

The Crook in the Lot

Thomas Boston

"Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight which He has made crooked?"—Ecclesiastes 7:13

Part 1

*While all the rough things that we meet
Which will not move a jot,
The hindrances to heart and feet,
The Crook in every Lot,
Mean plainly but that children's threads
Have at the end a knot.*

"An Old Sermon With a New Text" by George MacDonald

I. Introduction

- A. When they are perceived by the eye of faith, and duly considered, we have a just view of afflicting incidents, fitted to quell the turbulent motions of corrupt affections under dismal outward appearances.
- B. Solomon pronounces the house of mourning to be preferable to the house of feasting, sorrow to laughter, and a wise man's rebuke to a fool's song. As for that, even though the latter are indeed the more pleasant, yet the former are the more profitable.
 - 1. ***[Ecclesiastes 7:2-3]- It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.***
- C. Solomon cautions against making odious comparisons of former and present times, in that point insinuating undue reflections on the providence of God: and, against that querulous and fretful disposition.
 - 1. ***[Ecclesiastes 7:10]-Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.***
- D. The remedy itself, Wisdom.
 - 1. A wise eyeing of the hand of God in all we find to bear hard on us: *"Consider the work of God,"* in the crooked, rough, and disagreeable parts of your lot, the crosses you find in it.
 - a. You see very well the cross itself.
 - b. Lift up your eyes towards heaven, see the doing of God in it, the operation of His hand.
- E. The suitability of the remedy wisdom.
 - 1. Such a view of the crook in our lot is very suitable to still improper risings of heart, and quiet us under them: *"For who can make that straight which God has made crooked?"*
 - 2. *God has made it; and it must continue while He will have it so.*

II. Propositions from and purpose of the text.

- A. Proposition 1: Whatever crook there is in our lot, it is of God's making.
 - 1. As to the crook itself, the crook in the lot, for the better understanding of it.
 - a. Premises about the crook in the lot.
 - 1.) There is a certain train or course of events, by the providence of God, falling to every one of us during our life in this world. This train of events is widely different to different persons, according to the will and pleasure of the sovereign Manage, who orders men's condition in the world in a great variety, some moving in a higher, some in a lower sphere.
 - 2.) In that train or course of events, some fall out, cross to us, and against the grain; and these make the crook in our lot.

- 3.) Everybody's lot in this world has some crook in it.
- a.) *"Who would have thought but that Haman's lot was very straight, while his family was in a flourishing condition, and he prospering in riches and honor, being prime minister of state in the Persian court, and standing high in the king's favor?"*
 - b.) **[Esther 6:6-12]- So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head: And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour. And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house mourning, and having his head covered.**
- 4.) The crook in the lot came into the world by sin: it is owing to the fall,
- a.) **[Romans 5:12]- Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**
- b. The crook in the lot speaks, in general, two things.
- 1.) The crook in the lot is some one or other piece of adversity.
 - a.) **[John 16:33]- These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.**
 - 2.) The crook in the lot is adversity of some continuance.
- c. A threefold crook in the lot incident to the children of men.
- 1.) One made by a cross dispensation, which, however in itself passing, yet has lasting effects.
 - a.) Herod's cruelty made in the lot of the mothers in Bethlehem.
 - b.) **[Matthew 2:18]- In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.**
 - 2.) A train of cross dispensation, whether of the same or different kinds, following hard on one another, and leaving lasting effects behind them.
 - a.) In the case of Job, while one messenger of evil tidings was yet speaking, another came. Cross events coming one on the neck of another, deep calling to deep, make a sore crook.
 - 1.) **[Job 15-19]- And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons**

and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

- 3.) A crook made by one cross dispensation, with lasting effects of it coming in the room of another removed.
 - a.) Lack of children had long been the crook in Rachel's lot. That was at length made even to her mind; but then she got another in its stead, hard labor in travailing to bring forth.
 - b.) *[Genesis 30:1]- And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.*
 - c.) *[Genesis 35:18]- And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.*

- d. The crook in the lot has in it four things of the nature of that which is crooked.
 - 1.) Disagreeableness.
 - a.) A crooked thing is wayward; and, being laid to a rule, answers it not, but declines from it.
 - b.) The greatest crook of the lot on earth is straight in heaven. There is no disagreeableness in it there.
 - 2.) Unsightliness. Crooked things are unpleasant to the eye; and no crook in the lot seems to be joyous, but grievous, making an unsightly appearance.
 - a.) *[Psalm 39:3]- My heart was hot within me while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,*
 - 3.) Unfitness for motion.
 - a.) *[Proverbs 26:7]- The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.*
 - 4.) Aptness to catch hold and entangle.
 - a.) *[Psalm 73:13]- Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.*

- e. Conclusions.
 - 1.) It may fall in any part of the lot; there is no exempted one in the case: for, sin being found in every part, the crook may take place in any part.
 - a.) *[Isaiah 64:6]- But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*
 - 2.) It may at once fall into many parts of the lot, the Lord calling, as in a solemn day; one's terrors round about.
 - 3.) It often falls in the tender part; I mean, that part of the lot in which one is least able to bear it, or at least thinks he is so.
 - a.) *[Psalm 55:12]- For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him:*
 - 4.) The crook may be observed to fall in these four parts of the lot.
 - a.) In the natural part. Bodily defects, superfluities, deformities, infirmities, natural or accidental, make the crook in the lot of some.
 - 1.) Rachel's beauty was balanced with barrenness, the crook in her lot.

- 2.) Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, was it should seem, no personable man.
 - 3.) Timothy was of a weak and sickly frame.
- b.) It may fall in the honorary part. Some are neglected and slighted; their credit is still kept low; they go through the world under a cloud, being put into an ill name, their reputation sunk.
 - 1.) ***[Psalm 31:11-12]- I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.***
 - c.) It may fall in the vocational part. Whatever is a man's calling or station in the world, be it sacred or civil, the crook in their lot may take it's place in it.
 - 1.) ***[Jeremiah 20:9]- Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.***
 - 2.) ***[Psalm 107:38]- He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.***
 - d.) It may fall in the relational part. Relations are the joints of society; and there the crook in the lot may take place, one's smartest pain being often felt in these joints.
 - 1.) The lot of Jacob, by means of the death of Rachel, his beloved wife, and the loss of Joseph, his son and darling, which had like to have made him go halting to the grave.
 - 2.) ***[Job 16:7]- But now he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.***
 - 3.) ***[I Chronicles 7:22-23]-And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. And when he went in to his wife, she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house.***
2. God's making of the crook in the lot.
 - a. It is of God's making.
 - 1.) Three considerations.
 - a.) Since there can be no penal evil but of God's making, and the crook in the lot is such an evil, it is necessarily concluded to be of God's making.
 - 1.) ***[Amos 3:6]- Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?***
 - b.) God brings about every man's lot, and all the parts of it.
 - c.) God has, by an eternal decree, immovable as mountains of brass appointed the whole of every one's lot, the crooked part of it, as well as the straight.
 - b. How it is of His making. God's making of the crook in the lot.
 - 1.) Distinction between pure sinless crooks and impure sinful ones.
 - a.) There are pure and sinless crooks; which are mere afflictions, cleanly crosses, grievous indeed, but not defiling. Lazarus's poverty, Rachel's barrenness, Leah's tender eyes, the blindness of the man who had been so from his birth.
 - b.) There are impure sinful crooks, which, in their own nature, are sins as well as afflictions, defiling as well as grievous. As in David's lot, through his family disorders, the defiling of Tamar, the murder of Amnon, the rebellion of Absalom, all of them unnatural.

- 1.) *"He cannot be tempted with evil, neither does He tempt any man."* But they are of his making, by his holy permission of them, powerful bounding of them, and wise overruling of them to some good end.
 - 2.) He holily permits them, suffering men *"to walk in their own ways."*
 - 3.) He powerfully bounds them. *"The remainder of wrath"* (that is, the creature's wrath) *"you shall restrain."*
 - 4.) He wisely overrules them to some good purpose, becoming the Divine perfections.
- c. Why He makes it.
- 1.) The design of that dispensation: a matter, which it concerns every one to know, and carefully to notice, in order to a Christian improvement of the crook in their lot.
 - a.) The trial of one's state, whether one is in the state of grace or not? Whether a sincere Christian, or a hypocrite?
 - b.) Excitation to duty, weaning one from this world, and prompting him to look after the happiness of the other world.
 - c.) Conviction of sin.
 - d.) Correction or punishment for sin.
 - e.) Preventing of sin.
 - f.) Discovery of latent corruption, whether in saints or sinners.
 - g.) The exercise of grace in the children of God. The crook in the lot gives rise to many acts of faith, hope, love, self-denial, resignation, and other graces; to many heavenly breathings, partings, and groanings, which otherwise would not be brought forth.
- d. The use of the doctrine
- 1.) Use 1. For reproof. And it meets with three sorts of persons as reprovably.
 - a.) The carnal and earthly, who do not with awe and reverence regard the crook in their lot as of God's making. There is certainly a signature of the Divine hand on it to be perceived by just observers; and that challenges an awful regard, the neglect of which forebodes destruction.
 - 1.) ***[Psalm 28:5]- Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.***
 - b.) The unsubmitive, whose hearts, like the troubled sea, swell and boil fret and murmur, and cannot be at rest under the crook in their lot.
 - 1.) ***[Jude 1:13]- Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.***
 - c.) Thirdly, the careless and unfruitful, who do not set themselves dutifully to comply with the design of the crook in their lot.
 - 1.) ***[Micah 6:9]- The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.***
 - 2.) Use 2. For consolation. It speaks comfort to the afflicted children of God.
 - a.) ***[Psalm 89:30-33]- If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.***
 - b.) ***[Psalm 113:7-8]- He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.***
 - 3.) Use 3. For exhortation. Since the crook in the lot is of God's making, then, eyeing the hand of God in yours, be reconciled to it, and submit under it whatever it is.
 - a.) Object. 1. But some will say, "The crook in my lot is from the hand of the creature; and such a one too as I deserted no such treatment from."

- 1.) God Himself is the principal party, whoever is the less principal.
 - 2.) Although you have not deserved your crook at the hand of the instrument which He makes use of for your correction, you certainly deserve it at His hand;
 - 3.) He may make use of what instrument He will in the matter, or may do it immediately by Himself, even as seems good in His sight.
- b.) Object. II. "But the crook in my lot might quickly be evened, if the instrument or instruments of it pleased: only there is no dealing with them, so as to convince them of their fault in making it."
- 1.) *[Isaiah 49:23-25]- And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.*
 - 2.) *[Jeremiah 50:6-7]- My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.*
- c.) *Considerations to submit under the crook in the lot.*
- 1.) *[Jeremiah 10:19]- Woe is me for my hurt! my wound is grievous; but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it.*
 - 2.) It is a duty you owe to God, as your sovereign Lord and Benefactor.
 - a.) *[Job 2:10]- But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*
 - 3.) It is an unalterable statute, for the time of this life, that nobody shall want a crook in their lot;
 - a.) *[Job 5:7]- Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*
 - b.) *[John 16:33]- These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*
 - c.) *[Job 18:4]- He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?*
 - 4.) A crook in the lot, which one can by no means submit to, makes a condition of all things the likest to that in hell.
 - 5.) Great is the loss by not submitting to it.
 - a.) *[Psalm 119:67]- Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.*

B. Proposition 2: What God sees fit to mar, no one will be able to mend in his lot.

1. God's marring and making a crook in one's lot, as He sees fitting.
 - a. God keeps the choice of every one's crook to Himself; and therein He exerts His sovereignty.
 - b. He sees and observes the bias of every one's will and inclination, how it lies, and where it especially bends away from Himself, and consequently where it needs the special bow; so He did in that man's case.

- 1.) *[Luke 18:22]- Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.*
- c. By the conduct of His providence, or a touch of His hand, He gives that part of one's lot a bow the contrary way; so that henceforth it lies quite contrary to the bias of the party's will.
 - d. He wills that crook in the lot to remain while He sees fitting, for a longer or shorter time, just according to the holy ends He designs it for.
2. We shall consider men's attempting to mend or even that crook in their lot.
- a. A certain uneasiness under the crook in the lot; it is a yoke which is hard for the party to bear, till his spirit is tamed and subdued.
 - b. A strong desire to have the cross removed, and to have matters in that part going according to our inclinations.
 - 1.) *[Luke 26:39]- And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*
 - c. An earnest use of means for that end. This naturally follows on that desire.
3. In what sense it is to be understood that we shall not be able to mend or even the crook in our lot.
- a. It will never do by the mere force of our hand. "For, by strength shall no man prevail."
 - b. The use of all allowable means for it will be successful unless the Lord bless them for that end.
 - 1.) *[Lamentations 3:37]- Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?*
 - 2.) *[Ecclesiastes 9:11]- I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.*
 - 3.) *[John 7:6]- Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.*
4. Render some reasons of the point.
- a. Because of the absolute dependence we have on God. As the light depends on the sun, or the shadow on the body, so we depend on God, and without Him can do nothing, great or small. And God will have us to find it so, to teach us our dependence.
 - b. Because His will is irresistible. When God wills one thing, and the creature the contrary, it is easy to see which will must be done. When the omnipotent arm holds, in vain does the creature draw. "Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?"
 - 1.) *[Isaiah 46:10]- Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:*
 - 2.) *[Job 9:4]- He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?*
 - 3.) Inference 1: There is a necessity of yielding and submitting to the crook in our lot; for we may as well think to remove the rocks and mountains, which God has settled, as to make that part of our lot straight which He has made crooked.
 - 4.) Inference 2: The evening of the crook in our lot, by main force of our own, is but a cheat we put on ourselves, and will not last, but, like a stick by main force made straight, it will quickly return to the bow again.
 - 5.) Inference 3: The only effectual way of getting the crook evened is to apply to God for it.
 - 6.) Motive 1. All our attempts for its removal will, without Him, be vain and fruitless.
 - c. There is no crook but what may be remedied by Him, and made perfectly straight.

- 1.) *[Psalm 145:14]- The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.*
- d. He loves to be employed in evening crooks, and calls us to employ Him that way.
- 1.) *[Psalm 50:15]- And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*
- e. A crook thus evened is a double mercy. There are some crooks evened by a touch of the hand of common providence, while people are either not exercised about them, or when they fret for their removal; these are sapless mercies and short-lived.
- f. God has signalized His favor to His dearest children, in making and mending notable crooks in their lot. His darling ones ordinarily have the greatest crooks made in their lot.
- g. It is the shortest and surest way to go straight to God with the crook in the lot. If we would have our wish in that point, we must, as the eagle, first soar aloft, and then come down on the prey.
- 1.) *[Mark 5:36]- As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe*
- h. Objection 1: "But it is needless, for I see that though the crook in my lot may mend, yet it never will mend. In its own nature it is capable of being removed, but it is plain it is not to be removed, it is hopeless."
- 1.) Answer: That is the language of unbelieving haste, which faith and patience should correct. Abraham had as much to say for the hopelessness of his crook, and yet he applies to God in faith for the mending of it. Sarah had made such a conclusion, for which she was rebuked. Nothing can make it needless in such a case to apply to God.
- i. Objection 2: "But I have applied to Him again and again for it, yet it is never mended."
- 1.) Answer: Delays are not denials of suits at the court of heaven, but trials of the faith and patience of the petitioners. And whose will persevere will certainly speed at length.
- a.) *[Luke 18:7]- And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?*
5. Directions for rightly managing the application for removing the crook in the lot.
- a. Pray for it, and pray in faith, believing that, for the sake of Jesus, you shall certainly obtain at length, and in this life too, if it is good for you; but without peradventure in the life to come.
- b. Humble yourselves under it, as the yoke, which the sovereign hand has laid on you.
- 1.) *[Micah 7:9]- I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.*
- 2.) Justify God, condemn yourselves, kiss the rod, and go quietly under it; this is the most feasible way to get rid of it, the end being obtained.
- a.) *[1 Samuel 7:3]- And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.*
- c. Wait on patiently till the hand that made it mend it.
- 1.) *[James 1:4]- But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*
- 2.) *[Isaiah 60:22]- A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the LORD will hasten it in his time.*
- 3.) *[Isaiah 49:23]- And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the*

dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

6. Exhortation 2. What crook there is, which in the settled order of things cannot be removed or evened in this world, let us apply to God for suitable relief under it.
 - a. To take God in Christ for and instead of that thing, the withholding or taking away of which from you makes the crook in your lot.
 - b. Look for the stream running as full from Him as ever it did or could run, when the crook of the lot has dried it.
 - c. Seek for the spiritual fruits of the crook in the lot.
 - d. Grace to bear us up under the crook.
 - 1.) *[2 Corinthians 12:8-9]- For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*
 - e. The keeping in our eye the eternal rest and weight of glory in the other world.
 - 1.) *[2 Corinthians 4:17-18]- For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*
7. Exhortation 3. Let us then set ourselves rightly to bear the crook in our lot, while God sees fit to continue it. What we cannot mend, let us bear Christianly, and not fight against God, and so kick against the pricks. So let us bear it.
 - a. Patiently, without fuming and fretting, or murmuring.
 - 1.) *[Proverbs 25:28]- He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.*
 - b. With Christian fortitude, without sinking under discouragement.
 - 1.) *[Hebrews 12:5]- And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*
 - 2.) *[Job 17:9]- The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.*
 - 3.) Question "When may any one be reckoned to fall under sinking discouragement from the crook in his lot?"
 - 4.) Answer: When it prevails so far as to unfit us for the duties either of our particular or Christian calling. We may be sure it has carried us beyond the bounds of moderate grief, when it unfits us for the common affairs of life, which the Lord calls us to manage. Or for the duties of religion, hindering them altogether.
 - a.) *[1 Peter 3:7]- Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*
 - c. Let us bear it profitably, so we may gain some advantage by that means.
 - 1.) *[Psalm 119:71]-It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*
 - 2.) *[Isaiah 27:9]- By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, the groves and images shall not stand up.*

- d. Motive 1: There will be no evening of it while God sees fit to continue it. Let us behave under it as we will, and make what sallies we please in the case, it will continue immovable, as fixed with bands of iron and brass.
- 1.) **[Job 23:13-14]- But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.**
- e. Motive 2: An awkward carriage under it notably increases the pain of it.
- f. Motive 3: The crook in your lot is the special trial God has chosen for you to take your measure by.
- 1.) **[Luke 14:26]- If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.**
 - 2.) Question: "Is that disposition then a qualification necessarily pre-required to our believing, and if so, where must we have it? Can we work it out of our natural powers? "
 - a.) Answer: No, it is not so; but it necessarily accompanies and goes along with believing, flowing from the same saving illumination in the knowledge of Christ, by which the soul is brought to believe on Him.
 - 3.) Case. "Alas! I cannot get my heart freely to submit my lot to Him in that point."
 - a.) Answer 1: That submission will not be carried on in any without a struggle; the old man will never submit to it, and when the new man of grace is submitting to it, the old man will still be rebelling. "
 - b.) Answer 2: Where is the Christian self-denial and taking up the cross, without submitting to the crook? This is the first lesson Christ puts in the hands of His disciples.
 - c.) Answer 3: Where is our conformity to Christ, while we cannot submit to the crook? We cannot evidence ourselves Christians, without conformity to Christ.
 - d.) Answer 4: How shall we prove ourselves the genuine kindly children of God, if still warring with the crook?
- g. Motive 4: The trial by the crook here will not last long. What though the work is sore, it may be me better comported with that it will not be lonesome; a few days or years at farthest will put an end to it, and take you off your trials.
- h. Motive 5: If you would, in a Christian manner, set yourselves to bear the crook, you would find it easier than you imagine.
- 1.) **[Matthew 11:29-30]-Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**
- i. Motive 6: If you behave Christianly under your crook here, you will not lose your labor, but get a full reward of grace in the other world, through Christ.
- 1.) **[James 1:12]-Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.**
 - 2.) **[Revelation 7:14]- And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**
- j. Motive 7: If you do not behave Christianly under it, you will lose your souls in the other world.
- C. Proposition 3: The considering of the crook in the lot as the work of God, or of His making, is a proper means to bring us to a Christian deportment under it.
1. What it is to consider the crook as the work of God.
 - a. An inquiry into the spring from where it rises.

- b. A perceiving of the hand of God in it.
 - 1.) *[Psalm 28:5]- Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.*
 - c. A representing it to ourselves as a work of God, which He has wrought against us for holy and wise ends, becoming the Divine perfections.
 - 1.) *[2 Samuel 16:11]- And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.*
 - 2.) The degree of God, purposing that crook for us from eternity;
 - a.) *[Ephesians 1:11]- In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
 - 3.) The providence of God bringing to pass that crook for us in time.
 - d. A continuing in me thought of it as such. It is not a simple glance of the eye, but a contemplating and leisurely viewing of it as His work, that is the proper mean.
 - 1.) Habitually impressed with this consideration: as the crook is some lasting grievance, so the consideration of this as the remedy should be habitually kept up.
 - 2.) We are to be occasionally exercised in it.
 - e. A considering it for me end for which it is proposed to us, namely, to bring us to a dutiful carriage under it.
2. How it is to be understood to be a proper means to bring one to behave rightly under the crook.
 - a. Not as if it were sufficient of itself, and as it stands alone, to produce that effect. But as it is used in faith, in the faith of the Gospel;
 - 1.) Is it rational to think to set fallen man, with his corrupted nature, to work the same way with innocent Adam?
 - 2.) The Scripture is very plain on this head, showing the indispensable necessity of faith; and that, such as unites to Christ, "Without Me," that is, separate from Me, "you can do nothing;"
 - 3.) Do but consider what it is to behave rightly under the crook in the lot; what humiliation of soul, self-denial, and absolute resignation to the win of God must be in it.
 - 4.) Objection "Then it is saints only that are capable of the improvement of that consideration."
 - a.) Answer: Yea, indeed it is so, as to that and all other moral considerations, for true Christian ends: and that amounts to no more than that directions for walking rightly are only for the living that have the use of their limbs; and, therefore, that you may improve it, set yourselves to believe in the first place.
 3. It is a proper mean to bring one to behave rightly under it.
 - a. Four considerations.
 - 1.) It is of great use to divert from the considering and dwelling on those things about the crook which serve to irritate our corruption.
 - 2.) It has a moral aptitude for producing this good effect.
 - 3.) It has a Divine appointment for that end, which is to be believed.
 - 4.) The Spirit may be expected to work by it, and does work by it, in them that believe, and look to him for it, forasmuch as it is a mean of his own appointment.
 - b. Use 1: Then take this direction for your behaving rightly under the crook in your lot. Inure yourselves to consider it as the work of God. Helps for improving it.

- 1.) Consider it as the work of your God in Christ. This is the way to sprinkle it with Gospel-grace, and so to make it tolerable.
 - a.) Solemnly to take God for your God, under your crook.
 - b.) In all your encounters with it, resolutely to believe and claim your interest in Him.

- 2.) Enlarge the consideration with a view of the Divine relations to you, and the Divine attributes.
- 3.) Consider what a work of His it is, how it is a convincing work, for bringing sin to remembrance: a correcting work, to chastise you for your follies, a preventing work, to hedge you up from courses of sin you would otherwise be apt to run into; a trying work, to discover your state, your graces, and corruption; a weaning work, to wean you from the world and fit you for heaven.
- 4.) In all your considerations of it in this manner look upward for His Spirit to render them effectual. —Thus may you behave Christianly under it, till God make it even either here or in heaven.
 - a.) *[Proverbs 16:19]- Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.*
 - b.) There is a comparison instituted and that between two parties, and two points in which they vastly differ.
 - 1.) The parties are the lowly and the proud, who differ like heaven and earth. The proud are climbing up and soaring aloft; the lowly are content to creep on the ground, if that is the will of God.
 - 2.) The points wherein these parties are supposed to differ, namely, being of a humble spirit, and dividing the spoil.
 - c.) The decision made, in which the former is preferred to the latter;

- c. Doctrine. There is a generation of lowly afflicted ones, having their spirit lowered and brought down to their lot; whose case, in that respect, is better than that of the proud getting their will, and carrying all to their mind.
 - 1.) Consider the generation of the lowly afflicted ones, having their spirit brought down to their lot.
 - a.) Lay down some general considerations about them.
 - 1.) There is such a generation in the world, bad as the world is.
 - 2.) If it were not so, Christ, as He was in the world, would have no followers in it.
 - 3.) Nevertheless they are certainly very rare in the world.
 - 4.) They can be no more in number than the truly godly; for nothing less than the power of Divine grace can bring down men's minds from their native height, and make their will pliant to the will of God.
 - 5.) Though all the godly are of that generation, yet there are some of them to whom that character more especially belongs.
 - 6.) A lowly disposition of soul, and habitual aim and bent of the heart that way, has a very favorable construction put upon it in heaven.
 - b.) Lay down some particular considerations about them.
 - 1.) Affliction in their lot. That lowly generation, preferred to the proud and prosperous, is a generation of afflicted ones, whom God keeps under the discipline of the covenant.
 - a.) There is a yoke of affliction of one kind or other oftentimes upon them.
 - b.) There is a particular yoke of affliction which God has chosen for them, that hangs on them, and is seldom, if ever, taken off them.

- 2.) Lowliness in their disposition and tenor of spirit. They are a generation of lowly humble ones, whose spirits God has, by His grace, brought down from their natural height.
 - a.) They think soberly and meanly of themselves; what they are; what they can do; what they are worth, and what they deserve.
 - b.) They think highly and honorably of God.
 - c.) They think favorably of others, as far as in justice they may.
 - d.) They are sunk down into a state of subordination to God and His will.
 - e.) They are not bent on high things, but disposed to stoop to low things.
 - f.) They are apt to magnify mercies bestowed on them.

- 3.) A spirit brought down to their lot. Their lot is a low and afflicted one; but their spirit is as low, being, through grace, brought down to it.
 - a.) They submit to it as just.
 - b.) They go quietly under it as tolerable.
 - c.) They are satisfied in it, as drawing their comfort from another quarter than their outward condition, even as the house stands fast when the prop is taken away that it did not lean on.
 - d.) They have a complacency in it, as that which is fit and good for them.
 - e.) They rest in it, as what they desire not to come out of, till the God that brought them into it see it fit to bring them out with His good will.

- 2.) Consider the generation of the proud getting their will, and carrying all to their mind. And in their character also are three things.
 - a) There are crosses in their lot.
 - 1.) The confusion and vanity brought into the creation by man's sin, have made it impossible to get through the world but men must meet with what will ruffle them.
 - 2.) The pride of their heart exposes them particularly to crosses.

 - b) Reigning pride in their spirit.
 - 1.) They have an over-value for themselves; and so will not stoop to the yoke; it is below them.
 - 2.) They have an unmortified, self-will, arising from that over-value for themselves, and they will not stoop.
 - 3.) They have a crowd of unsubdued passions taking part with self-will.
 - a.) There is one black band of hellish passions that marches upward, and makes an attack; on heaven itself, namely, discontent, impatience, murmuring, frettings, and the like.
 - b.) There is another that marches forward, and makes an attack on the instrument or instruments of the cross, namely, anger, wrath, fury, revenge, bitterness, &c.

 - c) Getting their will, and carrying all to their mind.
 - 1.) Holy providence yielding to the man's unmortified self-will, and letting it go according to his mind.
 - 2.) The lust remaining in its strength and vigor.
 - 3.) The cross is removed, the yoke taken off.
 - 4.) The man is pleased in his having carried his point, even as one is when he is dividing the spoil.

- 3.) It is better to be in a low afflicted condition, with the spirit humbled and brought down to the lot, than to be of a proud and high spirit, getting the lot brought up to it, and matters going according to one's mind.
 - a.) Humility is so far preferable to pride, that in no circumstances whatever its preferableness can fail.

- 1.) Humility is a part of the image of God. Pride is the master-piece of the image of the devil.
 - 2.) Humility and lowliness of spirit qualify us for friendly communion and intercourse with God in Christ.
 - 3.) Humility is a duty pleasing to God, pride a sin pleasing to the devil.
- b.) They whose spirits are brought down to their afflicted lot have much quiet and repose of mind, while the proud, that must have their lot brought up to their mind, have much disquiet, trouble, and vexation. Consider here on the one hand that quiet of mind, and ease within is a great blessing upon which the comfort of life depends.
- 1.) ***[Colossians 3:15]- And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.***
 - 2.) ***[Jeremiah 9:5]- And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.***
 - 3.) ***[Hosea 13:11]- I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.***
- c.) They that get their spirit brought down to their afflicted lot gain a point far more valuable than they who in their pride force up their lot to their mind. *"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit, than he that takes a city.*
- 1.) The latter makes but a better condition in outward things, the former makes a better man.
 - 2.) The subduing of our own passions is more excellent than to have the whole world subdued to our will: for then we are masters of ourselves, according to that.
 - 3.) When both shall come to be judged it will appear the one has multiplied the tale of their good works in bringing their spirit to their lot; the others the tale of their ill works in bringing their lot to their spirit.
- d.) Use 1: Of information.
- 1.) It is not always best for folks to get their will.
 - 2.) The afflicted crossed party whose lot is kept low is so far from being a loser that he is a gainer by it if his spirit is brought down to it.
 - 3.) It is better to yield to Providence than to fight it out, though we should win.
 - 4.) It is of so much greater concern for us to get our spirits brought down than our outward condition raised.
- e.) Use 2. Of exhortation.
- 1.) It is far more needful for us to have our spirits humbled under the cross than to have the cross removed.
 - 2.) The humbling of the spirit will have a mighty good effect on a crossed lot, but the removal of the cross will have none on the unhumiliated spirit.
 - 3.) Think with yourselves how dangerous and hopeless a case it is to have the cross removed before the spirit is humbled; that is, to have the means of cure pulled away and blocked up from us while the power of the disease is yet unbroken; to be taken off trials before we have given any good proof of ourselves, and so to be given over of our Physician as hopeless.
- f.) Use 3. For direction.
- 1.) Believing the Gospel, take God for your God in Christ towards your eternal salvation, and then dwell much on the thoughts of God's greatness and holiness, and of your own sinfulness; so will you be humbled under the mighty hand of God; and in due time He will lift you up.

- 2.) *[1 Peter 5:6]- Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*
 - 3.) The duty of humbling ourselves.
 - a.) The state of those to whom it is proposed, those under the mighty hand of God whom His hand has humbled or brought low in respect of their circumstances in the world.
 - b.) The duty itself, namely, humiliation of our spirits under the humbling circumstances the Lord has placed us in.
 - c.) A particular spring of this duty: therefore we must consider, that those who cannot quietly keep the place assigned them of God in their afflictions or relation, but still press upward against the mighty hand that is over them, that mighty hand resists them, throwing them down, and often farther down than before; whereas it treats them with grace and favor that compose themselves under it to a quiet discharge of their duty in their situation; so, eyeing this, we must set ourselves to humble ourselves.
 - 4.) The infallible issue of that course; that He may exalt you in due time.
 - a.) Here is a happy event of humiliation of spirit secured, and that is exaltation or lifting up on high, by the power of God, that He may exalt you.
 - 1.) Objection 1. If we let our spirit fall we shall lie always at folks' feet, and they trample on us. Answer: No; pride of spirit unsubdued will bring men to lie at the feet of others forever.
 - 2.) Objection 2. If we do not raise ourselves none will raise us, and therefore we must see to ourselves to do ourselves right. Answer: That is wrong. Humble yourselves in respect of your spirits, and God will raise you up in respect of your lot, or low condition; and they that have God engaged for raising them have no reason to say they have none to do it for them.
 - 3.) Objection 3. But sure we shall never rise high if we let our spirits fall. Answer: This is wrong too: God will not only raise the humble ones, but He will lift them up on high; for so the word signifies.
 - b.) Here is the date of that happy event when it will fall out. In due time, or in the season, the proper season for it,
 - 1.) *[Galatians 6:9]- And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*
- 4.)
- d. Doctrine I. The bent of one's heart, in humbling circumstances, should lie towards a suitable humbling of the spirit, as under God's mighty hand placing us in them.
 - 1.) Suppositions
 - a.) God brings men into humbling circumstances.
 - 1.) *[Ezekiel 17:24]- And all the trees of the field shall know that I the LORD have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish: I the LORD have spoken and have done it.*
 - 2.) *[Deuteronomy 8:2]- And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*
 - b.) These circumstances prove pressing as a weight on the heart tending to bear it down.
 - 1.) *[Psalm 107:12]- Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.*

- c.) The heart is naturally apt to rise up against these humbling circumstances, and consequently against the mighty hand that brings and keeps them on.
1.) [Job 35:9-10]- By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;
- d.) But what God requires is, rather to labor to bring down the heart than to get up the head.
- e.) There must be a noticing of the hand of God in humbling circumstances.
1.) [Micah 6:9]- The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.
- 2.) What are those humbling circumstances the mighty hand of God brings men into.
- c.) Of imperfection. God has placed all men in such circumstances under a variety of wants and imperfections.
- d.) Of inferiority in relations, by which men are set in the lower place in relations and society, and made to depend on others.
- e.) Of contradiction, tending directly to balk us of our will.
- f.) Of affliction. Prosperity puffs up sinners with pride; for it is very hard to keep a low spirit with a high and prosperous lot.
- g.) Of sin, as the punishment of sin.
- 3.) What it is in humbling circumstances to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.
- a.) Noticing God's mighty hand, as employed in bringing about everything that concerns us, either in the way of efficacy or permission.
1.) [Proverbs 21:1]- The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.
- b.) A sense of our own worthlessness and nothingness before him.
1.) [Genesis 18:27]- And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes:
2.) [1 Peter 1:24]- For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:
- c.) A sense of our guilt and filthiness.
- d.) A silent submission under the hand of God.
1.) [Romans 9:20]- Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?
2.) [Psalm 39:9]- I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.
3.) [Job 1:21]- And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.
- e.) A magnifying of His mercies towards us in the midst of all His proceedings against us.
- f.) A holy and silent admiration of the ways and counsels of God, as to us unsearchable.
- g.) A forgetting and laying aside before the Lord all our dignity, by which we excel others.
1.) [Luke 18:11]- The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.
2.) [Psalm 30:2]- Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man.
- h.) A submitting readily to the meanest offices requisite in or agreeable to our circumstances.

- 1.) *[Philippians 2:8]-And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*
 - 2.) *[John 13:14]- If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*
- 4.) Use 1: Of exhortation. Let the bent of your heart, then, in all your humbling circumstances, be towards the humbling of your spirit, as under the mighty hand of God.
 - a.) Carefully notice all your humbling circumstances, and overlook none of them.
 - b.) Observe what these circumstances require of you, as suitable to them; bend your endeavors towards it, to bring your spirits into that temper of humiliation, that, as your lot is really low in all these respects, so your spirits may be low too, as under the mighty hand of God.
 - c.) Motive 1: God is certainly at work to humble one and all of us.
 - d.) Motive 2: The humiliation of our spirit will not take effect without our own agency in there: while God is working on us that way, we must work together with Him; for He works on us as rational agents, who, being moved, move themselves.
 - e.) Motive 3: If you do not you resist the mighty hand of God.
 - 1.) The sinfulness; what an evil thing it is.
 - 2.) The folly of it. How unequal is the match!
 - f.) Motive 4: This is the time of humiliation, even the time of this life.
 - 1.) Humiliation of spirit is in the sight of God of great price.
 - 2.) It is no easy thing to humble men's spirits; it is not a little that will do it; it is a work that is not soon done.
 - 3.) The whole time of this life is appointed for humiliation.
 - 4.) There is no humbling after this.
 - g.) Motive 5: This is the way to turn humbling circumstances to a good account; so that, instead of being losers, you would be gainers by them.
 - h.) Motive 6: Consider it is a mighty hand that is at work with us—the hand of the mighty God; let us then bend our spirits towards a compliance with it, and not wrestle against it
 - 1.) We must fall under it. Since the design of it is to bring us down we cannot stand before it; for it cannot miscarry in its designs.
 - 2.) They that are so wise as to fall in humiliation under the mighty hand, be they ever so low, the same hand will raise them up again.
 - 5.) General directions for reaching this humiliation.
 - a.) Fix it in your heart to seek some spiritual improvement of the conduct of Providence towards you.
 - b.) Settle the matter of your eternal salvation in the first place, by going to Christ, and taking God for your God in Him, according to the Gospel-offer.
 - c.) Use the means of soul-humbling in the faith of the promise.
 - 1.) *[Joel 2:13]- And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.*
 - 6.) Particular directions for reaching this humiliation.
 - a.) Assure yourselves that there are no circumstances that you are in so humbling but you may get your heart acceptably brought down to them.
 - 1.) *[1 Corinthians 10:13]- There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

- 2.) *[2 Corinthians 12:9]- And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*
- 3.) *[1 Corinthians 9:10]- Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.*
- b.) Whatever hand is, or is not, in your humbling circumstances, take God for your part, and consider yourselves in there as under His mighty hand.
- c.) Be much in the thoughts of God's infinite greatness; consider His holiness and majesty, to awe you into the deepest humiliation.
- 1.) *[Job 42:6]- Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*
- d.) Make it your habit to silently admit mysteries in the conduct of Providence towards you, which you are not able to comprehend, but will adore.
- 1.) *[Romans 11:33]- O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*
- 2.) *[Job 38:2]- Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?*
- e.) Be much in the thoughts of your own sinfulness.
- 1.) *[Job 40:4]- Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*
- f.) Settle it in your heart that there is need of all the humbling circumstances you are put in.
- 1.) *[1 Peter 1:6]- Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*
- 2.) *[Lamentations 3:33]- For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.*
- 3.) *[Hebrews 12:10]- For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*
- g.) Believe a kind design of Providence in them towards you.
- 1.) *[2 Kings 6:33]- And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?*
- 2.) Case 1: "Oh, if I knew there were a kind design in it, I would willingly bear it, although there were more of it; but I fear a ruining design of Providence against me in it. "
- 3.) Answer: Now, what word of God, or discovery from heaven, have you to ground these fears on?
- h.) Think with yourselves, that this life is the time of trial for heaven.
- 1.) *[James 1:12]- Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*
- 2.) *[James 1:2]- My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*
- 3.) Is it nothing to you to stand a candidate for glory, to be put on trial for heaven?
- 4.) What a vast disproportion is there between your trials and the future glory!
- 5.) What do you think of coming foul off in the trial of your humbling circumstances?

- i.) Think with yourselves, how, by humbling circumstances, the Lord prepares us for heaven.
 - 1.) ***[Colossians 1:12]- Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:***
 - 2.) Will nothing please you but two heavens, one here, another hereafter?
 - 3.) Without being humbled with humbling circumstances in this life you are not capable of heaven.
 - 4.) Our heavens.
 - a.) Of the Bible-heaven, that heaven described in the Old and New Testaments.
 - b.) Of the saints' heaven. *"And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*
 - c.) Of Christ's heaven. *"Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God "*

- j.) Give up at length with your towering hopes from this world, and confine them to the world to come.
 - 1.) ***[Isaiah 57:10]- Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope: thou hast found the life of thine hand; therefore thou wast not grieved.***
 - 2.) ***[Isaiah 9:10]-*** The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.

- 7.) Make use of Christ in all His offices for your humiliation under your humbling circumstances.
 - a.) ***[Zechariah 12:10]- And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.***
 - b.) As a Priest for you.
 - c.) As your Prophet to teach you.
 - d.) As your King.

- e. Doctrine 2: There is a due time in which those that now humble themselves under the mighty hand of God will certainly be lifted up.
 - 1.) Those who shall share of this lifting up must lay their account in the first place, with a casting down.
 - 2.) Being cast down by the mighty hand of God, we must learn to lie still and quiet under it, till the same hand that cast us down raise us up, if we would share of this promised lifting up.
 - 3.) Those who are never humbled in humbling circumstances shall never be lifted up in the way of this promise.
 - 4.) Humility of spirit in humbling circumstances ascertains a lifting up out of them some time, with the good-will and favor of Heaven.
 - 5.) There is an appointed time for the lifting up of those that humble themselves in their humbling circumstances.
 - 6.) It is not to be expected that immediately on one's humbling himself, the lifting up is to follow.
 - 7.) The appointed time for the lifting up is the due time, the time fittest for it, in which it will come most seasonably.
 - 8.) The lifting up of the humble will not fail to come in the appointed and due time.
 - 9.) On lifting up.

- a.) A partial lifting up, competent to the humbled in time during this life. For the partial lifting up. Every time is not fit for it; we are not always fit to receive comfort and ease, or a change of our burdens. God sees there are times in which it is needful for His people to be "*inheaviness*," to have their "*hearts brought down with grief*:" "
- b.) A total lifting up, competent to them at the end of time, at death. When we are sore oppressed with our burdens, we are ready to think, O to be away, and set beyond them all! "*As a servant earnestly desires the shadow, and as an hireling looks for the reward of his work; so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.*" But it may be fitter, for all that, that we stay awhile, and struggle without our burdens. "*Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.*"
- 10.) The nature of God, duly considered,
- a.) Infinite power that can do all things. No circumstances are so low but He can raise them; so entangling and perplexing but He can unravel them; so hopeless but He can remedy them.
- 1.) ***[Genesis 18:14]- Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.***
- 2.) ***[Deuteronomy 32:36]- For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left.***
- b.) Infinite goodness inclining to help. He is good and gracious in His nature. And therefore His power is a spring of comfort to them.
- 1.) ***[I John 4:16]- And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.***
- 2.) ***[Psalm 103:13]- Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.***
- c.) Infinite wisdom that does nothing in vain, and therefore will not needlessly keep one in humbling circumstances.
- 1.) ***[Lamentations 3:32]- But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.***
- 11.) The providence of God duly considered.
- a.) Observe the providence of God in the revolutions of the whole course of nature, day succeeding to the longest night, a summer to the winter, a waxing to a waning of the moon, a flowing to an ebbing of the sea, &c.
- b.) Observe the providence of God in the dispensations of it, about the man Christ, the most noble and august object of it, more valuable than a thousand worlds.
- c.) Observe the providence of God towards the Church in all ages.
- d.) Observe the providence of God in the dispensations of His grace towards His children.
- e.) Observe the providence of God at length throwing down wicked men, however long they stand and prosper,
- 12.) The Word of God duly considered.
- a.) The doctrines of the word; which teach faith and hope for the time, and the happy issue, which the exercise of these graces will have.
- b.) The promises of the word, by which heaven is expressly engaged for a lifting up to those that humble themselves in humbling circumstances:
- c.) The examples of the word sufficiently confirming the truth of the doctrines and promises.

- 13.)The intercession of Christ duly considered.
- a.) Joining the prayers and cries of His humbled people, in their humbling circumstances, insures a lifting up for them at length.
 - b.) Christ's intercession is certainly joined with the cries and prayers of the humbled in their humbling circumstances,
 - c.) Christ is in deep earnest in His intercession for His people in their humbling circumstances.
 - d.) His intercession is always effectual,
- 14.)Objections: If that is the case, what about the promise to lift us up? Where is the lifting up if one may go to the grave under the weight?
- a.) Answer: If there were no life after this, there would perhaps be ground for such an objection. In the other life the promise will be accomplished to those who have been humbled.
 - b.) Question: But then may we not stop praying for the lifting up in that case? No, because we do not know when that is our case.
- 15.)Objection: But people may get a lifting up here in time, yet there is no pledge of a lifting up on the other side. How then shall I know it is a pledge?
- a.) Answer: That lifting up which comes by the promises is certainly a pledge of the full lifting up in the other world.
 - b.) Question: But how shall I know that the lifting up comes by way of the promise?
Answer: That which comes by the way of the promise comes in the low way of humiliation, the high way of faith, or believing the promise, and the long way of waiting hope and patient continuance,
 - 1.) A removal of their humbling circumstances.
 - 2.) A comfortable sight of the acceptance of their prayers, which they put up in their humbling circumstances.
 - 3.) A heart-satisfying answer to their prayers, so that they shall not only get the thing, but see they have it as an answer of prayer.
 - 4.) Full satisfaction' as to the conduct of Providence, in all the steps of the humbling circumstances, and the delay of the lifting up, however perplexing these were before.
 - 5.) They get the lifting up; together with the interest for the time they lay out of it.
 - 6.) The spiritual enemies that flew thick about them in the time of the darkness of the humbling circumstances, these will be scattered at this lifting up in the promise.
- 16.)There are six things, I conceive, belong to this humiliation, preparatory to lifting up.
- a.) A deep sense of sinfulness and unworthiness of being lifting up at all.
 - b.) A resignation to the Divine pleasure as to the time of lifting up.
 - c.) An entire resignation as to the way and manner of bringing it about.
 - d.) Resignation as to the degree of the lifting up, yea, and as to the very being of it in time.
 - e.) The continuing of praying and waiting on me Lord in the case.
 - f.) Mourning under mismanagements in the trial.
- f. Considerations the lifting up as brought about at the end of time, in the other world.
- 1.) The nature of this lifting up.
 - a.) There is a certainty of this lifting up, in all cases of the humbled under humbling circumstances.
 - b.) It will be a perfect lifting up.
 - c.) They will not only be raised out of their low condition, but they will be set up on high; as Joseph, not only brought out of prison, but made ruler over the land of Egypt.
 - d.) It will be a final lifting up, after which there will be no more casting down forever.
 - e.) There will not be the least remaining uneasiness from the humbling circumstances, but, on the contrary, they will have a glorious and desirable effect.

- 2.) The due time of this lifting up.
 - a.) Then is the due time for it, when our work we have to do in this world is over.
 - b.) When that lifting up comes we shall see it is come exactly in the due time; that it was well it was neither sooner nor later; for though heaven is always better than earth, and that it would be better for us, absolutely speaking, to be in heaven than on earth, yet certainly there is a time where it is better for the honour of God and His service that we are on the earth than in heaven.
 - c.) Use 1: Let not then the humble cast away their confidence, whatever their humbling circumstances are; let them assure themselves there will come a lifting up to them at length; if not here, yet to be sure hereafter.
 - d.) Use 2: Let patience have her perfect work. The husbandman waits for the return of his seed, the merchant for the return of his ships, the store-master for what he calls year-time, when he draws in the produce of his flocks.