more need than themselves, and also better deserve it.

(4) It indicates covetousness, when men will deprive themselves and those around them, of the privileges of the gospel, for more of this world; and is condemned by Christ (Luke 14:18-20).

(5) It indicates covetousness, when men that have it, can go by, or hear of the poor, and shut up their heart and compassion from them (1 John 3:17).

(6) Also when men are convinced they should give to such and such that have need, but put off doing anything, and if not quite forget it, yet delay doing it, as being reluctant to meet the needs of those in need. This is forbidden by the Holy Ghost: 'Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.' Now, it is due from you to the poor, by the commandment of God, if they lack, and you have it; 'Say not to your neighbour, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when you have it by you' (Prov 3:27, 28).

(7) It indicates a greedy mind, when, after men have decided what to give, they reduce it in little ways; whereas the Holy Ghost says, 'Every man according as he intends in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Cor 9:7).

(8) And lastly, It indicates a filthy greedy heart when a man, after he has done any good, then has second thoughts, and secretly wishes that he had not done so, or at least that he had not done so much: this is to be weary of well-doing; (I speak now of sharing) and carries in it two evils, First, It spoils the work done. And, secondly, it, if entertained, spoils the heart for doing any more. 'The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl called bountiful,' for 'the liberal devises liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand' (Isa 32:5, 8).

Now then, to warn all against this poisonous sin, note that this is idolatry, worse than all other sins in the New Testament, (Eph 5:5; Col 3:5). So God's people should be so far from doing it, that they should be afraid even to mention it, lest it should, as adulterous thoughts, infect the heart, by talking of it (Eph 5:3).

Quest.

But why is covetousness called idolatry?

Answer.

1. Because it occupies the very heart of man in it, to mind earthly things; it gets our love, which should be set on God; and sets it on poor empty things; it takes our hearts away from heaven, where they should be, and sets them on earth, where they should not be (Ezek 33:31; Phil 3:18, 19; Col 3:1-3). So it changes the object on which the heart should be set, and sets it where it should not be. It makes a man forsake God, 'the fountain of living waters,' and causes him to hew for himself 'cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water' (Jer 2:11-13). For,

2. It rejects the care, government, and providence of God towards us, and causes us to make of our care and work a god, to whom, instead of God, we fly continually, both to keep what we have and to get more. This was Israel's idolatry of old, and the cause of all her idolatrous practices. 'For their mother has played the harlot,' that is, committed idolatry: 'she who conceived them has done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, who gave me my bread and water, my wool and flax, my oil and drink' (Hosea 2:5).

3. It obstructs God's way of caring for his creatures, and seeks to provide for them without heeding his heavenly wisdom; from this arises all discontent about God's dealing with us. Covetousness never yet said, It is the Lord, let him do what he pleases; but always objects, like a god, against everything that goes against it; and it is what, like a god, draws away the heart and soul from the true God, and his Son Jesus Christ: 'And he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions' (Matt 19:16-22). Now then, what causes the heart to reject the providence of God, and wishes to order and deal with things contrary to God, and to negotiate God on these terms, is idolatry; and all these are covetousness. 'The wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and blesses the covetous, whom the Lord hates' (Psa 10:3). Now the way to remedy this disease is, to learn the lesson which Paul had got by heart; that is, 'In whatever state you are, be content' (Phil 4:11).

Chapter 11; Of Pride

Secondly, I come to speak a word of pride, and loftiness of heart and life.

1. Pride, in general, is what causes a man to think of man and his things, above what is written (1 Cor 4:6).

2. It has its seat in the heart among these outrages, fornications, adulteries, lustfulness, murders, deceit, etc. (Mark 7:21-23) and shows itself in these following details.

(1) When you despise this or that gracious person; that is, look down on them, and shun them for their poverty in this world, and choose rather to talk to others, that possibly are less gracious, because of their greatness in this world. This the apostle writes against, James 2:1-3, under the name of partiality; 'for indeed the fruits of a puffed-up heart is to deal in this manner with Christians' (1 Cor 4:6, 7). Now this branch of pride flows from ignorance of the vanity of the creature, and of the worth of a gracious heart; so get more knowledge of these two, and this will be nipped in the bud, and you will learn to relate to men of low degree (Rom 12:16).

(2) It indicates pride of heart when men will not deny themselves in things that they may for the good of their neighbours. And it shows that pride has got so much up into self-love and self-pleasing, that they care little who they grieve or offend, so they may have their own way (Oba 12-15).

(3) It indicates pride of heart, when you will not receive sober reproofs for sin and unfitting behaviour, but that rather you huff, and yield to an irritable spirit, and bear a grudge against those who reprove you in that way. Says the prophet, 'Hear, and listen; do not be proud: for the Lord has spoken.' That is, hear the reproofs of God for your sins, and escape from them by repentance; 'but if you will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret for your pride,' etc. (Jer 13:15-17). So also in Hosea, 'They will not live so as to turn to their God: for the spirit of adultery is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord. And the pride of Israel testifies to his face' etc. (Hosea 5:4, 5). This indicates great unawareness of God, and a disordered heart.

(4) It also indicates pride when a reproof or admonition will not be received from the poorest saint, as well as from the greatest pastor; and it indicates a glory in men, 1 Corinthians 3:21, and that they want their faith to stand in human wisdom, and not 'in the power of God;' that is, of naked truth (1 Corinthians 2:5).

(5) It indicates pride of heart when a man who has this or that in his heart to do, in reference to God, but yet will avoid simply asking God for advice and direction: 'The wicked, through the pride of his face, will not seek after God,' says David (Psa 10:4).

(6) It indicates pride of heart, when persons are tickled with thoughts of their own praise and secretly desire it; who think of themselves and others above what is written; who do not acknowledge that man in his best estate is altogether vanity: but such people have forgot the exhortation, 'Be not high-minded, but fear:' (Rom 11:20). And also, That there is a knowledge that puffs up, and does not edify either themselves or others (1 Cor 8:1, 2). So, to such the apostle says, Do not desire vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind 'let each esteem others better than themselves' (Phil 2:3; Gal 5:26).

Pride also there is in outward attitude, behaviour, and gesture, which is bad for Christians to be tainted with; and this pride is expressed in fancy words, a superior attitude, and loving the trivial things that Satan, and every empty-headed fool brings into the world. As God speaks of the daughters of Zion, 'they walk with proud necks, and flirting eyes, strutting as they go' (Isa 3:16). Not a very fitting example for a people that profess godliness, and that come before God to confess their sins, and to humble themselves for what they have done. How can a sense of your own sin, of the vileness of your heart, and of the holiness of God, stand with such a example? Do you see the vileness of your heart, the fruit of sin? And are you troubled by the disagreement between God and your heart, that lays the reins on the neck of your lusts, and let them run where they want? Be not deceived, pride arises from ignorance of these things (1 Tim 6:3, 4). A sense of my vileness, of what I have deserved, and of what continually in my heart opposes God, cannot stand with a foolish, light, and flirting attitude: you will then see other things to mind than the

butterfly. Alas, all these things are just painting the devil, and putting a gloss on his castle; you imitate the spider: is your heart stronger for your fine gait, fancy words, and lofty looks? Does this not confirm that your heart is rotten, diseased and obsessed? Oh! that God would let you see a little of your heart, as you wish others to see your outside: you painted sepulchre, you whitewashed wall, will these things be found virtues in the day of God? Or, is this the way you take to mortify sin? 'An high look, and a proud heart, the ploughing of the wicked, is sin' (Prov 21:4). Pride is the ringleader of the seven abominations that the wise man names, Proverbs 6:16, 17, and is above all what causes men to fall into the condemnation of the devil (1 Tim 3:6).

Chapter 12; Of Adultery or Uncleanness

Now I come in the last place to speak a word or two about adultery, and then to draw towards a conclusion. Adultery has its place in the heart among the rest of those sins I mentioned before (Mark 7:21, 22) of which I observe two things.

1. That almost in every place where the apostle lays down a list of sins, he sets adultery, fornication, and uncleanness first; so Mark 7:21, Rom 1:29, 1 Cor 6: 9, Gal 5:19, Eph 5:3, 1 Thess 4:3-5, Heb 12:16, Jas 2:11, 1 Pet 2:11, and 2 Peter 2:10. From this I gather that the sin of uncleanness is a predominant and master sin, easy to catch the sinner out, one of the first that offers itself on all occasions to break the law of God.

2. I note that many commit this sin unawares, as soon as a they look on a woman: 'I say to you,' says Christ, 'that whoever looks on a woman to desire after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart' (Matt 5:28). This sin of uncleanness, I say, is a very powerful sin; it is natural above all sins to mankind; as it is most natural, so it lacks not tempting occasions, having objects for to look on in every corner: so there is need of a double and treble watchfulness in the soul against it. It is better here to make a covenant with our eyes, like Job (Job 31:1) than to let them wander to God's dishonour, and our own discomfort.

There are these three things which reveal a man or woman who inclines to uncleanness of heart.

(1) The first is a flirting eye, or an eye that secretly looks at things that tickle the heart with thoughts of immodesty and uncleanness. Isaiah calls this a flirting eye: and Peter an eye full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin (2 Peter 2:14; Isa 3:16). This is what Christ calls an evil eye, and John the lust of the flesh, and of the eyes, and defiles those who are not very watchful over their hearts (Mark 7:22; 1 John 2:16). This flirting eye is what the most holy saints should be careful of,

because it tends to affect them too. When Paul bids Timothy beg the young women to walk as befits the gospel, he bids him do it with all purity (1 Tim 5:1, 2). As if to say, Be careful that while you instruct them in holiness, you yourself are not corrupted with the lust of your eye. O how many souls, in the day of God, will curse the day that ever they gave way to a flirting eye!

(2) The second thing that uncovers one who tends to the lusts of uncleanness is loose and immodest talk; such as that brazen-faced whore in Proverbs 7 had, or such as they in Peter, who allured 'through the lusts of the flesh, through much looseness, those who had just escaped from those who live in error' (2 Peter 2:18). 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,' so if we are saints, let us be careful, of our tongue as well as our eye, and let not the lust of uncleanness, or of adultery, be even 'named among us, as befits saints' (Eph 5:3). Mark, 'Let it not be named.' This implies that the lusts of uncleanness are devilishly taking, they will both take the heart with eyes and tongue: 'Let it not be named among you,' etc.

(3) Another thing that indicates a man or woman inclining to wantonness and uncleanness is wearing immodest clothing. The clothing of an harlot is too frequently in our day the clothing of Christians; a vile thing, and indicates much wantonness and vileness of affections. If those who give way to a flirting eye, flirting words, and immodest clothing are not whores in their hearts, I know not what to say. Does a flirting eye indicate modesty? Does flirting talk indicate chastity? And does immodest clothing, with low cut dresses and a strutting walk indicate that the flesh is put to death? If you say that these things may indicate pride as well as the flesh; well, but why are they proud? Is it not to tart up the body? And why do they with pride tart up the body, if not to provoke both themselves and others to desire? God knows their hearts without their exterior: and we know their hearts by their exterior.

Chapter 11; Against Sin; For Steadfastness; Trials

My friends, I am here dealing with good works, and persuading you to flee what hinders them: so bear with my plainness when I speak against sin. I would pierce it with every word, because otherwise it will pierce us with many sorrows (1 Tim 6:9, 10). I do not treat of good works as if doing them would save us, for we are justified by his grace, according to the hope of eternal life; yet our sins and evil works will make us obnoxious to the judgements both of God and man. He who walks not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, is likely to have his peace assaulted often, both by the devil, the law, death, and hell; yes, and is like to have God hide his face from him also, for the iniquity of his covetousness (Isa 57:17).

How can he who behaves corruptly in the sight of men think he behaves well in the sight of God? And if so dim a light as is in man can justly see that you are wrong, how shall your sins be hid from him whose 'eyes test the children of men?' (Psa 11:4).

It is true, faith without works justifies us before God (Rom 3:28; 4:5): yet faith that is alone will be found to leave us sinners in the sight both of God and man (Jas 2:18). And though you add nothing to what saves you by what you do, yet your righteousness may benefit the son of man; as also says the text: but if you are so careless as to say, What do I care about being righteous to bless others? I tell you, that the love of God is not in you (Job 35:8; 1 John 3:17; 1 Cor 13:1-3). Walk in God's ways, and do them, for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear of all these statutes, and say, 'This great nation is a wise and understanding people' (Deut 4:6).

THIRD. Observe. Every believer should not only be careful that his works are good, and so do them now, but should carefully study to maintain them; that is, to exercise them throughout his life.

It is easier to begin to do good than it is to continue it; for there is not so much of a Christian's cross in the beginning of a work, as there is in

a continual, hearty, conscientious practice of it. Thus Christians need not only to start to do good, but also to continue the work. Man, by nature, is rather a hearer than a doer, continually listening for some new thing; seeing many things, but observing nothing (Acts 17:20; Isa 42:20). It is noticeable that after Christ had divided his hearers into four parts, he condemned three of them as fruitless hearers (Luke 8:5-8). O it is hard continuing to believe, continuing to love, continuing to resist all that opposes; we tend to be weary of well-doing (Gal 6:9). To pluck out right eyes, to cut off right hands and feet, is no pleasant thing to flesh and blood; and yet only these shall have the promise of life; because none but these will be found to have the effective work of God's grace in their souls (Matt 18:8, 9): 'If you continue in my word, then you are my disciples indeed' (Matt 24:13; John 8:31). And so it is, that you find so many IFS in the Scripture about men's happiness; as, 'if children, then heirs;' and 'if you continue in the faith;' and 'if we hold our confidence firm to the end' (Rom 8:17; Col 1:23; Heb 3:14). Not that continuing in the way of God causes the work to be right; but the work being right causes us to continue. As John says in another place, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us' (1 John 2:19). But I say, where the work of God indeed is savingly begun, even there the flesh, corruption, and the body of death oppose it. Therefore Christians should be careful, and be careful to maintain a continual course of good works.

Besides, as there is in our own heart what opposes goodness, so there is the tempter, the wicked one, both to animate these lusts, and to join with them in every assault against the work of God in our souls. That is why he is called the devil, the enemy, the destroyer, and he who seeks continually to devour us (1 Peter 5:8), I need say no more but this. He who will walk like a Christian indeed, as he shall find it is necessary to continue in good works, so his continuing in them will be opposed; so if he determines to continue in them, he must make it his business to study how to oppose those who oppose such a life, that he may continue in them.

FOURTH. Now then to help in this, here fitly comes in the last observation, that is, That the best way both to provoke ourselves and others to good works is to often affirm to others the teaching of justification by grace, and believe it ourselves. 'This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works' (Titus 3:8). I told you before, that good works must flow from faith: and now I tell you, that the best way to be fruitful in them, is often to exercise the teaching of justification by grace; and they both agree; for as faith animates to good works, so the teaching of grace animates faith. So, the way to be rich in good works is to be rich in faith; and the way to be rich in faith is to conscientiously affirm the teaching of grace to others, and believe it ourselves.

First, To constantly affirm it to others. Thus Paul tells Timothy, that if he put the brethren in mind of the truths of the gospel, he would not only be a good minister of Christ, but would be built up in the words of faith and good teaching (1 Tim 4:6). It is the plan of God that Christians should often assert the things of God; and that by so doing edify one another (Heb 10:24, 25; 1 Thess 5:11).

The teaching of the gospel is like the dew and the small rain that distils on the tender grass, which makes it grow and keep green (Deut 32:2). Christians are like the flowers in a garden, who have on each of them the dew of heaven,, drop their dew at each other's roots when shaken with the wind so they are jointly nourished by one another. For Christians to commune sweetly of God's matters one with another is as if they opened to each other boxes of perfume. Says Paul to the church at Rome, 'I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established; that is, that I may be strengthened together with you, by our mutual faith' (Rom 1:11, 12). Christians should often affirm the teaching of grace, and justification by it, to one another.

Second, As they should be thus doing, so they should live in the power of it themselves; they should by faith suck and drink in this teaching,

as the good ground receives the rain; when it is done, good works are proclaimed. Paul to the Colossians says; 'We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and love to all the saints; for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come to you, as it is in all the world, and brings forth fruit, as it does also in you.' But how long ago? Why, 'since the day you heard it, and knew the grace of God in truth' (Col 1:3-6).

Apples and flowers are not made by the gardener; but are a result of planting and watering. Plant good teaching in the sinner, and let it be watered with the word of grace; the effect of that is the fruits of holiness, and the end everlasting life (Rom 6:22).

Good teaching is the teaching of the gospel, which shows to men that God freely clothes them with the righteousness of his Son, and gives all his benefits to them in Him; by which free gift the sinner is made righteous before God; and because of that, a principle of grace is infused into the heart, which both makes alive, and causes it to produce fruit (Rom 3:21-26; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; John 1:16).

Now then, since good works flow from faith, and since faith is nourished by an affirming of the teaching of the gospel, take these few reasons from the teaching of the gospel for the support of your faith, that you may be indeed fruitful and rich in good works.

Consider 1. The whole Bible was given for just this, that you should both believe this teaching, and live in the comfort and sweetness of it: 'For whatever was written before, was written for our instruction, that we through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures might have hope' (Rom 15:4; John 20:31).

Consider 2. That therefore every promise in the Bible is yours, to strengthen, enliven, and encourage your heart in believing.

Consider 3. Nothing you do can so please God as believing; 'The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his mercy'

(Psa 147:11). They please him, because they embrace his righteousness.

Consider 4. That all God's withdrawals from you are not for the weakening, but for the testing of your faith; and also, that whatever he allows Satan, or your own heart to do, it is not to weaken faith (Job 23:8- 10; 1 Peter 1:7).

Consider 5. That believing is what will keep you aware of the things of heaven and glory; by it the devil will be discouraged, sin weakened, and your heart enlivened and sweetened (Heb 11:27; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:9; Eph 6:16; Rom 15:13).

Consider lastly, By believing, the lover of God is kept with warmth in his heart, and that this will stir you to continually bless God for Christ, for grace, for faith, hope, and all these things, either in God, or you, that accompanies salvation (2 Cor 2:14; Psa 103:1-3).

Third, The teaching of forgiveness of sins, received by faith, will have a clear effect in the heart of a sinner to produce good works.

But, since there is a body of death and sin in every one who has the grace of God in this world; and because this body of death will always oppose what is good, as the apostle says (Rom 7:21), so let us consider further how to deal with the hindrances to a fruitful life.

1. Keep a continual watch over the wretchedness of your own heart; not to be discouraged at the sight of your vileness, but to prevent its wickedness. For evil will labour to hinder you from starting good works, or from doing them; for evil will do both of these. Be careful then, that you do not listen to it at any time, but deny, though with much struggling, the workings of sin against you.

2. Let this be continually before your heart, that God's eye is on you, and sees every secret turning of your heart, either to or from him: 'All things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to do' (Heb 4:13).

3. If you deny to do the good that you should, with what your God has given you; then consider that though he loves your soul, he can chastise; First, Your inward man with such troubles that your life shall

be restless and comfortless. Secondly, Your outward man, that all you get shall be put in a bag with holes (Psa 89:31-33; Hag 1:6). And if he should permit one thief in your house, or one spark of fire among your barns, how quickly might that be consumed against your will, which you should willingly have spent to God's glory; and I tell you further, if you lack a heart to do good when you have enough, you may lack in those things from others when yours is taken from you. Jude 1:6, 7.

4. Consider that a life full of good works is the only way you can respond to the mercy of God extended to you; God has had mercy on you and saved you from all your troubles; God has not been reluctant to give you his Son, his Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven. Says Paul, 'I beg you therefore, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service' (Rom 12:1; Matt 18:32, 33).

5. Consider that this is the way to convince all men that the power of God's things has taken hold of your heart (I speak to those who are unashamed); and whatever you say, if your faith does not result in a holy life, you will be judged a withered branch, a nominal believer, salt without savour, and as lifeless as a gong, and a little cymbal (John 15; Matt 13:1 Cor 13:1, 2). For, they say, show us your faith by your works, for we cannot see your hearts (James 2:18). But I say on the contrary, if you walk as befits those who are saved by grace, then you will witness in every man's conscience that you are a good tree; you will leave guilt on the heart of the wicked (1 Sam 24:16, 17). Now you remove the opportunity from those who look for opportunity to criticise; and now you are clear from the blood of all men (2 Cor 11:12; Acts 20:26, 31-35). This is the man also who provokes others to good works. The ear that hears such a man shall bless him; and the eye that sees him shall bear witness to him. 'Surely,' says David, 'he shall not be moved for ever: The righteous shall be remembered for ever' (Heb 10:24; Job 29:11; Psa 112: 6).

6. Again, The heart that is fullest of good works, has in it least room for Satan's temptations. And this is what Peter means when he says, 'Be sober, be vigilant;' that is, be occupied with faith and holiness, 'because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, prowls around seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet 5:8). 'He who walks uprightly,

walks safely; and those who add to faith, virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, brotherly kindness; and to these love; what abounds in them shall neither be barren nor unfruitful; he shall never fall; but an entrance shall be given to him into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet 1:5-10; Prov 10:9).

7. The man who is fullest of good works, is fittest to live and fittest to die: 'I am now ready to be offered,' says fruitful Paul (2 Tim 4:6). But he who is barren, is fit neither to live, nor to die: he knows he is not fit to die, and God himself says he is not fit to live; 'cut him down, why does he clutter the ground?' (Luke 8:7).

Lastly, Consider, to provoke you to good works, when you come to glory God will give you a reward for everything you do for him on earth. Little do the people of God consider how richly God will reward what, from a right principle and to a right end, is done for him here; not a bit of bread to the poor, not a drink of water to the least of those who belong to Christ, or the loss of a hair of your head, shall in that day go without its reward (Luke 14:13, 14; Matt 10:42).

'For our light momentary affliction,' and so all other pieces of self-denial, 'works for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison' (2 Cor 4:17). I tell you, Christian, only be rich in good works, and you shall have more than salvation; your salvation you have freely by grace through Christ, without works (Eph 2:8-10), but now being justified and saved, and as its fruit, renewed by the Holy Ghost, you shall be rewarded for every work that proved good; 'For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you have showed toward his name, in that you have ministered to the saints' (Heb 6:10; 1 Cor 3:14). Moses counted the reward he was to have, for a short suffering with the people of God, of greater worth than the treasures of Egypt, the smiles of the king, or the honour of his kingdom (Heb 11:25- 27). In a word, let the disappointments that do, and shall most surely happen to the fruitless professors, provoke you to look with all diligence to your standing. For,

1. Such a one is only deceived and disappointed concerning the work of grace he supposes to be in his heart; he thinks he is a Christian, and has grace, as faith, hope, and so on, in his soul, yet no fruits of these appear in him; only his tongue is tipped with the talk and gossip of religion. Poor man, poor empty man! Faith without works is dead; your hope shall be like giving up the ghost; the gifts your soul has are only what is common to humanity; you are therefore disappointed; God considers you still wicked, though you come and go to the place of the Holy (James 2:19, 20; Job 11:20; 1 Cor 13:1-3).

2. Therefore all your joy and comfort must fall short of saving comfort, and so leave you in the ditch; your joy is the joy of the Pharisees (John 5:35), and your gladness as that of Herod (Mark 6:20), and the longest it can last is only a Scripture-moment (Job 20:5). Alas! in all your gladness and contentment with your religion, you are like the boy who plays with brass instead of gold; and with counters instead of currency. Thus, 'if a man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives [or disappoints] himself' (Gal 6:3).

3. This is not all, but expect certainly eternal disappointment in the day of God; for it must be; your lamp will go out at the first sound the trump of God shall make in your ears; you cannot stand at the appearance of the Son of God in his glory; his very looks will be to your belief as a strong wind is to a blinking candle, and you shall be left only to smoulder.

Oh the change that will happen to a foolish maiden! She thought she was happy, and that she should have received happiness with those who had a good heart; but on the contrary, her lamp is going out; must she now seek for saving grace when the time of grace is over? The heaven she thought hers is proved a hell, and her god is proved a devil. God has cast her out of his presence, and shuts the door on her. She pleads her profession, and so on, but has for her answer repulses from heaven. 'So are the paths of all who forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish; whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean on his house but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure' (Matt 25:1-10; Luke 8:25, 26; Job 8:13-15).

Be careful therefore; your soul, heaven, and eternity, lie at stake; they swing either towards you or away from you on the hinge of your faith; if it is right, all is yours: if wrong, then all is lost, whatever your hopes and expectations to the contrary: 'For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision is worth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things the wrath of God comes on the children of unbelief. For the earth which drinks in the rain that comes often on it, and brings forth fruit fit for them by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God: but what bears thorns and briars is REJECTED, and is nigh to cursing, whose end is to be burned' (Gal 5:6; Eph 5:3-6; Heb 6:7, 8).

Object.

But what shall I do? I am so cold, slothful, and heartless that I cannot find any heart to work for God in this world? There was a time when his dew rested all night on my branches, and when I could with desire, with earnest desire, be doing and working for God; but, alas! now it is otherwise.

Answer.

If this is true, your case is sad, you are to be pitied; the Lord pity you. And for your recovery out of this condition, I would give you no other advice than was given to Ephesus when she had lost her first love.

1. 'Remember,' says Christ, 'from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works,.' (Rev 2:5).

Note: Your first work is to seriously consider, and remember where you have fallen from. Remember that you have left your God, the support of your soul, without whom there is no support, comfort, or strength for you to do or endure anything in this world: 'Without me,' says he, 'you can do nothing' (John 15:5). A sad condition; to remember this surely is the first step to recover a backsliding heart; for remembering this brings to mind your loss, how it has lost its former visits, smiles, and consolations of God. When your conscience was made supple with the blood of your Saviour; when every step you

took was, as it were, honey and butter; and when your heart could meditate terror with comfort (Job 29:2-6; Isa 33:14- 19). Instead of that you feel darkness, hardness of heart, and the thoughts of God are terrible to you (Psa 77:3). Now God never visits you; or if he does, it is only as a visitor, who stays only for a night (Jer 14:8, 9).

This also brings to mind how your situation has changed concerning your confidence in God for your future happiness, how uncertain you now are of your hopes for heaven, how much life is uncertain before you (Deut 28:65, 66).

2. 'Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent.' These are words well put together; for considering what I have lost in my backsliding will provoke in my heart a sorrow, and godly heaviness, which will make me regret my condition, and say, 'I will return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now' (Hos 2:7). And believe it, the reason of God has withdrawn that comfortable communion with himself is that you might first see the difference between sticking close to God, and forsaking him; and next, that you might acknowledge your sin, and seek his face (Hos 5:15). He takes no pleasure in your forlorn condition; he had rather you should have him in your heart, but it must be in his own way. 'He looks on men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it was no good to me; then he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light' (Job 33:27, 28).

3. 'Remember where you have fallen from, and repent, and do the first works.'

As you should remember and repent, so you should heartily doing your first works; believe as before, lay hold of the things of heaven and glory, as at first; for now is God returned to you, as before (Zech 1:16). And though you may, through the loss of your hair, like Samson, be weak to start with, yet it will soon grow again; that is, your former experience will soon be as long, large, and strong, as in the former times. At first you will find all the wheels of your soul rusty, and all the strings of your heart out of tune; and when you first begin to stir, the

dust and filth of your heart will, like smoke, block that clear sight of the grace of your God, and his love to your soul; but wait, and go on, and though you find you are unable to do things like you used to; yet I say, get up, and be doing, and the Lord will be with you; for he has not despised the day of your small things (1 Chron 22:16; Zech 4:10).

I know you will be afflicted with a thousand temptations to drive you to despair, that your faith may be faint. But against all them set the word of God, the promise of grace, the blood of Christ, and the examples of God's goodness to great backsliders who are for your encouragement recorded in the scriptures; and remember, that turning to God after backsliding is the greatest service you can do for him, and the greatest honour you can bring to the blood of Christ; and know also, that God, to show his willing reception of so unworthy a one, says, there shall be joy in heaven when you return to him (Lk 15:7, 10).

Conclusion

If despite what has been said, you remain a backslider:

1. Then remember you must die; and remember also, that when the terrors of God, of death, and a backslidden heart, meet together, there will be sad work in that soul; this is the man who leans over the mouth of hell, while death is cutting the thread of his life.

2. Remember, that though God sometimes, yes, often, receives backsliders, yet it is not always so. Some go into endless loss; for, because they have thrown away God, and want none of him, he in justice flings up them and their souls for ever (Prov 1:24-28).

I have observed, that sometimes God, as it were in response to injury done him, snatches away souls in the very nick of their backsliding, as he served Lot's wife, when he turned her into a pillar of salt, even while she was looking over her shoulder to Sodom (Gen 19:26). An example that every backslider should remember with astonishment (Luke 17:32).

Thus have I, in few words, written to you, before I die, a word to provoke you to faith and holiness, because I want you to have the life that is laid up for all those who believe in the Lord Jesus, and love one another, when I am dead. Though there I shall rest from my labours, and be in paradise, as through grace I am sure, yet it is not there but here, I must do you good. So, not knowing the shortness of my life, nor the difficulties I may have later of serving my God and you, I have taken this opportunity to present these lines to you for your benefit.

Consider what has been said; and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Farewell.