

On the other hand, most dreadful will be the effects of placing your dependence for salvation on the meritorious obedience of Christ, to the neglect of personal obedience. No sooner can you be entangled in this most awful error, then you will entertain slight thoughts of sin, defiling and damnable as it is. You will account it a part of legal bondage, instead of your bounden duty, to study the Scriptures, and examine yourself by them, to watch, and pray, and mortify continually your corrupt inclinations. Your religion will be a presumptuous insolent dependence upon Christ without repentance, and without love, as if he was a friend of sinners, though they continued in their sins. From such diabolical opinions the growth of every evil temper, and the return of old sins, will follow of course; till Christ will be made of no other use than to reconcile sin and salvation.

Thus you will offer the greatest affront to the Redeemer, because such a monstrous perversion of his atonement is a denial of many of his most solemn declarations. It treats him with the uttermost contempt, as not worthy of credit and regard in the whole of his teaching, but only in some particulars. It gives him the lie, because he declares of himself, that he came not to destroy the law, and assures you that he, and he alone, is wise unto salvation, who heareth his sayings, and doeth them.

Thus you will likewise bring a reproach and dishonour upon him in the world. They will judge of your principles and doctrines by the influence they have upon you. If they observe you to be proud, worldly-minded, sen-

sual, or immoral in any way, however highly you may speak of the glory of the Saviour, and of his all-sufficiency of his sacrifice, the blame and reproach will not rest upon you alone; it will reach through you to the principles you hold; and, by reason of your pernicious ways, the way of truth itself will be evil spoken of.

Thus also you will set at nought the operations of the Holy Ghost, who is given on purpose to mortify the deeds of the body, and to bring forth all the fruits of righteousness in us. Now sanctification by the Spirit is insisted upon continually in God's word no less than belief of the truth; insomuch that it is said, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and, that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. But if you think that personal obedience and sanctification can be dispensed with, you entirely set aside these Scriptures, and declare that there is no need of the Holy Spirit; for the necessity of his influence is founded on the necessity of being turned from the love and practice of sin to the love of God and the practice of holiness.

The end of this dreadful error is destruction. Sin unrepented of, and unsubdued, brings forth death, eternal death; and to suppose that a bare assent to a set of doctrines can prove any security against it, is to suppose that God does not look to the heart, but only to some particular notions; and that if men do but hold some particular opinions, he will be favourable to them, though they hold them in unrighteousness. But this is utterly unworthy of his perfections, and con-