

Excusing Unrighteousness

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

THE word of God frequently teaches us, that a principal hindrance of our embracing Christ's righteousness, is want of a due sense of our own unrighteousness. There is a stupidity in this, as unaccountable in its nature, as it is dangerous in its effects.

All men are persuaded, that they have broken the precepts of God's law; it might be expected of course, they should be persuaded also, that they have deserved to suffer the penalty of it: but experience makes it evident, that it is otherwise. All men are convinced that they are sinners; but very few are convinced that they deserve to be miserable.

The word of God, which searches the heart, unfolds the secret cause of this. In like manner, men are insensible of their ill deserving; not that they absolutely deny their sins, but that they excuse them: nor is this a new artifice it is as ancient in the world, as sin itself.

It is natural for our affections to bias our judgment; and therefore, when sin has polluted the one, no wonder it should pervert the other. The first man on earth was no sooner accused, than, since he could not deny it, he strove to defend it, and heightened his guilt by a presumptuous attempt to extenuate it. We, his offspring, to this day, do not more resemble him in committing sin, than in excusing it.

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