

**A DISCOURSE ON
THE HOUSE OF GOD**

BY

JOHN BUNYAN

**A DISCOURSE OF THE BUILDING, NATURE,
EXCELLENCY AND GOVERNMENT OF THE
HOUSE OF GOD; WITH COUNSELS AND
DIRECTIONS TO THE INHABITANTS THEREOF.**

BY JOHN BUNYAN, OF BEDFORD.

*“Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and
the place where thine honour dwelleth.” - Psalm 26:8*

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR

Beautiful in its simplicity is this treatise on the Church of Christ, by John Bunyan. He opens, with profound knowledge and eminent skill, all those portions of sacred writ which illustrate the nature, excellency, and government of the house of God, with the personal and relative duties of its inhabitants. It was originally published in a pocket volume of sixty-three pages, by G. Larkin, 1688, and is now for the first time reprinted. We are deeply indebted to the unknown owner of this rare volume, and to Mr. Creasy, bookseller, Sleaford, through whom the copy was borrowed to enrich this edition.

What is the church? is a question upon which all the subtlety of Jesuitic schoolmen and casuists has been exhausted, to mystify and mislead the honest inquirer in every age. The Jews, Papists, Greeks, English, have each claimed the divine favour as being exclusively limited to their respective sects. Apostolic descent has been considered to depend upon human ceremonies, instead of its consisting in a similarity of mind and conduct to that of the apostles, through the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. Judging from this latter mode, we conclude that Bunyan the brazier was very nearly related to, and descended from, Paul the tent-maker, and the other apostles. But we form a very different judgment as to the descent of Bonner and other persecuting bishops.

A visible church of Christ is a congregation of the faithful, who having personally and individually given themselves to the Saviour, unite together to promote each other's spiritual happiness. Such were the churches to whom the epistles in the New Testament were addressed. The instructions given to this spiritual community, in the following treatise, are drawn solely from the sacred volume, and are full of peace and righteousness - tending purely to its happiness and prosperity. If these directions were strictly and constantly followed, our churches, notwithstanding the liability of the members to err, would each present 'a little heaven below.'

The officers in these communities are - I. Bishops, or preaching elders, to dispense the word and ordinances; a plurality in every church, to supply the services of such as suffered under affliction of body, or were imprisoned for conscience-sake. II. Ruling elders, to assist the preachers - to admit the serious inquirer, or shut out the profane backslider, and to re-admit the penitent - to watch over the members, that they be diligent in their worldly callings, that there be no drones or idlers - to heal offences - to feed the church with admonitions, and to visit and comfort the sick. III. Deacons, to manage the temporal affairs - provide for the Lord's table and for that of the bishops and elders - and to distribute the alms to the infirm and needy. IV. Female deacons, to nurse the sick, and direct their attention to that home where there shall be no more sorrow; and generally to aid the deacons and elders.

The duty of the private members is to walk humbly with God, and to be devoted to each other's happiness. In all these particulars Dr. John Cotton of New England, in his 'True Constitution of a Visible Church,' ^[1] fully concurs with Bunyan, as does also Dr. John Owen, in his 'Nature of a Gospel Church,' excepting that he is silent as to female deacons. Let every church be thus affectionately and scripturally governed, and in their works of faith and labours of love they will become terrible to the enemy 'as an army

with banners' (Song of Solomon 6:4).

At the present day, great laxity of discipline has crept in. Some offices have been discontinued, others altered, and it becomes us most solemnly to judge ourselves by the unerring word of the living God, whether we have deviated from the order recorded by the Holy Ghost, and if so, to repent and return to the scriptural model.

GEORGE OFFOR

A DISCOURSE ON THE HOUSE OF GOD

[I. BY WHOM THIS HOUSE IS BUILT.]

The builder's God, materials his Elect;
His Son's the rock on which it is erect;
The Scripture is his rule, plummet, or line,
Which gives proportion to this house divine,
His working-tools his ordinances are,
By them he doth his stones and timber square,
Affections knit in love, the couplings are;
Good doctrine like to mortar doth cement
The whole together, schism to prevent:
His compass, his decree; his hand's the Spirit
By which he frames, what he means to inherit,
A holy temple, which shall far excel
That very place, where now the angels dwell.

Call this a temple or a house of prayer,
A palace, oracle, or spouse most fair;
Or what you will: God's love is here displayed,
And here his treasure safely up is laid;
For his own darling none can find a place,
Where he, as here, is wont to show his face.

What though some slight it, it a cottage call,
Give't the reproachful name of beggar's hall;
Yea, what though to some it an eyesore is,
What though they count it base, and at it hiss,
Call it an alms-house, builded for the poor;
Yet kings of old have begged at the door.

[II. OF THE BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH.]

Lo her foundations laid with sapphires are;
Her goodly windows made of agates fair,
Her gates are carbuncles, or pearls; nor one
Of all her borders but's a precious stone;
None common, nor o' th' baser sort are here,
Nor rough, but squar'd and polish'd everywhere;
Her beams are cedars, fir her rafters be,
Her terraces are of the algum-tree;
The thorn or crab-tree here are not of us;
Who thinks them here utensils, puts abuse
Upon the place, yea, on the builder too;
Would they be thus controll'd in what they do?
With carved-work of lily, and palm-tree,
With cherubims and chains adorned be
The doors, the walls, and pillars of this place;
Forbidden beasts here must not show their face.
With grace like gold, as with fine painting, he

Will have this house within enriched be;
Fig-leaves nor rags, must here keep out no cold,
This builder covers all with cloth of gold,
Of needle-work prick'd more than once or twice
(The oft'ner prick'd, still of the higher price)
Wrought by his SON, put on her by his merit,
Applied by faith, revealed by the Spirit.

[III. OF THE CONVENIENCES OF THIS HOUSE.]

Within these walls the builder did devise
That there the householders might sacrifice;
Here is an altar, and a laver too,
And priests abundance, temple work to do;
Nor want they living offerings, nor yet fire,
Nor holy garments; what divine desire
Commands, it has bestowed on this place;
Here be the censors, here's the throne of grace;
None of the householders need go elsewhere,
To offer incense, or good news to hear.

A throne for judgment he did here erect,
Virtue to cherish, folly to detect;
Statutes and laws, unto this house he gave,
To teach who to condemn, and who to save:
By things thus wholesome taught is every brother
To fear his God, and to love one another.

And now for pleasure, solace, recreation,
Here's such as helpeth forward man's salvation.
Equal to these none can be found elsewhere,
All else turn to profuseness, sin, and care.
So situate it is, so roomy, fair,
So warm, so blessed, with such wholesome air,
That 'tis enticing: whoso wishes well
To his soul's health, should covet here to dwell.
Here's necessities, and what will delight
The godly ear, the palate, with the sight
Of each degree and sex; here's everything
To please a beggar, and delight a king.
Chambers and galleries, he did invent,
Both for a prospect and a retirement.
For such as unto music do incline,
Here are both harps and psalteries divine:
Her cellars and banqueting-house have been,
In former days, a palace for a queen.
O house! what title to thee can be given,
So fit as that which men do give to heaven!

[IV. OF THE STRENGTH AND
DEFENCE OF THIS HOUSE.]

This house, you may be sure, will always stand;
She's builded on a rock, not on the sand;
Storms, rain, yea floods have oft upon her beat,
Yet stands she, here's a proof she is no cheat;
Fear not therefore in her for to abide,
She keeps her ground, come weather, wind or tide.
Her corner-stone has many times been try'd,
But never could the scorn, or rage, or pride,
Of all her foes, by what force they could make,
Destroy her battlements, or ground-work shake.
Here's God the Lord encamping round about
His dwelling place; nor ought we once to doubt
But that he as a watchman succour will
Those that do dwell upon his holy hill.
*A wall of fire about her I will be,
And glory in the midst of her, and she
Shall be the place where I my name record;
Here I will come and bless you, saith the Lord.*

The holy watchers at her gates do stand,
With their destroying weapons in their hand,
Those to defend, that in this house do dwell,
From all her enemies in earth and hell;
Safety! where is it, if it is not here?
God dwelleth in her, doth for her appear,
To help her early, and her foes confound,
And unto her will make his grace abound;
Safety is here, and also that advance,^[2]
Will make a beggar sing, a cripple dance.

[V. THE DELICATENESS OF THE
SITUATION OF THIS HOUSE.]

As her foundation and her beauty's much;
Conveniencies, and her defences such
As none can parallel, so doth the field
About her richest, rarest dainties yield.
Moriah, where Isaac was offered,
Where David from his sin was ransomed;
Where Solomon the temple did erect,
Compar'd with this is worthy no respect.
Under the very threshold of this place
Arise those goodly springs of lasting grace,
Whose crystal streams minister like to those
That here of love to her, make their repose.
Sweet is her aid, (as one may well infer)
'Cause 'tis the breathings of the comforter.
The pomegranates at all her gates do grow,

Mandrakes and vines, with other dainties mo;^[3]
Her gardens yield the chief, the richest spice,
Surpassing them of Adam's paradise:
Here be sweet ointments, and the best of gums;
Here runs the milk, here drops the honey-combs.
Here are perfumes most pleasant to the sense,
Here grows the goodly trees of frankincense;
Her arbours, walks, fountains, and pleasant springs,
Delightful formerly have been to kings.

Such mountains round about this house do stand
As one from thence may see the holy land.
Her fields are fertile, do abound with corn;
The lilies fair, hervallies do adorn.
The birds that do come hither every spring,
For birds, they are the very best that sing.
Her friends, her neighbours too, do call her blest;
Angels do here go by, turn in and rest.
The road to paradise lies by her gate,
Here pilgrims do themselves accommodate
With bed and board, and do such stories tell
As do for truth and profit all excel.
Nor doth the porter here say any nay,
That hither would turn in, that there would stay.
*This house is rent-free; here the man may dwell
That loves his landlord, rules his passions well.*

[VI. THE WAY OF RECEIVING THOSE
THAT WOULD HERE INHABIT.]

And wouldst thou know the customs of this place,
How men are here admitted to this grace;
And consequently whether thou mayst be
Made one of this most blest fraternity?
Come hither then, unto me lend an ear;
And what is doubtful to thee, I will clear.

1. This place, as mercy's arms, stands ope to those
That their own happiness us'd to oppose;
Those under hedges, high-way men, or they
That would not God, nor yet good men obey;
Those that among the bushes us'd to browse,
Or under hedges us'd themselves to louze.
The vilest men, of sinners who are chief,
A fornicator, liar, or a thief,
May turn in hither, here take up and dwell
With those who ransom'd are from death and hell.

2. This place, as hospitals, will entertain,
Those which the lofty of this world disdain:
The poor, the lame, the maimed, halt and blind,

The leprous, and possessed too, may find
Free welcome here, as also such relief
As ease them will of trouble, pain and grief.

3. This place, as David's heart, with free consent
Opens to th' distressed, and the discontent;
Who is in debt, that has not wherewithal
To quit his scores, may here be free from thrall:
That man that fears the bailiff, or the jail,
May find one here that will become his bail.

4. Art thou bound over to the great assize,
For heark'ning to the devil and his lies;
Art thou afraid thereat to shew thy head,
For fear thou then be sent unto the dead?
Thou may'st come hither, here is room and place,
For such as willingly would live by grace.

5. This place, as father's house in former days,
Is a receptacle for runaways; ^[4]
He that, like to the ox, ^[5] backslidden is,
Forfeited hath for sin his share of bliss;
May yet come hither, here is room and rest;
Of old such have come hither and been blest.
Had this been false, O woe had been to David!
Nor Peter had, nor Magdalene, been saved.
Nor Jonah, nor Manasseh, nor the rest;
No runaway from God could be blest
With kind reception at his hands; return
Would here come too late, if nought but burn
Had been the lot of the backsliding man:
But we are told there's no rebellion can
Prevent, or hinder him from being saved,
That mercy heartily of God hath crav'd.
She that went from her God to play the whore,
Returning may be as she was before:
He that refuses to his God to turn,
That is resolved in hell fire to burn;
If he bethinks himself, and turns again,
May find them here that will him entertain.

6. But bring thou with thee a certificate,
To show thou seest thyself most desolate;
Writ by the master, with repentance seal'd,
To shew also that here thou would'st be heal'd,
By those fair leaves of that most blessed tree,
By which alone poor sinners healed be;
And that thou dost abhor thee for thy ways.
And wouldst in holiness spend all thy days;
And here be entertained; or thou wilt find
To entertain thee here are none inclin'd. ^[6]

[VII. OF THE GOVERNORS OF THIS HOUSE.]

The governors that here in office are,
Such be as service do with love and care;
Not swerving from the rule, nor yet intrude
Upon each other's work, nor are they rude
In managing their own: but to their trust
They labour to be honest, faithful, just.
1. The chief is he who is the Lord of all,
The Saviour; some him physician call.
He's cloth'd in shining raiment to the ground,
A golden girdle doth begirt him round;
His head and hairs are white as any snow,
His eyes are like a flame of fire also;
His feet are like fine brass, as if they burn'd
Within a furnace, or to fire were turn'd;
His voice doth like to many waters sound;
In his right hand, seven glittering stars are found.
Out of his mouth goes a two-edged sword,
Sharper than any ('tis his holy word)

And for his countenance, 'tis as the sun
Which shineth in its strength, till day is done.
His name is call'd holy, The WORD OF GOD;
The wine-press of his father's wrath he trod;
At all the power of sin he doth deride,
The keys of hell and death hang at his side.
This is our governor, this is the chief,
From this physician comes our soul's relief.
He is the tree of life and hidden manna;
'Tis he to whom the children sing hosanna.
The white stone he doth give with a new name;
In heaven and earth he is of worthy fame.
This man hath death destroy'd and slain the devil,
And doth secure all his from damning evil.
He is the prince of life, the prince of peace;
He doth us from the bonds of death release.
His work is properly his own; nor may,
In what he doth, another say him nay.

'Tis he who pays our hospitalian scores,
He's here to search, supple, and bind up sores;
He is our plaster-maker, he applies
Them to our wounds, he wipes our wetted eyes.
'Tis he that gives us cups of consolation,
'Tis he renews the hopes of our salvation.
He'll take our parts, oft times to us unknown,
And make as if our failings were his own;
He'll plead with God his name and doings too,
And save us will, from those would us undo.

His name is as an ointment poured forth;
 'Tis sweet from east to west, from south to north.
 He's white and ruddy; yea of all the chief;
 His golden head is rich beyond belief.
 His eyes are like the doves which waters wet,
 Well wash'd with milk, and also fitly set,
 His cheeks as beds of spices, and sweet flowers.
 He us'd to water with those crystal showers,
 Which often flowed from his cloudy eyes;
 Better by far than what comes from the skies.
 His lips like lilies, drop sweet-smelling myrrh,
 Scenting as do those of the comforter.
 His hands are as gold rings set with the beryls;
 By them we are delivered out of perils;
 His legs like marble, stand in boots of gold,
 His countenance is ex'lent to behold.
 His mouth, it is of all a mouth most sweet,
 O kiss me then, Lord, every time we meet!
 Thy sugar'd lips, Lord, let them sweeten mine,
 With the most blessed scent of things divine.

2. This is one Governor; and next in place,
 One call'd the Ghost, in Honour and in Grace
 No whit inferior to him; and HE
 Will also in this house our helper be,
 He 'twas who did at first brood the creation;
 And he's the cause of man's regeneration.
 'Tis he by whom the heavens were garnished,
 With all their host they then abroad did spread
 (Like spangles, pearls, diamonds or richest gems)
 Far richer than the fairest diadems.
 'Twas he who with his cloven tongues of fire
 Made all those wise ones of the world admire,
 Who heard his breathing in unlearned men.
 O blessed ruler! now the same as then!
 His work our mind is to illuminate
 With things divine, and to accommodate
 Us with those graces, which will us adorn,
 And make us look like men indeed new-born.
 For our inheritance he makes us meet;
 He makes us also in this world discreet.
 Prudent and wise in what we take in hand,
 To do and suffer at our Lord's command.
 'Tis he that leads us to the tomb and cross,
 Where Jesus crucified and buried was;
 He shews us also, that he did revive,
 And doth assure us that he is alive;
 And doth improve the merit of his blood,
 At grace's throne for our eternal good.
 Dark riddles he doth here to us unfold,
 Yea, makes us things invisible behold.

He sheds abroad God's love in every heart,
 Where he doth dwell, yea to them doth impart,
 Such tokens of a future happiness,
 That's past the tongue of angels to express.
 'Tis he which helpeth us, *that* to perform,
 Whether becalm'd, or whether in a storm,
 Which God commands: without him we do nought
 That's good, either in deed, or word, or thought.

'Tis he that doth with jewels us bedeck,
 'Tis he puts chains of gold about our neck;
 'Tis he that doth us with fine linen gird,
 That maketh us oft-times live as a bird.
 That cureth us of all our doubts and fears,
 Puts bracelets on our hands, rings on our ears;
 He sanctifies our persons, he perfumes
 Our spirits also; he our lust consumes;
 Our stinking breath he sweetens, so that we
 To God and all good men sweet-scented be;
 He sets God's mark upon us, and doth seal
 Us unto life, and life to us reveal.

[VIII. UNDER OFFICERS.]

3. Another sort of officers here are,
 But such as must not with these first compare;
 They're under-officers, but serviceable,
 Not only here to rule, but wait at table.
 Those clothed are with linen, fine and white,
 They glitter as the stars of darksome night.
 They have Saint Peter's keys, and Aaron's rod;
 They ope and shut, they bind and loose for God.
 The chief of these are watchmen, they have power
 To mount on high and to ascend the tower
 Of this brave fabric, and from thence to see
 Who keeps their ground, and who the stragglers be.
 These have their trumpet, when they do it sound
 The mountains echo, yea it shakes the ground.
 With it they also sound out an alarm,
 When they perceive the least mischief or harm
 Is coming, so they do this house secure
 There from, or else prepare it to endure
 Most manfully the cross, and so attain
 The crown which for the victor doth remain.

This officer is call'd a steward too,
 'Cause with his master's cash he has to do,
 And has authority it to disburse
 To those that want, or for that treasure thirst.
 The distributor of the word of grace
 He is, and at his mouth, when he's in place,

They seek the law, he also bids them do it;
He shews them sin, and learns them to eschew it.

By this example too he shews them how
To keep their garments clean, their knees to bow
Before the king, when he comes into place;
And when they do him supplicate for grace.

Another bade this officer doth wear,
Is that of overseer; because the care
Of the whole house is with him, he's to see
They nothing want, nor yet abused be
By false intruders, doctrines, or (perchance)
By the misplacing of an ordinance.^[7]
These also are to see they wander not
From place or duty, lest they get a blot
To their profession, or bring some disease
Upon the whole, or get a trick to lease,
Or lie unto their God, by doing what
By sacred statutes he commanded not.

Call them your cooks, they're skill'd in dressing food
To nourish weak, and strong, and cleanse the blood:
They've milk for babes, strong meat for men of age;
Food fit for who are simple, who are sage,
When the great pot goes on, as oft it doth,
They put not coloquintida^[8] in broth,
As do those younglings, fondlings of their skill,
Who make not what's so apt to cure as kill.

They are your sub-physicians, and know
What sickness you are incident unto;
Let them but feel your pulse, and they will tell
You quickly whether you are sick or well.
Have you the staggers? They can help you there;
Or if the falling-sickness, or do fear
A lethargy, a fever, or the gout,
God blessing of their skill, you need not doubt
A cure, for long experience has made
These officers the masters of their trade.^[9]
Their physic works by purge and vomit too,
Fear not, nor full nor fasting but 'twill do,
Have but a care, and see you catch no cold,
And with their physic then you may be bold.

You may them Prophets call, for they can tell
Of things to come, yea, here they do excel.
They prophesy of man's future event,
Whether to weal or woe his mind is bent,
Yea, so expert are they in their predictions,
Their arguments so full are of convictions,
That none who hear them, but are forced to say,
Woe unto them who wander from the way.

Art bound for hell against all wind and weather?
Or art thou one a going backward thither?

Or dost thou wink, because thou would'st not see?
Or dost thou sideling go, and would'st not be
Suspected? Yet these prophets can thee tell,
Which way thou art a going down to hell.

For him that would eternal life attain,
Yet will not part with all, that life to gain,
But keepeth some thing close, he should forsake,
Or slips the time, in which he should awake;
Or saith he lets go all, yet keepeth some
Of what will make him lose the world to come.

*These prophets can tell such a man his state,
And what at last will surely be his fate.*

If thou art one who tradeth in both ways,
God's now, the devil's then; or if delays
Thou mak'st of coming to thy God for life;

Or if thy light, and lusts are at a strife
About who should be master of thy soul,
And lovest one, the other dost control;

These prophets tell thee can, which way thou bendest,
On which thou frown'st, to which a hand thou lendest.

Art one of those whose fears do go beyond
Their faith? when thou should'st hope, dost thou despond?

Dost keep thine eye upon what thou hast done,
And yet hast licence to look on the sun?

Dost thou so covet more, as not to be
Affected with the grace bestowed on thee?

Art like to him, that needs must step a mile
At every stride, or think it not worth while
To follow Christ? These prophets they can tell
To cure this thy disease, and make thee well.

This officer is alsocall'd a guide,
Nor should the people but keep by his side;
Or tread his steps in all the paths they walk,
By his example they should do and talk.

He is to be to them instead of eyes,

He must before them go in any wise;

And he must lead them by the water side,
This is the work of this our Faithful Guide.

Since snares, and traps, and gins are for us set,
Since here's a hole, and there is spread a net,

O let no body at my muse deride,

No man can travel here without a guide.

Here's tempting apples, here are baited hooks,
With turning, twisting, cramping, tangling crooks

Close by the way; woe then to them betide,

That dare to venture here without a guide.

Here haunt the fairies with their chanting voice;
Fiends like to angels, to bewitch our choices;

Baits for the flesh lie here on every side:
Who dares set here one foot without a guide
 Master delusion dwelleth by our walks,
 Who with confusion, sings and prays and talks;
 He says the straight path's his, and ours the wide:
What then can we do here without a guide
 Let God then give our leaders always eyes;
 Yea, let him make them holy, bold, and wise;
 And help us fast by them for to abide,
And suffer not the blind to be our guide. ^[10]

4. Here are of rulers, yet another sort,
 Such as direct our manners to comport
 With our professed faith, that we to view,
 May let beholders know that we are *new*.
 These are our conversations to inspect,
 And us in our employments to direct,
 That we in faith and love do every thing,
 That reacheth from the peasant to the king.
 That there may be no scandal in our ways,
 Nor yet in our profession all our days.
 These should after our busy-bodies look,
 Tale-bearers also, they have undertook
 To keep in order, also they must see
 None that can work among us idle be;
 Jars, discords, frauds, with grievances and wrongs,
 These they're to regulate; to them belongs
 The judgment of all matters of this kind,
 And happy is the house thus disciplined.

5. Another sort of officers we have,
 Deacons we call them 'cause their work's to save
 And distribute those crumbs of charity
 Unto the poor, for their subsistency,
 That contributed is for their relief,
 Which of their bus'ness is indeed the chief.
 These must be grave, not of a double tongue,
 Not given to wine, not apt to do a wrong
 Unto the poor, through love to lucre. (Just
 In this their office, faithful to their trust)
 The wife must answer here as face doth face;
 The husband's fitness to his work and place,
 That ground of scandal or of jealousy
 Obstructs not proof that he most zealously
 Performs his office well, for then shall he
 Be bold in faith, and get a good degree
 Of credit with the church; yea what is more,
He shall possess the blessings of the poor.
 His wisdom teach him will, to find out who
 Is poor of idleness, and who comes to
 A low estate by sickness, age, or 'cause

The want of limbs, or sight, or work it was
 That brought them to it; or such destiny
 As sometimes maketh low, who once were high.
 They must remember too, that some there are
 Who halt before they're lame, while others care
Not to make known their want, they'll rather die,
Than charge the churches with their poverty.
 This done, they must bestow as they see cause;
 Making the word the rule, and want the laws
 By which they act, and then they need not pause.
 The table of the Lord, he also must
 Provide for, 'tis his duty and his trust.
 The teacher too should have his table spread
 By him; thus should his house be clad and fed;
 Thus he serves tables with the church's stock,
 And so becomes a blessing to the flock. ^[11]

I read of widows also that should be
 Employed here for further decency;
 I dare not say they are in office, though
 A service here they are appointed to:
 They must be very aged, trusty, meek,
 Such who have done much good, that do not seek
 Themselves; they must be humble, pitiful,
 Or they will make their service void and null.
 These are to teach the younger women what
 Is proper to their sex and state, what not:
 To be discreet, keepers at home, and chaste;
 To love their husbands, to be good; shamefac'd:
 Children to bear, to love them, and to fly
 What to the gospel would be infamy.
 I think those to the sick should look also,
 A work unfit for younger ones to do.
 Wherefore he saith, The younger ones refuse;
 Perhaps because their weakness would abuse
 Them, and subject them unto great disgrace,
 When such a one as Amnon is in place.
 And since the good old woman this must do
 'Tis fit she should be fed and clothed too,
Out of the deacon's purse, let it so be;
And let this be her service constantly. ^[12]

[IX. THE ORDER AND MANNER OF THE GOVERNMENT HERE.]

As I have shew'd you who in office are,
 So I will tell you how, and with what care
 Those here entrusted with the government,
 Keep to the statutes made to that intent.
 By rules divine this house is governed;
 Not sanguinary ones, nor taught nor fed

By human precepts: for the scripture saith,
The word's our ghostly food; food for our faith.
Nor are all forced to the same degree
In things divine, tho' all exhorted be
To the most absolute proficiency
That law or duty can to them descry.

Alas! here's children, here are great with young;
Here are the sick and weak, as well as strong.
Here are the cedar, shrub, and bruised reed;
Yea, here are such who wounded are, and bleed.
As here are some who in their grammar be,
So here are others in their A, B, C.
Some apt to teach, and others hard to learn;
Some see far off, others can scarce discern
That which is set before them in the glass;
Others forgetful are, and so let pass,
Or slip out of their mind what they did hear
But now; so great our differences appear
Wherefore our Jacob's must have special care
They drive their flocks, but as their flocks can bear;
For if they be o'erdriven, presently
They will be sick, or cast their young, or die.
The laws therefore are more and less of force,
According as they bring us to the source,
Or head, or fountain, or are more remote
To what at first we should ourselves devote.
Be we then wise in handling of the laws,
Not making a confused noise likedaws
In chambers, yea let us seek to excel,
To each man's profit; this is ruling well.
With fundamentals then let us begin,
For they strike at the very root of sin.
So the foundation being strongly laid,
Let us go on, as the wise builder said,
For I don't mean, we should at all disdain
Those that are less, we always should maintain
That due respect to either which is meet;
This is the way to sit at Jesus' feet.

Repent I must, or I am cast away;
Believe I must, or nothing I obey:
Love God I must, or nothing I can do,
That's worth so much as loosing of my shoe.
If I do not, bear after Christ, my cross;
If love to holiness is at a loss;
If I my lusts seek not to mortify;
If to myself, my flesh, I do not die;
What law, should I observe't, can do me good?
In little duties life hath never stood.

One reads, he prays, he catechises too;
But doth he nothing else, what doth he do?
I read to know my duty, I do pray
To God to help me do it day by day;
If this be not my end in what I do,
I am a sot, an hypocrite also.
I am baptis'd, what then? unless I die
To sin, I cover folly with a lie.
At the Lord's table, I do eat; what though?
There some have eat their own damnation too.

I will suppose, I hear, I sing, I pray,
And that I am baptis'd without delay,
I will suppose I do much knowledge get,
And will also suppose that I am fit
To be a preacher, yet nought profits me
If to the first, poor I a stranger be:
They are more weighty therefore; in compare
These unto them, but mint and anise are.

Not that I would the least of duty slight,
Because the least command, of divine right,
Requires that I myself subject thereto;
Wilful resisters do themselves undo.
But let's keep order, let the first be first;
Repent, believe, and love; and then I trust
I have that right, which is divine, to all
That is enjoined; be they great or small.
Only I must as cautionary speak,
In one word more, a little to the weak;
Thou must not suffer men so to enclose
Thee in their judgments, as to discompose
Thee in that faith and peace thou hast with him;
This would be like the losing of a limb;
Or like to him who thinks he doth not well,
Unless he lose the kernel for the shell.
Thou art no captive, but a child and free;
Thou wast not made for laws, but laws for thee;
And thou must use them as thy light will bear it;
They that say otherwise, do rend and tear it,
More like to wicked tyrants, who are cruel,
And add unto a little fire, more fuel.
But those who are true shepherds of the sheep,
To quench such burnings would most gladly weep.
But I am yet but upon generals;
Particulars our legislator calls
For at our hands, and that in order to
Consummate what we have begun to do.

1. My brother I must love, in very deed.
I'm taught of God to do it: let me heed

This divine duty, and perform it well,
Who loves his brother, God in him doth dwell;

*The argument which on me this imposes,
Smells like to ointment, or the sweetest roses.*

Shall God love, shall he keep his faith to me?

And shall not I? shall I unfaithful be?

Shall God love me a sinner? and shall I

Not love a saint? Yea, shall my Jesus die

To reconcile me to my God? and shall

I hate his child, nor hear his wants that call

For my little assisting of him? fie

On such a spirit, on such cruelty;

Fie on the thought that would me alienate,

Or tempt me my worst enemy to hate. ^[13]

2. He that dwells here, must also be a sharer

In others' griefs; must be a burden-bearer

Among his brethren, or he can not do

That which the blessed gospel calls him to.

In order hereunto, humility

Must be put on, it is our livery,

We must be clothed with it, if we will

The law obey, our master's mind fulfil.

If this be so, then what should they do here,

Who in their antic pranks of pride appear?

Let lofty men among you bear no sway,

The Lord beholds the proud man far away.

It is not fit that he inhabit there

Where humbleness of mind should have the chair.

Can pride be where a soul for mercy craves?

Shall pride be found among redeemed slaves?

Shall he who mercy from the gallows brought,

Look high, or strut, or entertain a thought

That tends to tempt him to forget that fate,

To which for sin he destin'd was of late,

And could not then at all delivered be,

But by another's death and misery?

Pride is the unbecoming'st thing of all:

Besides, 'tis the forerunner of a fall.

He that is proud, soon in the dirt will lie,

But honour followeth humility.

Let each then count his brother as his better,

Let each esteem himself another's debtor.

Christ bids us learn of him, humble to be,

Profession's beauty is humility.

3. Forgive, is here another statute law;

To be revenged is not worth a straw,

He that forgives shall also be forgiven,

Who doth not so, *must lose his part in heaven;*

Nor must thou weary of this duty be

'Cause God's not weary of forgiving thee.

Thou livest by forgiveness; should a stop
Be put thereto *one moment*, thou wouldst drop

Into the mouth of hell. Then let this move

Thee thy dear brother to forgive in love.

And we are bid in our forgivenesses

To do as God doth in forgiving his.

If any have a quarrel against any,

(As quarrels we have oft against a many)

Why then, as God, for Christ's sake, pardons you,

For Christ's sake, pardon thou thy brother too.

We say, What freely comes, doth freely go;

Then let all our forgivenesses be so.

I'm sure God heartily forgiveth thee,

My loving brother, prithee forgive me;

But then in thy forgiveness be upright;

Do't with thine heart, or thou'rt an hypocrite.

4. As we forgive, so we must watch and pray;

For enemies we have, that night and day,

Should we not watch, would soon our graces spoil,

Should we not pray, would our poor souls defile.

Without a watch, resist a foe who can?

Who prays not, is not like to play the man?

Complaint that he is overcome, he may;

But who would win the field, must watch and pray.

Who watches, should know who and who's together:

Know we not friends from foes, how know we whether

Of them to fight, or which to entertain?

Some have instead of foes, familiars slain.

Sometimes a lust will get into the place,

Or work, or office, of some worthy grace;

Till it has brought our souls to great decay.

Unless we diligently watch and pray,

Our pride will our humility precede:

By th' nose, our unbelief our faith will lead.

Self-love will be where self-denial should;

And passion heat, what patience sometime cool'd.

And thus it will be with us night and day,

Unless we diligently watch and pray.

Besides what these domestics do, there are

Abroad such foes as wait us to ensnare;

Yea, they against us stand in battle-'ray,

And will us spoil, unless we *watch and pray*.

There is the world with all its vanities,

There is the devil with a thousand lies;

There are false brethren with their fair collusions,

Also false doctrines with their strong delusions;

These will us take, yea carry us away
From what is good, unless we *watch and pray*.

Long life to many, is a fearful snare;
Of sudden death we also need beware;
The smiles and frowns of men, temptations be;
And there's a bait in all we hear and see.
*Let them who can, to any shew a way,
How they should live, that can not watch and pray.*

Nor is't enough to keep all well within,
Nor yet to keep all out that would be sin,
If entertained; I must myself concern
With my dear brother, as I do discern
Him tempted, or a wand'ring from the way;
Else as I should, I do not watch and pray.
Pray then, and watch, be thou no drowsy sleeper,
Grudge, nor refuse, to be thy brother's keeper,
Seest thou thy brother's graces at an ebb?
Is his heel taken in the spider's web?
Pray for thy brother; if that will not do,
To him, and warn him of the present woe
That is upon him; if he shall thee hear
Thou wilt a saviour unto him appear.^[14]

5. Sincerity, to that we are enjoined,
For I do in our blessed law-book find,
That duties, how well done soe'er they seem,
With our great God, are but of small esteem
If not sincerely done; then have a care
For hypocrites are hateful everywhere.
Things we may do, yea, and may let men see
Us do them too, design but honestly;
Vain-gloriously let us not seek for praise,
Vain-glory's nothing worth in gospel days.
Sincerity seeks not an open place,
To do, tho' it does all with open face;
It loves no guises, nor disfigurations.
'Tis plain, 'tis simple, hates equivocations.
Sincerity's that grace by which we poise,
And keep our duties even: nor but toys
Are all we do, if no sincerity
Attend our works, lift it up ne'er so high.
Sincerity makes heav'n upon us smile,
Lo, here's a man in whom there is no guile!
Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed!
With duties he sincerely doth proceed;
Under the fig-tree heav'n saw him at prayer,
There is but few do their devotions there.
Sincerity! Grace is thereto entailed,
The man that was sincere, God never fail'd.
One tear that falleth from sincerity,

Is worth ten thousand from hypocrisy.

6. Meekness is also here imposed by law,
A froward spirit is not worth a straw.
A froward spirit is a bane to rest,
They find it so, who lodge it in their breast.
A froward spirit suits with self-denial,
With taking up the cross, and ev'ry trial,
As cats and dogs, together by the ears;
As scornful men do suit with frumps^[15] and jeers.
Meek as a lamb, mute as a fish, is brave,
When anger boils, and passions vent do crave.
The meek, God will in paths of judgment guide;
Good shall the meek eat, and be satisfied;
The Lord will lift the meek to highest station;
Will beautify the meek with his salvation.
The meek are blest, the earth they shall inherit:
The meek is better than the proud in spirit.
Meekness will make you quiet, hardy, strong,
To bear a burden, and to put up wrong.
Meekness, though divers troubles you are in,
Will bridle passion, be a curb to sin.
Thus God sets forth the meek before our eyes;
A meek and quiet spirit God doth prize.

7. Temp'rance also, is on this house imposed,
And whoso has it not, is greatly nosed^[16]
By standers by, for greedy, lustful men:
Nor can all we can say, excuse us, when
Intemp'rance any where to them shall be
Apparent; though we other vices flee.
Temperance, the mother is of moderation,
The beauty also of our conversation.
Temperance will our affections moderate,
And keep us from being inordinate
In our embraces, or in our salutes
Of what we have, also in our pursuits
Of more, and in a sedate settlement
Of mind, will make's in all states be content.
Nor want we here an argument to prove
That who, inordinate is, in his love
Of worldly things, doth better things defy,
And slight salvation for the butterfly.

What argument can any man produce,
Why we should be intemperate in the use
Of any worldly good? Do we not see
That all these things from us a fleeting be?
What can we hold? What can we keep from flying
From us? Is not each thing we have a dying?
My house, my wife, my child, they all grow old,

Nor am I e'er the younger for my gold;
Here's none abiding, all things fade away,
Poor I at best am but a clod of clay.

If that be true, man doth not live by bread,
He that has nothing else, must needs be dead;
Take bread for what can in this world be found,
Yet all that therein is, is but a sound,
An empty sound, there is no life at all,
It can not save a sparrow from her fall.
Let us then use this world as we are bid,
And as in olden times, the godly did.

Who buy, should be as if they did possess
None of their purchase, or themselves did bless
In what they have; and he that doth rejoice
In what he hath, should rather out of choice,
Withdraw his mind from what he hath below,
And set his heart on whither he must go.
For those that weep under their heavy crosses,
Or that are broken with the sense of losses,
Let them remember, all things here are fading,
And as to nature, of a self-degrading
And wasting temper; yea, both we and they
Shall waste, and waste, until we waste away.
Let temperance then, with moderation be
As bounds to our affections, when we see,
Or feel, or taste, or any ways enjoy
Things pleasing to the flesh, lest we destroy
Ourselves therewith, or bring ourselves thereby
To surfeits, guilt, or Satan's slavery.

8. Patience, another duty, as we find
In holy writ, is on this house enjoined;
Her state, while here, is such, that she must have
This grace abounding in her, or a slave
She'll quickly be unto their lusts and will,
That seek the mind of Satan to fulfil.
He who must bear all wrongs without resistance,
And that with gladness too, must have assistance
Continually from patience, there-unto,
Or he will find such work too hard to do.

Who meets with taunts, with mocks, with flouts and squibs,
With raileries, reproaches, checks, and snibs;
Yea, he who for well-doing is abused,
Robb'd, spoiled, and goal'd, and ev'ry way misused;
Has he not patience soon will be offended,
Yea his profession too will soon be ended.
A Christian for religion must not fight,
But put up wrongs, though he be in the right;
He must be merciful, loving, and meek,
When they smite one, must turn the other cheek.

He must not render railing for reviling
Nor murmur when he sees himself a spoiling,
When they shall curse, he must be sure to bless,
And thus with patience must his soul possess.
I doubt our frampered^[17] Christians will not down
With what I say, yet I dare pawn my gown,
Do but compare my notes with sacred story,
And you will find patience the way to glory.
Patience under the cross, a duty is,
Whoso possess it, belongs to bliss;
If it is present work accomplisheth;
If it holds out, and still abideth with
The Truth; then may we look for that reward,
Promised at the coming of the Lord.

9. To entertain good men let's not forget
Some by so doing have had benefit;
Yea for to recompense this act of theirs,
Angels have lodged with them unawares.
Yea to encourage such a work as this,
The Lord himself makes it a note of his,
When hungry or when thirsty I have been,
Or when a stranger, you did take me in.
Strangers should not to strangers but be kind
Specially if conferring notes, they find
Themselves, though strangers here, one brotherhood,
And heirs, joint heirs, of everlasting good;
These should as mother's sons, when they do meet
In a strange country, one another greet
With welcome; come in, brother, how dost do?
Whither art wand'ring? Prithee let me know
Thy state? Dost want or meat, or drink, or cloth?
Art weary? Let me wash thy feet, I'm loth
Thou shouldst depart, abide with me all night;
Pursue thy journey with the morning light.

[X. THE WAY OF REDUCING WHAT'S AMISS, INTO ORDER HERE.]

Although this house thus honourable is,
Yet 'tis not sinless, many things amiss
Do happen here, wherefore them to redress,
We must keep to our rules of righteousness;
Nor must we think it strange, if sin shall be
Where virtue is; don't all men plainly see
That in the holy temple there was dust,
That to our very gold, there cleaveth rust?
In Abraham's family was a derider
I' th' palace of a king will be the spider.
Who saith, we have no sin, doth also say
We have no need at all to watch and pray;

To live by faith, the flesh to mortify,
 Or of more of the spirit to sanctify
 Our nature. All this wholly needless is
 With him, who as to this, has nought amiss.
 But we confess, 'cause we would not be liars,
 That we still feel the motions and desires
 Of sin within us, and should fall away,
 Did not Christ intercede and for us pray.
 We therefore do conclude that sin is here,
 But that it may not to our shame appear,
 We have our rules, thereby with it to deal,
 And plasters too, our deadly wounds to heal.
 And seeing idleness gives great occasions
 To th' flesh, to make its rude and bold invasions
 Upon good orders, 'tis ordained we see,
 That none dwell here, but such as workers be:
 So plain's the law for this, and so complete,
 It bids who will not work, forbear to eat;
 Let then each one be diligent to do
 What grace or nature doth oblige them to.
 Who have no need to work for meat or clothes,
 Should work for those that want. Not that the sloth
 Of idleness should be encouraged,
 But that those, poor indeed, be clad and fed.
 Dorcas did thus, and 'tis to sacred story
 Committed for her praise and lasting glory.

This house then is no nurse to idleness;
 Fig-trees are here to keep, and vines to dress;
 Here's work for all; yea, work that must be done;
 Yet work, like that, to playing in the sun;
 The toil's a pleasure, and the labour sweet,
 Like that of David's dancing in the street;
 The work is short, the wages are for ever,
 The work like me, the wages like the giver

No drone must hide himself under those eaves;
 Who sows not, will in harvest reap no sheaves.
 The slothful man himself, may plainly see,
 That honey's gotten by the working bee.
 But here's no work for life, that's freely given;
 Meat, drink, and cloths, and life, we have from heav'n;
 Work's here enjoined, 'cause it is a pleasure,
 Vice to suppress, and augment heavenly treasure
 Moreover, 'tis to shew, if men profess
 The faith, and yet abide in idleness,
 Their faith is vain, no man can ever prove
 He's right, but by the faith that works by love.
 If this good counsel is by thee rejected;
 If work and labour is by thee neglected;
 If thou, like David, lollest on thy bed;

Or art like to a horse, pamper'd and fed
 With what will fire thy lusts, and so lay snares
 For thine own soul, when thou shalt be i' th' wars:
 Then take what follows, *sin must be detected,*
And thou without repentance quite rejected.

This is the house of God, his dwelling-place,
 'Tis here that we behold his lovely face;
 But if it should polluted be with sin,
 And so abide, he quickly will begin
 To leave it desolate, and then woe to it,
Sin and his absence quickly will undo it.

And since sin is, of things the worst of all,
 And watcheth like a serpent on a wall,
 Or flyeth like an eagle in the air,
 Or runs as desperate ships, void of all care,
 Or, (as great Solomon hath wisely said)
 Is as the way of wantons with a maid,
 Who tick, and toy, and with a tempting giggle
 Provoke to lust, and by degrees, so wriggle
 Them into their affections, that they go
 The way to death, so do themselves undo:
 As it is said, this mischief to prevent,
 Let all men watch, yea, and be diligent
 Observers of its motions, and then fly,
 This is the way to live, and not to die.
 He that would never fall, must never slip,
 Who would obey the call, must fear the whip.
 God would also that every stander by
 That in the grass doth see the adder lie,
 Should cry as he did, death is in the pot,
 That many by its poison perish not.
 But if that beastly thing shall hold its hold,
 And make the man possessed basely bold
 In pleading for it, or shall it deny,
 Or it shall seek to cover with a lie;
 Then take more aid, and make a fresh assault
 At it again, diminish not the fault,
 But charge it home. If yet he will not fear,
 But still unto his wickedness adhere,
 Then tell the house thereof. But if he still
 Persist in his abomination will,
 Then fly him, 'cause he is a leprous man,
 Count him with heathens and the publican.
 But if he falls before thee at the first,
 Then be thou to him faithful, loving, just.
Forgive his sin, tell it not to a brother,
Lest thou thyself be served so by another.

If he falls not, but in the second charge,

Spread not his wickedness abroad at large.
But, if thou think his sorrow to be sound,
Forgive his sin, and hide it under ground.
If he shall stand the first and second shot;
If he before the church, repenteth not,
Deal with him as the matter shall require,
Let not the house for him be set on fire.

If after all, he shall repent and turn
To God, and you, you must not let him burn
For ever under sense of sin and shame,
You must his sin forgive in Christ his name.

Confirm your love to him in Christ, you must,
By all such ways as honest are, and just.
Shy be not of him, carry't not aloof,
But rather give him of your love such proof,
That he may gather thence, ye do believe
To mercy Christ again doth him receive.

Two things, monish you, as to this, I would;
The first, to shew the church wherein she should
In all her actions so herself behave,
As to convince the fault, she would save
His soul; and that 'tis for this very thing,
She doth him unto open judgment bring.
Then would I shew the person they reject,
What will, without repentance, be th' effect
Of this tremendous censure, so conclude;
Leaving my judgment to the multitude
Of those who sober and judicious be,
Begging of each of them a prayer for me.

1. This house, in order to this work, must be
Affected with the sin and misery,
Of this poor creature, yea, must mourn and weep,
To think such tares, in your neglect, or sleep,
Should spring up here, nor must they once invent
To think, till he's cast out, you're innocent.

2. Thus leaven, the whole lump has leavened;
Israel was guilty of what Achan did;
And so must stand, until they purged are,
Till Achan doth, for sin, his burden bear.
The reason is, Achan a member was
Of that great body, and by nature's laws,
The hand, foot, eye, tongue, ear, or one of these,
May taint the whole with Achan's foul disease.
The church must too be sensible of this,
Some lep'rous stones make all the house amiss:
And as the stones must thence removed be,
In order to the house's sanctity,

So it must purged be (in any wise)
Before 'tis counted clean (by sacrifice).

3. Next have a care, lest sin, which you should purge
Becomes not unto you a farther scourge,
The which it will, if such shall judges be,
Which from its spots and freckles are not free;
Pluck thou the beam first out of thine own eye,
Else the condemned will thee vilify
And say, let not the pot the kettle judge;
If otherwise, it will beget a grudge,
A great one 'twixt the church and him that sinned,
Nor by such means, can ever such be winned
To a renew'd embrace of holiness;
More like be tempted further to transgress.

4. Again, let those that loud against it cry,
See they don't entertain it inwardly;
Sin, like to pitch, will to the fingers cleave,
Look to it then, let none himself deceive;
'Tis catching; make resistances afresh,
Abhor the garment spotted by the flesh.
*Some at the dimness of the candle puff,
Who yet can daub their fingers with the snuff.*

5. Beware, likewise, lest rancour should appear
Against the person, do in all things fear:
Bewail the man, while you abhor his sin;
Pity his soul; the flesh you still are in;
Thyself consider thou may'st tempted be,
Hast thou no pity, who will pity thee?

6. See that the ground be good on which you go:
Sin, but not virtue show dislike unto.
Take heed of hypocritical intentions,
And quarrel not at various apprehensions
About some smaller matter, lest it breed
Needless debates, and lest that filthy seed
Contention, should o'errun your holy ground,
And lest not love, but nettles there are found.

7. You must likewise allow each man his grains,
For that none perfect are, sin yet remains,
And human frailties do attend the best;
To bear and forbear here, will tend to rest.
Vain jangling, jars, and strifes will there abound,
Where moles are mountains made, or fault is found,
With every little, trivial, petty thing;
This spirit snib, or 'twill much mischief bring
Into this house, and 'tis for want of love,
'Tis entertain'd: *it is not of the dove.*

8. For those that have private opinions too
We must make room, or shall the church undo:
 Provided they be such as don't impair
Faith, holiness, nor with good conscience jar:
 Provided also those that hold them shall
Such faith hold to themselves, and not let fall
Their fruitless notions in their brother's way,
Do this, and faith and love will not decay.

9. We must also in these our dealings shew
We put a difference 'twixt those sins that do
Clash with the light of nature, and what we
Perceive against the faith of Christ to be.
 Those against nature, nature will detect;
Those against faith, faith from them must direct
The judgment, conscience, understanding too,
Or there will be no cure, whate'er you do.
 When men are caught in immoralities,
Nature will start, the conscience will arise
To judgment; and if impudence doth recoil,
Yet guilt, and self-condemnings will embroil
The wretch concerned, in such unquietness
Or shame, as will induce him to confess
His fault, and pardon crave of God and man,
Such men with ease therefore we conquer can.

But 'tis not thus with such as swerve in faith
With them, who, as our wise Apostle saith,
 Entangled are at unawares, with those
Cunning to trap, to snare, and to impose
 By falsifyings, their prevarications:
No, these are slyly taken from their stations,
Unknown to nature; yea, in judgment they
Think they have well done to forsake the way.
Their understanding, and their judgment too
Doth like, or well approve of what they do.
These are, poor souls, beyond their art and skill,
 Ta'en captive by the devil, at his will,
Here therefore you must patience exercise,
 And suffer long, ye must not tyrannise
It over such, but must all meekness shew;
Still dropping of good doctrine as the dew,
 Against their error; so its churlishness
You conquer will, and may their fault redress.

 The reason why we must not exercise
That roughness here, as where conviction lies
 In nature, is because those thus ensnared
Want nature's light and help to be repair'd.
 A spirit hath them taken, they are gone,
 Delusions supernat'ral they're on

The wing of; They are out o' th' reach of man
Nothing but God, and gospel reach them can.
Now since we can not give these people eyes,
 Nor regulate their judgment, wherein lies,
Our work with them, if not, as has been said,
 In exercising patience. While display'd
 The holy word before their faces is,
By which alone they must see what's amiss
With their poor souls, and so convert again,
 To him with whom salvation doth remain.

Objection. But they are turbulent, they would confound
The truth, and all in their perdition drown'd.

Answer. If turbulent and mischievous they are,
 Imposing their opinions without care
 Who they offend, or do destroy thereby.
Then must the church deal with them presently,
Lest tainted be the whole with their delusion,
And brought into disorder and confusion.

[XI. THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THOSE THUS DEALT WITH.]

 The man that worthily rejected is,
And cast out of this house, his part in bliss
 Is lost for ever, turns he not again,
 True faith and holiness to entertain.
Nor is it boot, for who are thus cast out,
 Themselves to flatter, or to go about
To shift the censure; nothing here will do,
 Except a new conversion thou come to.
He that is bound on earth, is bound in heaven,
 Nor is his loosing, but the sin forgiven;
Repentance too, forgiveness must precede,
 Or thou must still abide among the dead.

[XII. AN EXPOSTULATION WITH SUCH TO RETURN.]

O shame! Is't not a shame for men to be
 For sin, spu'd out from good society!
 For man enlightened to be so base!
 To turn his back upon the God of grace!
For one who for his sins has mourn'd and cry'd,
 To slight him, who for sin hath bled and died!
 What fool would sell his part in paradise,
 That has a soul, and that of such a price?
 What parallel can suit with such so well,
As those, for sin cast down from heaven to hell!
 But let me tell thee, here is aggravation;

The angels, though they did fall from their station
 Had not the caution thou hast had; they fell;
 This thou hast seen, and seeing, didst rebel.
 One would a thought, the noise of this their fall,
 A warning; yea, a warning, and a call,
 Should unto thee have been, to have a care
 Of falling too: O how then didst thou dare,
 Since God did not spare them, thus to presume
 To tempt him in his wrath, thee to consume.
 Nor did the angels from a Jesus fall,
 Redeemed they were not, from a state of thrall;
 But thou! as one redeem'd, and that by blood,
 Redemption hast despised; and the mud
 Or mire of thine own filth againembracest:
 A dying bleeding Jesus thoudisgracest!
 What wilt thou do? see's not how thou hast trod
 Under thy foot, the very Son of God?
 O fearful hand of God! And fearful will
 Thy doom be, when his wrath thy soul shall kill.

Yea, with a signal these must hear their sin,
 This dirty sow from mire has washed been,
 Yet there did wallow, after wash'd she was;
 So to procure a lust, obtain'd this loss.
 O shame! is't not a shame for man to be,
 So much averse to his felicity,
 That none can make him leave to play the fool,
Till to the devil he be put to school,
 To learn his own salvation to prize?
 O fool! must now the devil make thee wise?
 O sot! that will in wickedness remain,
 Unless the devil drives thee back again.

Hast quite forgot how thou wast wont to pray,
 And cry out for forgiveness night and day?
 Or dost thou count they were but painted fears
 Which from thine eyes did squeeze so many tears?
 Remember man, thy prayers and tears will cry
 Thee down to hell, for thine apostasy.
 Who will not have what he has prayed for,
 Must die the death, his prayer shall him abhor.
 Hast thou forgotten that most solemn vow
 Thou mad'st to God, when thou didst crave he bow
 His ear unto thee would, and give thee grace,
 And would thee also in his arms embrace?
 That vow, I say, whereby thou then didst bind
 Thyself to him, that now thy roving mind
 Recoil against him should, and fling away
 From him, and his commandments disobey.
 What has he done? wherein has he offended?
 Thou actest now, as if thou wast intended

To prove him guilty of unrighteousness,
 Of breach of promise, or that from distress
 He could, or would not save thee, or that thou
 Hast found a better good than he; but how
 Thou wilt come off, or how thou wilt excuse
 Thyself, 'cause thou art gone, and did refuse
 To wait upon him that consider well;
 Thou art as yet alive, on this side hell.
 Is't not a shame, a stinking shame to be
 Cast forth God's vineyard as a barren tree?
 To be thrown o'er the pales, and there to lie,
 Or be pick'd up by th' next that passeth by?

Well, thou hast turn'd away, return again;
 Bethink thyself, thy foot from sin refrain;
 Hark! thou art call'd upon, stop not thine ear:
 Return, backsliding children, come, draw near
 Unto your God; repent, and he will heal
 Your base backslidings, to you will reveal
 That grace and peace which with him doth remain,
 For them that turn away, and turn again.

Take with thee words, come to the throne of grace
 There supplicate thy God, and seek his face;
 Like to the prodigal, confess thy sin,
 Tell him where, and how vicious thou hast been.
 Suppose he shall against thee shut the door,
 Knock thou the louder, and cry out the more;
 What if he makes thee there to stand a while?
 Or makes as if he would not reconcile
 To thee again? Yet take thee no denial,
 Count all such carriages but as a trial
 Whether thou art in earnest in thy suit,
 As one truly forlorn and destitute;
 But hide thou nought of all that thou hast done,
 Open thy bosom, make confession
 Of all thy wickedness, tell every whit;
 Hast thou a secret sin? don't cover it;
 Confess, thyself judge, if thou wouldst not die;
Who doth himself judge, God doth justify.

To sin, and stand in't, is the highest evil;
 This makes a man most like unto the devil;
 This bids defiance unto God and grace;
 This man resists himspitteth in his face,
 Scorns at his justice, mocketh at his power,
 Tempts him, provokes him, grieves him every hour:
 When he ariseth, he will recompense
 This sturdy rebel for his impenitence:
 Be not incorrigible then, come back again,
 There's hope, beg mercy while life doth remain.

Objection. But I fear I am lost and cast away,
Sentence is past, and who reverse it may?

Answer. The sentence past, admitteth or reprieve;
Yea, of a pardon, canst thou but believe.
Turn again sinner, never make a doubt,
Come, the Lord Jesus will not cast thee out.

FOOTNOTES

- [1] 4to, London, 1642. In the editor's library.
- [2] 'That advance,' preferment, or progress towards perfection. - Ed.
- [3] 'Mo,' a usual contraction for more in former times, now obsolete. - Ed.
- [4] Probably referring to the parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15. - Ed.
- [5] This may refer to the Levitical law, Exodus 21:28-36. The ox that had gored any one to death, 'shall be surely stoned' without possibility of escape, but the backslider or manslayer, although he lie equally under the sentence of death, yet may escape to the city of refuge. - Ed.
- [6] These stanzas afford an excellent illustration to the meaning of Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Christian, before the cross, receives the roll or certificate - loses it for a season in the arbour on the hill Difficulty, when loitering and sleeping on his way to the Interpreter's house, but regains it by repentance and prayers, and eventually, having crossed the river, gives it in at the gate of the Celestial City, and is admitted. - Ed.
- [7] Bunyan considered that baptism is to *follow* belief, and that christening a child was a misplacing the ordinance. So also with the Lord's Supper - that it was to be a *public* showing forth the death of the Saviour, and if administered in private, or with any other view, it was misplaced. - Ed.
- [8] It is a rare thing for Bunyan to use a foreign word; but all pious persons in his time were familiar with, and generally used, the Puritan or Genevan Bible, vulgarly called the Breeches Bible, an extremely valuable book; in the marginal notes of which, on this passage is the following explanation, "'wilde gourdes,'" which the apothecaries call *coloquintida*, and is most vehement and dangerous in purging.' - Ed.
- [9] The university or college in which Bunyan so highly graduated, is the only one where ministers can be instructed in this spiritual physic. It is Christ's college or school, neither at Oxford or Cambridge, but in the Bible. There, and there *only*, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, can the Christian bishop or under shepherd receive instruction in the precious remedies against Satan's devices, or in specifics to cure spiritual maladies. - Ed.
- [10] 'He had in his pocket A MAP of all ways leading to or from the celestial city; wherefore he struck a light, for he never went without his tinder box, and took a view of his book or map; which bid him be careful, in that place, to turn to the right hand way. And had he not here been careful to look in his map, they had, in all probability, been smothered in the mud; for just before them, and that in the cleanest way, was a pit, and none knows how deep, full of nothing but mud, there made on purpose to destroy pilgrims in. Then thought I with myself, who that goeth on pilgrimage, but would have one of these maps about him, that he may look when he is at a stand which is the way he must take.' - *Pilgrim's Progress, Part Second*.

[11] These hints to deacons are invaluable. They must have been the result of long intimacy and enlightened watchfulness over the conduct of the poor. To distinguish between the noisy beggar and the unobtrusive sufferer - to administer relief in just proportions, 'the *word* the rule, and *want* the law,' in spite of all that influence which is constantly brought to bear upon those who distribute any common charity fund. It requires much of the fear of God in the heart, and a solemn sense of responsibility at the great day. The terms, 'crumbs of charity,' are beautifully expressive of the general poverty of Christian churches. - Ed.

[12] Bunyan's idea of this scriptural order of female deacons is very striking, and worthy the solemn consideration of all Christian churches. They are to be chosen from such as are 'widows indeed, who trust in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day,' 1 Timothy 5:5. They are to devote themselves to the sick - to be patterns of good works - and, if needful, to be fed and clothed at the expense of the church, verse 16. If to this were added to examine and educate the children, they might be most eminently useful. - Ed.

[13] These instructions are like 'apples of gold in pictures of silver.' Thrice happy are those churches whose members act in conformity with these scriptural rules. But is there a member who dares to violate them? Poor wretched creature, the Lord have mercy on thee. - Ed.

[14] Happy is that Christian, who, in obedience to his Lord's command, is so humble as to *seek* out the brother who has offended him; 'Go and tell him his fault *between thee and him alone*,' is the divine command. Is it not at the peril of our souls wilfully to violate this self-humiliating but imperative law? - Ed.

[15] To 'frump,' to mock or browbeat. - Ed.

[16] 'Greatly nosed,' taken by the nose, ridiculed. - Ed.

[17] 'Frampered' or frampold, peevish, cross-grained, rugged; now obsolete. - Ed.