

# A Door Unto Everlasting Life

by Andrew Gray

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*Andrew Gray's sermon calls Christians to leave sin behind and embrace a life of holiness as a reflection of God's character and a pathway to eternal life.*

**Scripture:** John 11:25, John 14:6, John 20:31, Colossians 3:4, 1 John 5:12

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Second Coming"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher delves into the profound truth that Christ is our life, emphasizing that He is the Source of all true life and the fulfillment of Israel's expectation of a deliverer. The imminent return of Christ is highlighted, urging believers to abide in Him and live in light of His Second Coming. The preacher encourages believers to remember that when Christ, the Messiah, is revealed, they will also be revealed with Him in glory, sharing in His splendor and magnificence.

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## Transcript

A Door Unto Everlasting Life, Containing Several Arguments For Leaving Sin and Living Holily

by Andrew Gray (1634 - 1656)

Reader, I have always thought that good books (being silent teachers of goodness) are the best part of a man's furniture in his house, and the choicest goods of a country. Yet, many are so far from reading them, that they revile them, and employ their wicked wits in jeering whatever tends to make them wise to salvation. The profaneness and corruption of this present age is too visible. Many who bear the Name of Christ are enemies of the cross of Christ, and of the power of Christianity. They are even sunk below beasts in enormous sensuality, and whoever does not approve of, yes, and practice such detestable wickedness, such beastly and satanical sins as they do; whoever is not metamorphosed into a devil incarnate, is reproached by them as a devilish hypocrite.

With such, this plain piece will find no cordial respect, no practical entertainment; it will be as an unsavory breath in their nostrils. Yet if you are serious and solicitous for savory and wholesome truths; if to have the kingdom of Christ set up in your heart and life be what you do breathe after; if you be really sick of sin and sick of love for Him who is altogether lovely; if you be one of Zion's mourners, one whose heart is shaken with devils, scruples, and fears concerning the condition of your soul; if you be one of Zion's citizens, one whose conversation is in heaven, and would have your heart and affections more elevated, and set upon the things above, I am confident the ensuing treatises will be grateful and welcome to you. The very

subject matter of them will allure you to read them, and I question not, but through divine blessing, this little book will be a great blessing unto you. Let not any despise it because it is destitute of those elaborate and rhetorical flourishes with which many pieces are beautified, for the design of it is not to please the fancy, but to profit the soul, and to warm the heart. Sure I am that what profits the soul, and makes a Christian more devout and pious, is to be valued far above what only tickles the fancy of the curious.

Read it therefore, yes, read it seriously. It may be you may find something that may refresh your heart and do your soul good. What human frailties you discern in this small piece (which doubtless are not a few), pity them, and so much the more pray for me that God would pardon and amend all the errors both of my heart and life. Good reader, I shall detain you no longer in the porch, but only beg of you, that when you do begin to read this book, you would at least send up some short petitions to that God from whom all our fruit is found, that by His blessing upon it (without which you may read it often over, and yet profit little or nothing by reading it), it may distill as the precious dew upon the tender herb.

May it make your barren soul more fruitful, your treacherous soul more faithful, your weak soul more powerful, your troubled soul more joyful. It may pour you out a blessing of light for your understanding, a blessing of life for your affections, a blessing of peace for your conscience, and a blessing of joy and gladness for your heart and soul; in the attaining whereof I shall think my pains well bestowed, and my labors abundantly recompensed, especially if you will gratify with your remembrance at the throne of grace, him whose utmost design and ambition is to be serviceable in promoting the eternal interest of souls.

It is a very sad, but yet an apparent truth, that there is no creature in the world so merciless and mischievous to itself as man is. For whereas everything naturally desires, or tends to its own preservation, man unweariedly endeavors his own destruction. He becomes his own murderer and executioner, by loving vice, and hating virtue, by forsaking Christ, to follow the world, by poisoning his soul to please his senses, by leaving the safe and pleasant way of holiness, to walk in the dangerous and destructive way of wickedness. Wicked men turn their backs upon God, and are ruled by sin and Satan at their pleasure. Such profane beasts are many. They glory in their shame. Like Sodom, they carried their sin in their foreheads, oathing it, telling of their cheats, how many they have defrauded, and of their whoredoms, how many they have defiled. Alas, they have not so much as one grain of grace in their hearts, nor the least sign of holiness in their lives. Though, by the ministry of the word, they be called upon to be holy, yet the more they are called unto holiness, the further do they run into all sin and wickedness.

Yes, God's own children make but little progress in holiness. The estate of many is a declining estate. They have lost the savouriness of their spirits, and their delight in communion with God. They are weak in resisting temptations to sin, from the devil, the world, and the flesh. They are often overcome by sensuality, pride, worldliness, envy, etc. Their heart is less watched, their tongue less bridled, and their conversation more vain than formerly. What then more needful, than to have before our eyes such arguments, as are most likely to deter us from sin, to prevail with us to loath and leave all our lusts and transgressions, and to walk humbly and holily before God all our days. May the Lord open our eyes, to see the baseness of sin, and sanctify our hearts, that we may never welcome nor embrace it anymore, but may grow holier every day than the other. So living holily, may we die happily, and after death, reign with God gloriously forever.

In order to realize this, let these following considerations sink into our hearts. We must be holy, because the Lord our God is holy. "You shall be holy- for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19:2). "It is written, Be

holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). God's holiness is the great ground and cause of our holiness, and the motive of all obedience. "Let them praise Your great and awesome Name, for it is holy" (Psalm 99:3). "Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy" (Psalm 99:9). We are not bound to be essentially and infinitely holy- as God is holy; yet are we bound to be perfectly holy for our state, as God is holy. You call God Father, and if He is your Father indeed, you will be like Him in holiness. You will both have the same nature for likeness. You read a Holy Bible, serve an holy God, pretend to be led by a Holy Spirit. Oh, what shame and trembling then should cover you, if you be unholy! You pretend to love God, and why are you not an imitator of God? Is it not a known saying, likeness makes love? Likeness is the cause of love, and an effect of it. If you would have God to love you, you must labor to be like Him. If you remain unholy, think with yourself, how can an infinitely holy God delight in such an unholy wretch, in such an unlovely and loathsome soul, in such a vile abominable sinner? How unfit am I for His love and embracements! If unholy, you will not endure the purity and presence of God, nor will God's purity and presence endure you.

We must leave sin and live holily, because to sin is very unsuitable work; and very unbecoming to Christians-

(1) Are we not strangers, and therefore to abstain from whatever is contrary to holiness? "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). We are traveling to an higher country, where pure souls breathe in an uninfected air and are partakers of heavenly visions to the full. Oh, do not by living unholy, belie your great and glorious hopes. "Every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). Show yourselves to be the true seed of the woman, by flying from the face of the old serpent, and abhorring his image. Strangers must not be meddlers; oh, meddle not with sin, but put off the old man with his deceitful lusts. Trouble not yourselves with anything that will hinder you in your journey heavenward. You expect a room among the angels, and will you live as slaves in the world? You are in the way to Canaan, why then are you in love with the flesh-pots of Egypt? "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

(2) Are not your relative conditions changed? Once you were Satan's slaves, now God's servants. Once in darkness, now children of the light. Once the devil's drudges, now Christ's followers. Are your relative conditions thus changed, and shall not your work be altered? "You are all the children of the light, and the children of the day- we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thess. 5:5-6). "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as He who has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. 1:14-15). Is not sin the devil's creature? His old sorceress? And will you have any communion with it? Oh, you children of the Most High!

(3) What does baptism into the name of Christ stand for? Why were you baptized? Was it not for the renunciation of all sin, and the mortification of every lust? "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:2-4). As God promised on His part to be your God, so you promised to forsake His enemies, to dedicate yourself to His service, to obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of your life. Surely it is a most wretched forgetfulness, to forget yourself to be a Christian. Live holily, because the wicked lives of Christians are far more sinful than the wicked lives of pagans and heathens,

for-

(1) The sins of pagans are only against natural light; but the sins of Christians, both against natural and supernatural. And to sin, not only against a natural conscience, but an enlightened conscience, is a great aggravation of sin. Was it not an aggravation of Solomon's sin, that "his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice"? (1 Kings 11:9).

(2) The sins of pagans may have fairer excuses than others; they may plead in another sense than the apostle- "How can we call on Him, of whom we have not heard? And how shall we hear without a preacher? The sun, moon, and stars were but silent preachers. Had we, O God, heard the joyful sound, we would have received it gladly. We never knew that your Son was crucified, for had we known it, we would have believed in Him. We would have taken Him for our rightful Sovereign, and obeyed His laws."

But what will you pretend? Can you say, you never heard of heaven and hell? Never heard of faith, repentance, and remission of sins preached? Never heard a strict and circumspect course of life pressed upon you? Did you not know that drunkenness, cursing, etc. were sins? That piety, sobriety, and righteousness was your duty? Why then do you the one, and leave the other undone? Surely, if heathens shall be damned, wicked professing Christians cannot think to be saved.

(3) The sins of heathens bring not so much dishonor to God and Christ, as our sins do. We pretend greater holiness than they, and shall our holiness better than theirs, as if the death and resurrection of Christ was not able to make us live more holily, than the foundation of civility and morality among them? What scandal and reproach this brings to Christ. "The Name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. 2:24). What! Has the gospel no more efficacy than a pagan's ethics, or a Turkish Koran? Devout Salvian brings in the pagans insultingly over the professing Christians, whose lives were not agreeable to their knowledge. Both Christ and His law are scandalized by such professors- behold, this is the common report of pagans concerning them- "Where is this Christian law which they believe? Where are those precepts of piety and chastity which they learn? They read the gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostles, and frequent sermons, and yet are drunkards. They follow Christ, and yet are thieves. They lead a wicked life, and yet boast that they have a righteous law. It is altogether false (say the heathens) that they learn good things, and retain the rules of an holy law, for if these things which they learn were good, they then would be good themselves."

Thus we who would be accounted Christians, do bring our God, our religion, and our profession into contempt, if our lives be not answerable to our knowledge.

I would to God that everyone of us would take this into his consideration, so that, at length, we may be careful to adorn our holy religion with a holy and circumspect life and conversation. The love of God in giving His Son for us, should forcibly overcome us to live holily. "The grace of God, that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). What moved God to give His Son, but His own grace and love? That pure love, that lodged in His bosom from all eternity. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). If like Gideon, He had had threescore and ten sons, it had still been much to part with one of them. Oh, but it was His only Son.

Jacob tore his clothes, and went mourning many days, for losing one son of twelve (Gen. 37:34). Even a harlot pitied the fruit of her womb (1 Kings 3:26). But God gave the only Son of His love, and does not this eternal and astonishing love teach us to deny ungodliness? "I denied not", says the Lord, "My Son a

suffering body for your sake. I denied not His precious blood. The consolations of the Spirit, and the joys of the higher world- I kept back nothing, but exposed all for your sake. Oh, deny not your sins a sacrifice unto Me, but give them up to be condemned and crucified, and to be nailed to the cross of Christ, that they may languish and give up the spirit. I ask nothing of you that you can not easily deny. It is not your estate, your life, or your little ones I require. Nothing, but what you can well spare; nothing, but what is better parted with than kept. Nothing, but what, if it were never required at your hands, yet were it your wisdom and happiness to reject- even your base, vile, scarlet lusts. That sin may die in you, and you may live to God."

Oh, what will prevail with us to leave sin, and live holily, if love does not? Shall the consideration of death, or heaven, or hell move us? And shall not the consideration of Christ's wonderful love move us much more? "Death is certain," says one. "It may come suddenly, and will come certainly; therefore, I will avoid sin, and serve God." "I care not so much for death", says another. "It is but parting soul and body for a season. Oh, but I fear hell-torments, the worm that never dies, and the fire that never shall be quenched!" "Therefore I will leave sin, and live holily. I hope", says a third, "for the joys of heaven- that I shall live though I die; and that I shall eat and drink at Christ's table in His celestial kingdom. Therefore I will reject the fawning pleasures of sin, that would beguile me of the pleasures of heaven." "Oh, but Christ loved me", says a fourth, "and gave Himself for me, that He might redeem me from all iniquity. And this love of Christ constrains me, that I dare not, I will not sin."

This is the best motive. Holiness will not hinder you, but bring a blessing upon you, in your private and particular callings. Say not, I shall suffer loss, by leaving my worldly concerns to mind religion. Suppose your estate did suffer, and your body fared the worse by it; yet, sure I am, the cumberings and carings of worldlings bring them more grief, than religious duties bring loss to you. Say not, "My affairs and employments in the world are so great, and so many, that I cannot spare time." The more and greater your affairs are, the more need to mind religion, lest your heart be swallowed up of your affairs.

Are not the affairs of a kingdom more, and greater, than those of an household? And yet David, who had the affairs of a kingdom to look after, made religion his chief care. Say not, "My children must be educated and provided for." What! will you lose salvation, and damn your souls, to gather an estate, and to provide a portion for them? Provide for them a portion in God's Name- but especially let God be their Portion forever. Give them pious education and an holy example.

Is it not more comfortable to see children, in their parent's lifetime, just heirs of their parents' graces, than to see them, when parents are dead, heirs of their parents unjust gains? Oh remember, that providing for your children's bodies, will not answer the damning of your own soul. Your present welfare lies in divorcing sin and living holily.

Were there no commandment from heaven to leave sin, yet should you leave it, because it is the ulcer that sits on a creature's heart, and robs him of all true contentment and sound joy. Suppose no torment, no horror did follow sin hereafter; yet it disquiets and torments for the present. Oh the secret gnawings that envy, and pride, and covetousness give a man's soul. Oh, what a sweet life leads the contented and quiet spirited Christian when God and he are both of a mind! Compare him with the fretful and discontented, who would be always correcting God's providence, and vex themselves daily with crosses to no purpose. Oh, what peace and comfort crowns the heart of the godly! Oh, what outward miseries and inward horror fall upon the wicked!

Besides, sin is the soul's disease, a burning fever; it blinds the mind, hardens the heart, enthral's the will, defiles the conscience, deadens the affection, and hurls the whole man into confusion. It brings more evils, external and internal, for the present, than either tongue can speak or heart can think. Shall it not be divorced? Holiness is the way to the enjoyment of all visible blessings. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Who has not seen or heard, how large revenues, riches, and estates, have been wasted by vice and wickedness? There is a secret consuming cancer in the wicked man's estate; a worm in the gourd. Some men's wealth melts away, but how does this come about? Alas, it is banished by impiety. "Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your store" (Deut. 28:16-17). Oh but, "All these blessings shall come on you, and overtake you, if you shall hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God. Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field" (Deut. 28:2-3).

Thus the Lord puts a difference between the godly and the wicked, as He did between the Egyptians and the Israelites (Exodus 11:7). Will holiness bring disgrace? No. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and the honor, and life" (Prov. 22:4). Will holiness bring poverty and need? No. "If you be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (Isa. 1:19). "The young lions lack, and suffer hunger- but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing" (Psalm 34:10). See Job 22:21-30. God will be the godly man's gold and silver. Many of the godly have fuller treasure, and more riches than ever they enjoyed in their unregenerate condition. Who ever lost by serving God? Sin and the world have made many a beggar, but never did God and Christ, for in their worst and poorest condition, the godly are rich. "As dying, and behold we live- as chastened, and not killed- as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing- as poor, yet making many rich- as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:9-10), all things in hope and all things in the promise. God's people are possessors of Him who possesses all. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

Christian, when you are about to die, gather up your accounts, and see how much you have laid out for God, and how much He has rewarded you. You must needs confess that God is not behind-hand with you as your debtor, should He deny you heaven. Look on Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Jehoshaphat, Job, David, etc. I grant, a good man may suffer hardships and scarcity, but it is not due to his godliness, but because of some unmortified corruption, idleness, indiscretion, voluptuousness, or the like. He who lives wickedly is self-condemned-

(1) Condemned in his own conscience. What Paul said of the heretic, in Titus 3:11, may be said of every wicked man, he is condemned of himself. "Happy is he who condemns not himself in that thing which he allows" (Rom. 14:22). But wicked men condemn themselves in that thing which they allow. Ask even the grossest and most profane wretch in a country, Is it not excellent and desirable to live holily, to beware of open impiety, and resist Satan's temptations, to be pure, and holy, and chaste, and temperate? Yes, without question, will he say, it is very good. And yet he will hate what he has commended, and do what he has condemned. He will hate sanctity, and act wickedly. He says, he detests wickedness; but his own wickedness he detests not.

(2) He is condemned by his profession, because his most holy faith is contradicted by an unholy life. Baptism, wherein he gave his name to Christ, engages him to obey Christ as his Lord; but though he was baptized into the name of Christ, yet he obeys Him not. His profession is sacred, but his practice is sinful. The one is pure, the other impure. Now could any but dumb idols, stocks and stones, live without sense

and shame of this contradiction? He is condemned in conscience, and condemned by profession.

There is no true comfort outside of the ways of holiness. All earthly contentments are dead, bitter and inconstant. No course gives such solid foundation for comfort as an holy course. A worldly course does not, for the worldling is filled and fed from day to day with vexing cares, and tormenting thoughts, and in a time of common calamity and affliction, he is cast down. His face waxes pale; his mind is confused and his heart trembles. His cares and fears devour all his joy- whereas the godly man is anxious for nothing and rejoices in tribulation. He takes a providential and moderate care, but not an unbelieving and excessive thoughtfulness. He walks by faith, not by sense; he trusts in God in the midst of need, and finds faith and trust a universal remedy for trouble.

No way is so full of pleasantness as the ways of holiness. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" (Prov. 3:17). The paths of sin are void of peace, but great peace have they, who keep God's law (Gal. 6:16). What peace, what joy like that of a good conscience, in a time of affliction! When old age creeps up on a man, death approaches, and eternity is before him. Oh, then a world for a good conscience! The sinner's mirth and merriment is downright madness. "I said of laughter, It is mad- and of mirth, What does it?" (Eccles. 2:2). Christianity will not deprive you of your joy, it will only rectify, moderate, and sanctify the same. I grant, some of God's people are of sad, dark, uncomfortable spirits, but yet I affirm that godliness is not the proper cause of their sadness. And suppose it were, were it not better for a man to suffer qualms, and fits of melancholic sadness all his life, than to suffer hell torments even for one hour? I leave the wicked, when sober and settled in their wits, to judge and determine.

The mercies of God engage and bind us unto holiness. Every mercy is a silent sermon, preaching to us the doctrine of holiness. Every blessing is a suitor, wooing us to live holily. "That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74-75).

God, by His blessings, would allure and invite us unto holiness. Has not God caused our lot to fall in a pleasant land? Whereas we might have been born in Meshech, or in the tents of Kedar, in a barren land, a land of spiritual drought. Has He not kept us back from presumptuous, scandalous sins? And, at least from that unrepentable sin against the Holy Spirit? Has He not kept us safe from deadly dangers? Might not fire have suddenly broken out and laid our houses in ashes? Might not the devil, in the night time, have murdered us and our children in bed? Who was it that bound the devil to his good behavior, that he did not roar and tear both us and them in pieces? Was it not God? God's outward providential mercies are innumerable. Is it not pure mercy, that you have a dwelling house, though but a lowly cottage? You might have been a vagabond, and run up and down begging your bread. Is it not pure mercy, that you have a spread table? Have you an healthful state of body, when others your betters are crying out from day to day sick, sick? And are not children, which are an heritage from the Lord, multiplied unto you, and are continued with you, while others are fast burying their dead? Is it not pure mercy, that you have sufficient riches, and a soft bed, when Christ Himself lived in poverty, and had nowhere to lay His weary head? Have you not liberty and plenty of ordinances, burning and shining lights, while others have not the gospel preached to them, but live and die in gross darkness?

Therefore when you are tempted to sin, say as Joseph did, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). Shall I thus requite the Lord for the innumerable mercies bestowed upon me? Has He surrounded me with blessings and loaded me with His benefits? Has He crowned me with loving-kindness, and many rich blessings here; and has He promised to crown me with eternal

blessedness hereafter? And shall I be so unkind and disingenuous as to wrong that God, who has been so kind to me, and is continually doing me good? Shall I not hear Him calling on me to be holy, who has so often heard me crying to Him for help? Has He denied nothing to me, and shall I not deny my lusts for His sake? Is He my friend and benefactor, and shall I do service to His enemy? Has He honored me, and shall I dishonor Him? Does He promise me blessedness, and is a wicked life the way to come to it? Have I tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and shall I continue to do what is evil? Do showers of precious mercies distill on my head, and shall they all miscarry? Shall I displease and dishonor that high and awesome Majesty, whose free grace is the well-head and fountain of all these mercies? Or shall I not rather express my thankfulness in such a manner, as may become the mercies of God? Oh, the mercies of God are a mighty motive to prevent sin and promote holiness.

Therefore, dwell much in your thoughts upon the mercies and love-tokens of God. I read of one, that said, he had but one book, and that book had but two leaves, a white leaf, and a red leaf. Yet he could never read beyond these two leaves, though he lived many years, and read diligently, so much matter was contained in them. For in the red leaf (he said) were laid down all God's fearful judgments poured out upon sinners who were disobedient and would not be reformed; and in who the white leaf were laid down, all the mercies and favors of God given to mankind, either in general or particular. This book remains to this day, and happy is the man who is most careful to exercise therein day and night.

All a man's spiritual relations call for holiness. Our relation to duties calls for it. What is our praising God without an holy heart, but blessing of an idol? What good will our prayers do, if we lift not up pure hands without wrath and doubting? What are sacraments and ordinances, but abominations to the eye of God, when profaned by the sins of men? Prayers, praises, sacraments, and ordinances, are holy things, and what have swine and dogs do with such? Our relation to the saints calls for holiness. The saints are called a holy nation, and what are we but withered branches in the vine, masks of saints, and hypocritical counterfeits in the church, without holiness? Are not the saints above closely allied to the Church of God on earth? Are we not akin to the spirits of just men made perfect? Have we not the same father? The same Redeemer? The same Sanctifier and Savior? Who is our Head? Is it not the holy child Jesus? The holy, and just, and righteous One, who is white and ruddy (Cant. v. 10). He is white for sanctity, purity, and innocency; and ruddy in His sufferings, bloody stripes, gallings, woundings, and crucifixion. Now, must we not be conformed to our Head? Must the Head be of gold, and yet the thighs of brass, and feet of clay?

The duties we engage in are holy; the Christians we converse with are holy. Christ our Head is holy; and yet will we be unholy? Holiness will make you blessings to the places where you live. Wicked men are the firebrands of a nation, but good men are as props and pillars to it. Paul, indeed, was called a "pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition throughout the world" (Acts 24:5), as if he was no less to be avoided than a man coming out of a pest-house, with running plague-sores. But this was only a malicious slander. The turning of the world upside down, seditions, uproars, tumults, wars, and plagues are the fruits of unholiness, the effects of iniquity. Whereas godliness is gainful, and a whole family and nation has sometimes fared better for a single godly servant's sake. Witness Laban's family, for the sake of upright and plain-hearted Jacob. Witness also the house of Pharaoh, and the land of Egypt, for Joseph's sake. Witness the many souls in the ship, that had all perished, but for Paul's sake. Witness the Israelites that had been destroyed, while they wandered and wavered in the wilderness, but for Moses sake.

Therefore be holy, that you also may be props and pillars to the nation, and your names may be fragrant, and dear, and precious to others. Holiness is an excellent help to prolong our days. "That you might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you.. .that your

days may be prolonged" (Deut. 6:2). Religion teaches temperance. A sober care of the body, and a religious and virtuous course of life, does naturally tend to the prolonging of our days, and has very frequently the blessing of health and long life attending upon it.

Objection- Wicked men sometimes live long, and good men die soon.

Answer- 1. Though wicked men sometimes live a long life, yet theirs is not a promised life. "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days" (Psalm 55:23). Now every wicked man is a bloody and deceitful man, he is a self-deceiver, and imbrues his hands in the blood of his own soul.

2. Though good men sometimes lose life soon, yet firstly, they live in a spiritual, comfortable manner while they live. And secondly, by losing a temporal life, they gain an eternal life; the life which they gain, is infinitely better than the life which they lose. It is not a hard and difficult thing to live holily, after a man has obtained a willing mind, and made an entrance into heaven's way. It is not so much lack of power to live holily, as lack of will that is the cause of so much unholiness. Many pretend they cannot, but the truth is they will not. I would have gathered you, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not (Matt. 23:37). "You will not come to me, that you might have life" (John 5:40). "Knowledge is easy unto him that understands" (Prov. 14:6). Therefore up and be doing! Use a holy violence, a holy habit. If there be only an hearty willingness, and gracious assistance, what will these not do? What difficulties can hinder a resolved and encouraged Christian? There is honey in the carcass of the lion, for such as will not stumble at the cost. There is glory as well as duty, and yet will you say that duty is hard? Be but persuaded of the reward that attends duty, and you shall acknowledge that Christ's yoke is easy.

Compare the freedom of God's servants, with the service of Satan. Is not Satan's service a terrible task, an intolerable burden, an iron yoke, in comparison to God's service? Is it not easier to tell the truth, than by telling forgeries to bring upon ourselves shame and fear? Is it not easier to employ our thoughts in the service of God, than to waste our estates in satisfying our lusts? A wicked life will arm death with dread and terror. A holy life is always sure to be concluded with a happy death. Augustine used to say, that man cannot die ill, who lives well; and seldom does he die well, who lived ill. I grant, a bad life may sometimes be attended with a good death, where there is the interposition of an sincere late repentance.

Oh but, he who has lived wickedly, for the most part, laments ruefully when he comes to die. "Alas! Alas," says he, "the end is now come, the end of all my mirth and jollity, of all my honors and prosperity. My wife weeps, my children wail, and all my friends are troubled for me, but alas, not one of them will go with me to the judgment seat, to plead for me. Now all my delicious hours are past and gone; all my joys and pleasures, all my mirth and pastimes, are now finished. Where are all my companions, that used to laugh with me, and seemed as if they would never have forsaken me? Now they are all gone, and have left me here alone to answer the reckoning for all. None of them will do so much, as to go with me to judgment, or speak one word on my behalf. Oh, fool that I was, not to think of this day sooner, not to change my life sooner! Oh, unfortunate wretch that I am, now I must die whether I will or not! I must change earth for hell, pleasure for pain, light for darkness, and companions for devils. Now I see the difference between the ends of good and evil. Now I see, it is unprofitable service to serve the devil, the world and the flesh. It is no profit to me now, that I have been beautiful, rich, and prosperous upon earth. It is no profit that I have glittered in gold, and borne a great sway in the world. Now I would give all my estate, all I ever had in the world, yes, mountains of gold and silver, if I had them, but for one mite of true gospel-grace and holiness. But alas, it is not to be bought, and if it were, I have now no time to buy it! Now death is come, I must go away, and yet, alas, I know not where."

Oh, when death comes, a little grace will be worth all the world! Poor sinner, are not you as well as others tumbling towards the grave? Every moment of life you come nearer death. Your strength is but ashes, your glory but a flower. You eat today of the meat of birds and animals, and soon, it may be in two or three months time, your flesh may be dished out for crawling worms! Oh, it is but one spurn with God's foot, one touch with God's finger, and you are gone, and where, oh where! Think where you are then going without holiness. Catch therefore fleeing time, and make the best of it. Bid farewell to self, and welcome holiness. Abandon vanity, and embrace true piety. So live every day, that you may not be afraid of the day of death.

You may be wise, and rich, and educated, and yet damned at last, if not holy. For all the wicked shall be turned into hell. And God will wound the hairy scalp of every one that goes on in His trespasses (Psalm 68:21). Many that are clothed with infamy, and poverty, shall be saved; but none that die in unholiness, can escape hell and damnation. What but everlasting death, is the outcome and consequence of a sinful and vicious course of life? "The end of these things is death. The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:21-23), even eternal death. A death that comprehends in it all those fearful and startling miseries, with which the wrath of God will afflict and pursue sinners, in another world. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil" (Rom. 2:8-9).

So that, no matter how quietly a wicked man may pass out of this world, yet unspeakable and intolerable misery will most certainly overtake him at last. Sin is the highway to hell. Those who persevere in sin while they live, cannot escape hell when they die. Such may read their doom, "They must drink the wine of God's wrath. It is poured out undiluted into God's cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb." (Rev. 14:10). It is mixed with all stinging ingredients, but unmixed with any relief or offer of mercy! No tortures so great as fire, and no fire worse than that of brimstone. Yet, the impenitent sinner shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

How did the poor scorched Sodomites run, howling and yelling, and lamenting their pains, when God rained hell out of heaven upon them? How then will poor damned creatures howl and lament their pains, in that lake of fire and brimstone! What can be more horrible than that place, where both soul and body must be crowded into a fiery dungeon, with torments that can neither be avoided nor endured! There the sun, much less the face of God, never shines! There the eyes shall distill like fountains, and the teeth clatter like armed men, and the mind muse on nothing but sad despair, and that forever! Oh, the bitterness, the multitude, the everlastingness of their pains! Oh, eternity, eternity! Who can comprehend it? After the expiration of millions of years, eternity will not be one minute less. Oh, when eternity is added to extremity, then hell is hell indeed!

If dissolute sinners of our age were allowed to have a sight of hell, what a fear and astonishment would it strike into their hearts! How would they weep, yes, bleed for their sins? How constantly would they pray for pardon? How would they rectify their crooked and cursed steps, that they might never come to such a place? How would they loathe and leave sin, which only can endanger them there?

There is a story of one, who gave a young ruffian a curious ring, with a 'death's head' on it, upon this condition, that for a certain time, he should spend one hour every day in looking and thinking upon it. He took the ring in excitement, but performing his promise with diligence wrought a wonder upon him- so a desperate ruffian became a conscionable Christian. Did a Christian spend but one half hour fixedly every day, in meditating seriously on hell, the sad yet certain consequence of a sinful life, I doubt not, but by

God's grace, he would find a blessed alteration, both in his heart and life.

Bishop Babington, in his comforting notes upon the book of Exodus, tells us of an unconcerned woman, who, spending her time in sin, desired her wicked associate, to bestow on her a new gown. When he hesitated, she instantly answered, "Do I desperately cast away both body and soul forever to content you, and do you deny me so small a request? Henceforward, I am resolved to look to myself better, and to avoid both you and this wicked life." If she did turn from her wickedness, the denial was made a blessing unto her.

We also read of a covetous father, who raking up riches sinfully, suddenly called for his eldest son and for a dish of coals, and required his son to put his finger in and burn it off. At first, he thought his father had jested, but in the end, perceiving his settled resolution, he begged to be excused, for he would not do it. Thereupon the father answered, "Shall I, to make you a great man in the world, so heap up riches by all unlawful means, that I am sure to burn for it, both body and soul, eternally in hell, and will not you endure the loss of one finger for me? Now I will alter my course, and consider in time that which hereafter cannot be redressed."

Oh, it is good to meditate often on the wages of sin! I know, such thoughts, and meditations are held as being too melancholy, but it is the way to prevent sin, and consequently destruction. Now is the time to think of these things. The torments of hell are without measure, and the continuance in these torments is without end. The damned shall be punished in hell, so long as there is a God in heaven; and yet, will you, O man, for the pleasure of an hour, incur these everlasting pains? Will you rather lose your soul, than leave your sins? Is sin more sweet, than the wrath of God would be bitter? I think the very thought of the end of outcome of a wicked life (that the end of these things is death, that tribulation and anguish, far greater than we can imagine, shall be to every soul of man that does evil), should be more than enough to dishearten any man from a wicked life and to bring him to a better course.

Remember, oh man, if you who bear the name of Christ, live wickedly, your hell will be far hotter than the hell of superstitious Pagans! If Turks and Tartars shall be damned, wicked and debauched professing Christians shall be doubly damned. And believe it, the brick-kilns of Egypt, and Babel's fiery furnace, are but shadows and pictures of pain, when compared with the fiery Tophet. Resolve, therefore henceforward so to live and conduct yourself, that you may be of the number of those, who shall be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of man. Holiness is the only way to happiness. Grace is the only way to glory. No holiness, no heaven. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Holiness is the highway to that high and holy place. "And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8). "The pure in heart shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

Heaven is the inheritance of saints (Col. 1:12). No unclean thing can enter into God's kingdom. They who live in those sins which are the works of the devil, and mock those who are sanctified, shall have no place with God and His glorious angels. Heaven was never prepared for the workers of iniquity. "To sit on My right hand, and on My left- it shall be given unto them for whom it is prepared of My Father" (Matt. 20:23). Who are the blessed royal guests? Men who are gracious and holy. Heaven is no common inn. "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom" (Matt. 25:34). You that fed Me and clothed Me, you that visited the fatherless, which is pure religion (James 1:27).

A wicked man has not so much as half a promise of heaven in the whole Bible. The poor man has a promise (James 2:5), but the wicked man has none. Oh, you enemy of gospel holiness, show your

warrant. Why do you look for heaven? You have received no promise from God; and if you have no promise, you can expect no performance.

It may be, at present, you do taste some comfort from your self-flattery; oh, but in the end you shall reap the sorrow of your woeful self-deceit. God is sometimes better than His Word, but never contradicts His Word, which He must do, if the unholy, unhumiliated sinner comes to heaven. Heaven begins in holiness, and our expectation of future glory, obliges us to present sanctity. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent, that you may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:13-14).

What will move us to holiness, if glory does not? Shall the devil, by showing "the fading glory of this earthly world", prevail with thousands to serve him? And shall not Jesus, by showing us the everlasting glory of the world to come, prevail with us to serve Him? Are we called to this glory, and shall we not walk worthy of Him who has called us to it? (1 Thess. 2:12). Surely the enjoyment of God Himself hereafter, in all His perfections, sufficiency, blessedness, and goodness to us, according to our capacity, should make us study holiness, for how can an impure and filthy soul enjoy God? Alas, there is no suitableness, no fitness in such a soul.

The more holy we are, the more we are like the glorified saints. Holiness will be our perfection and delight in Heaven, and shall it not be our desire and study here on earth? Will we rather part with eternal life, than with our lust? Is our sin to be reckoned or compared with heavenly glory? Oh, let us choose an holy life, if we would be happy both in life and death. Let us become the servants of God, and have our fruit unto holiness, if we ever expect that the end shall be everlasting life. God calls us from sin to holiness, which is most reasonable (1 Thess. 4:7).

God calls us to follow Him in the way of holiness to eternal glory. The devil calls us to follow him in the way of sin to eternal torments. Now whether it be right that we obey God or the devil, judge you. "Follow peace with all men and holiness" (Heb. 12:14). Though lions be in the way, and discouragements be multiplied, though Satan interposes, and corruptions stop our course, we are yet to follow holiness. Who calls us? Is it not He, whose presence and breath is consuming? He who can command us into nothing, and shall not His call be complied with? Must the eternal God become a humble condescending suppliant to man? Majesty and mercy kneel and entreat us to be holy, and yet we live in sin still!

What are we called from? Is it not from sin and destruction to purity and salvation? Is it not from Satan to God, from embracing of sensual pleasures, to the pursuing of spirituality? And who can withstand such reasonable entreaties? Our profession of Christianity obliges us to holiness. Christianity is a matter of free acceptance; it is our own voluntary choice. When we take upon us the Name of Christ, we bind ourselves to leave sin, and live holily. "Let every one that names the Name of Christ, depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

Our Christian profession obliges us to a Christian way of life. What! Will we plow with an ox and an donkey together? I mean, will we have the face of a Christian, and yet the life of a heathen! Oh, let us not be "almost Christians", lest we be at last almost saved, that is, altogether damned. Oh, let this truth be like the water of jealousy, like fire in our bones, like the archangel's trumpet to awaken us.

You who possess Christ are bound to follow Christ, both in inward and outward holiness. You have taken upon you to be holy in part, and this obliges you to be holy in all. As he who believes one fundamental

article is bound to believe all fundamental points, so he who obeys God in one practical duty, is bound to obey all. As for example, suppose you being a professor of Christianity, come to the Lord's house upon His blessed day. Now I tell you- you are the greatest self-condemned man in the world, if you do not also cast by all profaneness, and make religion your chief business, both at home and abroad. For upon the same ground you come to Christ, upon that same ground you should pray with your family, educate your children Christianly, live strictly, and do all that is required. "He who said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill; Now if you commit no adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:11).

You that out of conscience, and from the command of God do one thing, ought likewise to do all. The same law, the same God, and the same authority that binds you to one, binds you to another. If you endeavor not to obey God in all, you obey Him insincerely. A professing Christian that endeavors not to be strict, exact, circumspect, and holy in practice shall never by me be called a Christian.

Your virtue and piety will profit your posterity after you. It will help to keep wrath from your children, and to procure a blessing upon them. This is that which God cannot forget, neither will He forget His goodness sake. "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments" (Ex. 20:6). "Oh that there were such an heart in them that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and their children forever" (Deut. 5:29); 1 Kings 6:34). "The just man walks in his integrity- his children are blessed after him" (Prov. 20:7).

According as we behave ourselves towards God (says an ancient writer) we entail a lasting blessing- or a great curse upon our children. As wicked parents entail God's anger and curse upon their posterity, so God reserves mercy for the posterity of the godly. He will be good, even to thousands of their seed, who diligently serve Him. Lo, here is the fruit of your prayers and tears, of your hearing God's Word, and leading your lives according to the sacred rules thereof. This seals up the Lord's favor not only to yourselves, but to your children after you. I beseech you, professing Christians, think seriously of all this, and as you would ever wish well to your own souls, as to their dear pledges, that are as your own heart, be afraid to offend God. And be constantly careful to lead your lives according to the rules of His most Holy Word. If God has irresistibly and effectually called you, among those few, very few called ones, whom He has chosen for Himself, let this engage you to be holy yet more and more. Did not the Spirit of grace knock at your door with infinite holy motions, before you condescended to open? You refused to obey, until He called, not a third time, as to Samuel, but many an hundred times. As Lot was reluctant to depart out of Sodom, until the angels laid hold upon his hand, and brought him forth; so you were unwilling to leave your sins, and sinful companions, until the hand of the Lord laid hold upon your heart. God's arbitrary and free grace called you and left others. Oh, how should this make you to admire God's love, and to strive for God's holiness! When God took you, He left others; he passed by thousands and ten thousands in the world, and left them in their impenitency and carnal security under the bondage and vassalage of Satan.

Consider, how few there are that shall be saved, in comparison of the multitude that shall be eternally destroyed. Consider that God should call you with a holy calling, and bring you in to be one of that little flock, that is under the care of the good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. If you should be chosen and singled out from the rest, when they are left in a state of sin to perish eternally, what astonishing distinguishing mercy is this! How should this engage you to be eminently holy. Was you called in your younger years? Oh, be holy in all manner of conversation for a requital of God's love that suffered you not to stab your soul to old age.

It is a greater mercy to be called at the first, or third, than at the eleventh hour; to be called in your infancy and early days, than in the afternoon, and evening, and twilight of your age. Being early called, you never made such sad shipwrecks, never involved yourself in such gross wickedness as others have done. You have had long trial of the sweetness of holiness, therefore follow after it still.

Were you called in old age? Labor to make requital for the many hours, days, and years, you lost before you were acquainted with God. Surely holiness becomes you forever. Oh, be holy, you old disciples, for your time to gather grace in will not be long.

Oh, be holy, you young converts, for you need liveliness, strength, and vigor in the way and work of the Lord. Your experiences are but short; some tastings you have had, oh, but desire more, for the more holiness you have, the more sweetness you shall find. The richest wine lies in the lowest cellar. Has Christ come down into your heart? Oh, be pure and holy that you vex not His righteous soul. Oh, how should you please Him, who has so highly honored and advanced you!

If a peasant's daughter were married to a prince, would she put on her old rags, or eat her poor food again? Christ the Prince of Peace has married you to Himself, and appointed you a rich estate. Will not you forever lay aside the filthy garments of sin, and slight those husks on which you fed before? It may be that you are so poor, that of your own you have nowhere to lay your head, and it is certain you possess not one foot of land that is your own forever. Yet are you an heir, a child, dearly beloved, both by God and angels. This honor have all the saints.

Once you were a great, a filthy sinner; oh, be holy, for Christ has washed you in His blood, justified you by His righteousness, and sanctified you by His Spirit, even when you were filthy to look upon. Moses once married a black woman; David had vile men for his soldiers; and Christ had publicans, harlots, and sinners for His companions. So God chose you when you had little morality, little ingenuity, or natural goodness. You are of the number of those few that shall be saved, and so strongly bound to be eminently holy.

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