

## **SIN IS CONTRARY TO GOD:**

### **I. A Summary Statement of Sin:**

*In short, sin is the dare of God's justice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the slight of his power, the contempt of his love, as one writer prettily expresses this ugly thing. We may go on and say, it is the upbraiding of his providence (Psalm 50), the scoff of his promise (2 Peter 3.3-4), the reproach of his wisdom (Isaiah 29.16). And as is said of the Man of Sin (i.e. who is made up of sin) it opposes and exalts itself above all that is called God (and above all that God is called), so that it as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing itself as if it were God (2 Thessalonians 2.4) (RV)*

### **II. General Statements as to the Contrary Nature of Sin to God**

#### **A. Read Romans 8:6-8**

1. What is meant by the “mind set on the flesh”?
2. What is the aim of the “mind set on the flesh”.
3. What is the response of the mind set on the flesh to:
  - a. God.
  - b. The law of God.
4. What is the effect of the mind set on the flesh when it comes to ones relationship with God?
5. What is meant by the idea of the mind being “hostile” to God?
6. What possible change can be had by the natural mind? Can you ever teach the natural mind, the mind set on the flesh to be filled with love, joy, peace?
7. Is it possible for a believer to have a mind set on the flesh?

#### **B. Read Colossians 1:21**

1. Paul writes of one “formerly” having some particular characteristics? What has changed for the person?
2. What three things are described of your former life/mind?

C. How is sin described in the following verses:

1. Leviticus 26:21
2. Isaiah 1:2:
3. Micah 2:8
4. Isaiah 45:9
5. Numbers 11.20
6. Romans 1.30
7. Acts 7.51
8. Acts 5.39
9. Acts 23.9
10. Psalm 14.1.

D. Read Psalm 51 and the background for the psalm, 1 Samuel 1:1-12:25:

1. List all of the persons against whom David sinned.
2. Against who did David say that he had sinned?

E. Would you agree with this statement: “Sin goes about to ungod God, and is by some of the ancients called Deicidium, God-murder or God-killing.”

F. Does sin admit that it is wrong? How do those who commit sins justify themselves to themselves?

### **III. *Sin is Contrary to the Nature of God***

To understand the degree to which sin is contrary to God, we should first note that sin is contrary to the very nature of God.

A. The holiness of God: We cannot fully unpack the concept of the holiness of God<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> This lesson cannot fully cover the information concerning the holiness of God. For additional study concerning this topic, please see “The Attributes of God” sermon on Holiness,

we see a few points.

1. Aspects of God's holiness:
  - a. God's holiness refers to his majesty: 1 Sam. 2:2, Ex. 15.11, Ps. 99.3,5,9; 2 Chron. 20.21; Ps. 22.3, 30.4, 33.21, 68,17, 35; 98.1.
  - b. God's holiness refers to his moral perfection: Ja. 1.13; Ps. 145.17, 1 Sam. 6.20, Ps. 105.42; 1 Pet. 15-16.
  - c. God's holiness refers to his purity. Here, list a verse which references the purity of God:
2. Holiness is of profound importance to God:
  - a. Read Isaiah 6:1-3 & Revelation 4:8:
    - i. What is the characteristic of God listed by the angels?
    - ii. In Hebrew, repetition of a word is used to intensive the meaning. Here, the word "holy" is repeated three times making it of the highest importance.
3. Holiness is required of all those who would seek to come to God:
  - a. Read Psalm 15: List the characteristics of those who would come to God.
  - b. Read 1 Peter 1:14-16: What is required of one who would come to God?
4. Read the following quotation from Stephen Charnock:
  - a. *The holiness of God is his glory, as his grace is his riches: holiness is his crown, and his mercy is his treasure. This is the blessedness and nobleness of his nature; it renders him glorious in himself, and glorious to his creatures, that understand anything of this lovely perfection. Holiness is a glorious perfection belonging to the*

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<http://www.calvarybiblechurch.org/Sermons.aspx/audio/sermon/2003/20030601>. For books on the topic, see R.C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God*; Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, vol. 2, "On the Holiness of God". Appropriate chapters from any good systematic theology would cover this ground.

*nature of God. Hence he is in Scripture styled often the Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob, the Holy One of Israel; and oftener entitled Holy than Almighty, and set forth by this part of his dignity more than any other: you never find it expressed His mighty name or His wise name; but His great name, and most all, His holy name. This is his greatest title of honor; in this doth the majesty and venerableness of his name appear. . . . It is upon this account he is called light, as impurity is called darkness; both in this sense are opposed to one another: he is pure and unmixed light, free from all blemish in his essence, nature, and operations.*

- b. If this is a true statement by Charnock, then what is the lesson we should draw from the proposition that sin is an attack on the holiness of God?

B. What does God condemn in Psalm 50:16-22?

1. How does God describe the nature of man before the Flood? Gen. 6:5 & 8:21
2. Read the following quotation from Stephen Charnock<sup>2</sup>:  
  
[If God was a being with all the other divine attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence] yet if we conceive of him destitute of this excellent perfection [holiness], and imagine him possessed with the least contagion of evil, we make him but an infinite monster, and sully all those perfections we ascribed to him before; we rather own him a devil than a God. (111)
3. In light of the information found in this section, comment upon the wrong referenced in Psalm 50:16-22.

C. Read Mal. 2.17:

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<sup>2</sup> Here is a similar quotation from Ralph Venning: “Holiness is the attribute which frees God, not only from evil itself, but from all appearance or suspicion of evil. If God were not holy, many of the things which God does would look unlike him: his justice and judgments would look not only like severity, but tyranny, were not it and they holy; his love in its conduct and behaviour to some people would look like fondness and respect of persons, but that it is holy; his patience would look like a toleration, if not approbation of sin, but that it is holy patience. Thus many acts of God, were it not for holiness, would appear as seemingly evil as they are really good, and would be as much suspected by all, as they are unjustly censured by some.”

1. What does God say wears him?
2. Explain how your sins “wearies” God?

#### **IV. Sin is Contrary to All the Names & Attributes of God**

- A. Sin in contrary to the claim of God to be the Sole King:
  1. Read Genesis 3:1-5
    - a. Who had given a rule to humans?
    - b. Who had the right to determine what was right and wrong?
  - iii. What was the bait which tempted Eve to sin? (What was the promise of Satan?)
- B. What is the boast of the sinful in Psalm 12:4?
- C. What is the boast of Pharoah in Exodus 5.2?
- D. Read the description of the wicked in Psalm 73.6-11. What is the nature of the wicked man’s relationship to God’s sovereignty?
- E. When you sin, you are breaking the law of God: Therefore, when you sin, who do you claim is king?

#### **V. Sin Denies the All-Sufficiency of God**

- A. Read John 4:1-15:
  1. What does Jesus offer to the woman?
  2. What will be the result of receiving what Jesus has to offer?
  3. What is the result of drinking regular water?
  4. Where does sin teach us not to seek satisfaction?
- B. Read John 6:22-71
  1. What did the people really seek?

2. What did Jesus really offer?
  3. Do most of the people want the satisfaction which could only be had in Jesus?
- C. “*Unbelief* is a turning away from God and his Son in order to seek satisfaction in other things? *Pride* is a turning away from God specifically to take satisfaction in *self*. . . . Every turning from God – for anything – presumes a kind of autonomy or independence that is the essence of pride. Turning from God assumes that one knows better than God.” John Piper, *Future Grace*, p. 87.
- D. If all true satisfaction can be found in God alone, and sin is seeking satisfaction elsewhere, what does sin say about the satisfaction offered by God?
- E. How then does seeking satisfaction outside of God make as an enemy of God?

#### **VI. Sin Denies God’s Knowledge**

- A. What does God know? (Provide at least one verse which proves this point.)
- B. When we sin, we are saying by our conduct about the scope of God’s knowledge?

#### **VI. Sin Despises the Kindness of God**

- A. Read Romans 2:4
  1. What is to be the purpose of God’s kindness and patience?
  2. What do men do with the kindness and patience of God? (Prove the point with at least one verse).
  3. How does sin presume upon the kindness of God?

#### **VII. Sin is Contrary to the Works of God**

- A. Read the following statements:

*Sin is contrary to the works of God. It works contrary to God, and it is contrary to God's works, and is called the work of the devil (1 John 3.8). All God's works were good exceedingly, beautiful even to admiration; but the works of sin are deformed and monstrously ugly, for it works disorder, confusion, and everything that is abominable. Sin may be arraigned for all the mischiefs and villainies that have been done in the world; it is the master of misrule, the author of sedition, the*

*builder of Babel, the troubler of Israel and all mankind. So contrary is sin to the works of God, that it sought and still seeks to undo all that God does, that there might be no seed, nor name, nor root left him in the earth. Everything works according to its nature; as the root is, so is the fruit; and thus every tree is known, whether it is a good tree or a bad (Matthew 7.17-18). God is good, and does good (Psalm 119.68). Sin is evil and does evil, indeed, it does nothing else. So sin and its works are contrary to God and his works. – Ralph Venning*

*Sin is a spoliation of the tribute or revenue of honor which the intelligent creature should have rendered to the Creator. George Smeaton (29)*

- B. Read Genesis 3:19, Romans 6:23 and 1 Corinthians 15:22-26 & 54-56:
1. What is the result of sin?
  2. What is death said to be as to God?
  3. What is the purpose of the work of Christ? (See also 2 Tim. 1:10)
- C. List ways in which things are sin are treated as if they were part of the work of God. (Starter hint: Think of the movie “Lion King” <http://www.lionking.org/lyrics/OMPS/CircleOfLife.html>). In what ways do you (or does the culture) think that “whatever is is right”?

### **VIII. Sin is Contrary to the Law and Will of God**

- A. *Sin is contrary to the law and will of God, to all the rules and orders of his appointment. There is not one of his laws which it has not broken, and endeavoured to make void and of none effect. It is not only a transgression of, but also a contradiction to the will of God. When the Son of God came into the world to declare and do his Father's will, he was encountered by, and underwent the contradiction of sinners (Hebrews 12.3) who would have made men believe that neither he nor his doctrine was of God.*

*Sin is an anti-will to God's will; it sets itself to oppose preaching, prayer, and all the institutions of God. And it does this, not only out of envy to man, that he should not be the better for them, but out of enmity to God, that he should not be worshipped in the world. Now to act contrary to the will and statutes of God is to act contrary to God himself, as may be seen by comparing Leviticus 26.14,15 with verses 21,23, and 27 of the same chapter, and many other places. David, in fulfilling the will of God, was said to be a man after God's own heart (Acts 13.22); and they who obey the will of sin are said to walk after the heart of sin (Ezekiel 11.21). (RV)*

## **IX. Sin is Contrary to the Image of God**

*Sin is contrary to the image of God, in which man was made. God made man in his own likeness, viz. in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4.24). Now sin is clean contrary to this image, as much unlike it as deformity and ugliness is unlike handsomeness and beauty, as darkness is to light, as hell to heaven. Yes, and there is more too: sin is the Devil's image. When God made man, he made him in his own image; so when the Devil made man sin, he thereby made him his own image and likeness. In this sense I conceive the Devil meant that phrase, 'Ye shall be like gods', Elohim (Genesis 3.5). He did not say or mean that he should be like the Elohim, the Creators, as the word is in Job 35.10 and Ecclesiastes 12.1, the God who made them; but like Elohim, gods, viz. such as I and my angels are, who once knew good, but now know evil, both by doing it, and suffering the sad effects of it. The word Elohim is used not only of God and good angels, but of fallen angels or devils (1 Samuel 28.13). And under the covert of this ambiguous word, he craftily abused our first parents; for he well knew that by sinning they could not become like Elohim, God above, but would become like Elohim, the gods below. And alas! are we not like Elohim-devils, knowing good by loss, and evil by its sad and dismal effects? Thus he that runs may read the picture, image, and likeness of the Devil in sin; sinners are as much like the Devil as anything. He that sinneth is of the Devil (1 John 3.8), not only a servant but a child of the Devil: 'Ye are of your father the devil' said holy Jesus to the sinful Jews (John 8.44). Never was child more like the father than a sinner is like the Devil; sin has the nature, the complexion, the air, the features, the very behaviour of the Devil. (RV)*

## **X. Sin is Contrary to the People of God**

*As God loves them, nor do them as much hurt as God can do them good. Yet, out of spite and envy, it will do its worst, and hate them because God loves them. God's children are his darlings and favourites, as dear to him as the apple of his eye. In all their afflictions he bears a part, and is afflicted, and looks upon it as if he himself were treated as they are in this world (Acts 9.4-5; Matthew 25.41-45). Now the nearer and dearer they are to God and the more God's heart is set upon them for good, the more sin sets its heart against them for evil. Sin is always warring against the seed of God in them, the flesh lusts against the spirit (Galatians 5.17) and wars against their souls (1 Peter 2.11). So, by sin's ill-will, God's people should neither enjoy nor do any good in this world. It is always provoking the serpentine race to make war upon, to imprison and persecute, even to destruction, the little flock and remnant of the holy seed. It will not, further than it is rebuked by grace, let them have one quiet day. It disturbs and interrupts them, so that they cannot attend upon God without distraction. When they would do good, evil is present with them, either to keep it undone, or to make it ill done. It endeavours to spoil all they take in hand, and to turn their holy things into iniquity, by reason of which they cry out as greatly oppressed: 'Wretches that we are! Who shall deliver us from this body of death?' (Romans 7.24).*



*This evil and envious sin is bent also on hindering, all it can, the comfort, welfare and happiness of the saints. Sin, like the Devil, has not such an evil eye or aching tooth at all the sinners in the world, as it has at the saints in the world. It is true, the Devil is a man-hater, but more a saint-hater. Watch! for your adversary the Devil seeks whom (of you) he may devour, as St. Peter tells us (1 Peter 5.8). And this he does to cross and thwart God and his design, who and which is set upon the happiness of his people. (RV)*

## **XI. Sin is Contrary to the Glory of God**

- A. Read Romans 1:18-25:
  - 1. List the information about God which was communicated to man.
  - 2. What is the relationship of God to man.
  - 3. What does man owe to God?
  - 4. What did man fail to give to God?
- B. Read Revelation 4:11
  - 1. What does man owe to God?
  - 2. On what basis does man owe God?
- C. What is the greatest commandment (give answer and verse).
- D. What does give glory to God? Joshua 7:19
- E. What will a sinful man not do? Rev. 16.9
- F. How is sin contrary to the glory of God?

## **XII. Sin is Contrary to the Existence of God**

Read the following Propositions from the Chapter “Practical Atheism” of Stephen Charnock’s *The Existence and Attributes of God*.

### **PROPOSITIONS:**

- Prop. I:        Actions are greater discovery of a principle than words. The testimony of works is louder and clearer than that of words; and the frame of men’s hearts must be measured rather by what they do than by what they say. . . . Men’s practices are

the best indexes of their principles. . . . (Tit. 1.16) “They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him.”

Prop. II. All sin is founded in a secret atheism. Atheism is the spirit of every sin; all the floods of impieties in the world break in at the gate of a secret atheism. . . . As all virtuous actions spring from an acknowledgment of God, so all vicious actions rise from a lurking denial of him: all licentiousness goes glib down where there is no sense of God. . . . Every sin invades the rights of God, and strips him of one or other of his perfections. . . . For a subject to slight his sovereign, is to slight his royalty; or a servant his master, is to deny his superiority.

Prop. III Sin implies that God is unworthy of a being. Every sin is a kind of cursing God in the heart; . . . [94] A man in every sin aims to set up his own will as his rule, and his own glory as the end of his actions against the will and glory of God; and could a sinner attain his end, God would be destroyed.

Prop. IV. Every sin in its own nature would render God a foolish and impure being. Many transgressors esteem their acts, which are contrary to the will of God, both wise and good; if so, the law against which they are committed, must be foolish and impure.

If God’s laws were not wise and holy, God would not enjoin them: and if they are so, we deny infinite wisdom and holiness in God by not complying with them. . . . Now suppose you knew an absolute atheist who denied the being of God, yet had a life free from any notorious sport or defilement; would you in reason count him so bad as the other that owns a God in being, yet lays, by his course, such a black imputation of folly and impurity upon the God he professeth to own – an imputation which renders any man a most despicable creature?

Prop. V Sin in its own nature endeavors to render God the most [96] miserable being. It is nothing but an opposition to the will of God: . . . It is true, God’s will cannot be hindered of its effect, for then God would not be supremely blessed, but unhappy and miserable: all misery ariseth from a want of that which a nature would have, and ought to have, besides, if anything could frustrate God’s will, it would be superior to him: God would not be omnipotent. . . . But sin a contradiction to the will of God’s revelation, to the will of his precept. . . . Sin endeavors to subject the blessed God to the humor and lust of every person in the world.

Prop. VI Men sometimes in some circumstances do wish the not being of God. This some think to be the meaning of the text, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,” that is, he wishes there were no God. . . . What is the consequent of this [Rom. 1.32, “they know the judgment of God”] but fear of punishment; and what is the issue of that fear, but a wishing the Judge either unwilling or unable to vindicate the honor of his violated law? . . . Fear of God is natural to all men; not

a fear of offending him, but a fear of being punished by him: the wishing the extinction of God has its degree in men, according to the degree of their fears of his just vengeance: . . .

**Exercise:**

1. List five sins and explain how these sins are contrary to some attribute of God.

**A point to ponder from Ralph Venning:**

*Before we pass on, let me beseech you, whoever you are who read this, to pause a little and consider what is said. For what is said of sin is to be considered by the sinner, and is meant of your and my sin. Shall I not plead for God and your soul, and entreat you to be on God's side, and to depart from the tents of wickedness? Poor soul! Can you find it in your heart to hug and embrace such a monster as this? Will you love that which hates God, and which God hates? God forbid! Will you join yourself to that which is nothing but contrariety to God, and all that is good? Oh, say to this idol, this devil, get hence, what have I to do with you, you (Elymas) sorcerer, you full of all malignity and mischief; you child, yea father of the Devil, you who are the founder of Hell, an enemy to all righteousness, who ceases not to pervert the right ways of the Lord, and to reproach the living God! Away! away! Shall I be seduced by you to grieve the God of all my joy, to displease the God of all my comfort, to vex the God of all my contentment, to do evil against a good God, by whom I live, move, and have my being? Oh no!*

*Thus consider these things, and do not go on to provoke the Lord, lest a worse thing befall you than any hitherto. Do not contend with God who is stronger than you are, who is able when he will (and he will one day be found both able and willing enough) to turn the wicked into hell, the element of sin and sinners, who shall go into it as into their own place, as Judas did (Acts 1.25). Oh, learn to pity your own soul, for he who sins offends and wrongs God, but also wrongs and destroys his own soul, or, as some read the text, despises his own soul (Proverbs 8.36). Oh, think of it! what! have you no value, no regard for your soul? Will you neglect and despise it, as if it were good for nothing, but to be damned, and go to Hell? Will you be *felo de se*, a self-soul-murderer? Shall your perdition be of yourself? Oh, look to yourself, for sin, notwithstanding all its flattering pretences, is against you, and seeks nothing less than your ruin and damnation. And this brings and leads me to the second thing to be treated of, which is, sin's contrariety to man.*

**Thomas Adams:** *It is detestable ingratitude in a subject, on whom his sovereign hath conferred a golden cup, to employ it to base uses; to make that a wash-pot which should receive the best wine he drinketh. Behold, the King of Heaven and earth hath given thee a rich vessel, thy heart, wherein though it be a piece of flesh of clay of itself, he hath placed the chief faculties of thy spirit and his. How adverse to thankfulness and his intent is thy practice, when thou shalt pour into thi cup lees, dregs, muddy pollutions, tetrical poisons, the waters of hell, wines which the infernal spirits drink to me; taking the heart from him that created it, from that him that bought it, from thim that keeps it, and bequeathing it, in the death of thy soul to him that infects, afflicts,*

*tempts, and torments it; making him thy executor which shall be thy executioner, that hath no more right to it than Herod had to the bed of his sister! What injury, what indignity, is offered to God, when Satan is gratified in his goods, when his best moveable on earth is taken from him and given to his enemy! (1/263)*

## APPENDIX A:

### Book Review of Dr. Mack's book *It's not Fair!*:

A couple of months ago I was having one of those mornings. I was in a grumpy mood to begin with and was grumbling as I headed downstairs to find that the children's lunches remained unmade. With just a few minutes before they had to be out the door and on the school bus I set to work on one of my least favorite routine jobs. As I did so I grumbled, "It's just not fair!" And in that very moment I had a little epiphany. Nothing's fair. Fairness is not a concept that has any business in the Christian life. I gain nothing by focusing on fairness. I repented and got to work with a whole new attitude. The day got better. The more I've thought about it the more I've realized that there was something to my thought that day. Worrying about fairness is a spiritual and emotional dead end.

It was not long after this little episode that a new book showed up in my mailbox. Written by Wayne Mack and Deborah Howard it is titled simply *It's Not Fair*. Mack deals with the very attitude I had fallen into. "From years of personal and counseling experience," he writes, "I know that nothing is more damaging to us spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and behaviorally than responding to the unpleasant, unwanted, and (in our judgment) undeserved attitude of life with the 'it's not fair' attitude." We fight against this attitude with a properly knowledge of who God is. "Nothing is more helpful to us in overcoming the tragic results of being infected with the 'it's not fair' attitude than possessing the knowledge of who and what God really is and the implications of that knowledge."

In this book, Mack focuses on four aspects of God's character that he thinks are the most useful in counteracting and destroying the devastation brought about by the "it's not fair" attitude. He looks to God's wisdom, love, sovereignty and justice. These characteristics, taken individually and together, counter an attitude that we are somehow getting less than we deserve. "Sometimes we are angry at other people, and sometimes we're angry about situations or circumstances. Ultimately, we are angry with God, regardless of how well we disguise it—even to ourselves."

And so he turns to God's omniscience and wisdom to show that God knows all that is happening and that he makes no mistakes; he turns to God's love to show that he loves us deeply and to encourage us to see God's character not through our feelings but through the lens of Scripture; he turns to God's justice to show that God will not and cannot do anything that is unjust or unfair and that God is committed to giving us what we need, not what we want; and he looks to God's omnipotence and sovereignty to show that God is in control of all of life's circumstances and that nothing happens outside of his will. Final chapters focus on practical application and case studies.

This book had its genesis in a biblical counseling class. The origins are visible throughout. There are vast amounts of Scripture included in the book and long studies in the character of God. Each chapter concludes with an appropriate hymn and with questions for study

and application. It is an eminently practical book and one that looks always to the heart. It is a book that answers sin with gospel. I am glad to recommend it to you. I think it is a valuable read for any Christian and one that may have a useful place in a church library.

<http://www.challies.com/>

Entry for January 13, 2009.

## APPENDIX B:

**A Note from Thomas Brooks:** One reason why people sin is because they do not fully understand the evil and wickedness of sin. Thomas Brooks discusses this excuse to sin and proposes some remedies thereto:

**DEVICE 3. BY EXTENUATING AND LESSENING OF SIN<sup>3</sup>:** Ah! says Satan, it is but a little pride, a little worldliness, a little uncleanness, a little drunkenness, etc. As Lot said of Zoar, "It is but a little one, and my soul shall live" (Gen. 19:20). Alas! says Satan, it is but a very little sin that you stick so at. You may commit it without any danger to your soul. It is but a little one; you may commit it, and yet your soul shall live.

**Remedy (1).** First, Solemnly consider, that those sins which we are apt to account small, have brought upon men the greatest wrath of God, as the eating of an apple, gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath day, and touching of the ark. Oh! the dreadful wrath that these sins brought down upon the heads and hearts of men! The least sin is contrary to the law of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore it is often punished severely by God; and do not we see daily the vengeance of the Almighty falling upon the bodies, names, states, families, and souls of men—for those sins that are but little ones in their eyes? Surely if we are not utterly forsaken by God, and blinded by Satan—we cannot but see it! Oh! therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one—you must say, Oh! but those sins which you call little, are such as will cause God to rain hell out of heaven upon sinners as he did upon the Sodomites!

**Remedy (2).** Seriously to consider, That the giving way to a less sin makes way for the committing of a greater sin. He who, to avoid a greater sin, will yield to a lesser, ten thousand to one but God in justice will leave that soul to fall into a greater. If we commit one sin to avoid another, it is just we should avoid neither, we having not law nor power in our own hands to keep off sin as we please; and we, by yielding to the lesser, do tempt the tempter to tempt us to the greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature; it creeps on the soul by degrees, step by step, until it has the soul to the very height of sin. David gives way to his wandering eye, and this led him to those foul sins that caused God to break his bones, and to turn his day into night, and to leave his soul in great darkness. Jacob and Peter, and other saints, have found this true by woeful experience, that the yielding to a lesser sin has been the ushering in of a greater. The little thief will open the door, and make way for the greater; and the little wedge knocked in, will make way for the greater.

Satan will first draw you to sit with the drunkard, and then to sip with the drunkard, and then at last to be drunk with the drunkard. He will first draw you to be unclean in your thoughts, and then to be unclean in your looks, and then to be unclean in your words, and at last to be unclean in your practices. He will first draw you to look upon the golden wedge, and then to

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<sup>3</sup> From *Precious Remedies for Satan's Devices*. Available on line (in a modified form) at [http://www.gracegems.org/Brooks/precious\\_remedies\\_against\\_satan5.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/Brooks/precious_remedies_against_satan5.htm)

desire the golden wedge, and then to handle the golden wedge, and then at last by wicked ways to take the golden wedge, though you run the hazard of losing God and your soul forever; as you may see in Gehazi, Achan, and Judas, and many in these our days. Sin is never at a stand-still (Psalm 1:1), first ungodly, then sinners, then scorners. Here they go on from sin to sin, until they come to the top of sin, that is, to sit in the seat of scorners.

By all this we see, that the yielding to lesser sins, draws the soul to the committing of greater. Ah! how many in these days have fallen, first to have low thoughts of Scripture and ordinances, and then to slight Scripture and ordinances, and then to make a nose of wax of Scripture and ordinances, and then to cast off Scripture and ordinances, and then at last to advance and lift up themselves, and their Christ-dishonoring and soul-damning opinions, above Scripture and ordinances.

Sin gains upon man's soul by insensible degrees. "The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness, and the end of his talking is mischievous madness." (Eccles. 10:13) Corruption in the heart, when it breaks forth, is like a breach in the sea, which begins in a narrow passage, until it eats through, and cast down all before it. The debates of the soul are quick, and soon ended; and that may be done in a moment that may undo a man forever. When a man has begun to sin, he knows not where, or when, or how he shall make a stop of sin. Usually the soul goes on from evil to evil, from folly to folly, until it is ripe for eternal misery!

**Remedy (3).** The third remedy against this third device that Satan has to draw the soul to sin, is solemnly to consider, That it is sad to sin against God for a trifle. Dives would not give a crumb, therefore he should not receive a drop (Luke 16:21). It is the greatest folly in the world—to adventure the going to hell for a small matter. "I tasted but a little honey," said Jonathan, "and I must die" (1 Sam. 14:29). It is a most unkind and unfaithful thing to break with God, for a little. Little sins carry with them but little temptations to sin, and then a man shows most viciousness and unkindness, when he sins on a little temptation. It is devilish to sin without a temptation; it is little less than devilish to sin on a little occasion. The less the temptation is to sin—the greater is that sin. Saul's sin in not waiting for Samuel, was not so much in the matter—but it was much in the malice of it; for though Samuel had not come at all, yet Saul should not have offered sacrifice; but this cost him dear—his soul and kingdom.

It is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to a friend, to venture the complaining, bleeding, and grieving of his soul—upon a light and a slight occasion. So it is the greatest unkindness that can be showed to God, Christ, and the Spirit, for a soul to put God upon complaining, Christ upon bleeding, and the Spirit upon grieving—by yielding to little sins. Therefore, when Satan says it is but a little one, you must answer—that oftentimes there is the greatest unkindness showed to God's glorious majesty, in the acting of the least folly, and therefore you will not displease your best and greatest friend—by yielding to his greatest enemy.

**Remedy (4).** The fourth remedy against this device of Satan, is seriously to consider, That there is great danger, yes, many times most danger—in the smallest sins. "A little leaven leavens the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). If the serpent sneaks in his head, he will draw in his whole body



after him. Greater sins do sooner startle the soul, and awaken and rouse up the soul to repentance, than lesser sins do. Little sins often slide into the soul, and breed, and work secretly and indiscernibly in the soul, until they come to be so strong, as to trample upon the soul, and to cut the throat of the soul. There is oftentimes greatest danger to our bodies in the least diseases that hang upon us, because we are apt to make light of them, and to neglect the timely use of means for removing of them, until they are grown so strong that they prove mortal to us. So there is most danger often in the least sins.

We are apt to take no notice of them, and to neglect those heavenly helps whereby they should be weakened and destroyed, until they are grown to that strength, that we are ready to cry out, the medicine is too weak for the disease! I would pray, and I would hear—but I am afraid that sin is grown up by degrees to such a head, that I shall never be able to prevail over it; but as I have begun to fall, so I shall utterly fall before it, and at last perish in it, unless the power and free grace of Christ acts gloriously, beyond my present apprehension and expectation. The viper is killed by the little young ones that are nourished and cherished in her belly—so are many men eternally killed and betrayed by the little sins, as they call them, that are nourished in their own bosoms.

I know not, says one, whether the nurture of the least sin be not worse than the commission of the greatest—for this may be of frailty, that argues obstinacy. A little hole in the ship sinks it. A small breach in a dyke carries away all before it. A little stab at the heart kills a man. A little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man!

**Remedy (5).** The fifth remedy against this device of Satan, is solemnly to consider, That other saints have chosen to suffer the worst of torments, rather than commit the least sin, that is, such as the world accounts little sins. So as you may see in Daniel and his companions, that would rather choose to burn, and be cast to the lions—than they would bow to the idol which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. When this 'slight offense', in the world's account, and a hot fiery furnace stood in competition, that they must either fall into sin, or be cast into the fiery furnace—such was their tenderness of the honor and glory of God, and their hatred and indignation against sin, that they would rather burn than sin! They knew that it was far better to burn for their not sinning, than that God and conscience should raise a hell, a fire in their bosoms for sin.

I have read of that noble servant of God, Marcus Arethusius, minister of a church in the time of Constantine, who had been the cause of overthrowing an idol's temple; afterwards, when Julian came to be emperor, he would force the people of that place to build it up again. They were ready to do it—but Marcus refused; whereupon those who were his own people, to whom he preached, took him, and stripped him of all his clothes, and abused his naked body, and gave it up to the children, to lance it with their pen-knives, and then caused him to be put in a basket, and drenched his naked body with honey, and set him in the sun, to be stung with wasps. And all this cruelty they showed, because he would not do anything towards the building up of this idol temple! No, they came to this, that if he would do but the least towards it, if he would give but a half-penny to it, they would save him. But he refused all, though the giving of a half-penny might

have saved his life; and in doing this, he did but live up to that principle that most Christians talk of, and all profess—but few come up to, that is—that we must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments that men and devils can invent and inflict, than to commit the least sin whereby God should be dishonored, our consciences wounded, religion reproached, and our own souls endangered.

**Remedy (6).** The sixth remedy against this device of Satan is, seriously to consider, That the soul is never able to stand under the guilt and weight of the least sin, when God shall set it home upon the soul. The least sin will press and sink the stoutest sinner as low as hell, when God shall open the eyes of a sinner, and make him see the horrid filthiness and abominable vileness that is in sin! What so little, base, and vile creatures—as lice or gnats—and yet by these little poor creatures, God so plagued stout-hearted Pharaoh, and all Egypt, that, fainting under it, they were forced to cry out, "This is the finger of God!" (Exod. 8:16; 10. 19). When little creatures, yes, the least creatures, shall be armed with a power from God, they shall press and sink down the greatest, proudest, and stoutest tyrants who breathe!

So when God shall cast a sword into the hand of a little sin, and arm it against the soul, the soul will faint and fall under it. Some, who have but contemplated adultery, without any actual acting it; and others, having found a trifle, and made no conscience to restore it, knowing, by the light of natural conscience, that they did not do as they would be done by; and others, that have had some unworthy thought of God, have been so frightened, amazed, and terrified for those sins, which are small in men's account, that they have wished they had never been born; that they could take no delight in any earthly comfort, that they have been put to their wits' end, ready to make away themselves, wishing themselves annihilated.

William Perkins mentions a good man—but very poor, who, being ready to starve, stole a lamb, and being about to eat it with his poor children, and as his manner was afore eating, to ask God's blessing, dare not do it—but fell into a great perplexity of conscience, and acknowledged his fault to the owner, promising payment if ever he should be able.

**Remedy (7).** The seventh remedy against this device is, solemnly to consider, That there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction; and this appears as clear as the sun, by the severe dealing of God the Father with his beloved Son, who let all the vials of his fiercest wrath upon him, and that for the least sin as well as for the greatest.

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23); of ALL sin, whether great or small, Oh! how should this make us tremble—as much at the least spark of lust as at hell itself; considering that God the Father would not spare his bosom Son, no, not for the least sin—but would make him drink the dregs of his wrath!

And so much for the remedies that may fence and preserve our souls from being drawn to sin by this third device of Satan.