

## Chapter I.

The foundation of the whole ensuing discourse laid in Rom. viii. 13 -- The words of the apostle opened -- The certain connection between true mortification and salvation -- Mortification the work of believers -- The Spirit the principal efficient cause of it -- What meant by "the body" in the words of the apostle -- What by "the deeds of the body" -- Life, in what sense promised to this duty.

That what I have of direction to contribute to the carrying on of the work of mortification in believers may receive order and perspicuity, I shall lay the foundation of it in those words of the apostle, Rom. viii. 13, "If you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body you shall live;" and reduce the whole to an improvement of the great evangelical truth and mystery contained in them.

The apostle having made a recapitulation of his doctrine of justification by faith, and the blessed estate and condition of them who are made by grace partakers thereof, verses 1-3 of this chapter, proceeds to improve it to the holiness and consolation of believers.

Among his arguments and motives unto holiness, the verse mentioned contains one from the contrary events and effects of holiness and sin: "If you live after the flesh, you shall die." What it is to "live after the flesh," and what it is to "die," that being not my present aim and business, I shall no otherwise explain than as they will fall in with the sense of the latter words of the verse, as before proposed.

In the words peculiarly designed for the foundation of the ensuing discourse, there is, --

First, A duty prescribed: "Mortify the deeds of the body."

Secondly, The persons are denoted to whom it is prescribed: "You," -- "if you mortify."

Thirdly, There is in them a promise annexed to that duty: "You shall live."

Fourthly, The cause or means of the performance of this duty, -- the Spirit: "If you through the Spirit."

Fifthly, The conditionality of the whole proposition, wherein duty,

means, and promise are contained: "If you," etc.

1. The first thing occurring in the words as they lie in the entire proposition is the conditional note, *Ei de*, "But if." Conditionals in such propositions may denote two things:--

(1.) The uncertainty of the event or thing promised, in respect of them to whom the duty is prescribed. And this takes place where the condition is absolutely necessary unto the issue, and depends not itself on any determinate cause known to him to whom it is prescribed. So we say, "If we live, we will do such a thing." This cannot be the intendment of the conditional expression in this place. Of the persons to whom these words are spoken, it is said, verse 1 of the same chapter, "There is no condemnation to them."

(2.) The certainty of the coherence and connection that is between the things spoken of; as we say to a sick man, "If you will take such a potion, or use such a remedy, you will be well." The thing we solely intend to express is the certainty of the connection that is between the potion or remedy and health. And this is the use of it here. The certain connection that is between the mortifying of the deeds of the body and living is intimated in this conditional particle.

Now, the connection and coherence of things being manifold, as of cause and effect, of way and means and the end, this between mortification and life is not of cause and effect properly and strictly, -- for "eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ," Rom. vi. 23, -- but of means and end. God has appointed this means for the attaining that end, which he has freely promised. Means, though necessary, have a fair subordination to an end of free promise. A gift, and procuring cause in him to whom it is given, are inconsistent. The intendment, then, of this proposition as conditional is, that there is a certain infallible connection and coherence between true mortification and eternal life: if you use this means, you shall obtain that end; if you do mortify, you shall live. And herein lies the main motive unto and enforcement of the duty prescribed.

2. The next thing we meet withal in the words is the persons to whom this duty is prescribed, and that is expressed in the word "You," in the original included in the verb, *thanatoute* "if you mortify;" -- that is, you believers; you to whom "there is no condemnation," verse 1; you that are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," verse 9; who are "quickened by the Spirit of Christ," verses 10, 11; to you is this duty

prescribed. The pressing of this duty immediately on any other is a notable fruit of that superstition and self-righteousness that the world is full of, -- the great work and design of devout men ignorant of the gospel, Rom. x. 3, 4; John xv. 5. Now, this description of the persons, in conjunction with the prescription of the duty, is the main foundation of the ensuing discourse, as it lies in this thesis or proposition:--

The choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought you to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.

3. The principal efficient cause of the performance of this duty is the Spirit: *Ei de Pneumati*, -- "If by the Spirit." The Spirit here is the Spirit mentioned verse 11, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of God, that "dwells in us," verse 9, that "quickens us," verse 11; "the Holy Ghost," verse 14; [2] the "Spirit of adoption," verse 15; the Spirit "that makes intercession for us," verse 26. All other ways of mortification are vain, all helps leave us helpless; it must be done by the Spirit. Men, as the apostle intimates, Rom. ix. 30-32, may attempt this work on other principles, by means and advantages administered on other accounts, as they always have done, and do: but, saith he, "This is the work of the Spirit; by him alone is it to be wrought, and by no other power is it to be brought about." Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, unto the end of a self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world. And this is a second principle of my ensuing discourse.

4. The duty itself, "Mortify the deeds of the body," is nextly to be remarked.

Three things are here to be inquired into:-- (1.) What is meant by the body; (2.) What by the deeds of the body; (3.) What by mortifying of them.

(1.) The body in the close of the verse is the same with the flesh in the beginning: "If you live after the flesh you shall die; but if you ... mortify the deeds of the body," -- that is, of the flesh. It is that which the apostle has all along discoursed of under the name of the flesh; which is evident from the prosecution of the antithesis between the Spirit and the flesh, before and after. The body, then, here is taken for that corruption and depravity of our natures whereof the body, in a great part, is the seat and instrument, the very members of

the body being made servants unto unrighteousness thereby, Rom. vi. 19. It is indwelling sin, the corrupted flesh or lust, that is intended. Many reasons might be given of this metonymical expression, that I shall not now insist on. The "body" here is the same with *palaios anthropos*, and *soma tes hamartias*, the "old man," and the "body of sin," Rom. vi. 6; or it may synecdochically express the whole person considered as corrupted, and the seat of lusts and distempered affections.

(2.) The deeds of the body. The word is *praxeis*, which, indeed, denotes the outward actions chiefly, "the works of the flesh," as they are called, *ta erga tes sarkos*, Gal. v. 19; which are there said to be "manifest," and are enumerated. Now, though the outward deeds are here only expressed, yet the inward and next causes are chiefly intended; the "axe is to be laid to the root of the tree," -- the deeds of the flesh are to be mortified in their causes, from whence they spring. The apostle calls them deeds, as that which every lust tends unto; though it do but conceive and prove abortive, it aims to bring forth a perfect sin.

Having, both in the seventh and the beginning of this chapter, treated of indwelling lust and sin as the fountain and principle of all sinful actions, he here mentions its destruction under the name of the effects which it does produce. *Praxeis tou somatos* are, as much as *phronema tes sarkos*, Rom. viii. 6, the "wisdom of the flesh," by a metonymy of the same nature with the former; or as the *pathemata* and *epithumiai*, the "passions and lusts of the flesh," Gal. v. 24, whence the deeds and fruits of it do arise; and in this sense is the body used, Rom. viii. 10: "The body is dead because of sin."

(3.) To mortify. *Ei thanatoute*, -- "If you put to death;" a metaphorical expression, taken from the putting of any living thing to death. To kill a man, or any other living thing, is to take away the principle of all his strength, vigour, and power, so that he cannot act or exert, or put forth any proper actings of his own; so it is in this case. Indwelling sin is compared to a person, a living person, called "the old man," with his faculties, and properties, his wisdom, craft, subtlety, strength; this, says the apostle, must be killed, put to death, mortified, -- that is, have its power, life, vigour, and strength, to produce its effects, taken away by the Spirit. It is, indeed, meritoriously, and by way of example, utterly mortified and slain by the cross of Christ; and the "old man" is thence said to be "crucified with Christ," Rom. vi. 6, and ourselves to be "dead" with

him, verse 8, and really initially in regeneration, Rom. vi. 3-5, when a principle contrary to it, and destructive of it, Gal. v. 17, is planted in our hearts; but the whole work is by degrees to be carried on towards perfection all our days. Of this more in the process of our discourse. The intendment of the apostle in this prescription of the duty mentioned is, -- that the mortification of indwelling sin remaining in our mortal bodies, that it may not have life and power to bring forth the works or deeds of the flesh is the constant duty of believers.

5. The promise unto this duty is life: "You shall live." The life promised is opposed to the death threatened in the clause foregoing, "If you live after the flesh, you shall die;" which the same apostle expresses, "You shall of the flesh reap corruption," Gal. vi. 8, or destruction from God. Now, perhaps the word may not only intend eternal life, but also the spiritual life in Christ, which here we have; not as to the essence and being of it, which is already enjoyed by believers, but as to the joy, comfort, and vigour of it: as the apostle says in another case, "Now I live, if you stand fast," 1 Thess. iii. 8; -- "Now my life will do me good; I shall have joy and comfort with my life;" -- "You shall live, lead a good, vigorous, comfortable, spiritual life whilst you are here, and obtain eternal life hereafter."

Supposing what was said before of the connection between mortification and eternal life, as of means and end, I shall add only, as a second motive to the duty prescribed, that, --

The vigour, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depends on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh.

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[2] There seems to be an oversight here, as the expression "Holy Ghost" does not occur in the verse cited. -- Ed.

## Chapter II.

The principal assertion concerning the necessity of mortification proposed to confirmation -- Mortification the duty of the best believers, Col. iii. 5; 1 Cor. ix. 27 -- Indwelling sin always abides; no perfection in this life, Phil. iii. 12; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Gal. v. 17, etc. -- The activity of abiding sin in believers, Rom. vii. 23; James iv. 5; Heb. xii. 1 -- Its fruitfulness and tendency -- Every lust aims at the height in its kind -- The Spirit and new nature given to contend against indwelling sin, Gal. v. 17; 2 Pet. i. 4, 5; Rom. vii. 23 -- The fearful issue of the neglect of mortification, Rev. iii. 2; Heb. iii. 13 -- The first general principle of the whole discourse hence confirmed -- Want of this duty lamented.

Having laid this foundation, a brief confirmation of the fore-mentioned principal deductions will lead me to what I chiefly intend, --

I. That the choicest believers, who are assuredly freed from the condemning power of sin, ought you to make it their business all their days to mortify the indwelling power of sin.

So the apostle, Col. iii. 5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." Whom speaks he to? Such as were "risen with Christ," verse 1; such as were "dead" with him, verse 3; such as whose life Christ was, and who should "appear with him in glory," verse 4. Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you. Your being dead with Christ virtually, your being quickened with him, will not excuse you from this work. And our Saviour tells us how his Father deals with every branch in him that bears fruit, every true and living branch. "He purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit," John xv. 2. He prunes it, and that not for a day or two, but whilst it is a branch in this world. And the apostle tells you what was his practice, 1 Cor. ix. 27, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." "I do it," saith he, "daily; it is the work of my life: I omit it not; this is my business." And if this were the work and business of Paul, who was so incomparably exalted in grace, revelations, enjoyments, privileges, consolations, above the ordinary measure of believers, where may we possibly bottom an exemption from this work and duty whilst we are in this world? Some brief account of the reasons hereof may be given:--

1. Indwelling sin always abides whilst we are in this world; therefore

it is always to be mortified. The vain, foolish, and ignorant disputes of men about perfect keeping the commands of God, of perfection in this life, of being wholly and perfectly dead to sin, I meddle not now with. It is more than probable that the men of those abominations never knew what belonged to the keeping of any one of God's commands, and are so much below perfection of degrees, that they never attained to a perfection of parts in obedience or universal obedience in sincerity. And, therefore, many in our days who have talked of perfection have been wiser, and have affirmed it to consist in knowing no difference between good and evil. Not that they are perfect in the things we call good, but that all is alike to them, and the height of wickedness is their perfection. Others who have found out a new way to it, by denying original, indwelling sin, and attempering the spirituality of the law of God unto men's carnal hearts, as they have sufficiently discovered themselves to be ignorant of the life of Christ and the power of it in believers, so they have invented a new righteousness that the gospel knows not of, being vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds. For us, who dare not be wise above what is written, nor boast by other men's lives of what God has not done for us, we say that indwelling sin lives in us, in some measure and degree, whilst we are in this world. We dare not speak as "though we had already attained, or were already perfect," Phil. iii. 12. Our "inward man is to be renewed day by day" whilst here we live, 2 Cor. iv. 16; and according to the renovations of the new are the breaches and decays of the old. Whilst we are here we "know but in part," 1 Cor. xiii. 12, having a remaining darkness to be gradually removed by our "growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18; and "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, so that we cannot do the things that we would," Gal. v. 17: and are therefore defective in our obedience as well as in our light, 1 John i. 8. We have a "body of death," Rom. vii. 24; from whence we are not delivered but by the death of our bodies, Phil. iii. 21. Now, it being our duty to mortify, to be killing of sin whilst it is in us, we must be at work. He that is appointed to kill an enemy, if he leave striking before the other ceases living, does but half his work, Gal. vi. 9; Heb. xii. 1; 2 Cor. vii. 1.

2. Sin does not only still abide in us, but is still acting, still labouring to bring forth the deeds of the flesh. When sin lets us alone we may let sin alone; but as sin is never less quiet than when it seems to be most quiet, and its waters are for the most part deep when they are still, so ought our contrivances against it to be vigorous at all times and in all conditions, even where there is least suspicion. Sin does not only abide in us, but "the law of the members is still

rebelling against the law of the mind," Rom. vii. 23; and "the spirit that dwells in us lusts to envy," James iv. 5. It is always in continual work; "the flesh lusts against the Spirit," Gal. v. 17; lust is still tempting and conceiving sin, James i. 14; in every moral action it is always either inclining to evil, or hindering from that which is good, or disframing the spirit from communion with God. It inclines to evil. "The evil which I would not, that I do," saith the apostle, Rom. vii. 19. Whence is that? Why, "Because in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing." And it hinders from good: "The good that I would do, that I do not," verse 19; -- "Upon the same account, either I do it not, or not as I should; all my holy things being defiled by this sin." "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, so that you cannot do the things that you would," Gal. v. 17. And it unframes our spirit, and thence is called "The sin that so easily besets us," Heb. xii. 1; on which account are those grievous complaints that the apostle makes of it, Rom. vii. So that sin is always acting, always conceiving, always seducing and tempting. Who can say that he had ever any thing to do with God or for God, that indwelling sin had not a hand in the corrupting of what he did? And this trade will it drive more or less all our days. If, then, sin will be always acting, if we be not always mortifying, we are lost creatures. He that stands still and suffers his enemies to double blows upon him without resistance, will undoubtedly be conquered in the issue. If sin be subtle, watchful, strong, and always at work in the business of killing our souls, and we be slothful, negligent, foolish, in proceeding to the ruin thereof, can we expect a comfortable event? There is not a day but sin foils or is foiled, prevails or is prevailed on; and it will be so whilst we live in this world.

I shall discharge him from this duty who can bring sin to a composition, to a cessation of arms in this warfare; if it will spare him any one day, in any one duty (provided he be a person that is acquainted with the spirituality of obedience and the subtlety of sin), let him say to his soul, as to this duty, "Soul, take your rest." The saints, whose souls breathe after deliverance from its perplexing rebellion, know there is no safety against it but in a constant warfare.

3. Sin will not only be striving, acting, rebelling, troubling, disquieting, but if let alone, if not continually mortified, it will bring forth great, cursed, scandalous, soul-destroying sins. The apostle tells us what the works and fruits of it are, Gal. v. 19-21, "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are, adultery, fornication,

uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like." You know what it did in David and sundry others. Sin aims always at the utmost; every time it rises up to tempt or entice, might it have its own course, it would go out to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression, every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head. Men may come to that, that sin may not be heard speaking a scandalous word in their hearts, -- that is, provoking to any great sin with scandal in its mouth; but your every rise of lust, might it have its course, would come to the height of villany: it is like the grave, that is never satisfied. And herein lies no small share of the deceitfulness of sin, by which it prevails to the hardening of men, and so to their ruin, Heb. iii. 13, -- it is modest, as it were, in its first motions and proposals, but having once got footing in the heart by them, it constantly makes good its ground, and presses on to some farther degrees in the same kind. This new acting and pressing forward makes the soul take little notice of what an entrance to a falling off from God is already made; it thinks all is indifferent well if there be no farther progress; and so far as the soul is made insensible of any sin, -- that is, as to such a sense as the gospel requires, -- so far it is hardened: but sin is still pressing forward, and that because it has no bounds but utter relinquishment of God and opposition to him; that it proceeds towards its height by degrees, making good the ground it has got by hardness, is not from its nature, but its deceitfulness. Now nothing can prevent this but mortification; that withers the root and strikes at the head of sin every hour, so that whatever it aims at it is crossed in. There is not the best saint in the world but, if he should give over this duty, would fall into as many cursed sins as ever any did of his kind.

4. This is one main reason why the Spirit and the new nature is given unto us, -- that we may have a principle within whereby to oppose sin and lust. "The flesh lusts against the Spirit." Well! and what then? Why, "The Spirit also lusts against the flesh," Gal. v. 17. There is a propensity in the Spirit, or spiritual new nature, to be acting against the flesh, as well as in the flesh to be acting against the Spirit: so 2 Pet. i. 4, 5. It is our participation of the divine nature that gives us an escape from the pollutions that are in the world through lust; and, Rom. vii. 23, there is a law of the mind, as well as a law of the members. Now this is, first, the most unjust and unreasonable thing in the world, when two combatants are engaged, to

bind one and keep him up from doing his utmost, and to leave the other at liberty to wound him at his pleasure; and, secondly, the foolishlest thing in the world to bind him who fights for our eternal condition, [salvation?] and to let him alone who seeks and violently attempts our everlasting ruin. The contest is for our lives and souls. Not to be daily employing the Spirit and new nature for the mortifying of sin, is to neglect that excellent succour which God has given us against our greatest enemy. If we neglect to make use of what we have received, God may justly hold his hand from giving us more. His graces, as well as his gifts, are bestowed on us to use, exercise, and trade with. Not to be daily mortifying sin, is to sin against the goodness, kindness, wisdom, grace, and love of God, who has furnished us with a principle of doing it.

5. Negligence in this duty casts the soul into a perfect contrary condition to that which the apostle affirms was his, 2 Cor. iv. 16, "Though our outward man perish, your the inward man is renewed day by day." In these the inward man perishes, and the outward man is renewed day by day. Sin is as the house of David, and grace as the house of Saul. Exercise and success are the two main cherishers of grace in the heart; when it is suffered to lie still, it withers and decays: the things of it are ready to die, Rev. iii. 2; and sin gets ground towards the hardening of the heart, Heb. iii. 13. This is that which I intend: by the omission of this duty grace withers, lust flourishes, and the frame of the heart grows worse and worse; and the Lord knows what desperate and fearful issues it has had with many. Where sin, through the neglect of mortification, gets a considerable victory, it breaks the bones of the soul, Ps. xxxi. 10, li. 8, and makes a man weak, sick, and ready to die, Ps. xxxviii. 3-5, so that he cannot look up, Ps. xl. 12, Isa. xxxiii. 24; and when poor creatures will take blow after blow, wound after wound, foil after foil, and never rouse up themselves to a vigorous opposition, can they expect anything but to be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and that their souls should bleed to death? 2 John 8. Indeed, it is a sad thing to consider the fearful issues of this neglect, which lie under our eyes every day. See we not those, whom we knew humble, melting, broken-hearted Christians, tender and fearful to offend, zealous for God and all his ways, his Sabbaths and ordinances, grown, through a neglect of watching unto this duty, earthly, carnal, cold, wrathful, complying with the men of the world and things of the world, to the scandal of religion and the fearful temptation of them that know them? The truth is, what between placing mortification in a rigid, stubborn frame of spirit, which is for the most part earthly, legal, censorious, partial, consistent with wrath,

envy, malice, pride, on the one hand, and pretences of liberty, grace, and I know not what, on the other, true evangelical mortification is almost lost amongst us: of which afterward.

6. It is our duty to be "perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1; to be "growing in grace" every day, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 2 Pet. iii. 18; to be "renewing our inward man day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. Now, this cannot be done without the daily mortifying of sin. Sin sets its strength against every act of holiness, and against every degree we grow to. Let not that man think he makes any progress in holiness who walks not over the bellies of his lusts. He who does not kill sin in this way takes no steps towards his journey's end. He who finds not opposition from it, and who sets not himself in every particular to its mortification, is at peace with it, not dying to it.

This, then, is the first general principle of our ensuing discourse: Notwithstanding the meritorious mortification, if I may so speak, of all and every sin in the cross of Christ; notwithstanding the real foundation of universal mortification laid in our first conversion, by conviction of sin, humiliation for sin, and the implantation of a new principle opposite to it and destructive of it; -- your sin does so remain, so act and work in the best of believers, whilst they live in this world, that the constant daily mortification of it is all their days incumbent on them. Before I proceed to the consideration of the next principle, I cannot but by the way complain of many professors of these days, who, instead of bringing forth such great and evident fruits of mortification as are expected, scarce bear any leaves of it. There is, indeed, a broad light fallen upon the men of this generation, and together therewith many spiritual gifts communicated, which, with some other considerations, have wonderfully enlarged the bounds of professors and profession; both they and it are exceedingly multiplied and increased. Hence there is a noise of religion and religious duties in every corner, preaching in abundance, -- and that not in an empty, light, trivial, and vain manner, as formerly, but to a good proportion of a spiritual gift, -- so that if you will measure the number of believers by light, gifts, and profession, the church may have cause to say, "Who has born me all these?" But now if you will take the measure of them by this great discriminating grace of Christians, perhaps you will find their number not so multiplied. Where almost is that professor who owes his conversion to these days of light, and so talks and professes at such a rate of spirituality as few in former days were, in any measure, acquainted with (I will not judge them, but perhaps boasting what the Lord has done in them), that does not give

evidence of a miserably unmortified heart? If vain spending of time, idleness, unprofitableness in men's places, envy, strife, variance, emulations, wrath, pride, worldliness, selfishness, 1 Cor. i., be badges of Christians, we have them on us and amongst us in abundance. And if it be so with them who have much light, and which, we hope, is saving, what shall we say of some who would be accounted religious and yet despise gospel light, and for the duty we have in hand, know no more of it but what consists in men's denying themselves sometimes in outward enjoyments, which is one of the outmost branches of it, which yet they will seldom practise? The good Lord send out a spirit of mortification to cure our distempers, or we are in a sad condition!

There are two evils which certainly attend every unmortified professor; -- the first, in himself; the other, in respect of others:--

1. In himself. Let him pretend what he will, he has slight thoughts of sin; at least, of sins of daily infirmity. The root of an unmortified course is the digestion of sin without bitterness in the heart. When a man has confirmed his imagination to such an apprehension of grace and mercy as to be able, without bitterness, to swallow and digest daily sins, that man is at the very brink of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Neither is there a greater evidence of a false and rotten heart in the world than to drive such a trade. To use the blood of Christ, which is given to cleanse us, 1 John i. 7, Tit. ii. 14; the exaltation of Christ, which is to give us repentance, Acts v. 31; the doctrine of grace, which teaches us to deny all ungodliness, Tit. ii. 11, 12, to countenance sin, is a rebellion that in the issue will break the bones. At this door have gone out from us most of the professors that have apostatized in the days wherein we live. For a while they were most of them under convictions; these kept them unto duties, and brought them to profession; so they "escaped the pollutions that are in the world, through the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. ii. 20: but having got an acquaintance with the doctrine of the gospel, and being weary of duty, for which they had no principle, they began to countenance themselves in manifold neglects from the doctrine of grace. Now, when once this evil had laid hold of them, they speedily tumbled into perdition.

2. To others. It has an evil influence on them on a twofold account:--

(1.) It hardens them, by begetting in them a persuasion that they are in as good condition as the best professors. Whatever they see in them

is so stained for want of this mortification that it is of no value with them. They have a zeal for religion; but it is accompanied with want of forbearance and universal righteousness. They deny prodigality, but with worldliness; they separate from the world, but live wholly to themselves, taking no care to exercise loving-kindness in the earth; or they talk spiritually, and live vainly; mention communion with God, and are every way conformed to the world; boasting of forgiveness of sin, and never forgiving others. And with such considerations do poor creatures harden their hearts in their unregeneracy.

(2.) They deceive them, in making them believe that if they can come up to their condition it shall be well with them; and so it grows an easy thing to have the great temptation of repute in religion to wrestle withal, when they may go far beyond them as to what appears in them, and yet come short of eternal life. But of these things and all the evils of unmortified walking, afterward.