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## Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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### A Practical Exposition Upon The Fifty-Third Chapter Of Isaiah.

by Thomas Manton

#### THE SIXTH VERSE.

*All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;  
and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.*

**I**N this verse we have two things which ought to be matter of continual meditation to us all our days, to wit, our misery by sin, and our remedy by Christ.

1. Our misery in the former clause; where—

[1.] Our sin is charged upon us collectively in common: *we have all gone astray.*

[2.] Distributively: *every one to his own way.* We all agree in turning aside from the right way of pleasing and enjoying of God; and we disagree, as each one hath a by-path of his own, some running after this lust, some after that, and so are not only divided from God, but divided from one another, while every one maketh his will his law. *Velle suum cuique est, nec voto vivitur uno:* several desires breed difference.

2. The remedy provided against this misery: *and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.* The burden of sin, that would otherwise have ruined us, is cast upon Christ. The sheep wander and the shepherd is slain. He is the good shepherd that layeth down his life for the sheep. David saith, 2 Sam. 24:17, ‘These sheep, what have they done?’ David was more tender of his people than of himself, yet David was guilty. But here it is otherwise, for our iniquities were laid upon Christ. Here we may observe:—

[1] The author of this benefit, or who it was that provided this remedy for us: *the Lord.*

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[2.] The nature of the benefit: *he laid our iniquities on him*; that is, on Christ.

[3.] The persons concerned: the iniquities *of us all*; all those that are at length gained to believe in him, and return to him, as the bishop and shepherd of their souls.

First, I begin with the misery or the woeful case wherein all those for whom Christ died were in before conversion.

1. They wandered in their ignorance and sinful ways to their own destruction, set forth by the going astray of sheep: ‘All we, like sheep, are gone astray.’ It is a usual similitude, which is not put here by way of extenuation, as in some scriptures, as ‘I send you forth as sheep among wolves;’ but in a way of aggravation, not to extenuate the sin, but to set it out the more. It is to show the folly of man. Sheep, of all creatures, are most apt to stray without a shepherd. They are apt either to be driven out of the fold as a dog or wolf scattereth the sheep, or to wander of their own accord, a fit emblem of our folly, who love to depart from God, and go astray from the way of life Rom. 3:12, ‘They are all gone out of the way;’ that is, the way to true happiness.

2. They were unable to bring themselves into the right way: Luke 15:18, ‘I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: St Austin saith, *Domine, errare per me potui, redire non potui*—Lord, I could go astray of my own accord, but could not return by myself.

3. In hazard to be preyed upon by the roaring lion, and the dogs and wolves that are abroad: 1 Peter 5:8, ‘Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.’ Our misery is mentioned to show the necessity of a Saviour; and this misery is made to consist in sin or straying from God; the sense of which is our first motive to make us look after Christ, that we by him may return again to our own happiness, even to God, who is the refuge of our souls, and the centre of our rest. But let us more nearly observe how our misery is described. And first of the universal particle, *all we*; and then of the distributive particle, *every one*.

First, From the universal particle *all*, we may observe:—

*Doct. 1.* That no son of Adam can exempt himself from the number of those that are gone astray from God and the way of true happiness. I shall explain the point in these considerations:—

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First, All are sinners by nature. There are three branches of original sin:—

1. The communication of Adam's guilt.

2. The want of original righteousness.

3. The corruption or pollution of nature. These are derived from Adam to all his children, and in respect of these they are all out of the way.

1. Because the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to us; his guilt we receive as children do the brand of their ancestors, that are tainted in blood and forfeited in law. Look, as Reuben's act in defiling his father's bed was a stain to all, his posterity, and they lost the sovereignty by it, Gen. 49:4, so all mankind, being in Adam, as they descended from him, and were in him as in a common person, they sinned in him, so that what Adam did we did. Thus it is said, Heb. 7:9, 'Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.' There is ground you see in nature for the imputation of the father's deed to those that descend of him: and God may as justly impute to us Adam's sin as to Levi Abraham's paying of tithes. When Abraham did it, it was as if Levi did it; and when Adam sinned, it was as if you sinned. We were all in his loins at that time; and, if it had been our personal case, we should have done so. Now this answer may satisfy as to the angels, that do not beget one another, and, therefore, sustain not the person of one another;—their sins do not take hold of one another; they, being all immediately begotten by God, are not guilty of each others' sins, unless it be by consent and mutual agreement; therefore, those only fell that combined to follow one as the ringleader of the faction. Hence it is said, Mat. 25:41, 'The devil and his angels;' not as if begotten by him, but adhering to him. But to return, in pursuance of the former matter, note, the scripture looketh upon parents as sustaining a common person, and, therefore, what injury is done to the father, is spoken of as done to his seed; and many families suffer for the miscarriages of their progenitors: Gen. 4:10, 'Thy brother's blood crieth unto me:' thou hast shed the blood of his offspring in spilling his, and, therefore, it is *bloods*, in the plural number. And so for Jacob and Esau, God elected them as sustaining the common persons of their posterity, and so likewise in many places. Now this holdeth good in man's justice, for treason in the father taints the blood of the son.

2. The want of original righteousness, which cometh upon us thus. As poor and ignoble parents convey their poverty and want to their children, and none can give what he hath not. A bankrupt father must needs leave his family poor; so Adam, having lost his righteousness, he could not bequeath it as a legacy to his children.

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3. As to the corruption and pollution of nature, that is conveyed as a leprosy is propagated to the children of lepers: 2 Kings 5:27, 'The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and to thy seed for ever;' so that every child born of that line was born a leper. Thus men beget children like themselves, corrupt and sinful; the copy answereth the original—the blood resembleth the kind. Of vipers there cometh nothing but vipers, and sinners produce sinners after their kind. If the immediate parent be sanctified, yet, that being not natural, doth not alter the case; from a circumcised father there doth not come a circumcised child,—threshed corn doth not produce threshed corn.

But let us consider these branches a little more particularly.

1. All men are sinners as they partake of Adam's guilt in being descended of him. As they sprang from him, they were in him as in a common person, and sinned in him; as Levi paid tithes in Abraham, as aforesaid, Heb. 7:9. To be sure, sin and death came upon him and upon all: Rom. 5:12, 'Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' If death, as is visible, then sin, even upon children: ver. 14, 'Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' Otherwise the apostle's reason would not be good and cogent, and there would be a punishment without a guilt: but *ubi poena, ibi culpa* (where there is punishment, there is guilt). Yea, Rom., 5:19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' *Made sinners* is meant *sense forensi*, in a law or court sense, by the imputation of Adam's guilt, as appeareth by the opposition. In short, those things are said to be imputed to us which are reckoned ours to all intents and purposes, as much as if they were our own. As another man's debt, taken on upon my score and account, is really and truly mine: so Adam's disobedience, and Christ's righteousness are imputed to all those whom they represented.

2. They are sinners as they want original righteousness: Rom. 3:23, 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' By 'the glory of God' may be meant his glorious recompenses, or his glorious image. The latter, questionless, is meant: 1 Cor. 11:7, 'A man ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.' See also 2 Cor. 3:18, 'But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.' This necessarily maketh them sinners: for the soul being destitute of a principle to incline it to God, wholly accommodateth itself to the interests of the flesh, and is only employed to cater for the body and the bodily life; for, though it be created by God, yet being created destitute of grace and original righteousness, and put into the body, it soon

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forgets its divine original, and that region of spirits from whence it came, and conformeth itself to the body; as water put into a round or square vessel, taketh form from the vessel into which it is put. The soul doth only affect things present and known, having no other principle to guide it. Now things present and known are the delights of the body and bodily life, such as meat, drink, natural generation, sports, wealth, honour, and pomp of living. And the soul is turned from the love and study of better things. That self-love that carrieth us to these things is naturally good but morally evil, as it destroys the love of God, and the care of pleasing and enjoying him. There is a conversion from God to the creature, a falling off from our last end.

3. There is pollution or corruption of nature, the stock of sin which we have inbred in us, consisting in a blind mind, perverse will, disorderly affections, an unruly appetite, and evil inclinations to sensual things. This corruption is often spoken of in scripture: Ps. 51:5, 'Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' John 3:6, 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh.' We all partake of the same carnal nature, the dunghill of corruption, which wreaketh out in the mind by vain thoughts, in the heart by carnal desires, and constantly discovereth itself by a proneness to all evil: Gen. 6:5, the imaginations and 'the thoughts of his heart are evil, and that continually.' An aversion from and enmity to all that is good Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law, neither indeed can be.' Man, in respect to that which is good, is described not only by terms that imply weakness, but hostility and opposition, as unfit for every good work, and so opposite to it Col. 1:21, 'Alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works.' If a man were indifferent to good and evil, a neuter and not a rebel, the case were the less; but the bent of his heart is against it, as appeareth not only by scripture but experience. There is a proneness, and a greater inclination to evil than to good. Now, from whence should it come? Not by example, for then this inclination would not discover itself so early, and children would be as capable of good as evil. We catch a disease from the sick, but not health from the sound. We find a manifest disproportion in all our faculties. In the understanding, a sharpness of apprehension in carnal things, but a dulness and slowness to conceive of what is spiritual—the will is backward and slow to what is good, but there is a strong bent and urging in it to what is evil. We need a bridle to curb and restrain us from evil, and a spur to excite and quicken us to good. Evil things persevere and continue with us. Oh, but how fickle and changeable are we in any holy matter! The memory is slippery in what is good, firm and strong in what is evil, the affections quick, and easily stirred; like fire in tinder, they catch presently what is evil, but are cold and dead, like fire in wet or green wood, to anything

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that is good. The body is unwieldy for any holy use, but ready to execute any carnal purpose. In short, there is the seed of all actual transgressions before it break forth; so that we are gone astray and out of the way indeed. This should be minded by us. Nothing inferreth so much a contradiction to God as our being sinners by nature. This is a standing enmity; actual sin is a blow and away, a fit of anger, this a state of malice. Surely, we had need look to a redeemer and a change by regeneration, that are so corrupt and fleshly in all the powers and faculties both of soul and body. This secludeth us from any possibility of attaining heaven and true happiness.

Secondly, All that come to the use of reason have actually sinned against God. The bad: 1 Kings 8:46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.' The good: Eccles. 7:20, 'For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.' Our nature, being unsubdued, discovereth itself in acts suitable: Gen. 8:21, 'For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, and that continually.' Though there be mixtures and intermissions, and though this corruption be in part broken, yet it is not wholly vanquished; as cloth dyed in the wool doth not easily leave its first mixture. Principles in the best are mixed, *so* are their operations, like fair water passing through a dirty sink. *Bonum non est nisi ex integro* (the good are not so apart from their innocence)—not so purely good, as merely evil before. The best are either overtaken, Gal. 6:1, or overborne, Rom. 7. The saints in heaven are called 'spirits made perfect,' Heb. 12:23. They sin no more; but here we come very short of that exact obedience which the law requireth: Prov. 20:9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' They have entered upon the work of cleansing their hearts, but cannot get them quite clean, but still go on with the work, and make use of the blood of Christ. Though none accuse them, yet God and their own hearts may justly condemn them for many sinful swervings from their duty.

Thirdly, This departing from God and his ways is fitly represented by the straying of sheep: 'All we like sheep have gone astray.'

In the general it implieth:—

1. That we are brutish in our sin and defection from God: it could not be expressed but by a comparison fetched from the beasts; we were like sheep led aside in a sensual way. Man aimed at being equal with God, and he was made beneath himself: Ps. 49:12 'Nevertheless, man being in honour, abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish.' He continued not in the honour of his creation, and in that excellency and dignity wherein God had set him; but became like a beast, governed by his senses and lower appetite. It is true of all men, they do not continue in the excellency of their being, they have lost much of the dignity of

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their reason, and are more led by sense, as the brute creatures are. And therefore you have the saints often complaining: Ps. 73:22, 'So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee.' I was as *behemoth*, a great beast. Sometimes they have no command of their affections, but are merely led by the unruliness of appetite or passions: so Prov. 30:2, 'I was more brutish than any man;' that is, he was no more able to gain heavenly knowledge, whereby to be wise for heaven and salvation, than brute creatures are able to wield man's reason, whereby to apply themselves to the affairs of this life. Therefore man is often compared to beasts for fierceness and cruelty, as the prophet calleth the proud oppressors cows: Amos 4:3, 'And ye shall go out of the breaches, every cow at that which is before her.' So for their rude wanton simplicity, they are compared to 'a wild ass's colt,' Job 11:12. And here to a sheep in decay of knowledge and government. In the general, then, it implieth something brutish in us, and that through the fall we have slipped beneath the excellency of our rank and being.

2. Proneness to err. No creature is more prone to wander and lose his way than a sheep without a shepherd, which is easily seduced. So are we apt to transgress the bounds whereby God hath hedged up our way: Jer. 14:10, 'Thus saith the Lord unto this people, thus have they loved to wander.' They loved to try experiments in a way of sin. Man indeed would fain transmit the fault from himself, as Adam doth obliquely upon God: 'The woman which thou gavest me to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat,' Gen. 3:12. It may not be the shepherd's fault if the sheep wander, but their own nature, their aptness to wander. When we bring ourselves into inconveniences, we are apt to murmur, and secretly to accuse God in our thoughts, as if he did not sufficiently provide for us. Solomon saith, Prov. 19:3, 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' It is our own folly, and we blame our own fate, our evil destiny, and those unlucky stars that shone at our birth; and in these things we blame God himself. The saints themselves have been guilty of this evil, fretting at God for what inconvenience comes to pass through their own sin and folly. 2 Sam. 6:8, it is said, 'David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah.' He should have been displeased with himself and his own ignorance, to order the ark to be carried upon a cart, when it should have been carried upon the priests' shoulders. Thus, as sheep, it noteth to us self-abasement, because of our own proneness we did it as sheep, and they are apt to wander.

3. Our inability to return, or to bring ourselves into the right way again. It is like a sheep, not like a swine or a dog; these creatures will find the way home again, but a sheep is irrecoverably lost without the shepherd's



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diligence and care: Jer, 50:6, 'My people have been lost sheep, their shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have turned them away on the mountains, they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting-place.' The farther they go the farther they will be from the flock, and in a very sad condition. It holdeth good too here; for we do not know the way back again to God. Austin saith, I could wander by myself, and could not return by myself. And God saith as much, Hosea 13:9, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.' That is done in a moment which we cannot help to all eternity. Our destruction is from ourselves, but our reparation from God. The good shepherd bringeth home the lost sheep upon his shoulders, Luke 15:5.

4. It noteth our readiness to follow evil example. A sheep is *animal sequax*, they run one after another, and one straggler draweth away the whole flock: Eph. 2:2,3, 'Wherein in times past ye walked, according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we had our conversation in times past, in the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.' There is Satan, corrupt examples, and evil inclinations, the world and the flesh, all concurring to ruin man. We easily swim with the stream and current of others' examples, and do as they do; and even so men take and do a great deal of hurt by evil examples. Thus sins are propagated, and we live by imitation; like sheep, we draw others out of the pasture together with ourselves. Sheep go by troops, and so do men follow the multitude to do evil; and what is common passeth into our practice without observance.

5. The danger of straying sheep, which when out of the pasture, are often in harm's way, and exposed to a thousand dangers: Jer. 50:6,7, 'My people have been like lost sheep; all that have found them have devoured them.' So are we in danger to be preyed upon by the roaring lion, and the dogs and wolves that are abroad. In our sinful estate we are as sheep whom no man taketh up, being out of God's protection, and so a ready prey for Satan. See how pathetically the prophet describeth the misery of Israel: Hosea 4:16, 'Now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.' Oh! consider what it is for a poor solitary lamb to wander through the mountains, where, it may be, some hungry lion and ravenous wolf looketh for such a prey. Even so it is with straying men, their judgment sleepeth not; it may be the next hour they will be delivered over to destruction Rom. 3:16, 'Destruction and misery is in their way, and the way of peace they have not known.'

*Use 1.* Is to show us the necessity of a Redeemer. All are included under a necessity of looking after a remedy; if all be sick, they must all seek to the

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physician or perish. And therefore it concerneth every one to see what they have done for the saving of their lost souls. 'All the world is become guilty before God,' as the apostle saith Rom. 3:19. Guilty you are, but have you sued out your discharge?' By nature you lost the glory of God, but are you changed into the image and likeness of Christ from glory to glory? You were polluted in your first birth, but are you born again of water and the Spirit? Are you saved by being washed in the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour? You are sinners by practice, but are you washed in the blood of the Lamb, and reconciled to God? You have gone astray, but is the case altered with you? 1 Peter 2:25, 'For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.' Do you use Christ as a mediator to seek the favour of God by him? Do you put yourselves into his hands as your Shepherd, and resign and give up yourselves to be governed by him as your bishop and overseer? As the misery involveth all, so doth the care and necessity of looking after a remedy concern all. In the first Adam we contracted guilt, and became liable to the wrath of God; in the second, we have righteousness, which is a pledge of God's favour. In the first Adam we lost the image of God; by the second, we are made partakers of the divine nature. In the first, we lost paradise; but by the second, are restored to a better paradise, heaven itself.

But let us not reflect only upon this common necessity, but our own personal necessity, what need we have to look after a Redeemer, and to get an interest in him, and that his redeeming grace may become glorious in our eyes.

1. In your natural estate you were every one of you as lost sheep, fugitives, and strangers, and enemies to him. Thy way was lost, thy God lost, thy happiness lost, thy soul lost; so it was, for Christ 'came to seek and to save that which was lost.' Then the devil was thy shepherd, then thou didst put thyself under his conduct, and God was looked upon as thy enemy. Oh, think of it; at a day old thou wert sinful, even to the death, and worthy of God's hatred: Col. 1:21, 'You were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works.' And his wrath remaineth on you, till application be made of the blood of Christ upon gospel terms: John 3:36, 'He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' These terms are repentance and turning to God. Now dost thou believe that thou wert a child of wrath by nature, a fire-brand of hell? and canst thou be secure, and desirest thou not to be freed from so great a danger?

2. In practice. How didst thou wander and depart from God throughout the whole course of thy life? The stragglings of thy youth, how canst thou look back upon them without shame and blushing? Cry out then, Ps. 25:7, 'Remember not

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the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord.' And in thy riper years how shamefully didst thou stray from God, even since thou beganest to have more of conscience, and a greater use of reason? It were endless to trace us in all our by-paths: 'Who can understand his errors?' Ps. 19:12. In every age, in every condition, in every business, we have been wandering from God.

3. Since grace received we have had our deviations: Ps. 119:176, 'I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant, for I do not forget thy commandments.' Though our hearts be set to walk with God in the main, yet we are ever and anon swerving from the rule, either neglecting our duty to God, or transgressing against the holy commandment. Oh, therefore eat your passover with sour herbs, and bless the Lord for finding you out in your wanderings, and following you with the tenders of his grace in Christ.

*Use 2.* If the Spirit of God sets forth our natural estate by the straying or wandering of sheep, see if this disposition be still in you, yea or no. Are you not apt to go astray from God and from his ways?

1. From God. Every sin is a departing from him, but especially unbelief: Heb. 3:12, 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living' God.' Adam thought to find much happiness in forbidden fruit, to mend and better his condition, but was miserably disappointed. So when we do not believe God in his word, we will be trying our fortunes and taking our own swing and course. But I speak of a more general disposition. There are some whose main care it is to be getting away from God; as the prodigal went into a far country, Luke 15:11. They think to be better anywhere than at home under God's eye and presence. This appeareth by the care they take to keep God out of their thoughts: Ps. 10:4, 'God is not in all his thoughts.' A thought of God rushing into their mind is very unwelcome and unpleasant to them; they are backward and hang off from communion with God, and the duties of religion are looked upon as a melancholy interruption.

2. From the ways of God. Though they are the only ways of peace and life, and will surely make us happy in the end, yet naturally we are of a libertine and yokeless spirit. Sinners looking upon all things through the spectacles of the flesh, count them harsh and unequal, and a strict confinement: Mat. 7:14, 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there' be that find it.' They cannot endure God's restraint: Prov. 14:12, 'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' The broad and easy ways of sin are pleasing to flesh and blood, but destructive to the soul. Well, then, he that counteth the company of God or the ways of God irksome,

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hath this wandering disposition still remaining with him; and if it be not checked it will prove his eternal destruction. The sheep do not fare the better for going out of the pasture. We leave all good in leaving the chiefest pod; and in departing from God you turn' your back upon your own happiness; as beasts put into a good pasture will yet seek out some gap that they may range abroad.

I come now to observe from the distribution of this common error every *man to his own way*:—

*Doct. 2.* That there are many several ways of sinning; or thus, though there be one path to heaven, yet there are several ways of sinning and going to hell.

Every man hath his several course. And as the channel is cut, so his corrupt nature findeth an issue and passage: Eccles. 7:29, 'God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.' One hath one invention, and another another, wherein he imagineth to find contentment and happiness, but findeth none. Man swerving from the state of happiness and sufficiency wherein God had created him, thinketh to better his condition, and therefore hath many devices and inventions, which indeed make it worse. So 1 John 2:16, 'For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.' Though no sin cometh amiss to a carnal heart, yet some are more kindly and suitable to that particular humour. One's notorious blemish is the lust of the eyes, worldliness; another, sensuality; another, pride; one this sin, another that. Hence the psalmist saith, Ps. 18:23, '*I kept myself from mine iniquity.*' That which most urgeth us, and prevaieth with us, we should endeavour to mortify.

The reasons how this cometh to pass are 1. Because of the activeness of man's spirit. It is always a-devising wickedness, which as it is true most especially of the malicious musing mind, so of all evil hearts: Ps. 64:6, 'They search out iniquities, they accomplish a diligent search; both the inward thought of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.' A wicked spirit is a searching spirit; they contrive new ways; they are always finding out new inventions and devices; they are not contented with the way God hath set them, and therefore will try others.

2. It happeneth through diversity of constitutions. *Amores animi sequuntur humores corporis*—the conditions of the mind follow the constitution of the body. The matter of some men's bodies is more viciously disposed than others are. We plainly see the body hath some indirect operation upon the soul; the affections, in their work and exercise, depend upon the body; and these corrupt affections meeting with a disposed body for them, by a violent sway carry the whole

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man with them. And this reason is the stronger, because the devil joineth with our tempers to help on those sins to which we are naturally disposed, as wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony; or if of a better constitution, to pride and vainglory. As when the devil observeth a lustful man, he helpeth forward the temptation, and offereth occasions, stirring up raging and immoderate desires, until at length, forgetting all shame and modesty, or the danger of punishments, he does most foully pollute himself. So if to luxury and gluttony, he presents sweet baits till the soul is drowned and drenched in meats and drinks, and there be no sense of piety, and the heart is made unwieldy to prayer or any good duty. So for contentious or furious persons; whatever the constitution be, he 'worketh mightily in the children of disobedience,' Eph. 2:2. Godly men find least hurt by him, as being led by the Spirit, and avoid the occasions and snares, and strive against evil suggestions, and yet they smart too much under his malice many times, through the advantage he hath over them by their constitutions.

3. It happeneth from their business and occasions in the world. Many men are engaged to ways of sin because they suit best with their employments, the sin of their calling, as vainglory in a minister. The apostle saith, 'Ordain not a novice, lest he be lifted up of pride, and fall into the condemnation of the devil,' 1 Tim. 3:6. So worldliness suits a man of business, or deceitfulness in his trade; and corruption is common to a magistrate. Several callings and businesses have their several corruptions. Men easily slide into the corruption of their way, and every calling, through the wickedness of our hearts, is made to serve this or that sin.

4. Custom and education. Aristotle saith, It is ill education that engageth men to a way of wickedness, and it is not easy to break them off from it. Vessels will not easily quit their first savour, and customs will not easily be left. Teach a child the way of the Lord and it will stick by him: Prov. 22:6, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'

5. Company and example. Men learn from them with whom they converse, and thence come national sins, partly as they run in the blood, but more by example. Of the Germans we learn drunkenness and gluttony; of the French, wantonness. Men shape their practices to the patterns that are before them, and learn their way; for it easily taints the spirits. And thus you see why there are so many inventions and ways of wickedness.

*Use 1.* Well, then, do not be too ready to bless yourselves, provided the sins of others break not out upon you: do not flatter yourselves that you run not into the same sins that others do. The devil may take you in another snare that suiteth more with your temper and condition of life. Some are sensual and some vainglorious, others worldly; many meet in hell that do not go thither the same

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way. A man may not be as other men, and yet he may not be as he should be: Luke 18:11, ‘The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men;’ yet ‘the publican went down to his house justified rather than the proud pharisee.’ Those that slighted the invitation to the marriage-feast had their several diversions and reasons of excuse: Mat. 22:5, ‘But they all made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.’ One hath business to keep him from Christ, and another pleasures and the pomps and vanities of the present world, and another has his superstitious observances. But all obstruct the power of the truth, and the receiving of Christ into their souls. Every man will have his way, saith Luther upon this text. Some follow their hawks and hounds, and neglect their precious and immortal souls. Others busy themselves in heaping up riches; others are for plays and sports to fool away the day of grace. ‘My way,’ saith he, ‘when I was a monk, was to fast and pray till I had made myself sick; to observe the statutes of my order strictly. I called upon the blessed Virgin, and St George, and St Christopher; and this was my way. And so vile a creature as I was, for all this, became the more sinful.’ Others may hate this or that public and visible blemish, but what are thy failings? John 8:7, ‘He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her.’ We may rashly censure others, and descant on their faults, but it is better to look inward. Do not I offend God as much another way as those whom I censure? There is a double madness—not only that which is idle and light, and breaketh out in strange freaks and furious extravagances, but that which is more sober, solemn, and grave. A frenzy betrayeth itself by deep musings and high conceits. So it is true of these discoveries of sin. Some delight in vain pleasures, others go to hell in a graver course. When a man perisheth, he ‘eateth the fruit of his own way, and is filled with his own devices,’ Prov. 1:31.

2. Stop your way of sinning, pluck out thy right eye, cut off thy right hand, Mat. 5:29,30. Your trial lieth there, as Abraham was tried in offering up his Isaac; and David voucheth it as a mark of sincerity: Ps. 23:23, ‘I was upright before thee, and kept myself from mine iniquity.’ It will prove a stumbling block, and eat out all the heart and power of grace if let alone. It concerneth us in our covenanting with God to set against the sin of this inbred and natural inclination. Though original sin dispose us to all sin, yet our particular and personal inclination may carry us more strongly to some one kind of sin: ‘Heb. 12:1, ‘Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us.’ Thus childhood is wanton, and old age touchy and covetous. Sins take the throne by turns, according to our vocation and course of life. Every calling hath its temptations, and there is a snare which others meet not with. Every condition of

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life hath a predominant sin; as the young man with his great possessions. Oh! let us consider our tender parts, our Delilah, our Herodias, that sin that hindereth us most in closing with Christ, that sin that most engrosseth our thoughts; for they always follow the temper of our hearts. Some sins we hide under the tongue, Job 20:12, which we cannot endure should be touched; our private sore is a tender place. Thus Herod would not be crossed in his Herodias, and Felix trembled when Paul ‘reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,’ Acts 24:25, because he lived in intemperance with Drusilla, his pretended wife. That which you reserve in turning to God, that which you set up a toleration in your hearts for, even this sin must be bewailed to God, and you must seek the blood of Christ to mortify it with all the promising occasions of it. Act the contrary grace, and see how you can deny yourselves in what you most affect.

*Use 2.* Is caution not to walk slightly. There is but one right path, there are many evil ones. As one said, Evil is manifold, and the way of sin divideth itself into divers paths; you may easily mistake. See that place, Prov. 4:26,27, ‘Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established: turn not to the right hand, nor to the left; remove thy foot from evil.’ Walk with a great deal of care and circumspection. When it is so easy to err, a man would be solicitous.

The apostle blameth those that did not *or Jopodein*, not ‘walk uprightly according to the truth of the gospel,’ Gal. 2:14. They did not go with a right foot. The world thinketh strictness to be folly and niceness. You see there is a great deal of reason for it: there is error on both sides of truth, and you may easily miscarry: there is an extreme on both hands. A little to direct you, mind that place, Mat. 7:14, Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it.’ There are some way-marks. I think, without wrong to that place, that I may give you three—a strait gate, a narrow way, and few company.

1. A strait gate. The entrance into it puts the soul shrewdly to it, whether taken for the coming out of ourselves, or the getting into Christ. It is a narrow way to carry the soul right. It is like the passages by which Jonathan and his armour-bearer sought to get up to the Philistines: 1 Sam. 14:4, ‘There was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side; the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other was Seneh.’ So here, between presumption and despair, it is hard to keep the soul right, sometimes the wind bloweth in one corner, sometimes in another. How to keep ourselves from despair in going out of ourselves, how to keep ourselves from presumption by getting into Christ, is not so easy.

2. There is a narrow path, *teJl immenh h odoV*, an afflicted, rough way, such as will engage believers—

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[1.] To the exercise of care. A diffident, regardless soul is out of his way: you have but a ridge to walk upon: Eph. 5:15, 'Walk circumspectly;' not even as it hitteth; for it is a hard matter to keep a good conscience, Acts 24:16; and Prov. 23:19, 'Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the right way.' You had need look to it.

[2.] To a great deal of pains and sorrow. He was mistaken that said, Take thine ease. Many can swallow sins, and pursue them, and yet have no sense of them that they are wrong. It is a way that will put you upon much sorrow and affliction, because you have such a distempered soul, and such a deal of pride and intemperance and anger in it: Rom. 7:24, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Ps. 120:5, 'Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! 'The saints are apt to grieve that they have such a worldly spirit in a heavenly journey.

[3] To a great deal of self-denial. It is a way that restraineth nature; therefore we are called upon, Mat. 3:3, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;' Heb. 12:13, 'And make straight paths to your feet.' There must be strictness in our course. It is not such a way as will leave you to the sway of your own hearts. Nature would have a thing many times, but you must put a knife to your throats, as if you were more ready to slay your appetite than to satisfy it. The thoughts, the affections, the speeches, the actions, must be reduced to the strict rules of the word. When men please nature to the full, it is a sign they have mistaken their way.

[4.] It will engage you to much mortification, to much opposition Eph. 6:12, 'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' You have strong lusts to cope with, and those must be mortified, which you cannot do without the Spirit of Christ, Rom. 8:13. It will cost you many prayers and tears, and fighting with spiritual wickednesses.

3. The next way-mark is, that you have but little company: 'Narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it.' Many walk as others do, and so mistake. Others sever themselves from the world, but go in the ordinary track of profession, not out of the common road. This is to be true to a sect and company of men, not to the ways of God. As Paul, when he was a pharisee, he lived by the eye, and did as others did; he lived after the strictest sect of religion, Acts. 26:5. You must put a difference between the ordinary number of professors and yourself. But if you be vain and sensual, what do you more than they? Christians should look after the distinction and the difference between them and others: Mat. 6:32,

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‘For after all these things do the Gentiles seek.’ Implying, a man should do more than they, more than the men of the world can ever do: Ps. 4:6 ‘There be many that say, Who will show us any good?’ That is the fashion of the men of the brutish multitude. But the godly say, ‘Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us.’

*Use 3.* Is to press you to look into the state of your hearts, and see what you have by long experience observed, what is your sin, your way of wickedness, what assaults you most frequently, most fiercely; observe the frequency of temptations, and the strength of them, the law in the members, and a thorn in the flesh; so, as it is conceived, he calleth the violent stirrings of lusts. Now bend all your strength against these; as the king of Aram said, I Kings 22:31, ‘Fight not against small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.’ So bend the strength of the soul against this way of wickedness.

I come now to the last point of the first part of the text, and that is drawn from that possessive particle whereby every man’s by-path is expressed: Every man *to his way*.

*Doct. 3.* That this is the sin of men in their natural condition, that they turn to their own way.

The phrase implieth these two things—

First, A defect or want of divine guidance; Secondly, A rejection of the ways of God when made known to us. We do not like them so well as some other, which we fancy to be better to us, because more suitable to our carnal desires; and therefore it is often charged upon the people of Israel, especially by Jeremiah, that they would not regard the ways of God, but the way of their own imaginations. See Jer. 7:24. God had told them that all that he required of them was this, ‘Obey my voice, and walk in the way that I have commanded you; but they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsel and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.’ So that you see it argueth a refusal of God’s ways when discovered to them, as not being for their turns. So Jer. 9:13, 14, ‘Because they have forsaken my law which I have set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein, but have walked after the imagination of their heart and after Baalim.’ They think their own path better, safer, or more comfortable, and therefore would not meddle with God’s. So Jer. 11:8, ‘Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart.’ This refusal is the more sottishly perverse; as in Jer. 44:17, ‘But will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our mouth.’ So that here is a scorning to have their ways prescribed, out of a presumption that they can better provide for themselves. The drunkard, the adulterer, thinks God’s

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way is either insipid or injurious. Our first parents thought their conceit was better, and that God in envy had denied it to them; and therefore they did not weigh God's restraint and prohibition, Gen. 3:17; she would eat, the devil had fastened her fancy to it, and she went on with the temptation.

1. There is a defect or want of divine guidance. God leaveth men to their own sway, and taketh away all check and restraint from them; and then whatever a man doth is purely from himself. So it is said, Ps. 81:12, 'I gave them up to their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels.' When all divine guidance or direction is taken away, you will be left to the impure dictates of a corrupt mind, or at best to some poor remains of civility. As it is said, Gen. 20:6, 'I also withheld thee from sinning against me, therefore suffered thee not to touch her.' Some restraints and chains God casteth upon men, that they are not able to do the evil which naturally they would. Though they do not go God's way, they cannot go their own. But when God pleaseth he letteth men alone, and then they do what is right in their own eyes; as you shall see, Acts 14:16, 'Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways;' that is, to live according to their own pleasure, prescribing no restraint to them by discovering himself in a law; or, to those that have the outward written word, by using no inward motions of his Spirit. So that this is the first thing, the privative part, a defect of divine guidance, either by such outward prescriptions as may revive natural light, or such inward motions as may restore it.

2. That which is positive or more formally imported is a following of the dictates of our own corrupt minds, and fulfilling the desires of our own corrupt wills. For I conceive this turning to our own way is expressed by the apostle upon the same occasion, Eph. 2:3; for he saith there, that natural men 'have their conversations in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.' There is a natural inclination to obey his corrupt mind, and to satisfy his corrupt will. It is but a pleasing of themselves. It is the way they have devised, and the way they have desired. But to speak of these things a little severally:—

[1.] There is a following the dictates of a corrupt mind. This is the first and chiefest, and therefore it is often expressed, 'According to their imaginations and their counsels.' There are a great many prejudices in a natural understanding against the ways of God. It is a way of their own contriving. Men think their way is good: Prov. 14:12, 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' Their blind hearts dictate to them that their own way is the best, safest, most pleasant, and comfortable. The mind chooseth, pauseth, and determineth upon what it conceives to be better for it than the rule of obedience. Therefore it is called *our own way*, because it is not

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of God's appointment, but our own choice. Men consult with their own hearts, and think sin is better. You may go through all the commandments of God, and you shall see a natural understanding dictates otherwise than God saith. As to the first table, man hath some confused knowledge that there is a God, who is to be worshipped, to be spoken of with reverence and observance; that there is some time to be set apart for his worship. Now what this God is, what is his worship, what time is to be set apart for it, and how it is to be spent, there reason faileth. We have some ways that seem right to us for that; and we are guided either by our own reason, or prescript of time, or education, or example, or custom. It is our own ways that we turn to, and therefore do not give God the glory that is due to his name: Rom. 1:21, 'Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.' They do not glorify him as God. We paint out worship by our own lazy thoughts, or overdo it by some fancies of our own: this is our own way. Then, as to the second table, there natural light is most clear. There we have some sparks and knowledge left of good and evil, and yet even there our carnal understanding easily leadeth us into a way that we think better to us than that which God hath set us; and so we think liberty is better than obedience to superiors; revenge is sweet, and injury is looked upon as profitable, and mere adultery as pleasant, some thinking nature never planted such strong desires in a man but to have them satisfied. And as to theft and oppression, why should a man be scrupulous and stand upon conscience when he seeth a present benefit? So calumny and reproach of others pleaseth us and serveth our ends, by making them odious to others whom we ourselves hate. Thus, by a little use, all knowledge of good and evil is blotted out of the mind, and a thing seemeth right to us, though condemned by God.

[2] There is a fulfilling of the desires of our corrupt wills. Men go the way of their own affections; and though it be not according to the law of God, it is according to their desires, lust being their law; as if it were. warrant enough to do a thing because they desire it. The apostle saith, Titus 3:3, 'Serving divers lusts and pleasures;' that is, their mind was to obey their vile affections. They think the desire was planted in them that they might satisfy it, and they are not bound to thwart it: it were a wrong to their natures, whose bent and force they follow. It is said of Eve, Gen. 3:6, that 'when she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.' Men think there is no harm as long as they do but please appetite, and only meddle with what tempts the desire. But, brethren, do not deceive yourselves the mere fulfilling of natural desires without thwarting is a walking in your own ways; for even so you may wander beyond those bounds by

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which the word hath hedged up your way, be it of pleasures, honour, or profit. One of the first lessons in Christ's school is self-denial. You must reckon upon it to go against your desires, and indeed it is a hard lesson. The way of natural men is their own way, they do not love to be restrained in their desires, and therefore they have ventured upon sin, notwithstanding great restraints, yea, the more for restraints. Men fancy some exceeding goodness in forbidden fruit, and think the prohibition cruel and envious, and therefore will venture and try their own way, as being loth to lose their longing and to disappoint nature. See that place, Rom. 7:5, 'For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death;' that is, when in our natural condition, the restraints of the law revived sin, and we let it work, though it were to our destruction. Men's voluptuous hearts will not let them enter upon such a strict course as the law prescribes. Well, now, gather all together, and you may see what it is to turn to our own way. It is to be left to ourselves, and then to reject the ways of God, upon a supposition that we have found something that is better for us, because it is more pleasing to our fancies, and more suitable to our desires.

The reasons may be referred to two heads. Our own way can never be right, either—

1. To please God; or,
2. To do ourselves good.

1. Not to please God. This appears in that:—

[1.] God will not stand to our appointment. Nothing pleaseth him but what he hath required; all other things he looketh upon as mere invention or imagination. Though man should be very zealous in his own way, with never so devout an intention, it is not acceptable. There is naturally implanted in the creature some desire to please God. Now, you will never do it in your duties, or in your lives, if your carriage be not suitable to his rule: Micah 6:7,8, 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' Here is a very liberal proposal. But what doth the prophet rejoin upon this? 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' There is the trial what God hath required of us. He will not stand to the creatures' courtesy; it is his prerogative to appoint what pleaseth him best. God hath been angry with things, though done with a good intention, if not according to what he hath showed. Uzzah's breach sets forth this: 2 Sam. 6:7, 'God smote him for his error;' it is said there, for 'doing besides the rule.' So

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you may see in a case that concerneth conversation as well as worship: Rom. 10:2, it is said of the Jews, that ‘they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.’ They were very furious in it; they had good intentions, but they did not understand God’s way. A man may seem to have much zeal, and much scrupulous tenderness of doing good, and avoiding evil; but it is such as is in his own fancy and apprehension, but not in God’s law; he hateth it. The false teachers had some seemingly strict ordinances: Col. 2:21,22, ‘Touch not, taste not, handle not;’ but they were the doctrines and commandments of men. Thus you see God will not like our way, though it should be never so strict, and accommodated with the advantage of many devout and pure intentions.

A popish spirit may be very devout, but God regardeth it not, because it is not according to his appointment. A good intention cannot make the action good, but the conformity of it to the rule; otherwise, those that slew the apostles and crucified Christ pleased him; many of them did it with a devout heart to that way which seemed right to them and they thought was pleasing to God: John 16:2, ‘The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.’ They think this is well, and will please God. Usually that hath been the lot of the saints hitherto, to suffer under such rage as hath been rashly and unadvisedly conceived for God’s sake. *Ecclesia nunquam magis passa est quam sub nomine ecclesiae* (the church has never suffered more than from those under the name of the church). Therefore I say, God doth not look to the intention of a thing, but the conformity of it to the rule, and to his appointment, that he liketh; otherwise that which is odious to him would seem right in our eyes.

[2.] Suppose God should commit it to ourselves, yet we should never do that which would please him. If God had left us no direction but the light of our own reason, we would never reach the right way, but there would be divers hindrances; as—(1st.) Ignorance. Natural men know not which way to go about it they are described, Rom. 1:21, to be such as ‘became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.’ A frivolous mind every man hath; the word is *dialogismo*, they are vain in their discourses and reasonings: they have very unsavoury apprehensions of the ways of God. It is spoken of the heathen there. And the like you shall see of the Jews, and of natural men within the church Jer. 4:22, ‘For my people is foolish; they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.’ Men of parts are sometimes extremely ignorant in point of duty towards God and man, and therefore certainly their own path must needs be a wrong way. Brethren, it signifies not what men in a notional way can discourse or argue concerning duty, for their foolish darkness will be discovered when it cometh to practice.

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(2dly.) Their antipathy against anything that concerneth the ways of God. Our way must needs be seen, for our heart is exceeding averse to the will of God: Rom. 8:7, 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.' Mark, it is not only *an enemy*, but *enmity*. There is the spirit of malice in it against all the ways of God. Therefore, God's appointments and carnal devices will never be brought together; if you be wise to the flesh, you cannot be wise to duty. A carnal wise heart must needs err in its choice then. There is a disallowing of all that is good, and an approving of all that is naught: this is most suitable to us. See Isa. 5:20, 'Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.' The prophet useth divers expressions to set out that wicked disvaluing of the ways of God that is in all carnal hearts. They think all the comfort and sweetness is in their own ways of jollity and excess, and for God's ways they look upon them as bitter and dark, such as will banish mirth and eat out all contentment, and fill the heart with sad fears and darkness. Oh, how are these men mistaken!

(3dly.) We have a base, paltry heart, and are loth to serve him as far as we know. It is said, Rom. 1:28, 'They did not like to retain God in their knowledge.' They do not approve or make such precious account of the ways of God as they should do. Carnal men are loth to go contrary to their desires. They like the knowledge that they have, and are better content with ignorance,—as it is said, 2 Peter 3:5: the apostle Peter saith, 'They are willingly ignorant' of what might make against them. This they are angry at, that they know so much, and are willing to practise so little; and, therefore, what is chosen and followed with full consent by such hearts must needs be a wrong way. You may well suspect whatever nature deviseth so willingly, and practiseth so cheerfully. This is the first reason: Our own way is not the right way, because we can never please God in it.

2. Our own way is not the right way to do ourselves good. The more we please the flesh, the more we wrong our own souls: passions and corrupt affections do but blind the heart to its own destruction. As the fishes that play down the pleasant streams of Jordan devolve themselves into the Dead Sea, so ways that are altogether suitable to

our nature do but end in destruction: Prov. 16:25, 'There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.' Mark, it is the plural, *ways*,—it is multiplex. A man ruineth himself many ways, by one sin or another; some their way is adultery, that wasteth the strength, blasteth the beauty, bringeth infamy, poverty, reproach, horror of conscience, death, and eternal destruction. Another drunkenness, which besots the brain, wasteth the

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estate, betrayeth a man to reproach, brawneth the heart, and bringeth death and destruction. I will not stand longer upon the reasons, but apply it.

*Use* 1. Is caution to you not to go in your own ways, neither in worship nor conversation; that is the sin of men in their natural condition. Now, that you may not do so—1. I shall give you some cautionary propositions.

2. A few directions.

The cautionary propositions I shall spread before you for the greater quickening and incitement of you.

[1.] God may not like what men like: Prov. 16:2, ‘All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirit.’ A man that doth not weigh his service in the balance of the sanctuary is not sensible of the defects of it. God weigheth and can look beneath the veil of pretences: so Luke 16:15, ‘For that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God.’ You may please yourselves in your ways, and yet you may very much displease God. The rule holdeth in duties. You may pass it off as if it were a seemly beast for an offering, whereas God looketh upon it as a poor, sick sacrifice, a corrupt thing, Mal. 1:14. This rule likewise holds good in conversation. Men please themselves in an easy moral way, but God can find a great deal of evil in it. We look upon sins as they are odious abroad, but God considereth inward guilt. Now, when men live in an easy, voluptuous, sensual way, they do not check themselves for it because others do not, but God may hate them for it.

[2.] Nay, the more thy way pleaseth thee, the more thou shouldest suspect it doth not please God. Whence cometh all this vigilance? Either the thing is carnal, or, if it be spiritual, thou art set on by the concernments of the flesh. Certainly, thy carnal heart is set on by something that is suitable. David did not dare touch the waters of Bethlehem, because he longed for them: 2 Sam. 23:15,16, ‘Oh that one would give me of the water of Bethlehem! He would not drink of it, because they went in jeopardy of their lives that fetched it, but poured it out before the Lord. I say, in doubtful things, when thou art so vehement, suspect thy heart; and the more thy life pleaseth thee, fear it is the less acceptable to God. Consider not what thou art willing to do, but what God alloweth. Nature would not be so strongly bent upon a thing, if there were not corruption in it. These are the two quickening propositions. The rules or directions are three:—

[1.] Lead your life by a divine rule; have respect to the commandment. See how heartily David prayeth, Pa. 119:10, ‘With my whole heart have I



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sought thee; let me not wander from thy commandments.’ That is the rule—the law a man should go by. Advise with the word. ‘Bind it continually about thine heart, and tie it about thy neck.’ The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light. ‘When thou goest it shall lead thee, when thou sleepest it shall keep thee, and when thou wakest it shall talk with thee,’ Prov. 6:21-23. He would not deviate into his own path: Gal. 6:16, ‘As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;’—they that walk by this rule, that is, according to the word of God. The law is the expression of God’s will to us creatures, therefore conform to that. If Christians had oftener recourse to the rule, they would have a better sight of duty.

[2] Beg divine assistance. We cannot keep to God’s rule without God’s power; beg it of God, then, as David in the psalm before mentioned. There are divers places hint this in scripture. It is a sign we run beyond ourselves when we would not be directed by God. When God leaveth us to ourselves, then we leave his law: Acts 14:16, ‘In times past God suffered the Gentiles to walk in their own ways.’ A man left to himself cannot but err; and, therefore, desire God that he would guide you; for a blind mind and a wicked heart cannot guide you in his ways. This is called a taking heed to the word, Ps. 119:9; and ver. 101, ‘I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep thy word;’ and David prayeth, ver. 133, ‘Order my steps in thy word.’ God must order every step, or else we shall soon go astray.

[3.] Look up to divine encouragement. As you must take the word for your rule, and the Spirit for your guide, so the promises for your encouragement: 2 Cor. 7:1, ‘Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;’ 2 Peter 1:4, ‘Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust’ Worldly wisdom is seen elsewhere: Rom. 8:5, ‘For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.’ Christians should fetch in a supply that way; it is a sign you are in God’s way when you eye God’s encouragements. Some mind only to compass their carnal ends, and sweeten all their endeavours by fleshly considerations; they are in their own way: ‘To be carnally minded is death.’ To savour only fleshly encouragements argueth a very naughty heart.

*Use 2.* Is examination, to try whether you be in the state of nature or no. Your own way is a sinful way; and, therefore, what is the generality of your conversations? Is it not a turning to your own way? But, you will say, how shall I know that?

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1. By the suitableness of it to nature. A life led in pleasures, without self-denial and mortification, certainly is none of God's way; it is a way of your own choosing: 1 Tim. 5:6, 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' Though she liveth a natural life, she dieth a spiritual death. This is even just as nature would have it. Observe what compliance it hath with your carnal desires and delights.

2. By the easiness of it to nature. It is your own way, for you can walk in it by your own strength. It is often said of such as were in a natural state, 'He did that which was right in his own eyes.' You have shaped out to yourselves such an easy course; but what difficulty is it to be such a Christian? Solomon saith, 'Lean not to thine understanding,' Prov. 3:5, 'but trust in the Lord with all thine heart' That is necessary to true Christianity; but now here men keep up themselves well enough, though no intercourse be between them.

3. The serviceableness of it to nature, and to natural ends and courses. Every man naturally is for himself, to attain honour, pleasure, profit, or satisfaction to his lusts. Our own way will serve for our own end. Though many things that man may do be of divine appointment, yet it is but your own way still; you borrow means of God to further your own purposes. The glory of God is the great Christian end, but men value themselves by other things.

*Use 3.* Is their ; to press men in their natural condition to turn from their sottishness and foolish ways by repentance. Now repentance first beginneth with turning from our own ways, as the prophet Jeremiah calleth it: Jer. 26:13, 'Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God.'

To this end a few things must be spoken to.

There are two things that make this exhortation fruitless: —1. Carnal prejudices. Do not believe what your own hearts suggest to you concerning the folly and uncomfortableness of God's ways, for these prove the best and most comfortable to the soul. Other pleasures are but for a season, Heb. 11:25. Natural reason calleth sour sweet. The best way to know is to try them once, then you will see how all was delusive; mistakes and prejudices will vanish then. 2. Despairing stubbornness. Men have been in an ill way, and they are loth to quit it: they think now they must try the worst of it: Jer. 18:12, 'And they said there is no hope, but we will walk after our devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.'

But I would not tarry too long on these black lines and dark shadows of man's sin and misery which are in the text; therefore I come now to the

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comfortable part, viz., God's remedy: *and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*. There I propounded three things:—1. The author of our deliverance: *the Lord*; that is, God the Father.

2. The nature or manner of our deliverance: *he hath laid our iniquities on him*.

3. The parties interested: *the iniquities of us all*.

1. The author: 'the Lord.' You may take it essentially for the whole Deity, or personally for God the Father, who, in the mystery of redemption, is looked upon as *pars offensa*, the wronged party against whom the offence is committed, and the supreme Judge to whom the satisfaction is tendered. The point is—

*Doct.* That God the Father laid our iniquities on Christ.

I shall a little open this point to you, and therein you shall see, that whatever Christ did as Mediator, or whatever was done to Christ, is attributed to God the Father, to his counsel and appointment.

1. He designed the person, and therefore it is said: Gal. 4:4, 'God sent forth his Son;' Rom. 8:3, 'God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh;' 1 John 4:14, 'God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.' It noteth the decree and designation of God the Father concerning the second person: John 10:36, 'Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world.' When a thing or person is set aside for divine uses and purposes, it is said to be sanctified. And so it is said, John 6:27, 'For him hath God the Father sealed.' The Father cannot but accept of the obedience of Christ—in the name of those for whom it is offered, and who do lay hold upon him by faith, seeing Christ did not come of himself, but was sent of the Father to pay our ransom for us. Moses, that interposed of his own accord, was denied: Exod. 32:32, 'If thou wilt not forgive their sin, blot me out of thy book.' But God told him, 'The soul that sinneth, him will I blot out of my book.' But Christ interposed not of his own accord. This sending his Son was a remedy of God's appointing. So in the place forementioned, John 10:36, 'Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world;' that is, consecrated him from eternity unto the office of Mediator, and then sent him into the world to assume human nature into the unity of his own person. 'Him hath the Father sealed;' that is, the Father hath authorised him to be the Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners. He hath a commission under the broad seal of heaven. Thus kings give commissions to their ministers of state, who are employed in their affairs: Esther 8:8, 'For the writing which is

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written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.' Christ coming in God's name is fully authorised to do your souls good.

2. He qualified him for his office, and therefore he is said to be 'anointed with the Spirit of the Lord to preach the gospel to the poor, and to heal the broken-hearted,' Luke 4:18; and John 3:34, 'For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.' As Mediator he is endowed with the Spirit for the discharge of his office, that he might be a full storehouse of all grace for his people: 1 Cor. 1:30, 'Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.' Surely we may use him for what he was made of God.

3. Whatever was done to Christ as Mediator, was from God the Father; either, first, mediately by men; God ordered their cruelty with reference to his own designs: Acts 4:28, 'For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' God hath so laid the state of our redemption, that whatever was done to Christ, he ordereth the whole business from first to last. Or, secondly, immediately by God: Isa. 53:10, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief;' Zech. 13:7, 'Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow: Our sin and punishment was not taken up by Christ without the Father's privity and consent; it was not by our desire and will, but by the counsel of the Father, that he laid our iniquities upon him.

4. Whatever was done by Christ, you shall find in the scripture; Christ always going according to the appointment of the Father, the whole work being but a testimony of his obedience: Heb. 10:7, 'Lo, I come to do thy will, O God: In the whole transaction Christ would be ordered by the will of his Father; the Son is become a servant in this business; therefore it is said, Phil. 2:7, 'He took upon him the form of a servant.' So in that place, Heb. 10:5, 'A body hast thou prepared me.' It is in Ps. 40:6, 'Mine ears hast thou opened,' or bored; that is, made me a wise and faithful servant in the work of redemption. They were wont, under the law, to bore the ears of their servants: Exod. 21:6, 'So that he was to be a servant for ever.' And thus you have Christ always professing his obedience to the Father. As if it were not his own business that he was set about, and he could not do as he would in it, but he must be acted and guided by another: John 10:37, 'If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not;' John 10:18, 'I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father.' All which is a testimony that the Father was satisfied by his sufferings, and is a ground of strong consolation to believers. The way was agreed upon between God and Christ long before the

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accomplishment. It was not out of impotence, as if forced to give place to the devil and the violence of wicked men, but obedience to God's designed way.

Now in two things Christ sheweth this:—

[1.] As if he acted altogether by the Father's power: John 5:19, 'The Son can do nothing of himself.' So ver. 30, 'I can of mine own self do nothing;' that is, the Father and he were distinct persons in themselves, but not separate in nature, power, and operation. The Son acts by the Father, and the Father in the Son. The Son doth nothing of himself, that is, separate from the Father. Or understand it of the manhood of Christ, that is guided by God the Father in its operations, it doth not act at pleasure. Christ would will or act nothing separate from the will and power of the Godhead. This is spoken to remove such a gross speculation, as if the union between God and Christ were no other than that between a natural father and son.

[2.] As if he acted by the Father's appointment: for he would do nothing, neither lay down his life, nor take it up, unless God the Father said *Amen* to it; as where Christ speaketh of some power he had in himself, yet it was a power limited by the Father: John 10:18, 'No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received from my Father.' Christ would lay down his life for his people, and take it up again, and all because of the Father's commandment. The words are spoken to exclude any external power or violence that could be offered to Christ; none could impose upon him, but at the Father's commandment he would lay it down, and take it up again. Christ would leave a testimony of his love and obedience: John 14:31, 'But that the world may know that I love the Father, as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.' No outward force can impose upon him, but the Lord can impose. Jehovah 'laid on him the iniquities of us all.'

The reasons of the point.

1. Because none else had any power to lay it on Christ but God alone. That God could, it is clear by virtue of that interest he had in him. A loving son can deny the father nothing. Now, it being the ordination and the will of God, Christ would not gainsay it; and as long as the Father's commandment lasted, he would obey; and therefore, when the burden of our sins lay sore upon him, to whom doth he address himself but to the Father? He laid it on, and he alone could take it off: Mat. 26:39, 'He fell on his face and prayed, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' Though it were a deadly cup, yet Christ would not have it any way to pass from him, unless

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it were the Father's will. He had such an interest in him, that he would stoop to that: no other could have gained Christ to such a service but the Father.

2. Because if God should not lay iniquity upon Christ, it would be to no purpose; for to him it belongeth, because against him was the offence committed. Ps. 51:4, see what David saith there with eyes brimful of tears, 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.' He had sinned against Bathsheba and against Uriah, yet 'against thee only have I sinned.' His sin was not known to many, for the plot was closely carried: 2 Sam. 12:12, 'Thou didst it secretly,' as the prophet Nathan told him. But how should he do to get it expiated by him against whom the offence was chiefly committed, and who knew it well enough? Ps. 41:4, 'Lord, be merciful unto me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.' Against whomsoever else the offence be, the chiefest aggravation is that it is against God, and therefore he must have all the ordering how the iniquity must be forgiven: Isa. 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' God would have you to look to him as one that only hath to do about the guilt of his people's sin: 'I, even I, am he.'

*Use.* Is to inform us what abundant matter here is for your faith to work upon. Jehovah laid the iniquities of us all on him. God, whom you most fear, God the Father, he is first in the design, and he layeth the command upon the bowels of Christ. Do but lay it abroad in some particular considerations before you pass over this circumstance: *the Lord*. Certainly all the triumph of faith cometh from it.

1. The Lord, to whom belongeth forgiveness. It is not the business of others to lay it upon Christ, it is not their right, it is not what they say, but what the Father saith; you must look to that. You see when Christ prayeth for pardon he addresseth himself to his Father, as if it were not in his own single power: Luke 23:34, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' The Son prayeth, there is hope: 'Father, forgive them.' If it passeth with God the Father, the matter is ended. So 1 John 2:1, Christ is said to be 'an advocate with the Father.' And so you shall see frequent places, as John 14:16, 'I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.' Forgiveness and mercy and comfort, they all proceed from the Father. It is true, we read Mat. 9:6, that 'the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,' but it is by commission from the Father, and as having the mind of the Father in it; as it is said, John 5:22, 'For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.' So the immediate dispensation of all censures is given to the Son by the Father, whose will passeth for a law. God the Father, in all the work of salvation is to be considered as a superior wronged. And what an encouragement is it to a poor

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soul, in the matter of its faith, to understand that God has laid its iniquities on Christ! Oh, then, as you would magnify the sufficiency of the Son's merit, so magnify the largeness of the Father's mercy. Look upon Christ as able to save you, and look upon God as willing to give Christ to you. Christ hath fully satisfied for iniquities; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. Tell me then, where should the soul stick? Usually it sticketh here: they doubt whether Christ be for them or no. No pardon is granted but it first passeth the Father. Why? because the Father is first in the design. God sent the Son. If men would reason thus out of the scriptures, how might they shame their hearts in the sense of their unbelief! Oh, wait then for the Spirit to fix this truth upon you. Though a man should frame never so many deductions without the Spirit, it would not do. Therefore, I cease to wonder why men do not believe, though they can object nothing against the free grace of God.

2. The God whom you have wronged. Sin is against all the persons of the Trinity, but it is chiefly against the Father. You may despise the Son, and grieve the Spirit, but the chiefest injury is against the Father, because he is the fountain of all; nay, all that is done to the other persons redounds to the Father's dishonour. Thus our Saviour often reasoneth with the Jews, 'He that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.' And the injury to the Spirit, it is called a vexing of his Spirit: Isa. 63:10, 'They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.' Therefore the prophet inquireth, Isa. 7:13, 'Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?' Oh, what a grievous thing is this, to do all this despite to God, that you have vexed and wearied God by your stubborn resisting of the motions of his Spirit! Why, yet this God puts Christ upon this task, the Lord hath laid on him our iniquities. He whom you have most cause to fear is your greatest friend. A soul that is sensible of sin is sensible of the wrong he hath done to God. Why, though you have wronged him, he is chief in the design of mercy. You have not only the Son on your side, but you have the Father. Jehovah laid our iniquities upon him. You shall see the apostle maketh it a great advantage to mercy that we have the Son and Father too: 2 John 9, 'He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.' He hath one that is willing and one that is able to save him, and therefore the wronged party is of his side and reconciled to him. O Christians! triumph now in this great design of salvation, if you believe you have an interest in the Father's affection, as well as the Son's merit. Nay, to invite you to believe, consider what a remedy here is against all your doubts; it was the Lord that put Christ upon all that he did for you. I use the more words that I may bring you to weigh these things. Why should you stick at your sins? The first motion to pardon cometh



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from him that should avenge them. You have sinned against Jehovah, and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.

3. The Lord, whose will and word is alone to be looked to. It is no matter what Satan saith, or what your hearts say, for it goeth altogether by what God saith, who hath laid our sins upon Christ. See how the apostle rejoiceth that God's hand was in the acquitting of poor sinners: Rom. 8:33, 34, 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen.' What a bold challenge is there! Satan may say, I can, and our consciences may condemn us too. The devil is an accuser of the brethren to God as well as men, and a poor soul can go and indict itself at the throne of grace, and bring in many a sad charge against itself, and find its own case liable to death and damnation. I have sinned, and the wages of sin is death. Ay! but who will you believe—God, or Satan and your own hearts? The Lord hath laid your sins upon Christ, and you will believe Satan, and lay them upon yourselves. God would have Christ not only to suffer the death, but to bear the sins; that, as he did take away the condemnation, so he might take away the accusation too; for mark, the apostle saith, 'Who shall charge?' and then, 'Who shall condemn?' Satan *hath* nothing to do to bring in the sad charge, or to collect the doleful inferences. Brethren, keep your ground still. It is God that justifieth, the whole business of your acquitment is carried on by the Lord. Satan telleth you, you have been a swearer,

a drunkard. It is a sad thing that you have been so, but has God

given you a sight of this? Here is your comfort, God hath ordered

all this to be laid upon the back of Christ. Ay! but Satan saith, the soul that sinneth shall die. But keep your faith on what God has done; he hath less reason to condemn than he hath to accuse. 'It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again.' Thus you see what comfort there is in God's acquitment. It is the Lord hath laid: now, nobody is to be believed before him. It is the great policy of Satan to make you put this high affront upon God, that you should believe him before the Lord: thus he did by our first parents in another case, Gen. 3:4, 'Ye shall not surely die.' Here he telleth a poor distressed soul, Ye shall surely die. The devil acts his part on every hand; but do not you believe him, for it is God that justifieth. Satan saith it shall be laid on thyself; the Lord saith, on Christ. Do not believe the father of lies before the Father of lights.

4. The Lord hath laid, even God, that hath so great an interest in Christ that he can deny him nothing. Look, as God denieth Christ nothing that he asketh him, so Christ denieth God nothing that he commandeth him. Thus you

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shall see when God commandeth Christ to die for souls, Ps. 40:8, 'I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart.' It was a gladsome intimation to Christ to be ordained to such a service. There is a law upon the bowels of Christ; he is called to bear your sins; he will be accounted the sinner, and you shall go free. Therefore see what rich matter there is for your faith to work upon, and beg the Spirit to fix it upon you.

*Use 2.* Is exhortation to glorify God for his goodness. Here are two things I would exhort you to:—

1. To glorify God for his mercy and goodness; and,
2. To glorify him alone.

1. Glorify God. Though Christ effected your deliverance, yet he was sent by the Father; the Lord laid our iniquities upon him. We have experience not only of Christ's love, but of God's; every person of the Trinity hath a hand in it, and every person must have his distinct glory. I will not speak now of what the Son did, or what the Spirit doth, but of the love of the Father. He showed a great deal of love:—

[1] In deputing Christ to this office, and laying his command upon Christ for it: John 17:23, 'That the world may know that thou bast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me. It is a high expression of the love of God to lay our sins upon his own Son, to send Christ to die for our sins. It is an expression of the same love to you that God bare to Christ; it was the same kind of love, though not the same degree, God's complacency in Christ being infinite and incomprehensible, above all the creatures in the world.

[2] In fitting Christ to bear the sins that were laid upon him. God anointed him with a compassionate spirit, so that the Spirit of the Godhead was always with him in the greatest agonies, and also in giving him readiness and strength. Acts 10:38, it is said, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.' It is usual in scripture to express the powerful graces of God's Spirit by anointing.

[3.] In loving him for it, for taking our sins upon him according to his will: John 10:17, 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again.' Though God's love to Christ were eternal, yet you see how he expresseth it, as if he were loved the more for his kindness to us. The like expression you have John 15:10, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love even as I kept my Father's, and abide in his love;' that is, his commandments about the office of his mediatorship. This is a great endearment to God's affection.

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[4.] God rewarded him for it: Heb. 2:9, 'But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour;' so Phil. 2:9, 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.' God restored him to his glory with a great deal of renown in the eyes of men. So Christ prayeth, John 17:5, 'And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.'

2. Glorify God alone. Let not other things share with him in your thoughts; do not think it is for your sakes. God can have no higher motive than his own will. The Lord laid it upon Christ, but nothing moved him to lay it but his own goodness. Now men usually fancy something without God to be the ground of his love; but he expressly saith, Isa. 43:25, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Mark, his *own sake*. Therefore exalt God, in that, as you see, nothing else could lay it upon Christ: Isa. 2:11, 'The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day;' that is, so separately and so singly, that you may see it was his own mere will that put him upon such a design of mercy. Dr Crisp disputeth at large that nothing else could lay it upon Christ, and so excludeth faith and all holy means, out of a mistake that we think faith layeth it on Christ, whereas faith only apprehendeth it to be laid on Christ. But this we may safely say, Nothing did put God upon it that could be found in us, no good disposition, faith or works foreseen. It is merely his own sovereignty and goodness; and therefore, Rom. 3:24, we are said to be 'justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'

But a little more particularly let me show you how you do not exalt God alone and separately for laying it upon Christ. It is inclusive two ways:—

1. If you have such a secret thought in you that it is because you are less sinners than others, therefore you are pardoned, and your sins are laid upon Christ.

2. If because you are greater sinners than others, you therefore conclude you shall not be pardoned, you do not give God the glory of his prerogative, that he alone should lay your sins upon Christ, but you look for somewhat in the creature.

1. When you think God laid your sins on Christ because you are not so vile as others. Take heed, say not in your hearts it is for your righteousness. God acts according to his own pleasure; he many times leaveth those that to outward appearance are most righteous. You have heard of the heathens, and yet they were passed by, as Cato and Aristides; nay, Fabricius and Socrates, though they

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did excel in outward honesty of life, yet God did not regard them in his choice. Whereas Paul, who was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, his sins were laid upon the back of Christ, as were those of Mary Magdalen, and the thief upon the cross, whose whole life was wasted in wickedness. And Christ telleth the pharisees that ‘publicans and harlots should enter into the kingdom of heaven before them.’ It doth not go by your works. The apostle Paul doth strive often to remove this conceit out of our hearts: Titus 3:4,5, ‘But after that the love and kindness of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.’ All that we could bring to God was disobedience, and lusts, and malice, and envy. So 2 Tim. 1:9, ‘He called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.’ God doth not look without himself, but only to his own purpose and grace. It is good to improve natural light, and to live to the utmost of it; but it is a vain thing to think that by any action of ours we should hope to move God to lay our sins upon Christ. Luther hath a pretty expression to this purpose upon this text: ‘Take heed,’ saith he, ‘of bringing the servants or the ass to God’s mountain. They may accompany you thither: Abraham and the lad must go yonder and worship; the servants and the ass must tarry at the foot of the hill. Only go you with faith to deal with the mercy of God; do not any way admit your works to the glory of a pardon.’ Therefore, I say, look upon God as laying your sins upon Christ, being moved thereunto merely by his own purpose and will. He saw nothing in you to incline him to lay your sins on Christ more than others’. This is the first way.

2. When you think God will not lay your sins upon Christ, because you are so great sinners, and have committed so much wickedness. We are all apt to say, as Peter, Luke 5:8, ‘Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man.’ Do not you make God to eye something without himself now to incline him to this? Alas! it is all one to God whether you are great or little sinners. The spring and rise of his love in giving Christ to you is from his own bowels; and if there be any difference in this kind it is in this, that the greater sins comply with God’s ends and designs. And therefore it is sometimes an argument used to God, that, though they can bring him no other thing, they can bring him wickedness enough. Thus David saith, ‘Pardon my sin, for it is great,’ Ps. 25:11; so Isa. 43:24,25, ‘Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices, but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, and hast wearied me with thine iniquities.’ What followeth? A man would think terrible, thundering words. No; it is a sweet and evangelical promise; ‘I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins’ So Gen. 8:21, ‘I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s

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sake, for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth' and Isa. 57:17,18, 'For the iniquity of his covetousness, I was wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him. I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.' God, you see, declares that it is according to his own purpose, and not of our works. He doth quite contrary to the deserts of man, not to debase strictness, but to exalt his own grace. Mark, that place fully setteth forth the covenant of grace, Isa. 54:9, where God saith, 'For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee.'

I come now to the next part, the nature and way of our deliverance: 'The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all.' Our sin and punishment is transferred to Christ. The point is—

*Doct.* That the way that God taketh to acquit poor sinners is to lay the guilt and punishment of sin on the back of his own Son. 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.' What the phrase importeth I did in part discover in giving you the different readings of it in several translations. Four especially you may take to set it off to your thoughts.

1. That of the Septuagint, *παρεδωκεν αυτον ταις αμαρτιαις*—*he* delivered him over to our sins. It is hard and sad with a man to be delivered over to be torn by wild beasts, to be delivered to persecutors, to be burned in the flames, to be stretched on a rack, to be broken on a wheel, and other tortures. But it is far more hard and evil to be delivered over to sins. Especially for Christ, who was inflamed with a desire to please God; there is nothing more abhorrent from his nature than the filthiness of sin. And therefore, though you should suppose him to be delivered over to the most exquisite punishments that the world or the wit and malice of man can invent, yet it is nothing in respect of his being given over to sins. So the spittings, scourgings, buffeting, his cross, and all, were but as a flea-biting in respect of his being given over to our sins. God delivered him to Pilate. The Jews could have done nothing if power had not been given them from above. But to be delivered over to the power of our sins, what a heavy thing was this for Christ! And therefore the expression doth in part reach what is meant here by God's laying it upon Christ.

2. That of Junius and others, *Fecit ut in eum incurrerent peccata nostra*. Our sins did rush upon Christ; they would fain destroy him, as an enemy pusheth sore to destroy their enemy. We read of a company that came out to take Christ with swords and staves, and a soldier that fiercely run him through. Ay! but brethren, there is another company that came rushing, and would fain destroy him,

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and that was your and my sins. We came forth with swords and lances, and, as it were, run him through.

3. Another version has it, *Traduxit in eum*, or, as with us, he ‘laid it on him.’ Do but consider what it is to have sin laid upon any. It is to be bound over to death and destruction; it is to put that upon a man that will be his certain ruin: 1 Kings 13:34, ‘And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.’ When sin is laid upon a man, it will undo him.

4. Others take our marginal reading, *Occurrere fecit in eum*: he made our sins to meet in him; that raiseth it a little higher. Though one sin be enough to ruin a man, yet all the sins in the world were as it were concentrated in Christ to overwhelm his soul, and to fill it with a great deal of terror; and indeed he stood in much danger of a great condemnation unless he could satisfy God’s wrath. Thus you see, from the several readings, what may be gathered out of this expression. And I the rather note it, because the Spirit of God useth a word here that hath so many significations. Out of all yon may gather a delivery of Christ over to that which was most contrary to him, which seized upon his soul, and settled there, and brought him to the death of the cross, and would not leave him till he had fully expiated and satisfied for it, even our sins.

But I come more particularly to set out the thing that is intended here by the Holy Ghost in this expression: but ‘he hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.’

There are two things in it—one implied, which is a taking off sin from the creature; and the other more formally expressed, which is a putting it upon Christ.

First, therefore, I shall show you how far it is taken off from the creature. But, for the understanding of both, you must know there are three things in sin:—

1. The fault or offence against God.
2. The guilt or obligation to punishment.
3. The blot or sinful inclination, or vicious disposition to sin.

1. I begin with the first. For the offence, it is as if it were never committed. The creature, when justified and sanctified, is as free as if it had never sinned, which is intimated in divers expressions of scripture. I will give you a few places: Jer. 50:20, ‘In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and shall not be found; and the sins of Judah, and there shall be none, for I will pardon them whom I reserve;’ Isa. 44:22, ‘I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.’ They are

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exhaled and dried up by the beams of mercy. And Jer. 31:34, 'I will remember your sins no more.' It is quite gone from the creature: Num. 23:21, 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel;' Ps. 51:9, David prayeth, 'Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.' God doth so cover the sin as if it were not at all; his carriage to the soul is as if there were no sin. As a holy and just God, he cannot behold it with approbation; and therefore, as a merciful God, he doth as it were cover it from his eyes. Whereas, on the contrary, when God punisheth sin, he is said to set iniquity before him: Ps. 90:8, 'Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance;' Ps. 109:15, 'Let them be before the Lord continually.' God in love will not take notice of the offence.

2. He taketh off all guilt and obligation to punishment Rom. 8:1, 'There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ' Nothing is done in a vindictive and punitive way, though many things be done in a corrective and chastising way. All God's dispensations are as branches of the covenant.

3. For the blot or sinful inclination; that is more and more taken away by virtue of Christ taking our sins upon him: 1 Peter 2:24, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes we are healed.' He took away vicious inclinations, as well as the penal obligations.

Secondly, It is transacted on Christ, or laid upon him. We cannot safely say the fault, for that is the guilt that groweth out of the sin inherent; but the guilt was laid upon him, such as groweth out of sin imputed: therefore he is said to 'bear the sins of many,' Isa. 53:12, and to 'bear our sorrows and griefs,' ver. 4.

1. So much sin was laid upon Christ as obliged him to make satisfaction for it to his Father's justice; for having once submitted to the taking of it, he could not recede; there was a necessity that he should clear himself with his Father: and therefore it is said, Luke 24:26, 'Ought not Christ to have suffered, and then to enter into his glory?'

2. There was so much sin as put Christ in our stead. Therefore, 2 Cor. 5:21, it is said, he was 'made sin for us.' And in this chapter he is said to be 'numbered among transgressors,' nay, the chief of transgressors.

3. So much sin as made him liable to the infinite wrath of God; therefore it is said, Gal. 3:13, he was 'made a curse for us.' And in the Psalms it is said, 'The pains of hell gat hold of him;' insomuch that he needed justification as well as we: Isa. 1. 8, 'He is near that justifieth me, who shall contend with



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me?’ It is spoken of Christ; this chapter is a chapter of Christ. He needed that God should clear him.

4. So much sin as would have sunk him into eternal misery, had he not been God to escape out of it: Acts 2:24, ‘Having loosed the pains of death, because it was impossible that he should be holden of it.’ And therefore you shall find faith’s chiefest support cometh from Christ’s resurrection: Rom. 8:34, ‘It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again.’ Mark that, *mal l on de*; faith looketh to that as the wonderfulest thing, that, having such a weight of sin upon him, he should be able to rise up again. This was a great wonder.

But I come to the reasons of the point.

1. Therefore did God lay it upon Christ, because he was the fittest person to bear it: he was most able. It best befitted the divine justice to choose such a person as might not miscarry in the work and transaction, else we could have had no assurance that satisfaction was given: Ps. 89:19, ‘I have laid help upon one that is mighty.’ It is spoken of David, but chiefly means Christ in it. The help is laid on one that is most able to go through with it, and Christ was most willing to come to the utmost: Luke 12:50, ‘I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!’ Christ had not room enough, his heart being enlarged with love, till he had given testimony of it to the world: Luke 22:15, ‘With desire have I desired to eat this passover.’ Christ knew the date of his days was then at an end.

2. This did suit best with God’s design, which was to magnify justice and mercy at the same time. The mercy-seat did but cover the tables of the law in the ark. The law was satisfied by Christ, and yet God is merciful to us. David saith, Ps. 101:1, ‘I will sing of mercy and judgment.’ God would have his people triumph in both now.

*Use* 1. To press us to bless the Lord for this wonderful deliverance by Christ.

1. That sin is taken off from our shoulders and laid upon Christ. How miserable would it have been if every man had borne his own burden! Gal. 5:6. How light soever men’s sins seem when they are committed, yet they will not be found light when they come to reckon with God, for then sin to an awakened conscience is one of the heaviest burdens that ever was felt. Now Christ hath taken off this burden from us. If God had laid sins upon us, as he laid them upon Christ, they would have sunk us to hell. The little finger of sin is heavier than the loins of any other sorrow. If God give you but a touch of it, or a spark of it light into your consciences, you will groan sadly Ps. 38:4, ‘Mine iniquities are gone over

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mine head, as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.' When we do but taste of this cup, we cry out presently, 'My heart faileth: You may know it—

[1] By what Christ felt. He lost his actual comforts, felt strange agonies, insomuch that he sweat drops of blood. We are of weak spirits, and soon dismayed, but his soul was exceeding sorrowful: 'If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?' Many times, a little before a shower, falls a gloominess and sad blackness so it was in Christ's spirit.

[2] The saints, when the little finger of God is upon them, how have they roared all the day long 1 Ps. 40:12, 'Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.' All life and spirit is gone when God sets home but one sin upon the conscience. Job saith, chap. 6:4, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison thereof drinks up my spirits.'

[3.] You may know it by your own experience. When conscience is a little opened, what horrors and disquiets are there! Prov. 18:14, 'A wounded spirit who can bear?' Then for thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil! Cain crieth out, 'My iniquity is greater than I can bear.'

[4] Consider the life to come, and the threatenings of the word concerning those that die in their sins: Heb. 10:31, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' Who can conceive what it is to remain in chains of darkness? 2 Peter 2:4. Sins that now lie asleep like sleepy lions will be then roused up: Mark 9:44, 'Their worm never dieth, and their fire is not quenched.' This is the portion of them that bear their own burden and their own transgressions.

2. When you begin to feel the burden of sin, make use of Christ for ease; remember this burden. is laid upon him: Mat. 11:28, 'Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' The weight lieth upon us, not to press us down to hell and despair, but to go to Christ, as they were to do under the law to the sacrifice, Lev. 1:4. They were to lay their hand upon the head of the sacrifice—a rite expressing that the sacrifice did bear the burden of their sins. This they were to do with brokenness of heart, acknowledging their offences—acknowledging that they were worthy to die as the beast died—owning the sacrifice of atonement, Christ Jesus Ps. 51:17, 'The sacrifices of a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' So John 1:29, 'Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;' 'Look on him whom they have pierced,' Zech. 12:10. This was done to renew the covenant: Ps. 50:5, 'Gather my saints together unto me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.' And they were to promise to walk with God in all humble obedience.

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*Use 2.* Is exhortation, to beseech you to believe this truth, that your iniquities are cast upon Christ. A man hath no benefit by it till he believeth. There is as much need of your believing as of Christ's suffering. Believe in 'the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world.'

1. As soon as you feel sin a burden, ease yourselves by considering it is laid upon Christ. Free grace, as it doth not exclude the merits of Christ, so not the application of faith: Rom. 3:25, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' The business was transacted between God and Christ before all worlds. Faith gets it copied out to the soul. You are weary and heavy laden with sin, come then to him, Mat. 11:28, with a lively faith; not as if by faith we did anew lay the burden of sin upon Christ, only then we apprehend it to be done for our sakes.

2. After you have gotten an interest in him by faith, renew the sense of your pardon. God seeth as a just God, and so our sins should be matter of humiliation to us; but he covereth them as a merciful God, and so it is matter of comfort. Sins, they were long since laid upon Christ; renew thy pardon again by faith, and strive to get an actual sense of it. Remember, Christ's soul was heavy to the death, that thou mightest go free.

But you say, I could take comfort in these things if I knew that my sins were laid upon Christ; it is only the sins of the elect are laid upon Christ.

*Ans.* The text saith, 'The iniquities of us all.'

*Doct.* That Christ is set forth in the gospel, as having all men's sins laid upon him. The word carrieth it in such a general way, that none is excepted, and there are very many other places to confirm it, where Christ is said to reconcile the world: 2 Cor. 5:19, 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself;' and to 'taste death for every man,' Heb. 2:9; and to 'die for all.' It is good to mark that: 2 Cor. 5:14, 'If one died for all.' I shall come to the reasons why Christ is proposed so generally.

1. Because all men in some sort have benefit by him. So far Christ suffered his Father's wrath that was due to all men's sins, that in a large sense they have benefit by him. All the common mercies we enjoy we have by virtue of Christ's death. You know how the threatening ran, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die,' Gen. 2:17; nay, it is 'surely die.' And all mankind might have been lost; but yet you see the absolute accomplishment of the sentence, even to wicked men, is referred to the day of judgment. The worst, at least, enjoy a reprieve by Christ. In this sense it is said, 1 Tim. 4:10, 'We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe.' Such as is spoken

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of, Ps. 36:6, 'O Lord, thou preservest man and beast;' by a common salvation and preservation. And the word *o swthr*, which is usually applied to Christ as Mediator, is used there to hint that it cometh by Christ; though it be a common mercy, it is from him. Thus it is said, Eph. 1:10, 'That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all, things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.' Some understand it of collecting the scattered parts of the world, and renewing the creature, which, had it not been for Christ, would have been lost. As an orator collects the heads of a discourse, that nothing be lost, and bringeth it into one sum. So the heathens, all their mercies come to them swimming in the blood of Christ; so, the word, ordinances, covenant, and outward graces to the church. Thus he suffered for the sins of the whole world, that the whole should enjoy these common favours and blessings by him.

2. Because there is a sufficiency in the merits of Christ for all, so that if it had pleased God to give Christ to all mankind, his justice had been sufficiently satisfied. For there is no defect in the Redeemer, and therefore there are so many general expressions in scripture to set out the value of Christ's sacrifice; so that if there were ten thousand times more sins committed than there are, here is enough to expiate them all, the person that suffered being so eminent, and the sufferings so great and infinite. Those that perish do not perish out of any defect or insufficiency in the merit of Christ, as if enough were not done to save them; but out of their own fault, because they did not believe it. Thus it is said, 1 Cor. 15:22, 'For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;' that is, as there was a sufficiency in Adam, the first common person, to ruin all his posterity, so there was a sufficiency in Christ to save all that Adam ruined; for it must needs be understood so, for take it literally and it is against all common experience. Many know not Christ, many hate him and will not come unto him: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life;" Rom. 5:18, 'Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.' The text proveth nothing but that there was as much sufficiency in Christ to justify, as there was in Adam to condemn. That we may not have too low and undervaluing thoughts of Christ's sufferings, the scripture speaks thus generally: there is enough for me and thee, and all the world. It is a great injury done to Christ to lessen and extenuate him beneath Adam, as if he were not as able to recover as the other to ruin us. 3. Therefore it is expressed thus generally, that all conditions of men might be included. God would not have any enclosure of his mercy within the bounds of any nation, persons, and conditions of men, that he might take off all outward exceptions, and comprise every believer, of what condition and rank

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soever; and therefore he expresseth himself promiscuously to all of every state, every nation, every order. It is the nature of man to confine privileges to their own nation and order. We would be singular and shine alone, and have none share with us; envy, I say, grudgeth at the commonest mercies. We see in common things nothing is so welcome to us as that which we enjoy alone. The Romans would be the only civil nation, all else were barbarians. The Romish clergy would have all learning and knowledge confined within their function; and the Jews could not endure to hear of a general salvation for other nations. It was the harshest note that could be sounded in their ears, that Christ died for all. It is much urged by the apostle, because of the rage of the Jews, for the enlargement of the pale of God's church. Therefore I conceive the apostle did inculcate, and so largely insist upon it, to meet with this perverseness of the Jews, as that which they would never hear of. In this sense it is said, Heb. 2:9, he 'tasted death for every man;' and so 1 John 2:2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;' that is, not only for us Jews, but for all the world, even of all places, orders, and ranks. God would not have the creatures *envy* it to any man, he proposeth it so generally to take away that Jewish indignation against the Gentiles. Therefore the apostles do so plentifully abound in these expressions.

4. That no man might accuse God as if he had not made sufficient provision for, his soul. Men are apt to transfer their guilt; though they will not charge Christ with it in a way of faith, they will charge God with it in a way of censure; as Prov. 19:3, 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.' It is their own folly and unbelief, and we are apt to impute it to God, as if he did not intend Christ to us. Now there would be more occasion offered, if the Lord should have pointed out by name those to whom he intended Christ. God keepeth it secret what he will do with men, that he may provoke them to endeavours after duty, leaving themselves to his good pleasure. No man can plead now, as an excuse for his negligence, that God left him out; it is we leave out ourselves; and therefore the proposal and offer of Christ is general. God hath expressed enough of his will to show man his duty, though not enough of his will to tell man his pleasure and secret intention. Now the will of God concerning any particular person is hidden. Men would fain excuse themselves of duty by prying into God's secrets. God giveth a check to such curious impudence, by making the proposal and offer of Christ general, though his intentions to give Christ may be particular; yet we must not meddle with that. Foolish curiosity proceeds from an innate desire in the creature to charge God with all its miscarriages: Deut. 29:29, 'Secret things belong unto the Lord, but those things which are revealed belong to us, and our children for ever.' The proposal of

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Christ in the gospel, that is a revealed thing, and it belongeth to the creatures. God would have it carried so as rather typing out duty to them than revealing his own purposes; he would not give the creature such an occasion to murmur.

5. To denote the multitude that should come into Christ, especially in the latter times; they are as good as a whole world: he ‘so loved the world,’ John 3:16. It is understood by many of *mundus credentium*; they were but a world when Christ saved them. God’s elect, compared with the wicked world, are but a little flock by themselves, but they are accounted in the scripture as innumerable: Rev. 7:9, ‘I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.’ Mark, it is a multitude which none can number; the sheep of Christ’s flock are so many that it is innumerable: in a sort especially, there shall be a great increase in the last times. And thus you may expound that place: Heb. 2:9, ‘He tasted death for every man.’ In the next verse it is so intended, ‘in bringing many sons unto glory.’ So Ps. 2:8, ‘Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.’ The gospel shall then be spread far and near. God hath given Christ to have and to hold all the world: Heb. 1:3, ‘Whom he hath appointed heir of all things.’ And it is said in the 10th verse of this Isa. 53, that ‘the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands.’ Therefore the scripture speaketh this generally, to comprise the vast multitude that should embrace the doctrine of Christ.

6. To denote the oneness, or the one way by which all are reconciled to God: all that have it have it by Christ. I say, many times the expressions are general, to show that God disposeth of the sins of all his people one way. Such expressions are rather exclusive of other ways, than inclusive and comprising all persons. God is said to lay the iniquities of us all upon Christ, because all those whose iniquities are disposed in a merciful way, they are disposed this way. Let me exemplify this a little: —The philosophers define good thus *kal on estin ou panta epiJumei*—good is that which all things desire. It is not to be understood as if all things in the world did desire good; for stones and timber, and many other things, have no appetite. The meaning is, all things that desire, desire that which is good. But I will give you instances in scripture: Col. 1:20, ‘And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.’ Not that everything is reconciled, but everything that is reconciled, is reconciled this way, by the blood of Christ’s cross. So Titus 2:11, ‘The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men;’ that is, to all to whom salvation is brought, it is brought by the grace of God; it rather noteth Christ’s merits than the persons that enjoy it. Divers

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such expressions there are in scripture. Thus, John 1:9, 'That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' Not that every man that cometh into the world is enlightened, there are many that perish and die in their ignorance: the meaning is, every man that is enlightened, is enlightened by him. As, for example, such a man cured all the city; not that every particular man was cured, but all that were cured were cured by him: so Christ is the Saviour of all men, that is, of all that are saved. These expressions are exclusive of all other ways, not inclusive of every person. Thus you have the reasons.

#### APPLICATION.

*Use 1.* This serveth to clear to us the mistake of the doctrine of universal grace, and to explain those expressions in scripture that are brought to favour this opinion: though you cannot conclude out of them universal grace, yet you may a universal necessity of believing this benefit. Solomon saith, Prov. 24:26, 'Every man shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer;' that is, ingenuous men will mightily prize and be taken with a right answer. Why, here now you have an answer against the patrons of universal grace. You see the reasons why the proposals of Christ are so general, and why there are so many expressions of it to all men: it is because all enjoy benefit by him. He is sufficient for all: God would not have any enclosure of his grace to any particular person; and it is to show the multitude of believers; and that God would have all men look to this, and to no other name, and to but one Christ.

*Use 2.* Is to inform us what little reason we have, to refuse to come to God at his call, seeing he keeps open-house for all comers; yea, though you have no money for heaven: Isa. 55:1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' The publication of the gospel is general to all men—to all kinds of men: nothing hindereth now but unbelief, or the refusal of Christ.

1. Not thy nation. Oh, how are we to praise God that he hath enlarged the bounds of mercy to us Gentiles now, as well as to the Jews formerly! You may look upon your iniquities as laid upon Christ Rom. 15:11, 'Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles.' It is quoted out of Ps. 117:1. All nations now share in this privilege. You know, in traffic or otherwise, peculiar nations have peculiar privileges, but here all alike.



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2. Not thy condition. Art thou poor? Christ is as mindful of thee as of the rich. God taketh a great deal of care and knowledge of a poor soul. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the poor man hath a proper name, and the rich man hath an appellation; and it is a great favour, I can tell you, to be known to God by name. It is spoken as a great privilege that God knew Moses by name: Exod. 33:12, 'I have known thee by name, and thou hast found favour in my sight;' Acts 17:34, 'Howbeit, certain men clave unto 'him, and believed, among which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris.' God took notice of the poor woman at Athens as well as the great scholars. So James 2:5, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?' Art thou a poor, neglected manor woman, or a poor servant? Yet your souls may be as dear to him as the richest man's alive, and he is as tender over you. You read in the 16th verse of Philemon, that Onesimus, a servant, was above a servant in regard of his spiritual condition. Oh, brethren, it is a great fault in men, they do not look after the poor in the world, especially poor servants; if they mind the good of the higher servants, yet they neglect the other. I speak a homely word, and yet a true one; it may be the soul of the poor scullion-boy in the kitchen may be as dear and precious to Christ as yours. So it may be said of one deformed: Acts 13:1, and 'Simon that was called Niger' was a saint as well as Moses the fair.

3. Not your sins. Make no exceptions where the word maketh none. Christ came to die for the dissolute drunkard as well as for the devout hypocrite. Men in despair look upon their sins as Cain did, and cry out, 'My sins are greater than I can bear.' Why, did Christ upon the cross only except thy sins, thinkest thou? Did he say he would not die for such a one as thou art? Mat. 11:28, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Those that have committed so many sins that they are even sunk down to hell by them, Christ calleth to himself; yea, the more unlikely it seemeth to you, God may have the greater regard to you Luke 14:21, 'The master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind!

A man would have thought a morsel at the door had been great preferment for them, and of all persons they should never have been invited. There is nothing exempted out of the call of the gospel but the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that is never pardoned, because the forgiveness thereof is never asked. Take heed of making exceptions where God hath made none; a feast may be intended for thee, though thou hast a poor, blind, lame soul.

4. Not any thoughts that Christ was never intended for us. How do you know that? Reprobation is God's sealed book. It is not for creatures to look into it; you would fain justify your unbelief by God's decree against you, but it

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argueth an ill spirit. If you can exempt yourself out of the number of them that go astray, you may exempt yourself out of the number of those whose iniquities are laid upon Christ. Let God alone with his secret judgments. Christians are to look to the revealed will of God—to directions in the scriptures, not to the secret that is in God's bosom.

But still the soul replieth, If I knew that I belonged to the election of grace, then I would believe; otherwise, I know that I cannot change his purpose by any faith of mine. Doth God promiscuously intend Christ to every one? I reserved the discussion of this doubt, that I might answer it the more fully. I shall endeavour it in these propositions, by which I shall lay open the whole matter:—

1. Certain it is that there is enough in Christ's death to merit pardon for all men in the world, though there were ten thousand times more men than ever there were or shall be; and so they would find it if they did believe. It is good to determine that first, for the defect is not on Christ's part; but this I spoke to before in the reasons.

2. Though Christ's death be sufficient for all, yet the efficacy and benefit of it is intended only to believers—to those that enjoy it by faith,—not only applied, but intended only. Mark, I say, that not only the efficacy of it is to believers, but the efficacy of it is intended to believers. See some proof of this from scripture: John 10:15, 'I lay down my life for the sheep.' There was the intent of God and Christ, that Christ should die only for those of his own flock; and therefore many times, where you find the expressions of God's love very general, you shall see the intention of it is restrained to those that believe. As John 3:16, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' God intended him to the world of believers: whoever amongst them do believe, let him be whatever he will, or whatever he was, he should not perish. So Rom. 3:22, 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference.' Though it be to all, it is with this restraint and limitation, 'to all that believe.' And there is good reason for it; for if God intended it, he would effect it: Ps. 115:3, 'Our God is in heaven, and doth whatsoever he will.' If ever God willed it, certainly he would accomplish it—man cannot frustrate it. And if God intended the giving Christ to the whole world, Christ would have prayed for it. A man cannot know what was God's will or the Son's duty better than by taking notice of his solemn prayer when he was about to offer up the sacrifice of himself: John 17:9, 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me out of the world.' Christ was given for none but for those that were given to him; and for them he prayeth, ver. 20, 'Neither

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pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.' Christ prayed only for those for whom he died, and he died only for believers.

3. God no doubt intended him such a sufficient sacrifice to the world. Christ did nothing but by the Father's will, as was largely confirmed in the beginning of this discourse: John 5:30, 'I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father, which hath sent me.' It was the Father's intention as well as the Son's. So far, then, we may safely say, God intended Christ as a sufficient sacrifice.

4. Though the efficacy and benefit be certainly intended to believers, yet God's offer of Christ, and the publication of the gospel, is general Isa. 55:1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters;' Rev. 22:17, 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' Such commands being rather an intimation of what he would have us do than what he intendeth we shall do; of the creature's duty rather than of God's will. It is the will of God's pleasure that they ought to seek after an interest in Christ. So it is said, 1 Tim. 2:4, 'God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;' *voluntate praecepti*, by the will of his command: and by virtue of this we are bidden to preach the gospel to every creature, Mark 16:16. To the making it effectual, there is required not only God's will, but God's grace, still reserving to God the power of his own secret judgment.

5. God is serious and in earnest in these offers and publications of Christ to all. That he mocketh no man you shall see: do but try him, accept him, and he will be as good as his word. It is not made to you fraudulently, and with an intent to deceive, but God is serious. God is bound to no man, and wicked men refuse him out of their owns perverseness. And indeed we should rather admire his mercy that he giveth Christ to any, than quarrel at his justice that he doth not give him to all.

That God is serious and in good earnest in these offers, appeareth—

1. By his entreaties. He beseecheth you to take him as well as offereth him: Ezek. 33:11, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from, his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?' 2 Cor. 5:20, 'Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.' So God useth all these entreaties to show that he is sincere and in earnest with all men.

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2. Because it suiteth more with his delight that you should take hold of these offers and not refuse them. God bindeth himself with a strong oath: Ezek. 33:11, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' Merely as it is the destruction of the creature, so God doth not any way approve of it, though, as a just punishment, he delighteth in it. If you look to God's approbation or delight, your accepting grace more suiteth with it than your refusal.

3. Because he is angry that you do refuse: John 5:40, 'Ye will not come to me that you may have life.' He is grieved that men, through their own folly, neglect that which should do them good: Mat. 23:37, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?' He meant by his outward ministry, though not inward call. He was mighty solicitous and earnest in that. So though God use all the means with us, and give us all the light that possibly can be into his will, except saving light, we turn unto our own way.

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