

THE Counterfeit Christian;  
OR, The Danger of Hypocrisy:  
Opened in TWO SERMONS.

*Containing an EXPOSITION of that Parabolical Speech of our Blessed Saviour, Matt. xii. 43, 44, 45. When the Unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, &c.*

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*Ezek. 33. 31. And they come unto thee as the People cometh, and they sit before thee as my People, and they hear thy Words, but they will not do them: for with their Mouth they shew much Love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.*

*Mat. 23. 25. Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites.*

*2 Pet. 2. 21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, &c.*

## To the Reader.

It is more than a Year since, I began a Morning-Exercise on the Lord's-Day at seven a Clock, when I entred upon an Exposition of all the Parables and express Similitudes contained in the four Evangelists, according to the measure of Light and Knowledge received; though by reason of a Journey into the Country it has not been continued. The Explication of this Parabolical Speech of our Saviour, I have been prevailed with to make publick. And if this meets with Acceptance, I may in a short time publish Proposals for printing the whole; which in regard of the greatness of the Charge, cannot be done but by Subscriptions. And though I must confess my Ability to perform so great a Work to be much inferiour to many others; yet by God's Assistance I shall do what I can.

And the Consideration of the kind Acceptance my other Labours have had amongst God's People, has caused me to take the more pains: God having blessed the Writings of divers of his Servants to the Conversion of many Souls, and Comfort of others; yet if I have not sufficient encouragement from Christian Friends, I must desist this great Essay.

Reader; The second Sermon I have much enlarged, scarcely half of it was delivered when preach'd, thinking to have preached a third time upon the Text, but was prevented by laying down that Lecture, for the Reason afore-mentioned: Neither have I been so large on other Parables already opened, nor intend to be on those I purpose to explain; so that the first Sermon is rather a proper Specimen of the whole Work than the second.

As touching some part of this dark Parabolical Saying of our Saviour, I may differ in my Conceptions, 'tis probable, from divers Men; inclined, 'tis like, to believe that the Man, or Men here mentioned, are such only that Satan overcomes, after they have made a profession of Religion, with the same scandalous Sins, and so they turn with the Dog to their old Vomit. I grant this may be true in respect of some of them; yet I do not believe the Lord Jesus intends to shew hereby they do all after manner fall from their \* Religion and Profession: 'Tis evident to me, he applies it to the Pharisees, and other People of that Generation; but many of them never became openly Prophane, yet was their State worse by many degrees, (than whilst they abode under the Power of gross and scandalous Sins) and died in their Unbelief and Hypocrisy, which 'tis to be feared many now do. If the Scope of the [text], be considered, That our blessed Saviour designed by this Parable to see \* the State of the Pharisees, is evident, as may be seen if you begin at the 24th Verse of the Chapter, where they charged him with casting out Devils by Belzebub the Prince of the Devils. From whence his [use of] an occasion to set forth the sadness of their

Conditions, \* Zeal and outward Sanctity, shewing \* Vers. 33, 34, 35. that their Hearts were not made good, but like an Evil and corrupt Tree. Then soon after follows these words, When the Unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, &c. Reader, I shall not trouble thee further: what Weakness thou findest in these Sermons, I hope Chairty will \* it: If any Profit thou shalt receive thereby, bless God, and be \* of resting in a Form of Religion, being not brought into \* Union with Jesus Christ, nor under the Power of true \* let me have a part in thy Prayers, who is \* them, being attended with many Troubles and \*, but doubt not but God will make them all work together for good, and will at last, I hope, through his infinite Grace, bring to his quiet, peaceable, and everlasting Rest,<sup>1</sup>

His poor Servant, thy unworthy Friend and Brother in the Gospel, BENJ. KEACH.

From my House near Horslydown, this 27th of the 3d Month, called May,  
1691.

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1 The \* denote that the source text had errors or unreadable text at this point.

## SERMON. I.

*When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry places, seeking Rest, and finding none, Then he saith, I will return into my House from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished, Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and enter in and dwell there; and the last State of that Man is worse than the first.*

MATT xii, V. 43-45

THIS place of Holy Scripture is generally acknowledged to be hard to be understood; most Expositors and Annotators (I have met with) say but little to it.

Some call it a Parable, and others a parabolical Speech or a Similitude.

By the Scope and Coherence of the place it is evident our Saviour setteth forth by it the direful State and Condition of the Scribes and Pharisees, and other People of the Jews, who boasted of their external Holiness, or seeming Sanctity, they being not prophane or notorious Sinners; or as they themselves foolishly said, Not Extortioners, unjust, or Adulterers, like as the Publicans were, Luke 18. 11. Yet the Lord Jesus sheweth by this Parable how they were deceived: for though they were delivered from that prophane and debauched unclean Spirit, yet was their State worse than the State of gross and wicked Sinners, which is signified by the entering into them seven other unclean Spirits worse or more wicked than the first that were gone out of them.

That the Words may be applied to them and other People of that Generation, is evident from the sequel of ver. 45. Even so shall it be with the People of this froward Generation. Yet no doubt our blessed Saviour in this place may have Reference to a Man in the like State; or as Beza, *Caeterum quum Spiritus impurus exierit à quopiam*, &c. as well as unto that People who were carried away with cursed Hypocrisy.

When the unclean Spirit, &c.

By the unclean Spirit, is certainly meant the Devil, called, an unclean Spirit.

1. Because he hath lost his own original Purity, or clean and Holy Nature, he being at first created an Angel of Light, having like Holiness before he fell, which the blessed and elect Angels of Heaven have.

2. Because he is so universally filthy and abominable vile in himself, and so remains and will abide for ever, there being no Possibility for him to become better, he being left and forsaken of God, without any means afforded of being purged from his unclean and filthy Nature.

3. Because he is not only unclean in himself, but also defileth the Hearts and Spirits of all such Persons who receive and entertain him; nay, all the Pollution of our Nature, yea, the whole Nature of humane Race, was originally from that Compliance and yeilding to him by our first Parents; 'tis this unclean Spirit that hath poisoned and notoriously defiled the whole Man both Body and Soul in all its Powers and Faculties, and not the whole Man only, but the whole World also. And as this is naturally the filthy and miserable Condition of all Creatures, so those who yield to his Temptations, come to have farther Pollution and Defilement cleave to their Hearts and Lives. Sin is an unclean thing, and it makes all such loathsom and abominable in the Sight of God, who are overcome by it. Though all naturally are vile and filthy, yet there are Degrees of Uncleanness, some are worse than others, more wicked, and so more like to the Devil, in whom his very Image or Likeness clearly may be seen.

4. He may also be called an unclean Spirit, because he continually inticeth and strives to draw Men to Filthiness, and to all manner of Uncleanness, being an utter Enemy to all Purity and true Holiness, envying all those who love it, and strive to promote it.

Is gone out of a Man.] Not that the Man was actually possessed with the Devil (as some may think) though 'tis very like the Lord Jesus may borrow this Parabolical Speech from a Person actually possessed; but he sheweth hereby that all wicked Men are in a mystical and spiritual sense possessed with the Devil; all graceless Sinners have an unclean Spirit in them. Where Sin predominates and rules in the Heart, there the Devil has Possession; that Heart is Satan's Throne where he reigns and sways the Scepter: Satan was said to enter into Judas; and to fill the Heart of Ananias: both these had this unclean Spirit in them; the one was plagued or possessed with a treacherous Devil, and the other with a lying Devil. Hence 'tis also said, that Satan, who is the Prince of the Power of the Air, both worketh and ruleth in the Children of Disobedience.

Gone out] Either by the Power and Force of the Grace of God in its common Operations he was thrown out; or else, through Policy, he voluntarily leaves his House for a time, with an Intention to return again with a stronger force: Some adhere to the first sense, and others to the last.

Gone out, i.e. as a carnal, prophane, or black Devil, for so he may be said to be in all debauched Persons: and in this respect he may be said to be gone out, or thrown out of the Pharisees, and other false and counterfeit Professors; he may not be able to keep them any longer under the Power of open and gross Prophaneness. And from hence the Pharisee proudly breaks forth, God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican. Why may not Satan be expelled or forced out of his House in some degree, by the common Influences of the Spirit? All generally grant that legal Convictions, and the Operation of common Grace through the Workings of natural Conscience, have some considerable Power in them to reform the Life of a wicked Person. Nor can I think Satan would yield to any Soul voluntarily so far as to let him become so much as civilized if he could help it; therefore I rather think he was forced to give place, as not being able to hold his own (in some respect) as formerly, although whilst the Creature abides in his natural State, not having a changed Heart, Satan hath possession of that Soul still in a great measure; and therefore he leaves, no doubt, a strong Guard behind him, when he is said to go out, though they may be said to hide themselves, or retire into some lurking-holes and Corners of the House, or rather of the Heart. Satan cannot doubtless keep Possession always, so far as to hold Men under the Power of gross and scandalous Sins, or cause them to continue openly prophane; such Power and Virtue is there in the common Operation of the Spirit, or in legal Convictions and workings of natural Conscience, together with the help of the external Ministration of God's Word, and by the means of Afflictions, and those severe Providences and Dispensations, under which wicked Men may be exercised, that it may tend to make them become other Men: though it cannot change their Hearts, yet it may make a great change in their Lives, by which means they may look like Saints, and talk like Saints and sanctified Persons, and be taken for such too by the truly Godly; nay, and that which is worse, may conclude within themselves they are converted, since their former Enemy, that debauched gross and unclean Spirit is gone out of them. I am so far of the mind of James Arminius, that Man by the means of that common Help and Power God affords to all in general, may leave the gross Acts of Wickedness, let Satan do what he can; which has been often evinced by that Terror severe humane Laws have had on the Consciences of wicked and ungodly Persons. I am perswaded were there a Law that he that swore an Oath, or was Drunk, or committed Adultery, should have his right Hand cut off, or be made a Slave all the days of his Life, we should see Men would get Power over those Temptations of Satan, and neither be Drunk nor commit Adultery.

He walketh through dry Places.]

1. Satan is said in that of Job, To go to and fro in the Earth, and to walk up and down in it. Satan here speaks, saith Mr. Caryl like a Prince; therefore saith he;

Some conceive this was the Prince of Devils that is mentioned in this Text, or Belzebub the chief of Devils.

He walketh about to view his Provinces and Territories, from one place to another, but he doth not walk to and fro as an idle Peripatetick, but to enquire, to observe, and consider, as a Spy, to search all things and Persons as he passeth along. Therefore;

2. This noteth that Satan is a diligent Enemy; if he hath lost a little ground, or is worsted in one Soul, he will try what Power and Success he can find in another.

3. It shews that he is an unquiet and restless Spirit, being cast out of Heaven, he can rest no where; and if he be forced out of some Men at one time, he will tempt others; nay, if the Servant hath a little worsted him, he, to revenge himself, will fall perhaps in the next place upon the Son; if he lose some place in his own House, he will see if he cannot get into the Temple of the Holy Ghost; or, if he is forced to leave wet and filthy places in which he delights, he will walk through dry places, and see what he can meet with there.

4. Satan's great Work which he imployes himself in and about, is no doubt to get into the Heart of Men to dwell, nay rule there, and so subject them to himself, and defile and polute them one way or other.

Dry places, seeking Rest, and finding none] i. e. where there is no Water or Moisture, or not enough to refresh him; he has a cruel Thirst upon him, and unless he can meet with that he seeketh, which is to make a Prey of the Souls of Men, he is in a restless state, like a thirsty Person who walking through dry Places can find no Water. There are some sorts of Men that aford Satan no Content nor Satisfaction; he seeketh for that oft-times which he finds not; he is not pleased to be as a Travellor, to pass through a place and stay (as it were but for a Night) but would fain find Rest, i.e. have a Place or Heart to dwell in, and take sole Possession of. I find one of the Ancients, who writing on this dark Expression, speaketh thus: So long as he dwelleth not in me, he is said to seek Rest he is grieved and vexed, &c.

1. Dry Places are commonly clean Places, or Places where there is no Dirt or Mire: and Satan, that unclean Spirit, is like a Swine, i. e. he delights in filthy and mirery Places, which may signify his assaulting the Saints, or seeking to get into sanctified Hearts, or Hearts renewed by the special Grace of God, and throughly purged by the Blood of Christ, in whom that filthy sink of Sin and Polution is not only dryed up, but the Heart is

changed and made new, and so no more a House or Habitation for this unclean Spirit, but is become the Temple of the Holy Ghost, or a Habitation for God through the Spirit. And these Men's Hearts are unto Satan, like dry Places to a thirsty and restless Person: for as the Holy Spirit cannot rest, nor take up his abode in filthy and polluted Hearts; so the Devil, that wicked Spirit, can find no Rest nor Place of abode in renewed and sanctified Hearts. And as it is no suitable House or Habitation for him; so likewise Believers have one dwelling in them, strong enough to keep Satan out: for stronger (saith the Apostle) is he that is in us, than he which is in the World: and again he saith, Ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you; and ye have overcome the Wicked one: He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not: shall not so touch him as to enter into his Heart, and take up his Dwelling, or get Possession of him any more; and therefore these Men's Hearts, i. e. the Hearts of true sanctified Christians, I conclude are meant here by our Saviour, which are to Satan as dry places, where there is no dwelling or abiding for him.

2. As dry Places are clean Places; so likewise they are commonly barren Places, Places where little or nothing will grow; Satan is for such Hearts that will receive his evil Seed, i. e. suited and fit to close in with his cursed Temptations, which are like to moist or mirery places; such as all corrupt and unregenerate Hearts are, in others that bitter and evil Seed which this unclean Spirit sows, will not take root: Or if it should so fall out, that through the Carelessness and Negligence of Believers, and Strength of Temptations, Satan should drop some of his cursed Seed in them, and it should meet with a little of the old corrupt Nature (there being in the best of Men an unregenerate part) yet it would soon wither and come to nothing; for their Hearts are, (as I said before) no proper Soil for the Seed of the wicked one, therefore if he gets in a little, he is soon turned out again; so that in a Word, according to the Import of this Saying of Christ, (as I conceive) these Mens Hearts are to the Devil, like dry places, where he can find no Rest.

3. Dry Places are for the most part places least inhabited for want of Water; the Hearts of Saints are like uninhabitable Places to Satan, in them he cannot find those proper Accommodations which he needs and must have where he dwells. But since he can find no Dwelling here, no Diabolical Comfort nor Refreshment, i. e. no abode in Godly Hearts; he saith, I will return into my House from whence I came out, ver. 44.

I will return: Not that he was quite routed and vanquished before, 'tis called still his House, he lays claim and pleads Propriety in him and Interest still. Therefore this Man's Heart was not become the Temple of the Holy Spirit, he was gone out, or forced out before, as a Swearing, Cheating, Whoring, or drunken Devil, &c. and this might inrage



him, and move him to attempt some greater Enterprize, which we have already spoken to. Satan doth not love to loose or let go any strong hold he hath of carnal and prophane Persons; but seeing he had received some small Defeat, he sets upon the truly Godly Christian; like as when he was cast out of Heaven unto the Earth, he presently persecuted the Woman which brought forth the Man-child, Rev. 12. 13. When he saw he could not uphold his Kingdom by Paganism, nor farther execute his Malice by Pagan Emperors, but was routed and overcome as to that Power he had, (as our late Annotators observe) to let us know that he retains his Malice, though he hath lost his former strength, he goes on in pursuing the Church of God. Even so, I say, he having been forced to give way before (as was hinted) he walks about to seek Revenge upon the Saints; but they being to him like dry Places to a thirsty Man, or as an Inn to a Traveller, viz. no resting Place, he resolves to return to his own House, that is, the Hearts of hypocritical Professors, such as the Pharisees were: And this returning of his into his old House, imports (as I conceive) his coming again in another form or shape, and with a Resolution to get better and more firmer and surer Possession than he had before.

Now he appears as an Angel of Light. Nor can we suppose he had no Party left in the said House when he went out. Parables must not be strained too far; We ought not to scrue or make too severe a Scrutiny upon every Phrase: therefore we cannot think when he is said to return to his former House, or attempt afresh the false and counterfeit Christian, that he hath quite given over his Designs in assaulting sanctified Persons, but he cannot indure to be an Underling, he is for kining it in the Souls of Men, would fain reign and sway the Scepter there; and where he cannot rule and domineer, he hath no Rest, nor can be satisfied. And therefore he may be said to return as an exiled Prince, and lest he should be discovered, he puts on a new Garb, and is now contented his Captive should become religious, that so the deluded Sinner might not discern him, but take him for his lawful Sovereign; as if he should say, I will yield to you now; if you will be a Professor and become religious, ye shall, but I will dwell with you notwithstanding; here is room enough for me as a white Devil, tho not as a black one

And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished.]

Empty; That is, the Spirit of God was not there, true Grace was not there, Christ dwelleth not there; that House may well be said to be empty, where God and Jesus Christ are not; nor is it a hard and difficult thing for the unclean Spirit to enter into such a Soul, since there was no Enemy strong enough to keep him out; but contrariwise, the place seems to be rather prepared and made fit for him, to take up his abode in this new religious and spiritual Appearance; nay here is not only room for himself, but the House

is so empty, that many other unclean Spirits more wicked than himself, may have their abode and dwelling there also. Satan saith, I will return to my House, &c. He speaks as if he was sure enough that this sinner was his own, and therefore should without any difficulty enter in, in that new Disguise in which he now appears; and accordingly 'tis said, he findeth it empty, and also swept: but doubtless some Dirt and Filth was yet in some Hole or Corner: For like as a lazy and slothful House-wife uses to sweep a little of the loose Dust and Filth in the open and middle of the Room, and lets many secret Corners lie foul as before, and may be leaves the Dirt behind the Door out of the publick view of People: So the false and counterfeit Christian reforms his Life in the sight of Men; or, like the Pharisees, makes clean the out-side of the Cup and Platter; but their Hearts are still polluted, and as vile as ever.

Swept; but not with a proper and fit Broom; 'tis said to be swept, but alas 'twas only with the Beesom of legal Reformation; and how far that will cleanse the unclean and wicked Person, is known to all understanding Men; it only takes away the Filth of gross and scandalous Sins: therefore said by St. Peter, To escape the Corruption that is in the World; that is, the prophane World, i. e. vile and notorious Sins and Pollutions.

And garnished, or painted; which may signify that seeming Sanctity, moral Vertue, and the common Graces of the Spirit. Our Saviour elsewhere compares Pharisaical Holiness, to painting or garnishing of a Sepulchre; Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited Sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead Mens Bones, and all Uncleaness: Ye build (saith he) the Tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the Sepulchres of the Righteous. And thus Pharisaical and Hypocritical Professors may be said to be garnished, i. e. they seem glorious to Men, who only judg by the outward Appearance, and know not the Heart; there may be a great change of Life, a beautiful outside, and yet the evil and vitious Habits and Pollutions of the Heart may be still the same, and not changed. And remarkable is this Phrase of our Saviour [garnished,] which we know is commonly a curious piece of Art: Men by their Ingenuity strive to imitate Nature; they will draw the Face of a Man, &c. with curious Painting, very exact, so that it much resembles the Person's natural Face, yet 'tis not the same, 'tis but a piece of Paint, an artificial Invention: Even so in like manner by the Improvement of a Man's natural Parts, common Grace, Light and Knowledg, he may appear in the view and sight of Men, as a true Child of God, and may talk and discourse like a Saint, read and hear God's Word, nay, and pray also with much seeming Devotion and Piety, and may likewise bridle many unruly Lusts, and gross Enormities of Life, and give Alms to the Poor, insomuch that he may very exactly

resemble a true and sincere Christian, and be taken by all Godly People to be indeed such an one: but notwithstanding all, 'tis but artificial Piece, 'tis but like a curious Paint, or vain-glorious Garnish; it is not the Image of God, it is not the new Creature; though it looks like it, much resembles it, yet it is not the same: for the Man is a meer Hypocrite, a counterfeit Christian, the work upon him being only the Product of natural Improvements, and not the Effects of the saving Operations of the Holy Spirit. Nay, and Satan, though an unclean Spirit, likes to dwell in such a House, I mean such a Heart, thus swept and garnished, as well as in the Heart of a vile and debauched Person: And evident it is, that this sweeping or external cleansing with the Broom of outward Reformation, or the Garnish of moral Righteousness, common Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, Prayer, hearing the Word, partaking of the Sacraments, and doing many good Works, cannot secure the Soul against Satan's Attempts, in order to his taking up his Habitation in such Persons Hearts.

After I had preached these two Sermons, a Godly Friend who heard them, told me he had met with a Treatise of Mr. Richard Allen's, Author of *Vindiciae Pietatis*, who gives the same sense on this mysterious place of Scripture: He helped me to the Book which I was ignorant of, and Mr. Allen being a very worthy Person, I shall give you some brief Hints of what he hath said.

When the unclean Spirit goeth out of a Man, &c. That Sinners are vile and abominable, saith he, it is from that wicked Spirit, Satan, that dwells in them: Every Sinner is a Person possessed of a Devil; when a little reformed, they seem for a time to be dispossessed, &c. He walketh through dry Places; what these dry Places may be, is not easy to determine: Some by these *loca arida*, understand *loca vacua*, void empty Places, the Deserts and Wastes of the Earth, where he finds no body to attempt or molest.

But could Satan, saith he, think to find Rest there where was no House for him to lay his Head in? Would the Tempter waste his time in seeking whom to devour in those waste Places, where he knew well enough there were none to be found? He knows too well where Sinners dwell, to go to seek them where they are not; more like to find the Devil at a Market, than in a Wilderness. Thus therefore seems not to be the sense—

Why may not, saith he, these dry Places be the Saints on Earth, the Fountain of whose Blood is dried up? in whom the Sun hath dried up their Dirt and Mire, in which this Swine loves to wallow, &c. [He seeketh Rest] this notes two things.

1. When the Devil is gone out of any Person, he is never at Rest till he is gotten in again, either thither whence he went out, or into some other Habitation, where he may do more

Mischief: Like Children, like Father, 'tis said of them, so 'tis much more true of him, He rests not but in doing Mischief.

2. The Devil loves to dwell where he may be at Rest; that is, not from Work (his Rest is his Work) but from Resistance or Opposition, i. e. in carnal and unclean Hearts, &c.

[Seeking Rest and finding none.] He goes, saith he, through these dry Places, from Saint to Saint, from Heart to Heart, in hope to find Entertainment, but is still disappointed; here's little Rest for me to be had, these dry Places I see are no Places for me, here's watching and wrestling and warring against me; so much praying, complaining against me, that there's no stay for me here:—Ile go back to my old Habitation: And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished, a little cleaner and handsomer than when he left it. The Devil can allow Sinners a little Reformation; but though it be a little cleansed and garnished, yet it lies empty still, there's no Tenant hath taken it up, though the Devil went out, Christ was not let in, but there it lies void for the next that comes.

Then he goeth and taketh seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there; and the last state of that Man is worse than the first. Beware of a returning Devil; the Devil at his return often makes sevenfold worse Work than before he did.

Allen's Godly Fear, p. 213, 214, 215, 216.

He modestly offers this as his Thoughts on the Place, and I find others confirming by some brief Hints the same things. I thought it not amiss to recite this Passage of his, as a farther Confirmation of the Exposition I have briefly given you of this dark Place of Scripture, not doubting but 'tis the sense and meaning of our Saviour.

But now to draw towards a Close, take two or three Points of Doctrine. Observe,

1. Satan is an unclean Spirit. As God is the Author and Original of all true Holiness, so is Satan of all Sin and Wickedness: And as God's Nature is pure, so the Devil in his Nature is impure; all Purity proceeds from God, and all Sin proceeds from Satan; God strives to promote the one, and the Devil labours to promote the other: As God's Kingdom is set up in the World, and maintained by Holiness and spiritual Sanctity; so the Devil's Kingdom is set up and upheld by Sin and Filthiness. As God by his Spirit dwells in sanctified Hearts, so the Devil dwells in polluted and sinful Hearts: And as Christ makes that Man or Woman holy and clean where he makes his abode; so Satan makes those Souls where he takes up his Dwelling, unclean and abominably wicked. Moreover, as he who is truly sanctified and made Holy, is said to be of God; so they that are wicked and ungodly, are said to be of the Devil. All those who are spiritual and truly gracious are like to God, or

bear some Resemblance of him; and all unclean and wicked Persons are like to the Devil. These things considered, no marvel Satan is called an unclean Spirit.

2. All prophane notorious and ungodly Sinners are in a woful state, the unclean Spirit is in them, their Hearts are Satan's Habitation.

The Heart of Man was not originally Satan's House, nor hath he any just Right or Propriety in it; 'tis his by Usurpation and Conquest, as Men yield up themselves to him, and entertain his Temptations. Man both Body and Soul is the Lord's, he is his Creature; nor ought he to suffer any to dwell in him, much less to rule and sway the Scepter over him, but the Holy God. But as all Men as they come into the World, have wretched and cursed Natures, through original Depravity; so ungodly Men actually have cast off God, their lawful and only Sovereign, and have imbraced the wicked one, they have received, and do subject themselves to Satan that unclean and filthy Spirit, he is King and Lord over them. The Devil hath got Possession by Craft, he inticed our first Parents to open the Door to him, they gave him the first Entertainment, 'twas then he took Possession, and thereby at once corrupted all that are in the House; I mean, all the Faculties of the Soul, to such a Degree, that they all naturally side with Satan, and are for him, and are filled with Enmity against God, and oppose and resist his Spirit, and rebel against the Light. Wicked Men had rather be under the tyrannical Government of the Devil, than to be ruled and governed by Jesus Christ: And from hence 'tis no wonder they rather chuse to have wicked earthly Rulers and tyrannical Kings to be over them, than to be subject to a Prince who is an Enemy to Wickedness, Tyranny and Oppression. This shews the Blindness and miserable State and Condition of all wicked and ungodly Men. We may further note also,

3. That Satan may lose some ground in Sinners Hearts, he may seem to be gone out of them, and they may become sober and civilized, and yet may be in the Gall of Bitterness, and their Hearts notwithstanding may be still Satan's Habitation.

Let these Men change their Lives, and become other Men in the View of the World, alter their course of Life, yet they are miserable; Satan has spiritual Power and Dominion over them; he has a strong party in their Hearts, when he seems to be gone out, and knows they are his still, and owns them as his dwelling place. When he cannot meet with Entertainment in other places, when Saints afford him no Incouragement, but displease and defy him, and their Hearts are as dry places, he can nevertheless return at pleasure to his old Habitation, and there he enters and dwells. Let them change their Religion, yet they are Satan's Slaves still, he matters not if they leave Popery and cleave to Prelacy, and so become Protestants in general; nay, imbrace a more refined sort of People, and take upon them a more strict Profession of Religion, yet still they belong to him, if they are

not truly regenerated and renewed in their Souls; let them be Presbyterians, Independents, or Baptists, it signifies nothing, they are still the same, and under Satan's Power and Dominion. O how miserably are some Men deceived, thinking if they are reformed and become zealous for external Ordinances, and have taken up this or that form of Religion, and are taken for Saints by Men, that all is well, and they shall be saved! How did the Pharisees glory in their seeming Zeal and Piety, and flatter themselves, and yet wofully blinded, and in a damnable State and Condition? Note also, that,

4. Morality, external Gifts and common Grace, are but like a vain Paint, a mere empty and artificial Garnish.

They make a fair show in the Flesh, they pride it in themselves, and Men praise and admire them, but what doth all this signify? they are still under a diabolical Power and Influence, and twofold more the Children of the Devil than they were before: Nay, as I shall hereafter shew, rather seven times worse than when they were openly wicked and prophane.

### **APPLICATION.**

1. A Terror to Sinners. Tremble you that live wicked Lives, remember the unclean Spirit dwells in you, and has Power over you, your Hearts are his Habitation, he rules in you, and takes you Captive at his Will. If in this State you die, you are undone for ever.

2. See to it, you that are Professors, lest you are also deceived. What is a reformed Life without a changed Heart? To cast off the gross Acts of Sin, will not avail you any thing, without the evil Habits are broke, and you renewed in the Spirit of your Mind. Though you seem to be godly to Men, yet God knows your Hearts, and how they stand affected to him, and to true real Godliness. A form of Religion will never save you; and though you may have got some ground against Satan, and he seems to have left you, or is gone out, yet take heed he does not return again with greater strength, and get you into stronger Bonds now, than he had before. But because this will be more fully opened in the next place, I shall at present say no more to it now.

3. This also affords much Comfort to God's People. Satan sets upon you, and fain he would subject your Souls to himself, and take Possession of your Hearts, but he cannot prevail, you have got one in you who is stronger than Satan, who will preserve you to his Heavenly Kingdom. But no more at this time: I shall leave what I have said to the Blessing of God.

THE unclean Spirit that goes out,  
Of Men that vicious are,  
Doth oft-times seek and search about,  
For rest both here and there:  
And fain would he make his abode,  
In places dry and clean;  
And ruin all the Saints of God,  
Which hath been often seen.  
But thou, O Lord, dost them preserve,  
And in them thou dost dwell,  
So that from thee they cannot swerve,  
To be o're-come by Hell.  
Which Satan seeing, strait-way goes,  
To his own Dwelling place,  
And with him brings more dismal Woes,  
On such who want thy Grace.  
Who of it being empty quite,  
Tho swept and garnished,  
He enters in, and with strong might  
They captive all are led,  
And overcome by him again,  
Through curst Hypocrisy,  
And in them he does rule and reign,  
Which few are brought to see.  
What cause have such thy Praise to sing,  
Who are renew'd by thee?  
Whose Heart thy Habitation is,  
They always happy be.

## SERMON II.

On MATTHEW xii, 43, 44, 45.

—When the Unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, &c.

THE last Day I opened the several Parts of this place of Holy Scripture, in the usual Method I have all along taken in my Exposition of other Parables, which I have already spoken to, according to that small measure of Light and Knowledge the Lord hath been pleased to bestow upon me. There remains one thing further to be done, and that is indeed the chief and most material of all, which is to shew you the sad State of the false and counterfeit Professor, out of whom the Unclean Spirit is said to be gone, but yet is returned again with seven other Spirits more wicked than himself. Our Blessed Lord saith, The last State of that Man is worse than the first. Now in what respect a painted Hypocrite, or one garnished only with common Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, may be said to be in a worse State than the open Prophane, I shall endeavour, God assisting, to demonstrate.

'Tis said, Satan returned with seven other Spirits, &c.] Seven is a number of Perfection. I judge our Saviour designed hereby to shew that the Devil hath now got stronger hold and possession of such a Person by many degrees; many unclean Spirits, or worse and more dangerous Sins cleave to him than before, so that he is like to be perfectly miserable. But to proceed;

First; That which renders false Professors, or counterfeit Christians, to be in such a deplorable Condition, (which also evidently appeared in the Pharisees and other People in that Generation, to whom primarily our Saviour refers, as the close of the 45th Verse shews) is, that great Ignorance that cleaves to them notwithstanding their common Illuminations; which usually does consist in these Respects following.

1. They know not their own miserable State, looking upon themselves to be rich and increased with Goods, and to have need of nothing: as appears by that Charge of the Lord Christ against the Church of Laodicea, who were fallen into the like Condition; they think none knows more than themselves, insomuch that they secretly contemn him who tells them how it is with them; and this rises from the consideration of that great Knowledge they conceit they have above others; But now ye say, Ye see, therefore your Sin remains. If your Ignorance were simple, (as if Christ should say) and not affected, or were you sensible of your blindness, then your Disease would not be so incurable: But now you say you see, and you doubt not but you are in a state of Happiness, and are the only People of



God, and yet presumptuously refuse the way of your Relief and Salvation, and do not conclude you are under Guilt and Wrath, as indeed you are. Prophane Persons, though their State is bad, and very miserable, yet are not generally so blind as once to imagine their Condition to be good, but act and do those abominable Deeds of Darkness, against the Light and Dictates of their own Consciences: And though Satan hath got power over them, and their Lusts predominate in them, yet are they commonly possessed at certain times with fear about their eternal State, (unless wholly given up to a reprobate Mind, having their Conscience seared with an hot Iron); and that which seems to bear up their Spirits, is the hopes they have of future Repentance; for the thoughts of dying in the present Condition they are in, is grievous to them: Nay, and the false Professor, whilst he abode under the Power of the Unclean Spirit, being openly prophane, might tremble, as seeing himself posting headlong to Hell; but now, through the blindness of his Mind, for want of a true illumination of the Spirit, he thinks he is in the direct way to Heaven, his Conscience being misled, (and his intellectual part darkened) never reproves him, but rather gives in its testimony for him. And thus it was with Paul before his Conversion; whilst he abode a Pharisee, his Conscience never accused him for those great Evils in persecuting the Church of God; for he himself saith, he did it ignorantly in unbelief.

What can render the State of a Person worse, i. e. to be an Enemy to God, and Jesus Christ, and to the Power of Godliness, and yet think he is Holy, and a good Christian; nay, and his Conscience being blinded in the Matter, acquits him of Hypocrisy for want of Saving-light, whilst he keeps up in a zealous performance of the external Acts of Duty and Religion, by which means he is deprived of that help which some openly-prophane meet with from the Rebukes and Lashes of their own Consciences, which oft-times proves a means of their Conversion. But the hypocritical Professor, not knowing the want of a changed Heart, nor the defect of those Sacred Principles from whence should flow all he acts and does, but contrarywise is stirred up by false Principles, and acts only by the power of natural Conscience and Affections, having no clear judgment to discern his own Danger, nor what a State is he still in; His Condition is deplorable, and this Unclean Spirit is worse and more direful than that which he was in before.

2. Their Blindness and Ignorance consisteth, in that they cannot discern nor distinguish between a changed Heart and a changed Life, or between legal Reformation and true Regeneration. They think, because their State seems so much better than it was before, in their own apprehension, and in the apprehension of others also, their Condition is good enough, they comparing themselves with themselves, beholding what a vast difference there is, or seems to be in respect of what they once were, when Swearers, Drunkards, Whoremongers, &c. cannot but commend themselves to themselves: once they saw

themselves Sinners, and called themselves so, and were ashamed of their own sinful and wicked Lives; but now they are Righteous in their own conceit, and so have no need of any further work, being arrived to that State of Holiness, (as they think) to that degree of Piety, to that Change, to that Conversion, that they conclude they need not seek for another, and yet are deceived, and in the Gall of Bitterness. And hereby they seem to put themselves out of the Call of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost: not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance. Let Men think what they please, certainly there is no Devil like this Devil: If he can perswade a Man that he is whole, and not sick at all, and so needs no Physician; and that when the Gospel is preached to Sinners, and the danger of Unbelief is opened, yet it doth not affect him, nor concern him, he being become a righteous Person; what hopes can there be of such a one? Alas, the Ministers of Christ have received no Commission to offer Christ to any but to Sinners. Now these are not the Persons a precious Saviour is tendred unto, they see no want nor need of him, and therefore these are passed by as such who need no Repentance.

3. Their Blindness consisteth in their ignorance of God's Righteousness, not knowing what Righteousness it is that will render them accepted and justified in the sight of God; and so, like the poor Jews, go about to establish their own Righteousness, their own personal Righteousness, a home-spun Righteousness; they see no need to go to another, to be beholden to another, for that which they suppose they have in themselves. And this ignorance of the Righteousness of God, partly rises from their ignorance of the Nature of the Law, and pure Nature of God, concluding, there is no need of a spotless or perfect Righteousness in point of Justification, (as either being inherent in us, which can't be, since all have sinned) or else by Imputation, as wrought out for us in the Person of the Mediator; and therefore think (as Paul once did) he is a justified Person who breaks not the Letter of the Law, or is not guilty of the gross Acts of Sin.

Secondly; Their Danger appears also from a proud Devil that now is entred into them. Pride commonly accompanies Ignorance, and this abounds in the Heart of Man by Nature, and there it will predominate, till the Soul passes through an effectual Change; but it appears in none so fully, or to such a Degree, as in a Pharisaical Person; he cannot indure to think he is so poor as prophane and notorious Sinners are; what, go to his Neighbour's Door for every Morsel of Bread he eats, and for every draught of Drink! no, 'tis below him to beg, he thinks 'tis enough for Publicans and Sinners to do so. And indeed what need he go to be fed and clothed by another, that is full, and sees his Goods increased, and hath need of nothing? Faith empties the Soul, makes it poor, before it fills and enriches it. But this Man knows not what Faith is, nor the Life of it. Pride springs

from an inordinate Self-love: Self-love, and Self-flattery, are the Glasses in which a self-deceived Hypocrite looks daily in, in which he appears indeed that which he is not. Self-love is a Multiplying, yea a Magnifying-Glass. These never had a true sight of themselves, never saw their own Poverty, and horrid pollution of their Nature; 'tis with them, as it was with the Apostle, before the Commandment came, they are alive, and beautiful in their own Eyes. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the Law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are excellent. Thou art, as if he should say, called a Saint, looked upon by all to be a Holy Person, a Religious Man, one of great Parts, and Knowledg, and Abilities, exceeding many; makest thy boast of God, as if none knew him so well as thou dost: but this was their Pride, their Hearts were lifted up, by reason of that knowledg they had of the Letter of the Law; though neither their Hearts nor Lives were conformable to the Spiritualness of it, never saw that the least Sin and Lusts lays them open to the dreadful Wrath of God, and to the Curse of his holy Law. They boasted in that they had escaped the Corruption that is in the World, i. e. all scandalous and gross Sins, and so were puffed up in Pride and Vain-Glory. These Self-righteous Persons will not be made sensible that they are in a sinful State, because of those commendable Qualities possessed within, as they seem in their own Eyes; and do not perceive how they are degenerated, and have lost the Image of God which we had in Creation, and how now they bear the Image of the Devil by Corruption; they understand not the Nature and Extent of Original Sin, the pravity of their natural Faculties, the lameness and impotency of their own natural Powers, nor the sinfulness of the first motions of their Hearts; boasting (as one observes) of self-Ability in the midst of utter Weakness, and an affection to God under prevailing and horrid Enmity. Pride commonly arises from a conceit of some excelling Quality, whether Beauty, Parts, or Knowledg, or affected Piety; and these Men never being convinced of their own natural Deformity, Filthiness, and Pollution of Sin, that contagion of the Soul, the universal stain of Nature, nothing but Pollution succeeding in the place of original Purity, are swelled up in spiritual Pride and self-conceitedness. The Pharisees were the proudest of all People, and they were the most ignorant of Gospel-Truths; they would have their Opinion a Rule to all the People, and that must be a Truth which they so esteem to be, and that an Error, which they conceit so to be. Pride being the Devil's Sin, is hateful to God. He that looks upon himself too much, looks upon God too little. If God hides the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven from any, 'tis from the Wise and Prudent. The Design of God in the glorious contrivance of the way of Salvation by Christ, is to confound and destroy the Pride of Man; and because Man's corrupt Reason cannot

comprehend the Sacred Mysteries of the Doctrine of Faith, they contemn and disbelieve the revelation of it.

No Religion nor Ordinance of God is valued by some Men but what suits with their own affected Principles and Notions; from hence the Greeks counted the Gospel Foolishness: and the Jews were so wedded to their own legal Righteousness, that unto them Jesus Christ was a stumbling-block; the pride of their Knowledg and Attainments was the Mother and Nurse of their incredulity: Have any of the Pharisees believed on him? These Men sin (as I have often told some of you) against the Remedy, and fence against the Edge of that Sword by which their Souls should be wounded, and they die, if ever they come to live indeed; therefore what hopes is there of them? Alas, Men swelled up with an Opinion of their own good Estate and Condition without Christ, are unfit for Faith. This is one of the strong Holds, exalting it self against the Knowledg of God: How loth is a proud Man to become a Fool, that he may be wise? or to captivate his Reason to the obedience of Faith, to be justified by another's Righteousness? and that our own Righteousness, which is so pleasant and acceptable in our sight, and in the sight of Men, should be as filthy Rags, or a loathsome thing in the sight of God, is to these sort of People a strange Paradox.

Lucifer, as some pretend, is one of the chief of Devils, who is called also the King of Pride: If so, certainly he is one of those wicked Spirits that entred into this Person. Now what but infinite Power can throw out this Devil, this Pride, and bring this Soul to the foot of the cross, and make it strike its swelling Sails to Jesus Christ, and become nothing in it self, and to hate and loth its own Righteousness, by reason of that impurity and pollution that cleaves to every best Duty they do or can perform? Thus this unclean Spirit raises up strong Fortifications against the way of Salvation, the way of Faith, or going to Jesus Christ for all as poor and undone Sinners. These Enemies, in Hypocritical and Self-righteous Persons, stand armed in the Breaches of Nature (as one observes) to beat off all Assaults of the Gospel, and therefore the latter State of these Persons is worse than the first.

Thirdly; Self-confidence may be another evil Spirit that is entred into these Persons, and which renders their State so bad. 'Tis impossible to perswade them that their Condition is nought and damnable: you may (as I hinted before) quickly bring a vile and debauched Person to acknowledg his State is dangerous, tho there is no turning him from his evil course; yet he stands not upon self-justification, but rather readily yields to you: if you deal with him at a seasonable time with Wisdom, and tell him he is a very wretched Creature I know: I am so, saith he, the Lord have Mercy upon me. But the Man out of

whom the debauched Devil is gone, is in his own Eyes become another Person, a seeming Saint, one that hears Sermons, Prays, and gives Alms, and yet not renewed, nor his evil Habits changed. O 'tis no easy thing to bring him once to doubt or question the Goodness of his Condition, he blesses God for that help he has had to change his former course of Life; God, I thank thee, I am not as other Men, nor as this Publican; I was as bad as other, but I am become religious; now I am no Swearer, Whoremonger, Drunkard, Extortioner, &c. To this purpose you have the Pharisee boasting and praising of God: this renders his state lamentable with a witness. What made the foolish Virgins so bold as to go forth to meet the Bridegroom? Was it not that confidence they had that their condition was good? A wise Man, saith Solomon, feareth, and departeth from iniquity; but a Fool rageth, and is confident.

Confidence is opposed to Fearing; so that this sort of Men are secure and unsensible of their Danger till it is too late. As in the Case of the Foolish Virgins, they saw not their fearful State till the Mid-night Cry was heard. And hence our Saviour told the Scribes and Pharisees, that Publicans and Harlots went into the Kingdom of Heaven before them: Which fully confirms what we say from this dark Scripture, viz. That openly prophane Persons, and notorious Sinners, are not in so dangerous a condition, as a false Professor or counterfeit Christian, who having passed under a seeming change of Life, and left the gross Acts of Sin, though never throughly wrought upon by regenerating Grace; and I conclude this of Self-confidence is one of those more wicked Spirits that are now entered into him. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and rests in the Law, and makes thy boast of God, &c. And art confident that thou thy self art a Guide of the Blind, a Light to them that sit in Darkness, &c. Thus these Persons proudly, with great Self-confidence, arrogate all Wisdom and Knowledg to themselves; and are like the Sluggard Solomon speaks of, i.e. wiser in their own conceit than seven Men that can render a Reason. Tremble ye who fear nothing, who conclude all Wisdom and Knowledg is with you, and that you need not be taught more than you already know. Some Men, tho openly prophane, glory and boast of their Church and Christianity, and doubt not but in that Faith to be saved: But if those who are of a good moral Life, and zealous for the external Parts of true Religion, for want of a saving Work of Grace on their Hearts, are in such a deplorable State, what vain pride and folly possesseth that foolish and debauched Crew we have amongst us?

Fourthly; Vain-Glory also certainly may be another Sin this Person is become guilty of. The Design of God in the Gospel, is to discover how vile, helpless, and wretched all Men naturally are in themselves, and so to shew us that we have nothing to glory in, but that

he that glorieth might glory in the Lord. But these Persons glory in their seeming Gifts, Parts, Learning, Knowledg, and external Privileges: they are like those of old who cried out, the Temple of the Lord, or the Church of God are we. Poor Sinners have nothing to glory in unless it be their Shame. The Publican cries out, Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner. But the false and self-righteous Professor, like as a rich Man glories in his Riches, and a strong Man glories in his Strength, so he glories in his own Righteousness, in his spiritual Attainments and seeming Sanctity. And doubtless this is another strong Chain with which the Devil binds these deluded Creatures. Self-confidence, Pride, and Vain-glory, are all of near Kin, and proceed from that horrid Ignorance I first mentioned; they are all the spurious Off-spring of that cursed Parent. But why should we glory in the Lord, or rejoice only in Christ? Why 'tis, because ye are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption: Ye are in him by Faith, by Regeneration, and his Spirit dwells in you. Our Righteousness is so imperfect, and so filthy, that it is compared to a menstruous Cloth; instead of glorying in it, we have cause to be ashamed of it, and to loath our selves, and with Paul, to account it but Dung; our best Actions, Works and Duties we perform, cannot commend us to God, nor in any respect procure the least Good from his Hands, forasmuch as Sin cleaveth to them, and nothing but a perfect and compleat Righteousness can render the Soul justified and accepted in his sight.

This vain-glorious Person little considereth what horrid Pollution abides still in his Heart, for which he is accursed by the Law of God, and so remains till he hath real Union with Christ, and is brought under a Divine Change. What though he has escaped some abominable Evils and Corruptions of his Life, since his vicious Habits, and filthy Nature is not changed, nor he sees not the Purity of the Law of God? Alas, he beholds it, as only forbidding all outward Acts of Sin, but the Spirituality of it was never opened to him, for if it had, he would see no cause of glorying in himself, but contrariwise would soon be convinced of his Error and sad Mistake, and behold himself an undone Man, and cry out of the deceitful Nature, turnings and windings of his own base Heart, Thoughts and Affections, and what a disproportion or disagreement to the perfect Rule; or how far he is from that Holiness, and Purity, and Rectitude described in the Book of God. It amazed Paul, when he once came fully to understand the Law, when he looked on all the parts of it, not only on the grosser Sins forbidden by it, but on the Rectitude, the Holiness which is required therein: When he saw the Law discover'd Lust to be Sin, and that the least Lust of the Heart is as palpable a breach of it, as Murder, Theft, or the outward Act of Adultery, and exposed equally to the Curse of it, and so to the Wrath of God: Then (saith he) Sin revived, and I died; that is, as to any hopes of Life and Salvation by that

Righteousness which before he gloried in, and made his boast of. The same Apostle afterwards came to see that in him, that is to say, in his Flesh dwelt no good thing; nay, and the Holy Ghost saith, All are gone out of the way, all are become filthy, and there is none that doth good, no not one. What cause is there then for this Man to glory in his Parts, Knowledg, and seeming Righteousness, since these things for which Men value and esteem themselves above others, God saith there is no good in, nothing excellent, but 'tis contrariwise abhorred and hateful to him? But O how hard a thing is it to bring this and that self-righteous Person to believe this, or receive it as a Truth? What, says he, can ye make me think I am still a vile Sinner, and God doth not accept me, who do so much good, that pray as I do, and hear Sermons, and am thus much reformed? O this is a worse Devil than the former, and he hereby is in a worse state than at first. Before he was easily brought to confess his State bad: when openly prophane, his gross and scandalous Sins appeared odious to him, being so indeed in the Eyes of all sober and civilized People; gross Wickedness seemed to him as filthy Rags, or as a menstruous Cloth: But to tell him his Righteousness is alike abominable, filthy, and hateful to God; this he cannot believe, but concludes, 'tis a glorious Cover, a rich Garment, a precious Ornament, and so prides himself in it, and makes his boast of it, pretending now to so much Sanctity, that like those of old he is ready in his Heart to say to others, Stand by your selves, come not near me, for I am holier than you. Thus the Pharisees of old sequestred themselves from all sorts of Men, must not be so much as touched by any; for so it seems by that passage, when the poor Woman came to Christ, and touched the Hem of his Garment, they wondered that our Saviour would suffer himself to be touched by her, she being a Sinner; they could not endure to have any legal pollution upon them, would not eat a bit of Meat until they had washed their Hands, and oft washed their whole Bodies, especially after they had been at a Feast, for fear any pollution had fallen upon them: and so also when they came from the Market, lest peradventure they should have touched some Heathen, or some Person who was legally unclean. And now in this Righteousness they gloried, trusted to it, and sought hereby for Justification and Acceptance in the Sight of God, which rendered their State worse than before. And that which seems to feed and heighten this Pride, Self-confidence, and Vain-glory, in some of these blind and self-deceived People, is that strange Conceit and Apprehension they have of their own Power and Abilities to do and perform those things God requireth, in order to their Acceptance with him, together with their false Notions of God's Mercy in pardoning them wherein they come short. In this very respect the Jews erred to their eternal Overthrow; they thought they had Power, and were able to keep the Law to such a Degree, that they were accepted as righteous Persons in God's Sight by it; and though they might not be puffed up with

Pride (as some of late amongst us are and have been) as to think they were without Sin, yet did not doubt but wherein they came short or were guilty, God, as a pure Act of his Mercy, would forgive them, not seeing a Necessity of Christ and of his Righteousness. Which Notion tends at once utterly to make void the Doctrine of Faith, and Covenant of Grace, and so consequently the whole Design of God in sending Jesus Christ into the World: for if Salvation may be obtained this way, Christ is dead in vain. And whilst I am hinting these things to you, I cannot but bewail another sort of Men, who though not so grossly blind and mistaken as some others are, yet doubtless greatly miss it, and run upon almost as bad a Rock, whilst they apprehend and think all Men are put into such a Capacity that they may be saved if they will, i. e. by improving the means of Light and Knowledg, they have by their own inherent Power and Abilities, without the special Operation of the spirit, not considering the woful pravity of Man's Nature, by original and actual Transgression, they being dead in Sin, and stand in as much need to be quickned by Jesus Christ, or to have a Principle of Divine Life infused into them, if ever they spiritually live, as Lazarus had to be quickned and raised again, after he had lain four days in the Grave. Nay and 'tis evident, God doth work in us, who are spiritually quickned and brought to believe, after the same manner which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead. One ground or cause of these Mens Mistake may arise from the Consideration of that Power Men in general have by the help of natural Conscience, and the external means of Grace, to leave the gross Acts of Sin, and so reform their Lives, and cleave to God in all Acts of Obedience, in the external Ordinances of the Gospel, which is I fear all the Conversion some Professors ever attained unto, and is also indeed the Substance of that which Man by the Power of his own Will, is able to arrive unto, to affirm that Man by his own natural and internal Abilities (as influenced by common Grace) hath Power to renew himself, change his own Heart, or form Jesus Christ in his Soul, is in effect to attribute to him Omnipotency, and make a God of him, even no less than a creating Power: For the Image of God, which is wrought in all true regenerated Persons, is called the new Creature; and a glorious Creature it is as ever the Almighty formed, being the top-Glory of all his creating Power. And besides, this necessarily makes way for Men to boast and glory in themselves, for it makes Man a Competitor, a Co-partner, and a Co-worker with God in Redemption; for the Work of Redemption doth not only consist in a price paid, or an Atonement made by Jesus Christ, (whereby he appeased Divine Wrath, and satisfied God's offended Justice) but also by Power and blessed Conquest the one was done without us in the Person of Christ, the other is done in us by the Spirit of Christ, whereby those evil and vicious Habits that are in us, naturally are removed, and the Power of Satan broke into Pieces, or that strong Man armed



overcome, and the Soul set at Liberty. To this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. No Man can be said to be redeemed by Christ, until he is redeemed from his Sins, or delivered from that Enmity that naturally is in his Heart against God, or that sacred Image of God be again restored in him, not until he is quickned or raised from the dead. Hence St. Peter, speaking of Redemption, saith, We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, from a vain Conversation, &c. but with the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot. The Redemption is from a vain Conversation, 'tis not from Wrath only, but from Sin the cause of that Wrath also. And all Men know this is not universal, seeing but a very few are indeed thus redeemed; and they may as well perceive that this is as absolutely the Work of Christ, as he is our Redeemer, viz. thus to work in us, to redeem us as it was his Work to die for us. How good is it therefore for us to consider the Danger that arises from mistaken and unsound Principles, if we would not be found guilty of this Sin of Vain-Glory? The truth is, some good Men are so misled, that they make the new Covenant a mere conditional Covenant, and if after all Christ hath done, their Interest in it and eternal Life wholly depends upon the weak and wavering Principles of the depraved Creature, and his stubborn and rebellious Will has its negative Voice: and if the Creature works not, complies not to those Conditions required, the whole of Redemption-Work may be lost, and not one Soul redeemed. And were it thus, there is more reason to believe Christ would have lost all his Labour and infinite Kindness, than otherwise. Since Man is naturally so depraved and averse to that which is truly good, having such Enmity in his Heart against God, and is wholly under the Power and Government of the Devil, and this also would render the new Covenant not better, nay, not so good as the first; for then Man was a perfect Creature, having not then such a captivating Power of Sin nor Satan in him, but had a Power of Will to stand, if he had exercised it, and resisted the Tempter from without. There is one thing more I shall note, before I leave this Point: 'Tis easy to perceive from hence, what Grace it is that Man may fall from, I mean finally and totally fall, i. e. whatsoever Men may act or do from those common Operations of the Spirit, or by the Power of natural Conscience, under the external Preaching of the Word, or means of the Rod or Afflictions, by the Assistance or Help of which I doubt not he may become another Man, a great Professor, pray, hear the Word, have a sort of Faith, viz. that of Credence, be baptized, and so become a Church-Member, yea, a Preacher, and may be in the Sight of Men of a blameless Life and Conversation, and yet never changed in Heart, or regenerated by the effectual and special Operations of Christ's Spirit, nor have Union with Christ: From this Grace, or such a reformed Life and Profession of Religion, a Person may fall away, and indeed rise no

more. And such I conclude the stony and thorny-ground-Professors were. Moreover, 'tis as evident that the good ground, viz. the honest-hearted Person, brought forth Fruit to Life eternal, and fell not finally and totally away from the Grace of God.

If any ask, how it came to pass any of the ground is said to be good?

I answer. Naturally all the Hearts of Men and Women are evil, the Defection was universal. But these Hearts of Men who are said to be good ground, were prepared for the Word; by which means, through the Spirit, they came to be regenerated, their Hearts were plowed up or broken in pieces by the Word and Spirit in effectual Convictions. Plow up the fallow Ground, (saith the Lord by the Prophet) and sow not amongst Thorns. Not that Man is able to do this, any more than he is to make himself a new Heart, which he is likewise required to do, Ezek. 18. 11. but the former is the Work of the Spirit by Convictions; the latter the Work of the Spirit in Regeneration. Till the Heart is pierced by the Holy Ghost, and broken to pieces and made soft, which naturally is hard, the Word can find no saving or effectual rooting there, but 'tis like a Rock, or so stony or thorny, that no Fruit of the Word will abide to everlasting Life. Therefore I conclude, effectual Convictions are a Preparative, or a Preparation to Regeneration; the Spirit is a Spirit of Burning before 'tis a Spirit of Consolation: it first plows up the Fallow-ground, and then when the Seed is sown, it will take Root, and bring forth Fruit to Salvation.

Fifthly. Moreover, Formality, it may appear to all, from hence is another Evil that does attend this sort of Men, or is another wicked Spirit that hath possession of their Souls. What a stir did the Pharisees make about Ceremonies? how zealous were they, like some now adays for outward Rituals and Traditions of their own devising, or which are mere humane; as if the chief part of Religion, and the sacred Worship of God, consisted in external Forms, Rites, and Ceremonies; And art confident (saith the Apostle) that thou thy self art a Guide of the Blind, a Light to them who are in Darkness, an Instructor of the foolish, a Teacher of Babes, which hast a form of Knowledg, and of the Truth in the Law. A Scheme or System of Notions, a compendious Model or Method which is artificially composed, such as Tutors and Professors of Arts and Sciences do read over again and again to their Pupils and Auditors: these Men are commonly the chief Enemies to the Power of Religion and Godliness, and like their Brethren of old, great Persecutors of God's faithful and sincere Children, whilst they cry up their external Forms, considering not what our Saviour saith, that God is a Spirit, and seeks spiritual Worshippers of him, not formal, not external, or carnal Modes, bodily Gestures, consecrated Places, attended with glorious Ceremonies, saying over a few Prayers, in which are many vain Repetitions, not minding whether their matter of Worship be of Divine Institution or not,

nor whether they perform their Devotion in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, flowing from a rectified Nature, and from sacred Principles in the Life and Power that attends all sanctified Christian Worshippers. Others of the same sort may be right in the matter of Worship, seeming to hate Idolatry and all Superstition, yet wholly resting on the external part of Religion and Godliness, whose state may be as dangerous as those before named; though in this they seem to excel them, i. e. they first miss it both in the matter of Divine Worship, as well as in the manner of it, they are zealous for the Traditions and Commandments of Men: as they are formal in their Worship; so their Form is not that form of Doctrine once delivered to the Saints; 'tis not the true form of Godliness, having [a form] of Godliness, not [the form;] 'tis like a Mask, or Vizard, or Appearance, an accidental form (as one observes on that place,) 'tis a devised, or an humane, nay may be an Antichristian Form, thinking themselves to be Christians, and the only Worshippers of Christ, and cry up themselves to be the Church, the Church, and yet under this Vizard and pretended Piety are very vitious, empty and vain: and though they deny not the Power of Godliness in Words, yet do deny it in their Practice, making a Profession, but Strangers to that Life, Peace, Love, Faith, and Self-denial, which attends and doth accompany all true Christians. But the other sort, though they are formal, yet 'tis a better Form, hence may be called Virgins, that is, such who have not, will not, defile themselves with Women; that is, with false Churches, with Idolatry, or the Superstitions of Men, these are for the Gospel-Form, the Gospel-Doctrine, Gospel-Precepts and Ordinances; these are not for a Form of Prayer, nor for any other Form of Worship, but what Christ himself ordained, as it is contained in the New Testament: These may be Members of a True Church, and worship with that Church, and be as zealous for the outward and external Parts and Ordinances as any; like those we read of, Isa. 1. 11, 12, 13. Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, Prayer, Incense, New-Moons, Sabbaths, and calling of Assemblies, with appointed Feasts, which were Institutions of God. But these Men resting on them, and having unsanctified Hearts and Lives, God hated them, and loathed their Services, being not performed in Faith, and hearty Love, and sincere Resolutions: that which they did, was but as if they had offered up a dead Carcase instead of a living Sacrifice; He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a Man; and he that sacrifices a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dog's Neck; and he that offereth an Oblation, as if he offered Swines Blood; he that burneth Incense, as if he blessed an Idol.

Such who shew never so much Zeal for the visible Worship of God, and for all his Ordinances, if only formal in their performances, are abominated by the Lord: 'tis not a Lamp without Oil, a Name without the Nature, a Form of Godliness without the Power, will avail any Person. O how do many Professors deceive themselves? Sirs, all is and will

be in vain, if the Root of the Matter be not in you, if not sincere, truly gracious, the garnish of outward Worship, or formal Services, or the Cloak of a visible Profession will not cover you from God's all-searching Eye; he sees through all this Deceit, and beholds your inward Pride, Vain-glory, and horrid pollution of your Hearts and Lives: 'tis all one to be of a false Religion as to own the true, if not sincere Christians; these have such unclean Spirits in them, that their State is worse than before they made no profession at all; these Devils are stronger than the first, have more cunning, craft, and subtilty to deceive and blind the Eyes, and so destroy the Soul, than those who rule in open prophane People; for these are commonly Men of great Light and Understanding, can discourse well concerning Religion, and some of the deep things of God, or the Mysteries of the Gospel; they can tell you the insufficiency or disability of Man to keep the Law, and how impossible 'tis to be justified in the sight of God by it; as also the absolute necessity of Faith and Regeneration. These are not only averse to all humane Innovations and Traditions of Men, and so contend for God's Holy Institutions in respect of his visible Worship, (as I told you before) but seem to be inlightned very much into that internal Work of God's Grace upon the Soul, &c. but never come themselves under those saving Operations of the Spirit, but rest in the Speculative Knowledg of those Mysteries, and are meer empty and formal Persons, and Strangers to that Divine Life, and sacred Change of which they speak, and yet possibly may not be throughly convinced of that deceit and delusion they are under, but may hope all is well with them; but since they are not savingly renewed, but only reformed, having not Jesus Christ dwelling in their Hearts, nor the Power of the Holy Ghost to enable and influence their Souls in the performance of their Duties, and in mortification of their Sins and Corruptions, they are frequently overcome by Satan, and horrid Evils prevail and predominate in them, by which means they bring great reproach upon Religion, and all those who do profess it: hence the Apostle calls this sort, the Enemies of the Cross of Christ, Phil. 3. 18. and this further aggravates their Sin and Misery, for whilst openly prophane, and not pretending to Religion and Godliness, they could not injure the Name of God, nor expose the Gospel and Professors thereof to that scorn and reproach as now they do.

Sinners openly wicked, though notorious and vile Enemies to God, yet the hurt and wrong they do is especially to their own Souls; but these by their carnal earthly [unreadable] loose and formal walking, hinder the promulgation of the Gospel, and Conversion of the Souls of Men, besides their weakning the Hands, and grieving the Hearts of the truly Godly. Moreover, they also pollute and defile (too often) the Church of Jesus Christ, and bring great trouble upon the same. Hence there is in most Congregations who keep up a strict and regular Discipline [unreadable] so much Church-work, which

makes the Communion of the Saints the more uncomfortable to them: for though it cannot be denied but sincere Persons may fall under Sin and Temptation, and so all the trouble of Churches, and Reproach that falls upon Religion, doth not arise from these counterfeit Christians, or formal Professors; yet doubtless the chiefest part of them do. It is said, Offences will come, but wo to them by whom the Offence comes. From all which considerations their state seems worse in many degrees than before.<sup>2</sup>

Sixthly; The wicked Spirit, or abominable Sin that some of these Mens Souls are also possessed with, is Legality. And though this clearly appears by what I have already said, yet I shall speak a little more fully and distinctly unto it. All that these Persons do and perform, is in a legal Spirit; and that I may shew you what I mean by Legality, in short it is this, i. e. They act and do for Life, look upon themselves to be under a conditional Covenant; and whilst they live up to that Law or Rule which they judg they are bound to observe and keep, in order to Justification, they have Peace, rendring the Gospel and Covenant of Grace (by their false Apprehensions of it) no better than a legal Ministration or conditional Covenant, as was hinted before in respect of another sort of Men: For like as the Jews of old acted in a legal Spirit, and sought to be justified by the Works of the Law, so these perform all their Services and Duties in the same Spirit, viz. not from Life, or a Divine Principle of Saving-Faith, but for Life. To keep the Commandments of God, and live religiously, is absolutely necessary. But then this must be done from a renewed Nature, and flows from Faith, it being the proper Effect or Fruit thereof; but to strive to live a sober and holy Life, and obey God's Precepts, and rest upon their so doing, and look to be accepted with God, and justified thereby, is that which too many of this sort of People do, and this is to act in a legal Spirit. Possibly a Man may say, I know I cannot perfectly keep the Law, but I will do (by the help of God) what I can; and wherein I through weakness do transgress, the Lord is merciful, and I trust will forgive me. But let me remember what God saith, viz. That he will in no wise clear the Guilty. Moreover, what the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that all Mouths may be stopped, and the whole World become guilty before God. 'Tis evident, as God will not forgive an impenitent Person, so he will not forgive the Penitent, except they believe in Jesus Christ. 'Tis not for the sake or worth of Repentance that God forgives any Man, the Penitent as well as the Impenitent are guilty, all have broke the Law, all are under Sin and Wrath, Repentance will not do, a holy Life will not do, Prayer and hearing Sermons will not do; By the Deeds of the Law (and by any thing we can do) no Flesh shall be justified. If Men believe not on Christ, let them be what they will, Professors or Prophane, they shall die in their Sins: God pardons no Sinner as a simple Act of his Mercy, without a

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<sup>2</sup> Note: there were textual errors in the source for this section.

respect had to the Satisfaction Christ hath made to his offended Justice by his Death: And hence it is that the Apostle saith, All have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the remission of Sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. Therefore God doth not accept of our Obedience in keeping the Precepts, either of the Old or New Testament, and forgive all our Deviations as a meer Act of his Mercy; for if this way Righteousness and Justification were attainable, 'tis evident Christ died in vain, as I said before; for could not God have done this, if Christ had never come to shed his precious Blood?

I remember some Years ago, I heard of a Man who lying on his Death-bed, when a Godly Person desired him to look out for a Christ; answered, He had lived a godly Life all along, and why (said he) do you tell me of a Christ? or to that effect. He thought, ('tis evident,) none needed a Christ but prophane Persons; and I fear many are of his Mind, tho they express it not as he did, with their Tongues.

But possibly some may say, We do not think that our Righteousness justifies us any otherwise than through Christ's Merits.

To which I answer; 'Tis not throug our personal Righteousness, though joined or coupled with Christ's Merits, that we are justified, but through the personal Righteousness of Christ alone, and the Merits of his Blood received by Faith; 'tis in this way, and only by this way we must be saved if ever we come to Heaven, Another Foundation can no Man lay. He that believeth not, shall be damned. Let him be what he will, Righteous or Wicked, 'tis a great Error to think that Christ's Merits make our Services or Performances meritorious: though [they] are accepted thereby when they flow from Faith, yet not as the Spring, or procuring Cause of our Justification.

To close with this, let me add one thing further, which shews the Danger these Persons are in. This Errour is a capital One, 'tis to err in a main Fundamental of Religion, and therefore Heresy, a damnable Principle. And hence the Apostle calls it, a subverting the Souls of such who receive it. And it was also from hence God gave the Jews up to Judicial Blindness, i. e. because they went about to establish their own Righteousness, and did not submit to the Righteousness of God. According as it is written, God hath given them the Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they should not hear. That must needs be a dangerous Evil, that provokes the Holy God thus to leave and give up a Person to blindness of Mind, and final Impenitency; for such must needs perish of necessity.

Therefore in the last place it follows, that the state of these People is worse than it was when they were no Professors of Religion at all, but were openly wicked and prophane Sinners: these unclean Spirits are worse than the first. And from hence let all take heed how they mix Law and Gospel together in the case of Justification. If by Grace, then is it no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no Grace. But if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work. There is no mixing of the Merits of good Works and the free Grace of God together, but one of these doth exclude and destroy the Nature of the other: for if Election and Justification were partly of Grace, and partly of (or from foreseen) Works, then Grace is no Grace, and Works no Works. For whatsoever proceedeth of Grace, (as one observes) that cometh freely, and not of Debt; but whatsoever cometh by Merits or Works, that cometh by Debt. But now Debt, and free Grace, or that which is free and absolutely by Grace, and that by desert, are quite contrary things: therefore to say Men are Called and Justified, partly by Grace, and partly by Works, (or by whatsoever is done by the Creature) this were to put such things together that cannot agree, for 'tis to make Merit no Merit, Debt no Debt, Works no Works, Grace no Grace, and so affirm and deny one and the same thing. Therefore how absurd a thing is it for Men to mix the Law and Gospel together in this sense, or make that which is the Creature's Act or Work, a procuring Cause of acceptance and Justification in God's sight? seeing it utterly destroys the nature of Grace, and so consequently the glorious Design, of God's eternal Purpose in Jesus Christ, and that blessed Covenant of his confirmed by the Mediator thereof. Where the Creature is wholly abased, and the free Grace of God alone exalted, Man is not a co-worker or co-partner with God: therefore those Principles that have a natural tendency so to do, ought to be abominated by all good Christians.

But it is objected, That we are said to be justified by Faith, and also that Repentance is required as a Condition of Salvation, &c.

1. I answer; Some put Faith in the room and place of perfect Obedience to the Law; and that Faith which they speak of they affirm is the sole Act of the Creature: But this certainly is a grand Errour, for it would make our Justification to be still by Works, and so destroy the Nature of God's free Grace: for that which is the Creature's Act, is all one with the Creature's Work; 'tis but to change one Work of the Creature to another; from an external Work of the Life, to an internal Work of the Heart. For, as Mr. Cary well observes,

'Tis Christ's perfect Righteousness and Obedience only which is put into the room and place of ours, to justify and save us, and his Sufferings take away the Curse which our Disobedience brought upon us.

Faith therefore is only the instrumental Cause of our Justification, 'tis only as an Instrument or Way of our receiving and applying the Righteousness of Christ, if it justifies, as a Condition of the New Covenant, (as Works were required under the Old); and as that act or work enjoined on our part to be done by us as Antecedent to the benefit of the Promise, that would make our Act or Work the formal Cause of our Justification, and so render the Terms of the New-Covenant much of the same Nature with the Old. Faith is not our Righteousness in it self, as a Work, but in relation to Christ the Object of it, or as an Act of receiving and applying his Righteousness and Merits; as Eating nourisheth, though it be the Meat that doth it in this sense. Him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifies the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness. And now whereas the Apostle James speaks of Works justifying, and not Faith only, Jam. 2. 24. it is easy to be comprehended, and the great Apostle of the Gentiles and he reconciled. Paul speaks of the Cause of our Justification before God, and James of the Signs of our Justification before Men; or shews how our good Works justify our Faith:

The one speaks of the Imputation of Righteousness, the other of the Declaration of our Righteousness; or one speaks of the Office of Faith, the other of the Quality of Faith; the one speaks of the Justification of the Person, the other of the Faith of that Person; the one speaks of Abraham to be justified, the other of Abraham already justified.

Moreover,

2. That Faith by which we are said to be justified, is as much the Free-Gift of God's Grace to us, as Christ is the Free-Gift of his Grace for us: and hence Faith is called the Gift of God Eph. 2. 8, 9. and also a Fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5. 22. And as it is a Grace wrought in us, so also such a Grace that was promised to us as part of Christ's Purchase; To you it is given (saith the Apostle) in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake; that is, it is given freely of God's meer Grace, yet upon the account of Christ's Merits and Mediation. Their believing in Christ was not in their own Power; No Man can come to me, that is, believe in me, except it were given unto him of my Father: And all that the Father hath given to me, shall come unto me, that is, believe on me. And again, No Man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him. That by the drawing here, is not meant of any coercion or force upon the Will, is out of Question; the Will acts freely according to the Nature of that Faculty, but as it is acted and influenced by the Spirit; according to that Text in the Psalms, My People shall be willing in the Day of my Power: But that it is to be understood only of a rational drawing, by Arguments used in the Ministry of the Word, we do deny; though in this sense some do take it, and conclude, it is of the same import with that compelling mentioned, Luk. 14. 23. for the Ministers of the Gospel (as one observes) have no other Power to compel. But the Act of



drawing here is not ascribed to the Servants, but to the Master, not the Preacher, but the Father; therefore doubtless it signifies a Divine Power put forth upon the Soul of Man, by which the Lord opens the Heart, as he did the Heart of Lydia, so that he is made obedient to the call of God, and willing to close with the Offer of Christ. And that this must be the meaning of the Text, it is rational to conclude, considering the nature of the motion in coming unto Christ, which is the motion of the Soul to a sublime spiritual Object to do; which as no Soul hath any power of it self, such is the darkness of the Mind, the obstinacy of the Will, and pravity of the Affections, unless influenced and wrought upon by the Spirit. So in like manner nothing is proud Man naturally more averse to, cannot indure to think he is such a poor Miscreant, a mere beggarly Wretch, that he has not so much as a bit of Bread to eat, nor a Garment, in a spiritual sense, to cover him, but must be beholden to his Neighbour for all: For as no Soul is able, without supernatural Grace, to apprehend spiritual Things [cannot] discern them; so there is in his mind enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed [can] be.

From all which I have said, it appears Faith (as before hinted) is not the Condition of Justification, tho the Way or Means appointed to receive that Righteousness that doth justify the Sinner; so likewise Faith is God's Gift. Yet 'tis foolish to say, Man doth not believe, but rather the Spirit for him, because he cannot believe by any natural Power inherent in him, till he is divinely influenced by the Holy Ghost: For such may as well say, Lazarus did not live, or it was not his Life which he had after quickned, because it was infused into him by the Power and Spirit of Christ. Therefore this and the former Objection are both gone, and the supposed Condition of the New Covenant vanquished, since Faith it self being the Fruit of it, cannot be the Condition thereof.

But saith the Objector, If Faith and Repentance be not Conditions of the Covenant of Grace, then those whom God hath appointed to Salvation, shall be saved whether they believe, or repent, or no.

To which we answer; That Faith and Repentance, &c. are Promises of the New Covenant, as well as Justification and Eternal Life; and he that hath ordained the End, hath also ordained the Means: I will put my Law into their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good, but I will put my Fear into their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me. That God who hath promised to make us Happy, hath also promised to make us Holy; he hath promised Grace to us here, and to change our Hearts of Stone, and to give us Hearts of Flesh, as well as he hath promised to give us Glory hereafter.

Our being called in Time, is but the effect of God's eternal Love before Time, because he hath loved us with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness hath he drawn us. We are called by the free Grace of God according to his purpose, as well as justified and eternally saved. We are predestinated that we may be conformable to the Image of his Son in Holiness here on Earth, as well as in Heaven hereafter. If Men are left under the power of their Sins, or only to the bare improvements of their own natural Abilities in a meer reformed Life, and never brought by the free Grace of God to believe in Jesus Christ, and so to have real Union with him, 'tis an evident sign they shall never be saved, they being none of them that the Father hath given to Christ; for, saith he, all that the Father giveth to me, shall come unto me; and in these only are infused the Divine Habits of Saving-Grace. The Apostle positively affirms, that God hath chosen us in Christ before the Foundation of the World, that we should be Holy, and without blame before him in love; not only chosen to Salvation which is the End, but to Holiness as the Means: Not because we are Holy are we chosen, but that we may be Holy; but this ought not to take any Soul from the use of the Means. And as a clear demonstration and illustration of this, I might mention that passage concerning Paul's Voyage to Rome, in respect of that assurance God gave him of the Lives of all that were with him in the Ship; the Angel of God appeared to him, and said, And lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God, that it shall be as it was told me. This Promise was absolute, yet see what Paul said to them, Except ye abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved. That God that hath promised us Salvation, doth not save us without the use of Means, although the efficaciousness and truth of the Promise, does no ways depend upon the virtue of the Means, but the Means are made effectual by virtue of the Promise, yet whoever neglects the Means, under any pretence of a free Promise, he does but tempt God, but doth not (as some observe) rightly believe in him.

Seventhly; Amongst the wicked Spirits that are entred into this Man, namely, into this Counterfeit Christian, that horrid and wicked Spirit of Unbelief must not be left out, for tho this Sin of Sins is in all unconverted Persons, yet it reigns and triumphs more in this sort of People than in others. Prophane Persons are kept up by a false Faith, depending, as they will tell you, on the Death and Merits of Christ, tho 'tis only cursed presumption in them; for that cannot be a true Faith, which changes not the Heart and Life of the Creature. But they believe not, by reason of love to their Sins, which they are not as yet willing to forgo. But these believe not on Christ, because of that love which they have to their own seeming Righteousness, which in point of Trust, Hope, and Dependance, they also are not willing to forgo. These Men place that Hope on their own Works and

Righteousness, which true Christians place on Christ, and so unbelief in them throws Christ quite away, they having no need of him.

Question: What is Unbelief, but an actual or vertual denial of the Truth of the Gospel, when Men do not assent to the Doctrine of it, by an act of the Understanding?

'Tis a refusal to accept heartily of Christ upon the Terms of the Gospel, which is opposite to Justifying-Faith, when there is not a fiducial Motion to Christ as the Center. When Christ, the only Foundation and chief Corner-Stone, is laid aside, and the Need and Worth of him not believed. This Sin binds all the Guilt of all their old and new Sins upon their Souls, 'tis a Sin against the highest Goodness of God, and casts Contempt upon it; for never did God manifest such sovereign Goodness unto his Creatures as in Jesus Christ. God hath said, there is no Life, no Salvation any other way, but by the Lord Jesus. But these Men do not assent to this Truth, do not believe the Report God hath given concerning the want of perfect Righteousness and Regeneration, and Self-debasement, &c. Nay, they seem to contradict the Will of God, by their going about to establish their own Righteousness, and so not submitting to the Righteousness of God. In a word, 'tis a denying of Christ, and a disesteeming the Price of his Blood, as it also reflects on the Wisdom of God, in fixing on this way to save Sinners: 'Tis an invaluable the Excellency of Christ's Person, Blood and Merits. As Faith counts all things Dung in Comparison of Christ; so Unbelief accounts the Person, Offices, and Doctrine of Christ, but as Dung in Comparison of the Excellency of Self-Righteousness, Self-Wisdom, Self-Sufficiency, &c. These Men are the worst Neglecters of the great Salvation, they do not only neglect it, but slight and contemn it, there being in their Thoughts not any need to look for Salvation this way: They that sin against the Law, fly to the Gospel; but these sin against the Cure held forth and extended in the Gospel. Whither must these fly? since there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin: if this be slighted, no other way or means is ordained for Salvation. Such who refuse the Covenant of Grace, and depend on the Covenant of Works, how woful is their Condition? And what hope a Law often transgress'd can give a Malefactor, is (saith a worthy Person) easy to imagine: Millions have perished by it, none can be secured by it, as none ever by it were or could be saved. At first these Persons transgressed against the Rule, but now they transgress against the Rule and Remedy too. None but Unbelievers are despised by God, none but these shall taste of his Wrath and Divine Vengeance; this is the condemning Sin, this is Satan's strongest hold, hither he retreats after all, and here he keeps as in chains his miserable Captive. He that believes not, shall be damned. And what is Faith but a going out of a Mans self to Christ for Life

and Righteousness, as a poor wretched and miserable Sinner? But these Men now see not themselves to be in such a State.

Earthly Hypocrisy, it appears from the whole which hath been said, is another of those evil Spirits that is entered into this Man.

Hypocrisy is opposed to that inward Simplicity of the Heart, and all counterfeit Professors are guilty of it, though all do not act the part of an Hypocrite with an Intention, i. e. are not convinced, they are Hypocrites: some deceive their own Hearts, they are the grosser sort; others their Hearts deceive them, these are most to be pitied; a Man may doubtless be an Hypocrite, and he may not know it, he may go on in a way of Duty, and do all things, as he thinks, exactly according to the Letter of the Word, and in Uprightness as he may judg, and yet be unsound; certainly thus it was with the foolish Virgins.

Hypocrites may be nevertheless discerned; our Saviour hath given the Character of them.

1. They are commonly most zealous from the lesser things of Religion, i. e. for paying Tithes of Mint, Anise, and Cummin, but neglect the weightier things of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, Faith, and the Love of God: They strain at a Knat, and swallow a Cammel. They make a stir about external Rights, Observation of Days and Meats, but to the Power of Religion and Godliness are Strangers, and experience nothing of a Divine change on their Souls.
2. As they lay the greatest stress upon the least things, so they are commonly partial in their pretended Obedience; they lay hard things, or heavy Burdens upon others, but they themselves will not touch them with one of their Fingers: What they preach and press on others, they do not themselves, they will not obey Christ, nor follow him in the hardest things, nor do they obey in Love, or always.
3. They are commonly finding Faults in other Men, can spy the Mote in their Brother's Eye, but cannot see the Beam that is in their own. As it is a Sign of notorious Hypocrisy and Impudence, to censure and judg others for those Sins which Men live in themselves; so it is a Sign of like Hypocrisy, to spy Faults in others, and reproach them for those Faults, and yet the Person is guilty of worse himself. What they preach and press on others, they do not themselves; they will not follow Christ in the most hard and difficult things of Religion, but pick and chuse; will do some things that they like of, and not only neglect others, but quarrel with them who contend for it, and faithfully subject to Christ in it. And as they are not universal in their Obedience, so they do not obey in Love, nor do they obey always as sincere Christians do, as David intimateth.

4. They are generally very confident touching the Goodness of their own Condition, not questioning their Salvation; thus were the Pharisees, they judged others were in a damnable State, but as touching themselves, did not doubt but they were the only People; and blessed God they were not as other Men: whereas a true Christian is full of Fear, and doubts about the Truth of Grace received, and Goodness of his Condition.

5. They are vain-glorious, do what they do to be seen of Men; like the Pharisees, They love the Praise of Men, more than the Praise of God: their Hearts are kept up by the good Opinion others have of them; they, like their Predecessors, love greetings in the Markets, and uppermost Rooms in Feasts, and to be called of Men Rabbi: they also are subject to Envy, or have their Hearts rise against such who they hear out-do them; and would be looked upon as the chiefest of Men, in Learning, Parts and Wisdom.

6. They are commonly very zealous to make Men Proselytes to their own Notions of Religion, though may be false and corrupt Notions: but if they can but bring a Person to receive their Principles and external Ordinances, then they glory, tho hereby he is made twofold (perhaps sevenfold) more the Child of Hell than before; the poor deceived Wretch thinking this change of Religion is a true Conversion, and so never looks out for any other, but speaking Peace to his own Soul, judging all is well within. They doubt not but they have Religion enough when it doth commend them to Me•, and are taken for Saints by Saints; their greatest Labor is to keep up their Name and Credit in Religion; so that if they may pass unsuspected amongst their Fellow-Creatures, or have the Approbation of Men, and that if none can charge them justly with any immoral Actions, they rest satisfied; whereas the greatest Care of a true Child of God is so to walk and labour, that he may be accepted of God, and have his Approbation.

7. Self is commonly in the bottom. In all they do, they aim not at the Glory of God, but have a carnal Design, Self-Advantage, or Self-Appraise, &c. This moves and quickens them, and animates them in all they perform in religious Services; and if they miss of their end, be it what it will, they soon are weary, and grow cold and flat in their Spirits, and become quarrelsome, and seek Offences, and disturb the Peace of the Church to whom they belong.

8. Moreover, they are not the same at Home, which they are Abroad; not in Private, what they seem to be in Publick; may be seldom pray, either in their Family, or Closet; or if they do, 'tis with little Zeal, Enlargedness, or Affection to God.

There are divers other Marks and Characters of Hypocrites, and of these false Professors, which I must pass by, because I would speak a word or two of Application.

In the last place; The latter State of these Men is worse than the first.

1. Because God oftentimes leaves them to judicial Blindness, and to the hardness of their own Hearts: According as it is written, God hath given them the Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they should not see, and Ears that they should not hear, unto this day. Even thus, as God dealt with the Unbelieving Jews, or the People of that Generation, so I say he often times deals with other formal Hypocrites, &c. and for the very same Cause. Doubtless it was for those Spiritual Sins, Unbelief and Hypocrisy, the Pharisees, and other People of Israel were rejected and cast off. And O what Wrath were they laid under! the Wrath of God (is said) to come upon them to the uttermost.

Moreover, some of these false and counterfeit Professors, also fall into the very same Sins and horrid Abominations they were guilty of before they made any profession of Religion; nay, and they prove more vile and notorious in Wickedness than ever: It hath often been seen, that this sort of Men who forsake the Ways of God, which they seemed to own and profess, have at last appeared more impudent in Sin than the vilest Men, being ring-leaders to all lewd and cursed Practices and Deeds of Darkness; so that the same unclean Spirit returneth into some of them in the same shape also; though I cannot see any ground to believe it happens so to them all; for doubtless many of them retain their seeming Zeal, and external Profession of Religion and outward Holiness, until they die. Evident it is, our Saviour applies this direful Doom on the People of that Generation, viz. the Jews, particularly to the Scribes and Pharisees, see the 38th verse. Yet certain it is, many of them never turned to open Prophaneness, but died in their Unbelief whilst they abode proud and zealous Pharisees. Yet I see no reason to question but this returning Devil, and those seven other Spirits more wicked, is applied to them as well as to others, who fell away from their seeming Piety and Profession. But of some of them especially it hath happened according to what St. Peter speaks, For if after they have escaped the Pollutions of the World through the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, and are again overcome, the latter end of that Man is worse than the first; that is, such a knowledge of Christ as brings with it, or doth produce, an outward reformation of Life. For as the Elect cannot be deceived, so they cannot fall finally, having the seed remaining in them, cannot sin unto Death, they are said to have eternal Life abiding in them; Because (saith Christ) I live, ye shall live also. He that hath begun that good work in them, will perform it to the Day of Christ. They are passed from Death unto Life, and shall not come into condemnation. But as to these falsehearted or hypocritical Persons, it happeneth to them (that is, to some of them) according to the true Proverb, The Dog is turned to his own Vomit, and the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the Mire. The Apostle comparing them to Dogs and

Swine, shews what fort they were, viz. such who never passed under an effectual change of Heart, but were, whilst they made a great or high profession, like unclean Beasts. A restraint may be put on an evil Beast, or on a filthy and unclean Nature; where there is not a change of nature, 'tis one thing to have the Life washed or cleansed, and another to have the Heart cleansed.

Furthermore; Some of this sort who have received those high, though common Illuminations of the Spirit, even to such a degree as they are said to be inlightned, and to have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, &c. that is, in the common Gifts and Graces thereof; and yet after all, they fall away, nay, and so fall, that they can never be renewed again by Repentance: Therefore some of these Persons are they who sin the Sin against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven. Prophane Persons doubtless do not sin this Sin, nor can true Christians commit it; they cannot sin unto Death. No, no, these are those miserable Souls, those cursed Apostates, who are liable and in danger to sin the unpardonable Sin. Nay, and observable it is, that the Lord Jesus in the verses before he spake this Parable, intimates, that those very Pharisees, &c. were guilty of, or in danger of being charged with this Sin, see vers. 30. they shewed so much Malice against our blessed Saviour, as to charge him with a Devil, and that he cast out Devils by Beelzebub. But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This Fellow doth not cast out Devils but by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils. And from hence he said, All manner of Sin and Blasphemy shall be forgiven to Men, but the Sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto Men. And therefore he bids them to make the Tree good, intimating, whilst the Heart was evil, and under diabolical Influences, it would or might carry them away to all horrid Words, and Blasphemy. And then presently after brings in this parabolical Speech, When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, &c. 'Tis not a speaking of hard words against Christ and the Holy Ghost, but a speaking them as the Pharisees did, out of spite, designing to destroy him, and render him odious: This is dangerous. 1. 'Tis a sinning wilfully after a Person has received much knowledg; it is a Sin knowingly committed against the operations of the Holy Spirit, casting contempt or highest reproach upon Christ and the Holy Ghost, contrary to the rational Convictions of their own Consciences.

2. There is also it appears Malice against Christ and his Spirit in the Hearts of those Men who are guilty of it; they are said to do despite to the Spirit of Grace; they desert the Assemblies where he manifesteth his Gifts and Graces, they reject him, viz. the Holy Spirit, with them, and treat (as one observes) his Gifts and Motions, as if they were mere

Delusions and Impostures of an evil Spirit: and this is done wilfully, out of Malice to Christ, his People, and Religion.

3. Also doubtless Apostacy is another ingredient thereof in some, they fall away, &c. they utterly disown that Religion they have professed.

4. Final Impenitency appertaineth to it likewise; for what Sins we truly repent of, we shall be forgiven. But of these 'tis said, 'Tis impossible to renew them again to Repentance, because God is withdrawn from them, and hath left them for ever, so that no Means used can do them any good. As God will not renew them again, so none else can do it: they sin therefore without remorse of Conscience, after they have made shipwreck of Faith, and that seeming good Conscience they once had; for Paul intimated he had a good Conscience before he was converted, or whilst a Pharisee, Act. 23. 1. But those who are unsound at Heart, who do not fall away from their seeming Holiness and profession of Religion, and so die not in Apostacy, yet if they never come to be savingly wrought upon, or to pass under a Divine Change, they all nevertheless perish in Hypocrisy; so that every way their State, and the State of all of them, is and will be at the last miserable.

And from the whole we may note,

That the State of the Self-righteous and Pharisaical Persons, is far worse than the State of gross and prophane Sinners.

These are sick, and know it not; wounded, but see no need of a Physician; Sinners, but see no want of a Christ: They may conclude they are converted, and therefore seek not after Conversion. We always think his State is sad, who, though mortally wounded, yet feels no pain. Some Sinners are said to be past feeling; their Enemy is hid in them, they think he is gone, when 'tis no such thing, for he another way has faster hold of them than ever.

'Tis a hard and difficult thing to bring a Pharisaical Person, one that looks upon himself to be a religious Man, to see his woful State and Condition.

Men may be civilized, and make a great Profession of Religion, and go for Saints on Earth, that are not such in the sight of God in Heaven.

We may also from hence infer, 'Tis a most dangerous thing to make a Profession of Religion, without true Regeneration be first wrought in the Soul; better be no Professors at all, than not so as to be sincere.

Hypocrisy is a most cursed and dangerous Sin; these Persons Satan hath commonly the strongest hold of, of all others.



The State of sincere Christians is happy: though Satan doth attempt to get into them, and destroy them, yet he cannot do it, there is no abiding for him; he may foil them, but cannot give them a final fall; though they fall, they shall rise again.

Satan cannot be said to be quite thrown out of that Man's Heart, where the true Grace of God is not implanted, nor the Soul renewed. None but the Lord Jesus, who is stronger than Satan, can bind this strong Man armed, and set the Soul at liberty. Where the Heart is not changed, Satan can return, in one way or another, at his pleasure, he takes them captive at his Will.

Mortality, or all external Gifts and common Graces, though it may seem to sweep the House, yet is the House empty, and all is but like a vain Shew or Garnish, all Reformation is nothing without Regeneration

### **APPLICATION.**

This may inform us of the Cause and Reason there is so great Reproach brought upon Religion, and on the Ways of God, and on the People of God, by some who profess the Gospel. Alas, many of them who are called Saints, we may justly fear are but counterfeit Christians, such who never experienced a true Work of Grace; they may have knowing Heads, but unsanctified Hearts. And from hence it is there are so many proud Persons in many Congregations, who with brazen Foreheads will brave it out, with impudent Faces, in the presence of Christ's faithful Ministers; and though reprov'd, and told of their cursed Pride and abominable Dresses, high and shameful Towers, hateful to God and good Men, yet reform not, will not deny themselves of their filthy Lusts, tho the Name of God and Religion is exposed to great Reproach and Contempt thereby, and the Hearts of sincere Christians wounded, and mourn for it bitterly before the Lord. If they had but a spark of true Grace, could they ever stand it out thus against the Gun-shot of Heaven? How fearless do they seem under the rattling Peals of the Thunder of Heaven? They regard not the whetted Sword of the Almighty, nor the bending of his dreadful Bow; nor mind the Arrows that are just upon the String, who is ready to send forth his Anger with Fury, and his Rebukes in Flames of Fire.

Moreover, from hence it is also there are so many covetous, earthly, and hardhearted Professors and Members in Churches. Alas, you may tell them of this abominable Sin a thousand times over, and all to no purpose, their Hearts ('tis to be feared) are set upon their Covetousness, they love the World more than the Word, nay, more than God or Jesus Christ; and yet, under a Cloak of Religion, shelter themselves as

if all was well, and they good Christians: And because they covet no Man's Goods but their own, and so are not guilty of Theft, they conclude they are not chargeable with this Sin of Covetousness; though Christ's poor Members are not regarded, the Naked are not clothed, nor the Hungry fed, nor the Sick visited. They will give something 'tis true, but not according to the Need and Necessity of the Poor, nor according to their Ability: nor is it out of Love to Christ, nor to his poor Saints neither, they give what they do give, may be to free themselves from Reproach, or to quiet their own Consciences. And hence it is likewise there are so many Whisperers, Tatlers and Backbiters in Congregations, and so consequently so much trouble and disorder in our Churches. Tho Godly Christians may be guilty of great Disorders and many Infirmities, yet I am perswaded, were there not many false and deceitful, carnal and hypocritical Professors, it would never be as it is. What makes the best Design that ever was amongst us, for the promoting the Interest of Christ, and good of the Churches, so neglected, and like to sink in the Bud, but the great discouragement these sort of People lay it under? They have no mind to such a good and great Work, they are for enriching themselves, and to lay into their own Coffers and Treasuries, but not to cast into Christ's Treasury. And this evil Example of theirs, lays a Temptation on sincere and upright Men and Women. What do such and such do? they are far richer than I, and they will do nothing. To these let me speak one word: Why, will you do no more for God, because some who love him not will do nothing? Alas, you had need do the more: I am perswaded you would not willingly be found foolish Virgins in the Day of Christ. How do you know but these very Men shall be found to be such who value the gratifying of a base Lust, above the discharging a holy and acceptable Duty to Christ? who give more to deck and adorn their Houses, and please the base Lust of their Children, than they will give to promote the Gospel, and recover the languishing Interest of Jesus Christ that is in our hands. And may not this be the reason our Assemblies are so thin on Lecture-days? is it not because the Hearts of People are not right with God? Can godly Christians be always under the same Temptation? Can Sin predominate in them, and they act thus habitually to the scandal of their sacred Religion? Can Sin be in the Affections of Saints, because there are some Infirmities in their Conversations? Is not a true Child of God quickly convinced of his Fault? and doth he not straitway reform? But this is a constant course of evil, and willfully persisting in: nay, and ye shall incur their displeasure perhaps if you deal plainly with them. Sure Christ is at the Door. Now the Kingdom of Heaven may certainly be compared to ten Virgins, five wise, and as many foolish: read the latter end of Mat. 24. and the beginning of the 25th Chapter. Multitudes of Foolish Virgins, 'tis to be feared, are now got into the Church, as Christ signifies it would be a little before his Coming, whose latter end will be worse than the first.

This also reproves those who foment such Notions, and strive to distil them into the Minds of People that are absurd, and tend to blind and ruin their Souls, telling them they are in the Covenant of Grace, and Church-Members, by their Parents Faith, and have the Seal of the Covenant; yet I could never learn what it doth seal or make firm to them. For a Seal, all know, usually makes sure all that is contained in the said Covenant. Shall they miss of the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace who have it sealed to them? Alas, hereby 'tis to be feared, many think they are in a good Condition, though never united by saving Faith to Jesus Christ. Can it seal, and not seal Covenant-Mercies to them? Or can they perish after they are in the Covenant, and have the Seal of it? Circumcision was a Seal, 'tis true, of that Faith Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised; it was not a Seal of that Faith which he had not, but of the Faith which he had; and therefore it could not be a Seal to his Male Infants of the Righteousness of their Faith which they had, being yet uncircumcised, because they had no such Faith before Circumcision, as to believe in God, and to have it imputed to them for Righteousness, as had Abraham their Father, to whom Circumcision was only called a Seal of the Righteousness of the Faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the Father of all them that believe. It was a Seal to him of the latter Blessing as well as the former; for the Promise that he should be the Heir of the World, the Apostle shews was not through the Law, nor in or through Circumcision, nor had any that dignity conferred upon them but Abraham only; which clearly shews Circumcision did not appertain to the Covenant of Faith.

Likewise it may reprehend another sort, who tell the People, they were made the Children of God, Members of Christ, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, in their Baptism, or rather Rantism. O the danger of this pernicious Doctrine! how many flatter themselves with the Hopes of Heaven from this false Foundation, thinking they sucked in the true Faith, and true Religion, with their Mother's Milk, and were made Christians by a Priest's scattering a little Water on their Faces when Babes, tho they live in all manner of horrid Sins, and are Enemies to the Life and Power of Godliness? This is a way of making Christians which Christ and his Apostles never taught; and it is a healing of the Hurt of the People slightly, taking them off from seeking after Grace and true Regeneration; for if they were made true Christians then, regenerated then, doubtless their State is good; and so 'tis to be feared, thousands of them conclude, and never doubt of their Salvation.

Moreover, it reproves all who rest on Morality; who, because they live a sober Life, and pay every Man his own, doing justly, &c. conclude all is well, yet look after no other Religion. And it also as much reprehends those who boast of their Knowledge and

spiritual Attainments, they conclude their State is good, because they are Members of a true Church, and have been Baptized indeed, and break Bread, Read and Pray in their Families, and discharge all other External Duties of Religion, but rest wholly upon these things, and never were brought to be poor in Spirit, nor obtain real Union with Christ, but are ignorant of the Faith, of the Operation of God. What means the Pride of some? their Earthliness, Contention, Whispering, Backbiting, want of Love, Divisions, &c. shutting their Eyes at further Light, and discovery of Truth? O look about you for the Lord's sake, lest after all your high Profession and Hopes of Heaven, you do not at last drop down to Hell.

Lastly; It reproves all such nice and scrupulous Persons, who seem to make it their chief Business to render all odious who are not of their own fantastical Humor; Women must not wear a bit of Lace, &c. nor a gold Ring, nor Men wear a Periwig, though never so short and modest, (and advised to do it by able Physicians, for their Health-sake) because the Apostle saith, 'Tis a shame for a Man to wear long Hair; therefore they run into Extreams, and cut their Hair close to their Ears, and so disguise themselves, and censure others as guilty of great Abomination, (who will not imitate them) as if the main Points of Religion lay in these foolish Formalities and Niceties, and as if none were to be taken for Godly Christians, but such who are just of their Height, and Length, and Breadth, and conform to them in these smaller things (that may be lawful notwithstanding what such say); and render those odious, who are better than themselves, even as such, who hate Instruction, and cast God's Word behind them, &c. These Men seem to bear the exact Image of the Pharisees of old; and though they thus strain at a Knat, yet at the same time seem to swallow a Camel. For one of this sort will be found, it is to be feared, guilty of horrid Lies and Slanders, back-biting and reproaching his Neighbours, seeming to be filled with Malice and Envy, rendering a great body or multitude of godly Christians, as a vile and wicked People, without Exeption, because they deny Babes Baptism, as if they were Deceivers and cursed Impostors, yet a People sound in all the Essentials of true Religion, and of holy and gracious Lives, our Enemies themselves being Judges, and only differ from our Brethren in that one thing which no wise nor worthy Men make absolutely necessary to Salvation. And 'tis not unknown how many learned Persons, who in the Point of Baptism differ from us, have acknowledged that we have the Word of God plain for us in that matter: Moreover, have confessed, Infants Baptism is doubtful, and therefore called for Moderation and Charity. But little of this appears in some censorious Zealots; though God (but a few Years ago) made a dreadful Example of one Man for his evil, envious, and reproachful Pen, near this City, enough to make all to tremble: And it ought never to be forgotten, how he abused the People falsely called Anabaptists, in a

small Pamphlet, is not unknown to many; and what Terror of Conscience he soon after fell under, and in Despair hanged himself in Bricklane, under the sense and Aprehension of God's fearful Wrath and Displeasure; crying out against himself, for writing that cursed Book, to the last; declaring that his State was worse than Cain's, Judah's, or Spirah's; and that he had touched the Apple of God's Eye, &c.

This may also reprove the Churches of Christ, and the Pastors of them, more particularly, for their Carelessness and Negligence in receiving in Persons: tho I know none to charge, yet I am afraid we have generally failed herein. O that greater care may be taken for the time to come; 'tis not a great Church, but a holy and good Church Christ loves. I am perswaded it would be better with the Churches, if many were severed from them. But O how seldom have any been dealt with, either for Pride or Covetousness▪ as if we were not able to find out such Offender as well as others.

Moreover, it sharply reproves those Preachers whose great Business 'tis to bring Men into visible Profession, and make them Members of Churches, whose Preaching tends more to bring Persons to Baptism, and to subject to external Ordinances, than to shew them the necessity of Regeneration, Faith, or a changed Heart. For the Lord's sake take heed what you do, if you would be pure from the Blood of all Men. We too often see when People are got into Churches, they conclude all is well; and when Conversion is preached, they do not think it concerns them, but others who are openly prophane: and thus they come to be blinded, may be to their own Destruction; and if their Blood do not lie at some of your Doors, it will be well. I am afraid some nowadays like the Pharisees, may be said to compass Sea and Land to make Proselytes, but when made, are twofold more the Children of Hell than before, as our Saviour intimates.

It may also put us all upon a strict Examination of our own Hearts, lest we should be found some of these false and counterfeit Christians. And that we may clear our selves in this matter; Consider,

1. Were you ever throughly convinced of your sinful and lost Condition by Nature, and of that horrid Evil there is in Sin? Did you ever see Sin as the greatest Evil, most hateful to God, not only of the evil Effects of Sin, but also of the evil Nature of Sin, not only as it has made a Breach between God and Man, but has also defaced the Image of God in Man, and made us like the Devil, filling our Minds with Enmity against God, Godliness, and good Men.

2. Is there no secret Sin lived in and favoured, the evil Habit never being broke? Is not the World more in your Affections, Desires, and Thoughts, than Jesus Christ?

3. Are you willing to suffer and part with all that you have, rather than sin against God? Do you see more evil in the least Sin, than in the greatest Suffering?

4. Do you as much desire to have your Sins mortified as pardoned, to be made holy as well as to be made happy? Do you love the Work of Holiness as well as the Reward of Holiness? Do you love the Word of God for that Purity which is in it, as well as the Advantage that comes by it?

5. Have you seen your own Righteousness as filthy Rags, and have you been made poor in Spirit?

6. Have you received a whole Christ with a whole Heart? A whole Christ comprehends all his Offices, and a whole Heart includes all our Faculties: Is not your Heart divided?

7. Is Christ precious to you, even the chiefest amongst ten thousand? Are you the same in private as in publick? Do you love Christ above Son or Daughter? Do you love the Person of Christ?

8. Can you bear Reproof kindly for your Faults, and look upon him your best Friend, that deals most plainly with you.

9. Do you more pry into your own Faults, than into the Miscarriages of others? Are you universal in your Obedience? And do you obey Christ's Word, his Commands, because you love him?

10. Have you been the same in a day of Adversity, as now you are in a day of Prosperity.

11. Can you say you hate Sin as Sin? Is your Mind spiritual, and set upon Heavenly things? Do you love the Saints, all the Saints, though some of them are not of your Sentiments in some Points of Religion?

12. Can you go comfortably on in the ways of Christ, though you meet with little esteem amongst the Saints? Can you stay your Souls upon God, though in Darkness, having no Light? Is all the stress of your Justification and Salvation built upon Jesus Christ?

Consider of these few Questions, and do not doubt but that your Hearts are sincere, when you can give a comfortable Answer to them, though it be with some fear and doubts that still may arise in you. A true Christian is ready to mistake his Portion, and take that to be his, that belongs to an Hypocrite; as an Hypocrite on the other hand, mistakes that

which belongs to him, and applies that to himself, which is the Portion of sincere Christians: but Grace is like a small Seed at first, that cannot be soon espied in the House, i.e. the Heart, especially when there is much Smoak and Darkness yet remaining.

But may be some may say, What you have said, tends to take us off of Holy Duties and Obedience.

God forbid: for though we would not have you rest or depend upon your Duties and Obedience; yet let me tell you, a godly Man, or he that is a true Christian, hath such Righteousness wrought in him, and by him, that exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; if he had not, he could in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. His Obedience and Righteousness flows from a Principle of Divine or Spiritual Life, or from a Principle of saving Grace, or else they would be all but dead Works; and from thence he acts and doth all that he performs Godward.

2. He acts from a Principle of Faith, his Obedience flows from thence, seeing himself justified and accepted only in Jesus Christ.

3. He acts from a Principle of Love to Christ, and is also always the same, and for the hardest part of Religion, as well as for the easiest part of it. Moreover, he is as careful to keep a good Conscience towards God, as to keep a Conscience void of Offence, towards Men; he takes up all the Duties of Religion in Point of Performance, though he lays them all down in Point of Dependance. He is as careful of his Heart and Ways, that he [ma]y please God, and glorify him as much, as a Man can be that expects to merit God's Favour thereby; he knows he must attend upon the means of Salvation, as well as to expect Salvation it self. 4. He exceeds all others in his end, which is the Honour and Glory of God, or to live to God on Earth, as well as to live with God in Heaven.

Lastly; How severely doth what we have said look upon all Self-righteous Persons; and those proud People that boast of their Holiness and Perfection, that think they need no Repentance, O that they would consider it, and tremble before it is too late, and they perish eternally, for rejecting the chief Cornerstone. Remember, unless ye believe that Christ is he, ye shall die in your Sins. Also it looks severely on all formal and carnal Christians who have nothing but a Name. Alas Sirs! If the painted Hypocrite, he that is so gloriously garnished with many great Gifts, Parts, Wisdom, Learning, and seeming Piety, is in a damnable Condition, what will become of you? Mourn O England▪ what a Number of filthy, debauched, treacherous, proud, drunken, swearing and unclean Christians (as they are called) hast thou in the Bowels of thee? they shew their Sin as Sodom, and hide it not, and yet glory as if they were the only People of God. Awake Sinners, before God's

Judgments are poured out upon you, for certainly great Wrath is at the Door. God hath wrought Wonders for the Deliverance of this Nation, but ye slight and contemn them: Neither Judgments nor Mercy will humble you; what would you have, since nothing God doth, pleases you? Certainly the Almighty will not bear with you much longer, if you repent not.

But ye who are truly pious and sincere ones, rejoice, you who mourn for your own Sins, and for the Sins of the Land; you are secured from the hungry Lion, your Day is coming, the Kingdom of Jesus Christ is near, your Redemption is at hand; lift up your Heads, and praise God for ever.



Satan a Spirit is unclean,  
From whom all Filth doth flow;  
A wicked Heart his House has been,  
There still he dwells also.  
As all true Holiness O Lord,  
Is from they self alone;  
So we do find from thy bless'd Word,  
Sin's from that wicked one:  
And that he in a filthy Heart  
Takes up his curs'd Abode;  
So thou so good to thy Saints art,  
In them to dwell, O God:  
And that thou mightst Possession have,  
Satan thou hast cast out:  
And from all Filth our Souls to save,  
Strange things hast wrought about.  
Let such who garnish'd are by Art,  
And common Graces, fear,  
Whilst all those sing with joyful Heart  
Who are indeed sincere.  
Let Sinners and each Hypocrite,  
Consider their sad doom;  
Whilst Saints do sing, having in sight  
The Glory that's to come.  
The latter State of some Men will,  
Be worsen than before;  
But Saints are happy and safe still,  
And shall for ever-more.

FINIS.