

Motives for Diligent Christian Walking

A Sermon by Richard Baxter

Having showed you what it is to take heed to ourselves, I shall next lay before you some motives to awaken you to this duty.

1. Take heed to yourselves, for you have a heaven to win or lose, and souls that must be happy or miserable for ever; and therefore it concerneth you to begin at home, and to take heed to yourselves as well as to others. Preaching well may succeed to the salvation of others, without the holiness of your own hearts and lives; it is, at least, possible, though less usual; but it is impossible it should save yourselves. 'Many will say in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?' to whom he will answer, 'I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.' O sirs, how many men have preached Christ, and yet have perished for want of a saving interest in him! How many, who are now in hell, have told their people of the torments of hell, and warned them to escape from it! How many have preached of the wrath of God against sinners, who are now enduring it! O what sadder case can there be in the world, than for a man, who made it his very trade and calling to proclaim salvation, and to help others to heaven, yet after all to be himself shut out! Alas! that we should have so many books in our libraries which tell us the way to heaven; that we should spend so many years in reading these books, and studying the doctrine of eternal life, and after all this to miss it! — that we should study so many sermons of salvation, and yet fall short of it! — that we should preach so many sermons of damnation, and yet fall into it? And all because we preached so many sermons of Christ, while we neglected him; of the Spirit, while we resisted him; of faith, while we did not ourselves believe; of repentance and conversion, while we continued in an impenitent and unconverted state; and of a heavenly life, while we remained carnal and earthly ourselves. If we will be divines only in tongue and title, and have not the Divine image upon our souls, nor give up ourselves to the Divine honour and will, no wonder if we be separated from the Divine presence, and denied the fruition of God for ever. Believe it, sirs, God is no respecter of persons: he saveth not men for their coats or callings; a holy calling will not save an unholy man.

If you stand at the door of the kingdom of grace, to light others in, and will not go in yourselves, you shall knock in vain at the gates of glory, that would not enter at the door of grace. You shall then find that your lamps should have had the oil of grace, as well as of ministerial gifts — of holiness, as well as of doctrine — if you would have had a part in the glory which you preached.

Do I need to tell you, that preachers of the gospel must be judged by the gospel; and stand at the same bar, and be sentenced on the same terms, and dealt with as severely, as any other men? Can you think to be saved, then, by your clergy; and to come off by a 'He passed for a clergyman,' when there is wanting the 'He believed and lived as a Christian.' Alas, it will not be! You know it will not be. Take heed therefore to yourselves, for your own sakes; seeing you have souls to save or lose, as well as others.

2. Take heed to yourselves, for you have a depraved nature, and sinful inclinations, as well as others. If innocent Adam had need of heed, and lost himself and us for want of it, how much more need have such as we! Sin dwelleth in us, when we have preached ever so much against it; and one degree prepareth the heart for another, and one sin inclineth the mind to more. If one thief be in the house, he will let in the rest; because they have the same disposition and design. A spark is the beginning of a flame; and a small disease may cause a greater. A man who knows himself to be purblind, should take heed to his feet. Alas! in our hearts, as well as in our hearers, there is an averseness to God, a strangeness to him, unreasonable and almost unruly passions! In us there are, at the best, the remnants of pride, unbelief, self-seeking, hypocrisy, and all the most hateful, deadly sins. And doth it not then concern us to take heed to ourselves? Is so much of the fire of hell yet unextinguished, that was at first kindled in us? Are there so many traitors in our very hearts, and is it not necessary for us to take heed? You will scarcely let your little children go themselves while they are weak, without calling upon them to take heed of falling. And, alas! how weak are those of us that seem strongest! How apt to stumble at a very straw! How small a matter will cast us down, by enticing us to folly; or kindling our passions and inordinate desires, by perverting our judgments, weakening our resolutions, cooling our zeal, and abating our diligence! Ministers are not only sons of Adam, but sinners against the grace of Christ, as well as others; and so have increased their radical sin. These treacherous hearts of yours will, one time or other, deceive you, if you take not heed. Those sins that seem now to lie

dead will revive: your pride, and worldliness, and many a noisome vice, will spring up, that you thought had been weeded out by the roots. It is most necessary, therefore, that men of so much infirmity should take heed to themselves, and be careful in the oversight of their own souls.

3. Take heed to yourselves, because the tempter will more ply you with his temptations than other men. If you will be the leaders against the prince of darkness, he will spare you no further than God restraineth him. He beareth the greatest malice to those that are engaged to do him the greatest mischief. As he hateth Christ more than any of us, because he is the General of the field, the Captain of our salvation, and doth more than all the world besides against his kingdom; so doth he hate the leaders under him, more than the common soldiers: he knows what a rout he may make among them, if the leaders fall before their eyes. He hath long tried that way of fighting, neither against great nor small comparatively, but of smiting the shepherds, that he may scatter the flock: and so great hath been his success this way, that he will continue to follow it as far as he is able.

Take heed, therefore, brethren, for the enemy hath a special eye upon you. You shall have his most subtle insinuations, and incessant solicitations, and violent assaults. As wise and learned as you are, take heed to yourselves, lest he outwit you. The devil is a greater scholar than you, and a nimbler disputant; he can transform himself into an angel of light to deceive: he will get within you, and trip up your heels before you are aware: he will play the juggler with you undiscerned, and cheat you of your faith or innocence, and you shall not know that you have lost it; nay, he will make you believe it is multiplied or increased, when it is lost. You shall see neither hook nor line, much less the subtle angler himself, while he is offering you his bait. And his bait shall be so fitted to your temper and disposition, that he will be sure to find advantages within you, and make your own principles and inclinations betray you; and whenever he ruineth you, he will make you the instruments of ruin to others. O what a conquest will he think he hath got, if he can make a minister lazy and unfaithful, if he can tempt a minister into covetousness or scandal! He will glory against the Church, and say, 'These are your holy preachers! See what their preciseness is, and whither it brings them.' He will glory against Jesus Christ himself, and say, 'These are thy champions! I can make thy chiefest servants abuse thee; I can make the stewards of thy house unfaithful.' If he did so insult God upon a false surmise, and tell him he could make Job curse

him to his face, what will he do if he should prevail against you? And at last he will insult as much over you, that he could draw you to be false to your great trust, and to blemish your holy profession, and to do so much service to him that was your enemy. O, do not so far gratify Satan; do not make him so much sport; suffer him not to use you as the Philistines did Samson, first to deprive you of your strength, and then to put out your eyes, and so to make you the matter of his triumph and derision.

4. Take heed to yourselves, because there are many eyes upon you, and there will be many to observe your falls. You cannot miscarry but the world will ring of it. The eclipses of the sun by day are seldom without witnesses. As you take yourselves for the lights of the churches, you may expect that men's eyes will be upon you. If other men may sin without observation, so cannot you.

And you should thankfully consider how great a mercy this is, that you have so many eyes to watch over you, and so many ready to tell you of your faults; and thus have greater helps than others, at least for restraining you from sin. Though they may do it with a malicious mind, yet you have the advantage of it. God forbid that we should prove so impudent as to do evil in the public view of all, and to sin wilfully while the world is gazing on us! 'They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.' Why, consider that you are ever in the open light: even the light of your own doctrine will expose your evil doings. While you are as lights set upon a hill, think not to lie hid. Take heed therefore to yourselves, and do your work as those that remember that the world looks on them, and that with the quick-sighted eye of malice, ready to make the worst of all, to find the smallest fault where it is, to aggravate it where they find it, to divulge it and to take advantage of it to their own designs, and to make faults where they cannot find them. How cautiously, then, should we walk before so many ill-minded observers!

5. Take heed to yourselves, for your sins have more heinous aggravations than other men's. It was a saying of king Alphonsus, that 'a great man cannot commit a small sin,' much more may we say, that a learned man, or a teacher of others, cannot commit a small sin; or, at least, that the sin is great as committed by him, which is smaller as committed by another.

(1) You are more likely than others to sin against knowledge, because you have more than they; at least, you sin against more light, or means of knowledge. What! do you not know

that covetousness and pride are sins? do you not know what it is to be unfaithful to your trust, and, by negligence or self-seeking, to betray men's souls? You know your 'Master's will; and, if you do it not, you shall be beaten with many stripes.' There must needs be the more wilfulness, by how much there is the more knowledge.

(2) Your sins have more hypocrisy in them than other men's, by how much the more you have spoken against them. O what a heinous thing is it in us, to study how to disgrace sin to the utmost, and make it as odious in the eyes of our people as we can, and when we have done, to live in it, and secretly cherish that which we publicly disgrace! What vile hypocrisy is it, to make it our daily work to cry it down, and yet to keep to it; to call it publicly all naught, and privately to make it our bed-fellow and companion; to bind heavy burdens on others, and not to touch them ourselves with a finger! What can you say to this in judgment? Did you think as ill of sin as you spoke, or did you not? If you did not, why would you dissemblingly speak against it? If you did, why would you keep it and commit it? O bear not that badge of a hypocritical Pharisee, 'They say, but do not.' Many a minister of the gospel will be confounded, and not be able to look up, by reason of this heavy charge of hypocrisy.

(3) Your sins have more perfidiousness in them than other men's, by how much the more you have engaged yourselves against them. Besides all your common engagements as Christians, you have many more as ministers. How oft have you proclaimed the evil and danger of sin, and called sinners from it? How oft have you denounced against it the terrors of the Lord? All this surely implied that you renounced it yourselves. Every sermon that you preached against it, every exhortation, every confession of it in the congregation, did lay an engagement upon you to forsake it. Every child that you baptized, and every administration of the supper of the Lord, did import your own renouncing of the world and the flesh, and your engagement to Christ. How oft, and how openly, have you borne witness to the odiousness and damnable nature of sin? and yet will you entertain it, notwithstanding all these professions and testimonies of your own? O what treachery is it to make such a stir against it in the pulpit, and, after all, to entertain it in thy heart, and give it the room that is due to God, and even prefer it before the glory of the saints!

6. Take heed to yourselves, because such great works as ours require greater grace than other men's. Weaker gifts and graces may carry a man through in a more even course of life,

that is not liable to so great trials. Smaller strength may serve for lighter works and burdens. But if you will venture on the great undertakings of the ministry; if you will lead on the troops of Christ against Satan and his followers; if you will engage yourselves against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places; if you will undertake to rescue captive sinners out of the devil's paws; do not think that a heedless, careless course will accomplish so great a work as this. You must look to come off with greater shame and deeper wounds of conscience, than if you had lived a common life, if you think to go through such momentous things as these with a careless soul. It is not only the work that calls for heed, but the workman also, that he may be fit for business of such weight.

We have seen many men who lived as private Christians, in good reputation for parts and piety, when they took upon them either the magistracy or military employment, where the work was above their gifts, and temptations did overmatch their strength, they proved scandalous disgraced men. And we have seen some private Christians of good esteem, who, having thought too highly of their parts, and thrust themselves into the ministerial office, have proved weak and empty men, and have become greater burdens to the Church than some whom we endeavoured to cast out. They might have done God more service in the higher rank of private men, than they do among the lowest of the ministry. If, then, you will venture into the midst of enemies, and bear the burden and heat of the day, take heed to yourselves.

7. Take heed to yourselves, for the honour of your Lord and Master, and of his holy truth and ways, doth lie more on you than on other men. As you may render him more service, so you may do him more disservice than others. The nearer men stand to God, the greater dishonour hath he by their miscarriages; and the more will they be imputed by foolish men to God himself. The heavy judgments executed on Eli and on his house were because they kicked at his sacrifice and offering: 'Therefore was the sin of the young men very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.' It was that great aggravation, of 'causing the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme,' which provoked God to deal more sharply with David, than he would otherwise have done. If you be indeed Christians, the glory of God will be dearer to you than your lives. Take heed therefore what you do against it, as you would take heed what you do against your lives. Would it not wound you to the heart to hear the name and truth of God reproached for your sakes; to see men point to you, and

say, 'There goes a covetous priest, a secret tippler, a scandalous man; these are they that preach for strictness, while they themselves can live as loose as others; they condemn us by their sermons, and condemn themselves by their lives; notwithstanding all their talk, they are as bad as we.' O brethren, could your hearts endure to hear men cast the dung of your iniquities in the face of the holy God, and in the face of the gospel, and of all that desire to fear the Lord? Would it not break your hearts to think that all the godly Christians about you should suffer reproach for your misdoings? Why, if one of you that is a leader of the flock, should be ensnared but once into some scandalous crime, there is scarcely a man or woman that seeketh diligently after their salvation, within the hearing of it, but, besides the grief of their hearts for your sin, are likely to have it cast in their teeth by the ungodly about them, however much they may detest it, and lament it. The ungodly husband will tell his wife, and the ungodly parents will tell their children, and ungodly neighbours and fellow-servants will be telling one another of it, saying, 'These are your godly preachers! See what comes of all your stir. What better are you than others? You are even all alike.' Such words as these must all the godly in the country hear for your sakes. 'It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!' O take heed, brethren, of every word you speak, and of every step you tread, for you bear the ark of the Lord, — you are entrusted with his honour! If you that 'know his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that ye yourselves are guides of the blind, and lights to them that are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes,' — if you, I say, should live contrary to your doctrine, and 'by breaking the law should dishonour God, the name of God will be blasphemed' among the ignorant and ungodly 'through you.' And you are not unacquainted with that standing decree of heaven, 'Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.' Never did man dishonour God, but it proved the greatest dishonour to himself.

God will find out ways enough to wipe off any stain that is cast upon him; but you will not so easily remove the shame and sorrow from yourselves.

8. Lastly, Take heed to yourselves, for the success of all your labours doth very much depend upon this. God useth to fit men for great works, before he employs them as his instruments in accomplishing them. Now, if the work of the Lord be not soundly done upon your own hearts, how can you expect that he will bless your labours for effecting it in others? He may

do it, if he please, but you have much cause to doubt whether he will. I shall here mention some reasons which may satisfy you, that he who would be a means of saving others, must take heed to himself, and that God doth more seldom prosper the labours of unsanctified men.

(1) Can it be expected that God will bless that man's labours, (I mean comparatively, as to other ministers) who worketh not for God, but for himself? Now, this is the case with every unsanctified man. None but converted men do make God their chief end, and do all or any thing heartily for dishonour; others make the ministry but a trade to live by. They choose it rather than another calling, because their parents did destine them to it, or because it affordeth them a competent maintenance; because it is a life wherein they have more opportunity to furnish their intellects with all kind of science; or because it is not so toilsome to the body, to those that have a mind to favour their flesh; because it is accompanied with some reverence and respect from men, and because they think it a fine thing to be leaders and teachers, and have others 'receive the law at their mouth.' For such ends as these are they ministers, and for these do they preach; and, were it not for these, or similar objects, they would soon give over. And can it be expected, that God should much bless the labours of such men as these? It is not for him they preach, but themselves, and their own reputation or gain. It is not him, but themselves, that they seek and serve; and, therefore, no wonder if he leave them to themselves for the success, and if their labours have no greater a blessing than themselves can give, and if the word reach no further than their own strength can make it reach.

(2) Can you think that he is likely to be as successful as others, who dealeth not heartily and faithfully in his work, who believeth not what he saith, and is not truly serious when he seemeth to be most diligent? And can you think that any unsanctified man can be hearty and serious in the ministerial work? A kind of seriousness indeed he may have, such as proceedeth from a common faith or opinion, that the Word is true; or he may be actuated by a natural fervor, or by selfish ends: but the seriousness and fidelity of a sound believer, who ultimately intendeth God's glory, and men's salvation, this he hath not. O sirs, all your preaching and persuading of others, will be but dreaming and vile hypocrisy, till the work be thoroughly done upon your own hearts. How can you set yourselves, day and night, to a work that your carnal hearts are averse to? How can you call, with serious fervour, upon

poor sinners to repent and return to God, that never repented or returned yourselves? How can you heartily follow poor sinners, with importunate solicitations to take heed of sin, and to lead a holy life, that never felt yourselves the evil of sin, or the worth of holiness?

These things are never well known till they are felt, nor well felt till they are possessed; and he that feeleth them not himself, is not likely to speak feelingly of them to others, nor to help others to the feeling of them. How can you follow sinners, with compassion in your hearts and tears in your eyes, and beseech them, in the name of the Lord, to stop their course, and return and live, and never had so much compassion on your own soul, as to do this much for yourselves? What! Can you love other men better than yourselves? Can you have pity on them, who have no pity upon yourselves? Sirs, do you think they will be heartily diligent to save men from hell, that be not heartily persuaded that there is a hell? Or to bring men to heaven, that do not truly believe that there is a heaven? As Calvin saith on my text; 'For never will the man take diligent care for the salvation of others who neglects his own salvation.' He that hath not so strong a belief of the Word of God, and of the life to come, as will withdraw his own heart from the vanities of this world, and excite him to holy diligence for salvation, cannot be expected to be faithful in seeking the salvation of other men. Surely he that dare damn himself, dare let others alone in the way to damnation; he that, like Judas, will sell his Master for silver, will not stick to make merchandise of the flock; he that will let go his hopes of heaven, rather than leave his worldly and fleshly delights, will hardly leave them for the saving of others. We may naturally conceive, that he will have no pity on others, that is wilfully cruel to himself; that he is not to be trusted with other men's souls, who is unfaithful to his own, and will sell it to the devil for the short pleasures of sin. I confess that man shall never have my consent to have the charge of other men's souls and to oversee them in order to their salvation that takes not heed to himself but is careless of his own, except it were in case of absolute necessity, that no better could be had.

(3) Do you think it is a likely thing, that he will fight against Satan with all his might, who is himself a servant to Satan? Will he do any great harm to the kingdom of the devil, who is himself a member and a subject of that kingdom? Will he be true to Christ who is in covenant with his enemy? Now, this is the case of all unsanctified men, of whatsoever rank or profession they be.

They are the servants of Satan, and the subjects of his kingdom; it is he that ruleth in their hearts; and are they like to be true to Christ that are ruled by the devil? What prince will choose the friends and servants of his enemy to lead his armies in war against him? This is it that hath made so many preachers of the gospel to be enemies to the work of the gospel which they preach. No wonder if such deride the holy obedience of the faithful; and if while they take on them to preach a holy life, they cast reproaches on them that practice it! O how many such traitors have been in the Church of Christ in all ages, who have done more against him, under his colours, than they could have done in the open field! They speak well of Christ and of godliness in the general, and yet slyly do what they can to bring them into disgrace, and make men believe that those who set themselves to seek God with all their hearts are a company of enthusiasts or hypocrites. And when they cannot for shame speak that way in the pulpit, they will do it in private among their acquaintance. Alas! How many such wolves have been set over the sheep! If there was a traitor among the twelve in Christ's family, no wonder if there be many now. It cannot be expected that a slave of Satan, 'whose god is his belly, and who mindeth earthly things,' should be any better than 'an enemy to the cross of Christ.' What though he live civilly, and preach plausibly, and maintain outwardly a profession of religion? He may be as fast in the devil's snares, by worldliness, pride, a secret distaste of diligent godliness, or by an unsound heart that is not rooted in the faith, nor unreservedly devoted to Christ, as others are by drunkenness, uncleanness, and similar disgraceful sins. Publicans and harlots do sooner enter heaven than Pharisees, because they are sooner convinced of their sin and misery.

And, though many of these men may seem excellent preachers, and may cry down sin as loudly as others, yet it is all but an affected fervency, and too commonly but a mere useless bawling; for he who cherisheth sin in his own heart doth never fall upon it in good earnest in others. I know, indeed, that a wicked man may be more willing of the reformation of others than of his own, and hence may show a kind of earnestness in dissuading them from their evil ways; because he can preach against sin at an easier rate than he can forsake it, and another man's reformation may consist with his own enjoyment of his lusts. And, therefore, many a wicked minister or parent may be earnest with their people or children to amend, because they lose not their own sinful profits or pleasures by another's reformation, nor doth it call them to that self-denial which their own doth.

But yet for all this, there is none of that zeal, resolution, and diligence, which are found in all that are true to Christ. They set not against sin as the enemy of Christ, and as that which endangereth their people's souls. A traitorous commander, that shooteth nothing against the enemy but powder, may cause his guns to make as great a sound or report as those that are loaded with bullets; but he doth no hurt to the enemy. So one of these men may speak as loudly, and mouth it with an affected fervency, but he seldom doth any great execution against sin and Satan. No man can fight well, but where he hateth, or is very angry; much less against them whom he loveth, and loveth above all.

Every unrenewed man is so far from hating sin to purpose, that it is his dearest treasure. Hence you may see, that an unsanctified man, who loveth the enemy, is very unfit to be a leader in Christ's army; and to draw others to renounce the world and the flesh, seeing he cleaveth to them himself as his chief good.

(4) It is not likely that the people will much regard the doctrine of such men, when they see that they do not live as they preach. They will think that he doth not mean as he speaks, if he do not live as he speaks. They will hardly believe a man that seemeth not to believe himself. If one bid you run for your lives, because a bear, or an enemy is at your backs, and yet do not mend his own pace, you will be tempted to think that he is but in jest, and that there is really no such danger as he alleges. When preachers tell people of the necessity of holiness, and that without it no man shall see the Lord, and yet remain unholy themselves, the people will think that they do but talk to pass away the hour, and because they must say somewhat for their money, and that all these are but words of course. Long enough may you lift up your voice against sin, before men will believe that there is any such evil or danger in it as you talk of, while they see the same man that reproacheth it, cherishing it in his bosom, and making it his delight. You rather tempt them to think that there is some special good in it, and that you dispraise it as gluttons do a dish which they love, that they may have it all to themselves. As long as men have eyes as well as ears, they will think they see your meaning as well as hear it; and they are apter to believe their sight than their hearing, as being the more perfect sense of the two. All that a minister doth, is a kind of preaching; and if you live a covetous or a careless life, you preach these sins to your people by your practice. If you drink, or game, or trifle away your time in vain discourse, they take it as if you said to them, 'Neighbours, this is the life you should all live; on this course you may

venture without any danger.' If you are ungodly, and teach not your families the fear of God, nor contradict the sins of the company you are in, nor turn the stream of their vain talking, nor deal with them plainly about their salvation, they will take it as if you preached to them that such things are needless, and that they may boldly do so as well as you. Nay, you do worse than all this, for you teach them to think evil of others that are better than yourselves. How many a faithful minister, and private Christian, is hated and reproached for the sake of such as you! What say the people to them? 'You are so precise, and tell us so much of sin, and duty, and make such a stir about these matters, while such or such a minister, that is as great a scholar as you, and as good a preacher, will be merry and jest with us, and let us alone, and never trouble himself or us with such discourse. You can never be quiet, but make more ado than needs; and love to frighten men with talk of damnation, when sober, learned, peaceable divines are quiet, and live with us like other men.' Such are the thoughts and talk of people, which your negligence doth occasion. They will give you leave to preach against their sins, and to talk as much as you will for godliness in the pulpit, if you will but let them alone afterwards, and be friendly and merry with them when you have done, and talk as they do, and live as they, and be indifferent with them in your conversation. For they take the pulpit to be but a stage; a place where preachers must show themselves, and play their parts; where you have liberty for an hour to say what you list; and what you say they regard not, if you show them not, by saying it personally to their faces, that you were in good earnest, and did indeed mean them, Is that man then likely to do much good, or fit to be a minister of Christ, that will speak for him an hour on the Sabbath, and, by his life, will preach against him all the week besides, yea, and give his public words the lie?

And if any of the people be wiser than to follow the examples of such men, yet the loathsomeness of their lives will make their doctrine the less effectual. Though you know the meat to be good and wholesome, yet it may make a weak stomach rise against it, if the cook or the servant that carrieth it has leprous or even dirty hands. Take heed therefore to yourselves, if ever you mean to do good to others.

Lastly, Consider whether the success of your labours depends not on the assistance and blessing of the Lord. And where hath he made any promise of his assistance and blessing to ungodly men?

If he do promise his Church a blessing even by such, yet doth he not promise them any blessing. To his faithful servants he hath promised that he will be with them, that he will put his Spirit upon them, and his word into their mouths, and that Satan shall fall before them as lightning from heaven.

But where is there any such promise to ungodly ministers? Nay, do you not, by your hypocrisy and your abuse of God, provoke him to forsake you, and to blast all your endeavours, at least as to yourselves, though he may bless them to his chosen? For I do not deny but that God may do good to his Church by wicked men; yet doth he it not so ordinarily, nor so eminently, as by his own servants. And what I have said of the wicked themselves, doth hold in part of the godly, while they are scandalous and backsliding, in proportion to the measure of their sin.