

P. No man is likely to do that, to which his heart is not first disposed, and which he is not resolved to do.

M. You see, then, the case is plain, that every one who will be Christ's disciple, must forsake the world in heart and resolution. "If any one love the world in an inordinate degree, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John ii. 15.

By this time you may perceive, if you are willing, whether your faith in Christ, and trust in God, have been true or false. And now tell me, what else you have to prove, that your hope of salvation is built on God?

P. My next proof is, that I hope I truly repent of my sins: and God hath promised to forgive them that repent.

M. Repentance is a good evidence as well as faith: but here you must be sure to understand well what true repentance is.

P. To repent, is to be sorry for my sins, when I have committed them, and to wish I had never done them.

M. If you know repentance no better than this, you may be undone by the mistake. True repentance is such a settled change of the mind, will, and life, from a carnal and ungodly state, to a spiritual and heavenly one, as maketh us hate the sin which we loved, and heartily prefer a holy life, and all those duties to God and man, from which our hearts were before averse. And this change is so firmly established in us, that it is become as a new nature to us.

P. There is a great deal in this. I pray you, Sir, explain it to me more particularly.

M. By this you may see what makes a true

repentance, and distinguishes it from that which is partial and false.

True repentance is a change of the whole soul, the judgment, the will, and the life. It is not a change only of a man's opinion, but of his heart, and his conversation.

It is a turning to God, and setting our hearts and hopes on heaven, so as to love holiness, and seek God's kingdom above this world. It is merely the effect of melancholy, when men cry out against the vanity of this world, yet set not their hearts upon a better, and seek not after heavenly felicity.

True repentance is a settled and an effectual change. It is but a counterfeit repentance, when men are sorry for having sinned, but amend not; are sorry to-day, and yet sin again to-morrow.

P. But Christ bids us forgive those that seven times in a day trespass, and seven times in a day return and say they repent. And will not God, then, do the same?

M. Christ speaketh of *true* repentance, as far as we can judge, and not of saying, I repent, when it is an apparent mockery. Infirmities, often returning, may consist with true repentance, because the sinner would fain overcome them, if he could. And so, if a man often wrong you through infirmity, and often repent, you must forgive him; but if your servant should every night come to you and say, "Master, I have done no work to-day; but I repent, I wish I had done it," and so hold on from day to day; would you take this for repentance! Do you think it possible for an ungodly, worldly man, to repent truly of such a life to-day, and turn to it again to-morrow? It cannot be.

When the drunkard is sick, or findeth that no-

thing is left but shame or poverty, or a wounded conscience, he may well say, I am sorry, and wish I had been sober: but still he loveth the sin, and hath no true change of heart and life, which is the true repentance.

P. You put me so hard to it, Sir, that I know not what to say: I know not well what to think of myself; and, therefore, as you have examined my case, I shall entreat you to help me to pass a right judgment upon it.

M. That I will gladly do; but then the patient must describe his condition before the physician can judge of his case. You must, therefore, answer me a few questions.

P. This I am ready to do.

M. I would then ask you, doth your soul and everlasting state engage your serious thoughts and regard more than your body and your worldly welfare?

P. I cannot say so, though I have often thought of it.

M. Do you verily believe, that your sins are so many and great, that if God should condemn you for them, he would not be more severe than you deserve?

P. I know you would not have me lie. I have been taught, indeed, that so it is: but my heart never perceived my sins to be so great as to deserve eternal condemnation.

M. Have you not only heard, but believed, and perceived, that you have need of Christ to be your Saviour? And is the favour of Christ of more value to your soul than all the riches of the world? Are his ransom and mediation your hope? and is his grace your earnest desire?

P. I know that we cannot be saved without Christ; but I cannot say that I have so much desired him.

M. Are you thoroughly convinced that the love and favour of God is far better than all the treasures and pleasures of this world? And do you verily believe, that all the blessed shall see his glory in heaven, and perfectly love, and praise, and serve him, and be filled with perfect joy for ever? And do you place heaven before earth, in your esteem, your desire, and hearty labour and diligence to make it sure?

P. I would I could say so: I doubt there are but few that reach so high as this.

M. Have you truly believed, that all who will come to heaven must be a sanctified people, in mind, and will, and life; and that this must be done by the Holy Ghost? And have you earnestly desired, that he would sanctify you thoroughly, and make you fervently love God, and fully obedient to his will? And have you given up yourself to Jesus Christ, to be taught and governed by him, being willing to imitate him, and to receive his Spirit?

P. I cannot say so; though I desire to amend.

M. Do you feel the evil of a carnal, unrenewed heart, and of an unholy life? yea, of your want of faith, and love to God, as well as of outward shameful sins? and are these sins of heart and practice a great trouble and burden to your mind?

P. I would it were so, but I do not find it so.

M. Can you truly say, that you live not wilfully in any known sin? and that you have no sin, nor infirmity, which you had not rather leave than keep? and that you had rather be perfectly holy.

than to have all the riches, and pleasures, and honours of this world?

P. I should dissemble if I should say so.

M. Can you truly say, that when you are tempted to your most beloved sin, God's authority, which forbiddeth it, is more powerful to keep you from it, than the temptation and your lust to draw you to it?

P. I would it were so: I should then sin less.

M. Are you truly willing to wait on God, to obtain his grace, in the constant use of the means which God appointeth you to use for your salvation, viz. prayer, meditation, the sacraments and ordinances of the Church, hearing the word, and the company and counsel of the godly?

P. I think they are happy that can do so, but hitherto, I am sorry to say, I cannot.

M. Can you truly say, that you are resolved to part with estate, honour, liberty, and life, rather than let go your faith and obedience, or by wilful sin to turn from God?

P. I know I should do so; but I am not yet come to that state of Christian firmness.

M. If you were now to be baptized, and understood what you did, would you take God for your only God and Father, and Christ for your only Saviour, and the Holy Ghost for your Sanctifier, to save you from sin and death, and to bring you to perfect holiness and glory; forsaking the world, the flesh, and the devil, and giving up yourself to God? Would you thus considerably be baptized, if it were to do again?

P. I should promise, and be baptized: but whether I should consent to all this heartily, I doubt.

M. By all these answers put together, you have

enabled me to judge of your condition. If all this be as you have answered, I must needs tell you, that I think you are yet un sanctified, and under the power of your sins. And if you should die as you are, without conversion, you are in imminent danger of destruction. You must be made a new creature, or you are undone. I know this judgment may possibly seem harsh, and be displeasing to you: But it is foolish to flatter our friends or ourselves, when we are in a most perilous state.

Yet I tell you with great satisfaction, that your case is not by any means desperate; but that you may be saved from it whenever you are willing: And that you are not so far from grace and recovery as many hardened sinners are. For I perceive that you deal openly, and are not so set against conviction and conversion as too many are.

P. I thank you for dealing plainly with me: but what makes you judge so hardly of my case?

M. I only pass my judgment out of your own mouth; for you confess that it is not yet with you, as it is with all that have the spirit of Christ. And "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9.

And I will here take the liberty to add some observations of my own, which have long made me fear, that you have not yet the spirit of Christ. For I have never perceived that you considered seriously the state of your soul. As often as I have been in your company, I have heard you talking only of common worldly things, which may certainly be talked of in due time and measure; but not a word of heaven, nor that savoured of any care for your salvation.

And I have observed that you were very indiffe-



rent in the choice of your company, and more with ignorant, worldly men; or mere sensualists, than with those that set their hearts on heaven, and might have helped you thitherward by their counsel and example.

And moreover, I never heard that you encouraged the worship of God in your family. You never instructed, nor catechised, nor took care of the souls of your children or servants, only using them like your beasts, to eat, and drink, and do your work. And you are often absent from the church service, or, at best, frequent only the morning service, as if the evening worship were no part of the duty of the Lord's day; *the whole* of which you are required to remember to keep holy: this, I presume, is not serving your God as you expect to be served yourself. Would you consider any labourer of your's as having earned his day's wages, who had not employed himself more than one fifth part of it in your service? Yet this is all you bestow upon Him, who demands at your hands, the service of the whole day; and will not (except in case of sickness, great distance from your place of worship, or real and unavoidable necessity,) accept the dedication of so small a portion of the whole that is due to him.

And you can, now and then, I am told, utter an oath or two, and a curse when you are angry; and spend the chief part of the Lord's day in common talk and business: and though I never took you for a drunkard, or a profligate man, nor heard you scorn or rail at godliness, yet you can sit by them that do it, and easily bear it, as if it were but a trifling matter: and I have heard that you once over-reached your neighbour by an unconsciona-

ble bargain; but you never made any restitution. And I perceive that you are all for yourself: (though you are a quiet and good neighbour,) you speak best of those that do you any good, be they what they will in other respects: and you have always an ill word for those that you think have wronged you, let them be ever so honest in all other respects. In a word, the love of God, and a heavenly mind, will, in some measure, show themselves, by preferring God and heaven before all: this I could never perceive in you; which made me fear your case was as bad as you now confess it.

For sure I am, that God saveth none but those who love, honour, and obey him above all others, and make him their trust, and hope, and happiness; and that Christ saveth none but those who value him as their Saviour, and give up themselves to be taught and ruled by him, and sanctified by his spirit; and that heaven is a place for no carnal person who loves the world above it, and seeks this world before it, and minds most the things of the flesh, and had rather satisfy than mortify his sinful lusts and appetites.

P. I confess, Sir, I never made the saving of my soul so much of my care, and so serious a business, as you talk of; nor hath my heart been so sensible of the need that I have of Christ, or of the greatness of God's love and mercy to sinners in our redemption; nor have I had such serious thoughts of the life to come, as to make it seem more desirable to me than this world; nor can I say, with truth, that I loved God better than my money, and estate, and pleasure; or that I ever made so great a matter of sinning, as to avoid it at the hazard of

any great suffering or loss; or that ever I was very desirous to lead a holy and a heavenly life; or that I had any great delight in the thoughts or practice of such things; much less that ever I made the pleasing of God, and the obtaining of perfect and everlasting holiness and happiness with him in heaven, to be the chief care and endeavour of my life. But yet I thought that God being merciful, I might be saved, if I believed in Christ, and put my trust in him alone. But now you have made me better to understand what it is to believe and trust in Christ, I perceive that I did not really believe and trust in him when I thought I did.

M. You seem, then, to acknowledge that there are such sins as presumption, carnal security, false believing, and false hope.

P. Yes; I have heard preachers often say so.

M. What do you think is presumption?

P. Presuming or thinking that we are in a state of grace, when we are not so.

M. What do you think of carnal security?

P. It is to be careless about the state of our souls, when our danger calleth for our greatest care.

M. What is false believing?

P. To believe that God hath promised that which he hath not promised; or to trust that Christ will give heaven to such as he hath told us shall not have it.

M. And what is false hope?

P. To hope for heaven or mercy without just ground, upon terms on which God never promised to give it, or hath plainly said, he will not give it.

M. You have answered very well and truly.

And do you not think that all these have been your sins?

P. I am now afraid they have: but I am still loth to think that it is so bad with me: but if it should be so, I pray you tell me, what would you yet advise me to do?

M. God knows I have no desire to trouble you, nor occasion you any needless fears, much less drive you into despair; nor would I have you conclude that your state is bad, upon my word alone; but I will here lay before you some texts of Scripture, by which you may certainly judge yourself; and I will entreat you to bestow a few hours in the true and impartial examination of yourself by them, and tell me when I next see you, how you find the case yourself.

P. But if I do find it bad, I pray you tell me what I must do to be pardoned and saved.

M. I will now only tell you in general, that you must well consider how sad is the condition of an unrenewed man, that you may not delay to seek for mercy, and to come out of such a miserable state; that you need not, however, despair or be discouraged; for Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour and Redeemer.

Indeed, till you repent, and are converted from your sins, you are in a state of enmity against God and holiness: you have a will of your own, which is rebellious against God, and will still be striving against his will: you are yet unreconciled, unpardoned, un sanctified: all your sins that ever you committed, are yet upon you in their guilt. Now, if you thus die before a true and sound conversion, all your mercies, your comforts, and hopes, are gone for ever. This is as sure as that the word of God is

true. And therefore, as you love yourself, and as you care what becomes of your soul, when it must shortly leave your body, go and thoroughly examine, whether you are penitent or not.

P. Alas! Sir, I know not how to do it; therefore I pray you give me your direction.

M. With all my heart, if you will but promise me to do your best. Will you set yourself some time apart for the business, and do it as a man would cast up an account, with your most serious thoughts? And will you examine yourself as you would do another man, with an unfeigned willingness to know the truth, be it better or be it worse?

P. Alas! what good will it do me to flatter and deceive myself, when God knoweth all, and will not be deceived? I desire to know what state I am in, that I may know what course to take hereafter.

M. Indeed, till you know that, you know not well whether comfort or sorrow best become you, nor whether the promises or threatenings should first be applied by you, nor how well to use any text that you read, or any sermon that you hear. And one would think that the very uncertainty what shall become of you when you die, and whether you shall be happy or miserable for ever, would spoil your mirth, and make you sleep with little quietness, till at least you had done your best to make your calling and election sure, so as to encourage a well-grounded hope of salvation.

This is the method that I would recommend to you:

Take the Scriptures, especially those texts which I shall subjoin, and set them before you, and consider them as the word of God. Earnestly

beg God's help and mercy, to convince you, and show you your real condition. Look back upon your life, and look into your soul, and let conscience compare your heart and life with the word of God, and urge it to speak plainly, and to judge you truly as you are.

Do not only try and judge yourself by some few actions; but by the main design, and scope, and tenor of your heart and life. Judge yourself by that which hath had your chief esteem, your chief love or choice, and hath been the main end and design of all your actions. Be sure you find out, whether God or the world hath been uppermost, and hath been that, to which you have been most subservient.

Lastly. Continue the search till you know the truth; and if you cannot do it at once, return to it again till you are resolved: and come and tell me how you have found the case to stand with you: and the Lord assist you.

The texts which I would set before you, are these which follow:

John iii. 3, 5, 6. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

John iii. 16, 18, 19, 20, 21. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life—He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already—And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds

were evil. For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Go and teach (or make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. So Mark xvi. 16.

Matt. xviii. 3. Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified, by faith that is in me.

Luke xiii. 3, 5. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Rom. viii. 1, 2, &c. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God: but ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his—13, &c. For if ye live after the flesh, ye

shall die; but if ye by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live: for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God—Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father: the Spirit itself beareth witness to (or with) our spirit, that we are the children of God.

Gal. v. 19, &c. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:—They which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof. Gal. vi. 14. God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.

2 Cor. v. 17. Now if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away; behold, all things are become new.—1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. So Ephes. v. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

1 John ii. 15. Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Luke xvi. 13. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

1 John v. 4, 5. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

1 John iii. 10. By this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 14. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Psalms i. 1, 2. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and

envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Matt. i. 21. He shall be called JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins.

Rev. xxi. 7, 8. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

2 Tim. iv. 8. There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. Read Matt. xxv.

Prayer for Repentance.

(In the Language of the Book of Common Prayer.)

ALMIGHTY God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit. Do thou, O God, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, grant me the aids of thy grace, that I may examine myself, and judge myself, that I be not judged of thee; that I may repent me truly of my sins past, and turn to thee with full purpose of heart to serve and please thee. And make me, I beseech thee, O God, deeply sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of human life. In the midst of life I

am in death: O God, to thee only can I look for succour. And yet thou for my sins art justly displeas'd. But, O merciful Father, who hast declared in thy holy word, that thou dost not will the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his sin and be saved, mercifully receive me. Spare me, good Lord. Enter not into judgment with me, a miserable sinner. Create and make in me a new and contrite heart; stir up in me a godly sorrow, that acknowledging my wretchedness, and truly lamenting my sins, I may obtain of thee perfect remission and forgiveness. Hear me, O Lord, for thy mercy is great; and after the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me through the merits and mediation of thy blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

DIALOGUE II.

THE PENITENT INSTRUCTED; *in a Dialogue between a Minister and his Parishioner.*

Minister. WELL, neighbour, have you examin'd those portions of the word of God which I selected for you?

Parishioner. I have done, Sir, what I was able.
M. And what do you think now of your state?

P. I will tell you, Sir: when I first read the promises to all that believe in Christ, I was ready to hope that I was safe; but when I read further, I found that it was as you had told me; that I am not a penitent convert, and, of course, not in a safe state. I now, therefore, beseech you, Sir, as you pity a poor sinner, to tell me what I must do to be saved.

M. Are you willing and resolved to do it if I tell it you, and prove it to you fully by the word of God?

P. By the grace of God I am resolved to do it, be it what it will; for nothing can be so bad as sin and death eternal.

M. You say well. I will first tell you this again in general, that your case is by no means remediless, but a full and sufficient salvation is purchased, and tendered in the Gospel to you—that Christ and his grace are all-sufficient; and