

THE MISCHIEF OF SIN

THOMAS WATSON



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ABOUT THIS BOOK



A **penetrating Puritan treatise** on the destructive nature of sin, expounding Psalm 106:43 — "they were brought low for their iniquity." Watson systematically unmasks how sin degrades the sinner in **every dimension**: in God's esteem, in intellect, in conscience, in spiritual vitality, and ultimately before the bar of divine justice. Rich with **vivid metaphors**, biblical examples, and unflinching pastoral urgency, the work moves from devastating diagnosis to **compassionate remedy** — calling readers to mortify sin through Word, prayer, and the hope of glory. A compact yet powerful classic of **practical divinity**.



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TITLE PAGE



THE MISCHIEF OF SIN, It brings a Person Low.
Published by **Thomas Watson** Minister of the Gospel.

—Isaiah 64.7.— Thou hast consumed us because of our iniquities.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER



Christian Reader,

The excess of impiety which has broken down the Banks of common Civility and Modesty, did at first lead my thoughts to these subjects ensuing. The Spirits of men are leavened with Atheism, and their lives stained with debauchery. I know not what to call them, but **Baptized Heathens**. Not long since there was a complaint that the Springs grew low: Sure I am the floods of sin are risen, even to a Deluge. There is a Generation among us, of whom I may say as **Oecumenius**, they **militate** against Religion; they are so prodigiously profane, that they esteem the **Bible** a Fable, and would jeer all Holiness out of the world. The **Prince** of the Air, **now works in the children of disobedience, Ephesians 2:2.** in our Saviour's time, many men's Bodies were possessed with the Devil, but now their souls are possessed. One is possessed with a blasphemous Devil, another with a spiteful Devil, another with a drunken Devil. This is one great sign of the approach of the last day, **iniquity shall abound, Matthew 24:12.** Men's lusts grow fierce and insatiable, and like **Imps** lie sucking them. But O how direful and tremendous will the effects of sin be. My Text says, **they were brought low for their iniquity:** Sin is such a Trade, that whoever follows,

is sure to break. What got **Achan** by his **wedge of Gold**? It was a wedge to cleave asunder his soul from God. What got **Judas** by his Treason? He purchased a Halter. What got King **Ahaz** by worshipping the Gods of **Damascus**? **they were the Ruin of him and of all Israel, 2 Chronicles 28:23.** Sin is first **Comical**, and then **Tragical**. I may fitly apply those words of **Solomon** to sin, **Proverbs 7:26. She has cast down many wounded:** O what a Harvest of souls is the Devil like to have! **Isaiah 5:14. Hell has enlarged itself.** It is fain to make room for its guests. 'Tis matter of grief to think, that the **Dragon** should have so many followers, and the **Lamb** so few. **Cyprian** brings in the Devil insulting over Christ, thus; **As for my followers, I never died for them as Christ has done for his, I never promised them so great a Reward as Christ has done to his, yet I have greater numbers than he, and my followers venture more for me, than his do for him.** Some sin out of ignorance, yet even the blind can find the way to Hell. But most sin out of **choice**, they know the Dish forbidden, but they lust after it, though **in the day they eat thereof, they shall surely die.** My design in this small Tract, is to give check to Sinners, and sound a Religious Retreat in their ears, to make them return from the hot pursuit of their impieties. If notwithstanding all admonitions, they will run counter to the Word, and prostitute themselves to their sordid lusts, they are **felo de se**, and their blood will be upon their own head. What remains, but that God should say in anger, as **Zechariah 11:9. That that dies, let it die, and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off.** I have at the request of some friends, made this Discourse (imparted formerly to my own family) public. I acknowledge it is not **rhetorico flatu cothurnatus**, embel-

lished with flowers of Eloquence. Saint **Paul's** preaching was not **with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit, and Power, 1 Corinthians 2:4.** Plainness is ever best in beating down sin. When a wound festers, it is fitter to lance it, than to embroider it with Silk, or lay Vermilion upon it. Reader, that God will bless these few Meditations to you, and make them operative upon your Heart, shall be the Prayer of him, who is,

Your Friend, studious of your eternal welfare, Thomas Watson.

THE MISCHIEF OF SIN, IT BRINGS A PERSON LOW



PSALM 106.43._ And were brought low, for their iniquity.

IF the Scripture be a Spiritual Rosary or Garden, (as
— Saint **Chrysostom** says) the Book of **Psalms** is a Knot in
this Garden, set with fragrant Flowers: **Luther** calls the **Psalms**,
parva Biblia, a **little Bible**. The **Psalms** make sweeter Music,
than ever **David's** Harp did: they are calculated for every
Christian's condition, and may serve either for illumination, or
consolation.

In this Psalm **David** sets down the people of **Israel's** sins.

First, In General; Verse 6. **We have sinned with our
Fathers**. The examples of Fathers, are not always to be urged.
Shall we be wiser than our Fathers? **Fathers may err**; a Son had
sometimes better take his Land from his Father, than his Religion.

Secondly, **David** makes a particular enumeration of their sins.

1. Their forgetfulness of God. Verse 13. **They soon forgot his
works**; or as it is in the Original, **they made haste** to forget his
works. The Lord wrought a famous Miracle for them, **Verse 11**. He
drowned **Israel's** enemies, and **Israel** drowned his mercies. Our

sins, and God's kindnesses are apt quickly to slip out of our memory. We deal with God's mercies, as with Flowers, when they are fresh, we smell to them, and put them in our bosom, but within a while we throw them away, and never mind them. **They made haste to forget his works.**

2. Their inordinate lusting, **Verse 14. They lusted exceedingly in the Wilderness.** They were weary of the Provision which God sent them miraculously from Heaven; they grew dainty, **they wept for Quails;** they were not content, that God should supply their Wants, but they would have him satisfy their lusts too; God lets them have their request; Quails they had, but in anger; **He sent leanness into their souls, (that is)** he sent a Plague whereby they pined and consumed away.

3. Their Idolatry. **Verse 19. They made a Calf in Horeb.** They framed to themselves a god of Gold and worshipped it. The Scripture calls Idols, **Bosheth, a shame,** Hosea 9:10. For this God disclaimed them from being his people, **Exodus 32:2. Thy people have corrupted themselves.** Formerly God called them **His** people, but now he does not say to **Moses, My people,** but **Thy people.**

4. Their Infidelity. **Verse 24. They believed not his word, but murmured.** They did not think that God would subdue their enemies, and bring them into that pleasant Land flowing with Milk and Honey; and this unbelief did break forth into **murmuring.** They wished they had made their Graves in **Egypt;** when men begin to distrust the Promise, then they quarrel at Providence. When faith grows low, passions grow high. For these things God did stretch out his hand against them, as it is in the Text, **And they were brought low, for their iniquity.**

The words branch themselves into two Parts.

1. **Israel's Misery. They were brought low;** Some Expositors translate it, **They waxed lean;** The Hebrew and Septuagint render it, **They were humbled.**

2. The procuring cause of it; **for their iniquity.**

Doctrine. The Proposition resulting from the Text is, That sin brings a Person low. Psalm 197:6. **The wicked he casteth down to the ground.** Sin is a Planet of a bad Aspect; as **Jephthah** said to his daughter, when she met them with Timbrel and Dances, Judges 11:35. **Alas my daughter, thou hast brought me very low.** So a man may say to his sin, alas my sin, you have brought me very low. Sin is the great **Leveller;** it brings a **Family** low: it cuts off the Arm, and dissolves the Pillars thereof. 1 Samuel 2:29. **Wherefore kick ye at my Sacrifice?** Verse 31. **Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thy arm; and the arm of thy Father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house.** Which threatening God made good, when he cut off **Eli's** two Sons, and put by the other Sons from the Priesthood.

Sin brings a **Kingdom** low, 1 Samuel 15:19. **Wherefore did you not obey the voice of the Lord, but did evil in his sight?** Verse 28. **The Lord has rent the Kingdom of Israel from you this day.** Sin breaks the Axletree of Church and State, Hosea 13:1. **When Ephraim spoke trembling, he exalted himself, but when he offended in Baal he died.** The Tribe of **Ephraim** did carry a Majesty with it, and was superior to the ten Tribes. When **Ephraim** spoke, he struck an awe and terror into others; **But when he offended in Baal he died.** When he once fell from God by Idolatry, he did **inter cuneos residere**, degrade

himself of his honor; his strength and glory came to nothing. Now every puny adversary would insult over him, as the Hare will tread upon a dead Lion.

Among the many threatenings against sin, this was one, Deuteronomy 28:43. **Thou shalt come down very low**; and in the Text this threatening is exemplified and made good, **They were brought low for their iniquity**. That I may amplify and illustrate the Proposition, I shall show 1. **How many ways sin brings a man low**. 2. **Why sin must needs bring a man low**.

1. How many ways sin brings a man low.

1. Sin brings a man low in God's esteem. The sinner sets an high price upon himself, **Proverbs** 26:16 but God has low thoughts of him, and looks upon him with a despicable eye, Daniel 11:21. **And in his estate, shall stand up a vile person**. Who was this spoken of? It was **Antiochus Epiphanes**; he was a King, and his Name signifies **Illustrious**, and by some he was worshipped, yet in God's account, he was a **vile person**. The Psalmist speaking of the wicked, says, **they are become filthy**; in the Hebrew it is, they are become **stinking**. That you may see how low a sinner is fallen in God's account, the Lord compares him to **dross**, Psalm 119:119 to **chaff**, Psalm 1:4 to a **Pot boiling with scum**, Ezekiel 24:6 to a **Dog**, 2 Peter 2:22 which under the Law was unclean; to a **Serpent**, Matthew 23:33 which is a **cursed** creature; nay, he is worse than a Serpent, for the poison of a Serpent, is what God has put into it; but a wicked man has that which the Devil has put into him, Acts 5:3. **Why has Satan filled your heart?**

Caelius Rhodiginus reports of an ancient Woman, who had always used flattering Glasses, by chance, seeing her face in a true Glass, fell mad; a sinner is well conceited of himself, while he does dress himself by the flattering Glass of presumption, but if he knew how loathsome and disfigured he were in God's eye, he would abhor himself in the dust.

2. Sin brings a man low in his intellectuals. It has eclipsed the [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉], the Rational Part; **darkness is upon the face of this deep**. Since the Fall, the Lamp of **Reason** burns dim, 1 Corinthians 13:9. **We know but in part**. There are many **arcana naturae**, knots in Nature, that are not easy to untie. Why **Nile** should overflow in Summer, when by the course of nature Waters are lowest? Why the Loadstone should rather draw Iron, than Gold a more Noble Metal? **What way the light is parted?** Job 38:24. **How the bones grow in the womb?** Many of these are Paradoxes that we understand not. The **Key of Knowledge**, is lost in **the Tree of Knowledge**.

Especially, in matters **Sacred**, we are enveloped with ignorance, **The Sword is upon our right eye**, Zechariah 11:16. What a little of the Sea, will a Nut-shell hold? How little of God will our intellect contain? Job 11:7. **Can you find out the Almighty unto perfection?** Who can fully unriddle the Trinity? or fathom the mystery of the Hypostatical Union? And alas, as to salvific heart-transforming knowledge, how are we to seek, till God's Spirit light our Lamp! 1 **Corinthians** 2:14.

3. Sin brings a man low in affliction; that is the meaning of the Text, **They were brought low for their iniquity**. **Adam's** sin brought him low; it banished him out of Paradise, 2 Chronicles 28:18. **In those days, God cut Israel short**. Sin makes God cut

a people short in their **Spiritual** and **Civil** liberties. Sin is the Womb of sorrow, and the Grave of comfort. Sin turns the body into an **Hospital**, it causes Fevers, Ulcers, Catarrhs. —macies & nova februm terris incubuit cohors— Sin buries the Name, melts the Estate, pulls away near Relations as limbs from our body. Sin is the **Trojan Horse**, out of which a whole Troop of afflictions comes. Sin drowned the old World, burnt **Sodom**, Sin made **Zion** sit in **Babylon**. Lamentations 1:8. **Jerusalem has grievously sinned, therefore she is removed.** Sin did shut up God's bowels, Lamentations 2:21. **Thou hast killed, and not pitied.** **Israel** did sin, and not repent, and God did kill, and not pity. Sin is the great **Humbler**: Did not **David's** sin bring him low? Psalm 38:3. **There is no rest in my bones, because of my sin.** Did not **Manasseh's** sin bring him low? It changed his **Crown-Royal** into Fetters, 2 **Chronicles** 33:11. God for sin, turned King **Nebuchadnezzar** to grass, **Daniel** 4:33. Sin is like the **Egyptian** Reed, too feeble to support us, but sharp enough to wound us. Jeremiah 2:16. **The Children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the Crown of your head.** The **Egyptians** were not a warlike, but a womanish people, imbecile and weak, yet these were too hard for **Israel**, and made a spoil of her. Verse 17. **Have you not procured this to yourself?** Is it not your sin that has brought you low?

Nay, Sin does not only bring us low in affliction, but it **embitters** affliction; Sin puts teeth into the Cross. Guilt makes affliction heavy; A little water is heavy in a Leaden Vessel; and a little affliction is heavy in a guilty conscience.

4. Sin brings one low in Melancholy: this is **atra bilis**, a black humour seated chiefly in the brain. Some have strange and dismal conceits, fancying their bodies to be made all of Glass, and that if any one touch them, they shall break. Melancholy clothes the mind in Sable; it puts a Christian out of tune, that he is not fit for prayer, nor praise. Lute-strings when wet, will not sound: nor can one under the power of Melancholy, **Make melody in his heart to the Lord**, Ephesians 5:19. When the mind is troubled, it is unfit to go about work. Melancholy does disturb Reason, and weaken Faith. Satan works much on this temper: it is **balneum diaboli**; he bathes himself with delight in such a person. Through the black Spectacles of Melancholy, every thing appears black. When a Christian looks upon sin, says he, this **Leviathan** will devour me; when he looks upon Ordinances, these will serve to increase my guilt; when he looks upon affliction, this gulf will swallow me up. Melancholy creates fears in the mind, it excites jealousies; and misprisions. I may allude to that Psalm 53:5. **There were they in great fear, where no fear was.**

5. Sin brings a man low in spiritual Plagues. It brings many an one, to a seared conscience, to final induration, Isaiah 29:10. **The Lord has poured out upon you, the spirit of a deep sleep, and has closed your eyes.** Men are brought low indeed, when the sound of **Aaron's** Bell will not awaken them, no Sermon will stir them. They are like the Smith's Dog, that can lie and sleep near the Anvil, when all the sparkles fly about. Conscience is in a Lethargy. When once a man's speech is gone, and his feeling lost, he draws on apace to death: So when the checks of Conscience cease, and a man is sensible neither of sin, nor wrath, you may ring

out the Bell, he is past hope of recovery. Thus some are brought low, even to a **reprobate sense**. This is **limen inferni**, the threshold of damnation.

6. Sin brings a man low in temptation. **Paul** began to be proud, and he had a **messenger of Satan to buffet him**, 2 Corinthians 12:7. Some think it was a visible apparition of Satan, tempting him to sin; others, that the Devil was now assaulting **Paul's** faith, making him believe he was an hypocrite. Satan laid the train of temptation, to blow up the fort of his Grace. And this temptation was so sore, that he called it, a **thorn in the flesh**, it did put him to much anguish. Such temptations do the godly often fall into. They are tempted to question the truth of the Promises, or the truth of their own Graces. Sometimes they are tempted to blasphemy, sometimes to self-murder; thus, they are **brought low**, they are almost gone, and ready to give consent. The Devil nibbles at their heel, but God wards off the blow from their head.

7. Sin brings one low in desertion. This is an abyss indeed. Psalm 88.6. **Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit**. Desertion is a short Hell. Canticles 5.6. **My beloved hath withdrawn himself, and was gone**. Christ knocked, but the Spouse was loth to rise off her bed of sloth, and open to him presently, Christ was gone. When the Devil finds a person sleeping, he enters; but when Christ finds him sleeping he is gone. And if this Sun of Righteousness withdraws his Golden beams from the soul, darkness follows. Desertion is the arrow of God, shot into the soul. Job 6.4. **The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit**. The **Scythians** in their Wars did use to dip their Arrows in the blood and gall of Asps, that the venomous heat of them might the more torture the enemy. So the

Lord did shoot his poisoned arrow of desertion at **Job**, under the wounds whereof, his Spirit lay bleeding. God is called in Scripture, a **light**, and a **fire**. The deserted soul feels the fire, but does not see the light. So dreadful is this, that the most tormenting pains, Stone, Colic, Strangury, are but a pleasure to it. All the delights under the Sun will administer no comfort in this condition. Worldly things can no more relieve a troubled mind, than a silken Stocking can ease a broken Leg. Psalm 88.15. **While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted. Luther** in desertion, was like one giving up the ghost, **He had no blood seen in his face, nor was heard to speak, but his body seemed dead;** as one writes in an Epistle to **Melancthon**.

8. Sin brings many low in despair; this is a gulf that none but reprobates fall into. Jeremiah 18.11. **Thou saidst, there is no hope.** Despair is **devoratoria salutis**, it is a millstone tied about the soul, that sinks it in perdition. Despair looks on God, not as a **Father**, but a **Judge**. It refuses the remedy. Other sins need Christ, despair rejects him: It closes the Orifice of Christ's wounds, that no blood will come out to heal. This is the voice of despair, **My sin is greater than the mercy of God can pardon.** It makes the wound broader than the plaster. Despair is a God-affronting sin; it is sacrilege, it robs God of his Crown-jewels, his Power, Goodness, Truth. How does Satan triumph to see the honour of God's Attributes laid in the dust by despair. Despair casts away the Anchor of hope, and then the soul must needs sink. What will a Ship do in a storm without an Anchor? Despair locks men up in impenitency. I have read of one **Hubertus** who died despairing; he made his Will after this manner, **I yield my goods to the King, my body to the grave, my soul to the Devil.** Isaiah

38.18. **They that go down into the pit, cannot hope for thy truth.** They who go down into this pit of despair, cannot hope for the truth of God's promise. And this despair grows at last into horror and raving, —Eheu quis intus scorpio? —

9. Sin brings a man without repentance into the **bottomless pit**, and then he is brought low indeed. Sin draws Hell at the heels of it. Psalm 9.7. **The wicked shall be turned into Hell.** Not to speak of **the punishment of loss**, which Divines think is the worst part of Hell: (**that is**) the being separated from the beatifical sight of God, **in whose presence is fullness of joy.** The **poena sensus, the punishment of sense**, is bad enough. Then **wrath** will come upon sinners, [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉], **to the uttermost**, 1 Thessalonians 2.16.

If when God's anger **is kindled but a little**, and a spark of it flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what will it be, when he **stirs up all his wrath?** Psalm 78.38. How sad was it with **Spira** when he did but sip of the Cup of wrath? He was a very Anatomy, his flesh consumed, he **became a terror to himself.** What is it then to lie steeping in Hell?

Some may ask, where the place of Hell is? But as **Chrysostome** says, let us not be inquisitive where it is, but rather let our care be to escape it. But to satisfy curiosity, Hell is some infernal place, it lies low, Proverbs 15.24. **Hell beneath.** **Hesiod** says, Hell is as far under the Earth, as Heaven is above it. If sin then brings a man to Hell, it brings him low. Consider,

1. The plurality of Hell torments. In bodily sickness, seldom above one Disease at a time troubles the Patient; the Stone, or Gout; but in Hell there is a diversity of torments. There is, 1.

Darkness, Jude 13. Hell is a dark Region. 2. There are **bonds and chains**. 2 Peter 2.4. God hath Golden cords which are his Precepts, tying men to duty; and Iron chains, which are partly his **decree**, in ordaining men to destruction, and partly his **Power**, in bridling and chaining them up under wrath. The **binding** the wicked in chains, notes that the damned in Hell cannot move from place to place, which might perhaps a little alleviate and abate their misery, but they shall be tied to the stake never to stir. The wicked could go from one sin to another, but in Hell they shall not move from one place to another.

3. The **Worm** that never dies. **Mark** 9.44. This is a self-accusing mind, which is so torturing, as if a Worm full of poison, were gnawing at a man's heart. Such as would not hear the voice of conscience, shall be made to feel the worm of conscience.

2. The severity of Hell torment. It is expressed by **a lake of Fire**, Revelation 20.15. Fire is the most torturing Element. **Nebuchadnezzar's** fiery Furnace, was but painted fire to this. It is called **Fire prepared**, Matthew 25.41. as if God had been sitting down to devise some exquisite torment. **Dives** cries out, **O I am tormented in this flame**, Luke 16.24.

3. The torments of Hell shall be in every part both of body and soul. 1. The **body** shall be tormented. That body which was so tender and delicate, that it could not bear heat or cold, shall suffer in every part. The eyes shall be tormented with sights of Devils, the ears with the hideous shrieks of the damned; the tongue that was fired with passion, shall now have fire enough, Luke 16.24. **Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue**.

2. All the **powers of the soul** shall be tormented. The **mind** to apprehend Divine displeasure; the **memory** to remember what mercies have been abused, what means of Grace have been slighted, and what an Heaven is forfeited; the **conscience** shall be tormented with self-accusations; the sinner shall arraign himself for stifling, and resisting the motions of the blessed Spirit.

4. The wicked shall not only be forced to behold the Devil, but shall be shut up in the Den with this roaring Lion, and he shall spit fire in their faces.

5. The wicked shall hear the language of Hell, Revelation 16.9. **Men were scorched with heat, and blasphemed the Name of God.** To hear reprobates cursing God, and have one's ears chained to their Oaths and Blasphemies, what an Hell will this be?

6. The torments of Hell have no period put to them. **Origen** fancied a fiery stream, in which the souls of sinful men, yea, Devils and all, were to be purged, and then pass into Heaven: but the Scripture asserts, that whosoever are not purged from sin by Christ's blood, are to lie under the **Torrid Zone** of God's wrath to all eternity, Revelation 14.11. **The smoke of their torment, ascendeth up for ever and ever.** This word **ever** burns hotter than the Fire. At death all our worldly sorrows die; but the torments of Hell are as long-lived as Eternity, Revelation 9.6. **They shall seek death, and shall not find it.** Always dying, but never dead. Here the wicked thought a Prayer long, a Sabbath long, **Amos** 8.5. But how long will it be to lie in Hell for ever.

—Vestigia nulla retrorsum—

7. The pains of Hell are without intermission. If a man be in pain, yet while he is asleep, he does not feel it. There is no sleep in Hell. What would the damned give for one hour's sleep, Revelation 4.8. **They rest not day nor night.** In outward pain there is some **abatement**; the burning fit is sometimes off, and the sick Patient is more at ease than he was. But the damned soul never says, **I have more ease**; those infernal pains are always **acute** and sharp; no cooling fits in those inflammations.

8. In Hell the wicked shall see the godly advanced to a Kingdom, and themselves devoted to misery, Luke 13.28. **Then shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.** When sinners shall see those whom they hated and scorned, to be set at Christ's right hand, and crowned with glory, and themselves cast out to the Devils; nay, when the ungodly shall see those whom they censured and persecuted sit as their Judges, and join with Christ in condemning them, 1 Corinthians 6.2. **Know ye not, that the Saints shall judge the world?** How will this aggravate the misery of those hellish Caitiffs, and make them gnash their teeth for envy.

9. In Hell the wicked shall have none to sympathize with them. It is some comfort to have friends condole with us in our sufferings, but the damned have none to compassionate them. Mercy will not pity them, mercy abused turns to fury. God the Father will not pity them, he will laugh at them Proverbs 1.26. **I will laugh at your calamity.** Is not this sad, for a damned soul to lie roaring in flames, and have God sit and laugh at him? Jesus Christ will not pity the wicked, they slighted his blood, and now his blood cries

against them. The Angels will not pity them; it is a desirable sight to them, to see God's Justice glorified. The Saints in Heaven will not pity them; they were continually persecuted by them, and **they shall rejoice when they see the vengeance**, Psalm 58.10. Nay, such as were their nearest Relations on Earth will not pity them; the Father will not pity his Child in Hell, nor the Wife her Husband; the reason is, because the Saints glorified have their wills made perfectly subject to God's will, and when they see his will is done, they rejoice, though it be in the damning of their near relations.

Does not sin then bring men **low**, when it brings them to Hell? Ezekiel 32.27. **They are gone down to Hell, they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquity shall be upon their bones.** Thus I have shown you how many ways sin brings one low.

2. Why sin must needs bring a man low.

1. Because sin is a **Disease**, and that brings low. Take the healthiest Constitution, the most sanguine Complexion, yet if sickness get into it, it brings the body low, the beauty withers, the **Silver Cord** begins to be loosed. So it is in spirituals, the soul which was once of an Orient brightness, the mind angelified, the will crowned with liberty, the affections as so many Seraphim burning in love to God, yet by sin is become **diseased**, and this disease brings it low. The soul is fallen from its pristine dignity, it has lost its noble and sublimated operations, and lies exposed (without Grace) to the **second death**.

2. Sin must needs bring a man low, because the sinner enters a contest with God. —*invadunt Martem clypeis, pugnamque lacesunt*— He tramples upon Gods Law, crosses his will; if God be of one mind, the sinner will be of another; he does all he can to spite God, Jeremiah 44.16. **As for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken to thee, but we will do whatsoever thing proceedeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the Queen of Heaven.** The same Hebrew word for **sin**, signifies **rebellion**. Now can the Lord endure to be thus saucily confronted by proud dust? God will never let his own creature rise up in arms against him, he will pull down the sinners plumes, and bring him low. Psalm 18.26. **With the froward, thou wilt show thy self froward;** In the Hebrew it is, **thou wilt wrestle**; and if God once wrestle with the sinner, he will throw him to the ground. When the Angel wrestled with **Jacob, he touched only the hollow of his thigh**, Genesis 32.25. But when God wrestles with a sinner, he will **rend the caul of his heart**, Hosea 13.8. The Apostle says, **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**, Hebrews 10.31. It is good to fall into Gods hands when he is a friend, but it is ill falling into his hands when he is an enemy.

3. Sin must needs bring a man low, because the sinner labors what he can to bring God low. It is true, God cannot lose any of his **essential** glory, he is so high that no strength of Mortals can reach him, but a wicked man does what in him lies to bring God low. **He has low thoughts of God**; he slights his sovereignty, questions his truth, looks upon all Gods Promises as a **forged deed**. The sinner therefore is said to **despise** God, Numbers 11.20.

Again, the sinner lessens God, and brings him low in the thoughts of **others**. Ezekiel 8.12. **They say, the Lord sees us not, the Lord has forsaken the earth.** Do but secure yourselves from mans eye, and as for Gods taking notice of sin, you need not trouble yourselves, **the Lord sees you not, he has forsaken the earth.** Zephaniah 1.12. **They say the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.** If you serve him you must not look for reward, and if you do not serve him, you need not fear punishment. Malachi 2.17. **You say, every one that does evil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delights in them: or where is the God of judgment?** Here they blemish Gods **Sanctity**; God is not so holy, but he bears as much favor to the wicked, as to the good; and, **Where is the God of judgment?** Here they tax his **justice**; as if they had said, God does not order things right, he does not weigh matters impartially in an equal balance; **Where is the God of judgment?** Thus a sinner eclipses the glory of the Godhead, and labors to bring God low in the thoughts of others.

And besides, he does what in him lies to extirpate a Deity; he wishes there were no God; he says, **Cause the holy One of Israel to cease,** Isaiah 30.11. A wicked man would not only **un-throne** God, but **un-be** God; if he could help it, God should be no longer God. Now if a sinner be thus impious, as to endeavor to bring God low, no wonder if God brings him low. Nahum 1.19. **I will make your grave, for you are vile.** I will bring you (O **Sennacherib**) from the **throne** to the **tomb**. I will kick you into your grave, Obadiah verse 4. **Though you set your nest among the Stars, thence will I bring you down says the Lord.**

4. Sin must needs bring a person low, because sin is the only thing God has an antipathy against. The Lord does not hate a man, because he is poor, or despised; you do not hate your friend, because he is sick; but that which draws forth the keenness of Gods hatred, is sin, Jeremiah 44.4. **Do not this abominable thing that I hate.** Now for any one to espouse that which Gods soul hates, it must needs undo him at last. Is that subject like to thrive, whom his Prince hates? The cherishing countenancing of sin, makes **the fury come up in Gods face**, Ezekiel 38.16. And if his wrath be once kindled, it **burns to the lowest Hell**. The Psalmist says, **Who can stand before his cold?** Psalm 147.17. But rather, who can stand before **his heat?** Isaiah 33.14.

5. Sin must needs bring the sinner low, because it exposes him to Gods curse, and Gods curse blasts where ever it comes, Deuteronomy 28.15, 16. **If you will not hearken to the voice of the Lord, all these curses shall come upon you. Cursed shall you be in the City, and cursed shall you be in the field, cursed shall be your basket and your store.** The curse of God haunts the sinner where ever he goes; if he be in the City, it spoils his Trade, if he be in the Country, it destroys his Crop; Gods curse drops poison into every thing. It is a **Moth** in the Wardrobe, **Murrain** among the Cattle, **Rot** among the Sheep. If the **flying Roll** of curses enters into a mans house, **it consumes the timber and walls of it**, Zechariah 5.4. When Christ cursed the **fig tree**, it presently withered, **Matthew** 21.19. Mens curses are insignificant, they shoot without bullets, but Numbers 22.6. **He whom you curse, is cursed.** Gods curse kills, Psalm 37.22.

They that are cursed of him, shall be cut off. If all Gods curses are leveled against the sinner, then he must needs be brought low.

Use 1. Informat. 1. Branch: See then from hence, that Gods punishing either a person or a Nation is not without a cause. A Father may chastise his Son out of an humor, when there is no cause, but God does never punish without a just cause. He does it not purely to show his Sovereignty, or because he takes pleasure to bring his creature low, Lamentations 3.33. **He does not willingly afflict;** or as it is in the Hebrew, **from the heart,** but there is some impellent cause, **They were brought low for their iniquity.** **Cyprian** writes thus, concerning the Persecution of the Church under the Emperor **Valerian, We must confess that this sad calamity, which has in a great part wasted our Churches, has risen from our own intestine wickedness, whilst we are full of avarice, ambition, emulation, etc.** Jeremiah 4.17. **As keepers of a field, are they against her round about.** Like as Horses or Deer in a field, are so enclosed with hedges, and so narrowly watched, that they cannot get out. So **Jerusalem** was so besieged with enemies, and watched, that there was no escape for her, without danger of life. Verse 18. **Your way and your doings have procured these things unto you, this is your wickedness.** As we use to say to Children when they are sick, this is your green fruit you have eat, or your going in the Snow: So says God, **This is your wickedness.** Jeremiah 30.15. **Why do you cry for your affliction, because your sins were increased, I have done these things unto you.** The Sword that wounds you, is of your own whetting; the cords that pinch you are of your own twisting; thank your sin for

all. 1 Corinthians 11.30. **For this cause many are sick, and weak, and many fall asleep.** The Church of **Corinth** was punished with corporal death, because of coming unworthily to the Lords Table, and profaning the body and blood of the Lord. The abuse of holy things incenses God. **Nadab** and **Abihu** found the flames of wrath hot about the Altar. So that still there is a **propter hoc**, a cause why God brings any person low. There is no reason why God should love us, but there is a great deal of reason why God should punish us. **They were brought low for their iniquity.**

2. See from hence, what a mischievous thing sin is, it brings a person, and a Nation low. Hosea 14.1. **You have fallen by your iniquity.** Sin lays men low in the Grave, and in Hell too without repentance. Sin is the **Achan** that troubles. It is the **Gall** in our Cup, and the **Gravel** in our Bread. Sin and punishment are linked together with Adamantine Chains. Sin is the **Phaeton** that sets the world on fire. It is a Coal that not only **blackens** but **burns**. Sin runs men into the briars, Job 30.7. **Among the bushes they brayed.** Sin **conjures up** all the winds; all the crosses which befall us, all the storms in conscience, sin raises them. Never let any one think to rise by sin, for the Text says, it brings him low. Sin first tempts and then damns. It is first a Fox, and then a Lion. Sin does to a man, as **Jael** to **Sisera**, she gave him **Milk**, but then she brought him low, Judges 5.26, 27. **She put her hand to the Nail, and with the Hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his Temples, at her feet he bowed, etc.** Sin first brings its pleasures with delight, and charms the senses, and then comes

with its Nail and Hammer. Sin does to the sinner, as **Absalom** to **Amnon**, when his heart was **merry with wine**, then he killed him, 2 **Samuel** 13.28. Sins last act is always **Tragical**.

How evil a thing is sin, that not only brings a people low, but it makes God delight in bringing them low, Ezekiel 5.13. **I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted**. God does not use to take delight in punishing, Judges 10.16. **His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel**. Like a Father that with tears chastises his Child; but God was so provoked with the **Jews**, that it seemed a delight to him to afflict; **I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted**. O what a venomous accursed thing is sin, that makes a merciful God take comfort in the destruction of his own creature.

3. See then what little cause any have to wonder that they are brought low. As the Apostle says, 1 Peter 4.12. **Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial**. So, think it not strange, if you be as full of Eclipses and Changes as the Moon. Wonder not, if you are under the black rod. A sick man may as well wonder that he is in pain, as a sinful man wonder that he is afflicted; do not Vapors cause Thunder? Is it a wonder after the hellish vapors of our sins have been sent up, to hear Gods thundering voice? Sin is a **debt**, it is set out in Scripture by a debt of **ten thousand talents**, Matthew 18.24. Is it a wonder for a man that is in debt, to be arrested? Never wonder God does arrest you with his judgments, when you are so deeply in arrears. Sin is a walking Antipodes to God, and if men walk contrary to God, is it a wonder God walks contrary to them? Leviticus 26.17. **If you will walk contrary to me, then I will also walk contrary to you, and I even I will chastise you seven times more for your sins**. O sinner, do

not wonder it is so bad with you, but rather wonder it is no worse. Are you in the deep of affliction, it is a wonder you are not in the deep of Hell. If Jesus Christ was brought low, is it a wonder that you are brought low? Christ was brought low **in poverty**. The Manger was his Cradle, the Cobwebs were his Curtains. He was brought low in **temptation**, Matthew 4.1. **He was led into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil**. No sooner was Christ out of the water of Baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation. Only his Godhead was too strong a bulwark for Satans **fiery darts** to enter. He was brought low in his **agonies**; he sweat blood in the Garden, he shed blood on the Cross. If Christ was brought low **who knew no sin**, do you wonder you are brought low, who are so full of sin? Lamentations 3.39. **Why does a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin?** What a sinner, and wonder or murmur that you are afflicted? Sin does as naturally draw punishment to it, as the Loadstone draws the Iron.

4. See the Text fulfilled this day in our eyes; sin has brought our Nation low. We are **Cadent**, if not **Morient**; we do not want for sin; there is a **Spirit of wickedness** in the Land. Ours are **mighty sins**, Amos 5.12. **bloody sins**, Hosea 4.2. The sins of **Denmark, Spain, France, Italy**, are translated into English; we have many **Sodoms** among us, and may fear to have the **line of confusion** stretched over us. By our impieties and blasphemies, we have sounded a Trumpet of Rebellion against Heaven. Were our sins engraven upon our foreheads, we should be ashamed to look up. Men invent new sins, Romans 1.30. **Inventors of evil things**. Some invent new **errors**, others invent new **snare**s: this Age exceeds former Ages in sinning. As it is with Trades, there may be old Trades, but there are some Tradesmen now, who are grown

more dexterous and cunning in their Trade, than they were in former times: So it is with sin, sin is an old Trade, but there are persons now alive, who are more skilled in the Trade, and are grown more expert in sin, than those who are dead and gone. Sinners in former times, were but bunglers at sin, to what they are now. They are cunning at self-damnation, Jeremiah 4.22. **Wise to do evil.** The Devils Mint is going every day, and sin is minted faster than money. People sin **with greediness**, Ephesians 4.19. They **drink iniquity like water**, Job 15.16. They are grown **Rampant** in wickedness, having laid aside the veil of modesty, Zephaniah 3.5. **The unjust knows no shame.** We read **Nebuchadnezzar** had **the heart of a beast** given him, **Daniel** 4.16. If all who have the **hearts** of beasts, should have the **faces** of beasts, men would grow very scarce.

And if sin be so high, well may it bring us low. While the body is in a Hectic Fever, it cannot thrive. The **Body Politic** being in this Paroxysm or burning Fever of sin, must needs waste. Has not sin brought us low? What Wars, Pestilences, Fires have broken forth among us? The Splendor and Magnificence of the City was brought low, and laid in the ashes.

Sin has brought us low in our **Repute**, Proverbs 14.34. **Sin is a reproach to any people.** Time was when God made the sheaves of other Nations **do obeisance to our sheaf.** But our pristine fame and renown is eclipsed, Malachi 2.2. **I have made you base and contemptible.** **Trading** is brought low; many men's estates are boiled to nothing; their gourd is withered, their **cruse of Oil** fails, Ruth 1.21. **I went out full, but the Lord has brought me home empty.** Sin has brought other Nations low, and do we think to escape better than they? **Salvian** observes, that

in **Africa**, when the Church of God had degenerated from its purity, the Land abounded in Vice, and was sick of a Pleurisy of sin, then the **Vandals** entered **Africa**, and the enemies Sword let them blood. Numbers 32.23. **Be sure your sin will find you out:** as a Bloodhound it will pursue you.

It may be inquired, what are those sins, that have brought this City, and Nation so low?

1. The first sin that has brought us low, is Pride, Proverbs 29.23. **A man's pride shall bring him low.** Pride is **ex Traduce**, it runs in the blood. Our first Parents aspired after a Deity; they did not content themselves to know God, but they would be knowing as God. Saint **Austin** calls pride, **the mother of all sin.** The **Persian** Kings would have their Image worshipped of all that came into **Babylon.** **Sapor**, writes himself Brother to the Sun and Moon, and Partner with the Stars. **Caligula** the Emperor commanded himself to be adored as a God; he caused a Temple to be erected for him, he used to have the most costly Fowls sacrificed to him: Sometimes he would sit with a golden Beard, and a Thunderbolt in his hand like **Jupiter**; and sometimes with a Trident like **Neptune.** Some persons would be more deserving, if (as **Solon** says) we could pluck the Worm of Pride out of their head. Pride discolors our Virtues, envenoms our mercies. The higher we lift up ourselves in pride, the lower God casts us down. Proverbs 15.25. **The Lord will destroy the house of the proud.** There is,

1. A **Spiritual Pride**; which is threefold.

1. Some take a pride in their **parts**. The Lord enriches them with Wit and Parts suitable to the places he calls them to, and Pride fumes from their heart into their head, and makes them giddy. **Herod** was proud of the Oration he made, and assumed that glory to himself, which he should have given to God, and his pride brought him low; **he was eaten of worms**, Acts 12.23.

2. Some take a pride in their **duties**. This Worm breeds in sweet fruit. They have said so many prayers, heard so many Sermons; Luke 18.12. **I fast twice a week**, and now they think they have made God amends, he is beholden to them, and they shall be accepted for their Religious performances. What is this but pride? Is not this to make a **Christ** of our duties? The Devil destroys some by making them neglect duty, and others by making them idolize duty. Better is that infirmity which humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud.

3. Some take a pride in their **Graces**. This seems strange, that seeing Grace is given to humble, any should be proud of his Grace. But Pride is not from the **Grace** in us, but the **corruption**; not from the strength of holiness, but the weakness. Christians may be said to be proud of their Grace,

1. When they lay too much stress upon their Grace; Thus **Peter**, Matthew 26.33. **Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will not I**. Here was a double pride. First, That he thought he had more Grace, than the rest of the Apostles. Secondly, In that he did lay such weight upon his **Grace**, making it like the **Tower of David**, on which did hang the **shield** of his hope. He leaned more upon his Grace, than upon Christ.

2. Men are proud of their Grace, when they slight others which they think are inferior to them in Grace. Instead of **the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak**, Romans 15.1. They are ready to despise the weak. Our Savior saw this pride breeding in his own Disciples, therefore cautions them against it, Matthew 18.10. **Take heed, that ye despise not one of these little ones.**

2. There is a **carnal** pride. I call it carnal, because it is conversant about carnal objects. As,

1. Some are proud of their **bodies**. Pride is seen in long and tedious dressings: people spend that time between the Comb and the Glass, which should be spent in prayer and holy meditation.

Pride is seen in painting of their faces, overlaying God's work, with the Devil's colors.

—Gratior est pulchro veniens è corpore virtus—

Pride is seen in spotting themselves. Pimples in the face, show that the blood is corrupt; spots in the face, show that the heart is corrupt. **Cyprian** says, they who paint and spot their faces may justly fear that at the resurrection their Creator will not know them. And how terrible is that word, **I know you not.**

Pride is seen in the strange antic fashions wherewith some people do dress, or rather disguise themselves. They clothe their flesh like the Rainbow with diverse colors. **Adam** was ashamed of his **nakedness**, these may be ashamed of their **clothing**. They are so plumed and gaudily attired that they tempt the Devil to fall in love with them.

2. Some are proud of their **estates**. Riches are fuel for pride Ezekiel 28.5. **Thy heart is lifted up because of thy riches**. Men's hearts rise with their estates, as the Boats on the **Thames** rise higher with the Tide. Now all this pride will bring a person low. For this sin God strikes many with Frenzy, and so levels the Mountain of pride. God has stained the pride of **England's** glory, Isaiah 23.9. He has stripped us of our Jewels, Proverbs 16.8. **Pride goes before destruction**. Where pride leads the Van, destruction brings up the Rear.

—Tolluntur in altum, ut lapsu graviore ruant—

2. Another sin which has brought us low, is Sabbath-profana-tion. The Sabbath is given as a distinctive **Sign** between the people of God, and the profane. Exodus 31.17. And among the Primitive Saints, when the question was asked, **Hast thou kept the Lord's Day?** the answer was, **I am a Christian, and dare not omit the celebration of this day**. The Lord has commanded the observation of the Sabbath under a **subpoena**. He has enclosed this day for himself: He has set a hedge about it. **Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day**. But how is this enclosure made common? This blessed day which is made purposely for communion with God, is become a day of perambulation. People frequent the Fields or Taverns, more than the holy assemblies. **O that our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears!** That we **might weep**, To see men pollute what God himself has consecrated. If they are to take Physic, it must be on the Lord's Day; if they are to make Feasts or Visits, it must be on this day. And so in a profane sense, **they call the Sabbath a delight**. Sabbath-breaking is Sacrilege; 'tis a robbing God of his due. People take that time which should be dedicated

wholly to the Lord, and spend it in the service of the Devil and their lusts: and has not this sin brought us low? God threatens Jeremiah 17.27. **If ye will not hearken to me, to hallow the Sabbath Day, then will I kindle a fire.** I observe, the devouring Fire which broke out in **London**, began on the Sabbath Day; as if God would tell us from Heaven, he was now punishing us, for our profaning his day.

3. The third sin which has brought us low, is neglect of Family-worship. Religion in men's families, is brought low. **No reading of Scripture**; they look oftener upon a pair of Cards, than a Bible. **No praying**; 'tis made the note of a reprobate, **He calls not upon God**, Psalm 14.4. The Atheist will be sure his prayer shall not be **turned into sin**, for he never prays at all. The **Grecians** asked counsel of their feigned Gods by their **Oracles**, the **Persians** by their **Magi**, the **Gauls** by their **Druids**, the **Romans** by their **Augurs**: Shall Ethnics pray, and not Christians? Creatures by the instinct of nature cry to God, Psalm 147.9. **The young Ravens which cry.** Prayer has no enemies, unless infernal spirits, and such as are near of Kin to them.

Keys that are often used are bright, but if they be laid aside and never used, they grow rusty: so it is with men's hearts, if they are not used to family-prayer, they will be rusted over with sin.

For this God has brought us low. Why did he pull down many houses in this City, but because they were unhallowed houses, there was no prayer in them.

How do we think to have a blessing from God, if we never ask it? Then God should do more for us, than he did for his own Son. Hebrews 5.7. **In the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers,**

with strong cries and tears.

4. Another sin which has brought us low, is Covenant-violation. Psalm 78.10. **They kept not the Covenant of God.** Verse 50. **He made a way to his anger, he spared not their souls from death.** The **Carthaginians** were noted for Covenant-breaking. O that this sin had died with them. Does not this poisonous Weed grow in our soil? Did not we make a vow in Baptism, to **fight under Christ's banner, against world, flesh and Devil?** Did not we solemnly covenant to be the Lord's people, to shine in sanctity, going each one before another in an exemplary Reformation? Deuteronomy 5.28, 29. **They have well said, in all that they have spoken, O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me and keep my commandments!** We have much **conforming**, but where is **reforming?** Is not Jesus Christ opposed in his Kingly Office? This is the great Controversy, who shall reign, Sin or Christ? for this God has been as a **Moth** to us, and we may fear lest he make good that commination, Leviticus 26.25. **I will bring a Sword that shall avenge the quarrel of my Covenant.**

5. Another sin which has brought us low, is the abuse of the Gospel. We are sick of **Israels** disease: they despised Manna, Numbers 21:5. **Our soul loatheth this light bread.** We did nauseate the bread of life. The Gospel is the visible token of God's presence, it is the sacred Conduit-pipe, that empties the golden Oil of mercy into us, it is the Glass in which we see the face of Christ, it is the Celestial banquet wherewith God doth cheer and refocillate the souls of his people. But was there not a Gospel surfeit in **England?** People had **itching ears**, and knew not who to hear, and has not our curiosity brought us to scarcity? God had no better

way to raise the price of the Gospel, than by abating the plenty. God surely did bring us low, when darkness did overspread our Horizon, and the Lord suffered so many hundred Lights to be at one time put under a bushel. The **Egyptian** Priests of old, told the people when any Eclipse happened, that the Gods were angry, and great miseries would follow. What sad catastrophes have ensued this spiritual Eclipse, is not unknown.

6. Another sin which has brought us low, is Covetousness. When men's Spirits are low, and with the Serpent they **lick the dust**, then God lays them in the dust, Isaiah 57:17. **For the iniquity of his Covetousness, I was wroth and smote him.** Covetousness is the Dropsy of the soul; men are set upon the world, when God is plucking it from them. Covetousness is a Key that opens the door to further wickedness. —opes irritamenta malorum— 1 Timothy 6:10. **The love of money, is the root of all evil.** A covetous man will stick at no sin. This made **Absalom** attempt to dethrone his Father; this made **Ahab** stone **Naboth**.

And what is one the better for all his wealth at death? 1 Timothy 6:10. **We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.** When the rich Miser dies, what scrambling is there? His friends are scrambling for his goods, the worms are scrambling for his body, and the Devils are scrambling for his soul.

This sin is most uncomely in those that profess better. They pretend to live by faith, and yet are as worldly and griping as others. These are **spots** in the face of Religion, Jeremiah 45:5. **Seekest thou great things for thyself?** For this sin God has brought us low, he has made our Fig-tree to wither, and suffered the Palmer-worm to eat our Vine.

7. Another sin which has brought us low, is Barrenness under the Means of Grace, Hosea 10:1. **Israel is an empty Vine**; his juice runs out only into leaves. We have had much pruning and dressing, the silver drops of Heaven have fallen upon us, but we have not brought forth the fruits of humility and repentance; we can discourse of Religion, but this is only to bring forth **leaves**, not **fruit**: non-proficiency has laid us **low**, and we may fear will **lay us waste**; God may pull up the hedge, and let in a foreign Wild-Boar.

Ursin tells us, that those who fled out of **England** in Queen **Mary's** days, acknowledged that that calamity befell them for their great unprofitableness under the Means of Grace in King **Edward's** days. What man will sow seed in barren ground? If the Lord lays out his cost, and sees no good return, the next word will be, **Cut down the tree, why cumpers it the ground?**

8. Another sin that has brought us low, is the sin of swearing. Christ says, **Swear not at all**, Matthew 5:34. And a godly man is said **to fear an Oath**, Ecclesiastes 9:2. Truly it is a matter of tears, we can hardly go in the Streets, but our ears are crucified with hearing of Oaths and Cursings. **Chrysostom** spent most of his Sermons at **Antioch** against swearers; we need many **Chrysostoms** nowadays, to preach against this sin. This may well be called **the unfruitful work of darkness**, for it is a sin has neither pleasure nor profit in it. How do men shoot their Oaths, as chain-bullets against Heaven? I knew a great swearer (saith Reverend Mister **Bolton**) whose heart Satan so filled, that on his death-bed, he swore as fast as he could, and desired the bystanders to help him with Oaths, and to swear for him. Will the Lord reckon with men for idle Words, what will he do for sinful Oaths? For ev-

ery Oath a man swears, God puts a drop of wrath in his Vial. Nay, usually God's judgements overtake the swearer in this life. I have read of a **German** Boy who was given to swearing, and did use to invent new Oaths, the Lord sent a Canker into his mouth which did eat out his tongue.

But says one, it is my custom to swear, and I cannot leave it.

Is this a good plea? As if a Thief should plead to a Judge not to condemn him, because it is his custom to rob and steal; therefore will the Judge say, thou shalt the rather die. This sin has brought us low, Jeremiah 23:10. **For because of swearing the Land mourneth.**

9. Another sin which has brought us low, and is like to bring us yet lower, is uncleanness. The adulterer's heart is a Mount **Aetna** burning with lust. Adultery is the shipwreck of chastity, the murder of conscience. It was said of **Rome** of old, it was become a **Stews**,—Urbs est jam tota Lupanar— I wish it might not be verified of many parts of this Land.

Adultery is a **brutish** sin, Jeremiah 5:8. **They neighed every one after his neighbour's Wife.** It is a **branded** sin; it doth not only stigmatize men's names, **Proverbs** 6:33. But God makes them carry the marks of this sin in their **Bodies**: it is a **costly sin**; it proves a **Purgatory** to the Purse, **Proverbs** 6:26. **By means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread.** There is no coming to an Harlot, but as **Jupiter** did to **Danae** in a golden shower. It is a **confounding sin**.

—laeta venire Venus, tristis abire solet—

The adulterer hastens his own death. The **Romans** were wont to have their Funerals at the Gate of **Venus** Temple: to signify that lust ends in death. The adulterer takes a short cut to Hell. Proverbs 26:23, 27. **Till a dart strike through his Liver.**

Creatures void of reason, will rise up in judgement against such. The Turtle-Dove is an Hieroglyphic of chastity. The Stork comes into no Nest but his own, and if any Stork leaves his Mate, and joins with another, all the rest fall upon him, and pluck his feathers from him. God will **chiefly** punish such as **walk in the lust of uncleanness.** 2 Peter 2:10. This sin has brought us low. The fire of lust has kindled the fire of God's anger.

10. Another sin which has brought us low, is our unbrotherly animosities, Matthew 12:25. **A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.** The **Turks** pray that the Christians may be kept at variance; we have in a great measure fulfilled the **Turks'** prayer. — *rara est concordia fratrum*— What seeds of dissension are sown among us, how are we crumbled into Parties! One is for **Paul**, and another for **Apollo**, but I fear few for Christ. Our divisions have given much advantage to the Popish adversary. When there is a breach made in the wall of a Castle, there the enemy enters. If the Popish enemy enter, it will be at our breaches. These divisions have cut the **lock** where our strength lay. Cut off the top of the Beech-tree, and the whole body of the tree withers. Divisions have taken away unity and amity, here is the top of the Beech-tree cut off, and this has made us to wither apace. These are the sins which have brought us low, and if the Lord prevent not; are like to bring **England's** gray hairs with **sorrow to the grave.**

5. Hence I infer, if sin brings a person low, then what madness is it for any one to be in love with sin? 2 Thessalonians 2:12. **Who take pleasure in iniquity.** The Devil can so cook and dress sin, that it pleases the sinner's palate. But hear what **Job** says, Job 20:12, 14. **Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, it is the gall of Asps within him. Herodotus** writeth of the River **Hypanis**, that near to the fountain, the water is sweet, but a few leagues off it is exceeding bitter. Sin will bring one low, who would love such an enemy? The forbidden fruit is sauced with **bitter herbs.** Sin is a **Serpent by the way that biteth.** Genesis 49:17. When you are about to commit sin, say to your soul, as **Boaz** said to his Kinsman, Ruth 4:4. **What day thou buyest the Field, thou must have Ruth with it.** So if thou wilt have the sweet of sin, thou must have the curse with it, it will bring thee low. To love sin, is to love a disease. A sinner is perfectly distracted. **Solomon** speaks of a generation of men, **Madness is in their heart while they live,** Ecclesiastes 9:3. 'Tis true of those who love sin, sin puts a worm into conscience, a thorn into death, yet that men should love sin, **Madness is in their heart.** There is no creature doth willingly destroy itself but man. Sin is a Silken Halter, yet he loves it. O remember that saying of Saint **Augustine**, the pleasure of sin is soon gone, but the sting remains.

6. See what little cause we have to envy sinners, Proverbs 3:31. **Envy thou not the Oppressor.** Men are high in worldly Grandeur, God has given them large estates, and they sin with their estates, but though they build among the Stars, God will bring them down, Ezekiel 28:18. **I will bring thee to ashes.** Who would envy men their greatness, their sins will bring them low. Deuteronomy 32:35. **Their foot shall slide in due time.**

There is a Story of a **Roman**, who was by a Court-Martial condemned to die, for breaking his rank to steal a bunch of Grapes; and as he was going to execution, some of the Soldiers envied him that he had Grapes, and they had none; says he, Do ye envy me my Grapes? I must pay dear for them. So the wicked must pay dear for what they have.

The prosperity of the wicked, is a great temptation to the godly; **David** stumbled at it, and had like to have fallen, Psalm 73:2. **My steps had well nigh slipped, for I was envious at the foolish, etc.** We are ready to **murmur** when we see ourselves low, and **envy** when we see the wicked high. Sinners live in a serene Climate, under a perpetual calm, Psalm 73:5. **They are not in trouble as other men, their eyes stand out with fatness.** It is said of **Polycrates** King of **Egypt**, that he never met with any cross in his life. And **Alexander** hearing that **Parmenio** his General had won the Victory, and his young Son **Alexander** was born the same day, prayed the Gods to spice his joy with some bitterness, lest he should surfeit of too much joy. But this prosperous state of the wicked is matter rather of **pity**, than **envy**, their sins will bring them low, Isaiah 14:12. **How art thou fallen from Heaven O Lucifer, Son of the Morning.** 'Tis spoken of the **Chaldean** Monarch, who though high had a sudden change befell him, Isaiah 47:1. **Come down and sit in the dust. Babylon** was the Lady of Kingdoms, but saith God, **Sit in the dust.** Go in **Pistrinum** into the Mill-house, Verse 2. **Take the Mill-stones and grind.** So will God say to the wicked, come down from all your pomp and glory, **sit in the dust**, nay, sit among the damned, and there grind at Mill. The Lord will proportion torment, to all

the pleasure the wicked have had, Revelation 18:7. **How much she hath lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.**

7. See the great difference between sin and Grace, sin brings a man low, but Grace lifts him high. Sin tumbles him in the ditch, but Grace sets him upon the Throne, Psalm 91:14. **I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.** Grace raises a person four ways.

1. Grace raises his **Projects**, his designs are high. He looks not at things **which are seen**, 2 Corinthians 4:18. His eye is above the Stars, he aims at the enjoying of God. A clownish Rustic when he goes to the Court, is much taken with the gay Pictures and Hangings, but a Privy Counselor passes by those things as scarce worthy of his notice, his business is with the King. So a carnal mind, is much taken with the things of the world, but a Saint passes by these gay things with a holy contempt, his business is with God, 1 John 1:3. **Our Communion is with the Father and his Son Jesus.** A Christian of the right breed does aspire after the things **within the Veil**, his ambition is the favor of God, he looks no lower than a Crown; he is in the altitudes, and trades among the Angels.

2. Grace raises a man's **Repute**. It embalms his name. 1 Samuel 18:30. **David's name was much set by;** or as the Original carries it, it was **precious**. Hebrews 11:2. **By faith the Elders obtained a good report.** How renowned were the godly Patriarchs for their sanctity! **Moses** for his self-denial, **Job** for his patience, **Phineas** for his zeal. What a fresh perfume do their names send forth to this day. A good name is a Saint's **Heir**, it lives when he is dead.

3. Grace raises a man's worth, Proverbs 12:26. **The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor.** As the Flower of the Roses in Spring, as the fat of the Peace-offering, as the precious stones upon **Aaron's** Breast-plate, so is a Saint in God's eye. Besides the shining lustre of the Gold, it has an internal worth, and is of great price and value: So Grace does not only make a man's name shine, but it puts a real worth into him, **he is more excellent than his neighbor.** A Heart full of love to God is precious. It is God's **Hephzibah**, or delight, it is the **apple of his eye**, it is his **jewel**, it is his **Garden of Spices**, it is his lesser Heaven where he dwells, Isaiah 57:17. **I dwell with him that is of a humble spirit.**

4. Grace raises a man's **privilege**; it advances him into the heavenly kindred. By it he is **born of God**, 1 John 3:1. He is a **Prince in all Lands**, Psalm 45:16. (though in this world like a Prince in disguise). He is **higher than the Kings of the earth**, Psalm 89:27. Allied to Angels. In short, Grace lifts a man up where Christ is, far above all Heavens.

And Grace raises a **Nation** as well as a Person, Proverbs 14:34. **Righteousness exalts a Nation.**

8. If sin brings one low, see what an imprudent choice they make, who commit sin to avoid trouble. Job 36:21. **Take heed, regard not iniquity, for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.** This was a false charge against **Job**, but many may be indicted of such folly; **they choose iniquity, rather than affliction.** To avoid poverty, they will lie and cozen, to avoid a Prison, they will comply against their conscience. What imprudence is this, when sin draws such dark shadows after it, and entails misery upon all its heirs and successors. By committing sin, to

avoid trouble, we meet with greater trouble. **Origen** to save himself from suffering, sprinkled Incense before the Idol, and being after to preach, as he opened his Bible, he did accidentally light on that Text, Psalm 50:16. **But to the wicked God says, what has thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth;** at the sight of which Scripture, he fell into a passion of weeping, and was so stricken with grief and consternation, that he was not able to speak a word to the people, but came down the Pulpit. **Spira** sinned against his conscience to save his life and estate, **he chose iniquity rather than affliction;** but what a Hell did he feel in his conscience, he professed he envied **Cain**, and **Judas**, as thinking their condition **more eligible**. His sin did bring him low. O what unparalleled folly is it **to choose sin rather than affliction**. Affliction is like a rent in the **Coat**, sin is like a rent in the **flesh**. He that to save himself from trouble, commits sin, is like one, that to save his Mantle, lets his flesh be torn. Affliction has a promise made to it, 2 **Samuel 22:28**. but there is no promise made to sin.

Sure then they do ill consult for themselves, who choose rather sin than suffering; who to avoid a lesser evil, choose a greater; to avoid the stinging of a Gnat, run into the Paw of a Lion.

9. If God brings his own people low for sin (**Israel** were brought low) then how low will he bring the wicked? **David** was in the **deep waters**, and **Jonah** went down to **the bottom of the Mountains**, Chapter 2:6. and **Jeremiah** was in the **deep dungeon**, then what a gulf of misery shall swallow up the reprobate part of the world? God's people do not allow themselves in sin, **Romans 7:15**. They tremble at it, they hate it, yet they suffer; if they that blush at their failings are brought low, what will become

of them that boast of their scandals? **If this be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?** If the godly lie **among the pots**, Psalm 68:13. the wicked shall lie among the Devils. **If judgment begins at the house of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel?** 1 Peter 4:17. If God mingles his people's cup with **wormwood**, he will mingle the sinner's cup with **fire and brimstone**, Psalm 11:6. If God thresh the Wheat, he will burn the Chaff. If the Lord afflicts them whom he loves, how severe will he be against them whom he hates? They shall feel **the second death**, Revelation 21:8.

Use 2. Exhortation, 1. Branch. 1. If sin brings a person low, then let us fear to come near sin; it will bring us either into affliction or worse. Its foul face may offend, but its breath kills. Sin is the **Apollyon**, the Man-devourer. O that we were as wise for our souls, as we are for our bodies! How afraid are we of that meat which we know will bring the Gout or Stone, or will make our Ague return. Sin is aguish meat which will put conscience into a shaking fit, and shall we not be afraid to touch this forbidden fruit? Genesis 39:9. **How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?** When the Empress **Eudoxia** threatened to banish **Chrysostom**, Tell her (says he) **I fear nothing but sin**. It was a saying of **Anselm**, if Hell were on one side, and sin were on the other, I would rather leap into Hell, than willingly commit sin. Love will be apt to grow wanton, if it be not poised with holy fear. No better Curb or Antidote against sin, than fear, Deuteronomy 17:13. **They shall fear, and do no more presumptuously.** If we could see Hell fire in every sin, it would make us fear to commit it. The fiercest creatures dread fire. When **Moses's rod** was turned into a Serpent, he was afraid and fled from it: Sin will prove

a stinging Serpent, O fly from it. Most people are like the **Leviathan, made without fear**, Job 41:33. They play upon **the hole of the Asp**. Sinners never fear till they feel. Nothing will convince them, but fire and brimstone.

2. If sin brings a person low, then when we are brought low under God's afflicting hand, let us behave ourselves wisely and as becomes Christians. I shall show,

1. What we must not do when we are brought low.

When our condition is low, let not our passions be high; impatience is not the way to get out of trouble, but rather to go lower into trouble. What gets the Child by struggling, but more blows? Oh do not lisp out a murmuring word against God. Murmuring is the scum which boils off from a discontented heart, Psalm 39:9. **I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.** David's ear was open to hear the voice of the Rod, but his mouth was not open in complaining. Christian, who should you complain of, but yourself? your own sin has brought you low.

2. What we must do when we are brought low.

1. Let us search the sin which is the cause of our trouble, Job 10:2. **Show me wherefore thou contendest with me:** Lord, What is that sin which has provoked thee to bring me low? Lamentations 3:40. **Let us search and try our ways.** As the people of **Israel**, when they were worsted in battle, searched the cause, and at last found out the **Achan** that troubled them, and stoned him to death. Joshua 7:18. So let us search out that **Achan** which has troubled us. Perhaps our sin was censoriousness, we have been ready to judge, and slander others; and now we ourselves lie under an **evil tongue**, and have false reports raised on

us: perhaps our sin was pride, and God has sent poverty as a thorn to humble us. Perhaps our sin was remissness in holy duties, we had forgot our **first love**, and were ready to fall into slumbering fits, and God has sent a sharp cross to awaken us out of our security. We may oftentimes read our sin in our punishment. O let us search the **Achan**, and say as **Job**, Chapter 34:32. **If I have done iniquity, I will do so no more.**

2. When we are brought low, let us justify God. God is just, not only when he punishes the guilty, but when he afflicts the righteous. Let us take heed of entertaining hard thoughts of God, as if he had dealt too severely with us, and had put too much Wormwood in our Cup: No, let us vindicate God, and say as the Emperor **Mauritius**, when he saw five of his Sons slain before his eyes, by **Phocas**, **Righteous art thou O Lord in all thy ways.** Let us speak well of God. If we have never so much affliction, yet not one drop of injustice, Psalm 97:2. **Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his Throne.**

3. When we are brought low in affliction, let us bring ourselves low in humiliation. 1 Peter 5:6. **Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.** When we are in the Valley of Tears, we must be in the Valley of Humility. Lamentations 3:19. **Remembering the Wormwood and the Gall, my soul has them continually in remembrance, and is humbled in me.** If our condition be low, then is a time to have our hearts lie low.

4. When we are brought low in affliction, let us be low upon our knees in prayer. Psalm 130:1. **Ex Profundis Clamavi—Out of the depths have I cried unto thee O Lord.** Psalm 79:8. **Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us, for we are**

brought very low. Jacob never prayed so fervently, as when he was in fear of his life; he oiled the Key of prayer with tears, Hosea 12:4. **He wept and made supplication.** One reason why God lets us be brought low, is to heighten a Spirit of prayer.

But what should we pray for in affliction? Let us pray that all our Hell may be here. As **Pilate** said concerning Christ, Luke 23:22. **I will chastise him, and let him go.** So pray that God when he does chastise us, **will let us go**, that he will free us from Hell and Damnation. Let us pray rather for the sanctification of affliction, than the **removal**; pray that the Rod may be a Divine Pencil, to draw God's Image more lively upon our souls, Hebrews 12:10. That affliction may be a Furnace to **refine**, not **consume** us. Pray, that if God do **correct** us, it may not be in **anger**, Psalm 6:1. That we may taste the honey of his love at the **end of the rod.** Let it be our prayer, that God will lay no more upon us, than he will enable us to bear. That if the burden be heavier, our shoulders may be stronger.

5. When we are brought low, let our faith be high. Let us believe that God intends us no hurt. That though he casts us into the deep, he will not drown us. Believe that still he is a Father; he afflicts us in as much mercy, as he gives Christ to us. He does by his **rod of Discipline** fit us for the inheritance, **Colossians** 1:12. O let this Star of faith appear in the dark night of affliction. **Jonah's** faith was never more in Heaven, than when he lay in the belly of Hell, **Jonah** 2:4.

6. When we are brought low in affliction, let us labor to be bettered by being brought low. Pick some good out of the cross; get some **honey** out of this **Lion.** The wicked are worse for affliction.

Weeds stamped in a Mortar are more unsavory. 2 Chronicles 28:22. **In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord. This is that King Ahaz.**

But let us labor to be meliorated, and made better by affliction. Christ **learned obedience** by what he suffered, **Hebrews** 5:8. If we are brought low in affliction and get no good, then the affliction is lost.

When are we bettered by afflictions?

When our eyes are more opened, and we are not only **chastened**, but **taught**. Psalm 94:12. Wormwood is bitter to the taste, but is good to clear the eyesight; then our spiritual eyesight is cleared,

1. When we see more of God's **holiness**. He is a jealous and sin-hating God; he will not suffer evil in his own children to go unpunished, if they make light of sin, he will make their chain heavy, **Lamentations** 3:2.

2. When we have a clearer insight into ourselves. We see more of our hearts than we did before; we see that earthliness, impatience, distrust of God, which we did not discover before. We never thought we had such a flux of corruption, or that there had been so much of the old man in the new man. The fire of affliction makes that scum of sin boil up, which before lay hid. When our eyesight is thus cleared, and both the **rod** and the **lamp** go together, now we are bettered by affliction.

2. When our hearts are softened. Affliction is God's furnace where he melts his gold, Jeremiah 9:7. **I will melt them and try them**. When our eyes are more watery, our thoughts more serious, our consciences more tender, when we can say as **Job**,

Chapter 23:16. **God makes my heart soft.** This melting of the heart whereby we are fitted to receive the impression of the Holy Ghost, is a blessed sign we are bettered by affliction.

3. When our wills are subdued. Micah 7:9. **I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.** Why doth God bring us low, but to tame our cursed hearts? A wicked man is, when he is brought low he quarrels with God: therefore is compared to a **wild Bull in a net**, Isaiah 51:20. If you go to rub a piece of stuff which is rotten, it frets and tears: So when God rubs a wicked man by affliction, he frets and tears himself with vexation, Isaiah 8:21. **They shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God.**

But when our spirits are calmed, and we are wrought to a sweet submission to God's will; we **accept of the punishment**, Leviticus 26:41, and do **in patience possess our souls**, Luke 21:19. When we say as **Eli**, 1 Samuel 3:18. **It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.** I know this trial is in mercy; God will rather afflict me, than lose me, let him hedge me with thorns, if he will plant me with flowers; **Let him do what seemeth him good:** now we are bettered by the affliction.

4. When sin is purged out. Isaiah 27:9. **This is all the fruit to take away iniquity.** Our hearts are dreggish and sinful, our Gold is mixed with Dross, our Stars with Clouds; now when affliction consumes pride, formality, hypocrisy, when God's Lance lets out our spiritual Imposthume, then we are bettered by affliction.

5. When our hearts are more unglued from the world; What are all these under-moon things! The **cares** of the world, exceed the **comforts**. The Emblem that King **Henry** the seventh used, was,

a Crown of Gold, hung in a bush of Thorns. Many who have escaped the Rocks of scandalous sins, have been cast away upon the Golden sands. The **Arabic** Proverb is, **The world is a carcass, and they that hunt after it are dogs.** Is not love of the world become almost the epidemic Disease? If the Lord bestows a plentiful estate upon men, they are apt to make an Idol of it. And therefore God is forced to take that out of their hand, which kept him out of their heart. Now when the Lord comes and afflicts any of us in that which we most love, he hits us in the **apple of our eye**, and our hearts grow more dead to the world, and sick of love to Christ; when God hath been withering our **gourd**, and our affections to it begin to wither, when he hath been digging about our root, and we are more loosened from the earth, then we are bettered by affliction.

6. When affliction hath produced more appetite to the Word. Perhaps in health and prosperity, we and the Bible seldom meet, or if we did chance to read, it was in a dull cursory manner, but the Lord by embittering the breast of the creature, hath made us run to the breast of a Promise; and we can say as **David**, Psalm 119:103. **How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey. Solomon** saith **truly the light is sweet.** Ecclesiastes 11:7. But we can say, **truly the Word is sweet**, We have tasted Christ in a Promise, the Word hath caused an exuberancy of joy, **Psalm** 19:8. This is the Manna we love to feed upon; every leaf of Scripture drops Myrrh, and as a rich Cordial cheers our spirit; when it is thus, now we are bettered by our trials, **Psalm** 119:50.

7. When our title to Heaven is more confirmed. In prosperity, we are more careless in **getting**, at least in **clearing** our spiritual title. People would be loath their evidences for their Land, were no better, than their evidences for Heaven. Many a man's evidence for glory is either **forged** or **blotted**; he is not able to read any discriminating work of God's Spirit, he is pendulous, and hangs in a doubtful suspense, not knowing whether he hath Grace or no; now when we are brought low in affliction and we fall to the work of self-examination, we see how matters stand between God and our souls, we turn over every leaf of the Book of conscience, we make a critical descant upon our hearts and after a thorough survey of ourselves, we can say, **We know the grace of God in truth**, Colossians 1:6. **We have received the holy anointing** 1 John 2:27. Our Grace will bear the **touchstone**, though not the **balance**, certainly then we have made a good proficiency in the time of affliction, and are bettered by it.

8. When we grow more fruitful in Grace. A Christian should be like the Olive tree, **fair and of goodly fruit**, Jeremiah 11:16. There is a tree in the Isle of **Pomona** which hath its fruit folded and wrapped up in the leaves of it. An emblem of a good Christian, who hath the fruits of Grace wrapped up in the leaves of his profession. Now after pruning, what fruits have we brought forth? The fruits of obedience, love, self-denial, meekness, heavenliness, longing to be with Christ? If the sharp Frost of affliction hath brought on the Spring flowers of Grace, which the Apostle calls, the **peaceable fruits of righteousness**, Hebrews 12:11, then we are bettered by affliction. A fruitful heart is better than a full Crop.

9. When we do really commiserate and put on bowels to such as are in a suffering condition.

Haud ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

Jesus Christ having suffered **is touched with our infirmity**, Hebrews 4:15. Having felt hunger and cold, he knows how to pity us. Before we have drunk of the bitter Cup, instead of pitying others in misery, we are ready to despise them. Psalm 123:4. **Our soul is filled with the scorning of them which are at ease.** But when we have been under the Harrow, and can sympathize with our suffering Brethren, and **weep with them that weep**; this is a sign we are bettered by the affliction. In Music, when one string is touched, all the rest sound: so our **bowels sound as an harp**, Isaiah 16:11.

10. When we have learned to bless God in affliction. Job 1:21. **The Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord:** Many can bless God, when he is giving; **Job** blesseth him when he takes away. This is excellent, not only to praise God when we are upon the Mountain of Prosperity, but in the Valley of adversity, Deuteronomy 8:10. **When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord.** But it is a greater matter when we are empty and in want, then to bless him, 1 Thessalonians 5:18. **In every thing give thanks.**

But what should we bless God for in affliction? We are to bless God that it is no worse with us. He might have put more Gall in our Cup, **Ezra** 9:14. We are to bless God, that he will choose rather to **correct** us in the world, than to **condemn** us with the world, 1 **Corinthians** 11:32. That he hath made affliction a means to prevent sin; that he proportions our strength to our trials; that he gives us any support in our trouble, **Psalm** 112:4. Though he doth not **break** our yoke, yet he **lines** our yoke with inward peace, and makes it soft and pleasant. We are to bless God that he deals with

us as **Children**, setting his seal of affliction on us, and so marking us for his own; We are to bless God, that Christ hath taken the sting out of the Cross; that there is an **hope** of better things **laid up for us in Heaven**, Colossians 1:5. When we can upon these considerations break forth into an holy gratitude and triumph in affliction, this is to be bettered by affliction, and it shows a **Spirit of God and glory rests upon us**, 1 Peter 4:14.

To bless God in Heaven, when he is crowning us with glory, is no wonder; but to bless God when he is correcting us, to bless him in a Prison, to give thanks on a sickbed; not only to kiss the Rod, but to bless the hand that holds it; here is the Sun in the **Zenith**, this speaks an high degree of Grace, indeed, and doth very much adorn our sufferings.

If we can find these sweet fruits of the Cross, we may assure ourselves the affliction is **sanctified**; and we may say as **David**, Psalm 119:71. **It is good for me, that I was afflicted**: and then, God will throw away the Rod, and make us glad after the days of our mourning, Ezekiel 16:42. **So will I make my fury towards thee to rest, and my jealousy shall depart from thee, and I will be quiet, and will be no more angry.**

3. If sin brings us low, let us labor to bring our sins low. Let all our spite be at sin; let us pursue it with an holy malice. Sin hath brought us even to the dust, and would bring us lower into the abyss of Hell, let us then shed the blood of sin, which would shed our blood, Colossians 3:5. **Mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, etc.** We are apt to plead for sin, **Is it not a little one?** Who would plead for him that seeks his life? We are ready to say to the Minister concerning sin, as **David** to **Joab** concerning **Absalom**, 2 Samuel 18:5. **Deal**

gently with the young man. So, Sir, deal gently with my sins; Oh be not too sharp in your reproofs; Why? Doth not the traitor sin, seek to take away thy Crown of glory, as **Absalom** did his Father's Crown? Would it not bring thee low? If therefore thou art wise, spare it not. Do with thy sin, as **Joab** with **Absalom**; he took **three darts** in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of **Absalom**; 2 Samuel 18:14. So take these three darts, the Word of God, Prayer, Mortification, and strike through the heart of thy lusts that they die. As **Samson** dealt with the **Philistines**, they brought him low, they **put out his eyes**, and he never left till he was revenged on them, and brought them low, Judges 16:30. **He bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell upon the Lords**, etc. **Samson** died, we live by the death of our enemies. O that every day, some limb of the **old man** may drop off. What is the end of all a Christian's duties, praying and hearing, but to weaken and mortify lust? Why is this spiritual Physic taken, but to kill the child of sin he goes with? Sin will insinuate itself, and plead for a reprieve, but show it no mercy. **Saul's** sparing **Agag**, lost him the Kingdom, and your sparing sin, will lose you the Kingdom of Heaven.

Lastly, Let this make us weary of living in the world, for while we live we sin, and sin brings us low. We eat the **forbidden fruit**, and then are sick after it. How should this make us long to have our pass to be gone, and cry, **O that we had the wings of a Dove, to fly away, and be at rest.** Then we shall shake off those Vipers which leaped upon us, 1 Corinthians 3.22. **Death is yours.** At death we shall have an eternal **Jubilee**, and be freed from all encumbrances.

Sin shall be no more; Death smites a Believer, as the Angel smote **Peter** on his side, and made his Chains fall off, **Acts** 12.7. So death smites a Believer, and makes the Chains of his sins fall off.

Trouble shall be no more; This lower Region is full of Storms. Troubles and vexations are some of the **thorns** with which the earth is cursed. But in the Grave, a Believer has his **quietus est; There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest,** Job 3.17. God will shortly **wipe away all tears.** Revelation 7.17. How should this make the Saints **desire to be dissolved,** Philippians 1.23. **Israel's** being so often stung with Serpents, made them weary of the Wilderness, and aspire after **Canaan.** The discourtesies a Prince meets with in a strange Land, make him long to be in his own Country, when the Crown-royal shall be set upon his head. When we are with Christ, we shall be brought low no more. We shall never be fixed Stars, till we are in Heaven.

O the felicity of glorified Saints; they have a full-eyed vision of God, and those refulgent beams of Glory are darted from his blessed face, as delight, yea, ravish their hearts with ineffable joy. The Birds of the fortunate Islands, are nourished with Perfumes; after death the Saints shall be forever nourished with the Aromatics and Perfumes of their Savior's Love.

FINIS.

THANKS FOR READING



If you spotted a typo or have feedback, the email is **sam@goodsoilapps.com** — or use the in-app feedback form in *Christian Reader*.