

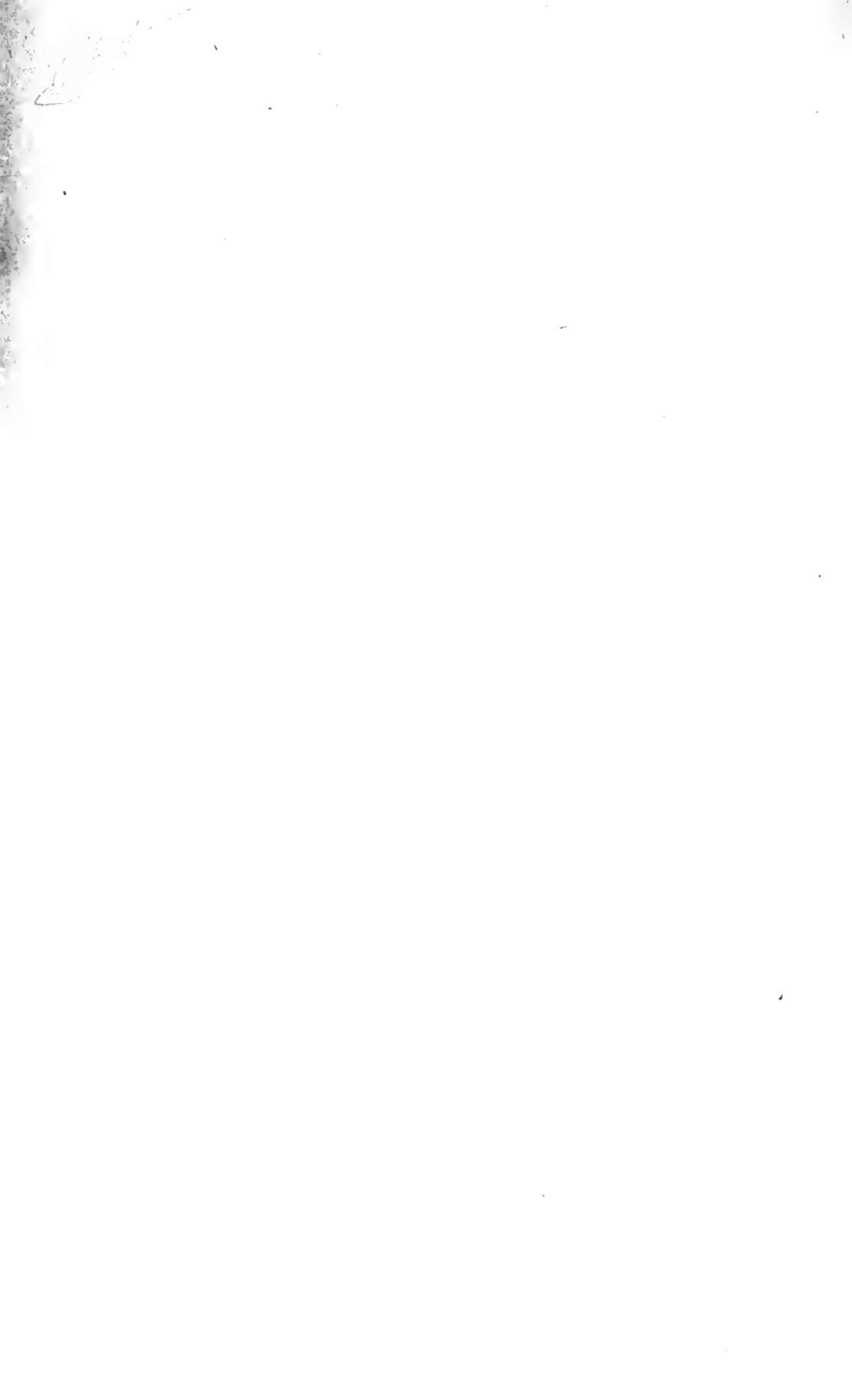
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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Engraved by

H. Robinson

THOMAS WATSON,

FORMERLY MINISTER OF ST STEPHEN'S WALBROOK, LONDON

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A BODY OF

PRACTICAL DIVINITY:

IN A SERIES OF, SERMONS

ON THE

SHORTER CATECHISM

OF THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

TO WHICH IS APPENDED,

also SELECT SERMONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS;

TOGETHER WITH

THE ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT, AND CHRIST'S VARIOUS FULNESS.

BY THOMAS WATSON,

FORMERLY MINISTER AT ST STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK, LONDON.

With Numerous Notes, to be found in this Edition only.

AND A CORRECT AND SPLENDID PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR.

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TO THE READER.

THESE Catechetical Lectures of the late Reverend THOMAS WATSON, (all but one written with his own hand) I have read over, together with some Sermons annexed to them; and since my testimony is desired concerning them, I do hereby declare, that (though I will not undertake to justify every expression or sentence in them, or in any human writing) I find them, in the main, agreeable to the doctrinal articles of this Church, and unto the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith and Catechisms: and I believe, that through the blessing of God, they may be profitable unto the edification of all that read them, with an honest desire to know and do the will of God; for certainly there are many excellent things in them, which, if they meet with a well-disposed, serious mind, are very apt to have a good effect upon it; and if it prove otherwise with any that happen to read this book, it will be their own fault more than the book's. Most writers have different styles; and it is well known that Mr Watson had one peculiar to himself, which yet hath found good acceptance with, and has been useful unto serious people; and I hope this (by reason of the great variety of excellent matter) may be more generally useful than any other thing he ever wrote. I little doubt but every sober Christian will be of this mind, after he has read his lectures on God's attributes, the ten commandments, Lord's prayer, &c. I sincerely profess, I have no other end in giving this testimony of this book, but thereby to serve the common good of Christ's church, and not the private interest of any person or party in the world: if my conscience did not bear me witness, that this book may be useful to that excellent end, no man should ever have prevailed with me, thus to prefix my testimony and name to it. That it may answer the main end for which it was at first written by the author, (whom I always took to be a grave, serious, modest, good man) and for which I hope, it is now published, to wit, the edification of the church of Christ in faith, holiness and comfort, is the hearty desire of one of the meanest servants of our most blessed LORD JESUS.

WILLIAM LORIMER.

WE, whose names are subscribed, having seen the testimony of our worthy brother, Mr William Lorimer, after his perusal of this book, doubt not but it may be of use to many; as the former writings of Mr Thomas Watson have been; and, with that desire and hope, we recommend it to the masters of families and others.

William Bates,
Matthew Barker,
John Howie,
Matthew Mead,
Edward Lawrence,
Samuel Slater,
Richard Mayo,
Matthew Sylvester,
Daniel Burges,

Joseph Cawthorne,
Daniel Williams,
Richard Wavel,
Timothy Cruso,
Timothy Rogers,
Nathaniel Oldfield,
Richard Adams,
Richard Steel,
Samuel Stancliff,

John Raynolds,
Nathaniel Vincent,
John Hughes,
Joseph Read,
Abraham Hume,
Richard Stretton,
John Shower,
Francis Glascock.

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF
THE AUTHOR.

IT is sufficiently known to all that have any acquaintance with the histories of the church, that many valuable and useful ministers were ejected for non-conformity, by the act of uniformity in the reign of King Charles II. which took place, August 24th, 1662. Among others, the Reverend Mr THOMAS WATSON was ejected from his charge, at St Stephen's, Walbrook, London; whose character is given by the Reverend Dr Edmund Calamy, in his abridgements, Vol. II. p. 37; and is as follows:

“From St Stephen's, Walbrook. Mr Thomas Watson; he was of Emanuel College in Cambridge, where he was noted for being a hard student, one so well known in the city, viz. London, for his piety and usefulness, that though he was singled out by the Friendly Debate, he yet carried a general respect from all sober persons along with him to his grave. A memorable passage which I have from good hands, must not be passed by: When Mr Watson was in the pulpit, on a lecture day, before the Bartholomew act took place, among other hearers there came in that reverend and learned Prelate, Bishop Richardson, who was so well pleased with his sermon, but especially with his prayer after it, that he followed him home, to give him thanks, and earnestly desired a copy of his prayer. Alas! said Mr Watson, that is what I cannot give; for I do not use to pen my prayers; it was no studied thing, but uttered as God enabled me from the abundance of my heart and affections, *pro re nata*. Upon which the good Bishop went away, wondering that any man could pray in that manner, *ex tempore*. After his ejection he continued in the exercise of the ministry in the city, as Providence gave opportunity, for many years: but his strength wearing away, he retired into Essex, and there died suddenly, in his closet, at prayer.”

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BODY OF PRACTICAL DIVINITY,

IN A SERIES OF SERMONS ON

THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE TO CATECHISING.

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled.—Col. i. 23.

INTENDING the next Lord's day to enter upon the work of catechising, it will not be amiss to give you this preliminary discourse, as preparative to it; showing you how needful it is for christians to be well instructed in the grounds of religion.

'If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled,'—Two propositions: *First*, It is the duty of christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith. *Second*, The best way for christians to be settled, is to be well grounded.

Doctr. I. That it is the duty of christians to be settled in the doctrine of faith. It is the apostle's prayer, 'the God of all grace, stablish, strengthen, settle you.'¹ That they might not be meteors in the air, but fixed stars. The apostle Jude speaks of 'wandering stars.'² They are called wandering stars, because, as Aristotle saith, 'they do leap up and down, and wander into several parts of the heaven; and being but dry exhalations, not made of that pure celestial matter—as the fixed stars are—they often fall to the earth.' Now, such as are not settled in religion, will, at one time or other, prove wandering stars; they will lose their former strictness, and wander from one opinion to another. Such as are unsettled are of the tribe of Reuben, 'unstable as water,'³ like a ship without ballast overturned with every wind of doctrine. Beza writes of one Belfectius, whose religion changed as the moon. The Arians had every year a new faith. These are not 'pillars' in the temple of God, but 'reeds'

shaken every way. The apostle calls them 'damnable heresies.'⁴ A man may go to hell as well for heresy as adultery. To be unsettled in religion, argues want of judgment; if their heads were not giddy, they would not reel so fast from one opinion to another. It argues lightness: feathers will be blown every way,—so will feathery christians.* Therefore such are compared to children, 'that we be no more children, tossed to and fro.'⁵ Children are fickle, sometimes of one mind, sometimes of another; nothing pleases them long; so unsettled christians are childish; those truths they embrace at one time, they reject at another; sometimes they like the protestant religion, and soon after they have a good mind to turn papists. Now, that you may labour to be settled, as Ignatius, in the faith, in unsettled times of settled judgments:

1st. It is the great end of the word preached, to bring us to a settlement in religion. 'And he gave some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the edifying of the body of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children.'⁶ The word is called 'an hammer.'⁷ Every blow of the hammer is to fasten the nails of the building; the preacher's words are but to fasten you the more to Christ, they weaken themselves to strengthen and settle you. This is the grand design of preaching, not only for the enlightening, but for the establishing of souls, not only to guide them into the right way, but to

¹ 1 Pe. 5. 10. ² Jude 13. ³ Ge. 49. 4.

⁴ 2 Pe. 2. 1. ⁵ Eph. 4. 14. ⁶ Eph. 4. 11, 13. ⁷ Je. 23. 29.

* *Triticum non rapit ventus, inanes paleæ jactantur.*—*Cyp.*

keep them in it. Now, if you be not settled, you do not answer God's end in giving you the ministry.

2d. To be settled in religion is both a christian's excellency and honour. It is his excellency; when the milk is settled it turns to cream; now he will be something zealous for the truth, walk in close communion with God; and his honour, 'the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.'¹ It is one of the best sights, to see an old disciple,—to see silver hairs adorned with golden virtues.

3d. Such as are not settled in the faith can never suffer for it; sceptics in religion will hardly ever prove martyrs; they that are not settled do hang in suspense, when they think of the joys of heaven, then they will espouse the gospel, but when they think of persecution, then they desert it. Unsettled christians do not consult what is best, but what is safest: 'the apostate,' saith Tertullian, 'seems to put God and Satan in balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master; and in this sense, may be said to put Christ to open shame.'² They will never suffer for the truth, but be as a soldier that leaves his colours, and runs over to the enemy's side; he will fight on the devil's side for pay.

4th. Not to be settled in the faith, is highly provoking to God. To espouse the truth, and then to fall away, brings an ill report upon the gospel, which will not go unpunished: 'they turned back, and dealt unfaithfully; when God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.'³ The apostate drops as a windfall into the devil's mouth.

5th. If ye are not settled in religion, you will never grow. We are commanded 'to grow up into the head, even Christ';⁴ but if we are unsettled, no growing: the plant which is continually removing never thrives. He can no more grow in godliness, who is unsettled, than a bone can grow in the body that is out of joint.

6th. What great need there is to be settled; because, indeed, there are so many things to unsettle us, and make us fall away gradually from the truth. Seducers are abroad, whose work is to draw away people from the principles of religion: 'these things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.'⁵ Seducers are the devil's fac-

tors; they are of all others the greatest felons, that would rob you of the truth; seducers have silver tongues; a fair tongue can put off bad wares; they have a slight to deceive.⁶ The Greek word there is taken from those that can cog a die, and cast it for the best advantage; so seducers are impostors,—they can cog a die,—they can so dissemble and sophisticate the truth that they can deceive others.

Now, the style by which seducers use to deceive, is: 1. By wisdom of words: 'By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.'⁷ They have fine elegant phrases, flattering language, whereby they work on the weaker sort, as being christed with Christ, and the light within them. 2. Another slight is a pretence of extraordinary piety, that so people may admire them and suck in their doctrine. They seem to be men of zeal and sanctity, and to be divinely inspired; they pretend revelations, as Munster, Michael Servetus, and others of the Anabaptists in Germany, though they were tainted with pride, lust, and avarice. 3. A third slight or cheat seducers have, is a labouring to vilify and nullify sound orthodox teachers; they would eclipse those that bring the truth, like unto the black vapours that darken the light of heaven; they would defame others, that themselves may be more admired. Thus the false teachers cried down Paul, that they might be received.⁸ 4. The fourth slight or cheat of seducers is, by preaching doctrines of liberty: as the Antinomian preacheth that men are freed from the moral law, the rule as well as the curse. He preacheth that Christ hath done all for them, and they need to do nothing; so he makes the doctrine of free grace a key to open the door to all licentiousness.

7th. Another thing to unsettle christians is persecutors.⁹ The gospel is a rose; it cannot be plucked without prickles. The legacy Christ hath bequeathed is the cross. While there is a devil and a wicked man in the world, never expect a charter of exemption from trouble; and how many fall away in an hour of persecution? 'There appeared a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns: and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven:'¹⁰ the red dragon, the heathenish empire and his tail, namely, his power and subtlety, drew away stars, namely, eminent professors that seemed to shine as stars in the firmament of the church. There-

¹ Pro. 16. 31. ² He. 6. 6. ³ Ps. 78. 57, 59. ⁴ Eph. 4. 15.
⁵ 1st Joh. 2. 26

⁶ Eph. 4. 14. ⁷ Ro. 16. 18. ⁸ Gal. 4. 17. ⁹ 2nd Tim. 2. 12.
¹⁰ Rev. 12. 3, 4

for we see what need there is to be settled in the truth, for fear the tail of the dragon cast us to the earth.

8th. To be unsettled in good is the sin of the devils.¹ They are called 'morning stars,'² but were 'falling stars;'—they were holy, but mutable. As the vessel is overturned with the sail, so their sails, being swelled with pride, were overturned.³ By unsettledness, whom dost thou imitate but lapsed angels? The devil was the first apostate. So much for the first proposition, that it is a great duty of christians to be settled; the sons of Sion should be like mount Sion, which cannot be removed.

Doctr. II. The second proposition is, that the way for christians to be settled, is to be well grounded: 'if ye continue grounded and settled.' The Greek word for grounded, alludes to a building that hath the foundation well laid; so christians should be grounded in the essential points of religion, and have their foundation well laid. Here let me speak of two things: 1. That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals. 2. That this grounding is the best way to settling.

1st. That we should be grounded in the knowledge of fundamentals. The apostle speaks of the 'first principles of the oracles of God.'⁴ In all arts and sciences, logic, physics, mathematics, there are some rules and principles that must necessarily be known to the practice of those arts; so, in divinity, there must be the first principles laid down. The knowledge of the grounds and principles of religion is exceeding useful: 1. Else we cannot serve God aright; we can never worship God acceptably, unless we worship him regularly; and how can we do that, if we are ignorant of the rules and elements of religion? We are bid to give God a 'reasonable service.'⁵ If we understand not the grounds of religion, how can it be a reasonable service? 2. Knowledge of the grounds of religion much enricheth the mind; it is a lamp to our feet; it directs us in the whole course of christianity, as the eye directs the body. Knowledge of fundamentals is the golden key that opens the chief mysteries of religion; it gives us a whole system and body of divinity exactly drawn in all its lineaments and lively colours; it helps us to understand many of those difficult things which do occur in the reading of the word; it helps to untie many scripture-knots. 3. It is armour of proof, and

doth furnish us with weapons to fight against the adversaries of the truth. 4. It is the holy seed of which grace is formed; 'the seed of faith,'⁶ and the root of love, 'being rooted and grounded in love;'⁷ the knowledge of principles conduceth to the making of a complete christian.

2d. That this grounding is the best way to settling: 'grounded and settled.' A tree that it may be well settled, must be well rooted: so, if you would be well settled in religion, you must be rooted in the principles of it. One, in Plutarch, set up a dead man, and he would not stand: 'O,' saith he, 'there must be something within;' so, that we may stand in shaking times, there must be a principle of knowledge within,—first grounded, and then settled. That the ship may be kept from overturning, it must have its anchor fastened; knowledge of principles is to the soul as the anchor to the ship, that holds it steady in the midst of all the rolling waves of error, or the violent winds of persecution. First grounded and then settled.

USE I. See the reason why so many people are unsettled, ready to embrace every novel opinion, and dress themselves in as many religions as they do fashions; it is because they are ungrounded. See how the apostle joins these two together, 'unlearned and unstable;'⁸ such as are unlearned in the main points of divinity, will be unstable. As the body cannot be strong that hath the sinews shrunk; so neither can that christian be strong in religion who wants the grounds of knowledge, which are the sinews to strengthen and stablish him.

USE II. See then what great necessity there is of laying down all the main grounds of religion in a catechetical form, that the weakest judgment may be instructed in the knowledge of the truth, and strengthened in the love of it. Catechising is the best expedient for the grounding and settling of people. I fear, one reason why there hath been no more good done by preaching, hath been because the chief heads and articles in religion have not been explained in a catechetical way. Catechising is the laying the foundation.⁹ To preach, and not to catechise, is to build without a foundation. This way of catechising is not novel, it is apostolical. The primitive church had their forms of catechism: so much those phrases imply, a 'form of sound words,'¹⁰ and 'the first principles of the oracles of God,'¹¹ and since the church had

¹ Jude 6. ² Job. 28. 7. ³ 1 Tim. 3. 6. ⁴ He. 5. 12. ⁵ Ro. 12. 1

⁶ Ps. 9. 10. ⁷ Eph. 3. 17. ⁸ 2 Pe. 3. 16. ⁹ He. 6. 1. ¹⁰ 2 Tim. 1. 13. ¹¹ Heb. 5. 12.

their *catechumenoi*, as Grotius and Erasmus observe, many of the ancient fathers have written for it, Fulgentius, Austin, Theodoret, Lactantius, and others. God hath given great success to it. By this laying down of grounds of religion catechistically, christians have been clearly instructed and wondrously built up in the christian faith; insomuch, that Julian the apostate, seeing the great success of catechising, did put down all schools and places of public literature, and instructing of youth. It

is my design therefore, with the blessing of God, to begin this work of catechising the next sabbath-day; and I intend every other sabbath, in the afternoon, to make it my whole work to lay down the grounds and fundamentals of religion in a catechistical way. If I am hindered in this work by men, or taken away by death, I hope God will raise up some other labourer in the vineyard among you, that may perfect this work which I am now beginning.

MAN'S CHIEF END IS TO GLORIFY GOD.

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Here are two ends of life specified: the glorifying of God, and the enjoying of God.

I. I begin with the glorifying of God. 'That God in all things may be glorified.'¹ The glory of God is a silver thread which must run through all our actions; 'whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'² Every thing works to some end in things natural and artificial; now man being a rational creature, must propose some end to himself, and that is, that he may lift up God in the world; and better lose his life than lose the end of his living; so then, the great truth asserted is this, that the end of every man's living, is to glorify God; this is the yearly rent that is paid to the crown of heaven. Glorifying of God hath respect to all the persons in the Trinity; it respects God the Father, who gave us our life; it respects God the Son, who gave his life for us; it respects God the Holy Ghost, who produceth a new life in us; we must bring glory to the whole Trinity. When we speak of God's glory, the question will be moved.

Q. *What are we to understand by God's glory?*

A. There is a twofold glory: 1. The glory that God hath in himself, his intrinsical glory. Glory is essential to the Godhead, as light is to the sun; he is called the 'God of glory.'³ Glory is the sparkling of the Deity; glory is so co-natural to the Godhead, that God cannot be God without it. The creature's honour is not essential to his being; a king is a man without his regal ornaments, when his crown

and royal robe are taken away, but God's glory is such an essential part of his being, that he cannot be God without it; God's very life lies in his glory. This glory can receive no addition, because it is infinite; this glory is that which God is most tender of, and which he will not part with, 'My glory I will not give to another.'⁴ God will give temporal blessings to his children, such as wisdom, riches, honour; he will give them spiritual blessings, he will give them grace, he will give them his love, he will give them heaven, but his essential glory he will not give to another. King Pharaoh parted with a ring off his finger to Joseph, and a gold chain, but he would not part with his throne, 'only in the throne will I be greater than thou.'⁵ So God will do much for his people; he will give them the inheritance; he will put some of Christ's glory, as mediator, upon them; but his essential glory he will not part with; in the throne he will be greater.

2. The glory which is ascribed to God, or which his creatures labour to bring to him: 'give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name,'⁶ and, 'glorify God in your body and in your spirit.'⁷ The glory we give God, is nothing else but our lifting up his name in the world, and magnifying him in the eyes of others: 'Christ shall be magnified in my body.'⁸

Q. *What is it to glorify God, or wherein doth it consist?*

A. Glorifying of God consists in four things: appreciation, adoration, affection, subjection. This is the yearly rent we pay to the crown of heaven.

¹ Ps. 4. 11. ² 1 Cor. 10. 31. ³ Acts 7. 2.

⁴ Isa. 42. 8. ⁵ Ge. 41. 40. ⁶ 1 Chron. 16. 29. ⁷ 1 Cor. 6. 20.
⁸ Phil. 1. 20

1. *Appreciation.* To glorify God, is to set God highest in our thoughts, to have a venerable esteem of him: 'Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore;' 'Thou art exalted far above all gods.'² There is in God all that may draw forth both wonder and delight; there is in him a constellation of all beauties; he is the original and spring-head of being, who sheds a glory upon the creature. This is to glorify God, when we are God-admirers; we admire God in his attributes, which are the glistering beams by which the divine nature shines forth; we admire him in his promises, which are the charter of free grace, and the spiritual cabinet where the pearl of price is hid; we admire God in the noble effects of his power, and wisdom, namely, the making of the world, this is called the 'work of his fingers,'³ such curious needle-work it was, that none but a God could work. This is to glorify God, to have God-admiring thoughts; we esteem him most excellent, and search for diamonds only in this rock.

2. *Adoration.* Glorifying of God consists in adoration, or worship: 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.'⁴ There is a twofold worship: 1st. A civil reverence we give to persons of honour: 'Abram stood up and bowed himself to the children of Heth.'⁵—Piety is no enemy to courtesy. 2d. A divine worship which we give to God, is his prerogative royal: 'They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces towards the ground.'⁶ This divine worship God is very jealous of; this is the apple of his eye, this is the pearl of his crown, which he guards, as he did the tree of life, with cherubins and a flaming sword, that no man may come near to violate it; divine worship may be such as God himself hath appointed, else it is offering strange fire.⁷ The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle, 'according to the pattern in the Mount';⁸ he must not leave out any thing in the pattern, nor add to it. If God was so exact and curious about the place of his worship, how exact will he be about the matter of his worship? Surely here every thing must be according to the pattern prescribed in his word.

3. *Affection.* This is a part of the glory we give to God. God counts himself glorified when he is loved: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy

soul.'⁹ There is a twofold love: 1st. A love of concupiscence, which is self-love, as when we love another, because he doth us a good turn: thus a wicked man may be said to love God, because he hath given him a good crop, or filled his cup with wine; and, to speak properly, this is rather to love God's blessings than to love God. 2d. A love of delight, as a man takes delight in a friend; this is indeed to love God; the heart is set upon God, as a man's heart is set upon his treasure. And this love is exuberant, not a few drops but a stream; it is superlative; we give God the best of our love, the cream of it, 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.'¹⁰ If the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ must drink of it. It is intense and ardent; true saints are seraphims, burning in holy love to God. The spouse was in fainting fits, 'sick of love.'¹¹ Thus to love God is to glorify him; he who is the chief of our happiness, hath the chief of our affections.

4. *Subjection.* When we dedicate ourselves to God, and stand ready dressed for his service. Thus the angels in heaven glorify him, they wait on his throne, and are ready to take a commission from him; therefore they are represented by the cherubims with their wings displayed, to show how swift the angels are in their obedience. This is to glorify God, when we are devoted to his service, our head studies for God, our tongue pleads for him, our hands relieve his members. The wise men that came to Christ did not only bow the knee to him, but presented him with gold and myrrh,¹² so we must not only bow the knee, give God worship, but bring presents, golden obedience. This is to glorify God, when we stick at no service; we will fight under the banner of his gospel against regiments, and we say to him as David to king Saul, 'Thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.'¹³ Thus you see wherein the glorifying of God doth consist: in appreciation, adoration, affection, subjection.

A good christian is like the sun, which doth not only send forth heat, but goes his circuit round the world. Thus, he who glorifies God, hath not only his affections heated with love to God, but he goes his circuit too; he moves vigorously in the sphere of obedience.

Q. *Why we must glorify God?*

A. 1. Because he gives us our being: 'it is

Ps. 92. 8. ² Ps. 97. 9. Ps. 8. 3. ⁴ Ps. 29. 2. ⁵ Ge. 23. 7.
⁶ No. 8. 6. ⁷ Lc. 10. 2. ⁸ Ex. 25. 40.

⁹ De. 6. 5. ¹⁰ Ca. 8. 2. ¹¹ Ca. 2. 5. ¹² Mat. 2. 11.
¹³ 1 Sa. 17. 32.

he that hath made us.¹ We think it a great kindness in a man to spare our life, but what kindness is it in God to give us our life? We draw our breath from him, and as life, so all the comforts of life are from God; he gives us health, which is the sauce to sweeten our life; he gives us food, which is the oil that nourisheth the lamp of life; now, if all we receive is from the hand of his bounty, is it not good reason we should glorify him, and live to him, seeing we live by him? 'For of him, and through him are all things.'² Of him are all—all we have is of his fullness; through him are all—all we have is through his free grace; and therefore to him should be all; so it follows, 'to him be glory for ever.' God is not only our benefactor, but our founder; the rivers come from the sea, and they empty their silver streams into the sea again.

A. 2. Because God hath made all things for his own glory: 'the Lord hath made all things for himself,'³—that is, 'for his glory.' As a king hath excise out of commodities, God will have his glory out of every thing; he will have glory out of the wicked, the glory of his justice; they will not give him glory, but he will get his glory upon them: 'I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.'⁴ But especially he hath made the godly for his glory; they are the living organs of his praise, 'this people have I formed for myself, and they shall shew forth my praise.'⁵ It is true, they cannot add to his glory, but they may exalt it; they cannot raise him in heaven, but they may raise him in the esteem of others. God hath adopted the saints into his family, and made them a royal priesthood, that they should show forth the praises of him who hath called them.⁶

A. 3. Because the glory of God hath such intrinsic value and excellency in it; it transcends the thoughts of men and the tongues of angels; God's glory is his treasure, all his riches lie here; as Micah said, 'what have I more?'⁷ So of God, what hath God more? God's glory is more worth than heaven, more worth than the salvation of all men's souls; better kingdoms be thrown down, better men and angels be annihilated, than God should lose one jewel of his crown, one beam of his glory.

A. 4. Creatures below us, and above us, bring glory to God; and do we think to sit rent free? Shall everything glorify God, but man? It is a

pity then that ever man was made. Creatures below us glorify God, the inanimate creatures, the heavens glorify God: 'The heavens declare the glory of God.'⁸ The curious workmanship of heaven sets forth the glory of its Maker; the firmament is beautified and penciled out in blue and azure colours, where the power and wisdom of God may be clearly seen; the heavens declare his glory; we may see the glory of God blazing in the sun, and twinkling in the stars. Look into the air; the birds, with their chirping music, sing hymns of praise to God, saith Anselm, every beast doth in its kind glorify him, 'The beast of the field shall honour me.'⁹ Creatures above us glorify God; 'the angels are ministering spirits,'¹⁰ they are still waiting on God's throne, and bring some revenues of glory into the exchequer of heaven. Then surely man should be much more studious of God's glory than the angels; for God hath honoured him more than the angels, in that Christ took man's nature upon him, and not the angels': although, in regard of creation, God hath made man 'a little lower than the angels,'¹¹ yet, in regard of redemption, God hath set him higher than the angels, he hath married mankind to himself: the angels are Christ's friends, but not his spouse, he hath covered us with the purple robe of his righteousness, which is a better righteousness than the angels have.¹² So that if the angels bring glory to God, much more should we, being dignified with honour above the angelical spirits.

A. 5. We must bring glory to God, because all our hopes hang upon him, 'My hope is in thee.'¹³ And 'My expectation is from him';¹⁴ I expect a kingdom from him. A child that is good-natured will honour his parent, as expecting all that ever he is like to be worth from him, 'all my springs are in thee';¹⁵ the silver springs of grace, the golden springs of glory.

Q. *How many ways may we glorify God?*

A. 1. It is a glorifying God, when we aim purely at God's glory; it is one thing to advance God's glory, another thing to aim at it. God must be the ultimate end of all our actions. Thus Christ, 'I seek not mine own glory, but the glory of him that sent me.'¹⁶ It is the note of an hypocrite, he hath a squint eye, he looks more to his own glory than God's glory. Our Saviour deceivers such, and gives a caveat against them, 'when thou givest alms, do not

¹ Ps. 100. 3. ² Ro. 11. 36. ³ Pro. 16. 4. ⁴ Ex. 14. 17.
⁶ 1. a. 43. 21. ⁶ 1 Pe. 2. 9. ⁷ Judges 18. 24.

⁸ Ps. 19. 1. ⁹ Isa. 43. 20. ¹⁰ He. 1. 14. ¹¹ He. 2. 7.
¹² 2 Cor. 5. 21. ¹³ Ps. 39. 7. ¹⁴ Ps. 62. 5. ¹⁵ Ps. 87. 7.
¹⁶ John 8. 50. ¹⁷ Mat. 6. 2.

sound a trumpet.' A stranger would ask, what means the noise of this trumpet. Then it was answered, they are going to give to the poor. And so they did not give alms, but sell them for honour and applause, that they might have glory of men; the breath of men was the wind that blew the sails of their charity, 'verily they have their reward.' The hypocrite may make his acquittance and write, received in full payment. Chrysostom calls vainglory one of the devil's great nets to catch men. And Cyprian says, whom Satan cannot prevail against by intemperance, those he prevails against by pride and vainglory. O let us take heed of self-woshipping! aim purely at God's glory.

Q. How shall we know that we aim at God's glory?

A. 1. When we prefer God's glory above all other things; above credit, estate, relations; when the glory of God comes in competition with them, we prefer his glory before them. If relations lie in our way to heaven, we must either leap over them, or tread upon them; a child must unchild himself, and forget he is a child; he must know neither father nor mother in God's cause. 'Who said unto his father and mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren.'¹ This is to aim at God's glory.

Then we aim at God's glory, when we can be content that God's will should take place, though it cross ours. Lord, I am content to be a loser, if thou be a gainer; to have less health, if I may have more grace, and thou more glory; whether it be food or bitter physic thou givest me, Lord I desire that which may be most for thy glory. Thus our blessed Saviour, 'not as I will, but as thou wilt';² so God might have more glory by his sufferings, he was content to suffer, 'Father, glorify thy name.'³

Then we aim at God's glory, when we can be content to be outshined by others in gifts and esteem, so God's glory may be increased. A man that hath God in his heart, and God's glory in his eye, desires that God should be exalted; and if this be effected, let who will be the instrument, he rejoiceth, 'some preach Christ of envy: notwithstanding Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.'⁴ They preached Christ of envy, they envied Paul that concourse of people, and they preached that they might outshine him in gifts, and get away some of his hearers: well,

saith Paul, Christ is preached, and God is like to have glory, therefore I rejoice; let my candle go out, if the Sun of Righteousness may but shine.

A. 2. We glorify God by an ingenuous confession of sin. The thief on the cross had dishonoured God in his life, but at his death he brings glory to God by confession of sin, 'we indeed suffer justly.'⁵ He acknowledged he deserved not only crucifixion, but damnation, 'My son, give, I pray thee, glory to God, and make confession unto him.'⁶ An humble confession exalts God. How is God's free grace magnified in crowning those who deserve to be condemned; as the excusing and mincing of sin doth cast a reproach upon God! Adam denies not he did taste the forbidden fruit, but, instead of a full confession, he taxes God, 'the woman whom thou gavest me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'⁷ It is long of thee, if thou hadst not given me the woman to be a tempter, I had not sinned. So confession glorifies God; it clears, it acknowledgeth he is holy and righteous whatever he doth. Nehemiah vindicates God's righteousness, 'thou art just in all that is brought upon us.'⁸ A confession then is ingenuous, when it is free, not forced, 'I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.'⁹ He chargeth himself with sin, before ever his father charged him with it.

A. 3. We glorify God by believing, Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God.¹⁰ Unbelief affronts God, it gives him the lie; 'he that believeth not, maketh God a liar.'¹¹ 'So faith brings glory to God, 'it sets to its seal that God is true.'¹² He that believes, flies to God's mercy and truth, as to an altar of refuge; he doth ingarrison himself in the promises, he trusts all he hath with God, 'into thy hands I commit my spirit.'¹³ This is a great way of bringing glory to God, therefore God honours faith, because faith honours God. It is a great honour we do to a man, when we trust him with all we have, we put our lives and estates into his hand, a sign we have a good opinion of him. The three children glorified God by believing, 'the God whom we serve is able to deliver us, and will deliver us.'¹⁴ Faith knows there are no impossibilities with God, and will trust him where it cannot trace him.

A. 4. We glorify God, by being tender of his glory. God's glory is dear to him as the

¹ Lu. 23. 41. ⁵ Jos. 7. 19. ⁷ Ge. 3. 12. ⁸ Nu. 9. 33.
² Lu. 15. 18. ¹⁰ Ro. 4. 20. ¹¹ 1 Jno. 5. 10. ¹² Jno. 3. 23.
³ Jno. 12. 28. ¹³ Ps. 31. 5 ¹⁴ Da. 3. 17.

¹ De. 33. 9. ² Mat. 26. 39. ³ Jno. 12. 28. ⁴ Phil. 1. 15.

apple of his eye. Now, when we are tender of his glory, by laying to heart his dishonours, this is a glorifying of him. An ingenuous child weeps to see a disgrace done to his father, 'The reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me.'¹ When we hear God reproached, it is as if we were reproached; when his glory suffers, it is as if we suffered. This is to be tender of God's glory.

A. 5. We glorify God by fruitfulness, 'Hereby is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.'² As it is a dishonour to God to be barren, so fruitfulness doth honour him, 'filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory.'³ We must not be like the fig-tree in the gospel, which had nothing but leaves, but like the pome-citron, that is continually either mellowing or blossoming; it is never without fruit. It is not profession, but fruit glorifies God; God expects to have his glory from us this way, 'Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit of it?'⁴ Trees in the forest may be barren, but trees in the garden are fruitful; we must bring forth the fruits of love and good works. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'⁵ Faith doth sanctify our works, and works do testify our faith; to be doing good to others, to be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, doth much glorify God, and thus Christ did glorify his Father; 'he went about doing good.'⁶ By being fruitful we are fair in God's eyes, 'The Lord called thy name a green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit,'⁷ and we must bear much fruit; it is muchness of fruit glorifies God, 'if ye bear much fruit.' The spouse's breasts are compared to clusters of grapes,⁸ to show how fertile she was. Though the lowest degree of grace may bring salvation to you, yet not so much glory to God; it was not a spark of love Christ commended in Mary, but much love, 'she loved much.'⁹

A. 6. We glorify God, by being contented in that state where his providence hath set us. We give God the glory of his wisdom, in that we rest satisfied with what he carves out to us. Thus did holy Paul glorify God; the Lord did cast him into as great variety of conditions as any man, 'in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft,'¹⁰ yet he had learned to be content. St

Paul could sail either in a storm or a calm, he could be any thing that God would have him, he could either want or abound.¹¹ A good Christian argues thus: it is God that hath put me in this condition, he could have raised me higher, if he pleased, but that might have been a snare to me; God hath done it in wisdom and love, therefore I will sit down satisfied with my condition. Surely this doth much glorify God! God counts himself much honoured with such a christian: God saith, here is one after my own heart, let me do what I will with him, I hear no murmuring, he is content: this shows abundance of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to be content, but when grace is conflicting with inconveniences, then to be content, is a glorious thing, indeed; for one to be content when he is in heaven, is no wonder, but to be content under the cross, is like a Christian. This man must needs bring glory to God, for he shows to all the world, that though he hath little meal in his barrel, yet he hath enough in God to make him content; he saith, as David, 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance; the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places.'¹²

A. 7. We glorify God in working out our own salvation. God hath twisted these two together, his glory, and our good. We glorify him, by promoting our own salvation. It is a glory to God to have multitudes of converts: now, his design of free grace takes, and God hath the glory of his mercy; so that, while we are endeavouring our salvation, we are honouring God. What an encouragement is this to the service of God, to think, while I am hearing and praying, I am glorifying him; while I am furthering my own glory in heaven, I am increasing God's glory! Would it not be an encouragement to a subject, to hear his prince say to him, 'You will honour and please me very much, if you will go to yonder mine of gold, and dig out as much gold for yourself as you can carry away?' So, for God to say, 'Go to the ordinances, get as much grace as you can, dig out as much salvation as you can; and the more happiness you have, the more I shall count myself glorified.'

A. 8. We glorify God, by living to him, 'that they which live, should not live to themselves, but unto him who died for them.'¹³ 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord.'¹⁴ The mammonist lives to his money, the epicure lives

¹ Ps. 69. 9. ² Jno. 15. 8. ³ Phil. 1. 11. ⁴ 1 Cor. 9. 7.
⁵ Mat. 5. 16. ⁶ Acts 10. 38. ⁷ Je. 11. 16. ⁸ Ca. 7. 7.
⁹ Lu. 7. 47. ¹⁰ 2 Co. 11. 23.

¹¹ Phil. 4. 12. ¹² Ps. 16. 5. ¹³ 2 Co. 5. 15. ¹⁴ Ro. 14. 8

to his belly, the design of a sinner's life is to gratify lust; but then we glorify God, when we live to him.

Q. What is it to live to God?

A. When we live to his service, and lay out ourselves wholly for him. The Lord hath sent us into the world, as a merchant sends his factor beyond the seas to trade for him; then we live to God, when we trade for his interest, and propagate his gospel. God hath given every man a talent. Now, when he doth not hide it in a napkin, but improves it for God, this is to live to God. When a master in a family, by counsel and good example, labours to bring his servants to Christ, when a minister doth exhaust himself in the labours of his holy calling, when he spends himself, and is spent, that he may win souls to Christ, and make the crown flourish upon Christ's head; when the magistrate doth not wear the sword in vain, but labours to cut down sin, and suppress vice,—this is to live to God, and this is a glorifying of God: 'That Christ might be magnified, whether by life or by death.'¹ Three wishes St Paul had, and they were all about Christ, that he might be found in Christ, be with Christ, and that he might magnify Christ.

A. 9. We glorify God by walking cheerfully. It is a glory to God, when the world sees a christian hath that within him that can make him cheerful in the worst times; he can, with the nightingale, sing with a thorn at his breast. The people of God have ground of cheerfulness; they are justified, and instated into adoption; and this creates inward peace; it makes music within, whatever storms are without.² If we consider what Christ hath wrought for us by his blood, and wrought in us by his Spirit, it is a ground of great cheerfulness, and this cheerfulness glorifies God. It reflects upon a master when the servant is always drooping and sad, sure he is kept to hard commons, his master doth not give him what is fitting; so, when God's people hang their harps on willows, sure they did not serve a good master, repent of their choice; this reflects dishonour on God. As the gross sins of the wicked bring a scandal on the gospel, so do the uncheerful lives of the godly, 'serve the Lord with gladness.'³ Your serving him doth not glorify him, unless it be with gladness. A christian's cheerful looks glorify God; religion doth not take away our joy, but refine and clarify it; it doth not break our viol, but tunes it, and makes the music sweeter.

A. 10. We glorify God, by standing up for his truths. Much of God's glory lies in his truth. God hath intrusted us with his truth, as a master intrusts his servant with his purse to keep. We have not a richer jewel to trust God with, than our souls; nor God hath not a richer jewel to trust us with, than his truth. Truth is a beam that shines from God, much of his glory lies in his truth; now when we are advocates for truth, this is to glorify God; so Athanasius, the bulwark of truth. 'That ye should contend earnestly for the faith,'⁴ namely, the doctrine of faith. The Greek word *to contend*, signifies a great contending, as one would contend for his land, and not suffer his right to be taken from him; so we should contend for the truth. Were there more of this holy contention, God would have more glory. Some can contend earnestly for trifles and ceremonies, but not for the truth; we should count him indiscreet, that would contend more for a picture, than for his land of inheritance, for a box of counters, than for his box of evidences.

A. 11. We glorify God, by praising him. Doxology, or praise, is a God-exalting work; 'whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.'⁵ The Hebrew word *bara*, to create, and *barak*, to praise, are little different, because the end of creation is to praise God. David was called 'the sweet singer of Israel,' and his praising God, was called a glorifying of God, 'I will praise thee, O Lord, my God, and I will glorify thy name.'⁶ Though nothing can add to God's essential glory, yet praise exalts him in the eyes of others. When we praise God, we spread his fame and renown, we display the trophies of his excellency. In this manner the angels glorify God; they are the choristers of heaven, and do trumpet forth his praise. And praising of God is one of the highest and purest acts of religion; in prayer we act like men; in praise we act like angels; this is a high degree of glorifying God. Believers are called 'temples of God'⁷ When our tongues praise God, then the organs in God's spiritual temple are going. How sad is it, that God hath no more of his glory from us this way! Many are full of murmurings and discontents, but seldom do they bring glory to God, by giving him the praise due to his name. We read of the saints having harps in their hands,⁸ the emblems of praise: many have tears in their eyes, and complaints in their mouth, but few have harps in their hand,

¹ Phil. 1. 20. ² 2 Co. 1. 4. ³ 1 Th. 1. 6 ⁴ Ps. 100. 2

Jude 3. ⁵ Ps. 50. 23. ⁶ Ps. 86. 12. ⁷ 1 Co. 3. 16. ⁸ Rev. 5. 8

blessing and glorifying God Let us honour God this way. Praise is the quitrent we pay to God; while God renews our lease, we must renew our rent.

A. 12. We glorify God, by being zealous for his name: 'Phinehas hath turned my wrath away, while he was zealous for my sake.'¹ Zeal is a mixed affection, a compound of love and anger, it carries forth our love to God, and anger against sin in a most intense manner; zeal is impatient of God's dishonour: a christian fired with it, takes a dishonour done to God worse than an injury done to himself, 'thou canst not bear them that are evil.'² Our Saviour Christ did thus glorify his Father; he, being baptized with a spirit of zeal, drove the money-changers out of the temple, 'the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.'³

A. 13. We glorify God, when we have an eye at God, both in our natural and in our civil actions: 1. In our natural actions, in eating and drinking, 'whether therefore ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God.'⁴ A gracious person holds the golden bridle of temperance; he takes his meat as a medicine to heal the decays of nature, and that he may be the fitter, by the strength he receives, for the service of God; he makes his food, not fuel for lust, but help to duty. 2. In buying and selling, we do all to the glory of God. The wicked live upon unjust gain, by falsifying the balances, 'the balances of deceit are in his hands.'⁵ While men make their weights lighter, they make their sins heavier; or, by exacting more than the commodity is worth, they do not for fourseore write down fifty, but for fifty, fourseore; they exact double the price that a thing is worth. But when we buy and sell to the glory of God, when in our buying and selling, we observe that golden maxim, 'to do to others, as we would have them to do to us.'⁶ When we do sell our commodities, that we do not sell our conscience, 'Herein do I exerceise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.'⁷ This is to glorify God, when we have an eye to him in all our civil and natural actions, and will do nothing that may reflect any blemish on religion.

A. 14. We glorify God, by labouring to draw others to him. We convert others, and so make them instruments of glorifying God. We should be both diamonds and loadstones; dia-

monds for the lustre of grace, and loadstones for our attractive virtue in drawing others to Christ; 'My little children, of whom I travail,' &c.⁸ This is a great way of glorifying God, when we break the devil's prison, and turn men from the power of Satan to God.

A. 15. We glorify God in a high manner, when we suffer for him, and seal the gospel with our blood: 'when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not: this spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.'⁹ God's glory shines in the ashes of his martyrs, 'wherefore glorify the Lord in the fires.'¹⁰ Micaiah was in the prison, Isaiah was sawn asunder, Paul beheaded, Luke hanged on an olive-tree: thus did they by their death glorify God. The sufferings of the primitive saints did honour God, and make the gospel famous in the world. What would others say? See what a good master they serve, and how they love him, that they will venture the loss of all in his service. The glory of Christ's kingdom doth not stand in worldly pomp and grandeur, as other kings; but it is seen in the cheerful sufferings of his people. The saints of old 'loved not their lives to the death.'¹¹ They snatched up torments as so many crowns. God grant we may thus glorify him, if he calls us to it. Many pray, 'let this eup pass away,' but not 'thy will be done.'

A. 16. We glorify God, when we give God the glory of all we do. Herod when he had made an oration, and the people gave a shout, saying, 'it is the voice of a god, and not of a man;' he took this glory to himself, the text saith, 'and immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms.'¹² Then we glorify God, when we sacrifice the praise and glory of all to him, 'I laboured more abundantly than they all,'¹³—a speech, one would think, savoured of pride, but the apostle pulls the crown from his own head, and sets it upon the head of free grace, 'yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' As Joab, when he fought against Rabbah, sent for king David, that he might carry away the crown of the victory,¹⁴ so a christian when he hath gotten power over any corruption or temptation, sends for Christ, that he may carry away the crown of the victory. As the silk-worm, when she weaves her curious work, she hides herself under the silk, and is not seen;

¹ Nu. 25. 11. ² Re. 2. 2. ³ Jno. 2. 14, 17. ⁴ 1 Co. 10. 31. ⁵ Ho. 12. 7. ⁶ Mat. 7. 12. ⁷ Acts 24. 16.

⁸ Ga. 4. 19. ⁹ Jno. 21. 18, 19. ¹⁰ Isa. 24. 15. ¹¹ Re. 12. 11. ¹² Acts 12. 23. ¹³ 1 Co. 15. 10. ¹⁴ 2 Sa. 12. 28

so when we have done any thing praiseworthy, we must hide ourselves under the veil of humility, and transfer the glory of all we have done to God. Constantine did use to write the name of Christ over his door, so should we write the name of Christ over our duties; let him wear the garland of praise.

A. 17. We glorify God by a holy life; as a bad life doth dishonour God; 'Ye are a holy nation, that ye should shew forth the praises of him that hath called you;' 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.'² Epiphanius saith, 'that the looseness of some christians, in his time, made many of the heathens shun the company of the christians, and would not be drawn to hear their sermons.' So, by our exact bible-conversation we glorify God. Though the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet our light must so shine that others may behold it; the chief of a building is the foundation, yet the glory of it is in the frontispiece; so is beauty in the conversation: when the saints, who are called jewels, cast a sparkling lustre of holiness in the eyes of the world, when they 'walk as Christ walked;' when they live as if they had seen the Lord with bodily eyes, and been with him upon the mount, then they adorn religion, and bring revenues of glory to the crown of heaven.

USE 1. It shows us what should not be our chief end: not to get great estates, not to lay up treasures upon earth, this is the degeneracy of mankind since the fall; their great design is to compass the earth and grow rich, and thus they make their chief end; those never think of glorifying God, they trade for the world, but are not factors for heaven: 'madness is in their heart while they live.'³ Sometimes they never arrive at an estate, they do not get the venison they hunt for, or, though they do, what have they? that which will not fill the heart, no more than the mariner's breath will fill the sails of a ship, like a fair picture drawn on the ice! So they spend their time, as Israel, in gathering straw, but remember not the end of living to glorify God: 'what profit hath he that laboureth for the wind?'⁴ And these things are soon gone.

USE 2. It reproves such—1. As bring no glory to God. They do not answer the end of their creation, their time is not true lived, but time lost; they are like the wood of the vine.⁵ their lives are, as St Bernard speaks, 'either

sinfulness or barrenness. An useless burden on the earth.' God will one day ask such a question as king Ahasuerus did, 'What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai?' So will the Lord say, 'What honour hath been done to me? What revenues of glory have you brought into my exchequer?' There is none of you here present but God hath put in some capacity of glorifying him; the health he hath given you, the parts, estate, seasons of grace, these all are opportunities put into your hand to glorify him; and, be assured, God will call you to account, to know what you have done with the mercies he hath intrusted to you, what glory you have brought to him. The parable of the talents,⁶ where the men with the five talents, and the two talents, are brought to a reckoning, doth evidently show that God will call you to a strict account, to know how you have traded with your talents, and what glory you have brought to him. Now, how sad will it be with them who hide their talents in a napkin, that bring God no glory at all? 'Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.'⁷ It is not enough for you to say, that you have not dishonoured God, you have not lived in gross sin; but what good have you done? what glory have you brought to God? It is not enough for the servant of the vineyard, that he do no hurt in the vineyard, that he do not break the trees, or destroy the hedges, if he doth not do service in the vineyard, he loseth his pay; if you do not good in your place, do not glorify God, you will lose your pay, miss of salvation. Oh think of this, all you that live unserviceably! Christ cursed the barren fig-tree. 2. It reproves such as are so far from bringing glory to God, that they rob him of his glory, 'Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me.'⁸ They rob God, who take the glory due to God to themselves: if they have gotten an estate, they ascribe all to their own wit and industry, they set the crown upon their own head, not considering that, 'thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.'⁹ If they do any duty of religion, they look squint to their own glory, 'that they may be seen of men,'¹⁰ that they may be set upon a theatre that others may admire and canonize them. The oil of vainglory feeds their lamp. How many hath the wind of popular breath blown to hell! Whom the devil could not

¹ 1 Pet. 2. 9. ² Ro. 2. 21 ³ 1 Jno. 2. 6. ⁴ Ec. 9. 3.
⁵ Ec. 5. 16. ⁶ Ez. 15. 2, 5

⁷ Es. 6. 3. ⁸ Ma. 25. 15. ⁹ Ma. 25. 30
¹⁰ 1 Pe. 2. 18. ¹¹ 1 Co. 5. 6.

destroy by intemperance, he hath by vainglory. It reproveth them who fight against God's glory: 'lest ye be found to fight against God.'¹ But who do fight against God's glory? Such as do oppose that whereby God's glory is promoted. God's glory is much promoted in the preaching of the word, because it is his engine whereby he converts souls. Now, such as would hinder the preaching of the word, these fight against God's glory, 'forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved.'² Dioclesian, who raised the 10th persecution against the christians, did prohibit church-meetings, and would have the temples of the christians to be razed down. Such as hinder preaching do as the Philistines that stopped the wells, they stop the well of the water of life, they take away the physicians that should heal sick souls. Ministers are lights,³ and who but thieves hate the light? these persons do directly strike at God's glory; and what an account will they have to give to God, when he shall charge the blood of men's souls upon them? 'Ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.'⁴ If there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, they shall not go unpunished.

USE 3. Exhortation. Let us every one, in our place, make this our chief end and design, to glorify God: let me speak to magistrates; God hath put much glory upon them, 'I have said ye are gods';⁵ and will they not glorify him whom he hath put so much glory upon? Magistrates should be zealous for God's worship and day; they should not let the sword rust in the scabbard, but draw it out for the cutting down of sin. Ministers, how should they study to promote God's glory! God hath intrusted them with two of the most precious things, his truths, and the souls of his people. Ministers are, by virtue of their office, to glorify God: they must glorify God by labouring in the word and doctrine: 'I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead: preach the word, be instant in season, out of season,' &c.⁶ It was Augustine's wish, 'that Christ, at his coming, might find him either praying or preaching.' Ministers must glorify God by their zeal and sanctity. The priests under the law, before they served at the altar, did wash in the laver; such as serve in the Lord's house, must first be washed from

gross sin in the laver of repentance. It is matter of grief and shame, to think how many, who call themselves ministers, do, instead of apparently bringing glory to God, dishonour God.⁷ Their lives, as well as doctrines, are heterodox, they are not free from the sins which they reprove in others. Plutarch's servant upbraided him, 'It is not as my master Plutarch saith; he hath written a book against wrath and anger, yet he falls into a passion of anger with me;' so this minister preacheth against drunkenness, yet he will be drunk; he preacheth against swearing, yet he will swear; this reproacheth God, and makes the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. Masters of families, do ye glorify God, season your children and servants with the knowledge of the Lord; your houses should be little churches: 'I know that Abraham will command his children that they may keep the way of the Lord.'⁸ You that are masters, know you have a charge of souls under you; for want of the bridle of family discipline, youth runs wild. Well, let me lay down some motives to glorify God.

1. *Mot.* It will be a great comfort in a dying hour to think we have glorified God in our lives. It was Christ's comfort before his death: 'I have glorified thee on the earth.'⁹ At the hour of death, all your earthly comforts will vanish. If you think how rich you have been, what pleasures you have had on earth, this will be so far from comforting you, that it will but torment you the more. What is one the better for an estate that is spent? But now, to have conscience telling you that you have glorified God on earth, what sweet comfort and peace will this let in to your soul! How will this make you long for death! The servant that hath been all day working in the vineyard, longs till evening comes when he shall receive his pay. They who have lived, and brought no glory to God, how can they think of dying with comfort? They cannot expect an harvest, that never sowed any seed. How can they expect glory from God, that never brought any glory to him? O in what horror will they be at death! the worm of conscience will gnaw their souls, before the worms are gnawing their bodies.

2. *Mot.* If we glorify God, he will glorify our souls for ever; by raising his glory, we increase our own; by glorifying him, we come at last to the blessed enjoying of him. And that brings me to the second division, 'the enjoying of God.'

II. Man's chief end is to enjoy God for ever,

¹ Acts 5. 39. ² 1 Th. 2. 16 ³ Mat. 5. 14. ⁴ Lu. 11. 52.
⁵ Ps. 82. 6. ⁶ 2 Tim. 4. 1.

⁷ 2 Ch. 11. 15. ⁸ Ge. 18. 19. ⁹ Jno. 17. 4.

‘whom have I in heaven but thee?’¹ that is, what is there in heaven I desire to enjoy but thee? There is a twofold fruition or enjoying of God; the one is in this life, the other in the life to come.

1st. An enjoying of God here in this life: the enjoying of God’s presence; it is a great matter to enjoy God’s ordinances (a mercy that some do envy us), but to enjoy God’s presence in the ordinances, is that which a gracious heart aspires after, ‘to see thy glory so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.’² This sweet enjoying of God, is, when we feel his Spirit co-operating with the ordinance, and distilling grace upon our hearts; when in word the Spirit doth quicken and raise the affections, ‘did not our hearts burn within us?’³ When the Spirit doth transform the heart, leaving an impress of holiness upon it, ‘we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.’⁴ When the Spirit doth revive the heart with comfort, it comes not only with its anointing, but its seal; it sheds God’s love abroad in the heart.⁵ This is to enjoy God in an ordinance, ‘our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’⁶ In the word, we hear God’s voice, and in the sacrament we have his kiss; this is enjoying of God, and what infinite content doth a gracious soul find in this! The heart being warmed and inflamed in a duty, this is God’s answering by fire. When a christian hath the sweet illapses of God’s Spirit, these are the first-fruits of glory, when God comes down to the soul in an ordinance; now, Christ hath pulled off his veil, and showed his smiling face; now, he hath led a believer into the banqueting-house, and given him of the ‘spiced wine’ of his love to drink; he hath put in his finger at the hole of the door; he hath touched the heart, and made it leap for joy. O how sweet is it thus to enjoy God! The godly have, in the use of the ordinances, had such divine raptures of joy, and soul-transfigurations, that they have been carried above the world, and despised all things here below.

USE 1. Is the enjoying of God in this life so sweet? How prodigiously wicked are they that prefer the enjoying of their lusts, before the enjoying of God! ‘The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life,’⁷ is the trinity they worship. Lust is an inordinate desire or impulse, provoking the soul to that which is evil. There

is the revengeful lust, and the wanton lust. Lust is like a feverish heat, it puts the soul into a flame. Aristotle calls sensual lusts brutish, because, when any lust is violent, reason or conscience cannot be heard, the beast rides the man. These lusts, when they are enjoyed, do besot and dispirit persons, ‘whoredom and wine take away the heart,’⁸ they have no heart for any thing that is good. How many make it their chief end not to enjoy God, but to enjoy their lusts! As that cardinal said, ‘let him but keep his cardinalship of Paris, and he was content to lose his part in paradise.’ Lust first bewitcheth with pleasure, and then comes the fatal dart, ‘till a dart strike through his liver.’⁹ This should be as a flaming sword to stop men in the way of their carnal delights. Who would for a drop of pleasure drink a sea of wrath?

USE 2. Let it be our great care to enjoy God’s sweet presence here, which is the beauty and comfort of the ordinances. Enjoying spiritual communion with God, is a riddle and mystery to most people: every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the king. We may approach to God in ordinances, and, as it were, hang about the court of heaven, yet not enjoy communion with God; we may have the letter without the spirit, the visible sign without the invisible grace; it is the enjoying of God in a duty we should chiefly look at, ‘my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.’¹⁰ Alas! what are all our worldly enjoyments without the enjoying of God? What is it to enjoy a great deal of health, a brave estate, and not to enjoy God? ‘I went mourning without the sun.’¹¹ So mayest thou say in the enjoyment of all creatures without God, ‘I went mourning without the sun.’ I have the starlight of outward enjoyments, but I cannot enjoy God, I want the Sun of Righteousness. ‘I went mourning without the sun.’ This should be our great design, not only to have the ordinances of God, but the God of the ordinances. The enjoying of God’s sweet presence with us here, is the most contented life: he is an hive of sweetness, a magazine of riches, a fountain of delight.¹² The higher the lark flies, the sweeter it sings; and the higher we fly by the wing of faith, the more of God we enjoy, the sweeter delight we feel in our souls. How is the heart inflamed in prayer and meditation! What joy and peace in believing! Is it not comfortable being in

¹ Ps. 73. 25. ² Ps. 63. 2. ³ Lu. 21. 32. ⁴ 2 Co. 3. 18.
⁵ Ro. 5. 5. ⁶ 1 Jno. 1. 3. ⁷ 1 Jno. 2. 16

⁸ Ho. 4. 11. ⁹ Pr. 7. 23. ¹⁰ Ps. 42. 2. ¹¹ Job 30. 28
¹² Ps. 36. 8, 9.

heaven? He that enjoys much of God in this life, carries heaven about him. O let this be the thing we are chiefly ambitious of, the enjoying of God in his ordinances; remember, the enjoying of God's sweet presence here is an earnest of our enjoying him in heaven. And that brings us to the second thing, namely, 2d. The enjoying of God in the life to come: man's chief end is to enjoy God for ever. Before this plenary fruition of God in heaven, there must be something previous and antecedent; and that is, our being in a state of grace. We must have conformity to him in grace, before we can have communion with him in glory; grace and glory are linked and chained together; grace precedes glory, as the morning-star ushers in the sun. God will have us qualified and fitted for a state of blessedness. Drunkards and swearers are not fit to enjoy God in glory; the Lord will not lay such vipers in his bosom; only 'the pure in heart shall see God;' we must first be, as the king's daughter, glorious within, before we are clothed with the robes of glory. As king Ahasuerus first caused the virgins to be purified and anointed, and they had their sweet odours to perfume them, and then they went to stand before the king,¹ so must we; we must have the anointing of God, and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet odours, and then we shall stand before the King of heaven. Now, being thus divinely qualified by grace, we shall be taken up to the mount of vision, and enjoy God for ever. This enjoying God for ever, is nothing else but to be put in a state of happiness. As the body cannot have life but by having communion with the soul, so the soul cannot have blessedness, but by having immediate communion with God. God is the chief good; therefore the enjoying of him is the highest felicity. He is, I say, the chief good.

1. He is an universal good, 'a good, in which are all goods.' The excellencies of the creature are limited. A man may have health, not beauty; learning, not parentage; riches, not wisdom; but in God are eminently contained all excellencies. He is a good, commensurate fully to the soul; he is a sun, a portion, an horn of salvation; in him dwells 'all fulness.'²—2. God is an unmixed good. No condition in this life but hath its mixture; for every drop of honey there is a drop of gall. Solomon who gave himself to find out this philosopher's stone, to search out for an happiness here below, he found

vanity and vexation,³ but God is a perfect, quint-essential good. He is sweetness in the flower.—3. God is a satisfying good; the soul cries out, I have enough, 'I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.'⁴ A man that is thirsty, bring him to the ocean, and he hath enough. If there be enough in God to satisfy the angels, then sure, enough to satisfy us. The soul is but finite, but God is an uncreated, infinite good. And yet though God be such a good as doth satisfy; yet not surfeit. Fresh joys spring continually from God's face; and God is as much desired after millions of years by glorified souls, as at the first moment. There is so much fulness in God as satisfies, yet so much sweetness, that the soul still desires; it is satisfaction without surfeit.—4. God is a delicious good. That which is the chief good must ravish the soul with pleasure; there must be in it spirits of delight and quintessence of joy, and this is to be enjoyed only in God. The love of God drops such infinite suavity into the soul as is unspeakable and full of glory. If there be so much delight in God, when we see him only by faith,⁵ what will the joy of vision be when we shall see him face to face? If the saints have found so much delight in God while they were suffering, O then what joy and delight will they have when they are crowning! If flames are beds of roses, O then what will it be to lean on the bosom of Jesus! What a bed of roses will that be!—5. God is a superlative good. He is better than any thing you can put in competition with him; he is better than health, riches, honour. Other things maintain life,—he gives life. But who would go to put any thing in balance with the Deity? Who would weigh a feather with a mountain of gold? God excels all other things more infinitely than the sun the light of a taper.—6. God is an eternal good. He is 'the Ancient of days,'⁶ yet never decays, nor waxes old. The joy he gives is eternal, the crown he gives fadeth not away.⁷ The glorified soul shall be ever solacing itself in God; it shall be feasting on his love, and sunning itself in the light of his countenance. We read of 'the river of pleasure at God's right hand;' but will not this in time be dried up? No, there is a fountain at the bottom which feeds it; 'with the Lord is the fountain of life.'⁸ Thus God is the chief good, and the enjoying God for ever is the supremest felicity the soul is capable of.

¹ Es. 2. 12.² Co. 1. 19.³ Ec. 1. 2.⁴ Ps. 17. 15.⁵ 1 Pe. 1. 8.⁶ Da. 7. 9.⁷ 1 Pe. 5. 4.⁸ Ps. 36. 9.

USE 1. Of Exhortation. Let it be the chief end of our living to enjoy this chief good hereafter; this is that which will crown us with happiness. Austin reckons up 288 opinions among the philosophers about happiness, but all did shoot short of the mark. The highest elevation of a reasonable soul is to enjoy God for ever. It is the enjoying God that makes heaven, 'then shall we ever be with the Lord.'¹ The soul trembles, as the needle in the compass, and is never at rest till it comes to God.

To set out this excellent state of a glorified soul's enjoying God; 1. This enjoying of God must not be understood in a sensual manner; we must not conceive any carnal pleasures in heaven. The Turks, in their Alcoran, speak of a paradise of pleasure, where they have riches in abundance, and red wine served in golden chalices. Here is an heaven, consisting of pleasures for the body; the epicures of this age would like such an heaven when they die. Though indeed the state of glory be compared to a feast, and is set out by pearls and precious stones, yet these metaphors are only to be helps to our faith, and to show us that there is superabundant joy and felicity in the empyrean heaven; but those are not carnal, but sacred delights, as our employment shall be spiritual, it will consist in adoring and praising of God; so our enjoyment shall be spiritual, it shall consist in having the perfection of holiness, in seeing the pure face of Christ, in feeling the love of God, in conversing with heavenly spirits. These delights will be more adequate and proper for the soul, and infinitely exceed all carnal voluptuous delights.—2. We shall have a lively sense of this glorious estate. A man in a lethargy, though he be alive, yet he is as good as dead, because he is not sensible, nor doth he take any pleasure in his life: we shall have a quick and lively sense of the infinite pleasure which ariseth from enjoyment of God, we shall know ourselves to be happy, we shall reflect with joy upon our dignity and felicity, we shall taste every crumb of that sweetness, every drop of that pleasure which flows from God.—3. We shall be made able to bear a sight of that glory. We could not now bear that glory, it would overwhelm us, as a weak eye cannot behold the sun; but God will capacitate us for glory; our souls shall be so heavenly and perfected with holiness, that they may be able to enjoy the blessed vision of God. Moses in a cleft of the

rock saw the glory of God passing by.² Through that blessed rock, Christ, we shall behold the beatifical sight of God.—4. This enjoyment of God shall be more than a bare contemplation of him. Some of the learned move the question, whether the enjoyment of God shall be only by way of contemplation? *A.* That is something, but it is but one half of heaven; there shall be a loving of God, an acquiescence in him, a tasting his sweetness, not only inspection but possession: 'that they may behold my glory,'³ there is inspection; 'and the glory thou hast given me, I have given them,'⁴ there is possession; 'Glory shall be revealed in us,'⁵ not only revealed to us, but in us. To behold God's glory there, is glory revealed to us; but, to partake of his glory there, is glory revealed in us. As the sponge sucks in the wine, so shall we suck in glory.—5. There is no intermission in this state of glory. We shall not only have God's glorious presence at certain special seasons, but we shall be continually in his presence, continually under divine raptures of joy. There shall not be one minute in heaven wherein a glorified soul may say, I do not enjoy happiness. The streams of glory are not like the water of a conduit, often stopped, that we cannot have one drop of water; but those heavenly streams of joy are continually running. O how should we despise this valley of tears, where we now are, for the mount of transfiguration! How should we long for the full enjoyment of God in paradise! Had we a sight of that land of promise, we should need patience to be content to live here any longer.

USE 2. Let this be a spur to duty. How diligent and zealous should we be in glorifying God, that we may come at last to enjoy him? If Tully, Demosthenes, and Plato, who had but the dim watch-light of reason to see by, and did but fancy an elysium and happiness after this life, did take such Herculean pains to enjoy it, O then how should christians, who have the light of scripture to see by, bestir themselves that they may arrive at the eternal fruition of God, and glory! If any thing can make us rise off our bed of sloth, and serve God with all our might, it should be this, the hope of our full enjoyment of God for ever. What made Paul so active in the sphere of religion? 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.'⁶ His obedience did not move slow as the sun on the dial, but swift, as the sun in the firmament.

¹ 1 Th. 4. 17.

² Ex. 33. 22. ³ Jno. 17. 24. ⁴ Jno. 17. 22. ⁵ Ro. 8. 18.
⁶ 1 Co. 15. 10.

Why was he so zealous in glorifying God, but that he might at last centre and terminate in him? 'then shall we be ever with the Lord.'¹

USE 3. *Of Consolation.* Let this comfort the godly in all the present miseries they feel. Thou complainest, christian, thou dost not enjoy thyself, fears disquiet thee, wants perplex thee, in the day thou canst not enjoy ease, in the

night thou canst not enjoy sleep, thou dost not enjoy the comforts of thy life. Let this revive thee, that shortly thou shalt enjoy God, and then thou shalt have more than thou canst ask or think; thou shalt have angels' joy, glory without intermission and expiration. We shall never enjoy ourselves fully till we enjoy God eternally.

OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Q. II. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

A. The word of God (which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

'All scripture is given by inspiration of God,' &c.² By *scripture* is understood the sacred book of God. It is given by divine inspiration, that is, the scripture is not the contrivance of man's brain, but of a divine original. The image of Diana was had in veneration by the Ephesians, because they did suppose it fell from Jupiter.³ This book then of the holy scripture is to be highly revered and esteemed, because we are sure it came from heaven.⁴ The two Testaments are the two lips by which God hath spoken to us.

Q. *How doth it appear that the scriptures have 'a divine authority' stamped upon them?*

A. Because the Old and New Testament are the foundation of all religion. If their divinity cannot be proved, the foundation is gone on which we build our faith. I shall therefore endeavour to evince this great truth, that the scriptures are the very word of God. I wonder whence the scripture should come, if not from God!—1. Bad men could not be the authors of scripture. Would their minds be employed in inditing such holy lines? Would they declare so fiercely against sin?—2. Good men could not be the authors of scripture. Could they write in such a strain? or could it stand with their grace to counterfeit God's name, and put, 'thus saith the Lord,' to a book of their own devising?—3. Nor could any angel in heaven be the author of scripture: because, the angels pry and search into the abyss of gospel-mysteries,⁵

which implies their nescience of some parts of scripture; and sure they cannot be authors of that book which themselves do not fully understand. Besides, what angel in heaven durst be so arrogant as to personate God, and say, 'I create,'⁶ and 'I the Lord have said it.'⁷ So that it is evident, the pedigree of scripture is sacred, and it could come from none but God himself. Not to speak of the harmonious consent of all the parts of scripture, there are seven cogent arguments which may evince it to be the word of God.

1. By its antiquity. It is of ancient standing. The gray hairs of scripture make it venerable. No human histories extant reach farther than since Noah's flood; but the holy scripture relates matters of fact that have been from the beginning of the world: it writes of things before time. Now, that is a sure rule of Tertullian, 'that which is of the greatest antiquity, is to be received as most sacred and authentic.'

2. We may know the scripture to be the word of God, by the miraculous preservation of it in all ages. The holy scriptures are the richest jewel that Christ hath left; and the church of God hath kept these public records of heaven—that they have not been lost. The word of God hath never wanted enemies to oppose, and, if possible, to extirpate it. They have given out a law, concerning scripture, as Pharaoh did to the midwives concerning the Hebrew women's children, to strangle them in the birth; yet God hath preserved this blessed book inviolable to this day. The devil and his agents have been blowing at scripture light, but could never prevail to blow it out,—a clear sign that it was lighted from heaven. Nor hath the church of God, in all revolutions and changes, only kept the scrip-

¹ 1Th. 4. 17. ² Ti. 3. 16. ³ Acts 19. 35. ⁴ Pe. 1. 21. ⁵ 1Pe. 1. 12.

⁶ Isa. 65. 17.

⁷ Nu. 14. 35.

ture that it should not be lost, but that it should not be depraved. The letter of scripture hath been preserved, without any corruption, in the original tongues. The scriptures were not corrupted before Christ's time, for then Christ would never have sent the Jews to the scriptures: but he sends them to the scriptures, 'search the scriptures.'¹ Christ knew these sacred springs were not muddied with human fancies.

3. The scripture appears to be the word of God, by the matter contained in it.—1. By its profundity. The mystery of scripture is so abstruse and profound, that no man or angel could have known it had it not been divinely revealed. That eternity should be born; that He who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle; that He who rules the stars should suck the breasts; that the Prince of life should die; that the Lord of glory should be put to shame; that sin should be punished to the full, yet pardoned to the full; who could ever have conceived of such a mystery, had not the scripture been the oracle to reveal it to us? So, for the doctrine of the resurrection: that the same body which is crumbled into a thousand pieces, should rise the same individual body, (for else it were a creation not a resurrection,) how could such a sacred riddle, above all human disquisition, be known, had not the scripture made a discovery of it?—2. By its purity. It is, for the matter of it, so full of goodness, justice, and sanctity, that it could be breathed from none but from God; the holiness of it shows it to be of God, it bears his very image. The scripture is compared to silver refined seven times.² This book of God hath no errata in it; it is a beam of the Sun of Righteousness, a crystal stream flowing from the fountain of life. All laws and edicts of men have had their corruptions, but the word of God hath not the least tincture, it is of a meridian splendour, 'thy word is very pure,'³ like wine that comes from the grape, which is not mixed nor adulterated. It is so pure, that it purifies every thing else, 'sanctify them through thy truth.'⁴ The scripture presseth holiness, so as never any book did; it bids us live 'soberly, righteously, godly.'⁵ Soberly, in acts of temperance; righteously, in acts of justice; godly, in the acts of zeal and devotion. It commends to us whatever is just, lovely, and of good report.⁶ This sword of the Spirit cuts down vice.⁷ Out of this tower of scripture is

thrown down a millstone upon the head of sin. The scripture is the royal law, which commands not only the actions, but affections: it binds the heart to its good behaviour. Where is there such holiness to be found, as is digged out of this sacred mine? who could be the author of such a book, as God himself?

4. That the scripture is the word of God, is evident by its predictions; it prophesieth of things to come. This shows the voice of God speaking in it. It was foretold by the prophet, 'a virgin shall conceive,'⁸ and, the 'Messiah shall be cut off.'⁹ The scripture foretels things that should fall out many ages and centuries after; as how long Israel should serve in the iron furnace, and the very day of their deliverance, 'at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, it came to pass, that the host of the Lord went out of Egypt.'¹⁰ This prediction of future things, merely contingent, and not depending upon natural causes, is a clear demonstration of its divine original.

5. The impartiality of those men of God, who wrote the scriptures. They do not spare to set down their own failings. What man that writes an history would black his own face, that is, record those things of himself that might stain his reputation? Moses records his own impatience when he struck the rock, and tells us, therefore he could not enter into the land of promise; David writes of his own adultery and bloodshed, which stands as a blot in his scutcheon to succeeding ages; Peter relates his own pusillanimity in denying Christ; Jonah sets down his own passions, 'I do well to be angry to the death.' Surely, had not their pen been guided by God's own hand, they would never have written that which did reflect dishonour upon themselves! Men do usually rather hide their blemishes than publish them to the world: but these penmen of holy scripture eclipse their own name,—they take away all the glory from themselves, and give the glory to God.

6. The mighty power and efficacy the word hath had upon the souls and consciences of men.—1. It hath changed their hearts. Some by reading of scripture have been turned into other men, they have been made holy and gracious. By reading other books the heart may be warmed, but by reading this book it is transformed, 'Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the

¹ Jno. 5. 39. ² Ps. 12. 6. ³ Ps. 119. 140. ⁴ Jno. 17. 17.
⁵ Tit. 2. 1. ⁶ Ph. 4. 8. ⁷ Ep. 6. 17.

⁸ Isa. 7. 14. ⁹ Da. 9. 26. ¹⁰ Ex. 12. 41.

living God.¹ The word was copied out into their hearts, and they were become Christ's epistle, so that others might read Christ in them. If you should set a seal upon marble, and it should make an impression upon the marble, and leave a print behind, there were a strange virtue in that seal: so, when the seal of the word leaves a heavenly print of grace upon the heart, there must needs be a power going along with that word no less than divine.—2. It hath comforted their hearts. When christians have sitten by the rivers weeping, the word hath dropped as honey and sweetly revived them. A christian's chief comfort is drawn out of these wells of salvation: 'that we through comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.'² When a poor soul hath been ready to faint, he hath had nothing to comfort him but a scripture-cordial; when he hath been sick, the word hath revived him: 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,'³ when he hath been deserted, the word hath dropped in the golden oil of joy into his heart: 'the Lord will not cast off for ever.'⁴ He may change his providence, not his purpose, he may have the look of an enemy, but the heart of a father. Thus the word hath a power in it to comfort the heart: 'this is my comfort in mine affliction; for thy word hath quickened me.'⁵ As the spirits are conveyed through the arteries of the body; so divine comforts are conveyed through the promises of the word. Now the scriptures having such an exhilarating, heart-comforting power in them, it shows clearly that they are of God, and it is he that hath put this milk of consolation into these breasts.

7. The great miracles wherewith the Lord hath confirmed scripture. Miracles were used by Moses, Elijah, Christ, and continued many years after by the apostles, to confirm the verity of the holy scriptures. As props are set under weak vines, so these miracles were set under the weak faith of men, that if they would not believe the writings of the word, yet they might believe the miracles. We read of God's dividing the waters, making a causeway in the sea for his people to go over, the iron swimming, the oil increasing by pouring out, Christ's making wine of water, his curing the blind, and raising the dead: thus God hath set a seal to the truth and divinity of the scriptures by miracles.

OBJECT. *The papists indeed cannot deny but that the scripture is divine and sacred; but they affirm that 'with respect to us,' it receives its divine authority from the church; and they bring that scripture,⁶ where the church is said to be 'the ground and pillar of truth.'*

A. It is true, the church is the pillar of truth: but it doth not therefore follow, that the scripture hath its authority from the church. The king's proclamation is fixed on the pillar, the pillar holds it out, that all may read, but the proclamation doth not receive its authority from the pillar, but from the king; so the church holds forth the scriptures, but they do not receive their authority from the church, but from God. If the word of God be divine, because the church holds it forth, then it will follow, that our faith is to be built upon the church and not upon the word; contrary to that, 'built upon the foundation (that is, the doctrine) of the apostles, and prophets.'⁷

Q. *Are all the books in the Bible of the same divine authority?*

A. Those which we call canonical.

Q. *Why are the scriptures called canonical?*

A. Because the word is a rule of faith, a canon to direct our lives. The word is the judge of controversies, the rock of infallibility; that only is to be received for truth, which is consonant to, and agrees with scripture, as the transcript with the original. All maxims in divinity are to be brought to the touchstone of scripture, as all measures are brought to the standard.

Q. *Are the scriptures a complete rule?*

A. The scripture is a full and perfect canon containing in it all things necessary to salvation: 'from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.'⁸ It shows what we are to believe; and what we are to practise. It gives us an exact model of religion, and perfectly instructs us in the deep things of God. The papists therefore make themselves guilty, who go to eke out scripture with their traditions, to which they equalize it. The council of Trent saith, that the traditions of the church of Rome are to be received with the same devotion that scripture is to be received with; so bringing themselves under the curse. 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.'⁹

¹ 2 Co. 3. 3 ² Ro. 15. 4. ³ 2 Co. 4. 17. ⁴ La. 3. 31. ⁵ Ps. 119. 50.

⁶ 1 Ti. 3. 15. ⁷ Ep. 2. 20. ⁸ 2 Ti. 3. 15. ⁹ Re. 22. 18.

Q. What is the main scope and end of scripture?

A. To chalk out a way to salvation. It makes a clear discovery of Christ :¹ 'these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name.' The design of the word is to be an examen whereby our grace is to be tried; a sea-mark to show us what rocks we are to avoid. The word is to sublimate and quicken our affections; it is to be our directory and consolatory; it is to waft us over to the land of promise.

Q. Who shall have the power of interpreting scriptures?

The papists do assert that it is in the power of the church. If you ask who they mean by the church, they say, the pope who is head of it, and he is infallible; so Bellarmine. But that assertion is false, because many of the popes have been ignorant and vicious, as Platina affirms, who writes of the lives of popes. Pope Liberius was an Arian; and pope John XX I. denied the immortality of the soul; therefore popes are not fit interpreters of scripture. Who then?

A. The scripture is to be its own interpreter, or rather the Spirit speaking in it; nothing can cut the diamond but the diamond; nothing can interpret scripture but scripture; the sun best discovers itself by its own beams; the scripture interprets itself in easy places to the understanding. But the question is concerning hard places of scripture where the weak christian is ready to wade beyond his depth. Who shall interpret here?

A. In the church, God hath appointed some to expound and interpret scripture; therefore he hath given gifts to men; the several pastors of churches, like bright constellations, give light to dark scriptures:² 'the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.'

Q. But this is to pin our faith upon men?

A. We are to receive nothing for current but what is agreeable to the word. As God hath given to his ministers gifts for the interpreting obscure places, so he hath given to his people so much of the spirit of discerning, that they can tell, at least in things necessary to salvation, what is consonant to scripture, and what is not: 'to one is given a spirit of prophecy, to another

discerning of spirits.'³ God hath endued his people with such a measure of wisdom and discretion, that they can discern between truth and error, and judge what is sound, and what is spurious: 'the Bereans searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.'⁴ They weighed the doctrine they heard, whether it was agreeable to scripture, though Paul and Silas were their teachers.'

USE 1st. See the wonderful goodness of God, who, besides the light of nature, hath committed to us the sacred scriptures. The heathens are enveloped with ignorance. 'As for his judgments they have not known them.'⁵ They have the oracles of the sybils, but not the writings of Moses and the apostles. How many live in the region of death where this bright star of scripture never appeared? We have this blessed book of God to resolve all our cases, to chalk out a way of life to us. 'Lord, how is it thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?'⁶ Seeing God hath given us his written word to be our directory, this takes away all excuses from men. No man can say, 'I went wrong for want of light.' No, God hath given thee his word, as a lamp to thy feet; therefore now, if thou goest wrong, thou dost it wilfully. No man can say, 'If I had known the will of God, I would have obeyed.' No, thou art inexcusable, O man! God hath given thee a rule to go by, he hath written his law with his own finger, therefore now, if thou obeyest not, thou hast no apology left. If a master leaves his mind in writing with his servant, and tells him what work he will have done, yet the servant neglects the work, that servant is left without excuse, 'now you have no cloak for your sins.'⁷

USE 2d. Is all scripture of divine inspiration? Is it a book made by God himself? Then this reproves: 1. The papists, who take away part of scripture, and so clip the King of heaven's coin; they expunge the second commandment out of their catechisms, because it makes against images; it is usual with them, if they meet with any thing in scripture which they dislike, either they put a false gloss upon it, or, if that will not do, pretend it is corrupted. These are like Ananias, who kept back part of the money.⁸ So they kept back part of the scripture from the people. This is an high affront to God, to deface and obliterate any part of his word; by

¹ Jno. 20. 31.

² Mal. 2. 7.

³ 1 Co. 12. 10. ⁴ Acts 17. 11. ⁵ 2 Ti. 3. 16. ⁶ Ps. 117. 20.

⁷ Jno. 14. 22.

⁸ Jno. 15. 22

⁹ Acts 5. 2.

this they bring themselves under that *premunire*, 'If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.'¹ Is all scripture of divine inspiration?—2. It condemns the antinomians, that lay aside the old testament as useless, and out of date; they call them old testament christians. God hath stamped a divine majesty upon both testaments; and till they can show me where God hath given a repeal to the old, it stands in force. The two testaments are the two wells of salvation: the antinomians would stop up one of these wells,—they would dry up one of the breasts of scripture. There is much gospel in the old testament; the comforts of the gospel in the new testament have their rise from the old. The great promise of the Messiah is in the old testament, 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.' Nay, I say more, the moral law, in some parts of it, speaks gospel, 'I am the Lord thy God:' here is the pure wine of the gospel. The saint's great charter, where God promiseth to 'pour clean water upon them, and put his Spirit within them,' is to be found primarily in the old testament;² so that they who go to take away the old testament, do, as Samson, pull down the pillars, they would take away the pillars of a christian's comfort.—3. It condemns the enthusiasts, who, pretending the Spirit, lay aside the whole bible: they say the scripture is a dead letter, and they live above it. What imprudence is this? Till we are above sin, we shall not be above scripture. Let not men talk of a revelation from the Spirit: suspect it to be an imposture. The Spirit of God acts regularly, it works in and by the word; and he that pretends to a new light, which is either above the word, or contrary to it, abuseth both himself and the Spirit,—his light is borrowed from him who transforms himself into an angel of light.—4. It condemns the slights of scripture: such are they, who can go whole weeks and months and never read the word. They lay it aside as rusty armour; they prefer a play or romance before scripture, the *magnalia legis* are to them *minutula*. O how many can be looking their faces in a glass all the morning, but their eyes begin to be sore, when they look upon a bible! Heathens die in the want of scripture, and these in the contempt of it. They surely must needs go wrong who slight their guide;

such as lay the reins upon the neck of their lusts, and never use the curbing bit of scripture to check them, are carried to hell, and never stop.—5. It condemns the abusers of scripture: who do mud and poison this pure crystal fountain with their corrupt glosses; who *wrest* scripture.³ The Greek word is, they set it upon the rack; they give wrong interpretations of it, not comparing scripture with scripture: as the antinomians pervert that scripture, 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,'⁴ hence they infer, God's people may take liberty in sin, because God sees no sin in them. It is true, God sees not sin in his people with an eye of revenge, but he sees it with an eye of observation. He sees not sin in them, so as to damn them; but he sees it, so as to be angry, and severely to punish them. Did not David find it so, when he cried out of his broken bones? In like manner the Arminians wrest scripture, 'ye will not come to me';⁵ here they bring in free-will. This text shows, how willing God is that we should have life; and that sinners may do more than they do; they may improve the talents God hath given them: but it doth not prove the power of free-will, for it is contrary to that scripture, 'no man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.'⁶ These therefore wring the text so hard, as they make the blood come; they do not compare scripture with scripture. It condemns those abusers who do jest with scripture; when they are sad, they take the scripture as their lute or minstrel, to play with, and so drive away the sad spirit, as that drunkard I have read of, who having drunk off his cups, called to some of his fellows, 'give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.' In the fear of God, take heed of this. Eusebius tells us of one, who took a piece of scripture to make a jest of, but was presently struck with a frenzy and ran mad. And, it is a saying of Luther, 'whom God intends to destroy, he gives them leave to play with scripture.'

USE 3. *Of exhortation.* If the scripture be of divine inspiration, then be exhorted to study the scripture. It is a copy of God's will; be scripture men, bible christians. 'I adore the fulness of scripture,' saith Tertullian. In the book of God are scattered many truths as so many pearls: 'search the scriptures;'⁷ search as for a vein of silver: this blessed book will fill your head with knowledge, and your heart with

¹ Ro. 22. 19.² Ez. 36. 25, 26.³ 2 Pr. 3. 16. ⁴ Nu. 23. 21. ⁵ Jno. 5. 40. ⁶ Jno. 6. 44.⁷ Jno. 5. 39.

grace. - God wrote the two tables with his own fingers; and if God took pains to write, well may we take pains to read. Apollos was mighty in the scriptures.¹ The word is our *magna charta* for heaven; shall we be ignorant of our charter? 'let the word of God dwell in you richly.'² The memory must be a table-book where the word is written. To make us read the word, consider, 1. There is majesty sparkling in every line of scripture. Take but one instance, 'who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength! I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.'³ Behold here a lofty magnificent style! What angel could speak after this manner? Junius was converted by reading one verse of John; he beheld a majesty in it beyond all human rhetoric.—2. There is a melody in scripture. This is that blessed harp, which drives away sadness of spirit: hear the sounding of this harp a little, 'this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;'⁴ he took not only our flesh upon him, but our sins. 'Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'⁵ How sweetly doth this harp of scripture sound, what heavenly music doth it make in the ears of a distressed sinner, especially when the finger of God's Spirit toucheth upon this instrument!—3. There is divinity in scripture. It contains the marrow and quintessence of religion. The scripture is a rock of diamonds, a mystery of piety; the lips of scripture have grace poured into them. The scripture speaks of faith, self denial, and all the graces which, as a chain of pearl, adorn a christian. The scripture excites to holiness; it treats of another world, it gives a prospect of eternity. O then search the scripture; make the word familiar to you! Had I the tongue of angels, I could not sufficiently set forth the excellency of scripture; it is a spiritual optic-glass, in which we behold God's glory; it is the tree of life,—the oracle of wisdom, the rule of manners,—the heavenly seed of which the new creature is formed,⁶ 'the two testaments,' saith Austin, 'are the two breasts which every christian must suck, that he may get spiritual nourishment.' The leaves of the tree of life were for healing,⁷ so these holy leaves of scripture, like those leaves, are for the healing of our souls. The scripture

is profitable for all things; if we are deserted, here is the spiced wine that cheers the heavy heart; if we are pursued by Satan, here is the sword of the Spirit to resist him; if we are diseased with sin's leprosy, here are the waters of the sanctuary, both to cleanse and cure. Oh, then, search the scriptures! There's no danger in tasting this tree of knowledge; there was a penalty laid at first, that we might not taste of the tree of knowledge, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;'⁸ but there is no danger of plucking this tree of holy scriptures; if we do not eat of this tree of knowledge, we shall surely die. Oh, then, read the scriptures! Time may come, when the scriptures may be kept from us.

Q. How should we so search the scriptures as to find life?

A. 1. Read the bible with reverence. Think every line you read, God is speaking to you. The ark wherein the law was put was overlaid with pure gold, and was carried on bars, that the Levites might not touch it.⁹ And why was this, but to breed in the people reverence to the law? Read with seriousness. It is matter of life and death; by this word you must be tried; conscience and scripture are the jury God will proceed by, in judging of you. Read the word with affection. Get your hearts quickened with the word; go to it to fetch fire, 'did not our hearts burn within us?'¹⁰ Labour that the word may not only be a lamp to direct, but a fire to warm. Read the scripture, not only as an history, but as a love-letter sent to you from God which may affect your hearts. Pray that the same Spirit that wrote the word, may assist you in the reading of it; that God's Spirit would show you the wonderful things of his law. 'Go near,' saith God to Philip, 'join thyself to this chariot.'¹¹ So when God's Spirit joins himself with his chariot of the word, then it becomes effectual.

A. 2. Be exhorted to prize the word written,¹² David valued the word more precious than gold. What would the martyrs have given for a leaf of the Bible! The word is the field where Christ the pearl of price is hid. In this sacred mine we dig, not for a wedge of gold, but a weight of glory.—1. The scripture is a sacred eye-salve, to illuminate us: 'the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light.'¹³ The scripture is the chart and compass by which we

¹ Acts 18. 24. ² Col. 3. 16. ³ Isa. 63. 1. ⁴ 1 Tim. 1. 15.
⁵ Ma. 11. 28. ⁶ Ja. 1. 18. ⁷ Re. 22. 2.

⁸ Ge. 2. 17. ⁹ Ex. 25. 14. ¹⁰ Lu. 24. 32. ¹¹ Acts 8. 29
¹² Job 23. 12. ¹³ Psa. 6. 23.

sail to the new Jerusalem.—2. The scripture is a sovereign cordial in all distresses. What are the promises but the water of life to renew fainting spirits? Is it sin troubles? There is a scripture-cordial, ‘iniquities prevail against me; as for our transgressions thou shalt *purge them away*;¹ or, as it is in the Hebrew, ‘thou shalt *cover them*.’ Is it outward afflictions disquiet thee? There is a scripture-cordial, ‘I will be with him in trouble,² not only to behold, but to uphold. Thus, as in the ark was laid up manna, promises are laid up as manna in the ark of scripture.—3. The scripture will make us wise: wisdom is above rubies; ‘by thy precepts I get understanding.’³ What made Eve so desire the tree of knowledge? ‘It was a tree to make one wise.’⁴ The scriptures teach a man to know himself; they discover Satan’s snares and stratagems,⁵ ‘they make one wise to salvation.’⁶ O then highly prize the scriptures! I read of queen Elizabeth, that at her coronation, she received the bible presented to her, with both her hands, and kissing it, laid it to her breast, saying, that that book had ever been her chiefest delight.

A. 3. If the scripture is of divine inspiration, believe the word. The Romans, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. O give credence to the word! It is breathed from God’s own mouth. Hence ariseth all the profaneness of men, they do not believe scripture, ‘who hath believed our report?’⁷ Did you believe the glorious rewards the scripture speaks of, would you not give diligence to make your election sure? Did you believe the infernal torments the scripture speaks of, would not this put you into a cold sweat, and cause a trembling at heart for sin? But people are in part atheists; they give but little credit to the word, therefore they are so impious, and draw such dark shadows in their lives. Learn to realize scripture; get your hearts wrought to a firm belief of it. Some think, if God should send an angel from heaven, and declare his mind, then they should rather believe him, or if he should send one from the damned, and preach the torments of hell all in flames, then they would believe, but ‘if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’⁸ God is wise, and he thinks this way fittest to make his mind known to us by writing;

and such as will not be convinced by the word, shall be judged by the word. The belief of the scripture is of high importance; it is the belief of scripture that will enable us to resist temptation, ‘the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.’ It is the belief of scripture conduceth much to our sanctification; therefore these two are put together, sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.¹⁰ If the word written be not believed, it is like writing on the water which takes no impression.

A. 4. Love the word written: ‘O how love I thy law!’¹¹ ‘Lord,’ saith Augustine, ‘let the holy scriptures be my chaste delight.’ Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden; every truth is a fragrant flower, which we should wear, not on our bosom, but our heart. David counted the word ‘sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.’¹² There is that in scripture may breed delight: it shows us the way to riches,¹³ to long life,¹⁴ to a kingdom.¹⁵ Well then may we count those the sweetest hours which are spent in reading the holy scriptures! Well may we say with the prophet, ‘thy words were found, and I did eat them; and they were the joy and rejoicing of my heart!’¹⁶

A. 5. Conform to scripture, let us lead scripture lives. O that the bible might be seen printed in our lives! Do what the word commands. Obedience is an excellent way of commenting upon the bible, ‘I will walk in thy truth.’¹⁷ Let the word be the sun-dial by which you set your life. What are we the better for having the scripture, if we do not direct all our speeches and actions according to it? What is a carpenter the better to have his rule about him, if he sticks it at his back, and never makes use of it for the measuring and squaring his work? So, what are we the better for the rule of the word, if we do not make use of it, and regulate our lives by it? How many swerve and deviate from the rule! The word teacheth to be sober and temperate, but they are drunk; to be chaste and holy, but they are profane; they go quite from the rule. The scriptures are *canonical*, but their lives are apocryphal. What a dishonour is this to religion, for men to live in contradiction to scripture! The word is called ‘a light to our feet.’¹⁸ It is not only a light to our eyes to mend our sight, but to our feet to mend our walk. O let us lead bible conversations!

¹ Ps. 65. 3. ² Ps. 91. 15. ³ Ps. 119. 101 ⁴ Ge. 3. c.
⁵ 2 Co. 2. 11 ⁶ 2 Tim. 3. 15 ⁷ Is. 53. 1. ⁸ Lu. 16. 31.

⁹ 1 Jno. 2. 14. ¹⁰ 2 Th. 2. 13. ¹¹ Ps. 119. 97. ¹² Ps. 19. 10.
¹³ De. 28. 5. Pr. 3. 16. ¹⁴ Ps. 31. 12. ¹⁵ He. 12. 28.
¹⁶ Je. 15. 16. ¹⁷ Ps. 86. 11. ¹⁸ Ps. 119. 105.

A. 6. Contend for scripture. Though we should not be of contentious spirits, yet we ought to contend for the word of God; this jewel is too precious to be parted with, 'keep her, for she is thy life.'¹ The castle of scripture is beset with enemies, heretics fight against it: we must therefore 'contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.'² The scripture is our book of evidences for heaven: shall we part with our evidences? The saints of old were both advocates and martyrs for truth; they would hold fast scripture, though it were with the loss of their lives.

A. 7. Be thankful to God for the scriptures. What a mercy is it that God hath not only acquainted us what his will is, but that he hath made it known to us by writing! In the old times God did reveal his mind by revelations, but the word written is a surer way of knowing God's mind than by revelation.³ This voice which came from heaven we heard; we have also a more sure word of prophecy. The devil is God's ape, and he can transform himself into an angel of light; he can deceive with false revelations: as I have heard of one who had, as he thought, a revelation from God to sacrifice his child, as Abraham had, whereupon he, following this impulsion of the devil, did kill his

child. Thus Satan oft deceives people with delusions, instead of divine revelations, therefore we are to be thankful to God for revealing his mind to us by writing. We have a more sure word of prophecy. We are not left under a doubtful suspense that we should not know what to believe, but we have an infallible rule to go by. The scripture is our pole-star to direct us to heaven; it shows us every step we are to take; when we go wrong, it instructs us; when we go right, it comforts us; and it is matter of thankfulness, that the scriptures are made intelligible, by being translated.

A. 8. Adore God's distinguishing grace, if you have felt the power and authority of the word upon your conscience; if you can say as David, 'thy word hath quickened me.'⁴ Christian, bless God that he hath not only given thee his word to be a rule of holiness, but his grace to be a principle of holiness! Bless God that he hath not only written his word, but sealed it upon thy heart, and made it effectual! Canst thou say it is of divine inspiration, because thou hast felt it to be of lively operation? O free grace! that God should send out his word, and heal thee; that he should heal thee, and not others; that the same scripture, which is to them a dead letter, should be to thee a savour of life.

THAT THERE IS A GOD.

Q. III. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Q. What is God?

A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Here is, 1st, something implied,—that there is a God; 2d, expressed,—that he is a spirit; —3d, what kind of spirit.

1st. Implied,—that there is a God. The question, What is God? takes it for granted that there is a God; the belief of God's essence is the foundation of all religious worship, 'he that comes to God, must believe that he is.'⁵ There must be a first cause which gives a being and existence to all things besides.

We come to know that there is a God: 1. By the book of nature; the notion of a Deity is engraven on man's heart, it is demonstrable by the light of nature. I think it hard for a man to be a natural atheist. He may wish there were no God, he may dispute against a Deity, but he cannot in his judgment believe there is no God, unless by accumulated sin his conscience be seared, and he hath such a lethargy upon him, that he hath sinned away his very sense and reason.

2. We come to know that there is a God by his works; and this is so evident a demonstration of a Godhead, that the most atheistical spirits, when they have considered these works of God, have been forced to acknowledge some wise and supreme power, the maker of these things; as it is reported of Galen and others.

1. We will begin with the greater world:

¹ Pr 4. 13. ² Jude 3. ³ 2 Pe. 1. 19. ⁴ Heb. 11. 6.

⁵ Ps. 119. 50.

1. The creation of the glorious fabric of heaven and earth; sure there must be some architect or first cause, the world could not make itself. Who could hang the earth on nothing, but the great God? Who could provide such rich furniture for the heavens, the glorious constellations, the firmament bespangled with such glittering lights? All this speaks a Deity. We may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Who could give the earth its clothing, cover it with grass and corn, adorn it with flowers, enrich it with gold? Only God! Who but God could make the sweet music in the heavens, cause the angels to join in concert and sound forth the praises of their Maker, 'when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?'¹ If a man should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that some greater power built them; to imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by God, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn by a pencil without the hand of a limner: 'God that made the world, and all things therein.'² 'To create, is proper to a Deity.—2. The wise government of all things evinces there is a God. God is the great superintendent of the world; he holds the golden reins of government in his hand, guiding all things most regularly and harmoniously to their proper end. Who that eyes providence, but must be forced to acknowledge there is a God? Providence is the queen and governess of the world; it is the hand that turns the wheel of the whole creation; providence sets the sun its race, the sea its bounds. If God should not guide the world, things would run into disorder and confusion. When one looks on a clock, and sees the motion of the wheels, the striking of the hammer, the hanging of the plummet, he would say, there were some artificer did make it, and put it into that order: so when we see the excellent order and harmony in the universe, the sun, that great luminary, dispensing its light and heat to the world, without which the world were but a grave or a prison, the rivers sending forth their silver streams to refresh the bodies of men, and prevent a drought, and every creature acting within its sphere, and keeping its due bounds, we must needs acknowledge there is a God, who wisely orders and governs all these things. Who could set this great army of the creatures in their several ranks

and squadrons, and keep them in their constant march, but HE, whose name is THE LORD OF HOSTS? And as God doth wisely dispose all things in the whole regiment of the creatures, so, by his power, he doth support them: did God suspend and withdraw his influence ever so little, the wheels of the creation would unpin, and the axle-tree break asunder.—3. The motion of the creatures. All motion, as the philosophers say, is from something that is unmovable: as for example, the elements are moved by the influence and motion of the heavenly bodies, the sun and moon, and the planets are moved by the highest orb, called *primum mobile*: now, if one should ask, who moves that highest orb, or the first mover of the planets? Sure it can be no other hand but God himself!

(2.) Let us speak of man, who is a microcosm, or lesser world. The excellent texture and frame of his body, which is wrought curiously as with needle-work, 'I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth;'³ and the endowment of this body with a noble soul; who but God could make such an union of different substances, flesh and spirit? 'In him we live, and move, and have our being.' The quick acute motion of every part of the body shows that there is a God. We may see something of him in the sparkling of the eye. And if the cabinet of the body be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? The soul hath a celestial brightness in it; as Damascene saith, 'It is a diamond set in a ring of clay.' What noble faculties is the soul endowed with? Understanding, will, affections, which are a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. The matter of the soul is spiritual; it is a divine spark lighted from heaven; and being spiritual, is immortal, as Scaliger notes; the soul doth not wax old, it lives for ever. And who could create a soul—ennobled with such rare angelical properties, but God? We must needs say as the psalmist, 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.'⁴

2. We may prove a Deity by our conscience. Conscience is God's deputy or vicegerent. Conscience is a witness of a Deity; if there were no bible to tell us there is a God, yet conscience might. Conscience, as the apostle saith, 'either accuseth,' or 'excuseth.'⁵ Conscience acts in order to a higher judicatory.—1. Natural conscience, being kept free from gross sin, excuseth. When a man doth virtuous actions, lives soberly and righteously, observes the golden

¹ Job 28. 4.² Job 38. 7.³ Acts 17. 24.⁴ Ps. 119. 15.⁵ Ps. 100. 3.⁶ Ro. 2. 15

maxim, doing to others as he would have them to do to him, then conscience approves, and saith, 'Well done!' Conscience, like a bee, gives honey. 2. Natural conscience in the wicked doth accuse. When men go against the light of conscience, then they feel the worm of conscience. Conscience, being sinned against, spits fire in men's faces, fills them with shame and horror; when the sinner sees an handwriting on the wall of conscience, his countenance is changed. Many have hanged themselves to quiet their conscience. Tiberius the emperor, a bloody man, felt the lashes of his conscience; he was so haunted with that fury, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily. And what is it should put a man's conscience into such an agony, but the impression of a Deity, and the thought of coming before God's tribunal? Those who are above all human laws, yet are subject to the checks of their own conscience. And it is observable, the nearer the wicked approach to death, the more they are terrified, and conscience gives a louder alarm to them: and whence is this, but from the apprehension of judgment approaching? The soul, being sensible of its immortal nature, trembles at him, who never ceaseth to live, and therefore will never cease to punish.

3. That there is a God, appears by the consent of nations, by the universal vote and suffrage of all. 'No nation so barbarous,' saith Tully, 'as not to believe there is a God.' Though the heathen did mistake in their devotion, and did not worship the true God, yet they worshipped a God. They set up an altar, 'to the unknown God.'¹ They knew a God should be worshipped, though they knew not the God whom they worshipped. Some did worship Jupiter, some Neptune, some Mars; rather than not worship something, they would worship anything.

4. That there is a God, appears by his prediction of future things. He who can foretell things which shall surely come to pass, is the true God. God foretold, that a virgin should conceive; he prefixed the time when the Messiah should be cut off;² he foretold the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and who should be their deliverer.³ This is such a strong argument to prove a Deity, as God himself useth it to prove he is the true God, and that all the gods of the heathens were fictions and nullities.⁴ To foretel things contingent, and which depend upon no natural causes, is proper to a Deity.

5. That there is a God, appears by God's unlimited power and sovereignty. He who can work, and none hinder him, is the true God; but God can do so, 'I will work, and who shall let it.'⁵ Nothing can hinder action but some superior power; but there is no power above God, all power that is, is by him, therefore all power is under him; he hath a 'mighty arm.'⁶ He sees the designs men drive on against him, and plucks off their chariot-wheels; he maketh the diviners mad;⁷ he cutteth off the spirit of princes; he bridleth the sea, gives check to the leviathan, binds the devil in chains; he acts according to his pleasure; he doth what he will: 'I will work, and who shall let it?'

6. There are devils, therefore there is a God. Atheists cannot deny but there are devils, and then they must grant there is a God. We read of divers possessed with the devil. The devils are called in scripture, 'Hairy Ones,' because they often appeared in the form of goats or satyrs. Gerson, in his book *De probatione Spirituum*, tells us how Satan on a time appeared to an holy man in a most glorious manner, professing himself to be Christ: the old man answered, 'I desire not to see my Saviour here in this desert, it shall suffice me to see him in heaven.' Now, if there be a devil, then there is a God. Socrates, an heathen, when he was accused at his death, confessed, that, as he thought there was an evil spirit, so he thought there was a good.

USE I. Seeing there is a God, this reproves such atheistical fools as deny it. Epicurus denied there was a providence, saying, that all things fell out by chance. He that saith there is no God, is the wickedest creature that is; he is worse than a thief, who doth but take away our goods from us, but the atheist would take away our God from us, 'they have taken away my Lord.'⁸ So we may say of atheists, they would take away our God from us, in whom all our hope and comfort is laid up. 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God.'⁹ He durst not speak it with his tongue, but said it in his heart; he wished it. Sure none can be speculative atheists! 'the devils believe and tremble.'¹⁰ I have read of one Arthur, a professed atheist, who, when he came to die, cried out he was damned; but though there are few found who say, 'there is no God,' yet many deny him in their practices, 'in

¹ Acts 17. 23. ² Dan. 9. 26. ³ Isa. 45. 1. ⁴ Isa. 41. 22.

⁵ Isa. 43. 13. ⁶ Ps. 89. 13. ⁷ Is. 41. 25. ⁸ Jno. 20. 13.
⁹ Ps. 14. 1. ¹⁰ Jas. 2. 19.

works they deny him.¹ Cicero said of Epicurus, 'by words he denied, by deeds he supported the gods.' The world is full of practical atheism; most people live as if they did not believe there was a God. Durst they lie, defraud, be unclean, if they believed there were a God who would call them to an account? If an Indian, who never heard of a God should come among us, and have no other means to convince him of a Deity, but the lives of men in our age, surely he would be of Protagoras' mind, who did hang in a doubtful suspense, and did question whether there were a God.

USE 2. Seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously, and give just rewards to men. Things seem to be carried in the world very unequally; the wicked flourish;² they who tempt God are delivered,³ the ripe clusters of grapes are squeezed into their cup, and, in the mean while, the godly, who wept for sin and served God, are afflicted; 'I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.'⁴ Evil men enjoy all the good, and good men endure all the evil. But seeing there is a God, he will deal righteously with men. 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'⁵ Offenders must come to punishment. The sinner's deathday and doomsday is a coming; 'the Lord seeth that his day is coming.'⁶ While there is an hell, the wicked shall be scourged enough; and while there is eternity, they shall lie there long enough; and God will abundantly compensate the faithful service of his people. They shall have their white robes and crowns: 'verily there is a reward for the righteous! verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth!' Because God is God, therefore he will give forth glorious rewards to his people.

USE 3. Seeing there is a God, wo to all such as engage this God against them! He lives for ever to be avenged upon them. 'Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?'⁷ Such as pollute God's Sabbath, oppose his saints, trampling these jewels in the dust, such as live in a contradiction to God's word, these do engage the infinite majesty of heaven against them; and how dismal will their case be? 'If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,' &c.⁸ If it be so terrible to hear

the lion roar, what is it when he begins to tear his prey? 'Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces!'¹⁰ O that men would think of this, who go on in sin! Shall we engage the great God against us? God strikes slow but heavy; 'hast thou an arm like God?'¹¹ Canst thou strike such a blow? God is the best friend, but the worst enemy. If he can look men into their grave, how far can he throw them? 'Who knows the power of his wrath?'¹² What fools are they, who, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath? Paracelsus speaks of a frenzy some have, which will make them die dancing: sinners go dancing to hell.

USE 4. Seeing there is a God, let us firmly believe this great article of our creed. What religion can there be in men, if they do not believe a Deity? 'He that cometh to God, must believe that he is.' To worship God, and pray to him, and not believe there is a God, is to put a high scorn and contempt upon God. Believe that God is the only true God; such a God as he hath revealed himself in his word, 'a lover of righteousness, and hater of wickedness'¹³ The real belief of a Deity gives life to all religious worship; the more we believe the truth and infiniteness of God, the more holy and angelical we are in our lives. Whether we are alone, or in company, God sees us; he is the heart-searcher; the belief of this would make us live always under God's eye. 'I have set the Lord always before me.'¹⁴ The belief of a Deity, would be a bridle to sin, a spur to duty; it would add wings to prayer, and oil to the lamp of our devotion. The belief of a Deity would cause dependance upon God in all our straits and exigencies; 'I am God all-sufficient,'¹⁵—a God that can supply all your wants, scatter all your fears, resolve all your doubts, conquer all your temptations; the arm of God's power can never be shrunk; he can create mercy for us, and therefore can help and not be beholden to the creature. Did we believe there is a God, we should so depend on his providence as not to use any indirect means; we should not run ourselves into sin to rid ourselves out of trouble. 'Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Beelzebub the God of Ekron?'¹⁶ When men run to sinful shifts, is it not because they do not believe there is a God, or that he is all-sufficient?

¹ Tit. 1. 16. ² Ps. 73. ³ Mal. 3. 15. ⁴ Ps. 102. 9. ⁵ Gen. 18. 25. ⁶ Ps. 37. 13. ⁷ Ps. 58. 11. ⁸ Ezek. 22. 11. ⁹ De. 32. 41.

¹⁰ Ps. 50. 22. ¹¹ Job 40. 9. ¹² Ps. 90. 11. ¹³ Ps. 45. 7. ¹⁴ Ps. 16. 8. ¹⁵ Gen. 17. 1. ¹⁶ 2 Kings 1. 3.

USE 5. Seeing there is a God, let us labour to get an interest in him, 'this God is our God.'¹ Two things will comfort us, Deity and property. Since the fall we have lost likeness to God, and communion with God; let us labour to recover this lost interest, and pronounce this Shibboleth, 'my God.'² It is little comfort to know there is a God, unless he be ours; God offers himself to be our God, 'I will be their God.'³ And faith catcheth hold of the offer; it appropriates God, and makes all that is in him over to us to be ours; his wisdom to be ours, to teach us; his holiness ours, to sanctify us; his Spirit ours, to comfort us; his mercy ours, to save us. To be able to say, God is mine, is more than to have all the mines of gold and silver.

USE 6. Seeing there is a God, let us serve and worship him as God. It was an indictment brought in against them, 'they glorified him not as God.'⁴ 1. Let us pray to him as to God.

Pray with fervency, 'an effectual fervent prayer availeth much.'⁵ This is both the fire and the incense; without fervency it is no prayer. 2. Love him as God, 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.'⁶ To love him with all thy heart, is to give him a preceedency in our love: to let him have the cream of our affections, to love him not only appreciatively, but intensively. As the sunbeams united in a burning-glass, burn the hotter, so all our affections should be united, that our love to God may be more ardent. 3. Obey him as God. All creatures obey him: the stars fight his battles, the wind and sea obey him,⁷ much more should man whom God hath endued with a principle of reason. He is God, and hath a sovereignty over us; therefore, as we received life from him, so we must receive a law from him, and submit to his will in all things. This is to kiss him with a kiss of loyalty, and it is to glorify him as God.

GOD IS A SPIRIT.

Q. IV. *What is God?* A. God is a Spirit.*

SECOND. The thing expressed, 'God is a Spirit.' God is *essentia spiritualissima*, a most spiritual essence. ZANCHY.

Q. *What do you mean when you say, God is a spirit?*

A. By a spirit I mean, God is an immaterial substance, of a pure, subtile, unmixed essence, not compounded of body and soul, without all extension of parts. The body is a dreggish thing; the more spiritual God's essence is, the more noble and excellent. The spirits are the more refined part of the wine.

Q. *Wherein doth God differ from other spirits?*

A. 1. The angels are spirits. But we must distinguish of spirits. The angels are created, God is a spirit uncreated. The angels are finite, and capable of being annihilated; the same power which made them, is able to reduce them to their first nothing; but God is an infin-

ite spirit. The angels are confined spirits; they cannot be in two places at once, they are confined to a place; but God is an immense spirit, and cannot be confined, being in all places at once. The angels, though they are spirits, yet they are but ministering spirits.⁴ Though they are spirits, yet are they servants. God is a super-excellent spirit, 'the Father of spirits.'⁵ 2. The soul is a spirit; 'the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.'⁶

Q. *How doth God, being a spirit, differ from the soul?*

A. Servetus and Osiander thought, that the soul being infused did convey into man the very spirit and substance of God; an absurd opinion, for the essence of God is incommunicable. Therefore, when it is said, the soul is a spirit, it is meant God hath made it intelligent, and hath stamped upon it his likeness, not his essence.

Q. *But is it not said, that we are made partakers of the divine nature?*

A. By *divine nature* there, is meant divine qualities.⁷ We are made partakers of the divine nature, not by identity or union with the divine essence, but by a transformation into the divine likeness. Thus you see how God differs from other spirits, angels and souls of men. He is

¹ Ps. 48. 14. ² Ps. 43. 5. ³ Je. 31. 33. ⁴ Re. 1. 21. ⁵ Juo. 4. 24.

* This is one of the first truths of religion, and one of the sublimest truths ever presented to the mind of man. Almost all nations have had some gross idea of God, but the bible reveals that he is a pure Spirit. And he is such a Spirit, he dwells not in temples made with hands (Acts 7. 48), neither is worshipped with men's hands as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. Acts 17. 25. A pure, a holy, a spiritual worship is such as he seeks—the offering of the *soul* rather than the *formal* offering of the *body*—the homage of the *heart* rather than that of the *lips*

¹ Jas. 5. 16. ² De. 6. 5. ³ Mark 4. 41. ⁴ He. 1. 14.
⁵ He. 12. 9. ⁶ Ec. 12. 7. ⁷ 2 Pe. 1. 4.

a spirit of transcendent excellency, 'the Father of spirits.'

OBJECT. *Against this Vorstius and the Anthropomorphites object, that, in scripture, a human shape and figure is given to God; he is said to have eyes and hands.*

A. It is contrary to the nature of a spirit to have a corporeal substance: 'handle me, and see me: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.'¹ Bodily members are ascribed to God, not properly, but metaphorically, and in a borrowed sense; he is only set out to our capacity; by the right hand of the Lord is meant his power; by the eyes of the Lord are meant his wisdom. Now that God is a spirit, and is not capable of bodily shape or substance, is clear. 1. A body is visible, but God is invisible; therefore he is a spirit, 'whom no man hath seen, nor can see';² not by an eye of sense. 2. A body is terminated; can be but in one place at once; but God is every where, in all places at once; therefore he is a spirit.³ God's centre is every where, and his circumference is nowhere. 3. A body being compounded of integral parts may be dissolved, but the Godhead is not capable of dissolution; he can have no end, from whom all things have their beginning. So that it clearly appears that God is a spirit, which adds to the perfection of his nature.

USE 1. If God be a spirit, then he is impassible,—he is not capable of being hurt. Wicked men set up their banners, and bend their forces against God; they are said to fight against God.⁴ But what will this fighting avail? What hurt can they do to the Deity? God is a spirit, and therefore cannot receive any hurtful impression; wicked men may imagine evil against the Lord, 'what do ye imagine against the Lord?'⁵ But God, being a spirit, is impenetrable. The wicked may eclipse his glory, but cannot touch his essence. God can hurt his enemies, but they cannot hurt him. Julian might throw up his dagger into the air against heaven, but could not touch the Deity. God is a spirit, invisible. How can the wicked with all their forces hurt him, when they cannot see him? Hence all the attempts of the wicked against God are foolish, and prove abortive; 'the kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed. He that sits in the heavens shall laugh.'⁶ He

is a spirit, he can wound them, but they cannot touch him.

USE 2. If God be a spirit, then it shows the folly of the papists, who worship him by pictures and images. Being a spirit, we cannot make any image to represent him by: 'the Lord spake to you out of the midst of the fire, ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude.'

1. God being a spirit is imperceptible, cannot be discerned; how then can there be any resemblance made of him? 'To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him?'⁷ How can you paint the Deity? Can we make an image of that which we never saw? 'Ye saw no similitude.' God is a spirit. It were a folly to go to make the picture of the soul, because it is a spiritual thing; or to paint the angels, because they are spirits.

OBJECT. *Are not the angels in scripture represented by the cherubim?*

A. There is the image of the person, and the image that represents the office. The cherubims did not represent the persons of the angels, but their office. The cherubims were made with wings, to show the swiftness of the angels, in discharge of their office; and if we cannot picture the soul, nor the persons of angels, because they are spirits, much less can we make an image or picture of God, who is infinite and the Father of spirits.

2. God, being a spirit, is omnipresent; he is present in all places, 'Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?'⁸ Therefore, being every where present, it is absurd to worship him by an image. Were it not a foolish thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king is present? So it is to worship God's image, when God himself is present.

Q. *But how then shall we conceive of God, being a spirit, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?*

A. We must conceive of him spiritually: namely, in his attributes,—his holiness; justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ, Christ 'is the image of the invisible God.'⁹ Set the eyes of your faith on Christ, God-man. In Christ we see some sparklings of the divine glory; in him there is the exact resemblance of all his Father's excellencies. The wisdom, love, and holiness

¹ Luke 24. 39. ² 1 Tim. 6. 16. ³ Ps. 139. 7, 8.

⁴ Acts 5. 39. ⁵ Nah. 1. 9. ⁶ Ps. 2. 2, 4.

⁷ De. 1. 12. ⁸ Isa. 40. 18. ⁹ Jer. 23. 24. ¹⁰ Col. 1. 15.

of God the Father, shine forth in Christ, 'He that hath seen me, hath seen the father.'¹

USE 3. If God be a spirit, it shows us that the more spiritual we grow, the more we grow like to God. To be earthly is to be unlike God. How do earth and spirit agree?² Earthly ones may give for their crest, the mole or tortoise that live in the earth. What resemblance is there between an earthly heart, and him who is a spirit? The more spiritual any one is, the more like God.

Q. *What is it to be spiritual?*

A. To be refined and sublimated, to have the heart still in heaven, to be thinking of God and glory, and to be carried up in a fiery chariot of love to God,—this is to be spiritual: 'whom have I in heaven but thee:'³ on which Beza paraphrased thus, 'O that I were in heaven with thee!' A christian, who is taken off these earthly things, as the spirits are taken off from the lees, hath a noble spiritual soul, and doth most resemble him who is a spirit.

USE 4. It shows what that worship is God requires of us, and is most acceptable to him, viz. such a worship as is suitable to his nature, 'spiritual worship.' 'They which worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.'⁴ Spiritual worship is the virgin worship. Though God will have the service of our bodies, our eyes and hands lifted up, to testify to others that reverence we have of God's glory and majesty, yet chiefly he will have the worship of the soul, 'glorify God in your body and in your spirit.'⁵ Spirit worship God prizeth, because it comes so near to his own nature who is a spirit.

Q. *What is it to worship God in spirit?*

A. 1. To worship him without ceremonies. The ceremonies of the law, which God himself ordained, are now abrogated, and out of date; Christ the substance being come, the shadows fly away; and therefore the apostle calls the legal ceremonies 'carnal rites';⁶ and if we may not use those Jewish ceremonies which God did once appoint, then not those which he did never appoint.

A. 2. To worship God in spirit, is to worship him with faith in the blood of the Messiah;⁷ and, to worship him with the utmost zeal and intenseness of soul, 'our twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night,'⁸—with intenseness of spirit, not only constantly, but instantly. This is to worship God in spirit. The more

spiritual any service is, the nearer it comes to God, who is a spirit, and the more excellent it is; the spiritual part of duty is the fat of the sacrifice, it is the soul and quintessence of religion. The richest cordials are made of spirits, and the best duties are such as are of a spiritual nature. God is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit; it is not pomp of worship, but purity, which God accepts. Repentance is not in the outward severities used to the body, penance, fasting, and chastising the body, but it consists in the sacrifice of a broken heart; thanksgiving doth not stand in church music, the melody of an organ, but rather in making melody in the heart to the Lord.⁹ Prayer is not the tuning the voice into an heartless confession, or telling over a few beads, but it consists in sighs and groans.¹⁰ When the fire of fervency is put to the incense of prayer, then it ascends as a sweet odour; that is the true holy water, not that which the pope sprinkles, but what is distilled from the limbeck of a penitent eye. Spirit-worship best pleaseth that God who is a spirit: 'the Father seeketh such to worship him';¹¹ to show the great acceptance of such, and how God is delighted with spiritual worship. This is the savoury meat God loves. How few mind this! Worshipping him who is a spirit, in the spirit, they give him more dregs than spirits; they think it enough to bring their duties, but not their hearts, which hath made God disclaim these very services he himself appointed.¹² Let us then give God spirit-worship, this best suits with his nature; a sovereign elixir full of virtue may be given in a few drops; a little prayer, if it be with the heart and spirit, may have much virtue and efficacy in it. The publican made but a short prayer, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,'¹³ but it was full of life and spirit; it came from the heart, therefore it was accepted.

USE 5. *Of Exhortation.* Pray to God that as he is a spirit; so he will give us of his Spirit. The essence of God is incommunicable; but not the motions, the presence, and influences of his Spirit. When the sun shines in a room, not the body of the sun is there, but the light, heat, and influence of the sun. God hath made a promise of his Spirit, 'I will put my Spirit within you.'¹⁴ Turn promises into prayers. 'O Lord, thou who art a spirit, give me of thy Spirit: I flesh, beg thy Spirit, thy

¹ Jno. 14. 9. ² Phil. 3. 19. ³ Ps. 73. 25. ⁴ Jno. 4. 21.
⁵ 1 Cor. 6. 20. ⁶ Heb. 9. 10. ⁷ Heb. 11. 9. ⁸ Acts 26. 7.

⁹ Eph. 5. 19. ¹⁰ Rom. 8. 26. ¹¹ John 4. 23.
¹² Isa. 1. 12. Ez. 33. 31. ¹³ Luke 18. 13. ¹⁴ Ez. 36. 27.

enlightening, sanctifying, quickening Spirit! Melancthon prayed, 'Lord, inflame my soul with thy Holy Spirit!' How needful is his Spirit? We cannot do any duty without it, in a lively manner; when this wind blows upon our sails, then we move swiftly towards heaven. Pray therefore, that God would give us of 'the residue of his Spirit,'¹ that we may move more vigorously in the sphere of religion.

USE 6. *Of Comfort.* As God is a spirit, so the reward that he gives is spiritual; that is the excellency of it. As the chief blessings he gives us in this life are spiritual blessings,² not gold and silver, he gives Christ, his love; he fills us

with grace; so the main rewards he gives us after this life are spiritual, 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'³ Earthly crowns fade, but the believer's crown being spiritual, is immortal, a never-fading crown. 'It is impossible,' saith Joseph Scaliger, 'for that which is spiritual to be subject to change or corruption.' This may comfort a christian in all his labours and sufferings; he lays out himself for God, and hath little or no reward here; but remember, God who is a spirit, will give spiritual rewards, a sight of his face in heaven, white robes, a weight of glory. Be not then weary of God's service; think of the spiritual reward, a crown of glory which fadeth not away!

GOD IS INFINITE.

3. Q. *What kind of a spirit is God?*

A He is infinite; so he differs from all created beings, which are finite. Though infinite may be applied to all God's attributes, as he is infinitely merciful, wise, and holy, yet, if we take infiniteness properly so, it implies his omnipresence.

The Greek word for *infinite* signifies 'without bounds or limits:' God is not confined to any place, he is infinite, and so is present in all places at once. His centre is everywhere, 'behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee!' This the Turks have a notion of: they build their temples open at the top, to show that God cannot be confined to their temples, or circumscribed, but is in all places by his presence. God's essence is not limited either to the regions above, or to the terrestrial globe, but his whole essence is everywhere; this is to be infinite. As philosophers say of the soul, it is in every part of the body; in the eye, heart, foot: so we may say of God, he is everywhere,—his essence is everywhere, his circuit is in heaven, and in earth, and sea, and he is in all places of his circuit at once. This is to be infinite. God, who bounds every thing else, is himself without bounds: he sets bounds to the sea, 'hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.' He sets bounds to the angels; they, like the cherubim, move and stand at his appointment,⁴ but he is infinite, without bounds. He who can span the heavens, and weigh the earth in a pair of scales, must needs be infinite.⁵

OBJ. *Vorstius, That God is in all places at once, but not in regard of his essence, but by his virtue and influence: as the body of the sun is in heaven, it only sends forth its beams and influences to the earth,—or as a king, who is in all places of his kingdom authoritatively, by his power and authority, but he is personally on his throne.*

A. God, who is infinite, is in all places at once, not only by his influence, but by his essence; for, if his essence fills all places, then he must needs be there in person. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?'²

OBJ. *But doth not God say, heaven is his throne?*

A. It is also said, that an humble heart is his throne.³ The humble heart is his throne, in regard of his gracious presence; and heaven is his throne, in regard of his glorious presence; and yet neither of these thrones will hold him, for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.*

OBJ. *But if God be in all places, then he is in places impure, and mingles with that impurity?*

A. Though God be in all places, in the heart of a sinner by his inspection, and in hell by his justice, yet he doth not mingle with that impurity, or receive the least tincture of evil. 'The divine nature is not mingled with existing

¹ Pe. 5. 4. ² Je. 23. 24. ³ Is. 66. 1. ⁴ Is. 57. 15.

* He is everywhere, because no creature, either body or spirit, can exclude the presence of his essence; for he is not only near, but in every thing, 'in him we live, and move, and have our being.' Not absent from any thing, but so present with them, that they live and move in him, and move more in God, than in air or earth, wherein they are; nearer to us than our flesh or our bones, than the air to our breath: he cannot be far from them that live and have every motion in him. The apostle doth not say, *by him*, but *in him*, to show the inwardness of his presence.—*Charnock on the Attributes.*

¹ Mal. 2. 15. ² Eph. 1. 3. ³ 1 Ki. 8. 27. ⁴ Ez. 10. 16.
⁵ Is. 40. 22.

substances, nor polluted with impurities,' AUG.; no more than the sun shining on a dunghill is defiled, or its beauty spotted, or than Christ going among sinners was defiled; his Godhead was a sufficient antidote against infection.—Reason why God must needs be infinite in all places at once, not only in regard of the simplicity and purity of his nature, but in regard of his power, which being so glorious, who can set him bounds, or prescribe him a circuit to walk in? It is as if the drop should go to limit the ocean, or the star to set the sun its bounds.

USE 1. It condemns the papists, who would make more things infinite than the Godhead. They hold that Christ's body is in many places at once, that it is in heaven, and in the bread and wine in the sacrament. Though Christ, as he is God, is infinite and in all places at once, yet, as man, he is not. Christ when he was on earth, his manhood was not in heaven, though his Godhead was; and now he is in heaven, his manhood is not on earth though his Godhead be. It is spoken of Christ, 'a body thou hast prepared me.'¹ This body cannot be in all places at once; for then it is no more a body, but a spirit; Christ's body in heaven, though it be glorified, it is not deified; it is not infinite, for so it must be, if it be both in heaven, and in the bread and wine by transubstantiation.

If God be infinite, present in all places at once, then it is certain he governs all things in his own person; he needs no proxies or deputies to help him to carry on his government. He is in all places at an instant, and manageth all affairs both in the earth and heaven. A king cannot be in all places of his kingdom in his own person, therefore he is fain to govern by deputies, and vicegerents, and they often pervert justice; but God, being infinite, needs no deputies, he is present in all places, he sees all with his own eyes, and hears all with his own ears; he is every where in his own person, therefore is fit to be the judge of the world; he will do every one right.

If God be infinite by his omnipresence, then see the greatness and immenseness of the divine majesty. What a great God do we serve! 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the glory, and the majesty, and thou art exalted as head above all.'² Well may the scripture display the greatness of his glory who is infinite in all places. He transcends our weak concep-

tions; how can our finite understanding comprehend him who is infinite? He is infinitely above all our praises, 'blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.'³ O what a poor nothing is man, when we think of God's infiniteness! As the stars disappear at the rising of the sun, O how doth a man shrink into nothing when Infinite Majesty shines forth in his glory! 'The nations are as a drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the balance.'⁴ O what a little of that drop are we! The heathens thought they had sufficiently praised Jupiter, when they called him great Jupiter. Of what immense majesty is God, who fills all places at once! 'His is excellent greatness.'⁵ If God be infinite, filling heaven and earth, see what a full portion the saints have; they have him for their portion who is infinite. His fulness is an infinite fulness; and he is infinitely sweet, as well as infinitely full; if a conduit be filled with wine, here is a sweet fulness, but still it is finite; but God is a sweet fulness, and it is also infinite. He is infinitely full of beauty, of love; his riches are called 'unsearchable,'⁶ because they are infinite. Stretch your thoughts as much as you can, there's that in God exceeds; it is an infinite fulness. He is said 'to do abundantly for us, above all that we can ask.'⁷ What cannot an ambitious spirit ask? He can ask crowns and kingdoms, millions of worlds; but God can give more than we can ask, nay, or think, because he is infinite.—We can think, what if all the dust were turned to silver, if every flower were a ruby, every sand in the sea a diamond; yet God can give more than we can think, because he is infinite! O how rich are they who have the infinite God for their portion! Well might David say, 'the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance,' 'the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage!'⁸ We may go with the bee from flower to flower, but we shall never have full satisfaction till we come to the infinite God. Jacob said, 'I have enough,' in the Hebrew, 'I have all,'⁹ because he had the infinite God for his portion. God being an infinite fulness, there is no fear of want for any of the heirs of heaven; though there be millions of saints and angels which have a share in God's riches, yet he hath enough for them all, because he is infinite. Though a thousand men behold the sun, there

¹ Heb. 10. 5.² 1 Chr. 29. 11.³ Neh. 9. 5. ⁴ Isa. 40. 15. ⁵ Ps. 150. 2. ⁶ Eph. 3. 8.⁷ Eph. 3. 20. ⁸ Ps. 16. 5, 6. ⁹ Gen. 33. 11.

is light enough in the sun for them all; put ever so many buckets into the sea, there is water enough in the sea to fill them. Though an innumerable company of saints and angels are to be filled out of God's fulness, yet God, being infinite, he hath abundantly enough to satisfy them. God hath land enough to give to all his heirs, there can be no want in that which is infinite.

If God be infinite, he fills all places, is every where present: this is sad to the wicked, God is their enemy, and they cannot escape him, nor flee from him, for he is every where present: they are never out of his eye, nor out of his reach: 'thy hand shall find out all thy enemies.'¹ What caves or thickets can men hide in, that God cannot find them? Go where they will, he is present, 'whither shall I flee from thy presence?'² If a man owes a debt to another, he may make his escape, and flee into another land, where the creditor cannot find him. 'But whither shall I flee from thy presence?' God is infinite; he is in all places: so that he will find out his enemies, and punish them.

OBJECT. *But is it not said, 'Cain went out from the presence of the Lord?'*³

A. The meaning is, he went out from the church of God, where were the visible signs of God's presence, and where God did in a special manner manifest his sweet presence to his people: but Cain could not go out of God's sight, for God being infinite, is every where present. Sinners can neither go from an accusing conscience, nor a revenging God.

If God be every where present, then for a christian to walk with God is not impossible. God is not only in heaven, but he is in earth too.⁴ Heaven is his throne, there he sits; the earth is his footstool, there he stands. He is everywhere present, therefore we may come to walk with God: 'Enoch walked with God.'⁵ If God was confined to heaven, a trembling soul might think, 'how can I converse with God,—how can I walk with him who lives in the highest parts, above the upper region?' but God is not confined to heaven, he is omnipresent; he is above us, yet he is about us, he is near to us.⁶ Though he be not far from the assembly of the saints, he stands in the congregation of the mighty.⁷ He is present with us, God is in every one of us; so that here on earth we may

walk with God. In heaven the saints rest with him,—on earth they walk with him. To walk with God, is to walk by faith; we are said 'to draw nigh' to God;⁸ and to see him, 'as seeing him who is invisible;⁹ and to have fellowship with him, 'our fellowship is with the Father.'¹⁰ Thus we may take a turn with him every day by faith. It is a slighting of God not to walk with him: if a king be in presence, it is a slighting him, to neglect him and walk with the page. There is no walk in the world so sweet as to walk with God: 'they shall walk in the light of thy countenance;¹¹ 'yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord;¹² it is like walking among beds of spices, which send forth a fragrant perfume.

USE 2. If God be infinite in his glorious essence, learn to admire where you cannot fathom. The angels wear a vail; they cover their faces, as adoring this infinite majesty.¹³ Elias wrapped himself in a mantle when God's glory passed by. Admire where you cannot fathom, 'canst thou by searching find out God?'¹⁴ Here we see some beams of his glory, we see him in the glass of the creation, we see him in his picture, his image shines in the saints, but who can search out all his essential glory? What angel can measure these pyramids? 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' He is infinite. We can no more search out his infinite perfections, than a man upon the top of the highest mountain can reach the firmament, or take a star in his hand. O have God-admiring thoughts! Adore where you cannot fathom; there are many mysteries in nature which we cannot fathom, why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it, why the Nile should overflow in summer, when by the course of nature, the waters are lowest,—how the bones grow in the womb.¹⁵ If these things pose us,—how may the infinite mystery of the Deity transcend our most raised intellectuals! Ask the geometrician, if he can, with a pair of compasses, measure the breadth of the earth: so unable are we to measure the infinite perfections of God. In heaven we shall see God clearly, but not fully, for he is infinite; he will communicate himself to us, according to the bigness of our vessel, but not the immenseness of his nature. Adore then where you cannot fathom.

If God be infinite in all places, then let us

¹ Ps. 21. 8. ² Ps. 139. 7. ³ Gen. 4. 16. ⁴ Is. 66. 1.
⁵ Gen. 5. 22. ⁶ Acts 17. 27. ⁷ Ps. 82. 1.

⁸ Heb. 10. 22. ⁹ Heb. 11. 27. ¹⁰ 1 Jno. 1. 3. ¹¹ Ps. 89. 15.
¹² Ps. 138. 5. ¹³ Is. 6. 3. ¹⁴ Job 11. 7. ¹⁵ Ec. 11. 5.

not go to limit God, 'they limited the Holy One of Israel.'¹ It is a limiting God to confine him within the narrow compass of our reason. Reason thinks God must go such a way to work, or the business will never be effected. This is to limit God to our reason; whereas he is infinite, 'and his ways are past finding out.'² In the deliverance of the church, it is a limiting God, either to set him a time, or prescribe him a method for deliverance. God will

deliver Sion, but he will be left to his own liberty; he will not be tied to a place, to a time, to an instrument, this were to limit him, and then he should not be infinite. God will go his own way, he will pose and nonplus reason, he will work by improbabilities, he will save in such a way as we think he will destroy; now he acts like himself, like an infinite, wonder-working God.

OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

'For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.'³ Glorious things are spoken of God; he transcends our thoughts and the angels' praises. God's glory lies chiefly in his attributes, which are the several beams by which the divine nature shines forth. Among other of his orient excellencies, this is not the least, 'the Lord is a God of *knowledge*;' or, as the Hebrew word is, 'A God of *knowledges*.' Through the bright mirror of his own essence, he hath a full idea and cognizance of all things. The world is to him a transparent body. He makes an heart anatomy; 'I am he which searcheth the reins and the heart.'⁴ The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to draw between us and his sight, 'the darkness hideth not from thee.'⁵ There is not a word we whisper, but God hears it, 'there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether!'⁶ There is not the most subtle thought comes into our mind, but God perceives it: 'I know their thoughts.'⁷ Thoughts speak as loud in God's ears, as words do in ours. All our actions, though ever so subtly contrived, and secretly conveyed, are visible to the eye of omniscieny, 'I know their works.'⁸ Achan hid the Babylonish garment in the earth, but God brought it to light.⁹ Minerva was drawn in such curious colours, and so lively penciled, that which way soever one turned, Minerva's eyes were upon him: so, which way soever we turn ourselves, still God's eye is upon us, 'dost thou know the balancing of the clouds! the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge?'¹⁰ God knows whatever is knowable; he knows future

contingencies. He foretold Israel's coming out of Babylon, and the virgin's conceiving. By this the Lord proves the truth of his Godhead against idol gods: 'show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know ye are gods.'¹ The perfection of God's knowledge is that it cannot be searched out to perfection.² What angel can reach the top of these pyramids? But God's knowledge is *primary*. He is the original, the pattern, and prototype of all knowledge; others borrow their knowledge of him; the angels light their lamps at this glorious sun.

2. God's knowledge is *pure*. It is not contaminated with the object. Though God knows sin, yet it is to hate and punish it. No evil can mix or incorporate with his knowledge, no more than the sun can be defiled with the vapours which arise from the earth.

3. God's knowledge is *facile*; it is without any difficulty. We study and search for knowledge: 'if thou seekest for her as for silver.'³ But the lamp of God's knowledge is so infinitely bright, that all things are intelligible to him.

4. God's knowledge is *infallible*; there is no mistake in his knowledge. Human knowledge is subject to error and misprision. A physician may mistake the cause of a disease; but God's knowledge is unerring; he can neither deceive nor be deceived; he cannot deceive, because he is truth; nor be deceived, because he is wisdom.

5. God's knowledge is *instantaneous*, out knowledge is successive, one thing after another. We argue from the effect to the cause; God knows things past, present, and to come, at once: they are all before him in one entire prospect.

6. God's knowledge is *retentive*; he never loseth any of his knowledge; he hath remem-

¹ Ps. 78. 41. ² Rom. 11. 33. ³ 1 Sam. 2. 3. ⁴ Rev. 2. 23.
⁵ Ps. 139. 12. ⁶ Ps. 139. 4. ⁷ Isa. 66. 18. ⁸ Isa. 66. 18.
⁹ Jos. 7. 21. ¹⁰ Job 37. 16.

¹ Isa. 41. 23.

² Job 11. 7.

³ Prov. 2. 4.

brance as well as intelligence—he remembers as well as understands. Many things elapse out of our minds, but God's knowledge is eternized. Things transacted a thousand years ago, are as fresh to him, as if they were done but the last minute. Thus he is perfect in knowledge.

OBJECT. *But is it not said, 'I will go down and see whether they have done according to the cry which is come up unto me, and I will know?'*¹

A. It could not be a nesciency, or that God was ignorant; because there is mention made of a cry; but the Lord speaks there after the manner of a judge, who will first examine the cause before he passeth the sentence. God, when he is upon a work of justice, is not in a riot, as if he did not care where he hits; but he goes in a way of circuit against offenders. He 'lays judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.'²

OBJECT. *The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid?*³

A. Not that his sin was hid from God, but his sin is hid, that is, it is recorded, it is laid up against a day of reckoning. That this is the meaning, is clear by the foregoing words, his iniquity is bound up: as the clerk of the assizes binds up the indictments of malefactors in a bundle, and at the assizes, brings out the indictments and reads them in court, so God binds up men's sins in a bundle, and, at the day of judgment, this bundle shall be opened, and all their sins brought to light before men and angels.

That God is thus infinite in his knowledge. 1. It cannot but be so; for he, who is the original cause, and gives a being to things, must needs have a clear inspection into them, 'he that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?'⁴ He who makes a watch or engine, knows all the workmanship in it. God, that made the heart, knows all the motions and fallacies of it: He is like Ezekiel's wheels, full of eyes, and, as Austin saith, 'all eye.' 2. It ought to be so; for he is to be 'judge of all the world.'⁵ There are so many causes to be brought before him, and so many persons to be tried, that he must have a most exquisite perfect knowledge, or he could not do justice. An ordinary judge cannot proceed without a jury, the jury must search the cause, and give in the verdict, but God can judge without a jury. He knows all things in

and of himself, and needs no witnesses to inform him. A judge judgeth only matters of fact, but God judgeth the heart. He not only judgeth wicked actions, but wicked designs. He sees the treason of the heart, and punisheth it.

USE 1. Is God infinite in knowledge? 'He is light, and in him is no darkness;'⁶ then how unlike are they to God, who are darkness, and in whom is no light, who are destitute of knowledge, such as the Indians who never heard of God? And are there not many among us who are no better than baptized heathens? Who are to seek in the first principles of the oracles of God? It is sad that after the sun of the gospel hath shined so long in our horizon, yet to this day the veil should be upon their heart. Such as are enveloped with ignorance cannot give God a 'reasonable service.'⁷ Ignorance is the nurse of impiety; the schoolmen say, 'every sin is founded on ignorance.' 'They proceed from evil to evil; and they know not me, saith the Lord.'⁸ Where ignorance reigns in the understanding, lust rageth in the affections: 'that the mind be without knowledge, it is not good;'⁹ such have neither faith nor fear. No faith, for knowledge carries the torch before faith: 'they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.'¹⁰ A man can no more believe without knowledge, than the eye can see without light. Nor fear of God. How can they fear him whom they do not know? The covering of Haman's face was a sad preface of death. When people's minds are covered with ignorance, this covering of the face is a fatal forerunner of destruction.

2. If God be a God of knowledge, then see the folly of hypocrisy. Hypocrites do not 'form virtue, but feign it,' MELANCT. They carry it fair with men, but care not how bad their hearts are; they live in secret sin: 'they say how doth God know;'¹¹ 'God hath forgotten, he hideth his face, he will never see it.'¹² But 'his understanding is infinite.'¹³ He hath a grate that looks into men's breasts; he hath a key for the heart; he beholds all the sinful workings of men's spirits, as in a glass-hive we can see the bees working in their combs. 'He sees in secret.'¹⁴ As a merchant enters down debts in his book, so God hath his diary or daybook, and he enters down every sin into

¹ Gen. 18. 21. ² Isa. 28. 17. ³ Hos. 13. 12. ⁴ Ps. 91. 9.
⁵ Gen. 18. 25.

⁶ 1 Jno. 1. 5. ⁷ Ro. 12. 1. ⁸ Jer. 9. 3. ⁹ Pro. 19. 2.
¹⁰ Ps. 9. 10. ¹¹ Ps. 73. 11. ¹² Ps. 10. 11. ¹³ Ps. 147. 5.
¹⁴ Mat. 6. 4.

the book; he makes a critical descant upon men's actions. Jeroboam's wife disguised herself that the prophet should not know her, but he discerned her: 'why feignest thou thyself to be another?' The hypocrite thinks to prevaricate and juggle with God, but God will unmask him: 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.' 'They have committed villany in Israel,' 'even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.'²⁵ Ay, but the hypocrite hopes he shall colour over his sin, and make it look very specious! Absalom masks over his treason with the pretence of a religious vow; Judas dissembles his envy at Christ, and covetousness, with the pretence of charity to the poor; Jehu makes religion a stirrup to his ambitious design;²⁶ but God sees through these fig-leaves. You may see a jade under his gilt trappings: 'their iniquities are not hid from mine eyes.'²⁷ And he that hath an eye to see, will find an hand to punish.

USE 2. Of Exhortation. Is God so infinite in his knowledge? Then we should always set ourselves as under his omniscient eye. 'We must so live as if ever in his sight,' **SENECA**. Let us set David's prospect before our eye, 'I have set the Lord always before me.'²⁸ Seneca counselled Lucilius that whatever he was doing he should imagine some of the Roman worthies stood before him, and then he would do nothing dishonourable. The consideration of God's omniscieny would be preventive of much sin. The eye of man will restrain from sin; and will not God's eyes much more? 'Then said the king, will he force the queen also before me?'²⁹ Will we sin when our judge looks on? Would men speak so vainly, if they considered God overheard them? Latimer took heed to every word in his examination, when he heard the pen go behind the hangings: so, what care would persons have of their words, if they remembered God heard, and the pen is going in heaven? Would men go after strange flesh, if they believed God was a spectator of their wickedness, and would make them do penance in hell for it? Would they defraud in their dealings, and use false weights, if they thought God saw them, and for making their weights lighter, would make their damnation heavier? The setting ourselves as under the eye of God's omniscieny, would cause reverence in the worship of God. God sees the frame and carriage

of our hearts when we come before him! How would this call in our straggling thoughts? how would this animate and spirit duty? It would make us put fire to the incense, 'the tribes instantly served God day and night,'³⁰ with the utmost zeal and intenseness of spirit. To think God is in this place, he beholds us, would add wings to prayer, and oil to the flame of our devotion.

Is God's knowledge infinite? Study sincerity, be what you seem, 'the Lord looketh upon the heart.'³¹ Men judge of the heart by the actions, God judgeth of the actions by the heart; if the heart be sincere, God will see the faith and wink at the failing. Asa had his blemishes, but his heart was right with God.³² God saw his sincerity, and pardoned his infirmity. Sincerity in a christian, is like elasticity in a wife, which doth excuse many failings. Sincerity makes our duties acceptable, like musk among linen, that perfumes it. As Jehu said to Jehonadab, 'is thine heart right?'³³ And he said, 'it is.' 'If it be,' said he, 'give me thy hand;' and he took him up into the chariot. So, if God see our heart is right, that we love him, and design his glory, 'now,' saith he, 'give me your prayers and tears; now you shall come up with me into the triumphant chariot of glory.' Sincerity makes our services to be golden, and God will not cast away this gold, though it may want some weight. Is God omniscient, and his eye chiefly upon the heart? wear this girdle of truth about you and never leave it off.

USE 3. Of Comfort. Is God a God of infinite knowledge? Then there is comfort, 1. To the saints in particular, 2. To the church in general, in three respects:

1. In case of private devotion. Christian, thou settest hours apart for God, thy thoughts run upon him as thy treasure: God takes notice of every good thought, 'he had a book of remembrance written for them that thought upon his name.'³⁴ Thou enterest into thy closet, and prayest to thy Father in secret: he hears every sigh and groan, 'my groaning is not hid from thee.'³⁵ Thou waterest the seed of thy prayer with tears; God bottles every tear, 'put thou my tears into thy bottle.'³⁶ When the secrets of all hearts shall be opened, God will make an honourable mention of the zeal and devotion of his people, and he himself will

²⁵ 1 Ki. 14. 6. ²⁶ Jer. 12. 14. ²⁷ Jer. 29. 23. ²⁸ Jno. 12. 5.
²⁹ 2 Ki. 10. 16. ³⁰ Jer. 16. 17. ³¹ Ps. 16. 8. ³² Est. 7. 8.

³³ Acts 26. 7. ³⁴ 1 Sam. 16. 7. ³⁵ 2 Chr. 15. 17. ³⁶ 2 Ki. 10. 15.
³⁷ Mal. 3. 16. ³⁸ Ps. 38. 9. ³⁹ Ps. 56. 8.

be the herald of their praises : ' then shall every man have praise of God.'¹

2. The infiniteness of God's knowledge is a comfort, in case the saints have not so clear a knowledge of themselves. They find so much corruption, that they judge they have no grace, ' if it be so, why am I thus?'² If I have grace, why is my heart in so dead and earthly a frame? O remember, God is of infinite knowledge, he can spy grace where thou canst not; he can see grace hid under corruption, as the stars may be hid under a cloud. God can see that holiness in thee which thou canst not discern in thyself; he can spy the flower of grace in thee, though overtopped with weeds, ' because there is in him some good thing.'³ God sees some good thing in his people when they can see no good in themselves; and though they judge themselves, he will give them an absolution.

3. It is comfort in respect of personal injuries. It is the saint's lot to suffer; the head being crowned with thorns, the feet must not tread upon roses. If saints find a real purgatory, it is in this life; but this is their comfort, God sees what wrong is done to them; the apple of his eye is touched, and is not he sensible? St Paul was scourged by cruel hands, ' thrice was I beaten with rods';⁴ as if you should see a scullion whip the king's son. God beholds it, ' I know their sorrows.'⁵ The

wicked make wounds in the backs of the saints, and then pour in vinegar; but God writes down their cruelty. Believers are part of Christ's mystical body; and for every drop of a saint's blood spilt, God puts a drop of wrath in his vial.

4. Comfort to the church of God in general. If God be a God of knowledge, he sees all the plots of the enemies against Zion, and can make them prove abortive. The wicked are subtle, having borrowed their skill of the old serpent; they dig deep to hide their counsels from God, but he sees them, and can easily counterwork them. The dragon is described with seven heads,⁶ to show how he plots against the church: but God is described with seven eyes,⁷ to show that he sees all the blots and stratagems of the enemies; and when they deal proudly, he can be above them. ' Come,' saith Pharaoh, ' let us deal wisely';⁸ and he never played the fool more than when he thought to deal wisely, ' in the morning-watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, by the pillar of fire, and troubled the host.'⁹ How may this be as sap in the vine, and may comfort the church of God in her militant state! The Lord hath an eye in all the councils and combinations of the enemy; he sees them lay their train, and can blow them up in their own mine.

OF THE ETERNITY OF GOD.

THE next attribute is, ' God is eternal: ' from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.'¹⁰ The schoolmen distinguish between time's duration and eternity, to explain the notion of eternity. There is a threefold being: 1st, Such a being as had a beginning, and shall have an end: so all sensitive creatures, the beasts, fowls, fishes, these at death are destroyed and return to dust, their being ends with their life. 2d, Such a being as had a beginning, but shall have no end, as the angels and souls of men; they are eternal for ever after, they abide for ever. 3d, Such a being as is without beginning, and without ending, and that is proper only to God. He is always existing, viz. from everlasting to everlasting;

it is God's title, a jewel of his crown: he is called, ' the king eternal.'¹¹ *Jehovah*,—a word that properly sets out God's eternity, a word so dreadful, that the Jews trembled to name or read it, therefore used another word, *Adonai*, ' Lord.' *Jehovah* contains in it time past, present, and to come, ' which is, and which was, and which is to come';¹² it interprets the word *Jehovah*, *which is*, He subsists of himself, having a pure and independent being,—*which was*, God only was before time, there is no searching into the records of eternity,—*which is to come*, his kingdom hath no end, his crown hath no successors, ' thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' The doubling of the word ratifies the certainty of it, as the doubling of Pharaoh's

¹ 1 Cor. 1. 5. ² Gen. 25. 22. ³ 1 Ki. 14. 13. ⁴ 1 Cor. 11. 35.
⁵ Ex. 3. 7. ⁶ Ps. 90. 2.

⁷ Rev. 12. 3. ⁸ Zec. 3. 9. ⁹ Ex. 1. 10. ¹⁰ Ex. 14. 21.
¹¹ 1 Tim. 1. 17. ¹² Rev. i. 8. ¹³ Heb. 1. 8.

dream did. I shall prove that God only could be eternal, without beginning. Angels could not; they are but creatures, though spirits; they were made, and therefore their beginning may be known, their antiquity may be searched into. If you ask, when they were created? Some think before the world was; but not so, for what was before time was eternal,—the angels' first rise and original reacheth no higher than the beginning of the world. It is thought by the learned that the angels were made that day on which the heavens were made, 'when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.'¹ St Hierom, Gregory, and venerable Bede, understand it of the angels, when God laid the foundation-stone of the world, the angels being then created, did sing the anthems of joy and praise; the angels could not be before time, for what was before time was eternal. It is only proper to God to be eternal, without beginning. He is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.² No creature can write itself Alpha, that is only a flower of the crown of heaven, 'I am that I am,'³ namely, He who exists from and to eternity.

USE 1. Here is thunder and lightning to the wicked. God is eternal, therefore the torments of the wicked are eternal. God lives for ever; and as long as God lives, he will be punishing the damned. This, methinks, should be as the handwriting upon the wall,⁴ it should make their joints to be loosed, &c. The sinner takes liberty to sin; he breaks God's laws, like a wild beast that breaks over the hedge, and leaps into forbidden pasture; he sins with greediness,⁵ as if he thought he could not sin fast enough. But remember, this is one of God's names, *Eternal*; and as long as God is eternal, he hath time enough to reckon with all his enemies. To make sinners tremble, let them think of these three things: the torments of the damned are without intermission,—without mixture,—and eternal.

1. Without intermission. Their pains shall be acute and sharp, and no relaxation; the fire shall not be slackened or abated, 'they shall have no rest day nor night';⁶ like one that hath his joints stretched continually on the rack, and hath no ease, therefore the wrath of God is compared to a stream of brimstone.⁷ Why to a stream? Because a stream runs without intermission; it runs, and doth not stop; so God's

wrath runs like a stream, and pours out without any intermission. In the pains of this life, there is some abatement and intermission; the fever abates,—after a fit of the stone, the patient hath some ease,—but the pains of hell are intense and violent in the highest degree; the damned soul never saith, 'I am now more at ease.'

2. Without mixture. Hell is a place of pure justice. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy; he mixeth compassion with suffering.⁸ Asher's shoe was of iron, but his foot was dipt in oil. Affliction is the iron-shoe, but mercy is mixed with it; here is the foot dipt in oil. But the torments of the damned have no mixture: 'the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture.'⁹ No mixture of mercy. How is the cup of wrath said to be full of mixture, 'for in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out and drink them?'¹⁰ Yet in the Revelation it is said to be without mixture. It is full of mixture, that is, it is full of all the ingredients that may make it bitter; the worm, the fire, the curse of God, all these are bitter ingredients. It is a cup mixed, yet it is without mixture, namely, there shall be nothing to afford the least comfort, no mixture of mercy; so it is a cup without mixture. In the sacrifice of jealousy¹¹ there was no oil to be put to it; so, in the torments of the damned, there is no oil of mercy to abate their sufferings.

3. Without cessation, eternal. The pleasures of sin are but for a season, but the torments of the wicked are for ever. Sinners have a short feast, but a long reckoning. Origen erroneously thought that after a thousand years the damned should be released out of their misery: but the worm, the fire, the prison, are all eternal, 'the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever.'¹² Eternity is a sea without bottom and banks. After millions of years, there is not one minute in eternity wasted; and the damned must be ever burning, but never consuming,—always dying, but never dead: 'they shall seek death, but shall not find it.'¹³ The fire of hell is such as multitudes of tears will not quench it, length of time will not finish it, the vial of God's wrath

¹ Job 38. 7. ² Rev. 1. 8. ³ Ex. 3. 14. ⁴ Dan. 5. 6.
⁵ Eph. 4. 19. ⁶ Rev. 14. 11. ⁷ Isa. 30. 33.

⁸ De. 33. 25. ⁹ Rev. 14. 10. ¹⁰ Ps. 75. 8. ¹¹ Nu. 5. 15.
¹² Rev. 14. 11. ¹³ Rev. 9. 6.

will be always dropping upon a sinner. As long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon the wicked. O ETERNITY! ETERNITY! who can fathom it? Mariners have their plummets to measure the depths of the sea; but what line or plummet shall we use to fathom the depth of eternity? The breath of the Lord kindles the infernal lake; and where shall we have engines or buckets to quench that fire? O ETERNITY! If all the body of the earth and sea were turned to sand, and all the air up to the starry heaven were nothing but sand, and a little bird should come every thousand years and fetch away in her bill but the tenth part of a grain of all that heap of sand, what a numberless number of years would be spent before that vast heap of sand would be fetched away? Yet, if at the end of all that time, the sinner might come out of hell, (though long) yet there would be some hope: but this word EVER, breaks the heart! 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.' What a terror is this to the wicked, enough to put them into a cold sweat, to think, as long as God is eternal, he lives for ever to be avenged upon sinners!

Q. Here a question may be moved, *Why sin that is committed in a short time should be punished eternally?*

A. We must hold with St Augustine, 'that God's judgments on the wicked may be secret, but never unjust.' The reason why sin committed in a short time is eternally punished, is, because every sin is committed against an infinite essence, and no less than eternity of punishment can satisfy. Why is treason punished with confiscation and death, but because it is against the king's person, which is sacred: much more that offence which is against God's crown and dignity, is of an heinous and infinite nature, and cannot be satisfied with less than eternal punishment.

USE 2. *Of comfort to the godly.* God is eternal, therefore lives for ever to reward the godly: 'to them who seek for glory and honour, eternal life.'¹ The people of God here are in a suffering condition: 'bonds and afflictions abide me.'² The head being crowned with thorns, the feet must not tread upon roses. The wicked are clad in purple and fare deliciously, while the godly suffer. Goats climb upon high mountains, while Christ's sheep are in the valley of slaughter. But here is the

comfort: God is eternal, and he hath appointed eternal recompenses for the saints,—in heaven are fresh delights, sweetness without surfeit, and that which is the crown and zenith of heaven's happiness, is, it is 'eternal.'⁴ Were there but the least suspicion that this glory must cease, it would much eclipse, yea embitter it; but it is eternal. What angel can span eternity? 'An eternal weight of glory.'⁵ The saints shall bathe themselves in the rivers of divine pleasure; and these rivers can never be dried up, 'at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'⁶ This is the *Elah*, the highest strain in the apostle's rhetoric, 'ever with the Lord.' There is peace without trouble, ease without pain, glory without end, 'ever with the Lord.' Let this comfort the saints in all their troubles; their sufferings are but short, but their reward is eternal. Eternity makes heaven to be heaven; 'tis the diamond in the ring. O blessed day that shall have no night! The sunlight of glory shall rise upon the soul, and never set! O blessed spring, that shall have no autumn, or fall of the leaf! The Roman emperors have three crowns set upon their heads, the first of iron, the second of silver, the third of gold: so the Lord sets three crowns on his children, grace, comfort, and glory. And this crown is eternal, 'ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'⁷ The wicked have a never-dying worm, and the godly a never-fading crown. O how should this be a spur to virtue! How willing should we be to work for God! Though we had nothing here, God hath time enough to reward his people; the crown of eternity shall be set upon their head.

USE 3. *Of exhortation.* 1. In general, study eternity. Our thoughts should chiefly run upon eternity. We all wish for the present, something that may delight the senses. If we could have lived, as Augustine saith, from the infancy of the world to the world's old age, what were this? What is time measured with eternity? As the earth is but a small point to the heaven, so time is but, nay scarce a minute to eternity! And then, what is this poor life which crumbles away so fast? O think of eternity! 'Keep in thy mind the years of eternity!' Brethren, we are every day travelling to eternity; and whether we wake or sleep, we are going our journey; some of us

¹ Isa. 30. 33. ² Rom. 2. 7. ³ Acts 20. 23.

⁴ 1 Jno. 2. 25. ⁵ 2 Cor. 4. 17. ⁶ Ps. 16. 11. ⁷ 1 Th. 4. 17.

⁸ 1 Pet. 5. 4.

are upon the borders of eternity, O study the shortness of life and length of eternity!

2. More particularly; think of God's eternity, and the soul's eternity. (1.) Think of God's eternity. He is 'the Ancient of days,' who was before all time. There is a figurative description of God, 'the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool.'¹ His white garment, wherewith he was clothed, signified his majesty; his hair, like the pure wool, his holiness; and 'the ancient of days,' his eternity. The thought of God's eternity should make us have high adoring thoughts of God. We are apt to have mean, irreverent thoughts of him: 'thou thoughtest I was altogether such an one as thyself';² weak and mortal, but if we would think of God's eternity, when all power ceaseth, he is King eternal, his crown flourisheth for ever, who can make us happy or miserable for ever, this would make us have adoring thoughts of God. 'The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat upon the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne.'³ The saints fall down, to signify by that humble posture, that they are not worthy to sit in God's presence. They fall down, and they worship him that liveth for ever and ever; they do as it were kiss his feet. And they cast their crowns before the throne; they lay all their honour at his feet; thus they show humble adoration to the eternal essence. Study God's eternity, it will make us adore where we cannot fathom. (2.) Think of the soul's eternity. As God is eternal, so he hath made us eternal. We are never-dying creatures; we are shortly entering upon an eternal state, either of happiness or misery. Have serious thoughts of this: say, O my soul, which of these two eternities is like to be thy portion? I must shortly depart hence, and whether then shall I go, to which of these eterni-

ties, either of glory or misery? The serious meditation of the eternal state we are to pass into, would work strongly with us. 1. Thoughts of eternal torments are a good antidote against sin; sin tempts with its pleasure; but, when we think of eternity, it may cool the intemperate heat of lust. Shall I, for the pleasure of sin for a season, endure eternal pain? Sin, like those locusts,⁴ seems to have on its head, a crown like gold, but it hath in it a tail like a scorpion,⁵ and a sting in its tail, and this sting can never be plucked out. Shall I venture eternal wrath? Is sin committed so sweet, as lying in hell for ever is bitter? This would make us flee from sin, as Moses from the serpent. 2. The serious thoughts of eternal happiness would very much take us off from these worldly things; we should not esteem much of them. What are these sublunary things to eternity? they are quickly gone, they salute us, and take their farewell. But I am to enter upon an everlasting estate; I hope to live with him who is eternal; what is the world to me? They who stand upon the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem as small things in their eyes; so he who hath his thoughts fixed on his eternal state after this life, all these things seem as nothing in his eye. What is the glory of this world? How poor and contemptible compared with an eternal weight of glory. 3. To conclude: The serious thoughts of an eternal state, either of happiness or misery, should have a powerful influence upon whatsoever we take in hand; every work we do, promotes either a blessed or cursed eternity; every good action sets us a step nearer to an eternity of happiness; every bad action sets us a step nearer to an eternity of misery. O what influence would the thoughts of eternity have upon our religious duties! It would make us do them with all our might: a duty well performed, lifts a Christian higher towards heaven, and sets a Christian a step nearer to a blessed eternity.

GOD'S UNCHANGEABLENESS.

THE next attribute is God's unchangeableness: 'I am Jehovah, I change not.'¹ 1. God is unchangeable in his nature. 2. In his decree.

I. Unchangeable in his nature: 1. There is

no eclipse of his brightness. 2. No period put to his being.

1. No eclipse of his brightness: his essence shines with a fixed lustre, 'with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning':² 'thou

¹ Dan. 7. 9. ² Ps. 50. 21. ³ Rev. 4. 10. ⁴ Mal. 3. 6.

⁵ Rev. 9. 7. ⁶ Rev. 5. 10. ⁷ Jam. 1. 17.

art the same.¹ All created things are full of vicissitudes: 1. Princes and emperors are subject to mutation. Sesostris, an Egyptian prince, having subdued divers kings in war, made them draw like horses in his chariot, as if he intended to turn them to eat grass, as God did king Nebuchadnezzar. The crown hath many successors. 2. Kingdoms have their eclipses and convulsions: what is become of the glory of Athens? The pomp of Troy? Kingdoms, though they have a head of gold, yet feet of clay. 3. The heavens change, 'as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.'² The matter of the elements, as it is more pure, so more firm and solid; the heavens are the most ancient records, where God hath written his glory like a sunbeam, yet these shall change; though I do not think they shall be destroyed as to their substance, yet they shall be changed as to their qualities; they shall melt with fervent heat,³ and so be more refined and purified. Thus the heavens shall be changed, but not he who dwells in heaven: 'with him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.'⁴ 4. The best saints have their eclipses and changes. Look upon a christian in his spiritual estate, and he is full of variation. Though the seed of grace doth not die, yet the beauty and activity of it doth often wither. A christian hath his aguish fits in religion; sometimes his faith is at an high tide, sometimes low ebb; sometimes his love flames, and at another time like fire hid in the embers, and he hath lost his first love. How strong was David's grace at one time, 'the God of my rock, in him will I trust.'⁵ And at another time, 'I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.' What christian can say he doth not find a change in his graces; that the bow of his faith doth never unbend, the strings of his zeal do never slacken? Sure we shall never meet with such christians till we meet with them in heaven! But God is without any shadow of turning. 5. The angels were subject to change; they were created holy, but mutable, 'the angels which kept not their first estate.'⁶ These morning stars of heaven were falling stars. But God's glory shines with a fixed brightness. In God there is nothing looks like a change, no better or worse; no better in him, because then he were not perfect; nor worse in him, for then he should cease to be perfect. He is immutably holy, immutably good, there is no shadow of change in him.

OBJECT. *Christ, who is God, assumed the human nature, here was a change.*

A. If indeed the divine nature had been converted into the human, or the human into the divine, here had been a change, but not so. The human nature was distinct from the divine, therefore there was no change. As suppose a cloud cover the sun, this makes no change in the body of the sun; so, though the divine nature be covered with the human, this makes no change in the divine nature.

II. There is no period put to his being, 'who only hath immortality.'⁷ The Godhead cannot die: 1. An infinite essence cannot be changed into finite; but God is infinite. 2. He is eternal, therefore he is not mortal; to be eternal and mortal, is a contradiction.

USE 1. See here *the excellency of the divine nature in its immutability*: this is the glory of the Godhead. Mutableness denotes weakness; it is not so in God, he is 'the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'⁸ Men are fickle and mutable, like Reuben, 'unstable as water.'⁹ They go in changeable colours. 1. They are changeable in their principles, sometimes protestant, sometimes papist; if their faces altered as fast as their opinions, we should not know them. 2. Changeable in their resolutions; as the wind that blows in the east, presently turns about to the west. They resolve to be virtuous, but quickly repent of their resolutions; their minds are like a sick man's pulse, alters every half-hour; these the apostle compares to 'waves of the sea,' and 'wandering stars';¹⁰ they are not pillars in God's temple, but reeds. 3. Others are changeable in their friendship, quickly love and quickly hate; sometimes will put you in their bosom, then excommunicate you out of their favour; thus they change as the cameleon into several colours. But God is immutable.

USE 2. See *the vanity of the creature*; there are changes in every thing but in God; 'men of high degree are vanity, and men of low degree are a lie.'¹¹ We look for more from the creature than God hath put into it. The world rings changes; the creature hath two evils in it; it promiseth more than we find, and it fails us when we most need it; there is a failure in all. A man desires to have his corn ground, the water fails, and then his mill cannot go; the mariner is for a voyage, the wind either doth not blow, or it is contrary, and he cannot sail;

¹ Ps. 102. 27. ² Ps. 102. 26. ³ 2 Pet. 3. 12. ⁴ 2 Sam. 22. 3.

⁵ Jude 6.

⁶ 1 Tim. 6. 16. ⁷ Heb. 13. 8. ⁸ Gen. 49. 4. ⁹ Jude 13. ¹⁰ Ps. 62. 9.

one depends upon another for the payment of a promise, and he fails, and is like a foot out of joint. Who would look for a fixed stability in the vain creature ! As if one should build houses on the sand, where the sea comes in and overflows. The creature is true to nothing but deceit, and is constant only in its disappointments. It is no more wonder to see changes fall out here below, than to see the moon dressing itself in a new shape and figure ; look to meet with changes in every thing but in God.

USE 3. *Comfort to the godly* : 1. In case of losses ; if an estate be almost boiled away to nothing, if you lose dear friends by death, here is a double eclipse ; but this is the comfort, God is unchangeable ; I may lose these things, but I cannot lose my God, he never dies. When the fig-tree, and olive-tree failed, yet God did not fail, 'I will joy in the God of my salvation.'¹ The flowers in the garden die, but a man's portion remains ; so outward things die and change, but 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.'² 2. In case of sadness of spirit, when God seems to cast off the soul in dejection, 'my Beloved had withdrawn himself ;'³ yet God is unchangeable. He is immutable in his love ; he may change his countenance, but not his heart, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love,'⁴—in Hebrew, *gnolam*, 'a love of eternity.' If once God's electing love riseth upon the soul, it never sets : 'the mountains shall be removed, but my loving-kindness shall not depart from thee, neither the covenant of my peace be removed.'⁵ God's love stands faster than the mountains ; God's love to Christ is unchangeable, and he will no more cease loving believers, than he will cease loving Christ.

USE 4. *Of exhortation*. Get an interest in this unchangeable God, then thou art as a rock in the sea, immovable in midst of all changes.

Q. *How shall I get a part in this unchangeable God ?*

A. By having a change wrought in thee : 'but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.'⁶ Whence we are changed from 'darkness to light,'—so changed, as if another soul did live in the same body ; by this change, we are interested in the unchangeable God. Trust to this God only, who is unchangeable, 'cease ye from man ;'⁷ leave trusting to the reed, but trust to 'the Rock of ages.' He that is by faith en-

garrisoned in God, is safe in all changes ; he is like a boat that is tied to an immovable rock. He that trusts in God, trusts in that which cannot fail him ; he is unchangeable, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'⁸ Health may leave us, riches, friends may leave us, but, saith God, 'I'll not leave thee ; my power shall support thee ; my Spirit shall sanctify thee ; my mercy shall save thee ; I will never leave thee.' O trust in this unchangeable God ! God is jealous of two things, of our love, and of our trust : he is jealous of our love, lest we love the creature more than him, therefore he makes it prove bitter ; and of our trust, lest we should place more confidence in it than in him, therefore he makes it prove unfaithful. Outward comforts are given us as baits by the way to refresh us, but not as crutches to lean on ; if we make the creature an idol, what we make our trust God makes our shame. O trust in the immortal God ! We, like Noah's dove, have no footing for our souls, till we get into the ark of God's unchangeableness, 'they that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Sion, which cannot be removed.'⁹ God is unchangeable in his decree ; what he hath decreed from eternity is unalterable, 'my counsel shall stand.'¹⁰ Argument, That God's eternal counsel or decree is immutable : if God changed his decree, it must be from some defect of wisdom or foresight in God, for that is the reason why men do change their purposes ; through a want of foresight, they see something after, which they did not see before ; but this cannot be the cause why God should alter his decree, because his knowledge is perfect, he sees all things in one entire prospect before him.

OBJECT. *But is not God said to repent ? There seems to be a change in his decree, 'the Lord repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them.'*¹¹

A. Repentance is attributed to God figuratively and improperly : he is not a 'man that he should repent.'¹² There may be a change in God's work, but not in his will ; God may will a change, but not change his will ; 'God may change his sentence, but not his decree.' As suppose a king shall cause a sentence to be passed upon a malefactor whom he intends to save : notwithstanding this sentence, the king doth not alter his decree, so God threatened destruction to Nineveh,¹³ but the people of

¹ Hab. 3. 18. ² Ps. 73. 26. ³ Cant. 5. 6. ⁴ Jer. 31. 3.
⁵ Is. 51. 10. ⁶ 1 Cor. 6. 11. ⁷ Is. 2. 22.

⁸ Heb. 13. 5. ⁹ Ps. 125. 1. ¹⁰ Isa. 46. 10. ¹¹ Jonah 3. 10
¹² Nu. 23. 19. ¹³ Jonah 3. 5.

Nineveh repenting, God spared them. Here God changed his sentence, but not his decree; it was what had lain in the womb of his purpose from eternity.

OBJECT. *But if God's decree be unchangeable, and cannot be reversed, then to what purpose should we use the means? Our endeavours towards salvation cannot alter his decree.*

A. This decree of God doth not take off my endeavour; for he that hath decreed my salvation, hath decreed it in the use of means: and if I neglect the means, I go about to reprobate myself. No man argues thus: 'God hath decreed how long I shall live, therefore I will not use means to preserve my life, not eat and drink.' God hath decreed the time of my life in the use of means; so God hath decreed my salvation in the use of word, prayer, sacraments; and as a man that refuseth his food, murders himself, so he that refuseth to work out his salvation doth destroy himself. The vessels of mercy are said to be 'prepared unto glory.'¹ How are they prepared but by being sanctified? And that cannot be but in the use of means; therefore let not God's decree take thee off from holy endeavours. A good saying of Dr Preston, 'Hast thou an heart to pray to God? it is a sign no decree of wrath hath passed against thee.'

USE 1. If God's decree be eternal and unchangeable, then God doth not elect our faith foreseen, as the Arminians, 'the children being not yet born, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said, Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.'² We are not elected *for* holiness, but *to* holiness.³ If we are not justified for our faith, much less elected for our faith; but we are not justified for it; we are said to be justified through faith as an instrument,⁴ but not for faith as a cause; and, if not justified for faith, then much less elected. God's decree of election is eternal and unchangeable, therefore depends not upon faith foreseen, 'as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.'⁵ They were not elected because they believed, but they believed because they were elected.

USE 2. If God's decree be unchangeable, it is comfort in two cases: 1. Concerning God's providence towards his church. We are ready to quarrel with providence if every thing doth not jump with our desire: remember

God's work goes on, and nothing falls out but what he hath decreed from eternity. 2. God hath decreed troubles for the church's good: the troubling of God's church is like the angel's troubling the water,⁶ which made way for healing his people. He hath decreed troubles in the church: 'whose fire is in Sion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.'⁷ The wheels in a watch move cross one to another, but they all carry on the motion of the watch: so the wheels of providence often move cross to our desires, but still they carry on God's unchangeable decree, 'many shall be made white.'⁸ God lets the waters of affliction be poured on his people, he doth but lay them a whitening. Therefore murmur not at God's dealings; his work goes on, nothing falls out but what he hath wisely decreed from eternity; every thing shall promote God's design, and fulfil his decree. 3. Comfort to the godly in regard of their salvation, 'the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.'⁹ God's counsel of election is unchangeable: once elected, and for ever elected, 'I will not blot his name out of the book of life.'¹⁰ The book of God's decree hath no errata in it,—no blottings out,—once justified never unjustified, 'repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.'¹¹ God never repents of his electing love, 'he loved them to the end.'¹² Therefore, if thou art a believer, comfort thyself with this, the immutability of God's decree.

USE 3. To conclude: a word to the wicked, who march furiously against God and his people—Let them know, God's decree is unchangeable; he will not alter it, nor can they break it; and while they resist his will, they fulfil it. There is a twofold will of God, the will of his precept, and of his decree. While the wicked resist the will of God's precept, they fulfil the will of his permissive decree. Judas betrays Christ, Pilate condemns him, the soldiers crucify him,—while they resisted the will of God's precepts, they fulfilled the will of his permissive decree.¹³ Such as are wicked, God commands one thing, they do the quite contrary; to keep the sabbath, they profane it; while they disobey his command, they fulfil his permissive decree. If a man sets up two nets, one of silk, the other of iron, the silken net may be broken, not the iron: God's commands are the silken net. While men break

¹ Ro. 9. 23. ² Rom. 9. 11—13. ³ Eph. 1. 4. ⁴ Eph. 2. 8. ⁵ Acts 13. 48.

⁶ Jno. 5. 4. ⁷ Isa. 31. 9. ⁸ Da. 12. 10. ⁹ 2 Tim. 2. 19. ¹⁰ Rev. 3. 5. ¹¹ Hos. 13. 14. ¹² Jno. 13. 1. ¹³ Acts 4. 28.

the silken net of God's command, they are taken in the iron net of his decree; while they sit backward to God's precepts, they row forward to his decree; his decree do permit their sin, and to punish them for their sin permitted.

OF THE WISDOM OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's wisdom, which is one of the brightest beams of the Godhead, 'he is wise in heart.' The heart is the seat of wisdom. Among the Hebrews, the heart is put for wisdom, 'let men of understanding tell me;' in the Hebrew, 'let men of heart tell me.' God is wise in heart, that is, he is most wise: God is only wise; he doth solely and wholly possess all wisdom; therefore he is called 'the only wise God.' All the treasures of wisdom are locked up in him, and no creature can have any wisdom but as God is pleased to give it out of his treasury. God is perfectly wise; there is no defect in his wisdom. Men may be wise in some things, but in other things may betray imprudence and weakness. But God is the exemplar and pattern of wisdom, and the pattern must be perfect.⁴ God's wisdom appears in two things: 1st, His infinite intelligence. 2dly, His exact working.

1st. His infinite intelligence. He knows the most profound, abstruse secrets.⁵ He knows the thoughts, which are the most intricate subtle things, 'he declareth to man what is his thought.'⁶ Let sin be contrived ever so politically, God will pull off all masks and disguises, and make an heart-anatomy. He knows all future contingencies, 'they are ever before his eyes,' all things are before him in one clear prospect.

2d. His exact curious working. He is wise in heart; his wisdom lies in his works. These works of God are bound up in three great volumes, where we may read his wisdom.

1. The work of creation. The creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so a looking-glass in which we may see his wisdom. None but a wise God could so curiously contrive the world. Behold the earth decked with variety of flowers which are both for beauty and fragraney; the heaven bespangled with lights; we may see the glorious wisdom of God blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. His wisdom is seen in the marshalling and ordering every thing in its

proper place and sphere; if the sun had been set lower, it would have burnt us; if higher, it would not have warmed us with its beams. God's wisdom is seen in appointing the seasons of the year, 'thou hast made summer and winter.'⁷ If it had been all summer, the heat would have scorched us; if all winter, the cold would have killed us. The wisdom of God is seen in chequering the dark and the light; if it had been all night, there had been no labour; if all day, there had been no rest. Wisdom is seen in mixing the elements, the earth with the sea; if it had been all sea, then we had wanted bread; if it had been all earth, then we had wanted water. The wisdom of God is seen in preparing and ripening the fruits of the earth; the wind and frost prepare the fruits, the sun and rain ripen the fruits. God's wisdom is seen in setting bounds to the sea, and so wisely contriving it, that though the sea be higher than the earth, yet it should not overflow the earth; so that we may cry out with the Psalmist, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.'⁸ There is nothing to be seen but miracles of wisdom. God's wisdom is seen in ordering things in the body politic, that one shall have need of another; the poor need the rich man's money, and the rich need the poor man's labour. God makes one trade depend upon another, that one may be helpful to another, and that mutual love may be preserved.

2. The second work wherein God's wisdom shines forth, is the work of redemption: 1. Here was the masterpiece of divine wisdom, to contrive a way to happiness, between the sin of man and the justice of God. We may cry out with the apostle, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' This possessed men and angels. If God had put us to find out a way of salvation when we were lost, we could neither have had a head to devise, nor a heart to desire, what God's infinite wisdom had found out for us. Mercy had a mind to save sinners, yet loath that the justice of God should

¹ Job 9. 4. ² Job 34. 31. ³ 1 Tim. 1. 17. ⁴ Mat. 5. 48.
⁵ Dan. 2. 28. ⁶ Amos 1. 13.

⁷ Ps. 71. 17. ⁸ Ps. 104. 24. ⁹ R. m. 11. 33.

be wronged; 'it is a pity,' saith Mercy, 'that such a noble creature as man should be made to be undone; and yet no reason that God's justice should be a loser. What way then shall be found out? Angels cannot satisfy for the wrong done to God's justice, nor is it fit that one nature should sin, and another nature suffer: what then? Shall man be for ever lost?' Now, while Mercy was thus debating with itself, what to do for the recovery of fallen man, here the wisdom of God stepped in, and thus the oracle spake, 'Let God become man; let the second person in the Trinity be incarnate, and suffer: and so for fitness he shall be man, and for ability he shall be God; thus justice may be satisfied, and man saved.' O the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God, thus to make justice and mercy to kiss each other! Great is this mystery, 'God manifested in the flesh.'¹ What wisdom was this, that Christ should be made sin, yet know no sin; that God should condemn the sin, yet save the sinner? Here was wisdom, to find out the way of salvation. 2. The means by which salvation is applied, set forth God's wisdom; that salvation should be by faith, not by works. Faith is an humble grace, it gives all to Christ; it is an adorer of free grace; and free grace being advanced here, God hath his glory, and it is his highest wisdom to exalt his own glory. 3. The way of working faith declares God's wisdom; it is wrought by the word preached, 'Faith cometh by hearing.'² What is the weak breath of a man to convert a soul? It is like whispering in the ears of a dead man; this is foolishness in the eye of the world; but the Lord loves to show his wisdom, by that which seems folly, 'he hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.'³ Why so? 'That no flesh should glory in his presence.'⁴ Should God convert by the ministry of angels, then we should have been ready to have gloried in angels, and have given that honour to them which is due to God: but when God works by weak tools, makes use of men who are of like passions with ourselves, and by them converts, now the power is plainly seen to be of God, 'we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'⁵ Herein is God's wisdom seen, that no flesh may glory in his presence.

3. The wisdom of God wonderfully appears in the works of his providence. Every provi-

dence hath either a mercy or a wonder wrapt up in it. The wisdom of God, in his works of providence, appears: 1. By effecting great things by small contemptible means. He cured the stung Israelites, by a brazen serpent. If some sovereign antidote had been used, if the balm of Gilead had been brought, there had been some likelihood that this should have healed; but what was there in a brazen serpent? It was a mere image, and not applied to him that was wounded, only he was to look upon it, yet this wrought a cure. The less probability in the instrument, the more is God's wisdom seen. 2. The wisdom of God is seen in doing his work by that which to the eye of flesh seems quite contrary: God intended to advance Joseph, and make all his brethren's sheaves bow to his sheaf: now what way doth he take? first Joseph is thrown into the pit, then sold into Egypt: then after that put in prison.⁶ And by his imprisonment, God made way for his advancement. For God to save in an ordinary way, wisdom would not be so much taken notice of. But when he goes strangely to work, and saves in that very way in which we think he will destroy; now his wisdom shines forth in a most glorious conspicuous manner. God would make Israel victorious, and what way doth he go in? He lessens Gideon's army, 'the people that are with thee are too many;'⁷ he reduceth the army of two and thirty thousand to three hundred, and by taking away the means of victory, makes Israel victorious. God had a design to bring his people out of Egypt, and a strange course he takes to effect it: he stirred up the hearts of the Egyptians to hate them, 'he turned their heart to hate his people.'⁸ The more they hated and oppressed Israel, the more God plagued the Egyptians, and the more glad they were to let Israel go.⁹ The Egyptians were urgent upon Israel, that they might send them out of the land in haste. God had a mind to save Jonah when he was cast into the sea, and he lets the fish swallow him up, and so bring him to the shore. God would save Paul, and all that were in the ship with him, and there was no way to save them, but the ship must break, and they all came safe to land upon the broken pieces of the ship.¹⁰ In referrence to the church, God oft goes by contrary means, makes the enemy do his work; he can strike a straight

¹ 1 Tim. 3. 16. ² Ro. 10. 17. ³ 1 Cor. 1. 27. ⁴ 1 Cor. 1. 29. ⁵ 2 Cor. 4. 7.

⁶ Gen. 39. 20. ⁷ Judg. 7. 2. ⁸ Ps. 105. 25. ⁹ Ex. 12. 33. ¹⁰ Acts 27. 44.

stroke by crooked sticks, God hath oft made his church grow and flourish by persecution. 'The showers of blood have made her more fruitful,' JULIAN. 'Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply;' and that way they took to suppress them, made them multiply; 'the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied;' like ground, the more it is harrowed, it bears the better crop. The apostles were scattered by reason of persecution, and their scattering was like the scattering of seed; they went up and down, and preached the gospel, and brought daily converts. Paul was put in prison, and his bonds were a means to enlarge the gospel.² 3. The wisdom of God is seen in making the most desperate evils turn to the good of his children. As several poisonable ingredients, wisely tempered by the skill of the artist, make a sovereign medicine, so God makes the most deadly afflictions co-operate for the good of his children. He purifies them, and prepares them for heaven.⁴ These hard frosts hasten the spring-flowers of glory. The wise God, by a divine chemistry, turns afflictions into cordials. He makes his people gainers by losses, and turns their crosses into blessings. 4. The wisdom of God is seen in this, that the sins of men shall carry on his work; yet that he should have no hand in their sin. The Lord permits sin, but doth not approve it. He hath an hand in the action in which sin is, but not in the sin of the action. As in the crucifying of Christ, so far as it was a natural action, God did concur; if he had not given the Jews life and breath, they could not have done it; but, as it was a sinful action, so God abhorred it. A musician plays upon a viol out of tune; the musician is the cause of the sound, but the jarring and discord is from the viol itself; so men's natural motion is from God, but their sinful motion is from themselves. A man that rides on a lame horse, his riding is the cause why the horse goes, but the lameness is from the horse itself. Herein is God's wisdom, the sins of men shall carry on his work, yet he hath no hand in them. 5. The wisdom of God is seen in helping in desperate cases. He loves to show his wisdom when human help and wisdom fail. Exquisite lawyers love to wrestle with niceties and difficulties in the law, to show their skill the more. God's wisdom is never at a loss; but when providences are darkest, now appears the morning-star of deliv-

erance: 'who remembered us in our low condition.'⁵ Sometimes God melts away the spirits of his enemies. Sometimes he finds them other work to do, and sounds a retreat to them, as he did to Saul when he was pursuing David; 'the Philistines are in the land.' 'In the mount will God be seen.' When the church seems to be upon the altar, her peace and liberty ready to be sacrificed, now comes the angel. 6. God's wisdom is seen in befooling wise men, and making their wisdom a means of their overthrow. Ahithophel had deep policy, 'the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled, in those days was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God:'⁶ but he consulted his own shame. The Lord turned his counsel into foolishness, 'he taketh the wise in their own craftiness;' that is, when they think to deal wisely, he not only disappoints them, but ensnares them. The snares they lay for others catch themselves, 'in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.'⁷ God loves to counterplot politicians; he makes use of their own wit to undo them, and hangs Haman upon his own gallows.

USE 1. Adore the wisdom of God; it is an infinite deep the angels cannot search into, 'His ways are past finding out.'⁸ And as we should adore, so we should rest in the wisdom of God; he sees what condition is best for us. Did we believe the wisdom of God, it would keep us from murmuring. Rest in God's wisdom in several cases: 1. In want of spiritual comfort. God is wise, he sees it good sometimes we should be without comfort. Perhaps we should be lifted up with spiritual enlargements, as Paul with his revelations.⁹ It is hard to have the heart low, when comfort is high. God sees humility is better for us than joy. It is better to want comfort, and be humble, than to have it, and be proud. 2. In want of bodily strength, rest in God's wisdom; he sees what is best. Perhaps the less health the more grace; weaker in body, the stronger we are in faith, 'though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.'¹⁰ At Rome there were two laurel-trees; when the one withered, the other flourished. The inward man is renewed. When God shakes the tree of the body, he is now gathering the fruits of righteousness.¹¹ Sickness is God's

⁵ Ps. 136. 23. ⁶ Jos. 2. 24. ⁷ 2 Sam. 16. 23

⁸ 2 Sam. 17. 23.; Job 5. 13. ⁹ Ps. 9. 16. ¹⁰ Rom 11. 33.

¹¹ 2 Cor. 12. 7. ¹² 2 Cor. 4. 16. ¹³ Heb. 12. 11

¹ Ex. 1. 0. ² Ex. 1. 12. ³ Phil. 1. 12. ⁴ 2 Cor. 4. 7.

lance to let out the imposthume of sin.¹ 3. In case of God's providences to his church: we wonder what he is doing with us, and are ready to kill ourselves with care: rest in his wisdom; he knows best what he hath to do, 'thy footsteps are not known.'² Trust him where you cannot trace him. God is most in his way, when we think he is most out of the way; when we think God's church is, as it were, in the grave, and there is a tombstone laid upon her, his wisdom can roll away the stone from the sepulchre. Christ cometh 'leaping over mountains.'³ Either his power can remove the mountain, or his wisdom knows how to leap over it. 4. In case we are low in the world, or have but little oil in our cruise, rest in God's wisdom, he sees it best; it is to cure pride and wantonness. God knew, if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost. He saw riches would be a snare unto thee;⁴ art thou troubled that God hath prevented a snare? God will make thee rich in faith; what thou lackest in temporals shall be made up in spirituals: he will give thee more of his love. Thou art weak in estate, yet God will make

thee strong in assurance. O rest in his wisdom! he will carve the best piece for thee. 5. In case of the loss of dear friends, a wife, or child, or husband, rest satisfied in God's wisdom. He hath taken away these, because he would have more of your love; he breaks these crutches, that we may live more upon him by faith. God would have us learn to go without crutches.

USE 2. If God be infinitely wise, then let us go to him for wisdom; as Solomon, 'give thy servant an understanding heart;' 'and the speech pleased the Lord.'⁵ And there is encouragement for us: 'if any one lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.'⁶ Wisdom is in God, as in the fountain; his wisdom is imparted, not impaired; his stock is not spent by giving. Go then to God: Lord, do thou light my lamp; in thy light shall I see light; give me wisdom to know the fallacies of my heart, the subtleties of the old serpent, to walk jealously towards myself, religiously towards thee, prudently towards others; guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory!

OF GOD'S POWER.

THE next attribute is God's power, 'if I speak of strength, lo, he is strong.'⁷ In this chapter is a magnificent description of God's power: 'lo, he is strong!' The Hebrew word for *strong*, signifies a conquering, prevailing strength. 'He is strong:' the superlative degree is intended here, viz. 'he is most strong.' He is called, *El-shaddai*, 'God almighty.'⁸ His almightiness lies in this, he can do whatever is feasible. Divines distinguish between authority and power; God hath both.

I. He hath a sovereign right and authority over man. He can do with his creatures as he pleases. Who shall dispute with God? who shall ask him a reason of his doings? 'He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?'⁹ God sits judge in the highest court, he calls the monarchs of the earth to the bar, and is not bound to give a reason of his proceedings; 'he putteth down

one, and setteth up another.'¹⁰ He hath salvation and damnation in his power. He hath the key of justice in his hand, to lock up whom he will in the fiery prison of hell; and he hath the key of mercy in his hands, to open heaven's gate to whom he pleases. This is the name engraven upon his vesture, 'King of kings, and Lord of lords.'¹¹ He sits Lord paramount, and who can call him to an account? 'I will do all my pleasure.'¹² The world is God's diocese, and shall not he do what he will in his own diocese? He it was that turned king Nebuchadnezzar to eat grass, and threw the angels to hell when they sinned; that broke the head of the Babylonish empire, 'how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer! Thy pomp is brought down to the grave.'¹³ Who sets bounds to the sea, and bridles the proud waves?¹⁴ God is the supreme monarch, all power is seated originally in him; 'the powers that be are ordained of God.'¹⁵ Kings hold their crowns of him, 'by me kings reign.'¹⁶

¹ Isa. 27. 9. ² Ps. 77. 19. ³ Ca. 2. 8. ⁴ 1 Tim. 6. 9.
⁵ Job 9. 19. ⁶ Ge. 17. 1. ⁷ Dan. 4. 35.

⁸ 1 Ki. 3. 9, 10. ⁹ Ja. 1. 5. ¹⁰ Ps. 75. 5, 7. ¹¹ Rev. 19. 16.
¹² Is. 46. 10. ¹³ Is. 14. 11. ¹⁴ Job 38. 11. ¹⁵ Ro. 13. 1. ¹⁶ Pr. 8. 15.

II. As God hath authority, so he hath infinite power. What is authority without power? 'He is mighty in strength.'¹ This power of God is seen, 1. In the creation. To create, requires infinite power; all the world cannot make a fly. God's power in creating is evident; because he needs no instruments to work with; it is proper to God to work without tools. He needs no matter to work upon; first, he creates matter, and then works upon it. He works without labour; 'he spake and it was done.'² 2. The power of God is seen in the conversion of souls. Surely a mighty power went to raise Christ from the grave.³ The same power goes to draw a sinner to God, as drew Christ out of the grave to heaven. Greater power is put forth in conversion, than in creation. When God made the world, he met with no opposition; as he had nothing to help him, so he had nothing to hinder him; but when he comes to convert a sinner, here he meets with opposition. Satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him; a sinner is angry with converting grace. The world was the 'work of God's fingers.'⁴ Conversion is the 'work of God's arm.'⁵ 3. In the creation, God wrought but one miracle, he spake the word; but, in conversion, he works many miracles; the blind is made to see; the dead is raised; the deaf hears the voice of the Son of God. O the infinite power of Jehovah! Before his sceptre angels veil and prostrate themselves; kings cast their crowns at his feet; 'he toucheth the land, and it shall melt';⁶ 'which shaketh the earth out of her place.'⁷ An earthquake makes the earth tremble upon her pillars, but God shakes it out of its place; he can remove the earth from its centre. God can do what he will, his power is as large as his will. Were men's power as large as their will, what work would they make in the world! God's power is of equal extent with his will. God can with a word unpin the wheels, and break the axle-tree of the creation. He can do more than we can think.⁸ He can suspend natural agents; he sealed up the lions' mouths, made the fire not to burn; he made the waters to stand upon an heap; he caused the sun to go ten degrees backward in the dial of Ahaz.⁹ What can pose omnipotency? The Lord cuts off the spirit of princes.¹⁰ He counterworks his enemies; he pulls down their flags and banners of pride, invaluates their counsels, breaks their forces; and

he doth it with ease, with the turning of his hand, 'with his breath,'¹¹ 'with a look.'¹² That is all it needs cost God to destroy his enemies; a look, a cast of his eye, 'the Lord looked into the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host.'¹³ Who shall stop him in his march? God commands, and all creatures in heaven and earth obey him. Xerxes, the Persian monarch, threw fetters into the sea, when its waves swelled, as if he would have chained up the waters; but when God speaks, the wind and sea obey him; if he say but the word, the stars fight in their courses against Sisera; if he stamp with his foot, an army of angels shall presently be in battalia. What cannot omnipotent power do? 'The Lord is a man of war.'¹⁴ 'He hath a mighty arm.'¹⁵ 'God's power is a glorious power';¹⁶ it is an irresistible power, 'who hath resisted his will?'¹⁷ To contest with him is as if the thorns should set themselves in battle array against the fire; or, as if an infirm child should fight with an archangel. If the sinner be once taken in God's iron net, there is no escaping; 'there is none that can deliver out of my hand.'¹⁸ God's power is an inexhaustible power; it is never spent or wasted. Men, while they exercise their strength, weaken it; but God hath an everlasting spring of strength in him.¹⁹ Though he spends his arrows upon his enemies,²⁰ yet he doth not spend his strength, 'he fainteth not, neither is weary.'²¹

OBJECT. *Can God do all things? he cannot deny himself.*

Ans. Though God can do all things, he cannot do that which stains the glory of his God-head: he cannot sin; he cannot do that which implies a contradiction. To be a God of truth, and yet deny himself, is a contradiction.

USE 1. If God be so infinite in power, fear this great God. We are apt to fear such as are in power: 'Fear ye not me?' saith the Lord; 'will ye not tremble at my presence?'²² He hath power to cast our souls and bodies into hell! 'Who knows the power of his wrath?'²³ He can with the same breath that made us, dissolve us; 'his eyes are as a flame of fire; the rocks are thrown down by him.'²⁴ Solomon saith, 'where the word of a king is, there is power';²⁵ much more where the word of a God is. O let us fear this mighty God! The fear of God will drive out all other base fear.

¹ Job 9. 4. ² Ps. 33. 9. ³ Eph. 1. 20. ⁴ Ps. 8. 3. ⁵ Luke 1. 5. ⁶ Am. 9. 5. ⁷ Job 9. 6. ⁸ Eph. 3. 20. ⁹ Is. 38. 8. ¹⁰ Ps. 76. 12.

¹¹ Ps. 81. 24. ¹² Is. 40. 24. ¹³ Exod. 14. 24. ¹⁴ Exod. 15. 3. ¹⁵ Ps. 89. 13. ¹⁶ Col. 1. 11. ¹⁷ Ro. 9. 19. ¹⁸ Is. 43. 13. ¹⁹ Is. 26. 4. ²⁰ De. 32. 23. ²¹ Is. 40. 28. ²² Jer. 5. 22. ²³ Ps. 90. 11. ²⁴ Na. 1. 6. ²⁵ Ec. 8. 4.

USE 2. See the deplorable condition of wicked men: 1. This power of God is not for them: 2. It is against them.

1. This power of God is not for them; they have no union with God, therefore have no warrant to lay claim to his power. His power is no relief to them. He hath power to forgive sins, but he will not put forth his power towards an impenitent sinner. God's power is an eagle's wing to carry the saints to heaven; but what privilege is that to the wicked; though a man will carry his child in his arms over a dangerous water, yet he will not carry an enemy in his arms. God's power is not engaged to help those that fight against him. Let miseries come upon the wicked, they have none to help them; they are like a ship in a storm without a pilot, driven upon the rocks.

2. This power of God is against the wicked. His power will not be the sinner's shield to defend him, but a sword to wound him. God's power will bind the sinner in chains. His power serves to revenge the wrong done to his mercy. God will be Almighty to damn the sinner. Now, in what a condition is every unbeliever? God's power is engaged against him, and 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

USE 3. It reproves such as do not believe this power of God. We say, we do not doubt of God's power, but his will. But indeed it is his power that we question. 'Is there any thing too hard for me?'¹ yet we stagger through unbelief, as if the arm of his power were shrunk, and he could not help in desperate cases. Take away a king's power, and we unking him; take away the Lord's power, and we ungod him; yet how guilty of this are we! Did not Israel question God's power? 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?'² They thought the wilderness was a fitter place for making of graves, than spreading of a table. Did not Martha doubt of Christ's power? 'He hath been dead four days.'³ If Christ had been there while Lazarus was sick, or when he had been newly dead, Martha did not question but Christ could have raised him; but he had lain in the grave four days, and now she seemed to question his power. Christ had as much ado to raise her faith, as to raise her dead brother. And Moses, though an holy man, yet limits God's power through unbelief: 'The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh that they may eat a whole month:

shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered for them to suffice them?'⁴ And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Is the Lord's hand waxed short?' This is a great affront to God, to go to deny his power. That men doubt of God's power, appears by their taking indirect courses. Would they defraud in their dealings, use false weights, if they believed the power of God, that he could provide for them? By their depending more upon second causes than upon God; 'in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.'⁵

USE 4. If God be infinite in power, then let us take heed of hardening our hearts against God. 'Who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered?'⁶ Job sends a challenge to all creatures in heaven and earth. Who is he did ever take up the buckler against God, and came off conqueror? For a person to go on daringly in any sin, is to harden his heart against God, and, as it were, to raise a war against heaven; and let him remember God is *El-shaddai*, almighty; he will be too hard for them that oppose him: 'hast thou an arm like God?'⁷ Such as will not bow to his golden sceptre, shall be broken with his iron rod. Julian hardened his heart against God, he opposed him to his face; but what got he at last? did he prosper? Being wounded in battle, he threw up his blood into the air, and said to Christ, 'O Galilean, thou hast overcome! I acknowledge thy power, whose name and truth I have opposed.' Will folly contend with wisdom? weakness with power? finite with infinite? O take heed of hardening your heart against God! He can send legions of angels to avenge his quarrel. It is better to meet God with tears in your eyes than weapons in your hand. You may overcome God sooner by repentance, than by resistance.

USE 5. Get an interest in God, and then this glorious power is engaged for you. He gives it under his hand, that he will put forth the whole power of his Godhead for the good of his people: 'The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a god to Israel.'⁸ This almightiness of God's power is a wonderful support and comfort to every believer. It was Samson's riddle, 'out of the strong came forth sweetness';⁹ so out of the attribute of God's power, out of this strong comes forth sweetness. It is comfort in several cases.

¹ Heb. 10. 31. ² Jer. 32. 27. ³ Ps. 78. 19. ⁴ Jno. 11. 39.

⁵ Nu. 11. 21. ⁶ 2 Ch. 16. 12. ⁷ Job 9. 4. ⁸ Job 40. 9.

⁹ 1 Ch. 17. 21. ¹⁰ Judges 14. 14.

1. In case of strong corruption. My sins, saith a child of God, are potent; I have no power against this army that comes against me; I pray, and humble my soul by fasting, but my sins return upon me. Ay, but dost thou believe the power of God? The strong God can conquer thy strong corruption; though sin be too hard for thee, yet not for him; he can soften hard hearts, and quicken the dead. 'Is any thing too hard for the Lord?'¹ Set God's power on work, by faith and prayer. Say, 'Lord! it is not for thy honour that the devil should have so strong a party within me; O break the head of this leviathan! Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee!'

2. In case of strong temptation. Satan is called 'the strong man,' O but remember the power of God: Christ is called, 'the lion of the tribe of Judah;' he hath broken the serpent's head upon the cross. Satan is a chained enemy, and a conquered enemy. Michael is stronger than the dragon.

3. Comfort in case of weakness of grace, and fear of falling away. I pray, but I cannot send out strong cries; I believe, but the hand of my faith doth shake and tremble. Cannot God strengthen weak grace? '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.'² I fear I shall not hold out. Christian, dost thou believe the power of God? Hath not God preserved thy grace thus far? Mayest thou not set up thy Ebenezer? God hath kept thy grace hitherto as a spark in the main ocean; and is not he able still to keep thy grace? 'Who are kept by the power of God,'³ &c. God's mercy pardons us, but his power preserves us. He who by his power keeps the

stars that they do not fall out of their orbs, keeps our grace that it doth not fail or annihilate.

4. Comfort in case of the deficiency in thy estate. God can multiply the oil in the cruise; miraculously he can raise up supplies: God, who provides for the birds of the air, cannot he provide for his children? He that clothes the lilies, cannot he clothe his lambs?

5. Comfort in regard of the resurrection. This seems difficult to believe, that the bodies of men when eaten up by worms, devoured by beasts and fishes, or consumed to ashes, should be raised the same numerical bodies; but if we believe the power of God, it is no great wonder. Which is hardest, to create, or raise the dead? he that can make a body of nothing, can restore it to its parts when mingled and confounded with other substances, 'with God all things are possible.'⁴ If we believe the first article of the creed, that God is almighty, we may quickly believe the other article, the resurrection of the body. God can raise the dead because of his power, and he cannot but raise them because of his truth.

6. It is comfort in reference to the church of God: he can save and deliver it when it is brought low. The enemies have power in their hand, but the remainder of wrath God will restrain.⁵ God can either confine the enemies' power or confound it. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' God can create Jerusalem a praise.⁶ The church in Ezekiel, is compared to dry bones, but God made breath to enter into them, and they lived.⁷ The ship of the church may be tossed, because sin is in it, but it shall not be overwhelmed, because Christ is in it.⁸ God is in the midst of it. All the church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance.

OF THE HOLINESS OF GOD

THE next attribute is God's holiness, 'glorious in holiness.'¹ Holiness is the most sparkling jewel of his crown; it is the name by which God is known, 'holy and reverend is his name.'² He is the holy One.³ Seraphim cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.'⁴ His power makes him

mighty; his holiness makes him glorious; God's holiness consists in his perfect loving of righteousness, and abhorrence of evil, 'of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.'⁵

1. God is holy intrinsically: He is holy in his nature; his very being is made up of holi-

¹ Ge. 18. 14. ² 2 Cor. 12. 9. ³ 1 Pe. 1. 5. ⁴ Ex. 15. 11. ⁵ Ps. 111. 9. ⁶ Job 6. 10. ⁷ Is. 6. 3.

⁸ Mat. 19. 26. ⁹ Ps. 76. 10. ¹⁰ Is. 65. 18. ¹¹ Ez. 37. 10. ¹² Ps. 46. 6. ¹³ Hab. 1. 13.

ness, as light is of the essence of the sun. He is holy in his word; the word bears a stamp of his holiness upon it, as the wax bears an impression of the seal, 'thy word is very pure;' it is compared to silver refined seven times.² Every line in the word breathes sanctity, it encourageth nothing but holiness. God is holy in his operations; all God doeth is holy; he cannot act but like himself; he can no more do an unrighteous action, than the sun can darken, 'the Lord is holy in all his works.'

2. God is holy primarily: he is the original and pattern of holiness; holiness began at him who is 'the Ancient of days.'

3. God is holy efficiently: he is the cause of all that is holiness in others, 'every good gift, and every perfect gift comes from above.'⁴ He made the angels holy; he infused all that holiness into Christ's human nature; all the holiness we have is but a crystal stream from this fountain. We borrow all our holiness from God. As the lights of the sanctuary were lighted from the middle lamp, so all the holiness of others is a lamp lighted from heaven, 'I am the Lord which sanctify you.'⁵ God is not only a pattern of holiness, but he is a principle of holiness; his spring feeds all our cisterns, he drops his holy oil of grace upon us.

4. God is holy transcendentally, 'there is none holy as the Lord.'⁶ No angel in heaven can take the just dimensions of God's holiness; the highest seraphim is too low of stature to measure these pyramids: the holiness in God is far above the holiness in saints or angels.

1. It is above the holiness in saints. 1. It is a pure holiness: the saints' holiness is like gold in the ore, imperfect; their humility is stained with pride; he that hath most faith, hath need pray, 'Lord help my unbelief;' but the holiness of God is pure, like wine from the grape; it hath not the least dash or tincture of impurity mixed with it. 2. A more unchangeable holiness: the saints though they cannot lose the habit of holiness (for the seed of God remains), yet they may lose some degrees of their holiness, 'thou hast left thy first love.'⁷ Grace cannot die, yet the flame of it may go out; holiness in the saints is subject to ebbing, but holiness in God is unchangeable; he never lost a drop of his holiness; as he cannot have more holiness, because he is perfectly holy, so

he cannot have less holiness, because he is unchangeably holy.

2. The holiness in God is above the holiness in angels; holiness in the angels is only a quality, which may be lost, as we see in the fallen angels; but holiness in God is his essence, he is all over holy, and he can as well lose his Godhead as his holiness.

OBJECT. *But is he not privy to all the sins of men? He beholds their impurities; how can this be, and he not defiled?*

A. God sees all the sins of men, but is no more defiled with them than the sun is defiled with the vapours that arise out of the earth. God sees sin, not as a patron to approve it, but as a judge to punish it.

USE 1. Is God so infinitely holy? Then see how unlike to God sin is. Sin is an unclean thing, it is hyperbolically evil.⁸ It is called 'an abomination.'⁹ God hath no mixture of evil in him; sin hath no mixture of good; it is the spirit and quintessence of evil; it turns good into evil; it hath deflowered the virgin-soul, made it red with guilt, and black with filth; it is called 'the accursed thing.'¹⁰ No wonder, therefore, that God doth so hate sin, being so unlike to him, nay, so contrary to him; it strikes at his holiness; sin doth all it can to spite God; sin would not only unthrone God, but un-god him; if sin could help it, God should be God no longer.

USE 2. Is God the Holy One, and is his holiness his glory? Then how impious are they, 1. That are haters of holiness? As the vulture hates perfumes, so they hate this sweet perfume of holiness in the saints; their hearts rise against holiness; as a man's stomach at a dish he hath an antipathy against. There is not a greater sign of a person devoted to hell, than to hate one for that thing wherein he is most like God, his holiness. 2. That are despisers of holiness: they despise the glory of the Godhead, 'glorious in holiness.' The despising of holiness is seen in the deriding of it; is it not sad, men should deride that which should save them? Sure that patient will die that derides the physic. The deriding the grace of the Spirit comes near to the despising the Spirit of grace. Scoffing Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's house.¹¹ Such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven.

USE 3. *Of Exhortation.* Is God so infinitely holy, then let us endeavour to imitate God in

¹ Ps. 119. 140. ² Ps. 12. 6 ³ Ps. 145. 17. ⁴ Ja. 1. 17.
⁵ Lev. 20. 8. ⁶ 1 Sa. 2. 2 ⁷ Rev. 2. 4.

⁸ Ro. 1. 13. ⁹ De. 7. 25. ¹⁰ Jos. 7. 11. ¹¹ Ge. 21. 9.

holiness; 'be ye holy, for I am holy.'¹ There is a twofold holiness, an holiness of equality, and an holiness of similitude. An holiness of equality no man or angel can reach to; who can be equally holy with God? Who can parallel him in sanctity? But there is an holiness of similitude, and that we must aspire after, to have some analogy and resemblance of God's holiness in us; be as like him in holiness as we can; though a taper doth not give so much light as the sun, yet it doth resemble it. We must imitate God in holiness.

Q. *If we must be like God in holiness, where-in doth our holiness consist?*

A. In two things; 1. In our suitableness to God's nature. 2. Our subjection to his will.

1. Our holiness stands in our suitableness to the nature of God; hence the saints are said to partake of the divine nature,² which is not a partaking of his essence, but his image. Herein is the saints' holiness, when they are the lively pictures of God, they bear the image of God's meekness, mercifulness, heavenliness; they are of the same judgment with God, of the same disposition; they love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

2. Our holiness consists in our subjection to the will of God: as his nature is the pattern of holiness, so his will is the rule of holiness. This is our holiness, when we do his will;³ when we bear his will;⁴ what he inflicts wisely, we suffer willingly. This is our holiness, when we are suitable to God's nature, and submissive to his will; this should be our great care, to be like God in holiness; our holiness should be so qualified as his; God's is a real holiness, such should ours be, 'righteousness and true holiness.'⁵ It should not be only the paint of holiness, but the life of holiness; it should not only be like the Egyptian temples, beautified without, but like Solomon's temple, gold within, 'the king's daughter is all glorious within.'⁶ That I may press you to resemble God in holiness, consider, 1. How illustrious every holy person is; he is a fair glass in which some of the beams of God's holiness shine forth. We read, Aaron put on his garments for glory and beauty.⁷ 2. When we wear the embroidered garment of holiness, it is for glory and beauty. A good christian is ruddy, being sprinkled with Christ's blood; and white, being adorned with holiness. As the diamond to a ring, so is holiness to the soul. So

beautiful a thing is holiness, that, as Chrysostom saith, they that oppose it cannot but admire it.

2. It is the great design God carries on in the world to make a people like himself in holiness; what are all the showers of the ordinances for, but to rain down righteousness upon us, and make us holy? What are the promises for, but to encourage holiness? What is the sending of the Spirit into the world for, but to anoint us with the holy unction?⁸ What are all afflictions for, but to make us partakers of God's holiness.⁹ What are mercies for, but loadstones to draw us to holiness? What is the end of Christ's dying, but that his blood might wash away our unholiness? 'who gave himself for us, to purify unto himself a peculiar people.'¹⁰ So that if we are not holy, we cross God's great design in the world.

3. It is our holiness draws God's heart to us. Holiness is God's image; God cannot choose but love his image where he sees it. A king loves to see his effigies upon a piece of coin; 'thou lovest righteousness.'¹¹ And where doth righteousness grow, but in an holy heart? 'Thou shalt be called *Hephzibah*, for the Lord delighteth in thee.'¹² It was her holiness drew God's love to her: 'they shall call them the holy people.'¹³ God values not any by their high birth, but their holiness.

4. Holiness is the only thing that differenceth us from the reprobate part of the world. God's people have his seal upon them, 'the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And let all that name the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.'¹⁴ The people of God are sealed with a double seal: 1. Election, 'the Lord knows who are his.' 2. Sanctification, 'let every one depart from iniquity.' As a nobleman is distinguished from another by his silver star; as a virtuous woman is distinguished from an harlot by her chastity, so holiness distinguisheth between the two seeds: all that are of God, as they have Christ for their captain,¹⁵ so holiness is the white colour they wear.

5. Holiness is our honour. Holiness and honour are put together. Dignity goes along with sanctity;¹⁶ 'he hath washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings unto God.'¹⁷ When we are washed and made holy, then we are kings and priests to God. The saints

¹ 1 Pe. 1. 16. ² 2 Pe. 1. 4. ³ Acts 13. 22. ⁴ Mic. 7. 9.
⁵ Eph. 4. 21. ⁶ Ps. 45. 13. ⁷ Ex. 28. 2.

⁸ 1 John 2. 20. ⁹ He. 12. 10. ¹⁰ Tit. 2. 14. ¹¹ Ps. 45. 6, 7.
¹² Is. 62. 4. ¹³ Is. 62. 12. ¹⁴ 2 Tim. 2. 19 ¹⁵ He. 2. 10.
¹⁶ 1 Thess. 4. 4. ¹⁷ Re. 1. 5, 6.

are called 'vessels of honour;' they are called 'jewels,' for the sparkling of their holiness, because filled with wine of the Spirit; this makes them earthly angels.

6. Holiness gives us boldness with God; 'thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.'¹ Lifting up the face is an emblem of boldness. Nothing can make us so ashamed to go to God, as sin: a wicked man in prayer may lift up his hands, but he cannot lift up his face. When Adam had lost his holiness, he lost his confidence, he hid himself. But the holy person goes to God, as a child to his father; his conscience doth not upbraid him with allowing any sin, therefore he can go boldly to the throne of grace, and have mercy to help in time of need.²

7. Holiness gives peace: sin raiseth a storm in the conscience; 'there is no peace saith my God to the wicked.'³ Righteousness and peace are put together. Holiness is the root which bears this sweet fruit of peace; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

8. Holiness leads to heaven; holiness is the King of heaven's highway, 'an highway shall be there, and it shall be called the way of holiness.'⁴ At Rome there was the temple of virtue and honour, and they were to go through the temple of virtue to the temple of honour;

so we must go through the temple of holiness to the temple of heaven. Glory begins in virtue; 'who hath called us to glory and virtue?' Happiness is nothing else but the quintessence of holiness; holiness is glory militant, and happiness holiness triumphant.

Q. *What shall we do to resemble God in holiness?*

A. 1. Have recourse to Christ's blood by faith; it is the purification of the soul; legal purifications were types and emblems of it.⁵ The word is a glass to show us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to wash them away.

2. Pray for an holy heart; 'create in me a clean heart, O God!'⁶ Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, 'Lord, my heart is full of leprosy; it defiles all it toucheth; Lord, I am not fit to live with such an heart, for I cannot honour thee: nor die with such an heart, for I cannot see thee. O create in me a clean heart! Send thy Spirit into me, to refine and purify me, that I may be a temple fit for thee the holy God to inhabit!'

3. Walk with them that are holy, 'he that walketh with wise men shall be wise.'⁷ Be among the spices, and you will smell of them. Association begets assimilation; nothing hath a greater power and energy to effect holiness than the communion of saints.

GOD'S JUSTICE.

THE next attribute is God's justice. All God's attributes are identical, and are the same with his essence. Though he hath several attributes whereby he is made known to us, yet he hath but one essence.

A cedar tree may have several branches, yet it is but one cedar; so there are several attributes of God whereby we conceive of him, but only one entire essence. Well then, concerning God's justice, 'just and right is he';⁸ 'touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power, and plenty of justice.'⁹ God is said to dwell in justice, 'justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.'¹⁰ In God power and justice meet. Power holds the sceptre, and justice holds the balance.

Q. *What is God's justice?*

A. Justice is to give every one his due. God's justice is the rectitude of his nature, whereby he is carried to the doing of that which is righteous and equal; 'shall not he render to every man according to his works?'¹¹ God is an impartial judge, he judgeth the cause: men oft judge the person, but not the cause, which is not justice, but malice; God judgeth the cause; 'I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come up unto me.'¹² When the Lord is upon a punitive act, he weighs things in the balance; he doth not punish rashly, he doth not go in the way of a riot, but a circuit, against offenders. Concerning God's justice, I shall lay down these six positions:

1. God cannot be but just. His holiness is the cause of his justice. Holiness will not suffer

¹ Job 22, 23, 26. ² He. 4. 16. ³ Is. 57. 21. ⁴ Is. 35. 8. ⁵ De. 32. 4. ⁶ Job 37. 23. ⁷ Ps. 89. 14.

⁸ 2 Pe. 1. 3. ⁹ 1 Jno. 1. 7. ¹⁰ Ps. 51. 10. ¹¹ Pro. 13. 20. ¹² Pro. 24. 12. ¹³ Ge. 18. 21.

him to do any thing but what is righteous. He can no more be unjust than he can be unholy.

2. God's will is the supreme rule of justice; it is the standard of equity. His will is wise and good. God wills nothing but what is just; and therefore it is just because he wills it.

3. God doth justice voluntarily: justice flows from his nature. Men may act unjustly, because they are bribed or forced: God will not be bribed, because of his justice; he cannot be forced, because of his power. He doth justice out of love to justice, 'thou hast loved righteousness.'¹

4. Justice is the perfection of the Divine nature. Aristotle saith, 'justice comprehends in it all virtues.' To say God is just, is to say, he is all that is excellent; perfections meet in him, as lines in a centre. He is not only just, but justice itself.

5. God never did, nor can do, the least wrong to his creatures. God's justice hath been wronged, but never did any wrong. God doth not go according to the rigour of the law; he abates something of his severity. He might inflict heavier penalties than he doth, 'thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve';² our mercies are more than we deserve, and our punishments less.

6. God's justice is such that it is not fit for any man or angel to expostulate with him, or demand a reason of his actions. He hath not only authority on his side, but equity. He lays 'judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet';³ and it is below him to give an account to us of his proceedings. Which of these two is fittest to take precedence, God's justice, or man's reason? 'Who art thou, O man! that repliest against God?'⁴ The plumb-line of our reason is too short to fathom the depth of his justice, 'how unsearchable are his judgments!'⁵ We are to adore God's justice, where we cannot see a reason of it.

Now God's justice runs in two channels: It is seen in two things, the distribution of rewards and punishments. 1. In rewarding the virtuous: 'verily there is a reward for the righteous!'⁶ The saints shall not serve him for nought, he will reward their prayers and tears; though they may be losers for him, they shall not be losers by him. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name.'⁷ He gives

a reward, not that we have deserved it, but because he hath promised it. 2. He is just in punishing offenders. And he is just, because he punisheth sinners by a law. 'Where there is no law, there is no transgression.'⁸ But God hath given men a law, and they break it, therefore he punisheth them justly. God is just in punishing the wicked; because he never punished them, but upon full proof and evidence. What greater evidence than for a man's own conscience to be witness against him? There is nothing God chargeth upon a sinner, but conscience doth set seal to the truth of it.

USE 1. See here another flower of God's crown; he is just and righteous; he is the exemplar and pattern of justice.

OBJECT. *But how doth it seem to stand with God's justice, that the wicked should prosper in the world? 'Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?'*⁹

This hath been a great stumbling, and been ready to make many question God's justice. Such as are highest in sin, are highest in power. Diogenes seeing Harpalus a thief go on prosperously, said, 'Sure God hath cast off the government of the world, and mindeth not how things go on here below!'

A. 1. The wicked may be sometimes instruments to do God's work; though they do not design his glory, yet they may promote it. Cyrus was instrumental in the building of God's temple in Jerusalem.¹⁰ There is some kind of justice, that they should have a temporal reward; God lets them prosper, under whose wing his people are sheltered. God will not be in any man's debt: 'do ye kindle a fire on mine altar for nought?'¹¹

A. 2. God lets them go on in sin, and prosper, that he may leave them more inexcusable, 'I gave her space to repent of her fornication.'¹² God adjourns the sessions, spius out his mercies towards sinners; and if they repent not, his patience will be a witness against them, and his justice will be more cleared in their condemnation, 'that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.'¹³

A. 3. God doth not always let the wicked prosper in their sin; some he doth punish openly, that his justice may be taken notice of: 'the Lord is known by the judgment which he exeunteth.'¹⁴ that is, his justice is seen by striking men dead in the very act of sin. Thus

¹ He. 1. 8. ² Ez. 9. 14. ³ Is. 28. 17. ⁴ Ro. 9. 20.
⁵ Ro. 11. 33. ⁶ Ps. 58. 11. ⁷ He. 6. 10.

⁸ Ro. 4. 15. ⁹ Pro. 12. 1. ¹⁰ Ezra 1. 7. ¹¹ Mal. 1. 10.
¹² Re. 2. 21. ¹³ Ps. 51. 4. ¹⁴ Ps. 9. 16.

he struck Zimri and Cozbi in the act of uncleanness.

A. 4. If God do let men prosper a while in their sin, his vial of wrath is all this while filling, his sword is all this time whetting, and though God may forbear men a while, yet long forbearance is no forgiveness. The longer God is in taking his blow, the heavier it will be at last; as long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with his enemies. Justice may be as a lion asleep, but at last this lion will awake, and roar upon the sinner. Do not Nero, and Julian, and Cain, now meet with God's justice?

OBJECT. *But God's own people suffer great afflictions; they are injured and persecuted, 'all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.'*¹ How doth this stand with God's justice?

A. 1. That is a true rule of St Austin, 'God's ways of judgment are sometimes secret, but never unjust.' The Lord never afflicts his people without a cause; so that he cannot be unjust. There is some good in the godly, therefore the wicked afflict them; there is some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. God's own children have their blemishes, 'are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord?'² These spiritual diamonds, have they no flaws? Do we not read of the spots of God's children?³ Are not they guilty of much pride, censoriousness, passion, worldliness? Though, by their profession, they seem to resemble the birds of paradise, to fly above, and feed upon the dew of heaven, yet, as the serpent, they lick the dust. And these sins of God's people do more provoke God than others: 'because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters.'⁴ The sins of others pierce Christ's side, these wound his heart; therefore is not God just in all the evils that befall them? 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.'⁵ I will punish you sooner, surer, sorer, than others.

A. 2. The trials and sufferings of the godly are to refine and purify them. God's furnace is in Zion.⁶ Is it any injustice in God to put his gold into the furnace to purify it? Is it any injustice in God, by afflicting his people, to make them partakers of his holiness?⁷ What doth more proclaim God's

faithfulness, than to take such a course with them as may make them better? 'In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.'⁸

A. 3. What injustice is it in God to inflict a lesser punishment, and prevent a greater? The best of God's children have that in them which is meritorious of hell: now, I pray, doth God do them any wrong, if he useth only the rod, where they have deserved the scorpion? Is the father unjust if he only corrects his child, who hath deserved to be disinherited? If God deals so favourably with his children, he only puts wormwood in their cup, whereas he might put fire and brimstone: they are rather to admire his mercy, than complain of his injustice.

OBJECT. *How can it stand with God's justice, that all men being equally guilty by nature, God should pass by one and save another? Why doth not he deal with all alike?*

A. 'Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!'⁹ 'Doth the Almighty pervert justice?'¹⁰ God is not bound to give an account of his actions to his creatures. If none may say to a king, 'what doest thou?'¹¹ much less to God. It is sufficient, God is Lord paramount; he hath a sovereign power over his creatures, therefore can do no injustice, 'hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?'¹² God hath a liberty left in his own breast, to save one and not another; and his justice is not at all impeached or blemished. If two men owe you money, you may, without any injustice, remit the debt to one, and exact it off the other. If two malefactors be condemned to die, the king may pardon the one, and not the other; he is not unjust if he lets one suffer, because he offended the law; nor if he save the other, because he will make use of his prerogative as he is king. Though some are saved and others perish, yet there is no unrighteousness in God; because, whoever perisheth, his destruction is of himself, 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.'¹³ God offers grace, the sinner refuseth it; is God bound to give grace? If a churgeon comes to heal a man's wound, and he will not be healed, but bolts out his churgeon, is the churgeon bound to heal him? 'I have called, and ye refused;'¹⁴ 'Israel would none of me.'¹⁵ God is not bound to force his mercies upon

¹ Ps. 73. 14. ² 2 Chr. 28. 10. ³ De. 32. 10. ⁴ De. 32. 19. ⁵ Am. 3. 2. ⁶ Is. 31. 9. ⁷ He. 12. 10.

⁸ Ps. 119. 75. ⁹ Ro. 9. 14. ¹⁰ Job 8. 3. ¹¹ Ec. 8. 4. ¹² Ro. 9. 21. ¹³ Hos. 13. 9. ¹⁴ Pro. 1. 24. ¹⁵ Ps. 81. 11

men: if they wilfully oppose the offer of grace, their sin is to be taxed as the cause of their perishing, and not God's justice.

USE 2. See the difference between God and a great part of the world. They are unjust, in their courts of judicature; they pervert justice, 'they decree unrighteous decrees.'¹ The Hebrew word for a judge's robe, signifies prevarication, deceit, or injustice: it is oftener true of the judge than of the robe; the judge deserves rather to have that name than the robe. What is a good law without a good judge? Injustice lies in two things, either not to punish where there is a fault, or, to punish where there is no fault; how frequent! Again, they are unjust in their dealings. This is either in using false weights, 'the balances of deceit are in his hand.'² It is sad to have the bible in one hand, and false weights in the other. Or, in adulterating commodities; 'thy wine is mixed with water;³' when they mix bad grain with good, yet sell it for pure grain. I can never believe he is good in the first table, who is not good in the second. He cannot be godly who is not just. Though God doth not bid you be omnipotent, as he is, yet he bids you be just, as he is.

USE 3. Imitate God in justice. Let Christ's golden maxim be observed, 'what ye would have men to do to you, do ye even so to them.'⁴ You would not have them wrong you, neither do you them; rather suffer wrong than do wrong, 'why do ye not rather take wrong?'⁵ O be exemplary for justice! Let justice be your ornament! 'I put on righteousness, viz. justice, as a robe and a diadem;⁶ a robe for its graceful beauty; and I put it on, and I was clothed with justice. A judge puts on his robe, and puts it off again at night; but Job did so put on justice, as he did not put it off till death,—he was always invested with it. We must not lay off this robe of justice till we lay

down our tabernacle. If you have any thing of God in you, you will be like him. By every unjust action, you do deny yourselves to be christians, you stain the glory of your profession; heathens will rise up in judgment against you; the sun might sooner alter his course than God could be turned from doing justice.

USE 4. If God be just, there will be a day of judgment. Now things are out of course; sin is rampant, saints are wronged, they are often cast in a righteous cause, they can meet with no justice here, justice is turned into wormwood; but there is a day coming, when God will set things right, he will do every man justice, he will crown the righteous and condemn the wicked, 'he hath appointed a day,'⁸ &c. If God be a just God, he will take vengeance. God hath given men a law to live by,—they break it; there must be a day for the execution of offenders; a law not executed, is but like a wooden dagger, for a show. At the last day God's sword shall be drawn out against offenders; then his justice shall be revealed before all the world, 'God will judge in righteousness.'⁹ 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'¹⁰ The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not sip one drop of injustice. At that day shall all mouths be stopt, and God's justice shall be fully vindicated from all the cavils and clamours of unjust men.

USE 5. Comfort to the true penitent; as God is a just God, he will pardon him. Man confesses, God pardons. 'If we confess our sins, *i. e.* confess and forsake, he is just to forgive us our sins.'¹¹ Not only merciful but just. Why just? Because he hath promised to forgive such.¹² If thy heart hath been broken for and from sin, thou mayest not only plead God's mercy, but his justice for the pardoning thy sin. Show him his hand and seal, he cannot deny himself.

THE MERCY OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's goodness or mercy. Mercy is the result and effect of God's goodness.⁷ So then this is the next attribute, God's goodness or mercy. The most learned

of the heathens thought they gave their god Jupiter, two golden characters when they styled him *good and great*; both these meet in God, goodness and greatness,—majesty and mercy.

¹ Is. 10. 1. ² Ho. 12. 7. ³ Is. 1. 22. ⁴ Mat. 7. 12.

⁵ 1 Co. 6. 7. ⁶ Job. 29. 14. ⁷ Ps. 33. 5.; Ps. 119. 61.

⁸ Acts 17. 31. ⁹ Acts 17. 31. ¹⁰ Ge. 18. 25. ¹¹ 1 Jno. 1. 9.

¹² Pro. 28. 13.

God is, 1. Essentially good in himself. And 2. Relatively good to us. They are both put together, 'thou art good, and doest good.'¹ This relative goodness is nothing else but his mercy, which is an innate propenseness in God to pity and succour such as are in mercy. Concerning God's mercy I shall lay down these twelve positions:

1. It is the great design of the scripture to represent God as merciful. This is a loadstone to draw sinners to him, 'the Lord merciful, gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, &c.'² Here are six expressions to set forth God's mercy, and but one to set forth his justice; 'who will by no means clear the guilty';³ 'thy mercy is great above the heavens.'⁴ God is represented as a king, and a rainbow was about his throne.⁵ The rainbow was an emblem of mercy; the scripture doth oftener represent God in his white robes of mercy, than with his garments rolled in blood; oftener with his golden sceptre, than his iron rod.

2. God is more inclinable to mercy than wrath. Mercy is his darling attribute, which he most delights in.⁶ Mercy pleaseth him. It is delightful to the mother, saith Chrysostom, to have her breasts drawn: so it is to God, to have the breasts of his mercy drawn; 'fury is not in me';⁷ that is, I do not delight in it. Acts of severity are rather forced from God, he doth not afflict willingly;⁸ the bee naturally gives honey, it stings only when it is provoked; God doth not punish till he can bear no longer, 'so that the Lord could bear no longer, because of the evil of your doings.'⁹ Mercy is God's right hand that he is most used to; inflicting of punishment is called God's 'strange work.'¹⁰ He is not used to it. And when the Lord would shave off the pride of a nation, he is said to 'hire a razor,' as if he had none of his own; 'he shall shave with a razor that is hired.'¹¹ 'He is slow to anger,'¹² 'and ready to forgive.'¹³

3. There is no condition, but we may spy mercy in it: when the church was in captivity, she cries out, 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.'¹⁴ Geographers write of Syracuse in Sicily, it is so situated, that the sun is never out of sight. In all afflictions we may see some sunshine of mercy. That outward and inward troubles do not come together, is mercy.

4. Mercy sweetens all God's other attributes: God's holiness without mercy, and his justice without mercy, were terrible. When the water was bitter, and Israel could not drink, Moses cast a tree into the waters, and then they were made sweet. How bitter and dreadful were the other attributes of God, did not mercy sweeten them! Mercy set God's power on work to help us; it makes his justice become our friend; it shall avenge our quarrels.

5. God's mercy is one of the most orient pearls of his crown; it makes his Godhead appear amiable and lovely. When Moses said to God, 'I beseech thee shew me thy glory;' the Lord answered him, 'I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will shew thee mercy.'¹⁵ God's mercy is his glory; his holiness makes him illustrious; his mercy makes him propitious.

6. Even the worst taste of God's mercy, such as fight against God's mercy, taste of it; the wicked have some crumbs from mercy's table; 'the Lord is good to all.'¹⁶ The sweet dew drops on the thistle as well as the rose. The diocese where mercy visits is very large; Pharaoh's head was crowned, though his heart was hardened.

7. Mercy coming to us in a covenant is sweetest. It was mercy that God would give Israel rain, and bread to the full, and peace, and victory over their enemies;¹⁷ but it was a greater mercy that God would be their God.¹⁸ To have health is a mercy; but to have Christ and salvation is a greater mercy; this is like the diamond in the ring, it casts a more sparkling lustre.

8. One act of mercy engageth God to another. Men argue thus: I have shown you kindness already, therefore trouble me no more; but because God hath shown mercy, he is more ready still to show mercy; his mercy in election makes him justify, adopt, glorify; one act of mercy engageth God to more. A parent's love to his child makes him always giving.

9. All the mercy in the creature is derived from God, and is but a drop of this ocean; the mercy and pity a mother hath to her child is from him; he that puts the milk in her breast, puts the compassion in her heart, therefore God is called, 'the Father of mercies,'¹⁹ because he begets all the mercies in the world. If God hath put any kindness into the creature, how much kindness is in him who is the Father of mercy?

¹ Ps. 119. 68. ² Ex. 34. 6. ³ Ps. 57. 10. ⁴ Ps. 108. 4.

⁵ Re. 4. 2, 3. ⁶ Mi. 7. 18. ⁷ Is. 27. 4. ⁸ La. 3. 33.

⁹ Jer. 44. 22. ¹⁰ Is. 28. 21. ¹¹ Is. 7. 20. ¹² Ps. 103. 8.

¹³ Ps. 86. 5.

¹⁴ La. 3. 22.

¹⁵ Ex. 33. 19. ¹⁶ Ps. 145. 9. ¹⁷ Le. 26. 4, 5, 6. ¹⁸ Le. 26. 12.

¹⁹ 2 Co. 1. 3

10. God's mercy, as it makes the saints happy, so it should make them humble. Mercy is not the fruit of our goodness, but the fruit of God's goodness. Mercy is an alms that God bestows; they have no cause to be proud, that live upon the alms of God's mercy; 'if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.'¹ All my righteousness is the effect of his mercy, therefore I will be humble, and will not lift up my head.

11. It is mercy stays the speedy execution of God's justice. Sinners continually provoke God, and make his 'fury come up in his face.'² Whence is it he doth not presently arrest and condemn them? It is not that God cannot do it, for he is armed with omnipotence, but it is from his mercy; mercy gets a reprieve for the sinner, and stops the speedy process of justice. God would, by his goodness, lead sinners to repentance.

12. It is dreadful to have mercy witness against one. It was sad with Haman, when the queen herself accused him.³ So will it, when this queen of mercy shall stand up against a person and accuse him. It is only mercy that saves a sinner. Now, how sad to have mercy become an enemy! If mercy be an accuser, who shall be our advocate? The sinner never escapes hell, when mercy draws up the indictment.

I might show you several species or kinds of mercy: preventing mercy, sparing mercy, supplying mercy, guiding mercy, accepting mercy, healing mercy, quickening mercy, supporting mercy, forgiving mercy, correcting mercy, comforting mercy, delivering mercy, crowning mercy,—but I shall speak of the qualifications or properties of God's mercy.

1. God's mercy is free. To set up merit is to destroy mercy; nothing can deserve mercy, because we are polluted in our blood; nor force it; we may force God to punish us, not to love us, 'I will love them freely.'⁴ Every link in the chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free, 'he hath chosen us in him,'⁵ 'according to the good pleasure of his will.' Justification is free, being justified freely by his grace.⁶ Salvation is free, 'according to his mercy he saved us.'⁷ Say not then, I am unworthy, for mercy is free; if God should show mercy only to such as are worthy, he would show none at all.

2. God's mercy is an overflowing mercy; it

is infinite; 'plenteous in mercy';⁸ 'rich in mercy';⁹ 'multitude of thy mercies.'¹⁰ The vial of wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light as God is of mercy; God hath morning-mercies 'they are new every morning';¹¹ and night-mercies, 'in the night his song shall be with me.'¹² God hath mercies under heaven, those we taste of, and in heaven, those we hope for.

3. God's mercy is eternal, 'the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.'¹³ It is repeated twenty-six times in one psalm, 'his mercy endureth for ever.'¹⁴ The souls of the blessed shall be ever bathing themselves in this sweet and pleasant ocean of God's mercy. His anger to his children lasts but a while, 'but his mercy lasts for ever.'¹⁵ As long as he is God, he will be showing mercy; as his mercy is overflowing, so everflowing.

USE 1. *Of Information.* It shows us how we are to look upon God in prayer, not in his judgment robes, but clothed with a rainbow full of mercy and clemency. Add wings to prayer. When Jesus Christ ascended up to heaven, that which made him go up thither with joy was, 'I go to my Father;' so that which should make our hearts ascend with joy in prayer is, 'we are going to the Father of mercy, who sits upon the throne of grace;' go with confidence in this mercy, as when one goes to a fire, it is not doubtingly, perhaps it will warm me, perhaps not.

USE 2. Believe in his mercy, 'I will trust in the mercy of God for ever.'¹⁶ God's mercy is a fountain opened, let down the bucket of faith, and you may drink of this fountain of salvation. What greater encouragement to believe than God's mercy? He counts it his glory to be scattering pardons; he is desirous that sinners should touch the golden sceptre of his mercy and live. And this willingness to show mercy appears two ways: 1. By his entreating of sinners to come and lay hold on his mercy, 'who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely.'¹⁷ Mercy woos sinners; it even kneels down to them. It were strange for a prince to entreat a condemned man to accept a pardon. God saith, poor sinner, suffer me to love thee, be willing to let me save thee. 2. By his joyfulness when sinners do lay hold on his mercy. What is God the better whether we receive his mercy or not? What is the fountain profited, that others drink of it?

⁸ Ps. 86. 5.

⁹ Eph. 2. 4.

¹⁰ Ps. 51. 1.

¹¹ La. 3. 23.

¹ Job 10. 15. ² Ez. 38. 18. ³ Es. 7. 6. ⁴ Ho. 14. 4.

⁵ Eph. 1. 4, 5. ⁶ Ro. 3. 24. ⁷ Ti. 3. 5.

¹² Ps. 12. 8.

¹³ Ps. 103. 17.

¹⁴ Ps. 136.

¹⁵ Ps. 103. 17.

¹⁶ Ps. 52. 8.

¹⁷ Re. 22. 17.

Yet, such is God's goodness, that he rejoiceth at the salvation of sinners, and is glad when his mercy is accepted of. When the prodigal son came home, how glad was the father? and he makes a feast, to express his joy; this was but a type or emblem, to show how God rejoiceth when a poor sinner comes in, and lays hold of his mercy. What an encouragement is here to believe in God? He is a God of pardons.¹ Mercy pleaseth him.² Nothing doth prejudice us but unbelief. Unbelief stops the current of God's mercy from running; it shuts up God's bowels, closeth the orifice of Christ's wounds, that no healing virtue will come out, 'he could do no mighty works there, because of their unbelief.'³ Why dost thou not believe in God's mercy? Is it thy sins discourage? God's mercy can pardon great sins, nay, because they are great.⁴ The sea covers great rocks as well as lesser sands; some that had an hand in crucifying Christ found mercy. As far as the heavens are above the earth, so far is God's mercy above our sins.⁵ What will tempt us to believe, if not the mercy of God!

USE 3. *Of Caution.* Take heed of abusing this mercy of God! Suck not poison out of the sweet flower of his mercy! Do not think, that because God is merciful, you may go on in sin; this is to make mercy become your enemy. None might touch the ark but the priests, who by their office were more holy; none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but such as are resolved to be holy. To sin because mercy abounds, is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy, is like one that wounds his head because he hath a plaster; he that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury, 'If he bless himself, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man.'⁶ Nothing sweeter than mercy, when it is improved, nothing fiercer, when it is abused; nothing colder than lead, when it is taken out of the mine, nothing more scalding than lead, when it is heated; nothing blunter than iron, nothing sharper when it is whetted. 'The mercy of the Lord is upon them that fear him.'⁷ Mercy is not for them that sin and fear not, but for them that fear and sin not. God's

mercy is an holy mercy; where it pardons it heals.

Q. *What shall we do to be interested in God's mercy?*

A. 1. Be sensible of your wants. See how you stand in need of mercy, pardoning, saving mercy. See yourselves orphans: 'in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.'⁸ God bestows the alms of mercy only on such as are indigent. Be emptied of all opinion of self-worthiness. God pours the golden oil of mercy into empty vessels.

A. 2. Go to God for mercy, 'have mercy upon me, O God!' Put me not off with common mercy that reprobates may have; give me not only acorns but pearls; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to save me; give me the cream of thy mercies; Lord, let me have mercy and loving-kindness! 'Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.'⁹ Give me such mercy as speaks thy electing love to my soul! O pray for mercy! God hath treasures of mercy; prayer is the key that opens these treasures; and in prayer, be sure to carry Christ in your arms; all the mercy comes through Christ: 'Samuel took a sucking lamb;' carry the lamb Christ in your arms, go in his name, present his merits, say 'Lord, here is Christ's blood, which is the price of my pardon! Lord, show mercy, because Christ hath purchased it!' Though God may refuse us when we come for mercy in our own name, yet not when we come in Christ's name: plead Christ's satisfaction, and this is such an argument as God cannot deny.

USE 4. It exhorts such as have found mercy, to three things: 1. To be upon *Gerizzim*, the mount of blessing and praising. They have not only heard the King of heaven is merciful, but they have found it so; the honeycomb of God's mercy hath dropt upon them; when in wants, mercy supplied them; when they were nigh unto death, mercy raised them from the sickbed; when covered with guilt, mercy pardoned them. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.'¹⁰ O how should the vessels of mercy run over with praise! 'Who was before a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy.'¹¹ I was bemiracled with mercy; as the sea overflows and breaks down the banks, so the mercy of God did break down the banks of my sin,

¹ Ne. 9. 17. ² Mi. 7. 18. ³ Mat. 13. 53. ⁴ Ps. 25. 11
⁵ Is. 55. 9. ⁶ De. 29. 19, 20. ⁷ Ps. 103. 17

⁸ Ho. 14. 3. ⁹ Ps. 51. 1. ¹⁰ Ps. 103. 4. ¹¹ 1 Sa. 7. 9.
¹² Ps. 103. 1. ¹³ 1 Ti. 1. 13

and mercy did sweetly flow into my soul. You that have been monuments of God's mercy, should be trumpets of praise; you that have tasted the Lord is gracious, tell others what experiences you have had of God's mercy, that you may encourage them to seek to him for mercy, 'I will declare what God hath done for my soul;' when I found my heart dead, God's Spirit did come upon me mightily, and the blowing of that wind made the withering flowers of my grace revive. O tell others of God's goodness, that you may set others a blessing him, and that you may make God's praises live when you are dead! 2. To love God. Mercy should be the attractive of love, 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.' The Hebrew word for *love*, signifies love out of the inward bowels. God's justice may make us fear him,

his mercy may make us love him. If mercy will not produce love, what will? We are to love God for giving us our food, much more for giving us grace; for sparing mercy, much more for saving mercy. Sure that heart is made of marble, which the mercy of God will not dissolve in love! 'I would hate my own soul,' saith St Augustine, 'if I did not find it loving God.' 3. To imitate God in showing mercy. God is the Father of mercy; show yourselves to be his children, by being like him. St Ambrose saith, 'the sum and definition of religion is, be rich in works of mercy, be helpful to the bodies and souls of others. Scatter your golden seeds; let the lamp of your profession be filled with the oil of charity. Be merciful in giving and forgiving. Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.'

OF THE TRUTH OF GOD.

THE next attribute is God's truth, 'a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he;' 'for thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds;' a God of truth, 'plenteous in truth.' God is truth. He is true: 1. In a physical sense, true in his being; he hath a real subsistence, and gives a being to others. 2. He is true in a moral sense; he is true, without errors, without deceit. God is the origin of truth, the pattern and prototype of truth. There is nothing true but what is in God, or comes from God. I shall now speak of God's truth, as it is taken from his veracity in making good his promises, 'there hath not failed one word of all his good promise.' The promise is God's bond, his truth is the seal set to his bond. This is the thing to be explicated and discussed, God's truth in fulfilling his promises.

There are two things to be observed in the promises of God to comfort us: 1. The power of God, whereby he is able to fulfil the promise, God hath promised to subdue our corruption, 'he will subdue our iniquities.' O! saith a believer, my corruption is so strong, that sure I shall never get the mastery of it; but the power of God can fulfil his promise. Thus Abraham looked at God's power, 'being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able also to

perform.' He believed that that God, who could make a world, could make dry breasts give suck. This is faith's support, there is nothing too hard for God. He that could bring water out of a rock, is able to bring to pass his promises. 2. The truth of God in the promises: His truth is the seal set to the promise, 'in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.' Eternal life, there is the sweetness of promise: God which cannot lie, there is the certainty of it. Mercy makes the promise, truth fulfils it. God's providences are uncertain, but his promises are the 'sure mercies of David,' 'God is not a man that he should repent.' The word of a prince cannot always be taken, but God's promise is inviolable. God's truth is one of the richest jewels of his crown, and he hath pawned this jewel in a promise, 'although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.' Although my house be not so, that is, though I fail much of that exact purity the Lord requires, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, that he will pardon, adopt, and glorify me; and this covenant is ordered in all things *sure*. 'the elements shall melt with fervent heat,' but this covenant abides firm and inviolable, being sealed with

¹ Ps. 66. 16. ² Ps. 18. 1. ³ De. 32. 4. ⁴ Ps. 57. 10.
⁵ Ps. 86. 15. ⁶ 1 Ki. 8. 56. ⁷ Mt. 7. 10.

⁸ Ro. 4. 21. ⁹ Ti. 1. 2. ¹⁰ Acts 13. 24. ¹¹ 1 Sa. 15. 29.
¹² 2 Sa. 23. 5.

the truth of God; nay, God hath added to his word his oath,¹ wherein he pawns his being, life, righteousness, to make good the promise. If as oft as we break our vows with God, he should break promise with us, it would be very sad; but his truth is engaged in his promise, therefore it is like the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered. 'We are not,' says Chrysostom, 'to believe our senses so much, as we are to believe the promises,' &c. Our senses may fail us, but the promise cannot, being built upon the truth of God; he will not deceive the faith of his people, nay he cannot; 'God, who cannot lie, hath promised;' he can as well part with his Deity, as his verity. God is said to be abundant in truth.² What is that? viz. If God hath made a promise of mercy to his people, he will be so far from coming short of his word, that he will be better than his word. God often doth more than he hath said, never less. He is abundant in truth.

1. The Lord may sometimes delay a promise, but he will not deny; he may delay a promise, God's promise may lie a good while as seed under ground, but at last it will spring up into a crop. He promised to deliver Israel from the iron furnace, but this promise was above four hundred years in travail before it brought forth. Simeon had a promise that he should not depart hence, 'till he had seen the Lord's Christ';³ but it was a long time first, but a little before his death, that he did see Christ. But though God delay the promise, he will not deny. Having given his bond, in due time the money will be paid in.

2. God may change his promise, but he will not break his promise. Sometimes God doth change a temporal promise into a spiritual, 'the Lord shall give that which is good,'⁴ perhaps this may not be fulfilled in a temporal sense, but a spiritual. God may let a christian be cut short in temporals, but he makes it up in spirituals. If he doth not increase the basket and the store, he gives increase of faith, and inward peace; here he changeth his promise, but he doth not break it, he gives that which is better. If a man promiseth to pay me in farthings, and pays me in a better coin, in gold, he doth not break his promise? 'I will not suffer my faithfulness to fail.'⁵ In the Hebrew, it is *to lie*.

OBJECT. 1. *But how doth this consist with*

the truth of God? He saith, He will have all to be saved,⁶ yet some perish.

A. St Austin understands it, not of every individual person, but some of all sorts shall be saved; as in the ark, God saved all the living creatures, not every bird or fish were saved, for many perished in the flood, but all, that is, some of every kind were saved, so God will have all to be saved, that is, some of all nations.

OBJECT. *It is said, Christ died for all; 'he is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world;'⁷ how doth this consist with God's truth, when some are vessels of wrath.⁸*

A. 1. We must distinguish of *world*. The world is taken either in a limited sense, for the world of the elect; or in a larger sense, for both elect and reprobates. 'Christ takes away the sins of the world,' that is, the world of the elect.

A. 2. We must distinguish of Christ's dying for the world. Christ died sufficiently for all, not effectually. There is the value of Christ's blood, and the virtue; Christ's blood hath value enough to redeem the whole world, but the virtue of it is applied only to such as believe. Christ's blood is meritorious for all, not efficacious. All are not saved, because some put away salvation from them,⁹ and vilify Christ's blood, counting it an unholy thing.¹⁰

USE 1. Here is a great pillar for our faith, the truth of God. Were not he a God of truth, how could we believe in him? Our faith were fancy; but he is truth itself, and not a word which he hath spoken shall fall to the ground. 'Truth is the object of trust.' The truth of God is an unmoveable rock, we may venture our salvation here, 'truth faileth';¹¹ truth on earth doth, but not truth in heaven. God can as well cease to be God, as cease to be true. Hath God said, he will do good to the soul that seeks him,¹² 'he will give rest to the weary?'¹³ Here is a safe anchor-hold, he will not alter the thing which is gone forth of his lips. The public faith of heaven is engaged for believers; can we have better security? The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power, and shall not our faith hang upon the word of God's truth? Where can we rest our faith but upon God's faithfulness? There is nothing else we can believe in, but the truth of God; we cannot trust in an arm of flesh, we cannot trust in our own hearts, this is to build upon the quicksands, but the truth of God is a golden pillar for faith to stay upon. God

¹ He. 6. 17. ² Ex. 34. 6. ³ Lu. 2. 26. ⁴ Ps. 85. 12.
⁵ Ps. 89. 35.

⁶ 1 Ti. 2. 4. ⁷ Jno. 1. 29. ⁸ Ro. 9. 22. ⁹ Acts 13. 46.
¹⁰ He. 10. 29. ¹¹ Is. 59. 15. ¹² Lu. 5. 25. ¹³ Ma. 11. 28.

cannot deny himself, 'if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.'¹ Not to believe God's veracity, is to affront him, 'he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.'² A person of honour cannot be more affronted or provoked, than when he is not believed. He that denies God's truth, makes the promise no better than a forged deed; and can there be a greater affront offered to God?

USE 2. *Of terror to the wicked.* God is a God of truth, and he is true in his threatenings; the threatenings are a flying roll against sinners. God hath threatened to 'wound the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.'³ He hath threatened to judge adulterers.⁴ To be avenged upon the malicious, 'thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand.'⁵ To 'rain fire and brimstone' upon the sinner.⁶ And God is as true in his threatenings as his promises; God hath oft, to show his truth, executed his threatenings, and let his thunderbolts of judgment fall upon sinners in this life; he struck Herod in the act of his pride; he hath punished blasphemers: Olympius, an Arian bishop, reproached and blasphemed the blessed Trinity, immediately lightning fell down from heaven upon him, and consumed him. God is as true in his threatenings as in his promises: let us fear the threatening, that we may not feel it.

USE 3. Is God a God of truth? let us be like him in truth. 1. We must be true in our words. Pythagoras being asked what made men like God? answered, 'when they speak truth.' It is the note of a man that shall go to heaven, 'he that speaketh the truth in his heart.'⁷ Truth in words is opposed, (1.) To lying, 'putting away lying, speak every man truth to his neighbour.'⁸ Lying is when one speaks that for truth, which he knows to be false. A liar is most opposite to the God of truth. There are, as Austin saith, two sorts of lies: 1. An officious lie, when a man tells a lie for his profit; as, when a tradesman saith his commodity cost him so much, when perhaps it did not cost him half so much; he that will lie in his trade, shall lie in hell. 2. A jesting lie: when a man tells a lie in sport, to make others merry, he goes laughing to hell. When you tell a lie, you make yourselves like the devil, 'the devil is a liar,'⁹ and the father of it.

He deceived our first parents by a lie. Some are so wicked, that they will not only speak an untruth, but will swear to it; nay, they will wish a curse upon themselves, if that untruth be not true. As I have read of a woman, one Anne Avarie, 1575, who being in a shop, wished that she might sink if she had not paid for the wares she took; she fell down speechless immediately, and died in the place. A liar is not fit to live in a commonwealth. Lying takes away all society and converse with men; how can you converse with him whom you cannot believe what he saith? Lying shuts men out of heaven, 'without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'¹⁰ And as it is a great sin to tell a lie, so it is a worse sin to teach a lie, 'the prophet that teacheth lies.'¹¹ He who broacheth error teacheth lies; he spreads the plague; he not only damns himself, but helps to damn others. (2.) Truth in words is opposed to dissembling. The heart and tongue should go together, as the dial goes exactly with the sun. To speak fair to one's face, and not to mean what one speaks, is no better than a lie: 'the words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart.'¹² Some have an art at this, they can flatter and hate. Hierom, speaking of the Arians, saith, 'they pretended friendship, they kissed my hands, but plotted mischief against me.' 'A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.'¹³ Noxious poisons lurk in sweetish honey,—falsehood in friendship is a lie. Counterfeiting of friendship is worse than counterfeiting of money. This is contrary to God who is a God of truth.

2. We must be true in our profession of religion. Let practice go along with profession, 'righteousness and true holiness.'¹⁴ Hypocrisy in religion is a lie; the hypocrite is like a face in a glass, there is the show of a face, but no true face, so he makes show of holiness, but hath no truth of it, it is but the face in the glass. Ephraim pretended to be that which he was not; and what saith God of him? 'Ephraim compasseth me about with lies.'¹⁵ By a lie in our words we deny the truth; by a lie in our profession we disgrace it. Not to be what we profess to God, is telling a lie; and the scripture makes it little better than blasphemy, 'I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.'¹⁶ O! I be-

¹ 2 Ti. 2. 13. ² 1 Jno. 5. 10. ³ Ps. 68. 21. ⁴ He. 13. 3. ⁵ Ps. 10. 14. ⁶ Ps. 11. 6. ⁷ Ps. 15. 2. ⁸ Eph. 4. 25. ⁹ Jno. 8. 44.

¹⁰ Re. 22. 15. ¹¹ Is. 9. 15. ¹² Ps. 55. 21. ¹³ Pr. 29. 5. ¹⁴ Rob. 1. 24. ¹⁵ Ho. 11. 12. ¹⁶ Re. 2. 9.

seech you, labour in this to be like God; he is a God of truth; he can as well part with his Deity as his verity; be, I say, like God, be true in your words, be true in your profession; God's children are children that will not lie.¹

When God sees 'truth in the inward parts,' and 'lips in which is no guile,' now he sees his own image in you; this draws God's heart towards you; likeness draws love.

BUT ONE GOD.

Q. V. THE fifth question is, *Are there more Gods than one?*

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

That there is a God hath been proved; and those that will not believe the verity of his essence, shall feel the severity of his wrath: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.'² He is the 'only God,' 'know therefore this day, and consider it in thy heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath, there is none else;³ 'a just God and a Saviour; there is none besides me.'⁴ There are many titular gods; kings represent God; their regal sceptre is an emblem of his power and authority. Judges are called gods, 'I have said, ye are gods,'⁵ viz. set in God's place to do justice; but dying gods, 'ye shall die like men.'⁶ 'There be that are called gods;' 'but to us there is but one God.'

ARGUMENT 1. There is but one First Cause that hath its being of itself, and on which all other beings depend. As in the heavens, the *primum mobile* moves all the other orbs, so God gives life and motion to every thing existent. There can be but one God, because there is but one First Cause.

2. There is but one infinite Being, therefore there is but one God. There cannot be two infinites: 'do not I fill heaven and earth,'⁷ saith the Lord? If there be one infinite, filling all places at once, how can there be any room for another infinite to subsist?

3. There is but one omnipotent Power. If there be two Omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two; that which one would do, the other power being equal, would oppose, and so all things would be brought into confusion. If a ship should have two pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other; when one would sail,

the other would cast anchor, here were a confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument that there is but one Omnipotent, one God that rules all: 'I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.'⁸

USE 1. *Of information.* If there be but one God, then, 1. It excludes all other gods. Some have feigned that there were two gods: so the Valentinians; others, that there were many gods: so the polytheists. The Persians worshipped the sun; the Egyptians the lion and elephant; the Grecians worshipped Jupiter; these, I may say, 'err, not knowing the scriptures;⁹' their faith is a fable. God hath given them up to strong delusions, to believe a lie, that they may be damned.¹¹ 2. If there be but one God, then there can be but one true religion in the world, 'one Lord, one faith.'¹² If there were many gods, then there might be many religions, every god would be worshipped in his way; but if there be but one God, there is but one religion; one Lord, one faith. Some say, we may be saved in any religion. It is absurd to imagine that God who is one in essence, should appoint several religions in which he will be worshipped. It is as dangerous to set up a false religion as to set up a false god. There are many ways to hell; men may go thither which way their fancy leads them; but there is but one direct road to heaven, viz. faith and holiness. There is no way to be saved but this: as there is but one God, so there is but one true religion. 3. If there be but one God, then you have but one that you need chiefly to study to please, and that is God. If there were divers gods, we should be hard put to it how to please them all; one would command one thing, another the quite contrary, and to please two contrary masters, is impossible; but there is but one God, there-

¹ Is. 63. 8. ² De. 6. 4. ³ De. 4. 39. ⁴ Is. 45. 21.

⁵ Ps. 82. 6. ⁶ Ps. 82. 7. ⁷ 1 Co. 8. 5, 6. ⁸ Je. 23. 21.

⁹ Is. 41. 6. ¹⁰ Mat. 22. 29. ¹¹ 2 Th. 2. 11. ¹² Eph. 4. 5

fore you have but one to please. As in a kingdom there is but one king, therefore every one seeks to ingratiate himself into his favour,¹ so there is but one true God; therefore here lies our main work to please him. Be sure to please God, whoever else you displease. This was Enoch's wisdom, he had this testimony before he died, that 'he pleased God.'²

Q. What doth this pleasing God imply?

A. 1. We please God when we comply with his will. It was Christ's meat and drink to do his Father's will,³ and so he pleased him: 'a voice came from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'⁴ It is the will of God that we should be holy,⁵ now, when we are bespangled with holiness, our lives are walking bibles; this is according to God's will, and it pleaseth him.

A. 2. We please God, when we do the work that he sets us about, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,' viz. my mediatory work. Many finish their lives, but do not finish their work. Our work God hath cut out for us is to observe the first and second tables. In the first, is set down our duty towards God; in the second, our duty towards man. Such as make morality the chief and sole part of religion, set the second table above the first; nay, they take away the first table; for, if prudence, justice, temperance, be enough to save, then what needs the first table? and so our worship towards God shall be quite left out. But those two tables which God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

A. 2. We please God, when we dedicate our heart to give him the best of every thing. Abel gave God the fat of the offering.⁷ Domitian would not have his image carved in wood, or iron, but in gold. Then we please God, when we serve him with love, fervency, alacrity; we give him golden services, here lies our wisdom and piety, to please God. There is but one God, therefore there is but one whom we have chiefly to please, namely, God.

A. 4. If there be but one God, then we must pray to none but God. The papists pray to saints and angels: 1. To saints. A popish writer saith, 'when we pray to the saints departed, they being touched with compassion, say the like to God for us, as the disciples did to Christ for the Canaanitish woman, 'send her away, for she crieth after us.'⁸ The

saints above know not our wants,⁹ 'Abraham is ignorant of us;' or, if they did, we have no warrant to pray to them. Prayer is a part of divine worship, which must only be given to God. 2. They pray to angels. Angel-worship is forbidden;¹⁰ and that we may not pray to angels, is clear from, 'how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed?'¹¹ We may not pray to any but whom we may believe in; but we may not believe in any angel, therefore we may not pray to him. There is but one God, and it is a sin to invoke any but only God.

A. 5. If there be but one God, who is 'above all,'¹² then he must be loved above all. 1. We must love him with a love of appreciation; set the highest estimate on him, who is the only fountain of being and bliss. 2. We must love him with a love of complacency. Our love to other things must be more indifferent; some drops of love may run beside to the creature, but the full stream must run towards God; the creature may have the milk of our love, but we must keep the cream of our love for God; he who is above all, must be loved above all, 'there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'¹³

USE 2. Of caution. If there be but one God, then let us take heed of setting up more gods than one: 'their sorrows are multiplied, that hasten after another god; their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.'¹⁴ God is a jealous God, and he will not endure that we should have other gods. It is easy to commit idolatry with the creature: 1. Some make a god of pleasure, 'lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God.'¹⁵ Whatever we love more than God, we make a god. 2. Others make money their god; the covetous man worships the image of gold, therefore he is called an idolater.¹⁶ That which a man trusts to, he makes his god; but he makes the wedge of gold his hope, he makes money his creator, redeemer, and comforter. It is his creator, if he hath money, then he thinks he is made; it is his redeemer, if he be in danger, he trusts in his money to redeem him out; it is his comforter, if at any time he be sad, the golden harp drives away the evil spirit; so that money is his god. God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth. 3. Another makes a god of his child, sets his child in God's

¹ Pr. 19. 6. ² He. 11. 5. ³ Jno. 4. 34. ⁴ Mat. 3. 17.

⁵ 1 Th. 4. 11. ⁶ Jno. 17. 4. ⁷ Ge. 4. 4. ⁸ Mat. 15. 23.

⁹ Is. 63. 16. ¹⁰ Col. 2. 18, 19. ¹¹ Ro. 10. 14. ¹² Eph. 4. 6.

¹³ Ps. 73. 25. ¹⁴ Ps. 16. 4. ¹⁵ 2 Ti. 3. 4. ¹⁶ Eph. 5. 5.

room, and so provokes God to take it away. If you lean too hard upon a glass, it will break; many break their children by leaning too hard upon them. 4. Others make a god of their belly, 'whose god is their belly.'¹ Clemens Alexandrinus writes of a fish that hath its heart in its belly,—an emblem of epicures, their heart is in their belly, they mind nothing but indulging the sensual appetite; they offer sacrifice to the household god,—their belly is their god, and to this they pour drink-offerings. Thus men make many gods. The apostle names the wicked man's trinity, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life';² the lust of the flesh,—pleasure; the lust of the eye,—money; pride of life,—honour. O take heed of this! Whatever you deify besides God, will prove a bramble; and fire will come out of this bramble and devour you.³

USE 3. *Of reproof.* If the Lord Jehovah be the only true God, then it reproves those who renounce the true God, I mean, such as seek to familiar spirits. This is too much practised among them that call themselves christians. It is a sin condemned by the law of God, 'there shall not be found among you any one that consults with familiar spirits.'⁴ How ordinary is this? If people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizards to know how they may come by their goods again. What is this but consulting with the devil? And so you renounce God and your baptism. What! because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too? 'Thus saith the Lord, is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Beelzebub?'⁵ So, is it not because you think there is not a God in heaven, that you ask counsel of the devil? If any here be guilty, be deeply humbled, ye have renounced the true God; better be without the goods ye have lost, than have the devil help you to them again.

USE 4. *Of exhortation.* If there be but one God, as God is one, so let them that serve him be one. This is what Christ prayed so heartily for, 'that they all may be one.'⁶ Christians should be one, 1. In judgment; the apostle exhorts to be all of one mind.⁷ How sad is it to see religion wearing a coat of divers colours; to see christians of so many opinions, and going so many different ways? It is Satan

hath sown these tares of division,⁸ he first divided men from God, and now divides one man from another. 2. One in affection. They should have one heart, 'the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul.'⁹ As in music, though there be several strings of a viol, yet all make one sweet harmony: so, though there are several christians, yet there should be one sweet harmony of affection among them. There is but one God, and they that serve him should be one. There is nothing would render the true religion more lovely, or make more proselytes to it, than to see the professors of it tied together with the heart-strings of love, 'behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity!'¹⁰ It is as the sweet dew on Hermon, and the fragrant ointment poured on Aaron's head. If God be one, let all that profess him be of one mind, and one heart; this fulfils Christ's prayer, 'that they all may be one.' If there be but one God, let us labour to clear the title, that this God is ours, 'this God is our God.'¹¹ What comfort can it be to hear that there is a God, and that he is the only God, unless he be our God? What is deity without property? O let us labour to clear the title! Beg the Holy Spirit; the Spirit works by faith; by faith we are one with Christ, and through Christ we come to have God for our God, and so all his glorious fulness is made over to us by a deed of gift.

USE 5. What cause have we to be thankful, that we have the knowledge of the only true God? How many are brought up in blindness? Some worship Mahomet; divers of the Indians worship the devil; they light a candle to him, that he should not hurt them. Such as know not the true God must needs stumble into hell in the dark. O be thankful that we are born in such a land, where the light of the gospel hath shined! To have the knowledge of the true God, is more than if we had mines of gold, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices; especially if God hath savingly revealed himself to us,—if he hath given us eyes to see the light,—if we so know God as to be known of him, as to love him, and believe in him,¹² we can never be enough thankful to God, that he hath hid the knowledge of himself from the wise and prudent of the world, and hath revealed it unto us.

Ph. 3. 19. ² 1 Jno. 2. 16. ³ Judg. 9. 15. ⁴ De. 18. 10, 11.
⁵ 2 Ki. 1. 6. ⁶ Jno. 17. 21. ⁷ 1 Co. 1. 18.

⁸ Mat. 13. 39. ⁹ Acts 1. 32. ¹⁰ Ps. 133. 1. ¹¹ Ps. 48. 14.
¹² Mat. 11. 25.

OF THE TRINITY.

Q. VI. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

A. Three persons, yet but one God. 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.'¹

God is but one, yet are there three distinct persons subsisting in one Godhead. This is a sacred mystery which the light within could never have discovered. As the two natures in Christ, yet but one person, is a wonder: so three persons, yet but one Godhead. I am in a great deep: the Father God,—the Son God,—the Holy Ghost God,—yet not three Gods, but one God. The three persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, but not divided; three substances, but one essence. This is a divine riddle, where one makes three, and three make but one. Our narrow thoughts can no more comprehend the Trinity in Unity, than a little nutshell will hold all the water in the sea. Let me shadow it out by this similitude: in the body of the sun, there is the substance of the sun, the beams, and the heat; the beams are begotten of the sun, the heat proceeds both from the sun and the beams; but these three, though different, are not divided; they all three make one sun: so in the blessed Trinity, the Son is begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds from both; yet though they are three distinct persons, yet but one God. First, let me speak of the Unity in Trinity; then of the Trinity in Unity.

I. Of the Unity in Trinity. The Unity of the persons in the Godhead consists in two things. 1. The identity of essence. In the Trinity there is an oneness in essence: the three persons are of the same divine nature and substance; so that there are no degrees in the Godhead; one person is not God more than another. 2. The Unity of the persons in the Godhead consists in the mutual in-being of them, or their being in one together. The three persons are so united that one person is in another, and with another: 'thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.'²

II. Let me speak of the Trinity in Unity. 1. The first person in the Trinity is God the Father: he is called the first person, in respect

of order, not dignity: for God the Father hath no essential perfection which the other persons have not; he is not more wise, more holy, more powerful, than the other persons are; a priority, not a superiority.

2. The second person in the Trinity is Jesus Christ, who is begotten of the Father before all time. 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled; before the hills, was I brought forth.'³ Which scripture declares the eternal generation of the Son of God. This second person in the Trinity, who is Jehovah, is become our Jesus. The scripture calls him the branch of David,⁴ and I may call him the flower of the virgin, having assumed our nature. 'By him all that believe are justified.'⁵

3. The third person in the Trinity, is the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; his work is to illuminate the mind, and enkindle sacred motions. The essence of the Spirit is in heaven, and every where; but the influence of it is in the hearts of believers: This is that blessed Spirit who gives us the holy unction.⁶ Though Christ merits grace for us, it is the Holy Ghost works it in us: though Christ makes the purchase, it is the Holy Ghost makes the assurance, and seals us up to the day of redemption. Thus I have spoken of all the three persons. The Trinity of persons may be proved out of, 'Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son.'⁷ Here are three names given to the three persons. He who spake with a voice from heaven, was God the Father; he who was baptized in Jordan, was God the Son; he who descended in the likeness of a dove, was God the Holy Ghost. Thus I have shown you the Unity of essence, and the Trinity of persons.

USE 1. It confutes the Jews and the Turks, who believe only the first person in the Godhead. This cuts asunder the sinews of our

¹ 1 Jno. 5. 7.

² Jno. 17. 21.

³ Pr. 8. 22—25.

⁴ Je. 23. 5.

⁶ Acts 13. 39

¹ Jno. 2. 20.

⁷ Mat. 3. 16.

comfort. Take away the distinction of the persons in the Trinity, and you overthrow man's redemption; for God the Father being offended with man for sin, how shall he be pacified without a mediator? This mediator is Christ, he makes our peace. And Christ having died, and shed his blood, how shall this blood be applied, but by the Holy Ghost? Therefore, if there be not three persons in the Godhead, man's salvation cannot be wrought out; if there be no second person in the Trinity, then there is no redeemer; if no third person, then there is no comforter. And so the plank is taken away by which we should get to heaven.

2. It confutes the execrable opinion of the Socinians, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus; they make him only to be a creature of an higher rank. As the papists blot out the second commandment, so the Socinians would the second person in the Trinity. If to oppose Christ's members be such a sin, what is it to oppose Christ himself? (1.) Jesus Christ is co-equal with God the Father, 'he thought it no robbery to be equal with God.'¹ (2.) He is co-eternal with God the Father, 'I was from the beginning';² for else there was a time when God was without a Son, and so he should be no Father; nay, else there was a time when God was without his glory, for Christ is the brightness of his Father's glory.³ (3.) He is co-essential with God the Father. The Godhead subsists in Christ, 'for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' It is said, not only Christ was 'with God' before the beginning, but he 'was God,'⁴ and 'God manifest in the flesh.'⁵ The title of Lord, so often given to Christ, in the New Testament, doth answer to the title of Jehovah in the Old Testament:⁶ so that Christ hath a co-eternity and con-substantiality with his Father, 'I and my Father are one.'⁷ It were blasphemy for any angel to speak thus. Yet further, to prove Christ's Godhead, consider 1st, The glorious incommunicable attributes belonging to God the Father are ascribed to Christ. 1. Is God the Father omnipotent? So is Jesus Christ. He is the Almighty;⁸ he creates.⁹ 2. Is God the Father infinitely immense, filling all places? So is Jesus Christ.¹⁰ While Christ was on the earth by his bodily presence, he was at the same time in the bosom of the

Father,¹¹ in regard of his divine presence. 2d, The same prerogatives royal, which belong to God the Father, belong also to Christ: 1. Doth God the Father seal pardons, this is a flower of Christ's crown, 'thy sins be forgiven thee.'¹² Nor doth Christ only remit sin *organice*, as ministers do, by virtue of a power delegated to them from God; but Christ doth it by his own power and authority. 2. Is God the Father the adequate object of faith? Is he to be believed in? So is his Son.¹³ 3. Doth adoration belong to God the Father? So it doth to the Son, 'let all the angels of God worship him.'¹⁴ How sacrilegious therefore is the Socinian, who would rob Christ of the best flower of his crown, his Godhead? They that deny Christ to be God, must greatly wrest, or else deny the scripture to be the word of God.

3. It confutes the Arians, who deny the Holy Ghost to be God. The eternal Godhead subsists in the Holy Ghost, 'he will guide you into all truth.'¹⁵ Christ speaks not there of an attribute, but of a person; and that the Godhead subsists in the person of the Holy Ghost, appears thus: the Spirit, who gives diversity of gifts, is said to be the same Lord, and the same God.¹⁶ The black and unpardonable sin is said in a special manner to be committed against the Godhead subsisting in the Holy Ghost.¹⁷ The mighty power of God is made manifest by the Holy Ghost; he changeth the hearts of men. The devil would have Christ prove himself to be God, by turning stones into bread; but thus the Holy Ghost shows his Godhead, by turning stones into flesh, 'I will take away the stony heart; and give you a heart of flesh.'¹⁸ Yet further, the power and Godhead of the Holy Ghost appeared in the effecting the glorious conception of our Lord Jesus Christ; the very shadow of the Holy Ghost made a virgin conceive.¹⁹ The Holy Ghost works miracles, which transcend the sphere of nature; as raising the dead.²⁰ To him belongs divine worship, our souls and bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost,²¹ in which temples he is to be worshipped.²² We are baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost; therefore either we must believe his Godhead, or renounce our baptism in his name. Methinks, it were enough for such men as have not so much as heard whether

¹ Ph. 2. 6. ² Pr. 8. 23. ³ He. 1. 3. ⁴ Col. 2. 9. ⁵ Jno. 1. 1. ⁶ 1 Ti. 3. 16. ⁷ De. 6. 5.; Mat. 22. 37. ⁸ Jno. 10. 30. ⁹ Re. 1. 8. ¹⁰ Col. 1. 16. ¹¹ Jo. 2. 21.

¹² Jno. 3. 13. ¹³ Mat. 9. 2. ¹⁴ Jno. 14. 1. ¹⁵ He. 1. 6. ¹⁶ Jno. 16. 13. ¹⁷ 1 Co. 12. 5, 6. ¹⁸ Mat. 12. 32. ¹⁹ Ez. 36. 26. ²⁰ Lu. 1. 35. ²¹ Ro. 8. 11. ²² 1 Co. 6. 19. ²³ 1 Co. 6. 20.

there be an Holy Ghost,¹ to deny his Deity; but that any who go for christians, should deny this article of their creed, seems to me very strange. They who would wittingly and willingly blot out the third person, shall have their names blotted out of the book of life.

USE 2. *Of exhortation.* 1. Believe this doctrine, the Trinity of persons in the Unity of essence. The Trinity is purely an object of faith; the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom this mystery; but where reason cannot wade, there faith must swim. There are some truths in religion may be demonstrated by reason, as that there is a God; but the Trinity of persons in the Unity of essence is wholly supernatural, and must be believed by faith. This sacred doctrine, though it be not against reason, yet it is above reason. Those illuminated philosophers that could find out the causes of things, and discourse of the magnitude and influence of the stars—the nature of minerals—could never, by their deepest search, find out the mystery of the Trinity: this is of divine revelation, and must be adored with humble believing. We can be no good Christians, without the firm belief of the Trinity. How can we pray to God the Father, but in the name of Christ, and through the help of the Spirit? Believe the glorious Trinity. How are the Quakers to be abhorred, who go under the name of Christians, yet undervalue and renounce Jesus Christ. I have read of some of the Quakers, who speak thus: ‘We deny the person of him whom you call Christ, and affirm, that they who expect to be saved by that Christ without works, will be damned in that faith?’ Could the devil himself speak worse blasphemy? They would pull up all religion by the roots, and take

away that corner-stone, on which the hope of our salvation is built. 2. If there be one God subsisting in three persons, then let us give equal reverence to all the persons in the Trinity. There is not more or less in the Trinity, The Father is not more God than the Son and Holy Ghost. There is an order in the Godhead, but no degrees; one person hath not a majority or supereminency above another, therefore we must give equal worship to all the persons, ‘that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.’² Adore Unity in Trinity. 3. Obey all the persons in the blessed Trinity, for all of them are God. 1. Obey God the Father; his words, either preceptive or minatory, must be observed. Christ himself, as man, obeyed God the Father,³ much more then must we.⁴ 2. Obey God the Son, ‘kiss the Son, lest he be angry?’⁵ Kiss him with a kiss of obedience; Christ’s commands are not grievous.⁶ Nothing he commands but is for our interest and benefit. O then kiss the Son! Why do the elders throw down their crowns at the feet of Christ, and fall down before the Lamb?⁷ but to testify their subjection, and to profess their readiness to serve and obey him. 3. Obey God the Holy Ghost. Our souls are breathed into us, by the glorious Spirit, ‘the Spirit of God hath made me.’⁸ Our souls are adorned by the blessed Spirit; every grace is a divine sparkle lighted in the soul by the Holy Ghost. Nay, more, the Spirit of God sanctified Christ’s human nature; he united it with the divine, and fitted the man Christ to be our Mediator. Well then doth this third person in the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, deserve to be obeyed; he is God, and this tribute of homage and obedience is to be paid him by us.

OF THE CREATION.

Q. VII. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever shall come to pass.

I should now come to speak concerning the decrees of God, but I have already spoken something to this under the attribute of God’s immutability. God is unchangeable in his essence,

and he is unchangeable in his decrees; his counsel shall stand; he hath decreed the issue of all things, and carries them on to their period by his providence; and therefore I shall proceed to the execution of his decrees.

Q. VIII. The next question is, *What is the work of creation?*

A. It is God’s making all things of nothing,

¹ Acts 19. 2.

Jno. 5. 23. ³ Jno. 4. 34. ⁴ De. 27. 10. ⁶ Ps 2. 12.

⁵ 1 Jno. 5. 3. ⁷ Rev. 4. 10, 11. ⁸ Job 33. 1

by the word of his power, &c. 'in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'¹

The creation is glorious to behold; it is a pleasant and fruitful study. Some think that Isaac, when he went abroad into the fields to meditate, it was in the book of the creatures. The creation is the heathen man's bible, the ploughman's primer, the traveller's perspective glass, through which he receives the species and representation of those infinite excellencies which are in God. The creation is a large volume in which God's works are bound up; and this volume hath three great leaves in it, heaven, earth, and sea.

The author of the creation is God, so it is in the text, 'God created.' The world was created in time, and could not be from eternity, as Aristotle thought. The world must have a maker, it could not make itself. If one should go into a far country, and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that there had been some artificer there to raise such goodly structures; so this great fabric of the world, could not create itself, it must have some builder or maker, and that is God, 'in the beginning God created.' To imagine that the work of the creation was not framed by the Lord Jehovah, is as if we should conceive a curious landscape to be drawn without the hand of a limner, 'God that made the world and all things therein.'²

In the work of creation there are two things to be considered: I. The making. II. The adorning of it.

I. The making of the world. Here consider, 1. God made the world without any pre-existent matter. This is the difference between generation and creation. In generation there is some matter to work upon; but in creation there is no pre-existent matter. God brought all this glorious fabric of the world out of the womb of nothing. We see our beginning, it was of nothing. Some brag of their birth and ancestry; you see how little cause they have to boast, they came of nothing.

2. God made the world with a word. When Solomon had to build a temple, he needed many workmen, and they all had tools to work with, but God wrought without tools, 'by the word of the Lord were the heavens made.'³ The disciples wondered that Christ could with a word calm the sea.⁴ But it was more with a word to make the sea.

3. God made all things at first very good, no defect or deformity. The creation came out of God's hands a curious piece; it was a fair copy, without any blot, written with God's own fingers,⁵ so perfect was God's work.

II. The adorning of the world. 1. God made this great lump and mass rude and shapeless, and then beautified it, and put it into a dress. He divided the sea and the earth, he decked the earth with flowers, the trees with fruit; but what is beauty when it is masked over? Therefore, that we might behold this glory, God made the light. The heavens were bespangled with the sun, moon, and stars, that so the world's beauty might be beheld and admired. God, in the creation, began with things less noble and excellent, vegetables and sensitives; and then the rational creatures, angels and men. Man was the most exquisite piece in the creation. He is a microcosm, or little world. Man was made with deliberation and counsel, 'let us make man.'⁷ It is the manner of artificers to be more than ordinary accurate, when they are about their master-pieces. Man was to be the master-piece of this visible world, therefore God did consult about the making of so rare a piece. A solemn council of the sacred persons in the Trinity was called, 'let us make man, and let us make him in our own image.'⁸ On the king's coin his image or effigies is stamped; so God stamped his image on man, and made him partake of many divine qualities.

I shall speak, 1. Of the parts of man's body. (1.) The head, the most excellent architectonical part; it is the fountain of spirits, and the seat of reason. In nature the head is the best piece, but in grace the heart excels. (2.) The eye, it is the beauty of the face; it shines and sparkles like a lesser sun in the body. The eye occasions much sin, and therefore well may it have tears in it. (3.) The ear, which is the conduit-pipe, through which knowledge is conveyed. Better lose our seeing than our hearing, for 'faith cometh by hearing.'⁹ To have an ear open to God, is the best jewel on the ear. (4.) The tongue. David calls the tongue his glory,⁹ because it is an instrument to set forth the glory of God; the soul at first was a viol in tune to praise God, and the tongue did make the music. God hath given us two ears, but one tongue, to show that we should be swift to hear, but slow to speak. God hath set a

¹ Ge. 1. 1. ² Acts 17. 24. ³ Ps. 33. 6. ⁴ Mat. 8. 26, 27.

⁵ Ge. 1. 31. ⁶ Ps. 8. 3. ⁷ Ge. 1. 26. ⁸ Ro. 10. 17. ⁹ Ps. 10. 9.

double fence before the tongue, the teeth and the lips, to teach us to be wary that we offend not with our tongue. (5.) The heart, this is a noble part, and seat of life.

2. The soul of man; this is the man of the man. Man, in regard of his soul, partakes with the angels; nay, as Plato saith, the understanding, will, and conscience, are a glass that resemble the Trinity. The soul is the diamond in the ring; the soul is a vessel of honour; God himself is served in this vessel. It is a sparkle of celestial brightness, saith Damascene. If David did so admire the rare contexture and workmanship of his body, 'I am wonderfully made, I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth;'¹ if the cabinet be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? How richly is the soul embroidered? Thus you see how glorious a work the creation is, and man especially, who is the epitome of the world.

Q. *But why did God make the world?*

A. 1. Negatively: not for himself: he did not need it, being infinite. He was happy before the world was, in reflecting upon his own sublime excellencies and perfections. God did not make the world to be a place of mansion for us, we are not to abide here for ever. Heaven is the mansion-house.² The world is only a passage-room to eternity; the world is to us as the wilderness was to Israel, not to rest in, but to travel through to the glorious Canaan. The world is a dressing-room to dress our souls in, not a place where we are to stay for ever. The apostle tells us of the world's funeral, 'the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.'³

A. 2. Positively: God made the world to demonstrate his own glory. The world is a looking-glass in which we may see the power and goodness of God shine forth, 'the heavens declare the glory of God.'⁴ The world is like a curious piece of arras or tapestry, in which we may see the skill and wisdom of him that made it.

USE 1. Did God create this world? This convinceth us of the truth of his Godhead; to create is proper to a Deity.⁵ This convinced Plato of a Deity, when he saw all the world could not make a fly. Thus God proves himself to be the true God, and distinguisheth himself from idols.⁶ It is written in Chaldee,

'thus shall ye say to them, the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish.' Who but God can create? The creation is enough to convince the heathen that there is a God. There are two books out of which God will judge and condemn the heathen, viz. the book of conscience, 'who have the law written in their heart;' and the book of the creation, 'the invisible things of him are clearly seen by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.'⁷ The world is full of emblems and hieroglyphics; every star in the sky, every bird that flies in the air, is a witness against the heathen. A creature could not make itself.

USE 2. Here is a mighty support for faith, God creates. He that made all things with a word, what cannot he do? He can create strength in weakness; he can create a supply of our wants. What a foolish question was that, 'can he prepare a table in the wilderness?'⁸ Cannot he that made the world do much more? 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'⁹ Rest on this God for help, who made heaven and earth. The work of creation, as it is a monument of God's power, so it is a stay to faith. Is thy heart hard? he can with a word create softness. Is it unclean? he can create purity, 'create in me a clean heart, O God!'¹⁰ Is the church of God low? he can create Jerusalem a praise.¹¹ No such golden pillar for faith to stay upon, as a creating power.

USE 3. Did God make this world full of beauty and glory, every thing very good,—then, what an evil thing is sin, that hath put out of frame the whole creation! Sin hath much eclipsed the beauty, soured the sweetness, and marred the harmony of the world. How bitter is that gall, a drop whereof can imbitter a whole sea? Sin hath brought vanity and vexation into the world, yea, a curse. God cursed the ground for man's sake.¹² There were several fruits of the curse. 1. 'In sorrow shalt thou eat of it.'¹³ By that word *sorrow*, is to be understood all the troubles and cares of this life. 2. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.'¹⁴ In innocency Adam did till the ground, (he must not live idly) but it was rather a delight than a labour; that tilling was without toiling. The eating in sorrow, and the

¹ Ps. 139. 14, 15. ² Jno. 14. 2. ³ 2 Pe. 3. 10. ⁴ Ps. 19. 1. ⁵ Acts 17. 24. ⁶ Je. 10. 11.

⁷ Ro. 2. 15. ⁸ Ro. 1. 20. ⁹ Ps. 78. 19. ¹⁰ Ps. 124. 8. ¹¹ Ps. 51. 10. ¹² Is. 65. 18. ¹³ Ge. 3. ¹⁴ Ge. 3. 17. ¹⁵ Ge. 3. 19.

sweat of the brow, came in after sin. 3. 'Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth.'¹

Q. *Whether in innocency did not the earth bear thorns, because it is threatened as a punishment?*

A. It is likely it did bear thorns; for, when God had done creating, he made no new species or kinds of things; but the meaning is, now, after sin the earth should bring forth more plenty of thorns, and now those thorns should be hurtful, and choke the corn, which hurtful quality was not in them before. Ever since the fall, all the comforts of this life have a thorn and a thistle in them.

4. The fourth fruit of the curse, was the driving man out of paradise: 'so he drove out the man.'² God at first brought Adam into paradise, as into a house ready furnished, or as a king into his throne, 'have dominion over every living thing that moveth;'³ now God's driving Adam out of paradise, signifies his dethroning and banishing him, that he might look after an heavenly and a better paradise. 5. A fifth fruit of the curse was death, 'to dust thou shalt return.'⁴ Death was not natural to Adam, it came in after sin. Josephus is of opinion, man should have died though he had continued in innocency only he should have had a longer term of years added to his life; but out of question, death grew out of the root of sin; the apostle saith, 'by sin came death.'⁵ See then how cursed a thing sin is, that hath brought so many curses upon the creation. If we will not hate sin for its deformity, let us hate it for the curse it brings.

USE 4. Did God make this glorious world? Did he make every thing good? Was there in the creature so much beauty and sweetness? Oh! then what sweetness is there in God? The cause is always more noble than the effect. Think with yourselves, is there so much excellency in house and lands, then how much more is there in God, that made these! Is there beauty in a rose? What beauty then is there in Christ, the rose of Sharon! Doth oil make the face shine?⁶ How will the light of God's countenance make it shine! Doth wine cheer the heart? O what virtue is there in the true vine! How doth the blood of this grape cheer the heart! Is the fruit of the garden sweet? now delicious are the fruits of the Spirit! Is a gold mine so precious; how precious is he

whofounded this mine! What is Christ in whom are hid all treasures?⁷ We should ascend from the creature to the Creator. If there be any comfort here below, how much more is there in God, who made all these things! How unreasonable is it, that we should delight in the world, and not much more in him that made it? How should our hearts be set on God, and how should we long to be with God, who hath infinitely more sweetness in him, than any creature!

USE 5. *Of Exhortation.* 1. Did God create the world? let us wisely observe those works of creation. God hath given us not only the book of the scriptures to read in, but the book of the creation; look up to the heavens, they show much of God's glory, the sun gilds the world with its bright beams, behold the stars, their regular motion in their orbs, their magnitude, their light, their influence. We may see God's glory blazing in the sun, twinkling in the stars. Look into the sea, and see the wonders of God in the deep.⁸ Look into the air, there the birds make melody, and sing forth the praises of their Creator. Look into the earth, there we may wonder at the nature of minerals, the power of the loadstone, the virtue of herbs; see the earth decked as a bride with flowers; all these are the glorious effects of God's power. God hath wrought the creation as with curious needle-work, that we may observe his wisdom and goodness, and give him the praise due to him, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.'⁹

2. Did God create all things? Let us obey our Maker. We are his by the right of creation; we owe ourselves to him; if another gives us our maintenance we think ourselves bound to serve him, much more should we serve and obey God who gives us our life: 'in him we live and move.'¹⁰ God hath made every thing for man's service, the corn for nourishment, the beasts for usefulness, the birds for music, that man should be for God's service. The rivers come from the sea, and they run into the sea again. All we have is from God; let us honour our Creator, and live to him that made us.

3. Did God make our bodies out of the dust, and that dust out of nothing? Let this keep down our pride. When God would humble Adam, he useth this expression, 'out of it (the dust) wast thou taken.'¹¹ Why art thou

¹ Ge. 3. 18. ² Ge. 3. 24. ³ Ge. 1. 28. ⁴ Ge. 3. 19.
⁵ Ro. 5. 12. ⁶ Ps. 104. 15.

⁷ Col. 2. 3. ⁸ Ps. 107. 24. ⁹ Ps. 104. 24. ¹⁰ Acts 17. 28.
¹¹ Ge. 3. 19.

proud, O dust and ashes? Thou art made but of coarse metal. 'Since thou art the clay of the ground (*humi limus*), why art thou not most humble?' (*humilimus*) BERN. David saith, 'I was curiously wrought.' Thy being curiously wrought, may make thee thankful; but being made of the dust, may keep thee humble. If thou hast beauty, it is but well-coloured earth. Thy body is but air and dust mingled together, and this dust will drop into the dust. When the Lord had said of the judges, they were gods, lest they should grow proud, he tells them, they were dying gods, 'ye shall die like men.'¹

4. Did God create our souls after his image, but we lost it? let us never rest till we are restored to his image again. We have now got the devil's image in pride, malice, envy; let us get God's image restored, which consists in knowledge and righteousness.⁸ Grace is our best beauty, it makes us like God and angels; as the sun is to the world, so is holiness to the soul. Let us go to God to repair his image in us. Lord! thou hast once made me, make me anew; sin hath defaced thy image in me, O draw it again by the pencil of the Holy Ghost!

OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Q. XI. *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

The work of God's providence, 'my Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'⁴ The great God hath rested from the works of creation, he doth not create any new species of things, 'he rested from all his works:'⁵ and therefore this scripture must needs be meant of God's works of providence, 'my Father worketh, and I work.'⁶ 'His kingdom ruleth over all;' i.e. his providential kingdom. Now, for the clearing of this point, I shall, 1. Show you that there is a providence. 2. What that providence is. 3. Lay down some maxims or propositions concerning the providence of God.

1. That there is a providence: there is no such thing as blind fate, but there is a providence that guides and governs in the world: 'the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.'⁷

2. What this providence is? I answer, providence is God's ordering all issues and events of things, after the counsel of his will, to his own glory. 1. I call providence God's ordering of things, to distinguish it from his decrees—God's decree ordains things that shall fall out, his providence ordereth them. 2. I call providence the ordering of things after the counsel of God's will, that I may free it from all rashness and precipitancy, and to show you that it is a high act of prudence done after the counsel of his own will. 3. God ordereth all events of things, after the counsel of his will,

to his own glory; that glory being the ultimate end of all his actings, and the centre where all the lines of providence do meet. The providence of God is the queen and governess of the world; it is the eye that sees, and the hand that turns all the wheels in the universe. God is not like an artificer that builds an house, and then leaves it, and is gone; but like a pilot, that does with a great deal of care, steer on the ship of the whole creation.

3. I shall lay down some positions about the providence of God.

I. God's providence reaches to all places, persons, and occurrences. 1. To all places, 'Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?'⁸ The diocese where providence visits is very large; it reaches to heaven, earth, and sea, 'they that go down to the sea, see the wonders of God in the deep.'⁹ Now, that the sea, which is higher than the earth, should not drown the earth, is a wonder of providence; the prophet Jonah, he saw the wonders of God in the deep, when the very fish which did devour him and swallow him, did bring him safe to shore. 2. God's providence reaches to all persons, especially the persons of the godly, they are in a special manner taken notice of. God takes care of every saint in particular, as if he had none else to take care for, 'he careth for you,'¹⁰ i.e. elect in a special manner. 'The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; to preserve them from death, and to keep them alive in famine.'¹¹ God, by his providential care, shields off dangers from his people, he sets a lifeguard of angels about them.¹² God's

¹ Ps. 139. 15. ² Ps. 82. 6. ³ Ps. 82. 7. ⁴ John 5. 17.
⁵ Gen. 2. 2. ⁶ Ps. 103. 19. ⁷ Pro. 16. 33.

⁸ Col. 3. 10. ⁹ Je. 23. 23. ¹⁰ Ps. 107. 23. 24. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 5. 7.
¹² Ps. 33. 18, 19. ¹³ Ps. 34. 7.

providence keeps the very bones of the saints,¹ it bottles their tears,² it strengthens the saints in their weaknesses,³ it supplies all their wants out of its alms-basket;⁴ thus providence doth wonderfully supply the wants of the elect. When the protestants in Rochelle were besieged by the French king, God by his providence sent in a great number of small fishes that fed them, such as were never seen before in that haven. So the raven, that unnatural creature that will hardly feed its own young, yet providentially brought sustenance to the prophet Elijah.⁵ The virgin Mary, though by bearing and bringing forth the Messiah she helped to make the world rich, yet she herself was very poor, and now, being warned of the angel to go into Egypt,⁶ the virgin had scarce enough to bear her charges thither: see now how God provides for her beforehand; he by his providence, sends the wise men from the east, and they bring costly gifts, gold, myrrh, and frankincense, and present these to Christ, and now the virgin had enough to defray her charges into Egypt. God's children sometimes scarce know how they are fed, and yet providence feeds them, 'verily thou shalt be fed'⁷ If God will give his people a kingdom when they die, he will not deny them daily bread while they live. 3. God's providence reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; there is nothing that stirs in the world, but God hath, by his providence, the overruling of it. The raising of a man to honour, 'he putteth down one, and raises up another.'⁸ Success and victory in battle is the result of providence: Saul had the victory, but God wrought the salvation.⁹ That among all virgins which were brought before the king, that Esther should find favour in the eyes of the king, was not without God's special providence; for, by this means, the Lord saved the Jews alive that were destined to destruction. Providence reaches to the least of things, to the birds and pismires; providence feeds the young raven, when the dam forsakes it, and will give it no food;¹⁰ providence reaches to the very hairs of our head, 'the very hairs of your head are all numbered';¹¹ and surely if providence reaches to our hairs, then much more to our souls. And thus you have seen that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, to all occurrences and affairs. Now there are two objections against this doctrine.

OBJECT. 1. *But some say, there are many things done in the world which are eccentrical, they are very disorderly and irregular; and surely God's providence doth not these things.*

A. Yes, these things that seem to us irregular, God makes use of to his own glory. For instance, suppose you were in a smith's shop, and there should see several sorts of tools, some crooked, some bowed, others hooked, would you condemn all these things for nought, because they do not look handsome? the smith makes use of them all for the doing of his work. Thus it is with the providences of God, they seem to us to be very crooked and strange, yet they all carry on God's work. I shall clear this to you in two particular cases:

1. God's people are low; why, this seems to be very much out of order, that these that are best should be in the lowest condition; but there is much wisdom to be seen in this providence, as appears thus: 1. Perhaps the hearts of the godly were lifted up with riches or with success: now God comes with an humbling providence to afflict them and fleec them; better is the loss that makes them humble, than the success that makes them proud. Again, 2. If the godly were not sometimes afflicted, and suffered an eclipse in their outward comforts, how could their graces be seen, their faith and patience? If it were always sunshine, we should see no stars; if we should have always prosperity, it would be hard to see the actings of men's faith. Thus you see God's providences are wise and regular, though to us they seem very strange and crooked.

2. Here is another case, the wicked flourish; this seems to be very much out of order; ay, but God, in his providence, sees good sometimes that the worst of men should be exalted; they may do some work to God, though against their will.¹² God will be in no man's debt. God makes use of the wicked sometimes to protect and shield his church; he makes use of them to refine and purify his people, 'thou hast established them for correction.'¹³ As if the prophet had said, 'thou hast ordained the wicked to correct thy children:' and indeed, as Austin saith well, 'we are beholden to wicked men, who against their wills do us good.' As the corn is beholden to the flail to thrash off its husks, or as the iron is beholden to the file to brighten it, so the godly are beholden to the wicked, though it be against their will, to brighten and

¹ Ps. 31. 10. ² Ps. 56. 8. ³ He. 11. 31. ⁴ Ps. 23. 5.

⁵ 1 Kings 17. 6. ⁶ Mat. 2. 13. ⁷ Ps. 37. 3. ⁸ Ps. 75. 7.

⁹ 1 Sa. 11. 13. ¹⁰ Ps. 117. 9. ¹¹ Mat. 10. 50.

¹² Is. 10. 7.

¹³ Ha. 1. 12.

refine their graces. Now then, if the wicked do God's own work, though against their will, God will not let them be losers by it; he will raise them in the world, exalt them, and wring out the waters of a full cup to them. Thus you see these providences are wise and regular, which to us seem strange and crooked.

OBJECT. 2. *But, some may say, if God hath a hand in ordering all things that fall out, why then he hath a hand in the sins of men.*

I answer, No, by no means, he hath no hand in any man's sin. God cannot go contrary to his own nature, he cannot do any unholy action, no more than the sun can be said to be darkened. Here you must take heed of two things; as you must take heed of making God ignorant of men's sins, so you must take heed of making God to have a hand in men's sins. Is it a thing likely, that God is the author of sin, that is an avenger of it? Is it a likely thing that God should make a law against sin, and then have a hand in breaking his own law? Is that likely? And therefore to answer the objection, God in his providence doth permit men's sins, 'he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.'¹ God permitted their sin, and he would never permit their sin if he could not bring good out of it; as the apothecary can make a treacle of poison. Had not sin been at all permitted, God's justice in punishing sin, and his mercy in pardoning sin, had never been so well known. The Lord is pleased to permit it, but he hath no hand in sin.

OBJECT. *But is it not said, that God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Here is more than God's bare permitting of sin.*

A. God doth not infuse evil into men, only he withdraws the influence of his graces, and then the heart hardens of itself; even as the light being withdrawn, darkness presently follows in the air; but it were absurd to say, that therefore the light darkens the air; and therefore you will observe, that Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart.² God is the cause of no man's sin; it is true, God hath a hand in the action where sin is, but no hand in the sin of the action. He that plays upon a jarring instrument, he is the cause of the sounding of the instrument, but the jarring is from itself: so it is here, the actions of men, so far as they are natural, are from God; but so far as they are sinful, they are from men themselves, and God has no hand at all in them. And so much for the first position,

that God's providence reaches to all places, to all persons, and to all occurrences.

II. A second position is this: there are providences that are casual and accidental to us, that are predetermined by the Lord: the falling of a tile upon one's head, the breaking out of a fire, to us is casual, but it is ordered by a providence of God. You have a clear instance of this:³ 'a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness.' This accident was casual as to the man that drew the bow, but it was divinely ordered by the providence of God; God's providence directed the arrow to hit the mark. Things that seem to fall out casual, and by chance, they are the issues of God's decrees, and the interpretation of his will.

III. God's providence is greatly to be observed, but we are not to make it the rule of our actions, 'whoso is wise will observe these things.'⁴ It is good to observe providence, but we must not make it our rule to walk by; providence is a christian's diurnal, but not his bible. Sometimes a bad cause prevails and gets ground; it is not to be liked because it doth prevail; we must not think the better of what is sinful, because it is successful; here is no rule for our actions to be directed by.

IV. Divine providence is irresistible, there is no standing in the way of God's providence to hinder it; when God's time was come for Joseph's release, the prison could hold him no longer, 'the king sent and loosed him.'⁵ When God would indulge the Jews with liberty in their religion, Cyrus, by a providence, puts forth a proclamation to encourage the Jews to go and build their temple at Jerusalem, and worship God.⁶ If God will shield and protect Jeremiah's person in captivity, the very king of Babylon shall nurse up the prophet, and give charge concerning him that he want nothing.⁷

V. God is to be trusted when his providences seem to run contrary to his promises. God promised David to give him the crown, to make him king, but providence runs contrary to his promise. David was pursued by Saul, was in danger of his life, but all this while it was David's duty to trust God. Pray observe, the Lord doth oftentimes by cross providences bring to pass his promises. God promised Paul the lives of all that were with him in the ship; but now the providence of God seems to run quite

¹ Acts 14. 16.

² Ex. 8. 15.

³ 1 Kings 22. 31. ⁴ Ps. 107. 43. ⁵ Ps. 105. 20.

⁶ Ezra 1. 2, 3. ⁷ Je. 39. 11, 12.

contrary to his promise, the winds blew, the ship splits and breaks in pieces; and thus God fulfilled his promise, upon the broken pieces of the ship, they all came safe to shore. Trust God when providences seem to run quite contrary to promises.

VI. The providences of God are chequer-work; they are intermingled; in the life to come, there shall be no more mixture, in hell there is nothing but bitter, in heaven there is nothing but sweet, but in this life the providences of God are mixed, there is something of the sweet in them, and something of the bitter. Providences are just like Israel's pillar of cloud that conducted them in their march; it was dark on one side, and light on the other; so the providences of God are a dark part and a light part. In the ark, there was laid up the rod and manna, so are God's providences to his children; there is something of the rod, and something of the manna; so that we may say with David, 'I will sing of mercy and judgment.' Joseph was in prison, there was the dark side of the cloud; but God was with Joseph, there was the light side of the cloud. Aslier's shoes were of brass, but his feet were dipt in oil.¹ So affliction is the shoe of brass that pinches; ay, but there is mercy mingled with the affliction, there's the foot dipt in oil.

VII. The very same action, as it comes from God's providence, may be good, which, as it comes from men, may be evil. For instance, Joseph being sold into Egypt; as he was sold by his brethren, it was evil, very wicked, for it was the fruit of their envy; but as it was an act of God's providence, so it was good; for by this means Jacob and all his family, were preserved alive in Egypt. Another instance is in Shimei's cursing David; now as Shimei cursed David, it was wicked and sinful, for it was the fruit of his malice; but as his cursing was ordered by God's providence, so it was an act of God's justice to punish David, and to humble him for his adultery and murder. The crucifying of Christ, as it came from the Jews, was an act of hatred and malice to Christ, so Judas's betraying him was an act of covetousness, but as it was an act of God's providence, so there was good in it; for, see it was an act of God's love in giving Christ to die for the world. Thus I have cleared to you the doctrine of God's providence, in these several positions: let me now speak something by way of application.

USE 1. By way of exhortation in these particulars. 1. Admire God's providence: the providence of God keeps the whole creation upon the wheels, or else it would soon be dissolved, and the very axle-tree would break in pieces: if God's providence should be withdrawn but for a while, creatures would be dissolved, and run into their first nothing. Without this wise providence of God there would be anxiety and confusion in the whole world, just like an army when it is routed and scattered. The providence of God infuses comfort and virtue into every thing we enjoy; our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us, without the special providence of God. And doth not all this deserve your admiration of providence?

2. Learn quietly to submit to divine providence; do not murmur at things that are ordered by divine wisdom. We may no more find fault with the works of providence than we may with the works of creation. It is a sin as well to quarrel with God's providence, as to deny God's providence. If men do not act as we would have them, they shall act as God would have them. His providence is his master-wheel that turns these lesser wheels, and God will bring his glory out of all at last: 'I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou, Lord, didst it.' It may be, we think sometimes we could order things better if we had the government of the world in our hands; but alas! should we be left to our own choice, we should choose things that are hurtful for us. David did earnestly desire the life of his child, which was the fruit of his sin; now, had the child lived, it had been a perpetual monument of his shame. Let us be content God should rule the world, learn to acquiesce in his will and submit to his providence. Doth any affliction befall you? remember God sees it is that which is fit for you, or it should not come; your clothes cannot be so fit for you, as your crosses. God's providence may sometimes be secret, but it is always wise; though we may not be silent under God's dishonour, yet we should learn to be silent under his displeasure.

3. You that are christians, believe that all God's providences shall conspire for the good of his people, and shall promote their salvation at last. The providences of God are sometimes dark, and our eyes dim, and we can hardly tell what to make of them; but when we cannot unriddle providence, believe it shall

¹ De. 33. 24.

² Ps. 39. 9.

work together for the good of the elect.¹ The wheels in a clock seem to move cross one to another, but they help forward the motion of the clock, and make the larum strike: so the providences of God seem to be cross wheels; but for all that they shall carry on the good of the elect. The pricking of a vein is in itself evil and hurtful, but as it prevents a fever, and tends to the health of the patient, so it is good; so affliction in itself is not joyous but grievous, but the Lord turns this to the good of his saints; poverty shall starve their sins, afflictions shall prepare them for a kingdom. Therefore, christians, believe that God loves us, that he will make the most cross providences to promote his glory and our good.

4. Let this be an antidote against immoderate fear; for nothing comes to pass but what is ordained by God's decree, and ordered by his providence. We sometimes fear what the issue of things will be, men grow high in their actings; let us not make things worse by our fear. Men are limited in their power, and shall not go one hair's breadth further than God's providence will permit; he might let Sennacherib's army march towards Jerusalem, but he shall not shoot one arrow against it. 'Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred and fourscore and five thousand.'² When Israel was compassed in between Pharaoh and the Red sea, no question some of their hearts did begin to tremble, and they looked upon themselves as dead men; but providence so ordered it, that the sea was a safe passage to Israel, and a sepulchre to Pharaoh and all his host.

USE 2. *Comfort in respect of the church of God.* God's providence reacheth in a more special manner to his church: 'sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine.'³ God waters this vineyard with his blessings, and watcheth over it by his providence, 'I the Lord keep it night and day;' such as think totally to ruin the church, must do it in a time when it is neither day nor night; for the Lord keeps it by his providence night and day. What a miraculous conduct of providence had Israel! God led them by a pillar of fire, gave them manna from heaven, set the rock abroach. God by his providence preserves his church in the midst of enemies; which is as to see a spark kept alive in the ocean, or a flock of sheep among wolves. God saves his church strangely: 1. By giving unexpected

mercies to his church, when she looked for nothing but ruin, 'when the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dreamed.'⁴ How strangely did God raise up queen Esther to preserve alive the Jews, when Haman had got a bloody warrant signed for their execution? 2. Strangely, by saving in that very way in which we think he will destroy. God works sometimes by contraries. He raiseth his church by bringing it low. The blood of the martyrs hath watered the church, and made it more fruitful: 'the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied.'⁵ The church is like that plant which Gregory Nazianzen speaks of, it lives by dying, and grows by cutting. 3. Strangely, in that he makes the enemy to do his work. When the people of Ammon and Moab, and Mount Seir came against Judah, God set the enemy one against another. 'The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir utterly to slay and destroy them; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.'⁶ In the powder treason he made the traitors to be their own betrayers; God can do his work by the enemy's hand. God made the Egyptians send away the people of Israel laden with jewels.⁷ The church is the apple of God's eye, and the eyelid of his providence doth daily cover and defend it.

USE 3. Let the merciful providence of God cause thankfulness. We are kept alive by a wonder-working providence. Providence makes our clothes warm us, our meat nourish us; we are fed every day out of the alms-basket of God's providence. That we are in health, that we have an estate, it is not our diligence, but God's providence: 'thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for he it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.'⁸ Especially if we go a step higher, we may see cause of thankfulness, that we should be born and bred in a gospel-land, that we should live in such a place where the Sun of righteousness shines, this is a signal providence! Why might we not have been born in such places where paganism prevails? That Christ should make himself known to us, and touch our hearts with his Spirit when he passeth by others; whence is this, but from the miraculous providence of God, which is the effect of his free grace?

USE 4. See here that which may make us

¹ Ro. 8. 28. ² 2 King. 19. 35. ³ Is. 27. 2.

⁴ Ps. 126. 1. ⁵ Ex. 1. 12. ⁶ 2 Ch. 20. 23. ⁷ Ex. 12. 36
⁸ De 8. 18.

long for that time when the great mystery of God's providence shall be fully unfolded to us. Now we scarce know what to make of God's providences, therefore are ready to censure what we do not understand; but in heaven we shall see how all God's providences, sickness, losses, sufferings, carried on our salvation. Here we see but some dark pieces of God's providence,

and it is impossible to judge of his works by pieces; but when we come to heaven, and see the full body and portraiture of his providence drawn out in its lively colours, it will be a glorious sight to behold; then we shall see how all God's providences helped to fulfil his promises. Never a providence but we shall see had either a wonder or a mercy in it.

OF THE COVENANT OF WORKS.

Q. XII. I PROCEED to the next question, What special providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge, upon pain of death.

For this, consult with Gen. ii. 16, 17, 'and the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' The subject then of our next discourse is the covenant of works. This covenant was made with Adam and all mankind; for Adam was a public person, and the representative of the world.

Q. For what reason did God make a covenant with Adam and his posterity in innocency?

A. 1. To show his sovereignty over us: we were his creatures, and as God was the great monarch of heaven and earth, he might impose upon us terms of a covenant. *2.* God made a covenant with Adam, to bind him fast to God; as God bound himself to Adam, so Adam was bound to him by the covenant.

Q. What was the covenant?

A. God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of knowledge; God gave Adam leave to eat of all the other trees of the garden. God did not envy him any happiness; only meddle not with this tree of knowledge, because God would try Adam's obedience. As king Pharaoh made Joseph chief ruler of his kingdom, and gave him a ring off his finger, and a chain of gold, only he must not touch his throne;¹ in like manner God dealt with Adam; he gave him a sparkling jewel, knowledge, and arrayed him with a fine vesture, put upon him the garment

of original righteousness, only, saith God, touch not the tree of knowledge, for that is aspiring after omniscency. Adam had power to have kept this law; he had the copy of God's law written in his heart. This covenant of works had a promise annexed to it, and a threatening. *1.* The promise, 'do this and live.' In case man had stood, it is probable he had not died, but had been translated to a better paradise. *2.* The threatening, 'thou shalt die the death;' Hebrew, 'in dying thou shalt die;' that is, thou shalt die both a natural death and an eternal, unless some other expedient be found out for thy restoration.

Q. But why did God give Adam this law, seeing God did foresee that Adam would transgress it?

A. 1. It was Adam's fault that he did not keep the law; God gave him a stock of grace to trade with, but he of himself broke. *2.* Though God foresaw Adam would transgress, yet that was not a sufficient reason that Adam should have no law given him; for, by the same reason, God should not have given his written word to men, to be a rule of faith and manners, because he foresaw that some would not believe, and others would be profane. Shall not laws be made in the land, because some break them? *3.* God, though he foresaw Adam would break the law, he knew how to turn it to a greater good, in sending Christ. The first covenant being broken, he knew how to establish a second, and a better. Well, concerning the first covenant, consider these four things:

1. The form of the first covenant, in innocency, was working; 'do this and live.'² Working was the ground and condition of our justification.³ Not but that working is required in the covenant of grace: we are bid to work out our salvation, and be rich in good works. But works

¹ Ge. 41. 10.

² Ge. 42. 18.

³ Ga. 3. 12.

in the covenant of grace are not required under the same notion, as in the first covenant with Adam. Works are not required to the justification of our persons, but as a testification of our love to God; not as a cause of our salvation, but as an evidence of our adoption. Works are required in the covenant of grace, not so much in our own strength, as in the strength of another 'it is God which worketh in you.'¹ As the scrivener guides the child's hand, and helps him to form his letters, so that it is not so much the child's writing as the scrivener's that guides his hand, so not our working, as the Spirit's co-working.

2. The covenant of works was very strict. God required of Adam and all mankind, 1. Perfect obedience. Adam must do all things written in the 'book of the law,'² and not fail, either in the matter or manner. Adam was to live up to the whole breadth of the moral law, and go exactly according to it, as a well made dial goes with the sun; a sinful thought had forfeited the covenant. 2. Personal obedience: Adam must not do his work by a proxy, or have any surety bound for him; no, it must be done in his own person. 3. Perpetual obedience: he must continue in all things written in the 'book of the law,'³ thus it was very strict. There was no mercy in case of failure.

3. The covenant of works was not built upon a very firm basis: therefore it must needs leave men full of fears and doubts. The covenant of works rested upon the strength of man's inherent righteousness, which though in innocency was perfect, yet was subject to a change. Adam was created holy, but mutable; he had a power to stand, but not a power not to fall. Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with, but he was not sure he would not break. Adam was his own pilot, and could steer right in the time of innocency; but he was not so secured, but that he might dash against the rock of a temptation, and he and his posterity suffer shipwreck; so that the covenant of works must needs leave jealousies and doubtings in Adam's heart, he having no security given him, that he should not fall from that glorious state.

4. The covenant of works being broken by sin, man's condition was very deplorable and desperate; he was left in himself helpless; there was no place for repentance; the justice of God being offended sets all the other attributes

against mankind. When Adam lost his righteousness, he lost his anchor of hope and his crown: there was no way for man's relief, unless God would find out such a way, as neither man nor angel could devise.

USE 1. See the condescension of God, who was pleased to stoop so low, as to make a covenant with us. For the God of glory to make a covenant with dust and ashes; for God to bind himself to us, to give us life in case of obedience; entering into a covenant was a sign of his friendship with us, and a royal act of his favour.

USE 2. See what a glorious condition man was in, when God entered into covenant with him. 1. He was placed in the garden of God, which for the pleasure of it was called paradise.⁴ He had his choice of all the trees, one only excepted; he had all kinds of precious stones, pure metals, rich cedars; he was a king upon the throne, and all the creation did obeisance to him, as in Joseph's dream, all his brethren's sheaves did bow to his sheaf. Man, in innocency, had all kinds of pleasure that might ravish his senses with delight, and be as baits to allure him to serve and worship his Maker. 2. Besides, he was full of holiness; paradise was not more adorned with fruit, than Adam's soul was with grace. He was the coin on which God had stamped his lively image; light sparkled in his understanding, he was like an earthly angel; his will and affections were full of order, tuning harmoniously to the will of God. Adam was a perfect pattern of sanctity. 3. Adam had in intimacy of communion with God, and conversed with him, as a favourite with his prince. Adam knew God's mind, and had his heart; he not only enjoyed the light of the sun in paradise, but the light of God's countenance. This condition was Adam in, when God entered into a covenant with him; but this did not long continue, 'man being in honour abideth not,'⁴ lodged not for a night; his teeth watered at the apple, and ever since it hath made our eyes water.

USE 3. Learn from Adam's fall, how unable we are to stand in our own strength. If Adam, in the state of integrity, did not stand, how unable are we now, when the lock of our original righteousness is cut? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? We need more strength to uphold us than our own.

USE 4. See in what a sad condition all unbelievers and impenitent persons are; as long as they continue in their sins, they continue

¹ Ph. 2. 13.² Ga. 3. 10.³ Ga. 3. 10.⁴ Ge. 2. 8.⁴ Ps. 19. ult.

under the curse, under the first covenant. Faith entitles us to the mercy of the second covenant; but while men are under the power of their sins, they are under the curse of the first covenant, and if they die in this condition, they are damned to eternity.

USE 5. See the wonderful goodness of God, who was pleased when we had forfeited the first covenant, to enter into a new covenant with us. Well may it be called *foedus gratiae*, a covenant of grace; it is bespangled with promises, as the heaven with stars. When the angels, those glorious spirits, fell, God did not enter into a new covenant with them to be their God, but let those golden vessels lie broken; but hath entered into a second covenant with us, better than the first.¹ It is better, because it is surer; it is made in Christ, and cannot be reversed; Christ hath engaged his strength to keep every believer. In the first covenant we had a power of standing; in the second we have an impossibility of falling finally.²

USE 6. Whosoever they are that look for righteousness and salvation by the power of their free-will, or the inherent goodness of their

nature, or by virtue of their merit, as the Socinians and Papists, these are all under the covenant of works; they do not submit to the righteousness of faith, therefore they are bound to keep the whole law, and in case of failure, they are condemned. The covenant of grace is like a court of chancery, to relieve the sinner, and help him who is cast by the first covenant; it saith, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and be saved;' but such as will stand upon their own inherent righteousness, free-will and merit, they fall under the first covenant of works, and are in a perishing estate.

USE 7. Let us labour by faith to get into the second covenant of grace, and then the curse of the first covenant is taken away by Christ. If we once get to be heirs of the covenant of grace, we are in a better state than before. Adam stood on his own legs, therefore fell; we stand in the strength of Christ; under the first covenant, the justice of God, as an avenger of blood, pursues you; but if ye get into the second covenant, you are got into the city of refuge; you are safe, and the justice of God is pacified towards you.

CONCERNING SIN.

Q. XIV. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God; 'sin is the transgression of the law.'³

Of sin in general. 1. Sin is a violation or transgression; the Latin word *transgredior*, 'to transgress,' signifies to go beyond one's bounds; the moral law is to keep us within the bounds of our duty; sin is a going beyond our bounds. 2. The law of God; it is not the law of an inferior prince that is broken, but of Jehovah, who gives laws as well to angels as men; it is a law that is just, and holy, and good.⁴ It is just, there is nothing in it unequal; holy, nothing in it impure; good, nothing in it prejudicial. So that there is no reason to break this law, no more than for a beast that is in a fat pasture, to break over the hedge, to leap into a barren heath or quagmire.

I shall show what an heinous and execrable thing sin is. It is the complication of all evil; it is the spirits of mischief distilled; the scrip-

ture calls it the 'accursed thing';⁵ it is compared to the venom of serpents, the stench of sepulchres. The apostle useth this expression of sin, out of measure sinful,⁶ or, as it is in the Greek, 'hyperbolically sinful.' The devil would paint over sin with the vermilion colour of pleasure and profit, that he may make it look fair: but I shall pull off the paint from sin, that you may see the ugly face of it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and to say of it, as Lot of Zoar, 'is it not a little one?'⁷ But that you may see how great an evil sin is, consider these four things:

1. The original of sin, from whence it comes: it fetcheth its pedigree from hell. Sin is of the devil, 'he that committeth sin is of the devil.'⁸ Satan was the first actor of sin, and the first tempter to sin: sin is the devil's first-born.

2. Sin is evil in the nature of it. 1. It is a defiling thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution. It is to the soul as rust is to gold, as a stain is to beauty. It makes the soul red

¹ He. 8. 6. ² 1 Pe. 1. 5. ³ 1 Jno. 3. 4. ⁴ Ro. 7. 12.

⁵ Josh. 7. 13. ⁶ Ro. 7. 13. ⁷ Ge. 19. 20. ⁸ 1 Jno. 3. 8.

with guilt, and black with filth. Sin in scripture is compared to a 'menstruous cloth,'¹ to a plague sore;² Joshua's filthy garments, in which he stood before the angel,³ were nothing but a type and hieroglyphic of sin. Sin hath blotted God's image, and stained the orient brightness of the soul. Sin makes God loathe a sinner,⁴ and when a sinner sees his sin, he loathes himself.⁵ Sin drops poison on our holy things, it infects our prayers. The high priest was to make atonement for sin on the altar,⁶ to typify that our holiest services need Christ to make atonement for them. Duties of religion in themselves are good, but sin corrupts them, as the purest water is polluted running through muddy ground. The leper, under the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had defiled the altar. The apostle calls sin, 'filthiness of the flesh and spirit.'⁷ Sin stamps the devil's image on a man; malice is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot. It turns a man into a devil; 'have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil.'⁸

2. Sin is a grieving of God's Spirit, 'grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.'⁹ To grieve is more than to anger.

Q. *How can the Spirit be said to be grieved? For, seeing he is God, he cannot be subject to any passion.*

A. This is spoken metaphorically: sin is said to grieve the Spirit; because it is an injury offered to the Spirit, and he takes it unkindly, and, as it were, lays it to heart. And is it not much thus to grieve the Spirit? The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove; sin makes this blessed dove mourn. Were it only an holy angel, we should not grieve him, much less the Spirit of God. Is it not sad to grieve our Comforter?

3. Sin is an act of contumacy against God; a walking antipodes to heaven: 'if ye will walk contrary to me.'¹⁰ A sinner tramples upon God's law, crosseth his will, doth all he can to affront, yea to spite God. The Hebrew word for sin, *pushang*, signifies 'rebellion'; there is the heart of a rebel in every sin. 'We will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven.'¹¹ Sin strikes at the very Deity; sin would not only unthroned God, but ungod him. If the sinner could help it, God would no longer be God.

4. Sin is an act of disingenuity and unkind-

ness. God feeds the sinner, keeps off evils from him, bemoans him with mercy; but the sinner not only forgets God's mercies, but abuseth them; he is the worse for mercy; like Absalom, who, as soon as David had kissed him, and taken him into favour, plotted treason against him.¹² Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk: 'is this thy kindness to thy friend?'¹³ God may upbraid the sinner: I have given thee (may God say) thy health, strength, and estate; thou requestest me evil for good, thou woundest me with my own mercies; is this thy kindness to thy friend? Did I give thee life to sin? Did I give thee wages to serve the devil?

5. Sin is a disease, 'the whole head is sick';¹⁴ some are sick of pride, others of lust, others of envy. Sin hath distempered the intellectual part, it is a leprosy in the head, it hath poisoned the vitals, 'their conscience is defiled.'¹⁵ It is with a sinner as with a sick patient, his palate is distempered, the sweetest things taste bitter to him. The word which is 'sweeter than the honey-comb,'¹⁶ tastes bitter to him; they 'put sweet for bitter.' This is a disease, and nothing can cure this disease but the blood of the Physician.

6. Sin is an irrational thing; it makes a man act not only wickedly but foolishly. It is absurd and irrational to prefer the lesser before the greater, the pleasures of life before the rivers of pleasures at God's right hand for evermore. Is it not irrational to lose heaven for the satisfying or indulging of lust? As Lysimachus, who for a draught of water lost a kingdom. Is it not irrational to gratify an enemy? In sin we do so. When lust or rash anger burns in the soul, Satan warms himself at this fire. Men's sins feast the devil.

7. Sin is a painful thing; it costs men much labour in pursuing their sins. How do men tire themselves in doing the devil's drudgery? 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity.'¹⁷ What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason? He goes to the high priest, and then after to the band of soldiers, and then back again to the garden. St Chrysostom saith, 'virtue is easier than vice.' It is more pains to some to follow their sins, than to others to worship their God. While the sinner travails with his sin, in sorrow he brings forth; it is called 'serving divers lusts.'¹⁸ Not *enjoy*, but *serve*: Why so? Because not

¹ Is. 30, 22. ² 1 Kings 8, 38. ³ Ze. 3, 3. ⁴ Ze. 11, 8. ⁵ Ez. 20, 42. ⁶ Ex. 29, 36. ⁷ 2 Co. 7, 1. ⁸ Jno. 6, 70. ⁹ Eph. 4, 30. ¹⁰ Le. 26, 27. ¹¹ Je. 44, 17.

¹² 2 Sa. 15, 10. ¹³ 2 Sa. 16, 17. ¹⁴ Is. 1, 5. ¹⁵ Ti. 1, 15. ¹⁶ Is. 5, 20. ¹⁷ Je. 9, 5. ¹⁸ Ti. 3, 3.

only of the slavery in sin, but the hard labour; it is 'serving divers lusts.' Many a man goes to hell in the sweat of his brow.

8. Sin is the only thing God hath an antipathy against. God doth not hate a man because he is poor, or despised in the world; you do not hate your friend because he is sick; but that which draws forth the keenness of God's hatred is sin, 'O do not this abominable thing which I hate.'¹ And sure, if the sinner dies under God's hatred, he cannot be admitted into the celestial mansions. Will God let him live with him whom he hates? God will never lay a viper in his bosom. The feathers of the eagle will not mix with the feathers of the other fowls; God will not mix and incorporate with a sinner. Till sin be removed, there is no coming where God is.

3. See the evil of sin, in the price paid for it; it cost the blood of God to expiate it. 'O man,' saith St Austin, 'consider the greatness of thy sin, by the greatness of the price paid for sin.' All the princes on earth, or angels in heaven, could not satisfy for sin; only Christ. Nay, Christ's active obedience was not enough to make atonement for sin, but he must suffer upon the cross; for, 'without shedding of blood is no remission.'² O what an accursed thing is sin that Christ should die for it! The evil of sin is not so much seen in that one thousand are damned for it, as that Christ died for it.

4. Sin is evil in the effects of it! 1. Sin hath degraded us of our honour. Reuben by incest lost his dignity; and though he were the first-born, he could not excel.³ God made us in his own image, a little lower than the angels; but sin hath debased us. Before Adam sinned, he was like an herald that hath his coat of arms upon him; all reverence him, because he carries the king's coat of arms; but let this coat be pulled off, and he is despised, no man regards him. Sin hath done this, it hath plucked off our coat of innocency, and now it hath debased us, and turned our glory into shame, 'and in his estate shall stand up a vile person.'⁴ This was spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a king, and his name signifies 'illustrious;' yet sin hath degraded him, he was a vile person.

2. Sin disquiets the peace of the soul. Whatever defiles, disturbs; as poison tortures the bowels, corrupts the blood, so sin doth the soul.⁵ Sin breeds a trembling at the heart; it creates

fears, and there is torment in fear.⁶ Sin makes sad convulsions in the conscience. Judas was so terrified with guilt and horror, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience. And is not he like to be well cured that throws himself into hell for ease?

3. Sin produceth all temporal evil, 'Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed.'⁷ It is the Trojan horse, it hath sword, and famine, and pestilence in the belly of it. Sin is a coal that not only blacks but burns. Sin creates all our troubles; it puts gravel into our bread, wormwood in our cup. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, buries relations. Sin shoots the flying roll of God's curses into a family and kingdom.⁸ It is reported of Phocas, that having built a wall of mighty strength about his city, there was a voice heard, 'sin is within the city, and that will throw down the wall.'

4. Sin unrepented of brings final damnation. The canker that breeds in the rose is the cause of its perishing; and corruptions that breed in men's souls are the cause of their damning. Sin, without repentance, brings the 'second death,'⁹ 'a death always dying.' Sin's pleasure will turn to sorrow at last; like the book the prophet did eat, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly.¹⁰ Sin brings the wrath of God, and what buckets or engines can quench that fire, 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?'¹¹

USE 1. See how deadly an evil sin is, how strange is it that any one should love it? 'how long will ye love vanity,'¹² 'who look to other gods and love flagons of wine?'¹³ Sin is a dish men cannot forbear though it make them sick. Who would pour rose water into a kennel? What pity is it so sweet an affection as love should be poured upon so filthy a thing as sin! Sin brings a sting in the conscience, a curse in the estate, yet men love it. A sinner is the greatest self-denier; for his sin he will deny himself a part in heaven

USE 2. Do any thing rather than sin! O hate sin! There is more evil in the least sin, than in the greatest bodily evils that can befall us. The ermine rather chooseth to die than defile her beautiful skin. There is more evil in a drop of sin than in a sea of affliction; affliction is but like a rent in a coat, sin a prick at the heart. In affliction there is some good; in this lion there is some honey to be found; 'it is good for

¹ Je. 41. 4. ² He. 9. 22. ³ Ge. 49. 4. ⁴ Da. 11. 21.
⁵ Is. 57. 21.

⁶ 1 Jno. 4. 18. ⁷ La. 1. 8. ⁸ Ze. 5. 4. ⁹ Re. 20. 14
¹⁰ Ez. 3. 3. ¹¹ Mark 9. 41. ¹² Ps. 4. 2. ¹³ Ho. 3. 1

me that I have been afflicted.¹ Affliction is God's flail to thrash off our husks, not to consume, but refine. There is no good in sin; it is the spirit and quintessence of evil. Sin is worse than hell; for the pains of hell only are a burden to the creature; but sin is a burden to God, 'I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.'²

USE 3. Is sin so great an evil? Then how thankful should you be to God, if he hath taken away your sin 'I have caused thy iniquity to pass from thee.'³ If you had a disease in your

body, plague or dropsy, how thankful would you be to have it taken away? Much more to have sin taken away. God takes away the guilt of sin by pardoning grace, and the power of sin by mortifying grace. O be thankful that this sickness is 'not unto death;' that God hath changed your nature, and by grafting you into Christ, made you partake of the sweetness of that olive; that sin, though it live, doth not reign, but the elder serves the younger, the elder of sin serves the younger of grace.

ADAM'S SIN.

Q. XV. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin was their eating the forbidden fruit. 'She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband.'⁴

Here is implied, 1. That our first parents fell from the estate of innocency. 2. The sin by which they fell, eating the forbidden fruit.

1. Our first parents fell from their glorious state of innocency. 'God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.'⁵ Adam was perfectly holy, he had rectitude of mind, and liberty of will to good, but his head ached till he had invented his own and our death, he sought out many inventions, 1. Adam's fall was voluntary; he had a power not to fall. Free-will was a sufficient shield to repel temptation; the devil could not have forced him, unless he had given his consent. Satan was only a suitor to woo, not a king to compel; but Adam gave away his own power, and suffered himself to be decoyed into sin, like a young gallant, who, at one throw, loseth a fair lordship. Adam had a fair lordship, he was lord of the world, 'have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth.'⁶ But he lost all at one throw. As soon as he sinned, he forfeited paradise. 2. Adam's fall was sudden, he did not long continue in his royal majesty.

Q. *How long did Adam continue in paradise before he fell?*

A. Tostatus saith, he fell the next day. Pere-

rius saith, he fell the eighth day after his creation. But the most probable and received opinion is, that Adam fell the very same day in which he was created: so Irenæus, Cyril Epiphanius, and many others.* The reasons which incline me to believe so, are—

* How long our first parents continued in their state of innocency, and in the possession of the garden of Eden, it is not so well agreed. The account of their fall, in the series of history, follows immediately their introduction into their blissful abode; whereupon most of the Jewish doctors, and some of the Christian fathers, were of opinion, that they preserved their integrity but a very short while; that in the close of the same day wherein they were made, they transgressed the covenant, and were the very same day cast out of paradise. But we are to consider, that many circumstances are omitted in the scriptures concerning the state of our first parents, and the manner of their transgression; that Moses makes mention of nothing but what is conducive to his main design, which is to give a brief account of the most remarkable transactions that had happened from the beginning of the world to his time; and that there are sundry good reasons, which may induce us to believe, that the state of man's innocency was of a longer duration, than those who are for precipitating matters are pleased to think it.

God indeed can do what he pleases in an instant; but man necessarily requires a succession of time to transact his affairs in; and therefore when we read of Adam, in the same day that he was created (and that was not until God had made every beast of the field, inquiring into the nature of every living creature, and imposing on them proper names; falling into a deep sleep, and, with some formality, (without doubt) receiving his wife from the hand of God; removing into the garden of paradise, and (as we may well suppose) walking about, and taking some survey of it; receiving from God both a promise and prohibition, and thereupon (as we may suppose again) ratifying the first great covenant with him:—when we read of all these things, I say, we cannot but think, that some time must be required for the doing of them: and therefore to suppose, after this, that, in the close of the same day, the woman wandered from her husband, met with the serpent, entered into a parley with him, was overcome by his insinuations, did eat of the forbidden fruit, did prevail with her husband to do the same, and thereupon perceiving themselves naked, did instantly fall to work, and make themselves aprons: to suppose that, in the same evening, God comes down, summons the criminals before him, hears their excuses, decrees their punishments, drives them out of paradise, and places two cherubims to guard all avenues against their return: this is crowding too long a series of business into too short a compass of time, and thereby giving an handle to infidelity, when there is no manner of occasion for it.

¹ Ps. 119. 71. ² Amos 2. 13. ³ Ze. 3. 4. ⁴ Ge. 3. 6.
⁵ Ec. 7. 29 ⁶ Ge. 1. 28

1. It is said, Satan was a murderer 'from the beginning.'¹ Now, whom did he murder? Not the blessed angels, he could not reach them; nor the cursed angels, for they had before destroyed themselves. How then was Satan a murderer from the beginning? As soon as Satan fell, he began to tempt mankind to sin; this was a murdering temptation. By which it appears Adam did not stay long in paradise. soon after his creation the devil set upon him, and murdered him by his temptation.

2. Argument to prove that Adam fell the same day he was created: Adam had not yet eaten of the tree of life, 'and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; the Lord sent him forth from the garden.'² This tree of life, being one of the choicest fruits of the garden, and being placed in the midst of paradise, it is very like Adam would have eaten of this tree of life one of the first, had not the serpent beguiled him with the tree of knowledge. So that hence I conclude, Adam fell the very day of his creation, because he had not yet tasted the tree of life, that tree that was most in his eye, and had such delicious fruit growing upon it.

3. Argument: 'man being in honour, *abideth not*.'³ The Rabbins read it thus, 'Adam being in honour, *lodged not one night*.' The Hebrew word for *abide*, signifies, 'to stay or lodge all night.' Adam, then, it seems, did not take up one night's lodging in paradise.

Inference. From Adam's sudden fall, he fell the same day in which he was created, learn: 1. The weakness of human nature. Adam in a state of integrity, quickly made a defection from God, he soon lost the robe of innocence, and the glory of paradise. And, was our nature thus weak when it was at the best, what is it now when it is at the worst? If Adam did not stand when he was perfectly righteous, how unable are we to stand when sin hath cut the lock of our original righteousness? If purified nature did not stand, how then shall corrupt nature? If Adam, in a few hours, sinned himself out of paradise, how quickly would we sin ourselves into hell, if we were not kept by a greater power than our own! But God puts underneath his everlasting arms.⁴—2. From Adam's sudden fall, he fell the same day; learn how sad it is for a man to be left to himself.—Adam being left to himself, fell: O then, what will become of us, how soon fall, if God leave

us to ourselves! A man left to himself will choose his own death; he will be a prey to every temptation. A man without God's grace, left to himself, is like a ship in a storm, without pilot or anchor, and is ready to dash upon every rock. Make this prayer to God, 'Lord do not leave me to myself: If Adam fell so soon who had strength, how soon shall I fall who have no strength!' Urge God with his hand and seal. 'My strength shall be made perfect in weakness.'⁵

2. The sin by which our first parents fell was 'eating the forbidden fruit;' where, consider two things: I. The occasion of it. II. The sin itself.

I. The occasion of it; the serpent's temptation. The devil did creep into the serpent, and spake in the serpent, as the angel in Balaam's ass; where, consider,

1. The subtlety of Satan's temptation; his wiles are worse than his darts. Satan's subtlety in tempting: (1.) He dealt all along as an impostor, he ushered in his temptation by a lie; he heaps up many lies;—1. That though our first parents did eat of that tree, they should not die, 'ye shall not surely die.'⁶ 2. Lie, That God did envy our first parents their happiness, 'God knows, that in the day ye eat, your eyes shall be opened;'⁷ that is, it is God's envying your felicity; that he forbids you this tree. 3. Lie, that they should be thereby made like unto God, 'ye shall be as gods.'⁸ Here was his subtlety in tempting: The devil was first a liar, then a murderer.

2. In that he set upon our first parents so quickly, before they were confirmed in their obedience; the angels in heaven are fully confirmed in holiness,—they are called 'stars of the morning,'⁹ and they are fixed stars. But our first parents were not confirmed in their obedience,—they were not fixed in their orb of holiness; though they had a possibility of standing, they had not an impossibility of falling: they were holy, but mutable; here was Satan's subtlety, in tempting our first parents before they were confirmed in their obedience.

3. His subtlety in tempting was, that he set upon Eve first; 1. Because he thought she was less able to resist. Satan did break over the hedge, where it was weakest; he knew he could more easily insinuate and wind himself into her by a temptation. An expert soldier, when he is to storm or enter a castle, observes warily where there is a breach, or how he may enter with more facility; so did Satan the weaker vessel. 2. He tempted Eve first,

¹ Job. 8. 41. ² Ge. 3. 22, 23. ³ Ps. 49. 12. ⁴ Deut. 32. 17.

⁵ 2 Cor. 12. 9. ⁶ Ge. 3. 4. ⁷ Ver. 5. ⁸ Ver. 5. ⁹ Job 38. 7.

because he knew, if once he could prevail with her, she would easily draw her husband. Thus the devil handed over a temptation to Job by his wife, 'curse God and die.'¹ Agrippina poisoned the emperor Commodus with wine in a perfumed cup; the cup being perfumed and given him by his wife, it was the less suspected. Satan knew a temptation coming to Adam from his wife, would be more prevailing, and would be less suspected: O bitter! Sometimes relations prove temptations: a wife may be a snare, when she dissuades her husband from doing his duty, or enticeth him to evil. 'Ahab sold himself to work wickedness, whom his wife Jezebel stirred up.'² She blew the coals and made his sin flame out the more. Satan's subtlety was in tempting Adam by his wife, he thought she would draw him to sin.

4. Satan's subtlety in tempting, was in his assaulting Eve's faith; he would persuade her that God had not spoken truth, 'ye shall not surely die.' This was Satan's masterpiece, to weaken her faith; when he had shaken that, wrought her once to distrust; then, 'she yielded;'—she presently put forth her hand to evil.

2. Satan's cruelty in tempting: as soon as Adam was invested in all his glory, the devil cruelly, as it were on the day of Adam's coronation, would dethrone him, and bring forth him and all his posterity under a curse. We see how little love Satan hath to mankind; he hath an implacable antipathy against us, and antipathies can never be reconciled. So much for the occasion of Adam's sin, tempted by the serpent.

II. The sin itself, 'eating the forbidden fruit.' This was very heinous, and that appears three ways: 1. In respect of the person that committed it. 2. The aggravation of the sin. 3. The dreadfulness of the effect.

1. Very heinous in respect of the person that committed it: Adam had excellent and noble endowments; he was illuminated with knowledge, embellished with holiness, he knew his duty, and it was as easy to him to obey God's command as to know it, he might have chosen whether he would sin or not, yet he wilfully did eat of the tree which he was forbidden.

2. The aggravation of Adam's sin.

QUEST. *Wherewith did it appear to be so great? 'Twas but the plucking of an apple, was this such a great matter to pluck an apple?*

ANS. Besides that, it was against an infinite

God; it was a voluminous sin—there were many sins twisted together in it, as Cicero saith of parricide, 'he who is guilty of it, commits many sins in one;' so there were many sins in this one sin of Adam. A big-bellied sin, a chain with many links. Ten sins in it.

1. Incredulity. Our first parents did not believe what God had spoken was truth. God said, they shall die the death, in the day they eat of that tree. They believed not that they should die; they could not be persuaded that such fair fruit had death at the door. Thus, by unbelief they made God a liar; nay, which was worse, they believed the devil rather than God.

2. Unthankfulness, which is the epitome of all sin. Adam's sin was committed in the midst of paradise. God had enriched him with variety of mercies; he had stamped his own image upon him; he had made him lord of the world, gave him of all the trees of the garden to eat (one only excepted) and now to take of that tree! This was high ingratitude; this was like the dye to the wool, which made it crimson. When Adam's eyes were opened, and he saw what he had done, well he might be ashamed, and hide himself; to sin in the midst of paradise, how could he look God in the face without blushing!

3. In Adam's sin was discontent: had he not been discontented, he would never have sought to have altered his condition. Adam, one would think, had enough, he differed but little from the angels; he had the robe of innocence to clothe him, and the glory of paradise to crown him, yet he was not content, he would have more, he would be above the ordinary rank of creatures. How wide was Adam's heart, that a whole world could not fill it.

4. Pride, in that he would be like God. This worm, that was but newly crept out of the dust, now aspires after Deity; 'ye shall be as gods,' saith Satan, and Adam hoped to have been so indeed; he supposed the tree of knowledge would have anointed his eyes, and made him omniscient. But, by climbing too high, he got a fall.

5. Disobedience. God said, 'thou shalt not eat of the tree;' he would eat of it, though it cost him his life. Disobedience is a sin against equity; it is equal we should serve him from whom we have our subsistence; God gave Adam his allowance, therefore it was but equal

¹ Job 2. 9. ² 1 Kings 21. 25. ³ Ge. 3. 1.

he should give God his allegiance; therefore disobedience was against equity. How could God endure to see his laws trampled on before his face? This made God place a flaming sword at the end of the garden.

6. Curiosity: to meddle with that which was out of his sphere, and did not belong to him. God smote the men of Bethshemish but for looking into the ark.¹ Adam would be prying into God's secrets, and tasting what was forbidden.

7. Wantonness: though Adam had a choice of all the other trees, yet his palate grew wanton, and he must have this tree. Like Israel, God sent them manna, angels' food, ay, but they had an hankering after quails; it was not enough God did supply their wants, unless he should satisfy their lusts. Adam had not only for necessity, but for delight; yet his wanton palate lusted after forbidden fruit.

8. Sacrilege: the tree of knowledge was none of Adam's, yet he took of it, and did sacrilegiously rob God of his due. It was counted a great crime in Harpalus to rob the temple, and steal the silver vessels; so in Adam to steal fruit from that tree, which God had peculiarly enclosed for himself. Sacrilege is double theft.

9. Murder: Adam was a public person, and all his posterity were involved and wrapped up

in him, and he sinning, did at once destroy all his posterity, if free grace did not interpose. If Abel's blood did cry so loud in God's ears, 'the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground,'² then how loud did the blood of all Adam's posterity cry against him for vengeance!

10. Presumption: Adam presumed of God's mercy; he blessed himself saying, he should have peace; he thought, though he did transgress, he should not die, God would sooner reverse his decree, than punish him. High presumption; what an heinous sin then was Adam's breach of covenant!

USE. One sin may have many sins in it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, it is but a little one. How many sins were in Adam's sin? O take heed of any sin! As in one volume there may be many works bound up, so there may be many sins in one sin.

3 The dreadfulness of the effect: it hath corrupted man's nature. How rank is that poison a drop whereof could poison a whole sea! And how deadly is that sin of Adam, that could poison all mankind, and bring a curse upon them, till it be taken away by him who was 'made a curse for us.'

OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Q. XVI. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,'² &c. Adam being a representative person, he standing, we stood; and he falling, we fell. We sinned in Adam; so it is in the text, 'in whom all have sinned.' Adam was the head of mankind, and he being guilty, we are guilty, as the children of a traitor have their blood stained. 'All of us,' saith Austin, 'sinned in Adam, because we were part of Adam.'

OBJECT. *If when Adam fell, all mankind*

fell with him; why then, when one angel fell, did not all fall?

A. The case is not the same. The angels had no relation to one another; they are called morning-stars,—the stars have no dependence one upon another; but it was otherwise with us, we were in Adam's loins, as a child is a branch of the parent, we were part of Adam, therefore when he sinned, we sinned.

Q. *How is Adam's sin made ours?*

A. 1. By imputation. The Pelagians of old held that Adam's transgression is hurtful to posterity by imitation only, not by imputation; but the text confutes that, 'in whom all have sinned.'

A. 2. Adam's sin is ours by propagation. Not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to

¹ 1 Sa. 6. 19.

² Ro. 5. 12.

³ Ge. 4. 10.

us, but the pravity and corruption of his nature is derived to us as poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern. This is that which we call original sin, 'in sin did my mother conceive me.'¹ Adam's leprosy cleaves to us as Naaman's leprosy did cleave to Gehazi.² This original concupiscence is called,

1. 'The old man.'³ It is said to be the old man, not that it is weak as old men are, but for its long standing, and of its deformity. In old age the fair blossoms of beauty fall; so original sin is the old man, because it hath withered our beauty, and made us deformed in God's eye.

2. Original concupiscence is called 'the law of sin.'⁴ Original sin hath the power of a law. A law binds the subject to allegiance. Men must needs do what sin will have them, when they have both the love of sin to draw them, and the law of sin to force them. In original sin there is something privative, and something positive.—1. Something privative. We have lost that excellent quintessential frame of soul which once we had. Sin hath cut the lock of original purity, where our strength lay.—2. Something positive. Original sin hath contaminated and defiled our virgin-nature. It was death among the Romans to poison the springs. Original sin hath poisoned the spring of our nature, it hath turned beauty into leprosy, it hath turned the azure brightness of our souls into a midnight darkness.

Original sin is become co-natural to us. A man by nature cannot but sin; though there were no devil to tempt, no bad examples to imitate, yet there is such an innate principle in him, that he cannot forbear sinning,⁵ who cannot cease to sin, as a horse that is lame cannot go without halting. In the original, sin is, 1. An aversion from good. Man hath a desire to be happy, yet opposeth that which should promote his happiness; he hath a disgust of holiness, he hates to be reformed. Since we fell from God, we have no mind to return to him. 2. A propension to evil. If, as the Pelagians say, there is so much goodness in us since the fall, then why is there not as much natural proneness to good as there is to evil? Our own experience tells us that the natural bias of the soul hath a tendency to that which is bad. The very heathens by the light of nature saw this: Hierocles the philosopher said, 'it is

grafted in us by nature to sin.' Men roll sin as honey under their tongue. They drink iniquity as water.⁶ Like an hydropical person that thirsts for drink and is not satisfied: so they have a kind of drouth on them, they thirst for sin. They sin' though they are tired out in committing sin, yet they sin, 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity';⁷ as a man that follows his game while he is weary, yet he delights in it, and cannot leave off. Though God hath set so many flaming swords in the way to stop men in their sin, yet they go on in sin; which all shows what a strong appetite they have to the forbidden fruit.

That we may further see the nature of original sin, consider, 1. the universality of it; it hath, as a poison, diffused itself into all the parts and powers of our soul, 'the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.'⁸ Like a sick patient that hath no part sound, his liver swelled, his feet gangrened, his lungs perished; such infected, gangrened souls have we, till Christ, who hath made a medicine of his blood, do cure us.

1 Original sin hath depraved the intellectual part. As in the creation, 'darkness was upon the face of the deep,'⁹ so the understanding, darkness is upon the face of this deep. As there is salt in every drop of the sea, bitterness in every branch of wormwood, so there is sin in every faculty; the mind is darkened, we know little of God. Ever since Adam did eat of the tree of knowledge, and his eyes were opened, we lost our eyesight. Besides ignorance in the mind, there is error and mistake; we do not judge rightly of things; we put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.¹⁰ Besides this, there is much pride, superciliousness, and prejudice many fleshly reasonings against the truth, and swarms of vain thoughts, 'how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?'¹¹

2. Original sin hath defiled the heart, the heart is deadly wicked,¹² it is a lesser hell. In the heart are legions of lusts, obdurateness, infidelity, hypocrisy, sinful estimations; it boils as the sea with passion and revenge. 'Madness is in their heart while they live.'¹³ The heart is the devil's shop or workhouse, where all mischief is framed.

3. The will. Contumacy is the seat of rebellion. The sinner crosseth God's will to fulfil his own: 'we will burn incense to the queen of heaven.'¹⁴ There is a rooted enmity

¹ Ps. 51. 5. ² Ki. 5. 27. ³ Eph. 4. 22. ⁴ Ro. 7. 25.

⁵ 2 Pet. 2. 11.

⁶ Job 15. 16. ⁷ Eph. 4. 19. ⁸ Je. 9. 5. ⁹ Is. 1. 5. ¹⁰ Ge. 1. 2. ¹¹ Is. 5. 20. ¹² Je. 1. 11. ¹³ Je. 17. 9. ¹⁴ Ec. 9. 3. ¹⁵ Je. 11. 18.

in the will against holiness; it is like an iron sinew, it refuseth to bend to God. Where is then the freedom of the will, when it is so full not only of indisposition, but opposition to what is spiritual?

4. The affections. These, as the strings of a viol, are out of tune. These are the lesser wheels, which are strongly carried by the will, the master-wheel. Our affections are misplaced, set on wrong objects. Our love is set on sin, our joy on the creature. Our affections are naturally as a sick man's appetite, he desires things which are noxious and hurtful for him; he calls for wine in a fever: so we have impure lustings, instead of holy longings.

2. The adherency of original sin. It cleaves to us as blackness to the skin of the Ethiopian, we cannot get rid of it. Paul shook off the viper on his hand, but we cannot shake off this inbred corruption. It may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, though the roots of it are pulled up, yet there are some strings of it in the joints of the stone-work which will not be eradicated, but will sprout forth till the wall be pulled in pieces. Original concupiscence comes not as a lodger, for a night, but as an indweller, 'sin which dwelleth in me.'¹—It is an evil spirit, that haunts us wheresoever we go. 'The Canaanite dwelt in the land.'²

3. Original sin retards and hinders us in the exercises of God's worship. Whence is all that dulness and deadness in religion? It is the fruit of original sin: it is this rocks us asleep in duty, 'the good that I would, I do not.'³ Sin is compared to a weight.⁴ A man that hath weights tied to his legs cannot run fast. It is like that fish Pliny speaks of, a sea-lamprey, that cleaves to the keel of the ship, and hinders its progress when it is under sail.

4. Original sin, though it lies latent in the soul, and be as a spring which runs under ground, yet oft it breaks forth unexpectedly. Christian, thou canst not believe that evil which is in thy heart, and which will break forth suddenly, if God leave thee: 'is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?'⁵ Hazael could not believe he had such a root of bitterness in his heart, that he should rip up the women with child: is thy servant a dog? Yes, and worse than a dog, when that original corruption within was stirred up! If one had come to Peter, and said,

'Peter, within a few hours thou wilt deny Christ,' he would have said, 'Is thy servant a dog?' But alas! Peter did not know his own heart, nor how far that corruption within would prevail upon him. The sea may be calm and look clear; but when the wind blows, how doth it rage and foam! so though now thy heart seems good, yet when temptation blows, how may original sin discover itself, making thee foam with lust and passion. Who would have thought to have found adultery in David, and drunkenness in Noah, and cursing in Job? If God leave a man to himself, how suddenly and scandalously may original sin break forth in the holiest men alive!

5. Original sin doth mix and incorporate itself with our duties and graces. 1. With our duties. As the hand which is paralytical or palsied cannot move without shaking, as wanting some inward strength, so we cannot do any holy action without sinning, as wanting a principle of original righteousness. As the leper, whatever he touched became unclean, if he touched the altar, the altar did not sanctify him, but he polluted the altar; such a leprosy is original sin, it defiles our prayers and tears, we cannot write without blotting. Though I do not say that the holy duties and good works of the regenerate are sins, for that were to reproach the Spirit of Christ by which they are wrought; yet this I say, that the best works of the godly have sin cleaving to them; only Christ's blood makes atonement for our holy things. 2. With our graces. There is some unbelief mixed with faith, lukewarmness with zeal, pride with humility. As bad lungs cause an asthma or shortness of breath, so original corruption, having infected our heart, our graces breathe now very faintly.

6. Original sin is a vigorous active principle within us; it doth not lie still, but is ever exciting and stirring us up to evil; it is an inmate very unquiet; 'what I hate, that do I.'⁶ How came Paul to do so? Original sin did irritate and stir him up to it. Original sin is like quicksilver, always in motion; when we are asleep, sin is awake in the fancy. Original sin sets the head aplotting evil, and the hands aworking it; it hath in it the beginning of motion, not of rest; it is like the pulse, ever beating.

7. Original sin is the cause of all actual; it is the incentive of evil; it is the womb in which all actual sins are conceived. Hence come murders, adulteries, rapines; it is the Trojan horse,

¹ Ro. 7. 17. ² Ge. 13. 7. ³ Ro. 7. 19. ⁴ He. 12. 1.

⁵ 2 Ki 8. 13. 15.

⁶ Ro. 7. 15.

out of which a whole army of impieties come. Though actual sins may be more scandalous, yet original sin is more heinous; the cause is more than the effect.

8. It is not perfectly cured in this life. Grace, though it doth subdue sin, yet doth not wholly remove it. Though we are like Christ, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, yet we are unlike him, having the remainders of the flesh. There are two nations in the womb. Original sin is like that tree,¹ though the branches of it were hewn down, and the main body of it, yet the stumps and root of the tree were left: though the Spirit be still weakening and hewing down sin in the godly, yet the stump of original sin is still left. It is a sea that will not, in this life, be dried up.

Q. *But why doth God leave original corruption in us after regeneration? He could quite free us from it, if he pleased.*

A. He doth it to show the power of his grace in the weakest believer. Grace shall prevail against a torrent of corruption. Whence is this? the corruption is ours, but the grace is God's.

A. 2. God leaves original corruption to make us long after heaven, where there shall be no sin to defile, no devil to tempt. When Elias was taken up to heaven, his mantle dropped off, so, when the angels shall carry us up to heaven, this mantle of sin shall drop off, we shall never more complain of an aching head, or an unbelieving heart.

USE 1. If original sin be propagated to us, and will be inherent in us while we live here, then it confutes the Libertines and Quakers, who say they are without sin; they hold perfection; they show much pride and ignorance, but we see the seeds of original sin remain in the best. There is not a just man lives, and sins not.² And St Paul complained of a 'body of death.'³ Grace, though it doth purify nature, it doth not perfect it.

OBJECT. *But doth not the Apostle say of believers, that their 'old man is crucified,'⁴ and they are 'dead to sin'?*⁵

A. They are dead, 1. Spiritually. They are dead as to the guilt of it; and as to the power of it, the love of sin is crucified.

A. 2. They are dead to sin legally. As a man that is sentenced to death is dead in law, so they

are legally dead to sin; there is a sentence of death gone out against sin, it shall die and drop into the grave. But at the present, sin hath its life lengthened out; nothing but the death of the body can quite free us from the body of death.

USE 2. Let us lay to heart original sin, and be deeply humbled for it; it cleaves to us as a disease; it is an active principle in us stirring us up to evil. Original sin is worse than all actual sin; the fountain is more than the stream. Some think, as long as they are civil, they are well enough; ay, but the nature is poisoned. A river may have fair streams, but vermin at bottom. Thou carriest an hell about thee, thou canst do nothing but thou defilest it; thy hearr, like muddy ground, defiles the purest water that runs through it. Nay, though thou art regenerate, there is much of the old man in the new man. O how should original sin humble us! This is one reason God hath left original sin in us, because he would have it as a thorn in our side to humble us. As the bishop of Alexandria, after the people had embraced Christianity, destroyed all their idols but one, that the sight of that idol might make them loathe themselves for their former idolatry, so God leaves original sin to pull down the plumes of pride. Under our silver wings of grace are black feet.

USE 3. Let the sense of this make us daily look up to heaven for help, beg Christ's blood to wash away the guilt of sin, and his Spirit to mortify the power of it, beg further degrees of grace; being guilty on account of sin, we supplicate the mercy of Christ. Though grace cannot make sin not to be, yet not to reign; though grace cannot expel sin, it can repel it; and for our comfort, where grace makes a combat with sin, death shall make a conquest.

USE 4. Let original sin make us walk with continual jealousy and watchfulness over our hearts. The sin of our nature is like a sleeping lion, the least thing that awakens it makes it rage. The sin of our nature, though it seems quiet, and lies as fire hid under the embers, yet if it be a little stirred and blown up by a temptation, how quickly may it flame forth into scandalous evils! Therefore we had need always to walk watchfully, 'I say to you all, Watch.'⁶ A wandering heart needs a watchful eye.

¹ De. 4. 23. ² Ec. 7. 20. ³ Ro. 7. 24. ⁴ Ro. 6. 6.
⁵ Ro. 7. 11

⁶ Mark 13. 37.

MAN'S MISERY BY THE FALL.

Q. XIX. *What is the misery of that estate wherinto man fell?*

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

'And were by nature children of wrath.'¹ Adam left an unhappy portion to his posterity, sin and misery. We have already considered the first of these, original sin,—now the misery of that estate. In the first, we have seen mankind offending; in the second, we shall see him suffering. The misery ensuing from original sin is twofold.

1. Privative. By this first hereditary sin we have lost communion with God. Adam was God's familiar, his favourite; but sin hath put us all out of favour; when we lost God's image, we lost his acquaintance. God's banishing Adam out of Paradise, hieroglyphically, it showed how sin hath banished us out of God's love and favour.

2. Positive. In four things. **1.** Under the power of Satan. **2.** Heirs of God's wrath. **3.** Subject to all the miseries of this life. **4.** Obnoxious to hell and damnation.

1. The first misery is, by nature we are 'under the power of Satan,' who is called 'the prince of the power of the air.'² Before the fall, man was a free denizen, now a slave; before, a king on the throne,—now in fetters. And who is man enslaved to? To one that is an hater of him. This was an aggravation of Israel's servitude, 'they that hated them ruled over them.'³ By sin we are enslaved to Satan, who is an hater of mankind, and writes all his laws in blood. Sinners before conversion are under Satan's command, as the ass at the command of the driver, he doth all the devil's drudgery. No sooner Satan tempts, but he obeys; as the ship is at the command of the pilot, he steers it which way he will, so is the sinner at the command of Satan, he may steer him which way he will; and he never steers the ship but into hell's mouth. The devil rules all the powers and faculties of a sinner.

1. He rules the understanding, he blinds men with ignorance, and then rules them; as the

Philistines first put out Samson's eyes, and then bound him. Satan can do what he will with an ignorant man; he doth not see the error of his way, therefore the devil can lead him into any sin; you may lead a blind man any whither; every transgression is founded on ignorance. **2.** Satan rules the will. Though he cannot force the will, yet he can, by temptation, draw it, 'the lusts of your father ye will do.'⁴ He hath got your hearts, and him ye will obey: 'we will burn incense to the queen of heaven.'⁵ When the devil spurs a sinner by a temptation, he will over hedge and ditch break all God's laws, that he may obey Satan. Where then is free will, when Satan hath such power over the will? 'His lusts ye will do.' There's not any member of the body, but is at the devil's service; the head to plot sin, the hands to work it, the feet to run the devil's errand. Slavery is hateful to a noble spirit. Satan is the worst tyrant; the cruelty of a cannibal, or Nero, is nothing to his. Other tyrants do but rule over the bodies, he over the conscience; other tyrants have some pity on their slaves, though they work in the galley, they give them meat, let them have hours for rest, but Satan is a merciless tyrant, he lets them have no rest. What pains did Judas take? The devil would let him have no rest till he had betrayed Christ, and afterwards imbrued his hands in his own blood.

USE 1. See here our misery by original sin; enslaved to Satan.⁶ Satan is said to work effectually in the children of disobedience. What a sad plague is this for a sinner to be at the will of the devil! Just like a slave, if the Turks bid him dig in the mines, hew in the quarries, tug at the oar, the slave must do it, he dares not refuse. If the devil bids a man lie or cozen, he doth not refuse; and which is worse, men are enslaved, and they willingly obey this tyrant; other slaves are forced against their will: 'Israel sighed by reason of their bondage,'⁷ but sinners are willing to be slaves, they will not take their freedom, they kiss their fetters.

USE 2. Let us labour to get out of this deplorable condition sin hath plunged us into; get from under the power of Satan. If any of

¹ Eph. 2. 3.² Eph. 2. 2.³ Ps. 106. 11.⁴ Jno. 8. 44.⁵ Je. 41. 17.⁶ Eph. 2. 2.⁷ Ex. 2. 23.

your children were slaves, you would give great sums of money to purchase their freedom; your souls are enslaved, and will ye not labour to be set free? Improve the gospel; the gospel proclaims a jubilee to captives; sin binds men, the gospel looseth them; Paul's preaching was 'to turn men from the power of Satan to God.'¹ The gospel-star leads you to Christ; and if you get Christ, then you are made free, though not from the being of sin, yet from Satan's tyranny, 'if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.' You hope to be kings to reign in heaven, and will you let Satan reign in you now? Never think to be kings when you die, and slaves while you live; the crown of glory is for conquerors, not for captives. Oh! get out of Satan's jurisdiction; get your fetters of sin filed off by repentance.

II. Misery. [We are heirs of God's wrath.] In the text, 'and were by nature the children of wrath.' Tertullian's exposition here is wrong, 'children of wrath,' he understands subjectively, that is, subject to wrath and passion, offending often in the irascible faculty of a wrathful spirit. But, by 'children of wrath,' the apostle passively means heirs of wrath, exposed to God's displeasure. God was once a friend, but sin broke the knot of friendship; now God's smile is turned into a frown; we are now bound over to the sessions, and become children of wrath; and who knows the power of God's wrath?² 'The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion.'³ How did Haman's heart tremble when the king rose up from the banquet in wrath?⁴ But God's wrath is infinite; all other is but as a spark to a flame; wrath in God is not a passion as in us, but it is an act of God's holy will, whereby he abhors sin, and decrees to punish it. This wrath is very dismal; it is this wrath of God that embitters afflictions in this life; when sickness comes attended with God's wrath, it puts conscience into an agony. The mingling the fire with the hail made it so terrible;⁵ so mingling God's wrath with affliction, makes it torturing; it is the nail in the yoke. God's wrath, when but in a threatening, as a shower hanging in the cloud, made Eli's ears to tingle: what is it then, when this wrath is executed? It is terrible when the king rates and chides a traitor; but it is more dreadful when he causeth him to be set upon the rack, or to be broke upon the

wheel: 'Who knows the power of God's wrath?' While we are children of wrath, 1. We have nothing to do with any of the promises; they are as the tree of life, bearing several sorts of fruit, but no right to pluck one leaf. 'Children of wrath,' 'strangers from the covenants of promise.'⁶ The promises are as a fountain sealed. While we are in the state of nature, we see nothing but the flaming sword; and, as the apostle saith, there remains nothing but 'a fearful looking for of fiery indignation.'⁷ 2. While children of wrath, we are heirs to all God's curses.⁸ How can the sinner eat and drink in that condition? Like Damocles's banquet, he sat at meat, and there was a sword hanging over his head by a small thread; one would think he could have little stomach to eat; so the sword of God's wrath and curse hangs every moment over a sinner's head. We read of a flying roll written with curses:⁹ there is a roll written with curses goes out against every person that lives and dies in sin. God's curse blasts wherever it comes; a curse on the sinner's name, a curse on his soul, a curse on his estate, posterity, a curse on the ordinances. Sad, if all a man did eat should turn to poison: the sinner eats and drinks his own damnation at God's table. Thus it is before conversion. As the love of God makes every bitter thing sweet, so the curse of God makes every sweet thing bitter.

USE. See our misery by the fall. 'Heirs of wrath?' and is this estate to be rested in? If a man be fallen under the king's displeasure, will he not labour to re-ingratiate himself into his favour? O let us flee from the wrath of God! And whither should we fly, but to Jesus Christ? there's none else to shield off the wrath of God from us: 'Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.'¹⁰

III. Subject to all outward miseries. All the troubles incident to man's life are the bitter fruits of original sin. The sin of Adam hath 'subjected the creature to vanity.'¹¹ Is it not a part of the creature's vanity that all the comforts here below will not fill the heart, no more than the mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship? 'In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.'¹² There is still something wanting, and a man would have more; the heart is always hydropical, it thirsts and is not satisfied. Solomon put all the

¹ Acts 26. 18. ² Jno. 8. 36. ³ Ps. 90. 11. ⁴ Pr. 19. 12.
⁵ Est. 7. 7. ⁶ Ex. 9. 24.

⁷ Eph. 2. 3, 12. ⁸ He. 10. 27. ⁹ Ga. 3. 10. ¹⁰ Ze. 5. 2.
¹¹ 1 Th. 1. 10. ¹² Ro. 8. 20. ¹³ Job 20. 22.

creatures into a limbec; and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, there was nothing but froth, 'all was vanity.'¹ Nay it is vexing vanity, not only emptiness, but bitterness. Our life is labour and sorrow; we come into the world with a cry, go out with a groan.² Some have said, that they would not be to live the life they have lived over again, because their life hath had more water in it than wine, more water of tears than wine of joy: 'man is born unto trouble,'³ a long life is nothing but a long tormentary. Every one is not born heir to land, but he is born heir to trouble; as well separate weight from lead. We do not finish our troubles in this life, but change them. Trouble is the vermin bred out of the putrid matter of sin. Whence are all our fears, but from sin? There is torment in fear.⁴ Fear is the ague of the soul, sets it a shaking. Some fear want, others alarms, others fear loss of relations; if we rejoice, it is with trembling. Whence are all our disappointments of hopes but from sin? Where we look for comfort, there is a cross; where we expect honey, there we taste wormwood. Whence is it that the earth is filled with violence, that 'the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?'⁵ Whence is it that so much fraudulency in dealing, so much falseness in friendship, such crosses in relations? Whence is it children prove undutiful? They that should be as the staff of the parent's age, are a sword to pierce their hearts. Whence is it servants are unfaithful to their masters? The apostle speaks of some who have entertained angels in their houses;⁶ but how oft, instead of entertaining angels in their houses, do some entertain devils? Whence are all the mutinies and divisions in a kingdom? 'in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in.'⁷ All this is but the sour core in that apple our first parents ate, viz. fruit of original sin. Besides, all the deformities and diseases of the body, fevers, convulsions, catarrhs, arise from sin. There had never been a stone in the kidneys, if it had not been first a stone in the heart. Yea, the death of the body is the fruit and result of original sin, 'sin entered into the world, and death by sin.'⁸ Adam was made immortal, conditionally, if he had not sinned; sin digged Adam's grave. Death is terrible to nature. Louis king of France forbade all that came into his court to mention the name

of death in his ears. The Socinians say that death comes only from the infirmness of the constitution; but the apostle saith, sin ushered in death into the world, 'by sin came death.' Certainly, had not Adam ate of the tree of knowledge, he had not died, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,'⁹ implying, if Adam had not eaten, he should not have died. O then see the misery ensuing upon original sin! Sin dissolves the harmony and good temperature of the body, it pulls this frame in pieces.

IV. Original sin without repentance exposeth to hell and damnation: 'this is the second death.'¹⁰ Two things in it:

1. Punishment of loss. The soul is banished from the beatifical presence of God, in whose presence is fulness of joy

2. Punishment of sense. The sinner feels the scalding vials of God's wrath. It is penetrating, abiding,¹¹ 'reserved.'¹² If, when God's anger be kindled but a little, and a spark or two of it flies into a man's conscience here in this life, it be so terrible; what then will it be when God stirs up all his anger? In hell there is the worm and the fire.¹³ Hell is the very accent and emphasis of misery; there's judgment without mercy. O what flames of wrath, what seas of vengeance, what rivers of brimstone, are poured out there upon the damned! Bellarmine is of opinion that one glimpse of hell fire were enough to make the most flagitious sinner to turn Christian; nay, live like an hermit, a most strict mortified life. What is all other fire to this, but painted fire? To bear it will be intolerable, to avoid it will be impossible; and these hell-torments are for ever, have no period put to them, 'they shall seek death, and shall not find it.'¹⁴ Origen fancied a fiery stream in which the souls of sinful men were to be purged after this life, and then to pass into heaven; but it is for ever. The breath of the Lord kindles that fire; and where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it? 'and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest night nor day.'¹⁵ Thank original sin for all.

USE 1. What sad thoughts should we have of this primitive original sin that hath created so many miseries? What honey can be got out of this lion? What grapes can we gather off this thorn? It sets heaven and earth against us: while we choose this bramble to rule, fire comes out of the bramble to devour us.

¹ Ec. 1. 2. ² Ps. 90. 10. ³ Job 5. 7. ⁴ 1 Jno. 4. 18.
⁵ Ifa. 1. 13. ⁶ He. 13. 2. ⁷ 2 Ch. 15. 5. ⁸ Ro. 5. 12.

⁹ Ge. 2. 17. ¹⁰ Re. 20. 14. ¹¹ Jno. 3. 36. ¹² 2 Pe. 2. 17.
¹³ Mark 9. 44. ¹⁴ Re. 9. 6. ¹⁵ Re. 14. 11.

USE 2. How are all believers bound to Jesus Christ, who hath freed them from that misery to which sin hath exposed them, 'in whom we have redemption through his blood?'¹ Sin hath brought trouble and a curse into the world; Christ hath sanctified the trouble, and removed

the curse. Nay, he hath not only freed believers from misery, but purchased for them a crown of glory and immortality, 'when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'²

OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Q. XX. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in this state of sin and misery?*

A. No, he entered into a covenant of grace to deliver the elect out of that estate, and bring them into a state of grace by a Redeemer.

'I will make an everlasting covenant with you.'³ Man being by his fall plunged into a labyrinth of misery, and having no way left to recover himself, God was pleased to enter into a new covenant with him, and so restored him to life by a Redeemer. The great proposition I shall go upon is, that there is a new covenant ratified between God and the elect.

Q. *What is the new covenant?*

A. It is a solemn compact and agreement made between God and fallen man, wherein the Lord undertakes to be our God, and to make us his people.

Q. *What names are given to the covenant?*

A. 1. It is called *a covenant of peace*,⁴ because it seals up reconciliation between God and humble sinners. Before this covenant there was nothing but enmity; God did not love us; a creature that offends cannot be loved by an holy God; and we did not love him; a God that condemns cannot be loved by a guilty creature; so that there was war on both sides. But God hath found out a way in the new covenant to reconcile differing parties, so that it is fitly called *a covenant of peace*.

2. It is called *a covenant of grace*, and well it may, for, 1. It was with grace, that, when we had forfeited the first covenant, God should enter into a new covenant, after we had cast away ourselves. The covenant of grace is as a plank after shipwreck. O the free grace of God, that he should parley with sinners, and set his wisdom and mercy awork to bring rebels into the bond of the covenant! 2. It is a covenant of grace, because it is a royal charter, all made

up of terms of grace: that 'God will cast our sins behind his back,' that 'he will love us freely,'⁵ that he will give us a will to accept of the mercy of the covenant, and strength to perform the conditions of the covenant.⁶ All this is pure grace.

Q. *Why should God make a covenant with us?*

A. 1. It is out of indulgence, favour, and respect to us. A tyrant will not enter into a covenant with slaves, he will not show them such respect. God's entering into a covenant with us to be our God, is a dignity he puts upon us. A covenant is a note of distinction between God's people and heathens, 'I will establish my covenant with thee.'⁷ When the Lord told Abraham that he would enter into a covenant with him, Abraham fell upon his face,⁸ as being amazed that the God of glory should bestow such a favour upon him.

A. 2. God makes a covenant with us, to tie us fast to him; it is called in Ezekiel, 'the bond of the covenant.'⁹ God knows we have slippery hearts, therefore he will have a covenant to bind us; it is horrid impiety to go away from God after covenant. If one of the vestal nuns, who had vowed herself to religion, was deflowered, the Romans caused her to be burned alive. It is perjury to depart from God after solemn covenant.

Q. *How doth the covenant of grace differ from the first covenant made with Adam?*

A. 1. The terms of the first covenant were more strict and severe, for, 1. The least failing would have made the covenant with Adam null and void, but many failings do not null the covenant of grace. I grant the least sin is a trespass upon the covenant, but it doth not make it null and void. There may be many failings in the conjugal relation, but every failing doth not break the marriage-bond. It would be sad, if,

¹ Eph. 1. 7. ² Is. 55. 3. ³ Ez. 37. 26.

⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 4. ⁵ Ho. 14. 4. ⁶ Ez. 37. 26. ⁷ Ez. 16. 62.
⁸ Ge. 17. 2.

as oft as we break covenant with God, he should break covenant with us; but God will not take advantage of every failing, but ‘in anger remember mercy.’² 2. The first covenant being broken, allowed the sinner no remedy, all doors of hope were shut, but the new covenant allows the sinner a remedy, it leaves room for repentance, it provides a mediator, ‘Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.’¹

A. 2. The first covenant did run all upon ‘working,’ the second upon ‘believing.’³

Q. *But are not works required in the covenant of grace?*

A. Yes; ‘this is a faithful saying, that they which have believed in God, be careful to maintain good works.’⁴ But the covenant of grace doth not require works in the same manner as the covenant of works did. In the first covenant, works were required as the condition of life; in the second, they are required only as the signs of a man that is alive. In the first covenant, works were required as grounds of salvation; in the new covenant, they are required as evidences of our love to God. In the first, they were required to the justification of our persons; in the new, to the testification of our grace.

Q. *What is the condition of the covenant of grace?*

A. The main condition is faith.

Q. *But why is faith more the condition of the new covenant than any other grace?*

A. To exclude all glorying in the creature; faith is an humble grace. If repentance or works were the condition of the covenant, a man would say, ‘it is my righteousness hath saved me:’ but if it be of faith, where is boasting? Faith fetcheth all from Christ, and gives all the glory to Christ; it is a most humble grace. Hence it is God hath singled out this grace to be the condition of the covenant. And if faith be the condition of the covenant of grace, it excludes desperate presumptuous sinners from the covenant. They say there is a covenant of grace, and they shall be saved: but did you ever know a bond without a condition? The condition of the covenant is faith, and if thou hast no faith, thou hast no more to do with the covenant than a foreigner, or a country farmer with the city charter.

USE 1. *Of information.* See the amazing goodness of God, to enter into covenant with

us: he never entered into covenant with the angels when they fell. It was much condescension in God to enter into covenant with us in a state of innocency, but more so when we were in a state of enmity. In this covenant of grace, we may see the cream of God’s love and the working of his bowels to sinners. This is a marriage covenant, ‘I am married to you, saith the Lord.’⁵ In the new covenant, God makes himself over to us, and what can he give more? And he makes over his promises to us, and what better bond can we have?

USE 2. *Of trial.* Whether we are in covenant with God. There are three characters.

1. God’s covenant people are an humble people, ‘be clothed with humility.’⁶ God’s people esteem of others better than themselves; they shrink into nothing in their own thoughts.⁶ David cries out, ‘I am a worm and no man;’⁷ though a saint, though a king, yet a worm. When Moses’ face shined, he covered it with a veil: God’s people, when they shine most in grace, are covered with the veil of humility. Pride excludes from the covenant; ‘God resisteth the proud,’⁸ and sure such are not in covenant with God, whom he resists.

2. A people in covenant with God are a willing people; though they cannot serve God perfectly, they serve him willingly. They do not grudge God a little time spent in his worship; they do not hesitate or murmur at sufferings; they will go through a sea and a wilderness if God call: ‘thy people shall be a willing people,’—*Heb.* ‘a people of willingness.’ This spontaneity and willingness, is from the attractive power of God’s Spirit; the Spirit doth not force, but sweetly draw the will; and this willingness in religion makes all our services accepted. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never the work without willingness.

3. God’s covenant-people are a consecrated people; they have holiness to the Lord written upon them; ‘thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God.’⁹ God’s covenant-people are separated from the world and sanctified by the Spirit. The priests under the law were not only to wash in the great laver, but were arrayed with glorious apparel.¹¹ This was typical to show God’s people are not only washed from gross sins, but adorned with holiness of

¹ He. 12. 21.

² Ro. 1. 5.

³ Tit. 3. 8.

⁴ Je. 3. 14.

⁵ 1 Pe. 5. 5.

⁶ Phil. 2. 3.

⁷ Ps. 22. 6.

⁸ 1 Pe. 5. 5.

⁹ Ps. 110. 3.

¹⁰ De. 7. 6.

¹¹ Ex. 28. 2.

heart, they bear not only God's name, but image. Tamerlane refused a pot of gold, when he saw it had not his father's stamp upon it, but the Roman stamp. Holiness is God's stamp; if he doth not see this stamp upon us, he will not own us for his covenant-people.

USE 3. Of exhortation. To such as are out of covenant, labour to get into covenant, and have God for your God. How glad would the old world have been of an ark? How industrious should we be to get within the ark of the covenant? Consider 1. The misery of such as live and die out of covenant with God. Such have none to go to in an hour of distress. When conscience accuseth, when sickness approacheth, which is but an harbinger to bespeak a lodging for death, then what will you do? Whither will you flee? Will you look to Christ for help? He is a mediator only for such as are in covenant. O how will you be filled with horror and despair! and be as Saul; 'the Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed.'¹ Till you are in covenant with God, there is no mercy. The mercy-seat was placed upon the ark, and the mercy-seat was no larger than the ark, to show, that the mercy of God reacheth no further than the covenant.

2. The excellency of the covenant of grace; it is a better covenant than the first made with Adam. 1. Because it is more friendly and propitious. Those services which would have been rejected in the first covenant, are accepted in the second. Here God accepts of the will for the deed;² here sincerity is crowned in the covenant of grace; wherein we are weak, God will give strength, and wherein we come short, God will accept of a surety. 2. It is a better covenant, because it is a surer, 'God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.'³ The first covenant was not sure, it stood upon a tottering foundation, works; Adam had no sooner a stock of righteousness to trade with, but he broke; but the covenant of grace is sure, it is confirmed with God's decree, and it rests upon two mighty pillars, the oath of God, and the blood of God. 3. It hath better privileges. The covenant of grace brings preferment. Our nature is now more ennobled, we are raised to higher glory than in innocency, we are advanced to sit upon Christ's throne.⁴ We are by virtue of the covenant of grace, nearer to Christ than the angels; they are his friends, we his spouse. God is willing to be in

covenant with you. Why doth God woo and beseech you by his ambassadors to be reconciled, if he were not willing to be in covenant?

OBJ. *I would fain be in covenant with God, but I have been a great sinner, and I fear God will not admit me into covenant.*

A. If thou seest thy sins, and loatest thyself for them, yet God will take thee into covenant, 'thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities; I, even I, am he that bletteth out thy transgressions.'⁵ As the sea covers great rocks, so God's covenant-mercy covers great sins. Some of the Jews that crucified Christ, yet had their sins washed away in his blood.

OBJ. *But I am not worthy that ever God should admit me into covenant.*

A. It never came into God's thoughts to make a new covenant upon terms of worthiness. If God should show mercy to none but such as are worthy, then must he show mercy to none at all. But it is God's design in the new covenant to advance the riches of grace, to love us freely, and when we have no worthiness of our own, to accept us through Christ's worthiness. Therefore let not unworthiness discourage you; it is not unworthiness excludes any from the covenant, but unwillingness.*

Q. *What shall we do that we may be in covenant with God?*

A. 1. Seek to God by prayer 'Lord, be my God in covenant.' The Lord hath made an express promise that, upon our prayer to him, the covenant should be ratified, he will be our God, and we shall be his people; 'they shall call upon my name, and I will hear them; I will say, it is my people; and they shall say, the Lord is my God.'⁶ Only it must be an importunate prayer; come as earnest suitors, resolve to take no denial.

A. 2. If you would be in covenant with God, break off the covenant with sin; before the marriage-covenant, there must be a divorce; 'if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts,

⁵ Is. 43. 24.

⁶ Ze. 13. 9.

* "Come unto me," says Christ, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Dost thou think that the faithful High Priest in heaven will break his word, or that he hath promised what he cannot perform? Trust thy cause in his hands; he hath saved thousands and millions, a number that no man can number, and dost thou think he cannot save thee? What is thy case, O soul? Art thou more vile than Manasseh, a worse backslider than Solomon, a fiercer persecutor than Saul, or one in whom there are more devils than were in Mary Magdalen? If thou art more vile than these were, yet do not despair, whilst the atoning High Priest says, "Come now, and let us reason together; though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."—ALLEN'S *Spirit. Mag.*

¹ 1 Sa. 28. 15. ² 2 Co. 4. 12 ³ 2 Sa. 23. 5 ⁴ Re. 3. 21.

then put away the strange gods;⁷ and they put away Ashtaroth, viz. their female gods. Will any king enter into covenant with that man who is in league with his enemies?

A. 3. If you would enter into the bond of the covenant, get faith in the blood of the covenant. Christ's blood is the blood of atonement; believe in this blood, and you are safely arked in God's mercy: 'ye are made nigh by the blood of Christ.'¹

USE 4. Of comfort to such as can make out their covenant-interest in God. 1. You that are in covenant with God, all your sins are pardoned. Pardon is the crowning mercy, 'who forgiveth thy iniquity, who crowneth thee,'² &c. This is a branch of the covenant, 'I will be their God, and I will forgive their iniquity.'³ Sin being pardoned, all wrath ceaseth. How terrible is it when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience! but sin being forgiven, no more wrath. God doth not appear now in the fire or earthquake, but covered with a rainbow full of mercy.

2. All your temporal mercies are fruits of the covenant. Wicked men have mercies by providence, not by virtue of a covenant; with God's leave, not with his love. But such as are in covenant have their mercies sweetened with God's love, and they swim to them in the blood of Christ. As Naaman said to Gehazi, 'take two talents,'⁴ so saith God to such as are in covenant, take two talents, take health, and take Christ with it; take riches, and take my love with them; take the venison, and take the blessing with it; take two talents.

3. You may upon all occasions plead the covenant. If you are haunted with temptations, plead the covenant: Lord, thou hast promised to bruise Satan under my feet shortly, wilt thou suffer thy child to be thus worried? take off the roaring lion. If in want, plead the covenant: Lord, thou hast said, 'I shall want no good thing,' wilt thou save me from hell, and not from want? wilt thou give me a kingdom, and deny me daily bread?

4. If in covenant with God, all things shall co-operate for your good.⁵ Not only golden paths, but his bloody paths. Every wind of providence shall blow them nearer heaven. Affliction shall humble and purify.⁶ Out of the bitterest drug, God distils your salvation. Afflictions add to the saints' glory. The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles; the

heavier the saints' cross, the heavier shall be their crown.

5. If thou art in covenant once, then for ever in covenant. The text calls it, 'an everlasting covenant.' Such as are in covenant are elected; God's electing love is unchangeable: 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me.'⁷ God will so love the saints, that he will not forsake them; and the saints shall so fear God, that they shall not forsake him. It is a covenant of eternity. It must be so; for who is this covenant made with? Is it not with believers? and have not they coalition and union with Christ? Christ is the head, they are the body.⁸ This is a near union, much like that union between God the Father and Christ: 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.'⁹ Now the union between Christ and the saints being so inseparable, it can never be dissolved, or the covenant made void; you may die with comfort.

6. Thou art in covenant with God, and thou art going to thy God: behold a death-bed cordial; death breaks the union between the body and the soul, but perfects the union between Christ and the soul. This hath made the saints desire death as the bride the wedding-day;¹⁰ 'Lead me, Lord, to that glory,' said one, 'a glimpse whereof I have seen as in a glass darkly.'

USE 5. Of direction: To show how you should walk who have tasted of covenant-mercy—live as a people in covenant with God. As you differ from others in respect of dignity, so you must in point of carriage.

1. You must love this God. God's love to you calls for love. 1. It is a free love. Why should God pass by others and take you into a league of friendship with himself? In the law, God passed by the lion and eagle, and chose the dove; so he passes by the noble and mighty.

2. It is a full love. When God takes you into covenant, you are his *Hephzibah*:¹¹ his delight is in you; he gives you the key of all his treasure, he heaps pearls upon you, he settles heaven and earth upon you, he gives you a bunch of grapes by the way, and saith, 'Son, all I have is thine.' And doth not all this call for love? Who can tread upon these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God?

2. Walk holily. The covenant hath made you a royal nation, therefore be an holy people.

⁷ 1 Sa. 7. 3. ¹ Eph. 2. 13. ² Ps. 103. 3. ³ Je. 31. 33, 34.
⁴ Ki. 5. 23. ⁵ Ps. 25. 10. ⁶ He. 12. 10.

⁷ Je. 32. 40. ⁸ Eph. 1. 23. ⁹ Jno 17. 21. ¹⁰ Phi. 1. 23.
¹¹ Is. 62. 5.

Shine as lights in the world; live as earthly angels. God hath taken you into covenant, that you and he may have communion together; and what is it keeps up your communion with God, but holiness?

3. Walk thankfully.¹ God is your God in covenant, he hath done more for you than if he had made you ride upon the high places of the earth, and given you crowns and sceptres.*

O take the cup of salvation, and bless the Lord! Eternity will be little enough to praise him. Musicians love to play on their music where there is the loudest sound; and God loves to bestow his mercies where he may have the loudest praises. You that have angels' reward, do angels' work. Begin that work of praise here, which you hope to be always doing in heaven.

CHRIST THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT.

HEB. 12. 24. *Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, &c.*

JESUS CHRIST is the sum and quintessence of the gospel, the wonder of angels, the joy and triumph of saints. The name of Christ is sweet, it is as music in the ear, honey in the mouth, and a cordial at the heart. I shall wave the context, and only speak of that which concerns our

¹ Ps. 103. 1.

* The covenant of works and the covenant of grace differ in this—the one was vastly more expensive than the other. The one cost the Almighty but the breath of his lips. He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. But the other required vastly more. There was need of more than words to establish it. Who can fully declare what the covenant of grace has cost a Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? To accomplish its great ends, God behoved to tear his Son as from his bosom, and to send him forth made of a woman, made under the law, Gal. 4. 4. To recover enemies, he behoved to part with an only Son. Ere he could smile on them, he was to frown on him and to desert him: before he could put the sword of justice as into its scabbard, he behoved, Father as he was, to plunge it into the bowels of his own, his only Son. The Son, the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, behoved in virtue of his suretyship, to forego the ineffable pleasures of a Father's bosom, to be clothed in the likeness of sinful flesh, to be a reproach of men, covered with darkness, surrounded with sorrow, overwhelmed with fear, attacked by devils, stricken, smitten, and forsaken of God, and at last to die. What amazing cost is here! To use the words of one, 'It is an expended Deity on human veal!' The Holy Spirit whose it is to apply the covenant to sinners, how costly work is it to him! He strives more with one sinner in a day, than ever he did with angels since they fell. He never knocked at their door, but, oh, how long he stands at that of mankind sinners! How he strives and expostulates, ere he get access. What rebellion often against him! what resistance! and when received, what untender treatment often follows! Sons and daughters vex, grieve, and well nigh quench him. And thus, as violence was done to the Son, so also to the Holy Spirit. He suffers in his influences and operations, though he cannot in his adorable person. He bears with the manners of his people, though often grievous to him, and does not altogether cast them off. Thus the covenant of grace is a costly covenant. Nothing could be equally so. The salvation of one sinner has cost God more than creation in all its extent, pomp and splendour. Ten thousand worlds had been as easily created as one. But to accomplish the ends of the covenant, what did God do? I shall tell you in the language of inspiration, and if not inspired, perhaps it had not been safe to use it, "God — laid down his life," 1 John 3. 16. And now, my brethren, what could have been done more for the vineyard than has been done? Isa. 5. 4. Surely a legion of angels could not say. The cost could not possibly rise higher: God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all: Awake, said he, O sword, against the man that is my fellow.—BELL on the Covenants.

present purpose: having discoursed of the covenant of grace, I shall speak now of the Mediator of the covenant, and the restorer of lapsed sinners, 'Jesus the Mediator of the covenant.'

There are several names and titles in scripture given to Christ, as the great restorer of mankind: 1. Sometimes he is called a Saviour.² His name shall be called Jesus. The Hebrew word for Jesus, signifies a Saviour, and whom he saves from hell, he saves from sin; where Christ is a Saviour, he is a sanctifier; 'he shall save his people from their sins.'³ There is no other Saviour, 'neither is there salvation in any other.'⁴ As there was but one ark to save the world from drowning, so there is but one Jesus to save sinners from damning. As Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, 'Are there yet any more sons in my womb?'⁵ So, hath God any other sons in the womb of his eternal decree, to be saviours to us besides Christ? 'Where shall wisdom be found? the depth saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, it is not in me.'⁶ Let me allude, Where shall salvation be found? The angel saith, it is not in me; morality saith, it is not in me; the ordinance saith, it is not in me: Christ alone is the well-spring of life; the ordinance is the conduit-pipe that conveys salvation, but Christ is the spring that feeds it; 'neither is there salvation in any other.'

2. Sometimes Christ is called a Redeemer: 'the Redeemer shall come to Sion.'⁷ Some understand it of Cyrus, others of an angel; but the most ancient Jewish doctors understood it of Christ, the Redeemer of the elect; 'my Redeemer liveth.'⁸ The Hebrew word for Redeemer signifies such a one as is near akin, and hath right to redeem a mortgage; so Christ is

² Mat. 1. 21. ³ Mat. 1. 21. ⁴ Acts 4. 12. ⁵ Ru. 1. 11
 Job 28. 12. 14. ⁶ Ps. 59. 20. ⁷ Job 19. 23.

near of kin to us, being our elder brother, therefore hath the best right to redeem us.

3. Christ is called a Mediator in the text, 'Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.' The Greek word for Mediator, signifies a middle person, one that doth make up the breach between two disagreeing parties. God and we were at variance by sin, now Christ doth mediate and umpire between us, he reconciles us to God through his blood, therefore he is called the Mediator of the new covenant. There is no way of communion and intercourse between God and man, but in and through a Mediator; Christ takes away the enmity in us, and the wrath of God, and so makes peace. Nor is Christ only a Mediator* of reconciliation, but intercession, 'Christ is entered, not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.'¹ The priest, when he had slain the sacrifice, was to go with the blood before the altar and mercy-seat, and show it to the Lord.

Now, in Christ our blessed Mediator, consider two things: 1. His person. 2. His graces.

1. His person. His person is amiable; he is all made up of love and beauty. He is the *effigies* of his Father, 'the express image of his person.'² Consider, 1. Christ's person in two natures: 2. His two natures in one person.

1. Christ's person in two natures. 1. Look upon his human nature as incarnate. The Valentianians deny his human nature; but 'the Word was made flesh.'³ It is spoken of Christ the promised Messiah. Christ took our flesh,

¹ He. 9. 24.

² He. 1. 3.

³ Jno. 1. 14.

* This Mediator is in all respects suited to our case, and worthy of our confidence. If it had been revealed that God would deal with us through a Mediator, and we had been required to look out for one on whom we could most entirely and unreservedly depend, when eternal happiness or misery was at stake, what could we have done? We could never have entrusted such an important cause in the hands of any mere man; nay, the more we had considered the matter in all its difficulties and consequences, the greater hesitation should we have felt to confide it to the hands of a mere creature. For all are changeable; and we should have been apprehensive, lest some want of power, love, truth, wisdom, or constancy, should defeat the whole, when our eternal all was at stake. Yet we could never have thought of such a mediator as our offended God hath himself provided, appointed, and revealed; who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' 'the true and the holy One,' 'Emmanuel,' 'God over all, blessed for ever more.' Here we can have no ground for fear; unbelief alone can hesitate. He whose power sustains the universe is able to save our souls in all possible cases. He who is worthy to be intrusted with the rights of God, and the eternal glory of his name, must also be worthy to be intrusted with our immortal interests, (for our rights in respect are all forfeited;) and he who, perfect in justice and purity himself, could so pity and condescend to guilty polluted creatures as to undertake such an office wholly for their benefit, cannot want love to accomplish whatever is wanting for the eternal salvation of all who accept of his mediation.—*Scott's Essays.*

that the same nature which sinned might suffer; and 'the Word was made flesh,' that through the glass of his human nature we might look upon God.

Q. *Why is Christ called the Word?*

A. Because, as a word is the interpreter of the mind, and reveals what is in a man's breast, so Jesus Christ reveals his Father's mind to us concerning the great matters of our salvation.⁴ Were it not for Christ's manhood, the sight of the Godhead would be formidable to us; but through Christ's flesh we may look upon God without terror. And Christ took our flesh, that he might know how to pity us; he knows what it is to be faint, sorrowful, tempted, 'he knows our frame.'⁵ And he took our flesh, that he might, as Austin saith, enoble our human nature with honour. Christ having married our flesh, hath exalted it above the angelical nature.

2. Look upon Christ's divine nature. Christ may be fitly compared to Jacob's ladder,⁶ which reacheth from earth to heaven. Christ's human nature was the foot of the ladder which stood upon earth; his divine nature the top of the ladder which reacheth to heaven. This being a grand article of our faith, I shall amplify. I know the Arians, Socinians, Ebionites would rob Christ of the best jewel of his crown, his Godhead; but the Apostolical, Nicene, Athanasian creeds, affirm Christ's Deity; to this the churches of Helvetia, Bohemia, Wittemberg, Transylvania, &c., give their full consent; and the scripture is clear for it. He is called the 'mighty God,'⁷ 'and in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead.'⁸ He is of the same nature and essence with the Father. So Athanasius, Basil, Chrysostom; 1. Is God the Father called Almighty? so is Christ, 'the Almighty.'⁹ 2. Is God the Father, the heart-searcher? so is Christ, 'he knew their thoughts.'¹⁰ 3. Is God the Father omnipresent? so is Christ, 'the Son of man, which is in heaven.'¹¹ Christ as God was then in heaven, when as man he was upon the earth.*

⁴ Jno. 1. 18.

⁵ Ps. 103. 14.

⁶ Ge. 28. 12.

⁷ Is. 9. 6

⁸ Col. 2. 9.

⁹ Rc. 1. 8.

¹⁰ Jno. 2. 25.

¹¹ Jno. 3. 13.

* That the Son is equal with the Father, appears from the names which are given him. To collect all these would far exceed the limits to which we mean to confine ourselves; therefore instead of many, we shall only select a few. He is at every turn called God. The Father is represented as calling him so. Heb. 1. 8, unto the Son, he saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' John 1. 1, 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God.' God is an absolute term; Lord a relative: the one expressing what he is in himself, the other what he is in relation to the creatures. Compare Psa. 45. 11. Acts 2. 36. Accordingly it is said, Phil. 2. 6, 'that he was

Q. Is God eternal?

A. Christ is the everlasting Father,¹ which scripture may be urged against the Cerinthian heretics, who denied the pre-existancy of Christ's Godhead, and held that Christ had no being till he derived it from the Virgin Mary.

4. Doth divine worship belong to the first person in the Trinity? so it doth to Christ, 'let all the angels of God worship him.'² 5. Is creation proper to the Deity? this is a flower of Christ's crown, 'by him were all things created.'³ 6. Is invocation proper to the Deity? this is given to Christ, 'Lord Jesus receive my spirit.'⁴ 7. Is recumbency and trust peculiar to God the Father? this is given to Christ, 'ye believe in God, believe also in me.'⁵ Christ must needs be God, not only that the divine nature might support the human from sinking under God's wrath, but also to give value and weight to his sufferings.

Christ being God, his death and passion is meritorious; Christ's blood is called the blood of God,⁶ because the person who was offered in sacrifice was God as well as man. This is an invincible support to believers; it was God who was offended, and it was God who satisfied. Thus Christ's person in two natures.

2d. Consider Christ's two natures in one person, God-man, 'God manifest in the flesh.'⁷ Christ had a twofold substance, divine and human; yet not a twofold subsistence, both natures make but one Christ. A scion may be grafted into another tree, a pear-tree into an apple, which, though it bear different fruits, is but one tree; so Christ's manhood is united to the

Godhead in an ineffable manner; yet though there are two natures, yet but one person. This union of the two natures in Christ was not by transmutation, the divine nature changed into the human, or the human into the divine,—nor by mixture, the two natures mingled together as wine and water are mixed,—both the natures of Christ remain distinct, yet make not two distinct persons, but one person; the human nature not God, yet one with God.

II. Consider Christ, our Mediator, in his graces: these are the sweet savour of his ointments that make the virgins love him. Christ, our blessed Mediator, is said to be, 'full of grace and truth.'⁸ He had the anointing of the Spirit without measure.⁹ Grace in Christ is after a more eminent and glorious manner than it is in any of the saints.

1. Jesus Christ, our Mediator, hath perfection in every grace.¹⁰ He is a panoply, magazine, and storehouse of all heavenly treasure, all fulness. This no saint on earth hath; he may excel in one grace, but not in all: as Abraham was eminent for faith, Moses for meekness, but Christ excels in every grace.

2. There is a never-failing fulness of grace in Christ; grace in the saints is ebbing and flowing, it is not always in the same degree and proportion; at one time David's faith was strong, at another time so faint and weak that you could hardly feel any pulse, 'I said, I am cut off from before thine eyes.'¹¹ But grace in Christ is a never-failing fulness, it did never abate in the least degree, he never lost a drop of his holiness. What was said of Joseph, may more truly be applied to Christ, 'the archers shot at him, but his bow abode in strength.'¹² Men and devils shot at him, but his grace remained in its full vigour and strength,—'his bow abode in strength.'

3. Grace in Christ is communicative, his grace is for us; the holy oil of the Spirit was poured on the head of this blessed Aaron that it might run down upon us. The saints have not grace to bestow on others. When the foolish virgins would have bought oil of their neighbour virgins, 'give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out,' the wise virgins answered, 'not so, lest there be not enough for us and you.'¹³ The saints have no grace to spare to others; but Christ diffuseth his grace to others; grace in the saints is as water in the vessel, grace in Christ is as water in the spring;

¹ 1s. 9. 6. ² Jno. 5. 23.; ³ He. 1. 6. ⁴ Col. 1. 16.
⁵ Acts 7. 59. ⁶ Jno. 11. 1. ⁷ Acts 20. 28. ⁸ 1 Ti. 3. 16.

In the form of God;' and the following context, ver. 9—11, bears, that he as Lord hath dominion over all. Thomas joined both in his confession, saying, 'My Lord, and my God,' John 20. 28. He is not only called God, but the 'true God,' 1 John 5. 20. 'The great God,' Tit. 2. 13. 'The mighty God,' Isa. 9. 5. Nay, he is called 'Jehovah,' Jer. 23. 6. Hos. 1. 17, which is a name never ascribed unto any, but 'to the living and the true God,' Psa. 83. ult. and quite different from the relative word Lord. Compare Psa. 110. 1, 'Jehovah said to my Lord.' Now if such great and glorious names be given him, he must surely be all that they can import. He must be God in the highest possible sense of the word. Not a God in name or title only, 1 Cor. 8. 5, but a God by nature and in truth. The apostle reminds the Galatians, that when they knew not God, they did service unto them who by nature are no gods, Gal. 4. 8. Hence we may infer on the surest grounds, that Christ is by nature God. Were he not, he could not be God at all: he could not be God, except in title only. A God, but not by nature, is as palpable a contradiction as a made God. He who is not by nature God, cannot possibly be so by donation. This is as obvious and certain as that a being who is not by nature Infinite, eternal, and immutable, cannot possibly be made so. To be made eternal, is to be made to have no beginning. An absurdity this as gross as that of the Papists, who make their Maker, and eat their God. To be without beginning is incommunicable to a creature.—*Bell on the Deity of Christ.*

⁹ Jno. 1. 14. ¹⁰ Jno. 3. 35. ¹¹ Col. 1. 19. ¹² Ps. 31. 22.
¹³ Ge. 49. 23. ¹⁴ Mat. 25. 8, 9.

'of his fulness have we received grace for grace.'¹ Set a glass under a still or limbeck, and it receives water from the limbeck drop by drop; so the saints have the drops and influences of Christ's grace distilled upon them. What a rich consolation is this to those who either have no grace, or their stock is but low! They may go to Christ, the Mediator, as a treasury of grace: 'Lord, I am indigent, but whither shall I carry my empty vessel, but to a full fountain?'² 'All my springs are in thee;' I am guilty, thou hast blood to pardon me; I am polluted, thou hast grace to cleanse me; I am sick unto death, thou hast the 'balm of Gilead, to heal me.'³ Joseph opened all the storehouses of corn: Christ is our Joseph, that opens all the treasures and storehouses of grace, and communicates to us. He is not only sweet as the honeycomb, but drops as the honeycomb; this is a great comfort, in Christ our Mediator there is a *cornucopia*, and fulness of all grace; and Christ is desirous that we should come to him for grace, like the full breast that aches till it be drawn.

USE 1. Admire the glory of this Mediator; he is God-man, he is co-essentially glorious with the Father. All the Jews that saw Christ in the flesh, did not see his Godhead; all that saw the man did not see the Messiah; the temple of Solomon within was embellished with gold; travellers, as they passed along, might see the outside of the temple, but only the priests saw the glory which sparkled within the temple; only believers, who are made priests unto God,⁴ see Christ's glorious inside, the Godhead shining through the manhood.

USE 2. If Christ be God-man in one person, then look unto Jesus Christ alone for salvation. There must be something of the Godhead to fasten our hope upon; in Christ

there is Godhead and manhood hypostatically united. If we could weep rivers of tears, out-fast Moses on the mount, if we were exact moralists, touching the law blameless, if we could arrive at the highest degree of sanctification in this life, all this would not save us, without looking to the merits of him who is God; our perfect holiness in heaven is not the cause of our salvation, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. To this therefore did Paul flee, as to the horns of the altar, 'that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness.'⁵ It is true, we may look to our graces as evidences of salvation, but to Christ's blood only as the cause. In the time of Noah's flood, all that trusted to the high hills and trees, and not to the ark, were drowned: 'Looking unto Jesus';⁶ and so look unto him, as to believe in him, that so Christ may not only be united to our nature, but to our persons, 'that believing, you may have life through his name.'⁷

USE 3. Is Jesus Christ God and man in one person? This, as it shows the dignity of believers, that they are nearly related to one of the greatest persons that is, 'in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily,'⁸ so it is of unspeakable comfort. Christ's two natures being married together, the divine and human, all that Christ in either of his natures can do for believers, he will do. In his human nature he prays for them, in his divine nature, he merits for them. This for the person of our Mediator.

USE 4. Admire the love of Christ our Mediator, that he should humble himself, and take our flesh, that he might redeem us. Believers should put Christ in their bosom, as the spouse did, 'lie betwixt my breasts.'⁹ What was said of Ignatius, that the name of Jesus was found written in his heart, should be verified of every saint, he should have Jesus Christ written in his heart.

OF CHRIST'S PROPHETICAL OFFICE.

DEUT. 18. 15. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, &c.*

HAVING spoken of the person of Christ, we are next to speak of the offices of Christ,—prophetical, priestly, regal.

I. Prophetical. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet.' This passage foretels the Saviour; it is spoken of Christ. There are

several names given to Christ as a prophet: he is called 'the Counsellor':¹⁰ in Christ alone the angel of the covenant is completed; 'the Messenger of the covenant,'¹¹ 'a Lamp,'¹² 'the Morning Star.'¹³ Jesus Christ is the great prophet of

¹ Phil. 3. 9. ² He. 12. 2. ³ Jno. 20. 31. ⁴ Col. 2. 9.
⁵ Cant. 1. 13. ⁶ Is. 9. 6. ⁷ Mal. 3. 1. ⁸ 2 Sa. 22. 29
⁹ Re. 22. 16

¹ Jno. 1. 16. ² Ps. 87. 7. ³ Ge. 41. 56. ⁴ Re. 1. 6.

his church. The woman of Samaria gave a shrewd guess.¹ He is the best teacher, he makes all other teaching effectual, 'then opened he their understanding.'² He did not only open the scriptures, but opened their understanding. He teacheth to profit, 'I am the Lord thy God, who teacheth thee to profit'³

Q. How doth Christ teach?

A. 1. Externally, by his word, 'thy word is a lamp to my feet.'⁴ Such as pretend to have a light or revelation above the word, or contrary to it, never had their teaching from Christ.⁵

A. 2. Christ teacheth these sacred mysteries inwardly by the Spirit.⁶ The world knows not what it is, 'the natural man receives not the things of God, neither can he know them.'⁷ He knows not what it is to be transformed by the renewing of the mind,⁸ or what the inward workings of the Spirit mean; these are riddles and paradoxes to him. He may have more insight into the things of the world than a believer, but he doth not see the deep things of God. A swine may see an acorn under a tree, but he cannot see a star; he who is taught of Christ sees the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

Q. What are the lessons Christ teacheth?

A. 1. He teacheth us to see into our own hearts. Take the most mercurial wits, the greatest politicians that understand the mysteries of state, yet they know not the mysteries of their own hearts, they cannot believe there is that evil in them as is: 'Is thy servant a dog?'⁹ The heart of man is a great deep, which is not easily fathomed. But Christ when he teacheth, removes the veil of ignorance, and lights a man into his own heart; and now he sees swarms of vain thoughts, he blusheth to see how sin mingles with his duties, his stars are mixed with clouds, he prays, as Austin, that God would deliver him from himself.

A. 2. The second lesson Christ teacheth, is the vanity of the creature. A natural man sets up his happiness here, worships the golden image; but he that Christ hath anointed with his eyesalve, hath a spirit of discerning, he looks upon the creature in its night-dress, sees it to be empty and unsatisfying, not commensurate to an heaven-born soul. Solomon had put all the creatures into a limbeck, and when he came to extract the spirit and quintessence, all was vanity.¹⁰ The apostle calls it a show or apparition,¹¹ having no intrinsical goodness.

A. 3. The third lesson is the excellency of the things unseen. Christ gives the soul a sight of glory, a prospect of eternity; 'we look not at things which are seen, but at things which are not seen.'¹² Moses saw him who is 'invisible';¹³ and the patriarchs saw a better country, viz. an heavenly,¹⁴ where delights of angels, rivers of pleasure, the flowers of joy, fully ripen and blow.

Q. How doth Christ's teaching differ from other teaching?

A. Several ways:

1. Christ teacheth the heart. Others may teach the ear, Christ the heart, 'whose heart the Lord opened.'¹⁵ All that the dispensers of the word can do is but to work knowledge, Christ works grace; they can but give you the light of the truth, Christ gives you the love of the truth; they can only teach you what to believe, Christ teacheth how to believe.

2. Christ gives us a taste of the word. Ministers may set the food of the word before you, and carve it out to you; but it is only Christ causeth you to taste it, 'if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious';¹⁶ 'taste and see that the Lord is good.'¹⁷ It is one thing to hear a truth preached, another thing to taste it; one thing to read a promise, another thing to taste it. David had got a taste of the word; 'thou hast taught me: how sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth.'¹⁸ The apostle calls it the savour of knowledge.¹⁹ The light of knowledge is one thing, the savour another. Christ makes us taste a savouriness in the word.

3. Christ, when he teacheth, makes us obey. Others may instruct, but cannot command obedience; they teach to be humble, but men remain proud. The prophet had been denouncing judgments against the people of Judah, but they would not hear, 'we will do whatsoever goeth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven.'²⁰ Men come as if armed in a coat of mail that the sword of the word will not enter; but when Christ comes to teach, he removes this obstinacy; he not only informs the judgment, but inclines the will. He doth not only come with the light of his word, but the rod of his strength, and makes the stubborn sinner yield to him. His grace is irresistible.

4. Christ teacheth easily. Others teach with difficulty. Difficulty in finding out a truth, and in inculcating it, 'precept (must be) upon

¹ 1 Jno. 4. 16. ² Lu. 24. 45. ³ Is. 48. 17. ⁴ Ps. 119. 105.

⁵ Is. 8. 20. ⁶ Jno. 16. 13. ⁷ 1 Co. 2. 14. ⁸ Ro. 12. 2.

⁹ 2 Ki. 8. 13. ¹⁰ Ec. 2. 11. ¹¹ 1 Co. 7. 31.

¹² 2 Co. 4. 18. ¹³ He. 9. 27. ¹⁴ He. 11. 16. ¹⁵ Acts 16. 14.

¹⁶ 1 Pe. 2. 3. ¹⁷ Ps. 31. 8. ¹⁸ Ps. 119. 102. 103. ¹⁹ 2 Co. 2. 14.

²⁰ Je. 41. 17.

precept, and line upon line.¹ Some may teach all their lives, and the word take no impression. They complain, as Isaiah, 'I have spent my labour in vain,'² ploughed on rocks; but Christ the great prophet teacheth with ease. He can with the least touch of his Spirit convert; he can say, 'Let there be light;' with a word he conveys grace.

5. Christ when he teacheth, makes men willing to learn. Men may teach others, but they have no mind to learn, 'Fools despise instruction,'³ they rage at the word, as if a patient should rage at the physician when he brings him a cordial; thus backward are men to their own salvation. But Christ makes his people a 'willing people.'⁴ They prize knowledge, and hang it as a jewel upon their ear. Those that Christ teacheth, say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in them;'⁵ and, 'we are all here present before God, to hear all things commanded.'⁶

6. Christ, when he teacheth, doth not only illuminate, but animate. He doth so teach, as he doth quicken, 'I am the light of the world;' he that follows me shall have the light of life. By nature we are dead, therefore unfit for teaching; who will make an oration to the dead? But Christ teacheth them that are dead, he gives the light of life. As when Lazarus was dead, Christ said, 'come forth,' and he made the dead to hear, 'Lazarus came forth:' so when Christ saith to the dead soul, come forth of the grave of unbelief, he hears Christ's voice, and comes forth, it is the light of life. The philosophers say, light and heat increase together. It is true here, where Christ comes with his light, there is the heat of the spiritual life going along with it.

USE 1. Of information. 1. See here an argument of Christ's divinity: had he not been God, he could never have known the mind of God, or revealed to us those secrets of heaven, those deep mysteries, which no man or angel could find out. Who but God can anoint the eyes of the blind, and give not only light but sight? Who but he, who hath the key of David, can open the heart? Who but God can bow the iron sinew of the will? He only who is God can enlighten the conscience, and make the stony heart bleed.

2. See what a *cornucopia*, or plenty of wisdom is in Christ, who is the great doctor of his church, and gives saving knowledge to all the elect. The body of the sun must needs be full of clarity and brightness, which enlightens the

whole world: Christ is the great luminary, 'in whom are hid all treasures of knowledge.'⁷ The middle lamp of the sanctuary gave light to all the other lamps: Christ diffuseth his glorious light to others. We are apt to admire the learning of Aristotle and Plato: Alas! what is this poor spark of light to that which is in Christ, from whose infinite wisdom both men and angels light their lamp.

3. See the misery of man in the state of nature. Before Christ come to be their prophet they are enveloped with ignorance and darkness. Men know nothing in a salvifical sanctified manner, they know nothing as they ought to know.⁸ This is sad. 1. Men in the dark cannot discern colours: so in the state of nature they cannot discern between morality and grace, they take one for the other, a cloud for a goddess. 2. In the dark the greatest beauty is hid,—let there be rare flowers in the garden, and pictures in the room, yet in the dark their beauty is veiled over,—so, though there be such transcendent beauty in Christ as amazeth the angels, a man in the state of nature sees none of this beauty. What is Christ to him, or heaven to him? The veil is upon his heart.

3. A man in the dark is in danger every step he goes: so a man in the state of nature is in danger, every step, of falling into hell. Thus it is before Christ teacheth us; nay, the darkness in which a sinner is, while in an unregenerate state, is worse than natural darkness, for natural darkness affrights, 'an horror of great darkness fell upon Abraham,'⁹ but the spiritual darkness is not accompanied with horror, men tremble not at their condition, nay, they like their condition well enough, 'men loved darkness.'¹⁰ This is their sad condition, till Jesus Christ comes as a prophet to teach them, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

4. See the happy condition of the children of God, they have Christ to be their prophet, 'all thy children shall be taught of the Lord;'¹¹ 'God is made to us wisdom.'¹² One man cannot see by another's eyes; but believers see with Christ's eyes, 'in his light they see light;' Christ gives them the light of grace and light of glory.

USE 2. Labour to have Christ for your prophet; he teacheth savingly, he is an interpreter of a thousand, he can untie those knots which puzzle very angels. Till Christ teach, we

¹ Is. 28. 10. ² Is. 49. 4. ³ Pro. 1. 7. ⁴ Ps. 110. 3.
⁵ Is. 2. 3. ⁶ Acts 10. 33. ⁷ Jno. 8. 12.

⁸ Col. 2. 3. ⁹ 1 Co. 8. 2. ¹⁰ Ge. 15. 12. ¹¹ Jno. 3. 19.
¹² 1s. 51. 13. ¹³ 1 Co. 1. 30

never learn any lesson; till Christ is made to us wisdom, we shall never be wise to salvation.

Q. *What shall we do to have Christ for our teacher?*

A. See your need of Christ's teaching. You cannot see your way without this morning-star. Some speak much of the light of reason improved: Alas! the plumb-line of reason is too short to fathom the deep things of God, the light of reason will no more help a man to believe, than the light of a candle will help him to understand. A man can no more by the power of nature reach Christ, than an infant can reach the top of the pyramids, or the ostrich fly up to the stars. See your need of Christ's anointing and teaching.¹

A. 2. Go to Christ to teach you: 'Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.'² As one of the disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray:'³ so Lord, teach me to profit. Do thou light my lamp, O thou great prophet of thy church! Give me a spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may see things in another manner than ever I saw them before; teach me in the word to hear thy voice, and in the sacrament to discern thy body. 'Lighten mine eyes,' &c. 'He hath his pulpit in heaven who converts souls,' AUG. And that we may be encouraged to go to our great prophet

1. Jesus Christ is very willing to teach us. Why else did he enter into the calling of the ministry but to teach the mysteries of heaven? 'Jesus went about teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.'⁴ Why did he take the office prophetically upon him? Why was Christ so angry with them that kept away the key of knowledge?⁵ Why was Christ

anointed with the Spirit without measure?—but that he might anoint us with knowledge. Knowledge is in Christ as milk in the breast for the child. O then go to Christ for teaching! None in the gospel came to Christ for sight but he restored their eyesight; and sure Christ is more willing to work a cure upon a blind soul than ever he was to do so upon a blind body.

2. There are none so dull and ignorant but Christ can teach them. Every one is not fit to make a philosopher's scholar of,—a Mercury is not made out of every block of wood; but there is none so dull, but Christ can make a good scholar of. Even such as are ignorant, and of low parts, Christ teacheth them in such a manner, that they know more than the great sages and wise men of the world. Hence that saying of St Augustine, the unlearned men rise up, and take heaven; they know the truths of Christ more savingly than the great admired rabbis. The duller the scholar, the more is his skill seen that teacheth. Hence it is, Christ delights in teaching the ignorant, to get himself more glory. 'The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.'⁶ Who would go to teach a blind or a deaf man? Yet such dull scholars Christ teacheth. Such as are blinded with ignorance, they shall see the mysteries of the gospel, and the deaf ears shall be unstopped.

3. Wait upon the means of grace which Christ hath appointed. Though Christ teacheth by his Spirit, yet he teacheth in the use of ordinances. Wait at the gates of wisdom's door: ministers are teachers under Christ, 'pastors and teachers.'⁷ We read of pitchers and lamps within the pitchers.⁸ Ministers are earthen vessels, but these pitchers have lamps within them to light souls to heaven. Christ is said to speak to us from heaven now,⁹ by his ministers, as the king speaks by his ambassador. Such as wean themselves from the breasts of ordinances, seldom thrive; either they grow light in their head, or lame in their feet. The word preached is Christ's voice in the mouth of the minister, and they that refuse to hear Christ speaking in the ministry, Christ will refuse to hear them speaking on their death-bed.

4. If you would have the teachings of Christ, walk according to that knowledge which you have already. Use your little knowledge well, and Christ will teach you more: 'if any man will do his will, he shall know of my doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of

¹ Re. 3. 18. ² Ps. 25. 5. ³ Lu. 11. 1. ⁴ Ps. 13. 3.
⁵ Mat. 4. 23. ⁶ Lu. 11. 52.

* See here the perfect pattern of an evangelical preacher. 1. To go to seek out sinners on every side, that he may show them the way to heaven. 2. To preach 'the gospel of the kingdom,' not with a servile spirit, but with a freedom worthy of the King whom he serves, and of the kingdom which he proclaims. 3. To make his reputation, and the confidence of the people, subservient, not to his own interest, but to the good of souls, and to the establishing the kingdom of God. 4. To speak nothing but what may tend towards salvation. 5. To preaching, to join the exercise of works of mercy, and temporal assistance, as often as he can. 6. To assist all those who apply to him as penitents, how great sinners, and of what condition soever they be. 7. To take care to make them sensible, that diseases, and all kinds of temporal evils, are the effects of sin; that whether God be pleased to remove them or not, it is for the good of the soul, and to promote our eternal salvation; and that the power which he makes appear in healing them, is a sure pledge of the power of his grace in healing our souls.—*Quezel on the Gospels.*

⁷ Is. 35. 5. ⁸ Eph. 4. 11. ⁹ Ju. 7. 16. ¹⁰ He. 12. 25.

myself.¹ A master seeing his servant improve a little stock well gives him more to trade with.

USE 3. If you have been taught by Christ savingly, be thankful; it is your honour to have God for your teacher, and that he should teach you and not others, is matter of admiration and gratulation. O how many knowing men are ignorant! They are not taught of God; they have Christ's word to enlighten them, but not his Spirit to sanctify them. But that you should have the inward as well as the outward teaching, that Christ should anoint you with the heavenly unction of his Spirit,

that you can say as he, 'one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see,'² O how thankful should you be to Christ, who hath revealed his Father's bosom secrets unto you! 'No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.'⁶ If Alexander thought himself so much obliged to Aristotle for the philosophical instructions he learned from him; O how are we obliged to Jesus Christ, this great Prophet, for opening to us the eternal purposes of his love, and revealing to us the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven!

OF CHRIST'S PRIESTLY OFFICE.

Q. XXV. *How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

A. In his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us. 'Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'²

Q. *What are the parts of Christ's priestly office?*

A. Christ's priestly office hath two parts, his satisfaction and intercession.

I. His satisfaction. And this consists of two branches: 1. His active obedience,² he fulfilled all righteousness. Christ did every thing which the law required; his holy life was a perfect commentary upon the law of God; and he obeyed the law for us. 2. His passive obedience. Our guilt being transferred and imputed to him, he did undergo the penalty which was due to us; he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* The paschal-lamb slain, was a type of Christ, who was offered up in sacrifice for us. Sin could not be done away without blood: 'without blood is no remission.'⁴ Christ was not only a lamb without spot, but a lamb slain.

Q. *Why was it requisite there should be a priest?*

A. There needed a priest to be an umpire, to mediate between a guilty creature, and an holy God.

Q. *How could Christ suffer, being God?*

A. Christ suffered only in the human nature.

Q. *But if only Christ's humanity suffered, how could this suffering satisfy for sin?*

A. The human nature being united to the divine, the human nature did suffer, the divine did satisfy. Christ's Godhead, as it did support the human nature that it did not faint, so it did give virtue to his sufferings. The altar sanctifies the thing offered on it; so the altar of Christ's divine nature sanctified the sacrifice of his death, and made it of infinite value.

Q. *Wherein doth the greatness of Christ's sufferings appear?*

A. 1. In the sufferings of his body. He suffered truly, not in appearance only; the apostle calls it, the death of the cross.³ Truly, when he speaks of this kind of death, says, what shall I say of crucifixion? Though he was a great orator he wanted words to express it. The thoughts of this made Christ sweat great drops of blood in the garden.⁹ It was an ignominious, painful, cursed death. Christ suffered in all his senses: 1. In his eyes; they beheld two sad objects, he saw his enemies insulting, and his mother weeping. 2. In his ears; his ears were filled with the revilings of the people: 'he saved others, himself he cannot save.'¹⁰ 3. In his smell; when their drivel fell upon his face. 4. In his taste; when they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, bitterness and sharpness. 5. In his feeling; his head suffered with thorns, his hands and feet with the nails; his whole body was but one sore; now was this white lily dyed of a pur-

¹ Jno. 7. 17. ² He. 9. 26. ³ Mat. 3. 15. ⁴ He. 9. 22.

* The painful effect which the law curse then had upon Christ, is no way imaginary, it was infinitely more real than the torments of wicked men and devils in hell; because that effect was infinitely more complete on him, but never can be so on them.—*Gill's Sacred Contemplations.*

⁵ Jno. 9. 25. ⁶ Jno. 1. 18. ⁷ Mat. 23. 19. ⁸ Phi. 2. 8.
⁹ Lu. 22. 44. ¹⁰ Mat. 27. 42.

ple colour. 2. In the sufferings of his soul. He was pressed in the wine-press of his Father's wrath. This caused that vociferation and outcry on the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Christ suffered a double eclipse upon the cross, an eclipse of the sun, and an eclipse of the light of God's countenance. How bitter was this agony! The evangelists use three words to express it: 'He began to be amazed;' 'He began to be faint;' 'to be exceeding sorrowful.'² Christ felt the pains of hell in his soul, though not locally yet equivalently.

Q. *Why did Christ suffer?*

A. Surely not for any desert of his own; 'the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;'³ it was for us,⁴ for one man's sin another is punished; he suffered that he might satisfy God's justice for us. We, by our sins, had infinitely wronged God; and, could we have shed rivers of tears, offered up millions of holocausts and burnt-offerings, we could never have pacified an angry Deity; therefore Christ must die, that God's justice may be satisfied. It is hotly debated among divines, whether God could not have forgiven sin freely without a sacrifice. Not to dispute what God could have done, yet when we consider God was resolved to have the law satisfied, and to have man saved in a way of justice as well as mercy, then, I say, it was necessary that Christ should lay down his life as a sacrifice.

1. To fulfil the predictions of scripture: 'thus it behoved Christ to suffer.'

2. To bring us into favour with God. It is one thing for a traitor to be pardoned, and another thing to be made a favourite. Christ's blood is not only called a sacrifice, whereby God is appeased, but a propitiation, whereby God becomes gracious and friendly to us. Christ is our mercy-seat, from which God gives answers of peace to us.

3. Christ died that he might make good his last will and testament with his blood; there were many legacies which Christ bequeathed to believers, which had been all null and void had not he died, and by his death confirmed the will.⁶ A testament is in force after men are dead; the mission of the Spirit, the promises, those legacies, were not in force till Christ's death; but Christ by his blood hath sealed them, and believers may lay claim to them.

4. He died that he might purchase for us glorious mansions, therefore heaven is called not

only a promised, but a 'purchased possession,'⁷ Christ died for our preferment; he suffered that we might reign; he hung upon the cross that we might sit upon the throne. Heaven was shut, and the cross of Christ is the key of paradise, the ladder by which we ascend to heaven. His crucifixion is our coronation.

USE 1. In the bloody sacrifice of Christ, see the horrid nature of sin; sin, it is true, is odious, as it banished Adam out of paradise, and threw the angels into hell; but that which doth most of all make it appear horrid is this, that it made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood. We should look upon sin with indignation, and pursue it with an holy malice, and shed the blood of those sins which shed Christ's blood. The sight of Cæsar's bloody robe, incensed the Romans against them that slew him. The sight of Christ's bleeding body should incense us against sin; let us not parley with it, let not that be our joy, which made Christ a man of sorrow.

USE 2. Is Christ our priest sacrificed? See God's mercy and justice displayed. I may say as the apostle, 'Behold the goodness and severity of God.'⁸ 1. The goodness of God in providing a sacrifice: had not Christ suffered upon the cross, we must have lain in hell for ever, satisfying God's justice. 2. The severity of God: though it were his own Son, the Son of his love, and our sins were but imputed to him, yet God did not spare him,⁹ but his wrath did flame against him. And if God were thus severe to his own Son, how dreadful will he be one day to his enemies? Such as die in wilful impenitency, must feel the same wrath as Christ did; and because they cannot bear it at once, therefore they must be enduring it for ever.

USE 3. Is Christ our priest who was sacrificed for us? Then see the endeared affection of Christ to us sinners. 'The cross,' saith Austin, 'was a pulpit, in which Christ preached his love to the world.' That Christ should die, was more than if all the angels had been turned to dust; and that Christ should die as a malefactor, having the weight of all men's sins laid upon him, that he should die for his enemies.¹⁰ The balm-tree weeps out its precious balm, to heal those that cut and mangle it: Christ shed his blood to heal those that crucified him. And that

⁷ Eph. 1. 14. ⁸ Ro. 11. 22. ⁹ Ro. 8. 32. ¹⁰ Ro. 5. 10.

* Here indeed was the highest display of the infinite evil, the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and of the most dreadful, but necessary claims of divine justice on every sinner; the most realizing apprehensions of hell can give no such view of this matter, as is to be had in meditation upon the cross of Christ.—*Gibb's Sacred Contemplations.*

¹ Mar. 14. 33. ² Mat. 26. 37. ³ Da. 9. 26. ⁴ Is. 53. 6.
⁵ Lu. 24. 46. ⁶ He. 9. 16.

he should die freely: it is called the offering of the body of Jesus.¹ And though his sufferings were so great that they made him sigh, and weep, and bleed, yet they could not make him repent; 'he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.'² Christ had hard travail upon the cross, yet he doth not repent of it, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees redemption brought forth to the world. O infinite, amazing love of Christ! A love that passeth knowledge,³ that neither man nor angel can parallel! How should we be affected with this love! If Saul was so affected with David's kindness in sparing his life, how should we be affected with Christ's kindness in parting with his life for us? At Christ's death and passion, the very stones did cleave asunder, 'the rocks rent.'⁴ Not to be affected with Christ's love in dying, is to have hearts harder than rocks.

USE 4. Is Christ our sacrifice? then see the excellency of his sacrifice. It is perfect, 'by one offering he hath perfected them that are sanctified.'⁵ Therefore, how impious are the papists, in joining their merits and the prayers of saints with Christ's sacrifice? They offer him up daily in the mass, as if Christ's sacrifice on the cross were imperfect; this is a blasphemy against Christ's priestly office. 2. Christ's sacrifice is meritorious; he not only died for our example, but to merit salvation; the person who suffered being God as well as man, did put virtue into his sufferings; and now our sins are expiated, and God appeased. No sooner did the messengers say, 'Uria is dead,'⁶ but David's anger was pacified. No sooner did Christ die, but God's anger was pacified. 3. This sacrifice is beneficial. Out of the dead lion Samson had honey; it procures justification of our persons, acceptance of our service, access to God with boldness, entrance into the holy place of heaven.⁷ Through the side of Christ a way is laid open for us into heaven. Israel passed through the Red sea to Canaan; so through the red sea of Christ's blood, we enter into the heavenly Canaan.

USE 5. *Of exhortation.* 1. Let us fiducially apply this blood of Christ; all the virtue of a medicine is in the applying; though the medicine be made of the blood of God, it will not heal, unless by faith applied. As fire is to the chemist, so is faith to the christian; the chemist can do nothing without fire, so there is nothing

done without faith. Faith makes Christ's sacrifice ours, 'Christ Jesus my Lord.'⁸ It is not gold in the mine that enricheth, but gold in the hand; faith is the hand that receives Christ's golden merits. It is not a cordial in the glass refresheth the spirit, but a cordial drunk down. Faith opens the orifice of Christ's wounds, and drinks the precious cordial of his blood. Without faith Christ himself will not avail us.

2. Let us love a bleeding Saviour, and let us show our love to Christ, by being ready to suffer for him. Many rejoice at Christ's suffering for them, but dream not of their suffering for him; Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but not of his imprisonment. Was Christ a sacrifice? Did he bear God's wrath for us? We should bear men's wrath for him. Christ's death was voluntary, 'Lo I come to do thy will, O God;'⁹ 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!'¹⁰ Christ calls his sufferings a baptism; he was to be, as it were, baptized in his own blood; and how did he thirst for that time? 'How am I straitened?' O then, let us be willing to suffer for Christ! He hath taken away the venom and sting of the saints' sufferings: there is no wrath in their cup. Our sufferings he can make sweet. As there was oil mixed in the peace-offering, so God can mix the oil of gladness with our sufferings. 'The ringing of my chain is sweet music in my ears.'¹¹ Life must be parted with shortly; what is it to part with it a little sooner, as a sacrifice to Christ, as a seal of sincerity, and a pledge of thankfulness?

USE 6. *Of consolation.* This sacrifice of Christ's blood may infinitely comfort us. This is the blood of atonement; Christ's cross is 'the hinge and fountain of our comfort.'¹² 1. This blood comforts in case of guilt! O, saith the soul, my sins trouble me! why, Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sin.¹³ Let us see our sins laid on Christ, and then they are no more ours but his. 2. In case of pollution. Christ's blood is an healing and cleansing blood: It is healing, 'with his stripes we are healed.'¹⁴ It is the best weapon-salve, it heals at a distance: Though Christ be in heaven, we may feel the virtue of his blood healing our bloody issue. And it is cleansing: It is therefore compared to fountain-water.¹⁵ The word is a glass to show us our spots, and Christ's blood is a fountain to

¹ He. 10. 10. ² Is. 53. 11. ³ Eph. 3. 19. ⁴ Mat. 27. 51.
⁵ He. 10. 14. ⁶ 2 Sa. 11. ⁷ ¹ He. 10. 19.

⁸ Phi. 3. 8. ⁹ Ps. 40. 7. ¹⁰ Lu. 12. 50. ¹¹ Landgrave of Hesse.
¹² Mat. 26. 5. ¹³ Is. 53. 5. ¹⁴ Ze. 13. 1.

wash them away, it turns leprosy into purity, 'the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.'¹ There is indeed one spot so black, that Christ's blood doth not wash away, viz. the sin against the Holy Ghost. Not but that there is virtue enough in Christ's blood to wash it away; but he who hath sinned that sin will not be washed, he contemns Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot.² Thus we see what a strong cordial Christ's blood is; it is the anchor-hold of our faith, the spring of our joy, the crown of our desires, and the only support both in life and death. In all our fears, let us comfort ourselves with the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood: Christ died both as a purchaser and as a conqueror: 1. As a purchaser, in regard of God having by his blood obtained our salvation. 2. And as a conqueror, in regard of Satan; the cross being his triumphant chariot, wherein he hath led hell and death captive.

USE *ult.* Bless God for this precious sacri-

fice of Christ's death, 'bless the Lord, O my soul!' And for what doth David bless him? 'Who redeemeth thy life from destruction!' Christ gave himself a sin-offering for us; let us give ourselves a thank-offering to him. If a man redeem another out of debt, will not he be grateful? How deeply do we stand obliged to Christ, who hath redeemed us from hell and damnation! 'And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.'⁶ Let our hearts and tongues join in concert to bless God, and let us show thankfulness to God by fruitfulness; let us bring forth, as spice trees, the fruits of humility, zeal, good works. This is to live unto him who died for us.⁷ The wise men did not only worship Christ, but presented him with gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.⁸ Let us present Christ with the fruits of righteousness which are unto the glory and praise of God.

OF CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

ROM. viii. 34. *Who also maketh intercession for us.*

II. WHEN Aaron entered into the holy place, his bells gave a sound: so Christ having entered into heaven, his intercession makes a melodious sound in the ears of God. Christ, though he be exalted to glory, hath not laid aside his bowels of compassion, but is still mindful of his body mystical, as Joseph was mindful of his father and brethren, when he was exalted to the court. 'Who also maketh intercession for us.' To intercede, is to make request in the behalf of another. Christ is the great master of requests in heaven; 'Christ is the general priest of the Father.' TERTUL.

Q. *What are the qualifications of our intercessor?*

A. 1. He is holy; 'for such an high priest became us, who is holy, undefiled, separated from sinners.'⁵ 'Christ knew no sin.'⁶ He knew sin in its weight, not in the act. It was requisite that he, who was to do away the sins of others, should himself be without sin. Holiness is one of the precious stones which shiue on the breastplate of our high priest.

A. 2. He is faithful, 'it behoved him to be

made like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful high priest.'⁹ Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a Son.¹⁰ He doth not forget any cause he hath to plead, nor doth he use any deceit in pleading. An ordinary attorney may either leave out some word which might make for the client, or put in a word against him, having received a fee on both sides; but Christ is true to the cause he pleads; we may leave our matters with him, we may trust our lives and souls in his hand.

A. 3. He never dies. The priests under the law, while their office lived, they themselves died, 'they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death;¹¹ but 'Christ ever lives to make intercession.'¹² He hath no succession in his priesthood.

Q. *Who does Christ intercede for?*

A. Not for all promiscuously,¹³ but for the elect. The efficacy of Christ's prayer reacheth no further than the efficacy of his blood; but his blood was shed only for the elect, therefore his prayers only reach them. The high priest

⁵ Ps. 103. 1. ⁶ Re. 5. 9. ⁷ 2 Co. 5. 15. ⁸ Mat. 2. 11.

⁹ He. 2. 17. ¹⁰ He. 3. 5. ¹¹ He. 7. 23. ¹² He. 7. 25.

¹³ Jno. 17. 9.

¹ 1 Jno. 1. 7. ² He. 10. 29. ³ Heb. 7. 26. ⁴ 2 Co. 5. 21.

went into the sanctuary with the names only of the twelve tribes upon his breast: so Christ goes into heaven only with the names of the elect upon his breast. Christ intercedes for the weakest believers,¹ and for all the sins of believers. In the law there were some sins the high priest was neither to offer sacrifice for, nor yet to offer prayer for, 'the soul that doeth ought presumptuously shall be cut off.'² The priest might offer up prayer for sins of ignorance, but not of presumption; but Christ's intercession extends to all the sins of the elect. Of what a bloody colour was David's sin! Yet it did not exclude Christ's intercession.

Q. What doeth Christ in the work of intercession?

A. Three things.

1. He presents the merit of his blood to his Father, and, in the virtue of that price paid, pleads for mercy. The high priest was herein a lively type of Christ. Aaron was to do four things: 1. Kill the beasts. 2. To enter with the blood into the holy of holies. 3. To sprinkle the mercy-seat with the blood. 4. To kindle the incense, and with the smoke of it cause a cloud arise over the mercy-seat; and so the atonement was made.³ Christ our high priest did exactly answer to this type: he was offered up in sacrifice, that answers to the priest's killing the bullock: and Christ is gone up into heaven, that answers to the priest's going into the holy of holies; and he spreads his blood before his Father, that answers to the priest's sprinkling the blood upon the mercy-seat; and he prays to his Father that, for his blood's sake, he would be propitious to sinners, that answers to the cloud of incense going up; and through his intercession God is pacified, that answers to the priest's making atonement.

2. Christ by his intercession answers all bills of indictment brought in against the elect. Believers, do what they can, sin; and then Satan accuseth them to God, and conscience accuseth them to themselves: now Christ by his intercession, answers all these accusations, 'who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is Christ that maketh intercession for us.'⁴ When Esculus was accused for some impiety, his brother stood up for him, and showed the magistrates how he had lost his hand in the service of the state, and so obtained his pardon: thus, when Satan accuseth the saints, or when the justice of God lays any

thing to their charge, Christ shows his own wounds, and by virtue of his bloody sufferings, he answers all the demands and challenges of the law, and counterworks Satan's accusations.

3. Christ by his intercession calls for acquittance, 'Lord, let the sinner be absolved from guilt:' and in this sense Christ is called an advocate.⁵ He requires that the sinner be set free in the court. An advocate differs much from an orator; an orator useth rhetoric to persuade and entreat the judge to show mercy to another; but an advocate tells the judge what is law. Thus Christ appears in heaven as an advocate, he represents what is law; when God's justice opens the debt-book, Christ opens the law-book: 'Lord,' saith he, 'thou art a just God, and wilt not be pacified without blood; lo! here the blood is shed, therefore in justice, give me a discharge of these distressed creatures; it is equal, that the law being satisfied, the sinner should be acquitted.' And, upon Christ's plea, God sets his hand to the sinner's pardon.

Q. In what manner Christ intercedes?

A. 2. Freely: he pleads our cause in heaven, and takes no fee. An ordinary lawyer will have his fee, and sometimes a bribe too; but Christ is not mercenary, how many causes doth he plead every day in heaven and will take nothing? As Christ laid down his life freely,⁶ so he intercedes freely.

A. 3. Feelingly: he is as sensible of our condition as his own, 'we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmity.'⁷ As a tender-hearted mother would plead with a judge for a child ready to be condemned, O how would her bowels work! how would her tears trickle down! what weeping rhetoric would she use to the judge for mercy! Thus the Lord Jesus is full of sympathy and tenderness,⁸ that he might be a merciful high priest; though he hath left his passion, yet not his compassion. An ordinary lawyer is not affected with the cause he pleads, nor doth he care which way it goes; it is profit makes him plead, not affection; but Christ intercedes feelingly, and that which makes him intercede with affection is, it is his own cause which he pleads. He hath shed his blood to purchase life and salvation for the elect; and if they should not be saved, he would lose his purchase.

A. 4. Efficaciously: it is a prevailing intercession. Christ never lost any cause he pleaded;

¹ Jno. 17. 20. ² Nu. 15. 30 ³ Le. 16. 11—16. ⁴ Ro. 8. 33.

⁵ 1 Jno. 2. 1. ⁶ Jno. 10. 15, 18. ⁷ He. 4. 15. ⁸ He. 2. 17.

he was never nonsuited. Christ's intercession must needs be effectual, if we consider,

1. The excellency of his person. If the prayer of a saint be so prevalent with God, (Moses' prayer did bind God's hand, 'let me alone;' and Jacob as a prince, prevailed with God;¹ and Elijah did by prayer open and shut heaven,²) then what is Christ's prayer? He is the Son of God, the Son in whom he is well pleased.³ What will not a father grant a son! 'I knew that thou hearest me always.'⁴ If God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a son.

2. Christ prays for nothing but what his Father hath a mind to grant. There is but one will between Christ and his Father; Christ prays 'Sanctify them through thy truth;' and, 'this is the will of God, even your sanctification.'⁵ So then, if Christ prays for nothing but what God the Father hath a mind to grant, then he is like to speed.

3. Christ prays for nothing but what he hath power to give; what he prays for as he is man, that he hath power to give as he is God, 'Father, I will.'⁶ *Father*, there he prays as a man; *I will*, there he gives as God. This is a great comfort to a believer, when his prayer is weak and he can hardly pray for himself, Christ's prayer in heaven is mighty and powerful. Though God may refuse prayer as it comes from us, yet not as it comes from Christ.

4. Christ's intercession is always ready at hand. The people of God have sins of daily incursion; and, besides these, sometimes they lapse into great sins, and God is provoked, and his justice is ready to break forth upon them; but Christ's intercession is ready at hand, he daily makes up the breaches between God and them, he presents the merits of his blood to his Father to pacify him. When the wrath of God began to break out upon Israel, Aaron presently stepped in with his censer, and offered incense, and so the plague was stayed;⁷ so, no sooner doth a child of God offend, and God begin to be angry, but immediately Christ steps in and intercedes: 'Father, it is my child that hath offended; though he hath forgotten his duty, thou hast not lost thy bowels; O pity him, and let thy anger be turned away from him!' Christ's intercession is ready at hand, and upon the least failings of the godly, he stands up and makes request for them in heaven.

Q. *What are the fruits of Christ's intercession?*

A. *1st* Fruit. Justification. In justification there are two things: 1. Guilt is remitted. 2. Righteousness is imputed, 'the Lord our righteousness.'⁸ We are reputed not only righteous as the angels, but as Christ, having his robes put upon us.⁹ But whence is it that we are justified? It is from Christ's intercession; Lord, saith Christ, these are the persons I have died for; look upon them as if they had not sinned, and repute them righteous.¹⁰

2d Fruit. The unction of the Spirit, 'ye have an unction from the Holy One.'¹¹ This unction or anointing is nothing else but the work of sanctification in the heart, whereby the Spirit makes us partake of the divine nature.¹² Such as speak of the philosopher's stone, suppose it to have such a property, that when it toucheth the metal it turns it into gold: such a property hath the Spirit of God upon the soul; when it toucheth the soul, it puts it into a divine nature, it makes it to be holy and to resemble God. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is the fruit of Christ's intercession, 'the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.'¹³ Christ being glorified and in heaven, now he prays the Father, and the Father sends the Spirit, who pours out the holy anointing upon the elect.

3d Fruit. The purification of our holy things. It is Christ's work in heaven, not only to present his own prayers to his Father, but he prays over our prayers again; 'another angel came, having a golden censer, and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar.'¹⁴ This angel was Christ; he takes the golden censer of his merits, and puts our prayers into this censer, and with the incense of his intercession makes our prayers go up as a sweet perfume in heaven. It is observable, 'Aaron shall make atonement for the holy place.'¹⁵ This was typical, to show that our holy duties need to have atonement made for them. Our best services, as they come from us, are mixed with corruption, as wine that tastes of the cask, 'they are filthy rags';¹⁶ but Christ purifies and sweetens these services, mixing the sweet odours of his intercession with them; and now God accepts and crowns them. What would become of our duties without a high priest? Christ's intercession doeth to our prayers as the fan to the chaff, it winnows it from the corn, so Christ

¹ Ex. 32. 10. ² Ge. 32. 28. ³ Ja. 5. 17. ⁴ Mat. 3. 17.
⁵ Jno. 11. 42. ⁶ 1 Th. 4. 3. ⁷ Jno. 17. 24. ⁸ Nu. 16. 47.
⁹ Je. 33. 16. ¹⁰ 2 Co. 5. 21. ¹¹ Ro. 8. 33, 34. ¹² 1 Jno. 2. 20
¹³ 2 Pe. 1. 4. ¹⁴ Jno. 7. 39. ¹⁵ Re. 8. 3. ¹⁶ Le. 16. 16.
¹⁷ Is. 64. 6.

winnows out the chaff which intermixeth with our prayer.

4th Fruit. Access with boldness unto the throne of grace.¹ We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens, let us go—come boldly to the throne of grace; we have a friend at court that speaks a good word for us, and is following our cause in heaven, therefore let this animate and encourage us in prayer. We think it too much boldness; what, such sinners as we to come for pardon, we shall be denied! This is a sinful modesty: did we indeed come in our own name in prayer, it were presumption, but Christ intercedes for us in the force and efficacy of his blood. Now, to be afraid to come to God in prayer, is a dishonour to Christ's intercession.

5th Fruit. The sending the Comforter. 'I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter.'² The comfort of the Spirit is distinct from the anointing; this comfort is very sweet, sweeter than the honey drops from the comb; it is the manna in the golden pot; it is wine in the heart; a drop of this heavenly comfort is enough to sweeten a sea of worldly sorrow; it is called 'the earnest of the Spirit.'³ An earnest assures one of the whole sum. The Spirit gives us an earnest of heaven in our hand. Whence is this comforting work of the Spirit? Thank Christ's intercession for it: 'I will pray the Father, and he shall send the Comforter.'

6th Fruit. Perseverance in grace: 'keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me.'⁴ It is not our prayer, or watchfulness, or grace that keeps us, but it is God's care and maintenance; he holds us, that we do not fall away. And whence is it God preserves us? It is from Christ's intercession; 'Father, keep them.' That prayer of Christ for Peter, is the copy of his prayer now in heaven, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'⁵ Peter's faith did fail in some degree when he denied Christ; but Christ prayed that it might not totally fail. The saints persevere in believing, because Christ perseveres in praying.

7th Fruit. Absolution at the day of judgment. Christ shall judge the world, 'God hath committed all judgment to the Son.'⁶ Now sure those that Christ has so prayed for, he will absolve when he sits upon the bench of judicature. Will Christ condemn those he prays for? Believers are his spouse; will he condemn his spouse?

USE I. Branch 1. See here the constancy of

Christ's love to the elect. He did not only die for them, but intercedes for them in heaven; when Christ hath done dying, he hath not done loving; he is now at work in heaven for the saints; he carries their names on his breast, and will never leave praying till that prayer be granted; 'Father, I will, that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.'⁷

Branch 2. See whence it is that the prayers of the saints are so powerful with God. Jacob, as an angel, prevailed with God; Moses' prayer tied God's hands; 'Let me alone.'⁸ Whence is this? It is Christ's prayer in heaven makes the saints' prayers so available. Christ's divine nature is the altar on which he offers up our prayers, and so they prevail; prayer, as it comes from the saints, is but weak and languid; but when the arrow of a saint's prayer is put into the bow of Christ's intercession, now it pierceth the throne of grace.

Branch 3. It shows where a christian must chiefly fix his eye when he comes to prayer, namely, on Christ's intercession. We are to look up to the mercy-seat, but to hope for mercy through Christ's intercession. We read that Aaron made the atonement as well by the incense, as by the blood:⁹ we must look to the cloud of incense, namely, the intercession of Christ. Christian, look up to thy advocate, one that God can deny nothing to; a word from Christ's mouth is more than if all the angels in heaven were interceding for thee. If a man had a suit depending in the court of chancery, and had a skilful lawyer to plead, this would much encourage him. Christ is now at the court appearing for us,¹⁰ and he hath great potency in heaven; this should much encourage us to look up to him, and hope for audience in prayer. We might indeed be afraid to present our petitions if we had not Christ to deliver them.

Branch 4. The sad condition of an unbeliever: he hath none in heaven to speak a word for him, 'I pray not for the world;'¹¹ as good be shut out of heaven as be shut out of Christ's prayer. Christ pleads for the saints, as queen Esther did for the Jews, when they should have been destroyed: 'Let my people be given me at my request.'¹² When the devil shows the blackness of their sins, Christ shows the redness of his wounds. But how sad is the condition of that man Christ will not pray for, nay, that he will pray against? As queen

¹ He. 4. 16. ² Jno. 14. 16. ³ 2 Co. 1. 22. ⁴ Jno. 17. 11. ⁵ Lu. 22. 32. ⁶ Jno. 5. 22.

⁷ Jno. 17. 24. ⁸ Ex. 32. 10. ⁹ Lev. 6. ¹⁰ He. 9. 24. ¹¹ Jno. 17. 9. ¹² Est. 7. 3.

Esther petitioned against Haman, and then his face was covered,¹ and he was led away to execution. It is sad when the law shall be against the sinner, and conscience, and judge, and no friend to speak a word for him; there is no way then, but, jailor, take the prisoner.

Branch 5. If Christ makes intercession, then we have nothing to do with other intercessors. The church of Rome distinguisheth between mediators of redemption and intercession, and say, the angels do not redeem us, but intercede for us, and pray to them; but Christ only can intercede for us *ex officio*. God hath consecrated him an high priest, 'thou art a priest for ever.'² Christ intercedes in the virtue of his blood; he pleads his merits to his Father; the angels have no merits to bring to God, therefore can be no intercessors for us; whoever is our advocate, must be our propitiation to pacify God, 'we have an advocate with the Father, and he is our propitiation.'³ The angels cannot be our propitiation, therefore not our advocates.

USE 2. *Of trial.* How shall we know that Christ intercedes for us? They have little ground to think Christ prays for them, who never pray for themselves; well, but how shall we know?

A. 1. If Christ be praying for us, then his Spirit is praying in us, 'he hath sent forth his Spirit into your heart, crying, Abba, Father;'⁴ and the Spirit helps us with sighs and groans; not only with gifts but groans. We need not climb up into the firmament to see if the sun be there, we may see the beauty of it upon the earth; so we need not go up into heaven to see if Christ be there interceding for us, let us look into our hearts, if they are quickened and inflamed in prayer, and we can cry, Abba, Father. By this interceding of the Spirit within us, we may know Christ is interceding above for us.

A. 2. If we are given to Christ, then he intercedes for us, 'I pray for them whom thou hast given me;'⁵ 'tis one thing for Christ to be given to us, another for us to be given to Christ.

Q. *How know you that?*

A. If thou art a believer, then thou art one given to Christ, and he prays for thee; faith is an act of recumbency, we do rest on Christ as the stones in the building rest upon the cornerstone. Faith throws itself into Christ's arms: it saith, 'Christ is my priest,—his blood is my sacrifice,—his divine nature is my altar, and

here I rest.' This faith is seen by its effects; it is a refining work, and a resigning work. It purifies the heart, there is the refining work; it makes a deed of gift to Christ, it gives up its use, its love to him; there is the resigning work of faith. These that believe are given to Christ, and have a part in his prayer, 'neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.'

USE 3. *Of exhortation.* Branch 1. It stirs us up to several duties: If Christ appears for us in heaven, then we must appear for him upon earth; Christ is not ashamed to carry our names on his breast, and shall we be ashamed of his truth? Doth he plead our cause, and shall we not stand up in his cause? What a mighty argument is this to stand up for the honour of Christ in times of apostasy? Christ is interceding for us: doth he present our names in heaven, and shall not we profess his name on earth?

Branch 2. If Christ lays out all his interest for us at the throne of grace, we must lay out all our interest for him, 'that Christ may be magnified.'⁶ Trade your talents for Christ's glory; there's no man but has some talent to trade, one parts, another estate. O trade for Christ's glory! Spend and be spent for him; let your heart study for Christ, your hands work for Christ, your tongue speak for him; if Christ be an advocate for us in heaven, we must be factors for him on earth, every one in his sphere must act vigorously for Christ.

Branch 3. Believe in this glorious intercession of Christ! That he now intercedes for us, and that for his sake God will accept us: in the text, 'who maketh intercession for us.' If we believe not, we dishonour Christ's intercession. If a poor sinner may not go to Christ as his high priest, believing in his intercession, then are we christians in a worse condition under the gospel than the Jews were under the law. They, when they had sinned, had their high priest to make atonement: and shall not we have our high priest? Is not Christ our Aaron, who presents his blood and incense before the mercy-seat? O look up by faith to Christ's intercession! Christ did not only pray for his disciples and apostles, but for the weakest believer.

Branch 4. Love your intercessor, 'if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.'¹⁰ Kindness invites love; had

¹ Est. 7. 6. ² He. 5. 6. ³ 1 Jno. 2. 1, 2. ⁴ Gal. 4. 6.
⁵ Ro. 8. 26. ⁶ Jno. 17. 9.

⁷ 1 Co. 6. 19. ⁸ Jno. 17. 20. ⁹ Phi. 1. 20. ¹⁰ 1 Co. 16. 22.

you a friend at court, who, when you were questioned for delinquency or debt, should plead with the judge for you, and bring you off your troubles, would you not love that friend? So it is here, how oft doth Satan put in his bills against us in the court? Now Christ is at the Judge's hand, he sits at his Father's right hand ever to plead for us, and to make our peace with God. O how should our hearts be fired with love to Christ! Love him with a sincere and superlative love, above estate, relations: 'Love thy friends more than thy possessions,' BERN. And our fire of love should be as fire on the altar, never to go out.¹

USE 4. *Of comfort to believers.* Christ is at work for you in heaven, he makes intercession for you. O! but I am afraid Christ does not intercede for me.

Q. *I am a sinner; who doth Christ intercede for?*

A. 'He made intercession for the transgressors.'² Did Christ open his sides for thee, and will he not open his mouth to plead for thee?

Q. *But I have offended my high priest by distrusting his blood, abusing his love, grieving his Spirit; and will he ever pray for me?*

A. Which of us may not say so? But, christian, dost thou mourn for unbelief? Be

not discouraged, thou mayest have a part in Christ's prayer, 'the congregation murmured against Aaron;' yet, though they had sinned against their high priest, 'Aaron ran in with his censers, and stood between the dead and the living.'¹⁰ If so much bowels in Aaron, who was but a type of Christ, how much more bowels are in Christ, who will pray for them who have sinned against their high priest? Did not he pray for them that crucified him, 'Father, forgive them.'

Q. *But I am unworthy; what am I, that Christ should intercede for me?*

A. The work of Christ's intercession is a work of free grace; Christ's praying for us, is from his pitying of us; Christ looks not at our worthiness, but our wants.

Q. *But I am followed with sad temptations?*

A. But though Satan tempts, Christ prays, and Satan shall be vanquished; though thou mayest lose a single battle, yet not the victory; Christ prays that thy faith fail not, therefore, christian, say, 'why art thou cast down, O my soul?' Christ intercedes; it is man that sins,—it is God that prays; the Greek word for advocate, signifies comforter. This is a sovereign comfort, Christ makes intercession.

OF CHRIST'S KINGLY OFFICE.

Q. XXVI. *How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

A. In subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Now of Christ's regal office, 'and he hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.'¹²—Jesus Christ is of mighty renown, he is a king; 1. He hath a kingly title, 'High and Mighty.'¹³ 2. He hath his ensigns of royalty; (the crown is the badge of royal power), he hath his crown;¹⁴ his sword, 'gird thy sword upon thy thigh';¹⁵ his sceptre, 'a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.'¹⁶ 3. His *escutcheon*, or coat armour; he gives the lion in his arms, 'the lion of the tribe of Judah.'¹⁷ And he is, the text saith, 'King of kings.' He hath a pre-eminence of all other kings; he is called 'the Prince of the kings of the earth.'¹⁸

He must needs be so, for 'by him kings reign.'¹⁹ They hold their crowns by immediate tenure from this great King. Christ infinitely outvies all other princes; he hath the highest throne, the largest dominions, and the longest possession, 'thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.'²⁰ Christ hath many heirs, but no successors. Well may he be called, 'King of kings,' for he hath an unlimited power; the power of other kings is limited, but Christ's power is unlimited, 'whatsoever he pleased, that did he, in heaven and earth, and in the sea.'²¹ Christ's power is as large as his will. The angels take the oath of allegiance to him, 'let all the angels of God worship him.'²²

Q. *How doth Christ come to be king?*

A. Not by usurpation, but legally. Christ holds his crown by immediate tenure from heaven. God the Father hath decreed him to be king, 'I have set my king upon my holy

¹ Le. 6. 13. ² Is. 53. 12. ³ Re. 19. 16. ⁴ Is. 57. 15. ⁵ Re. 6. 2. ⁶ Is. 45. 3. ⁷ He. 1. 8. ⁸ Re. 5. 5. ⁹ Re. 1. 5

¹⁰ Nu. 16. 48. ¹¹ Pr. 8. 15. ¹² He. 1. 8. ¹³ Ps. 135. 6. ¹⁴ He. 1. 6.

hill: I will declare the decree.¹ God hath anointed and sealed him to his regal office, 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' God hath set the crown upon his head.

Q. In what sense is Christ king?

A. Two ways: 1st. In reference to his people. And, 2d. In reference to his enemies.

1st. In reference to his people: 1. To govern them. It was prophesied of Christ before he was born, 'and thou, Bethlehem, art not the least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel.'² It is a vain thing for a king to have a crown on his head, unless he have a sceptre in his hand to rule.

Q. Where doth Christ rule?

A. His kingdom is spiritual. He rules in the hearts of men. He sets up his throne where no other king doth, he rules the will and affections, his power binds the conscience, he subdues men's lusts, 'he will subdue our iniquities.'³

Q. What doth Christ rule by?

A. By law and by love: 1. He rules by law. It is one of the royal rights, the flowers of the crown, to enact laws. Christ as king makes laws, and by his laws he rules: the law of faith, 'believe in the Lord Jesus;' the law of sanctity, 'be ye holy in all manner of conversation.'⁴ Many would admit Christ to be their advocate to plead for them, but not their king to rule them. 2. He rules by love. He is a king full of mercy and clemency; as he hath a sceptre in his hand, so an olive branch of peace in his mouth. Though he be the Lion of the tribe of Judah for majesty, yet the Lamb of God for meekness. His regal rod hath honey at the end of it. He sheds abroad his love into the hearts of his subjects; he rules them with promises as well as precepts. This makes all his subjects become volunteers; they are willing to pay their allegiance to him, his people are a willing people.⁵

2. Christ is a king to defend his people. As Christ hath a sceptre to rule them, so a shield to defend them; 'thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.'⁶ When Antiochus did rage furiously against the Jews, he took away the vessels of the Lord's house, set up an idol in the temple; then this great king, called Michael, did stand up for them, to defend them.⁷ Christ preserves his church as a spark in the ocean, as a flock of sheep among wolves. That the sea should be higher than the earth and yet not drown it, is a

wonder: so, that the wicked should be so much higher than the church in power, and not devour it, is because Christ hath this inscription on his vesture and his thigh, KING OF KINGS. 'If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, they had swallowed us up.'⁸ They say lions are sleepless, they have little or no sleep; it is true of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he never slumbers nor sleeps, but watcheth over his church to defend it: 'Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine; I the Lord do keep it, lest any hurt it. I will keep it night and day.'⁹ If the enemies destroy the church, it must be at a time when it is neither night nor day, for Christ keeps it day and night. Christ is said to carry his church, as the eagle her young ones upon her wings.¹⁰ The arrow must first hit the eagle before it can hurt the young ones, and shoot through her wings: the enemies must first strike through Christ, before they can destroy his church. Let the wind and storms be up, and the church almost covered with waves, yet Christ is in the ship of the church, and so long there is no danger of shipwreck. Nor will Christ only defend his church, as he is king, but deliver it; 'and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion Nero';¹¹ 'the Lord saved them by a great deliverance.'¹² Sometimes Christ is said to command deliverance,¹³ sometimes to create deliverance.¹⁴ Christ as a king commands deliverance, and as a God creates it. And deliverance shall come in his time, 'I the Lord will hasten it in his time.'¹⁵

Q. When is the time that this King will deliver his people?

A. When the hearts of his people are humbled, when their prayers are most fervent, when their faith is strongest, when their foes are weakest, when their enemies are highest, now is the usual time that Christ puts forth his kingly power in their deliverance.¹⁶

3. Christ is a king to reward his people. There is nothing lost by serving this king. He rewards his subjects in this life; he gives them inward peace and joy; a bunch of grapes by the way, and oftentimes riches and honour. 'Godliness hath the promise of this life.'¹⁷ These are, as it were, the saints' vails. But besides the great reward is to come, 'an eternal weight of glory.'¹⁸ Christ makes all his subjects kings, 'I will give thee a crown of life.'¹⁹ This crown will be full of jewels, and it will 'never fade.'²⁰ Christ is a

¹ Ps. 2. 6, 7. ² Jno. 6. 27. ³ Mat. 2. 6. ⁴ Mi. 7. 19.
¹ 1 Pe. 1. 15. ⁵ Ps. 110. 3. ⁷ Ps. 3. 3. ⁸ Da. 12. 1.

⁹ Ps. 124. 2, 3. ¹⁰ Is. 27. 2, 3. ¹¹ Ex. 19. 4. ¹² 2 Ti. 4. 17
¹³ 1 Ch. 11. 14. ¹⁴ Ps. 64. 4. ¹⁵ Is. 45. 18. ¹⁶ 1s. 60. 22.
¹⁷ Is. 33. 2, 8, 9. ¹⁸ 1 Ti. 4. 8. ¹⁹ 2 Co. 4. 17. ²⁰ Re. 2. 10.
²¹ 1 Pe. 5. 4.

king in reference of his enemies, in subduing and conquering them; he pulls down their pride, befools their policy, restrains their malice. That stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image,¹ was an emblem, saith Austin, of Christ's monarchical power, conquering and triumphing over his enemies. Christ will make his enemies his footstool.² He can destroy them with ease, 'it is nothing with thee to help.'³ He can do it with weak means, without means. He can make the enemies destroy themselves; he set the Persians against the Grecians; and the children of Ammon helped to destroy one another.⁴ Thus Christ is king in vanquishing the enemies of his church. This is a great ground of comfort to the church of God in the midst of all the combinations of the enemy, 'Christ is king;' and he can not only bound the enemies' power, but break it. The church hath more with her than against her, she hath Emmanuel on her side, even that great King to whom all knees must bend. Christ is called 'a man of war;'⁵ he understands all the policy of chivalry; he is described with seven eyes and seven horns.⁶ The seven eyes are to discern the conspiracies of his enemies, and the seven horns are to push and vex his enemies. Christ is described with a crown and a bow: 'he that sat on the white horse had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.'⁷ The crown is an ensign of his kingly office, and the bow is to shoot his enemies to death. Christ is described with a vesture dipt in blood.⁸ He hath a golden sceptre to rule his people, but an iron rod to break his enemies: 'the ten horns thou sawest are ten kings; these shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them;'⁹ for he is the King of kings. The enemies may set up their standard, but Christ will set up his trophies at last; 'and the angel gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and the wine-press was trodden, and blood came out of the wine-press.'¹⁰ The enemies of Christ shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by Christ till their blood come out. Christ will at last come off victor, and all his enemies shall be put under his feet; 'I am glad Christ reigns, else I should have despaired,' said Miconius in an epistle to Calvin.

USE 1. Branch 1. See hence, it is no disparagement to serve Christ; he is a king, and it is no dishonour to be employed in a king's service. Some are apt to reproach the saints for their piety; they serve the Lord Christ, he who hath this inscription upon his vesture, KING OF KINGS. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be a servant of Christ, than the head of an empire. Christ's servants are called 'vessels of honour,'¹¹ and 'a royal nation.'¹² Serving of Christ ennobles us with dignity; it is a greater honour to serve Christ, than to have kings to serve us.

Branch 2. If Christ be king, it informs us, that all matters of fact must one day be brought before him. Christ hath the power of life and death in his hand, 'the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.'¹³ He who once hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench of judicature; kings must come before him to be judged; they who once sat upon the throne, must appear at the bar. God hath committed all judgment to the Son, and Christ's is the highest court of judicature; if this king once condemns men, there is no appeal to any other court.

Branch 3. See whither we are to go, when we are foiled by corruption; go to Christ, he is king; desire him by his kingly power to subdue thy corruptions, to bind these kings with chains.¹⁴ We are apt to say of our sins, 'these sons of Zeruiah will be too strong for us;' we shall never overcome this pride and infidelity: ay, but go to Christ, he is king; though our lusts are too strong for us, yet not for Christ to conquer, he can by his Spirit break the power of sin. Joshua, when he had conquered five kings, caused his servants to set their feet on the necks of those kings; so Christ can and will set his feet on the necks of our lusts.

USE 2. *Of caution.* Is Christ King of kings? Let all great ones take heed how they employ their power against Christ. Christ gives them their power, and if this power shall be made use of for the suppressing of his kingdom and ordinances, their account will be heavy. God hath laid the key of government upon Christ's shoulders,¹⁵ and to go to oppose Christ in his kingly office, it is as if the thorns should set themselves in battalia against the fire, or a child fight with an archangel. Christ's sword on his thigh is able to avenge all his quarrels: it is not good to stir a lion; let no man provoke the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah, whose eyes are as a lamp of fire,

¹ Da. 2. 34. ² Ps. 110. 1. ³ 2 Ch. 14. 11. ⁴ 2 Ch. 20. 23.

⁵ Ex. 15. 3. ⁶ Re. 5. 6. ⁷ Re. 6. 2. ⁸ Re. 19. 13.

⁹ Re. 17. 12, 11. ¹⁰ Re. 14. 18, 20.

¹¹ 2 Ti. 2. 21. ¹² 1 Pe. 2. 9. ¹³ Jno. 5. 22. ¹⁴ Ps. 149. 3.

¹⁵ Is. 9. 6.

and the rocks are thrown down by him.¹¹ 'He shall cut off the spirit of princes.'¹²

USE 3. Branch 1. If Christ be a great king, submit to him. Say not, as those Jews, 'we have no king but Cesar,' no king but our lusts. This is to choose the bramble to rule over you, and 'out of the bramble will come forth a fire.'¹³ Submit to Christ willingly. All the devils in hell submit to Christ; but it is against their will, they are his slaves, not his subjects. Submit cheerfully to Christ's person and his laws. Many would have Christ their Saviour, but not their Prince; such as will not have Christ to be their king to rule them, shall never have his blood to save them. Obey all Christ's princely commands; if he commands love, humility, good works, be as the needle which points which way soever the loadstone draws.

Branch 2. Let such admire God's free grace,

who were once under the power and tyranny of Satan, and now Christ hath made them of slaves to become the subjects of his kingdom. Christ did not need subjects, he hath legions of angels ministering to him; but in his love he hath honoured you to make you his subjects. O how long was it ere Christ could prevail with you to come under his banner! How much opposition did he meet with, ere you would wear this Prince's colours! But at last omnipotent grace overcame you. When Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, an angel came and beat off his chains;¹⁴ so when thou wert sleeping in the devil's arms, that Christ should by his Spirit smite thy heart, and cause the chains of sin to fall off, and make thee a subject of his kingdom. O admire free grace! Thou who art a subject of Christ, art sure to reign with Christ for ever.

OF CHRIST'S HUMILIATION IN HIS INCARNATION.

1 TIM. 3. 16. *Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.*

Q. XXVII. *Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?*

A. In his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross.

Christ's humiliation consisted in his incarnation, his taking flesh and being born. It was real flesh Christ took; not the image of a body (as the Manichees erroneously held) but a true body; therefore Christ is said to be 'made of a woman.'¹⁵ As the bread is made of the wheat, and the wine is made of the grape, so Christ is made of a woman, his body was part of the flesh and substance of the virgin. This is a glorious mystery, 'God manifest in the flesh.' In the creation, man was made in God's image; in the incarnation, God was made in man's image.

Q. *How came it about that Christ was made flesh?*

A. It was by his Father's special designation, 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.'¹⁶ God the Father did in a special manner appoint Christ to be incarnate, which shows how needful a call is to any business of weight and importance: to act without a call, is to act without a blessing. Christ himself would not be incar-

nate, and take upon him the work of a Mediator till he had a call. 'God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.'

Q. *But was there no other way for the restoring of fallen man but this, that God should take flesh?*

A. We must not ask a reason of God's will; it is dangerous to pry into God's ark; we are not to dispute but adore. The wise God saw this the best way for our redemption that Christ should be incarnate; it was not fit for any to satisfy God's justice but man; none could do it but God; therefore, Christ being both God and man, he is the fittest to undertake this work of redemption.

Q. *Why was Christ born of a woman?*

A. 1. That God might fulfil that promise, 'the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.' 2. Christ was born of a woman, that he might roll away that reproach from the woman which she had contracted by being seduced by the serpent. Christ, in taking his flesh from the woman, hath honoured her sex; that as at the first the woman had made man a sinner; so now, to make him amends, she should bring him a Saviour.

Q. *Why was Christ born of a virgin?*

A. 1. For decency. It became not God to

¹ Na. 1. 6. ² Ps. 76. 12. ³ Ju. 9. ⁴ Ga. 4. 4.

⁵ Ga. 4. 4.

⁶ Acts 12. 7.

⁷ Ge. 3. 15.

have any mother but a maid, and it became not a maid to have any other son but a God.

A. 2. For necessity, Christ was to be an high priest, most pure and holy. Had he been born after the ordinary course of nature, he had been defiled; all that spring out of Adam's loins have a tincture of sin, but, that 'Christ's substance might remain pure and immaculate,' he was born of a virgin.

A. 3. To answer the type. Melchisedec was a type of Christ; he is said to be 'without father and without mother.' Christ being born of a virgin, answered the type; he was without father and without mother; without mother as he was God, without father as he was man.

Q. *How could Christ be made of the flesh and blood of a virgin, and yet be without sin? The purest virgin that is, her soul is stained with original sin.*

A. This knot the scripture unties: 'the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.' 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' that is, the Holy Ghost did consecrate and purify that part of the virgin's flesh whereof Christ was made. As the alchymist extracts and draws away the dross from gold, so the Holy Ghost did refine and clarify that part of the virgin's flesh, separating it from sin. Though the virgin herself had sin, yet, that part of her flesh, whereof Christ was made, was without sin; otherwise it must have been an impure conception.

Q. *What is meant by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing the virgin?*

A. Basil saith, 'It was the Holy Ghost's blessing that flesh of the virgin whereof Christ was formed.' But there is a further mystery in it; the Holy Ghost having framed Christ in the virgin's womb, did, in a wonderful manner, unite Christ's human nature to his divine, and so of both made one person. This is a mystery which the angels pry into with adoration.

Q. *When was Christ incarnate?*

A. In the fulness of time, 'when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.' By the fulness of time, we must understand the time appointed by the Father; the determinate time that God hath set.* More particularly, this fulness of time was when all the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah were accomplished; and all

legal shadows and figures, whereby he was typified, were abrogated: 'in the fulness of time, God sent his Son.' And, by the way, observe, this may comfort us in regard of the church of God, though at present we do not see that peace and purity in the church as we could desire, yet in the fulness of time, when God's time is come and mercy is ripe, then shall deliverance spring up, and God will come riding upon the chariots of salvation. When the fulness of time was come, then God sent forth his Son, made of a woman.*

Q. *Why was Jesus Christ made flesh?*

A. 1. The especial and impulsive cause was free grace; it was love in God the Father to send Christ, and love in Christ that he came to be incarnate. Love was the intrinsical motive. Christ is God-man, because he is a lover of man. Christ came out of pity and indulgence to us. Not our deserts, but our misery, made Christ take flesh. Christ's taking flesh, was a plot of free grace, and a pure design of love. God himself, though Almighty, was overcome with love. Christ incarnate is nothing but love covered with flesh. Christ assuming our human nature, as it was a master-piece of wisdom, so a monument of free grace.

A. 2. Christ took our flesh upon him, that he might take our sins upon him. He was, saith Luther, the greatest sinner, having the weight of the sins of the whole world lying upon him. He took our flesh that he might take our sins, and so appease God's wrath.

A. 3. Christ took our flesh that he might make the human nature appear lovely to God, and the divine nature appear lovely to man. 1. That he might make the human nature lovely to God. Upon our fall from God, our nature

* Doubtless the most proper time was fixed on for this great event: we might conclude so, because it had been determined in the divine counsels, and by unerring wisdom. But if any should still presumptuously ask, Why was his appearance so long deferred? we may assign some reason. His interposition became necessary upon the original transgression; we trust that its benefits were received by our first parents, to whom his gracious designs were announced; and they were certainly extended to all from that period, who truly believed the promise of his coming. But the delay of four thousand years might be intended to give farther proofs, that man would be totally and irrecoverably lost without such a Mediator. At least, this was undeniably established by the history of the world during that space. Full trial was afforded; but did any of our species return unto God, and seek reconciliation of their own accord. The improvements and progress of the arts and sciences were great; but was any adequate atonement for sin found out, or any sufficient cure for the maladies of the soul? Let all the fooleries of pagan superstition, which universally prevailed in most polished and learned nations, let the increasing wickedness and obduracy of men, give the answer; and the proper conclusion will be drawn, that Jesus appeared as a Saviour in a desperate case, when it had been fully evinced, that 'we were without strength,' Rom. 5. 6.—*Robinson's Christian System.*

became odious to him; no vermin is so odious to us as the human nature was to God. When once our virgin nature was become sinful, it was like flesh imposthumated, or running into sores, loathsome to behold: such was our nature when corrupt, odious to God, he could not endure to look upon us. Now, Christ taking our flesh, makes this human nature appear lovely to God. As when the sun shines on the glass, it casts a bright lustre; so Christ being clad with our flesh, makes the human nature shine, and appear amiable in God's eyes. 2. As Christ being clothed with our flesh, makes the human nature appear lovely to God, so he makes the divine nature appear lovely to man. The pure Godhead is terrible to behold, we could not see it and live; but Christ clothing himself with our flesh, makes the divine nature more amiable and delightful to us. Now we need not be afraid to look upon God, seeing him through Christ's human nature. It was a custom of old among the shepherds, they were wont to clothe themselves with sheep-skins, to be more pleasing to the sheep; so Christ clothed himself with our flesh, that the divine nature may be more pleasing to us. The human nature is a glass, through which we may see the love and wisdom, and glory of God clearly represented to us. Through the lantern of Christ's humanity, we may behold the light of the Deity shining. Christ being incarnate, he makes the sight of the Deity not formidable, but delightful to us.

A. 4. Jesus Christ united himself to man, 'that man might be drawn nearer to God.' God before was an enemy to us, by reason of sin; but Christ taking our flesh, doth mediate for us, and bring us into favour with God. As when a king is angry with a subject, the king's son marries the daughter of this subject, and so mediates for this subject, and brings him into favour with the king again; so, when God the Father was angry with us, Christ married himself to our nature, and now mediates for us with his Father, and brings us to be friends again, and now God looks upon us with a favourable aspect. As Joab pleaded for Absalom, and brought him to king David, and David kissed him, so doth Jesus Christ ingratiate us into the love and favour of God. Therefore he may well be called a peace-maker, having taken our flesh upon him, and so made peace between us and his angry Father.

USE I. Branch I. See here, as in a glass, the infinite love of God the Father; that when

we had lost ourselves by sin, then God, in the riches of his grace, did send forth his Son, made of a woman, to redeem us. And behold the infinite love of Christ, that he was willing thus to condescend to take our flesh. Surely the angels would have disdained to have taken our flesh, it would have been a disparagement to them! What king would be willing to wear sackcloth over his cloth of gold? But Christ did not disdain to take our flesh. O the love of Christ! had not Christ been made flesh, we had been made a curse; had not he been incarnate, we had been incarcerated, and had been for ever in prison. Well might an angel be the herald to proclaim this joyful news of Christ's incarnation, 'behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour; which is Christ the Lord.'¹ The love of Christ in being incarnate, will the more appear if we consider,

1. Whence Christ came. He came from heaven, and from the richest place in heaven, his Father's bosom, that hive of sweetness.

2. To whom Christ came. Was it to his friends? No; he came to sinful man. Man that had defaced his image, abused his love; man who was turned rebel; yet he came to man, resolving to conquer obstinacy with kindness. If he would come to any, why not to the angels that fell? 'He took not upon him the nature of angels.'² The angels are of a more noble extract, more intelligible creatures, more able for service; ay, but behold the love of Christ, he came not to the fallen angels, but to mankind. Among the several wonders of the loadstone, this is not the least, that it will not draw gold or pearl, but despising these, it draws the iron to it, one of the most inferior metals: thus Christ leaves the angels, those noble spirits, the gold and the pearl, and he comes to poor sinful man and draws him into his embraces.

3. In what manner he came. He came not in the majesty of a king, attended with his life-guard, but he came poor; not like the heir of heaven, but like one of an inferior descent. The place he was born in was poor: not the royal city Jerusalem, but Bethlehem, a poor obscure place. He was born in an inn, and a manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his curtains, the beasts his companions; he descended of poor parents. One would have thought, if Christ would have come into the world, he

¹ Lu. 2. 10.

² He. 2. 16.

would have made choice of some queen or personage of honour to have descended from; but he comes of mean obscure parents; that they were poor, appears by their offering, 'a pair of turtle doves,' which was the usual offering of the poor.³ Christ was so poor, that when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it.⁴ He, when he died, made no will. He came into the world poor.

4. Why he came. That he might take our flesh, and redeem us; that he might instate us into a kingdom. He was poor that he might make us rich.⁴ He was born of a virgin that we might be born of God. He took our flesh that he might give us his Spirit. He lay in the manger that we might lie in paradise. He came down from heaven that he might bring us to heaven. And what was all this but love? If our hearts be not rocks, this love of Christ should affect us. Behold love that passeth knowledge!⁵

Branch 2. See here the wonderful humility of Christ; Christ was made flesh: 'O holy humility, thou hast caused the Son of God to descend into the loins of the Virgin Mary!' AUST. That Christ should clothe himself with our flesh, a piece of that earth which we tread upon; O infinite humility! Christ's taking our flesh was one of the lowest steps of his humiliation. Christ did humble himself more in lying in the virgin's womb, than in hanging upon the cross. It was not so much for man to die, but for God to become man, that was the wonder of humility, 'he was made in the likeness of man.'⁶ For Christ to be made flesh was more humility than for the angels to be made worms. Christ's flesh is called a veil, 'through the veil,' that is, his flesh; Christ's wearing our flesh, veiled his glory. For him to be made flesh, who was equal with God, O humility! 'who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.'⁷ He stood upon even ground with God, he was co-essential and consubstantial with his Father, as Austin, and Cyril, and the council of Nice express it; yet for all this he takes flesh. Christ stript himself of the robes of his glory, and covered himself with the rags of our humanity. If Solomon did so wonder that God should dwell in the temple, which was enriched and hung with gold, how may we wonder that God should dwell in man's weak and frail nature? Nay, which is yet more hu-

mility, Christ not only took our flesh, but took it when it was at the worst, under disgrace; as if a servant should wear a nobleman's livery, when he is impeached of high treason. Nay, besides, Christ took all the infirmities of our flesh. There are two sorts of infirmities: such as are sinful without pain, or such as are painful without sin. The first of these infirmities Christ did not take upon him; sinful infirmities, to be covetous or ambitious, Christ never took these upon him; but Christ took upon him painful infirmities; as, 1. Hunger, he came to the fig-tree, and would have eaten.⁸ 2. Weariness; as when he sat on Jacob's well to rest him.¹⁰ 3. Sorrow, 'my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.'¹¹ It was a sorrow guided with reason, not disturbed with passion. 4. Fear, 'he was heard in that he feared.'¹² Nay, yet a further degree of Christ's humility, he not only was made flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, 'he knew no sin, yet he was made sin.'¹³ He was like a sinner; he had all sin laid upon him, but no sin lived in him. 'He was numbered among transgressors.'¹⁴ He who was numbered with the persons of the Trinity, he is said 'to bear the sins of many.'¹⁵ Now, this was the lowest degree of Christ's humiliation. For Christ to be reputed as a sinner, never such a pattern of humility! That he, who would not endure sin in the angels, should himself endure to have sin imputed to him, it is the most amazing humility that ever was!

From all this learn to be humble. Dost thou see Christ humbling himself, and art thou proud? 'Tis the humble saint that is Christ's picture. Christians, be not proud of your fine feathers: 1. Hast thou an estate? be not proud, the earth thou treadest on is richer than thou: it hath mines of gold and silver in the bowels of it. 2. Hast thou beauty? be not proud: it is but air and dust mingled. 3. Hast thou skill and parts? be humble: Lucifer hath more knowledge than thou. 4. Hast thou grace? be humble: thou hast it not of thy own growth, it is borrowed. Were it not folly to be proud of a ring that is lent?¹⁶ Thou hast more sin than grace, spots than beauty. O look on Christ, this rare pattern, and be humbled! It is an unseemly sight to see God humbling himself, and man exalting himself; to see an humbled Saviour, and a proud sinner. God hates the very resemblance of

¹ Lu. 2. 24. ² Le. 12. 8. ³ Mat. 17. 27. ⁴ 2 Co. 8. 3.
⁵ Eph. 3. 10. ⁶ Phi. 2. 7. ⁷ He. 10. 20. ⁸ Phi. 2. 6.

⁹ Mat. 21. 18. ¹⁰ Jno. 4. 6. ¹¹ Mat. 26. 38. ¹² He. 5. 7.
¹³ 2 Co. 5. 21. ¹⁴ Isa. 53. 12. ¹⁵ He. 9. 28. ¹⁶ 1 Co. 4. 7.

pride.¹ He would have no honey in the sacrifice. Indeed leaven is sour; but why no honey? because, when honey is mingled with meal or flour, it makes the meal to rise and swell; therefore no honey. God hates the resemblance of the sin of pride; better want parts, and the comforts of the Spirit, than humility. 'If God,' saith Austin, 'spared not the angels, when they grew proud, will he spare thee, who art but dust and rottenness?'

Branch 3. Behold here a sacred riddle or paradox, 'God manifest in the flesh.' The text calls it a mystery. That man should be made in God's image, was a wonder; but that God should be made in man's image, is a greater wonder. That the Ancient of Days should be born, that he who thunders in the heavens should cry in the cradle, that he who rules the stars, should suck the breast, that a virgin should conceive, that Christ should be made of a woman, and of that woman which himself made, that the branch should bear the vine, that the mother should be younger than the child she bare, and the child in the womb bigger than the mother, that the human nature should not be God, yet one with God: this was not only wonderful, but a miracle. Christ taking flesh is a mystery we shall never fully understand, till we come to heaven, when our light shall be clear, as well as our love perfect.

Branch 4. From hence, 'God manifest in the flesh, Christ born of a virgin,' a thing not only strange in nature, but impossible, learn that there are no impossibilities with God: God can bring about things which are not within the sphere of nature to produce; that iron should swim, that the rock should gush out water, that the fire should lick up the water in the trenches.² It is natural for the water to quench the fire, but for the fire to consume the water, this is impossible in the course of nature: but God can bring about all this, 'there is nothing too hard for thee.'³ 'If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it be marvellous in my eyes? saith the Lord.'⁴ How should God be united to our flesh? It is impossible to us, but not with God; he can do what transcends reason, and exceeds faith. He would not be our God, if he could not do more than we can think.⁵ He can reconcile contraries. How apt are we to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities! How do our hearts die within us when things go cross to our sense and reason!

We are apt to say as that prince, 'if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?'⁶ It was a time of famine, and now that a measure of wheat, which was a good part of a bushel—should be sold for a shekel, namely, half an ounce of silver, how can this be? So when things are cross, or strange, God's own people are apt to question, how they should be brought about with success? Moses, who was a man of God, and one of the brightest stars that ever shined in the firmament of God's church, yet he was apt to be discouraged with seeming impossibilities, 'and Moses said, the people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen, and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat for a whole month: shall the flocks and herds be slain for them to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered for them, to suffice them?'⁷ As if he had said, in plain language, he did not see how the people of Israel, being so numerous, could be fed for a month, 'and the Lord said, Is the Lord's hand waxed short?'⁸ Surely, that God who brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb, what cannot he do? O let us rest upon the arm of God's power, and believe in him, in the midst of seeming impossibilities. Remember, 'there are no impossibilities with God.' He can subdue a proud heart. He can raise a dying church. Christ born of a virgin; that wonder-working God that wrought this can bring to pass the greatest seeming impossibilities.

USE 2. *Of exhortation.* Branch 1. Seeing Christ took our flesh, and was born of a virgin, let us labour that he may be spiritually born in our hearts. What will it profit us, that Christ was born into the world, unless he be born in our hearts: that he was united to our nature, unless he be united to our persons? Marvel not that I say unto you, Christ must be born again, namely, in our hearts, 'till Christ be formed in you.'⁹ Now, then, try if Christ be born in your hearts.

Q. *How shall we know that?*

A. 1. There are pangs before the birth; so, before Christ be born in the heart, there are spiritual pangs. Some pangs of conscience, deep convictions, 'they were pricked at their heart.'¹⁰ I grant the new-birth doth pain more or less; all have not the same pangs of sorrow and humiliation, yet all have pangs. If Christ be born in thy heart, thou hast been deeply

¹ Le. 2. 11. ² 1 Ki. 18. 38. ³ Je. 32. 27. ⁴ Zech. 8. 6. ⁵ Eph. 2. 3.

⁶ 2 Ki. 7. 2. ⁷ Nu. 11. 21, 22. ⁸ Nu. 11. 23. ⁹ Ga. 4. 19. ¹⁰ Acts 2. 37.

afflicted for sin. Christ is never born in the heart without pangs. Many thank God they never had any trouble of spirit, they were always quiet: a sign Christ is not yet formed in them.

A. 2. As, when Christ was born into the world, he was made flesh; so, if he be born in thy heart, he makes thy heart a heart of flesh.¹ Is thy heart incarnate? before it was a rocky heart, and would not yield to God, or take the impressions of the world,—it is a hard thing which does not yield to the touch; now it is fleshy and tender like melted wax, to take any stamp of the Spirit. This is a sign Christ is born in our hearts; when they are hearts of flesh, they melt in tears and in love. What is it the better Christ was made flesh, unless he hath given thee a heart of flesh?

A. 3. Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin, so, if he be born in thee, thy heart is a virgin-heart, in respect of sincerity and sanctity. Art thou purified from the love of sin? If Christ be born in thy heart, it is an holy of holies. If thy heart be polluted with the predominant love of sin, never think Christ is born there. Christ will never lie any more in a stable. If he be born in thy heart, it is consecrated by the Holy Ghost.

A. 4. If Christ be born in thy heart, then it is with thee as in a birth: 1. There is life. Faith is the living principle, it is the vital artery of the soul: 'the life that I live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God.'² 2. There is appetite, 'as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word.'³ The word is like breast-milk, pure, sweet, nourishing; the soul in which Christ is formed, desires this breast-milk. St Bernard, in one of his soliloquies, comforts himself with this, that sure he had the new-birth in him, because he found in his heart such strong anhelations and thirstings after God. 3. Motion. After Christ is born in the heart, there is a violent motion; there is striving to enter in at the strait gate, and offering violence to the kingdom of heaven.⁴ By this we may know Christ is formed in us. This is the only comfort, that as Christ was born into the world, so he is born in our hearts; as he was united to our flesh, so he is united to our person.

Branch 2. As Christ was made in our image, let us labour to be made in his image. Christ being incarnate, was made like us, let us labour to be made like him. There are three things

in which we should labour to be like Christ. 1. In disposition. He was of a most sweet disposition. He invites sinners to come to him. He hath bowels to pity us, breasts to feed us, wings to cover us. He would not break our heart, but with mercy. Was Christ made in our likeness? let us labour to be made in his likeness. Let us be like him in this sweetness of disposition: be not of a morose spirit. It was said of Nabal, 'he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.'⁵ Some are so barbarous, as if they were akin to the ostrich, they are fired with rage, and breathe forth nothing but revenge; like those two men in the gospel, 'possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce.'⁶ Let us be like Christ in mildness and sweetness. Let us pray for our enemies, and conquer them by love. David's kindness melted Saul's heart.⁷ A frozen heart will be thawed with the fire of love.

2. Be like Christ in grace. He was like us in having our flesh, let us be like him in having his grace. In three graces we should labour to be like Christ: 1. In humility, 'he humbled himself.'⁸ He left the bright robes of his glory to be clothed with the rags of our humanity: a wonder of humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace. Humility, saith St Bernard, is a contempt of self-excellency, a kind of self-annihilation. This is the glory of a christian. We are never so comely in God's eyes, as when we are black in our own. In this let us be like Christ. True religion is to imitate Christ. And indeed, what cause have we to be humble, if we look within us, about us, below us, above us? 1. If we look within us, here we see our sins represented to us in the glass of conscience; lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermin crawling in our souls, 'How many are my iniquities?'⁹ Our sins are as the sands of the sea for number, as the rocks of the sea for weight. Austin cries out, My heart, which is God's temple, is polluted with sin.—(2.) If we look about us, here is that may humble us. We may see other Christians outshining us in gifts and graces, as the sun outshines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit; perhaps we have but here and there an olive-berry growing, to show that we are of the right kind.¹⁰ (3.) If we look below us, here is that may humble us. We may see the mother earth, out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element: 'They were

¹ Ez. 36. 26. ² Ga. 2. 20 ³ 1 Pe. 2. 2 ⁴ Mat. 12. 11.

⁵ 1 Sa. 25. 17. ⁶ Mat. 8. 28. ⁷ 1 Sa. 24. 16. ⁸ Ph. 2. 8. ⁹ Job 13. 23. ¹⁰ Is. 17. 6.

viler than the earth.¹ Thou that dost set up thy scutcheon, and blaze thy coat of arms, behold thy pedigree; thou art but walking ashes: and wilt thou be proud? What is Adam? He is the son of dust. And what is dust? The son of nothing.—(4.) If we look above us, here is that may humble us. If we look up to heaven, there we may see God resisting the proud. The proud man is the mark which God shoots at, and he never misses the mark. He threw proud Lucifer out of heaven, he thrust proud Nebuchadnezzar out of his throne, and turned him to eat grass.² O then be like Christ in humility!

3. Did Christ take our flesh? was he made like to us? let us be made like to him in zeal: 'The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up.' He was zealous when his Father was dishonoured. In this let us be like Christ, zealous for God's truth and glory, which are the two orient pearls of the crown of heaven. Zeal is as needful for a Christian, as salt for the sacrifice, or fire on the altar. Zeal without prudence, is rashness; prudence without zeal, is cowardliness. Without zeal, our duties are not acceptable to God. Zeal is like rosin to the bow-strings, without which the lute makes no music.

4. Be like Christ, in the contempt of the world. When Christ took our flesh, he came not in the pride of flesh, he did not descend immediately from kings and nobles, but was of mean parentage. Christ was not ambitious of titles of honour. Christ did as much decline the world's dignity and greatness as others seek it. When they would have made him a king, he refused it; he chose rather to ride upon the foal of an ass, than to be drawn in a chariot; and to hang upon a wooden cross, than to wear a golden crown. Christ scorned the pomp and glory of the world: he waived secular affairs, 'Who made me a judge?'⁴ His work was not to arbitrate matters of law; he came not into the world to be a magistrate, but a Redeemer. Christ was like a star in an higher orb, he minded nothing but heaven. Was Christ made like us? let us be made like him, in heavenliness and contempt of the world. Let us not be ambitious of the honours and preferments of the world; let us not purchase the world with the loss of a good conscience. What wise man would damn himself to grow rich? or pull down his soul, to build up an

estate? Be like Christ in an holy contempt of the world.

5. Be like Christ in conversation. Was Christ incarnate? was he made like us? let us be made like him in holiness of life. No temptation could fasten upon Christ, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.'⁵ Temptation to Christ was like a spark of fire upon a marble pillar, which glides off. Christ's life, saith Chrysostom, was brighter than the sunbeams. Let us be like him in this, 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' We are not, saith Austin, to be like Christ in working miracles, but in a holy life. A Christian should be both a loadstone and a diamond,—a loadstone, in drawing others to Christ,—a diamond, casting a sparkling lustre of holiness in his life. O let us be so just in our dealings, so true in our promises, so devout in our worship, so unblamable in our lives, that we may be the walking pictures of Christ! Thus as Christ was made in our likeness, let us labour to be made in his likeness.

Branch 3. If Jesus Christ was so abased for us; he took our flesh, which was a disparagement to him; it was mingling dust with gold,—if he, I say, abased himself so for us, let us be willing to be abased for him. If the world reproach us for Christ's sake, and cast dust on our name, let us bear it with patience. The apostles departed from the council 'Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name;⁷ that they were graced to be disgraced for Christ. That is a good saying of St Austin, they who take away from a saint's name, shall add to his reward; and while they make his credit weigh lighter, they make his crown weigh heavier. O was Christ content to be humbled and abased for us, to take our flesh, and to take it when it was in disgrace! Let us not think much to be abased for Christ. Say as David, 'If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.'⁸ If to serve my Lord Christ, if to keep my conscience pure, if this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.

USE 3. *Of comfort.* Jesus Christ having taken our flesh, hath ennobled our nature. Our nature is now invested with greater royalties and privileges than in time of innocency. Before, in innocency, we were made in the image of God; but now, Christ having assumed our nature, we are made one with God; our nature is ennobled above the angelical nature. Christ

¹ Job 30. 8. ² Dan. 4. 33. ³ John 2. 17. ⁴ Luke 12. 11.

⁵ Jno. 14. 30. ⁶ 1 Pet. 1. 15. ⁷ Acts 5. 41. ⁸ 2 Sam 6. 22.

taking our flesh, hath made us nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are his friends, believers are flesh of his flesh, his members.¹

And the same glory which is put upon Christ's human nature, shall be put upon believers.

OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION.

PHIL. ii. 9. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c.*

BEFORE, we have spoken of Christ's humiliation; now of his exaltation; before, you saw the Sun of Righteousness in the eclipse; now, you shall see it coming out of the eclipse, and shining in its full splendour and glory: 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him,' 'Above all exaltation.' AMBR.

Q. XXVIII. *Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?*

A. In his rising from the dead, his ascending into heaven, and sitting at the right hand of God the Father, &c.

Q. *In what sense hath God exalted Christ?*

A. Not in respect of Christ's Godhead, for that cannot be exalted higher than it is; as in his humiliation the Godhead was not lower, so in his exaltation, the Godhead is not higher; but Christ is exalted as Mediator, his human nature is exalted.

Q. *How many ways is Christ exalted?*

A. Five ways: God hath exalted Christ, 1. In his titles. 2. In his office. 3. In his ascension. 4. In his session at God's right hand. 5. In constituting him judge of the world.

I. *First title.* God hath exalted Christ in his titles. He is exalted to be a Lord, 'the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.'² He is a Lord in respect of his sovereignty; he is Lord over angels and men, 'All power is given unto me.'³ Christ hath three keys in his hand, the key of the grave, to open the graves of men at the resurrection, the key of heaven to open the kingdom of heaven to whom he will, the key of hell, to lock up the damned in that fiery prison.⁴ To this Lord all knees must bow, 'that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:'⁵ *name*, is put here for *person*, to that holy thing Jesus, to the sceptre of that divine person every knee shall bow. *Bowing* is put for *subjection*, all must be subdued to him as sons or captives, submit to him as to the Lord or Judge; 'Kiss the Son,'⁶ with a kiss of love and loyalty. We must not only cast ourselves into Christ's

arms to be saved by him, but we must cast ourselves at his feet, to serve him.

Second title. Christ is exalted to be a prince; 'There shall stand up Michael the great prince;' some think it was a created angel, but it was Christ the angel of the covenant. He is a great prince, 'the prince of the kings of the earth.'⁷ They hold their crowns by immediate tenure from him; his throne is above the stars, he hath angels and archangels for his attendants. Thus he is exalted in his titles of honour.

II. God hath exalted Christ in his office; he hath honoured him to be the Saviour of the world, 'him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.'⁸ It was a great honour to Moses to be a temporal saviour; but what is it to be the Saviour of souls! Christ is called 'the horn of salvation.'⁹ He saves from sin,¹⁰ from wrath.¹¹ To save is a flower belongs only to his crown: 'neither is there salvation in any other.'¹² What an honour is this to Christ! How did this make heaven ring of saints' praises! they sing hallelujahs to Christ their Saviour: 'they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.'¹³

III. God hath exalted Christ in his ascension; if he be ascended, then he is exalted. Austin saith, 'Some were of opinion that Christ's body ascended into the orb and circle of the sun:' so the Hermians. But the scripture is plain, he ascended into heaven,¹⁴ and 'far above all heavens,'¹⁵ therefore above the firmament. He is ascended into the highest part of the empyrean heaven, which Paul calls the third heaven. Concerning Christ's ascen-

¹ Dan. 12. 1. ² Re. 1. 5. ³ Acts 5. 31. ⁴ Lu. 1. 69.

⁵ Mat. 1. 21. ⁶ 1 Thes. 1. 10. ⁷ Acts 4. 12.

⁸ Re. 5. 9. ⁹ Lu. 24. 51. ¹⁰ Eph. 4. 10.

* Nothing so proper to Jesus as *to save*, in destroying sin by his grace. Would to God, that every one would as fully answer his name of christian, of pastor, of magistrate, of father, of priest, &c., as Jesus Christ does that of Saviour! O amiable and reviving name! What confidence dost thou inspire into true penitents! What fidelity, gratitude, and love into christians!—*Quesnel on the Gospels*, vol. 1. p. 29.

¹ Eph. 5. 30. and 1. 23. ² Acts 9. 17. ³ Mat. 28. 18.

⁴ Re. 1. 18. ⁵ Phil. 2. 10. ⁶ Ps. 2. 12.

sion, two things: 1. The manner of his ascension: Christ being to ascend, blessed his disciples, 'he lifted up his hands, and blessed them; and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.'¹ He did not leave his disciples houses and lands, but he left them his blessing. Christ ascended as a conqueror, in a way of triumph, 'thou hast led captivity captive,'² &c. He triumphed over sin, hell, and death; and his triumph is a believer's triumph: he hath conquered sin and hell for every believer. 2. The fruit of his ascension: Christ's ascension to heaven causeth the descension of the Holy Spirit into our hearts: 'when he ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men.'³ Christ having ascended up in the clouds, as his triumphant chariot, gives the gift of his Spirit to us: as a king at his coronation bestows gifts liberally to his favourites.

IV. God hath exalted Christ in his session at his right hand: 'after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat upon the right hand of God.'⁴ 'He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, far above all principality and power, and every name that is named.'

Q. *What is meant by Christ's sitting at God's right hand?*

A. To speak properly, God hath no right hand or left; for being a Spirit, he is void of all bodily parts; but it is a borrowed speech, a metaphor taken from the manner of kings who were wont to advance their favourites next to their own persons, and set them at their right hand; Solomon caused a seat to be set for the queen his mother, and placed her at his right hand.⁵ So for Christ to sit at the right hand of God, is to be in the next place to God the Father in dignity and honour. The human nature of Christ, being personally united to the divine, is now set down on a royal throne in heaven, and adored even of angels. By virtue of the personal union of Christ's human nature with the divine, there is a communication of all that glory from the Deity of Christ which his human nature is capable of. Not that the manhood of Christ is advanced to an equality with the Godhead, but the divine nature being joined with the human, the human nature is wonderfully glorified, though not deified. Christ as Mediator is filled with all majesty and honour, beyond the comprehension of the highest order of angels. Christ in his humiliation de-

scended so low, that it was not fit to go lower; and in his exaltation he ascended so high, that it is not possible to go higher. In his resurrection he was exalted above the grave, in his ascension he was exalted above the airy and starry heaven, in his sitting at God's right hand, he is exalted above the highest heavens far, 'far above all heavens.'

V. God hath exalted Christ in constituting him Judge of the whole world; 'the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.'⁶ At the day of judgment, shall Christ be exalted supereminently: 'he shall come in the glory of his Father.'⁷ He shall wear the same embroidered robes of majesty as the Father; and he shall come with all his holy angels.⁸ He who was led to the bar with a band of soldiers, shall be attended to the bench with a guard of angels: Christ shall judge his judges, he shall judge Pilate that condemned him; kings must leave their thrones, and come to his bar. And this is the highest court of judicature, from whence is no appeal.

USE 1. *Of information.* Branch 1. See Christ's different state on earth, and now in heaven. O how is the scene altered! When he was on earth, he lay in a manger, now he sits on a throne; then he was hated and scorned of men, now he is adored of angels; then his name was reproached, now 'God hath given him a name above every name.'⁹ Then he came in the form of a servant, and as a servant, stood with his basin and towel, and washed his disciples' feet,¹⁰ now he is clad in his prince's robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns before him; on earth he was a man of sorrow, now he is anointed with the oil of gladness; on earth was his crucifixion, now his coronation; then his Father frowned upon him in desertion, now he hath set him at his right hand; before he seemed to have no form or beauty in him,¹¹ now he is in the brightness

¹ Eph. 4. 10. ² Jno. 5. 22. ³ Mar. 8. 38. ⁴ Mat. 25. 31.
⁵ Phi. 2. 9. ⁶ Jno. 13. 4, 5. ⁷ Is. 53. 2.

* The second prerogative and function of Christ is, to be the universal Judge of the quick and the dead. To him belongs all judgment, visible and invisible, particular and general, temporal and eternal, either by withdrawing grace, or inflicting punishment. I own and adore thee, O Jesus, as my judge, and as the sovereign disposer of life and death. My lot is in thy hands; for thou dispensest thy graces according to the measure which thou hast settled, and appointest punishments according to the degree and demerit of the sins. Judge me, O Lord, not in thy anger, but in thy mercy. Punish me in this world, not in the other; not by withdrawing thy Holy Spirit from me, or casting me out of thy sight, but rather by depriving me of the carnal satisfactions of this life, and the fatal prosperity of this corrupt world.—*Quesnel on the Gospels*, vol. iii. p. 255.

¹ Lu. 24. 50. ² Ps. 68. 18. ³ Eph. 4. 8. ⁴ Mar. 16. 19.
⁵ Eph. 1. 20. ⁶ 1 Ki. 2. 19.

of his Father's glory.¹ O what a change is here! 'Him hath God highly exalted.'

Branch 2. Was Christ first humble and then exalted? hence learn, the way to true honour is humility: 'he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'² The world looks upon humility as that which will make one contemptible, but it is the ready way to honour; the way to rise is to fall, the way to ascend is to descend. Humility exalts us in the esteem of men, and it exalts us to an higher throne in heaven, 'who-soever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,'³ namely, he shall have a greater degree of glory in it.

Branch 3. Christ suffered, and then was exalted: see hence, that sufferings must go before glory. Many desire to be glorified with Christ, but they are not content to suffer for Christ: 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.'⁴ The wicked first reign and then suffer; the godly first suffer, and then reign: there is no way to Constantinople but through the Straits; no way to heaven, but through sufferings; no way to the crown, but by the way of the cross. Jerusalem above is a pleasant city, streets of gold, gates of pearl; but we must travel through a dirty road to this city, through many reproaches and sufferings.⁵ We must enter into glory as Christ did; first he suffered shame and death, and now is exalted to sit at God's right hand.

USE 2. *Of comfort.* Branch 1. Christ, being so highly exalted, hath ennobled our nature; he hath crowned it with glory, and lifted it above angels and archangels; though Christ, as he was man, was made a little lower than the angels,⁶ yet as the human nature is united to the divine, and is at God's right hand, so the human nature is above the angels.⁷ And if God hath so dignified our human nature, what a shame is it that we should debase it! God hath exalted the human nature above the angels, and the drunkard abaseth the human nature below the beasts.

Branch 2. Christ being exalted at God's right hand, the key of government is laid upon his shoulders; he governs all the affairs of the world for his own glory. Do you think when Christ is so highly advanced, and hath all power in heaven and earth in his hand, he will not take care of his elect, and turn the most astonishing providences to the good of his

church? In a clock, the wheels move cross one to another, but all make the clock strike: so Christ being at his Father's right hand, he will make the most cross providences tend to the salvation of his church.

Branch 3. Christ being at God's right hand, we may be assured he hath now finished the work of man's redemption, 'this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.'⁸ If Christ had not fully expiated sin, and satisfied God's law, he had not sitten down at God's right hand, but had still lain in the grave; but now he is exalted to glory,—this is an evident token he hath done and suffered all that was required of him, for the working out of our redemption.

Branch 4. Though Jesus Christ is so highly exalted in glory, yet he is not forgetful of us on earth. Some, when they are raised to places of honour, forget their friends; when the chief butler was restored to his place at court, then he forgot poor Joseph in prison; but it is not so with Christ, though he be exalted to such glory in heaven, yet he is not unmindful of his saints on earth. Our high priest hath all the names and wants of his people written upon his breastplate. Art thou tempted? Though Christ be in glory, he knows how to pity and succour thee: 'we have not an high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.'⁹ Dost thou mourn for sin? Christ, though in a glorified state, hears thy sighs, bottles thy tears.

Branch 5. Christ being exalted at God's right hand, this is for the comfort of believers, that they shall one day be exalted to that place of glory where he is. Christ's exaltation is our exaltation. Christ hath prayed for this: 'Father, I will, that all those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.'¹⁰ And he is said to go before to 'prepare a place' for believers.¹¹ Christ is called the head, the church is called his body.¹² The head being exalted to honour, the body mystical shall be exalted too; as sure as Christ is exalted far above all heavens, so sure will he instate believers in all that glory which his human nature is adorned with.¹³ As here he puts his grace upon the saints, so shortly will he put his glory upon them. This is comfort to the poorest christian; perhaps thou hast scarce an house to put thy head in, yet thou mayest look up to heaven, and say, 'there is my house, there is my coun-

¹ He. 1. 3. ² Lu. 14. 11. ³ Mat. 18. 4. ⁴ 2 Tim. 2. 12.
⁵ Acts 14. 22. ⁶ He. 2. 9.

⁷ He. 10. 12. ⁸ He. 4. 15. ⁹ Jno. 17. 24. ¹⁰ Jno. 14. 2.
¹¹ Eph. 1. 22, 23. ¹² Jno. 17. 22.

try, and I have already taken possession of heaven in my head Christ; he sits there, and it will not be long before I shall sit there with him; he is upon the throne of glory, and I have his word for it, I shall sit upon the throne with him.¹

USE 3. *Of exhortation.* Hath God highly exalted Christ? Let us labour to exalt him. Let us exalt, 1. His person. 2. His truths.

1. Let us exalt Christ in our hearts; believe! O adore and love him! We cannot lift Christ up higher in heaven, but we may in our hearts. 2. Let us exalt him in our lips; let us praise him. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, our tongues must be the organs in these temples; by praising and commending Christ, we exalt him in the esteem of others. 3. Let us exalt him in our lives, by living holy lives. It is not all the doxologies and prayers in the

world do so exalt Christ as an holy life: this makes Christ renowned, and lifts him up indeed, when his followers walk worthy of Christ.

2. Let us exalt Christ's truths, Bucholcerus, in his Chronology, reports of the nobles of Polonia, that whenever the gospel is read, they lay their hands upon their swords, by that intimating they are ready to maintain the gospel with the hazard of their lives. Let us exalt Christ's truths, maintain the truths of Christ against error, maintain the doctrine of free grace against merit, the Deity of Christ against Socinianism.

Truth is the most orient pearl of Christ's crown: contend for the truth as one would for a sum of money, that it should not be wrested out of his hand; this Christ takes to be an exalting of him, when we exalt his truths, wherein his glory is so much concerned.

CHRIST THE REDEEMER.

Q. XXX. *How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased to us by Christ?*

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Here are in this answer two things: 1st. Something implied, viz. That Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption, in these words, 'the redemption purchased by Christ.' 2d. Something expressed, viz. that the Spirit applies to us this redemption purchased, by working faith in us, &c.

I. The thing here implied, that Jesus Christ is the glorious purchaser of our redemption. The doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ is a glorious doctrine; it is the marrow and quintessence of the gospel; in this all a christian's comfort lies. Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a word, in the other shedding of blood.² The creation was but the work of God's fingers;³ redemption the work of his arm: 'having obtained eternal redemption for us.'⁴ Christ's purchasing redemption for us, implies that our sins did mortgage and sell us; had there not been some

kind of mortgaging, there had been no need of redemption. Now Christ, when we were thus mortgaged and sold by sin, did purchase our redemption; Christ had the best right to redeem us, for he is our kinsman. The Hebrew word for Redeemer, *goel*, signifies a kinsman,—one that is near in blood: in the old law, the nearest kinsman was to redeem his brother's land.⁵ Thus Christ being near akin to us, 'flesh of our flesh,' is the fittest to redeem us.*

Q. *How doth Christ redeem us?*

A. By his own precious blood, 'in whom we have redemption through his blood.'⁶ Among the Romans, he was said to redeem another that laid down a price equivalent for the ransom of the prisoner. In this sense, Christ is a Redeemer, he hath paid a price. Never such a price paid to ransom prisoners, 'ye are bought

⁵ Ruth 4. 4.

⁶ Eph. 1. 7.

* Christ is well qualified to be our Redeemer. He is God's shepherd, the man his fellow. Behold what interest he has in God! and that both by nature, being God's fellow, and by covenant, being God's shepherd. Behold what interest he has in us! and that also both by nature, being man; and by covenant, by virtue of the covenant of grace, being our shepherd by God's appointment and constitution. O to reveal the counsel of God's love from eternity! How fit is he who is the middle person of the Godhead to be the mediator and midman! How fit is he who is the eternal Son of God to bring many aens and daughters to glory! The eternal Word that made the world also, to redeem the world! How fit as God-man, being man, to pay man's debt; as God to give it value; man to deal with man, and God to deal with God! What an able Saviour must he be to save to the uttermost!—*Beauties of Ralph Erskine*, vol. 1. p. 11.

¹ Rr. 3. 21. ² Lu. 1. 51. ³ Ps. 8. 3. ⁴ He. 9. 12.

with a price;¹ and this price was his own blood. So, in the text, 'by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,' this blood being the blood of that person who was God as well as man, is a price sufficient for the ransom of millions.

Q. From what doth Christ redeem us?

A. From sin. To be redeemed from Turkish slavery is a great mercy, but it is infinitely more to be redeemed from sin. There is nothing can hurt the soul, but sin; it is not affliction hurts it, it often makes it better, as the furnace makes gold the purer; but it is sin that doth damnify. Now Christ redeems us from sin, 'now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.'²

Q. But how are we redeemed from sin? Do we not see corruption stirring in the regenerate? Much pride and unmortified passion?

A. We must distinguish of redemption: redemption is either begun redemption, or perfect redemption; sin cannot stand with a perfect redemption, but here it is begun; sin may stand with an imperfect redemption. There may be some darkness in the air at the sun's first rising, but not when the sun is at the full meridian; while our redemption is but begun, there may be sin; but not when it is perfect in glory.

Q. But in what sense hath Christ redeemed justified persons from sin?

A. 1. From the guilt of sin, though not the stain. Guilt is the binding a person over to punishment. Now Christ hath redeemed a justified person from the guilt of sin; he hath discharged his debts. Christ saith to God's justice, as Paul to Philemon, 'if he hath wronged thee any thing, or owes thee ought, put that on my account.'³

A. 2. A justified person is redeemed from the power and regency of sin, though not the presence. Sin may rage, but not reign; it may rage in a child of God, but not reign; lust did rage in David, fear in Peter, but it did not reign, they recovered themselves by repentance, 'sin shall not have dominion over you.'⁴ Sin lives in a child of God, but is deposed from the throne; it lives not as a king, but a captive.

A. 3. A believer is redeemed from the curse due to sin, 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'⁵ Christ said to his Father, as Rebecca to Jacob,

'upon me, upon me be the curse; let the blessing be upon them, but upon me be the curse.'⁶ And now, there is no condemnation to believers.⁶ An unbeliever hath a double condemnation, one from the law which he hath transgressed, and the other from the gospel which he hath despised; but Christ hath redeemed a believer from this malediction, he hath set him out of the power of hell and damnation.

Q. To what hath Christ redeemed us?

A. He hath redeemed us to a glorious inheritance, 'to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.'⁷

1. 'To an inheritance:' Christ hath not only redeemed us out of prison, but he hath redeemed us to a state of happiness, to an inheritance. Heaven is not a lease which soon expires, but an inheritance, and a glorious inheritance,⁸ an inheritance in light. Light adorns and gilds the world. What were the world without light but a prison? The heavenly inheritance is irradiated with light; Christ, as a continual sun, enlightens it with his beams.⁹

2. 'To an inheritance incorruptible:' It doth not moulder away, or suffer dissolution. Earthly comforts are shadowed out by the tabernacle, which was transient; but heaven is set out by the temple which was fixed and permanent, built with stone, overlaid with gold. This is the glory of the celestial inheritance; it is incorruptible. Eternity is written upon the frontispiece of it.

3. 'Undefiled:' The Greek word for undefiled, alludes to a precious stone called *amianthus*, which cannot be blemished: such a place is heaven, undefiled, nothing can stain it, there's no sin there to eclipse its purity. For the holiness and undefiledness of it, it is compared to pure gold, and to the sapphire and emerald.¹⁰ 'The sapphire hath a virtue,' saith Pliny, 'to preserve chasteness; the emerald to expel poison.' These are the lively emblems of heaven, to show the sanctity of it, no fever of lust, no venom of malice, there are none but pure virgin spirits inhabit it.

4. It 'fadeth not away:' The Greek word is the name of a flower *amaranthus*, which keeps a long time fresh and green, as Clem. Alexandrinus writes. Such is the heavenly inheritance, it doth not lose its orient colour, but keeps its freshness and greenness to eter-

¹ 1 Co. 6. 20. ² He. 9. 26. ³ Phil. 18. ⁴ Ro. 6. 14. ⁵ Ga. 3. 13.

⁶ Ro. 8. 1. ⁷ 1 Pe. 1. 4. ⁸ Co. 1. 12. ⁹ Re. 21. 23. ¹⁰ Re. 21.

nity; the beauty of it fadeth not away. To this glorious inheritance hath Christ redeemed the saints: an inheritance which cannot be fully described or set forth by all the lights of heaven, though every star were a sun. And that which is the diamond in the ring, the glory of this inheritance is, the eternal sight and fruition of the blessed God; the sight of God will be a most alluring, heart-ravishing object; the king's presence makes the court, 'we shall see him as he is.'¹ It is comfortable to see God showing himself through the lattice of an ordinance, to see him in the word and sacrament; the martyrs thought it comfortable to see him in a prison; O then, what will it be to see him in glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun! And not only see him but enjoy him for ever. Faith itself is not able fully to comprehend this reward. And all this blessedness hath Christ purchased through the redemption of his blood.

USE 1. Branch 1. See into what a wretched deplorable condition we had brought ourselves by sin. We had sinned ourselves into slavery, so that we needed Christ to purchase our redemption. 'Slavery is the worst condition;' such as are now prisoners in Algiers think it so. But by sin we are in a worse slavery, slaves to Satan, a merciless tyrant, who sports in the damnation of souls. In this condition we were when Christ came to redeem us.

Branch 2. See in this, as in a transparent glass, the love of Christ to the elect; he came to redeem them, these he died intentionally for. Were it not great love for a king's son to pay a great sum of money to redeem a captive? But that he should be content to be a prisoner in his stead, and die for his ransom; this were matter of wonder. Jesus Christ hath done all this, he hath written his love in characters of blood. It had been much for Christ to speak a good word to his Father for us, but he knew that was not enough to redeem us; though a word speaking made a world, yet it would not redeem a sinner; 'without shedding of blood there is no remission.'²

USE 2. *Of trial.* If Christ came to purchase our redemption, then let us try whether we are the persons whom he hath redeemed from the guilt and curse due to sin. This is a needful trial; for, let me tell you, there is but a certain number whom Christ hath redeemed. O, say sinners, Christ is a Redeemer, and we shall

be saved by him! Beloved, Christ came not to redeem all; then we overthrow the decrees of God. Redemption is not as large as creation. I grant there is a sufficiency of merit in Christ's blood to save all; but there is difference between sufficiency and efficiency. Christ's blood is a sufficient price for all, but it is effectual only to them that believe. A plaster may have a sovereign virtue in it to heal any wound, but it doth not heal unless applied to the wound. And if it be so, that all have not the benefit of Christ's redemption, only some; then it is a necessary question to ask our souls, *Whether we are in the number of them that are redeemed by Christ or not?*

Q. *How shall we know that?*

A. Such as are redeemed, are reconciled to God; the enmity is taken away; their judgments approve, their wills incline to good.³ Are they redeemed, that are unreconciled to God, who hate God and his people, who do all they can to disparage holiness? Are those redeemed who are unreconciled? Christ hath purchased a reprieve for these: but a sinner may have a reprieve and yet go to hell.⁴

A. 2. Such as are redeemed by Christ are redeemed from the world, 'who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver (or redeem) us from this present evil world.'⁵ Such as are redeemed by Christ, are risen with him.⁶ As the birds, though they light upon the ground to pick up a little seed, yet immediately they take their wings and fly up to heaven again: so the redeemed of the Lord, though they use the world, and take the lawful comforts of it, yet their hearts are presently off these things, and they ascend to heaven; live here, and trade above. Such as Christ hath died for, are 'dead to the world;' to the honours, profits, and preferments of it. What shall we think of them who say, they are redeemed of the Lord, yet are lovers of the world? Like the tribes who desired to have their portion on this side Canaan: 'who mind earthly things.'⁷ They pull down their souls to build up an estate. They are not redeemed by Christ who are not redeemed from the world.

USE 3. *Of comfort to such as are redeemed.* You are happy, the lot of free grace is fallen upon you, you who were once in the devil's prison, you have broke this prison; you that were once bound in the chains of sin, God hath begun to beat off your chains, and hath freed

¹ Jno. 3. 2.

² He. 9. 22.

³ Co. 1. 21. ⁴ Jno. 5. 6. ⁵ Ga. 1. 4. ⁶ Co. 3. 1. ⁷ Phi. 3. 19.

you from the power of sin, and the curse due to it. What a comfort is this? And is there any consolation in Christ? it is thine. Is there any sweet fruit growing upon the promise? thou mayest gather it. Are there any glorious privileges in the gospel? they are thy jointure, justification, adoption, coronation. Is there any glory in heaven? thou shalt shortly drink of that river of pleasure. Hast thou any temporal comforts? these are but a pledge and earnest of more: thy meal in the barrel is but a bait by the way, and an earnest of that angels' food which God hath prepared for thee. How mayest thou be comforted in all worldly afflictions, though the fig-tree flourish not! Nay, in case of death, death hath lost its sting. Death shall carry thee to thy Redeemer; fear not dying since you cannot be perfectly happy but by dying.

USE *ult.* *Of exhortation.* Long for the time when you shall have a full and perfect redemp-

tion in heaven, an eternal jubilee; when you shall be freed not only from the power but from the presence of sin. Here a believer is as a prisoner that hath broken prison, but walks with a fetter on his leg; when the banner of glory shall be displayed over you, you shall be as the angels of God,—you shall never have a sinful thought more, no pain or grief, no aching head or unbelieving heart. You shall see Christ's face, and lie for ever in his arms; you shall be as Joseph, 'they brought him hastily out of the dungeon, and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment and came in unto Pharaoh.'⁴ Long for that time when you shall put off your prison-garments, and change your raiment, and put on the embroidered garment of glory. O long! yet be content to wait for this full and glorious redemption, when you shall be more happy than you can desire, when you shall have 'that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into man's heart to conceive.'

OF FAITH.

GAL. 2. 20. *The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.*

II. THE Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us.

CHRIST is the glory, and faith in him the comfort of the gospel.

Q. *What are the kinds of faith?*

A. Fourfold: 1. An historical or dogmatical faith, which is the believing the truths revealed in the word, because of divine authority.

2. There is a temporary faith, which lasteth but for a time, and vanisheth, 'yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for a while.'¹ A temporary faith is like Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night and withered.²

3. A miraculous faith, which was granted to the apostles, to work miracles for the confirmation of the gospel. This Judas had; he cast out devils, yet was cast out to the devil.

4. A true justifying faith, which is called 'a faith of the operation of God,'³ and is a jewel hung only upon the elect.

Q. *What is justifying faith?*

A. I shall show, 1st. What it is not. It is not a bare acknowledgment that Christ is a Saviour. Indeed there must be an acknow-

ledgment, but that is not sufficient to justify. The devils acknowledged Christ's Godhead, 'Jesus the Son of God.'⁵ There may be an assent to divine truth, yet no work of grace on the heart; many assent in their judgments, that sin is an evil thing, but they go on in sin, their corruptions are stronger than their convictions, and that Christ is excellent: they cheapen the pearl, but do not buy.

2d. What justifying faith is? I answer, true justifying faith consists in three things.

1. Self-renunciation. Faith is a going out of one's self; a man is taken off from his own bottom, he sees he hath no righteousness of his own to save him, 'not having mine own righteousness.'⁶ Self-righteousness is a broken reed the soul dares not lean on. Repentance and faith are both humbling graces; by repentance a man abhors himself; by faith he goes out of himself. It is with a sinner in the first act of believing, as with Israel in their wilderness march, behind them they saw Pharaoh and his chariots pursuing them, before them the Red sea ready to devour them: so the soul behind sees God's justice pursuing him for sin,

¹ Mat. 13. 21.

² Jon. 4. 10.

³ Co. 2. 12.

⁴ Ge. 41. 14.

⁵ Mat. 8. 29.

⁶ Phil. 3. 9.

before hell ready to devour him; and, in this forlorn condition, he sees nothing in himself to help him but he must perish unless he can find help in another.

2. Recumbency. The soul casts itself upon Jesus Christ; faith rests on his person. Faith believes the promise; but that which faith rests upon in the promise, is the person of Christ; therefore the spouse is said to 'lean upon her beloved.' And faith is described to be a 'believing on the name of the Son of God,'² viz. on his person. The promise is but the cabinet, Christ is the jewel in it which faith embraceth. The promise is but the dish, Christ is the food in it which faith feeds on. And as faith rests on Christ's person, so on his person under this notion, as he was crucified. Faith glories in the cross of Christ.³ To consider Christ as he is crowned with all manner of excellencies, doth rather stir up admiration and wonder; but Christ looked upon as bleeding and dying, is the proper object of our faith; therefore it is called 'faith in his blood.'⁴

3. Appropriation, or the applying Christ to ourselves. A medicine, though it be ever so sovereign, yet if not applied to the wound, will do no good, though the plaster be made of Christ's own blood, yet it will not heal, unless it be applied by faith; the blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. This applying of Christ is called a receiving of him.⁵ The hand receiving of gold, enricheth; so the hand of faith receiving Christ's golden merits with salvation, enricheth us.

Q. How is faith wrought?

A. By the blessed Spirit; who is called the 'Spirit of grace,'⁶ because he is the spring and efficient of all grace. Faith is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world, God did but speak a word, but in working faith, he puts forth his arm.⁷ The Spirit's working faith is called, 'the exceeding greatness of God's power.' What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave, when such a tombstone lay upon him, 'the sins of all the world!' Yet he was raised up by the Spirit; the same power the Spirit of God puts forth in working faith. The Spirit irradiates the mind, subdues the will; the will naturally is like a garrison, which holds out against God; the Spirit with a sweet violence conquers, or rather changeth the will, making the sinner willing to have Christ upon

any terms, to be ruled by him as well as saved by him.

Q. Wherein lies the preciousness of faith?

A. 1. In its being the chief gospel-grace, the head of the graces; as gold among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Clem. Alexandrinus calls the other graces the daughters of faith. Indeed, in heaven, love will be the chief grace; but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith; love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth, 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'⁸

A. 2. In its having influence upon all the graces, and setting them a-work, not a grace stirs till faith set it a-work. As the clothier sets the poor a-work, he sets their wheel a-going: faith sets hope a-work. The heir must believe his title to an estate in reversion before he can hope for it; faith believes its title to glory; and then hope waits for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love a-work, 'faith which worketh by love';⁹ believing the mercy and merit of Christ causeth a flame of love to ascend. Faith sets patience a-work, 'be followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.'¹⁰ Faith believes the glorious rewards given to suffering. This makes the soul patient in suffering. Thus faith is the master-wheel, it sets all the other graces a-running.

A. 3. In its being the grace which God honours to justify and save: thus indeed it is 'precious faith,' as the apostle calls it.¹¹ The other graces help to sanctify, but it is faith that justifies, 'being justified by faith.'¹² Repentance or love doth not justify, but faith.

Q. How doth faith justify?

A. Faith doth not justify, as it is a work, that were to make a Christ of our faith; but faith justifies, as it lays hold of the object, viz. Christ's merits. If a man had a precious stone in a ring that could heal, we say the ring heals; but properly it is not the ring, but the precious stone in the ring that heals. Thus faith saves and justifies, but it is not any inherent virtue in faith, but as it lays hold on Christ, so it justifies. Faith doth not justify as it exerciseth grace. It cannot be denied, faith doth invigorate all the graces, it puts strength and liveli-

¹ Ca. 8. 5. ² Jno. 3. 23. ³ Ga. 6. 14. ⁴ Ro. 3. 25.
⁵ Jno. 1. 12. ⁶ Ze. 12. 10. ⁷ Lu. 1. 51.

⁸ 1 Jno. 5. 4. ⁹ Ga. 5. 6. ¹⁰ He. 6. 12. ¹¹ 2 Pe. 1. 1.
¹² Ho. 5. 1

less into them, but it doth not justify under this notion. Faith works by love but it doth not justify as it works by love, but as it applies Christ's merits.

Q. Why should faith save and justify more than any other grace?

A. 1. Because of God's sanction. He hath appointed this grace to be justifying: and he doth it, because faith is a grace that takes a man off himself, and gives all the honour to Christ and free grace; 'strong in faith, giving glory to God.'¹ Therefore God hath put this honour on faith, to make it saving and justifying. The king's stamp makes the coin pass for current; if he would put his stamp upon leather as well as silver, it would make it current; so God having put his sanction, the stamp of his authority and institution upon faith, this makes it to be justifying and saving.

A. 2. Because faith makes us one with Christ.² It is the espousing, incorporating grace, it gives us coalition and union with Christ's person: other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ.

USE 1. Of exhortation. Let us above all things labour for faith. 'Above all taking the shield of faith.'³ Faith will be of more use to us than any grace: as an eye though dim, was of more use to an Israelite than all the other members of his body, (not a strong arm, or a nimble foot,) it was his eye looking on the brazen serpent that cured him. It is not knowledge, though angelical, not repentance, though we could shed rivers of tears, could justify us: only faith, whereby we look on Christ. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God;⁴ and if we do not please him by believing, he will not please us in saving of us. Faith is the condition of the covenant of grace; without faith, without covenant: and without covenant, without hope.⁴

USE 2. Of trial: Let us try whether we have faith. There is something looks like faith, and is not; a Bristol-stone looks like a diamond. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root, and taste. Something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished by the fruits. Let us be serious in the trial of our faith; there is much depends upon our faith; if our faith be not good, there is nothing good comes from us; our duties and graces are adulterate.

Q. Well then, how shall we know it is a true faith?

A. By the noble effects: 1. Faith is a Christ-prizing grace, it puts an high valuation upon him, 'to you that believe, he is precious.'⁶ St Paul did best know Christ: 'have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?'⁷ Paul saw Christ with his bodily eyes in a vision, when he was caught up into the third heaven, and saw him with the eye of his faith in the holy supper, therefore he best knew Christ. And see how he styles all things in comparison of him, 'I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ.'⁸ Do we set an high estimate upon Christ? could we be willing to part with the wedge of gold for the pearl of price? Gregory Nazianzen blessed God, he had any thing to lose for Christ's sake.

2. Faith is a refining grace: 'the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.'⁹ Faith is in the soul as fire among metals: it refines and purifies. Morality may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside: 'having purified their hearts by faith.'¹⁰ Faith makes the heart a sacristy or holy of holies. Faith is a virgin-grace, though it doth not take away the life of sin, yet it takes away the love of sin. Examine if your hearts be an unclean fountain, sending out mud and dirt, pride, envy; if there be legions of lusts in thy soul, there is no faith. Faith is an heavenly plant which will not grow in an impure soil.

3. Faith is an obediential grace, 'the obedience of faith.'¹¹ Faith melts our will into God's; faith runs at God's call; if God commands duty (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys: 'by faith Abraham obeyed.'¹² Faith is not an idle grace; as it hath an eye to see Christ, so it hath an hand to work for him. Faith doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. It is not your having knowledge will evidence you to be believers; the devil hath knowledge, but wants obedience, and that makes him a devil. And the true obedience of faith is a cheerful obedience; God's commands do not seem grievous. Have you the obedience, and obey cheerfully? What say you to this? Do you look upon God's command as your burden, or privilege, as an iron fetter about your leg, or a gold chain about your neck?*

¹ 1 Pe. 2. 7. ² 1 Co. 9. 1. ³ Phi. 3. 8. ⁴ 1 Tim. 3. 9.
⁵ Acts 15. 9. ⁶ Ro. 16. 26. ⁷ He. 11. 8.

* He that submits his understanding to all that he knows God hath said, and is ready to submit to all that he hath said, if he but know it, denying his own affections, and ends, and hu-

¹ Ro. 4. 20. ² Eph. 3. 17. ³ Eph. 6. 19. ⁴ He. 11. 6.
⁵ Eph. 2. 12.

4. Faith is an assimilating grace. It changeth the soul into the image of the object; it makes it like Christ. Never did any look upon Christ with a believing eye, but he was made like him. A deformed person may look on a beautiful object, but not be made beautiful; but faith looking on Christ transforms a man, and turns him into his similitude. Faith looking on a bleeding Christ, causeth a soft bleeding heart; looking on an holy Christ causeth sanctity of heart; looking on an humble Christ makes the soul humble. As the camelion is changed into the colour of that which it looks upon; so faith looking on Christ changeth a christian into the similitude of Christ.

5. By the growth of it; if it be a true faith, it grows; living things grow, 'from faith to faith.'¹

Q. *How may we judge of the growth of faith?*

A. Growth of faith is judged, 1. By strength. We can do that now, which we could not do before. When one is man-grown, he can do that which he could not do when he was a child; he can carry a heavier burthen, so thou canst bear crosses with more patience. 2. Growth of faith is seen by doing duties in a more spiritual manner, namely, with fervency; we put coals to the incense, from a principle of love to God. When an apple hath done growing in bigness, it grows in sweetness; thou doest duties in love, and now art sweeter, and come off with a better relish.

OBJ. *But I fear I have no faith?*

A. We must distinguish between weakness of faith and nullity; a weak faith is true. The bruised reed is but weak, yet it is such as Christ will not break. Though thy faith be but weak, yet be not discouraged: 1. A weak faith may receive a strong Christ; a weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong; a weak eye might have seen the brazen serpent. The woman in the gospel, that but touched Christ, received virtue from him. The touch of faith. 2. The promise is not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, whosoever hath a giant-faith that can remove mountains, that can stop the mouths of lions, shall be saved; but whosoever believes, be his faith ever so small. Though Christ sometimes chides a weak faith; yet, that it may not be discouraged, he makes a promise to it;² 'happy are those that hunger.' 3. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most; the vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. Weak christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which is after the first planting of faith! 4. Weak faith may be growing. The seeds spring up by degrees; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Therefore be not discouraged; God who would have us receive them that are weak in faith,³ will not himself refuse them. A weak believer is a member of Christ; and though Christ will cut off rotten members from his body, yet not weak members.

EFFECTUAL CALLING.

ROM. 8. 34. *Them he also called.*

Q. XXXI. *What is effectual calling?*

A. It is a gracious work of the Spirit, whereby he causeth us to embrace Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*

¹ Ro. 1. 17.

man persuasions, laying them all down at the foot of his great Master, Jesus Christ,—that man hath brought his understanding into subjection, and every proud thought into the obedience of Christ, and this is, 'the obedience of faith.'—*Beauties of Jeremy Taylor*, p. 503.

* The Rev. Thomas Doolittle, a godly minister of the seventeenth century, used to catechise the members, and especially the young people, of his congregation, every Lord's day. One Sabbath evening, after having received an answer in the words of the Assembly's Catechism, to the question, 'What is effectual calling?' and having explained it, he proposed that the question should be answered by changing the words *us* and *our*, into *me* and *my*. Upon this proposal a solemn silence fol-

In this verse is a golden chain of salvation made up of four links; this is one, vocation:

² Mat. 5. 3.

³ Ro. 14. 1.

lowed; many felt its vast importance; but none had courage to answer. At length a young man rose up, and with every mark of a broken and contrite heart, by divine grace, was enabled to say, 'Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing *me* of *my* sin and misery, enlightening *my* mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing *my* will, he *did* persuade and enable *me* to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to *me* in the gospel.' The scene was truly affecting. The proposal of the question had commanded unusual solemnity. The rising up of the young man had created high expectations, and the answer being accompanied with proofs of unfeigned piety and modesty, the congregation was bathed in tears. This young man had been convicted by being catechised, and to his honour, Mr D. says, 'From being an ignorant and wicked youth, he had become an intelligent professor, to God's glory, and my much comfort.'—*Whitecross's Anecdotes illustrative of the Shorter Catechism*.

‘them he also called.’ Calling is a new creation, the first resurrection. There is a twofold call: 1. An extrinsic or outward call; 2. An intrinsic or inward effectual call.

1. An extrinsic or outward call, which is God’s offer of grace to sinners, inviting them to come in and accept of Christ and salvation, ‘many are called, but few chosen.’¹ This outward call shows men what they ought to do in order to salvation, and renders them inexcusable in case of disobedience.

2. There is an intrinsic or effectual call, when God with the offer of grace works grace; by this call the heart is renewed, and the will effectually drawn to embrace Christ. The outward call brings men to a profession of Christ, the inward to a possession of Christ.

Q. What are the means of this effectual call?

A. Every creature hath a voice to call us. The heavens call to us to behold God’s glory;² conscience calls to us; God’s judgments call to us, repent, ‘hear ye the rod.’³ But every voice doth not convert. There are two means of our effectual call: 1. The preaching of the word, which is the sounding God’s silver trumpet in men’s ears; God doth not speak by an oracle, he calls by his ministers. Samuel thought it had been only the voice of Eli that called to him; but it was God’s voice.⁴ So perhaps you think it is only the minister speaks to you in the word, but it is God himself speaks. Therefore Christ is said (now) to speak to us from heaven.⁵ How doth he speak but by his ministers as a king speaks by his ambassadors. Know, that in every sermon preached, God calls to you; and to refuse the message we bring, is to refuse God himself.

2. The other means of our effectual call, is the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the word is the pipe or organ; the Spirit of God blowing in it, doth effectually change men’s hearts, ‘while Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word of God.’⁶ Ministers knock at the door of men’s hearts, the Spirit comes with a key and opens the door, ‘a certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened.’⁷

Q. From what doth God call men?

A. He calls them, 1. From sin; from their ignorance and unbelief.⁸ By nature the understanding is enveloped with darkness. God calls men ‘from darkness to light,’⁹ as if one should be called out of a dungeon to behold

the light of the sun. 2. From danger. As the angels called Lot out of Sodom when it was ready to rain fire, so God calls his people from the fire and brimstone of hell, and from all those curses they were exposed to. 3. He calls them out of the world, as Christ called Matthew from the receipt of custom: ‘they are not of the world.’¹⁰ Such as are divinely called are not natives here, but pilgrims; they do not conform to the world, or follow its sinful fashions; they are not of the world; though they live here, yet they trade in the heavenly country; the world is a place where Satan’s throne is.¹¹ A stage on which sin every day acts its part. Now such as are called, are in, but not of the world.

Q. To what doth God call men?

A. He calls them, 1. To holiness, ‘God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.’¹² Holiness is the livery, or silver star, the godly wear, ‘the people of thy holiness.’¹³ The called of God are anointed with the consecrating oil of the Spirit, ‘ye have an unction from the Holy One.’¹⁴ 2. God calls them to glory, as if a man were called out of a prison to sit upon a throne, ‘who hath called us to his kingdom and glory.’¹⁵ Whom God calls, he crowns; it is a weight of glory.¹⁶ The Hebrew word for glory, *Kabod* signifies a weight; the weight of glory adds to the worth, the weightier gold is, the more it is worth. And this glory is not transient, but permanent, an eternal weight; it is better felt than expressed.

Q. What is the cause of the effectual call?

A. God’s electing love, ‘whom he predestinated, them he also called.’¹⁷ Election is the fountain-cause of our vocation; it is not because some are more worthy to partake of the heavenly calling than others (as the Arminians), we were ‘all in our blood.’¹⁸ And what worthiness is in us? What worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast? What worthiness in the Corinthians, when God began to call them by his gospel? They were fornicators, effeminate, idolaters, ‘such were some of you, but ye are washed,’¹⁹ &c. Before effectual calling, we are not only ‘without strength,’²⁰ but ‘enemies.’²¹ So that the foundation of vocation is election.

Q. What are the epithets or qualifications of this call?

¹ Mat. 20. 16. ² Ps. 19. 1. ³ Mi. 6. 9. ⁴ 1 Sa. 3. 6. ⁵ Ho. 12. 25. ⁶ Acts 10. 44. ⁷ Acts 16. 6. ⁸ 1 Pe. 1. 14. ⁹ Acts 26. 18.

¹⁰ Jno. 17. 16. ¹¹ Re. 2. 13. ¹² 1 Th. 4. 7. ¹³ Is. 63. 18. ¹⁴ 1 Jno. 2. 20. ¹⁵ 1 Th. 2. 12. ¹⁶ 2 Co. 4. 17. ¹⁷ Ro. 8. 30. ¹⁸ Ez. 16. 6. ¹⁹ 1 Co. 6. 11. ²⁰ Ro. 5. 6. ²¹ Col. 1. 21.

A. 1. It is a powerful call; 'the words of God are deeds,' *LUTH.* God puts forth infinite power in calling home a sinner to himself; he doth not only put forth his voice but his arm. The apostle speaks of the exceeding greatness of his power, he exerciseth towards them that believe. God rides forth conquering in the chariot of his gospel; he conquers the pride of the heart, and makes the will, which stood out as a fort-royal, to yield and stoop to his grace; he makes the stony heart bleed; it is a mighty powerful call. Why then do the Arminians seem to talk of a moral persuasion, that God in the conversion of a sinner, doth only morally persuade, and no more? He sets his promises before them to allure them to good, and his threatenings to deter them from evil; and here is all he doeth. But sure moral persuasions alone are insufficient to the effectual call: how can the bare proposal of promises and threatenings convert a soul? This amounts not to a new creation, or that power which raised Christ from the dead; God doth not only persuade, but enable.² If God, in conversion, should only morally persuade, that is, set good and evil before men, then God doth not put forth so much power in saving men, as the devil doth in destroying them. Satan doth not only propound tempting objects to men, but doth concur with his temptations: therefore he is said to 'work in the children of disobedience.'³ The Greek word to work, signifies the force of authority, the power Satan hath in carrying men to sin. And shall not God's power in converting, be greater than Satan's power in seducing? The effectual call is mighty and powerful; God puts forth a divine energy, nay a kind of omnipotency; it is such a powerful call that the will of man hath no power effectually to resist.

A. 2. It is an high calling, 'I press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God.'⁴ It is an high calling, *1st*, Because we are called to high exercises of religion; to be crucified to the world, to live by faith, to do angels' work, to love God, to be living organs of his praise, to hold communion with the Father and the Son.⁵—*2dly*, It is an high calling, because we are called to high privileges; to justification and adoption, to be kings and priests unto God; we are called to the fellowship of angels, to be co-heirs with Christ.⁶ They who are effectually called, are candidates of heaven; they are princes in all lands,⁷ though

princes in disguise.—*3dly*, It is an immutable call, 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;' that is, those gifts that flow from election, (as vocation and justification) these are without repentance. God repented he called Saul to be a king; but he never repents that he calls a sinner to be a saint.

Use 1st. See the necessity of the effectual call, a man cannot go to heaven without it. First, We must be called before glorified.⁸ A man uncalled can lay claim to nothing in the Bible but threatenings; a man in the state of nature is not fit for heaven, no more than a man in his filth and his rags is fit to come into a king's presence; a man in his pure naturals, is a God-hater;⁹ and is he fit for heaven? Will God lay his enemy in his bosom?

USE 2. Of trial. Whether we are effectually called? we may know it by the antecedent and consequent of it.

1. By the antecedent. Before this effectual call, an humbling work passeth upon the soul: a man is convinced of sin, he sees he is a sinner, and nothing but a sinner; the fallow-ground of his heart is broken up.¹⁰ As the husbandman breaks the clods, then casts in the seed; so God, by the convincing work of the law breaks a sinner's heart, and makes it fit to receive the seeds of grace. Such as were never convinced, are never called. 'He shall convince the world of sin.'¹¹ Conviction is the first step in conversion.

2. By the consequents, two, (1.) He who is savingly called, answers to God's call. When God called Samuel, he answered, 'Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth.'¹² When God calls thee to an act of religion, thou dost run at God's call. 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.'¹³ If God calls to duties contrary to flesh and blood, we obey his voice in every thing; true obedience is like the needle which points that way which the loadstone draws. Such as are deaf to God's call, show they are not called by grace.—(2.) He who is effectually called, doth stop his ears to all other calls which would call him off from God. As God hath his call, so there are other contrary calls: Satan calls by temptation, lust calls, evil company calls; but, as the adder stops its ear against the voice of the charmer, so he who is effectually called, stops his ear against all the charms of the flesh and the devil.

USE 3. Of comfort to them who are the called

¹ Eph. 1. 19. ² Ez. 37. 27. ³ Eph. 2. 2. ⁴ Phil. 3. 14.
⁵ 1 Jno. 1. 3. ⁶ Ro. 8. 17. ⁷ Ps. 45. 16.

⁸ Ro. 11. 9. ⁹ Ro. 8. 30. ¹⁰ Ro. 1. 30. ¹¹ Jer. 4. 3.
¹² 1 Jno. 16. 8. ¹³ 1 Sa. 3. 10. ¹⁴ Acts 26. 19.

of God. This call evidenceth election, 'whom he predestinated, them he also called.'¹ Election is the cause of our vocation, and vocation is the sign of our election. Election is the first link of the golden chain of salvation, vocation is the second; he who hath the second link of the chain is sure of the first link; as by the stream we are led to the fountain, so by vocation we ascend to election. Calling is an earnest and pledge of glory, 'God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification.'² We may read God's predestinating love in the work of grace in our heart.

Branch 2. To such as are called, to be thankful to God for this unspeakable blessing; be thankful to all the persons in the Trinity, to the Father's mercy, to the Son's merit, to the Spirit's efficacy. To make you thankful, consider, when you had offended God that he should call you; that, when God needed you not, he had millions of glorified saints and angels to praise him, yet he called you. Again, consider what you were before God called you; you were in your sins; when God called Paul, he found him persecuting; when he called Matthew, he found him at the receipt of custom; when he called Zaccheus, he found him using extortion. When God calls a man by his grace, he finds him seeking after his lusts; as when Saul was called to the kingdom, he was seeking the asses; that God should call thee when thou wast in the hot pursuit of sin, admire God's love, exalt his praise. Again, that God should call you, and pass by others, what mercy is this! 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'³ That God should pass by the wise and noble persons, of sweeter disposition, acuter parts, guilty of less vice, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you. O astonishing love of God! It was a great favour of God to Samuel, that God called to him, and revealed his mind to him, and passed by Eli, though a priest and a judge in Israel,⁴ so, that God should call to thee, a flagitious sinner, and pass by others of higher birth and better morals, here is that which calls aloud for praise. As God so governs the clouds, that he makes them rain upon one place, and not upon another; so two at a sermon, one his heart the Lord opens, the other is no more affected with it, than a deaf man with the sound of music. Here is the banner of free grace displayed, and here should the trophies

of praise be erected. Elijah and Elisha were walking together; on a sudden there came a chariot of fire, and carried Elijah up to heaven, but left Elisha behind; so, when two are walking together, husband and wife, father and child, that God should call one by his grace, but leave the other, carry up one in a triumphant chariot to heaven, but let the other perish eternally; O infinite rich grace! How should they that are called be affected with God's discriminating love? How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? How should they stand upon mount *Gerizim*, blessing and praising God? O begin the work of heaven here! Such as are patterns of mercy should be trumpeters of praise. Thus St Paul being called of God, and seeing what a debtor he was to free grace, breaks forth into admiration and gratulation.⁵

USE 4. *To the called.* Walk worthy of your high calling: 'I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called;'⁶ in two things. 1. Walk compassionately. Pity such as are yet uncalled; hast thou a child that God hath not yet called, a wife, a servant? weep over their dying souls; they are in their blood, 'under the power of Satan.' O pity them! Let their sins more trouble you than your own sufferings; if you pity an ox or ass going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray? Show your piety by your pity. 2. Walk holily. Yours is an holy calling.⁷ You are called to be saints.⁸ Show your vocation by a bible conversation. Shall not flowers smell sweeter than weeds? Shall not they who are ennobled with grace, have more fragrancy in their lives than sinners? 'As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.'⁹ O dishonour not your high calling, by any sordid carriage! When Antigonus was going to defile himself with women; one told him, 'he was a king's son.' O remember your dignity: 'called of God!' of the blood-royal of heaven: do nothing unworthy of your honourable calling! Scipio refused the embraces of an harlot because he was general of an army: abhor all motions to sin, because of your high calling. It is not fit for them who are the called of God, to do as others; though others of the Jews did drink wine, it was not fit for the Nazarene, because he had a vow of separation upon him, and had promised abstinence. Though

¹ Ru. 3. 30. ² Th. 2. 13. ³ Mat. 11. 26. ⁴ 1 Sa. 3. 6.

⁵ 1 Ti. 1. 13. ⁶ Eph. 4. 1. ⁷ 2 Ti. 1. 9. ⁸ Ro. 1. 7.
⁹ 1 Pe. 1. 15.

pagans and nominal christians take liberty to sin, yet it is not fit for them who are called out of the world, and have the mark of election upon them, to do so; ye are consecrated persons,

your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and your bodies must be a sacristy or holy of holies.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. 3. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace.*

Q. XXXIII. *What is justification?*

A. It is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardoneth all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of CHRIST, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

JUSTIFICATION is the very hinge and pillar of CHRISTIANITY: and an error about justification is dangerous, like a crack in the foundation, or an error in the first concoction. Justification by Christ is a spring of the water of life; and to have the poison of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring, is damnable. It was a saying of Luther, 'that after his death, the doctrine of justification would be corrupted;' as it hath been in these latter times: the Arminians and Socinians have cast a dead fly into this box of precious ointment. I shall endeavour to follow the star of scripture to light me through this mysterious point.

Q. *What is meant by justification?*

A. It is a word borrowed from law-courts, wherein a person arraigned is pronounced righteous, and is openly absolved in the court. Thus God, in justifying a person, pronounceth him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

Q. *What is the ground of justification?*

A. The inward impellent motive or ground of justification,—is the free grace of God: so in the text, justified freely by his grace; which Ambrose expounds, 'not of the grace wrought within us, but the free grace of God.' The first wheel that sets all the rest a-running is the love and favour of God: 'being justified by his grace;' as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace. God doth not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy.

Q. *What is the material cause, or that by which a sinner is justified?*

A. The matter of our justification, is Christ's satisfaction made to his Father. If it be asked,

how can it stand with God's justice and holiness to pronounce us innocent when we are guilty? This answers it: Christ having made satisfaction for our fault, now God may, in equity and justice, pronounce us righteous. It is a just thing for a creditor to discharge a debtor of the debt, when a satisfaction is made by the surety.*

Q. *But how was Christ's satisfaction meritorious, and so sufficient to justify?*

A. In respect of the divine nature: as he was man he suffered, as God he satisfied; by Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied, than if we had suffered the pains of hell for ever.

Q. *Wherein lies the formality or essence of our justification?*

A. In the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, 'this is the name whereby he shall be called, *Jehovah Tzidhennu,*' THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. 'He is made to us righteousness.'² This righteousness of Christ which doth justify us, is a better righteousness than the angels'; theirs is the righteousness of creatures, this of God.

Q. *What is the means or instrument of our justification?*

A. Faith, 'being justified by faith.'¹ The dignity is not in faith as a grace, but relatively, as it lays hold on Christ's merits.

Q. *What is the efficient cause of our justification?*

A. The whole Trinity; all the persons in the blessed Trinity have an hand in the justifi-

¹ Je. 23. 6.

² 1 Co. 1. 30.

³ Ro. 5. 1.

* As it is altogether a gratuitous gift on God's part, we must not presume to bring a price in our hands, or to offer any thing of our own as an equivalent. We must humbly apply for and thankfully accept it. The terms we must leave to the Donor: he alone has a right to appoint them; and he has done it in the clearest and most satisfactory manner. He has declared, that as he is 'well pleased' with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, he requireth in every applicant an entire submission to it, or an unreserved dependence upon it. No other trust can be allowed to intrude, no other plea to be offered; but to such a reliance on the Saviour, where all personal merit is renounced, the blessing is promised and infallibly secured: that is, we are 'justified by faith without the deeds of the law,' Rom. 3. 28.—*Robinson's Christian System.*

cation of a sinner. God the Father is said to justify, 'it is God that justifieth.'¹ God the Son is said to justify, 'by him all that believe are justified.'² God the Holy Ghost is said to justify, 'but ye are justified by the Spirit of our God.'³ God the Father justifies, as he pronounceth us righteous; God the Son justifies, as he imputes his righteousness to us; and God the Holy Ghost justifies, as he clears up our justification, and seals us up to the day of redemption.

Q. What is the end of our justification?

A. The end is, 1. That God may inherit praise: 'to the praise of the glory of his grace.'⁴ Hereby God raiseth the everlasting trophies of his own honour; how will the justified sinner proclaim the love of God, and make heaven ring with his praises! 2. That the justified person may inherit glory: 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'⁵ God, in justifying, doth not only absolve a soul from guilt, but advance him to dignity: as Joseph was not only loosed from prison, but made lord of the kingdom. Justification is crowned with glorification.

Q. Whether are we justified from eternity?

A. No: for, 1. By nature we are under a sentence of condemnation.⁶ But we could not be at all condemned, if we were justified from eternity. 2. The scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent: 'repent that your sins may be blotted out.'⁷ Therefore their sins were uncanceled, and their persons unjustified, till they did repent. Though God doth not justify us for our repentance, yet not without it. The Antinomians erroneously hold, that we are justified from eternity; this doctrine is a key which opens the door to all licentiousness; what sins do they care they commit, so long as they hold they are from eternity justified whether they repent or not.

Before I come to the uses, I shall lay down four maxims or positions about justification.

Position 1. That justification confers a real benefit upon the person justified. The acquitting and discharging of the debtor, by virtue of the satisfaction made by the surety, is a real benefit to the debtor; a robe of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness, are real benefits.

Position 2. All believers are alike justified; justification has no degrees,—though there are degrees in grace, yet not in justification; one is not justified more than another, the weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest.

Mary Magdalene is as much justified as the Virgin Mary. This may be cordial-water to a weak believer: though thou hast but a drachm of faith, thou art as truly justified as he who is of the highest stature in Christ.

Position 3. Whosoever God justifies he sanctifies: 'but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.'⁸ The papists calumniate the protestants; they report, we hold that men continuing in sin, are justified; whereas all our protestant writers affirm, that righteousness imputed, viz. justification,—and righteousness inherent, viz. sanctification,—must be inseparably united. Holiness indeed is not the cause of our justification, but it is the concomitant. It is absurd to imagine that God should justify a people, and they go on in sin. If God should justify a people and not sanctify them, he should justify a people whom he could not glorify. God, as he is an holy God, cannot lay a sinner in his bosom. The metal is first refined, before the king's stamp is put upon it; first the soul is refined with holiness, before God puts the royal stamp of justification upon it.

Position 4. Justification is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost. The Arminians hold an apostasy from justification; to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified; to-day a Peter, to-morrow a Judas; to-day a member of Christ, to-morrow a limb of Satan; a most uncomfortable doctrine. Indeed justified persons may fall from degrees of grace,—they may leave their first love,—they may lose God's favour for a time,—but not lose their justification. If they are justified then they are elected; they can no more fall from their justification than from their election. If they are justified, then they have union with Christ: and can a member of Christ be broken off? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, they all may, and so Christ should be an head without a body.

USE 1. See from hence that there is nothing within us could justify us, but something without us; not any righteousness inherent, but imputed; we may as well look for a star in the earth, as for justification in our own righteousness. The papists say we are justified by works. But the apostle confutes it: 'not of works, lest any man should boast.'⁹ But the papists say, 'the works done by an unregenerate man indeed cannot justify him, but works done by a regenerate man may justify.' This is

¹ Ro. 8. 33. ² Acts 13. 39. ³ 1 Co. 6. 11. ⁴ Eph. 1. 6.
⁵ Ro. 8. 30. ⁶ Jno. 3. 18. ⁷ Acts 3. 19.

⁸ 1 Co. 6. 11.

⁹ Eph. 2. 9.

most false, as may be proved both by example and reason. 1. By example. Abraham was a regenerate man, but Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith: he 'believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.'¹ 2. By reason. How can those works justify us which defile us? 'our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.'² Good works are not an usher to go before justification, but an handmaid to follow it.

OBJ. *But doth not the apostle James say Abraham was justified by works?*

A. The answer is easy: works declare us to be righteous before men, but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are evidences of our justification, not causes. This name only must be graven upon the golden plate of our high priest Christ, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

USE 2. *Of exhortation.* Branch 1. Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God to find out such a way to justify us by 'rich grace and precious blood.' We were all involved in guilt; none of us could plead *not guilty*, and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death; now that the Judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid and not distress the debtor, this may fill us with wonder and love. The angels admire the mystery of free grace in this new way of justifying and saving lost man,³ and should not we, who are nearly concerned in it, and on whom the benefit is devolved, cry out with the apostle, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.'

Branch 2. Labour for this high privilege of justification. There is balm in Gilead; Christ hath laid down the price of our justification, namely, his blood; and he offers himself and all his merits to us, to justify us; he invites us to come to him; he hath promised to give his Spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will ye not look after this great privilege of justification? Do not starve in the midst of plenty; do not perish when there is a remedy to save you. Would not he be thought distracted, who having a pardon offered him, only upon the acknowledgment of his fault, and promising amendment, should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; for his part he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? Thou who neglectest justifi-

cation offered thee freely by Christ in the gospel, art this distracted person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? Is thy soul and heaven worth nothing? O then look after justification through Christ's blood! Consider, 1. The necessity of being justified. If we are not justified, we cannot be glorified: 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'⁴ He who is outlawed, and all his goods confiscated, must be brought into favour with his prince, before he can be restored to his former rights and liberties: so, we must first have our sins forgiven, and be brought into God's favour by justification, before we can be restored to the liberty of the sons of God, and have right to that happiness we forfeited in Adam. 2. The utility and benefit: by justification we enjoy peace in our conscience,—a richer jewel than any prince wears in his crown: 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God.'⁵ Peace can sweeten all our afflictions, it turns our water into wine. How happy is a justified person who hath the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him! Peace flowing from justification, is an antidote against the fear of death and hell: 'it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?'⁶ Therefore labour for this justification by Christ. This privilege is obtained by believing in Christ: 'by him all that believe are justified.'⁷ And, 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.'⁸ Faith unites us to Christ; and having union with his person, we partake of his merits, and the glorious salvation which comes by him.

USE 3. *Comfort to the justified.* 1. It is comfort in case of failings. Alas! how defective are the godly. They come short in every duty; but though believers should be humbled under their defects, yet not despond; they are not to be justified by their duties or graces, but the righteousness of Christ. Their duties are mixed with sin, but that righteousness which justifies them is a perfect righteousness. 2. Comfort in case of hard censures; the world censures the people of God as proud and hypocritical, and the troublers of Israel; but

¹ Ru. 8. 30. ² Ro. 5. 1. ³ Ro. 8. 33. ⁴ Acts 13. 39.
⁵ Ro. 3. 25.

* The late Mr Reynolds of Bristol, being importuned by a friend to sit for his portrait, at last consented.—'How would you like to be painted?' 'Sitting among books.' 'Any book in particular?' 'The Bible.' 'Open at any part?' 'At the fifth chapter of the Romans: the fifth verse to be legible: 'Therefore, being justified by FAITH, we have peace with God, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.'

though men censure and condemn the godly, yet God hath justified them; and as he hath now justified them, so at the day of judgment he will openly justify them, and pronounce them righteous before men and angels. And God is so just and holy a Judge, that having

once justified his people, he will never condemn them. Pilate justified Christ, 'I find no fault in him,' yet after this he condemned him; but God having publicly justified his saints, he will never condemn them: 'whom he justified them he also glorified.'

OF ADOPTION.

JOHN 1. 12. *To them he gave power to become the sons of God.*

HAVING spoken of the great points of faith and justification, the next is adoption.

1. The qualification of the persons: 'as many as received him.' Receiving is put for believing, as is clear by the last words, 'to them that believe in his name!' 2. The specification of the privileges: 'to them he gave power to become the sons of God.' The Greek word for power, signifies dignity and prerogative; he dignified them to become the sons of God.

Our sonship differs from Christ's sonship; Christ was the Son of God by eternal generation, a Son before time, but our sonship is, 1. By creation, 'we are his offspring.'¹ This is no privilege; men may have God for their Father by creation, yet have the devil for their father.—2. Our sonship is by adoption; so in the text, 'he gave them power to become the sons of God.'

Adoption is twofold. 1. External and federal: so those who live in a visible church, and make a profession of God, are sons: 'the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.'² 2. Real and gracious: so they are sons, who are God's favourites, and are heirs of glory. Before I proceed to the questions, I shall lay down three positions.

Position 1. Adoption takes in all nations: at first adoption was confined to the people of the Jews, they only were grafted into the true olive, and were dignified with glorious privileges, 'who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory.'³ But now, in the time of the gospel, the charter is enlarged, and the believing Gentiles are within the line of communication, and have a right to the privileges of adoption as well as the Jews: 'in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.'⁴

Position 2. Adoption takes in both sexes, females as well as males, 'I will be a father

unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.'⁵ I have read that in some countries, females are excluded from the supreme dignity,—as by the Salique law in France no woman can inherit a crown: but if we speak of spiritual privileges, females are as capable as males. Every gracious soul, of whatever sex, lays claim to adoption, and hath an interest in God as a Father: 'ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Position 3. Adoption is an act of pure grace, 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, according to the good pleasure of his will.'⁶ Adoption is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace; all by nature are strangers, therefore have no right to sonship, only God is pleased to adopt one and not another, to make one a vessel of glory, another a vessel of wrath. The adopted heir may cry out, 'Lord, how is it, that thou wilt show thyself to me, and not unto the world?'

Q. *What is this filiation or adoption?*

A. Adoption is the taking a stranger into the relation of a son and heir: so Moses was the adopted son of king Pharaoh's daughter;⁷ and Esther was the adopted child of her uncle Mordecai.⁸ Thus God adopts us into the family of heaven; and God, in adopting us, doeth two things: 1. He ennobles us with his name: he who is adopted, bears his name who adopts him, 'I will write on him the name of my God.'⁹ 2. God consecrates us with his Spirit; whom he adopts, he anoints; whom he makes sons, he makes saints. When a man adopts another for his son and heir, he may put his name upon him, but he cannot put his disposition into him; if he be of a morose rugged nature, he cannot alter it, but whom God adopts he sanctifies; he doth not only give them a new name but a new nature.¹⁰ God turns the wolf into a lamb;

¹ Acts 17. 23. ² Mat. 8. 12. ³ Ro. 9. 4. ⁴ Acts 10. 35.

⁵ 2 Cor. 6. 18. ⁶ Eph. 1. 5. ⁷ Ex. 2. 10. ⁸ Est. 2. 7.
⁹ Re. 3. 12. ¹⁰ 2 Pe. 1. 4

he makes the heart humble and gracious; he works such a change as if another soul did dwell in the same body.

Q. From what state doth God take us when he adopts us?

A. From a state of sin and misery. King Pharaoh's daughter took Moses out of the ark of bulrushes in the water, and adopted him for her son. God did not take us out of the water, but out of our blood, and adopted us.¹ God adopted us from slavery; it is a mercy to redeem a slave, but it is more to adopt him.

Q. To what does God adopt us?

A. He adopts us to a state of excellency. It were much for God to take a clod of dust and make it a star; it is more for God to take a piece of clay and sin and adopt it for his heir.

1st. God adopts us to a state of liberty. Adoption is a state of freedom; a slave being adopted, is made a free man, 'Thou art no more a servant, but a son.'²

Q. How is an adopted son free?

A. 1. Not to do what he lists: he is free from the dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law: 2. He is free in the manner of worship; he hath God's free Spirit, which makes him free and cheerful in the service of God; he is 'joyful in the house of prayer.'³

2d. God adopts us to a state of dignity. God makes us heirs of promise; he installs us into honour: 'since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.'⁴ The adopted are God's treasure;⁵ his jewels;⁶ his first-born;⁷ they have angels for their life-guard;⁸ they are of the blood-royal of heaven. The scripture hath set forth their spiritual heraldry; they have their escutcheon or coat-armour; sometimes they give the lion for their courage;⁹ sometimes the dove for their meekness;¹⁰ sometimes the eagle for their sublimeness.¹¹ Thus you see their coat of arms displayed: but what is honour without inheritance? God adopts all his sons to an inheritance, 'It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'¹² It is no disparagement to be the sons of God. To reproach the saints, is as if Shimei had reproached David when he was going to be made king; adoption ends in coronation. The kingdom God gives his adopted sons and heirs, excels all earthly monarchies.

1. In riches.¹⁴ The gates are of pearl, and the streets of pure gold, and as it were transparent glass. 2. In tranquillity. It is peaceable; the white lily of peace is the best flower in a prince's crown; peace alone is better than numberless triumphs. No divisions at home, or invasions abroad; no more the noise of the drum or cannon, but the voice of harpers harping, the hieroglyphic of peace.¹⁵ 3. In stability. Other kingdoms are corruptible; though they have heads of gold, yet feet of clay; but this kingdom, into which the saints are adopted, runs parallel with eternity; it is 'a kingdom that cannot be moved.'¹⁶ The heirs of heaven reign for ever and ever.^{17*}

Q. What is the organical or instrumental cause of adoption?

A. Faith interests us in the privilege of adoption, 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.'¹⁸ Before faith be wrought, we are spiritually illegitimate, we have no relation to God as a father; an unbeliever may call God judge, but not father; faith is the filiating grace, it confers upon us the title of sonship, and gives us right to inherit.

Q. Why is faith the instrument of adoption more than any other grace?

A. 1. Faith is a quickening grace, it is the vital artery of the soul: 'The just shall live by his faith.'¹⁹ Life makes us capable of adoption, dead children are never adopted. 2. Faith makes us Christ's brethren, and so God comes to be our father.

USE 1. Branch 1. See the amazing love of God in making us his sons. Plato gave God thanks that he had made him a man, and not only a man but a philosopher: but it is infinitely more that he should invest us with the prerogative of sons. It is love in God to feed

¹⁴ Re. 21. 21. ¹⁵ Re. 14. 2. ¹⁶ He. 12. 28. ¹⁷ Re. 22. 5. ¹⁸ Ga. 3. 26. ¹⁹ He. 2. 4.

* A popish priest in Ireland, who is making the Scriptures his daily study, and is an advocate for the schools in that country, which most of the priests opposed, lately met one of the scholars going to school, and asked him, what book it was he carried under his arm? "It is a will, Sir," said the boy. "What will?" rejoined the priest. "The last will and testament that Jesus Christ left to me, and to all who desire to claim a title in the property therein bequeathed," replied the boy. "What did Christ leave you in that will?" "A kingdom, Sir." "Where does that kingdom lie?" "It is the kingdom of heaven, Sir." "And do you expect to reign as a king there?" "Yes, Sir; as joint heir with Christ." "And will not every person get there as well as you?" "No, Sir: none can get there but those that claim their title to that kingdom upon the ground of the will." The priest asked several other questions, to which the boy gave such satisfactory answers as quite astonished him. "Indeed," said he, "you are a good little boy: take care of the book wherein God gives you such precious promises; believe what he has said, and you will be happy here and hereafter.

¹ Ez. 16. ² Ga. 4. 7. ³ Is. 56. 7. ⁴ Is. 43. 4. ⁵ Ex. 19. 5. ⁶ Mal. 3. 17. ⁷ He. 12. 23. ⁸ He. 1. 14. ⁹ 1 Jno. 3. 9. ¹⁰ Pr. 28. 1. ¹¹ Ca. 2. 14. ¹² Is. 40. 31. ¹³ 1. u. 12. 32.

us, but more to adopt us, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!'¹ It is a behold of wonder. The wonder of God's love in adopting us, will appear the more if we consider these six things.

1. That God should adopt us when he had a Son of his own. Men adopt because they want children, and desire to have some to bear their name: but that God should adopt us when he had a Son of his own, the Lord Jesus,—here is the wonder of love. Christ is called 'God's dear Son;'² a Son more worthy than the angels, 'being made so much better than the angels.'³ Now, when God had a Son of his own, such a Son, here is the wonder of God's love in adopting us. We needed a Father, but he did not need sons.

2. Consider what we were before God did adopt us; we were very deformed; a man will scarce adopt him for his heir that is crooked and ill-favoured, but that hath some beauty. Mordecai adopted Esther, because she was fair. But we were in our blood, and then God adopted us, 'When I saw thee polluted in thy blood, it was the time of love.'⁴ God did not adopt us when we were bespangled with the jewels of holiness, and had the angels' glory upon us; but when we were black as Ethiopians, diseased as lepers, then it was the time of love.

3. That God should be at so great expense in adopting us: when men adopt, they have only some deed sealed, and the thing is effected; but when God adopts, it puts him to a far greater expense, it sets his wisdom a-work to find out a way to adopt us; it was no easy thing to make the heirs of wrath, heirs of the promise. And when God had found out a way to adopt, it was no easy way; our adoption was purchased at a dear rate; when God was about to make us sons and heirs, he could not seal the deed but by the blood of his own Son. Here is the wonder of God's love in adopting us, that he should be at all this expense to bring this work about.

4. That God should adopt his enemies; if a man adopts another for his heir, he will not adopt his mortal enemy; but that God should adopt us, when we were not only strangers, but enemies,—here is the wonder of love; for God to have pardoned his enemies, had been much, but to adopt them for his heirs, this sets the angels in heaven a wondering.

5. That God should take great numbers out of the devil's family, and adopt them into the family of heaven. Christ is said to bring many sons to glory.⁵ Men adopt usually but one heir, but God is resolved to increase his family, he brings many sons to glory. God's adopting millions, is the wonder of love. Had but one been adopted, all of us might have despaired; but he brings many sons to glory, this opens a door of hope to us.

6. That God should confer so great honour upon us in adopting us. David thought it no small honour that he should be a king's son-in-law.⁶ But what honour to be the sons of the high God! And the more honour God hath put upon us in adopting us, the more he hath magnified his love towards us. What honour that God hath made us so near in alliance to him, sons of God the Father, members of God the Son, temples of God the Holy Ghost! That he hath made us as the angels;⁷ nay, in some sense, superior to the angels; all this proclaims the wonder of God's love in adopting us.

Branch 2. See the sad condition of such as live and die in unbelief. They are not the sons of God: 'to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.' No faith, no sonship; unbelievers have no sign of sonship, they know not God; all God's children know their Father, but the wicked do not know him, 'they proceed from evil to evil, and know not me, saith the Lord.'⁸ Unbelievers are 'dead in trespasses.'⁹ God hath no dead children; and not being children, they have no right to inherit.

USE 2. *Of trial.* Try whether we are adopted. All the world is divided into these two ranks, either the sons of God, or the heirs of hell: 'to them he gave power to become the sons of God.'¹⁰ Let us put ourselves on a trial. It is no sign we are adopted sons, because we are sons of godly parents. The Jews boasted that they were of Abraham's seed,¹¹ they thought they must needs be good, because they came of such an holy line. But adoption doth not come by blood; we see many godly parents have wicked sons; Abraham had an Ishmael,—Isaac an Esau. The corn that is sown pure yet brings forth grain with an husk; he who himself is holy, yet the child that springs from his loins is unholy. So that,

¹ 1 Jno. 3. 1 ² Col. 1. 13. ³ He. 1. 4. ⁴ Ez. 16. 6.

⁵ He. 2. 10. ⁶ 1 Sa. 18. 18. ⁷ Mat. 22. 30. ⁸ Je. 9. 3.

⁹ Eph. 2. 1 ¹⁰ Jno. 1. 12. ¹¹ Jno. 8. 33.

as Hierom, we are not born as sons,—we are not God's sons as we are born of godly parents, but by adoption and grace. Well, then, let us try if we are the adopted sons and daughters of God.

First sign of adoption, *obedience*. A son obeys his father, 'I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites, pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine. But they said, we will drink no wine: for Jonadab, the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, ye shall drink no wine.'¹ So, when God saith, 'drink not in sin's enchanted cup;' an adopted child saith, 'my heavenly Father hath commanded me, I dare not drink.' A gracious soul doth not only believe God's promise, but obey his command. And true child-like obedience must be regular, which implies three things:

1. It must be done by a right rule. Obedience must have the word for its rule, 'to the law and to the testimony.'² If our obedience be not according to the word, it is offering up strange fire; it is will-worship, and God will say, who hath required this at your hand? The apostle condemns worshipping of angels which had a show of humility.³ The Jews might say that they were loath to be so bold as to go to God in their own persons; they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, desiring them to be their mediators to God. Here was a show of humility in their angel-worship; but it was abominable, because they had no word of God to warrant it: it was not obedience, but idolatry. Child-like obedience is that which is consonant to our Father's revealed will.

2. It must be done from a right principle, *i. e.* the noble principle of faith, 'the obedience of faith.'⁴ 'Whatever is right, proceedeth from faith.' AUG. A crab-tree may bear fair fruit to the eye, but it is sour because it doth not come from a good root. A moral person may give God outward obedience, and to the eyes of others it seems glorious, but his obedience is sour, because it comes not from that sweet and pleasant root of faith. A child of God gives him the obedience of faith, and that meliorates and sweetens his services, and makes them come off with a better relish, 'by faith Abel offered unto God, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.'⁵

3. It must be done to a right end; the end

of obedience is glorifying God. That which hath spoiled many glorious services, is, when the end hath been wrong: 'when thou dost thine alms, do not sound a trumpet, as the hypocrites do, that they may have glory of men.'⁶ Good works should shine, but not blaze. 'If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity, it profits me nothing.'⁷ The same I may say of a sincere aim; if I obey never so much, and have not a sincere aim, it profits me nothing. True obedience looks at God in all, 'Christ shall be magnified.'⁸ Though a child of God shoots short, yet he takes a right aim.

True childlike obedience is uniform. A child of God makes conscience of one command as well as another. All God's commands have the same stamp of divine authority upon them; and if I obey one precept because my heavenly Father commands me, then by the same rule I must obey all; as the blood runs through all the veins of the body, and the sun in the firmament runs through all the signs of the zodiac, so true childlike obedience runs through the first and second table, 'when I have respect unto all thy commandments.'⁹ To obey God in some things of religion, and not in others, shows an unsound heart; like Esau, who obeyed his father in bringing him venison, but not in a greater matter, *viz.* the choice of his wife. Childlike obedience moves towards every command of God, as the needle points that way which the loadstone draws. If God call to duties which are cross to flesh and blood, if we are children, we obey our Father.

Q. *But who can obey God in all things?*

A. An adopted heir of heaven, though he cannot obey every precept perfectly, yet he doth evangelically: He approves of every command: 'I consent to the law that it is good.'¹⁰ A child of God delights in every command: 'O how I love thy law!¹¹ His desire is to obey every command: 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!¹² Wherein he comes short, he looks up to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This is evangelical obedience; which, though it be not to satisfaction, it is to acceptance.

True childlike obedience is *constant*.¹³ Blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times. Childlike obedience is not like an high colour in a fit which is soon over; but like a right sanguine complexion, it abides; it is like the fire on the altar, which was kept always burning.¹⁴

¹ Je. 35. 5. ² Is. 8. 20. ³ Col. 2. 18. ⁴ Ro. 16. 26.

⁵ He. 11. 4.

⁶ Mat. 6. 2. ⁷ 1 Co. 13. 3. ⁸ Phi. 1. 20. ⁹ Ps. 119. 6. ¹⁰ Ro. 7. 16.

¹¹ Ps. 119. 97. ¹² Ps. 119. 5. ¹³ Ps. 106. 3. ¹⁴ Le. 6. 13.

Second sign of adoption, to love to be in our Father's presence. The child who loves his father, is never so well as when he is near his father. Are we children? we love the presence of God in his ordinances. In prayer we speak to God, in the preaching of his word, he speaks to us; and how doth every child of God delight to hear his Father's voice! 'My soul thirsteth for thee, to see thy power and glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.'¹ Such as disregard ordinances, are not God's children, because they care not to be in God's presence: 'Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.'² Not that he could go out of God's sight, but the meaning is, 'Cain went out from the church and people of God, where the Lord gave visible tokens of his presence.'

Third sign of adoption, to have the conduct of God's Spirit: 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.'³ It is not enough that the child have life, but it must be led every step by the nurse: so the adopted child must not only be born of God, but have the manuduction of the Spirit to lead him in a course of holiness, 'I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.'⁴ As Israel was led by the pillar of fire, so God's children are led by the conduct of his Spirit; the adopted ones need God's Spirit to lead them, they are apt to go wrong. The fleshly part inclines to sin; the understanding and conscience are to guide the will, but the will is imperious and rebels; therefore God's children need the Spirit to check corruption, and lead them in the right way. As wicked men are led by the evil spirit; the spirit of Satan led Herod to incest, Ahab to murder, Judas to treason: so the good Spirit leads God's children into virtuous actions.

OBJ. But enthusiasts pretend to be led by the Spirit, when it is a delusion.

A. The Spirit's conduct is agreeable to the word; enthusiasts leave the word, 'the word is truth';⁵ and, 'the Spirit guides into all truth.'⁶ The word's teaching, and the Spirit's leading, agree together.

Fourth sign, if we are adopted, we have an entire love to all God's children: 'love the brotherhood.'⁷ We bear affection to God's children, though they have some infirmities, there are the spots of God's children.⁸ But we must love the beautiful face of holiness, though it hath a scar in it. If we are adopted,

we love the good we see in God's children, we admire their graces, we pass by their imprudences; if we cannot love them because they have some failings, how do we think God can love us? Can we plead exemption? By these signs we know our adoption.

Q. What are the benefits which accrue to God's children?

A. They have great immunities. Kings' children have great privileges and freedoms; they do not pay custom.⁹ God's children are privileged persons, they are privileged from the hurt of every thing: 'nothing shall by any means hurt you.'¹⁰ Hit you it may, not hurt you: 'there shall no evil befall thee.'¹¹ God saith not, No affliction shall befall his children, but, No evil; the hurt and poison of it is taken away. Affliction to a wicked man hath evil in it, it makes him worse; it makes him curse and blaspheme, 'men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.'¹² But no evil befalls a child of God, he is bettered by affliction.¹³ The furnace makes gold purer. Again, no evil befalls the adopted, because no condemnation: 'it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?'¹⁴ What a blessed privilege is this to be freed from the sting of affliction, and the curse of the law! To be in such a condition, that nothing can hurt one! When the dragon hath poisoned the water, the unicorn with his horn doth extract and draw out the poison: so Jesus Christ hath drawn out the poison of every affliction, that it cannot prejudice the saints.

Second benefit, if we are adopted, then we have an interest in all the promises: the promises are children's bread, 'believers are heirs of the promises.'¹⁵ The promises are sure: God's truth, which is the brightest pearl in his crown, is laid to pawn in a promise. The promises are suitable like a physic-garden; there is no disease but there is some herb in the physic-garden to cure it. In the dark night of desertion, God hath promised to be a sun; in temptation, to tread down Satan.¹⁶ Doth sin prevail? he hath promised to take away its kingly power.¹⁷ O the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the limbeck of the promises! But who hath a right to these? Believers only are heirs of the promise. There is never a promise in the bible, but a believer may say, this is mine.

¹ Ps. 63. 1, 2. ² Ge. 4. 16. ³ Ro. 8. 14. ⁴ Ho. 11. 3.
⁵ Jno. 16. 13. ⁶ Jno. 16. 13. ⁷ 1 Pe. 2. 17. ⁸ De. 32. 5.

⁹ Mat. 18. 6. ¹⁰ Lu. 10. 19. ¹¹ Ps. 91. 10. ¹² Re. 16. 9.
¹³ He. 12. 10. ¹⁴ Ro. 8. 33. ¹⁵ He. 6. 17. ¹⁶ Ro. 16. 20.
¹⁷ Ro. 6. 14.

USE *last*. Extol and magnify God's mercy, who hath adopted you into his family; who, of slaves, hath made you sons; of heirs of hell, heirs of the promise. Adoption is a free gift. He gave them power, or dignity, to become the sons of God. As a thread of silver runs through the whole piece of work, so free grace runs through this whole privilege of adoption. Adoption is a greater mercy than Adam had in paradise; he was a son by creation, but here is a further sonship by adoption. To make us

thankful, consider, in civil adoption there is some worth and excellency in the person to be adopted; but there was no worth in us, neither beauty, nor parentage, nor virtue; nothing in us to move God to bestow the prerogative of sonship upon us. We have enough in us to move God to correct us, but nothing to move him to adopt us, therefore exalt free grace, begin the work of angels here; bless him with your praises who hath blessed you in making you his sons and daughters!

OF SANCTIFICATION.

1 THESS. 4. 3. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.*

THE notion of the word *sanctification*, signifies to consecrate and set apart to an holy use: thus they are sanctified persons, who are separated from the world, and set apart for God's service. Sanctification hath a privative and a positive part.

1. A privative part, mortification, which lies in the purging out of sin. Sin is compared to leaven which sours; and to leprosy which defiles; sanctification doth purge out 'the old leaven.'¹ Though it takes not away the life, yet it takes away the love of sin.

2. A positive part, vivification, which is the spiritual refining of the soul, which in scripture is called a 'renewing of your mind,'² and a 'partaking of the divine nature.'³ The priests in the law not only were washed in the great laver, but adorned with glorious apparel;⁴ so sanctification not only washes from sin, but adorns with purity.

Q. *What is sanctification?*

A. It is a principle of grace savingly wrought, whereby the heart becomes holy, and is made after God's own heart. A sanctified person bears not only God's name, but image. For the opening the nature of sanctification, I shall lay down these seven positions.

1. Sanctification is a supernatural thing: it is divinely infused. We are naturally polluted; and to cleanse, God takes to be his prerogative; 'I the Lord which sanctifieth you.'⁵ Weeds grow of themselves. Flowers are planted. Sanctification is a flower of the Spirit's planting, therefore it is called, 'the sanctification of the Spirit.'⁶

2. Sanctification is an intrinsical thing: 'it lies chiefly in the heart.' It is called the adorning 'the hidden man of the heart.'⁷ The dew wets the leaf, the sap is hid in the root; the religion of some consists only in externals, but sanctification is deeply rooted in the soul: 'in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.'⁸

3. Sanctification is an extensive thing: it spreads into the whole man, 'the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.'⁹ As original corruption hath depraved all the faculties, 'the whole head is sick, the whole heart faint,' no part sound, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted, so sanctification goes over the whole soul. After the fall, there was ignorance in the mind; now in sanctification, we are 'light in the Lord.'¹⁰ After the fall, the will was depraved; there was not only impotency to good, but obstinacy; now, in sanctification, there is a blessed pliability in the will, it doth symbolize and comport with the will of God. After the fall, the affections were misplaced on wrong objects; in sanctification, they are turned into a sweet order and harmony, the grief placed on sin, the love on God, the joy on heaven. Thus sanctification spreads itself as far as original corruption: it goes over the whole soul: 'the God of peace sanctify you wholly.' He is not a sanctified person who is good only in some part, but who is all over sanctified, therefore in scripture, grace is called a new man,¹¹ not a new eye or a new tongue, but a 'new man.' A good christian, though he be sanctified but in part, yet in every part.*

¹ 1 Co. 5. 7. ² Ro. 12. 2. ³ 2 Pe. 1. 4. ⁴ Ex 28. 2.

⁵ Le. 21. 8.

⁶ 1 Pe. 1. 2.

⁷ 1 Pe. 3. 4. ⁸ Ps. 51. 6. ⁹ 1 Th. 5. 23. ¹⁰ Eph. 5. 8. ¹¹ Co. 3. 10.

* A friend of Archbishop Usher repeatedly urged him to

4. Sanctification is an intense ardent thing: 'fervent in spirit.'¹ Sanctification is not a dead form, but it is inflamed into zeal. We call water hot, when it is so in the third or fourth degree: he is holy, whose religion is heated to some degree, and his heart boils over in love to God.

5. Sanctification is a beautiful thing; it makes God and angels fall in love with us, 'the beauties of holiness.'² As the sun is to the world, so is sanctification to the soul, beautifying and bespangling it in God's eyes. That which makes God glorious, must needs make us so. Holiness is the most sparkling jewel in the Godhead, 'glorious in holiness.'³ Sanctification is the first-fruit of the Spirit; it is heaven begun in the soul; sanctification and glory differ only in degree; sanctification is glory in the seed, and glory is sanctification in the flower. Holiness is the quintessence of happiness.

6. Sanctification is an abiding thing, 'his seed remaineth in him.'⁴ He who is truly sanctified, cannot fall from that state. Indeed seeming holiness may be lost, colours may wash off, sanctification may suffer an eclipse; 'thou hast left thy first love':⁵ but true sanctification is a blossom of eternity, 'the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.'⁶ He who is truly sanctified, can no more fall away, than the angels which are fixed in their heavenly orbs.

7. Sanctification is a progressive thing, it is growing; it is compared to seed which grows,—first the blade springs up,—then the ear,—then the ripe corn in the ear; such as are already sanctified, may be more sanctified.⁷ Justification doth not admit of degrees; a believer cannot be more elected or justified than he is, but he may be

more sanctified than he is; sanctification is still increasing, like the morning sun, which grows brighter to the full meridian. Knowledge is said to increase, and faith to increase.⁸ A christian is continually adding a cubit to his spiritual stature. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who received the Spirit without measure; Christ could not be more holy than he was. But we have the Spirit only in measure, and may be still augmenting our grace; as Apelles, when he had drawn a picture, he would be still mending it with his pencil. The image of God is drawn but imperfectly in us, therefore we must be still mending it, and drawing it in more lively colours; sanctification is progressive; if it doth not grow, it is because it doth not live. Thus you see the nature of sanctification.

Q. *What are the counterfeits of sanctification?*

A. There is something looks like sanctification, which is not.

1. The first counterfeit of sanctification is moral virtue. To be just, temperate, to be of a fair deportment, not having one's scutcheon blotted with ignominious scandal, this is good, but not enough: this is not sanctification. A field-flower differs from a garden-flower. Heathens have attained to morality; Cato, Socrates, Aristides. Civility is but nature refined; there is nothing of Christ there; the heart may be foul and impure, under these fair leaves of civility, the worm of unbelief may be hid. 2. A moral person hath a secret antipathy against grace; he hates vice, and he hates grace as much as vice. The snake hath a fine colour, but a sting. A person adorned and cultivated with moral virtue, hath a secret spleen against sanctity: those stoics, which were the chief of the moralized heathens, were the bitterest enemies St Paul had.¹⁰

2. The second counterfeit of sanctification is superstitious devotion: this abounds in popery; adorations, images, altars, vestments, holy water, which I look upon as a religious frenzy; this is far from sanctification. It doth not put any intrinsical goodness into a man, it doth not make a man better. If the legal purifications and washings, which were of God's own appointing, did not make them that used them more holy, (the priests, who wore holy garments, and had holy oil poured on them, were never the more holy, without the anointing of the Spirit,) then surely those supersti-

¹ Ro. 12. 11. ² Ps. 110. 3. ³ Ex. 15. 11. ⁴ 1 Jno. 3. 9.
⁵ Re. 2. 4. ⁶ 1 Jno. 2. 27. ⁷ 2 Co. 7. 1.

write on sanctification, which at length he engaged to do; but a considerable time elapsing, the performance of his promise was importunately claimed. The bishop replied to this purpose: 'I have not written, and yet I cannot enlarge myself with a breach of promise: for I began to write, but when I came to treat of the new creature which God formeth by his Spirit in every regenerate soul, I found so little of it wrought in myself, that I could speak of it only as parrots, or by rote, without the knowledge of what I might have expressed; and therefore, I durst not presume to proceed any further upon it.' Amazed to hear so holy a man speak in this manner, the bishop added, 'I must tell you, we do not understand what sanctification and the new creature are. It is no less than for a man to be brought to an entire resignation to the will of God, and to live in the offering up of his soul continually in the flames of love, as a whole burnt-offering to Christ; and oh! how many who profess christianity, are unacquainted experimentally with this great work upon their souls!'—*Whitcross's Anecdotes illustrative of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism.*

⁸ Col. 1. 10. ⁹ 2 Co. 10. 15. ¹⁰ Acts 17. 18.

tious innovations in religion which God never appointed, cannot contribute any holiness to men. A superstitious holiness costs no great labour; there is nothing of the heart in it; if to tell over a few beads, or bow to an image, or sprinkle themselves with holy water, if this were sanctification, and were all that were required of them that should be saved, then hell would be empty, none would come there.

3. The third counterfeit of sanctification is hypocrisy; when men make a pretence of that holiness which they have not. A comet may shine like a star; such a lustre shines from their profession, as dazzleth the eyes of the beholders; 'having a form of godliness, but denying the power.'¹ These are lamps without oil; whited sepulchres, like the Egyptian temples, which had fair outsides, but within spiders and apes. The apostle speaks of true holiness,² implying that there is holiness which is spurious and feigned, 'Thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead:'³ like pictures and statues which are destitute of a vital principle, 'Clouds without water.'⁴ They pretend to be full of the Spirit, but are empty clouds. This show of sanctification (when it is nothing else) is self-delusion. He who takes copper instead of gold, wrongs himself; the most counterfeit saint deceives others while he lives, but deceives himself when he dies. To pretend holiness, when there is none, is a vain thing. What were the foolish virgins better for their blazing lamps, when they wanted oil? What is the lamp of profession without the oil of saving grace? What comfort will a show of holiness yield at last? Will painted gold enrich, —painted wine refresh him that is thirsty? Will painted holiness be a cordial at the hour of death? A pretence of sanctification is not to be rested in. Many ships, that have had the name of the Hope, the Safeguard, the Triumph, yet have been cast away upon the rocks; so, many who have had the name of saintship, have been cast into hell.

4. The fourth counterfeit of sanctification is restraining grace. When men forbear vice, though they do not hate it, this may be the sinner's motto, 'Fain I would, but I dare not.' The dog hath a mind to the bone, but is afraid of the cudgel; men have a mind to lust, but conscience stands as the angel, with a flaming sword, and affrights; they have a mind to revenge, but the fear of hell is a curb-bit to check

them. Here is no change of heart; sin is curbed, but not cured; a lion may be in chains, but is a lion still.

5. The fifth counterfeit of sanctification, is common grace, which is a slight, transient work of the Spirit, but doth not amount to conversion. There is some light in the judgment, but it is not humbling, some checks in the conscience but they are not awakening: this looks like sanctification, but is not. Men have convictions wrought in them, but they break loose from them again, like the deer, which, being shot, shakes out the arrow; after conviction, men go into the house of mirth, take the harp to drive away the spirit of sadness, and so all dies and comes to nothing.

Q. *Wherein appears the necessity of sanctification?*

A. In six things, 1. God hath called us to it: 'Who hath called us to glory and virtue;' to virtue, as well as glory. 'God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.'⁵ We have no call to sin; we may have a temptation, but no call; no call to be proud, or unclean; but we have a call to be holy.

2. The necessity appears in this; without sanctification there is no evidencing our justification; justification and sanctification go together: 'But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified:'⁶ 'Pardoneth iniquity,'⁷ there is justification; 'He will subdue our iniquities,'⁸ there is sanctification.' Out of Christ's side came blood and water.⁹ Blood, viz. justification; water, viz. sanctification. Such as have not the water out of Christ's side to cleanse them, shall never have the blood out of his side to save them.

3. Without sanctification we have no title to the new covenant. The covenant of grace is our charter for heaven; the tenure of the covenant, is, That God will be our God, the crowning blessing. But who are interested in the covenant, and may plead the benefit of it? Only sanctified persons; 'A new heart also will I give you, and I will put my Spirit within you,'¹⁰ and I will be your God. If a man make a will, and settle his estate upon such persons as he names in the will, none else but they can lay claim to the will: so God makes a will and testament, but it is restrained and limited to such as are sanctified; and it is high presumption for any else to lay claim to the will.

4. There is no going to heaven without

¹ 2 Tim. 3. 5. ² Eph. 4. 21. ³ Re. 3. 1. ⁴ Ju. 12.

⁵ 2 Pe. 1. 3. ⁶ 1 Th. 4. 7. ⁷ 1 Cor. 6. 11. ⁸ Mic. 7. 18
⁹ Mic. 7. 19. ¹⁰ 1 Jno. 5. 6. ¹¹ Ez. 36. 26.

sanctification: 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'¹ God is an holy God, and he will suffer no unholy creature to come near him; a king will not suffer a man with plaguesores to approach into his presence. Heaven is not like Noah's ark, where the clean beasts and the unclean entered, no unclean beasts come into the heavenly ark; though God suffer the wicked to live a while on the earth, he will never suffer heaven to be pestered with such vermin. Are they fit to see God, who wallow in wickedness? Will God ever lay such vipers in his bosom? 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' It must be a clear eye that sees a bright object; only an holy heart can see God in his glory. Sinners may see God as an enemy, but not as a friend; may have an affrighting vision of God, but not a beatifical vision: they may see the flaming sword, but not the mercy-seat. O then what need is there of sanctification!

5. Without sanctification, all our holy things are defiled: 'unto them that are defiled, is nothing pure.'² Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, had carried a piece of holy flesh in his skirt, the holy flesh had not cleansed him, but he had polluted that.³ An emblem of a sinner's polluting his holy offering. A foul stomach turns the best food into ill humours; an unsanctified heart pollutes prayers, alms, sacraments. This evinceth the necessity of sanctification: sanctification makes our holy things accepted; an holy heart is the altar which sanctifies the offering; his duties, though they are not to satisfaction, yet to acceptance.

6. Without sanctification we can show no sign of our election.⁴ Election is the cause of our salvation, sanctification is our evidence; sanctification is the ear-mark of Christ's elect sheep.

Q. What are the signs of sanctification?

A. 1. Such as are sanctified, can remember a time when they were unsanctified.⁵ We were in our blood, and then God washed us with water, and anointed us with oil.⁶ Those trees of righteousness that blossom and bear almonds, can remember when they were like Aaron's dry rod, not one blossom of holiness growing; a sanctified soul can remember when he was estranged from God through ignorance and vanity, and when free grace planted this flower of holiness in him. 2. The second sign of

sanctification, is the indwelling of the Spirit, 'the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.'⁷ As the unclean spirit dwells in the wicked, and carries them to pride, lust, revenge; the devil hath entered into these swine;⁸ so the Spirit of God dwells in the elect, as their guide and comforter. The Spirit possesseth the saints. God's Spirit sanctifies the fancy, causing it to mint holy thoughts; it sanctifies the will, putting a new bias upon it, whereby it is inclined to good. He who is sanctified, hath the influence of the Spirit, though not the essence. 3. The third sign of sanctification, is an antipathy against sin;⁹ a hypocrite may leave sin, yet love it, as a serpent casts its coat, but keeps its sting; but a sanctified person can say, he not only leaves sin, but loathes it. As there are antipathies in nature, between the vine and laurel, so in a sanctified soul, there is an holy antipathy against sin; and antipathies can never be reconciled. Because he hath an antipathy against sin, he cannot but oppose it, and seek the destruction of it. 4. The fourth sign of sanctification is, the spiritual performance of duties, viz. with the heart, and from a principle of love. The sanctified soul prays out of a love to prayer, he 'calls the sabbath a delight.'¹⁰ A man may have gifts to admiration, he may speak as an angel dropped out of heaven, yet may be carnal in spiritual things; his services do not come from a renewed principle, nor is he carried upon the wings of delight in duty. A sanctified soul worships God in the spirit.¹¹ God doth not judge of our duties by the length, but by the love. 5. The fifth sign, a well-ordered life; 'be ye holy in all manner of conversation.'¹² Where the heart is sanctified, the life will be so too: the temple had gold without as well as within. As in a piece of coin, there is not only the king's image within the ring, but his superscription too without; so where there is sanctification, there is not only God's image in the heart, but a superscription of holiness written in the life. Some say they have good hearts, but their lives are vicious, 'there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, yet is not washed from their filthiness.'¹³ If the water be foul in the bucket, it cannot be clean in the well, 'the King's daughter is all glorious within,'¹⁴ there is holiness of heart; 'her clothing is of wrought gold,'—holiness of life. Grace is most beautiful when its light doth so shine, that others may see it; this adorns religion, and

¹ He. 12. 14. ² Tit. 1. 15. ³ Ha. 1. 12, 13. ⁴ 2 Th. 2. 13. ⁵ Ti. 3. 3. ⁶ Ez. 16. 9.

⁷ 2 Ti. 1. 14. ⁸ Acts 5. 3. ⁹ Ps. 119. 104. ¹⁰ Is. 58. 13. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 2. 5. ¹² 1 Pe. 1. 15. ¹³ Pr. 30. 12. ¹⁴ Ps. 45. 13.

makes proselytes to the faith. 6. The sixth sign, steadfast resolution. He is resolved never to part with his holiness; let others reproach it, he loves it the more; let water be sprinkled on the fire, it burns the more. He saith, as David, when Michal reproached him for dancing before the ark, 'If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.'¹ Let others persecute him for his holiness, he saith as Paul, 'none of those things move me:'² he prefers sanctity before safety; and had rather keep his conscience pure than his skin whole. He saith as Job, 'my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.'³ He will rather part with his life than his conscience.

USE 1. See what is the main thing a christian should look after, viz. sanctification; this is the one thing needful. Sanctification is our purest complexion, it makes us as the heaven, bespangled with stars, it is our nobility, by it we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature; it is our riches, therefore compared to rows of jewels, and chains of gold.⁴ It is our best certificate for heaven: what evidence have we else to show? Have we knowledge? so hath the devil. Do we profess religion? Satan often appears in Samuel's mantle, and transforms himself into an angel of light. But here is our certificate to show for heaven, sanctification. Sanctification is the first-fruits of the Spirit, the only coin that will pass current in the other world. Sanctification is the evidence of God's love; we cannot guess of God's love by giving us health, riches, success, but by drawing his image of sanctification on us by the pencil of the Holy Ghost. It shows the misery of such as are destitute of a principle of sanctification; they are spiritually dead.⁵ Though they breathe, yet they do not live. The greatest part of the world remain unsanctified, 'the world lies in wickedness,'⁶ that is, the major part of the world. Many call themselves christians, yet blot out the word saints; you may as well call him a man who wants reason, as him a christian who wants grace; nay, which is worse, some are buoyed up to such a height of wickedness, that they hate and deride sanctification: 1. They hate it; it is bad to want it, it is worse to hate it: they embrace the form of religion, but hate the power. The vulture hates sweet smells, so do they the perfumes of holiness. 2. Deride it: 'these are your holy ones!' To deride sanctification, argues an

high degree of atheism, and is a black brand of reprobation: scoffing Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's family,⁷ such as scoff at holiness shall be cast out of heaven.

USE 2. *Of exhortation.* Above all things, pursue after sanctification; seek grace more than gold, 'keep her, for she is thy life.'⁸

Q. *What are the chief inducements to sanctification?*

A. 1. It is the will of God that we should be holy: in the text, 'this is the will of God, your sanctification.' As God's word must be the rule, so his will, the reason of our actions: this is the will of God, our sanctification. Perhaps it is not the will of God we should be rich, but it is his will that we should be holy. God's will is our warrant.

2. Jesus Christ hath died for our sanctification. Christ shed his blood to wash off our impurity. The cross was both an altar and a laver; 'who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.'⁹ If we could be saved without holiness, Christ needed not have died. Christ died, not only to save us from wrath, but from sin.

3. Sanctification makes us resemble God. It was Adam's sin that he aspired to be like God in omniscency, but we must endeavour to be like him in sanctity. It is only a clear glass in which we can see a face; it is only an holy heart in which something of God can be seen; there is nothing of God to be seen in an unsanctified man; you may see Satan's picture in him; envy is the devil's eye, hypocrisy his cloven foot, but nothing of God's image can be seen in him. You can see no more of God in him than you can see a man's face in a glass that is dusty and foul.

4. Sanctification is that which God bears a great love to. Not any outward ornaments, high blood, or worldly grandeur, draws God's love, but an heart embellished with holiness. Christ never admired any thing but the beauty of holiness; he slighted the glorious buildings of the temple, but admired the woman's faith: 'O woman, great is thy faith;' love is founded on likeness. A king delights to see his image upon a piece of coin: where God sees his likeness, there he gives his love. The Lord hath two heavens he dwells in, and the holy heart is one of them.

5. Sanctification is the only thing doth difference us from the wicked: God's people have

¹ 2 Sa. 6. 22. ² Acts 20. 24. ³ Job 27. 6. ⁴ Ca. 1. 10.

⁵ Eph. 2. 1.

⁶ 1 Jno. 5. 19.

⁷ Ge. 21. 9.

⁸ Pro. 4. 13.

⁹ Ti. 2. 14.

his seal upon them: 'the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his: and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'¹ The godly are sealed with a double seal: a seal of election, 'the Lord knoweth who are his:' a seal of sanctification, 'let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' This is the name by which God's people are known, 'the people of thy holiness.'² As chastity distinguisheth a virtuous woman from a harlot, so sanctification distinguisheth God's people from others, 'ye have an unction from the Holy One.'³

6. It is as great a shame to have the name of a christian, yet want sanctity, as to have the name of steward, and yet want fidelity; the name of a virgin, yet want chastity. It exposeth religion to reproach, to be baptized into the name of Christ, yet unholy; to have eyes full of tears on a sabbath, and on a week-day eyes full of adultery.⁴ To be so devout at the Lord's table, as if men were stepping into heaven; and so profane the week after, as if they came out of hell. To have the name of christians, yet unholy, is a scandal to religion, and makes the ways of God evil spoken of.

7. Sanctification fits for heaven, 'who hath called us to glory and virtue';⁵ glory is the throne, and sanctification is the step by which we ascend to it. First, you cleanse the vessel, and then you pour in the wine; first God cleanseth us by sanctification, and then pours in the wine of glory. Solomon was first anointed with oil, and then he was a king;⁶ first God anoints us with the holy oil of his Spirit, and then he sets the crown of happiness upon our head. Pureness of heart and seeing God are linked together.⁷

Q. How may sanctification be attained to?

A. 1. Be conversant in the word of God: 'sanctify them through thy truth.'⁸ The word is both a glass to show us the spots of our soul, and a laver to wash them away; the word hath a transforming virtue in it, it irradiates the mind, and consecrates the heart. 2. Get faith in Christ's blood; 'purifying their hearts by faith.'⁹ She in the gospel that touched the hem of Christ's garment was healed: a touch of faith purifies. Nothing can have a greater force upon the heart, to sanctify it, than faith; if I believe Christ and his merits are mine, how

can I sin against him? Justifying faith doeth that in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doeth, it removes mountains; the mountains of pride, lust, envy. Faith and the love of sin are inconsistent. 3. Breathe after the Spirit; it is called the sanctification of the Spirit.¹⁰ The Spirit sanctifies the heart, as lightning purifies the air, as fire refines metals. Every active principle generates something like itself. The Spirit stamps the impression of its own sanctity upon the heart, as the seal prints its effigies and likeness upon the wax. The Spirit of God in a man perfumes him with holiness, and makes his heart a map of heaven. 4. Associate with sanctified persons. They may, by their counsel, prayers, holy example, be a means to make you holy: as the communion of saints is in our creed, so it should be in our company, 'he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise.'¹¹ Association begets assimilation. 5. Pray for sanctification. Job propounds a question, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'¹² God can do it; out of an unholy heart, he can produce grace. O! make David's prayer, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.'¹³ Lay thy heart before the Lord, and say, 'Lord, my unsanctified heart pollutes all it toucheth. I am not fit to live with such an heart, for I cannot honour thee; nor die with such an heart, for I cannot see thee. O create in me a new heart; Lord, consecrate my heart, and make it thy temple, and thy praises shall be sung there for ever!'

USE 3. Of thankfulness. Hath God brought a clean thing out of an unclean,—hath he sanctified you? wear this jewel of sanctification with thankfulness, 'giving thanks to the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance.'¹⁴ Christian, thou couldest defile thyself, but not sanctify thyself; but God hath done it, he hath not only chained up sin, but changed thy nature, and made thee as a king's daughter, all glorious within. He hath put upon thee the breastplate of holiness, which, though it may be shot at, can never be shot through. Are there any here that are sanctified? God hath done more for you than millions: they may be illuminated, but not sanctified. He hath done more for you, than if he had made you the sons of princes, and caused you to ride upon the high places of the earth. Are you sanctified? heaven is begun in you, happiness is nothing but the quintessence of

¹ 2 Ti. 2. 19. ² Is. 63. 18. ³ 1 Jno. 2. 20. ⁴ 2 Pe. 2. 15.
⁵ 2 Pe. 1. 8. ⁶ 1 Ki. 1. 39. ⁷ Mat. 5. 8. ⁸ Jno. 17. 7.
⁹ Acts 15. 9.

¹⁰ 2 Th. 2. 13. ¹¹ Pro. 13. 20. ¹² Job 11. 4. ¹³ Ps. 51. 10.
¹⁴ Col. 1. 12.

holiness. O how thankful should you be to God! Do as that blind man in the gospel, after he had received his sight, 'he followed Christ, glorifying God;'⁵ make heaven ring of God's praises!

OF ASSURANCE.

Q. XXXVI. *What are the benefits which flow from sanctification?*

A. Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

The first benefit flowing from sanctification, is *assurance of God's love*. 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.'¹ Sanctification is the seed, assurance is the flower which grows out of it: assurance is a consequent of sanctification, the saints of old had it: 'we know that we know him,'² 'I know whom I have believed,'³—here was the reflex act of faith; and 'Christ hath loved me,' here was faith flourishing into assurance. Æcolampadius, when he was sick, pointed to his heart, saying, 'here I have light enough,' meaning comfort and assurance.

Q. 1. *Have all sanctified persons assurance?*

A. They have a right to it, and I do incline to believe that all have it in some degree before their last expiring; though their comfort may not be so strong, and their vital spirits so weak, that they cannot express what they feel. But I dare not positively affirm that all have assurance in the first moment of their sanctification; a letter may be written, when it is not sealed, so grace may be written in the heart, yet the Spirit may not set the seal of assurance to it. God is a free agent, and may give or suspend assurance as he pleases. Where there is the sanctifying work of the Spirit, he may withhold the sealing work, partly to keep the soul humble, partly to punish our careless walking; we neglect our spiritual watch, grow remiss in duty, and then walk under a cloud; we quench the graces of the Spirit, and God withholds the comforts: and partly to put a difference between earth and heaven. This I rather speak, to bear up the hearts of God's people who are dejected because they have no assurance; you may have the water of the Spirit poured on you in sanctification, though not the oil of gladness in assurance; there may

be faith of adherence, and not of evidence; there may be life in the root, when there is no fruit in the branches to be seen; so faith in the heart, when no fruit of assurance.

Q. 2. *What is assurance?*

A. It is not vocal, any audible voice, or brought to us by the help of an angel or revelation. Assurance consists of a practical syllogism, where the word of God makes the major, conscience the minor, the Spirit of God the conclusion. The word saith, 'he that fears and loves God is loved of God;' there is the major proposition; then conscience makes the minor, 'but I fear and love God;' then the Spirit makes the conclusion, 'therefore thou art loved of God,' and this is that which the apostle calls, 'the witnessing of the Spirit with our spirits, that we are his children.'⁶

Q. 3. *Whether hath a sanctified soul such an assurance as excludes all doubtings?*

A. He hath that which bears up his heart from sinking, he hath such an earnest of the Spirit, that he would not part with it for the richest prize, but his assurance, though it be infallible, it is not perfect. There will be sometimes a trepidation or trembling; he is safe, yet not without fears and doubts; as a ship lies safe at anchor, yet may be a little shaken by the wind. If a christian had no doubtings, there would be no unbelief in him; had he no doubtings, there would be no difference between grace militant and grace triumphant. Had not David his ebbs sometimes as well as flowings? Like the mariner, who sometimes cries out, 'I see a star;' sometimes the star is out of sight. Sometimes we hear David say, 'thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes;'⁷ but at another time he was at a loss, 'Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?'⁸ And there may fall out an eclipse in a christian's assurance, to put him upon longing after heaven, then there shall not be the least doubting, then the banner of God's love shall be always displayed upon the soul, then

¹ 2 Pe. 1. 10. ² 1 Jno. 2. 3. ³ 2 Ti. 1. 12. ⁴ Ga. 2. 20.

⁵ Lu. 18. 43. ⁶ Ro. 8. 16. ⁷ Ps. 26. 3. ⁸ Ps. 89. 49.

the light of God's face shall be without clouds, and have no sun-setting, then the saints shall have an uninterrupted assurance, and be ever with the Lord.

Q. 4. *What are the differences between true assurance and presumption?*

A. 1. They differ in the method or manner of working: divine assurance flows from humiliation for sin, I speak not of the measure of humiliation, but the truth. There are in Palermo, reeds growing, in which there is a sugared juice: a soul humbled for sin is the bruised reed, in which grows this sweet assurance. God's Spirit is a spirit of bondage, before it be a spirit of adoption; but presumption ariseth without any humbling word of the Spirit: 'How camest thou by the venison so soon?' The plough goes before the seed be sown; the heart must be ploughed up by humiliation and repentance, before God sow the seed of assurance.

A. 2. He who hath a real assurance, will take heed of that which will weaken and darken his assurance; he is fearful of the forbidden fruit; he knows, though he cannot sin away his soul, yet he may sin away his assurance: but he who hath the *ignis fatuus* of presumption, doth not fear defiling his garments, he is bold in sin, 'wilt thou not cry unto me, my Father? Behold, thou hast done evil things as thou couldst!' Balaam said, My God, yet was a sorcerer. It is a sign he hath no money about him, who fears not to travel all hours in the night; it is a sign he hath not the jewel of assurance, who fears not the works of darkness.

A. 3. True assurance is built upon a scripture basis; the word saith, 'the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever.'¹ A christian's assurance is built upon this scripture; God hath sown the seed of righteousness in his soul, and this seed hath brought forth the harvest of assurance; but presumption is a spurious thing, it hath not scripture to show for its warrant, it is like a will without seal and witnesses, which is null and void in law, presumption wants both the witness of the word, and the seal of the Spirit.*

¹ Je. 3. 4, 5.

² Is. 32. 17.

* Another difference between the *my* of faith and the *my* of presumption is this, that the assurance of faith will maintain its claim and humble confidence, even under God's challenges, and a deep and abasing sense of much prevailing iniquity, whereas presumptuous confidence succumbs and fails upon the prevalency of sin. The reason of this is, because the ground of presumptuous confidence is within the man, some good disposition and qualification which he finds within him, as he apprehends, which being dashed by the eruption of his reigning

A. 4. Assurance flowing from sanctification always keeps the heart in a lowly posture: 'Lord,' saith the soul, 'what am I, that, passing by so many, the golden beams of thy love should shine upon me?' St Pau. had assurance: is he proud of this jewel? No; 'to me who am less than the least of all saints.' The more love a christian receives from God, the more he sees himself a debtor to free grace, and the sense of his debt keeps his heart humble; but presumption is bred of pride. He who presumes, disdains; he thinks himself better than others: 'God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are, nor as this publican.'² Feathers fly up, but gold descends; he who hath this golden assurance, his heart descends in humility.

Q. 5. *What is it may excite us to look after assurance?*

A. To consider how sweet it is, and the noble and excellent effects it produceth:

1. How sweet it is. This is the manna in the golden pot,—the white stone,—the wine of paradise which cheers the heart. How comfortable is God's smile! The sun is more refreshing when it shines out, than when it is hid in a cloud,—it is a prælibration and a foretaste of glory,—it puts a man in heaven before his time; none can know how delicious and ravishing it is, but such as have felt it, as none can know how sweet honey is, but they who have tasted it.†

2. The noble and excellent effects it produceth: *Effect 1.* Assurance will make us love God, and praise him: 1. Love him. Love is the soul of religion, the fat of the sacrifice, and who can love God so, as he who hath assurance? The sun reflecting its beams on a burning-glass, makes the glass burn that which is near to it; so assurance, which is the reflection of God's love upon the soul, makes it burn in love to God. St Paul was assured of

² Eph. 3. 8.

² Lu. 18. 11.

lusts, he has no more to look to, the foundation of his confidence is gone. But now faith builds and bottoms its confidence, not within, but on something without, viz. the everlasting righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and the mercy of God running in this channel, exhibited in the word of grace. Here it is that faith sets down its feet, and upon this foundation it stands, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.—E. Erskine on *Saving Faith*.

† Mr Golding, who died in the 24th year of his age, a little before his death, when his brother said to him, 'You seem to enjoy foretastes of heaven,' replied, 'Oh, this is no longer a foretaste, this is heaven! I not only feel the climate, but I breathe the fine, ambrosial air of heaven, and soon shall enjoy the company!' The last words which he was heard to utter, were, 'Glory, glory, glory!'—*Whitecross's Anecdotes illustrative of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism*.

Christ's love to him, 'who loved me:'¹ and how was his heart fired with love? he valued and admired nothing but Christ.² As Christ was fastened to the cross, so he was fastened to Paul's heart. 2. Praise him. Praise is the quit-rent we pay to the crown of heaven. Who but he who hath assurance of his justification, can bless God, and give him the glory of what he hath done for him! Can a man in a swoon or apoplexy, praise God that he is alive? Can a christian, staggering with fears about his spiritual condition, praise God that he is elected and justified? No: 'the living, the living, he shall praise thee.'³ Such as are enlivened with assurance, they are the fittest persons to sound forth God's praise.

Effect 2. Assurance would drop sweetness into all our creature-enjoyments; it would be as sugar to wine, an earnest of more; it gives a blessing with the venison; as guilt embitters our comforts, it is like drinking out of a worm-wood cup, so assurance would indulcerate and sweeten all health, and the assurances of God's love are sweet riches, and with the assurance of a kingdom are delectable, nay, a dinner of green herbs, with the assurance of God's love, is princely fare.

Effect 3. Assurance would make us active and lively in God's service; it would excite prayer, quicken obedience. As diligence begets assurance, so assurance begets diligence. Assurance will not, as the papists say, breed security in the soul, but industry; doubting does discourage us in God's service, but the assurance of his favour breeds joy: 'for the joy of the Lord is your strength.'⁴ Assurance makes us mount up to heaven, as eagles, in holy duties; it is like the Spirit in Ezekiel's wheels, that moved them, and lifted them up. Faith would make us walk, but assurance would make us run: we should never think we could do enough for God. Assurance would be as wings to the bird, as weights to the clock, to set all the wheels of obedience a-running.

Effect 4. Assurance would be a golden shield to beat back temptation: assurance triumphs over temptation. There are two sorts of temptations Satan useth: He tempts to draw us to sin; now the being assured of our justification would make this temptation vanish. 'What, Satan? shall I sin against him who hath loved me, and washed me in his blood! Shall I return to folly after God hath spoken peace?

Shall I weaken my assurance, wound my conscience, grieve my Comforter? Avoid, Satan, tempt no more!' Satan would make us question our interest in God; he tells us we are hypocrites, and God doth not love us. Now there is no such shield against this temptation as assurance. What, Satan? Have I a real work of grace in my heart, and the seal of the Spirit to witness it, and dost thou tell me, God doth not love me? Now I know thou art an impostor, who goest about to disprove what I sensibly feel. If faith resists the devil, assurance would put him to flight.

Effect 5. Assurance would make us contented though we have but a little in the world; he who hath enough is content; he who hath sun-light is content though he want torch-light. A man that hath assurance, hath enough, he hath the riches of Christ's merit, a pledge of his love, an earnest of his glory; he is filled with the fulness of God, here is enough, and having enough he is content: 'the Lord is the portion of my inheritance;' 'the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.' Assurance will rock the heart quiet; the reason of discontent, is either because men have no interest in God, or do not know their interest. St Paul saith, 'I know whom I have believed.'⁵ There was the assurance of his interest; and, 'as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.'⁶ There was his contentment. Get but assurance, and you will be out of the weekly bill of murmurers, you will be discontented no more. Nothing can come amiss to him that hath assurance; God is his. Hath he lost a friend? his Father lives. Hath he lost his only child? God hath given him his only Son. Hath he scarcity of bread? God hath given him the finest of the wheat, the bread of life. Are his comforts gone? he hath the Comforter. Doth he meet with storms on the sea? he knows where to put in for harbour, God is his portion, and heaven is his haven. This assurance gives sweet contentment in every condition.

Effect 6. Assurance would bear up the heart in sufferings, it would make a christian endure troubles with patience and cheerfulness. With patience: 'ye have need of patience.'⁷ There are some meats which are hard of digestion, and only a good stomach will concoct them, affliction is a meat hard of digestion, but patience, like a good stomach, will be able to

¹ Ga. 2. 20. ² Phi. 3. 6. ³ Is. 38. 19. ⁴ Ne. 8. 10.

⁵ Ps. 16. 5. ⁶ Ti. 1. 12. ⁷ 2 Co. 6. 10. ⁸ He. 10. 36.

digest it; and whence comes patience but from assurance? 'tribulation worketh patience, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,' with cheerfulness. Assurance is like the mariner's lantern on the deck, which gives light in a dark night. Assurance gives the light of comfort in affliction, ye 'took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves,' there was assurance. He that hath assurance, can rejoice in tribulation; he can gather grapes of thorns, and honey out of the lion's carcass. Latimer said, 'when I sit alone, and can have a settled assurance of the state of my soul, and know that God is mine, I can laugh at all troubles, and nothing can daunt me.'

Effect 7. Assurance would pacify a troubled conscience: he who hath a disturbed vexatious conscience, carries an hell about him; alas, what a serpent is within us! but assurance cures the agony, and allays the fury of conscience; conscience, that before was turned into a serpent, now is like a bee that hath honey in its mouth, it speaks peace. When God is pacified toward us, then conscience is pacified. If the heavens are quiet, and there are no winds stirring thence, the sea is quiet and calm; so if there be no anger in God's heart, if the tempest of his wrath do not blow, conscience is quiet and serene.

Effect 8. Assurance would strengthen us against the fears of death. Such as want it, cannot die with comfort; they are in equilibrium, they hang in a doubtful suspense what should become of them after death, but he who hath assurance, hath an happy and joyful passage out of the world, he knows he is passed from death to life, he is carried full sail to heaven! Though he cannot resist death, yet he overcomes it.

Q. 6. What shall they do that want assurance?

A. 1. Such as want assurance, let them labour to find grace. When the sun denies light to the earth, it may give forth its influence; when God denies the light of his countenance, he may give the influence of his grace. How shall we know we have a real work of grace, and so have a right to assurance? If we can resolve two queries, 1. Have we high appreciations of Jesus Christ? 'To you that believe he is precious.'¹ Christ is all made up of beauties and delights; our praises fall short of his worth, and is like spreading canvass upon cloth of gold. How precious is his blood and in-

cense! The one pacifies our conscience, the other perfumes our prayers. Can we say we have endearing thoughts of Christ? Do we esteem him our pearl of price, our bright morning-star? Do we count all our earthly enjoyments but as dung in comparison of Christ? Do we prefer the worst things of Christ, before the best things of the world; the reproaches of Christ before the world's embraces?² Query 2. Have we the indwelling of the Spirit? 'the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.'³ How may we know that we have the indwelling presence of the Spirit? Not by having sometimes good motions stirred up in us by the Spirit, he may work in us, yet not dwell, but by the sanctifying power of the Spirit in our heart; the Spirit infuseth a divine nature, it stamps its own impress and effigies on the soul, making the complexion of it holy. The Spirit ennobles and raiseth the heart above the world. When Nebuchadnezzar had his understanding given him, he grazed no longer among the beasts, but returned to his throne, and minded the affairs of his kingdom: when the Spirit of God dwells in a man, it carries his heart above the visible orbs, it makes him pant for heaven, thirst after Christ and glory. If we can find this, then we have grace, and so have a right to assurance.

A. 2. If you want assurance, wait for it. If the figures are graven on the dial, it is but waiting a while, and the sun shines; when grace is engraven in the heart, it is but waiting a while and we shall have the sunshine of assurance: 'he that believeth shall not make haste,' he will stay God's leisure. Say not, God hath forsaken you, he will never lift up the light of his countenance; but rather say as the church, 'I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob.'⁴ Hath God waited for your conversion and will not you wait for his consolation! How long did he come a wooing to you by his Spirit? He waited till his head was filled with dew: he cried, 'wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?'⁵ O! christian, did God wait for thy love, and canst thou not wait for his? Assurance is so sweet and precious, that it is worth waiting for; the price of it is above rubies, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir. Assurance of God's love is a pledge of election, it is the angel's banquet: what other joy have they! as Micah said, 'what have I more';⁶ so, when God assures the soul

¹ Ro. 5. 3. 5. ² He. 10. 34. ³ 1 Pe. 2. 7.

⁴ Phi. 3. 8. ⁵ He. 11. 26. ⁶ 2 Ti. 1. 14. ⁷ Is. 28. 16
⁸ Is. 8. 17. ⁹ Je. 13. 27. ¹⁰ Ju. 18. 24.

of his eternal purposes of love, what hath he more to give? Whom God kisseth he crowns. Assurance is the first fruits of paradise: one smile of God's face, one glance of his eye, one crumb of the hidden manna is so sweet and delicious, that it deserves our waiting. God hath given a promise that we should not wait in vain: 'they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.'¹ Perhaps God reserves this cordial of assurance for a fainting time; he keeps sometimes his best wine till last. Assurance shall be reserved as an ingredient to sweeten the bitter cup of death.

Q. 7. How may deserted souls be comforted who are cast down for want of assurance? They have the day-star of grace risen in their souls; but as Job complains, 'I went mourning without the sun.'² They go mourning for want of the sunlight of God's face; their joy is eclipsed, they walk in darkness, and see no light.³ How shall we comfort such as lie bleeding in desertion, and are cast down for want of assurance?

A. 1. Want of assurance shall not hinder the success of the saint's prayers. Sin lived in, doth put a bar to our prayer; but want of assurance doth not hinder prayer; we may go to God still in a humble, fiducial manner. A christian perhaps may think, because he doth not see God's smiling face, therefore God will not hear him; this is a mistake: 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes, nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplication.'⁴ If we pour out sighs to heaven, God hears every groan; though he doth not show us his face, he may lend us his ear.

A. 2. Faith may be strongest when assurance is weakest; the woman of Canaan had no assurance, but a glorious faith: 'O woman, great is thy faith!'⁵ 'Rachel was more fair, but Leah was more fruitful.' Assurance is more fair and lovely to look upon, but a fruitful faith God seeth it better for us: blessed are they that believe and feel not.⁶

A. 3. When God is out of sight, yet he is not out of covenant: 'my covenant shall stand fast.'⁷ Though a wife doth not see her husband's face in many years, yet the marriage-relation holds, and he will come again to her after a long voyage. God may be gone from the soul in desertion, but the covenant stands fast: 'the covenant of my peace shall not be removed.'⁸ Query, But this promise was made to the Jews, and doth not belong to us; Yes: 'this is the heritage of the servants of the

Lord.' This is made to all the servants of God, those who are now living, as well as those who lived in the time of the Jews.

Q. 8. What should we do to get assurance?

A. 1. Keep a pure conscience; let no guilt lie upon the conscience unrepented of: God will seal no pardons before repentance. God will not pour in the wine of assurance into a foul vessel: 'let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience!'⁹ Guilt clips the wings of comfort; he who is conscious to himself of secret sins, cannot draw near to God in full assurance,—he cannot call God father, but judge; keep conscience as clear as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it.

A. 2. If you would have assurance, be much in the actings of grace: 'exercise thyself rather unto godliness.'¹⁰ Men grow rich by trading; by trading in grace, we grow rich in assurance: 'make your election sure.'¹¹ How? 'add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge.' Keep grace upon the wing, it is the lively faith flourisheth into assurance. No man will set up a great sail into a small boat, but in a large vessel: God sets up the sail of assurance in an heart enlarged with grace.

A. 3. If you would have assurance, cherish the Holy Spirit of God. When David would have assurance, he prays, 'take not thy Holy Spirit from me.'¹² He knew that it was the Spirit only that could make him hear the voice of joy: the Spirit is the Comforter, he seals up assurance.¹³ Therefore make much of the Spirit, do not grieve it: as Noah opened the ark to receive the dove, so should we open our hearts to receive the Spirit, this is the blessed dove which brings an olive branch of assurance in its mouth.

A. 4. Let us lie at the pool of the ordinances, frequent the word and sacrament: 'he brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.'¹⁴ The blessed ordinances are the banqueting-house where God displays the banner of assurance. The sacrament is a sealing ordinance; Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: so, in the holy supper, in the breaking of bread God makes himself known to us, to be our God and portion.

Q. 9. How should they carry themselves who have assurance?

A. 1. If you have assurance of your justifica-

¹ Is. 49. 23. ² Job 30. 23. ³ Is. 50. 18. ⁴ Ps. 31. 22. ⁵ Mat. 15. 28. ⁶ Jud. 20. 23. ⁷ Ps. 89. 24. ⁸ Is. 51. 10.

⁹ Is. 51. 17. ¹⁰ He. 10. 22. ¹¹ 1 Ti. 4. 7. ¹² 2 Pe. 1. 10. ¹³ Ps. 51. 11. ¹⁴ 2 Co. 1. 22. ¹⁵ Ca. 2. 2.

tion, do not abuse assurance: it is an abusing of assurance, when we grow more remiss in duty; as the musician, having money thrown him, leaves off playing. By remissness, or intermitting the exercises of religion, we grieve the Spirit, and that is the way to have an embargo laid upon our spiritual comforts. We abuse assurance, when we grow presumptuous and less fearful of sin. What! because a father gives his son an assurance of his love, and tells him he will entail his land upon him, shall the son therefore be wanton and dissolute? This were the way to lose his father's affection, and make him cut off the entail; it was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, 'his heart was turned away from the Lord, after he had appeared to him twice.'¹ It is bad to sin when one wants assurance, but it is worse to sin when one hath it. Hath the Lord sealed his love with a kiss? Hath he left a pledge of heaven in your hand, and do you thus requite the Lord? Will you sin with manna in your mouth? Doth God give you the sweet clusters of assurance to feed on, and will you return him wild grapes? It much pleaseth Satan, either to see us want assurance, or abuse it: this is to abuse assurance, when the pulse of our soul beats faster in sin, and slower in duty.

A. 2. If you have assurance, admire this stupendous mercy. You deserved that God should give you gall and vinegar to drink, and hath he made the honeycomb of his love to drop upon you? O fall down and adore his goodness! Say, Lord, how is it that thou shouldst manifest thyself to me, and not to other believers! those whom thou lovest as the apple of thine eye, yet thou holdest them in suspense, and givest them no assurance of thy love; though thou hast given them a new name, yet not the white stone; though they have the seed of grace, yet not the oil of gladness: though they have the Holy Ghost, the sanctifier, yet not the Holy Ghost, the comforter! Lord, whence is it that thou shouldst manifest thyself to me, and make thy golden beams of assurance shine upon my soul? O admire God! this will be the work of heaven.

A. 3. Let your hearts be endeared in love to God. If God gives his people correction, they must love him; much more when he gives them assurance: 'O love the Lord, ye his saints.'² Hath God brought you to the borders of Canaan, given you a bunch of grapes,

crowned you with loving-kindness, confirmed your pardon under the broad seal of heaven? How can you be frozen at such a fire? How can you choose but be turned into seraphim burning in divine love? Say as St Austin, 'I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving God. Give God the cream and quintessence of your love, and show your love by being willing to lose all for his sake.'

A. 4. If you have assurance, improve it for God's glory, several ways: 1. By encouraging such as are yet unconverted; tell them how sweet this hidden manna is; tell them what a good master you serve, what gales you have had; tell them God hath carried you to the hill of myrrh, to the mountains of spices, he hath given you not only a prospect of heaven, but an earnest. O persuade sinners, by all the love and mercy of God, that they would enrol their names in his family, and cast themselves upon him for salvation! Tell them God hath met with you, and unlocked the secrets of free grace, and assured you of a land flowing with those infinite delights which eye hath not seen. Thus, by telling others what God hath done for your soul, you may make them in love with the ways of God, and cause them to turn proselytes to religion. 2 Improve assurance, by comforting such as want it: Be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds. You who have assurance, are gotten, as it were to the haven, you are sure of your happiness; but do you not see others who are struggling with the waves of temptation and desertion, and are ready to sink? O now sympathize with them, and do what you can to comfort them when they are in this deep ocean! 'whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation.'³ The comfortable experience of one christian, being communicated to another, doth much revive and bear up his fainting heart: 'our comfort,' saith the apostle, 'is for your consolation.' 3. Improve assurance by walking more heavenly. You should scorn these things below; you who have an earnest of heaven, should not be too earnest for the earth: you have angels' food, and it becomes not you with the serpent to lick the dust. The wicked are all for corn, wine, and oil, but you have that which is better: God hath lifted up the light of his countenance; will you hanker after the world, when you have been feeding upon the grapes and pomegranates of the holy land? Do you now lust after

¹ Ki. 11. 9.² Ps. 31. 23.³ 2 Co. 1. 6.

the garlic and onions of Egypt? When you are clothed with the sun, will you set the moon and stars above you? O! let them scramble for the world, who have nothing else but husks to feed on. Have you assurance of heaven, and is not that enough? Will not a kingdom satisfy you? Such as are high in assurance, should be in the altitudes, live above the world.

4. Improve assurance by a cheerful walking. It is for condemned persons to go hanging down their heads: but hast thou thy absolution? Doth thy God smile on thee? Cheer up: 'why art thou, being the king's son, lean?'¹ Art thou the King's son; hath God assured thee of thy adoption, and art thou sad? Assurance should be an antidote against all trouble. What though the world hate thee, yet thou art assured that thou art one of God's favourites. What though there is but little oil in the cruse, and thou art low in the world, yet thou art high in assurance. O then rejoice! How musical is the bird, how doth it chirp and sing, that knows not where to pick up the next crumb! and shall they be sad and discontented, who have God's bond to assure them of their daily bread, and his love to assure them of heaven? But certainly those who have assurance, cannot but be of a sanguine complexion.

A. 5. If you have an assurance of salvation, let this make you long after a glorified state. He who hath an earnest in his hand, desires the whole sum to be paid; that soul who hath tasted how sweet the Lord is, should long for a fuller enjoyment of him in heaven. Hath Christ put this ring of assurance on thy hand, and so espoused thee to himself; how shouldst thou long for the marriage-supper of the Lamb?⁴ O christian, think with thyself, if a glimpse of heaven, a smile of God's face be so sweet, what will it be, to be ever sunning thyself in the light of God's countenance! Certainly you who have an assurance of your title to heaven, cannot but desire possession. Be content to live, but willing to die.

A. 6. If you have assurance, be careful you do not lose it; keep it, for it is your life, viz. the comfort of your life. Keep assurance, by prayer; 'O continue thy loving-kindness:'⁵ Lord, continue assurance; do not take away this privy seal from me. Keep assurance by humility; pride estrangeth God from the soul; when you are high in assurance, be low in humility. St Paul had assurance, and he baptizeth himself with this name, 'chief of sinners.'⁶ The jewel of assurance is best kept in the cabinet of an humble heart.

OF PEACE.

1 PET. 1. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.*

HAVING spoken of the first-fruit of sanctification, assurance, I proceed to the second, viz. peace: 'peace be multiplied.'

Q. *What are the several species or kinds of peace?*

A. Peace, in scripture, is compared to a river,² this river parts itself into two silver streams. *First.* There is an external peace, and that is, 1. Economical, peace in a family. 2. Political, peace in the state. Peace is the nurse of plenty: 'he maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.'³ How pleasant is it when the waters of blood begin to assuage, and we can see the windows of our ark open, and the dove returning with an olive branch of peace! 3. Ecclesiastical, peace in the church. Unity in trinity is the greatest mystery in heaven, and unity

in verity, the greatest mercy on earth. Peace ecclesiastical stands in opposition to schism and persecution. *Second.* A spiritual peace, which is twofold,—peace above us, or peace with God,—and peace within us, or peace with conscience. This is superlative; other peace may be lasting, but this is everlasting.

Q. 2. *Whence comes this peace?*

A. This peace hath the whole Trinity for its author: 1. God the Father is 'the God of peace.'⁷ 2. God the Son is the 'Prince of peace.'⁸ 3. Peace is said to be the 'fruit of the Spirit.'⁹

1. God the Father is the 'God of peace.' As he is the God of order,¹⁰ so the God of peace.¹¹ This was the form of the priest's blessing the people, 'the Lord give thee peace.'¹²

⁴ Re. 19. 9. ⁵ Ps. 36. 10. ⁶ 1 Ti. 1. 15. ⁷ 1 Th. 5. 23.
⁸ Is. 9. 6. ⁹ Ga. 5. 22. ¹⁰ 1 Co. 11. 33. ¹¹ Job. 1. 9.
¹² Nu. 6. 26.

¹ 2 Sa. 13. 4. ² Is. 66. 12. ³ Ps. 147. 14.

2. God the Son is the purchaser of peace. He had made peace by his blood: 'having made peace through the blood of his cross:¹' The atonement Aaron made for the people when he entered into the holy of holies with blood, was a type of Christ our high priest, who hath by his sacrifice pacified his angry Father, and made atonement for us. Christ purchased our peace upon hard terms; his soul was in an agony, while he was travelling to bring forth peace to the world.

3. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit. He seals up peace to the conscience. The Spirit clears up the work of grace in the heart, from whence ariseth peace. There was a well of water near Hagar, but she did not see it, therefore wept: a christian hath grace, but doth not see it, therefore weeps. Now the Spirit discovers this well of water, it enables conscience to witness to a man that hath the real work of grace, and so peace flows into the soul. Thus you see whence this peace comes: the Father decrees it, the Son purchaseth it, the Holy Ghost applies it.

Q. 3. *Whether may such as are destitute of grace have peace?*

A. No. Peace flows from sanctification, but they being unregenerate, have nothing to do with peace: 'there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.²' They may have a truce, but no peace. God may forbear the wicked awhile, and stop the roaring of his cannon; but though there be a truce, yet no peace. The wicked may have something which looks like peace, but it is not. They may be fearless and stupid; but there is a great difference between a stupified conscience, and a pacified conscience: 'when a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.³' This is the devil's peace; he rocks men in the cradle of security; he cries, 'peace! peace!' when men are on the precipice of hell. The seeming peace a sinner hath, is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but the ignorance of his danger.*

Q. 4. *What are the signs of a false peace?*

¹ Co. 1. 20.

² Is. 57. 21.

³ Lu. 11. 21.

* It is a deluded peace: 'he feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand,' Isa. 44. 20. It is as if a man were sleeping on a topmast, ready to be flung into the ocean, with every pire of wind, and yet dreaming that he is an universal monarch. Would any man envy him? This is the case of the profano; they are in all circumstances of danger, exposed to the loudest thunder of heaven, yet dreaming of nothing but ease and quiet, while ready to plump into the ocean of God's wrath; for they have no shelter, no defence: who would envy them?—*Beauties of Ralph Erskine*, vol. 2. p. 547.

A. 1. A false peace hath much confidence in it, but this confidence is conceit. The sinner doth not doubt of God's mercy; from which presumptuous confidence ariseth some kind of quiet in the mind. The same word in the Hebrew (*cassal*) signifies both confidence and folly. Indeed a sinner's confidence is folly; how confident were the foolish virgins?

A. 2. False peace separates those things which God hath joined together: God joins holiness and peace, but he who hath a false peace, separates these two. He lays claim to peace, but banisheth holiness: 'I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.⁴' The wicked are loose and vain, and yet thank God that they have peace, a delusion. You may as well suck health out of poison, as peace out of sin.

A. 3. False peace is not willing to be tried; a sign they are bad wares which will not endure the light; a sign a man hath stolen goods, when he will not have his house searched. A false peace cannot endure to be tried by the word. The word speaks of an humbling and refining work upon the soul before peace; false peace cannot endure to hear of this; the least trouble will shake this peace, it will end in despair. In a false peace, conscience is asleep; but, when this lion of conscience shall be awakened at death, then it will roar upon a man, he will be a terror to himself, and be ready to lay violent hands upon himself.

Q. 5. *How shall we know that ours is a true peace?*

A. 1. True peace flows from union with Christ. The graft or scion must first be inoculated into the tree before it can receive sap or nourishment from it; so we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can receive peace from him. Have we faith? By holiness we are made like Christ; by believing we are made one with Christ, and being in Christ we have peace.⁵

A. 2. True peace flows from subjection to Christ; where Christ gives peace, there he sets up his government in the heart, 'Of his government and peace there shall be no end.⁶' Christ is called 'a priest upon his throne.⁷' Christ as a priest makes peace; but he will be a priest upon his throne, he brings the heart in subjection to him. If Christ be our peace, he is our prince.⁸ Whenever Christ pacifies the conscience, he subdues the lust.

⁴ De. 29. 19.

⁵ Juo. 16. 33.

⁶ Is. 9. 7.

⁷ Ze. 6. 13.

⁸ Is. 9. 6.

A. 3. True peace is after trouble. First, God lets loose a spirit of bondage, he convinceth and humbleth the soul; then he speaks peace. Many say they have peace, but is this peace before a storm, or after it? True peace is after trouble. First there was the earthquake, and then the fire, and then the still small voice.¹ Thou who never hadst any legal bruising, mayest suspect thy peace; God pours the golden oil of peace into broken hearts.

Q. 6. Whether have all sanctified persons this peace?

A. They have a title to it; they have the ground of it; grace is the seed of peace, and it will in time turn to peace, as the blossoms of a tree to fruit, milk to cream. They have a promise of it, 'The Lord will bless his people with peace.'² They may have peace with God, though not peace in their own conscience; they have the initials and beginnings of peace. There is a secret peace the heart hath in serving God; such meltings and enlargements in duty as do revive the soul, and bear it up from sinking.

Q. 7. But why have not all believers the full enjoyment and possession of peace? Why is not this flower of peace fully ripe and blown?

A. Some of the godly may not have so full a degree of peace. 1. Through the fury of temptation. The devil, if he cannot destroy us, he will disturb us. Satan disputes against our adoption; he would make us question the work of grace in our hearts, and so troubles the waters of our peace: Satan is like a subtle cheater, who, if he cannot make a man's title to his land void, yet he will put him to many troublesome suits in law. If Satan cannot make us ungodly, he will make us unquiet: violent winds make the sea rough and stormy; the winds of temptation blowing, disturb peace of spirit, and put the soul into a commotion.— 2. The godly may not enjoy peace, through mistake and misapprehension about sin. They find so much corruption, that sure, if there were grace, there would not be such strong working of corruption: whereas this should be so far from discouraging Christians, and hindering their peace, that it is an argument for them. Let me ask, Whence is it that you feel sin? No man can feel sin, but by grace. A wicked man is insensible; lay a hundred weight upon a dead man, he doth not complain, but the being sensible of corruption argues a gracious

principle.³ Again, Whence is it that there is a combat with sin, but from the life of grace?⁴ Dead things cannot combat. Whence is it that the saints weep for sin? what are these tears but seeds of faith? The not understanding of this, hinders a Christian's peace. 3. The godly may not enjoy peace, through remissness in duty; they leave their first love. When Christians abate their fervency, God abates their peace; if you slacken the strings of a viol, the music is spoiled, if Christians slack in duty, they spoil the sweet music of peace in their souls. As the fire decays so the cold increaseth; as fervency in duty abates, so our peace cools.

USE 1. Labour for this blessed peace,—peace with God and conscience. Peace with neighbour-nations is sweet,—peace is better than numberless triumphs. The Hebrew word *shalom*, 'peace,' comprehends all blessings, it is the glory of a kingdom; a prince's crown is more beautiful when it is hung with the white lily of peace, than when it is set with the red roses of a bloody war. O then, how sweet is peace of conscience! It is a bulwark against the enemy,⁵ it shall keep you as in a garrison; you may throw out the gauntlet and bid defiance to the enemies; it is the golden pot and the manna; it is the first fruits of paradise. It is still music; for want of this a Christian is in continual fear, he doth not take that comfort in ordinances. Hannah went up to the feast at Jerusalem, but 'she wept, and did not eat.'⁶ So, a poor dejected soul goes to an ordinance, but doth not eat of the feast; he weeps and doth not eat. He cannot take that comfort in worldly blessings, health, estate, relations; he wants that inward peace, which should be a sauce to sweeten his comforts. O therefore labour for this blessed peace! Consider the noble and excellent effects of it: 1. It gives boldness at the throne of grace; guilt of conscience clips the wings of prayer, it makes the face blush, and the heart faint, but when a Christian hath some lively apprehensions of God's love, and the Spirit whispering peace, then he goes to God with boldness, as a child to his father: 'unto thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.'⁷ Time was when David's soul was bowed down: 'I am bowed down greatly';⁸ but now the case is altered, he will lift up his soul to God in a way of triumph, whence was this? God hath spoken peace to his soul:

¹ 1 Ki. 19. 11.

² Ps. 29. 11.

³ Ro. 7. 21. ⁴ Ga. 5. 17. ⁵ Phi. 4. 7. ⁶ 1 Sa. 1. 7.

⁷ Ps. 25. 1

⁸ Ps. 38. 6.

'thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes.'¹ 2. This divine peace fires the heart with love to Christ. Peace is the result of pardon: he who hath a pardon sealed cannot choose but love his prince. How endeared is Christ to the soul! Now Christ is precious indeed. 'O, saith the soul, how sweet is this rose of Sharon! Hath Christ waded through a sea of blood and wrath, to purchase my peace? Hath he not only made peace, but spoken peace to me? How should my heart ascend in a fiery chariot of love! How willing should I be to do and suffer for Christ!' 3. This peace quiets the heart in trouble: 'this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and tread in our palaces.'² The enemy may invade our palaces, but not our peace; this man, Christ, shall be the peace. When the head aches, the heart may be well; when worldly troubles assault a christian, his mind may be in peace and quiet: 'I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.'³ 'Twas now a sad time with David, he was fleeing for his life from Absalom; it was no small affliction to think that his own son should seek to take away his father's life and crown; David wept and covered his face,⁴ yet at this time, saith he, 'I will lay me down in peace and sleep.' He had trouble from his son, but peace from his conscience; David could sleep upon the soft pillow of a good conscience; this is a peace worth getting.

Q. 8. *What shall we do to attain this blessed peace?*

A. 1. Let us ask it of God. He is the God of peace, he beats back the roaring lion, he stills the raging of conscience; if we could call all the angels out of heaven, they could not speak peace without God. The stars cannot make day without the sun; none can make day in a dark deserted soul, but the Sun of Righteousness. As the wilderness cannot water itself, but remains dry and parched till the clouds drop their moisture: so our hearts cannot have peace till he infuse it, and drop it upon us by his Spirit. Therefore pray, 'Lord, thou who art the God of peace, create peace; thou who art the Prince of peace, command it. Give me that peace which may sweeten trouble, yea, the bitter cup of death.'

A. 2. If you would have peace, make war with sin. Sin is the Achan that troubles us, the Trojan horse: 'when Joram saw Jehu, he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered,

What peace, so long as the wickedness of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?'⁵ What peace, so long as sin remains unmortified? If you would have peace with God, break the league with sin,—give battle to sin, it is a most just war, God hath proclaimed it, nay, he hath promised us victory: 'sin shall not have dominion.'⁶ No way to peace, but by maintaining a war with sin. 'Our peace is war against the evil spirit,' TERT. When Samson had slain the lion, there came honey out of the lion: by slaying sin, we get this honey of peace.*

A. 3. Go to Christ's blood for peace. Some go to fetch their peace from their own righteousness, not Christ's; they go for peace to their holy life, not Christ's death; if conscience be troubled, they strive to quiet it with their duties. This is not the right way to peace; duties must not be neglected, nor yet idolized. Look up to the blood of sprinkling.⁷ That blood of Christ which pacified God, must pacify conscience; Christ's blood being sucked in by faith, gives peace: 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God.'⁸ No balm to cure a wounded conscience, but the blood of Christ.

A. 4. Walk closely with God. Peace flows from purity: 'as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.'⁹ In the text, grace and peace are put together; grace is the root, and peace is the flower. As balm-water drops from the limbec, so divine peace comes out of the limbec of a gracious heart. Walk very holily: God's Spirit is first a refiner before a comforter.

USE 2. You who have this peace,—peace above,—peace within,—labour to keep it; it is a precious jewel, do not lose it; it is sad to have the league of national peace broken, but it is worse to

⁵ 2 Ki. 9. 22. ⁶ Ro. 6. 14. ⁷ He. 12. 21. ⁸ Ro. 5. 1.
⁹ Ga. 6. 16.

* May we not ask with anxious solicitude: How can such fallen, wretched creatures be kept in peace, 'in perfect peace?' What warrant have we to trust in God, or stay our minds upon him, as our righteousness and strength? This important question has been answered by God himself. He graciously promised a Saviour, even at the time when justice pronounced death on the transgressors. Thus mercy rejoiced against judgment, and shed a ray of heavenly light over the benighted souls of our fallen race. In the fulness of time, Jesus, the promised seed of the woman, was born. The ransom-price was paid by his precious blood-shedding upon the cross; and the gates of heaven were opened to all believers. The gospel was preached, and pardon proclaimed to every humble, penitent, believing soul. All who lived before the advent of Christ, looking to the promise, and resting in the covenant of grace, were accepted in the Beloved; and those who have lived since his advent in the flesh, can say, 'whom having not seen, we love; and in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'—*Christian Retirement*

¹ Ps. 26. 3. ² Mi. 5. 5. ³ Ps. 4. 8. ⁴ 2 Sa. 15. 30.

have the peace of conscience broken: Oh preserve this peace! First, take heed of relapses. Hath God spoken peace? do not turn again to folly.* Besides the ingratitude, there is folly in relapses. It was long ere God was reconciled and the breach made up, and will you again eclipse and forfeit your peace? Hath God healed the wound of conscience, and will you tear it open again? Will you break another vein? Will you cut a new artery? this is returning indeed to folly. What madness is it to meddle again with that sin, which will breed

the worm of conscience! Secondly, Make up your spiritual accounts daily; see how matters stand between God and your souls: 'I commune with my own heart.'² Often reckonings keep God and conscience friends; do with your hearts as you do with your watches, wind them up every morning by prayer, and at night examine whether your hearts have gone true all that day, whether the wheels of your affections have moved swiftly toward heaven. Oh call yourselves often to account; keep your reckonings even, and that is the way to keep your peace.

OF JOY.

GAL. 5. 22. *The fruit of the Spirit is joy.*

THE third fruit of justification, adoption, and sanctification, is joy in the Holy Ghost. Joy is the setting the soul upon the top of a pinnacle, it is the cream of the sincere milk of the word.*

Q. *What is this joy?*

A. Spiritual joy is a sweet and delightful passion, arising from the apprehension and

feeling of some good, whereby the soul is supported under present troubles, and fenced against future fear.

1. It is a delightful passion. So it is contrary to sorrow, which is a perturbation of mind, whereby the heart is perplexed and cast down. Joy is a sweet and pleasant affection, which eases the mind, exhilarates and comforts the spirits.

2. It ariseth from the feeling of some good. Joy is not a fancy, or bred of conceit; but is rational, and ariseth from the feeling of some good, viz. the sense of God's love and favour. Joy is so real a thing that it makes a sudden change in a person; it turns mourning into melody. As in the spring-time, when the sun comes to our horizon, it makes a sudden alteration in the face of the universe; the birds sing, the flowers appear, the fig-tree puts forth her green figs, every thing seems to rejoice and put off its mourning, as being revived with the sweet influence of the sun: so, when the Sun of Righteousness ariseth on the soul, it makes a sudden alteration, and the soul is infinitely rejoiced with the golden beams of God's love.

3. By it the soul is supported under present troubles. Joy stupifies and swallows up troubles; it carries the heart above them, as the oil swims above the water.

4. The heart is fenced against future fear. Joy is both a cordial and an antidote; it is a cordial which gives present relief to the spirits when they are sad; and an antidote, it fenceth off fear of approaching danger: 'I will fear no

* Ps. 85. 8.

* Christian joy is not a tumultuous passion or feverish affection; but a calm and composed frame; a holy serenity of soul; a gladsome rest in the faithfulness and grace of Jesus. It sheds a lustre over the countenance; beams forth at the eye, and often causes it to be suffused in tears. It creates an indescribable delight in the heart. St Paul was in this heavenly frame when he said, 'I am filled with comfort; I am exceeding joyful in all my tribulation.' This holy joy does not depend on outward circumstances, for the apostle could say, 'as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.' No one possesses this inward joy, but the real believer. 'A stranger intermeddled not with it.' It is the fruit of the Spirit, and flows from a lively faith in the divinity and atonement of Jesus. So inseparable from christian joy are right views of the blessed Saviour, that St John commences his first Epistle, as he did his Gospel, by refuting those two heresies, which, like poisonous weeds were then springing up. The one propagated by the Gnostics or Doctees, who denied the real humanity; the other by the Ebionites, who denied the essential divinity of the Redeemer. How conclusive are the declarations of St John: 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.' What language can more fully describe the real humanity of the Son of God? 'For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.' What a striking attestation to the divinity of Christ! 'That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.' It were well, if all who profess to believe in Jesus, would examine the ground of their faith, and the source of their joy, by this highly important passage in the word of God. Holy joy is a portion of heaven brought down into the soul, and enables the believer to soar above the troubles which assail him. Like the Alpine traveller, he looks down upon the storm which agitates the vale beneath. Even when compelled to exclaim, 'without are fightings, and within are fears,' he can 'rejoice evermore.'—*Christian Retirement.*

² Ps. 77. 6.

evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me.²¹

Q. 2. How is this joy wrought?

A. 1. It ariseth partly from the promise; as the bee lies at the breast of the flower, and sucks out the sweetness from it, so faith lies at the breast of a promise, and sucks out the quintessence of joy: 'thy comforts delight my soul;²² that is, the comforts which distil from the limbec of the promises.

A. 2. The Spirit of God, who is called the 'Comforter,'²³ doth sometimes drop in this golden oil of joy into the soul; the Spirit whispers to a believer the remission of his sin, and sheds God's love abroad into the heart,²⁴ whence flows infinite joy and delight.

Q. 3. What are the seasons when God doth usually give his people these divine joys?

A. Five seasons: 1st Season. Sometimes at the blessed supper; the soul oft comes weeping after Christ in the sacrament, and God sends it away weeping for joy. The Jews had a custom at their feasts, they poured ointment on their guests, and kissed them: in the Eucharist, God often pours the oil of gladness on the saints, and kisseth them with the kisses of his lips. There are two grand ends of the sacrament, the strengthening of faith, and the flourishing of joy. Here in this ordinance, God displays the banner of his love; here believers taste not only sacramental bread, but hidden manna. Caution, not that God always meets the soul with joy. He may give increase of grace, when not increase of joy; but oftentimes he pours in the oil of gladness, and gives the soul a privy seal of his love, as Christ made himself known in the breaking of bread.

2d Season. Before God calls his people to suffering: 'be of good cheer, Paul.'²⁵ When God was about to give Paul a cup of blood to drink, he spiced it with joy: 'as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth;²⁶ this made the martyrs' flames beds of roses; when Stephen was stoning, he saw heaven open, and the Sun of Righteousness shined in his face. God candies our wormwood with sugar.

3d Season. After sore conflicts with Satan. Satan is the red dragon who troubleth the waters; he puts the soul into frights, makes it believe that it hath no grace, and that God doth not love it; though Satan cannot blot out a christian's evidence, yet he may cast such

a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read it. Now, when the soul hath been bruised with temptations, God will comfort this bruised reed: he now gives joy to confirm a christian's title to heaven. After Satan's fiery darts, comes the white stone; no better balm to heal a tempted soul, than the oil of gladness: as after Christ was tempted, then came an angel to comfort him.

4th Season. After desertion: desertion is a poisoned arrow which shoots to the heart.²⁷ God is called a fire and a light: the deserted soul feels the fire, but doth not see the light; it cries out, as Asaph, 'Is his mercy clean gone?'²⁸ Now, when the soul is in this case, and ready to faint away in despair, God shines upon the soul, and gives it some apprehension of his favour, and turns the shadow of death into the light of the morning. God keeps his cordials for a time of fainting. Joy after desertion is like a resurrection from the dead.

5th Season. At the hour of death, such as have had no joy in their lifetime, God puts in this sugar in the bottom of the cup, to make their death sweet. Now, at the last hour, when all other comforts are gone, God sends the Comforter; and when their appetite to meat fails, God feeds them with hidden manna. Sure, as the wicked, before they die, have some apprehensions of hell and wrath in their conscience; so the godly have some foretastes of God's everlasting favour, though sometimes their diseases may be such, and their animal spirits so oppressed, that they cannot express what they feel. Jacob laid himself to sleep on a stone, where he saw a vision, a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending: so, when the saints lay themselves down to sleep the sleep of death, they have often a vision; they see the light of God's face, and have the evidences of his love sealed up to them for ever.

Q. 4. What are the differences between worldly joys and spiritual?

A. The gleanings of the one are better than the vintage of the other. 1. Spiritual joys help to make us better, worldly joys do often make us worse: 'I spake unto thee in thy prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear.'²⁹ Pride and luxury are the two worms bred of worldly pleasures: 'wine takes away the heart;³⁰ it is 'the inflamer of lust,' AUG. As Satan entered in the sop, so often in the cup! but spiritual joy makes one better; it is like cordial water,

¹ Ps. 23. 4. ² Ps. 94. 19. ³ Juo. 11. 26. ⁴ Ro. 5. 5.

⁵ Acts 23. 11.

⁶ 2 Co. 1. 5.

⁷ Job 6. 1.

⁸ Ps. 77. 8.

⁹ Je. 22. 21.

¹⁰ Ho. 1. 11.

which, as physicians say, doth not only cheer the heart, but purges out the noxious humours; so divine joy is a cordial water, which doth not only comfort but cleanse; it makes a christian more holy, it causeth an antipathy against sin, it infuseth strength to do and suffer: 'the joy of the Lord is your strength.'¹ As some colours do not only delight the eye, but strengthen the sight: so the joys of God do not only refresh the soul, but strengthen it. 'The joy of the Lord is your strength.'

A. 2. Spiritual joys are inward, they are heart joys: 'your heart shall rejoice.'² Seneca saith, true joy is hidden within; worldly joy lies on the outside, like the dew that wets the leaf, who 'glory in appearance,'³ in the Greek, in the face. It goes no farther than the face, it is not within, in 'laughter the heart is sad.' Like a house which hath a gilded frontispiece, but all the rooms within are hung in mourning. But spiritual joy lies most within: 'your heart shall rejoice.' Divine joy is like a spring of water which runs underground: a christian, others can see his sufferings, but they see not his joy: 'a stranger intermeddeth not with his joy.'⁴ This joy is hidden manna, hid from the eye of the world; he hath still music which others hear not; the marrow lies within, the best joy is within the heart.

A. 3. Spiritual joys are sweeter than others, better than wine.⁵ They are a christian's festival; they are the golden pot and the manna; they are so sweet, that they make every thing else sweet, sweeten health, estate, as sweet waters poured on flowers make them more fragrant and aromatical. Divine joys are so delicious and ravishing, that they do very much put our mouth out of taste to earthly delights; as he who hath been drinking spirits of alkermes, tastes little sweetness in water. St Paul had tasted these divine joys, and his mouth was out of taste to worldly things; the world was crucified to him.⁶ It was like a dead thing, he could find no sweetness in it.

A. 4. Spiritual joys are more pure, they are not tempered with any bitter ingredients; a sinner's joy is mixed with dregs, it is imbittered with fear and guilt; the wolf feeds in the breasts of his joy, he drinks wormwood wine, but spiritual joy is not muddied with guilt, but like a crystal stream, runs pure; it is all spirits and quintessence, it is joy and nothing but joy, it is a rose without prickles, it is honey without the wax.

A. 5. These are satisfying and filling joys: 'ask, that your joy may be full.'⁷ Worldly joys can no more fill the heart, than a drop can fill a cistern; they may please the palate or fancy, (Plato calls them 'pictures of joy,') not satisfy the soul: 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing';⁸ but the joys of God satisfy: 'thy comforts delight my soul.'⁹ There is as much difference between spiritual joys and earthly, as between a banquet that is eaten, and one that is painted on the wall.

A. 6. These are stronger joys than worldly: 'strong consolation.'¹⁰ They are strong indeed, that can bear up a christian's heart in trials and afflictions: 'having received the word in much affliction, with joy.'¹¹ These are roses that grow in winter, these joys can sweeten the waters of Marah, he that hath these can gather grapes of thorns, and fetch honey out of the carcass of a lion: 'as sorrowing, yet always rejoicing.'¹² At the end of the rod a christian tastes honey.

A. 7. These are unwearied joys: other joys, when in excess, oft cause a loathing, we are apt to surfeit on them, too much honey nauseates, one may be tired with pleasure as well as labour: Xerxes offered a reward to him that could find out a new pleasure: but the joys of God, though they satisfy, yet they never surfeit; a drop of joy is sweet, but the more of this wine the better; such as drink of the joys of heaven are never cloyed; the satiety is without loathing, because they still desire the joy where-with they are satiated.

A. 8. These are more abiding joys. Worldly joys are soon gone; such as crown themselves with rose-buds, and bathe in the perfumed waters of pleasure, yet these joys which seem to be sweet are swift, like meteors, they give a bright and sudden flash, and then disappear; but the joys which believers have are abiding; they are a blossom of eternity, a pledge and earnest of those rivers of pleasure which run at God's right hand for evermore.

Q. 5. *Why is this joy to be laboured for?*

A. 1. Because this joy is self-existent, it can subsist in the want of all other carnal joy. This joy depends not upon outward things. As the philosophers once said, when the musicians came to them, 'philosophers can be merry without music;' he that hath this joy can be cheerful in the deficiency of carnal joys; he can rejoice in God, in sure hope of glory:

¹ Ne. 8. 10. ² Jno. 16. 22. ³ 2 Co. 5. 12. ⁴ Pro. 11. 10.
⁵ Ca. 1. 2. ⁶ Ga. 6. 11.

⁷ Jno. 16. 21. ⁸ Ec. 1. 8. ⁹ Ps. 91. 19. ¹⁰ He. 6. 18.
¹¹ 1 Th. 1. 6. ¹² 2 Co. 6. 10.

‘though the fig-tree doth not flourish.’¹ Spiritual joy can go without crutches to support it. Spiritual joy is higher built than upon creatures, it is built on the love of God; on the promises; on the blood of Christ.

A. 2. Because spiritual joy carries the soul through duty cheerfully; the sabbath is a delight, religion is a recreation. Fear and sorrow hinder us in the discharge of duty; but a christian serves God with activity, when he serves him with joy. The oil of joy makes the wheels of obedience move faster. How fervently did they pray whom God made joyful in the house of prayer?²

A. 3. It is called the kingdom of God,³ because it is a taste of that which the saints have in the kingdom of God. What is the heaven of the angels but the smiles of God’s face, the sensible perception and feeling of those joys, which are infinitely ravishing and full of glory? And to encourage and quicken us in seeking after them, consider, that Christ died to purchase this joy for his saints: he was a man of sorrows, that we may be full of joy, he prays that the saints may have this divine joy: ‘and now I come to thee, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.’⁴ And this prayer he now prays over in heaven; he knows we never love him so, as when we feel his love: which may encourage us to seek after this joy; we pray for that which Christ himself is praying for, that his joy may be fulfilled in us.

Q. 6. *What shall we do to obtain this spiritual joy?*

A. Walk accurately and heavenly; God gives it after a long and close walking with him. 1. Observe your hours; set time every day apart for God. 2. Mourn for sin; mourning is the seed, as Basil saith, out of which the flower of spiritual joy grows: ‘I will restore comfort to his mourners.’⁵ 3. Keep the book of conscience fair written: do not by presumptuous sins blur your evidences; a good conscience is the ark where God puts the hidden manna. 4. Be often upon your knees, pray with life and fervency. The same Spirit that fills the heart with sighs, fills it with joys. The same Spirit that indites the prayer seals it. When Hannah had prayed, her countenance was no more sad.⁶ Praying christians have much intercourse with God, and none are so like to have the secrets of his love imparted, as those who hold correspondence with him; by a

close walking with God, we get these bunches of grapes by the way, which are an earnest of future happiness.

Q. 7. *How shall we comfort them that want joy?*

A. Such as walk in close communion with God have more than others. 1. Initial joy, joy in the seed: ‘light,’ a metaphor for joy, ‘is sown for the righteous.’ Grace in the heart is a seed of joy; though a christian wants the sun, he hath a day star in his heart. 2. A believer hath real, though not royal comforts; he hath, as Aquinas saith, joy ‘in God,’ though not ‘from God.’ Joy in God is the delight and complacency the soul takes in God: ‘I will be glad in the Lord.’⁷ He that is truly gracious, is so far joyful as to take comfort in God; though he cannot say, God rejoiceth in him, yet he can say, he rejoiceth in God. 3. He hath supporting, though not transporting comforts; he hath so much, that keeps him from sinking: ‘thou strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.’⁸ If a christian hath not God’s arm to embrace him, yet to uphold him: thus a christian, who walks with God, hath something that bears up his heart from sinking, and it is but waiting a while, and he is sure of those joys which are unspeakable, and full of glory.

USE 1. Then see that religion is no melancholy thing; it brings joy; the fruit of the Spirit is joy,—it is changed, but not taken away. A poor christian that feeds on bread and water, may have purer joy than the greatest monarch; though he fares hard, he feeds high; he hath a table spread from heaven, angels’ food, hidden manna; he hath sometimes those sweet raptures of joy, as a cause of jubilation of spirit,⁹ he hath that which is better felt than can be expressed.

USE 2. If God gives his people such joy in this life; O then what glorious joy will he give them in heaven! ‘enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’¹⁰ Here joy begins to enter into us, there we shall enter into joy; God keeps his best wine till last. Heliogabalus bathed himself in sweet perfumed waters; what joy when the soul shall for ever bathe itself in the pure and pleasant fountain of God’s love? What joy to see the orient brightness of Christ’s face, and have the kisses of those lips which drop sweet smelling myrrh? ‘The spouse shall delight in the embraces of her Lord,’ AUG. O! if a

¹ Ha 3 17. ² Is. 56. 7. ³ Ro. 14. 27. ⁴ Jno. 17. 13.
⁵ Is. 57. 18.

⁶ 1 Sa. 1. 18.

⁷ Ps. 97. 11. ⁸ Ps. 104. 34. ⁹ Ps. 138. 3. ¹⁰ 2 Co. 12. 3.
¹¹ Mat. 25. 21.

cluster of grapes here be so sweet, what will the full vintage be? How may this set us all a longing for that place, where sorrow cannot live, and where joy cannot die!

OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

2 PET. 3. 18. *But grow in grace.*

THE fourth fruit, growth of grace. True grace is progressive, of a spreading, growing nature. It is with grace as with the light: first, there is the daybreak, then it shines brighter to the full meridian. A good christian is like the crocodile, he hath never done growing. The saints are not only compared to stars for their light, but to trees for their growth.¹ A good christian is not like Hezekiah's sun that went backward, nor Joshua's sun that stood still, but is always advancing in holiness, and increasing with the increase of God.² Now to amplify and illustrate this:

Q. 1. *How many ways may a christian be said to grow in grace?*

A. 1. He grows in the exercise of grace; his lamp is burning and shining, therefore we read of a lively hope.³ Here is the activity of grace; the church prays for the blowing of the Spirit, that her spices might flow forth.⁴ 2. A christian grows in the degree of grace; he goes from strength to strength,⁵ viz. from one degree of grace to another. A saint goes from 'faith to faith,'⁶ and his love abounds more and more.⁷ Here is growing in the degree.

Q. 2. *What is the right manner of a christian's growth?*

A. 1. The right manner of growth, is to grow less in one's own eyes: 'I am a worm and no man.'⁸ The sight of corruption and ignorance makes a christian grow into a dislike of himself, he doth vanish in his own eyes. Job abhorred himself in the dust.⁹ This is good, to grow out of conceit with one's self.

A. 2. The right manner of growth is to grow proportionably, when a christian grows in one grace as well as another.¹⁰ To grow in knowledge, but not in meekness, brotherly love, good works, this is not the right growth; a thing may swell and not grow, a man may be swelled with knowledge, yet may have no spiritual growth, the right manner of growth is uni-

form, growing in one grace as well as another. As the beauty of the body is, when there is a symmetry of parts, not only the head grows, but the arms and breast; so spiritual growth is most beautiful, when there is a symmetry and proportion, every grace thrives.

A. 3. The right manner of growth is, when a christian hath grace suitable to his several employments and occasions; when corruptions are strong, and he hath grace able to give check to them, burdens are heavy, and he hath patience able to bear them, temptations fierce, and he hath faith able to resist them, here is grace growing in the right manner.

Q. 3. *Whence is it that true grace cannot but grow?*

A. 1. It is proper for grace to grow; it is the seed of God.¹¹ It is the nature of seed to grow; grace doth not lie in the heart, as a stone in the earth, but as seed in the earth, which will spring up, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

A. 2. Grace cannot but grow, from the sweetness and excellency of it; he that hath grace, is never weary of it, but still would have more. The delight he hath in it, causeth thirst; grace is the image of God, and a christian thinks he can never be enough like God. Grace instills peace; therefore a christian cannot but strive to increase in grace, because, as grace grows, so peace grows.

A. 3. Grace cannot but grow, from a believer's ingrafting into Christ; he who is a scion, ingrafted into this noble, generous stock, cannot but grow. Christ is so full of sap, and vivifical influence, that he makes all inoculated into him grow fruitful: 'from me is thy fruit found.'¹²

Q. 4. *What motives or incentives are there to make us grow in grace?*

A. 1. Growth is the end of the ordinances. Why doth a man lay out cost on ground, manure and water it, but that it may grow? The sincere milk of the word is given, that we may

¹ Is. 61. 3.; Ho. 14. 5. ² Co. 2. 16. ³ 1 Pe. 1. 3. ⁴ Ca. 4. 16. ⁵ Ps. 81. 7. ⁶ Ro. 1. 17. ⁷ Phi. 1. 6. ⁸ Ps. 22. 6. ⁹ Job 42. 6. ¹⁰ 2 Pe. 1. 5.

¹¹ 1 Jno. 3. 9.

¹² Ho. 11. 8.

grow thereby.¹ The table of the Lord is on purpose for our spiritual nourishment and increase of grace.

A. 2. The growth of grace is the best evidence of the truth of it. Things that have no life will not grow; a picture will not grow, a stake in the hedge will not grow, but a plant that hath a vegetative life grows. The growing of grace shows it to be alive in the soul.

A. 3. Growth in grace is the beauty of a christian. The more a child grows, the more it comes to its favour and complexion, and looks more ruddy; so, the more a christian grows in grace, the more he comes to his spiritual complexion, he looks fairer. Abraham's faith was beautiful when in its infancy, but at last it grew so vigorous and eminent, that God himself was in love with it, and crowned Abraham with this honour, to be the 'father of the faithful.'

A. 4. The more we grow in grace, the more glory we bring to God. God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. This should be our design, to raise the trophies of God's glory; and how can we do it more than by growing in grace? 'Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.'² Though the least dram of grace will bring salvation to us, yet it will not bring so much glory to God: 'filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are to the praise of his glory.'³ It commends the skill of the husbandman, when his plants grow and thrive; it is a praise and honour to God, when we thrive in grace.

A. 5. The more we grow in grace, the more will God love us. Is it not that we pray for? The husbandman loves his thriving plants: the thriving christian is God's *Hephzibah*, or chief delight. Christ loves to see the vine flourishing, and the pomegranates budding.⁴ Christ accepts the truth of grace, but commends the growth of grace: 'I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.'⁵ Would you be as the beloved disciple that lay in Christ's bosom? Would you have much love from Christ? labour for much growth, let faith flourish with good works, and love increase into zeal.

A. 6. What need have we to grow in grace. There is still something lacking in our faith.⁶ Grace is but in its infancy and minority, and we must still be adding a cubit to our spiritual stature; the apostles said, 'Lord increase our faith.'⁷ Grace is but weak: 'I am this day

weak, though anointed king.'⁸ So, though we are anointed with grace, yet we are but weak, and had need arrive at further degrees of sanctity.

A. 7. The growth of grace will hinder the growth of corruption. The more health grows, the more the distempers of the body abate; so it is in spirituals, the more humility grows, the more the swelling of pride is assuaged, the more purity of heart grows, the more the fire of lust is abated. The growth of flowers in the garden, doth not hinder the growing of weeds, but the growing of this flower of grace hinders the sprouting of corruption. As some plants have an antipathy, and will not thrive if they grow near together, as the vine and the bay-tree: so, where grace grows, sin will not thrive so fast.

A. 8. We cannot grow too much in grace: there is no excess there. The body may grow too great, as in the dropsy; but faith cannot grow too great: 'your faith groweth exceedingly;'⁹ here was exceeding, yet not excess. As a man cannot have too much health, so not too much grace. Grace is the beauty of holiness.¹⁰ We cannot have too much spiritual beauty; it will be the only trouble at death, that we have grown no more in grace.

A. 9. Such as do not grow in grace, decay in grace. 'Not to advance in the path of life is to return,' BERN. There is no standing at a stay in religion, either we go forward or backward; if faith doth not grow, unbelief will; if heavenly-mindedness doth not grow, covetousness will. A man that doth not increase his stock, diminisheth it: if you do not improve your stock of grace, your stock will decay. The angels on Jacob's ladder were either ascending or descending: if you do not ascend in religion, you descend.

A. 10. The more we grow in grace, the more we shall flourish in glory. Though every vessel of glory shall be full, yet some vessels hold more; he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities.¹¹ Such as do not grow much, though they do not lose their glory, yet they lessen their glory. If any shall follow the Lamb in whiter and larger robes of glory than others, they shall be such as have shone most in grace here.

USE. Lament we may the want of growth: religion in many is grown only into a form and profession; this is to grow in leaves, not in

¹ 1 Pe. 2. 2. ² Jno. 15. 8. ³ Phi. 1. 11. ⁴ Ca. 6. 11.

⁵ Mat. 8. 10. ⁶ 1 Th. 3. 10 ⁷ Lu. 17. 5.

⁸ 2 Sa. 3. 39. ⁹ 2 Th. 1. 3. ¹⁰ Ps. 110. 3. ¹¹ Lu. 19. 17.

fruit. Many christians are like a body in an atrophy, which doth not thrive; they are not nourished by the sermons they hear; like the angels who assumed bodies, they did eat, but did not grow. It is very suspicious where there is no growth, there wants a vital principle. Some instead of growing better, grow worse; they grow more earthly, more profane.¹ Evil men 'shall wax worse and worse.' Many grow hellward, they grow past shame,² they are like some watered stuffs, which grow more rotten.

Q. 5. How shall we know whether we grow in grace?

A. For the deciding of this question, I shall, first, show the signs of our not growing; secondly, of our growing.

1st. The signs of our not growing in grace, but rather falling into a spiritual consumption.

Sign 1. When we have lost our spiritual appetite. A consumptive person hath not that stomach to his meat as formerly. Perhaps, christian, thou canst remember the time when thou didst hunger and thirst after righteousness, thou didst come to the ordinances with such a stomach as to a feast, but now it is otherwise, Christ is not so prized, nor his ordinances so loved: a sad presage, grace is on the declining hand,—thou art in a deep consumption. A sign David was near his grave, when he covered him with clothes, and got no heat: so, when a person is plied with hot clothes, I mean ordinances, yet he hath no heat of affection to spiritual things, this is a sign he is declining in grace.

Sign 2. When we grow more worldly. Perhaps once we were mounted into higher orbs, we did set ourselves on things above, and speak the language of Canaan, but now our minds are taken off heaven, we dig our comfort out of these lower mines, and with Satan compass the earth: a sign we are going down the hill apace, and our grace is in a consumption. It is observable when nature decays, and people are near dying, they grow more stooping; and truly, when men's hearts grow more stooping to the earth, and they can hardly lift up themselves to a heavenly thought, if grace be not dead, yet it is ready to die.³

Sign 3. When we are less troubled about sin. Time was when the least sin did grieve us, as the least hair makes the eye weep: but now we can digest sin without remorse. Time was when a christian was troubled if he neglect-

ed closet-prayer: now he can omit family-prayer. Time was when vain thoughts did trouble him: now he is not troubled for loose practices. Here is a sad declension in religion; and truly grace is so far from growing, that we can hardly perceive its pulse to beat.

2dly. The signs of our growing in grace.

Sign 1. The first sign of our growing is when we are got beyond our former measures of grace: a sign a child thrives, when he hath outgrown his clothes, his clothes are too little for him. That knowledge which would serve us before, will not serve us now, we have a deeper insight into religion, our light is clearer, our spark of love is increased into a flame: there is a sign of growth. That competency of grace we once had, is too scanty for us; we have outgrown ourselves.

Sign 2. When we are more firmly rooted in religion,⁴ rooted in him, and established: the spreading of the root shows the growth of the tree. When we are so strongly fastened on Christ, that we cannot be blown down with the breath of heretics, a blessed sign of growth. Athanasius was called *adamas ecclesiae*, the adamant of the church, an adamant that could not be removed from the love of the truth.

Sign 3. The third sign of growth: when we have a more spiritual frame of heart. 1. We are more spiritual in our principles; we oppose sin out of love to God, and as it strikes at his holiness. 2. We are more spiritual in our affections; we grieve for the first rising of corruption, for the bubbling up of vain thoughts, the spring that runs under ground. We mourn not only for the penalty of sin, but the pollution; it is not only a coal that burns, but blackens. 3. We are spiritual in the performance of duty; we are more serious, reverent, fervent; we have more life in prayer, we put fire to the sacrifice: 'fervent in spirit.'⁵ We serve God with more love, which ripens and mellows our duty, and makes it come off with a better relish.

Sign 4. The fourth sign of growth: when grace gets ground by opposition. The fire, by an antiperistasis, burns hottest in the coldest season. Peter's courage increased by the opposition of the high priest and the rulers.⁶ The martyrs' zeal was increased by persecution. Here was grace of the first magnitude.

Q. 6. What shall we do to grow in grace?

A. 1. Take heed of that which will hinder its growth,—the love of any sin. The

¹ 2 Ti. 3. 13. ² Eph. 2. 3, 5. ³ 1 Ki. 1. 1. ⁴ Re. 3. 2.

⁵ Co. 2. 7. ⁶ Ro. 12.

⁷ Acts 4. 8, 11.

body may as well thrive in a fever, as grace can where any sin is cherished.

A. 2. Use all means for growth in grace. 1. 'Exercise yourselves to godliness.'¹ The body grows stronger by exercise.* Trading of money makes men grow rich; the more we trade our faith in the promises, the richer in faith we grow. 2. If you would be growing christians, be humble christians. It is observed in some countries, as in France, the best and largest grapes, which they make their wine of, grow on the lower sort of vines; the humble saints grow most in grace: 'God giveth grace to the humble.'² 3. Pray to God for spiritual growth. Some pray that they may grow in gifts. It is better to grow in grace than gifts; gifts are for ornament, grace is for nourishment, to edify others, to save ourselves. Some pray that they may grow rich, but a fruitful heart is better than a full purse. Pray that God would make you grow in grace, though it be by affliction.³ The vine grows by pruning.

God's pruning-knife is to make us grow more in grace.

Q. 7. *How may we comfort such as complain they do not grow in grace?*

A. They may mistake; they may grow when they think they do not: 'there is that maketh himself poor, yet he is rich.'⁴ The sight christians have of their defects in grace, and their thirst after greater measures of grace, makes them think they do not grow when they do. He who covets a great estate, because he hath not so much as he desires, therefore he thinks himself to be poor. Indeed christians should seek after the grace they want, but they must not therefore overlook the grace they have. Let christians be thankful for the least growth; if you do not grow so much in assurance, bless God if you grow in sincerity; if you do not grow so much in knowledge, bless God if you grow in humility. If a tree grows in the root, it is a true growth; if you grow in the root grace of humility, it is as needful for you as any other growth.

OF PERSEVERANCE.

I PET. 1. 5. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.*

THE fifth and last fruit of sanctification, is perseverance in grace. The heavenly inheritance is kept for the saints;⁴ and they are kept to the inheritance; in my text, 'who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' The apostle asserts a saint's stability and permanency in grace. The saints' perseverance is much oppugned by papists and arminians; but it is not the less true because it is opposed. A christian's main comfort depends upon this doctrine of perseverance; take away this, and you much prejudice religion, and cut

the sinews of all cheerful endeavours. Before I come to the full handling and discussing this great point, let me first clear the sense of it, which I shall do by way of concession or grant.

When I say, believers do persevere: *1st*, I grant that such as are so only in profession, may fall away: 'Demas hath forsaken me.'⁵ Blazing comets soon evaporate. A building on sand will fall.⁶ Seeming grace may be lost. No wonder to see a bough fall from a tree that is only tied on! Hypocrites are only tied on Christ by an external profession, they are not

¹ 1 Ti. 4. 7. ² 1 Pe. 5. 5. ³ He. 12. 10. ⁴ 1 Pe. 1. 4.

* The christian life is frequently compared in scripture to the act of walking, and walking implies progression. 'Enoch walked with God;' which beautiful figure St Paul thus explains, 'Enoch before his translation had this testimony that he pleased God;' but 'without faith it is impossible to please him;' so that walking with God, is living by faith; or 'walking worthy of God unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.' This natural action of the body, therefore, aptly describes the spiritual action of the soul, in its journey towards the celestial Canaan. The scripture warns us how we are not to walk. 'Walk not after the flesh;' 'walk not after the course of this world;' 'walk not by sight;' 'walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their minds.' And they instruct us how we are to walk, so as to please God. 'Walk after the Spirit;' 'walk by faith;' 'walk in love;' 'walk in the truth;' 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' To such holy characters, Jesus says, 'they shall walk with me in white.' And

⁵ Pr. 13. 7. ⁶ 2 Ti. 4. 10. ⁷ Mat. 7. 26.

even here in this world of darkness, whilst 'they walk in his ways,' they shall 'walk in the light of his countenance;' and in the world of glory they shall 'follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.' O! then, what blessedness is connected with an humble, loving, obedient walk with God; not a standing still, or a drawing back, but a uniform desire to be pressing forwards in the ways of righteousness. The words of our christian poet sweetly express those spiritual desires:

'O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heav'nly frame;
A light to shine upon the road,
That leads me to the Lamb.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be;
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the way
That leads me to the Lamb.'

ingrafted. Who ever thought artificial motions would hold long? The hypocrite's motion is only artificial, not vital. All blossoms do not ripen into fruit.

2. I grant that, if believers were left to stand upon their own legs, they might fall finally. Some of the angels, who were stars full of light and glory, yet did actually lose their grace; and if those pure angels fell from grace, much more would the godly, who have so much sin to betray them, if they were not upheld by a superior power.

3. I grant, true believers, though they do not fall away actually, and lose all their grace, yet their grace may fail in the degree, and they may make a great breach upon their sanctification. Grace may be 'dying, but not dead:' 'strengthen the things which are ready to die.'¹ Grace may be like fire in the embers: though not quenched, yet the flame is gone out. This decay of grace I shall show in two particulars.

1. The lively actings of grace may be suspended: 'thou hast left thy first love.'² Grace may be like a sleepy habit; the godly may act faintly in religion, the pulse of their affections may beat low. The wise virgins slumbered.³ The exercise of grace may be hindered; as when the course of water is stopped, and doth not run. 2. Instead of grace exercising in the godly, corruption may exercise,—instead of patience, murmuring,—instead of heavenliness, earthliness. How did pride put forth itself in the disciples, when they strove who should be the greatest! How did lust put forth itself in David! Thus lively and vigorous may corruption be in the regenerate; they may fall into enormous sins. But though all this be granted, yet they do not fall away finally from grace. David did not quite lose his grace; for then, why did he pray, 'take not away thy Holy Spirit from me?' He had not quite lost the Spirit. As Eutychus, when he fell from a window,⁴ and all thought he was dead: No, saith Paul, 'his life is in him.' So David fell foully, but there was the life of grace in him. Though the saints may come to that pass, they have but little faith, yet not to have no faith; though their grace may be drawn low, yet not drawn dry; though grace may be abated, not abolished; though the wise virgins slumbered, yet their lamps were not quite gone out. Grace, when it is at the lowest, shall revive and flourish; as when Samson had lost his strength, his

hair grew again, and he renewed his strength. Having thus explained the proposition, I come now to the amplifying this great doctrine of the saints' perseverance.

Q. 1. *By what means do christians come to persevere?*

A. 1. By the manuduction and help of ordinances, prayer, word, sacraments. Christians do not arrive at perseverance when they sit still and do nothing. It is not with us as with passengers in a ship, who are carried to the end of their voyage, and they sit still in the ship; or, as it is with noblemen, who have their rents brought in without their toil or labour; but we arrive at salvation in the use of means, as a man comes to the end of a race by running, to a victory by fighting: 'watch and pray.' As Paul said, 'except ye abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.'⁵ Believers shall come to shore at last, arrive at heaven; but 'except they abide in the ship,' viz. in the use of ordinances, 'they cannot be saved.' The ordinances cherish grace; as they beget grace, so they are the breast-milk by which it is nourished and preserved to eternity.

A. 2. By the sacred influence and concurrence of the Spirit. The Spirit of God is continually at work in the heart of a believer to carry on grace to perseverance; it drops in fresh oil to keep the lamp of grace burning. The Spirit excites, strengthens, increaseth grace, and makes a Christian go from one step of faith to another, till he comes to the end of his faith, salvation.' It is a fine expression of the apostle, 'the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.'⁶ He who dwells in an house, keeps the house in repair: the Spirit dwelling in a believer, keeps grace in repair. Grace is compared to a river of the water of life.⁷ This river can never be dried up, because God's Spirit is a spring which continually feeds it.

A. 3. Grace is carried on to perseverance, by Christ's daily intercession. As the Spirit is at work in the heart, so is Christ at work in heaven. Christ is ever praying that the saints' grace may hold out. Father, 'keep those whom thou hast given me,'⁸ keep them as the stars in their orbs, keep them as jewels, that they may not be lost. 'Father keep them.' That prayer Christ made for Peter, was the copy of his prayer he now makes for believers, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not,'⁹ that it

¹ Re. 3. 2 ² Re. 2. 4. ³ Mat. 25. 5. ⁴ Acts 20.

⁵ Mat. 26. 41. ⁶ Acts 27. 31. ⁷ 1 Pe. 1. 9. ⁸ 2 Ti. 1. 14.

⁹ Jno. 7. 37. ¹⁰ Jno. 17. 11. ¹¹ Lu. 22. 32.

be not totally eclipsed; how can the children of such prayers perish?

Q. *By what arguments may we prove the saints' perseverance?*

A. 1.—‘From the truth of God.’ God hath both asserted it, and promised it: 1. God hath asserted it, ‘his seed remaineth in him;’¹ ‘the anointing ye have received of him abideth in you.’²—2. As God hath asserted it, so he hath promised it: the truth of God, the most orient pearl of his crown, is laid a pawn in the promise, ‘I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.’ ‘I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.’³ God will so love his people that he will not forsake them; and they shall so fear him, that they shall not forsake him. If a believer should not persevere, God should break his promise, ‘I will betrothe thee unto me for ever, in righteousness and loving-kindness.’⁴ God doth not marry his people unto himself, and then divorce them; he hates putting away.⁵ God’s love ties the marriage-knot so fast that neither death nor hell can break it asunder.

2. The second argument is, from the power of God. In the text, we ‘are kept by the power of God unto salvation.’ Every person in the Trinity hath a hand in making a believer persevere. God the Father establisheth;⁶ God the Son confirms;⁷ God the Holy Ghost seals;⁸ so that it is the power of God that keeps us. Alas, we are not kept by our own power! The Pelagians held, that man, by his own power, might overcome temptation and persevere. But St Austin confutes them. ‘Man,’ saith he, ‘prays unto God for perseverance, which would be absurd, if he had power of himself to persevere.’ And, saith St Austin, ‘if all the power be inherent in a man’s self, then why should not one persevere as well as another? Why not Judas as well as Peter?’⁹ So that it is not by any other than the power of God that we are kept. As the Lord preserved Israel from perishing in the wilderness, till he brought them to Caanan: the same care will he take, if not in a miraculous manner, yet in a spiritual, invisible manner, in preserving his people in a state of grace, till he bring them to the celestial Canaan. As the heathens feigned of Atlas, that he did bear up the heavens from falling,

the power of God is that Atlas which bears up the saints from falling. It is disputed, whether grace of itself may not perish, as Adam’s; yet sure I am, grace kept by the power of God cannot perish.

3. The third argument is taken from God’s electing love. Such as God hath from all eternity elected to glory cannot fall away finally; but every true believer is elected to glory, therefore he cannot fall away. What can frustrate election, or make God’s decree void? This argument stands like Mount Sion, which cannot be moved; insomuch that some of the Papists hold, that those who have absolute election cannot fall away, ‘the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.’¹⁰ The foundation of God is nothing else but God’s decree in election; and this stands sure, God will not alter it, others cannot.

4. The fourth argument is taken from believers’ union with Christ. They are knit to Christ, as the members to the head, by the nerves and ligaments of faith, so that they cannot be broken off.¹¹ What was once said of Christ’s natural body, is true of his mystical. ‘A bone of it shall not be broken.’ As it is not possible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together, so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, ever to be separated: Christ and his members make one body. Now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ lose any member of his body mystical, and be perfect? In short, if one believer may be broken off from Christ, then, by the same rule, why not another? Why not all? And so Christ should be a head without a body.

5. The fifth argument is taken from the nature of a purchase. A man will not lay down his money for a purchase which may be lost, and the fee-simple alienated. Christ died, that he might purchase use as a people to himself for ever, ‘having obtained eternal redemption for us.’¹² Would Christ, think ye, have shed his blood that we might believe in him for a while, and then fall away? Do we think Christ will lose his purchase?

6. The sixth argument is from a believer’s ‘victory over the world.’ The argument stands thus: He who overcomes the world, doth persevere in grace; but a believer doth overcome the

¹ 1 Jno. 2. 9. ² 1 Jno. 2. 27. ³ Jno. 10. 28. ⁴ Je. 32. 40. ⁵ Ho. 2. 19. ⁶ Mal. 2. 16. ⁷ 1 Cor. 1. 21. ⁸ 1 Cor. 1. 8. ⁹ Eph. 1. 13.

¹⁰ 2 Ti. 2. 19. ¹¹ Eph. 3. ¹² Ho. 9. 12.

world, therefore he perseveres in grace, 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'¹ A man may lose a single battle in the field, yet at last win the victory. A child of God may be foiled in a single battle against temptation (as Peter was), but at last he is victorious. Now, if a saint be crowned victor, if the world be conquered by him, he must needs persevere.

I come next to answer some objections of the Arminians. The first objection of Arminians, is, *If a believer shall persevere in grace, then, to what purpose are all those admonitions in scripture?* 'Let him take heed lest he fall';² 'Let us fear, lest any of you seem to come short.'³ *These admonitions seem to be superfluous and vain, if a saint shall certainly persevere.*

A. No, these counsels and admonitions are necessary to caution believers against carelessness; they are as goads and spurs to quicken them to a greater diligence in working out their salvation. These admonitions do not imply the saints can fall away, but they are preservatives to keep them from falling away. Christ told some of his disciples, they should abide in him, yet he exhorts them to abide in him.⁴ His exhorting them was not in the least to question their abiding in him, but to awaken their diligence, and make them pray the harder that they might abide in him.

The second objection is, 'It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.'

A. This place of scripture hath no force in it, for the apostle here speaks of hypocrites. He shows how far they may go, yet fall away.

1. 'They who were once enlightened:' men may have great illuminations, yet fall away. Was not Judas enlightened? 2. They have been made 'partakers of the Holy Ghost,' the common gifts of the Spirit, not the special grace. 3. They have 'tasted the good word of God.' Tasting here is opposed to eating; the hypocrite may have a kind of taste of the sweetness of religion, but his taste doth not nourish. There is a great deal of difference between one that takes a gargle and a cordial; the gargle only washeth his mouth, he tastes it, and puts it out again,—but a cordial is drunk

down which nourisheth and cherisheth the spirits. The hypocrite, who hath only some smack or taste of religion, as one tastes a gargle, may fall away. 4. And have felt 'the powers of the world to come:' that is, they may have such apprehensions of the glory of heaven, as to be affected with it, and seem to have some joy in the thoughts of it, yet fall away: as in the parable of the stony ground.⁵ All this is spoken of the hypocrite; but it doth not therefore prove, that the true believer, who is effectually wrought upon, can fall away. Though meteors fall, it doth not therefore follow, that true stars fall. That this scripture speaks not of sound believers, is clear. 'But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.'

USE 1. See the excellency of grace, it perseveres: other things are but for a season; health and riches are sweet, but they are but for a season,—but grace is a blossom of eternity. The seed of God remains.⁶ Grace may suffer an eclipse, not a dissolution. It is called substance, for its solidity; and durable riches, for its permanency.⁷ It lasts as long as the soul,—as heaven lasts. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires, but it runs parallel with eternity.

Branch 2. See here that which may excite in the saints everlasting love and gratitude to God. What can make us love God more than the fixedness of his love to us? He is not only the author of grace, but finisher; his love is perpetuated and carried on to our salvation: 'my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life.'⁸ 'My sheep,' there is election; 'hear my voice,' there is vocation; 'and I know them,' there is justification; 'and I give unto them eternal life,' there is glorification. How may this make us love God, and set up the monuments and trophies of his praise! How much have we done to cause God to withdraw his Spirit, and suffer us to fall finally! yet that he should keep us, let his name be blessed, and his memorial eternized, who keepeth the feet of his saints.⁹

Branch 3. See whence it is that saints do persevere in holiness: it is solely to be ascribed to the power of God. We are kept by his power,—kept as in a garrison. It is a wonder any christian perseveres, if you consider,—1, Corruption within. The tares are mingled with the wheat, there is more sin than grace,

¹ 1 Jno. 5. 4. ² 1 Cor. 10. 12. ³ He. 4. 1. ⁴ Jno. 15.

⁵ He. 6. 4

⁶ Mat. 13. 20. ⁷ Mat. 13. 9. ⁸ 1 Jno. 3. 9. ⁹ Pr. 8. 21.

¹⁰ Pr. 8. 18.

¹¹ Jno. 10. 27.

¹² 1 Sa. 2. 9.

yet grace is habitually predominant. Grace is like a spark in the sea, a wonder it is not quenched, a wonder sin doth not destroy grace; that it doth not do, as sometimes the nurse to the infant, overlay it, and it dies: so that this infant of grace is not smothered by corruption. 2. Temptations without. Satan envies us happiness, and he raiseth his militia, stirs up persecution; he shoots his fiery darts of temptations; they are called darts for their swiftness, fiery for their terribleness. We are every day beset with devils; as it was a wonder Daniel was kept alive in the midst of the roaring lions: so, that there are many roaring devils about us, and yet we are not torn in pieces. Now, whence is it we stand against these powerful temptations? We are kept by the power of God. 3. The world's golden snares, riches and pleasures. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?'¹ How many have been cast away upon these golden sands, as Demas?² What a wonder any soul perseveres in religion, that the earth doth not choke the fire of all good affections? Whence is this but from the power of God? We are kept by his power.

USE 2. *Consolation.* This doctrine of perseverance is as a Bezoar stone; it is a sovereign cordial to keep up the spirits of the godly from fainting. There is nothing doth more trouble a child of God than this, he fears he shall never hold out; these weak legs of mine will never carry me to heaven. But perseverance is an inseparable fruit of sanctification. Once in Christ, and for ever in Christ. A believer may fall from some degrees of grace, but not from the state of grace; an Israelite could never wholly sell or alienate his land of inheritance.³ A type of our heavenly inheritance, which cannot be wholly alienated from us. How despairing is the Arminian doctrine of falling from grace? To-day a saint,—to-morrow a reprobate; to-day a Peter,—to-morrow a Judas. This must needs cut the sinews of a christian's endeavour, and be as the boring an hole in the vessel, to make all the wine of his joy run out. Were the Arminian doctrine true, how could the apostle say, the seed of God remains in him,⁴ and the anointing of God abides?⁵ What comfort were it to have one's name written in the book of life, if it might be blotted out again? But, be assured, for your comfort, grace, if true, though never so weak,

shall persevere; though a christian hath but little grace to trade with, yet he need not fear breaking, because God doth not only give him a stock of grace, but will keep his stock for him. Grace may be shaken with fears and doubts, but it cannot be plucked up by the roots. Fear not falling away. If any thing should hinder the saints' perseverance, then it must be either sin or temptation; but neither of these. 1. Not the sin of believers. That which humbles them shall not damn them; but their sins are a mean to humble them, they gather grapes off thorns; from the thorn of sin they gather the grape of humility. 2. Not temptation. The devil lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of a saint's grace; but this cannot do it. Temptation is a medicine for security; the more Satan tempts, the more the saints pray. When Paul had the messenger of Satan to buffet him: 'for this I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.'⁶ Thus nothing can break off a believer from Christ, or hinder his perseverance. Let this wine be given to such as are of an heavy heart: this perseverance is comfort. 1. In the loss of worldly comforts. When our goods may be taken away, our grace cannot: 'Mary hath chosen the better part which cannot be taken from her.'⁷ 2. In the hour of death. When all things fail, friends take their farewell of us, yet still grace remains. Death may separate all things else from us but grace; a christian may say on his deathbed, as Olevan once, 'sight is gone,—speech and hearing are departing,—but the loving-kindness of God will never depart.'

Q. 3. *What motives and incentives are there to make christians persevere?*

A. 1. It is the crown and glory of a christian to persevere. 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if found in the way of righteousness.'⁸ When grey hairs shine with golden virtues, this is a crown of glory. The church of Thyatira was best at last: 'I know thy patience and thy works, and the last to be more than the first.' The excellency of a building is not in having the first stone laid, but when it is finished. The glory and excellency of a christian is, when he hath finished the work of faith.

A. 2. You are within a few days' march of heaven. Salvation is near to you: 'now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.'⁹ Christians, it is but a little while and you will have

¹ Lu. 18. 24. ² Ti. 4. 10. ³ Lu. 15. 23. ⁴ 1 Jno. 3. 9.
⁵ 1 Jno. 2. 27.

⁶ 2 Co. 12. 8. ⁷ Lu. 10. 42. ⁸ Pr. 16. 31. ⁹ Re. 2. 19.
¹⁰ Ro. 13. 11.

done weeping and praying, and be triumphing; you shall put off your mourning, and put on white robes; you shall put off your armour, and put on a victorious crown; you who have made a good progress in religion, you are almost ready to commence and take your degree of glory; now is your salvation nearer than when you began to believe. When a man is almost at the end of a race, will he now tire, or faint away? O labour to persevere, your salvation is now nearer, you have but a little way to go, and you will set your foot in heaven! Though the way be up-hill and full of thorns, namely, sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, and shortly you shall rest from your labours.

A. 3. How sad is it not to persevere in holiness! You expose yourselves to the reproaches of men, and the rebukes of God. First, to the reproaches of men. They will deride both you and your profession: 'this man began to build, and was not able to finish.'¹ Such is he who begins in religion, and doth not persevere: he is the scum and derision of all. Secondly, to the rebukes of God. God is most severe against such as fall off, because they bring an evil report upon religion. Apostasy breeds a bitter worm in conscience; what a worm did Spira feel! And it brings swift damnation; it is a drawing back to perdition.² God will make his sword drunk with the blood of apostates.

A. 4. The promises of mercy are annexed only to perseverance: 'he that overcometh, shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.'³ The promise is not to him that fights, but that overcomes: 'ye are they which have continued with me, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.'⁴ 'The promise of a kingdom,' saith Chrysostom, 'is not made to them that heard Christ or followed him, but that continued with him.' Perseverance carries away the garland; no man hath the crown set upon his head, but he who holds out to the end of the race. O therefore, by all this, be persuaded to persevere! God makes no account of such as do not persevere. Who esteems of corn that sheds before harvest, or fruit that falls from the tree before it be ripe?

Q. 4. What expedients or means may be used for a christian's perseverance?

A. 1. Take heed of those things which will make you desist and fall away. *1st.* Take heed of presumption. Do not presume upon

your own strength; exercise an holy fear and jealousy over your own hearts: 'be not high-minded but fear';⁵ 'let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.'⁶ It was Peter's sin, he leaned more upon his grace than upon Christ, and then he fell. A christian hath cause to fear lest the lust and deceit of his heart betray him; take heed of presuming; fear begets prayer, prayer begets strength, and strength begets steadfastness. *2dly,* Take heed of hypocrisy. Judas was first a sly hypocrite, and then a traitor: 'their heart was not right with God, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.'⁷ If there be any venom or malignity in the blood, it will break forth into a plague-sore. The venom of hypocrisy is in danger of breaking out into the plague-sore of scandal. *3dly,* Beware of an evil heart of unbelief, 'take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' Whence is apostasy but from incredulity? Men do not believe the truth, and then they fall from the truth. Unbelieving and unstable go together: 'they believed not in God; they turned back.'⁸

A. 2. If you would be pillars in the temple of God, and persevere in sanctity

First, Look that you enter into religion upon a right ground; be well grounded in the distinct knowledge of God; you must know the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost. Such as know not God aright, will by degrees fall off. The Samaritans sometimes sided with the Jews when they were in favour, but afterwards disclaimed all kindred with them, when Antiochus persecuted the Jews; and no wonder the Samaritans were no more fixed in religion, if you consider what Christ saith of the Samaritans, 'ye worship ye know not what:'⁹ they were ignorant of the true God. Let your knowledge of God be clear, and serve him purely out of choice, and then you will persevere: 'I have chosen the way of truth, I have stuck unto thy testimonies.'¹¹

Secondly, Get a real work of grace in your heart: 'it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.'¹² Nothing will hold out but grace; it is only this anointing abides; paint will fall off. Get an heart-changing work: 'but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.'¹³ Be not content with baptism of water,

⁵ Ro. 11. 20. ⁶ 1 Co. 10. 12. ⁷ Ps. 78. 37. ⁸ He. 3. 12.

⁹ Ps. 78. 22, 41. ¹⁰ Jno. 4. 22. ¹¹ Ps. 119. 30, 31.

¹² He. 13. 9. ¹³ Co. 6. 11.

² Lu. 14. 30. ³ He. 10. 39. ⁴ Re. 3. 5. ⁵ 1 Lu. 22. 28.

without baptism of the Spirit; the reason men persevere not in religion, is for want of a vital principle; a branch must needs wither, that hath no root to grow upon.

Thirdly, If you would persevere, be very sincere. Perseverance grows only upon the root of sincerity: 'let integrity and uprightness preserve me.'¹ The breastplate of sincerity can never be shot through. How many storms was Job in? the devil set against him, his wife tempted him to curse God, his friends accused him of being a hypocrite, here was enough, one would think, to have made him to desist from religion: yet for all this, he perseveres. What preserved him? It was his sincerity: 'my righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.'²

Fourthly, If you would persevere, be humble. St Chrysostom calls humility the mother of all the graces. God lets a poor, humble christian stand, when others of higher parts, and who have higher thoughts of themselves, fall off by apostasy. They are likeliest to persevere, whom God will give most grace to: 'but he gives grace to the humble.'³ They are likeliest to persevere, who have God dwelling in them: but God dwells in the humble soul.⁴ 'The Holy Spirit will not rest but on the humble man,' BERN. The lower the tree roots in the earth, the firmer it is; the more the soul is rooted in humility, the more established it is, and is in less danger of falling away.

Fifthly, Would you persevere, cherish the grace of faith. Faith doth establish the mind: 'by faith ye stand.'⁵ Faith knits us to Christ, as the members are knit to the head by nerves and sinews. Faith fills us with love to God,—it works by love; and he who loves God, will

rather die than desert him. The soldier who loves his general, will die in his service. Faith gives us a prospect of heaven, it shows an invisible glory; and he who hath Christ in his heart, and a crown in his eye, will not faint away. O cherish faith! Keep your faith, and your faith will keep you; while the pilot keeps his ship, his ship keeps him.

Sixthly, Would we persevere, let us seek God's power to help us; we are kept by the power of God. The child is safest when it is held in the nurse's arms; so are we, when we are held in the arms of free grace. It is not our holding God, but his holding us, preserves us. When a boat is tied to a rock, it is secure; so when we are fast tied to the Rock of Ages, then we are impregnable. O engage God's power to help us to persevere! We engage his power by prayer; let us pray to him to keep us; 'hold up my goings in thy path, that my footsteps slip not.'⁶ It was a good prayer of Beza, 'Lord perfect what thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven.'

Seventhly, If you would persevere, set before your eyes the noble examples of those who have persevered in religion. What a glorious army of saints and martyrs have gone before us! How constant to the death was St Paul!⁷ How persevering in the faith were Ignatius, Polycarp, Athanasius! These were stars in their orbs, pillars in the temple of God. Let us look on their zeal and courage, and be animated: 'seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us.'⁸ The crown is set at the end of the race; if we win the race, we shall wear the crown.

A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. 1. 21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

SAINT PAUL was a great admirer of Christ,—he desired to know nothing but Christ and him crucified.⁹ No medicine like the blood of Christ; and in the text, 'to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'

I. 'For me to live is Christ.' We must understand Paul of a spiritual life. 'For me to

live is Christ,' i. e. Christ is my life: or thus, my life is made up of Christ; as a wicked man's life is made up of sin, so Paul's life was made up of Christ, he was full of Christ. But that I may give you the sense of the text more fully, take it in these three particulars:

1. Christ is the principle of my life.

¹ Ps. 25. 21. ² Job 27. 6. ³ 1 Pe. 5. 5. ⁴ Is. 57. 15.
⁵ 2 Co. 1. 24. ⁶ 1 Co. 2. 2. ⁷ Ga. 5. 5.

⁸ Ps. 17. 5.

⁹ Acts 21. 13.

¹⁰ He. 12. 1.

2. Christ is the end of my life.

3. Christ is the joy of my life.

1. 'For me to live is Christ,' i. e. Christ is the principle of my life. I fetch my spiritual life from Christ, as the branch fetcheth its sap from the root: 'Christ liveth in me.'¹ Jesus Christ is an head of influence; he sends forth life and spirits into me, to quicken me to every holy action. Thus, 'for me to live is Christ;' he is the principle of my life; from his fulness I live, as the vine-branch lives from the root.

2. 'For me to live is Christ,' i. e. Christ is the end of my life,—I live not to myself but to Christ. So Grotius and Causabon, 'for me to live is Christ:' all my living is to do service to Christ; 'whether we live, we live unto the Lord,'² when we lay out ourselves wholly for Christ. As the factor trades for the merchant, so we trade for Christ's interest, we propagate his gospel; the design of our life is to exalt him, and make the crown upon his head flourish. Now, it may be said, 'for us to live is Christ,'—our whole life is a living to him.

3. 'For me to live is Christ,' i. e. Christ is the joy of my life: 'God my exceeding joy,'³ or the cream of my joy. A christian rejoiceth in Christ's righteousness; he can rejoice in Christ, when worldly joys are gone; when the tulip in a garden withers, a man rejoiceth in his jewels: when relations die, a saint can rejoice in Christ the pearl of price. In this sense, 'for me to live is Christ,' he is the joy of my life; if Christ were gone, my life would be a death to me.

Use. It should exhort us all to labour to say as the apostle, 'for me to live is Christ.' Christ is the principle of my life, the end of my life, the joy of my life. 'For me to live is Christ;' and then we may comfortably conclude, that to die shall be gain.

II. And that brings me to the second part of the text, 'and to die is gain.'

Doct. To a believer death is great gain. A saint can tell what his losses for Christ are, but he cannot tell how great his gains are at death, 'to me to die is gain.' Death to a believer is the daybreak of eternal brightness. To show fully what a believer's gains are at death, were a task too great for an angel, all hyperboles fall short, the reward of glory exceeds our very faith: only let me give you some dark views and imperfect lineaments of that infinite glory

the saints shall gain at the hour of death; 'to me to die is gain.'

1. Believers at death shall gain a writ of ease from all sins and troubles; they shall be in a state of impeccability.* Sin expires with their life. I think sometimes what an happy state that will be, never to have a sinful thought more; and they shall have a rest from their troubles. Here David cried out, 'my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing,'⁴ 'What is a long life but a lengthened torment,' AUG. Life begins with a cry, and ends with a groan; but at death all troubles die.

2. Believers at death shall gain the glorious sight of God. They shall see him intellectually with the eyes of their mind, which divines call the beatifical vision; if there were not such an intellectual sight of God, how do the spirits of just men, made perfect, see him? They shall behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ; and if it be pleasant to behold the sun, then how blessed a sight will it be to see Christ the Sun of Righteousness clothed with our human nature, shining in glory above the angels? Through Christ's flesh, as through a trans-

* Ps. 31. 10.

* In heaven, the believer will be removed out of the reach of evil. Those happy souls, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, 'shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.' 'God himself shall be with them, and be their God. He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.' The ransomed host who stand upon Mount Zion as conquerors through the blood of the Lamb, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of the highest good. They shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. 'They shall eat of the hidden manna; and receive a white stone, in which is written a new name which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.' 'They shall be clothed with white raiment, and their name shall not be blotted out of the book of life.' 'The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water.' 'They shall inherit all things,' and 'reign with Christ for ever and ever.' Such is the blessedness of the saints. To this blessedness, the Spirit and the Bride say, 'come—and let him that heareth say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' With unextinguishable desire, may we seek the Lamb's face and favour. Never let us rest in outward forms, nor in any of the appointed means of grace; but ever bearing the blessed end in view, may we labour to apprehend that, for which also we are apprehended by his grace, till we attain at length the prize of the high calling of God, even eternal life, through the exceeding riches of his love and mercy. Thou hast said, 'surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Though billows of sorrow should roll,
And surround me on every side;
Yet thou canst the tempest control,
My Saviour, my Refuge, my Guide.

Thy smile nukes the soul to expand,
And graces celestial to grow;
With rapture I gaze on the land,
Where pleasures incessantly flow.

May this my delight ever be,
On earth his rich grace to record;
And when from these temples set free,
With joy ascend up to the Lord.

¹ Ga. 2. 20.

² Ro. 11. 8.

³ Ps. 43. 4.

parent glass, some bright rays and beams of the Godhead shall display themselves to glorified eyes; the sight of God through Christ will be very complacential and delightful; the terror of God's essence will be taken away; God's majesty will be mixed with beauty, and sweetened with clemency; it will be infinitely delightful to the saints to see the amiable aspects and smiles of God's face. Which brings me to the third thing.

3. The saints at death shall not only have a sight of God, but shall enjoy the love of God; there shall be no more a veil on God's face, nor his smiles chequered with frowns, but his love shall discover itself in all its orient beauty and fragrant sweetness. Here the saints pray for God's love, and they have a few drops, but there they shall have as much as their vessel can receive. To know this love that passeth knowledge, this will cause jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints as are superlative, and would soon overwhelm them if God did not make them able to hear it.

4. Believers at death shall gain a celestial palace, an house not made with hands.¹ Here the saints are straitened for room, they have but mean cottages to live in, but they shall have a royal palace to live in; here is but their sojourning-house, there in heaven is their mansion-house, an house built high above all the visible orbs, an house bespangled with light,² enriched with pearls and precious stones.³ And this is not their landlord's house, but their Father's house;⁴ and this house stands all upon consecrated ground; it is set out by transparent glass to show the holiness of it.⁵

5. Believers at death shall gain the sweet society of glorified saints and angels: this will add something to the felicity of heaven, as every star adds some lustre to the firmament. *1st*, The society of the glorified saints; we shall see them in their souls, as well as in their bodies; their bodies shall be so clear and bright, that we shall see their souls shining through their bodies, as the wine through the glass; and believers at death shall have converse with the saints glorified. And how delightful will that be, when they shall be freed from all their sinful corruptions, pride, envy, passion, censoriousness, which are scars upon them here to disfigure them! In heaven there shall be perfect love among the saints; they

shall, as the olive and myrtle, sweetly embrace each other; the saints shall know one another, as Luther speaks. If in the transfiguration, Peter knew Moses and Elias, whom he never saw before,⁶ then much more, in the glorified state, the saints shall perfectly know one another, though they never saw them before. *2d*, The saints at death shall behold the angels with the glorified eye of their understanding. The wings of the cherubim, representing the angels, were made of fine gold; to denote both their sanctity and splendour; the angels are compared to lightning,⁷ because of those sparkling beams of majesty, which as lightning shoot from them. And when saints and angels shall meet and sing together in concert in the heavenly choir, what divine harmony, what joyful triumphs will it create!

6. Believers at death shall gain perfection of holiness. Here grace was but in its cradle, very imperfect; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting; believers are said to receive but 'the first-fruits of the Spirit.'⁸ But at death the saints shall arrive at perfection, their knowledge clear, their sanctity perfect, their sun shall be in its full meridian splendour. They need not then pray for increase of grace; they shall love God as much as they would love him, and as much as he desires to have them love him; they shall be then, in respect of holiness, as the angels of God.

7. At death the saints shall gain a royal magnificent feast. I told you before what a glorious palace they shall have; but a man may starve in a house, if there be no cheer. The saints at death shall have a royal banquet, shadowed out in scripture by a marriage-supper.⁹ Bullinger and Gregory the Great, understand by that marriage-supper of the Lamb, the stately, magnificent festival the saints shall have in heaven; they shall feed on the tree of life.¹⁰ They shall have the heavenly nectar and ambrosia,—'the spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate.'¹¹ This royal supper of the Lamb, will not only satisfy hunger, but prevent it: 'they shall hunger no more.'¹² Nor can there be any surfeit at this feast, because a fresh course will be continually serving; new and fresh delights will spring from God; therefore the tree of life in paradise is said to bear twelve sorts of fruit.¹³

8. Believers at death shall gain honour and dignity, they shall reign as kings; therefore

¹ 2 Co. 5. 1. ² Co. 1. 12. ³ Re. 21. 19. ⁴ Jno. 14. 2.
⁵ Re. 21. 27.

⁶ Mat. 17. 3. ⁷ Mat. 28. 3. ⁸ Ro. 8. 22. ⁹ Re. 19. 9.
¹⁰ Re. 22. ¹¹ Ca. 8. 2. ¹² Re. 16. ¹³ Re. 22. 2.

we read of the ensigns of their royalty, their white robes and crowns celestial.¹ We read that the doors of the holy of holies were made 'of palm-trees and open flowers, covered with gold:'² an emblem of that victory and triumph, and that golden garland of honour wherewith God hath invested the saints glorified. When all worldly honour shall lie in the dust, the mace, the star, the robe of ermine, the imperial diadem, then shall the saints' honour remain; not one jewel shall be plucked out of their crown; they shall gain at death a blessed eternity. If the saints could have the least suspicion or fear of losing their glory, it would much cool and embitter their joy; but their crown fadeth not away.³ As the wicked have a worm that never dies, so the elect have a crown that never fades. EVER, is a short word, but hath no ending. 'There shall be a joy that hath no end,' BERN. 'The things which are not seen are eternal,'⁴ 'at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'⁵ Who can span eternity? Millions of ages stand but for ciphers in eternity. This is the *clah*, or highest strain of the saints' glory; ever in Christ's bosom.

Q. How come the saints to have all this gain?

A. Believers have a right to all this gain at death upon divers accounts: by virtue of the Father's donation, the Son's purchase, the Holy Ghost's earnest,—and faith's acceptance. Therefore the state of future glory, is called the saint's proper inheritance.⁶ They are heirs of God, and have a right to inherit.

USE 1. See the great difference between the death of the godly and the wicked: the godly are gainers at death, the wicked are great losers at death. They lose four things: 1. They lose the world, and that is a great loss to the wicked; they laid up their treasure upon earth, and to be turned out of it all at once is a great loss. 2. They lose their souls.⁷ The soul was at first a noble piece of coin, which God stamped his own image upon; this celestial spark is more precious than the whole globe of the world, but the sinner's soul is lost; not that the souls of the wicked are annihilated at death, but damnified. 3. They lose heaven. Heaven is the royal seat of the blessed; it is the region of happiness, the map of perfection. There is that manna which is angels' food: there is the garden of spices, the bed of perfumes, the river of pleasure. Sinners, at death, lose all

this. 4. They lose their hopes; for though they lived wickedly, yet they hoped God was merciful, and they hoped that they should go to heaven. Their hope was not an anchor, but a spider's web. Now, at death, they lose their hopes, they see they did but flatter themselves into hell: 'whose hope shall be cut off.'⁸ That is sad, to have a man's life and his hope cut off together

USE 2. If the saints gain such glorious things at death; then how may they desire death? Doth not every one desire preferment? No one is happy till after his death. Faith gives a title to heaven, death a possession. Though we should be desirous of doing service here, yet we should be ambitious of being with Christ.⁹ We should be content to live, but willing to die. Is it not a blessed thing to be freed from sin, and to lie for ever in the bosom of divine love? Is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven, and to be singing divine anthems of praise among the angels? Doth not the bride desire the marriage-day, especially if she were to be matched unto the crown? What is the place we now live in, but a place of banishment from God? We are in a wilderness, while the angels live at court. Here we are combating with Satan, and should not we desire to be out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and to receive a victorious crown? Think what it will be to have always a smiling aspect from Christ's face,—to be brought into the banqueting-house, and have the banner of his love displayed over you! O ye saints, desire death; it is your ascension-day to heaven! 'Go forth, my soul, what fearest thou?' said Hilarion on his deathbed. Another holy man said, 'Lord, lead me to that glory which I have seen as through a glass; haste, Lord, and do not tarry!' Some plants thrive best when they are transplanted: believers, when they are by death transplanted, cannot choose but thrive, because they have Christ's sweet sunbeams shining upon them. And what though the passage through the valley of the shadow of death be troublesome? who would not be willing to pass a tempestuous sea, if he were sure to be crowned so soon as he came to shore.

USE 3. Comfort in the loss of our dear and pious relations. They, when they die, are not only taken away from the evil to come, but they are great gainers by death, they leave a

¹ 1 Ti. 4. 7. ² 1 Ki. 6. 35. ³ 1 Pe. 5. 4. ⁴ 2 Co. 4. 18. ⁵ Ps. 16. 11. ⁶ Co. 1. 12. ⁷ Mat. 16. 26 27.

⁸ Job 8. 14.

⁹ Phi. 1. 23.

wilderness, and go to a paradise, they change their complaints into thanksgivings, they leave their sorrows behind, and enter into the joy of their Lord. Why should we weep for their preferment? Believers have not their portion paid till the day of their death: God's promise

is his bond to make over heaven in reversion to them; but though they have his bond, they do not receive their portion till the day of death. O rejoice to think of their happiness who die in the Lord! To them 'to die is gain;' they are as rich as heaven can make them.

A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. 1. 21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

HOPE is a christian's anchor which he casts within the veil: 'rejoicing in hope.'¹ A christian's hope is not in this life, but he 'hath hope in his death.'² The best of a saint's comfort begins when his life ends; the wicked have all their heaven here: 'wo unto you, rich, you have received your consolation.'³ You may make your acquittance, and write, 'received in full payment;' 'son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;'⁴ but a saint's happiness is in reversion; 'the righteous hath hope in his death.' God keeps the best wine till last. If Cato the heathen said, 'to me to die is gain,' he saw mortality to be a mercy: then, what may a believer say? 'the day of death is better than the day of one's birth.'⁵ A queen of this land said, she preferred her coffin before her cradle.

Q. 1. *What benefits do believers receive at death?*

A. 1. They have great immunities.—2. Their bodies are united to Christ in the grave till the resurrection.—3. They pass immediately into a state of glory.

I. The saints at death have great immunities and freedoms. An apprentice when out of his time is made free: when the saints are out of their time of living, then they are made free, not made free till death.

1. At death they are freed from a body of sin. There are in the best, some remainders and relics of corruption: 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!'⁶ By the body of death, is meant the *congeries*,—the mass and lump of sin. It may well be called a body for its weightiness, and a body of death for its noisomeness. 1. It weighs us down; sin hinders us from doing good. A christian is like a bird that would be flying up, but hath a string tied to its legs to hinder it;

so he would be flying up to heaven with the wings of desire, but sin hinders him: 'for what I would, that I do not.'⁷ A christian is like a ship that is under sail, and at anchor; grace would sail forward, but sin is the anchor that holds it back. 2. Sin is more active in its sphere than grace. How stirring was lust in David, when his grace lay dormant! 3. Sin sometimes gets the mastery, and leads a saint captive: 'the evil that I would not, that I do.'⁸ Paul was like a man carried down the stream, and could not bear up against it. How oft is a child of God overpowered with pride and passion! Therefore Paul calls sin a law in his members; it binds as a law; it hath a kind of jurisdiction over the soul as Cesar had over the senate. 4. Sin defiles the soul, it is like a stain to beauty, it turns the soul's azure brightness into sable. 5. Sin debilitates us, it disarms us of our strength: 'I am this day weak, though anointed king.'⁹ so, though a saint be crowned with grace, yet he is weak, though anointed a spiritual king. 6. Sin is ever restless: 'the flesh lusts against the Spirit.'¹⁰ It is an inmate that is always quarrelling; like Marcellus, that Roman captain, of whom Hannibal said, whether he did beat or was beaten, he would never be quiet. 7. Sin adheres to us, we cannot get rid of it; it may be compared to a wild fig-tree growing on a wall, though the roots are pulled up, yet there are some fibres, some strings of it in the joints of the stonework, which cannot be gotten out. 8. Sin mingles with our duties and graces; we cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. This makes a child of God weary of his life, and makes him water his couch with his tears, to think sin so strong a party, and he should often offend that God whom he loves; this made Paul cry out, 'O wretched man that I am!'

¹ Ro. 12. 12. ² Pr. 14. 32. ³ Lu. 6. 24. ⁴ Lu. 16. 25. ⁵ Ec. 7. 1.

⁶ Ro. 7. 15. ⁷ Ro. 7. 19. ⁸ Ro. 7. 24. ⁹ 2 Sa. 3. 39. ¹⁰ Ga. 5. 17.

Hence he did not cry out of his affliction, of his prison-chain, but of the body of sin. Now a believer at death shall be freed from sin; he is not taken away in, but from his sins; he shall never have a vain, proud thought more; he shall never grieve the Spirit of God any more; sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world. The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they killed all serpents and venomous creatures: such a day will the day of death be to a believer, it will destroy all his sins, which, like so many serpents have stung him. Death smites a believer as the angel did Peter, he made his chains fall off, so death makes all the chains of sin fall off.¹ Believers at death are made perfect in holiness: 'the spirits of just made perfect.'² At death the souls of believers recover their virgin purity. O what a blessed privilege is this, to be without spot or wrinkle,³ to be purer than the sunbeams, to be as free from sin as the angels! This makes a believer so desirous to have his pass to be gone; he would fain live in that pure air where no black vapours of sin arise.

II. At death the saints shall be freed from all the troubles and incumbrances to which this life is subject. 'Sin is the seed sown, and trouble is the harvest reaped,' EURIP. Life and trouble are married together; there is more in life to wean us than to tempt us. Parents divide a portion of sorrow to their children, and yet leave enough for themselves: 'man is born to trouble,'⁴ he is heir to it, it is his birthright, you may as well separate weight from lead as trouble from the life of man; it well suits king Henry's emblem, a crown hung in a bush of thorns. There is a far greater proportion of bitterness than pleasure in this life: 'I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon,'⁵ for one sweet ingredient there were two bitter; for the cinnamon, there were myrrh and aloes. A man's grace will not exempt him from troubles: 'few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.'⁶ Though he was a godly patriarch,—though he had met with God,⁷ and named 'the name of the place Peniel, for I have seen God face to face,'—yet he had his troubles. There are many things to imbitter life and cause trouble, and death frees us from all.—1. *Care*. The mind is full of perplexed thoughts, how to bring about such a design, how to prevent such an evil: the

Greek word for *care*, comes from a primitive in the Greek, that signifies, 'to cut the heart in pieces.' Care doth disrueciate the mind, waste the spirits; no such bitter bread as the bread of carefulness.⁸ Care is a spiritual canker which eats out the comfort of life; death is the cure of care.—2. *Fear*. Fear is the ague of the soul which sets it a shaking; 'there is torment in fear.'⁹ Fear is like Prometheus's vulture, it gnaws upon the heart. There is a mistrustful fear, a fear of want; and a distracting fear, a fear of danger; and a discouraging fear, a fear God doth not love us. These fears leave sad impressions upon the mind; now at death a believer is freed from these torturing fears; he now knows he is passed from death to life; he is as far from fear as the damned are from hope; the grave buries a christian's fear.—3. *Labour*: 'all things are full of labour.'¹⁰ Some labour in the mine; others among the muses; God hath made a law, 'in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread,' but death gives a believer a *quietus est*; it takes him off from his day-labour: 'blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, they rest from their labours.'¹¹ What needs working, when they have their reward? What needs fighting, when the crown is set on their head? They rest from their labours.—4. *Suffering*: believers are as a lily among thorns; as the dove among the birds of prey. The wicked have an antipathy against the righteous, and secret hatred will break forth into open violence: 'he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit.'¹² The dragon is described with seven heads and ten horns.¹³ He plotteth with the one, and pusheth with the other. But at death the godly shall be freed from the molestations of the wicked; they shall never be pestered with these vermin more: 'there (viz. in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling.'¹⁴ Death doeth to a believer, as Joseph of Arimathea did to Christ, it takes him down from the cross, and gives him a writ of ease; the eagle that flies high, cannot be stung with the serpent; death gives the soul the wings of the eagle, that it flies above all these venomous serpents here below.—5. *Temptation*. Though Satan be a conquered enemy, yet he is a restless enemy.¹⁵ He walketh about; the devil is always going his diocese, he hath his snares and his darts; one he tempts with riches, another with

¹ Acts 12. 7. ² He. 12. 23. ³ Eph. 5. 27. ⁴ Job 5. 7.
⁵ Pr. 7. 17. ⁶ Ge. 47. 9. ⁷ Ge. 32. 30.

⁸ Ez. 12. 19. ⁹ 1 Jno. 4. 18. ¹⁰ Ec. 1. 8. ¹¹ Re. 14. 13.
¹² Ga. 1. 29. ¹³ Re. 12. 3. ¹⁴ Job 3. 17. ¹⁵ 1 Pe. 5. 8.

beauty. It is no small trouble to be continually followed with temptations; it is as bad as for a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted; but death will free a child of God from temptation, he shall never be vexed more with the old serpent. After death hath shot its darts at us, the devil shall have done shooting his; though grace puts a believer out of the devil's possession, only death frees him from the devil's temptation.—6. *Sorrow*. A cloud of sorrow gathers in the heart, and drops into tears: 'my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.'¹ It was a curse: 'in sorrow thou shalt bring forth.'² Many things occasion sorrow; sickness, lawsuits, treachery of friends, disappointment of hopes, loss of estate: 'call me not Naomi, call me Mara:'³ 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' Sorrow is the evil spirit that haunts us; the world is a *Boehim*; Rachel wept for her children; some grieve that they have no children, and others grieve that their children are undutiful. Thus we spend our years with sighing; it is a valley of tears, but death is the funeral of all our sorrows: 'and God shall wipe away all tears.'⁴ Then Christ's spouse puts off her mourning; how can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, when the bridegroom shall be with them? Thus death gives a believer his *quietus est*; it frees him from sin and trouble; though the apostle calls death the last enemy,⁵ yet it is the best friend: 'to me to die is gain.'

USE I. See here that which may make a true saint willing to die; death will set him out of gunshot,—free him from sin and trouble: there is no cause of weeping to leave a valley of tears; the world is a stage on which sin and misery are acted. Believers are here in a strange country, why then should they not be willing to go out of it? Death beats off their fetters of sin, and sets them free. Who goes weeping from a jail? Besides our own sins, the sins of others. The world is a place where Satan's seat is; a place where we see God daily dishonoured. Lot—who was a bright star in a dark night—his righteous soul was vexed with the unclean conversation of the wicked.⁷ To see God's sabbaths broken, his truths adulterated, his glory eclipsed, is that which wounds a godly heart. This made David cry out, 'Wo

is me that I dwell in Mesech, that I sojourn in the tents of Kedar!'⁸ Kedar was Arabia, where were Ishmael's posterity; this was a cut to David's heart to dwell there. O then be willing to depart out of the tents of Kedar!

II. The bodies of believers are united to Christ in the grave, and shall rest there till the resurrection. They are said to sleep in Jesus.⁹ The dust of believers is part of Christ's body mystical. The grave is a dormitory or place of rest to the saints, where their bodies quietly sleep in Christ, till they are awakened out of their sleep by the trumpet of the archangel.

Q. 2. *But how shall we know that we shall gain all this at death, to be freed from sin and trouble, and to have our bodies united to Christ in the grave?*

A. If we are believers, then we gain all this at death. 'To me,' saith Paul, 'to die is gain:' to me, that is as a believer. Are we such? Have we this blessed faith? Faith, wherever it is, is operative. Lapidaries say there is no precious stone but hath some hidden virtue in it: so I may say of faith, it hath some secret virtue in it, it anchors the soul on Christ, it hath both a justifying and sanctifying virtue in it, it fetcheth blood out of Christ's sides to pardon, and water out of his sides to purge, it works by love, it constrains to duty, it makes the head study for Christ, the tongue confess him, the hands work for him. I have read of a father who had three sons, and, being to die, left in his will all his estate to that son who could find his ring with the jewel which had a healing virtue. The case was brought before the judges: the two elder sons counterfeited a ring, but the younger son brought the true ring, which was proved by the virtue of it, whereupon his father's estate went to him. To this ring I may compare faith: there is a counterfeit faith in the world, but if we can find this ring of faith which hath the healing virtue in it to purify the heart, this is the true faith which gives us an interest in Christ, and entitles us to all these privileges at death, to be freed from sin and sorrow, and to have our bodies united to Christ while they are in the grave.

III. I should now come to the third privilege at death, the souls of believers pass immediately into glory. Where I shall lead you to the top of mount Pisgah, and give you a short view of the glory of heaven.

¹ Ps. 31. 10. ² Ge. 3. 16. ³ Ru. 1. 20. ⁴ Re. 7. 17.
⁵ Mat. 9. 15. ⁶ 1 Cor. 15. 11. ⁷ 2 Pe. 3. 7.

⁸ Ps. 120. 5.

⁹ 1 Th. 4. 14.

A BELIEVER'S PRIVILEGE AT DEATH.

PHIL. 1. 21. *And to die is gain.*

III. AT death the souls of believers pass into glory. Death brings an end of all ill, and a beginning of all good; death is the daybreak of eternal brightness. And here I shall lead you to the top of Mount Pisgah, and give you a glimpse of the holy land.

Q. 1. *What is comprehended in glory?*

A. Glory is a perfect state of bliss which consists in the accumulation and heaping together all those good things which immortal souls are capable of. And truly here I am at a loss; all that I can say falls short of the celestial glory! Apelles's pencil cannot delineate it, angels' tongues cannot express it, we shall never understand the glory fully, till we are in heaven,—only let me give you some dark views, and some imperfect lineaments of that state of glory saints shall arrive at after death.

1. The first and most sublime part of the glory of heaven is the full and sweet fruition of God. We are apt to think the happiness of heaven is in being free from pain and misery, but the very quintessence of happiness, is the enjoyment and fruition of God: this is the diamond-ring of glory. God is an infinite inexhaustible fountain of joy; and to have him, is to have all. Now the enjoyment of God implies three things.

1. It implies our seeing of God.
2. Our loving of God.
3. God's loving us.

1. The enjoying of God implies our seeing of God, 'We shall see him as he is:'¹ Here we see him as he is not; mutable, mortal: there as he is.

Q. 2. *How shall we see God?*

A. 1. We shall see him intellectually, with the eyes of our mind. This divines call the beatifical vision: we shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully. If there were not such an intellectual sight of God, then how do the spirits of just men made perfect see God. This sight of God will be very glorious, as when a king, on his coronation-day shews himself in all his royalty and magnificence.

A. 2. We shall corporeally behold the glorified body of Jesus Christ: and if it be a pleasant thing to behold the sun,² then, how blessed

a sight will it be to behold the Sun of Righteousness, to see Christ clothed in our human nature, sitting in glory above the angels! Solomon saith, 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing,'³ but sure the eyes of saints will be satisfied with seeing that orient brightness which shall shine from the beautiful body of Christ. It must needs be satisfying, because through Christ's flesh some rays and beams of the Godhead shall gloriously display themselves. God's excellent majesty would overwhelm us; but through the veil of Christ's flesh we shall behold the divine glory.

A. 3. Our seeing God will be transforming. We shall so see him as to be in some measure assimilated and changed into his image: 'we shall be like him.'⁴ If, when Moses was with God on the mount, and had but some imperfect sight of his glory, 'Moses' face shined,'⁵ how shall the saints glorified shine, being always in God's presence, and having some beams of his glory put upon them? 'We shall be like him.'⁶ One that is deformed may look on beauty, and not be made beautiful; but the saints shall so see God, as that sight shall transform them into his likeness: 'when I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.'⁷ Not that the saints shall partake of God's essence: for as the iron in the fire is made fiery, yet remains iron still, so the saints, by beholding God's majesty, shall be made glorious creatures, but yet creatures still.

A. 4. Our seeing of God in heaven will be unwearable. Let a man see the rarest sight that is, he will soon be cloyed; when he comes into a garden, and sees delicious walks, fair arbours, pleasant flowers, within a little while he grows weary, but it is not so in heaven, there is no surfeit,—'no hunger, no weariness exist there,'⁸ BERN. The saints will never be weary of their prospect, namely, of seeing God; for, God being infinite, there shall be every moment new and fresh delight springing from God into the souls of the glorified.

2. The second thing implied in our enjoying God, is our loving of God. It is a saint's grief that his heart is like the frozen ocean,—that he can melt no more in love to God: but in heaven the saints shall be like seraphim,

¹ 1 Jno. 3. 2.

² Ec. 11. 7.

³ Ec. 1. 8.

⁴ 1 Jno. 3. 2.

⁵ Ex. 34. 35.

⁶ Ps. 17. 15.

burning in divine love; love is a pleasant affection; 'fear hath a torment in it;'¹ love hath joy in it. To love beauty is delightful: God's amazing beauty will attract the saints' love, and it will be their heaven to love him.

3. The third thing implied in enjoying God, is God's loving us. Were there glory in God, yet, if there were not love, it would much eclipse the joys of heaven: but 'God is love.'² The saints glorified cannot love so much as they are loved. What is their love to God's? What is their star to this sun? God doth love his people on earth, when they are black as well as comely; they have their imperfections; O how entirely will he love them, when they are without 'spot or wrinkle.'³

1. This is the felicity of heaven, to be in the sweet embraces of God's love; to be the *Hephzibah*,—the delight of the King of Glory; to be sunning ourselves in the light of his countenance. Then the saints shall know 'the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.'⁴ From this glorious manifestation of God's love, will flow infinite joy into the souls of the blessed: therefore heaven is called 'entering into the joy of our Lord.'⁵ The seeing of God, the loving of God, and being beloved of God, will cause a jubilation of spirit, and create such holy raptures of joy in the saints, as is unspeakable and full of glory.⁶ 'The soul is pleased, nay, is ravished, by a certain sweetness in God,' AUG. Now the saints spend their years with sighing, they weep over their sins and afflictions, then their water shall be turned into wine, then the vessels of mercy shall be filled and run over with joy, then they shall have their palm-branches and harps in their hands,⁷ in token of their triumphs and rejoicing.

2. The second thing comprehended in glory, is the good society there. First, there are the angels; every star adds to the light; those blessed cherubim will welcome us to paradise. If the angels rejoiced so at the conversion of the elect, how will they rejoice at their coronation! Secondly, there is the company of the saints: 'the spirits of just men made perfect.'⁸

Q. 3. *Whether shall the saints in glory know each other?*

A. Certainly they shall; for our knowledge in heaven shall not be diminished but increased. We shall not only know our friends and godly relations, but those glorified saints which we never saw before; it must be so; for society

without acquaintance is not comfortable, and of this opinion were St Austin, Anselm, Luther. And indeed the scripture seems to hint so much to us; for, if Peter in the transfiguration knew Moses and Elias, whom he never saw before,⁹ then surely in heaven the saints shall know one another, and be infinitely delighted in each other's company.

3. The third thing comprehended in glory, is perfection in holiness. Holiness is the beauty of God and angels; it makes heaven; what is happiness but the quintessence of holiness? Here a christian's grace is imperfect, he cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. He is said to receive but the 'first-fruits of the Spirit,'¹⁰ grace in its rising to existence; but at death believers shall arrive at perfection of grace; then this sun shall be in its meridian splendour; then shall they not need to pray for increase of grace, for they shall be as the angels, their light shall be clear as well as their joy full.

4. The fourth thing in glory is dignity and honour; they shall reign as kings; therefore the saints glorified are said to have their ensigns of royalty, their white robes and their crown.¹¹ Cæsar, after his victories, in token of honour, had a chair of ivory set for him in the senate, and a throne in the theatre; the saints, having obtained their victories over sin and Satan, shall be enthroned with Christ in the empyrean heaven. To sit with Christ denotes safety; to sit on the throne, dignity: 'this honour have all the saints.'¹²

5. The fifth thing in glory, is the harmony and union among the heavenly inhabitants. The devil cannot get his cloven foot into heaven; he cannot conjure up any storms of contention there; there shall be perfect union; there Calvin and Luther are agreed; there is no jarring string in the heavenly music; there is nothing to make any difference, no pride or envy there. Though one star may differ from another, one may have a greater degree of glory, yet every vessel shall be full: there shall the saints and angels sit as olive-plants round about their Father's table, in love and unity. Then shall they join together in concert,—then shall the loud anthems of praise be sung in the heavenly choir.

6. The sixth thing in glory, is a blessed rest, 'there remaineth therefore a rest.'¹³ A happy transit from labour to rest. Here we can have no rest, tossed and turned as a ball on racket, 'we

¹ 1 Jno. 4. 18. ² 1 Jno. 4. 16. ³ Eph. 5. 27. ⁴ Eph. 3. 19. ⁵ Mat. 25. 21. ⁶ 1 Pe. 1. 8. ⁷ Re. 14. 2. ⁸ He. 12. 23.

⁹ Mat. 17. 4. ¹⁰ Ro. 8. 23. ¹¹ 2 Ti. 4. 7. ¹² Ps. 149. 9. ¹³ He. 4. 9.

are troubled on every side.' How can a ship rest in a storm? But after death the saints get into their haven. Every thing is quiet in the centre; God is 'the centre where the soul doth sweetly acquiesce.' A christian, after his weary marches and battles, shall put off his bloody armour, and rest himself upon the bosom of Jesus, that bed of perfume; when death hath given the saints the wings of a dove, then they shall fly away to paradise and be at rest.

7. The seventh thing in glory, is eternity, 'an eternal weight of glory.'²—1st, Glory is a weight: the Hebrew word for glory is a weight: God must make us able to bear it.—2dly, An eternal weight. Glory is such a manna as doth not breed worms. If the saints' glory in heaven were but for a time, and they were in fear of losing it, it would eclipse and embitter the joys of heaven; but eternity is written upon their joys; the garland made of flowers of paradise fades not.³ I have read of a river which they call the day-river, in which time it runs with a full torrent, but at night it is dried up; such are all earthly comforts, they run with a full stream all the daytime of life, but at the night of death they are dried up; but the saints glorified shall drink of the rivers of pleasure for evermore.⁴ Eternity is the heaven of heavens; 'at death joy shall be endless.' BERN. The joys of heaven as overflowing, so everflowing.

Q. 4. *When do believers enter upon possession of glory?*

A. They pass immediately after death into glory. Some hold with the Platonists and Lucianists, that the soul dies; but many of the sober heathens believed the soul's immortality. The Romans, when their great men died, caused an eagle to be let loose, and fly about in the air, signifying hereby that the soul was immortal, and did not die with the body. Christ tells us the soul is not capable of killing,⁵ therefore not of dying. And as the soul doth not die, so neither doth it sleep in the body for a time; if the soul be at death absent from the body,⁶ then it cannot sleep in the body. There is an immediate passage from death to glory; it is but winking, and we shall see God, 'To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'⁷ By paradise is meant heaven. The third heaven into which Paul was rapt, which all hold to be the heaven of the blessed, was called paradise.⁸ Now saith Christ to the thief on the cross,

'To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.' His body could not be there, for it was laid in the grave; but it was spoken of his soul, that it should be immediately after death in heaven. Let none be so vain as to talk of purgatory; a soul purged by Christ's blood, needs no fire of purgatory, but goes immediately from a death-bed into a glorified state.*

USE 1. See what little cause believers have to fear death, when it brings such glorious benefits: 'to me to die is gain!' Why should the saints fear their preferment? Is it not a blessed thing to see God, to love God, and to lie for ever in the bosom of divine love? Is it not a blessed thing to meet our godly relations in heaven? Why should the saints be afraid of their blessings? Is a virgin afraid to be matched unto the crown? Now is but the contract, at death is the marriage-supper of the Lamb.⁹ What hurt doth death, but to take us from among fiery serpents, and place us among angels? What hurt doth it do, but to clothe us with a robe of immortality? Hath he any wrong done him that hath his sackcloth pulled off, and hath cloth of gold put upon him? Fear not dying, ye who cannot live but by dying!

USE 2. You who are real saints, whose hearts are purified by faith, spend much time in musing upon these glorious benefits which you shall have by Christ at death. Thus might you by a contemplative life, begin the life of angels here, and be in heaven before your time. Eudoxius was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it. What should we contemplate but celestial glory, when we shall see God face to face; David was got above the ordinary sort of men, he was in the altitudes, 'I am still with thee.'¹⁰ A true saint every day takes a turn in heaven; his thoughts and desires are like cherubim flying up to paradise. Can men of the world so delight in looking upon their bags of gold, and

⁹ Re. 19. 9. ¹⁰ Ps. 139. 18. ¹¹ 1 Jno. 3. 2.

* Mr Robert Bruce, the morning before he died, being at breakfast, and having, as he used, eaten an egg, he said to his daughter, "I think I am yet hungry; you may bring me another egg." But having mused a while, he said, "*Hold, daughter, hold, my Master calls me!*" With these words his sight failed him: on which he called for the Bible, and said, "Turn to the 8th chapter of the Romans, and set my finger on the words,—I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, &c. shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." When this was done, he said, "Now, is my finger upon them?" Being told it was, he added, "Now, God be with you, my dear children: I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night." And then he expired.—*Whitecross's Anecdotes Illustrative of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism.*

¹ 2 Cor. 4. 8. ² 2 Cor. 4. 17. ³ 1 Pt. 5. 4. ⁴ Ps. 16. 11.
⁵ Lu. 12. 4. ⁶ 2 Cor. 5. 8. ⁷ Lu. 23. 43. ⁸ Cor. 12. 11.

fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of heaven take more delight in contemplating their glory in reversion? Could we send forth faith as a spy, and every day view the glory of the Jerusalem above, how would it rejoice us, as it doth the heir to think of the inheritance which is to come into his hand shortly?

USE 3. *Consolation.* This is that which may comfort the saints in two cases. 1. Under their wants; they abound only in wants, the meal is almost spent in the barrel, but be patient till death, and you shall have a supply of all your wants, you shall have a kingdom, and be as rich as heaven can make you. He who hath the promise of an estate, after the expiring of a few years, though at present he hath

nothing to help himself, yet comforts himself with this, that shortly he shall have an estate come into his hand: 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'² We shall be enamelled with glory, and be as rich as the angels. 2. A true saint is, (as Luther) an heir of the cross; but this may make us go cheerfully through our sufferings; there are great things laid up in store, there is glory coming, which eye hath not seen, we shall drink of the fruit of the vine in the kingdom of heaven. Though now we drink in a wormwood eup, yet here is sugar to sweeten it: we shall taste of those joys of paradise which exceed our faith, and may be better felt than they can be expressed.

OF THE RESURRECTION.

JOHN 5. 28, 29. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Q. XXXVIII. *What benefits shall believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. 1. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory.

A. 2. They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment; and shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God for ever.

I. The bodies of believers shall be raised up to glory. The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental article of our faith; the apostle puts it among the principles of the doctrine of Christ.^{1*} The body shall rise again; we are not so sure to rise out of our beds as we are to rise out of our graves. The ransomed body shall rise again. Some hold that the soul shall be clothed with a new body; but then it were improper to call it a resurrection, it would be

rather a creation: 'though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.'² Not in another flesh, but my flesh: 'this corruptible must put on incorruption.'⁴

Q. *By what arguments may the resurrection be proved?*

Arg. 1. By scripture: 'I will raise him up at the last day.'³ 'He will swallow up death in victory.'⁶ That is by delivering our bodies from the captivity of the grave wherein death for a time had power over them: 'them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.'

Arg. 2. Christ is risen: therefore the bodies of the saints must rise. Christ did not rise from the dead as a private person, but as the public head of the church; and the head being raised, the rest of the body shall not always lie in the grave. Christ's rising is a pledge of our resurrection: 'knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus.'⁵ Christ is called the first-fruits of them that sleep;⁹ as the first-fruits is a sure evidence that the harvest is coming on, so the resurrection of Christ is a sure evidence of the rising of our bodies out of the grave. Christ cannot be perfect as he is Christ mystical, unless his members be raised with him.

Arg. 3. In respect of God's justice. If God be a just God, then he will reward the bodies

¹ He. 6. 2.

* The resurrection of the human body is altogether a matter of divine revelation. It has pleased God to declare it with such clearness and fulness of expression, as excludes all doubt and hesitation from our minds. Some, indeed, have questioned whether the doctrine was known from the beginning, or with what degree of light it was discovered by the ancient church, in its different periods. Curious speculations of this kind might be instituted, but to us they would be uninteresting and useless. It is, however, of importance to remark, that our Lord condemned the Sadducees of his time for their ignorance and infidelity, in not collecting this point even from the Pentateuch. 'Ye do err,' said he, 'not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God;—that the dead are raised even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead but of the living: for all live unto him,' (Mat. 22. 29.; Luke 20. 37, 38.) It was, therefore, the Lord's design that his people from the beginning should be cheered with the hope of a resurrection to life eternal.—*Robinson's Christian System.*

² 1 Jno. 3. 2. ³ Job 19. 26. ⁴ 1 Co. 15. 53. ⁵ Jno. 6. 44. ⁶ Is. 25. 8. ⁷ 1 Th. 4. 14. ⁸ 2 Co. 4. 14. ⁹ 1 Co. 15. 20.

of the saints as well as their souls. It cannot be imagined that the souls of believers should be glorified, and not their bodies; they have served God with their bodies, their bodies have been members of holiness, their eyes have dropped tears for sin, their hands have relieved the poor, their tongues have set forth God's praise: therefore justice and equity require that their bodies should be crowned as well as their souls: and how can that be, unless they are raised from the dead?

Arg. 4. If the body did not rise again, then a believer should not be completely happy: for though the soul can subsist without the body, yet it hath a desire of re-union with the body, and it is not fully happy till it be clothed with the body: therefore undoubtedly the body shall rise again. If the soul should go to heaven and not the body, then a believer should be only half-saved.

Obj. 1. *But some say, as the Virgin Mary to the angel, 'How can this be?' so, how can it be, that the body which is consumed to ashes should rise again?*

A. It doth not oppose reason, but transcend it; there are some resemblances of the resurrection in nature. The corn, which is sown in the ground, dies before it springs up: 'that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.'¹ In winter the fruits of the earth die, in spring there is a resurrection of them; Noah's olive tree springing after the flood was a lively emblem of the resurrection. After the passion of our Lord, 'many bodies of the saints which slept in the grave arose.'² God can more easily raise the body out of the grave, than we can awake a man out of sleep.

Obj. 2. *But when the dust of many is mingled together, how is it possible that a separation should be made and the same numerical body arise?*

A. If we believe God can create, then he can distinguish the dust of one body from another; do not we see the chemist can, out of several metals mingled together, as gold, silver, alloy, extract the one from the other, the silver from the gold, and the alloy from the silver, and can reduce every metal to its own kind? And shall we not much more believe, that when our bodies are mingled and confounded with other substances, the wise God is able to make an extraction, and re-invest every soul with its own body?³

¹ 1 Co. 15. 36.

² Mat. 27. 52.

* Is it still inquired, 'How are the dead to be raised up; and with what body do they come?' The resurrection, however

Q. 3. *Shall none but the bodies of the righteous be raised?*

A. Yes, all that are in the graves shall hear Christ's voice, and shall come forth.⁴ There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust: 'I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God.'⁵ But though all shall be raised out of their graves, yet all shall not be raised alike.

1. The bodies of the wicked shall be raised with ignominy; those bodies which on the earth did tempt and allure others with their beauty, shall be at the resurrection loathsome to behold; they shall be ghastly spectacles, as the phrase is, 'they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.'⁶ But the bodies of the saints shall be raised with honour: 'it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory.'⁷ The saints' bodies then shall shine as sparkling diamonds: 'then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.'⁸

2. The bodies of the saints shall arise out of their graves with triumph; the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave with trembling, as being to receive their fatal doom, but the godly, when they awake out of the dust shall sing for joy: 'awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust.'⁹ When the archangel's trumpet sounds, then the saints shall sing; the bodies of believers shall come out of the grave to be made happy, as the chief butler came out of the prison, and was restored to all his dignity at the court; but the bodies of the wicked shall come out of the grave, as the chief baker out of prison, to be executed.⁹

Use 1. Believe this doctrine of the resurrection; and that the same body that dies shall rise again, and with the soul be crowned. Without the belief of this, 'all religion falls to the ground.'¹⁰ If the dead rise not, then Christ is not risen, and then our faith is vain.

Use 2. *Comfort.* The body shall rise again? this was Job's comfort, 'though worms destroy

³ Acts 24. 15. ⁴ Re. 20. 12. ⁵ Is. 66. 21. ⁶ 1 Co. 15. 43. ⁷ Mat. 13. 43. ⁸ Is. 26. 19. ⁹ Ge. 40. 22. ¹⁰ 1 Co. 15. 14.

wonderful and mysterious, is only analogous to what we constantly witness in the common course of divine providence. What does every returning spring exhibit, but a resurrection in the vegetable creation? Whence arises the vast increase of grain, but from the seed, which corrupted and apparently perished in the earth? 'That which thou sowest, is not quickened, except it die,' 1 Co. 15. 36. Here is life consequent upon death, and even resulting from it. Such a revival is not less mysterious, than that which we look for at the final consummation. Let us relinquish all vain controversies and curious inquiries which would betray our ignorance or our presumption. We should rest in a general persuasion, that 'nothing is impossible with God;' and be satisfied with his express assurances, that 'He who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus,' 2 Co. 4. 14.—*Robinson's Christian System.*

this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.¹ The body is sensible of joy as well as the soul; and indeed we shall not be in all our glory, till our bodies are re-united to our souls. O consider what joy there will be at the re-uniting of the body and the soul at the resurrection! Look what sweet embraces of joy were between old Jacob and Joseph, when they first saw one another:² such, and infinitely more, will there be, when the body and soul of a saint shall meet together at the resurrection! How will the body and soul greet one another! What a welcome will the soul give to the body! O blessed body! when I prayed, thou didst attend my prayers with hands lifted up, and knees bowed down; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me; thou wert sown in dishonour, but now art raised in glory. O my dear body! I will enter into thee again, and be eternally married to thee.

USE 3. The resurrection of the body is a cordial when a Christian lies a-dying. Thy body, though it drop into the sepulchre, it shall revive and flourish as an herb in the resurrection: the grave is a bed of dust where the bodies of saints sleep; but they shall be awakened by the trump of the archangel. The grave is your long home, but not your last home: though death strip you of your beauty, yet at the resurrection you shall have it restored again. As David, when he found Saul asleep, took away his spear and cruise of water, but when he awoke, he restored them again,³ so, though at death all our strength and beauty be taken away, yet at the resurrection God will restore all again in a more glorious manner.

Q. 4. *But how shall we know that our bodies shall be raised to a glorious resurrection?*

A. If we have a part in the first resurrection, 'Blessed and holy is he that hath a part in the first resurrection.'⁴ *What is meant by this?* A. It is a rising by repentance out of the grave of sin; he who lies buried in sin, can have little hope of a joyful resurrection; his body shall be raised but not in glory. O then! ask conscience, have you a part in the first resurrection? hath the Spirit entered into you, and lifted you up? hath he raised you out of your unbelief? hath he raised your hearts above the earth? this is the first resurrection; and if your souls are thus spiritually raised, then your bodies shall be gloriously raised, and shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven. Regeneration makes way for a glorious resurrection.

USE. Seeing you expect your bodies should arise to glory, keep your bodies unspotted from sin. Shall a drunken body rise to glory? Shall an unclean body rise to glory? Shall a thievish body steal into heaven? O keep your bodies pure, keep your eyes from unchaste glances, your hands from bribes,—your tongues from slander; defile not your bodies, which you hope shall rise one day to glory. Your bodies are the members of Christ: and hear what the apostle saith, 'Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.'⁵ O keep your bodies unspotted, let them be instruments of righteousness, 'glorify God in your body!'⁶ If your bodies glorify God, God will glorify your bodies.*

Q. 5. *But seeing our bodies must be laid in the grave, and they may lie many years rotting there before the resurrection; what may support and comfort us in this case?*

A. 1. That God will not leave his people in the grave. Our friends bring us to the grave and leave us there, but God will not; God will go to the grave with us, and watch over our dead bodies, and take care of our ashes. Rizpah watched over the dead bodies of the sons of Saul, and guarded them against the ravenous fowls of the air.⁷ Thus the Lord watcheth over the dead bodies of the saints, and looks to it, that none of their dust be missing. Christian, thou hast a God to watch over thy body when thou art dead!

A. 2. The bodies of the saints in the grave, though separated from their souls, are united to Christ. The dust of a believer is part of Christ's mystical body.

A. 3. When the bodies of the saints are in the sepulchre, their souls are in paradise; the soul doth not sleep in the body, 'but the spirit shall return to that God that gave it.'⁸ The soul immediately partakes of those joys the blessed angels do; when the body returns to dust, the soul returns to rest; when the body is sleeping, the soul is triumphing; when the

⁵ 1 Cor. 6. 15. ⁶ 1 Cor. 6. 20. ⁷ 2 Sa. 21. 10. ⁸ Ec. 12. 7.

* There is a transformation, even in this world, of all the bodies which Christ will raise in glory. The face that he beautifies with salvation, is the face which here was adorned with modesty; the body that is satisfied with the goodness of his house, is that whose appetites temperance controlled; the frame he reclines in Abraham's bosom, is that which toiled in the duties of industry, and wrestled in the conflicts of prayer; the eye that gazes on the Mediator's glory, is that which moistened by contrition and pity. Our bodies must be kept in some measure unspotted from the world, as Christ's body was, if we would wish hereafter to walk with him in white.—*Bef-
frage on the Shorter Catechism.*

body is buried, the soul is crowned; as the spies were sent before to taste of the fruits of the land,¹ so at death the soul is sent before into heaven to taste of the fruit of the holy land.

A. 4. When God's time is come, the 'graves shall deliver up their dead,'² when the judge sends, the jailor must deliver up his prisoners: as God said to Jacob, 'I will go down with thee into Egypt, and I will surely bring thee up again,'³ so the Lord will go down with us into the grave, and will surely bring us up again.

A. 5. Though the bodies of the saints shall rot and be loathsome in the grave, yet afterwards they shall be made illustrious and glorious. Concerning this, consider,

1. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be comely and beautiful. The body of a saint in this life may be deformed: those whose minds are adorned with virtue, yet may have mis-shapen bodies; as the finest cloth may have the coarsest list: but this deformed body shall be amiable and beautiful. This beauty consists in two things: 1. Perfection of parts. There shall be a full proportion of all the members; in this life there is oft a defect of members; the eye is lost, the arm is cut off, but in the resurrection all parts of the body shall be restored again; therefore the resurrection is called the time of restoring all things.⁴ Malchus' ear cut was restored.—2. Clarity and splendour. The bodies of the saints shall have a graceful majesty in them; they shall be like Stephen whose face shone as if it had been the face of an angel.⁵ Nay, they shall be made like Christ's glorious body.⁶

2. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be free from the necessities of nature, as hunger and thirst, 'they shall hunger no more.'⁷ Moses on the mount was so filled with the glory

of God, that he needed not the recruits of nature. Much more in heaven shall the bodies of the saints, so filled with God's glory, be upheld without food.

3. The bodies of the saints, when they arise, shall be swift and nimble. Our bodies on earth are dull and heavy in their motion; then they shall be swift, and made fit to ascend, as the body of Elias, in the air. Now the body is a clog; in heaven it shall be a wing. We shall be as the angels.⁸ And how nimble are they? The angel Gabriel in a short time came from heaven, to the earth.⁹ As the helm turns the ship whither the steersman will; so the body in an instant will move which way the soul will.

4. The bodies of the saints, at the resurrection, shall be very firm and strong, 'it is raised in power.'¹⁰ Through frequent labour and sickness, the strongest body begins to languish: but at the resurrection we shall be of a strong constitution; then there will be no weariness in the body, nor faintness in the spirits. This may comfort you who now conflict with many bodily weaknesses. This weak body shall be raised in power; the body, which is now a weak reed, shall be like a rock.

5. The bodies of the saints at the resurrection shall be immortal, 'this mortal must put on immortality,'¹¹ our bodies shall run parallel with eternity, 'neither can they any more.'¹² Heaven is a healthful climate, there is no bill of mortality there. If a physician could give you a receipt to keep you from dying, what sums of money would you give? At the resurrection Christ shall give the saints such a receipt, 'there shall be no more death.'¹³

II. The second privilege believers shall have at the resurrection, is, They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.

OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

Q. XXXVIII. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. Their bodies shall be raised up to glory, and shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment, and crowned with the full and perfect enjoyment of God to all eternity.

II. *They shall be openly acquitted at the day of judgment.* This is to be laid down for a position, that there shall be a day of judgment:

'for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.'¹⁴ This is the grand assizes,—the greatest appearance that ever was. Now Adam shall see all his posterity at once. We must all appear; the greatness of men's persons doth not exempt them from Christ's tribunal; kings and captains are brought in trembling before the Lamb's throne.¹⁵ We must all appear, and appear in our own persons, not by a proxy.

¹ Nu. 13. ² Re. 20. 13. ³ Ge. 46. 4. ⁴ Ac. 3. 19. ⁵ Ac. 6. 15. ⁶ Ph. 3. 21. ⁷ Re. 7. 16.

⁸ Ma. 22. 50. ⁹ Da. 9. 21. ¹⁰ 1 Cor. 15. 43. ¹¹ 1 Cor. 15. 53. ¹² 1 Jn. 20. 36. ¹³ Re. 21. 1. ¹⁴ Ro. 11. 10. ¹⁵ Re. 16. 15.

Q 1. *How doth it appear that there shall be a day of judgment?*

A. Two ways. 1. By the suffrage of scripture, 'for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing.'¹ 'For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth.'² The reduplication denotes the certainty: 'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow; the judgment was set, and the books were opened.'³ 2. It appears from the petty sessions kept in a man's own conscience; when a man doeth virtuously, conscience doth excuse him, when evil, conscience doth arraign and condemn him. Now, what is this private session kept in the court of conscience, but a certain forerunner of that general day of judgment when all the world shall be summoned to God's tribunal?

Q 2. *Why must there be a day of judgment?*

A. That there may be a day of retribution, when God may render to every one according to his works. Things seem to be carried very unequally in the world; the wicked do so prosper as if they were rewarded for doing evil; and the godly do so suffer as if they were punished for being good. Therefore for the vindicating of God's justice, there must be a day, wherein there shall be a righteous distribution of punishments and rewards to men, according to their actions.

Q 3. *Who shall be judge?*

A. The Lord Jesus Christ; 'the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.'⁴ It is an article of our creed, that, Christ 'shall come to judge the quick and the dead.' It is a great honour put upon Christ; he who was himself judged, shall now be Judge; he who once hung upon the cross, shall sit upon the bench. Christ is fit to be judge, as he partakes both of the manhood and Godhead.

1. Of the manhood: being clothed with the human nature, he may be visibly seen of all. It is requisite the judge should be seen: 'behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him.'⁵

2. As he partakes of the Godhead: he is of infinite prudence to understand all causes brought before him, and of infinite power to execute offenders. He is described with seven eyes,⁶ to denote his prudence; and a rod of iron,⁷ to denote his power. He is so wise that he cannot be deluded; and so strong, that he cannot be resisted.

Q 4. *When will the court sit, when will the time of judgment be?*

A. For the *when*, or the time of the general judgment, it is a secret kept from the angels: 'of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven.'⁸ But this is sure, it cannot be far off; one great sign of the approach of the day of judgment, is, 'that iniquity shall abound;'⁹ sure then this day is near at hand, for iniquity did never more abound than in this age, and lust grows hot, and love grows cold. This is certain, when the elect are all converted, then Christ will come to judgment; as he that rows a ferry-boat, stays till all the passengers are taken into his boat, and then he rows away, so Christ stays till all the elect are gathered in, and then he will hasten away to judgment.

Q 5. *What shall be the modus or manner of trial?*

A 1. The citing of men to the court. The dead are cited as well as the living. Men, when they die, avoid the censure of our law-courts; but at the last day, the dead are cited to God's tribunal: 'I saw the dead small and great stand before God.'¹⁰ This citing of men will be by the sound of a trumpet,¹¹ and this trumpet will sound so loud, that it will raise men out of their graves.¹² Such as will not hear the trumpet of the gospel sound in their ears *repent and believe*, shall hear the trumpet of the archangel sounding, *arise and be judged*.

A 2. The approach of the Judge to the bench.

First, This will be terrible to the wicked: How can a guilty prisoner endure the sight of the Judge? If Felix trembled when Paul preached of judgment,¹³ how will sinners tremble when they shall see Christ come to judgment? Christ is described, sitting in judgment, with a fiery stream issuing from him.¹⁴ Now the Lamb of God will be turned into a lion; the sight of Christ will strike terror into sinners. As when Joseph said to his brethren, 'I am Joseph, whom ye sold into Egypt, they were troubled at his presence:'¹⁵ now, how did their hearts smite them for their sin? so, when Christ shall come to judgment, and say, 'I am Jesus whom ye sinned against, I am Jesus whose laws ye have broken, whose blood ye despised, I am now come to judge you,' O what horror and amazement will take hold of sinners! They will be troubled at the presence of their Judge.

¹ Ec. 12. 9, 12, 14. ² Ps. 96. 13. ³ Da. 7. 9, 10. ⁴ Jno. 5. 22.
⁵ Re. 1. 7. ⁶ Ze. 3. 9. ⁷ Ps. 2.

⁸ Mat. 24. 36. ⁹ Mat. 24. ¹⁰ Re. 20. 12. ¹¹ 1 Th. 4. 16.
¹² Mat. 24. 31. ¹³ Acts 24. 25. ¹⁴ Da. 7. 10. ¹⁵ Ge. 45. 4.

Secondly, The approach of Christ to the bench of judicature will be comfortable to the righteous. 1. Christ will come in splendour and great glory. His first coming in the flesh was obscure.¹ He was like a prince in disguise; but his second coming will be illustrious: 'he shall come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'² O what a bright day will that be, when such a number of angels, those morning-stars, shall appear in the air, and Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shall shine in splendour above the brightest cherub! 2. Christ will come as a friend. Indeed, if the saints' Judge were their enemy, they might fear condemning; but he who loves them, and prayed for them, is their judge; he who is their husband is their judge, therefore they need not fear but all things shall go well on their side.

Thirdly, The trial itself, which hath a dark and a light side. 1. A dark side. It will fall heavy on the wicked: the Judge being set, the books are opened,³ the book of conscience, and the book of God's remembrance. And now the sinner's charge being read, and all their sins laid open, their murder, drunkenness, uncleanness,—Christ will say, 'Sinners, what can you plead for yourselves that the sentence of death should not pass? The wicked being convicted will be speechless. Then follows that dismal sentence, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!'⁴ He that said to God, 'depart from me';⁵ and to religion, 'depart from me;' must now hear that word pronounced from his Judge, 'depart from me;—a dreadful sentence, but righteous!' The sinner himself shall cry, Guilty! Though the wicked have a sea of wrath, yet not one drop of injustice. And when once the sentence is passed, it is irreversible, there is no appealing to an higher court.* 2. The trial hath a light side: it will be for increasing the joy and happiness of the righteous. The day of judgment will be a day of jubilee to them.

1st. At that day Christ their judge will own them by name. Those whom the world scorned, and looked upon as precisians and fools, Christ will take by the hand, and openly acknowledge them to be his favourites. What is Christ's confessing of men,⁷ but his openly acknowledging them to be precious in his eyes?

2d. Christ as judge will plead for them. It is not usual to be both judge and advocate, to sit on the bench and plead: but it shall be so at the day of judgment.

1. Christ will plead his own blood for the saints. 'These persons I have paid a price for, they are the travail of my soul; they have sinned, but my soul was made an offering for their sin.'

2. Christ will vindicate them from all unjust censures. Here they were strangely misrepresented to the world, as proud, hypocritical, factious; Paul was called a seditious man, the head of a faction;⁸ but at the day of judgment, Christ will clear the saints' innocency, then he will 'bring forth their righteousness as the light.'⁹ As he will wipe off tears from their eyes, so dust from their name. Moses, when he was charged with ambition that he took too much upon him, comforted himself with this, 'to-morrow will the Lord show who are his.'¹⁰ So may the saints, when reproached, comfort themselves with the day of judgment; then will Christ say who are his; then shall the saints come forth as the wings of a dove covered with silver.

3. Christ as Judge will absolve them before men and angels; as Pilate said of Christ, 'I find no fault in this man,'¹¹ so will Christ say of the elect, 'I find no fault in them, I pronounce them righteous.' Then follows, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom.'¹² As if Christ should say, 'O ye happy ones, the delight of my soul, the fruit of my sufferings, stand no longer at the bar! Ye are heirs-apparent of the crown of heaven, enter and take possession.' At the hearing of this sentence, with what ravishing joy will the saints be filled? This word, 'come, ye blessed,' will be music to their ear, and a cordial to their heart.

4. Christ will mention before men and angels all the good deeds the saints have done: 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.'¹³ You that have wept in secret for sin, that have shown any love for Christ's name, that have been rich

¹ Is. 53. 2. ² Mat. 16. 27. ³ Re. 20. 12. ⁴ Mat. 25. 41.

⁵ Job 21. 11.

⁶ Ps. 51. 4.

* No appeal, no remedy, to all eternity; no end to the punishment of those whose final impentence manifests in them, as it were, an eternal will and desire to sin. By dying in settled opposition to God, they cast themselves into a necessity of continuing in an eternal aversion to him. The eternity of the torment of the damned, proceeds from the infinite justice of the God who is offended; the eternity of the reward of the elect, from the infinite goodness of him who cools it on them. O eternal life, which art nothing but pure life and joy; not the joy of the world, but that substantial joy of which God alone is the source, the object, and the end; may I have nothing at heart but thee, may I seek nothing else during this mortal life.—*Queen on the Gospels.*

⁷ Lu. 12. 8. ⁸ Acts 24. 5. ⁹ Ps. 37. 6. ¹⁰ Nu. 16. 5.

¹¹ Lu. 23. 4.

¹² Mat. 25. 31.

¹³ Mat. 25. 35.

in good works, Christ will take notice of it at the last day, and say, 'well done, good and faithful servants.' He himself will be the herald to proclaim your praises; thus it shall be done to the man whom Christ delights to honour.

5. Christ will call his saints from the bar, to sit upon the bench with him to judge the world: 'behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all;' ¹ 'do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?' ² The saints shall sit with Christ in judicature, as justices of peace with the Judge, —they shall applaud Christ's righteous sentence on the wicked, and, as it were, vote with Christ. This, as it is a great honour to the saints, so it must needs add to the sorrows of the wicked, to see those whom they once hated and derided, sit as judges upon them.

6. The saints shall be fully crowned with the enjoyment of God for ever. They shall be in his sweet presence, 'in whose presence is fulness of joy;' ³ and this shall be for ever. The banner of God's love shall be eternally displayed; the joys of heaven are without intermission and expiration: 'and so shall we be ever with the Lord.' ⁴

USE. As it is sad news to the wicked.— They shall 'not stand in judgment,' ⁵ they shall come to judgment, but they shall not *stand* in judgment, i. e. they shall not stand acquitted, they shall not stand with boldness, but sneak and hang down their head, and not be able to look their Judge in the face: so it is great consolation to the godly. When the apostle had said, 'the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God;' he presently adds, 'wherefore comfort one another with these words.' ⁶ 1. The day of judgment is comfort, in respect of weakness of grace. A christian is ready to be troubled, to see his grace so minute and imperfect; but, at the last day, if Christ find but a drachm of true grace, it shall be accepted. If thine be true gold, though it may be many grains too light, Christ will put his merits into the scales, and make it pass current. 2. It is a comfort to such of the saints who have met with unrighteous judgment in the world, who have been wronged of their estates in lawsuits, or had their lives taken away by an unrighteous sentence, Christ will judge things over again, and will give a righteous sentence. If your estates have been tak-

en away wrongfully, you shall be restored a thousand-fold at the day of judgment. If you have lost your lives for Christ, yet you shall not lose your crown; you shall wear a garland made of the flowers of paradise, which fade not away.

Branch 1st. Meditate much upon the day of judgment. Feathers swim upon the water, but gold sinks into it; light feathery christians float in vanity, they mind not the day of judgment, but serious spirits sink deep into the thoughts of it. The meditation of this last day would make us very sincere. We would then labour to approve our hearts to God the great Judge and umpire of the world. It is easy to carry it fair before men, but there is no dissembling or prevaricating with God; he sees what the heart is, and will accordingly pass his verdict. The meditation of Christ's coming to judge us, would keep us from judging our brethren. We are apt to judge others as to their final state; which is for men to step into Christ's place, and take his work out of his hand: 'who art thou that judgest another?' ⁷ Thou that passest a rash sentence upon another, thou must come thyself shortly to be judged, and then perhaps he may be acquitted, and thou condemned.

Branch 2d. So demean and carry yourselves, that, at the day of judgment, you may be sure to be acquitted, and have those glorious privileges the saints shall be crowned with.

Q. *How is that?*

A. 1. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, then labour to get into Christ. 'That I may be found in him.' ⁸ Faith implants us into Christ, it engarrisons us in him, and then 'there is no condemnation.' ⁹ There is no standing before Christ, but by being in Christ. Labour for humility. It is a kind of self-annihilation: 'though I be nothing.' ¹⁰ Christian, hast thou parts and abilities, and dost thou cover them with the veil of humility? as Moses, when his face shone, put a veil over it. If thou art humble, thou shalt be acquitted at the day of judgment: 'he shall save the humble person.' ¹¹ An humble man judgeth himself for his sins, and Christ will acquit them who judge themselves.

A. 2. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then keep a clear conscience. Do not load yourselves with guilt, and furnish your Judge with matter against you. 'The Lord,' saith Paul, 'hath appointed a day in which he

¹ Ju. 14. ² 1 Co. 6. 2. ³ Ps. 16. 11. ⁴ 1 Th. 4. 17.

⁵ Ps. 1. 5.

⁶ 1 Th. 4. 16, 18.

⁷ Ja. 4. 12. ⁸ Phi. 3. 9. ⁹ Ro. 8. 1. ¹⁰ 2 Co. 12. 11.

¹¹ Job 22. 29

will judge the world.¹ And how would Paul fit himself for that day? 'Herein I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.'² Be careful of the first and second table; be holy and just. Have hearts without false aims, and hands without false weights. Keep conscience as clear as your eye, that no dust of sin fall into it. They that sin against conscience, will be shy of their Judge: such as take in prohibited goods, cannot endure to see the searchers that are appointed to open their packs. Christian, thy pack will be opened at the last day, — I mean, thy conscience; and Christ is the searcher, to see what sins, what prohibited goods thou hast taken in; and then he proceeds to judgment. O be sure to keep a good conscience; this is the best way to stand with boldness at the day of judgment! The voice of conscience is the voice of God; if conscience doth upon just grounds, acquit us, God will acquit us: 'if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.'³

A. 3. If you would stand acquitted at the last day, then trade your talents for God's glory; lay out yourselves for God, honour him with your substance; relieve Christ's members; this is the way to be acquitted. He that had five talents traded with them, and made them five talents more, 'his lord said unto him, well done good and faithful servant.'⁴*

A. 4. If you would stand acquitted at the day of judgment, get an entire love to the saints: 'we know we are passed from death to life,' &c. Love is the truest touchstone of sincerity. To love grace for grace, shows the Spirit of God to be in a man. Doth conscience witness for you? Are you perfumed with this sweet spice of love? Do you delight most in those in whom the image of God shines? Do you reverence their graces? Do you bear with their infirmities? A blessed evidence that you shall be acquitted in the day of judgment. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.'

OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S REVEALED WILL.

DEUT. 27. 9, 10. *Take heed and hearken, O Israel, this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God; thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments.*

Q. XXXIX. *What is the duty that God requireth of man?*

A. Obedience to his revealed will.

It is not enough to hear God's voice, but we must obey. Obedience is a part of that honour we owe to God: 'if I be a Father, where is my honour?'⁵ Obedience carries in it the life-blood of religion; 'obey the voice of the Lord God, and do his commandments.' Obedience without knowledge is blind, and knowledge without obedience is lame. Rachel was fair to look upon, but, being barren, said, 'give me children, or I die:' so, if knowledge doth not bring forth the child of obedience, it will die: 'to obey is better than sacrifice.'⁶ Saul thought it was enough for him to offer sacrifices, though he disobeyed God's command. no, 'to obey is better than sacrifice.' God disclaims sacrifice if obedience be wanting: 'I spake not to your fathers concerning burnt-offerings, but this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice.'⁷ Not but that God did enjoin those religious rites of worship; but the meaning is,

God looked chiefly at obedience, without which, sacrifice was but devout folly. The end why God hath given us his laws, is obedience: 'ye shall do my judgments, and keep my ordinances.'⁸ Why doth a king publish an edict, but that it may be observed?

Q. 1. *What is the rule of obedience?*

A. The written word; that is, proper obedience which the word requires; our obedience must correspond with the word, as the copy with the original. To seem to be zealous, if it be not according to the word, is not obedience, but will-worship. Popish traditions, which have no footing in the word, are abominable; and God will say, 'who hath required this at your hand?'⁹ The apostle condemns the worshipping of angels, which had a show of humility.¹⁰ The Jews might say they were loath to

¹ Mat. 25. 21. ² 1 Jno. 3. 14. ³ Le. 18. 4. ⁴ Is. 1. 12.
⁵ Co. 2. 18.

* The reward which God bestows on his servants is a superabundant reward, because it is himself. Our faithfulness in observing his commands, is the price of it, rather than the greatness of our labour. We sow on earth, we reap in heaven. Here a little pain and sorrow—there an inconceivable and eternal joy!—*Quæset on the Gospels.*

⁶ Acts 17. 31. ⁷ Acts 24. 16. ⁸ 1 Jno. 3. 21. ⁹ Mal. 1. 6.
¹⁰ 1 Sa. 15. 22. ¹¹ Je. 7. 22.

be so bold as to go to God in their own persons, they would be more humble, and prostrate themselves before the angels, and desire them to present their petitions to God: this show of humility was hateful to God, because there was no word to warrant it.

Q. 2. *What are the right ingredients in our obedience to make it acceptable? How must it be qualified?*

A. 1. Obedience must be free and cheerful, else it is penance, not sacrifice: 'if ye be willing and obedient.'¹ Though we serve God with weakness, let it be with willingness. You love to see your servants go cheerfully about your work. Under the law, God would have 'a free-will offering.'² Hypocrites obey God grudgingly, and against their will; they do that which is good, but will it not. Cain brought his sacrifice, but not his heart. 'Tis a true rule, 'what the heart doth not do, is not done.' Willingness is the soul of obedience; God sometimes accepts of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness. Cheerfulness shows that there is love in the duty; and love doth to our services, as the sun doth to the fruit, mellow and ripen them, and make them come off with a better relish.

A. 2. Obedience must be devout and fervent: 'fervent in spirit,'³ which bursts forth through an ardent spirit—it alludes to water that boils over, so the heart must boil over with hot affections in the service of God. The glorious angels, who, for their burning in fervour and devotion, are called *seraphim*, these God chooseth to serve him in heaven. The snail under the law was unclean, because a dull slothful creature: obedience without fervency is like a sacrifice without fire. Why should not our obedience be lively and fervent? God deserves the flower and strength of our affections. Domitian would not have his statue carved in wood or iron, but in gold: lively affections make golden services. It is fervency makes obedience acceptable. Elijah was fervent in spirit, and his prayer opened and shut heaven; and again he prayed, and fire fell on his enemies.⁴ Elijah's prayer fetched fire from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried fire up to heaven: 'whatever is decorous is attained only through faith.' AUG.

A. 3. Obedience must be extensive, it must reach to all God's commands: 'then shall I not be ashamed,' or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lo*

ehosh, blush, 'when I have respect to all thy commandments.'⁵ Whatever is done for heaven's sake, is an universal effect. There is a stamp of divine authority upon all God's commands; and, if I obey one precept because God commands, I must obey all. True obedience runs through all duties of religion, as the blood through all the veins, or the sun through all the signs of the zodiac. A good christian makes gospel piety and moral equity kiss each other. Herein some discover their hypocrisy, they will obey God in some things which are more facile, and may raise their repute, but other things they leave undone: 'one thing thou lackest.'⁶ Herod would hear John Baptist, but not leave his incest; some will pray, but not give alms; others will give alms, but not pray: 'ye pay tithe of mint and anise, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.'⁷ The badger hath one foot shorter than the other: so these are shorter in some duties than in others. God likes not such partial servants, that will do some part of the work he sets them about, and leave the other undone.

A. 4. Obedience must be sincere, namely, We must aim at the glory of God in it, in religion the end is all. The end of our obedience must not be to stop the mouth of conscience, or to gain applause or preferment, but that we may grow more like God, and bring more glory to God: 'do all to the glory of God.'⁸ That which hath spoiled many glorious actions, and made them lose their reward, is, when men's aims have been wrong; the Pharisees gave alms, but blew a trumpet that they might have glory of men,⁹ alms should shine, but not blaze. Jehu did well in destroying the Baal worshippers, and God commended him for it; but, because his aims were not good, he aimed at settling himself in the kingdom, therefore God looked upon it as no better than murder, 'I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.'¹⁰ O let us look to our ends in obedience! It is possible the action may be right, and not the heart: 'Jotham did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,'¹¹ but not with a perfect heart. Two things are chiefly to be eyed in obedience, the principle and the end: a child of God, though he shoots short in his obedience yet he takes a right aim.*

¹ Ps. 119. 6. ² Mar. 10. 21. ³ Mat. 23. 23. ⁴ 1 Co. 10. 31.
⁵ Mat. 6. 2. ⁶ Ho. 1. 4. ⁷ 2 Ch. 25. 2.

* Our simple desire also should be, in the whole course of

A. 5. Obedience must be in and through Christ, 'he made us accepted in the beloved.'¹ Not our obedience, but Christ's merits, procure acceptance; we must, in every part of worship tender up Christ to God in the arms of our faith; unless we serve God thus, in hope and confidence of Christ's merits, we do rather provoke God, than please him. As, when king Uzziah would offer incense without a priest, God was angry with him, and struck him with leprosy,² so when we do not come to God in and through Christ, we offer up incense to God without a priest; and what can we expect but severe rebukes?

A. 6. Obedience must be constant, 'blessed is he who doeth righteousness at all times.'³ True obedience is not like an high colour in a fit, but it is a right sanguine; it is like the fire on the altar, which was always kept burning.⁴ Hypocrites' obedience is but for a season; it is like plastering work, which is soon washed off; but true obedience is constant; though we meet with affliction, we must go on in our obedience, 'the righteous shall hold on his way.'⁵ We have vowed constancy; we have vowed to renounce the pomp and vanities of the world, and to fight under Christ's banner to death. When a servant hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are sealed, then he cannot go back, he must serve out his time: there are indentures drawn in baptism, and in the Lord's supper the indentures are renewed and sealed on our part, that we will be faithful and constant in our obedience, therefore we must imitate Christ, who became obedient to the death.⁶ The crown is set upon the head of perseverance, 'He that keeps my words unto the end, to him will I give the morning star.'⁷*

¹ Eph. 1. 6. ² 2 Chr. 26. 16. ³ Ps. 106. 3. ⁴ Le. 6. 13.
⁵ Job 17. 9. ⁶ Phi. 2. 8. ⁷ Re. 2. 26, 28.

our obedience, that he may be exalted. This surely must be meet and right, and the principle is indispensably required? 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,' 1 Cor. 10. 31. There is no nobler motive that can actuate the human mind. Compared to this, how paltry are all our little selfish views! how mean the considerations of our own reputation or advancement! how detestable the plans which are conducted by avarice, ambition, or even religious ostentation from which all regard to the honour of God must be excluded! And if those works only are to be denominated good which are directed to a good end, how few will stand the test! How many, which are admired and applauded amongst men, will hereafter be rejected as 'reprobate silver.' O let us pray that God may sanctify and govern both our hearts and minds!—*Robinson's Christian System.*

* "When you see a dog following two men," says Mr Ralph Erskine in one of his sermons, "you know not to which of them he belongs while they walk together; but let them

USE 1. This indicts such who live in a contradiction to this text; they have cast off the yoke of obedience: 'as for the word which thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.'⁸ God bids men pray in their family, they live in the total neglect of it: he bids them sanctify the sabbath, they follow their pleasures on that day. God bids them abstain from the appearance of sin, they do not abstain from the act, they live in the act of revenge, in the act of uncleanness. This is an high contempt of God; it is rebellion, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Q. *Whence is it that men do not obey God? That they know their duty yet do it not?*

A. 1. The not obeying of God is for want of faith: 'who hath believed our report?'⁹ Did men believe sin were so bitter that hell followed at the heels of it, would they go on in sin? Did they believe there were such a reward for the righteous that godliness were gain, would they not pursue it? But they are atheists, not fully captivated into the belief of these things; hence it is they obey not. This is Satan's masterpiece, his drag-net by which he drags millions to hell, by keeping them in infidelity; he knows, if he can but keep them from believing the truth, he is sure to keep them from obeying it. 2. The not obeying God is for want of self-denial. God commands one thing, and men's lusts command another, and they will rather die than deny their lusts; now, if lust cannot be denied, God cannot be obeyed.

USE 2. Obey God's voice. This is the beauty of a christian.

Q. *What are the great arguments or incentives to obedience?*

A. 1. Obedience makes us precious to God; we shall be his favourites: 'if ye will obey my voice, ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people;'¹⁰ you shall be my portion, my jewels, the apple of mine eye: 'I will give Egypt for thy ransom.'¹¹ 2. There is nothing lost by obedience. To obey God's will is the way to have our will. Would we have a bless-

⁸ Je. 44. 16. ⁹ Is. 53. 1. ¹⁰ Ex. 19. 5. ¹¹ Is. 43. 3.

come to a parting road, and one go one way and the other another way, then you will know which is the dog's master. So at times religion and the world go hand in hand. While a man may have the world and a religious profession too, we cannot tell which is the man's master, God or the world; but stay till the man come to a parting road; God calls him this way, and the world calls him that way. Well, if God be his master, he follows religion, and lets the world go; but if the world be his master, then he follows the world and the lusts thereof, and lets God, and conscience, and religion go.—*Hiltecross's Anecdotes, Illustrative of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism.*

ing in our estates, let us obey: 'if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord, to do all his commandments, blessed shalt thou be in the field: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.'¹ To obey, is the best way to thrive in our estates. Would we have a blessing in our souls, let us obey: 'obey my voice, and I will be your God';² my Spirit shall be your guide, sanctifier, and comforter: 'Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.'³ While we please God, we please ourselves; while we give him the duty, he gives us the dowry. We are apt to say, as Amaziah, 'what shall we do for the hundred talents?'⁴ You see you lose nothing by obeying; the obedient son hath the inheritance settled on him. Obey, and you shall have a kingdom: 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'⁵

USE 3. What a sin disobedience is! *1st*, It is an irrational sin. We are not able to stand it out in defiance against God: 'Are we stronger than he?'⁶ Will the sinner go to measure arms with God? He is the Father Almighty, who can command legions: 'if we have no strength to resist him, it is irrational to disobey him. It is irrational, as it is against all law and equity: we have our daily subsistence from God; in him we live and move, is it not equal, that as we live by him, we should live to him? that as God gives us our allowance, so we should give him our allegiance?' *2dly*, It is a destructive sin: 'the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the gospel.'⁷ He who refuseth to obey God's will in commanding, shall be sure to obey his will in punishing. The sinner, while he thinks to slip the knot of obedience twists the cord of his own damnation; he perisheth without excuse; he hath no plea or apology to make for himself: 'the servant which knew his lord's will, but did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.'⁸ God will say why did you not obey? You knew how to do good,

but did it not; therefore your blood is upon your own head.

Q. *What means shall we use that we may obey?*

A. 1. Serious consideration. Consider, God's commands are not grievous: he commands nothing unreasonable;⁹ it is easier to obey the commands of God than sin; the commands of sin are burdensome; let a man be under the power of any lust, how doth he tire himself? What hazards doth he run, even to the endangering of his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lusts? What tedious journeys did Antiochus Epiphanes take in persecuting the Jews? 'They weary themselves to commit iniquity';¹⁰ and are not God's commands more easy to obey? Chrysostom saith, Virtue is easier than vice, temperance is less burdensome than drunkenness. Some have gone with less pains to heaven, than others have to hell.—*Consideration 2d*. God commands nothing but what is beneficial: 'O Israel, what doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and to keep his statutes, which I command thee this day, for thy good.'¹¹ To obey God, is not so much our duty as our privilege; his commands carry meat in the mouth of them. He bids us repent: and why? that our sins may be blotted out.¹² He commands us to believe: and why? that we may be saved.¹³ There is love in every command: as if a king should bid one of his subjects dig in a gold mine, then take the gold to himself.

A. 2. Earnest supplication. Implore the help of the Spirit to carry us on in obedience: God's Spirit makes obedience easy and delightful. If the loadstone draw the iron, now it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's Spirit quicken and draw the heart, now it is not hard to obey. When a gale of the Spirit blows, now we go full sail in obedience. Turn that promise into a prayer, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.'¹⁴ The promise encourageth us, the Spirit enables us to obedience.

OF LOVE.

THE rule of obedience being the moral law, comprehended in the ten commandments, the next question is,

Q. XLII. *What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to

¹ De. 28. 1, 3. ² Je. 7. 23. ³ He. 5. 9. ⁴ 2 Chr. 25. 9.
⁵ Lu. 12. 32. ⁶ 1 Co. 10. 22. ⁷ 2 Th. 1. 7, 8. ⁸ Lu. 12. 47.

⁹ 1 Jno. 5. 3. ¹⁰ Je. 9. 5. ¹¹ De. 10. 12, 13. ¹² Acts 3. 19.
¹³ Acts 16. 31. ¹⁴ Ez. 36. 27.

love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.’ The duty called for is love, yea, the strength of love, ‘with all thy heart.’ God will lose none of our love. Love is the soul of religion, and that which goes to the right constituting a christian; love is the queen of the graces, it shines and sparkles in God’s eye, as the precious stones did on the breast-plate of Aaron.

Q. 1. *What is love?*

A. It is an holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme good.*

Q. 2. *What is the antecedent of love to God?*

A. The antecedent of love is knowledge: the Spirit shines upon the understanding, and discovers these orient beauties in God, his wisdom, holiness, mercy, and these are the load-stone to entice and draw out love to God. What we know not of we wish not,—such as know not God cannot love him; if the sun be set in the understanding, there must needs be night in the affections.

Q. 3. *Wherein doth the formal nature of love consist?*

A. The nature of love is in delighting in the object: ‘the pleasure of a lover is in the person loved,’ AQUIN. This is our loving God, our taking delight in him: ‘delight thyself also in the Lord;’² as a bride delights herself in her jewels. Grace changeth a christian’s aims and delights.

Q. 4. *How must our love to God be qualified?*

A. 1. If it be a sincere love, we must love God with all our heart: in the text, ‘thou shalt love the Lord thy God,’ Heb. *Becol Icauaca*, ‘with all thy heart.’ God will have

the whole heart; we must not divide our love between God and sin; the true mother would not have the child divided, nor will God have the heart divided; it must be the whole heart.

A. 2. We must love God for himself, for his own intrinsic excellencies; we must love for his loveliness. ‘It is an harlot’s love, to love the portion more than the person.’ Hypocrites love God because he gives them corn and wine: we must love God for himself, for those shining perfections which are in him. Gold is loved for itself.

A. 3. We must love God with all our might, in the Hebrew text, our vehemency. We must love God as much as we are able. Christians should be like seraphim, burning in holy love; we can never love God so much as he deserves; the angels in heaven cannot love God so much as he deserves.

A. 4. Love to God must be active in its sphere; love is an industrious affection, it sets the head a-studying for God, hands a-working, feet a-running in the ways of his commandments, it is called ‘the labour of love.’³ Mary Magdalene loved Christ, and poured her ointments on him. We think we never do enough for the person whom we love.

A. 5. Love to God must be superlative. God is the quintessence of beauty, a whole paradise of delight; and he must have a priority in our love. Our love to God must be above all things besides, as the oil swims above the water; we must love God above estate, relations. Great is the love to relations: there is a story in the Annals of Rome, of a daughter, who, when her father was condemned to die by hunger, gave him suck with her own breasts. But our love to God must be above father and mother.⁴ We may give the creature the milk of our love, God must have the cream; the spouse keeps the juice of her pomegranates for Christ.⁵

A. 6. Our love to God must be constant, like the fire the Vestal virgins kept in Rome, which did not go out. Love must be like the motion of the pulse, it beats as long as there is life, ‘many waters cannot quench love;’⁶ not the waters of persecution, ‘rooted in love.’⁷ A branch withers that doth not grow on a root; that love may not die, it must be well rooted.

Q. 5. *What are the visible signs of our love to God?*

A. 1. If we love God, then our desire is

¹ De. 6. 5.

² Ps. 37. 4.

* Love is the greatest thing that God can give us; for himself is love: and it is the greatest thing we can give to God; for it will also give ourselves, and carry with it all that is ours. The apostle calls it the bond of perfection; it is the old, and it is the new, and it is the great commandment, and it is all the commandments; for it is the fulfilling of the law. It does the work of all other graces, without any instrument but its own immediate virtue. For as the love to sin makes a man sin against all his own reason, and all the discourses of wisdom, and all the advices of his friends, and without temptation, and without opportunity; so does the love of God: it makes a man chaste without the laborious arts of fasting and exterior disciplines, temperate in the midst of feasts, and is active enough to choose it without any intermedial appetites, and reaches at glory through the very heart of grace, without any other arms but those of love. It is a grace that loves God for himself; and our neighbours, for God.—*Beauties of Jeremy Taylor.*

³ 1 Th. 1. 3.

⁴ Mat. 10. 37.

⁵ Ca. 8. 2.

⁶ Ca. 8. 7.

⁷ Eph. 3. 17.

after him, 'the desire of our soul is to thy name.'¹ He who loves God, breathes after communion with him, 'my soul thirsteth for the living God.'² Persons in love desire to be often conferring together; he who loves God desires to be much in his presence; he loves the ordinances, they are the glass where the glory of God is resplendent; in the ordinances we meet with him whom our souls love, we have God's smiles and whispers, and some foretastes of heaven. Such as have no desire after ordinances, have no love to God.

A. 2. The second visible sign: he who loves God cannot take contentment in any thing without him. An hypocrite who pretends to love God, give him but corn and wine, and he can be content without God: but a soul fired with love to God, cannot be without him; lovers faint away if they have not a sight of the object loved. A gracious soul can want health, but not want God, who is the health of his countenance.³ If God should say to a soul that entirely loves him, 'take thy ease, swim in pleasure, solace thyself in the delights of the world, but thou shalt not enjoy my presence,' this would not content the soul. Nay, if God should say, 'I will let thee be taken up to heaven, but I will retire into a withdrawing-room, and thou shalt not see my face,' this would not content the soul, it is a hell to want God. The philosopher saith there can be no gold without the influence of the sun: there can be no golden joy in the soul without God's sweet presence and influence.

A. 3. The third visible sign: he who loves God, hates that which would separate between him and God, and that is sin. Sin makes God hide his face; it is like an incendiary which parts chief friends; therefore the keenness of a Christian's hatred is set against sin, 'I hate every false way.'⁴ Antipathies can never be reconciled; one cannot love health but he must hate poison; so we cannot love God but we must hate sin, which would destroy our communion with him.

A. 4. The fourth visible sign is sympathy; friends that love do grieve for the evils which befall each other. Homer describing Agamemnon's grief when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter, brings in all his friends weeping with him, and accompanying him to the sacrifice in mourning; lovers grieve together; if we have true love in our heart to God, we cannot but

grieve for those things which grieve him, we shall lay to heart his dishonours, the luxury, drunkenness, contempt of God and religion, 'rivers of waters run down mine eyes,'⁵ &c. Some speak of the sins of others, and make a laughing at them: sure they have no love to God, who can laugh at that which grieves his Spirit. Doth he love his father who can laugh to hear him reproached?

A. 5. The fifth visible sign: he who loves God, labours to render him lovely to others; he not only admires God, but speaks in his praises, that he may allure and draw others to be in love with God. She that is in love will commend her lover: the love-sick spouse extols Christ, she makes a panegyric oration of his worth, that she might persuade others to be in love with him.⁶ His head is as the most fine gold. True love to God cannot be silent; it will be eloquent in setting forth God's renown; no better sign of loving God, than by making him appear lovely, and so drawing proselytes to him.

A. 6. The sixth visible sign: he who loves God, weeps bitterly for his absence. Mary comes weeping: 'they have taken away the Lord.'⁷ One cries, my health is gone; another, my estate is gone; but he who is a lover of God, cries out, my God is gone, I cannot enjoy him whom I love! What can all worldly comforts do, when once God is absent? It is like a funeral-banquet, where there is much meat but no cheer: 'I went mourning without the sun.'⁸ If Rachel mourned so for the loss of her children, what vail or pencil can shadow out the sorrow of that christian who hath lost God's sweet presence? such a soul pours forth floods of tears, and while it is lamenting, seems to say thus to God, 'Lord, thou art in heaven; hearing the melodious songs and triumphs of angels, but I sit here in the valley of tears, weeping because thou art gone. O when wilt thou come to me, and revive me with the light of thy countenance!' Or, 'Lord, if thou wilt not come to me, let me come to thee, where I shall have a perpetual smile of thy face in heaven, and shall never more complain, 'My beloved hath withdrawn himself.'

A. 7. The seventh visible sign: he who loves God, is willing to do and suffer for him. He subscribes to God's commands; he submits to his will. 1. He subscribes to God's commands: if God bids him mortify sin, love his

¹ Is. 26. 8. ² Ps. 42. 2. ³ Ps. 43. 5. ⁴ Ps. 109. 128.

⁵ Ps. 119. 136. ⁶ Ca. 5. 11. ⁷ Jno. 20. 2. ⁸ Job 30. 28.

enemies, be crucified to the world, he obeys. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves God, and slights his commands. 2. He submits to God's will; if God will have him suffer for him, he doth not dispute, but obey; love 'endureth all things.'¹ Love made Christ suffer for us, and love will make us suffer for him. It is true every christian is not a martyr, but he hath a spirit of martyrdom in him; he hath a disposition of mind to suffer, if God call him to it: 'I am now ready to be offered up;'² not only the sufferings were ready for Paul, but he was ready for the sufferings. Origen chose rather to live despised in Alexandria, than with Plotinus to deny the faith, and be great in the prince's favour.³ Many say they love God, but will not suffer the loss of any thing for him. If Christ should have said to us, 'I love you well, you are dear to me, but I cannot suffer for you, I cannot lay down my life for you,' we should have questioned his love very much: and may not the Lord question ours, when we pretend love to him, but will endure nothing for his sake?

USE 1. What shall we say to them who have not a draehm of love in their hearts to God? They have their life from him, yet do not love him. God spreads their table every day, yet they do not love him; sinners dread God as a judge, but do not love him as a father. All the strength in the angels cannot make the heart love God; judgments will not do it; only omnipotent grace can make a stony heart melt in love. How sad is it to be void of love to God! When the body is cold, and hath no heat in it, it is a sign of death; he is spiritually dead who hath no heat of love in his heart to God. Shall such live with God, that doth not love him? Will God lay an enemy in his bosom? Such as will not be drawn with cords of love, shall be bound in chains of darkness.

USE 2. Let us be persuaded to love God with all our heart and might. O let us take our love off from other things, and place it upon God! Love is the heart of religion, the fat of the offering; it is the grace which Christ inquires most after: 'Simon, lovest thou me?'⁴ Love makes all of our services acceptable, it is the musk that perfumes them. It is not so much duty, as love to duty, God delights in; therefore serving and loving God are put together.⁵ It is better to love him than to serve him; obedience without love is like wine with-

out the spirit. O then, be persuaded to love God with all your heart and might! To persuade to this virgin-affection of love.

1. It is nothing but your love God desires. The Lord might have demanded your children to be offered in sacrifice; he might have bid you cut and lance yourselves, or lie in hell a while; but he only desires your love, he would only have this flower. Is this an hard request, to love God? Was ever any debt easier paid than this? Is it any labour for the wife to love her husband? Love is delightful. 'Love cannot exist without giving pleasure,' BERN. What is there in our love that God should desire it? Why should a king desire the love of a woman that is in debt and diseased? God doth not want our love. There are angels enough in heaven to adore and love him. What is God the better for our love? It adds not the least cubit to his essential blessedness. God doth not need our love, yet seeks it. Why doth God desire us to give him our heart?⁶ Not that he needs our heart, but that he may make it better.

2. Great will be our advantage, if we love God. God doth not court our love, that we should lose it: 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'⁷ If you will love God, you shall have such a reward as exceeds your faith. God will betroth you to himself in the dearest love: 'I will betroth thee unto me for ever, in loving-kindness and in mercies;'⁸ 'the Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love.'⁹ If you love God, he will interest you in all his riches and dignities, he will give you heaven and earth for your dowry, he will set a crown on your head. Vespasian the emperor gave a great reward to a woman who came to him, and professed she loved him; God gives a crown of life to them that love him.¹⁰

3. Love is the only grace that shall live with us in heaven. In heaven we shall need no repentance, because we have no sin; no faith, because we shall see God face to face: but love to God shall abide for ever: 'love never faileth.'¹¹ How shall we nourish this grace, which shall outlive all the graces, and run parallel with eternity!

4. Our love to God is a sign of his love to us; 'we love him because he first loved us.'¹² By nature we have no love to God; we have

¹ 1 Co. 13. 7. ² 2 Ti. 4. 6. ³ Re. 12. 11. ⁴ Jno. 21. 15.
⁵ 1s. 56. 6.

⁶ Pr. 23. 26. ⁷ 1 Co. 2. 9. ⁸ Ho. 2. 19. ⁹ Zeph. 3. 17.
¹⁰ Ja. 1. 12. ¹¹ 1 Co. 13. 8. ¹² 1 Jno. 4. 19.

hearts of stone.¹ And how can any love be in hearts of stone? Our loving him is from his loving us. If the glass burn, it is because the sun hath shined on it, else it could not burn; if our hearts burn in love, it is a sign the Sun of Righteousness hath shined upon us.

Q. *How shall we do to love God aright?*

A. 1. Wait on the preaching of the word. As faith comes by hearing, so doth love; the word sets forth God, in his incomparable excellencies; it doth decipher and pencil him out in all his glory, and a sight of his beauty inflames love.

A. 2. Beg of God that he will give you a heart to love him. When king Solomon asked wisdom of God, 'the speech pleased the Lord.'² So, when thou criest to God, 'Lord, give me a heart to love thee, it is my grief I can love thee no more!' sure this prayer pleaseth the

Lord, and he will pour out his Spirit upon thee, whose golden oil will make the lamp of thy love burn bright.

A. 3. You who have love to God, keep it flaming upon the altar of your heart. Love, as fire, will be ready to go out: 'thou hast left thy first love.'³ Through neglect of duty, or too much love of the world, our love to God will cool. O preserve your love to God! As you would be careful to preserve the natural heat in your body, so be careful to preserve the heat of love to God! Love is like oil to the wheels, it quickens us in God's service. When you find your love abate and cool, use all means for quickening; when the fire is going out, you throw on fuel; when the flame of love is going out, make use of the ordinances as sacred fuel to keep the fire of your love burning.

OF THE PREFACE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Exod. 20. 1, 2. *And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, &c.*

Q. XLIII. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments is, 'I am the Lord thy God.'

Where observe, 1. The preface to the preface; 'God spake all these words, saying.' 2. The preface itself to the commandments, 'I am the Lord thy God.'

I. I begin with the first, the preface to the preface: 'God spake all these words, saying,' &c. This is like the sounding of a trumpet before a solemn proclamation, 'God spake;' other parts of the Bible are said to be uttered by the mouth of the holy prophets,⁴ but here God spake in his own person.

Q. *How may we understand this [God spake], he hath no bodily parts or organs of speech?*

A. God made some intelligible sound, or formed a voice in the air, which was to the Jews as God's very speaking to them. In the text, 1. The lawgiver, God: 'God spake.' 2. The law itself: 'all these words.'

1. The lawgiver: 'God spake.' There are two things requisite in a lawgiver. *First*, Wisdom. Laws are founded upon reason; and he must be wise that makes laws. God, in this respect, is most fit to be a lawgiver: 'he is wise in heart;⁵ he hath a monopoly of wisdom:

'the only wise God.'⁶ Therefore he is the fittest to enact and constitute laws. *Second*, Authority. If a subject make laws, though ever so wise, yet they want the stamp of authority. God hath the supreme power in his hand; he derives a being to all; and he who gives men their lives, hath most right to give them their laws.

2. The law itself: 'all these words;' that is, all the words of the moral law, which is usually styled the decalogue, or ten commandments. It is called the moral law, because it is the rule of life and manners.

St Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden, the moral law is a chief flower in it; the scripture is a banquet, the moral law the chief dish in it.

(1.) The moral law is perfect: 'the law of the Lord is perfect.'⁷ It is an exact model and platform of religion; it is the standard of truth, the judge of controversies, the polestar to direct us to heaven. 'The commandment is a lamp.'⁸ Though the moral law be not a Christ to justify us, yet it is a rule to instruct us.

(2.) The moral law is unalterable; it remains still in force. Though the ceremonial and judicial law are abrogated, yet the moral law, delivered by God's own mouth, is to be

¹ Ez. 36. 1. ² 1 Ki. 3. 10. ³ Lu. 1. 70. ⁴ Job 9. 4.

⁵ Re. 2. 1. ⁶ 1 Ti. 1. 17. ⁷ Ps. 19. 7. ⁸ Prov. 6. 23.

of perpetual use in the church. Therefore the law was written in tables of stone, to show the perpetuity of it.

(3.) The moral law is very illustrious and full of glory. God did put glory upon it in the manner of the promulgation of it. 1. The people, before the moral law was delivered, were to wash their clothes,¹ whereby as by a type, God required the sanctifying of their ears and hearts to receive the law. 2. There were bounds set that none might touch the mount,² which was to breed in the people reverence to the law. 3. God wrote the law with his own finger, which was such an honour put upon the moral law as we read of no other written. God did by some mighty operation make the law legible in letters, as if it had been written with his own finger. 4. God's putting the law in the ark to be kept, was another signal mark of honour put upon it. The ark was the cabinet in which God put the ten commandments, as ten jewels. 5. At the delivery of the moral law, there was the attendance of many angels.³ Here was a parliament of angels called, and God himself was the speaker.

USE 1. Here we may take notice of God's goodness who hath not left us without a law: therefore the Lord doth often set it down as a demonstration of his love, in giving his commandments:⁴ 'He hath not dealt so with any nation, and as for his judgments they have not known them;'⁵ 'Thou gavest them true laws, good statutes and commandments.' What a strange creature would man be, if he had no law to direct him! There would be no living in the world; we should have none born but Ishmaels, every man's hand would be against his neighbour. Man would grow wild, if he had not affliction to tame him, and the moral law to guide him. The law of God is an hedge to keep us within the bounds of sobriety and piety.

USE 2. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then it condemns, 1st, The Marcionites, and Manichees, who speak slightly, yea, blasphemously of the moral law: they say, it is below a Christian, it is carnal, which the apostle confutes, when he saith, 'the law is spiritual, but I am carnal.'⁶ 2d, The Antinomians, who will not admit the moral law to be a rule to a believer. We say not he is under the curse of the law, but the command; we say not the moral law is a Christ, but it is a star to lead one to Christ; we say not it doth save, but it

doth sanctify. They who cast God's law behind their backs, God will cast their prayers behind his back; they who will not have the law to rule them, shall have the law to judge them. 3d, The papists, who, as if God's law were imperfect, and when he spake all these words he did not speak enough, add their canons and traditions to the moral law. This is to tax God's wisdom, as if he knew not how to make his own law. And surely it is an high provoking sin:⁷ 'if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues written in this book.' As it is a great evil to add any thing to a man's sealed will, so, much more to add any thing to that law God himself spake, and wrote with his own fingers.

USE 3. If God spake all these words, viz. of the moral law, then this presseth upon us several duties:

1. If God spake all these words, then we must hear all these words. The words which God speaks are too precious to be lost. As we would have God hear all our words when we pray, so we must hear all his words when he speaks. We must not be as the deaf adder which stoppeth her ears: he that stops his ears when God cries, shall cry himself, and not be heard.

2. If God spake all these words, then we must attend to them with reverence. Every word of the moral law is an oracle from heaven; God himself is the preacher; this calls for reverence. If a judge gives a charge upon the bench, all attend with reverence. In the moral law God himself gives a charge: 'God spake all these words.' Therefore with what veneration should we attend? Moses put off his shoes from his feet, in token of reverence when God was about to speak to him.⁸

3. If God spake all these words of the moral law, then we must remember them. Sure all God speaks is worth remembering. Those words are weighty which concern salvation. 'It is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.'⁹ Our memory should be like the chest in the ark where the law was kept: God's oracles are ornaments, and shall we forget them?¹⁰ 'can a maid forget her ornaments?'

4. If God spake all these words, then believe them. See the name of God written upon every commandment. The heathens, that they might gain credit to their laws, reported that they were inspired by the gods at Rome. The

¹ Ex. 19. 10. ² Ex. 19. 12. ³ Ex. 31. 18. ⁴ De. 32.

⁵ Ps. 147. 20. ⁶ Ne. 9. 13. ⁷ Ro. 7. 11.

Re. 22. 18 ⁹ Ex. 3. 5, 6. ¹⁰ De. 32. 47. ¹¹ Jer. 2. 32.

moral law fetcheth its pedigree from heaven: *Ipsæ dixit*,—God spake all these words. Shall we not give credit to the God of heaven? How would the angel confirm the women in the resurrection of Christ: ‘lo,’ saith he, ‘I have told you;’¹ I speak in the word of an angel. Much more should the moral law be believed, when it comes to us in the word of God. ‘God spake all these words.’ Unbelief enervates the virtue of God’s word, and makes it prove abortive: ‘the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith.’² Eve gave more credit to the devil when he spake, than she did to God.

5. If God spake all these words, then love the commandments: ‘O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.’³ ‘Consider how I love thy precepts.’⁴ The moral law is the copy of God’s will,—our spiritual directory; it shows us what sins to avoid, what duties to pursue; the ten commandments are a chain of pearls to adorn us, they are our treasury to enrich us, they are more precious than lands of spices, or rocks of diamonds: ‘the law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.’⁵ The law of God hath truth and goodness in it.⁶ Truth, for God spake it; and goodness, for there is nothing the commandment enjoins, but is for our good. O then let this command our love!

6. If God spake all these words, then teach your children the law of God: ‘these words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.’⁷ He who is godly, is both a diamond and a loadstone; a diamond for the sparkling of his grace, and a loadstone for his attractive virtue in drawing others to the love of God’s precepts; a good man doth more good to his neighbours than to himself. You that are parents, discharge your duty; though you cannot impart grace to your children, yet you may impart knowledge. Let your children know the commandments of God: ‘ye shall teach them to your children.’⁸ You are careful to leave your children a portion; leave the oracles of heaven with them; instruct them in the law of God; if God spake all these words, you may well speak them over again to your children.

7. If God spake all these words, then the moral law must be obeyed. If a king speaks, his word commands allegiance; much more, when God speaks, all his words must be sub-

scribed to. Some will obey partially, obey some commandments, not others, like a plough, which when it comes to a stiff piece of earth, makes a balk; but God that spake all the words of the moral law, will have all obeyed: God will not dispense with the breach of one law. Indeed princes, for special reasons, dispense sometimes with penal statutes, and will not take the severity of the law: but God, who spake all these words, binds men with a *subpœna* to yield obedience to every law.

This condemns the church of Rome, who instead of obeying the whole moral law, blots out one commandment, and dispenses with others. 1. They leave out the second commandment out of their catechisms, because it makes against images; and to fill up the number of ten, they divide the tenth commandment into two. Thus they run themselves into that dreadful premunire: ‘if any man shall take away from the words of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.’⁹ 2. As they blot out one commandment, and cut that knot which they cannot untie, so they dispense with other commandments; they dispense with the sixth commandment, making murder meritorious, in case of propagating the catholic cause; they dispense with the seventh commandment, wherein God forbids adultery,—the pope dispenseth with the sin of uncleanness, yea, incest, only paying such fines and sums of money into his coffer. No wonder the pope takes men off from their loyalty to kings and princes, when he teacheth them disloyalty to God! Some of the papists say expressly in their writings, that the pope hath power to dispense with the laws of God, and can give men a license to break the commandments of the Old and New Testament. That such a religion ever get foot in England, the Lord in mercy prevent! If God spake all the commandments, then we must obey all; he who breaks this hedge of the commandments, a serpent shall bite him.

Obj. *But what man alive can obey all God’s commandments?*

A. To obey the law in a legal sense, namely, to do all the law requires, no man alive can; sin hath cut the lock of original righteousness, where our strength lay; but, in a true gospel sense, we may so obey the moral law, as to find acceptance. Which gospel obedience consists in a real endeavour to observe the whole moral

¹ Mat. 28. 7. ² He. 4. 2. ³ Ps. 119. 97. ⁴ Ps. 119. 159.
⁵ Ps. 119. 72. ⁶ Ne. 9. 13. ⁷ De. 6. 7. ⁸ De. 11. 19.

⁹ Re. 22. 19.

law: I have done thy commandments;¹ not, I have done all I should do, but I have done all I am able to do; and wherein our obedience comes short, we look up to the perfect righteousness and obedience of Christ, and hope for pardon through his blood; this is evangelically to obey the moral law, which, though it be not

to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance. Thus I have done with the first, the preface to the preface, 'God spake all these words:' I should now come to the second, the preface itself to the commandments, 'I am the Lord thy God,' &c.

EXOD. 20. 2. *I am the Lord thy God, &c.*

II. THE preface itself, which consists of three parts: 1. 'I am the Lord thy God;' 2. 'Which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt;' 3. 'Out of the house of bondage.'

First, 'I am the Lord thy God.' Where we have a description of God, by his essential greatness, 'I am the Lord;' by his relative goodness, 'thy God.'

1st, By his essential greatness, '*I am the Lord*,' or, as it is in the Hebrew, *Jehovah*. By this great name God sets forth his majesty. The name of Jehovah was had in more reverence among the Jews than any other name of God, it signifies God's self-sufficiency, eternity, independency, immutability.²

USE 1. If God be Jehovah, the fountain of being, who can do what he will, let us fear this great Lord: 'that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, *Jehovah*.'³ 2. If God be Jehovah, the supreme Lord, then it condemns the blasphemous papists, who speak after this manner, 'our Lord God the Pope.' Is it a wonder, the pope lifts his triple crown above the head of kings and emperors, when he usurps God's title, 'showing himself that he is God?'⁴ The pope goes to make himself Lord of heaven, for he will canonize saints there; Lord of earth, for with his keys he doth bind and loose whom he pleaseth; Lord of hell, for he can free men out of purgatory; but God will pull down these plumes of pride; he will 'consume this man of sin with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming.'

2d, God is described by his relative goodness, '*thy God*.' Had God only called himself Jehovah, it might have terrified us, and made us flee from him, but when he said, 'thy God,' this may allure and draw us to him; this, though a preface to the law, is pure gospel. This word *Eloha*, 'thy God,' is so sweet, that we can never suck out all the honey

in it. 'I am thy God,' not only by creation, but by election. This word, 'thy God,' though it was spoken to Israel, yet is a charter belongs to all the saints. For the further explication, here are three questions.

Q. 1. *How God comes to be our God?*

A. Through Jesus Christ. Christ is a middle person in the Trinity; he is *Emmanuel*, 'God with us:' he brings two different parties together; he makes our nature lovely to God, and God's nature lovely to us; he, by his death, causeth friendship, yea, union; he brings us within the verge of the covenant, and so God becomes our God.

Q. 2. *What doth this imply, God being our God?*

A. It is comprehensive of all good things. God is our strong tower, our fountain of living water, our salvation. More particularly, God being our God, implies the sweetest relation.

1. The relation of a father: 'I will be a Father unto you.'⁵ A father is full of tender care for his child: whom doth he settle the inheritance upon, but his child? God being our God, will be a father to us: a 'Father of mercy;' 'the everlasting Father.'⁶ If God be our God, we have a Father in heaven that never dies.

2. It imports the relation of a husband: 'thy Maker is thy husband.'⁷ If God be our husband, he esteems us precious to him, as the apple of his eye.⁸ He imparts his secrets to us.⁹ He bestows a kingdom upon us for our dowry.¹⁰

Q. 3. *How may we come to know this covenant union, that God is our God?*

A. 1. By having his grace planted in us. Kings' children are known by their costly jewels: it is not having common gifts which shows we belong to God, many have the gifts of God without God, but it is grace gives us a true genuine title to God. In particular, faith is

¹ Ps. 119. 166. ² Mal. 3. 6. ³ De. 28. 54. ⁴ 2 Th. 2. 4. ⁵ 2 Th. 2. 8.

⁶ 2 Co. 6. 18. ⁷ 1 Co. 1. 3. ⁸ Is. 9. 6. ⁹ Is. 51. 5. ¹⁰ Ze. 2. 8. ¹¹ Ps. 25. 11. ¹² Lu. 12. 32.

the grace of union; by this we may spell out our interest in God. Faith doth not, as the mariner, cast its anchor downwards, but upwards; it trusts in the mercy and blood of God, and trusting in him, engageth him to be our God; other graces make us like God, faith makes us one with him. 2. We may know God is our God, by having the earnest of his Spirit in our hearts. God often gives the purse to the wicked, but the Spirit only to such as he intends to make his heirs. Have we had the consecration of the Spirit? If we have not had the sealing work of the Spirit, have we had the healing word? 'ye have an unction from the Holy One.'² The Spirit, where it is, stamps the impress of its own holiness upon the heart; it embroiders and bespangles the soul, and makes it all glorious within. Have we had the attraction of the Spirit? 'Draw me, we will run after thee.'³ Hath the Spirit, by its magnetic virtue, drawn our hearts to God? Can we say, 'O thou whom my soul loveth!'⁴ Is God our paradise of delight? our *Segullah*, or chief treasure! Are our hearts so chained to God, that no other object can enchant us, or draw us away from him? Have we had the elevation of the Spirit? Hath it raised our hearts above the world? 'the Spirit lifted me up.'⁵ Hath the Spirit made us seek the things above where Christ is? Though our flesh is on earth, is our heart in heaven? though we live here, trade we above? hath the Spirit thus lifted us up? by this we may come to know, that God is our God: where God gives his Spirit for an earnest, there he gives himself for a portion.—3. We may know God is our God, if he hath given us the hearts of children. Have we obediential hearts?⁶ do we subscribe to God's commands, when his commands cross our will? A true saint is like the flower of the sun: it opens and shuts with the sun, he opens to God, and shuts to sin. If we have the hearts of children, then God is our father.—4. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by our standing up for his interest. We will appear in his cause, and vindicate his truth, wherein his glory is so much concerned. Athanasius was the bulwark of truth; he stood up for it, when most of the world were Arians. In former times the nobles of Polonia, when the gospel was read, did lay their hands upon their swords, signifying that they were ready to defend the faith, and hazard their lives for the

gospel: no better sign of our having an interest in God, than by our standing up for his interest.—5. We may know God is ours, and we have an interest in him, by his having an interest in us: 'my beloved is mine, and I am his.'⁷ When God saith to the soul, 'thou art mine;' the soul answers, 'Lord, I am thine; all I have is at thy service; my head shall be thine to study for thee; my tongue shall be thine to praise thee.'⁸ If God be our God by way of donation, we are his by way of dedication; we live to him, and are more his than we are our own. And thus we may come to know that God is our God.

USE 1. Above all things, let us get this great charter confirmed, that God is our God. Deity is not comfortable without propriety. O let us labour to get sound evidences, that God is our God! We cannot call health, liberty, estate, ours; O let us be able to call God ours, and say as the church, 'God, even our own God, shall bless us!'⁹ Let every soul here labour to pronounce this *Shibboleth*, 'my God.' And that we may endeavour after this to have God for our God; consider, 1. The misery of such as have not God for their God. In how sad a condition are they, when an hour of distress comes? This was Saul's case: 'I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and the Lord is departed from me.'¹⁰ A wicked man, in time of trouble, is like a vessel tossed on the sea without an anchor, it falls on rocks or sands; a sinner not having God to be his God, though he make a shift while health and estate last, yet, when these crutches which he leaned upon are broken, his heart sinks. It is with a wicked man as it is with the old world, when the flood came; the waters at first came to the valleys, but then the people would get to the hills and mountains, but when the waters came to the mountains, then there might be some trees on the high hills, and they would climb up to them; ay, but then the waters did rise up to the tops of the trees, now all hopes of being saved were gone, their hearts failed them. So it is with a man that hath not God to be his God: if one comfort be taken away, he hath another, if he lose a child, he hath an estate, ay, but when the waters rise higher, death comes and takes away all; now he hath nothing to help himself with, no God to go to, he must needs die despairing. 2. How great a privilege it is to have God for our

¹ 2 Co. 1. 22. ² 1 Jno. 2. 20. ³ Ca. 1. 4. ⁴ Ca. 1. 7.
⁵ Ez. 3. 14. ⁶ Ps. 27. 8.

⁷ Ca. 2. 16. ⁸ Ps. 67. 6. ⁹ 1 Sa. 28. 15.

God. 'Happy are the people whose God is the Lord.'¹ 'God is man's blessedness,' AUG. That you may see the privilege of this charter:

1. If God be our God, then, though we may feel the stroke of evil, yet not the sting. He must needs be happy who is in such a condition that nothing can hurt him; if he lose his name, it is written in the book of life; if he lose his liberty, his conscience is free; if he lose his estate, he is possessed of the pearl of price; if he meets with storms, he knows where to put in for harbour; God is his God, and heaven is his haven.

2. If God be our God, then our soul is safe. The soul is the jewel, it is a blossom of eternity: 'I was grieved in the midst of my body.'² in the Chaldee it is 'in the midst of my *sheath*.' The body is but the sheath; the soul is the princely part of man which sways the sceptre of reason; it is a celestial spark, as Damascene calls it. If God be our God, the soul is safe, as in a garrison. Death can do no more hurt to a virtuous heaven-born soul, than David did to Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment; the soul is safe, being hid in the promises, hid in the wounds of Christ, hid in God's decree. The soul is the pearl, and heaven is the cabinet where God will lock it up safe.

3. If God be our God, than all that is in God is ours: the Lord saith to a saint in covenant, as the king of Israel to the king of Syria, 'I am thine, and all that I have.'³ So saith God, I am thine. How happy is he who not only inherits the gift of God, but inherits God himself! All that I have shall be thine; my wisdom shall be thine, to teach thee; my power shall be thine, to support thee; my mercy shall be thine to save thee. God is an infinite ocean of blessedness, and there is enough in him to fill us. If a thousand vessels be thrown into the sea, there is enough in the sea to fill them.

4. If God be our God, he will entirely love us: propriety is the ground of love. God may give men kingdoms, and not love them; but he cannot be our God, and not love us. He calls his covenanted saints, *Jediduth Naphshi*, 'the dearly beloved of my soul.'⁴ He rejoiceth over them with joy, and rests in his love;⁵ they are as refined silver;⁶ his jewels;⁷ his royal diadem.⁸ He gives them the cream and flower of his love; he not only opens his hand and fills them,⁹ but opens his heart and fills them.

5. If God be our God, he will do more for us than all the world besides can. What is that? He will give us peace in trouble: when a storm rages without, he will make music within. The world can create trouble in peace, but God can create peace in trouble; he will send the Comforter, who, as a dove, brings an olive-branch of peace in his mouth.¹⁰ God will give us a crown of immortality: the world can give a crown of gold, but that crown hath thorns in it, and death in it: but God will give 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'¹¹ The garland made of the flowers of paradise never withers.

6. If God be our God, he will bear with many infirmities. God may respite sinners a while, but long forbearance is no acquittance; he will throw them to hell for their sins; but if God be our God, he will not for every failing destroy us; he bears with his spouse as with the weaker vessel; God may chastise,¹² he may use the rod and the pruning-knife, but not the bloody axe: 'He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob:'¹³ he will not see sin in his people, so as to destroy them; he sees their sins so as to pity them; he sees them as a physician sees a disease in his patient, to heal him: 'I have seen his ways, and I will heal him.'¹⁴ Every failing doth not break the marriage-bond asunder. The disciples had great failings, they all forsook Christ and fled; but this did not break off their interest in God, therefore saith Christ, at his ascension, 'Tell my disciples, I go to my God and to their God.'

7. If God be once our God, he is so for ever: 'this God is our God for ever and ever.'¹⁵ Whatever worldly comforts we have are but for a season;¹⁶ we must part with all. As Paul's friends did accompany him to the ship, and there left him,¹⁷ so all our earthly comforts will but go with us to the grave, and there leave us. You cannot say you have health, and shall have it for ever; you have a child, and shall have it for ever; but if God be your God, you shall have him for ever; 'this God is our God for ever and ever.' If God be our God, he will be a God to us as long as he is a God! 'You have taken away my gods,'¹⁸ saith Micah, but it cannot be said to a believer, that his God is taken away; he may lose all things else, but cannot lose his God. God is ours from everlasting in election, and to everlasting in glory.

8. If God be our God, we shall enjoy all our

¹ Ps. 144. 15. ² Da. 7. 15. ³ 1 Ki. 20. 4. ⁴ Je. 12. 7.

⁵ Zep. 3. 17. ⁶ Ze. 13. 9. ⁷ Mal. 3. 17. ⁸ Is. 62. 3.

⁹ Ps. 145. 16.

¹⁰ Jno. 14. 16. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 5. 4. ¹² Ps. 89. 32. ¹³ Nu. 23. 21.

¹⁴ Is. 57. 18. ¹⁵ Ps. 48. 14. ¹⁶ He. 11. 25. ¹⁷ Acts 20. 28.

¹⁸ Judg. 18. 24.

godly relations with him in heaven. The great felicity on earth, is to enjoy relations; a father sees his own picture in a child; a wife sees a piece of herself in her husband; we plant the flower of love among our relations, and the loss of them is like the pulling off a limb from the body. But if God be ours, with enjoying God we shall enjoy all our pious relations in glory. The gracious child shall see his godly father, the virtuous wife shall see her religious husband in Christ's arms: and then there will be a dearer love to relations than ever was before, though in a far different manner; then relations shall meet and never part: 'and so shall we be ever with the Lord.'¹

USE 2. To all such as can make out this covenant union, it exhorts to several things.

1. If God be our God, let us improve our interest in him, cast all our burdens upon him, the burden of our fears, wants, sins: 'cast thy burden upon the Lord.'² Wicked men, who are a burden to God, have no right to cast their burden upon him; but such as have God for their God, are called upon to cast their burden on him. Where should the child ease all its cares but in the bosom of its parent? 'let all thy wants lie upon me.'³ So God seems to say to his children, 'let all your wants lie upon me.' Christian, what doth trouble thee? Thou hast a God to pardon thy sins, to supply thy wants, therefore roll your burden on the Lord: 'casting all your care on him.'⁴ Whence are christians so disquieted in their mind? They are taking care, when they should be casting care away.

2. If God be our God, let us learn to be contented, though we have the less of other things. Contentment is a rare jewel; it is the cure of care. If we have God to be our God, well may we be contented. 'I know whom I have believed:'⁵ there was Paul's interest in God; 'as having nothing, yet possessing all things:'⁶ there was his content. That such who have covenant union with God may be filled with contentation of spirit, consider what a rich blessing God is to the soul. 1. God is a *sufficient good*. He who hath God hath enough. If a man be thirsty, bring him to a spring and he is satisfied; in God there is enough to fill the heaven-born soul; 'He gives grace and glory.'⁷ There is in God not only a sufficiency, but a redundancy; he is not only full as a vessel but as a spring. Other things can no more

fill the soul than a mariner's breath can fill the sails of a ship; but in God is an infinite fullness; he hath enough to fill the angels, therefore enough to fill us. The heart is a triangle, which only the Trinity can fill. 2. God is a *sanctifying good*. He sanctifies all our comforts, and turns them into blessings. Health is blessed, estate is blessed, he gives with the venison a blessing, 'I will abundantly bless her provision.'⁸ He gives us that life we have, as an earnest of more. He gives the little meal in the barrel, as an earnest of the royal feast in paradise. He sanctifies all our crosses; they shall not be destructive punishments, but medicines, they shall corrode and eat out the venom of sin, they shall polish and refine our grace. The more the diamond is cut it sparkles the more. God's stretching the strings of his viol, is to make the music the better. 3. God is a *choice good*. All things under the sun, are but the blessings of the footstool; but to have God himself to be ours, is the blessing of the throne. Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines, but he settled the inheritance upon Isaac: 'Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.'⁹ God may send away the men of the world with gifts, a little gold and silver; but, in giving us himself, he gives us the very quintessence, his grace, his love, his kingdom; here is the crowning blessing. 4. God is the *chief good*. In the chief good there must be, first, delectability, it must have something that is delicious and sweet: and where can we suck those pure quintessential comforts, which ravish us with delight, but in God? 'At God's right hand are pleasures.'¹⁰ Secondly, in the chief good there must be transcendency, it must have a surpassing excellency. Thus God is infinitely better than all other things; it is below the Deity to compare other things with it. Who would go to weigh a feather with a mountain of gold? God is the spring of all entities, and the cause is more noble than the effect. It is God that bespangles the creation; that puts light into the sun, that fills the veins of the earth with silver; creatures do but maintain life, God gives life; God infinitely outshines all sublunary glory; he is better than the soul, than angels, than heaven. Thirdly, in the chief good, there must be not only fullness, but variety; where variety is wanting we are apt to nauseate; to feed only on honey, would breed loathing; but in God is all variety of fullness.¹¹ He is an universal good, commen-

¹ 1 Th. 4. 17. ² Ps. 55. 22. ³ Judg. 19. 20. ⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 7.

⁵ 2 Tim. 1. 12. ⁶ 2 Cor. 6. 10. ⁷ Ps. 84. 11.

⁸ Ps. 132. 15. ⁹ Gen. 25. 5. ¹⁰ Ps. 16. 11. ¹¹ Col. 1. 19.

surate to all our wants; he is the good fountain from which all good things proceed, a sun, a portion, an horn of salvation, he is called the 'God of all comfort.'¹ There is a complication of all beauties and delights in him; health hath not the comfort of beauty, nor beauty of riches, nor riches of wisdom, but God is the God of all comfort. Fourthly, In the chief good there must be eternity. God is a treasure that can neither be drawn low, nor drawn dry. Though the angels are still spending on him, he can never be spent; he abides for ever. Eternity is a flower of his crown. Now, if God be our God, here is enough to let in full contentment into our souls. What though we want torch-light, if we have the sun? What if God deny us the flower, if he hath given us the jewel? How should this rock a christian's heart quiet? If we say God is our God, and we are not content, we have cause to question our interest in him.

3. If we can clear up this covenant union that God is our God, let this cheer and revive us in all conditions. To be content with God, is not enough, but to be cheerful. What greater cordial can you have, than union with Deity? When Jesus Christ was ready to ascend, he could not leave a richer consolation with his disciples than this, tell them 'I go to my God and your God.'² Who should rejoice, if not they, who have an infinite, all-sufficient, eternal God to be their portion, who are as rich as heaven can make them? What though I want health? I have God 'who is the health of my countenance, and my God.'³ What though I am low in the world? if I have not the earth, I have him that made it. The philosopher comforted himself with this, though he had no music or vine-trees, yet here are the household gods with me: so, though we have not the vine or fig-tree, yet we have God with us. I cannot be poor, saith St Bernard, as long as God is rich; for his riches are mine. O let the saints rejoice in this covenant union! To say God is ours, is more than to say heaven is ours;* heaven would not be heaven without

God. All the stars cannot make day without the sun; all the angels, those morning stars, cannot make heaven without Christ the Sun of Righteousness. And as to have God for our God is matter of rejoicing in life, so especially it will be at our death. Let a christian think thus, I am going to my God. A child is glad when he is going home to his father. This was Christ's comfort, when he was leaving the world: 'I go to my God.'⁴ And this is a believer's death-bed cordial, I am going to my God; I shall change my place, but not my kindred; I go to my God and my Father.

4. If God be our God, then let us break forth into doxology and praise: 'thou art my God, and I will praise thee.'⁵ O infinite, astonishing mercy, that God should take dust and ashes into so near a bond of love as to be our God! As Micah said, 'what have I more?'⁶ so, what hath God more; what richer jewel hath he to bestow upon us than himself? what hath he more? That God should put off most of the world with riches and honour, that he should pass over himself to us by a deed of gift, to be our God, and by virtue of this settle a kingdom upon us, O let us praise him with the best instrument, our heart; and let this instrument be screwed up to the highest pitch, let us praise him with our whole heart! See how David riseth by degrees: 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, and shout for joy.'⁷ 'Be glad,' there is thankfulness; 'rejoice,' there is cheerfulness; 'shout,' there is triumph. Praise is called incense, because it is so sweet a sacrifice. Let the saints be choristers in God's praises. The deepest springs yield the sweetest water; the more deeply sensible we are of God's covenant-love to us, the sweeter praises we should yield. We should begin here to eternize God's name, and do that work on earth which we shall be always doing in heaven: 'while I live, will I praise the Lord.'⁸

5. Let us carry ourselves as those who have God to be our God; that is, when we walk so, that others may see there is something of God in us. Live holily; what have we to do with sin? Is it not this, that if it doth not break, yet it will weaken the interest? 'What have I to do any more with idols?'⁹ So would a christian say, 'God is my God; what have I to do any more with sin, with lust, pride, malice! Bid me commit sin! as well bid me

¹ 2 Cor. 1. 3.² Jno. 20. 17.³ Ps. 42. 11.

* A gentleman one day took an acquaintance of his upon the leads of his house, to show him the extent of his possessions; waving his hand about, 'There,' says he, 'that is my estate.' Then pointing to a great distance on one side, 'Do you see that farm?' 'Yes.' 'Well, that is mine.' Pointing again to the other side, 'Do you see that house?' 'Yes.' 'That also belongs to me.' 'Then,' said his friend, 'do you see that little village out yonder?' 'Yes.' 'Well, there lives a poor woman in that village, who can say more than all this.' 'Ay, what can she say?' 'Why, she can say, 'Christ is mine!'' He looked confounded, and said no more.—*Whitcross's Anecdotes illustrative of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism*

⁴ Jno. 20. 17. ⁵ Ps. 118. 28. ⁶ Judg. 18. 21. ⁷ Ps. 32. 11.⁸ Ps. 146. 2.⁹ Ho. 14. 8.

drink poison! Shall I forfeit my interest in God? Let me rather die, than willingly offend him who is the crown of my joy, the God of my salvation!

Exod. 20. 2. *The land of Egypt, &c.*

Second, The second part of the preface, 'which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' Egypt and the house of bondage are the same; only they are represented to us under a different expression, or notion. I begin with the first expression, 'which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'

Q. Why doth the Lord mention this deliverance of Israel out of Egypt?

A. 1. Because of the strangeness of the deliverance. God delivered his people Israel by strange signs and wonders, by sending plague after plague upon Pharaoh, blasting the fruits of the earth, killing all the first-born in Egypt.¹ And when Israel marched out of Egypt, God made the waters of the sea to part, and become a wall to his people, while they went on dry ground; and as he made the sea a causeway to Israel, so a grave to Pharaoh and his chariots. Well might the Lord mention his bringing them out of the land of Egypt, because of the strangeness of the deliverance! God wrought miracle upon miracle for their deliverance.

A. 2. God mentions Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, because of the greatness of the deliverance. God delivered Israel from the pollutions of Egypt; Egypt was a bad air to live in, it was infected with idolatry; the Egyptians were gross idolaters, they were guilty of that which the apostle speaks of, 'they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.'² The Egyptians worshipped instead of the true God, first, corruptible man; they deified their king Apis, forbidding all, under pain of death, to say that he was a man. *2d,* They were worshippers of birds, they worshipped the hawk. *3d,* They were worshippers of beasts, they worshipped the ox; thus they made the image of a beast to be their god. *4th,* They were worshippers of creeping things, they worshipped the crocodile, and the Indian mouse. Therefore God mentions this as a memorable and signal favour to Israel, that he brought

them out of such an idolatrous country: 'I brought thee out of the land of Egypt.'

The thing I would note is this, That it is no small blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry. God speaks of it no less than ten times in the Old Testament, 'I brought you out of the land of Egypt;' an idolatrous place. Had there been no iron furnace in Egypt, yet there being so many altars there, and false gods, it was a great privilege to Israel to be delivered out of Egypt. Joshua reckons it among the chief and most memorable mercies of God to Abraham, that he brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, where Abraham's ancestors served strange gods.³ It is well for the plant that is set in a bad soil, to be transplanted to a better, where it may grow and flourish: so when any are planted among idolaters, it is a mercy when they are removed and transplanted into Zion, where are the silver drops of God's word to make them grow in holiness.

Q. Wherein doth it appear that it is such a great blessing to be delivered from places of idolatry?

A. It is a great mercy, because our nature is so prone to idolatry. Israel began to be defiled with the idols of Egypt.⁴ Dry wood is not more prone to take fire, than our nature is to idolatry. The Jews made cakes to the queen of heaven, that is, the moon.⁵ *Q.* Whence is it that we are so prone to idolatry? *A.* Because we are led much by visible objects, and love to have our senses pleased. Men naturally fancy a god that they may see; though it be such a god that cannot see them, yet they would see it. The true God is invisible; this makes the idolater worship something that he may see.

A. 2. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the greatness of the sin of idolatry. It is giving that glory to an image, which is due to God. All divine worship God doth appropriate to himself; it is a flower of his crown. The fat of the sacrifice God laid claim to:⁶ divine worship is the fat of the sacrifice which God reserves for himself. The idolater devotes this worship to his idol,

¹ Ex. 12. 29.

² Ro. 1. 23.

³ Josh. 24. 2, 3.

⁴ Ez. 22. 3.

⁵ Je. 7. 18.

⁶ Le. 3. 3.

which the Lord will by no means endure: 'my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.'¹ Idolatry is spiritual adultery: 'with their idols have they committed adultery.'² To worship any other than God is to break wedlock; this makes the Lord disclaim his interest in a people: 'plead with your mother, plead she is not my wife.'³ And 'thy people have corrupted themselves;'⁴ no more my people, but thy people. God calls idolatry blasphemy: 'in this your fathers have blasphemed me.'⁵ Idolatry is devil-worship: 'they sacrificed to devils, not unto God; to new gods.'⁶ These new gods were old devils: 'and they shall no more offer their sacrifice unto devils;'⁷ the Hebrew word *lashegnirim*, is 'the hairy ones,' because the devils were hairy, and appeared in the forms of satyrs and goats. How dreadful a sin is idolatry; and what a signal mercy is it to be snatched out of an idolatrous place, as Lot was snatched by the angels out of Sodom!

A. 3. It is a mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places, because idolatry is such a silly irrational religion. I may say, as Jeremiah, 'what wisdom is in them?'⁸ Is it not folly to refuse the best, and choose the worst? The trees in the field of Jotham's parable, despised the vine-tree which cheers both God and man, and the olive which is full of fatness, and the fig-tree which is full of sweetness, and chose the bramble to reign over them; this was a foolish choice:⁹ so, for us to refuse the living God, who hath power to save us, and to make choice of an idol, that hath eyes and sees not, feet but walks not,¹⁰ what a prodigy of madness is this? Therefore to be delivered from committing such folly, is a mercy.

A. 4. It is a mercy to be delivered from idolatrous places, because of the sad judgments inflicted upon idolaters. This is a sin which enrageth God, and makes the fury come up in his face.¹¹ Search through the whole book of God, and you shall find no sin God hath followed with more plagues than idolatry: 'their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another god.'¹² 'They moved him to jealousy with their graven images.'¹³ When God heard this, 'he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel;'¹⁴ 'so that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh.'¹⁵ Shiloh was a city belonging to the

tribe of Ephraim; there God set his name;¹⁶ but, for their idolatry God forsook that place, gave his people up to the sword, caused his priests to be slain, his ark to be carried away captive, and it never returned to Shiloh any more. How severe was God against Israel, for worshipping the golden calf?¹⁷ The Jews say, that in every misery that befalls them, there is an ounce of the golden calf in it: 'come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.'¹⁸ Idolatry, lived in, cuts men off from heaven:¹⁹ so then it is no small mercy to be delivered out of idolatrous places.

USE 1. See the goodness of God to our nation, who hath brought us out of mystical Egypt, delivering us from popery, which is Romish idolatry, and hath caused the light of his truth to break forth gloriously among us. In former times, and more lately in the days of Mary, England was overspread with idolatry, we worshipped God after a false manner, that is idolatry, not only to worship a false god, but the true God, in a false manner, this was our case formerly, we had purgatory, indulgences, the idolatrous mass, the scriptures locked up in an unknown tongue, invocation of saints and angels, image-worship. Images are teachers of lies.²⁰ Wherein do they teach lies? Because they represent God in a bodily shape, whereas he cannot be seen: 'but saw no similitude, only ye heard a voice.'²¹ 'What is invisible, no one can portray,' AMBR. God cannot be pictured out by any finger; you cannot picture the soul being a spirit, much less God: 'to whom then will ye liken God?'²² The papists say, they worship God by the image; which hath a great absurdity in it, for if it be absurd to bow down to the picture of a king, when the king himself is present, then much more to bow down to the image of God, when God himself is present.²³ What is the popish religion, but a bundle of ridiculous ceremonies? Their wax, flowers, *pixes*, *agnus Dei*, cream and oil, beads, crucifixes, what are these but Satan's policy to dress up a carnal worship, fitted to carnal minds? O what cause have we to bless God, for delivering us from popery! It was a mercy to be delivered from the Spanish invasion and the powder-treason; but a far greater to be delivered from the popish religion, which would have made God give us a bill of divorce.

¹ Is. 42. 8. ² Ez. 23. 37. ³ Ho. 2. 2. ⁴ Ex. 32. 7.

⁵ Ez. 20. 27, 31. ⁶ De. 32. 17. ⁷ Le. 17. 7. ⁸ Je. 8. 9.

⁹ Judg. 9. ¹⁰ Ps. 115. 5, 7. ¹¹ Ez. 38. 18. ¹² Ps. 16. 4.

¹³ Ps. 78. 58, 59. ¹⁴ Ps. 78. 60.

¹⁵ Je. 7. 12. ¹⁶ Ex. 32. 27. ¹⁷ Re. 18. 4. ¹⁸ 1 Co. 6. 9.

¹⁹ Ha. 2. 18. ²⁰ De. 4. 12. ²¹ Is. 40. 18. ²² Je. 23. 24

USE 2. If it be a great blessing to be delivered from Egypt, popish idolatry; then it shows their sin and folly, who, being brought out of Egypt, are willing to return into Egypt again; having put off the yoke of Rome, would fain put it on again. The apostle saith, 'flee from idolatry.' But these rather flee to idolatry; herein we are like the people of Israel, who, notwithstanding all the idolatry and tyranny of Egypt, yet longed to go back to Egypt; 'let us make a captain and let us return into Egypt.'² But how shall they go back into Egypt? How shall they have food in the wilderness? Will God rain down manna any more upon such rebels? How will they get over the sea? Will God divide the water again by miracle for such as leave his service, and go into idolatrous Egypt? Yet say they, Let us make a captain. And are there not such spirits amongst us, who say, 'Let us make a captain, and go back to the Romish Egypt again?' And if we do, what shall we get by it? I am afraid the leeks and onions of Egypt will make us sick. Do we ever think, if we drink in the cup of fornication, we shall drink in the cup of salvation? O that any should so forfeit their reason, as to enslave themselves to the see of Rome! That they should be willing to hold a candle to a mass-priest, and bow down to a strange god. Let us not say we will make a captain; but rather say as Ephraim, 'What have I to do any more with idols?'³

USE 3. If it be a mercy to be brought out of Egypt, then it is not desirable or safe to plant one's self in an idolatrous place where it may be a capital crime to be seen with a Bible in one's hand. Some for secular gain thrust themselves among idolaters, and think there is no danger to live where Satan's seat is: but do you pray God would not lead you into temptation, and do you lead yourselves? You are in great danger of being polluted; it is hard to be as the fish, which keeps fresh in salt waters. A man cannot dwell among the blackamoors, but he will be discoloured; you will sooner be corrupted by idolaters, than they will be converted by you; Joseph got no good by living in an idolatrous court; he did not teach Pharaoh to pray, but Pharaoh taught him to swear: they 'were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols.'⁴ I fear this hath been the undoing of many; they have seated themselves amongst idolaters, for advancing their trade,

and at last have not only traded with them in their commodities, but in their religion.

USE 4. Is it a mercy to be brought out of the land of Egypt,—places which are defiled, and where sin reigns? then it reproaches such parents as show little love to the souls of their children, whether it be in putting them out to service or matching them.—1. In putting them out to service: their care is chiefly for their bodies, that they may be provided for, but care not what becomes of their souls; their souls are in Egypt, in houses where there is drinking, swearing, sabbath-breaking, and where God's name is every day dishonoured.—2. In matching their children, they look only at money: 'be not ye unequally yoked:'⁵ if their children be equally yoked for estate, they care not whether they be unequally yoked for religion: now, to such parents, (1.) Think how precious the soul of your child is; it is immortal, it is capable of communion with God and angels: and will you let this soul be lost, by placing it in a bad family? If you had a horse you loved, you would not put him into a stable with other horses that were sick and diseased; and do you not love your child better than your horse. (2.) God hath intrusted you with the souls of your children, you have a charge of souls. God saith, 'keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then thy life shall be for his life.'⁶ So saith God, 'if the soul of thy child miscarry by thy negligence, his blood will I require at thy hand.' Think of this, all ye parents; take heed of placing your children in Egypt, in a wicked family; do not put them in the devil's mouth: find out a sober, religious family, such a family as Joshua's: 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'⁷ Such a family as Cranmer's, which was a nursery of piety; such a family as is a Bethel, of which it may be said, 'the church which is in his house.'⁸

USE 5. Let us pray that God would keep our English nation from the defilements of Egypt, that it may not be again overspread with superstition and idolatry. O sad religion! not only to have our estates, our bodies enslaved, but our conscience. Pray that the true protestant religion may still flourish among us; that the sun of the gospel may still shine in our horizon. The gospel lifts a people up to heaven, it is the crown and glory of the kingdom; if this be removed, then *Ichabod*, the glory is departed! The top of the beech-tree

¹ 1 Co. 10. 14. ² Nu. 14. 1. ³ Ho. 11. 8. ⁴ Ps. 106. 35.

⁵ 2 Co. 6. 11. ⁶ 1 Ki. 20. 39. ⁷ Jo. 24. 15. ⁸ Co. 4. 15.

being cut off, the whole body of the tree withers apace: the gospel is the top of all our blessings, if this top be cut, the whole body politic will soon wither. O pray that the Lord will continue the visible tokens of his presence among

us, his ordinances, that England may be called, *Jehovah Shammah*, 'The Lord is there!' Pray that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, that so glory may dwell in our land!

EXOD. 20. 2. *Out of the house of bondage.*

Third. The third part of the preface 'out of the house of bondage.' 'Egypt,' and '*the house of bondage*,' are the same, only they are expressed under a different notion. By Egypt is meant a place of idolatry and superstition; by the house of bondage, is meant a place of affliction. Israel, while they were in Egypt, were under great tyranny; they had cruel taskmasters set over them, who put them to hard labour, and set them to make brick, yet allowed them no straw; therefore Egypt is called the iron furnace,¹ and here the house of bondage. From this expression, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage,' two things are to be noted: 1. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, 'in the house of bondage.' 2. That God will in his due time bring them out of their afflicted state, 'I brought thee out of the house of bondage.'

1st. God's children may sometimes be under sore afflictions, 'in the house of bondage.' God's people have no right of ease granted them,—no charter of exemption from trouble in this life; while the wicked are kept in sugar, the godly are oft kept in brine. And indeed, how could God's power be seen in bringing them out of trouble, if he did not sometimes bring them into it? or how should God wipe away the tears from their eyes in heaven, if on earth they shed none? Doubtless God sees there is need that his children should be sometimes in the house of bondage, 'If need be, ye are in heaviness;² the body sometimes doth more need a bitter potion than a julep.

Q. 1. *Why doth God let his people be in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state?*

A. He doth it, 1. For probation or trial: 'Who led thee through that terrible wilderness, that he might humble thee and prove thee.'³ Affliction is the touchstone of sincerity, 'Thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver: thou laidst affliction upon our loins.'⁴ Hypocrites may embrace the true religion in

prosperity, and court this queen while she hath a jewel hung at her ear, but he is a good Christian who will keep close to God in a time of suffering, 'All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee.'⁶ To love God in heaven, is no wonder: out to love God when he chastiseth us, this discovers sincerity. 2. For purgation; to purge our corruption. 'And this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.' The eye, though it be a tender part, yet when it is sore, we put sharp powders and waters into it, to eat out the pearl: though the people of God are dear to him, yet when corruption begins to grow in them, he will apply the sharp powder of affliction, to eat out the pearl in the eye. Affliction is God's flail to thrash off our husks; it is a means God useth to purge out sloth, luxury, pride, and love of the world. 'God's fire is in Zion.'⁸ This is not to consume, but to refine; what if we have more affliction, if by this means we have less sin. 3. For augmentation: to increase the graces of the Spirit. Grace thrives most in the iron furnace; sharp frosts nourish the corn, so do sharp afflictions grace; grace in the saints is often as fire hid in the embers, affliction is the bellows to blow it up into a flame. The Lord makes the house of bondage a friend to our grace; now faith and patience act their part; the darkness of the night cannot hinder the brightness of a star, so, the more the diamond is cut the more it sparkles, and the more God afflicts us, the more our graces cast a sparkling lustre. 4. For preparation: to fit and prepare the saints for glory.⁹ These stones which are cut out for a building are first hewn and squared: the godly are called 'living stones.'¹⁰ And God doth first hew and polish them by affliction that they may be fit for the heavenly building; the house of bondage prepares for the 'house not made with hands.'¹¹ The vessels of mercy are seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.

¹ De. 4. 20. ² 1 Pet. 1. 6. ³ De. 8. 16. ⁴ Ps. 66. 10, 11.

⁵ Ez. 48. 35. ⁶ Ps. 41. 17. ⁷ Is. 27. 9. ⁸ Is. 31. 9.
⁹ 2 Cor. 4. 17. ¹⁰ 1 Pet. 2. 5. ¹¹ 2 Cor. 5. 1.

Q. 2. How do the afflictions of the godly differ from the afflictions of the wicked?

A. 1. These are but castigations,—those on the wicked are punishments; these come from a father, those from a judge. *2.* Afflictions on the godly are fruits of covenant-mercy.¹ But afflictions on the wicked are effects of God's wrath: 'he hath much wrath with his sickness.'² Afflictions on the wicked are the pledge and earnest of hell; they are like the pinioning of a malefactor, which doth presage his execution. *3.* Afflictions on the godly make them better, but afflictions on the wicked make them worse; the godly pray more,³ the wicked blaspheme more: 'men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.'⁴ Afflictions on the wicked make them more impenitent; every plague upon Egypt increased the plague of hardness in Pharaoh's heart. To what a prodigy of wickedness do some persons come after great sickness? Affliction on the godly is like bruising of spices, which are most sweet and fragrant; affliction on the wicked is like stamping of weeds with a pestle, which makes them more unsavoury.

USE 1. It shows us, that we are not to wonder to see Israel in the house of bondage.⁵ The holiness of the saints will not excuse them from sufferings. Christ was the holy one of God, yet he was in the iron furnace; Christ's spouse is a lily among thorns.⁶ His sheep, though they have the ear-mark of election upon them, yet may have their wool fleeced off; the godly have some good in them, therefore the devil afflicts them, and some evil in them, therefore God afflicts them. While there are two seeds in the world, expect to be under the black rod. The gospel tells us of reigning, but first of suffering.⁷

Branch 2. It informs us, that affliction is not always the sign of God's anger. Israel, the apple of God's eye, a peculiar treasure to him above all people,⁸ yet these were in the house of bondage. We are apt to judge and censure them who are in an afflicted state. When the barbarians saw the viper on Paul's hand, they said, 'no doubt this man is a murderer;'⁹ so, when we see the viper of affliction fasten upon the godly, we are apt to censure them, and say, these are greater sinners than others, and God hates them; this rash censuring is for want of wisdom. Were not Israel in the house of bondage? Jeremiah in the dungeon? Paul

a night and a day in the deep? God's afflicting is so far from evidencing hatred, that his not afflicting is, 'I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom.'¹⁰ God punisheth most when he doth not punish; his hand is heaviest when it seems to be lightest; the judge will not burn him in the hand whom he intends to execute.

Branch 3. If God's own Israel may be in the house of bondage, then afflictions do not of themselves demonstrate a man miserable; indeed sin unrepented of, makes one miserable; but the cross doth not. If God hath a design in afflicting his children, to make them happy, then they are not miserable; but God's afflicting them is to make them happy, therefore they are not miserable; 'happy is the man whom God correcteth.'¹¹ The world counts them happy who can keep out of affliction; but the scripture calls them happy who are afflicted.

Q. How are they happy?

A. 1. Because they are more holy.¹² *2.* Because they are more in God's favour.¹³ The goldsmith loves his gold when in the furnace. *3.* Because they have more of God's sweet presence.¹⁴ And they cannot be unhappy that have God's powerful presence in supporting, his gracious presence in sanctifying their affliction. *4.* Because, the more affliction they have, the more degrees of glory they shall have; the lower they have been in the iron furnace, they shall sit upon the higher throne of glory: the heavier their crosses, the heavier shall be their crown. So then, if afflictions make a christian happy, they cannot denominate him miserable.

Branch 4. See the merciful providence of God to his children: though they may be in the house of bondage, and smart by affliction, yet they shall not be hurt by affliction. What hurt doth the fan to the corn? only separates the chaff from it. Or, the lance to the body? only lets out the imposthume. The house of bondage doth that which sometimes ordinances will not do; it doth humble and reform: 'if they be held in cords of affliction, he openeth their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.'¹⁵ O what a merciful providence is this, though God bruise his people, yet, while he is bruising them, he is doing them good? As if one should throw a bag of money at another, and a little bruise him, yet it doth enrich him. Affliction enricheth the soul, and yields the sweet fruits of righteousness.¹⁶

¹ 2 Sa. 7. 14. ² Ec. 5. 17. ³ Ps. 130. 1. ⁴ Re. 16. 9. ⁵ 1 Pe. 4. 12. Ca. 2. 2. ⁶ 2 Ti. 2. 12. ⁷ Ex. 19. 5. ⁸ Acts 28. 4.

⁹ Ho. 4. 14. ¹⁰ Job 5. 17. ¹¹ He. 12. 10. ¹² Pr. 3. 12. ¹³ Ps. 91. 15. ¹⁴ Job 36. 8, 10. ¹⁵ He. 12. 11.

Branch 5. If Israel be in the house of bondage, if the Lord deals so with his own children, then, how severely will he deal with the wicked? If God be so severe with them he loves, how severe will he be with them he hates? If it be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If they that pray and mourn for sin be so severely dealt with, what will become of them that swear and break the sabbath, and are unclean? If Israel be in the iron furnace, the wicked shall lie in the fiery furnace of hell. It should be the saddest news to wicked men, to hear that the people of God are afflicted, let them think how dreadful will the case of sinners be: 'judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?' If God thrash his wheat, he will burn the chaff. If the godly suffer castigation, the wicked shall suffer condemnation. If he mingle his people's cup with wormwood he will mingle the wicked's cup with fire and brimstone.

USE 2. If Israel be in the house of bondage, then, *1st*, Do not entertain too hard thoughts of affliction. Christians are apt to look upon the cross and the iron furnace as frightful things, and do what they can to shun them. Nay, sometimes, to avoid affliction, they run themselves into sin. But do not think too hard y of affliction; do not look upon it as through the multiplying-glass of fear: the house of bondage is not hell. Consider, first, Whence doth affliction come? even from a wise God, who prescribes whatever befalls us. Persecutions are but like apothecaries. They give us that physic which God prescribes. Secondly, affliction hath its light side, as well as its dark. God can sweeten our afflictions, candy our wormwood: 'as our sufferings abound, so doth also our consolation.'¹ Argerius dated his letters from the pleasant garden of the Leonine prison. God doth sometimes so revive his children in trouble, that they had rather bear their afflictions than want their comforts. Why then should christians entertain such hard thoughts of afflictions? Do not look at its

grim face, but at the message it brings, which is to enrich us both with grace and comfort.

2d, If Israel be sometimes in the house of bondage, in an afflicted state, then think beforehand of affliction; say not as Job, 'I shall die in my nest.'² In the house of mirth, think of the house of bondage; you that are now Naomi, may be Marah.³ How quickly may the scene turn, and the hyperbole of joy end in a catastrophe! All outward things are upon the tropics, given to change. The forethoughts of affliction would make us sober and moderate in the use of lawful delight; it would cure a surfeit. Christ at a feast mentions his burial,—a good antidote against a surfeit. The forethoughts of affliction would make us prepare for it; it would take us off the world, it would put us upon a search of our evidences,—we should see what oil we have in our lamp, what grace we can find, that we may be able to stand in the evil day. That soldier was imprudent who had his sword to whet, when he was just going to fight. He who forecasts sufferings, will have the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit ready, that he may not be surprised.

3d, If afflictions do come, let us labour to deport ourselves wisely as christians, that we may adorn our sufferings; that is, let us endure with patience: 'take my brethren the prophets for an example of enduring affliction and patience.'⁴ Satan labours to take advantage of us in affliction, by making us either faint or murmur; he blows the coals of passion and discontent, and then warms himself at the fire. Patience adorns sufferings. A christian should say as Jesus Christ, 'Lord, not my will but thy will be done.' And indeed, it is a sign the affliction is sanctified, when the heart is brought to a sweet submissive frame, and then God will remove the affliction; he will take us out of the iron furnace. And that brings me to the second thing, God's deliverance of his people Israel: 'I brought you out of the house of bondage.'

Exod. 20. 2. *Which brought thee out of the house of bondage.*

WE may consider these words, 'which brought thee out of the house of bondage;'

either literally; or spiritually, and mystically. *1st*, In the letter, 'I brought thee out of the

¹ 1 Pe. 4. 17.

² 2 Co. 1. 5.

³ Job 29. 18.

⁴ Ru. 1. 20.

⁵ Jas. 5. 10.

house of bondage;’ that is, I delivered you out of the misery and servitude you sustained in Egypt, where you were in the iron furnace. 2*d*. Spiritually and mystically, ‘I brought thee out of the house of bondage.’ So it is a type of our deliverance by Christ from sin and hell.

First, Literally, in the letter, ‘I brought thee out of the house of bondage,’ namely, out of great misery and slavery in the iron furnace. The thing I note hence is, though God bring his people sometimes into trouble, yet he will bring them out again; Israel was in the house of bondage, but at last I brought you out of bondage. 1. That God doth deliver out of trouble. 2. In what manner. 3. When are the seasons. 4. Why God delivers. 5. How the deliverances of the godly and wicked out of trouble differ.

1*st*, *That God doth deliver his children out of troubles.*

‘Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted, and thou didst deliver them;’¹ ‘and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,’² namely, from Nero; ‘thou laidst affliction upon our loins, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place;’³ ‘heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.’⁴ God brought Daniel out of the lion’s den, Zion out of Babylon. God, in his due time, gives an issue out of trouble.’ The tree which in the winter seems dead, in the spring revives: after darkness cometh sunshine. Affliction may leap on us as the viper did on Paul, but at last this viper shall be shaken off. It is called a cup of affliction;⁵ the wicked drink a sea of wrath, the godly drink only a cup of affliction, and God will say shortly, ‘let this cup pass away.’ God will give his people a gaol-delivery.

2*d*, *Q. In what manner doth God deliver his people out of trouble?*

A. He doth it like a God, in wisdom.—1. He doth it sometimes suddenly. As the angel was caused to fly swiftly,⁶ so God sometimes makes a deliverance fly swiftly, upon the wing, and on a sudden he turns the shadow of death into the light of the morning. As God gives us mercies above what we can think,⁷ so sometimes before we can think of them: ‘when the Lord turned the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream;’⁸ we were in a dream, we never thought of it. Joseph could not have thought of such a sudden alteration, to be the same day freed out of prison, and made the

chief ruler in the kingdom. Mercy sometimes does not stick long in the birth, but is brought forth on a sudden. 2. God sometimes delivers his people strangely. Thus the whale which swallowed up Jonah was the means of bringing him safe to land. God sometimes delivers his people in that very way they think he will destroy; in bringing Israel out of Egypt, God stirred up the heart of the Egyptians to hate them,¹⁰ and that was the means of their deliverance. He brought Paul to shore by a contrary wind, and upon the broken pieces of the ship.¹¹

3*d*. *Q. When are the times and seasons that God usually delivers his people out of the bondage of affliction?*

A. 1. When they are in the greatest extremity. When Jonah was in the belly of hell, then ‘thou hast brought up my life from corruption.’¹² When there is but an hair’s breadth between the godly and death, then God ushers in deliverance. When the ship, in the gospel, was almost covered with waves, then Christ awoke and rebuked the wind. When Isaac was upon the altar, and the knife going to be put to his throat, then comes the angel, ‘lay not thy hand upon the child.’ When Peter began to sink, then Christ took him by the hand. ‘When the tale of brick was doubled, then comes Moses,’ the temporal saviour. When the people of God are in the greatest danger, then appears the morning-star of deliverance. When the patient is ready to faint, then the cordial is given.

A. 2. The second season is, when affliction hath done its work upon them: when it hath effected that which God hath sent it for. As, 1. When it hath humbled them: ‘remembering my affliction, the wormwood and gall, my soul is humbled in me.’¹³ When God’s corrosive hath eaten out the proud flesh. 2. When it hath tamed their impatience. Before they were proud and impatient, like froward children that would struggle with their parents, but when their cursed hearts are tamed, and they say as Micah, ‘I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him;’¹⁴ and as Eli, ‘it is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good:’ let him hedge me with thorns, if he will plant me with grace.

A. 3. When they are more partakers of God’s holiness,¹⁵ they are more full of heavenly-mindedness. When the sharp frost of affliction hath brought forth the spring-flowers of grace,

¹ Ps. 22. 4. ² 2 Ti. 4. 17. ³ Ps. 66. 11, 12. ⁴ Ps. 30. 5.

⁵ Ps. 68. 20. ⁶ Is. 51. 17. ⁷ Da. 9. 21. ⁸ Eph. 3. 20.

⁹ Ps. 126. 1.

¹⁰ Ps. 105. 24. ¹¹ Ac. 27. 44. ¹² Jon. 2. 5. ¹³ La. 3. 19, 20.

¹⁴ Mi. 7. 9.

¹⁵ He. 12. 10.

now the cross is sanctified, and God will bring them out of the house of bondage. When the metal is refined, then it is taken out of the furnace; when affliction hath healed us, then God takes off the smarting plaster.

4th, Q. Why doth God bring his people out of the house of bondage?

A. Hereby he makes way for his own glory, God's glory is dearer to him than any thing besides; it is a crown-jewel. God by raising his people, raiseth the trophies of his own honour; he glorifies his attributes; his power, goodness, and truth, do all ride in triumph.

1. His power. If God did not sometimes bring his people into trouble, how would his power be seen in bringing them out? He brought Israel out of the house of bondage, with miracle upon miracle; he saved them with an outstretched arm, 'what aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest?'¹ &c. It is spoken of Israel's march out of Egypt, 'when the sea fled, and the waters were parted each from other.' Here was the power of God set forth, 'is there any thing too hard for me?'² God loves to help when things seem past hope; he creates deliverance.³ He brought Isaac out of a dead womb, and the Messiah out of a virgin's womb. O how doth his power shine forth, when he overcomes seeming impossibilities, and works a cure when things look desperate!

2. His truth. God hath made promises to his people, when they are under great pressures, to deliver them: and his truth is engaged in his promise, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee.'⁴ 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven.'⁵ How is the scripture bespangled with these promises, as the firmament is with stars? Either God will deliver them from death, or by death; he will make a way to escape.⁶ When promises are verified, God's truth is magnified.

3. His goodness. God is full of compassion to such as are in misery. The Hebrew word, *racham*, for mercy, signifies bowels. God hath 'sounding of bowels.'⁷ And this sympathy stirs up God to deliver, 'in his love and pity he redeemed them.'⁸ This makes way for the triumph of God's goodness. For he is tender-hearted, he will not over afflict; he cuts asunder the bars of iron, he breaks the yoke of the oppressor. Thus all his attributes ride in triumph, in saving his people out of trouble.

5th, Q. How the deliverance of the godly and wicked out of trouble, differ?

A. 1. The deliverances of the godly are preservations; of the wicked are reservations, 'The Lord knows how to deliver the godly, and to reserve the unjust to be punished.'⁹ A sinner may be delivered from dangerous sickness, and out of prison; but all this is but a reservation to some greater evil.

A. 2. God delivers the wicked or rather spares them in anger. Deliverances to the wicked are not given as pledges of God's love, but symptoms of displeasure, as quails were given to Israel in anger; but deliverances of the godly are in love, 'He delivered me because he delighted in me.'¹⁰ 'Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption;'¹¹ or as in the Hebrew, *Chashiacta Naphshi*,—thou hast *loved* me from the pit of corruption. A wicked man may say, Lord, thou hast delivered me out of the pit of corruption; but a godly man may say, Lord, thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption. It is one thing to have God's power deliver us, and another thing to have his love deliver us. O, saith Hezekiah, 'thou hast in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption.'

Q. How may it be known that a deliverance comes in love?

A. 1. When a deliverance makes our heart boil over in love to God, 'I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice.'¹² It is one thing to love our mercies, another thing to love the Lord; then a deliverance is in love, when it causeth love.

A. 2. Then a deliverance is in love, when we have hearts to improve it for God's glory. The wicked instead of improving their deliverance for God's glory, improve their corruption; they grow worse after, as the metal when it is taken out of the fire grows harder; but then our deliverance is in love, when we improve it for God's glory. God raiseth us out of a low condition, and we lift him up in our praises, and honour him with our substance.¹³ He recovers us from sickness, and we spend ourselves in his service. Mercy is not as the sun to the fire to dull it and put it out; but as oil to the wheel, to make it move faster.

A. 3. Then a deliverance comes in love, when it makes us more exemplary in holiness; our lives are walking bibles. A thousand praises and doxologies do not honour God so

¹ Ps. 114. 5.

² Jer. 32. 27.

³ Ps. 121. 8.

⁴ Ps. 50. 15.

⁵ Job 5. 19.

⁶ 1 Cor. 10. 13.

⁷ Is. 62. 15.

⁸ Is. 63. 9.

⁹ 2 Pet. 2. 9.

¹⁰ 2 Sam. 22. 20.

¹¹ Is. 38. 17.

¹² Ps. 116. 1.

¹³ Pr. 3. 9.

much as the mortifying of one lust, 'on mount Zion there shall be deliverances and holiness.' When these two go together, deliverance and holiness, when being made monuments of mercy, we are patterns of piety, now a deliverance comes in love, and we may say as Hezekiah, 'thou hast in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption.'

USE 1. If God brings his people out of bondage, then let none despond in trouble. Say not, 'I shall sink under this burden;' or as David, 'I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.' God can make this text good, personally and nationally; to bring his people out of the house of bondage when he sees a fit season, he will put forth his arm and save them; and he can do it with ease: 'it is nothing with thee, Lord, to help.'² He that can turn tides, can turn the times; he that raised Lazarus when he was dead, can raise thee when thou art sick: 'I looked, and there was none to help; therefore my own arm brought salvation.'³ Do not despond; believe in God's power; faith sets God on work to deliver us.

USE 2. Labour, if you are in trouble, to be fitted for deliverance; many would have deliverance, but are not fitted for it.

Q. *When are we fitted for deliverance?*

A. When we are, by our afflictions, conformed to Christ: namely, when we have learned obedience; 'yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered';⁴ that is, he learned sweet submission to his Father's will: 'not my will, but thine be done.'⁵ When we have thus learned obedience by our sufferings, we are willing to do what God would have us to do, and be what God would have us to be. Now we are conformed to Christ, and are fitted for deliverance.

USE 3. If God hath brought you at any time out of the house of bondage, out of great and imminent troubles, be much in doxology and praise. Deliverance calls for praise: 'thou hast put off my sackcloth: and girded me with gladness: to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee.'⁶ 'My glory,' that is, my tongue, which is the instrument of glorifying thee. The saints are temples of the Holy Ghost.⁷ Where should God's praises be sounded but in his temple? The deepest springs yield the sweetest water, and hearts deeply sensible of God's deliverances, yield the sweetest praises. Moses tells Pharaoh, when he was

going out of Egypt, 'we will go with our sheep and our cattle:'⁸ why so, because he might have sacrifices of thanksgiving ready to offer to God for their deliverance. To have a thankful heart for deliverance is a greater blessing than the deliverance itself; one of the lepers, 'when he saw he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.'⁹ The leper's thankful heart was a greater blessing than to be healed of his leprosy. Have any of you here been brought out of the house of bondage,—out of prison, sickness, or any death-threatening danger? do not forget to be thankful; be not graves, but temples. And, that you may be the more thankful, observe every emphasis and circumstance in your deliverance; as to be brought out of trouble when there was but an hair's breadth between you and death; or to be brought out of affliction, without sin, you did not purchase your deliverance by the ensnaring of your consciences; or, to be brought out of trouble upon the wings of prayer; or, that those who were the occasions of bringing you into trouble, should be the instruments of bringing you out; these circumstances, being well weighed, do heighten a deliverance, and should heighten our thankfulness. The cutting of a stone may be of more value than the stone itself; and the circumstancing of a deliverance, may be greater than the deliverance itself.

Q. 2. *But how shall we praise God in a right manner for deliverance?*

A. 1. Be holy persons. In the sacrifice of thanksgiving, whosoever did eat thereof, with their uncleanness upon them, were to be cut off;¹⁰ to typify how displeasing their praises and thank-offerings are who live in sin. 2. Praise God with humble hearts, acknowledge how unworthy you were of deliverance. God's mercies are not debts, but legacies; and that you should have a legacy given you, be humble: 'the elders fell upon their faces,' an expression of humility, 'and worshipped and praised God.'¹¹ 3. Praise God for deliverances cordially: 'I will praise the Lord with my whole heart.'¹² In religion there is no music but in concert, when heart and tongue join. 4. Praise God for deliverances constantly: 'while I live will I bless the Lord';¹³ some will be thankful while the memory of a deliverance is fresh, and then they leave off, like the Carthaginians, who used at first to send the tenth of their yearly revenue to Hercules; but by degrees they grew weary,

¹ Oba. 17. ² 2 Chr. 14, 11. ³ Is. 63, 5. ⁴ He. 5, 8.
Lu. 22, 42. ⁶ Ps. 30, 11, 12. ⁷ 1 Co. 3, 16.

⁸ Ex. 10, 9. ⁹ Lu. 17, 15. ¹⁰ Le. 7, 20. ¹¹ Re. 11, 16.
¹² Ps. 111, 1. ¹³ Ps. 146, 2.

and left off sending. But we must be constant in our eucharistical sacrifice or thank offering; the motion of our praise must be like the motion of our pulse, which beats as long as life lasts: 'I will sing praises to my God while I have a being.'⁴

EXOD. 20. 2. *Out of the house of bondage.*

Secondly, These words are to be understood mystically and spiritually. By Israel's deliverance from the house of bondage, is typified their spiritual deliverance from sin, Satan, and hell.

I. From sin. The house of bondage was a type of Israel's deliverance from sin. Sin is the true bondage, it enslaves the soul. 'Of all conditions, servitude is the worst.' 'I was held before conversion,' saith Austin, 'not with an iron chain, but with the obstinacy of mine own will.' Sin is the enslaver; sin is called a law,¹ because it hath such a binding power over a man; and it is said to reign,² because it exerciseth a tyrannical power; and men are said to be the servants of sin,³ because they are so enslaved by it. Thus sin is the house of bondage. Israel was not so enslaved in the iron furnace as the sinner is by sin; those are worse slaves and vassals who are under the power of sin, than those who are under the power of earthly tyrants. 1. Other slaves have the tyrants only ruling over their bodies,—but the sinner hath his soul tyrannized over; the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and was once crowned with perfect knowledge and holiness, this prince now goes on foot; it is enslaved, and made a lackey to every base lust. 2. Other slaves have some pity shown them,—the tyrant gives them meat, and lets them have hours for their rest; but sin is a merciless tyrant, it will let men have no rest. Judas had no rest until he had betrayed Christ, and after that, he had less rest in his conscience. How doth a man hackney himself out in the service of sin, waste his body, break his sleep, distract his mind? A wicked man is every day doing sin's drudgery work. 3. Other slaves, though they are set about servile work, yet about lawful; it is lawful to work in the galley, tug at the oar; but all the laws and commands of sin are unlawful. Sin saith to one man, defraud; to another, be unchaste; to another, take revenge; to another, take a false oath. Thus all sin's commands are unlawful; we cannot obey sin's law, but by breaking

God's law. 4. Other slaves are forced against their will; Israel groaned under slavery;⁵ but sinners are content to be under the command of sin,—they are willing to be slaves,—they love their chains,—they will not take their freedom; they 'glory as in their shame.'⁶ They wear their sins, not as their fetters, but their ornaments; they rejoice in iniquity.⁷ 5. Other slaves are brought to correction, but sin's slaves are, without repentance, brought to condemnation; other slaves lie in the iron furnace, sin's slaves lie in the fiery furnace. What freedom of will hath a sinner to his own confusion, when he can do nothing but what sin will have him? He is enslaved. Thus sinners are in the house of bondage, but God takes his elect out of this house of bondage; he beats off the chains and fetters of sin; he rescues them from their slavery; he makes them free, by bringing them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.⁸ The law of love now commands, not the law of sin. Though the life of sin be prolonged, yet not the dominion: as those beasts in Daniel had their lives prolonged for a season, but their dominion was taken away.⁹ The saints are made spiritual kings, to rule and conquer their corruptions,—to bind these kings in chains.¹⁰ This is matter of the highest praise and thanksgiving, to be thus taken out of the house of bondage, to be freed from enslaving lusts and made kings to reign in glory for ever.

II. The bringing Israel out of the house of bondage, was a type of their deliverance from Satan. Thus men naturally are in the house of bondage, they are enslaved to Satan. Satan is called the prince of this world,¹¹ and the god of this world,¹² because he hath such power to command and enslave them. Though Satan shall one day be a close prisoner in chains, yet now he doth insult and tyrannize over the souls of men; sinners are under the rule of Satan, he exerciseth over them such a jurisdiction as Cæsar did over the senate. The devil

⁴ Ps. 146. 2. ⁵ Ex. 2. 23. ⁶ Phi. 3. 19. ⁷ Je. 11. 15.
⁸ Ro. 8. ⁹ Da. 7. 12. ¹⁰ Ps. 149. 8. ¹¹ Jno. 14. 30.
¹² 2 Co. 4. 4.

¹ Ro. 7. 23.

² Ro. 6. 12.

³ Ro. 6. 17.

fills men's heads with error, and their hearts with malice: 'why hath Satan filled thine heart?'¹ A sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house: 'I will return into mine house.'² And sure that must needs be an house of bondage, which is the devil's mansion-house. Satan is a perfect tyrant:—1. He rules men's minds, he blinds them with ignorance, 'the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.'³—2. He rules their memories; they shall remember that which is evil, and forget that which is good; their memories are like a searcer or strainer, that lets go all the pure liquor, and retains only the dregs.—3. He rules their wills; though the devil cannot force the will, yet he draws it; 'the lusts of your father you will do.'⁴ He hath got your hearts, and him will ye obey; his strong temptations do more to draw men to evil, than all the promises of God can draw them to good. This is the state of every man by nature, he is in the house of bondage, the devil hath him in his power; a sinner grinds in the devil's mill, he is at the command of Satan, as the ass is at the command of the driver. No wonder to see men oppress and persecute! These slaves must do what the god of this world will have them. How could those swine but run, when the devil entered into them?⁵ When the devil tempted Ananias to tell a lie, he could not but speak what Satan had put in his heart.⁶ When the devil entered into Judas, and bid him betray Christ, Judas would do it, though he hanged himself. This case is sad and dismal, to be thus in the house of bondage, under the power and tyranny of Satan. When David would curse the enemies of God, how did he pray against them? That Satan might be at their right hand.⁷ He knew he could lead them into any snare. If Satan be at the sinner's right hand, let the sinner take heed he be not set on God's left hand. Is not this a case to be bewailed, to see men taken captive by Satan at his will?⁸ he leads sinners as slaves before him in triumph; he possesseth them. If people should see but their beasts bewitched and possessed of the devil, they would be much troubled; yet their souls are possessed by Satan, but they are not sensible. What can be worse than to be in the house of bondage,—to have the devil hurry men on in their lust to perdition? Sinners are willingly enslaved to Satan; they love their gaoler; are content to sit quietly under Sa-

tan's jurisdiction; they choose this bramble to rule them, though within a while, fire will come out of this bramble to devour them.⁹ Now, what an infinite mercy of God is it, when he brings poor souls out of this house of bondage, when he gives them a gaol-delivery from the prince of darkness! JESUS CHRIST redeems captives, he ransoms sinners by price, and rescues them by force. As David took a lamb out of the lion's mouth,¹⁰ so Christ rescues souls out of the mouth of this roaring lion. O what a mercy is it to be brought out of the house of bondage, to be taken from being made captives to the prince of the power of the air, and to be made subjects of the Prince of Peace! And this is done by the preaching of the word, 'to turn them from the power of Satan unto God.'¹¹

III. The bringing of Israel out of the house of bondage was a type of their being delivered from hell. Hell is an house of bondage; an house built on purpose for sinners to lie in.

1. That there is such an house of bondage where the damned lie, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell.'¹² 'How can ye escape the damnation of hell?'¹³ If any one shall ask where this house of bondage is,—where is the place of hell? I wish you may never know feelingly 'Let us not so much,' saith Chrysostom, 'labour to know where hell is, as how to escape it.' Yet to satisfy curiosity, hell is—some place beneath: 'Hell beneath.'¹⁴ Hesiod saith, 'Hell is as far under the earth as heaven is above it.' 'The devils besought Christ that he would not command them to go into the deep.'¹⁵ Hell is in the deep.

2. Why must there be this house of bondage? why a hell? Because there must be a place for the execution of divine justice; earthly monarchs have their prison for malefactors, and shall not God have his; sinners are criminal persons, they have offended God; and it would not consist with God's holiness and justice, to have his laws infringed, and not appoint penalties for the transgressors.

3. The dreadfulness of this place. Could you but for one hour hear the groans and shrieks of the damned, it would confirm you in this truth, that hell is an house of bondage; hell is the emphasis of misery. Besides the punishment of loss, which is the exclusion of the soul from the glorified sight of God, which divines think the worst part of hell, I say, besides this, there will be the punishment of sense. If,

¹ Ac. 5. 3. ² Mat. 12. 44. ³ 2 Cor. 4. 4. ⁴ Jno. 8. 34.
⁵ Mat. 3. 32. ⁶ Ac. 5. 3. ⁷ Ps. 109. 6. ⁸ 2 Tim. 2. 26.

⁹ Judg. 9. ¹⁰ 1 Sam. 17. 34. ¹¹ Ac. 26. 18. ¹² Ps. 9. 17.
¹³ Mat. 23. 33. ¹⁴ Pr. 15. 24. ¹⁵ Lu. 8. 31.

when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, as in the case of Spira, then what will hell itself be? That I may describe this house of bondage, 1. In hell there will be a plurality of torments: 'Bonds and chains,'¹ 'the worm,'² this is the worm of conscience—and the lake of fire.³ Other fire is but painted to this. 2. This house of hell is haunted with devils.⁴ Anselm hath a saying, 'I had rather endure all torments, than see the devil with bodily eyes.' Such as go to hell must not only be forced to behold the devil, but must be shut up in the den with this lion; they must keep the devil company; the devil is full of spite against mankind: this red dragon will spit fire in men's faces. 3. The torments of hell abide for ever,⁵ 'the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.'⁶ Time cannot finish it, tears cannot quench it; the wicked are salamanders, who live always in the fire of hell, and are not consumed; after sinners have lain millions of years in hell, their punishment is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come, and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; yet, if after all that time the damned might come out of hell, there was some hope; but this word EVER breaks the heart.

Q. But how doth this seem to stand with God's justice, for a sin committed in a moment to punish it with eternal torment?

A. 1. Because there is an eternity of sin in man's nature. 2. Because sin is committed against an infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and proportionably the punishment must be infinite. Now because a finite creature cannot bear infinite wrath, therefore he must be eternally satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once. Now then, if hell be such an house of bondage, what infinite cause have they to bless God, who are delivered from it? 'Jesus delivered us from the wrath to come.'⁷ Jesus Christ suffered the torments of hell in his soul, that believers should not suffer them. If we are thankful, when we are ransomed out of prison, or delivered from fire, O how should we bless God to be preserved from the wrath to come! And that which may cause the more thankfulness, is because the most part go into this house of bondage, the most part go to hell;

therefore to be of the number of those few that are delivered from it, is matter of infinite thankfulness. I say most go to this house of bondage when they die; most go to hell, 'broad is the way which leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.'⁸ The greatest part of the world lies in wickedness. Divide the world, saith Brerewood, into thirty-one parts, nineteen parts of it are possessed by Jews and Turks, seven parts by heathens; so that there are but five parts of christians, and among these christians so many seduced papists on the one hand, and so many formal protestants on the other, that we may conclude the major part of the world goes to hell. 1. The scripture compares the wicked to briers.⁹ There are but few lilies in your fields, but in every hedge thorns and briers. 2. To 'the mire in the streets.'¹⁰ Few jewels or precious stones in the street, but you cannot go a step but you meet with mire. The wicked are as common as the dirt in the street. Look into the generality of people, how many drunkards for one that is sober?—how many adulterers for one that is chaste?—how many hypocrites for one that is sincere? The devil hath the harvest, and God only a few gleanings. O then, such as are delivered from the house of bondage, hell, have infinite cause to admire and bless God! How should the vessels of mercy run over with thankfulness? When most are carried prisoners to hell, they are delivered from wrath to come.

Q. How shall I know I am delivered from hell?

A. 1. Those whom Christ saves from hell he saves from sin: 'he shall save his people from their sins.'¹¹ Hath God delivered you from the power of corruption, from pride, malice, lust? If he hath delivered you from the hell of sin, then he hath delivered you from the hell of torment.

A. 2. If you have got an interest in Christ, —prizing, confiding, loving him,—then you are delivered from hell and damnation: 'no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.'¹² If you are in Christ, then he hath put the garment of his righteousness over you, and hell-fire can never singe this garment. Pliny observes, nothing will so soon quench fire as salt and blood; the salt tears of repentance and the blood of Christ will quench the fire of hell that it shall never kindle upon you.

¹ 2 Pe. 2. 4. ² Mar. 9. 11. ³ Re. 20. 15. ⁴ Mat. 25. 40.
Re. 14. 11. ⁵ Mar. 9. 41. ⁶ 1 The. 1. 10.

⁸ Mat. 7. 13.

¹¹ Is. 10. 6.

⁹ 1 Jno. 5. 19.

¹² Mat. 1. 21.

¹⁰ Is. 10. 17.

¹² Ro. 8. 1.

OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

EXOD. 20. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

BEFORE I come to the commandments, I shall premise some things about the moral law, namely, answer questions, and lay down rules.

Q. 1. *What is the difference between the moral law and the gospel?*

A. 1st. The law requires that we worship God as our Creator; the gospel requires that we worship God in and through Christ. God in Christ is propitious; out of Christ we may see God's power, justice, holiness, in Christ we see his mercy displayed. 2d. The moral law requires obedience, but gives no strength, as Pharaoh required brick but gave no straw, but the gospel gives strength; the gospel bestows faith on the elect; the gospel sweetens the law, it makes us serve God with delight.*

Q. 2. *Of what use then is the moral law to us?*

A. The law is a glass to show us our sins, that so, seeing our pollution and misery, we may be forced to flee to Christ to satisfy for former guilt, and save from future wrath: 'the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.'¹

Q. 3. *But is the moral law still in force to believers; is it not abolished to them?*

A. In some sense it is abolished to believers. 1. In respect of justification; they are not justified by their obedience to the moral law. Believers are to make great use of the moral law, as I shall show, but they must trust only to Christ's righteousness for justification; as Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety. If the moral law could justify, what need were there of Christ's dying? 2. The moral law is abolished to believers, in respect of the malediction of it; they are freed from the curse and damnatory power of it: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'²

Q. 4. *How was Christ made a curse for us?*

A. Christ may be considered, 1st. As the Son of God, and so he was not made a curse. 2d. As our pledge and surety,³ and so he was made a curse for us: this curse was not upon his Godhead, but upon his manhood. This

curse was the wrath of God lying upon him; and thus Christ hath taken away from believers the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them. But though the moral law is thus far abolished, yet it remains a perpetual rule to believers; though the moral law be not their saviour, yet it is their guide; though it be not a covenant of life, yet it is a rule of living; every christian is bound to conform to the moral law, and write, as exactly as he can, after this copy: 'do we then make void the law through faith, God forbid.' Though a christian is not under the condemning power of the law, yet he is under the commanding power: to love God, to reverence and obey him, this is a law always binds and will bind in heaven. This I urge against the Antinomians, who say the moral law is abrogated to believers; which, as it contradicts scripture, so it is a key to open the door to all licentiousness. They who will not have the law to rule them, shall never have the gospel to save them.

Having answered these questions, I shall in the next place, lay down some general rules for the right understanding of the *decalogue*, or ten commandments: these rules may serve to give us some light into the sense and meaning of the commandments.

1. The commands and prohibitions of the moral law reach the heart. The COMMANDMENTS require not only outward actions but inward affections,—they require not only the outward act of obedience, but the inward affection of love: 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.'⁴ The THREATS and PROHIBITIONS of the moral law reach the heart; the law of God forbids not only the act of sin, but the desire and inclination; not only doth it forbid adultery, but lusting;⁵ not only stealing, but coveting.⁶ 'Man's law binds only the hands, God's law binds the heart.'

2. In the commandments there is a *synecdoche*, more is intended than is spoken. Where any duty is commanded, there the contrary sin is forbidden, &c. When we are commanded to keep the sabbath-day holy, there we are forbidden to break the sabbath; when we are commanded to live in a calling: 'six days shalt thou labour,' there we are forbidden to

¹ Ga. 3. 24. ² Ga. 3. 13. ³ He. 7. 22.

* The law commands, and the gospel promises. Now, there is a perfect accordance between the promises of the one, and the commands of the other. The promises exhibit the grace by which we are enabled to obey the commands; and we see in the connexion between them, the fulfilment of the humble and pious request of Augustine, 'Give what thou demandest, and demand what thou pleasest.'—*Dick's Lect.*, v. 4. p. 102.

⁴ Ro. 3. 31. ⁵ De. 6. 5. ⁶ Mat. 5. 28. ⁷ Ro. 7. 7.

live idly, and out of a calling. Where any sin is forbidden, there the contrary duty is commanded. When we are forbidden to take God's name in vain, the contrary duty is commanded, that we should reverence his name: 'that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.' Where we are forbidden to wrong our neighbour, there is the contrary duty included, that we should do him all the good we can, by vindicating his name and supplying his wants.

3. Where any sin is forbidden in the commandment, there the occasion of it is also forbidden. Where murder is forbidden, there envy and rash anger are forbidden, which may occasion it. Where adultery is forbidden in the commandment, there is forbidden all that may lead to it, as wanton glances of the eye, or coming into the company of an harlot: 'come not nigh the door of her house;'² he who would be free from the plague, must not come near the infected house. Under the law the Nazarite was forbidden to drink wine; nor might he eat grapes of which the wine was made.

4. Where one relation is named in the commandment, there another relation is included. Where the child is named, there the father is included; where there is the duty of children to parents mentioned, there is included also the duty of parents to children; where the child is commanded to honour the parent, there is implied that the parent is also commanded to instruct, to love, to provide for the child.

5. Where greater sins are forbidden, there lesser sins are also forbidden. Though no sin in its own nature is little, yet comparatively one may be less than another; where idolatry is forbidden, there is forbidden superstition, or bringing any innovation into God's worship, which he hath not appointed. As the sons of Aaron were forbidden to worship an idol, so to sacrifice to God with strange fire.³ Mixture in sacred things, is like a dash in the wine, which though it gives a colour, yet doth but debase and adulterate it. It is highly provoking to God to bring any superstitious ceremony into his worship which he hath not prescribed; it is to tax God's wisdom, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served.

6. The law of God is copulative. The first and second tables are knit together,—piety to God, and equity to our neighbour, these two

tables which God hath joined together must not be put asunder. Try a moral man by the duties of the first table, piety to God, and there you will find him negligent; try a hypocrite by the duties of the second table, equity to his neighbour, and there you will find him tardy. He who is strict in the second table but neglects the first, or he who is zealous in the first table, but neglects the second, his heart is not right with God. The Pharisees were the highest pretenders to the first table, zeal and holiness; but Christ detects their hypocrisy: 'ye have omitted judgment, mercy, and faith.'⁴ They were bad in the second table; they omitted judgment, that was, being just in their dealing; mercy, in relieving the poor; and faith, that is faithfulness in their promises and contracts with men. God wrote both the tables, and our obedience must set a seal to both.

7. God's law forbids not only the acting of sin in our own persons, but being accessory to, or having any hand in the sins of others. Q. How and in what sense may we be said to partake of, and have an hand in the sins of others?

1. By decreeing unrighteous decrees, and imposing on others that which is unlawful. Jeroboam made the people of Israel to sin; he was accessory to their idolatry, by setting up golden calves; so David, though he did not in his own person kill Uriah, yet because he wrote a letter to Joab, to set Uriah in the fore-front of the battle, and it was done by his command, therefore he was accessory to Uriah's death, and the murder of him was laid to David's charge by the prophet, 'thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword.'⁵ 2. We become accessory to the sins of others by not hindering them when it is in our power. If a master of a family see his servant break the sabbath, or hear him swear, and let him alone, doth not use the power he hath to suppress him, he becomes accessory to his sin. Eli, for not punishing his sons when they made the offering of the Lord to be abhorred, made himself guilty.⁶ He that suffers an offender to pass unpunished, makes himself an offender. 3. By counselling, abetting, or provoking others to sin. Ahithophel made himself guilty of the fact, by giving counsel to Absalom to go in and defile his father's concubines.⁷ He who shall tempt or solicit another to be drunk, though himself be sober, yet being the occasion of another's sin, he is accessory to it: 'woe unto him that

¹ De. 28. 58. ² Pro. 5. 8. ³ Le. 10. 1.

⁴ Mat. 23. 23. ⁵ 2 Sa. 12. 9. ⁶ 1 Sa. 3. 14. ⁷ 2 Sa. 16. 21.

giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him.¹ 4. By consenting to another's sin. Saul did not cast one stone at Stephen, yet the scripture saith, 'Saul was consenting to his death.'² Thus he had a hand in it. If several did combine to murder a man, and they should tell another of their intent, and he should give his consent to it, he were guilty: though his hand were not in the murder, yet his heart was in it; though he did not act it, yet he did approve it, so it became his sin. 5. By example. Examples are powerful and cogent; setting a bad example occasions another to sin, and so a person becomes accessory. If the father swears, and the child by his example learn to swear, the father is accessory to the child's sin; he taught him by his example. As there are diseases hereditary, so there are sins.

8. The last rule about the commandments is this, that though we cannot, by our own strength, fulfil all these commandments, yet doing what we are able, the Lord hath provided encouragement for us. There is a threefold encouragement. 1. That though we have not ability to obey any one command, yet God hath, in the new covenant, promised to work that in us, which he requires: 'I will cause you to walk in my statutes.'³ God commands us to love him. Alas how weak is our love! it is like the herb that is yet only in the first degree; but God hath promised to circumscribe our hearts, that we shall love him.⁴ He that doth command us

will enable us. God commands us to turn from sin, but alas! we have not power to turn; therefore God hath promised to turn us,—to put his Spirit within us, and turn the heart of stone into flesh.⁵ There is nothing in the command, but the same is in the promise; therefore, christian, be not discouraged, though thou hast no strength of thy own, God will give thee this strength. The iron hath no power to move, but when the loadstone draws it, it can move; 'thou also hast wrought all our works in us.'⁶ 2. Though we cannot exactly fulfil the moral law, yet God will, for Christ's sake, mitigate the rigour of the law,* and accept of something less than he requires. God in the law requires exact obedience, yet he will accept of sincere obedience; he will abate something of the degree, if there be truth in the inward parts; God will see the faith, and pass by the failing; the gospel remits something of the severity of the moral law. 3. Wherein our personal obedience comes short, God will be pleased to accept us in our surety: 'he hath made us accepted in the beloved.'⁷ Though our obedience be imperfect, yet, through Christ our surety, God looks upon it as perfect. And that very service which God's law might condemn, God's mercy is pleased to crown, by virtue of the blood of our mediator. Having given you these rules about the commandments, I shall come next to the direct handling of them.

OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

Why doth the commandment run in the second person singular, *thou*? Why doth not God say, *you shall have no other gods, but, thou*?

Because the commandment concerns every one, and God would have you take it as spoken to you by name. Though we are forward to take privileges to ourselves, yet we are apt to shift off duty from ourselves to others: therefore the commandment runs in the second person, *thou* and *thou*, that every one may know, that the commandment is spoken to him, as it were, by name. And so I come to the commandment, 'thou shalt have no other gods before me.' This commandment may well lead the van, and be set in the front of all the com-

mandments, because it is the foundation of all true religion.† The sum of this commandment

¹ Ez. 36. 26. ² Is. 26. 12. ³ Eph. 1. 6.

* Mr Watson has here used an expression which is now in general employed only by those, who go about to establish in some way, and to a certain extent, a righteousness of their own. That his sentiments were scriptural, is evident from the whole scope of his writings, and from what almost immediately follows: 'though our obedience be imperfect, yet through Christ our surety, God looks upon it as perfect.' That God 'mitigates the rigour of the law,' or 'abates something of the degree' of obedience is nowhere said in scripture. 'The supposed change implies a reflection not only upon the law, but upon the Law-giver.' The law in its utmost rigour has been satisfied, and that rigour stands unmitigated, even while God accepts our imperfect works; in like manner as he is just, and the justifier of the ungodly that believeth in Jesus. It is founded on the nature of God, and every change in it must imply a corresponding change in him: and if God mitigates its rigour, he detracts necessarily from his own holiness and justice, which demanded that such a degree of rigour should characterize it.

† I may also add, that by such a commencement of the do

¹ Ha. 2. 15 ² Acts 8. 1. ³ Ez. 36. 27 ⁴ De. 30. 6.

is, that we should sanctify God in our hearts, and give him a precedency above all created beings. There are two branches of this commandment: 1. That we must have one God. 2. That we must have but one. Or thus, 1. That we must have God for our God. 2. That we must have no other.

1st branch. That we must have God for our God: it is manifest that we must have a God, and 'who is God save the Lord?'¹ The Lord Jehovah (one God in three persons) is the true, living, eternal God; and him must we have for our God.

I. *What is it to make God to be a God to us?*

1. To make God to be a God to us, is to acknowledge him for a God; the gods of the heathens are idols,² and we 'know that an idol is nothing,'³ that is, it hath nothing of deity in it; if we cry, 'help, O Idol!' an idol cannot help; the idols were themselves carried into captivity,⁴ so that an idol is nothing; vanity is ascribed to it;⁵ we do not acknowledge it to be a God. But this is to make God to be a God to us, when we do from the heart acknowledge him to be God: all the people fell on their faces and said, 'the Lord he is God! the Lord he is God!'⁶ Yea, we acknowledge God to be the only God: 'O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone!'⁷ Deity is a jewel that belongs only to his crown. Yet further, we acknowledge that there is no God like him: 'Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord; and he said, Lord God of Israel, there is no god like thee.'⁸ 'For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?'⁹ In the Chaldee it is, Who among the *angels*. None can do as God: he brought the world out of nothing, 'and hangeth the earth

upon nothing.'¹⁰ This is to make God to be a God to us, when we are persuaded in our hearts, and confess with our tongues, and subscribe with our hand, that God is the only true God, and that there is none comparable to him.

2. To make God to be a God to us, is to choose him: 'choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.'¹¹ that is, we will choose the Lord to be our God. It is one thing for the judgment to approve of God, and another for the will to choose him. Religion is not a matter of chance, but choice. *Before* this choosing God for our God, there must be *knowledge*; we must know God, before we can choose him; before one choose the person he will marry, he must first have some knowledge and cognizance of the person: so we must know God, before we can choose him for our God: 'know thou the God of thy fathers.'¹² We must know God in his attributes, glorious in holiness, rich in mercy, faithful in promises. We must know God in his Son; as in a glass a face is represented; so in Christ, as in a transparent glass, we see God's beauty and love shine forth. This knowledge must go before our choosing of God. Lactantius said, all the learning of the philosophers was without a head, because it wanted the knowledge of God. This choosing is *an act of mature deliberation*; a christian having viewed the superlative excellencies in God, and being stricken into an holy admiration of his perfections, he singles out God from all other objects, to set his heart upon; he saith, as Jacob, 'the Lord shall be my God.'¹³ The soul that chooseth God *devotes* himself to God: 'thy servant is devoted to thy fear.'¹⁴ As the vessels of the sanctuary were consecrated and set apart from common to holy uses, so the soul who hath chosen God to be his God, hath dedicated and set himself apart for God, and will be no more for profane uses.

3. To make God to be a God to us, is to enter into a solemn covenant with him, that he shall be our God: after choice, follows the marriage-covenant. As God makes a covenant with us: 'I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.'¹⁵ so we make a covenant with him: 'they entered into covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers.'¹⁶ And 'one shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord;¹⁷ like soldiers, that sub-

¹ 2 Sa. 22. 32. ² Ps. 96. 5. ³ 1 Co. 8. 4. ⁴ Is. 46. 2. ⁵ Je. 14. 22. ⁶ 1 Ki. 18. 39. ⁷ 2 Ki. 19. 15. ⁸ 4 Ki. 8. 22, 23. ⁹ Ps. 89. 6.

calogue, it is distinguished from all other systems of morality, which have been framed in ignorance of it, or in opposition to it. In the systems of heathenism, the unity of God was either entirely disregarded, or if it was noticed, it was by way of cautious insinuation, as if they were afraid to offend the prejudices, or to oppose the superstitions of their country. Never was God held out there, in the first prescriptions of their sages, as the only true God, and as possessing an entire and exclusive claim to the reverence of the heart, and the obedience and homage of the life. It is true that the impostor of the east, plainly and decidedly asserts in his Koran, that there is no God but one; but the God whose messenger he represents himself to be, differs little from those of the heathen. His robe is darkness, his homage empty forms, or indolent submission to blind fatality; his banner is given, not to be displayed because of truth, but for conquest, enslavement, and strong delusion; and his rewards are earthly and sensual.—*Belfrage on the Shorter Catechism*, vol. 1. p. 382

¹⁰ Joh 26. 7. ¹¹ Jo. 24. 15. ¹² 1 Chr. 28. 9. ¹³ Ge. 28. 21. ¹⁴ Ps. 119. 38. ¹⁵ Is. 55. 3. ¹⁶ 2 Chr. 15. 12. ¹⁷ Is. 44. 5.

scribe their names in the muster-roll. This covenant, 'that God shall be our God,' we have often renewed in the Lord's supper; and it is like a seal to a bond, to bind us fast to God, and to keep us that we do not depart from him.

4. To make God to be a God to us, is to give him *adoration*: which consists, 1. In reverencing of him: 'God is to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.'¹ The seraphim, who stood about God's throne, covered their faces,² and Elijah wrapt himself in a mantle, when the Lord passed by, in token of reverence. This reverence shows the high esteem we have of God's sacred majesty. 2. Adoration is in bowing to him, or worshipping him; 'worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.'³ 'They bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.'⁴ Divine worship is the peculiar honour belonging to the Godhead: this God is jealous of, and will have no creature share in: 'my glory will I not give to another.'⁵ Magistrates may have a civil respect or veneration, God only a religious adoration.

5. To make God to be a God to us, is to fear him; 'that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God.'⁶ This fearing of God is, 1. To have God always in our eye, 'I have set the Lord always before me';⁷ 'mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.' He who fears God, imagines, that whatever he is doing, God looks on, and, as a judge, weighs all his actions. 2. To fear God, is, when we have such an holy awe of God upon our hearts, that we dare not sin: 'stand in awe and sin not.'⁸ The wicked sin and fear not; the godly fear and sin not; 'how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'⁹ Bid me sin, bid me drink poison. It is a saying of Anselm, 'If hell were on one side, and sin on the other, I would rather leap into hell, than willingly sin against my God.' (1.) This glorious and fearful name: he who fears God will not sin, though it be ever so secret: 'thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God.'¹⁰ Suppose you should curse a deaf man, he cannot hear you curse him; or if you lay a block in a blind man's way, and make him fall, he cannot see you lay it; ay, but the fear of God will make you forsake these sins which can neither be heard nor seen by men. (2.) Where the fear of God is, it destroys the fear of man;

the three children feared God, therefore they feared not the king's wrath.¹¹ The greater noise drowns the less; the noise of thunder drowns the noise of a river; so when the fear of God is superintendent in the soul, it drowns all other carnal fear. This is to make God to be a God to us, when we have an holy filial fear of him; 'that thou mayest fear.'

6. To make God to be a God to us, is to trust in him: 'mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust.'¹² 'the God of my rock, in him will I trust.'¹³ There is nothing we can trust in but God; all the creatures are a refuge of lies,—they are like the Egyptian reed, too weak to support us, but strong enough to wound us. God only is a sufficient foundation to build our trust upon; and then, when we trust, we make him a God to us; else we make him an idol, if we do not trust in him. Trusting in God is when we rely on his power as a creator, and on his love as a father. Trusting in God is, when we commit our chief treasure to him; our soul is our chief treasure, we commit our soul to him: 'into thy hands I commit my spirit.'¹⁴ As the orphan trusts his estate with his guardian, so we trust our souls with God; this is to make him a God to us. But how shall we know that we trust in God aright? If we trust in God aright, then we will trust in God at one time as well as another: 'trust in him at all times.'¹⁵ Can we trust God? 1. In our straits. When the fig-tree doth not flourish,—when our earthly crutches are broken,—can we now lean upon God's promise? When the pipes are cut off that used to bring us comfort, can we live upon God, in whom are all our fresh springs? When we have no bread to eat but the bread of carefulness,¹⁶—when we have no water to drink unless tears: 'thou givest them tears to drink in great measure,'¹⁷—can we now trust in God's providence to make supply for us? A good christian believes that if God feed the ravens, he will feed his children; he lives upon God's all-sufficiency, not only for grace, but food; he believes if God will give him heaven, he will give daily bread; he trusts God's bond: 'verily thou shalt be fed.'¹⁸ 2. Can we trust God in our fears? fear is the age of the soul. When adversaries begin to grow high, can we now display the banner of faith? 'what time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.'¹⁹ Faith cures the trembling at

¹ Ps. 89. 7.² Is. 6.³ Ps. 29. 2.⁴ Ne. 8. 6.⁵ Is. 42. 8.⁶ De. 28. 58.⁷ Ps. 16. 8.⁸ Ps. 25. 15.⁹ Ps. 4. 4.¹⁰ Ge. 39. 9.¹¹ Le. 19. 14.¹² Dan. 3. 16.¹³ Ps. 141. 8.¹⁴ 2 Sa. 22. 3.¹⁵ Ps. 31. 5.¹⁶ Ps. 62. 8.¹⁷ Ez. 19. 8.¹⁸ Ps. 80. 5.¹⁹ Ps. 37. 3.²⁰ Ps. 56. 3.

the heart: faith gets above fear, as the oil swims above the water. This is to trust in God, and it is to make him to be a God to us.

7. To make God to be a God to us, is to love him; in the godly, fear and love kiss each other.

8. To make him a God to us, is to obey him. But I forbear to speak of these, because I shall be large upon them in the second commandment; 'showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.'

II. *Why must we cleave to the Lord as our God?**

1. From the equity of it: it is but equal we should cleave to him as our God, from whom we receive our being; who can have a better right to us than he that gives us our breath? 'It is he that made us, and not we ourselves.'¹ It is unequal, yea ungrateful, to give away our love or worship to any but God.

2. From the utility. If we cleave to the Lord as our God; then, 1. He will bless us: 'God, even our own God, will bless us.'² He will bless us, (1.) In our estate: 'blessed shall be the fruit of thy ground: blessed shall be thy basket and thy store;' we shall not only have our sack full of corn, but it shall be blessed: here is money in the mouth of the sack. (2.) He will bless us with peace: 'the Lord will bless his people with peace;³ outward peace, which is the nurse of plenty: 'he maketh peace in thy borders;⁴ inward peace, a smiling conscience; this is sweeter than the dropping honey. 2. God will turn all evils to our good.⁵ He will make a treacle of poison. Joseph's imprisonment was a means for his advancement.⁶ Out of the bitterest drug, God will distil his glory and our salvation. In short, God will be our guide to death, our comfort in death, our reward after death. So then the utility of it may make us cleave to the Lord as our God: 'happy is that people who have the Lord for their God.'⁷

3. From the necessity. If God be not our God, he will curse our blessings;⁸ and God's curse blasts wherever it comes. If God be not our God, we have none to help us in misery; will God help his enemies; will he assist them

who disclaim him? If we do not make God to be our God, he will make himself to be our judge; and if he condemns, there is no appealing to a higher court. So that there is a necessity of having God for our God, unless we intend to be eternally espoused to misery.

USE 1. If we must have one God, and the Lord Jehovah for our God, it condemns the atheists who have no God; 'the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.'¹⁰ There is no God he believes in, or worships; such atheists were Diogoras and Theodorus. When Seneca had reproved Nero for his impieties, saith Nero, 'dost thou think I believe there is any God, when I do such things?' The duke of Silesia was so infatuated, that he affirmed, 'that there was neither God nor devil.' We may see God in the works of his fingers. The creation is a great volume, in which we may read a Godhead, and he must needs put out his own eyes, that denies a God. Aristotle, though a heathen, did not only acknowledge God, when he cried out, 'thou Being of beings, have mercy on me!' but he thought, he that did not confess a Deity, was not worthy to live. They who will not believe a God, shall feel him; 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'¹¹

USE 2. It condemns christians, who profess to own God for their God, yet they do not live as if he were their God. 1. They do not believe in him as a God; when they look upon their sins, they are apt to say, can God pardon? when they look upon their wants, can God provide? can he prepare a table in the wilderness? 2. They do not love him as a God; they do not give him the cream of their love; but are apt to love other things more than God; they say they love God, but will part with nothing for him. 3. They do not worship him as a God; they do not give him that reverence, nor pray with that devotion, as if they were praying to a God. How dead are their hearts? If not dead in sin, yet dead in duty. 'Tis as if praying to a god that hath eyes and sees not,—ears, and hears not. In hearing the word, how much distraction, what regardless hearts have many? they are thinking of their shops and drugs. Would a king take it well at our hands, if, when he is speaking to us, we should be playing with a feather? when God is speaking to us in his word, and our hearts are taken up with thoughts about the world, is not this playing with a feather?

¹ Ps. 100. 3. ² Ps. 67. 6. ³ De. 28. 4, 5. ⁴ Ps. 29. 11.
⁵ Ps. 147. 14. ⁶ Ro. 8. ⁷ Ge. 50. 20. ⁸ Ps. 141. 15.

⁹ Mal. 2. 2.

* It is most worthy of notice, and it is a peculiarity about this commandment, that it is the only one in the first table of the law, to which there are no reasons annexed; as if the bare statement of God's exclusive glory, was in itself reason sufficient for our yielding him our sole homage. As God gives none, neither reason nor piety requires any.—*Belfrage on the Catechism*, vol. 1. p. 381.

¹⁰ Ps. 14. 1.

¹¹ He. 10. 31.

O how may this humble most of us, we do not make God to be a God to us? We do not believe in him, love him, worship him as a God. Many heathens have worshipped their false gods with more seriousness and devotion than some christians do the true God. O let us chide ourselves! Did I say *chide*? let us ab-

hor ourselves for our deadness and formality in religion,—how we have professed God, yet we have not worshipped him as God! So much for the first, ‘we must have God for our God:’ I should come to the second, ‘we must have no other God.’

EXOD. 20. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

THE second branch of the first commandment is, that we must have no other god: ‘thou shalt have no other gods before me.’

Q. 1st. *What is meant by this word, ‘before me?’*

A. That is, before my face, in my sight: ‘cursed be he that makes a graven image, and puts it in a secret place.’¹ Some would not bow to the idol where others might see, but they would secretly bow to it; but though this was out of man’s sight, it was not out of God’s sight: ‘cursed therefore,’ saith God, ‘be he that puts the image in a secret place.’ ‘Thou shalt have no other gods.’ 1. There *is* really no other god. 2. We must have no other.

I. There *is* really no other God. The Valentinians held there were two Gods, the Polytheists that there were many; the Persians worshipped the sun; the Egyptians, the ox and elephant; the Grecians, Jupiter; but there is no other than the true God: ‘know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none other.’² For, 1. there is but one first cause, that hath its being of itself, and on which all other beings depend; as in the heavens, the *primum mobile* moves all the other orbs, so God is the great mover, he gives life and motion to every thing existent. 2. There is but one omnipotent power. If there be two omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two; that which one would do, the other power, being equal, would oppose, and so all things would be brought into a confusion. If a ship should have two pilots of equal power, one would be ever crossing the other; when one would sail, the other would cast anchor; here were a confusion, and the ship must needs perish. The order and harmony in the world, the constant and uniform government of all things, is a clear argument

that there is but one omnipotent, one God that rules all: ‘I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.’³

II. We *must* have no other God. ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me:’ this commandment forbids, 1. serving a false god, and not the true: ‘saying to a stock, thou art my father; and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth.’⁴ Or, 2. joining a false god with a true; ‘they feared the Lord, and served their own gods.’⁵ Both these are forbidden in the commandment; we must adhere to the true God, and no other; ‘God is a jealous God,’ and he will endure no co-rival. A wife cannot lawfully have two husbands at once; nor may we have two Gods: ‘thou shalt worship no other god, for the Lord is a jealous God.’⁶ ‘Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.’ The Lord interprets it a ‘forsaking of him,’ to espouse any other god; ‘they forsook the Lord,’⁷ and followed other gods. God would not have his people so much as make mention of idol gods: ‘make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.’⁸ God looks upon it as a breaking of the marriage-covenant to go after other gods. Therefore, when Israel committed idolatry with the golden calf, God disclaims his interest in them; ‘thy people have corrupted themselves.’⁹ Before, God called Israel his people; but when they went after other gods, ‘now,’ saith the Lord to Moses, ‘they are no more my people but thy people.’ ‘Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife.’¹⁰ She doth not keep faith with me; she hath stained herself with idols, therefore I will divorce her; ‘she is not my wife.’ To go after other gods, is what God cannot bear; it makes the fury rise up in his face: ‘if thy brother, or thy son, or the wife of thy bosom,

³ Is. 44. 6. ⁴ Je. 2. 27. ⁵ 2 Ki. 17. 33. ⁶ Ex. 34. 14.

⁷ Ps. 16. 4. ⁸ Judg. 2. 12. ⁹ Ex. 23. 13 ¹⁰ Ex. 32. 7.

¹¹ Ho. 2. 2.

¹ De. 27. 15.

² De. 4. 39.

or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods, thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.¹

Q. 2d. But what is it to have other gods besides the true God? I fear, upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.

A. 1. To trust in any thing more than God, is to make it a god.

1. If we trust in our riches, then we make riches our god. We may take comfort from them, not put confidence in them. It is a foolish thing to trust in them. They are deceitful riches,² and it is foolish to trust to that which will deceive us. They have no solid consistency, they are like landscapes or golden dreams, which leave the soul empty when it awakes or comes to itself. They are not what they promise; they promise to satisfy our desires, and they increase them: they promise to stay with us, and they take wings. They are hurtful: 'riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.'³ It is foolish to trust to that which will hurt one; who would take hold of the edge of a razor to help him? They are often fuel for pride and lust.⁴ So that it is folly to trust in our riches; but some do, and so make money their god: 'the rich man's wealth is his strong tower.'⁵ He makes the wedge of gold his hope.⁶ God made man of the dust of the earth, and man makes a god of the dust of the earth. Money is his creator, redeemer, comforter: his creator, if he had money, now he thinks he is made; his redeemer, if he be in danger, he trusts to his money to redeem him; his comforter, if he be sad, money is the golden harp to drive away the evil spirit. Thus, by trusting to money, we make it a god.

2. If we trust in the arm of flesh, we make it a god: 'cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.' The Syrians trusted in their army, which was so numerous that it filled the country, but this arm of flesh withered.⁷ What we make our trust, God makes our shame. The sheep run to the hedges for shelter and they lose their wool; we have run to second causes to help us, and we have lost much of our golden fleece,—they have not only been ours to fail us, but thorns

to prick us. We have broken our parliament-crutches, by leaning too hard upon them.

3. If we trust in our wisdom, we make it a god:* 'let not the wise man glory in his wisdom!'⁸ Glorifying is the height of confidence. Many a man doth make an idol of his wit and parts; he deifies himself, but how oft doth God take the wise in their own craftiness!⁹ Ahithophel had a great wit, his counsel was as the oracle of God, but his wit brought him to the halter.¹¹

4. If we trust in our civility, we make it a god. Many trust to this, none can charge them with gross sin. Civility is but nature refined and cultivated; a man may be washed, and not changed; his life may be civil, yet there may be some reigning sin in his heart; the Pharisee could say, 'I am no adulterer';¹² but he could not say, I am not proud. To trust to civility, is to trust to a spider's web.

5. If we trust to our duties to save us, we make them a god: 'our righteousnesses are as filthy rags';¹³ they are fly-blown with sin. Put gold in the fire, and there comes out much dross; our most golden duties are mixed with infirmity; we are apt either to neglect duty, or idolize it. Use duty, but do not trust to it; for then you make it a god. Trust not to your praying and hearing; these are the means of salvation, but they are not saviours. If you make duties bladders to trust to, you may sink to hell with these bladders.

6. If we trust in our grace, we make a god of it. Grace is but a creature; if we trust to it, we make it an idol. Grace is imperfect, we cannot trust to that to save us which is imperfect: 'I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord.'¹⁴ David did walk in his integrity; but did not trust in his integrity: 'I have trusted also in the Lord.' If we trust in our graces, we make a Christ of them. They are good graces, but bad christ.

A. 2. To love any thing more than God, is to make it God.

1. If we love our estate more than God, then

¹ Je. 9. 23. ² Job 6. 13. ³ 2 Sa. 17. 23. ⁴ Lu. 18. 11.
⁵ Is. 64. 6. ⁶ Ps. 26. 1.

* It is the invariable property of error in morals and religion, that men take credit to themselves for it, and extol it as wisdom. So the heathen. They were proud of their knowledge in general, and boasted of their learning, 1 Co. 1. 21. Philosophy made them vain also of their discernment of divine things. Notwithstanding all this, however, on the subject of the Deity they laboured under the greatest delusion. With regard even to their philosophers, it may be true they were not enslaved by the common idolatry, still the pantheistical doctrines which they entertained, were closely allied to polytheism and served it as a kind of defence, by representing it as involving some profounder meaning.—*Tholuck on Romans*, ch. 1, v. 22.

¹ De. 13. 6, 8, 9. ² Mat. 13. 2. ³ Ec. 1. 18.
⁴ Ez. 28. 5.; Jer. 5. 7. ⁵ Psa. 10. 15. ⁶ Job 31. 24.
⁷ Je. 17. 5. ⁸ 1 Ki. 20. 27, 29.

we make it a god. The young man in the gospel loved his gold better than his Saviour; the world lay nearer his heart than Christ.¹ This glittering gold dazzles the eyes. Hence it is, the covetous man is called an idolater.² Why so? Because he loves his estate more than God, and so he makes it his god; though he doth not bow down to an idol, yet he worships the graven image on his coins; he is an idolater. That which hath most of the heart, that we make a god.

2. If we love our pleasures more than God, we make a god of pleasure: 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.'³ Many let loose the reins, and give themselves up to all manner of sensual delights; they idolize pleasure; 'they take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ; they spend their days in wealth.'⁴ I have read of a place in Africa, where the people spend all their time in dancing, and making merry: and have not we many who make a god of pleasure, who spend their time in going to plays and visiting stews, as if God had made them like the leviathan, to play in the water?⁵ In the country of Sardinia, there is an herb like balm, that if one eat too much of it, he will die laughing; such an herb is pleasure; if one feeds immoderately on it, he will go laughing to hell. Such as make a god of pleasure, let them read but two scriptures: 'the heart of fools is in the house of mirth';⁶ and, 'how much she hath lived deliciously, so much torment give her.'⁷ Sugar laid in a damp place turns to water; so all the sugared joys and pleasures of sinners will turn to the water of tears at last.

3. If we love our belly more than God, we make a god of it: 'whose god is their belly.'⁸ Clemens Alexandrinus writes of a fish that had its heart in its belly: an emblem of epicures, their heart is in their belly, their belly is their god, and to this god they pour drink-offerings. The Lord allows what is fitting for the recruiting of nature: 'I will send grass that thou mayest eat and be full.'⁹ But, to mind nothing but the indulging of the appetite, is idolatry; 'whose god is their belly.'¹⁰ What pity is it, that the soul, that princely part, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is akin to angels, should be enslaved to the brutish part!

4. If we love a child more than God, we make a god of it. How many are guilty in this kind? they think of their children, and delight

more in them than in God; they grieve more for the loss of their first-born, than for the loss of their first love. This is to make an idol of a child, and to set it in God's room. Thus God is oft provoked to take away our children. If we love the jewel more than him that gave it, God will take away the jewel, that our love may return to him again.

USE 1. It reproves such as have other gods, and so renounce the true God.* 1. Such as set up idols: 'according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah:'¹¹ 'their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the field.'¹² 2. Such as seek to familiar spirits. This is a sin condemned by the law of God, 'there shall not be found among you any that consult with familiar spirits.'¹³ It is ordinary, that if people have lost any of their goods, they send to wizards and soothsayers, to know how they may come by their goods again: what is this but for people to make a god of the devil, by consulting with him, and putting their trust in him? What! because you have lost your goods, will you lose your souls too?¹⁴ So, is it not because you think there is not a God in heaven, that you ask counsel of the devil? If any be guilty, be humbled.

USE 2. It sounds a retreat in our ears. Let it call us off from the idolizing any creature; and renouncing other gods, let us cleave to the true God and his service. If we go away from God, we know not where to mend ourselves. 1. It is *honourable* serving of the true God; it is more honour to serve God than to have kings serve us. 2. Serving the true God is *delightful*, 'I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.'¹⁵ God oft displays the banner of his love in an ordinance, and pours in the oil of gladness into the heart. All God's ways are pleasantness, his paths are strewed with roses.¹⁶ 3. Serving the true God is *beneficial*; they have great gain here, the hidden manna,—inward peace, and a great reward to come. They that serve God shall have a kingdom when they die,¹⁷ and shall wear a crown made of the flowers of paradise.¹⁸ To serve the true God is our true interest.

¹⁰ Je. 2. 28. ¹¹ Ho. 12. 11. ¹² De. 18. 10, 11. ¹³ 2 Ki. 1. 6. ¹⁴ Is. 56. 7. ¹⁵ Pro. 3. 17. ¹⁶ Lu. 12. 32. ¹⁷ 1 Pe. 5. 4.

* 'When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations.' The first charge is, that they did not find God: the second, that they failed to do so, although favoured with the best and most manifest opportunities: the third, that they failed, though calling themselves wise: and the fourth, that they not merely did not find him, but degraded his worship to demons. The knowledge which they ought to have had concerning him who is incomparably the most excellent of all, they transferred to that which is incomparably the most vile.—*Chrysostom*.

¹ Mat. 19. 22. ² Eph. 5. 5. ³ 2 Ti. 3. 4. ⁴ Job 21. 12, 13. ⁵ Ps. 104. 26. ⁶ Ec. 7. 4. ⁷ Re. 18. 7. ⁸ Phi. 3. 19. ⁹ De. 11. 15.

God hath twisted his glory and our salvation together. He bids us believe; and why? that we may be saved. Therefore, renouncing all others, let us cleave to the true God. 4. You have *covenanted* to serve the true JEHOVAH, renouncing all others. When one hath entered into covenant with his master, and the indentures are drawn and sealed, then he cannot go back, but must serve out his time. We have covenanted in baptism to take the Lord for our God, renouncing all others, and renewed this covenant in the Lord's supper, and shall we not keep our solemn vow and covenant? We can-

not go away from God without the highest perjury, 'if any man draw back,' as a soldier that steals away from his colours, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'⁵ I will pour vials of wrath on him, and make mine arrows drunk with blood. 5. None ever had *cause to repent* of cleaving to God and his service: some have repented that they had made a god of the world. Cardinal Wolsey said, 'Oh that I had served my God as I have served my king, he would never have left me thus!' None ever complained of serving God: it was both their comfort and crown on their deathbed.

OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, &c.*

IN the first commandment is forbidden the worshipping a false god: in this, the worshipping the true God in a false manner. 1. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.' This forbids not the making an image for civil use, 'whose is this image and superscription? they say unto him, it is Cæsar's.'¹ But the commandment forbids setting up an image for religious use or worship. 2. 'Nor the likeness of any thing,' &c. All ideas, portraitures, shapes, images of God, whether by effigies or pictures, are here forbidden: 'take heed lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make the similitude of any figure.'² God is to be adored in the heart, not painted to the eye. 3. 'Thou shalt not bow to them.' The intent of making images and pictures, is to worship them. No sooner was Nebuchadnezzar's golden image set up, but all the people fell down and worshipped it.³ Therefore God forbids the prostrating of ourselves before an idol. So then, the thing prohibited in this commandment is image-worship. To set up an image to represent God, is a debasing of the Deity, it is below God. If one should make images of snakes or spiders, saying he did it to represent his prince, would not the prince take this in high disdain? What greater disparagement to God, than to represent the infinite God by that which is finite,—the living God, by that which is without life, and the Maker of all, by a thing which is made?

1. To make a true image of God is impossible. God is a spiritual essence; and, being a spirit, he is invisible: 'ye saw no similitude in the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb

out of the midst of the fire.'⁶ How can any paint the Deity? Can they make an image of that which they never saw? 'What is invisible cannot be portrayed,' AMB. 'Ye saw no similitude.' It is impossible to make a picture of the soul, or to paint the angels, because they are of a spiritual nature; much less then can we paint God, by an image, who is an infinite, uncreated spirit.

2. To worship God by an image, is both absurd and unlawful. 1. It is absurd and irrational; for, the workman is better than the work: 'he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.'⁷ If the workman be better than the work, and none bow to the workman, how absurd then is it to bow to the work of his hands? Is it not an absurd thing to bow down to the king's picture, when the king himself is present? more so to bow down to an image of God, when God himself is everywhere present. 2. It is unlawful to worship God by an image; for, it is against the homily of the church; it runs thus; 'the images of God, our Saviour, the virgin Mary, are of all others the most dangerous; therefore the greatest care ought to be had that they stand not in temples and churches.' So that image-worship is contrary to our own homilies, and doth affront the authority of the church of England. Image-worship is expressly against the letter of scripture; 'ye shall make no graven image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone, to bow down to it:'⁸ 'neither shalt thou set thee up any image'

¹ Mat. 22 20. ² De. 4. 15, 16. ³ Da. 3. 7. ⁴ John 4 24

⁵ Heb. 10. 38.

⁶ De. 4. 15.

⁷ Heb. 3. 3.

⁸ Lev. 26. 1.

which the Lord thy God hateth ;¹ ‘ confounded be all they that serve graven images.’² Do we think to please God, by doing that which is contrary to his mind, and that which he hath expressly forbidden ? Image-worship is against the practice of the saints of old. Josiah, that renowned king, destroyed the groves and images.³ Constantine abrogated the images set up in temples ; the christians destroyed images at Basil, Zurich, Bohemia ; when the Roman emperors would have thrust images upon them, they chose rather to die than deflower their virgin-profession by idolatry ; they refused to admit any painter or carver into their society, because they would not have any carved statue or image of God ; when Seraphion bowed to an idol, the christians excommunicated him, and delivered him up to Satan.

USE 1. It reproves and condemns the church of Rome, who from the Alpha of their religion to the Omega, are wholly idolatrous. They make images of God the Father, painting him in their church windows as an old man,—and an image of Christ on the crucifix ; and, because it is against the letter of this commandment, therefore they sacrilegiously blot out the second commandment out of their catechism, dividing the tenth commandment into two ; now this image-worship must needs be very impious and blasphemous, because it is a giving that religious worship to the creature, which is only due to God. It is vain for papists to say, they give God the worship of the heart, and the image only the worship of the body ; for the worship of the body is due to God, as well as the worship of the heart ; and to give an outward veneration to an image, is to give that adoration to a creature, which only belongs to God : ‘ my glory will I not give to another.’⁴

OBJ. 1. *The papists say, they do not worship the image, but only make use of it as a medium, to worship God by it.*

A. 1. Where hath God bidden them worship him by an effigy or image ? ‘ who hath required this at your hands ?’⁵ The papists cannot say so much as the devil,—‘ it is written.’ 2. The heathens may bring the same argument for their gross idolatry, as the papists do for their image-worship. Who of the heathens were so simple, as to think gold or silver, or the figure of an ox or elephant, were God ? They were only emblems and hieroglyphics to represent him ; they did worship the invisible God,

by such visible things. To worship God by an image, God takes as done to the image itself.

OBJ. 2. *But, say the papists, images are laymen’s books, and they are good to put us in mind of God. One of the popish councils affirmed, that we might learn more by an image, than by long study of the scriptures.*

A. ‘ What profiteth the graven image, the molten image, and a teacher of lies ?’⁶ Is an image a layman’s book ? See then what lessons this book teacheth, it teacheth lies ; it represents God in a visible shape, who is invisible. For the papists to say they make use of an image to put them in mind of God, is as if a woman should say, she keeps company with another man, to put her in mind of her husband.

OBJ. 3. *But did not Moses make the image of a brazen serpent ? Why then may not images be set up ?*

A. That was done by God’s special command : ‘ make thee a fiery serpent ;’⁷ and there was a special use of it, both literal and spiritual. But what ! doth the setting up of this image of the brazen serpent justify the setting up of images in churches ? What ! because Moses did make an image by God’s appointment, may we therefore set up an image of our own devising ?—because Moses made an image to heal them that were stung, is it lawful therefore to set up images in churches, to sting them that are whole ? This doth not at all follow. Nay, that very brazen serpent which God himself commanded to be set up, when Israel did look upon it with too much reverence, and began to burn incense to it, Hezekiah defaced that image, and called it *nehushtan*, (mere brass) ; and God commended him for so doing.⁸

OBJ. 4. *But is not God represented as having hands, and eyes, and ears ? Why then may we not make an image to represent him by, and help our devotion ?*

A. Though God is pleased to stoop to our weak capacities, and set himself out in scripture by eyes, to signify his omniscieny, and hands to signify his power, yet it is very absurd from metaphors and figurative expressions, to bring an argument for images and pictures ; for, by that rule, God may be pictured by the sun and the element of fire, and by a rock ; for God is set forth by these metaphors in scripture : and sure the papists themselves would not like to have such images made of God.

Q. 1. *If it be not lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an im-*

¹ De. 16. 22.

² Ps. 97. 7.

³ 2 Ki. 23. 24.

⁴ Is. 42. 8.

⁵ Is. 1. 12.

⁶ Hab. 2. 18

⁷ Nu. 21. 8.

⁸ 2 Ki. 18. 4.

age of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man?

A. No. Epiphanius seeing an image of Christ hanging in a church, brake it in pieces. It is Christ's Godhead, united to his manhood, that makes him to be Christ; therefore to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ, we separate what God hath joined, we leave out that which is the chief thing, which makes him to be Christ.

Q. 2. *But how then shall we conceive of God aright, if we may make no image or resemblance of him?*

A. We must conceive of God spiritually, namely, in his attributes,—his holiness, justice, goodness, which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ; Christ is the 'image of the invisible God,'¹ as in the wax we see the print of the seal. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ God-man; 'he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.'²

USE 2. Take heed of idolatry, namely, image-worship. Our nature is prone to this sin, as dry wood to take fire; and indeed, what needs so many words in the commandment, 'thou shalt not make any graven image, or the likeness of any thing' in heaven, earth, water, sun, moon, stars, male, female, fish,—'thou shalt not bow down to them:' I say, what needed so many words, but to show how subject we are to this sin of false worship? It concerns us therefore to resist this sin. Where the tide is apt to run with greater force, there we had need to make the banks higher and stronger; the plague of idolatry is very infectious: 'they were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols.'³

It is my advice to you to avoid all occasions of this sin. 1. Come not into the company of idolatrous papists; dare not to live under the same roof with them, else you run into the devil's mouth. John the divine would not be in the bath where Cerinthus the heretic was. 2. Go not into their chapels to see their crucifixes, or hear mass; as the looking on an harlot draws to adultery, so the looking on the popish gilded picture may draw to idolatry. Some care not though they go and see their idol-worship; indeed, a vagrant that hath nothing to lose, cares not though he goes among thieves; such as have no goodness in them, care not into what idolatrous places they come, or what

temptations they cast themselves upon; but you who have a treasure about you, good principles, take heed the popish priests do not rob you of your principles, and defile you with their images. 3. Dare not to join in marriage with image-worshippers. Solomon, though a man of wisdom, yet his idolatrous wives drew away his heart from God. The people of Israel entered into an oath and curse that they would not give their daughters in marriage to the idolaters.⁴ For a protestant and papist to marry, is to be unequally yoked;⁵ and there is more danger that the papist will corrupt the protestant, than hope that the protestant will convert the papist. Mingle wine and vinegar, the vinegar will sooner sour the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar. 4. Avoid superstition,* which is a bridge leads over to Rome. Superstition is the bringing in any ceremony, fancy, or innovation into God's worship, which he never appointed. This is very provoking to God, because it reflects much upon his honour, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner of his own worship. God hates all strange fire to be offered in his temple.⁶ A ceremony may in time bring to a crucifix. They who contend for the cross in baptism, why may they not as well have the oil, salt, and cream, the one being as ancient as the other? Such as are for altar-worship, they who will bow to the east, may in time bow to the host. Take heed of all occasions of idolatry; idolatry is devil-worship,⁷ and if you search through the whole Bible, there is no one sin that God hath more followed with plagues, than idolatry; the Jews have a saying, that in every evil that befalls them, there is an ounce of the golden calf in it. Hell is a place for idolaters, 'for without are idolaters.'⁸ Senesius calls the devil a rejoicer at idols, because the image-worshippers help to fill hell.

That you may be preserved from idolatry and image-worship: 1. Get good principles, that

¹ Ne. 10. 30. ² 2 Cor. 6. 14. ³ Lev. 10. 1. ⁴ Ps. 106. 37
⁵ Rev. 22. 15.

* Superstition of every kind is an evident violation of the spirit and intent of this commandment; and so are all human appointments in religious worship, when at all relied on as acceptable with God. The use of things indifferent in religion without command from God, leads men's minds to gross conceptions of him: as if he delighted in that outward splendour, or those external forms, which excite in them lively but false affections, that are often mistaken for devotion; and it is commonly connected with a false dependance; it substitutes something else in the place of the appointments of God; and it tends to the usurpation of authority over men's consciences. But many circumstances of worship must be regulated by human discretion; every man therefore should judge for himself, which regulations tend to these evils, and which do not; and be candid in judging such as differ from him.—*Scott's Com. E. r. 20. 4.*

¹ Col. 1. 15.

² Jno. 14. 9.

³ Ps. 106. 35, 36.

you may be able to oppose the gamsayer. Whence doth the popish religion get ground? not from the goodness of their cause, but from the ignorance of their people. 2. Get love to God. The wife that loves her husband is safe from the adulterer; and the soul that loves Christ is safe from the idolater. 3. Pray that God will keep you. Though it is true, there is nothing in an image to tempt—for if we pray to an image, it cannot hear, and if we pray to God, by an image, he will not hear: I say there's nothing to tempt—yet we know not our own hearts, or how soon we may be drawn to vanity, if God leave us; therefore pray that you be not enticed by false worship, or receive the mark of the beast in your right hand or forehead. Pray,

'hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.'⁸ Lord, let me neither mistake my way for want of light, nor leave the true way for want of courage. 4. Let us bless God, who hath given us the knowledge of his truth; that we have tasted the honey of his word, and our eyes are enlightened. Bless him that he hath shown us the pattern of his house, the right mode of worship; that he hath discovered to us the forgery and blasphemy of the Romish religion. Let us pray, that God will preserve pure ordinances, and powerful preaching among us: idolatry came in at first by the want of good preaching,—then the people began to have golden images, when they had wooden priests.

EXOD. 20. 5. *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*

I. 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.' The first reason why Israel must not worship graven images is, because the Lord is a jealous God, 'the Lord whose name is *Jealous*, is a jealous God.'¹

Jealousy is taken, 1. in a good sense, and so God is jealous for his people: 2. in a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people. 1. In a good sense; and so God is jealous for his people: 'thus saith the Lord, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion, with a great jealousy.'² God hath a dear affection for his people, they are his *hephzibah*, or delight;³ the apple of his eye;⁴ to express how dear they are to him, and how tender he is of them. They are his spouse, adorned with jewels of grace; they lie near to his heart. He is jealous for his spouse, therefore he will be avenged on them who go to wrong her: 'the Lord shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall roar, he shall prevail against his enemies.'⁵ What is done to the saints, God takes as done to himself,⁶ and the Lord will undo all them that afflict Zion, 'I will undo all that afflict thee.'⁷ 2. Jealousy is taken in a bad sense, and so God is jealous of his people: and so it is taken in this commandment, 'I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.' I am jealous lest you should go after false gods, or worship the true God in a false manner; lest you defile your virgini-profession by images. God will have his spouse

to keep close to him, and not go after other lovers, 'thou shalt not be for another man.'⁸ God cannot bear a co-rival: our conjugal love, namely, a love joined with adoration and worship, must be given only to God.

USE 1. Let us give God no just cause to be jealous. A good wife will be so discreet and chaste as to give her husband no just occasion of jealousy. Let us avoid all sin, especially this sin of idolatry, or image-worship; it is heinous, after we have entered into a marriage-covenant with God, now to prostitute ourselves to an image. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, and God is a jealous God, he will avenge it; image-worship makes God abhor a people, 'they moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel.'⁹ Image-worship enrageth God, 'jealousy is the rage of a man';¹⁰ it makes God divorce a people, 'plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife.'¹¹ 'Jealousy is cruel as the grave.'¹² As the grave devours men's bodies, so God will devour image-worshippers.

USE 2. If God be a jealous God, let it be a word to such whose friends are popish idolaters, and they are hated by their friends because they are of a different religion, and perhaps they cut off their maintenance from them. O remember, God is a jealous God! Better move your parents to hatred, than move God to jealousy; their anger cannot do you so much hurt

¹ Ex. 34. 14. ² Zec. 1. 14. ³ Is. 62. 4. ⁴ Zec. 2. 8.
⁵ Is. 42. 13. ⁶ 2 Ki. 19. 22. ⁷ Zep. 3. 19.

⁸ Ps. 119. 117

⁹ Ho. 3. 3.

¹⁰ Ps. 78. 58, 59.

¹¹ Pr. 6. 34.

¹² Ho. 2. 2.

¹³ Can. 8. 6.

as God's; if they will not provide for you, God will; 'when my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.'¹

II. The second reason against image-worship, 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.' There is a twofold visiting: 1. There is God's visiting in mercy, 'God will surely visit you';² that is, he will bring you into the land of Canaan, the type of heaven. Thus God hath visited us with the sunbeams of his favour; he hath made us swim in a sea of mercy; this is an happy visitation. 2. There is God's visiting in anger, 'shall I not visit for these things?'³ that is, God's visiting with the rod: and, 'what will ye do in the day of visitation?'⁴ that is, in the day when God shall visit with his judgments. Thus God's visiting is taken here, in this commandment, 'visiting iniquity,' that is, punishing iniquity.

Observe here three things. 1. That sin makes God visit; 'visiting iniquity.' Sin is the cause why God visits with sickness, poverty; 'if they break my statutes, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod.'⁵ Sin twists the cords which pinch us; sin creates all our troubles, it is the gall in our cup, and the gravel in our bread; sin is the Trojan horse, the Phæton that sets all on fire; it is the womb of our sorrows, and the grave of our comfort. God visits for sin. 2. One special sin God visits for, is idolatry and image-worship: 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers.' Most of God's envenomed arrows have been shot among idolaters: 'go now into my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it.'⁶ God, for Israel's idolatry suffered their army to be routed, their priests slain, the ark taken captive; and we never read that the ark returned to Shiloh any more. Jerusalem was the most famous metropolis of the world; there was the temple, 'whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord.' Yet, for their high places and images, their city was besieged and taken by the Chaldean forces.⁷ When images were set up in Constantinople, the chief seat of the eastern empire, this city, which was in the eye of the world impregnable, was taken by the Turks, and many cruelly massacred. Then the Turks in their triumphs reproached the idolatrous christians, causing an image or crucifix to be carried through the streets in contempt, and throwing dirt upon it, cried, 'this is the God of

the christians!' Here was God's visitation for their idolatry. God hath set special marks of his wrath upon idolaters; at a place called Epoletium, there perished by an earthquake 350 persons, while they were offering sacrifice to idols. Idolatry hath brought misery upon the eastern churches, it removed the golden candlesticks of Asia. This iniquity God visits for. 3. Idolatrous persons are enemies not only to their own souls, but to their children: 'visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.'⁸ As an idolatrous father entails his land of inheritance, so he entails God's anger and curse upon them. A jealous husband, finding his wife hath stained her integrity, may justly cast off her and her children too, because they are none of his. If the father be a traitor to his prince, no wonder if all the children suffer. God may visit the iniquity of image-worshippers upon their children.

Q. *But is it not said, 'every one shall die for his own sin; the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father?'*† How then doth God say, *He 'will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children?'*

A. Though the son be not damned for his father's sin, yet he may be severely punished; 'God layeth up his iniquity for his children;' that is, God lays up the punishment of his ini-

⁹ Job 21. 19.

* It is evident that children in general are sufferers by the crimes of their parents; but Israel was under a peculiar covenant, which idolatry violated in its primary condition. If then the parents forfeited the covenant-blessings, their posterity must suffer the effects of the forfeiture. As this was intended to restrain them from sin, by means of natural affection, the third and fourth generations only are mentioned; for they could not expect to see more of their descendants, and would be less concerned about their remote posterity: or it may imply, that the Lord being ready to forgive, the effects would cease after that period, unless the children persisted in the sins of their parents.—*Scott, Ex. 20. 5.*

This denunciation is also capable of a general application. God is said to 'visit iniquity' when, after long forbearance, he proceeds as a judge to search it out and punish it. He declares he will do so toward the 'children' of transgressors unto the third and fourth generation. This is violently objected to as unreasonable and unjust. But we may remark, that the visitation denounced refers only to temporal judgments. In this life the Lord frequently afflicts the posterity of atrocious transgressors, to manifest his hatred of sin. Yet the innocent never suffer; wherever his judgments fall, they fall on the head of the guilty; none can suffer more than they deserve.—In the common course of providence, this threatening is every day fulfilled.—*Robinson's System.*

† We might reconcile them by supposing the original law, which was merely a positive one, to be revoked; or we may consider the words of Ezekiel as referring to a particular case. The Israelites had adopted this proverb, 'the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge,' intimating that their present sufferings were not owing to their own sins, but to those of their ancestors. To repel this accusation against his procedure, God declares, that the case was not as they supposed; that he was punishing them for their own sins; that it was far from him to confound the righteous with the wicked; and that every man among them should be rewarded according to his works.—*Dick's Lect., vol. 4. p. 437.*

¹ Ps. 27. 10. ² Ge. 50. 25. ³ Je. 5. 9. ⁴ Is. 10. 3.
⁵ Ps. 89. 31, 32. ⁶ Je. 7. 12. ⁷ Ps. 122. 4. ⁸ 2 Ki. 25. 4.

quity for his children; the child smarts for the father's sin. Jeroboam thought to have established the kingdom by idolatrous worship, but it brought ruin upon him and all his posterity.¹ Ahab's idolatry wronged his posterity, they lost the kingdom, and were all beheaded; 'they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons.'² There God visited the iniquity of the father upon the children. As a son catcheth a hereditary disease from his father, the stone or gout; so he catcheth misery from him, his father's sin ruins him.

USE 1. If so, then how sad is it to be the child of an idolater? It had been sad to have been one of Gehazi's children, who had leprosy entailed upon them; 'the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever.'³ So it is sad to be a child of an idolater, or image-worshipper; his seed are exposed to God's heavy judgments in this life; 'God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.' Methinks I hear God speak, as in Isa. xiv. 21., 'prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers.'

USE 2. See what a privilege it is to be the children of good parents; the parents are in covenant with God, and God lays up mercy for their posterity, 'the just man walketh in his integrity, his children are blessed after him.'⁴ A religious parent doth not procure wrath, but helps to keep off wrath from his child; he seasons his child with religious principles, he prays down a blessing on his child; he is a loadstone drawing his child to Christ by good counsel and example. O what a privilege is it to be born of godly religious parents! St Austin saith, that his mother Monica travailed with greater care and pains for his new birth than for his natural. Wicked idolaters entail misery on their posterity; God 'visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children;' but religious parents procure a blessing upon their children: God reserves mercy for their posterity.

III. The third reason against image-worship; 'of them that hate me.' This is a reason against image-worship; it is hating God; the papists, who worship God by an image, hate God. Image-worship is a pretended love to God, but God interprets it an hating of him; 'she that loves another man hates her own husband.' An image-lover is a God-hater. Idolaters are said to go a whoring from God.⁵ How can they love God?

I shall show that image-worshippers hate God, whatever love they pretend. 1. They who go contrary to God's express will, hate him. God saith, you shall not set up any statue, image, nor picture, to represent me; these things I hate; 'neither shalt thou set up any image, which the Lord thy God hateth.'⁶ Yet the idolater will set up images, and worship them. This God looks upon as an hating of him. How doth that child love his father, who doeth all he can to cross him? 2. They who turned Jephthah out of doors, hated him, therefore they laboured to shut him out of his father's house.⁷ The idolater shuts the truth out of doors, he blots out the second commandment, he makes a shape of the invisible God, he brings a lie into God's worship: which is a clear proof he hates God. 3. Idolaters, though they love the false image of God in a picture, yet they hate the true image of God in a believer: they pretend to honour Christ in a crucifix, yet persecute Christ in his members: these hate God.

USE 1. This may confute those who plead for image-worshippers. They are very devout people, they adore images, they set up the crucifix, kiss it, light candles to it: they love God. Nay, but who shall be judge of their love? God saith, they hate him; they give religious adoration to a creature. These hate God, and God hates them, and they shall never live with God whom God hates; he never will lay such vipers in his bosom; heaven is kept as paradise with a flaming sword, that they shall not enter in, and 'he repayeth them that hate him to their face.'⁸ God will shoot all his destroying pieces among idolaters; all the plagues and curses in the book of God shall befall the idolater; the Lord repays him that hates him to his face.

USE 2. Let it exhort us all to flee from Romish idolatry; let us not be among God-haters; 'little children, keep yourselves from idols.'⁹ As you would keep your bodies from adultery, so keep your souls from idolatry. Take heed of images, they are images of jealousy to provoke God to anger; they are damnable; you may as well perish by false devotions as by real scandal; by image-worship, as by drunkenness and whoredom. A man may as well die by poison, as pistol; we may as well go to hell by drinking poison in the Romish cup of fornication, as by being pistoled with gross and scandalous sins. To conclude, 'God is a jealous God,' who will admit of no co-rival; 'he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon their

¹ 1 Ki. 14. 10.² 2 Ki. 10. 7.³ 2 Ki. 5. 27.⁴ Pro. 20. 7⁵ Ez. 34. 15.⁶ De. 16. 22. ⁷ Judg. 11. 7. ⁸ De. 7. 10. ⁹ 1 Jno. 5. 21.

children; he will entail a plague upon the posterity of idolaters. He interprets idolaters to be such as hate him; he that is an image-

lover is a God-hater. Therefore keep yourselves pure from Romish idolatry; if you love your souls, keep yourselves from idols.

EXOD. 20. 6. *Showing mercy unto thousands, &c.*

THIS is another argument against image-worship, because such as do not provoke God with their images, he is merciful to them, and will entail mercy upon their posterity; 'showing mercy unto thousands.' 1. Here is the golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed.— 2. The persons interested in God's mercy; such as love him, and keep his commandments.

1. The golden sceptre of God's mercy displayed, 'showing mercy to thousands.' The heathens thought they praised Jupiter enough, when they called him good and great: both these excellencies meet in God, majesty and mercy. Mercy is that innate propenseness in God to do good to distressed sinners. God showing mercy, makes his godhead appear full of glory. When Moses said to God, 'I beseech thee show me thy glory;' 'I will,' saith God, 'show mercy.'⁷ His mercy is his glory. Mercy is the name by which God will be known; 'the Lord passed by, and proclaimed, 'the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious!'⁸ Mercy proceeds primarily, and originally from God; he is called, the 'Father of mercies,'⁹ because he begets all those mercies and bowels which are in the creature. Our mercies compared with God's are scarce so much as a drop to the ocean.

Q. What are the qualifications?

A. 1. The spring of mercy which God shows, is free and spontaneous. To set up merit, is to destroy mercy; nothing can deserve mercy or force it; we cannot deserve mercy, because of our enmity, nor force it; we may force God to punish us, not to love us: 'I will love them freely.'¹⁰ Every link in the golden chain of salvation is wrought and interwoven with free grace. Election is free; 'he hath chosen us in him according to the good pleasure of his will.'¹¹ Justification is free: 'being justified freely by his grace.'¹² Say not then, I am unworthy; for mercy is free. If God should show mercy only to such as deserve it, he must show mercy to none at all. 2. The mercy God shows is powerful. How powerful is that

mercy which softens an heart of stone? Mercy changed Mary Magdalen's heart, out of whom seven devils were cast: she who was an inflexible adamant, mercy made her a weeping penitent! God's mercy works sweetly, yet irresistibly; it allures, yet conquers. The law may terrify, mercy doth mollify. Of what sovereign power and efficacy is that mercy which subdues the pride and enmity of the heart, and beats off those chains of sin in which the soul is held! 3. The mercy which God shows is superabundant; 'abundant in goodness, keeping mercy for thousands.'¹³ God visits iniquity only 'to the third and fourth generation;'¹⁴ but he shows mercy to a thousand generations. The Lord hath treasures of mercy lying by, therefore he is said to be 'plenteous in mercy,'¹⁵ and 'rich in mercy.'¹⁶ The vial of God's wrath doth but drop, but the fountain of his mercy runs. The sun is not so full of light, as God is of love. God hath mercy, of all dimensions; he hath depth of mercy,—it reacheth as low as sinners; and height of mercy,—it reacheth above the clouds. God hath mercies for all seasons: mercies for the night, he gives sleep; nay, sometimes he gives a song in the night.¹⁷ And he hath mercies for the morning; 'his compassions are new every morning.'¹⁸ God hath mercies for all sorts. Mercies for the poor; 'he raiseth the poor out of the dust;'¹⁹ mercies for the prisoner; 'He despiseth not his prisoner;'²⁰ mercies for the dejected, 'in a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.'²¹ God hath old mercies; 'thy mercies have been ever of old;'²² and new mercies, 'he hath put a new song in my mouth.'²³ Every time we draw our breath, we suck in mercy. God hath mercies under heaven, and those we taste of; and mercies in heaven, and those we hope for. Thus God's mercies are superabundant

4. The mercy God shows is abiding, 'the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to ever-

⁷ Ex. 33. 18. ² Ex. 34. 6. ³ 2 Cor. 1. 3. ⁴ Ho. 14. 4.

⁵ Eph. 1. 5.

⁶ Ro. 3. 24.

⁷ Ex. 34. 6, 7. ⁸ Ex. 20. 5. ⁹ Ps. 86. 5. ¹⁰ Eph. 2. 4.

¹¹ Ps. 42. 8.

¹² La. 3. 23.

¹³ 1 Sa. 2. 8.

¹⁴ Ps. 69. 33.

¹⁵ Is. 51. 8.

¹⁶ Ps. 25. 6.

¹⁷ Ps. 40. 3.

lasting.¹ God's anger to his children lasts but a while,² but his mercy lasts for ever. God's mercy is not like the widow's oil, which ran a while, and then ceased.³ Over-flowing, ever-flowing. God's mercy, as it is without bounds, so without bottom; 'His mercy endureth for ever.'⁴ God never cuts off the entail of mercy from the elect.

Q. 2. *How many ways is God said to show mercy?*

1. We are all living monuments of God's mercy. God shows mercy to us in daily supplying us. He supplies us with health: health is the sauce which makes our life relish sweeter. How would they prize this mercy who are chained to a sick-bed!—God supplies us with provisions; 'the God which fed me all my days.'⁵ Mercy spreads our tables, it carves us every bit of bread we eat; we never drink but in the golden cup of mercy.

2. God shows mercy in lengthening out our gospel liberties: 'there are many adversaries;⁶ many would stop the waters of the sanctuary that they should not run; we enjoy the sweet seasons of grace, we hear joyful sounds, we see the goings of God in his sanctuary, we enjoy sabbath after sabbath, the manna of the word yet falls about our tents, when in divers parts of the land they have no manna. Here is God's showing mercy to us, he spins out our forfeited liberties.

3. God shows mercy to us in preventing many evils from invading us, 'thou O Lord art a shield for me.'⁷ God hath restrained the wrath of men, and been a screen between us and danger; when the destroying angel hath been abroad, and shot his deadly arrow of pestilence, God hath kept off the arrow that it hath not come near us.

4. God shows mercy in delivering us; 'and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion,'⁸ namely, Nero. God hath restored us from the grave. May we not write the writing of Hezekiah, 'when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness?'⁹ When we thought the sun of our life had been setting God hath made it return to its former brightness.

5. God shows mercy in restraining us from sin; lusts within, are worse than lions without. The greatest sign of God's anger is to give men up to their sins;* 'so I gave them up to

their own hearts' lusts;¹⁰ let them sin themselves to hell, but God hath laid the bridle of restraining grace upon us. As God said to Abimelech, 'I withheld thee from sinning against me;¹¹ so God withheld us from those exorbitances which might have made us a prey to Satan, and a terror to ourselves.

6. God shows mercy in guiding and directing us. Is it not a mercy for one that is out of the way to have a guide?—There is a providential guiding: God guides our affairs for us, chalks out a way he would have us to walk in; he resolves our doubts, unties our knots, appoints the bounds of our habitation.¹²—A spiritual guiding; 'thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.'¹³ As Israel had a pillar of fire to go before them, so God guides us with the oracles of his word, and the conduct of his Spirit. He guides our head, keeps us from error; and he guides our feet, keeps us from scandal. O what mercy is it to have God to be our guide and pilot! 'For thy name's sake lead me and guide me.'¹⁴

7. God shows mercy in correcting us. God is angry in love; he smites that he may save. God's rod is not a rod of iron to break us, but a fatherly rod to humble us; 'he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'¹⁵ Either God will mortify some corruption, or exercise some grace. Is there not mercy in this? Every cross to a child of God is like Paul's cross wind, which though it broke the ship, it brought Paul to shore upon the broken pieces.¹⁶

8. God shows mercy in pardoning us; 'who is a God like thee, that pardonest iniquity?'¹⁷ It is mercy to feed us, rich mercy to pardon us; this mercy is spun out of the bowels of free grace: this is enough to make a sick man well: 'the inhabitant shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.'¹⁸ Pardon of sin is a mercy of the first magnitude; God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. This made David put on his best clothes, and anoint himself; his child newly dead, and God had told him the sword should not depart from his house, yet now he falls anointing himself; the reason was, God had sent him his pardon by the prophet Nathan, 'the Lord hath put away thy sin.'¹⁹ Pardon is the only fit remedy for a troubled conscience.

¹⁰ Ps. 81. 12. ¹¹ Gen. 20. 6. ¹² Ac. 17. 26. ¹³ Ps. 73. 24.
¹⁴ Ps. 31. 3. ¹⁵ He. 12. 10. ¹⁶ Ac. 27. 44. ¹⁷ Mi. 7. 18.
¹⁸ Is. 33. 24. ¹⁹ 2 Sa. 12. 13.

imposes on those who are not hardened and obstinate offenders. It seems to denote here, neither an active plunging into sin, on the one hand, nor a mere inactive letting alone on the other; but a withholding by way of just retribution for their offences, such restraints as I have just described.—*Stuart on Rom. 1. 24.*

¹ Ps. 103. 17. ² Ps. 102. 9. ³ 2 Ki. 4. 6. ⁴ Ps. 136.

⁵ Ge. 48. 15. ⁶ 1 Cor. 16. 9. ⁷ Ps. 3. 3. ⁸ 2 Tim. 4. 17.

⁹ Is. 38. 9.

* Gave up, gave over, that is, left them to pursue their own desires, without checking them by such restraints as he usually

What can give ease to a wounded spirit but pardoning mercy? Offer him the honours and pleasures of the world: 'tis as if you bring flowers and music to one that is condemned. But, How may I know my sins are pardoned? Where God removes the guilt, he breaks the power of sin, 'he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities.' With pardoning love God gives subduing grace.

9. God shows his mercy in sanctifying us; 'I am the Lord that sanctify you.'² This is the partaking of the divine nature.³ God's Spirit is a spirit of consecration, though it sanctify us but in part, yet in every part.⁴ This is such a mercy that God cannot give it in anger; if we are sanctified, then we are elected; 'God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification.'⁵ This prepares for happiness, as the seed prepares for harvest. When the virgins had been anointed and perfumed, then they were to stand before the king;⁶ so, when we have had the anointing of God, then we shall stand before the King of heaven.

10. God shows mercy in hearing our prayers; 'have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.'⁷ Is it not a favour, when a man puts up a petition to the king, and hath it granted? When we pray for pardon, adoption, the sense of God's love, to have God give a gracious answer,—what a signal mercy is this? God may sometimes delay an answer, when he will not deny. You do not presently throw a musician money, because you love to hear his music: God loves the music of prayer, therefore doth not presently let us hear from him, but in due season he will give an answer of peace; 'blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.'⁸ If God doth not turn away our prayer, then he doth not turn away his mercy.

11. God shows mercy in saving us: 'according to his mercy he saved us.'⁹ This is the top-stone of mercy, and it is laid in heaven. Now mercy displays itself in all its orient colours; now mercy is mercy indeed, when God shall perfectly refine us from all the lees and dregs of corruption. Our bodies shall be made like Christ's glorious body, and our souls like the angels. Saving mercy is crowning mercy; it is not only to be freed from hell, but enthroned in a kingdom. In this life we do rather desire God than enjoy him, but what

rich mercy will it be to be fully possessed of God, to see his smiling face, and to have God lay us in his bosom? This will fill us with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory;' 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.'¹⁰

USE 1. As an argument against despair: see what a great encouragement here is to serve God,—he shows mercy to thousands. Who would not be willing to serve a prince who is given to mercy and clemency? God is represented with a rainbow round about him; an emblem of his mercy.¹¹ Acts of severity are rather forced from God: judgment is his strange work.¹² Therefore the disciples, who are not said to wonder at the other miracles of Christ, yet did wonder when the fig-tree was cursed and withered, because it was not Christ's manner to put forth acts of severity. God is said to delight in mercy.¹³ Justice is God's left hand, mercy is his right hand; God useth his right hand most; he is more used to mercy than to justice. God is said to be 'slow to anger,'¹⁴ but 'ready to forgive.'¹⁵ This may encourage us to serve God. What argument will prevail, if mercy will not? Were God all justice, it might fright us from him; but his mercy may be a loadstone to draw us to him.

USE 2. Branch 1. Hope in God's mercies, 'the Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, and hope in his mercy.'¹⁶ God counts it his glory to be scattering pardons among men. OBJ. But I have been a great sinner and sure there is no mercy for me. ANS. No, not if thou goest on in sin, and are so resolved; but, if thou wilt break off thy sins, the golden sceptre of mercy shall be held forth to thee; 'let the wicked forsake his way, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him.'¹⁷ And Christ's blood is 'a fountain set open for sin and uncleanness.'¹⁸ Mercy doth more overflow in God, than sin in us; God's mercy can drown great sins, as the sea covers great rocks. Some of those Jews who had their hands imbrued in Christ's blood, were saved by that blood: God loves to magnify his goodness, to display the trophies of free grace, and to set up his mercy above you, in spite of sin,—therefore hope in God's mercy.

Branch 2. If God show mercy to thousands, labour to know that his mercy is for you, 'he is the God of my mercy.'¹⁹ A man that was ready to drown, saw a rainbow: saith he, 'what an l

¹ Mi. 7. 19. ² Le. 20. 8. ³ 2 Pe. 1. 4. ⁴ 1 Thess. 5. 23. ⁵ 2 Thess. 2. 13. ⁶ Esth. 2. 12. ⁷ Ps. 1. 1. ⁸ Ps. 66. 20. ⁹ Tit. 3. 4.

¹⁰ Ps. 17. 15. ¹¹ Re. 4. 3. ¹² Is. 28. 21. ¹³ Mi. 7. 19. ¹⁴ Ps. 103. 8. ¹⁵ Ps. 86. 5. ¹⁶ Ps. 147. 11. ¹⁷ Is. 55. 7. ¹⁸ Ze. 13. 1. ¹⁹ Ps. 59. 17.

the better, though God will not drown the world, if I drown?' so, what are we the better God is merciful, if we perish? Let us labour to know God's special mercy is for us.* How shall we know it belongs to us? 1. If we put an high value and estimate upon God's mercy. God will not throw away his mercy on them that slight it; we prize health, but we prize adopting mercy above it. This is the diamond in the ring, it outshines all other comforts. 2. If we are fearers of God, we have a reverent awe upon us; we tremble at sin, and flee from it, as Moses did from his rod turned into a serpent; his mercy is on them that fear him.¹ 3. If we take sanctuary in God's mercy, we trust in it.² As a man is saved by catching hold of a cable; God's mercy is a cable let down from heaven to us; now taking fast hold of this cable by faith, we are saved; 'I trust in the mercy of God for ever.'³ As a man trusteth his life and goods in a garrison, so we trust our souls in God's mercy.

What shall we do to get a share in God's special mercy? 1. If we would have mercy, it must be through Christ; out of Christ no mercy is to be had. We read in the old law, that none might come into the holy of holies,

where the mercy-seat stood, but the high priest; signifying, we have nothing to do with mercy, but through Christ our high priest: that the high priest might not come near the mercy-seat without blood,⁷ to show that we have no right to mercy, but through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ's blood: and that the high priest might not upon pain of death come near the mercy-seat without incense.⁸ No mercy from God without the incense of Christ's intermission: so that if we would have mercy, we must get a part in Christ. Mercy swims to us through Christ's blood. 2. If we would have mercy, we must pray for it, 'show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation';⁹ 'turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me.'¹⁰ Lord put me not off with common mercy; give me not only mercy to feed and clothe me, but mercy to pardon me; not only sparing mercy, but saving mercy. Lord, give me the cream of thy mercies; let me have mercy and loving-kindness, 'who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy.'¹¹

Be earnest suitors for mercy; let your wants quicken your importunity; then we pray most fervently, when we pray most feelingly.

Exod. 20. 6. *Of them that love me, &c.*

God's mercy is for them that love him. Love is a grace that shines and sparkles in God's eye, as the precious stone did upon Aaron's breastplate. Love is an holy expansion or enlargement of soul, whereby it is carried with delight after God, as the chief good; so Aquinas defines love to be, "the delight of the lover in the beloved;" love is a complacential delighting in God, as in our treasure; love is the soul of religion; it is a grace highly momentous. If we had knowledge as the angels, or faith of miracles, yet without love it would profit nothing.⁴

'This is the first and great commandment,'⁵ It is so, 1. because, if this be wanting, there can be no religion in the heart; there can be no faith, for 'faith worketh by love.'⁶ All else

is but pageantry, or a devout compliment. 2. Because love doth meliorate and sweeten all the duties of religion; it makes them savoury meat, else God cares not to taste of them. 3. It is the first and great commandment, in respect of the excellency of this grace. Love is the queen of the graces; it outshines all the others, as the sun the lesser planets. In some respect it is more excellent than faith; though in one sense faith be more excellent, as it unites us to Christ,—faith puts upon us the embroidered robe of Christ's righteousness, which is a brighter robe than any of the angels wear,—yet, in another sense, love is more excellent, in respect of the continuance of it; it is the most durable grace; faith and hope will shortly cease, but love will remain. When all the other graces, like Rachel, shall die in travail, love shall revive. The other graces are in the nature of a lease, only for the term of life; love is as a freehold, it continues for ever. Thus love carries away the garland from all the other

¹ Lu. 1. 50.

² Ps. 52. 8.

³ Ps. 52. 8.

⁴ 1 Cor. 13. 2.

⁵ Mat. 22. 38.

⁶ Gal. 5. 6.

* It is, indeed, a happy thing, to have in the soul an extract of that great archive and act of grace towards it, that hath stood in heaven from eternity. It is surely both a very comfortable and very profitable thing, to find and to read clearly the seal of mercy upon the soul, which is holiness, that by which a man is marked by God as a part of his peculiar possession, that he hath chosen out of the world.—*Leighton on 1 Pet. 2. 10.*

⁷ Le. 16. 14.

⁸ Le. 16. 13.

⁹ Ps. 85. 7.

¹⁰ Ps. 25. 16.

¹¹ Ps. 103. 4.

graces,—it is the most long-lived grace,—it is a bud of eternity,—this grace alone shall accompany us in heaven.

Q. 1. *How must our love to God be qualified?*

A. 1. Love to God must be pure and genuine; he must be loved chiefly for himself; this the schoolmen call the love of friendship. We must love God, not only for his benefits, but for those intrinsic excellencies where-with he is crowned; we must love God not only for the good which flows from him, but the good which is in him. True love is not mercenary; a soul that is deeply in love with God, needs not to be hired with rewards; he cannot but love God for the beauty of his holiness: not but that it is lawful to look at God's benefits,—Moses had an eye to the recompense of reward,¹ but we must not love God only for his benefits, for then it is not love of God but self-love.

2. Love to God must be with all the heart, 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.'² We must not love God a little,—give God a drop or two of our love,—but the main stream of our love must run after him; the mind must think of God, they will choose him, the affections pant after him: the true mother would not have the child divided, nor God will not have the heart divided; we must love him with our whole heart. Though we may love the creature, yet it must be a subordinate love: love to God must be highest, as the oil swims above the water.

3. Love to God must be flaming; to love coldly is all one as not to love. The spouse is said to be 'sick of love.'³ The seraphim are so called, from their burning: love turns saints into seraphim, it makes them burn in holy love to God; and 'many waters cannot quench this love.'

Q. 2. *How may we know whether we love God?*

A. 1. He that loves God, desires his sweet presence; lovers cannot be long asunder, they have their fainting fits, they want a sight of the object of their love. A soul deeply in love with God, desires the enjoyment of him in his ordinances, in word, prayer, sacraments. David was ready to faint away and die when he had not a sight of God, 'my soul fainteth for God;'⁴ such as care not for ordinances, but say, when will the sabbath be over? plainly discover want of love to God.

2. He who loves God, doth not love sin; 'ye that love the Lord hate evil.'⁵ The love of God and the love of sin can no more mix together than iron and clay; every sin loved, strikes at the being of God, but he who loves God, hath an antipathy against sin; he who would part between two lovers, is an hateful person: God, and the believing soul are two lovers,—sin comes to part between them,—therefore the soul is implacably set against sin. By this try your love to God. How could Delilah say she loved Samson, when she entertained correspondence with the Philistines who were his mortal enemies? How can he say he loves God, who loves sin which is God's enemy?

3. He who loves God is not much in love with any thing else; his love is very cool to worldly things; his love to God moves as the sun in the firmament, swiftly; his love to the world moves as the sun on the dial, very slow. The love of the world eats out the heart of religion; it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world was a dead thing to Paul; 'I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.'⁶ In Paul we might see both the picture and pattern of a mortified man; he that loves God, useth the world, but chooseth God; the world is his pension, but God is his portion.⁷ The world doth busy him, but God doth delight and satisfy him. He saith as David, 'God my exceeding joy,'⁸—the gladness or cream of my joy.*

4. He who loves God cannot live without him. Things we love we know not how to be without; a man can want music or flowers, but not food; a soul deeply in love with God looks upon himself as undone without him, 'hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit.'⁹ He saith, as Job, 'I went mourning without the sun.'¹⁰ I have star-light, I want

⁵ Ps. 97. 10.

⁶ Ga. 6. 14.

⁷ Ps. 119. 57.

⁸ Ps. 43. 4.

⁹ Ps. 143. 7.

¹⁰ Job 30. 28.

* There is a tasting of the heavenly gift exercised by temporary believers, He. 6. 44. Their highest sense of spiritual things, and it will be in some far higher than we easily think, is yet but a taste, and is called so in comparison of the truer, fuller sense, that true believers have of the goodness and grace of God; which, compared with a temporary taste, is more than tasting. The former is merely tasting, rather an imaginary taste than real; but this is a true feeding on the graciousness of God; yet is it called a taste in comparison of the fulness to come. Jesus Christ being all in all unto the soul, faith apprehending him, is all the spiritual senses. Faith is the eye that beholds his matchless beauty, and so kindles love in the soul, and can speak of him as having seen him, and taken particular notice of him. It is the ear that discerns his voice. It is faith that smells his name, poured forth as an ointment; faith that touches him, and draws virtue from him; and faith that tastes him. He that hath tasted of this goodness, O how tasteless are those things to him, which the world calls sweet!—*Leighton on 1 Pet. 12. 4, 5.*

¹ He. 11. 27. ² Mar. 12. 30. ³ Ca. 2. 5. ⁴ Ps. 84. 2.

the Sun of Righteousness,—I enjoy not the sweet presence of my God. Is God our chief good that we cannot live without? Alas, how do they demonstrate they have no love to God, who can make a shift well enough to be without him! Let them have but corn, wine and oil, and you shall never hear them complain of the want of God!

5. He who loves God will be at any pains to get him. What pains doth the merchant take, what hazards doth he run, to have a rich return from the Indies! Jacob loved Rachel, and he could endure the heat by day, and the frost by night, that he might enjoy her. A soul that loves God, will take any pains for the fruition of him; 'my soul follows hard after God.'¹ Love is as the weight which sets the clock agoing. The soul is much in prayer, weeping, fasting; he strives as in agony that he may obtain him whom his soul loves. Plutarch reports of the Gauls, an ancient people of France, after they had tasted the sweet wine of Italy, they never rested till they had arrived at that country: he who is in love with God never rests till he hath gotten a part in him, 'I sought him whom my soul loveth.'² How can they say they love God, who are not industrious in the use of means to obtain him? 'A slothful man hides his hand in his bosom.'³ He is not in agony, but lethargy; if Christ and salvation would drop as a ripe fig into his mouth, he could be content to have them, but he is loth to put himself to too much trouble. Doth he love his friend that will not make a journey to see him.

6. He that loves God, prefers him before estate and life.—Before estate; 'for whom I have suffered the loss of all things.'⁴ Who that loves a rich jewel, would not part with a flower for it? Galeacius, marquis of Vico, parted with a fair estate to enjoy God in his pure ordinances. When a Jesuit persuaded him to return to his popish religion in Italy, promising him a huge sum of money, saith he, 'let their money perish with them, who esteem all the gold in the world worth one day's communion with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit.'—Before life; 'they loved not their lives to the death.'⁵ Love to God carries the soul above the love of life and the fear of death.

7. He who loves God, loves his favourites, namely, the saints.⁶ To love a man for his grace, and the more we see of God in him the more

we love him, is the infallible sign of love to God. The wicked pretend to love God, but hate and persecute his image. Doth he love his prince, who abuseth his statue, or tears his picture? Indeed they seem to show great reverence to the saints departed; they have a great reverence for St Paul, and St Stephen, and St Luke; they canonize dead saints, but persecute living saints; and do these love God? Can it be imagined he should love God, who hates his children because they are like him? If Christ were alive again, he would not escape a second persecution.

8. If we love God, as we cannot but be fearful of dishonouring him (the more a child loves his father, the more he is afraid to displease him) so we weep and mourn when we have offended him. Peter 'went out and wept bitterly.'⁷ When Peter thought how dearly Christ loved him—he took up to the mount where he was transfigured,—Christ showed him the glory of heaven in a vision—now, that he should deny Christ, after he had received such signal tokens of Christ's love, this broke his heart with grief, 'he wept bitterly.' Are our eyes limbecs dropping tears of grief for sin against God? A blessed evidence of our love to God; and such shall find mercy! 'He shows mercy to thousands of them that love him.'

USE. Let us be lovers of God. We love our food, and shall we not love him that gives it? All the joy we hope for in heaven, is in God; and shall not he who shall be our joy, be our love? It is a saying of St Austin; 'is it not punishment enough, Lord, not to love thee?' And again, 'I would hate my own soul, if I did not find it loving God.'

Q. *What are the incentives to provoke and inflame our love to God?*

1. God's benefits bestowed on us. A prince who bestows continual favours on a subject, if that subject hath any ingenuousness, he cannot but love his prince. God is constantly heaping benefits on us, 'filling our hearts with food and gladness.'⁸ As the rock followed Israel, whithersoever they went streams of water out of the rock followed them, so God's blessings follow us every day; we swim in a sea of mercy. That heart is hard, that is not prevailed with by all God's blessings, to love him. Great is the love that is excited by love. Kindness works on a brute; the ox knows his owner.

2. Love to God would make duties of religion facile and pleasant. I confess, to him that

¹ Ps. 63. 8. ² Ca. 3. 2. ³ Pro. 19. 24. ⁴ Ph. 3. 8.

⁵ Re. 12. 11.

⁶ 1 Jno. 5. 1.

⁷ Ma. 26. 75.

⁸ Acts 14. 17.

hath no love to God religion must needs be a burden; and I wonder not to hear him say, 'what a weariness is it to serve the Lord?' It is like rowing against the tide. But love oils the wheels, it makes duty a pleasure. Why are the angels so swift and winged in God's service, but because they love him? Jacob thought seven years but little for the love he did bear to Rachel. Love is never weary; he who loves money is not weary of telling it, and he who loves God is not weary of serving him.

3. It is advantageous. There is nothing lost by our love to God; 'eye hath not seen, &c., the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'¹ Such glorious rewards are laid up for them that love God, 'that (as St Austin saith) they do not only transcend our reason, but faith itself is not able to comprehend them.' A crown is the highest ensign of worldly glory, and God hath promised a 'crown of life to them that love him.'² And it is a never-fading one.³

4. By our loving God, we may know that he loves us; 'we love him, because he first loved us.'⁴ If the ice melts, it is because the sun has shined upon it; if the frozen heart melts in love, it is because the Sun of Righteousness hath shined upon it.

Q. 2. *What means may be used to excite our love to God?*

1. Labour to know God aright. The schoolmen say true; 'we cannot love that which we do not know.' God is the most eligible good; all the excellencies which lie scattered in the creature are united in God; he is 'the best, the greatest.' Wisdom, beauty, riches, love, do all centre in God. How fair was that

tulip which had the colours of all tulips in it? all perfections and sweetnesses are eminently in God. Did we know God more, and by the eye of faith see his orient beauty, our hearts would be fired with love to him.

2. Make the scriptures familiar to you. St Austin saith, before his conversion he took no pleasure in scripture, but after conversion it was his chief delight. The book of God discovers God to us, in his holiness, wisdom, veracity and truth; it represents God rich in mercy, encircled with promises. St Austin calls the scripture a golden epistle, or love-letter sent from God to us: by reading this love-letter, we shall be the more enamoured with love to God, as by reading lascivious books, comedies, romances, &c., lust is provoked.

3. Meditate much of God, and this will be a means to love him; 'while I was musing, the fire burned.'⁵ Meditation is the bellows of the affections. Meditate on God's love in giving us Christ; 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,'⁶ etc. That God should give Christ to us, and not to the angels that fell,—that the Sun of righteousness should shine in our horizon,—that he is revealed to us and not to others,—what wonderful love is this! 'Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?'⁷ Who can meditate on God's love? who can tread on these hot coals, and his heart not burn in love to God? Beg an heart to love God: the affection of love is natural, but not the grace of love.⁸ This fire of love is kindled from heaven; beg that it may burn upon the altar of your heart. Sure this request is pleasing to God, and he will not deny such a prayer: 'Lord, give me an heart to love thee!'

EXOD. 20. 6. *And keep my commandments, &c.*

LOVE and obedience, like two sisters, must go hand in hand; indeed this is a good evidence of our loving God; 'if ye love me, keep my commandments.'⁹ 'Love is proved by actions.' The son that loves his father will obey him. Obedience pleaseth God; 'to obey is better than sacrifice.'¹⁰ In sacrifice, only a dead beast is offered,—in obedience, a living soul; in sacrifice, only a part of the fruit is offered,—in obedience, fruit and tree and all; a man offers himself up to God. 'Keep my commandments.' It is not said, God shows mercy to thousands

that *know* his commandments, but that *keep* them. The knowing God's commandments, without keeping them, doth not entitle any to mercy. The commandment is not only a rule of knowledge, but duty. God gives us his commandments, not only as a landscape to look upon, but as his will and testament which we are to perform. A good Christian is like the sun, which doth not only send forth light, but goes its circuit round the world: so he hath not only the light of knowledge, but goes his circuit too, and moves in the sphere of obedience.

¹ 1 Co. 2. 9. ² Ja. 1. 12. ³ 1 Pe. 5. 4.
⁴ 1 Jno. 4. 19. ⁵ Jno. 14. 15. ⁶ 1 Sa. 15. 22.

⁷ Ps. 29. 3. ⁸ Jo. 3. 16. ⁹ Pro. 4. 28. ¹⁰ Ga. 5. 22.

Q. *In what manner must we keep God's commandments?*

1. Our keeping the commandments must be fiducial. Our obedience to God's commandments, must spring from faith; therefore it is called 'the obedience of faith.' 'Abel by faith offered up a better sacrifice than Cain.'² Faith is a vital principle; without it all our services are dead works.³ Faith doth meliorate and sweeten our obedience, and make it come off with a better relish. But why must faith be mixed with obedience to the commandment? Because faith eyes Christ in every duty, and so both the person and offering are accepted. The high priest under the law laid his hand upon the head of the beast slain, which did point to the Messiah,⁴ so faith in every duty lays its hand upon the head of Christ. His blood doth expiate the guilt, and the sweet odour of his intercession perfumes our works of obedience; 'he hath made us accepted in the beloved.'⁵

2. Our keeping the commandments must be uniform. We must make conscience of one commandment as well as another; 'then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments.'⁶ Every commandment hath the same stamp of divine authority upon it; and if I obey one precept because God commands, by the same reason I must obey all. Some obey the commands of the first table but are careless in the duties of the second; and some the commands of the second, neglecting the duties of the first. Physicians have a rule, when the body sweats in one part, but is cold in another, it is a sign of a distemper: so when men seem zealous in some duties of religion, but are cold and frozen in others, it is a sign of hypocrisy. We must have respect to all God's commandments. But who can keep all his commandments? There is a fulfilling of God's commands, and a keeping of them; though we cannot fulfil all, yet we may be said to keep them in an evangelical sense. We keep the commandments evangelically, 1. Where we make conscience of every command; though we come short in every duty, yet we dare not neglect any duty. 2. Our desire is to keep every commandment. 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' What we want in strength we make up in will. 3. We grieve that we can do no better; when we fail, we weep; we prefer bills of complaint

against ourselves, and judge ourselves for our failings.⁷ 4. We endeavour to obey every commandment; 'I press toward the mark.'⁸ We strive as in agony; and, if it lay in our power, we would fully comport with every commandment. 5. When we fall short, and are unable to come up to the full latitude of the law, we look to Christ's blood to sprinkle our imperfect obedience, and, with the grains of his merits cast into the scales, to make it pass current; this is in an evangelical sense to keep all the commandments, and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

3. Our keeping God's commandments must be willing; 'if ye be willing and obedient.'⁹ God was for a 'free-offering.'¹⁰ David will run the way of God's commandments;¹¹ that is, freely and cheerfully. The lawyers have a canon, adverbs are better than adjectives:—not the doing much, but the doing well. A musician is not commended for playing long, but for playing well; it is obeying God willingly is accepted; the Lord hates that which is forced, it is rather paying a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly; he brought his sacrifice not his heart. To obey God's commandments unwillingly is like the devils who came out of the men possessed, at Christ's command, but with reluctancy, and against their will.¹² Good duties must not be pressed nor beaten out of us as the waters came out of the rock, when Moses smote it with his rod, but must freely drop from us, as myrrh from the tree, or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet smelling savour to God. That we may keep God's commandments willingly, let these things be well weighed:

I. Our willingness is more esteemed than our service; therefore David counsels Solomon not only to serve God, but with a willing mind.¹⁴ The will makes sin to be worse, and makes duty to be better. To obey willingly shows we do it with love; and this crowns all our services.

II. There is that in the lawgiver, which may make us willing to obey the commandments, namely, God's indulgence to us. (1.) God doth not require all that the law requires, as absolutely necessary to salvation; he expects not perfect obedience, only requires sincerity. Do but act from a principle of love, and aim at honouring God in your

¹ Ro. 16. 26. ² He. 11. 4. ³ He. 6. 1. ⁴ Ex. 29. 10.

⁵ Eph. 1. 6. ⁶ Ps. 119. 6. ⁷ Ps. 119. 5.

⁸ Ro. 7. 24.

⁹ Ps. 3. 14.

¹⁰ Is. 1. 19.

¹¹ De. 16. 10. ¹² Ps. 19. 32. ¹³ Mat. 8. 29. ¹⁴ 1 Chr. 28. 9.

obedience, and it is accepted. (2.) In the times of the gospel a surety is admitted. The law would not favour us so far; but now God doth so indulge us, that what we cannot do of ourselves, we may do by proxy. 'Jesus Christ is the surety of a better testament.'¹ We fall short in every thing, but God looks upon us in our surety; and Christ having fulfilled all righteousness, it is as if we had fulfilled the law in our own persons. (3.) God gives strength to do what he requires. The law called for obedience; but though it required brick, it gave no straw; but in the gospel, God with his commands, gives power, 'make you a new heart.'² Alas! it is above our strength; we may as well make a new world; 'I will give you a new heart.'³ God commands us to cleanse ourselves; 'Wash you, make you clean.'⁴ 'But who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'⁵ Therefore the precept is turned into a promise, 'from all your filthiness will I cleanse you.'⁶ When the child cannot go, the nurse takes it by the hand; 'I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms.'⁷

III. There is that in God's commandments, which may make us willing; they are not burdensome.

1. For a Christian, so far as he is regenerate, consents to God's commands, 'I consent to the law that it is good.'⁸ What is done with consent, is no burden; if a virgin gives her consent the match goes on cheerfully: if a subject consents to his prince's laws, as seeing the equity and rationality of them, then they are not irksome. A regenerate person in his judgment approves, and in his will consents to God's commandments, therefore they are not burdensome.*

2. God's commandments are sweetened with joy and peace. Cicero questions whether that can properly be called a burden which one carries with delight and pleasure. If a man carries a bag of money given him, it is heavy, but

the delight takes off the burden: when God gives inward joy, that makes the commandments delightful, 'I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.'⁹ Joy is like oil to the wheels, which makes a Christian run in the way of God's commandments, so that it is not burdensome.

3. God's commandments are advantageous. 1. The commandments are preventive of evil; a curb-bit to check us from sin. What mischiefs would we not run into, if we had not afflictions to humble us, and the commandments to restrain us? God's commandments are to keep us within bounds: the yoke keeps the beast from straggling; we are to be thankful to God for precepts: had not he set his commandments as an hedge or bar in our way, we might have run to hell, and never stopped. 2. There is nothing in the commandments but what is for our good: 'to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command thee for thy good.'¹⁰ God commands us to read his word; and what hurt is in this? God bespangles the word with promises; as if a father should bid his son read his last will and testament, wherein he makes over a fair estate to him. God bids us pray: and tells us, if we 'ask, it shall be given.'¹¹ Ask power against sin, ask salvation, and it shall be given. If you had a friend should say, 'come when you will to me, I will supply you with money,' would you think it a trouble to visit that friend often? God commands us to fear him; 'but fear thy God.'¹² And there is honey in the mouth of this command, 'his mercy is upon them that fear him.'¹³ God commands us to believe, and why so? 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved.'¹⁴ Salvation is the crown set upon the head of faith: good reason then we obey God's commands willingly,—they are for our good, they are not so much our duty as our privilege.

4. God's commandments are ornamental. God's commandments do not burden us, but adorn us. It is an honour to be employed in a king's service: and so to be employed in God's, 'by whom king's reign.' To walk in God's commandments, proclaims us to be wise; 'behold I have taught you statutes, keep, therefore, and do them, for this is your wisdom.'¹⁵ And to be wise is an honour: I may say of every commandment of God, 'it shall give to thy head an ornament of grace.'¹⁶

¹ He. 7. 22. ² Ez. 18. 31. ³ Ez. 36. 26. ⁴ Is. 1. 16.

⁵ Job 14. 4. ⁶ Ez. 36. 25. ⁷ Ho. 11. 3. ⁸ Ro. 7. 16.

* The moral law is perfect, not only in some respects, and in consideration of the Old Testament age, when it was promulgated; but also absolutely in its own nature; and so perfect, that it not only contains all things that should be done by us, and nothing is omitted, but also that nothing should be added to it, nothing taken from it, (De. 4. 2. 12. 32.) It is perfect as to extensiveness, for in the love of God and our neighbour it adequately embraces all duties, (Mat. 22. 37.); as to the degree in which it renders each duty incumbent, for our love is not to be any thing we please, but most perfect and as great as can be; and as to the purpose it was appointed to serve, for to those who observe it, it can give life and blessedness, (Lev. 18. 5.) Only of that which admits neither addition nor correction, could this be said.—Franc. Turrett. Loc. XI. § 4.

⁹ Is. 56. 7. ¹⁰ De. 10. 13. ¹¹ Mat. 7. 7. ¹² Le. 25. 43.

¹³ Lu. 1. 50. ¹⁴ Ac. 16. 31. ¹⁵ De. 4. 5, 6. ¹⁶ Pro. 4. 9.

5. The commands of God are infinitely better than the commands of sin, these are intolerable. Let a man be under the command of any lust, how doth he tire himself? What hazards doth he run to the endangering his health and soul, that he may satisfy his lust? 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity.'¹ And are not God's commandments more equal, facile, pleasant, than the commands of sin? Chrysostom saith true; 'to act virtue is easier than to act vice.' Temperance is less troublesome than drunkenness; meekness is less troublesome than passion and envy. There is more difficulty in the contrivement and pursuit of a wicked design, than in obeying the commandments of God. Hence a sinner is said to travail with iniquity.² A woman while she is in travail, is in pain; to show what pain and trouble a wicked man hath in bringing forth sin. Many have gone with more pains to hell, than others have to heaven. This may make us obey the commandments willingly.

6. Willingness in obedience makes us resemble the angels. The cherubim, types representing the angels, are described with wings displayed, to show how ready the angels are to serve God. God no sooner speaks the word, but they are ambitious to obey. How are they ravished with joy, while they are praising God! In heaven we shall be as the angels; by our willingness to obey God's commandments, we shall be like them here. This is what we pray for, that God's will may be done by us on earth, as it is in heaven: is it not done willingly there? We must keep God's commandments constantly; 'blessed is he who doeth righteousness all times.'³ Our obedience to the command must be as the fire of the altar which never went out.⁴ It must be as the motion of the pulse, always beating. The wind blows off the fruit, our fruits of obedience must not be blown off by the wind of persecution; 'I have chosen you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.'⁵

USE. It reproves them who live in a wilful breach of God's commandments,—in malice, uncleanness, intemperance,—they walk antipodes to the commandment. To live in a wilful breach of the commandment is,

1. Against reason. Are we able to stand it out against God? 'Do we provoke the Lord, are we stronger than he?'⁶ Can we measure

arms with God? Can impotency stand against omnipotency? A sinner, in acting sin, acts against reason.

2. It is against equity. We have our being from God; and, is it not equal we should obey him who gives us our being? We have all our subsistence from God; and is it not fitting, that as God gives us our allowance we should give him our allegiance? If a general gives his soldier pay, he is to march at his command; so that to live in the breach of his commands, is against equity.

3. It is against nature. Every creature in its kind obeys God's law. Animate creatures obey him. God spake to the fish, and it set Jonah ashore.⁷ Inanimate creatures; 'the wind and the sea obey him.'⁸ The very stones, if God give them a commission, will cry out against the sins of men; 'the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.'⁹ None disobey God but wicked men and the devil; and can we find none to join with else?

4. It is against kindness. How many mercies have we to allure us to obey? Miracles of mercy; therefore the apostle joins these two together,—disobedient and unthankful,¹⁰ and this dyes a sin of a crimson colour. And, as the sin is great, (for it is a contempt of God, a hanging out of the flag of defiance against God, and rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft) so the punishment will be proportionable; such cut themselves off from mercy. God's mercy is for them that keep his commandments, but no mercy to them that live in a wilful breach of them. All God's judgments set themselves in battle array against the disobedient: 'temporal judgments.'¹¹ Eternal; 'Christ comes in flames of fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not God.'¹² Such as break the golden chain of God's commands, God hath iron chains to hold them; chains of darkness, in which the devils are held.¹³ As long as there is eternity, God hath time enough to reckon with all the wilful breakers of his commandments. But how shall we do to keep God's commandments? Beg the Spirit of God. We cannot do it in our own strength; 'the Spirit must work in us both to will and to do.'¹⁴ When the loadstone draws, the iron moves; when God's Spirit draws, then we run in the way of God's commandments.

¹ Je. 9. 5.² Ps. 7. 11.³ Ps. 106. 3.⁴ Le. 6. 9.⁵ Jho. 15. 16.⁶ 1 Co. 10. 22.⁷ Jon. 2. 10.⁸ Mar. 4. 41.⁹ 11a. 2. 11.¹⁰ 2 Ti. 3. 2.¹¹ Le. 26. 15, 16.¹² 2 Th. 1. 8.¹³ Jude 6.¹⁴ Ph. 2. 13.

OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

EXOD. 20. 7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain : for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

THIS commandment has two parts : first, a negative expressed ; that we must not take God's name in vain, namely, cast any reflections and dishonour on God's name. Secondly, an affirmative implied ; that we should have a care to reverence and honour his name. But that I shall speak to more fully when I come to the first petition in the Lord's prayer, 'hallowed be thy name.' I shall now speak of the negative expressed in this commandment, or the prohibition, 'thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' The tongue is an unruly member. All the parts and organs of the body are defiled with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter, 'but the tongue is full of deadly poison.'¹ There is no one member of the body doth more break forth into God's dishonour than the tongue ; therefore this commandment is a bridle for the tongue,—it is to bind the tongue to its good behaviour ; 'thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' And this prohibition is backed with a strong reason, 'the Lord will not hold him guiltless ;' that is, he will not hold him innocent. Men of place and eminency take it heinously to have their names abused, and will inflict heavy penalties on the offenders : 'the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.' God looks upon him as a criminal person, and he will severely punish him. Well then, the thing to be insisted on is, that great care must be had that the holy and reverend name of God be not profaned by us, or taken in vain.

Q. How many ways may we be said to take God's name in vain?

I. We take God's name in vain when we speak slightly and irreverently of his name ; 'that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God.'² David speaks of God with reverence ; 'the Lord, even the most mighty God.'³ 'That men may know, that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the most High over all the earth.'⁴ And the disciples, speaking of Jesus, did hallow his name ; 'Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people.'⁵

When we mention the names of kings, we give them some title of honour, as 'excellent majesty,' so should we speak of God with such sacred reverence as is due to the infinite majesty of heaven. When we speak slightly of God or his works, God interprets it to be a contempt, and it is a taking his name in vain.

II. When we profess God's name, but do not live answerably to it, it is a taking his name in vain.⁶ In words they profess Christ, 'but in works they deny him.' When men's tongues and lives cross one another ; when under a mask of profession, men will lie and cozen, and be unclean, these make use of God's name to abuse him, they take his name in vain, 'pretended sanctity is a double sin,' 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.' When the heathens saw the Jews who professed to be God's people, to be scandalous, this made them speak evil of God, and hate the true religion for their sakes.

III. We take God's name in vain, when we use God's name in idle discourse. God is not to be spoken of but with an holy awe upon our hearts ; and to bring God's name in at every turn, when we never think of God,—to say, 'O God !' or 'O Christ !' or, 'As God shall save my soul !' this is taking God's name in vain. And, how many are guilty in this kind ! Though they have God in their mouths, they have the devil in their hearts. It is a wonder that fire doth not come out from the Lord and consume them, as it did Nadab and Abihu !⁷

IV. We take God's name in vain, when we worship him with our lips, but not our hearts, this is to abuse God.* It is the heart which God calls for ; 'my son give me thy heart.'⁸ The heart is the chief thing in religion, it draws the will and affections after it, as the *primum mobile* draws the other orbs along with it. The heart is the incense that perfumes our holy things,—it is the altar that sanctifies the offering. Now, when we seem to worship God,

⁶ Tit. 1. 16. ⁷ Ro. 2. 24. ⁸ Le. 10. 2. ⁹ Pr. 23. 26.

* An oath, no less than a prayer, should always be accompanied with seriousness and devotion, and speaking the unfeigned sentiments of the heart. It will then be proper and useful : it offers to society, the strongest bond, the most solemn pledge. But we lament the haste, levity, indecency, with which it is frequently administered in our courts of justice.—*Robinson's Syst.* p. 483.

¹ Ja. 3. 8. ² De. 28. 58. ³ Ps. 50. 1. ⁴ Ps. 73. 18.

⁵ Lu. 21. 19.

but withdraw our heart from him, we take his name in vain; 'this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips they do honour me, but they have removed their heart from me.'¹ 1. Hypocrites take God's name in vain,—their religion is a lie,—they seem to honour God, but they do not love him, their hearts go after their lusts: 'they set their hearts on their iniquity. Their eyes are lifted up to heaven, but their hearts are rooted in the earth.'² These are devils in Samuel's mantle, they take God's name in vain. 2. Superstitious persons take God's name in vain. They bring God a few ceremonies which he never appointed; they bow at Christ's name, and cringe to the altar, but hate and persecute God's image; these take his name in vain.

V. We take God's name in vain, when we pray to him but do not believe in him. Faith is the great grace that honours God. Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God: but when we pray to God, but do not mix faith with our prayer, we take his name in vain. 'I may pray (saith a Christian), but I shall be never the better; I question whether God doth hear, or whether he will grant.' This is to dishonour God, and take his name in vain,—this is to make God either an idol, that he hath ears and hears not, or a liar, who promiseth mercy to the penitent but will not make good his word; 'he that believeth not hath made God a liar.'³ When the apostle saith, 'how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?'⁴ the meaning is, how shall they call on God aright, and not believe in him? But how many do call on God who do not believe in him? They ask for pardon, but unbelief whispers their sins are greater than can be forgiven. Thus to pray and not believe is to take God's name in vain, and is an high dishonouring of God, as if he were not such a God as the word represents him, 'plenteous in mercy to all that call upon him.'⁵

VI. We take God's name in vain when we in any kind profane and abuse his word. Now the word of God is profaned, first, in general, when profane men meddle with it. It is unseemly and unbecoming a wicked man to talk of sacred things,—of God's providence, and the decrees of God and heaven; it is very distasteful to Christ, to hear the devil quote scripture, 'it is written:' to hear a wicked man that walks in sin talk of God and religion, is offensive,

—it is the taking of God's name in vain. When the word of God is in a drunkard's mouth it is like a pearl hung upon a swine. Under the law, the lips of the leper were to be covered:⁶ the lips of a profane, drunken minister ought to be covered,—he is unfit to speak of God's word because he takes God's name in vain. But secondly, more particularly they profane God's word, and take his name in vain,

1. That speak scornfully of God's word, 'where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.'⁷ As if they had said, 'here is much ado the preachers make about the day of judgment, when all must be called to account for their works; but where is the appearing of that day? we see things keep their course, and continue as they were since the creation.' Thus they speak scornfully of scripture, and take God's name in vain. If sentence be not speedily executed, men scorn and deride; but 'judgments are prepared for scorners.'⁸

2. That speak jestingly. Such are they who sport and play with scripture; it is playing with fire. Some cannot be merry unless they make bold with God; they make the scripture an harp to drive away the spirit of sadness. Eusebius relates of one who took a piece of scripture to jest with, God struck him with frenzy. To play with scripture, shows a very profane heart. Some will rather lose their souls than lose their jests: these are guilty of taking God's name in vain. Tremble at it: such as mock at scripture, God will laugh at your calamity!⁹

3. They abuse God's word, and take his name in vain, that bring scripture to countenance any sin. The word, which was written for the suppressing of sin, some bring it for the defending of sin. For instance, first, if we tell a covetous man of his sin, that covetousness is idolatry, he will bring scripture to maintain his sin: hath not God bid me live in a calling? 'six days shalt thou labour.' Hath not God said, that he who provides not for his family is worse than an infidel? Thus he goes to support his covetousness with scripture. It is true, God hath bid thee take pains in a calling, but not hurt thy neighbour; he hath bid thee provide for thy family, but not by oppression; 'ye shall not oppress one another.'¹⁰ He hath bid thee look after a

¹ Is. 29. 13. ² Ho. 4. 8. ³ Ez. 33. 31. ⁴ Ro. 4. 20.
⁵ 1 Jno. 5. 10. ⁶ Ro. 10. 14. ⁷ Ps. 86. 5.

⁸ Le. 13. 45. ⁹ 2 Pe. 3. 4 ¹⁰ Pro. 19. 29.
¹¹ Pro. 1. 26. ¹² Le. 25. 14.

liveliness, but not with the neglect of thy soul. He hath bid thee lay up thy treasure in heaven.¹ He hath commanded thee to lay out, as well as lay up,—to sow seeds of charity on the backs and bellies of the poor, which perhaps thou neglectest. So that to bring scripture to uphold thee in thy sin, is an high profaning of scripture, and a taking of God's name in vain. Second instance: if we tell a man of his inordinate passions,—that he may be drunk as well with rash anger, as wine,—he will bring scripture to justify it: “doth not the word say, ‘Be angry and sin not.’”² It is true that anger is good which is mixed with zeal; then anger is without sin, when it is against sin; but thou dost sin in thine anger,—thou speakest unadvisedly with thy lips,—thy tongue is set on fire of hell, and to bring scripture to defend thy sin is to profane scripture, and to take God's name in vain.

4. They abuse the word, and take God's name in vain, who adulterate the word, and wrest it in a wrong sense. Such are heretics, who put their own gloss upon scripture, and make it speak that which the Holy Ghost never meant. For instance, 1st, when we expound those texts literally which are meant figuratively. Thus the Pharisees were guilty, when God said in the law, ‘thou shalt bind the commandments for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.’ The Pharisees took it in a literal sense; they got two scrolls of parchment, whereon they wrote the two tables, putting one on their left arms, and binding the other to their eyebrows, thus they wrested the scripture and took God's name in vain. That scripture was to be understood spiritually and by a figure: God meant, by binding his laws upon their hands that they should meditate on his law, and put it in practice; and so the papists expound that scripture, ‘this is my body,’ literally, of the very body of Christ; then, when Christ gave the bread, he should have had two bodies, one in the bread, and the other out of the bread, whereas Christ meant it figuratively, it is a sign of my body. Thus they, by wresting the scripture to a wrong sense, profane it, and take God's name in vain. 2dly, When we expound those scriptures figuratively and allegorically which the Holy Ghost means literally. For example, Christ said to Peter, ‘launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.’ This text is spoken in a plain,

literal sense of launching out the ship; but the papists take it in a mystical and allegorical. This text proves, say they, that the pope, who is Peter's successor, shall launch forth, and catch the ecclesiastical and political power over the west parts of the world. This, say they, was meant when Christ bade Peter launch out into the deep. But I think the papists have launched out too far beyond the meaning of the text. When men strain their wits to wrest the word to such a sense as pleaseth them, they do profane God's word, and highly take his name in vain.

VII. We take God's name in vain, when we swear by his name. Many seldom name God's name but in oaths; for this sin the land mourns. ‘Swear not at all,’³ that is, rashly and sinfully, so as to take God's name in vain; not but that in some cases it is lawful to take an oath before a magistrate,⁴ ‘thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve him, and swear by his name:’⁵ ‘an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all strife;’⁶ but when Christ saith, ‘swear not at all,’ he forbids such a swearing as takes God's name in vain. There is a threefold swearing forbidden.

1. Vain-swearing; when men in their ordinary discourse let fly oaths. Some will go to excuse their swearing. It is a coarse wool that will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse. Excuse 1. I swear little trifling oaths; as ‘faith,’ or ‘by the mass.’ *Ans.* The devil hath two false glasses which he sets before men's eyes: the one is a little glass in which the sin appears so small that it can hardly be seen, this glass the devil sets before men's eyes when they are going to commit sin,—the other is a great magnifying glass, wherein sin appears so big that it cannot be forgiven, the

¹ Lu. 5. 4. ² Mat. 5. 34. ³ De. 6. 13. ⁴ He. 6. 16.

* We have examples of oaths in the Old Testament, with directions how to swear, namely, in truth, judgment, and righteousness; and lest any should think that what was formerly tolerated is now prohibited, we have examples also in the New. When Paul says, ‘I call God for record on my soul,’ ‘God is my witness,’ ‘I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,’ his language in all these instances, and particularly in the two first, amounts to an oath. Our Saviour recognises the lawfulness of an oath, when one having been administered to him, according to the form of his country, he broke the silence he hitherto observed, and answered the question of the high priest. It is impossible to understand the words of the apostle in any other way than as a sanction of the practice, when he says, ‘men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.’ It is a misapprehension of our Saviour's words ‘swear not at all,’ to consider them as an absolute prohibition of an oath; because it is plain from his own illustration, that he meant only to forbid the practice of swearing in common conversation, and particularly of swearing by creatures.—*Dick's Lect.* b. 4. p. 457.

¹ Mat. 6. 20. ² Ep. 4. 26. ³ De. 6. 8.

devil sets this before men's eyes when they have sinned. Thou that sayest, sin is small, when God shall open the eye of thy conscience, then thou wilt see it great, and be ready to despair. But to answer this plea, thou sayest, they are but small oaths, but Christ forbids vain oaths, 'swear not at all.' If God will reckon with us for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account-book? Excuse 2. But I swear to the truth. See how this harlot sin would paint itself with an excuse. *Ans.* 1. Though it be true, yet, if it be a rash oath, it is sinful. Besides, 2, he that swears commonly, it cannot be avoided but sometimes he must swear more than is true; as, where much water runs, some gravel or mud will pass along with the water, so where there is much swearing, some lies will run along with the oaths. Excuse 3. But I shall not be believed unless I seal up my words with an oath. *Ans.* 1. A man that is honest will be believed without an oath; his bare word carries authority with it, and is as good as letters testimonial. 2. He who swears, the more he swears, the less others will believe him. Another thinks an oath weighs very light with thee, thou carest not what thou swearest, and the more thou swearest the less he believes thee. He will trust thy bond, but not thy oath. Excuse 4. But it is a custom of swearing I have gotten, and I hope God will forgive me. *Ans.* Though among men custom carries it, and is pleadable in law, yet it is not so in the case of sin,—custom here is no plea. Thou hast got an habit of swearing, and canst not leave it; is this an excuse? Is a thing well done because it is commonly done? This is so far from being an excuse, that it is an aggravation of sin. As if one that had been accused for killing a man, should plead with the judge to spare him, because it was his custom to murder; this is an aggravation of the offence, so it is here; therefore all excuses for the sin of vain-swearing are taken away. Dare not to live in this sin, it is a taking of God's name in vain.

2. Vile swearing, horrid prodigious oaths not to be named. Swearers, like mad dogs, fly in the face of heaven; and when they are angered spue out their blasphemous venom on God's sacred majesty. Some in gaming, when things go cross, and the dice run against them, their tongues run as fast against God in oaths and curses; and tell them of their sin,—go to bring home these asses from going astray,—and it is but pouring oil on the flame, they will swear

the more. St Austin saith, 'they do no less sin who blaspheme Christ now in heaven, than the Jews did who crucified him on earth. Swearers profane Christ's blood, and tear his name. An harlot told her husband, that of her three sons, there was but one of them his; the father dying, desired the executors to find out which was the true natural son, and all his estate he bequeathed to him. The father being dead; the executors set up his corpse against a tree, and delivered to every one of these three sons a bow and arrows, telling them, that he who could shoot nearest the father's heart should have all the estate. The two bastard sons shot as near as they could to his heart, but the third did feel nature so work in him that he refused to shoot at his father's heart; whereupon the executors judged him to be the true son, and gave all the estate to him. Such as are the true children of God, fear to shoot at him; but such as are bastards, and not sons, care not though they shoot at him in heaven with their oaths and curses. And that which makes swearing yet more heinous, is, when men have resolved upon any wicked action, they bind themselves with an oath to do it, such were they,¹ who bound themselves, with an oath and curse, to kill Paul. To commit sin is bad enough; but to swear we will commit sin, is an high profaning God's name, and is as it were to call God to approve our sin.

3. Forswearing: this is an heaven-daring sin; 'ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God.'² Perjury is a calling God to witness to a lie. It is said of Philip of Macedon, he would swear and unswear as might stand best with his interest. 'Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth,'³ in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.' In righteousness, therefore it must not be an unlawful oath. In judgment, therefore it must not be a rash oath. In truth, therefore it must not be a false oath. Among the Scythians, if a man did forswear himself, he was to have his head stricken off, because if perjury were allowed, there would be no living in a commonwealth, it would take away all faith and truth from among men. The perjurer is in as bad a case as the witch, for by a false oath he binds his soul fast to the devil. In forswearing or taking a false oath in a court, there are many sins linked together, for besides the taking of God's name in vain, the perjurer is a thief,—by his false oath, he robs the innocent of his

¹ Acts 23. 12.² Le. 19. 1.³ Je. 4. 2.

right,—he is a perverter of justice,—he doth not only sin himself, but occasions the jury to give a false verdict, and the judge to pass an unrighteous sentence; and sure God's judgments will find him out. When God's flying-roll or curse goes over the face of the earth, into whose house doth it enter? 'Into the house of him who swears falsely: and it shall consume the timber and stones of his house.'¹ Beza relates of a perjurer, that he had no sooner taken a false oath, but he was immediately struck with an apoplexy, and never spake more, but died. O tremble at such horrid impiety!

VIII. We highly take God's name in vain, when we prefix God's name to any wicked action. I say the mentioning of God to a wicked design, is taking his name in vain. 'I pray, (saith Absalom) let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord in Hebron.'² This pretence of paying his vow, made to God, was only to colour over his treason; 'when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, ye shall say, Absalom reigneth.'³ When any wicked action is baptized with the name of religion, this is taking God's name in vain. Herein the pope is highly guilty when he sends out his bulls of excommunication or curses against the Christian; he begins with, 'in the name of God.' What a provoking sin is this! It is to do the devil's work, and put God's name to it.

IX. We take God's name in vain, when we use our tongues any way to the dishonour of God's name; as when we use railing, or curse in our passions; especially, when we wish a curse upon ourselves if a thing be not so when we know it to be false. I have read of one who wished his body might rot if that which he said was not true: and soon after his body rotted, and he became a loathsome spectacle.

X. We take God's name in vain by rash and unlawful vows. There is a good vow when a man binds himself by a vow to do that which the word binds him to; as, if he be sick, he vows if God restore him, he will live a more strict holy life; 'I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered when I was in trouble.'⁴ But such a vow should not be made as is displeasing to God,—as to vow voluntary poverty, as your friars,—or to vow to live in nunneries. Jephthah's vow was rash and unlawful; he vowed to the Lord to sacrifice that to him which he met with next, and it was his daughter.⁵ He did ill to

make the vow, and worse to keep it; he became guilty of the breach of the third and sixth commandments.

XI. When we speak evil of God, now we take his name in vain; 'they spake against God.'⁶ How do we speak against God? When we murmur at his providences, as if he had dealt hardly with us. Murmuring is the accusing of God's justice, 'shall not the judge of all the earth do right?' Murmuring springs from a bitter root,—it comes from pride and discontent,—it is a reproaching of God and a high taking his name in vain. It is such a sin as God cannot bear; 'how long shall I bear with this evil congregation that murmur against me?''⁷

XII. And lastly, we take God's name in vain, when we falsify our promise: to say, if God spare us life we will do this, and never intended it. Our promise should be sacred and inviolable; but, if we make no reckoning to make a promise, and mention God's name in it, yet never intend to keep it, it is a double sin; it is telling a lie, and taking God's name in vain. I come now to the affirmative implied.

USE. Take heed of taking God's name in vain any of these ways. Remember this commination and threatening in the text, 'the Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Here is a *meiosis*,—less is said, and more intended. 'He will not hold him guiltless;' that is, he will be severely avenged on such an one. 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Here the Lord speaks after the manner of a judge who holds the court of assize; the judge here, is God himself; the accusers, Satan, and a man's own conscience: the matter of fact is, 'taking God's name in vain;' the malefactor accused is found guilty, and condemned; 'the Lord will not hold him guiltless.' Methinks these words, 'the Lord will not hold him guiltless,' may set a lock upon our lips, and make us afraid of speaking any thing that may redound dishonour upon God, or may be taking his name in vain. 'The Lord will not hold him guiltless.' It may be men may hold such guiltless, when they curse, swear, speak irreverently of God; *men* may hold them guiltless, let them alone, not punish them. If one takes away another's good name, he shall be sure to be punished: but if he takes away God's good name, where is he that doth punish him? He that robs another of his goods shall be put to death; but he that robs God of his glory, by oaths and curses, he is

¹ Zec. 5. 4. ² 2 Sa. 15. 7. ³ 2 Sam. 15. 10. ⁴ Ps. 66. 13.
⁵ Judg. 11. 31, 31.

⁶ Ps. 78. 19.

⁷ Ge. 18. 25.

⁸ Num. 11.

spared; but God himself will take the matter into his own hand, and he will punish him who takes his name in vain.

1. Sometimes God punishes swearing and blasphemy in this life. 1st. Swearing. In the country of Samurtia there arose a great tempest of thunder and lightning: a soldier burst forth into swearing, but the tempest tearing up a great tree by the root, it fell upon him, and crushed him to pieces. The German history relates of a youth, who was given to swearing, and did use to invent new oaths, the Lord sent a cancer into his mouth, which did eat out his tongue, whereupon he died. 2dly, Blasphemy. He who did blaspheme God, the Lord caused him to be stoned to death, 'the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed. And Moses spake to the children of Israel, that they should bring forth him that had cursed out of the camp, and stone him with stones.' Olympias, an Arian

bishop, reproached and blasphemed the sacred Trinity, whereupon he was suddenly struck with three flashes of lightning which burned him to death. Felix, an officer of Julian, seeing the holy vessels which were used in the sacrament, said, in scorn of Christ, 'see what precious vessels the Son of Mary is served withal!' Soon after he was taken with a vomiting of blood out of his blasphemous mouth, whereof he died.

2. Or, if God should not execute judgment on the profaners of his name in this life, yet their doom is to come; God will not remit their guilt, but deliver them to Satan the gaoler, to torment them for ever. If God justify a man, who shall condemn him? But if God condemn him, who shall justify him? If God lay a man in prison, where shall he get bail or main-prize? God will take his full blow at the sinner in hell, 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'²

OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 8. *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.*

THIS commandment was engraven in stone by God's own finger, and it will be our comfort to have it engraven in our hearts. The sabbath-day is set apart for God's solemn worship, it is God's enclosure, and it must not be alienated to common uses. The Lord hath set a preface before this commandment,—he hath put a *memento* to it,—'remember to keep the sabbath-day holy.' This word, 'remember,' shows that we are apt to forget sabbath holiness; therefore we need a memorandum to put us in mind of sanctifying this day.

I shall explain the word.

I. Here is a solemn command, 'remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.'

II. Many cogent arguments to induce us to observe the command.

I. In the command, (1.) The matter of it, namely, the sanctifying of the sabbath, which sabbath-sanctification consists in two things:

I. in resting from our own works: 2. in a

conscientious discharge of our religious duty. (2.) The persons to whom the command of sanctifying the sabbath is given: 1st, either superiors, and they are, 1. more private, as parents and masters; or, 2. more public, as magistrates: or, 2dly, inferiors; 1. natives, as children and servants, 'thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant;' 2. foreigners, 'the stranger that is within thy gates.'

II. The cogent arguments to obey this command of keeping holy the sabbath, 1. From the rationality of it, 'six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work.' As if God had said: 'I am not an hard master, I do not grudge thee time to look after thy calling, and to get an estate. I have given thee six days,—six to do all thy work in,—and have taken but one day for myself: I might have reserved six days for myself, and allowed thee but one, but I have given thee six days for the works of thy

¹ Le. 24. 11, 23.

² He. 10. 31.

calling, and have taken but one day for my own service: therefore it is equal and rational, that thou shouldst set this day in a special manner apart for my worship.*

2. The second argument for sanctifying the sabbath, is taken from the justice of it,* 'the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.' As if God had said: 'the sabbath-day is my due, I challenge a special right in it, and none hath any thing to do to lay claim to it. He who robs me of THIS DAY, and puts it to common uses, is a sacrilegious person,—he steals from the crown of heaven, and I will in no wise hold him guiltless.'

3. The third argument for sanctifying the sabbath is taken from God's own pattern, he 'rested the seventh day.' As if the Lord should say: 'will you not follow my pattern? Having finished all my works of creation, I rested the seventh day: so you have done all your secular work on the six days, you should now cease from the labour of your calling, and dedicate the seventh day to the Lord, as a day of holy rest.'

4. The fourth argument for sabbath-sanctification, is taken from the benefit which redounds, from a religious observation of the sabbath: 'the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.' It is not only a day of God's appointment, God did not only appoint the seventh day, but he blessed the seventh day. The sabbath-day is not only a day of honour to God, but a day of blessing to us; it is not only a day wherein we give God worship, but a day wherein he gives us grace; on this day a blessing drops down from heaven. This is a great argument for the keeping of the sabbath-day holy. God is not benefited by it, we cannot add one cubit to his essential glory,—but we ourselves are advantaged; the sabbath-day, religiously observed, entails a blessing upon our

souls, our estate, our posterity, as the not keeping this day holy, brings a curse. God curseth a man's blessings.² The bread which he eats is poisoned with a curse; so the conscientious observation of the sabbath, brings all manner of blessings with it. These are the arguments to induce sabbath-sanctification. And so I have divided the commandment into its several parts and explained the sense of it.

The thing I would have you observe is, that this commandment about keeping the sabbath was not abrogated with the ceremonial law, but it is purely moral, and the observation of the sabbath is to be continued to the end of the world. Where can we show that God hath given us a discharge from keeping one day in seven? So that I say, this fourth commandment is moral, and obligeth Christians to the perpetual commemoration and sanctification of the sabbath.

Q. 1st. *Why hath God appointed a sabbath?*

1. In respect of himself. It is requisite that God should reserve one day in seven for his own immediate service, that hereby he might be acknowledged to be the Great Plenipotentiary or Sovereign Lord, who hath power over us both to command worship, and appoint the time when he will be worshipped.

2. In respect of us. The sabbath-day makes for our interest,—it promotes holiness in us; the business on the week-day makes us too forgetful of God and our souls,—the sabbath brings God into our remembrance. When the dust of the world falling hath clogged the wheels of our affections that they would scarce move towards God, the sabbath comes, and oils the wheels of our affections, and now they move swiftly in religion, therefore God hath appointed a sabbath to ripen our holiness. On this day the thoughts contemplate heaven,—the tongue speaks of God, and is as the pen of a ready writer,—now the eyes drop tears,—now the soul burns in love. When the heart was all the week frozen, now on the sabbath it is melted with the word. The sabbath is a friend to religion,—it files off the rust of our graces, it is a spiritual jubilee, wherein the soul is set to converse with its Maker.

I should in the next place, show you the manner how we should keep the sabbath-day holy. But before I come to that, I shall propound a great question, viz.

Q. 2d. *How comes it to pass that we do*

* Since moral duty, while founded in the nature of Deity, bears a relation to the condition of the creature, the manner in which it attaches and ought to be displayed, will be regulated by the respective conditions of the different classes of rational beings. If angels, for example, were formed solely to be the ministers of God, and for this end made spirits, unembodied in flesh and blood, and independent of the supports of these, then all their time must be his. The claims of Deity, viewed relatively to their condition, necessarily require that it should all be sacred. But the human race have been formed in a different condition. Even Adam in the state of innocence, had a natural body, dependent on the supports of food. Since the fall, ailment, and the means of health and cure, are become requisite. The human race are under a constitution of things which give rise to various occupations, and render it necessary that much of their time should be devoted to the cares of life. According to both their primitive and their present condition, only a certain part of their time, can be solely and directly devoted to God.—*Christian Mag.* vol. 3. p. 231.

not keep the seventh-day sabbath, as it was in the primitive institution, but have changed it to another day?

Ans. The old seventh-day sabbath, which was the Jewish sabbath, is abrogated, and in the room of it the first day of the week, which is the Christian sabbath, succeeds. The morality or substance of the fourth commandment doth not lie in keeping the seventh day precisely, but in keeping one day in seven, which God hath appointed.*

Q. 3d. But how comes the first day in the week to be substituted in the room of the seventh day?

Not by ecclesiastic authority. The church, saith Mr Perkins, hath no power to ordain a sabbath. But, 1. The change of the sabbath from the last day of the week to the first, was by Christ's own appointment. Christ is 'Lord of the sabbath,'¹ and who shall appoint a day but he who is Lord of it? He made this day; 'this is the day which the Lord hath made.'² Arnobius, and the current of expositors, understand it of our Christian sabbath, and it is called the 'Lord's day' in Re. 1. 10. As it is called the 'Lord's supper,' because of the Lord's instituting the bread and wine, and setting it apart from a common to a more special and sacred use: so it is called the Lord's day, because of the Lord instituting it, and setting it apart from common days to his special worship and service. Christ arose on the first day of the week out of the grave, and appeared twice on this day to his disciples,³ which was to intimate to the disciples, say Austin and Athanasius, that he transferred the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day. 2. The keeping of the first day, which is the Lord's day, was the practice of the apostles; 'on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.'⁴ Here was both preaching and breaking of bread on this day. Austin, and Innocentius, and Isidore, make the keeping of our gospel-sabbath to be an apostolical sanction, and affirm, that by virtue of the apostles' practice, this Lord's day is to be sequestered and set apart for divine worship.

¹ Mar. 2. 28. ² Ps. 118. 24. ³ Jno. 20. 19, 26.

⁴ 1 Co. 16. 2; Acts 20. 7.

* We do not find from the inspired history, that the last day of the week was observed as the sabbath in the primitive church. If it was, through indulgence for a season, the fact is passed without notice, lest it should have been viewed as a precedent, or occasioned confusion. And in settling the new state of things, we have no command concerning the observance of the last of the seven as the day of rest.—*Christ. Mag.* b. 3. p. 276.

What the apostles did, they did it by divine authority, for they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. 3. Besides, the primitive church had the Lord's day—which we now celebrate—in high estimation; it was a great badge of their religion to observe this day. Ignatius the most ancient father, who lived in the time of St John the apostle, hath these words, 'let every one that loveth Christ, keep holy the first day of the week, the Lord's day.' This day hath been observed by the church of Christ, above sixteen hundred years, as the learned Bucer notes. Thus you see how the seventh-day sabbath comes to be changed to the first-day sabbath. Now there is a grand reason for changing of the Jewish sabbath to the Lord's day, because this puts us in mind of the 'mystery of our redemption by Christ.' The reason why God did institute the old sabbath was, because God would have it kept as a memorial of the creation; but the Lord hath now brought the first day of the week in the room of it in memory of a more glorious work than creation, and that is redemption. Great was the work of creation, but greater was the work of redemption. As it was said, 'the glory of the second temple was greater than the glory of the first temple';⁵ so the glory of the redemption was greater than the glory of the creation. Great wisdom was seen in curiously making us,—but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out of nothing,—but greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. It cost more to redeem us than to create us. In the creation there was but 'speaking a word';⁶ in the redeeming us, there was shedding of blood.⁷ The creation was the work of God's fingers;⁸ redemption was the work of his arm.⁹ In the creation God gave us ourselves; in the redemption, he gave us himself. By creation, we have a life in Adam; by redemption, we have a life in Christ.¹⁰ By creation, we had a right to an earthly paradise; by redemption, we have a title to an heavenly kingdom. So that well Christ might change the seventh day of the week into the first, because this day puts us in mind of our redemption, which is a more glorious work than the creation.

Use. The use I shall make, is, that we should have this Christian sabbath we now celebrate in high veneration. The Jews called the sabbath 'the desire of days, and the queen

⁵ IIa. 2. 9. ⁶ Ps. 148. 5. ⁷ 1 Pet. 1. 19.
⁸ Ps. 8. 3. ⁹ Lu 1. 4. ¹⁰ Co. 3. 3.

of days; it is a day of sweet rest. This day we must call a 'delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable.' Metal that hath the king's stamp upon it is honourable, and of great value. God hath set his royal stamp upon the sabbath; it is the sabbath of the Lord, this makes it honourable. This day we should look upon as the best day in the week. What the phoenix is among the birds,—what the sun is among the planets,—that the Lord's day is among other days, 'this is the day which the Lord hath made.'¹ God hath made all the days, but he hath blessed this. As Jacob got the blessing from his brother, so the sabbath got the blessing from all the other days in the week. The sabbath is a day in which we converse in a special manner with God. The Jews called the sabbath 'a day of light;' on this day the Sun of Righteousness shines upon the soul. The sabbath is the market-day of the soul,—the cream of time; this is the day of Christ's rising out of the grave, and the Holy Ghost's descending upon the earth; this day is perfumed with the sweet odour of prayer, which goes up to heaven as incense; this day the manna falls, that angels' food; this is the soul's festival-day; on this day the graces act their part; the other days of the week are most employed about earth, this day about heaven,—then you gather

straw, now pearl. Now Christ takes the soul up into the mount, and gives it transfiguring sights of glory; now Christ leads his spouse into the wine-cellar, and displays the banner of his love; now he gives her his spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate.⁶ The Lord doth usually reveal himself more to the soul on this day. The apostle John 'was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;'⁷ he was carried up in divine raptures towards heaven. This day a Christian is in the altitudes,—he walks with God, and takes as it were a turn with him in heaven.⁸ On this day holy affections are quickened,—the stock of grace is improved,—corruptions are weakened; on this day Satan falls like lightning before the majesty of the word. Christ wrought most of his miracles upon the sabbath: so he doth now; the dead soul is raised, the heart of stone is made flesh. How should this day be highly esteemed, and had in reverence? This day is more precious than rubies; God hath anointed this day with the oil of gladness above its fellows. On the sabbath we are doing angels' work, our tongues are tuned to God's praises. This sabbath on earth is a shadow and type of that glorious rest and eternal sabbath we hope for in heaven, when God shall be the temple, and the Lamb shall be the light of it.⁹

EXOD. 20. 9, 10. *Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work, &c.*

'Six days shalt thou labour.' God would not have any live out of a calling; religion seals no warrant for idleness. It is as well a duty to labour six days as to keep holy rest on the seventh day; 'six days shalt thou labour.' 'We hear there are some among you, who walk disorderly, working not at all. Now them that are such, we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.'² A Christian must not only mind heaven, but his calling. While the pilot hath his eye to the star, he hath his hand to the helm. Without labour the pillars of a commonwealth will dissolve, and the earth will be like the sluggard's field, overrun with briers.³ Adam in innocency, though he was the monarch of the world, yet God would not have him idle, but he must dress and till the ground.⁴

Piety doth not exclude industry; 'six days shalt thou labour.' Standing water putrefies. The inanimate creatures are in motion, the sun goes its circuit, the fountain runs, the fire sparkles: and animate creatures, Solomon sends us to the ant and pismire to learn labour.¹⁰ The bee is the emblem of industry; some of the bees trim the honey, others work the wax, others frame the comb, others lie sentinel at the door of the hive to keep out the drone. And shall not man much more inure himself to labour? That law in paradise was never yet repealed, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.'¹¹ Such professors are to be disliked who talk of living by faith, but live out of a calling; they are like the lilies which toil not neither do they spin.¹² It is a speech of holy and learned Mr Perkins, 'let a man be endowed with excellent

¹ Is. 58. 13. ² Ps. 118. 21. ³ 2 Thess. 3. 11, 12.
⁴ Pro. 21. 31. ⁵ Ge. 2. 15.

⁶ Ca. 2. 8. ⁷ He. 1. 10. ⁸ 1 Jno. 1. 3. ⁹ Re. 21. 22, 23.
¹⁰ Pro. 6. 6; 30. 25. ¹¹ Ge. 3. 19. ¹² Mat. 6. 28.

gifts, and hear the word with reverence, and receive the sacrament, yet if he practise not the duties of his calling, all is but hypocrisy.' What is an idle person good for? What benefit is there of a ship that lies always on the shore, or of armour that hangs up and rusts? To live out of a calling, exposeth a person to temptation. Melancthon calls idleness the devil's bath, because he bathes himself with delight in an idle soul. We do not use to sow seed in ground when it lies fallow; but Satan sows most of his seed of temptation in such persons as lie fallow, and are out of a calling. Idleness is the nurse of vice. Seneca, an old heathen, could say, 'no day passeth me without some labour.' An idle person stands for a cipher in the world, and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life. We read in scripture of eating the 'bread of idleness,'¹ and drinking the 'wine of violence.'² It is as well a sin 'to eat the bread of idleness,' as to 'drink the wine of violence.' An idle person can give no account of his time. Time is a talent to trade with, both in our particular and general calling: the slothful person 'hides his talent in the earth,' he doth no good, his time is not lived but lost; an idle person lives unprofitably, he cumpers the ground; God calls the slothful servant wicked; 'thou wicked and slothful servant.'³ Draco, whose laws were written in blood, deprived them of their life who would not work for their living. In Hetruria, they caused such persons to be banished. Idle persons live in the breach of this commandment, 'six days shalt thou labour.' Let them take heed they be not banished heaven. A man may as well go to hell for not working in his calling, as for not believing. So I pass to the next,

"But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work."

Having spoken already of the reasons of sanctifying the sabbath, I come now to that question,

Q. In what manner are we to sanctify the sabbath?

I. Negatively. We must do no work in it; that is expressed in the commandment, 'in it thou shalt do no manner of work.' God hath enclosed this day for himself, therefore we are not to lay it common by doing any civil work. As Abraham, when he went to sacrifice, left his servants and the ass at the bottom of the

hill;⁴ so, when we are to worship God this day, we must leave all worldly business behind, leave the ass at the bottom of the hill. And as Joseph, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the Egyptians; so, when we would converse with God this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments. The Lord's day is a day of holy rest; all secular work must be forborne and suspended, it is a profaning the day. "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, as also wine-grapes and figs, and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath-day; and I testified against them. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, 'what evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath-day?'"⁵ It is sacrilege to rob that time for civil work which God hath dedicated and set apart for his worship. He that converts any time of the sabbath for worldly business, is a worse thief than he who robs on the highway; for such a thief does but rob a man, but this thief robs God, he robs him of his day. The Lord forbade manna to be gathered on the sabbath.⁶ One would think that might have been dispensed with, for manna was the 'staff of their life;' and the time when manna fell was early, between five and six in the morning; so that they might have gathered it betimes, and all the rest of the sabbath they might have employed in God's worship; and besides, they needed not to have taken any great journey for manna, for it was but stepping out of their doors, and fell about their tents; yet they might not gather manna on the sabbath; and but for purposing to gather it, God was very angry; 'there went out some of the people on the seventh day to gather, and they found none: and the Lord said, 'How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?'"⁷ Surely the anointing Christ when he was dead, was a commendable work; but Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, though they had prepared sweet ointments to anoint the dead body of Christ, yet they came not to the sepulchre to embalm him, till the sabbath was past; 'they rested on the sabbath-day according to the commandment.'⁸ The hand cannot be busied on the Lord's day, but the heart will be defiled. The very heathens, by the light of nature, would not do any secular work, in that time which they had set apart for the worship

¹ Pro. 31. 27.² Pro. 4. 17.³ Mat. 25. 26.⁴ Ge. 22. 5⁵ Ne. 13. 15. 17.⁶ Ex. 16.⁷ Ex. 16. 27, 28.⁸ Lu. 23. 56.

of their false gods. Clemens Alexandrinus reports of one of the emperors of Rome, that on the day of set worship for his gods, he did forbear warlike affairs, and did spend that time in his devotion. To do servile work on the sabbath, shows an irreligious heart, and highly affronts God; to work servile work on this day, is to follow the devil's plough, it is to debase the soul. God hath made this day on purpose to raise the heart up to heaven, to converse with God, to do angel's work; and to be employed in earthly work, is to degrade the soul of its honour. God will not have his day intrenched upon, or defiled in the least thing; the man that gathered sticks on the sabbath, God would have him stoned.¹ One would think it a small thing to pick up a few sticks to make a fire, but God would not have this day violated in the smallest matters. Nay, that work which had a reference to a religious use, might not be done on the sabbath, as the hewing of stones for the building of the sanctuary: Bezaleel, who was to cut the stones, and carve the timber out for the sanctuary, yet he must forbear it on the sabbath.² A temple is the place of God's worship, but it were a sin to build a temple on the Lord's day. This is keeping the sabbath-day holy negatively, in doing no servile work. Yet caution: not but that works of necessity and charity may be done on this day,—God, in these cases, will have mercy and not sacrifice. (1.) It is lawful to take the necessary recruits of nature; food is to the body, as oil to the lamp. (2.) It is lawful to do works of mercy, as helping our neighbour when either life or estate are in danger. Herein the Jews were too nice and precise, they would not suffer works of charity to be done on the sabbath; if a man were sick, they thought on this day they might not use means for his recovery. Christ charged them with this, that they were angry that he had wrought a cure on the sabbath.³ If an house were on fire, the Jews thought they might not bring water to quench it; if a vessel did run, they thought that on this day they might not stop it. These were 'righteous over-much;' here was seeming zeal, but it wanted discretion to guide it. But unless in these two cases of necessity and charity, all secular work is to be suspended and laid aside on the Lord's day; 'in it thou shalt do no manner of work.' Which justly doth arraign and condemn many among us who do too much foul their fingers

with work on that day,—some dressing great feasts,—others in opening their shop-doors, and selling meat on the sabbath, which I have seen. The mariner will not set to sea but on the sabbath, and so runs full-sail into the breach of this commandment. Others work on this day though privately; they put up their shop-windows, but follow their trade within doors; but though they think to hide their sin under a canopy, God sees it, 'whither shall I flee from thy presence? the darkness hideth not from thee.'⁴ These persons do profane this day, and God will have an action of trespass against them.

2. Positively. We keep the sabbath-day holy, by 'consecrating and dedicating' this day to the 'service of the high God.' It is good to rest on the sabbath-day from the works of our calling; but if we rest from labour and do no more, the ox and the ass keep the sabbath as well as we, for they rest from labour. We must dedicate the day to God; we must not only 'keep a sabbath,' but 'sanctify' a sabbath. This sabbath-sanctification consists in two things: 1st, the solemn preparation for it; 2d, the sacred observation of it.

1. The solemn preparation for it. If a prince were to come to your house, what preparation would you make for his entertainment,—sweep the house, wash the floor, adorn the room with the richest tapestry and hangings, that there might be something suitable to the state and dignity of so great a person? On the blessed sabbath, God intends to have sweet communion with you; he seems to say to you, as Christ to Zaccheus; 'make haste and come down, for this day I must abide at thy house.'⁵ Now, what preparation should you make for entertaining this King of glory? Now this preparation for the sabbath is first, when the evening of the Saturday approacheth, sound a retreat; call your minds off the world and summon your thoughts together, to think of the great work of the day approaching. Secondly, purge out all unclean affections which may indispose you for the work of the sabbath. Evening preparation will be like the tuning of the instrument, it will fit the heart the better for the duties of the ensuing sabbath.

2. The sacred observation of it;* touching which these things are to be practised: (1.)

* Ps. 139. 7, 12.

⁵ Lu. 19. 5.

* Among christians, there has been a difference of sentiment respecting the degree of strictness with which the sabbath is to be observed. Some are for retaining all the rigour of the Jewish law, while others insist that now its severity is relax-

¹ Nu. 15. ² Ex. 31. 15. ³ Jo. 7. 23.

rejoice at the approach of this day, as being a day wherein we have a prize for our souls, and enjoy much of God's presence; 'Abraham saw my day, and rejoiced.'¹ So, when we see the light of a sabbath shine, we should rejoice; 'thou shalt call the sabbath a delight;² this is the queen of days, which God hath crowned with a blessing. As there was one day in the week on which God did rain manna twice as much as upon any other day, so God rains down the manna of heavenly blessings twice as much on the sabbath as on any other. This is the day wherein Christ carries the soul into the house of wine, and displays the banner of love over it; now the dew of the Spirit falls on the soul, whereby it is revived and comforted. How many may write the Lord's day, the day of their new birth! This day of rest is a pledge and earnest of that eternal rest in heaven; and shall not we rejoice at the approach of it? That day on which the Sun of Righteousness shines, should be a day of gladness. (2.) Get up betimes on the sabbath morning. Christ rose early on this day before the sun was up.³ Did Christ rise early to save us, and shall not we rise early to worship and glorify him? 'early will I seek thee.'⁴ Can we be up betimes on other days? The husbandman is early at his plough, the traveller riseth early to go his journey, and shall not we when we are on this day travelling to heaven? Certainly did we love God as we should, we would rise on this day betimes, that we may meet with him whom our soul loveth. Such as sit up late at work on the night before, will be so buried in sleep that they will hardly be up betimes on a sabbath morning. (3.) Having dressed our bodies, we must dress our souls for the hearing of the word. As the people of Israel were to wash themselves before the law was delivered to them,⁵ so we must wash and cleanse our souls, and that is, by reading, meditation, and prayer.

I. By reading the word. The word is a

¹ Jno. 8. 56. ² Is. 58. 13. ³ Jno. 20. 1.

⁴ Ps. 63. 1.

⁵ Ex. 19. 10.

ed. It is possible so to overstrain the duties of the day, as to make men think that they can hardly speak, or move, or look around them, without violating its sanctity; and thus to give the sabbath a gloomy and forbidding aspect. It is possible to grant such liberty, that it shall resemble a human festival rather than a season of devotion, a day of idleness, gossiping, and amusement, mixed up with some religious offices.—*Dick's Lect. v. 4. p. 448.*

That the commandment specifies no particular manner of spending the time, is a striking proof of its being intended for universal obligation, and permanent existence. How strange is it, that this *holy resting*, so evidently enjoined for the sake of permanent application to every state of the church while on earth, should be the very thing supposed to be now abolished by the christian dispensation!—*Christ. Mag. v. 3. p. 273.*

great means to sanctify the heart, and bring it into a sabbath-frame; 'sanctify them through thy truth.'⁶ And read the word not carelessly, but with seriousness and affection; it is the oracle of heaven, the well of salvation, the book of life. David, for the preciousness of God's word, esteemed it above gold; and for the sweetness, above honey.⁷ By reading the word aright, our hearts, when they are dull, are quickened; when they are hard, are mollified; when cold and frozen, are inflamed; and we can say as the disciples, 'did not our hearts burn within us?' Some step out of their bed to hearing. The reason why many get no more good on a sabbath by the word preached, is because they did not breakfast with God in the morning by reading of his word.

II. Meditation. Get upon the mount of meditation, and so converse with God. Meditation is the soul's retiring of itself, that, by a serious and solemn thinking upon God, the heart may be raised up to divine affections. Meditation is a work fit for the morning of a sabbath. Meditate on four things:

1. On the works of creation. That is expressed here in the commandment; 'the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea,' &c. The creation is a looking-glass in which we see the wisdom and power of God gloriously represented. God produced this fair structure of the world without any pre-existent matter, and with a word; 'by the word of the Lord were the heavens made.'⁸ The disciples wondered that Christ could with a word calm the sea;⁹ but it was far more with a word to make the sea. Let us on a sabbath meditate on the infiniteness of our Creator. Look up to the firmament, there we may see 'God's wonders in the deep,'¹⁰ Look into the earth, there we may behold the nature of minerals, the power of the loadstone, the virtue of herbs, the beauty of flowers. By meditating on these works of creation, so curiously embroidered, we come to admire God and praise him; 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all!'¹¹ By meditating on the works of creation, we come to confide in God. He who can create, can provide; he that could make us when we were nothing, he can raise us when we are low; 'our help stands in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.'¹²

2. Meditate on God's holiness; 'holy and reverend is his name,'¹³ 'thou art of purer eyes

⁶ Jno. 17. 17. ⁷ Ps. 19. 10. ⁸ Ps. 33. 6. ⁹ Mat. 8. 26
¹⁰ Ps. 107. 24. ¹¹ Ps. 104. 24. ¹² Ps. 124. 8. ¹³ Ps. 111. 9

than to behold iniquity.¹ God is essentially, originally, and efficiently holy; all the holiness in men and angels is but a crystal stream that runs from this glorious ocean. God loves holiness because it is his own image: a king cannot but love to see his own effigies stamped on coin. God counts holiness his glory, and the most sparkling jewel of his crown; 'glorious in holiness.'² Here is a meditation fit for our first entrance into a sabbath, God's holiness; the contemplation of this would work in us such a frame of heart as is suitable to a holy God; it would make us then reverence his name, hallow his day; while we are musing of the holiness of God's nature, we begin to be transformed into his likeness.

3. Meditate on Christ's love in redeeming us.³ Redemption exceeds creation; the one is a monument of God's power, the other of his love. Here is fit work for a sabbath. O the infinite stupendous love of Christ in raising poor lapsed creatures from a state of guilt and damnation! (1.) That Christ who was God should die, that this glorious Sun of Righteousness should be in an eclipse; we can never enough admire this love, no, not in heaven. (2.) That Christ should die for sinners, not sinful angels, but sinful mankind. That such clods of earth and sin should be made bright stars of glory: O the amazing love of Christ! (3.) That Christ should not only die for sinners, but die as a sinner, 'he was made sin for us.'⁴ He was among the glorious persons of the Trinity, 'was numbered among the transgressors.'⁵ Not that he had sin, but he was like a sinner, having our sins imputed to him. Sin did not live in him, but it was laid upon him. Here was an hyperbole of love, enough to strike us into astonishment. (4.) That Christ should redeem us, when we could not look to gain any thing, or be advantaged at all by us. Men will not lay out their money upon purchase, unless it will turn to their profit: but what benefit could Christ expect in purchasing and redeeming us? We were in such a condition, that we could neither deserve nor recompense Christ's love. 1st. We could not deserve it; for we were in our blood.* We had no spiritual beauty to tempt Christ. Nay, we were not only in our blood, but we were up in arms; 'when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us';⁷ when he was shedding his blood, we were spitting out poison. 2nd. As we could not deserve,

so neither could we recompense Christ's love: for, 1. after he had died for us, we could not so much as love him, till he made us love him. 2. We could give Christ nothing in lieu of his love; 'who hath first given to him?' We were fallen to poverty. If we have any beauty, it is from Christ; 'it was perfect through my comeliness which I put upon thee.'⁸ If we bring forth any good fruit, it is not of our own growth, it comes from Christ, the true vine; 'from me is thy fruit found.'¹⁰ So that it was nothing but pure love for Christ to lay out his blood to redeem such as he could not expect to be really bettered by. (5.) That Christ should die so willingly; 'I lay down my life.'¹¹ The Jews could not have taken it away, if he had not laid it down; he could have called to his Father for a legion of angels to be his life-guard; but what needed that, when his God-head could have defended him from all assaults? But he 'laid down his life;' the Jews did not so much thirst for Christ's death, as he thirsted for our redemption; 'I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?'¹² Christ called his sufferings a baptism: he was to be baptized and sprinkled with his own blood, and Christ thought the time long before he suffered; 'how am I straitened till it be accomplished.' Therefore to show Christ's willingness to die, his sufferings are called 'an offering;' 'by the offering of the body of Jesus';¹³ his death was a free-will offering. (6.) That Christ should not grudge nor think much of all his sufferings; his being scourged and crucified, (we grudge him a light service) but that he should be well contented with what he hath done; and, if it were to do again, he would do it; 'he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.'¹⁴ As the mother, though she hath hard labour, yet when she sees a child brought forth, she doth not repent of her pangs, but is well contented: so Christ, though he had hard travail upon the cross, which put him into an agony, yet he doth not think much, he is not troubled, but thinks his sweat and blood well bestowed, because he sees the man-child of redemption brought forth into the world: 'he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' (7.) That Christ should make redemption effectual to some and not to others: here is the quintessence of love. Though there is a sufficiency in Christ's merit to save all, yet only some par-

¹ *Ha.* 1. 13. ² *Ex.* 15. 11. ³ *Re.* 1. 5. ⁴ *2 Co.* 5. 21.
⁵ *1 s.* 53. 12. ⁶ *Ez.* 16. 6. ⁷ *Ro.* 5. 8.

⁸ *Ro.* 11. 35. ⁹ *Ez.* 16. 14. ¹⁰ *Ho.* 14. 8. ¹¹ *Jno.* 10. 17.
¹² *Lu.* 12. 50. ¹³ *He.* 10. 10. ¹⁴ *1 s.* 53. 11.

take of its saving virtue; all do not believe; 'there are some of you that believe not.'¹ Christ doth not pray for all.² Some refuse Christ; 'this is the stone which the builders refused,'³ others deride him;⁴ others throw off his yoke; 'we will not have this man to reign over us.'⁵ So that all have not the benefit of salvation by him. Herein appears the distinguishing love of Christ, that the virtue of his death should reach some and not others; 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.'⁶ That Christ should pass by many of birth and parts, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon thee; that he should sprinkle his blood upon thee; 'O the depth of the love of Christ!' (8.) That Christ should love us with such an entire transcendent love. The apostle calls it a 'love which passeth knowledge.' That he should love us more than the angels; he loves them as his friends, believers as his spouse. He loves them with such a kind of love as God the Father bears to him; 'as the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.'⁷ O what an hyperbole of love doth Christ show in redeeming us! (9.) That Christ's love in our redemption should be everlasting; 'having loved his own, he loved them to the end.'⁸ As Christ's love is matchless, so endless; the flower of Christ's love is sweet, and that which makes it sweeter, it never dies. Christ's love is eternized.⁹ He will never divorce his elect spouse. The failings of his people cannot quite take off his love; they may eclipse his love, not wholly remove it; their failings may make Christ angry with them, but not hate them. Every failing doth not break the marriage-knot. Christ's love is not like the saints' love; sometimes they have strong affections towards Christ, at other times the hot fit is off, and they can find little or no love stirring in them, but it is not so with Christ's love to the saints, it is a love of eternity. When the sunshine of Christ's electing love is once risen upon the soul, it never sets finally. Death may take away our life from us, but not Christ's love. Behold here a rare subject in a sabbath-morning to meditate upon! The meditation of Christ's wonderful love in redeeming us, would work in us a sabbath-frame of heart.—First, it would melt us in tears for our spiritual unkindnesses, that we should sin against so sweet a Saviour, that we should be no

more affected with his love, but requite evil for good, like the Athenians, who, notwithstanding all the good service Aristides had done them, banished him out of their city; that we should grieve Christ with our pride, rash anger, our unfruitfulness, animosities, strange factions. Have we none to abuse but our friend? Have we nothing to kick against but the bowels of our Saviour? Did not Christ suffer enough upon the cross, that we must needs make him suffer more? Do we give him more 'gall and vinegar to drink?' O if any thing can dissolve the heart in sorrow, and broach the eyes with tears, it is disingenuity and unkindness offered to Christ! When Peter thought of Christ's love to him, how he had made him an apostle, and revealed his bosom secrets to him, and taken him to the mount of transfiguration, and that he should deny Christ, it broke his heart with sorrow; 'he went out and wept bitterly.'¹⁰ What a blessed thing is it to have the eyes dropping tears on a sabbath! And nothing would sooner fetch tears, than to meditate on Christ's love to us, and our unkind requitals.—Secondly, the meditating on a Lord's day morning of Christ's love would kindle love in our hearts to Christ. How can we look on Christ's bleeding and dying for us, and our hearts not to be warmed with love to him? Love is the soul of religion, the purest affection; it is not rivers of oil, but sparks of love that Christ values. And sure, as David said, 'while I was musing the fire burned,'¹¹ so while we are musing of Christ's love in redeeming us, the fire of our love will burn towards Christ; and then is a christian in a blessed sabbath frame, when he is like a seraph burning in love to Christ.

4. On a sabbath morning meditate on the glory of heaven. Heaven is the extract and quintessence of happiness. It is called a kingdom;¹² a kingdom for its riches and magnificence; it is set out by 'precious stones, gates of pearl.'¹³ There is all that is truly glorious; transparent light, perfect love, unstained honour, unmixed joy; and that which crowns the joy of the celestial paradise is eternity. Suppose earthly kingdoms were more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphire, yet they are corruptible: but the kingdom of heaven is eternal; those rivers of pleasure 'run for evermore.'¹⁴ And that wherein the essence of glory

¹ Jno. 6. 21. ² Jno. 17. 9. ³ Ps. 118. 22. ⁴ Lu. 16. 14.

⁵ Lu. 19. 14. ⁶ 1 Co. 1. 26. ⁷ Ep. 3. 19. ⁸ Jno. 15. 9.

⁹ Jno. 17. 1. ¹⁰ Je. 31. 3.

¹¹ Mat. 26. 75.

¹² Ps. 39. 3.

¹³ Mat. 25. 34.

¹⁴ Re. 21.

¹⁵ Ps. 16. 11.

consists, and makes heaven to be heaven, is the immediate sight and fruition of the blessed God; 'when I awake I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.'¹ O think of this Jerusalem above! This is proper for a sabbath! 1. The meditation of heaven would raise our hearts above the world. O how would these things disappear and shrink into nothing, if our minds were mounted above the visible orbs, and we had a prospect of glory! 2. How would the meditation of heaven make us heavenly in our sabbath-exercises! It would quicken affection, it would add wings to devotion, it would make us to be 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day.'² How vigorously doth he serve God who hath a crown of glory always in his eye!

III. We dress our souls on a sabbath morning, by prayer; 'when thou prayest, enter into thy closet,'³ etc. Prayer sanctifies a sabbath. 1. The things we should pray for in the morning of the sabbath. Beg a blessing upon the word which is to be preached, that it may be a savour of life to us, that by it our minds may be more illuminated, our corruptions more weakened, our stock of grace more increased; pray that God's special presence may be with us, that our hearts may burn within us while God speaks; pray that we may receive the word into meek, humble hearts,⁴ that we submit to it, and bring forth the fruits of it. Nor should we only pray for ourselves, but for others. 2. For him who dispenseth the word; that his tongue may be touched with a coal from God's altar; that God would warm his heart who is to help to warm others. Your prayers may be a means to quicken the minister. Some complain, they find not that benefit by the word preached: perhaps they did not pray for their minister as they should. Prayer is like the whetting and sharpening of an instrument, which makes it cut the better. 3d. Pray with and for your family; yea, pray for all the congregations that meet this day in the fear of the Lord, that the dew of the Spirit may fall with the manna of the word,—that some souls may be converted, and others strengthened,—and that gospel ordinances may be continued, and have no restraint put upon them. These are the things we should pray for. The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit unless it be shaken by the hand of prayer. 4. The manner of our prayer. It is not enough to say a prayer; to pray in a dull, cold manner, which teacheth

God to deny; but we must pray with reverence, humility, fervency, hope in God's mercy,⁵ Christ prayed more earnestly. And that we may pray with more fervency, we must pray with a sense of our wants. He who is pinched with wants, will be earnest in craving alms. He prays most fervently, who prays most feelingly. This is to sanctify the morning of a sabbath, and it is a good preparatory for the word preached. When the ground is broken up by the plough, now it is fit to receive the seed; when the heart hath been broken by prayer, now it is fit to receive the seed of the word preached. Thus you see how to dress your souls on a sabbath morning. There are other duties remaining.

IV. Having thus dressed your souls in a morning for the further sanctification of the sabbath, address yourselves to the hearing of the word preached.* 1. And when you are set down in your seat, lift up your eyes to heaven for a blessing upon the word to be dispensed; for, you must know the word preached doth not work as physic, by its own inherent virtue, but by a virtue from heaven; and the co-operation of the Holy Ghost; therefore put up a short ejaculatory prayer for a blessing upon the word, that it may be made effectual to you. 2. The word being begun to be preached, set yourselves in a right manner, with reverence and holy attention; 'a certain woman, named Lydia, attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.'⁶ Constantine the emperor was noted for his reverent attention to the word. 'Christ taught daily in the temple; and all the people were attentive to hear him.'⁷ In the Greek, 'they hung upon his lip.' Could we tell men of a rich purchase, they would diligently attend; and shall they not much more, when the gospel of grace is preaching unto them?

Now, that we may sanctify and hallow the sabbath, by attentive hearing, take heed of two things in hearing, namely, 1st, distraction; 2d, drowsiness. 1st. Distraction: 'that ye may

¹ Lu. 22. 44.

² Acts 16. 11.

³ Lu. 19. 48.

* It appears to be one end of this sacred institution, that the means of grace may be openly celebrated, and that the members of the same society may be at liberty to join together in the solemn worship of Almighty God. There is no other day so well adapted to the purpose. It was therefore commanded in the old law, 'on the seventh day ye shall have a solemn convocation.' It was the invariable practice of our Lord to attend the services of the synagogue on that day; (Lu. 4. 16.) The first christians also, and after them the whole christian church, thus hallowed 'the first day of the week,' by 'coming together' for the administration of the Lord's supper and other divine ordinances (Acts 20. 7.) Can we follow better examples? — *Robinson's Christ. Syst.* p. 504

¹ Ps 17. 15.

² Re. 1. 10.

³ Mat. 6. 6.

⁴ Ja. 1. 21.

attend upon the Lord without distraction.¹ It is said of St Bernard, that when he came to the church-door, he would say, 'stay here all my earthly thoughts; so should we say to ourselves, when we are at the door of God's house, 'stay here all my worldly cares, and wandering cogitations; I am now going to hearken what the Lord will say to me.' Distraction hinders devotion. Distraction in hearing is when the mind is tossed with vain thoughts and diverted from the business in hand. It is hard to make the quicksilver heart fix. St Hierom complained of himself: 'sometimes (saith he) when I am about God's service, I am walking in the galleries, and sometimes casting up accounts.' So, oft in hearing of the word, the thoughts dance up and down; and, when our eye is upon the minister, our mind is upon other things. Distracted hearing is far from sanctifying the sabbath. It must needs be very heinous to give way to vain thoughts at this time; because, when we are hearing the word, we are now in God's special presence. To do any treasonable action in the king's presence is high impudence; 'yea, in my house have I found their wickedness.'² So may the Lord say, 'in my house, while they are hearing my word, I have found wickedness; they have wanton eyes, and their soul is set on vanity.' This enhanceth and aggravates the sin.

Q. *Whence do these roving distracted thoughts in hearing come?*

1. Partly from Satan. The devil is no recusant, he will be sure to be present in our assemblies: if he cannot hinder us from hearing, he will hinder us in hearing: 'when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them.'³ The devil sets vain objects before the fancy, to cause a diversion. Satan's great design is to render the word we hear fruitless. As when one is writing, another jogs him that he cannot write even, so when we are hearing, the devil will be jogging us with a temptation, that we should not attend to the word preached; 'he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.'⁴ 2. These wandering thoughts in hearing come partly from ourselves. We must not lay all the blame upon Satan. (1.) They come from the eye. A wandering eye causeth wandering thoughts. A thief may be let into the house at a window: so vain thoughts are let in at the eye. So that,

as we are bid to keep our feet when we enter into the house of God,⁵ so we had need make a covenant with our eyes when we are in the house of God,⁶ that we be not distracted by beholding other objects. (2.) Wandering thoughts in hearing rise out of the heart. These sparks come out of our own furnace. Vain thoughts are the mud which the heart as a troubled sea, casts up; 'for,' from within, 'out of the heart' of men, 'proceed evil thoughts.'⁷ It is the foulness of the stomach sends up fumes into the head; and the corruption of the heart sends up evil thoughts into the mind. (3.) Distracted thoughts in hearing proceed from an evil custom. We inure ourselves to vain thoughts at other times, therefore we cannot forbear them on a sabbath. Custom is a second nature; 'can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil?'⁸ He that is used to bad company, knows not how to leave it; such as have vain thoughts keeping them company all the week, they know not how to get rid of them on the sabbath. Let me show you how evil these vain distracting thoughts in hearing are.

1st. To have the heart distracted in hearing, is a disrespect to God's omniscieny. God is an all-seeing spirit; and thoughts speak louder in his ears, than words do in ours; 'he declarerth unto man what is his thought.'⁹ Therefore, to make no conscience of wandering thoughts in hearing, is the affronting of God's omniscieny, as if he knew not our heart, or did not hear the language of our thoughts. 2d. To give way to wandering thoughts in hearing is hypocrisy. We pretend to hear what God saith, and our mind is quite upon another thing. We present God with our bodies, but do not give him our hearts.¹⁰ This hypocrisy God complains of; 'this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their hearts far from me.'¹¹ This is to prevaricate and deal falsely with God. 3d. Vain thoughts in hearing discover much want of love to God. Did we love God we should listen to his words as oracles, 'and bind them upon the table of our heart.'¹² When a friend whom we love speaks to us, and gives us advice, we mind it with seriousness, and suck in every word. The giving our thoughts leave to ramble in holy duties shows the defect of our love to God. 4th. Vain impertinent

¹ 1 Co. 7. 35. ² Je. 23. 11. ³ Job 1. 6. ⁴ Ze. 3. 1.

⁵ Ec. 5. 1. ⁶ Job 31. 1. ⁷ Mar. 7. 21. ⁸ Je. 13. 23. ⁹ Am. 4. 13. ¹⁰ Ho. 7. 11. ¹¹ Is. 29. 13. ¹² Pro. 3. 3

thoughts in hearing defile an ordinance; they are as dead flies in the box of ointment. When a string of the lute is out of tune, it spoils the music: distraction of thought puts our mind out of tune, and makes our services sound harsh and unpleasant. Wandering thoughts poison a duty, and turn it into sin; 'let his prayer become sin.'¹ What can be worse than to have a man's praying and hearing of the word become sin? Were it not sad when the meat we eat should increase bad humours? So when the hearing of the word, which is the food of the soul, should be turned into sin. 5th. Vain thoughts in hearing, anger God. If the king were speaking to one of his subjects, and he should not give heed to what the king saith, but be thinking on another business, or playing with a feather, would not this provoke the king? So, when we are in God's presence, and God is speaking to us in his word, and we minding not much what he saith, but our hearts go after covetousness.² Will not this anger God, to be thus slighted? God hath pronounced a curse upon such; 'cursed be the deceiver which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.'³ To have strong lively affections to the world, here is a male in the flock; but to hear the word with distraction, to give God duties fly-blown with vain thoughts, this is to offer to the Lord a corrupt thing; this brings a curse; 'cursed be the deceiver.'⁴ 6th. Vain thoughts in hearing, when allowed and not resisted, make way for hardening the heart. A stone in the heart, is worse than in the kidneys. Distracted thoughts in hearing, do not better the heart, but harden it. Vain thoughts take away the holy awe of God which should be upon the heart; they make conscience less tender, and hinder the efficacy the word should have upon the heart. 7th. Vain distracting thoughts rob us of the comfort of an ordinance. A gracious soul oft meets with God in the sanctuary, and can say, 'I found him whom my soul loveth.'⁵ He is like Jonathan, who having tasted the honey on the rod, his eyes were enlightened. But vain thoughts hinder the comfort of an ordinance, as a black cloud hides the warm comfortable beams of the sun from us. Will God speak peace to us when our minds are wandering and our thoughts are travelling to the ends of the earth?⁶ If ever you would hear the word with attention, do as Abraham, he drove away the

fowls from the sacrifice:⁶ so when we find these excursions, and sinful wanderings in hearing, labour to drive away the fowls, get rid of these vain thoughts; they are vagrants, and we must not give them entertainment.

Q. *But how shall we get help against these vagabond thoughts?*

1. Pray and watch against them. 2. Let the sense of God's omniscient eye overawe your hearts. The servant will not sport in his master's presence. 3. Labour for an holy frame of heart. Were the heart more spiritual, the mind would be less feathery. 4. Bring more love to the word. That which we love we fix our minds upon; he that loves his pleasures and recreations, his mind is fixed upon them, and he can follow them without distraction. Were our love more set upon the word preached, our minds would be more fixed upon it; and surely there is enough to make us love the word preached; for it is the word of life, the inlet to knowledge, the antidote against sin, the quickener of holy affections: it is the true manna, which hath all sorts of sweet tastes in it; it is the pool of Bethesda, in which the rivers of life spring forth to heal the broken in heart; it is a sovereign elixir or cordial to revive the sorrowful spirit. Get love to the word preached, and you will not be so distracted in hearing. What the heart delights in, the thoughts dwell upon.

2d. If you would sanctify the sabbath by diligent attentive hearing, take heed of drowsiness in hearing; drowsiness shows much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God how drowsy, as if the devil had given them some opium to make them sleep! A drowsy temper is (now) very absurd and sinful. Are not you in prayer asking pardon of sin? Will the prisoner fall asleep when he is begging his pardon? In the preaching of the word, is not the bread of life broken to you, and will a man fall asleep at his food? Which is worse, to stay from a sermon, or sleep at a sermon? While you slept, perhaps the truth was delivered, which might have converted your souls. Besides, sleeping is very offensive in these holy assemblies; it is not only a grieving the Spirit of God, but a making the hearts of the righteous sad.⁷ It troubles them to see any show such a contempt of God and his worship; to see them busy in the shop, but drowsy in the

¹ Ps. 109. 7. ² Ez. 33. 31. ³ Mal. 1. 14. ⁴ Cs. iii. 4.

⁵ Pro 17. 21.

⁶ Ge. 15. 11.

⁷ Ez. 13. 22.

temple. Therefore, as Christ said, 'could ye not watch one hour?'¹ so, can ye not wake one hour? I deny not but that a child of God may sometimes, through weakness and indisposition of body, drop asleep at a sermon, but it is not voluntary or ordinary. The sun may be in an eclipse, but not often; if sleeping be customary and allowed, it is a very bad sign, and a profaning of the ordinance. A good remedy against drowsiness is to use a spare diet upon this day. Such as indulge their appetite too much on a sabbath, are fitter to sleep on a couch, than pray in the temple. Now, that you may throw off distracting thoughts and drowsiness on the Lord's day, and may hear the word with reverent attention, consider, 1. It is God that speaks to us in his word; therefore the preaching of the word is called the 'breath of his lips.'² And Christ is said now 'to speak to us from heaven,'³ as a king speaks in his ambassador. Ministers are but as the pipes and organs, it is the Spirit of the living God breathes in them. When we come to the word, we should think thus with ourselves: God speaks in this preacher. The Thessalonians heard the word Paul preached as if God himself had spoken unto them; 'when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God.' When Samuel knew it was the Lord that spake to him, he lent his ear.⁴ If we do not regard God when he speaks to us, he will not regard us when we pray to him. 2. Consider how serious and weighty the matters delivered to us are. As Moses said, 'I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I have set before you life and death.'⁵ Can men be regardless of the word, or drowsy when the weighty matters of eternity are set before them? We preach of faith, and holiness of life, and the day of judgment, and the eternal recompenses; here is life and death set before you, and doth not all this call for serious attention? If a letter were read to one of special business, wherein his life and estate were concerned, would not he be very serious in listening to that letter? In the preaching of the word your salvation is concerned; and if ever you

would attend, it should be now; 'it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.'⁶ 3. To give way to vain thoughts, and drowsiness in hearing, doth much gratify Satan. He knows that not to mind a duty is all one as not to do a duty in religion. 'What the heart doth not do, is not done.' Therefore Christ saith of some, 'hearing they hear not.'⁷ How could that be? Because, though the word sounded in their ear, yet they minded not what was said to them; their thoughts were upon other things, therefore it was all one as if they did not hear. 'Hearing, they hear not;' and doth not this please Satan, to see men come to the word, and as good stay away? They are haunted with vain thoughts; they are taken off the duty while they are in it; their body is in the assembly, their heart in their shop: 'hearing, they hear not.' 4. It may be the last sabbath that ever we shall keep; we may go from the place of hearing to the place of judging; and shall not we give reverent attention to the word, did we think thus when we come into God's house: perhaps this will be the last time that ever God will counsel us about our souls; before another sermon, death's alarm will sound in our ears, with what attention and devotion should we come hither, and our affections would be all on fire in hearing? 5. You must give an account for every sermon you hear; 'give an account of thy stewardship.'⁸ So will God say, give an account of thy hearing. Hast thou been affected with the word? Hast thou profited by it? And how can we give an account, if we have been distracted in hearing, and have not taken notice what hath been said to us? The judge to whom we must give an account is God. Were one to give an account to man, he might falsify his accounts; but we must give an account to God. "He is so just a God that he cannot be bribed, and so wise that he cannot be deceived." BERN. Therefore, going to give an account to such an impartial judge, how should we observe every word preached, remembering the account? Let all this make us shake off distraction and drowsiness in hearing, and have our ears chained to the word.

¹ Mat. 26. 40.² Is. 11. 4.³ He. 12. 25.⁴ 1 Th. 2. 13.⁵ 1 Sa. 3. 10.⁶ De. 30. 19.⁷ De. 32. 47.⁸ Mat. 13. 13.⁹ Lu. 16. 2.

EXOD. 20. 8. *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy, &c.*

2d. IF you would hear the word aright, lay aside those things which may render the word preached ineffectual; as, 1. Curiosity. Some come to the word preached, not so much to get grace, as to enrich themselves with notions: 'itching ears.' Austin confesseth that before his conversion, he went to hear St Ambrose, rather for his eloquence, than for the spirituality of the matter. 'Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.'² Many come to the word only to feast their ears; they like the melody of the voice, the mellifluous sweetness of the expression, the newness of the notion.³ This is to love the garnishing of the dish more than the food; this is to desire to be pleased, rather than edified. Like a woman that paints her face, but neglects her health: so they paint and adorn themselves with curious speculations, but neglect their soul's health. This hearing doth neither sanctify the heart, nor the sabbath.

2. Lay aside prejudice. (1.) Prejudice against the truths preached. The Sadducees were prejudiced against the doctrine of the resurrection.⁴ (2.) Prejudice against the person preaching: 'there's one Michaiah by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him.'⁵ This hinders the virtue of the word. If a patient hath an ill opinion of his physician, he will not take any of his recipes though never so good. Prejudice in the mind is like an obstruction in the stomach, which hinders the nutritive virtue of the meat. Prejudice poisons the word, and makes it lose its efficacy.

3. Lay aside covetousness. Covetousness is not only getting the world unjustly, but loving it inordinately; this is a great hinderance to the word preached. The seed which fell among thorns was choked,⁶ an emblem of the word being preached to a covetous hearer. The covetous man is thinking on the world when he is hearing; his heart is in his shop; 'they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.'⁷ A covetous hearer derides the word; 'the Pharisees, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him.'⁸

4. Lay aside partiality. Partiality in hearing is, when we like to hear some truths preached,

but not all. We love to hear of heaven, but not of self-denial; of reigning with Christ, but not of suffering; of the more facile duties of religion, but not them which are more knotty and difficult, as mortification; laying the axe to the root, and hewing down their beloved sin: 'prophesy smooth things,'⁹ such as may not grate upon our conscience. Many like to hear of the love of Christ, but not of loving their enemies; they like the comforts of the word, but not the reproofs. Herod heard John Baptist gladly; he liked many truths, but not when he spake against his incest. Lay aside partiality.

5. Lay aside censoriousness. Some, instead of judging themselves for sin, sit as judges upon the preacher; either his sermon had too much gall in it, or it was too long. These will sooner censure a sermon than practise it. God will judge the judger.¹⁰

6. Lay aside disobedience: 'all the day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient people.'¹¹ It is spoken of the Jews; God stretched out his hands in the preaching of the word, but they rejected Christ. Let there be none among you that wilfully refuse the counsels of the word; it is sad to have an adder's ear, an adamant heart.¹² If, when God speaks to us in his word, we are deaf; when we speak to him in prayer, he will be dumb.

3d. If you would hear the word aright, have good ends in hearing; 'come to the word to be made better.'¹³ Some have no other end in hearing, but because it is in fashion, or to gain repute, or stop the mouth of conscience; but come to the word to be made more holy. There is a great deal of difference between one that goes to a garden for flowers to wear in her bosom, and another that goes for flowers to make syrups and medicines of. We should go to the word for a medicine to cure us, as Naaman the Syrian went to Jordan to be healed of his leprosy: 'desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.'¹⁴ Come to the word to be changed into the similitude of it; as the seal leaves its print upon the wax, so labour that the word preached may leave the print of its own holiness upon your heart; labour that the 'word' may have such a virtue upon you, as the water of jealousy, to kill and make fruitful.¹⁵ That it may

¹ 2 Tim. 4. 3. ² Ez. 33. 32. ³ Ac. 17. 21. ⁴ Lu. 20. 27.
⁵ 1 Ki. 22. 8. ⁶ Mat. 13. 22. ⁷ Ez. 33. 31. ⁸ Lu. 16. 14.

⁹ Is. 30. 10. ¹⁰ Mat. 7. 1. ¹¹ Ro. 10. 21.
¹² Zec. 7. 11, 12. ¹³ 2 Pe. 2. 2. ¹⁴ Nu. 5. 27.

kill your sins, and make your souls fruitful in grace.

4th. If you would hear the word aright, come to it with delight. The word preached is a feast of fat things: with what delight do men come to a feast! The word preached anoints the blind eye; mollifies the rocky heart; it beats off our fetters, and turns us from the 'power of Satan to God.'¹ The word is the seed of regeneration,² the engine of salvation. Hear the word with delight and complacency; 'thy words were found, and I did eat them;' 'thy word was unto me the rejoicing of my heart.'³ 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.'⁴ Yea, love that word which comes most home to the conscience; bless God when your corruptions have been met with, when the sword of the Spirit hath divided between you and your sins. Who cares for that physic which will not work?

5th. If you would hear the word aright, mix it with faith. Believe the verity of the word preached, that it is that word by which you must be judged; not only give evidence to the word preached, but learn to apply it to your own souls; faith concocts the word, and turns it into spiritual nourishment. Many hear the word, but it may be said of them, 'they believed not his word.'⁵ As Melancthon once said to some of the Italians, 'ye Italians worship God in the bread, when ye do not believe him to be in heaven:' so, many hear God's words, but do not believe that God is; they question the truth of his oracles. If we do not mix faith with the word, it is like leaving out the chief ingredient in a medicine, which makes it ineffectual; unbelief hardens men's hearts against the word; 'divers were hardened, and believed not.'⁶ Men hear many truths delivered concerning the preciousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the felicity of a glorified estate, but, if through unbelief and atheism they question these truths, we may as well speak to the stones and pillars of the church as to them. That word which is not believed, can never be practised. Unbelief makes the word preached of no effect: 'the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.'⁷ The word to an unbeliever is like *dioscordium* put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth all its virtue. If there be any unbelievers in our congrega-

tions, what shall ministers say to God at the last day? 'Lord, we have preached to the people thou sentest us to, we showed them our commission, we declared unto them the whole counsel of God, but they believed never a word we spake; we told them what would be the fruit of sin, but they would drink their sugared draught, though there was death in the cup; Lord, we are free from their blood.' God forbid that ever ministers should make this report to God of their people! But this they must be forced to do, if people live and die in unbelief. Would you sanctify a sabbath in hearing the word aright? hear the word with faith. The apostle puts these two together, 'belief and salvation;' 'we are of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'⁸

6th. If you would hear the word aright, hear it with meek spirits: 'receive the word with meekness.'⁹ Meekness is a submissive frame of heart to the word; contrary to this meekness is fierceness of spirit, when men rise up in a rage against the word, as if the patient should be angry with the physician when he gives him a recipe to purge out his bad humours: 'when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on Stephen with their teeth.'¹⁰ 'Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house.'¹¹ Pride and guilt make men fret at the word. What made Asa storm so, but pride? he was a king, and thought he was too good to be told of his sin. What made Cain so angry, when God said to him, 'where is Abel thy brother?' saith he, 'am I my brother's keeper?' What made him so touchy, but guilt? He had imbrued his hands in his brother's blood. If you would hear the word aright, lay down your passions, 'receive the word with meekness,' get humble hearts to submit to the truths delivered. God takes the meek person to be his scholar; 'the meek will he teach his way.'¹² Meekness makes the word preached to be an 'ingrafted word.'¹³ A good scion grafted in a bad stock changeth the nature of it and makes it bear good and generous fruit; so, when the word preached is grafted into men's hearts, it sanctifies them and makes them bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness. By meekness it becomes an ingrafted word.

7th. If you would hear the word aright, be not only attentive, but retentive. Lay the word up in your memories and hearts; 'the

¹ Ac. 26. 18. ² Ja. 1. 18. ³ Je. 15. 16. ⁴ Ps. 119. 103.
⁵ Ps. 106. 21. ⁶ Ac. 19. 9. ⁷ He. 4. 2.

⁸ He. 10. 39. ⁹ Ja. 1. 21. ¹⁰ Ac. 7. 54. ¹¹ 2 Ch. 16. 10.
¹² Ps. 25. 9. ¹³ Ja. 1. 21

seed on the good ground are they, who having heard the word, keep it." The Greek word for 'to keep,' signifies to hold the word fast, that it do not run from us. If the seed be not kept in the ground, but is presently washed away, it is sown to little purpose: so if the word preached be not kept in your memories and hearts, it is preached in vain. Many people have memories like leaky vessels. If the word goes out as fast as it comes in, how can it profit? If a treasure be put in a chest and the chest be not locked, it may easily be taken out: a bad memory is like a chest without a lock, the devil can easily take out all the treasure; 'then comes the devil and takes away the word out of their hearts.'⁸ Labour to keep in memory the truths you hear; the things we esteem we are not so apt to forget; 'will a bride forget her jewels?' 'can a maid forget her ornaments?'⁹ Did we prize the word more, we should not so soon forget it; if the meat doth not stay in the stomach, but comes up as fast as we eat it, it cannot nourish: so, if the word stays not in the memory, but is presently gone, it can do the soul but little good.

8th. If you would hear aright, practise what you hear. Practice is the life of all: 'blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.'¹⁰ Bare hearing will be no plea at the day of judgment. 'Lord I have heard so many sermons.' But God will say, 'what fruits of obedience have ye brought forth?' The word we preach is not only to inform you but to reform you; not only to mend your sight, but to mend your pace in the way to heaven; a good hearer is like the *heliotropium*, &c., it opens and shuts with the sun,—to God against sin. Now that you may sanctify a sabbath by hearing. (1.) If you do not hear the word aright, you lose all your labour. How many a weary step have you taken; your body hath been crowded, your spirit faint; if you are not bettered by hearing, —if you are as proud, as vain, as earthly as ever, all your hearing is lost. You would be loath to trade in vain, and why not as loath to hear sermons in vain? 'why then labour I in vain?'¹¹ Put this question to your own soul: 'why labour I in vain? Why do I take all this pains to hear, yet have not the grace to practise it? I am as bad as ever! why then

labour I in vain?' (2.) If you hear the word, and are not bettered by it, you are like the salamander in the fire, not hotter; your hearing will increase your condemnation; 'that servant which knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.'¹² We pity such as know not where to hear; it will be worse with such as care not how they hear. To graceless disobedient hearers, every sermon will be a faggot to heat hell; it is sad to go loaded to hell with ordinances. O beg the Spirit to make the word preached effectual! Ministers can but speak to the ear,—the Spirit speaks to the heart: 'while Peter spake, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that heard the word.'¹³

9th. Having heard the word in an holy and spiritual manner, for the further sanctification of the sabbath, confer of the word. We are forbidden on this day to speak our own words,¹⁴ but we must speak of God's word. Speak of the sermons as you sit together; this is one part of sanctifying the sabbath. Good discourse brings holy truths into our memories, and fastens them upon our hearts: 'then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.'¹⁵ There is a great power and efficacy in good discourse; 'how forcible are right words?'¹⁶ By holy conference on a sabbath, one Christian helps to warm another when he is frozen, to strengthen another when he is weak. Latimer confessed he was much furthered in religion, by having conference with Mr Bilny the martyr: 'my tongue shall speak of thy word.'¹⁷ One reason why preaching the word on a sabbath doth no more good, is, because there is so little good conference. Few speak of the word they have heard: as if sermons were such secrets that they must not be spoken of again, or as if it were a shame to speak of that which will save us.

10th. Shut up the sabbath evening with repetition, reading, singing of psalms, and prayer; beg that God would bless the word you have heard. But I hope your practice herein will prevent my further speaking. Could we but thus spend a sabbath, we might be 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day,'¹⁸ our souls might be nourished and comforted; and this sabbath which we now keep, would be an earnest of that everlasting sabbath which we shall celebrate in heaven.

¹ Lu. 8. 15.² Lu. 8. 12.³ Je. 2. 32.⁴ Re. 22. 14.⁵ Job 9. 29.⁶ Lu. 12. 47.⁷ Ac. 10. 41.⁸ Is. 58. 14.⁹ Mal. 3. 17.¹⁰ Job 6. 25.¹¹ Ps. 119. 172.¹² Re. 1. 10.

EXOD. 20. 8. *Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.*

USE. 1. See here a Christian's duty, 'to keep the sabbath-day holy.'

1. The whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God. It is not said, keep a part of the sabbath holy, but the whole day must be religiously observed. If God hath given us six days and taken but one to himself, shall we grudge him any part of that day? It were sacrilege! The Jews kept a whole day to the Lord: and we are not to abridge or curtail the sabbath, saith St Austin, more than the Jews did. The very heathens, by the light of nature, did set apart a whole day in the honour of their false gods,* and Scœvola the high priest did affirm that the wilful transgression of that day could have no expiation or pardon. Whoever robs any part of the sabbath for servile work or recreation, Scœvola the high priest of the heathenish gods shall rise up in judgment against such Christians, and condemn them. And they who say, that to keep a whole sabbath is too judaical, let them show where God has made any abatement of the time of worship; where he has said, you shall keep but a part of the sabbath; and if they cannot show that, it argues much boldness to go to rob God of his due. That a whole day be designed and set apart for God's special worship, is a perpetual statute, while the church remains upon the earth, saith Pet. Martyr. Of this opinion also were Theodoret, Austin, Irenæus, and the chief of the fathers.†

* This appears to have been derived, not so much from the custom of the Jews, whose religion was hated by the heathen, as from their own remote ancestors. Hence Clemens of Alexandria says, that 'not only the Hebrews, but also the Greeks acknowledged each seventh day to be sacred.' This he proves out of Hesiod, Homer, Linus, and Callimachus, by whom the seventh day is called ἑβδομῆ ἡμέρα, 'a sacred day.' Hence by Philo it is called ἑβδομῆ πάνδημος, 'a general festival,' belonging equally to all nations. Thus also Josephus, in his work against Apion, says, 'there is no state either of the Greeks or Barbarians, nor any nation, in which the custom of observing the seventh day, on which we rest from work, has not found a place.' Tibullus, (lib. 3. eleg. 3) calls Saturday 'a sacred day;' and more examples may be found in the 13th chap. of the 13th book of Eusebius's Præp. Evang.—*Turret. Theol. loc. und. quæst. 13.*

† Who can think that one whole day is too much to be observed to the Lord, who believes that a whole eternity shall be occupied, and occupied most delightfully, in his service!—*Belfrage's Exp. of Catech. b. 2. p. 29.*

Whether man had fallen or not, the seventh part of our time would have been equally that part which it seemed good in the sight of God to claim; and it would have been equally proper and suitable, though neither the Jewish nor Christian economies had ever existed. If it bear a reference to any thing in the state of mankind, it is not to their being saints or sinners, to their living before or after the coming of Christ, but simply to their condition as creatures who require an adequate allowance of time for making provision for their temporal necessities, and a proper season of rest, not so much for relaxation from their labours, as for glorifying their Maker without distraction or interrup-

2. As the whole sabbath is to be dedicated to God, so it must be kept holy; you see the manner of sanctifying the Lord's day, by reading, meditation, prayer, hearing of the word, and by singing of psalms to make melody to the Lord. Now, besides what I have said for the keeping this day holy, let me make a short comment or paraphrase on that scripture, 'if thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thy own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:' here is a description of the right sanctifying a sabbath. (1.) 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath.' That may be understood either literally, or spiritually. First, literally, 'if thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,' that is, if thou withdrawest thy foot from taking long walks or journeys on the sabbath-day: so the Jewish doctors expound it. Or, secondly, spiritually, 'if thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath,' that is, if thou turn away thy affections (the feet of thy soul) from inclining to any worldly business. (2.) 'From doing thy pleasure on my holy day.' That is, thou must not do that which may please the carnal part, as sports and pastimes; this is to do the devil's work on God's day. (3.) 'And call the sabbath a delight.' Call it a delight, that is, esteem it so: though the sabbath be not a day for carnal pleasure, yet holy pleasure is not forbidden. The soul must take pleasure in the duties of a sabbath. The saints of old counted the sabbath a delight; the Jews called the sabbath 'a day of light.' The Lord's day, on which the Sun of Righteousness shines, is both a day of light and delight.‡ This is the day of sweet intercourse between God and the soul. On this day a Christian makes his sallies out to heaven; his soul is lifted above the earth; and can this

‡ Is. 58. 13.

tion, and doing homage to him, as the great end of their being. Hence, God chose to exemplify the time in his own rest from the works of creation, which is confessedly unconnected with any peculiar economies.—*Christ. Mag. v. 3. p. 234.*

‡ The Christian sabbath hath Christ's light in all its doctrines, his Spirit in all its worship, and his peace in all its design. How different from the Jewish sabbath! It hath in its temple, neither cloud nor veil; in its worship no type nor shadow; in all its rites, and about its votaries, no yoke of bondage nor spirit of fear. Grace and truth from the light of its sanctuary, righteousness and salvation the clothing of its priests, love and hope the spirit of its service, and the piety of the heart its only sacrifice.—*Belfrage Exp. Cat. b. 2. p. 34.*

be without delight? The higher the bird flies, the sweeter it sings. On a sabbath the soul acts its love to God; and where the love is, there is the delight. On this day a believer's heart is melted, that is, quickened, enlarged in holy duties; and how can all this be, and not a secret delight go along with it? On a sabbath a gracious soul can say, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.'¹ How can a spiritual heart choose but call the sabbath a delight? Is it not delightful to a queen to be putting on her wedding-ropes in which she shall meet the king her bridegroom? When we are about sabbath exercises, we are dressing ourselves, and putting on our wedding-ropes in which we are to meet our heavenly bridegroom the Lord Jesus: and is not this delightful? On the sabbath God makes a feast of fat things, he feasts the ear with his word, and the heart with his grace. Well then may we call the sabbath a delight; and to find this holy delight, is to 'be in the Spirit on the Lord's day.' (4.) 'The holy of the Lord honourable.' In the Hebrew, it is glorious. To call the sabbath honourable, is not to be understood so much of an outward honour given to it, by wearing richer apparel, or having better diet on this day, as the Jewish doctors corruptly gloss; this is the chief honour some give to this day; but by calling the sabbath honourable, is meant that honour of the heart which we give to this day, reverencing it, and esteeming it the queen of days. We are to count the sabbath honourable, because God hath honoured it. All the persons in the Trinity have honoured it; God the Father blessed it, God the Son rose upon it, God the Holy Ghost descended on this day.² And indeed this day is to be honoured of all good Christians, and had in high veneration. It is a day of renown. On this day a golden sceptre of mercy is held forth. The Christian sabbath is the very dawning of the heavenly sabbath. It is honourable, because this day 'God comes down to us and visits us.' To have the king of heaven present in a special manner in our assemblies, makes the sabbath-day honourable. Besides, the work that is done on this day makes it honourable; the six days are filled up with servile work, which makes them lose much of their glory; but on this day sacred work is done. The soul is employed wholly about the worship of God; it is praying, hearing, meditat-

ing; it is doing angels' work, praising and blessing God. Again, the day is honourable by virtue of a divine institution; silver is of itself valuable, but when the royal stamp is put upon it, it is honourable: so God hath put a sacred stamp upon this day, the stamp of divine authority, and the stamp of divine benediction, this makes it honourable: this is a sanctifying the sabbath, to call it a delight, and honourable. (5.) 'Not doing thy own ways:' that is, thou shalt not defile the day by doing any servile work. (6.) 'Nor finding thy own pleasure:' that is, not gratifying the fleshly part, by walks, visits, or pastimes. (7.) 'Nor speaking thy own words:' that is, words heterogeneous and unsuitable for a sabbath; vain, impertinent words; discourses of worldly affairs. Here is the sanctifying of a sabbath described.

USE 2. If the sabbath-day be to be kept holy, it reproves them who, instead of sanctifying the sabbath, profane it. They take that time which should be dedicated wholly to God, and spend it in the service of the devil and their lusts. The Lord hath enclosed this day for his own worship, and they lay this day common. God hath set an hedge about this commandment, 'remember;' and they break this hedge; but 'whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.'³ The sabbath-day in England lies bleeding: and oh that our parliament would pour in some balm into the wounds which the sabbath hath received! How is this day profaned, by sitting idle at home, by selling meat, by vain discourse, by sinful visits, by walking in the fields, by using sports. The people of Israel might not gather manna on the sabbath, and may we use sports and dancings on this day? Truly it should be matter of grief to us to see so much sabbath-profanation! When one of Darius's eunuchs saw Alexander setting his feet on a rich table of Darius's, he fell a weeping: Alexander asked him why he wept? He said it was to see the table which his master so highly esteemed to be now made a footstool. So we may weep to see the sabbath-day, which God so highly esteems, and hath so honoured and blessed, to be made a footstool, and to be trampled upon by the feet of sinners. To profane the sabbath, is a sin of an high nature; it is a wilful contempt of God; it is not only a casting God's law behind our back, but a trampling it under foot. God saith 'keep the sabbath holy,' but men will pollute it: this is to

¹ Ca. 2. 3.² Ac. 2. 1.³ Ec. 10. 8.

despise God, to hang out the flag of defiance, to throw down the gauntlet, and challenge God himself. Now, how can God endure to be thus saucily confronted by proud dust? God will not suffer this high impudence to go unpunished. This will draw God's curses upon the sabbath-breaker; and God's curse will blast where it comes, though the law of the land lets sabbath-breakers alone. No sooner did Christ curse the fig-tree, but it withered. To rob a man of his purse, shall be punished with death; but to rob God of his day, shall not be punished with death. But God will take the matter into his own hand; he will see after the punishing of sabbath-violation: and how doth he punish it? 1. With spiritual plagues. He gives up sabbath-profaners to hardness of heart and a seared conscience. Spiritual judgments are sorest: 'so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lusts.' A sear in the conscience is a brand-mark of reprobation. 2. God punisheth this sin of sabbath-breaking, by giving them up to commit other sins. God, to revenge the breaking of his sabbath, suffers men to break open houses, and so come to be punished by the magistrate. How many such confessions have we heard from thieves going to be executed! They never regarded the sabbath, and so God suffered them to commit those heinous sins, for which now they are to die. 3. God punisheth sabbath-breaking, by sudden visible judgments on men for this sin; God punisheth them in their estates, and in their persons. One carrying corn into his barn on the Lord's day, both house and corn were consumed with fire from heaven. In Wiltshire there was a dancing-match appointed upon the Lord's day; and one of the company, as he was dancing, fell down dead suddenly, and so was made a spectacle of God's justice. The 'Theatre of God's Judgments' relates of one, who used every Lord's day to hunt in sermon-time, and he had a child by his wife with a head like a dog, and it cried like a hound. His sin was monstrous, and it was punished with a monstrous birth. The Lord threatened the Jews that if they would not hallow the sabbath-day, he would kindle a 'fire in their gates.'² The dreadful fire which brake out in London, began on the sabbath-day; as if God would tell us from heaven, he was then punishing us for our sabbath-profanation. Nor doth God pun-

ish it only in this life with death, but with damnation. Such as break God's sabbath, let them see if they can break those chains of darkness, in which they and the devils shall be held.

USE 3. It exhorts us to sabbath-holiness.

Make conscience of keeping this day holy. The other commandments have only an affirmative in them or a negative; this fourth commandment hath both an affirmative in it and a negative; 'thou shalt keep the sabbath-day holy,' and, 'thou shalt not do any manner of work in it;' to show how carefully God would have us to observe this day. Not only must you keep this day yourselves, but have a care that all under your charge keep it; 'thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maid-servant;' that is, thou who art a superior, a parent or a master, thou must have a care that not only thyself sanctify the day, but those who are under thy trust and tuition. To blame are those masters of families, who are careful that their servants serve them, but have no care that they serve God; they care not though their servants should serve the devil, so long as their bodies do them service. That which St Paul saith to Timothy, 'keep that which is committed to thy trust,'³ is of large extension. Not only have a care of thy own soul, but have a care of the souls thou art entrusted with. See that they who are under thy charge sanctify the sabbath.* God's law provided, that if a man met with an ox or an ass going astray, he should bring him back again: much more, when thou seest the soul of thy child or servant going astray from God, and breaking his sabbath, thou shouldest bring him back again to a religious observation of this day. Now, that I may press you to sabbath-sanctification, consider,

³ 1 Ti. 1. 11.

* There are some well-meaning, but injudicious persons, whom it may be needful to caution against perverting a day, which Christ says was made for man, into a season of gloom and severity for themselves or their families. This is done by protracting the services of religion to an immoderate length, manifesting an unwise scrupulosity as to things which are necessary for their comfort, abridging their requisite support, imposing on the young tasks which are burdensome, speaking to them in harshness and terror, not in mild counsel, and dwelling on the dark scenes and topics of religion, to the neglect of those more bright and cheering. It is in this way that the sabbath is made to the young the object of disgust and hatred, whereas, by an opposite temper and conduct, they might be brought to love it as their delight, to look back on it as the day on which they not only saw most of a parent's piety, but felt most of his love; in which religion appeared, not with a scowl to terrify, but with heavenly smiles to allure; in which wisdom's bread was brought to their repasts, the spirit of love to their worship, and the visions of God to their pillow.—*Belfrage's Exp. Cat.*, v. 2. p. 37.

(1.) God hath promised great blessings to the strict observers of this day.—1. A promise of joy. If this be a delight, 'then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord.'¹ Delighting in God is both a duty and a reward. In this text it is a reward; then shalt thou 'delight thyself in the Lord:'² as if God had said, 'if thou keep the sabbath conscientiously, I will give thee that which will fill thee with delight; if thou keep the sabbath willingly, I will make thee keep it joyfully; I will give thee those enlargements in duty, and that inward comfort, which shall abundantly satisfy thee; thy soul shall overflow with such a stream of joy, that thou shalt say, Lord, in keeping thy sabbath there is great reward!'—2. Of honour: 'I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth:' that is, I will advance thee to honour; so Munster interprets it. Some, by the 'high places of the earth,' understand Judea; so Grotius. I will bring thee into the land of Judea, which is higher situated than

the other countries adjacent.—3. Of earth and heaven: 'I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob:' that is, 'I will feed thee with all the delicious things of Canaan, and afterwards I'll translate thee to heaven, whereof Canaan was but a type.' And another promise; 'blessed is the man that doth this, that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it.'³ 'Blessed is the man;' in the Hebrew it is 'blessedness.' To him that keeps the sabbath holy, here is blessedness upon blessedness belongs to him; he shall be blessed with the upper and nether springs; he shall be blessed in his name, estate, soul, progeny. Who would not keep the sabbath from polluting it, that shall have so many blessings entailed upon him and his posterity after him?

(2.) A conscientious keeping the sabbath seasons the heart for God's service all the week after. Christian, the more holy thou art on a sabbath, the more holy thou wilt be on the week following.

OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 12. *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

HAVING done with the first table, I am next to speak of the duties of the second table. The commandments may be likened to Jacob's ladder; the first table, as the top of his ladder, reacheth to heaven; it respects God: the second table, as the foot of the ladder, rests on the earth; it respects superiors and inferiors. By the first table we walk religiously towards God; by the second we walk religiously towards man. He cannot be good in the first table that is bad in the second. 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' In this, 1st. a command, 'honour thy father and thy mother:' 2d. a reason annexed to it, 'that thy days may be long in the land.'

I. The command, 'honour thy father.'

Q. *Who is meant here by father?*

Father is taken several ways; the political, ancient, spiritual, economical, natural.

1. The political father, the magistrate. He is the father of his country; he is to be an encourager of virtue, a punisher of vice, a father to the widow and orphan; such a father was Job; 'I was a father to the poor; and the

cause which I knew not, I searched out.'⁴ And as magistrates are fathers, so especially the king, who is the head of magistrates, is a political father; he is placed as the sun among the lesser stars. The scripture calls kings 'father:' 'kings shall be thy nursing-fathers.'⁵ They are to nurse up their subjects in piety, by their good edicts and examples; and to nurse them up in peace and plenty. Such nursing-fathers were David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Constantine, Theodosius. It is happy for a people who have such nursing-fathers, whose breasts milk comfort to their children. These fathers are to be honoured; for, (1.) Their place deserves honour. God hath set these political fathers to preserve order and harmony in a nation, and to prevent those state convulsions which otherwise might ensue: when 'there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes.'⁶ A wonder, Prov. 30. 27. (2.) God hath promoted kings, that they may promote justice. As they have a sword in their hand, to signify their power, so a sceptre, an emblem of jus-

¹ Is. 58. 14.

² Ps. 37. 4.

³ Is. 56. 2. ⁴ Job 29. 16. ⁵ Is. 49. 23. ⁶ Ju. 17. 6.

tice. It is said of Marcus Aurelius, emperor, that he allotted one hour of the day to hear the complaints of such as were oppressed. Kings place judges as cherubim about the throne, for distribution of justice. These political fathers are to be honoured: 'honour the king.'¹ And this honour is to be shown by a civil respect to their persons, and a cheerful submission to their laws, so far as they agree and run parallel with God's law.* Kings are to be prayed for, which is a part of that honour we give them; 'I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, be made for kings, that we may lead a quiet, peaceable life under them, in all godliness and honesty.'² We are to pray for kings, that God would honour them to be blessings; that under them we may enjoy the gospel of peace, and the peace of the gospel. How happy was the reign of Numa Pompilius, when the swords were beaten into ploughshares, and the bees made their hives of the soldiers' helmets!

2. There is the grave ancient father who is venerable for old age, whose grey hairs are resembled to the white flowers of the almond-tree.³ There are fathers for seniority, on whose wrinkled brows, and in the furrows of whose cheeks is pictured the map of old age. These fathers are to be honoured: 'thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.'⁴ Especially, those are to be honoured who are fathers not only for their seniority, but their piety; whose souls are flourishing, when their bodies are a decaying. It is a blessed sight to see the springs of grace in the autumn of old age; to see men stooping towards the grave, yet going up the hill of God; to see them lose their colour, yet keep their savour. Such, whose silver hairs are crowned with righteousness, are worthy of double honour; they are to be honoured, not only as pieces of antiquity, but as patterns of virtue. If you see an old man fearing God, whose grace shines brightest when the sun of

his life is setting, O honour him as a father, by reverencing and imitating him!

3. There are spiritual fathers, as pastors and ministers. These are the instruments of 'the new-birth'; 'though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.'⁵ The spiritual fathers are to be honoured.

1st. In respect of their office. Whatever their persons are, their office is honourable; they are the 'messengers of the Lord of hosts.'⁶ They represent no less than God himself; 'now then we are ambassadors for Christ.'⁷ Jesus Christ was of this calling; he had his mission and sanction from heaven;⁸ and this crowns the ministerial calling with honour.

2nd. Ministers, these spiritual fathers, are to be 'honoured for their work's sake;' they come, like the dove, with an olive-branch in their mouth; they preach 'glad tidings of peace;' their work is 'to save souls.' Other callings have only to do with men's bodies or estates, but the minister's calling is employed about the souls of men. Their work is to redeem spiritual captives, and turn men 'from the power of Satan to God.'⁹ Their work is 'to enlighten them who sit in the region of darkness,' and make them 'shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven.' These spiritual fathers are to be 'honoured for their work's sake;' and this honour is to be shown three ways: (1.) By giving them respect; 'know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.'¹⁰ I confess, the scandalous lives of some ministers have been a great reproach, and have made the 'offering of the Lord to be abhorred' in some places of the land. The leper in the law was to have his lip covered: such as are angels by office, but lepers in their lives, ought to have their lips covered, and to be silenced. But though some deserve 'no honour,' yet such as are faithful, and make it their work to bring souls to Christ, are to be reverenced as spiritual fathers. Obadiah honoured the prophet Elijah.¹¹ Why did God reckon the tribe of Levi for the first-born?¹² Why did he appoint that the prince should ask counsel of God by the priest?¹³ Why did the Lord show, by that

¹ 1 Pe. 2. 17. ² 1 Ti. 2. 1, 2. ³ Ec. 12. 5. ⁴ Le. 19. 32.

* All magistrates are by his permission, and even when they are oppressive, the christian is bound to regard them (so he should regard other evils) as existing by divine permission, and to bow submissive in all cases where disobedience to God is not demanded by them. Such a view of the subject is greatly adapted to satisfy the mind of a christian, when he feels galled with the yoke of oppression. 'The powers that be are ordained of God;' that is, they exist by the wise and holy arrangements of his providence, even when they are oppressive; and, like other evils in the world, they should be submitted to on the same ground as that which we take when we urge acquiescence in the afflictive dispensations of an overruling power.—*Stuart on Romans*, c. 13. v. 1.

⁵ 1 Co. 4. 15. ⁶ Mal. 2. 7. ⁷ 2 Co. 5. 20. ⁸ Jno. 8. 13.

⁹ Ac. 26. 18. ¹⁰ 1 Th. 5. 12, 13. ¹¹ 1 Ki. 18. 16.

¹² Nu. 3. 13.

¹³ Nu. 27. 21.

miracle of 'Aaron's rod flourishing,' that he had chosen the tribe of 'Levi to minister before him?'¹ Why doth Christ call his apostles 'the lights of the world?' Why doth he say to all his ministers, 'lo, I am with you to the end of the world;' but because he would have these spiritual fathers revered? In ancient times the Egyptians chose their kings out of their priests. They are far from showing this respect and honour to their spiritual fathers who have slight thoughts of such as have the charge of the sanctuary, and do minister before the Lord. 'Know them,' saith the apostle, 'which labour among you.' Many can be content to know their ministers in their infirmities, and are glad when they have any thing against them, but do not know them in the apostle's sense, so as to give them 'double honour.' Surely, were it not for the ministry, you would not be a vineyard, but a desert; were it not for the ministry, you would be destitute of the two seals of the covenant,—baptism and the Lord's supper; you would be infidels; 'for faith comes by hearing; and how shall they hear without a preacher?'² (2.) Honour the ministers, these spiritual fathers, by becoming advocates for them, and wiping off those slanders and calumnies which are unjustly cast upon them.³ Constantine was a great honourer of the ministry; he vindicated them; he would not read the envious accusations brought in against them, but did burn them. Do the ministers open their mouths to God for you in prayer, and will not you open your mouths in their behalf? Surely, if they labour to preserve you from hell, you should preserve them from slander; if they labour to save your souls, you ought to save their credit. (3.) Honour them by conforming to their doctrine. This is the greatest honour you can put upon your spiritual fathers, by believing and obeying their doctrine. He is an honourer of the ministry, who is not only a hearer, but a follower of the word. As disobedience reproacheth the ministry, so obedience honoureth it. The apostle calls his Thessalonians his crown; 'what is our crown of rejoicing? are not ye?'⁴ A thriving people are a minister's crown; when there is a metamorphosis, a change wrought; when people come to the word proud, but go away humble; they come earthly, but they go away heavenly; they come, as Naaman to Jordan, lepers, but they go away healed; this is an honour to the min-

istry, 'need we, as some others, epistles of commendation?'⁵ Though other ministers might need letters of commendation, yet Paul needed none: for, when men should hear of the obedience of these Corinthians, which was wrought in them by Paul's preaching; this was a sufficient certificate for him, that God had blessed his labours. The Corinthians were a sufficient honour to him; they were his letters-testimonial. You cannot honour your spiritual fathers more, than by thriving under their ministry, and living upon those sermons which they preach.

4. There is the economical father, that is, the master; he is the father of the family, therefore Naaman's servants called their master, 'father.'⁶ And the centurion calls his servant, 'son.'⁷ The servant is to honour his master, as the father of the family. Though the master be not so exactly qualified as he should, yet the servant must not neglect his duty, but show some kind of honour to him.

1st. In obeying his master in things that are lawful and honest; 'servants, be subject to your masters; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.'⁸ God hath nowhere given a charter of exemption to free you from your duty. You cannot disobey your earthly master, but you disobey your master in heaven. Think not that birth, or high parts, no, nor yet your grace, will exempt you from obedience to your master; to obey him, is an ordinance of God, and the apostle saith, 'whosoever resisteth the ordinance, shall receive to themselves damnation.'⁹

2d. The servant's honouring of his master, his economical father, is seen in being diligent in his service. Apelles painted a servant with his hands full of tools,—an emblem of diligence. The loitering servant is a kind of thief; though he doth not steal from his master's goods, yet he steals that time which he should have employed in his master's service. The slothful servant is called a 'wicked servant.'¹⁰

3d. The servant is to honour his master, who is his family-father, by being faithful; 'who then is a faithful and wise servant?'¹¹ Faithfulness is the chief thing in a servant. This faithfulness in a servant is seen in six things. (1.) In tenaciousness in concealing the secrets your master hath intrusted you with; if those secrets are not sins, you ought to promise pri-

¹ Nu. 17. ² Ro. 10. 14. ³ 1 Ti. 5. 19. ⁴ 1 Thes. 2. 19.

⁵ 2 Co. 3. 1. ⁶ 2 Ki. 5. 13. ⁷ Mat. 8. 6. ⁸ 1 Pet. 2. 13.
⁹ Ro. 13. 2. ¹⁰ Mat. 23. 26. ¹¹ Mat. 24. 45.

vacy. What is whispered in your ear you are not to publish on the house-top; such servants are spies. Who would keep a glass that is cracked? Who would keep a servant that hath a crack in his brain, and cannot keep a secret? (2.) Faithfulness in a servant is seen in designing the master's advantage. A faithful servant esteems his master's good as his own. Such a good servant had Abraham; when his master sent him to transact business for him, he was as careful about it, as if it had been his own; 'O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham!'¹ Doubtless Abraham's servant was as glad he had got a wife for his master's son, as if he had got a wife for himself. (3.) Faithfulness in a servant is seen in standing up for the honour of his master. When he hears him spoken against, he must vindicate him. As the master is careful of the servant's body, so the servant should be careful of the master's name; when the master is unjustly reproached, the servant cannot be excused if he be possessed with a dumb devil. (4.) Faithfulness is, when a servant 'is true to his word.' He dares not tell a lie, but will speak the truth, though it be against himself. A lie doubles the sin: 'he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.'² A liar is near akin to the devil;³ and who would let any of the devil's kindred live with him? The lie that Gehazi told his master Elisha, entailed leprosy on Gehazi and his seed for ever.⁴ A faithful servant, his tongue is the true index of his heart. (5.) Faithfulness is, when a servant is against impropriation. He dares not convert his master's goods to his own use; 'not purloining.'⁵ What a servant filcheth from his master, is damnable gain. The servant who enricheth himself by stealing from his master, stuffs his

pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. (6.) Faithfulness is in preserving the master's person, if unjustly in danger. Banister who betrayed his master the duke of Buckingham, in king Richard the Third's reign; it is remarkable how the judgments of God befell that traitorous servant: his eldest son ran mad, his daughter, of a singular beauty, was suddenly struck with leprosy, his younger son was drowned, and he himself arraigned, and had been executed, had he not been saved by his clergy. That servant who is not true to his master, will never be true to God or his own soul.

4th. The servant is to honour his master by serving him, as with love, for willingness is more than the work, so with silence, that is, without repining, and without replying: 'exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, not answering again;'⁶ Greek, 'not giving cross answers.' Some servants are quick at speech, though slow at work, and instead of being sorry for a fault, they provoke by unbecoming language: were the heart more humble, the tongue would be more silent.* They are the apostle's words, 'not answering again.' And to those servants who do thus honour their masters, or family-fathers, by submission, diligence, faithfulness, love, and humble silence, for their encouragement let them take that; 'servants, obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.' In serving your masters, you serve Christ, and he will not let you lose your labour, ye shall receive the 'reward of the inheritance.' From serving on earth, you shall be taken up to reign in heaven, and shall sit with Christ upon his throne.⁸

Ex. 20. 12. *Honour thy Father and thy Mother, &c.*

If we are not just, we cannot be holy. Having shown you how servants are to honour their masters, the fathers of families; I shall next show how masters are to carry it towards their servants, that they may gain honour from them.

1. In general, masters must remember that they have a master in heaven, who will call them

to account; 'knowing that your master also is in heaven.'⁹

⁶ Ti. 2. 9. ⁷ Col. 3. 24. ⁸ Re. 3. 21. ⁹ Ep. 6. 9.

* The christian servant who falls into the hands of a froward master, will not be beaten out of his station and duty of obedience by all the hand of wrongful usage he meets with, but will take that as an opportunity of exercising the more obedience and patience, and will be the more cheerfully patient, because of his innocence. Men do indeed look sometimes upon this as a just plea for impatience, that they suffer unjustly, which is yet very ill logic; for, as the philosopher said, 'would any man that frets because he suffers unjustly, wish to deserve it, that he might be patient.'—*Leighton on 1 Pet. 2. 19.*

¹ Ge. 24. 12. ² Ps. 101. 7. ³ Jno. 8. 44.
⁴ 2 Ki. 5. 27. ⁵ Ti. 2. 10.

2. More particularly. (1.) Masters must have a care to provide for their servants; as they cut them out work, so they must give them their meat in due season.¹ And the food should be wholesome and sufficing. It is an unworthy thing in some governors of families, to lay out so much upon their own back, as to pinch their servants' bellies. (2.) Masters should encourage their servants in their work, by commending them when they do well; though a master is to tell a servant of his faults, yet he is not always to beat upon one string, but sometimes take notice of that which is praiseworthy. This makes a servant more cheerful in his work, and gains the master love from his servant. (3.) Masters must not overburden their servants, but proportion their work to their strength; if you lay too much load on a servant he will faint under it. Christianity teacheth compassion. (4.) Masters must endeavour the spiritual good of their servants; they must be seraphim to kindle their love to religion: they must be monitors to put them in mind of their souls; they must bring them to the pool of the sanctuary, waiting till the angel stir the waters.² They must seek God for them, that their servants may be his servants; they must allow them time convenient for secret devotion. Some masters are cruel to the souls of their servants; they look that they do the work about the house, but abridge them of the time they should employ in working out their salvation. (5.) Masters should use mild gentle behaviour towards servants; 'forbearing threatening,'³ 'thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but fear thy God.'⁴ It requires wisdom in a master to know how to keep up his authority, yet lay down his austerity: we have a good copy to write after; our Master in heaven is 'slow to anger, and of great mercy.'⁵ Some masters are so harsh and implacable, that they are enough to spoil a good servant.* (6.) Be very exact and punctual in the compacts and agreements you make with your servants: do not prevaricate, keep not back any of their wages, nor deal deceitfully with them, as Laban did with Jacob, changing his wages.⁶ Falseness in promise is as bad as false weights. (7.)

¹ Lu. 17. 7. ² Jno. 5. 4. ³ Ep. 6. 9. ⁴ Le. 25. 43.
⁵ Ps. 115. 8. ⁶ Ge. 31. 7.

* Consider *who made thee to differ*. Might he not with a turn of his hand have made your stations just contrary: have made thee the servant and thy servant the master? But we willingly forget those things that should compose our minds to humility and meekness, and blow them up with such fancies as please and feed our natural vanity, and make us somebody in our own account.—*Lighton on 1 Pet. 2. 18.*

Be careful of your servants, not only in health but in sickness. They have got their sickness in your service; use what means you can for their recovery; be not like the Amalekite, who 'forsook his servant when he was sick,' but be as the good centurion, who kept his sick servant, and sought to Christ for a cure.⁷ If you have a beast that falls sick, you will not turn it off, but have it looked to, and pay for its cure; will you be kinder to your horses than to your servants? Thus should masters, the fathers of the family, carry themselves prudently and piously, that they may gain honour from their servants, and may give up their accounts to God with joy.

5. The natural father, the father of the flesh.⁸ Honour thy natural father. This is so necessary a duty, that Philo the Jew placed the fifth commandment in the first table, as though we had not performed our whole duty to God, till we had paid this debt of honour to our natural parents. Children are the vineyard of the parent's planting, and honour done to the parent is some of the fruit of the vineyard.

Q. *Wherein are children to show their honour to their parents?*

1. In a reverential esteem of their persons,—they must 'give them a civil veneration.' Therefore when the apostle speaks of fathers of our bodies, he speaks also of 'giving them reverence.'⁹ This veneration or reverence must be shown,

1. Inwardly, by fear mixed with love; 'ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.'¹⁰ In the commandment the father is named first, here the mother is named first, (1.) Partly to put the honour upon her the mother, because, by reason of many weaknesses incident to her sex, she is apt to be more slighted by children. And, (2.) partly, because the mother endures more for the child; therefore, here God gives the mother the priority, names her first, 'ye shall fear every one his mother and his father.'

2. Reverence must be shown to parents outwardly, that is, in word and gesture. (1.) In word, and that either in speaking to parents, or speaking of them. First, reverence in speaking to parents: children must speak to parents respectfully, and in decent language; 'ask on, my mother,'¹¹ said king Solomon to his mother Bathsheba. Secondly, reverence in speaking of parents: children must speak of their parents honourably, they ought to speak well of them, if they deserve well;

⁷ 1 Sa. 30. 13. ⁸ Mat. 8. 6. ⁹ He. 12. 9. ¹⁰ He. 12. 9.
¹¹ Le. 19. 3. ¹² 1 Ki. 2. 20.

'her children rise up, and call her blessed.'¹ And, in case a parent bewrays weakness and indiscretion, the child should make the best of it, and, by his wise apologies for his father, cover his father's nakedness. (2.) In gesture. Children are to show their reverence to their parents by submissive behaviour, by uncovering the head, bending the knee. Joseph, though he was a great prince, and his father grown poor, yet he bowed to him, and behaved himself as humbly, as if his father had been the prince, and he the poor man.² And king Solomon, when his mother came to him, rose off his throne, and 'bowed himself to her.'³ Among the Lacedemonians, if a child had carried himself arrogantly or saucily to his father, it was lawful for the father to appoint whom he would to be his heir. O how many children are far from thus giving reverence to their parents! They despise their parents; they carry themselves with that pride and malapertness towards them, that they are a shame to religion, 'and bring their parents' grey hairs with sorrow to the grave; 'cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother.'⁴ If all that set light by their parents are cursed, how many children in our age are under a curse! If such as are disrespectful to their parents live to have children, they will be thorns in their sides, and God will make them read their sins in their punishment.

II. The second way of showing honour to parents, is in careful obedience: 'children obey your parents in all things.'⁵ Our Lord Christ herein set a pattern to children,⁶ he was subject to his parents. He to whom angels were subject, yet was subject to his parents. This obedience to parents is shown three ways:

1. In hearkening to their counsel; 'hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.'⁷ Parents are, as it were, in the room of God; if they would teach you the fear of the Lord, you must listen to their words as oracles, and not be as the deaf adder to stop your ears. Eli's sons hearkened not to the voice of their father,⁸ but they were called 'sons of Belial.'⁹ And children must hearken to the counsel of their parents, as in spiritual matters, so in other affairs which relate to this life; as in the choice of a calling, and in case of entering into marriage. Jacob would not dispose of himself in marriage, though he was forty years old, without the

advice and consent of his parents.¹⁰ Children are, as it were, the parents' proper goods and possession, and it is high injustice in a child to give away herself without the parents' leave. If parents should indeed counsel a child to a match with one that is irreligious or popish, I think the case is plain, and many of the learned are of opinion, that here the child may have a negative voice, and is not obliged to be ruled by the parent. Children are to 'marry in the Lord,'¹¹ therefore not with persons irreligious, for that is not to marry in the Lord.

2. Obedience to parents is shown in subscribing to their commands. A child should be the parents' echo: when the father speaks, the child should echo back obedience. The Reebabites were forbidden by their father to drink wine; and they did obey him, and were commended for it.¹² And children must obey their parents in all things.¹³ Things that are more against the grain, and which they have most reluctance to, yet they must obey their parents. Esau would obey his father, when he commanded him to fetch him venison, because it is probable he took pleasure in hunting; but refused to obey him in a matter of greater concernment, namely, in the choice of a wife. But though children must obey their parents 'in all things,' yet it is with this limitation, 'things just and honest.' 'Obey in the Lord,'¹⁴ that is, so far as the commands of parents agree with, and are consonant to God's commands. If they command against God, then they lose their right of being obeyed, but in this case we must unchild ourselves.

3. Honour is to be shown to parents, in relieving their wants. Joseph cherished his father in his old age.¹⁵ It is but paying the just debt. Parents have brought up children when they were young, and children ought to nourish their parents when they are old. The young storks, by the instinct of nature, bring meat to the old storks, when by reason of age they are not able to fly. The memory of Eneas was honoured, for carrying his aged father out of Troy when it was on fire. I have read of a daughter, whose father being condemned to be starved to death, she did in prison give him suck with her own breasts, which being known to the governors, procured his freedom out of prison. To blame are such, shall I say children or monsters, who are ashamed of their parents when they are old, and fallen to decay; when

¹ Pr. 31. 28. ² Ge. 48. ³ 1 Ki. 2. 19. ⁴ De. 27. 16.
⁵ Col. 3. 20. ⁶ Lu. 2. 52. ⁷ Pr. 1. 8. ⁸ 1 Sa. 2. 25. ⁹ ver. 12.

¹⁰ Ge. 28. 1, 2.

¹¹ 1 Cor. 7. 39

¹² Je. 35. 6.

¹³ Col. 3. 20.

¹⁴ Eph. 6. 1.

¹⁵ Ge. 47. 12.

parents' tears and lean cheeks may plead pity, yet children have no compassion; when they ask for bread, they give them a stone.* When houses are shut up, we say the plague is there: when children's hearts are shut up against their parents, the plague is in those hearts. Our blessed Saviour took great care for his mother; when he was on the cross, he charged his disciple John to take her home to him as his mother, and see that she wanted nothing.¹

The reasons why children should honour their parents are, 1. It is a solemn command of God, 'honour thy father,' &c. As God's word is the rule, so his will must be the reason of our obedience. 2. They deserve honour, in respect of that great love and affection which they bear to their children; and that love is evidenced both by their care and cost. (1.) Their care in bringing up their children; a sign their hearts are full of love, because their hearts are so full of care. Parents often take more care of their children than for themselves. They take care of them when they are tender, lest like wall-fruit they should be nipt in the bud. And as children grow older, so the care of parents grows greater; they are afraid of their children falling when young, and of worse falls when they are older. (2.) Their love is evidenced by their cost.² They lay up, and they lay out for their children; they are not like the raven or ostrich,³ which are cruel to their young. Parents sometimes do impoverish themselves to enrich their children: all this calls for honour from the children. Children can never parallel or equal parents' love; parents are the instruments of life to their children, children cannot be so to their parents. 3. To honour parents, 'is well-pleasing to the Lord.'⁴ As it is joyful to the parents, so it is pleasing to the Lord. Children, is it not your duty to please God? In honouring and obeying your parents, you please God, as well as when you repent and believe. And, that you

may see how well it pleaseth God, he bestows a reward upon it, 'that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Jacob would not let the angel go till he had blessed him; nor God would not part with this commandment till he had blessed it. Here is the blessing, 'that thy days may be long in the land,' &c. St Paul calls this 'the first commandment with promise.'⁵ The second commandment hath a general promise of mercy; but this is the first commandment that hath a particular promise made to it,† 'that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Long life is mentioned as a blessing; 'thou shalt see thy children's children.'⁶ It was a great favour of God to Moses, that though he was an hundred and twenty years old, he needed no spectacles; 'his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.'⁷ God threatened it as a curse to Eli, that there should not be an old man in his family.⁸ Since the flood, life is much abbreviated and cut short; some, the womb is their tomb, others exchange their cradle for their grave, others die in the flower of their age; death serves its warrant every day upon one or other. Now, when death lies in ambush continually for us, if God satisfy us with long life, 'with long life will I satisfy him,'⁹ this is to be esteemed a blessing. It is a blessing that God gives a long time to repent, and a long time to do service, and a long time to enjoy the comforts of relations; and upon whom is this blessing of long life entailed, but obedient children? 'Honour thy father that thy days may be long.' Nothing sooner shortens life than disobedience to parents. Absalom was a disobedient son who sought to deprive his father of his life and crown, and he did not live but half his days; the mule he rode upon, as being weary of such a burden, left him hanging in the oak betwixt heaven and earth, as not fit to tread upon one,

¹ Jno. 19. 26, 27. ² 1 Cor. 12. 14. ³ Job 39. 14. ⁴ Col. 3. 20.

* There was lately a man who had an only son, to whom he was very kind, and gave every thing that he had. When his son grew up and got a house, he was very unkind to his poor old father, whom he refused to support, and turned out of his house. The old man said to his grandson, 'go and fetch the covering from my bed, that I may go and sit by the wayside and beg.' The child burst into tears and ran for the covering. He met his father, to whom he said, 'I am going to fetch the rug from my grandfather's bed, that he may wrap it round him and go a-begging.' He went for the rug, brought it to his father, and said to him, 'pray, father, cut it in two: the half of it will be large enough for grandfather, and perhaps you may want the other half when I grow a man and turn you out of doors! The words of the child struck him so sorely, that he immediately ran to his father, asked forgiveness, and was very kind to him till he died.—*Whitcross's Anecdotes on Cat.* p. 120.

⁵ Eph. 6. 2. ⁶ Ps. 128. 6. ⁷ De. 34. 7.

⁸ 1 Sa. 2. 31. ⁹ Ps. 91. 16.

† The church of Rome would from hence argue, that the second commandment, which forbids the worship of images, having a promise added to it of God's showing mercy to thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments, can be no longer obligatory under the gospel, since this which relates to honouring parents, is said to be the *first* commandment with promise. But it is easy to discern the fallacy and weakness of this argument, as what is annexed to the second commandment evidently relates to the whole law, and is a general declaration of the mercy God would show to those who kept not only that, but all his commandments; while this is really the *first* and only precept of the decalogue that has a particular promise annexed to it, peculiar to itself.—*Doddridge's Fam. Ex. Exp.* G. 2.

or to enter into the other. Obedience to parents spins out thy life; 'that thy days may be long.' Nor doth obedience to parents only lengthen life but sweeten it: therefore it follows, 'that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' To live long, and not to have a foot of land, is a misery; but obedience to parents settles land of inheritance upon the child. 'Hast thou but one blessing,

O my father?' said Esau. Behold, God hath more blessings for an obedient child than one; not only shall he have a long life, but a fruitful land; and not only shall he have land, but land given in love, 'the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.' Thou shalt have thy land not only with God's leave, but with his love. All which are cogent arguments to make children honour and obey their parents.

Ex. 20. 12. *Honour thy Father* —

USE 1. If we are to honour our fathers on earth, then much more our Father in heaven: 'if then I be a father, where is my honour?'¹ A father is but the instrument of conveying life, but God is the original cause of our being; 'it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves.'² Honour and adoration is a pearl which belongs only to the crown of heaven.

1. We show honour to our heavenly Father, by obeying him. Thus Christ honoured his Father; 'I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.'³ This he calls honouring of God, 'I do always those things that please him.'⁴ 'I honour my father.'⁵ The wise men did not only bow the knee to Christ, but presented him with 'gold and myrrh,'⁶ so we must not only bow the knee, give God adoration, but bring him presents, give him golden obedience.

2. We show honour to our heavenly Father, by appearing advocates in his cause, and standing up for his truth in an adulterous generation. That son honours his father who stands up in his defence, and vindicates him when he is calumniated and reproached. Do they honour God who are ashamed of him? 'Many believed on him, but did not confess him.'⁷ They are bastard-sons who are ashamed to own their heavenly Father; such as are born of God, are steeled with courage for his truth, they are like the rock which no waves can break, like the adamant which no sword can cut. Basil was a champion for truth in the time of the emperor Valens; and Athanasius, when the world was Arian, appeared for God.

3. We show honour to our heavenly Father, by ascribing the labour of all we do to him; 'I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I but the grace of God which was with me.'⁸ If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, any

strength against corruption, he rears up a pillar and writes upon it, 'hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' As Joab, when he had fought against Rabbah, and had like to have taken it, sent for king David, that he might carry away the honour of the victory,' so, when a child of God hath any conquest over Satan, he gives all the honour to God. Hypocrites, whose lamp is fed with the oil of vainglory, while they do any eminent service for God, seek themselves; and so their very serving of him is a dishonouring him.

We show honour to our heavenly Father, by celebrating his praise; 'let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day,'⁹ 'blessing, honour, glory and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne.'¹⁰ Blessing God is honouring of God; it lifts him up in the eyes of others; it spreads his fame and renown in the world. In this manner the angels, the choristers of heaven, are now honouring God, they trumpet forth his praise; in prayer, we act like saints, in praise, like angels.

5. We show honour to our heavenly Father, by suffering dishonour, yea, death for his sake. St Paul did bear in his body the 'marks of the Lord Jesus.'¹¹ As they were the marks of honour to him, so trophies of honour to the gospel. The honour which comes to God, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him, which we do to kings, but it comes in another way, by the suffering of his people; they let the world see what a good God they serve, and how they love him, and will fight under his banner to the death. Thus you see how we are to honour our heavenly Father: God is 'worthy of honour;' 'thou art clothed with honour and majesty.'¹² What are all his attributes but glorious beams shining from this sun? He deserves more honour than men or

¹ Mal 1. 6. ² Ps. 107. ³ Jno. 6. 38. ⁴ Jno. 7. 29. ⁵ Jno. 8. 49. ⁶ Mat. 2. 11. ⁷ Jno. 12. 42. ⁸ Co. 15. 10.

⁹ 2 Sa. 12. 27. ¹⁰ Ps. 71. 8. ¹¹ Re. 5. 13. ¹² Ga. 16. 17. ¹³ Ps. 104. 1.

angles can give him; 'I will call upon the Lord who is worthy to be praised.'¹ God is worthy of honour. Oftentimes we confer honour upon them that do not deserve it; many noble persons we give titles of honour to, who are sordid and vicious, they do not deserve honour, but God is worthy of honour; 'blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessings and praise!'² He is above all the acclamations and triumphs of the archangels. O then, let every true child of God honour his heavenly Father! Though the wicked dishonour him by their flagitious lives, yet let not his own children dishonour him. Sins in you are worse than in others; a fault in a stranger is not so much taken notice of, as a fault in a child; a spot in black cloth is not so much observed, but a spot in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it; a sin in the wicked is not so much wondered at, it is a spot in black, but a sin in a child of God, here is a spot in scarlet; this is more visible, and brings an odium and dishonour upon the gospel. The sins of God's own children go nearer to his heart; 'when the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and of his daughters.'³ O forbear doing anything that may reflect dishonour upon God! Will you disgrace your heavenly Father? Let not God complain of the provocations of his sons and daughters; let him not cry out, 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.'⁴ So much for the first; if our earthly father be to be honoured, then much more our heavenly.

USE 2. Exhortation. First Branch. Doth God command, 'honour thy father and thy mother?' Then let it exhort children to put this great duty in practice: be living commentaries upon this commandment. Honour and reverence your parents; not only obey their commands, but submit to their rebukes; you cannot honour your Father in heaven, unless you honour your earthly parents; to deny obedience to parents, entails God's judgments upon children; 'the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.'⁵ Eli's two disobedient sons were slain.⁶ God made a law that the rebellious son should be stoned: the same death the blasphemer had; 'if a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his

mother; then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die.'⁷ A father once complaining, 'never had a father a worse son than I have;' 'yes,' said the son, 'my grandfather had;' a prodigy of impudence that can hardly be paralleled. Manlius, when he was grown old and poor, and had a son very rich, the old father desired some food of him, but the son denied him relief, yea, disclaimed him from being his father, and sent him away with reproachful language. The poor old father let tears fall, as witnesses of his grief. But God, to revenge this disobedience, struck this unnatural son with madness, of which he could never be cured. Disobedient children stand in the place where all God's arrows fly.

Second Branch. Let parents so carry it, as they may gain honour from their children.

Q. *How may parents so carry towards their children, that their children may willingly pay the debt of honour and reverence to their parents?*

If you would have your children honour you, I. Be careful to bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord: 'bring them up in the admonition of the Lord.'⁸ You conveyed the plague of sin to them, therefore endeavour to get them healed and sanctified. Austin saith, his mother Monica travailed more for his spiritual birth than his natural. Timothy's mother instructed him from a child;⁹ she did not only give him her breast-milk, but 'the sincere milk of the word.' Season your children with good principles betimes, that they may, with Obadiah, 'fear the Lord from their youth.'¹⁰ When parents instruct not their children, they seldom prove blessings. God oft punisheth the carelessness of parents with un-
dutifulness in their children. It is not enough that in baptism your child is dedicated to God, but it must be educated for God. Children are young plants which you must be continually watering with good instruction; 'train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'¹¹ The more your children fear God, the more they will honour you.* 2. If you would have your chil-

¹ Le. 21. 14. De. 21. 18. ⁶ Ep. 6. 4. ⁹ 2 Tim. 3. 15.

¹⁰ 1 Ki. 18. 12.

¹¹ Pr. 22. 6.

* The judicious Hooker used to say, 'if I had no other reason and motive for being religious, I would earnestly strive to be so for the sake of my aged mother, that I might requite her care of me, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy.'—*Whitcross's Anecdotes on Catech.* p. 117.

¹ 2 Sa. 22. 4.

² Ne. 9. 5.

³ De. 32. 19.

⁴ Is. 1. 2.

⁵ Pr. 30. 17.

⁶ 1 Sa. 4. 11.

dren honour you, keep up parental authority over your children; be kind, but do not cocker them; if you let them get too much ahead, they will contemn you instead of honouring you. The rod of discipline must not be withheld: 'thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' A child indulged and humoured in wickedness, will be a thorn in the parents' eye. David cockered Adonijah; 'his father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, why hast thou done so?'² And he afterwards was a grief of heart to his father, and was false to the crown.³ Keep up your authority, and you keep up your honour. 3. Provide for your children what is fitting, both in their minority, and when they come to maturity; 'the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.'⁴ They are your own flesh, and, as the apostle saith, 'no man ever yet hated his own flesh.'⁵ The parents' bountifulness will cause dutifulness in the child. If you pour water into a pump, the pump will send water out again freely; so, if parents pour in something of their estate to their children, children, if ingenuous, will pour out obedience again to their parents. 4. When your children are grown up, put them to some lawful calling, wherein they may serve their generation. And it is good to consult the natural genius and inclination of a child; forced callings do as ill, sometimes, as forced matches. To let a child be out of a calling, is to expose him to temptation. A child out of a calling is like fallow-ground; and what can you expect should grow up but weeds of disobedience? 5. Carry it lovingly to your children; in all your counsels and commands let them read love. Love will command honour: and how can a parent but love the child who is his living picture, nay part of himself? The child is the father in the second edition. 6. Carry it prudently towards your children. A great point of prudence, is, when a parent doth not provoke his children to wrath; 'fathers provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.'⁶

Q. *How many ways may a parent provoke his children to wrath?*

1st. By giving them opprobrious terms; 'thou son of the perverse rebellious woman,'⁷ said Saul to his son Jonathan. Some parents use imprecations and curses to their children: this is to provoke them to wrath. Would you have

God bless your children, and do you curse them? 2d. Parents provoke children to wrath, when they strike their children without a cause; or when the correction exceeds the fault. This is rather to be a tyrant than a father. Saul cast a javelin at his son to smite him,⁸ and his son was provoked to anger; 'so Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger.'⁹ 'The power of a father over a son, is not that of a tyrant, but of a king.' DAVENANT. 3d. When parents deny their children conveniences; they will not let them have that which may cherish or cover nature. Some have thus provoked their children; they have stinted them, and kept them so short, that they have forced them upon indirect courses, and made them put forth their hands to iniquity. 4th. When parents carry it unequally towards their children, showing more kindness to one than to another, this sometimes breeds bad blood. Though a parent have a greater love to one child, yet discretion should guide affection, that he should not show more love to one than to another. Jacob showed more love to Joseph than all his children, and what did it procure but envy of his brethren? 'now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, and when his brethren saw that, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.'¹⁰ 5th. When a parent doeth any thing which is sordid and unworthy, that which casts disgrace upon himself and his family; as to cozen or take a false oath; this is to provoke the child to wrath. As the child should honour his father, so the father should not dishonour the child. 6th. When parents lay such commands upon their children, as their children cannot perform without wronging their conscience. Saul commanded his son Jonathan to bring David to him; 'fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.'¹¹ Jonathan could not do this with a good conscience: but was provoked to anger; 'Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger.'¹² Now, the reason why parents should show their prudence in not provoking their children to wrath is set down, 'lest they be discouraged.'¹³ This word *discouraged* implies three things: (1.) Grief. The parents' provoking the child, the child so takes it to heart, that it causeth immature death. (2.) Despondency: the parents' austerity dispirits the child, and makes it unfit for service; like members of the body stupified, which are unfit for work. (3.) Contumacy and refractoriness:

¹ Pr. 23. 14. ² 1 Ki. 1. 6. ³ 1 Ki. 7. 9. ⁴ 1 Co. 12. 14.
⁵ Eph. 5. 29. ⁶ Col. 3. 21. ⁷ 1 Sa. 20. 30.

⁸ 1 Sa. 20. 33.

⁹ 1 Sa. 20. 34.

¹⁰ Ge. 37. 3, 4.

¹¹ 1 Sa. 20. 31.

¹² 1 Sa. 20. 34

¹³ Col. 3. 21.

the child being provoked by the cruel and unnatural carriage of the parent, grows desperate, and oft studies to irritate and vex his parents, which, though it be evil in the child, yet the parent is accessory to it, as being the occasion of it. *7th.* If you would have honour from your children, pray much for them. Not only lay up a portion for them, but lay up a stock of prayer for them. Monica prayed much for her son Austin; and it was said, it was impossible a son of so many prayers and tears should perish. Pray that your children may be preserved from the contagion of the times; pray that as your children bear your images in their faces, they may bear God's image in their hearts; pray they may be instruments and vessels of glory. This may be one fruit of prayer, that the child may honour a praying parent. *8th.* Encourage that which you see good and commendable in your children. 'Virtue increases when praised.' Commending that which is good in your children, makes them more in love with virtuous actions; and is like

the watering of plants, which makes them grow more. Some parents discourage the good they see in their children, and so nip virtue in the bud, and help to damn their children's souls. They have their children's curses. *9th.* If you would have honour from your children, set them a good example; it makes children despise the parents, when the parents live in a contradiction to their own precepts; when they bid their children be sober, yet they themselves will be drunk; they bid their children fear God, yet are themselves loose in their lives. Oh! if you would have your children honour you, teach them by an holy example. A father is a looking-glass, which the child oft dresseth himself by; let the glass be clear, and not spotted. Parents should observe a good decorum in their whole carriage, lest they give occasion to their children to say to them, as Plato's servant, 'my master hath made a book against rash anger, but he himself is passionate;' or, as a son once said to his father, 'if I have done evil, I have learned it of you.'

OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

IN this commandment, *1st.* Is a sin forbidden, that is, murder, 'thou shalt not kill.' *2d.* A duty implied, 'to preserve our own life, and the life of others.'

1. The sin forbidden, murder: 'thou shalt not kill.' Where two things are to be understood, *1st.* The not injuring another. *2d.* Our-selves.

1st. In this, 'thou shalt not kill,' is meant the not injuring another. *1.* We must not injure him in his name. *2.* In his body. *3.* In his soul. *1.* We must not injure another in his name. 'A good name is a precious balsam;' it is a great cruelty to murder a man in his name. We injure others in their name when we calumniate and slander them. It was David's complaint, 'they laid to my charge things that I knew not.'¹ The primitive Christians were traduced for incest, and killing their children. This is to behead others in their good name; his is an irreparable injury; no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue. *2.* We must not injure another in his body. The life is the most precious thing; and God hath set this

commandment as a fence about it, to preserve it, 'thou shalt not kill.' God made a statute which was never to this day repealed, 'whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'² In the old law, had a man killed another unawares, he might take sanctuary; but if he had killed him willingly, though he did flee to the sanctuary, the holiness of the place was not to defend him; 'if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.'³

Now in this commandment, 'thou shalt do no murder,' all those sins are forbidden which lead to it, and are the occasions of it: As. (1.) Unadvised anger. Anger boils up the blood in the veins, and oft produceth murder; 'in their anger they slew a man.'⁴ (2.) Envy. Satan envied our first parents the robe of innocence, and the glory of paradise; therefore never left off till he had procured their death. Joseph's brethren envied him, because his father loved him, and gave him a 'coat of many colours;' therefore took 'counsel to slay him.'⁵

¹ Ps. 35. 11.² Ge. 9. 6. ³ Ex. 21. 14. ⁴ Ge. 49. 6. ⁵ Ge. 37. 20.

Envy and murder are near akin, therefore the apostle puts them together, 'envyings, murders.'¹ Envy is a sin breaks both the tables at once; it begins in discontent against God, and ends in injury against man, as we see in Cain.² Envious Cain was first discontented with God, there he broke the first table; and then he fell out with his brother and slew him, there he broke the second table. Anger is sometimes 'soon over,' like fire kindled in straw, which is quickly out; but envy is a radicated thing, and will not quench its thirst without blood; 'who is able to stand before envy?'³ (3.) Hatred. The Pharisees hated Christ, because he excelled them in gifts, and had more honour among the people than they; therefore they never left till they had nailed him to the cross, and taken away his life. Hatred is a vermin lives upon blood; 'because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel.'⁴ Haman hated Mordecai, because he did not bow to him, and he presently sought revenge, he got a bloody warrant sealed for the destruction of the whole race and seed of the Jews.⁵ Hatred is ever cruel. All these sins are forbidden in this commandment, which lead the way, and are oft the occasions of this sin of murder.

Q. *How many ways is murder committed?*

A. We may be said to murder another, twelve ways: 1. With the hand: as Joab killed Abner and Amasa; 'he smote him in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels.'⁶ 2. Murder is committed with the mind. Malice is mental murder; 'whoso hateth his brother is a murderer.'⁷ To malign another, and wish evil against him in the heart, is a murdering him. 3. Murder is committed with the tongue, by speaking to the prejudice of another, and causing him to be put to death. Thus the Jews killed the Lord of life, when they inveighed against him, and accused him falsely to Pilate.⁸ 4. Murder is committed with the pen. So David killed Uriah in writing to Joab, 'set ye Uriah in the fore-front of the hottest battle.'⁹ Though the Ammonites' sword cut off Uriah, yet David's pen was the cause of his death; therefore the Lord tells David by the prophet Nathan, 'thou hast killed Uriah.'¹⁰ 5. Murder is committed by plotting another's death. Thus Jezebel, though she did not lay hands herself upon Naboth, yet because she contrived his

death, and caused two false witnesses to swear against him, and bring him within the compass of treason, she was a murderer.¹¹ 6. Murder is committed by instilling poison into potions. Thus the wife of Commodus the emperor killed her husband, by poisoning the wine which he drank. So, many kill the children they go with, by taking such medicines or strong purges, as prove the death of the child. 7. By witchcraft and sorcery;* a thing forbidden under the law; 'there shall not be found among you an enchanter, or a witch, or a consulter with familiar spirits.'¹² 8. By having an intention to kill another; as Herod would, under a pretence of worshipping Christ, have killed him.¹³ So Saul when he made David go as captain against the Philistines, designing thereby that the Philistines should have killed him, 'Saul said, let not my hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.'¹⁴ Here was intentional murder, and it was in God's account as bad as actual murder. 9. By consenting to another's death; so Saul to the death of Stephen; 'I also was standing by and consenting to his death.'¹⁵ He that gives consent is accessory to the murder. 10. By not hindering the death of another when in our power. Pilate knew Christ was innocent, 'I find no fault in him;' but he did not hinder his death; therefore he was guilty. It was not washing his hands in water, could wash away the guilt of Christ's blood. 11. By unmercifulness. (1.) By taking away that which is necessary for the sustentation of life: as to take away those tools or utensils whereby a man gets his living; 'no man shall take the upper or the nether millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life'¹⁶ (2) By not helping him when he

¹ 1 Ki. 21. 10. ¹² De. 18. 10. ¹³ Mat. 2. 8, 13.

¹⁴ 1 Sa. 18. 17. ¹⁵ Ac. 22. 20. ¹⁶ De. 24. 6.

* Whatever may have been the efficacy of the arts of witchcraft and sorcery, the scriptures do not give the most distant hint that the life of man can be their victim. If those who used them were not to be suffered to live, the murderous nature of their practices, is not assigned as a reason for this. They were guilty of apostacy from God, and of maintaining a system diametrically opposed to his service; they were to be cut off, for the same reason, as idolaters. 1. Either their arts were rendered effectual by demoniacal operation, and in that case they were trusting in the help of wicked ones, instead of trusting in Jehovah; uttering invocations to them, instead of offering up prayers to him: or, 2. Though their arts were ineffectual, they yet believed them, while using them, to be so, and consequently were chargeable with the same crimes: or, 3. They were ignorant or careless about the source whence the efficacy was to come, and thus, what is said of all the heathen, is true of them; 'they are without excuse, because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations;' or, 4. They were aware of the vanity of their arts, and in this way the guilt contracted by their own personal practices, and by leading others into sin, was unspcakably aggravated.

¹ Ga. 5. 21. ² Ge. 4. 6, 8. ³ Pr. 27. 4.

⁴ Ez. 35. 5. ⁵ Es. 3. 9. ⁶ 2 Sa. 20. 10. ⁷ 1 Jno. 3. 15.

⁸ Jno. 18. 30. ⁹ 2 Sa. 11. 15 ¹⁰ 2 Sa. 12. 9.

is ready to perish. You may be the death of another, as well by not relieving him, as by offering him violence. If thou dost not feed him that is starving, thou killest him. And then, how many are guilty of the breach of this commandment. 12. By not executing the law upon capital offenders. A felon having committed six murders, the judge may be said to be guilty of five of them, because he did not execute the felon for his first offence.

The next thing I shall speak to, is, to show the aggravations of this sin of murder: As, 1. To shed the blood of another causeless; as to kill another in a humour or frolic. A bee will not sting unless provoked, but many when they are not provoked, will take away the life of another. This makes the sin of blood more cloudy. The less provocation to a sin the greater sin. 2. To shed the blood of another contrary to promise. Thus, after the princes of Israel had sworn to the Gibeonites, that they should live,¹ Saul slew them.² Here were two sins twisted together, breach of oath and murder. 3. To take away the life of any public person enhanceth the murder, and makes it greater; as, to kill a judge upon the bench, because he represents the king's person; to murder a person whose office is sacred, and comes on the King of heaven's embassy; the murdering of him may be the murdering of many: Herod added this sin above all, that he shut up John Baptist in prison,³ then much more to behead John in prison: to stain one's hands with royal blood; David's heart smote him, because he did but cut off the lap of king Saul's garment:⁴ how would David's heart have smitten him, if he had cut off Saul's head? 4. To shed the blood of a near relation, aggravates the murder, and dyes it of a deeper crimson. For a son to kill his father is horrid. Parricides are monsters in nature. 'He who takes away his father's life, committeth many sins in one;' he is not only guilty of murder, but of disobedience, ingratitude, ostracism, and diabolical cruelty. 'He who smiteth his father or mother, shall be surely put to death.'⁵ then how many deaths is he worthy of that destroys his father or mother? Such a monster was Nero, who caused his mother Agrippina to be slain. 5. To shed the blood of any righteous person, aggravates the sin. Hereby justice is perverted. Such a person, being innocent, is unworthy of death. A saint being a public

blessing, he lies in the breach to turn away wrath; so that to destroy him is to go to pull down the pillars of a nation. He is precious to God.⁶ He is a member of Christ's body; therefore what injury is offered to him is done to God himself.⁷

Caution 1. Though this commandment, 'thou shalt not kill,' forbids private persons to shed the blood of another, unless in their own defence, yet such as are in office must punish public offenders, yea, with death, else they sin. To kill an offender is not murder, but justice.* A private person sins, if he draws the sword; a public person sins, if he puts up the sword. A magistrate ought not to let the sword of justice rust in the scabbard. As the magistrates should not let the sword be too sharp by severity, so neither should the edge of it be blunted by too much lenity.

Caution 2. Neither doth this commandment, 'thou shalt not kill,' prohibit a just war. When men's sins grow ripe, and long plenty hath bred surfeit, then God saith, 'sword, go through the land.'⁸ God did abet the war between the tribes of Israel and Benjamin; when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, then God sent Israel to commence a war against them.⁹†

USE 1. Lamentation, that this land is so defiled with blood.¹⁰ How common is this sin in this hectoring age! England's sins are written in letters of blood. Some make no more of killing men than sheep; 'in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents.'¹¹ Junius reads it *in alis*; and so in Hebrew, 'in thy wings' is found the blood of innocents. It alludes to the birds of prey, which stain their wings with the blood of other birds. May not the Lord justly take up a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because 'blood toucheth blood?'¹² There is

⁶ Is. 15. 43, 41. ⁷ Ac. 9. 4. ⁸ Ez. 14. 17. ⁹ Ju. 11. 21.
¹⁰ Nu. 35. 33. ¹¹ Je. 2. 34. ¹² Hos. 4. 2.

* It is generally agreed, that murder should be subjected to a capital punishment; but many doubts have been expressed whether it should be extended to any other offence. The reasoning indeed which some employ goes to abolish all capital punishments; for if the power of civil rulers consists in the surrender which their subjects have made of a portion of their rights, for the preservation of the rest, and if no man has such power over his own life as to commit it to the disposal of another, it follows that the jurisdiction of magistrates does not reach the lives of their subjects, and is confined to what may affect their personal liberty, their property, and, in general, their state in society.—*Dick's Lectures*, v. 4., p. 458.

† The plain answer is, that they are justifiable only on the plea of self-defence; that we may make war and destroy our enemies when we are unjustly attacked, for we are acting the same part, on a more extended scale, with the individual who resists the housebreaker, the highwayman, and the assassin.—*Dick's Lectures*, v. 4., p. 459.

¹ Jo. 9. 15. ² 2 Sa. 21. 1. ³ Lu. 3. 20.
⁴ 1 Sa. 21. 5. ⁵ Ex. 21. 15.

a concatenation, a plurality of murders. And that which may increase our lamentation is, that not only man's blood is shed among us, but Christ's blood. Such as are profane flagitious sinners are said to 'crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.'¹ (1.) They swear by his blood, and so do, as it were, make his wounds bleed afresh. (2.) Crucify Christ in his members; 'why persecutest thou me?'² The foot being trodden on, the head crieth out. (3.) If it lay in their power, were Christ alive on earth they would nail him again to the cross; thus men crucify Christ afresh; and, if man's blood doth so cry, how loud will Christ's blood cry against sinners?

USE 2. Beware of having your hands imbrued in the blood of others.

OBJ. *But such an one hath wronged me by defamation, or otherwise; and if I spill his blood, I do but revenge my own quarrel.*

If he hath done you wrong, the law is open; out take heed of shedding blood. What! because he hath wronged you, will you therefore wrong God? Is it not a wrong to God, to take his work out of his hand? He hath said 'vengeance is mine, and I will repay.'³ But you will take upon you to revenge yourself; you will be both plaintiff, and judge, and executioner yourself. This is an high wrong done to God, and he will not hold him guiltless. Now, to deter all from having their hands defiled with blood, consider what a sin murder is.

1. A God-affronting sin: it is a breach of his commandment, trampling upon God's royal edict. It is a wrong offered to God's image; 'in the image of God made he man.'⁴ It is tearing God's picture, and breaking in pieces the king of heaven's broad seal. Man is the temple of God; 'know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?'⁵ So that the manslayer destroys God's temple; and will God endure to be thus confronted by proud dust?

2. It is a crying sin. There are three sins in scripture said to cry. (1.) Oppression.⁶ (2.) Sodomy.⁷ (3.) Bloodshed. This cries so loud, that it drowns all the other cries; 'the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.'⁸ Abel's blood had as many tongues as drops, to cry aloud for vengeance. This sin of blood lay heavy on David's conscience; though he had sinned by adultery, yet what he cried out of most, was, this crimson sin of blood, 'deliver me from blood-

guiltiness, O God!'⁹ Though the Lord visits for every sin, yet he will in a special manner make 'inquisition for blood.'¹⁰ If a beast did kill a man, the beast was to be stoned, 'and his flesh shall not be eaten.'¹¹ If God would have a beast stoned that killed a man, who had not the use of reason to restrain him, then much more will he be incensed against those who go both against reason and conscience in spoiling the life of a man.

3. Murder is a diabolical sin. It makes a man the devil's first-born; he was a murderer from the beginning.¹² By saying to our first parents, 'ye shall not die,' he brought in death into the world.

4. It is a cursed sin. If there be a curse for him that smites his neighbour secretly,¹³ then he is doubly cursed that kills him. The first man that was born was a murderer; 'and now art thou cursed from the earth.'¹⁴ He was an excommunicated person, banished from the place of God's public worship. God set a mark upon bloody Cain.¹⁵ Some think it was horror of mind, which, above all sins, doth accompany the sin of blood. Others think this mark was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh, which was a mark of infamy God set upon him. He carried a curse along with him.

5. It is a wrath-procuring sin.¹⁶ (1.) It procures temporal judgments. Phocas, to get the empire, put to death all the sons of Mauritius the emperor, and then slew him; but this Phocas was pursued by his son-in-law Priscus, who cut off his ears and feet, and then killed him. Charles IX., who caused the massacre of so many Christians at Paris, blood issued out at several parts of his body, of which he died. Albonia killed a man and then made a cup of his skull to drink in: afterwards his own wife caused him to be murdered in his bed. Vengeance as a blood-hound pursues the murderer; 'bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.'¹⁷ (2.) It brings eternal judgments. It binds men over to hell. The papists make nothing of massacres; theirs is a bloody religion; they dispense with men for murder, so it be to propagate the catholic cause. If a cardinal put his red hat upon the head of a murderer going to execution, he is saved from death. But let all impenitent murderers read their doom; 'murderers shall have their part

¹ He. 6. 6. ³ Ac. 9. 4. ³ Ro. 12. 19. ⁴ Ge. 9. 6.
⁵ 1 Co. 6. 19. ⁶ Ps. 12. 5. ⁷ Ge. 18. 24. ⁸ Ge. 4. 10.

⁹ Ps. 51. 14. ¹⁰ Ps. 9. 12. ¹¹ Ex. 21. 28. ¹² Jno. 8. 44.
¹³ De. 27. 21. ¹⁴ Ge. 4. 11. ¹⁵ Ge. 4. 15. ¹⁶ 2 Ki. 21. 4.
¹⁷ Ps. 55. 23.

in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;¹ this 'is the second death.' We read of 'fire mingled with blood.'² Such as have their hands full of blood must undergo the

wrath of God.' Here is fire mingled with blood, and this fire is inextinguishable.³ Time will not finish it, tears will not quench it.

EXOD. 20. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

3. WE must not injure another's soul.* This is the greatest murder of all, because there is more of God's image in the soul than in the body. The soul, though it cannot be annihilated, is said to be murdered, because it misseeth of happiness, and is for ever in torment. Now, how many are soul-murderers?

1. Such as corrupt others by bad example. The world is led by example; especially the examples of great ones are very pernicious. We are apt to do as we see others before us, especially above us. Such as are placed in high power are like the pillar of cloud; when that went, Israel went; when great ones move in their sphere, others will follow them, though it be to hell. Evil magistrates, like the tail of the dragon, draw the 'third part of the stars after them.'

2. Such as entice others to sin. The harlot by curling her hair, rolling her eyes, laying open her breasts, doeth what in her lies to be both a tempter and a murderer; such an one was Messalina, wife to Claudius the emperor: 'I discerned a young man, and there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot; so she caught him and kissed him.'¹ Better are the reproofs of a friend, than the kisses of a harlot.

3. Ministers are murderers, who either starve, or poison, or infect souls. (1.) That starve souls; 'feed the flock of God which is among you.'² These feed themselves, and starve the flock: either through non-residing, they do not preach, or through insufficiency they cannot. There are many in the ministry, a shame to speak it, so ignorant, that they had need to be taught the 'first principles of the oracles of God.'³ Was not he fit to be a preacher in Israel, think ye, who being asked something

concerning the decalogue, answered he never saw any such book? (2.) That poison souls. Such are heterodox ministers, who poison people with error; the basilisk poisons herbs and flowers, by breathing on them: the breath of heretical ministers, like the basilisk's breath, poisons souls. The Socinian, that would rob Christ of his Godhead; the Arminian, that by advancing the power of the will, would take off the crown from the head of free grace; the Antinomian, who denies the use of the moral law to a believer, as if it were antiquated and out of date; these poison men's souls. Error is as damnable as vice; 'there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.'⁴ (3.) That infect souls, that is, by their scandalous lives; 'let the priests which come near to the Lord sanctify themselves.'⁵ Ministers, who by their places are nearer to God, should be holier than others. The elements, the higher they are, the purer; the air is purer than the water; the fire is purer than the air. The higher men are by office, the holier they should be; John Baptist was a shining lamp. But there are many who infect their people with their bad life; they preach one thing, and live another. They, like Eli's sons, are in white linen, but they have scarlet sins. Some say, that Prester John, the lord of Africa, caused to be carried before him a golden cup full of dirt, a fit emblem of such ministers as have a golden office, but are dirty and polluted in their lives. They are murderers, and the blood of souls will cry against them at the last day.

4. Such as destroy others, by getting them into bad company, and so making them proselytes to the devil. 'Vices quickly find their way into every one that comes near them.' A man cannot live in the Ethiopian climate but he will be discoloured with the sun; nor he cannot be in bad company but he will partake of their evil. One drunkard makes another; as the prophet speaks in another sense; 'I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites

¹ Re. 21. 8. ² Re. 8. 7. ³ Pr. 7. 7, 10, 13. ⁴ 1 Pet. 5. 2. ⁵ He. 5. 12.

* Does not capital punishment deprive men of all further opportunity of reformation? God can take the wicked out of the world in any way, when already they have long enough abused his long-suffering; and we must believe that he has delivered them into the hand of the magistrate as his vicegerent, that their thread of life may be cut short, and their miserable death serve as an example to others. Meantime to a certain extent their salvation may be consulted, for, if their doom be not speedily executed, and sufficient space be granted them for bewailing their sins, and consecrating the whole soul to God by sincere repentance.—*Limborch. Theol.* p. 622.

⁶ Mar. 9. 41.

⁷ 2 Pet. 2. 1.

⁸ Ex. 19. 22.

pots full of wine and cups, and said unto them, drink ye wine;" so the wicked set pots of wine before others, and make them drink till reason be stupified, and lust inflamed. These are guilty of the breach of this commandment, they are murderers of souls. How sad will it be with these, who have not only their own sins, but the blood of others, to answer for? So much for the first thing forbidden in the commandment, the injuring of others.

2d. The second thing forbidden in it is, the injuring one's self; 'thou shalt not kill:' thou shalt do no hurt to thyself.

1. Thou shalt not hurt thy own oody. One may be guilty of self-murder, either, 1st, indirectly and occasionally; or, 2d, directly and absolutely.

(1.) Indirectly and occasionally; as, First, when a man thrusts himself into danger which he might prevent; as if a company of archers were shooting, and one should go and stand in the place where the arrows fly, if the arrow did kill him, he is accessory to his own death. In the law, God would have the leper shut up, to keep others from being infected.¹ Now, if any would be so presumptuous as to go in to the leper, and get the plague of leprosy, he might thank himself, he occasioned his own death. Secondly, a person may be in some sense guilty of his own death, by neglecting the use of means. If sick, and use no physic, if he hath received a wound and will not apply balsam, he hastens his own death. God appointed Hezekiah to lay a 'lump of figs upon the boil.'² If he had not used the lump of figs, he had been the cause of his own death. Thirdly, by immoderate grief, 'the sorrow of the world worketh death';³ when God takes away a dear relation, and one is swallowed up with sorrow. How many weep themselves into their graves! Queen Mary grieved so excessively for the loss of Calais, that it broke her heart. Fourthly, by intemperance, excess in diet. Surfeiting shortens life; 'more die of it than by the sword'; many dig their grave with their teeth; too much oil chokes the lamp; the cup kills more than the cannon. Excessive drinking causeth untimely death.

(2.) One may be guilty of self-murder, directly and absolutely. First, by envy. Envy is a secret repining at the welfare of another. An envious man is more sorry at another's prosperity, than at his own adversity; he never

laughs, but when another weeps. Envy is a self-murder, a fretting canker. Cyprian calls it 'a secret wound;' it hurts a man's self most. Envy corrodes the heart, dries up the blood, rots the bones; 'envy is the rottenness of the bones.'⁴ It is to the body, as the moth to the cloth, it eats it, and makes its beauty consume; envy drinks its own venom. The viper, which leaped on Paul's hand, thought to have hurt Paul, but fell herself into the fire;⁵ so, while the envious man thinks to hurt another, he destroys himself. Second, by laying violent hands on himself, and thus he is *felo de se*;⁶ as Saul fell upon his own sword and killed himself. And because I see so many in the bills of mortality, who make away themselves, let me a little expatiate. It is the most unnatural and barbarous kind of murder for a man to butcher himself and imbrue his hands in his own blood. A man's self is most near to him, therefore this sin of self-murder breaks both the law of God, and the bonds of nature. The Lord hath placed the soul in the body, as in a prison; now it is a great sin to break prison, till God by death open the door. Self-murderers are worse than the brute-creatures; they will tear and gore one another, but no beast will go to destroy itself. Self-murder is occasioned usually from discontent; discontent is joined with a sullen melancholy. The bird that beats herself in the cage, and is ready to kill herself, is the true emblem of a discontented spirit. And this discontent ariseth, 1. from pride. A man that is swelled with an high opinion of himself, thinks he deserves better than others; and if any cross befall him, he is discontented, and now in a sudden passion will make away himself. Alithophel had high

¹ Pr. 14. 30.

² Ac. 28. 3.

* That every man ought to preserve his own being, as long as he is able, is evident; because what he is not himself the author and giver of, he can never, of himself, have just power or authority to take away. He that sent us into the world, and alone knows for how long a time he appointed us our station here, and when we have finished all the business he intended we should do, can alone judge when it is fit for us to be taken hence, and has alone authority to dismiss and discharge us. This reasoning has been admirably applied by Plato, Cicero, and others of the best philosophers. The objections which the author of the Defence of Self-murder, has attempted to advance against this argument, are very weak and childish. as, when he says, that the reason why it is not lawful for a sentinel to leave his station without his commander's order, is, because he entered into the service *by his own consent*; as if God had not a just power to lay any commands upon his creatures *without their own consent*: or, when he says, that there are many lawful ways to seek death in; as if, because a man may lawfully venture his life in many public services, therefore it was lawful for him directly to throw it away upon any foolish discontent.—*Clarke's Natural and Revealed Religion* pp. 61, 63.

thoughts of himself, his words were esteemed oracles; and to have his wise counsel rejected, he was not able to bear it: 'he put his household in order, and hanged himself.'¹ 2. From poverty. Poverty is a sore temptation; 'give me not poverty.'² Many by their sin have brought themselves to poverty; and when a great estate is boiled away to nothing, then they are discontented, and think better to die quickly, than languish in misery: hereupon the devil helps them to despatch themselves. 3. From covetousness. Avarice is a dry drunkenness, an horse-leech that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like Behemoth, 'behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not.'³ The covetous miser hoards up corn; and if he hears the price of corn begins to fall, then he is troubled, and there is no cure for his discontent but an halter. 4. From horror of mind. A man hath sinned a great sin, he hath swallowed down some pills of temptation the devil hath given him, and these pills begin to work in his conscience, and the horror is so great, that he chooseth strangling. Judas having betrayed innocent blood, he was in that agony, that he hanged himself to quiet his conscience; as if one should, to avoid the stinging of a gnat, endure the biting of a serpent. This self-murder is an high breach of this commandment; it is an execrable sin. I can see no ground of hope for such as make away themselves; for they die in the very act of sin and cannot have time to repent.

2. Here is forbidden hurting one's own soul, 'thou shalt not kill.' Many who are free from other murders, yet are guilty here; they go about to murder their own souls; they are wilfully set to damn themselves, and throw themselves into hell.*

¹ 2 Sa. 17. 23. ² Pr. 30. 8. ³ Job 40. 23.

* There are, it must be admitted, instances of suicide which strongly claim our pity, and they are cases in which a distracted mind, unable any longer to resist the fatal suggestions of the wounded spirit, yields life and hope to its power. While other self-destroyers rush into eternity in proud defiance of its terrors, and with the boast that they neither care, nor wish, nor ask for merrily, these victims of despair dare not so much as to lift up their eyes to heaven, and put their mouths in the dust, under the horrible impression that to them the heart and hand of mercy are closed for ever. It is most painful to think, how such scenes are employed by the scoffer to give effect to his bitter sarcasms against religion, and that they have so much influence in exciting prejudices against it in the minds of the inconsiderate. Its gracious hand is ready to heal the broken-hearted, but this it cannot do, where it is thrust away in the madness of desperation. No skill can tune the bruised reed to melody, nor can the mildest suasion guide the bewildered mind to peace. Let us leave them in the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great; and let us bless him, that he hath not given to us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.—*Belfrage on Catech.* b. 2. p. 91.

Q. *Who are they that go about desperately to murder their own souls?*

1. Such wilfully go about to murder their souls, who have no sense of God, or the other world; they are 'past feeling.'⁴ Tell them of God's holiness and justice, they are not at all affected; 'they made their hearts like an adamant.'⁵ The adamant, saith Pliny, is insuperable, the hammer cannot conquer it. Sinners have adamantine hearts. The altar of stone, when the prophet spake to it, 'rent asunder';⁶ but sinners' hearts are so hardened in sin, that nothing will work upon them, neither ordinances nor judgments; they do not believe a Deity; they laugh at hell; these go about to murder their own souls, they are throwing themselves as fast as they can into hell.

2. Such as are set wilfully to murder their own souls, are they who are resolved upon their lusts, let what will come of it. The soul may cry out, 'I am killing! I am murdering!' 'they have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness.'⁷ Let ministers speak to them about their sins, let conscience speak, let affliction speak, yet they will have their lusts, though they go to hell for them. Are not these resolved to murder their souls? As Agrippina, mother to Nero said, 'let my son kill me, so he may reign;' so many say in their hearts, let our sins damn us, so they may but please us. Herod will have his incestuous lust, though it cost him his soul; men will, for a drop of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath. Are not these about to massacre and damn their own souls.

3. They murder their souls, who avoid all means of saving their souls. They will go to plays, to drunken meetings, but will not set their foot within God's house, or come near the sound of the gospel-trumpet; as if one that is diseased should shun the bath, for fear of being healed. These do wilfully damn their souls, and are as great murderers of themselves, as he, who having means of cure offered him, chooseth death rather than physic.

4. They do voluntarily murder their souls, who suck in false prejudices against religion; as if religion were so strict and severe, that they who espouse holiness, must live a melancholy life, like hermits and anchorites, and drown all their joy in tears. This is a slander which the devil hath cast upon religion: for there is no true joy but in believing.⁸ No honey so sweet as that which drops from a promise. Some

⁴ Eph. 4. 19. ⁵ Ze. 7. 12. ⁶ 1 Ki. 13. 5. ⁷ Eph. 4. 19.
⁸ Ro. 15. 13.

men have foolishly taken up a prejudice against religion; they are resolved rather never to go to heaven, than to go thither through the strait gate. I may say of prejudice, as Paul to Elymas, 'O full of subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness,'¹ how many souls hast thou damned!

5. They are wilfully set to murder their own souls, who will neither be good themselves, nor suffer others to be so; 'ye neither go in your-

selves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in.'² Such are those that persecute others for their religion. Drunken meetings shall escape punishments; but, if men meet to serve God, then let all severity be used. These are resolved to shipwreck others, though they themselves are cast away in the storm. Oh! take heed of this, of murdering your own souls; no creature but man doth willingly kill itself. So I have done with the first, the sin forbidden in this commandment, 'thou shalt not kill.'

Ex. 20. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*

II. THE duty implied is, that we should do all the good we can to ourselves and others.

1st. In reference to others; we should endeavour to preserve the lives and souls of others.

2d. In reference to ourselves; to preserve our own life and soul.

1st. In reference to others. 1. To preserve the life of others. Comfort them in their sorrows, relieve them in their wants, be as the good Samaritan, pour wine and oil into their wounds: 'I was a father to the poor; the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me.'³ This is a great means of preserving the life of another, by relieving him when he is ready to perish. Pompey, when there was a great dearth in Rome, provided corn for their relief; and when the mariners were backward to sail thither in a tempest, said he, 'it is not necessary that we should live, but it is necessary that Rome be relieved.' Grace makes the heart tender, it causeth sympathy and charity; as it melts the heart, in contrition towards God, so in compassion towards others; 'he hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor.'⁴ This the commandment implies, that we should be so far from ruining others, that we should do all we can to preserve the lives of others. When we see the picture of death drawn in their faces, administer to their necessities, be temporal saviours to them, draw them out of the waters of affliction with a silver cord of charity. That I may persuade you to this, let me lay before you arguments:

First. Works of charity evidence grace. 1. Faith: 'I will show thee my faith by my works.'⁵ Works are faith's letters of credence to show. We judge of the health of the body by the pulse where the blood stirs and operates: Christian, judge of the health of thy faith by the

pulse of charity: the word of God is the rule of faith, and good works are the witnesses of faith. 2. Love. Love loves mercy: it is a noble bountiful grace. Mary loved Christ, and how liberal was her love! She bestowed on Christ her tears, kisses, costly ointments. Love, like a full vessel, will have vent; it vents itself in acts of liberality.

Secondly. To communicate to the necessities of others, is not arbitrary, it is not left to our choice whether we will or no, but it is a duty incumbent; 'charge them that are rich in this world that they do good, that they be rich in good works.'⁶ This is not only a counsel, but a charge. If God should lay a charge upon the inanimate creatures, they would obey; if he would charge the rocks, they would send forth water; if he should charge the clouds, they would melt into showers; if he should charge the stones, they would become bread. And shall we be harder than the stones not to obey God, when he chargeth us to 'be rich in good works?'

Thirdly. God supplies our wants, and shall not we supply the wants of others? 'We could not live without mercy.' God makes every creature helpful to us; the sun doth enrich us with its golden beams, the earth yields us its increase, veins of gold, crops of corn, store of flowers. God opens the treasury of his mercy; he feeds us every day out of the alms-basket of his providence: 'thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.'⁷ Now, doth God supply our wants, and shall not we minister to the wants of others? Shall we be only as a sponge to suck in mercy, and not as breasts to milk it out to others?

Fourthly. Herein we resemble God, to be

¹ Ac. 3. 10. ² Job 29. 16. 13. ³ Ps. 112. 9. ⁴ Ja. 2. 18.

⁵ Mat. 23. 13.

⁶ 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18.

⁷ Ps. 145. 16.

doing good to others. It is our excellency to be like God: 'godliness is Godlikeness.' And wherein are we more like to him, than in acts of bounty and munificence? 'thou art good, and doest good.'¹ 'Thou art good,' there is God's essential goodness; and 'doest good,' there is his communicative goodness. The more helpful we are to others, the more like we are to God; we cannot be like God in omniscieney or in working miracles, but we may be like him in doing works of mercy.

Fifthly. God remembers all our deeds of charity, and takes them kindly at our hands: 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which you have showed towards his name, in that you have ministered unto the saints.'² The chief butler may forget Joseph's kindness, but the Lord will not forget any kindness we show to his people: 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink.'³ Christ takes the kindness done to his saints, as done to himself. God, that hath a bottle for your tears, hath a book to write down your alms; 'a book of remembrance was written before him.'⁴ Tamerlane had a register to write down all the names and good services of his soldiers: so, God hath a book of remembrance to write down all your charitable works, and at the day of judgment there shall be an open and honourable mention made of them in presence of the angels.

Sixthly. Hard-heartedness to them in misery reproacheth the gospel. When men's hearts are like pieces of rocks, or as the scales of the leviathan, 'shut up together as with a close seal,'⁵ you may as well extract oil of flint, as the golden oil of charity out of their hearts. These unchristian themselves. Unmercifulness is the sin of the heathen; 'without mercy.'⁶ It eclipseth the glory of the gospel. Doth the gospel teach uncharitableness? Doth it not bid us 'drawout thy soul to the hungry?'⁷ 'These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works.'⁸ While you relieve not such as are in want, you walk antipodes to the gospel; you cause it to be evil spoken of, and lay it open to the lash and censure of others.

Seventhly. There is nothing lost by relieving the necessitous. The Shunamite woman was kind to the prophet, she welcomed him to her house, and she received kindness from him

another way; he restored her dead child to life. Such as are helpful to others, shall 'find mercy to help in time of need.' Such as pour out the golden oil of compassion to others, God will pour out the golden oil of salvation to them; for 'a cup of cold water' they shall have 'rivers of pleasure.' Nay, God will make it up some way or other in this life; 'the liberal soul shall be made fat';⁹ as the loaves in breaking multiplied; or, as the widow's oil increased in pouring out.¹¹ An estate may be imparted, yet not impaired.

Eighthly. To do good to others in necessity, keeps up the credit of religion. Works of mercy adorn the gospel, as the fruit adorns the tree; when 'our light so shines that others see our good works,' this glorifies God, crowns religion, silenceth the lips of gainsayers. Basil saith, nothing rendered the true religion more famous in the primitive times, and made more proselytes to it, than the bounty and charity of the Christians.

Ninthly, and lastly. The evil that doth accrue by not preserving the lives of others, and helping them in their necessities: God sends oft a secret moth into their estate; 'there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty,'¹² 'whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard';¹³ 'he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.'¹⁴ Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water 'depart from me, ye cursed; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat.'¹⁵ Christ saith not ye took away my meat; but 'ye gave me no meat; ye did not feed my members, therefore, 'depart from me.' By all this, be ready to distribute to the necessities of others. This is included in the commandment, 'thou shalt not kill.' Not only thou shalt not destroy his life, but thou shalt preserve it by ministering to his necessities.

2. It is implied, that we should endeavour to preserve the souls of others; counsel them about their souls, set life and death before them, help them to heaven. In the law, if one met his neighbour's ox or ass going astray, he must bring him back again,¹⁶ much more, if we see our neighbour's soul going astray, we should use all means to bring him back to God by repentance.

2d. In reference to ourselves. The com-

¹ Ps. 119. 68. ² He. 6. 10. ³ Mat. 25. 35. ⁴ Mal. 3. 16.
⁵ Job 41. 15. ⁶ Ro. 1. 31. ⁷ 1. 5. 10. ⁸ Tit. 3. 8.

⁹ 2 Ki. 4. 35. ¹⁰ Pr. 11. 25. ¹¹ 1 Ki. 17. 10. ¹² Pr. 11. 24
¹³ Pr. 21. 13. ¹⁴ Ja. 2. 13. ¹⁵ Mat. 25. 41, 42. ¹⁶ Ex. 23. 4

mandment, 'thou shalt not kill,' requires that we should preserve our own life and soul.

1. It is engraven upon every creature, that we should preserve our own natural life. We must be so far from self-murder, that we must do all we can to preserve our natural life; we must use all means of diet, exercise, and lawful recreation, which is like oil to preserve the lamp of life from going out. Some have been under temptation; Satan has suggested they are such sinners as do not deserve a bit of bread, and so they have been ready to starve themselves: this is contrary to this sixth commandment, 'thou shalt do no murder;' it is implied, we are to use all means for the preservation of our own life; 'drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake.'¹ Timothy was not by drinking too much water to overcool his stomach, and weaken nature, but we must use means for self-preservation, 'drink a little wine,' &c.

2. This commandment requires, that we should endeavour, as to preserve our own life, so especially, to preserve our own souls. 'Though all else should perish, be mindful of the safety of the soul.' It is engraven upon every creature, as with the point of a diamond, that it should look to its own preservation. If the life of the body must be preserved, then much more the life of the soul. If he who doth not provide for his own house is worse than an infidel,² then much more he who doth not provide for his own soul. This is a main thing implied in the commandment, a special care for the preserving our souls; the soul is the jewel, the soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay; Christ puts the soul in balance with the world, and it outweighs.³ The soul is a glass, in which some rays of divine glory shine; it hath in it some faint idea and resemblance of a Deity; it is a celestial spark lighted by the breath of God. The body was made of the dust, but the soul is of a more noble extract and original; 'God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.'⁴

1. The soul is excellent in its nature. It is a spiritual being,—'it is a kind of angelical thing,—the mind sparkles with knowledge, the will is crowned with liberty, and all the affections are as stars shining in their orb. The soul being spiritual, it is of quick operation. How quick are the motions of a spark! How

swift the wing of a cherubim! So quick and agile is the motion of the soul. What is quicker than a thought? How many miles can the soul travel in an instant! The soul, being spiritual, moves upward,—it contemplates God and glory; 'whom have I in heaven but thee?'' The motion of the soul is upward, only sin hath put a wrong bias upon the soul, and made it move too much downward. The soul being spiritual, hath a self-moving power; it can subsist and move when the body is dead, as the mariner can subsist when the ship is broken. The soul, being spiritual, is immortal, 'a bud of eternity.' 2. As the soul is excellent in its nature, so in its capacities. It is capable of grace, it is fit to be an associate and companion of angels. It is capable of communion with God, of being Christ's spouse;⁵ that I might espouse your virgin souls to Christ. It is capable of being crowned with glory for ever. O then, carrying such precious souls about you, created with the breath of God, redeemed with the blood of God, what endeavours should you use for the saving of these souls! Let not the devil have your souls. Heliogabalus fed his lions with pheasants: the devil is called a roaring lion, feed him not with your souls. Besides the excellency of the soul, which may make you labour to get it saved, consider how sad it will be not to have the soul saved; it is such a loss as there is none like it; because, in losing the soul you lose a great many things with it. A merchant in losing his ship, loseth many things with it; he loseth money, jewels, spices, &c., so, he that loseth his soul loseth Christ, the company of angels in heaven; it is an infinite loss, and it is an irreparable loss; it can never be made up again, 'two eyes but one soul,' CHRYS. O what care should be taken of the immortal soul! I would request but this of you, that you would but take as much care for the saving of your souls, as you do for the getting of an estate: nay, I will say this, do but take as much care for the saving your souls as the devil doth for destroying them. O how industrious is Satan to damn souls! How doth he play the serpent in his subtle laying of snares to catch souls! How doth he shoot fiery darts; the devil is never idle; the devil is a busy bishop in his diocese, he 'walketh about seeking whom he may devour.'⁷ Now, is not this a reasonable request, to take but as much care

¹ 1 Tim. 5. 23. ² 1 Tim. 5. 8. ³ Mat. 16. 26. ⁴ Ge. 2. 7.

⁵ Ps. 73. 25.

⁶ 2 Co. 12. 15

⁷ 1 Pe. 5. 9.

for the saving of your souls, as the devil doth for the destroying of them?

Q. *How shall we do to get our souls saved?*

By having them sanctified. Only the 'pure in heart shall see God.' Get your souls inlaid and enamelled with holiness.¹ It is not enough that 'we cease to do evil,' which is all the evidence some have to show, this is to lose heaven by short shooting; but we must be inwardly sanctified; not only the 'unclean spirit' must go out, but we must be filled with the 'Holy Ghost.'² This holiness must needs be, if you consider God is to dwell with you here, and you are to dwell with him hereafter. I. God is to dwell with you here, God takes up the soul for his own lodging, 'that Christ may

dwell in your heart.'⁹ Therefore the soul must be consecrated. A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber; 'the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost,'¹⁰ then the soul is the holy of holies: how holy ought that to be? 2. You are to dwell with God. Heaven is a holy place, 'an inheritance undefiled.'¹¹ And how can you dwell with God till you are sanctified? We do not put wine into a musty vessel: God will not put the new wine of glory into a sinful heart. O then, as you love your souls, and would have them saved eternally, endeavour after holiness! By this means you will have an identity and fitness for the kingdom of heaven, and your souls will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Ex. 20. 14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

God is a pure, holy spirit, and hath an infinite antipathy against all uncleanness. In this commandment he hath entered his caution against it, 'thou shalt not commit adultery.' The sum of this commandment is, the preservation of corporal purity. We must take heed of running on the rock of uncleanness, and so making shipwreck of our chastity. In this commandment there is something tacitly implied, and something expressly forbidden.

I. Something tacitly implied, that is, that the ordinance of marriage should be observed. II. Something expressly forbidden, that is, the infecting ourselves with bodily pollutions, 'thou shalt not commit adultery.'

I. Something implied,—that the ordinance of marriage should be observed; 'let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband,'¹² 'marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.'¹³ God did institute marriage in paradise; he brought the woman to the man;¹⁴ he did, as it were, give them in marriage. And Jesus did honour marriage with his presence;¹⁵ the first miracle he wrought was at a marriage, when he turned the water into wine. Marriage is a type and resemblance of the mystical union between Christ and his church.¹⁶ Concerning marriage,

Ist. There are general duties. 1. The general duty of the husband is to rule, 'the husband is the head of the wife.' The head

is the seat of rule and government; but he must rule with discretion. He is head, therefore must not rule without reason. 2. The general duty on the wife's part is submission; 'wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.'¹⁷ It is observable the Holy Ghost passed by Sarah's failings, he doth not mention her unbelief, but he takes notice of that which was good in her, her reverence and obedience to her husband, 'Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.'¹⁸

2d. Special duties belonging to marriage are love and fidelity. 1. Love.¹⁹ Love is the marriage of the affections. There is, as it were, but one heart in two bodies; love lines the yoke and makes it easy; love perfumes the marriage relation, without which it is not *conjugium* but *conjurgium*; it is like two poisons in one stomach, one is ever sick of the other. 2. Fidelity. In marriage there is mutual promise of living together faithfully according to God's holy ordinance. Among the Romans, on the day of marriage, the woman presented to her husband fire and water: fire refines metal, water cleanseth; hereby signifying, that she would live with her husband in chastity and sincerity. This is the first thing in the commandment implied, that the ordinance of marriage should be purely observed.

II. The thing forbidden in the commandment, that is, infecting ourselves with bodily

¹ 1 Pe. 1. 16. ² Ep. 5. 18. ³ 1 Co. 7. 2. ⁴ He. 13. 4.
⁵ Ge. 2. 22. ⁶ Jno. 2. 2. ⁷ Ep. 5. 32. ⁸ Ep. 5. 23.

⁹ Ep. 3. 17. ¹⁰ 1 Co. 6. 19. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 1. 4.
¹² Ep. 5. 22. ¹³ 1 Pe. 3. 6. ¹⁴ Ep. 5. 25.

pollution and uncleanness: 'thou shalt not commit adultery.' The fountain of this sin is lust. Since the fall, holy love is degenerated to lust. Lust is the fever of the soul. There is a twofold adultery: 1. Mental; 'whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.'¹ As a man may die of an inward bleeding, so he may be damned for the inward boilings of lust, if they be not mortified. 2. Corporal adultery, when sin hath conceived, and brought forth in the act. This is expressly forbidden under a *sub pœna*, 'thou shalt not commit adultery.' This commandment is set as a hedge to keep out uncleanness; and they that break this hedge a serpent shall bite them. Job calls adultery a heinous crime.² Every failing is not a crime; and every crime is not a heinous crime; but adultery is a heinous crime. The Lord calls it villany; 'they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbour's wives.'³

Q. *Wherein appears the heinousness of this sin of adultery?*

1. In that adultery is the breach of the marriage oath. When persons come together in a matrimonial way they bind themselves by covenant each to other, in the presence of God, to be true and faithful in the conjugal relation. Unchastity is a falsifying this solemn oath; and herein adultery is worse than fornication, because it is a breach of the conjugal bond.

2. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, that it is such a high dishonour done to God. God saith, 'thou shalt not commit adultery.' The adulterer sets his will above God's law, tramples upon God's command, affronts him to his face; as if a subject should tear his prince's proclamation. The adulterer is highly injurious to all the persons in the Trinity. 1. To God the Father. Sinner, God hath given thee thy life, and thou dost waste the lamp of thy life, the flower of thy age in lewdness; he hath bestowed on thee many mercies, health and estate, and thou spendest all on harlots. Did God give thee wages to serve the devil? 2. Injurious to God the Son, two ways. 1st. As he hath purchased thee with his blood, 'ye are bought with a price.'⁴ Now, he who is bought is not his own; it is a sin for him to go to another, without consent from Christ, who hath 'bought him with a price.' 2d. By virtue of baptism thou art a Christian, and professest that Christ is thy head, and thou art a mem-

ber of Christ; therefore, what an injury is it to Christ, to take the members of Christ, and make them the 'members of a harlot?'⁵ 3. It is injurious to God the Holy Ghost; for the body is his temple; 'know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?'⁶ And what a sin is it to defile his temple!

3. The heinousness of adultery lies in this, that it is committed with mature deliberation. First, there is the contriving the sin in the mind, then consent in the will, and then the sin is put forth in act. To sin against the light of nature, and to sin deliberately, is like the dye to the wool, it gives sin a tincture, and dyes it of a crimson colour.

4. That which makes adultery so heinous, is, that it is a sin after remedy. God hath provided a remedy to prevent this sin; 'to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.'⁷ Therefore after this remedy prescribed, to be guilty of fornication or adultery, is inexcusable; it is like a rich thief, that steals when he hath no need. This doth enhance and accent the sin, and make it heinous.

USE 1. It condemns the church of Rome, who allow the sin of fornication and adultery. They suffer not their priests to marry, but they may have their courtezans. The worst kind of uncleanness, incest with the nearest of kin, is dispensed with for money. It was once said of Rome: Rome is become a common stew. And no wonder, when the pope could for a sum of money give them a license and patent to commit uncleanness; and, if the patent were not enough, he would give them a pardon! Many of the papists judge fornication venial. God condemns the very lusting.⁸ If God condemns the thought, how dare they allow the fact of fornication? You see what a cage of unclean birds the church of Rome is; they call themselves the Holy Catholic Church, but, how can they be holy, who are so steeped and parboiled in fornication, incest, sodomy, and all manner of uncleanness?

USE 2. It is matter of lamentation to see this commandment so slighted and violated among us. Adultery is the reigning sin of the times; 'they are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker.'⁹ The time of king Henry VIII. was called the golden age, but this may be called the unclean age, wherein whore-hunting is common: 'in thy filthiness is lewdness.'¹⁰ Luther tells of one who said, if he

¹ Mat. 5. 28. ² Job 31. 11. ³ Je. 29. 23. ⁴ 1 Co. 6. 20.

⁵ 1 Co. 6. 15.

⁶ 1 Co. 6. 19.

⁷ 1 Co. 7. 2.

⁸ Mat. 5. 28.

⁹ Ho. 7. 4.

¹⁰ Ez. 24. 13.

might but satisfy his lust, and be carried from one whore-house to another, he would desire no other heaven; afterwards he breathed out his soul betwixt two notorious strumpets. This is to be the right seed of Adam, to love the forbidden fruit, to love to drink of stolen waters: 'son of man, dig now in the wall; and when I had digged, behold a door; and he said unto me, go in and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.'¹ Could we, as the prophet, dig in the walls of many houses, what vile abominations should we see there! In some chambers we might see fornication; dig farther, and see adultery; dig farther, and we may see incest, &c. And may not the Lord go from his sanctuary; 'seest thou the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary?'² God might remove his gospel, and then we might write *I-chabod* on this nation, 'The glory is departed.' Let us mourn for what we cannot reform.

USE 3. It exhorts us to keep ourselves from this sin of adultery; 'let every man have his own wife,' saith Paul,³ not his concubine, nor his courtesan. Now, that I may deter you from adultery, let me show you the great evil of it. First, it is a thievish sin.* Adultery is the highest sort of theft; the adulterer steals from his neighbour that which is more than his goods and estate, he steals away his wife from him, 'who is flesh of his flesh.' Secondly, adultery debaseth a person; it makes him resemble the beasts; therefore the adulterer is described like a horse neighing: 'every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.'⁴ Nay, this is worse than brutish; for some creatures that are void of reason, yet, by the instinct of nature, observe a kind of decorum of chastity. The turtle-dove is a chaste creature, and keeps to its mate; the stork, wherever he flies, comes into no nest but his own. Naturalists write, if a stork, leaving his own mate, joineth with any

other, all the rest of the storks fall upon him, and pull his feathers from him. Adultery is worse than brutish, it degrades a person of his honour. Thirdly, adultery doth pollute and befilyth a person. The devil is called an 'unclean spirit.'⁵ The adulterer is the devil's first-born; he is unclean, he is a moving quagmire, he is all over ulcerated with sin, his eyes sparkle with lust, his mouth foams out filth, his heart burns like mount Etna, in unclean desires, he is so filthy that if he die in this sin all the flames of hell will never purge away his uncleanness. And, as for the adulteress, who can paint her black enough; the scripture calls her 'a deep ditch.' She is a common sewer: whereas a believer, his body is a living temple, and his soul a little heaven bespangled with the graces as so many little stars. The body of a harlot is a walking dunghill, and her soul a lesser hell. Fourthly, adultery is destructive to the body; 'and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed.'⁶ It brings into a consumption. Uncleanness turns the body into an hospital, it wastes the radical moisture, rots the skull, eats the beauty of the face. As the flame wastes the candle, so the fire of lust consumes the bones. The adulterer hastens his own death, 'till a dart strike through his liver.'⁷ The Romans had their funerals at the gate of Venus's temple, to signify that lust brings death. Venus is lust. Fifthly, adultery is a purgatory to the purse: as it wastes the body, so the estate, by means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread.' Whores are the devil's horse-leeches, sponges that will soon suck in all one's money. The prodigal had soon spent his portion when once he fell among harlots.⁸ King Edward III., his concubine, when he lay a-dying, got all she could from him, and plucked the rings off his fingers, and so left him. He that lives in luxury, dies in beggary. Sixthly, adultery blots and eclipseth the name; 'whoso committeth adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.'⁹ Some while they get wounds, get honour. The soldier's wounds are full of honour; the martyr's wounds for Christ are full of honour; these get honour while they get wounds: but the adulterer gets wounds in his name, but no honour: 'his reproach shall not be wiped away.' The wounds of the name no

¹ Ez. 8. 8, 9. ² Ez. 8. 6. ³ 1 Co. 7. 2. ⁴ Je. 5. 8.

* The common thief, who steals or forces his way into the house at midnight, has never been treated with kindness or confidence by him whose property he invades; and all which he carries off may usually be repaired without very much difficulty, or may perhaps be of a kind which is scarcely of sufficient importance to our convenience to be replaced by the easy efforts that might replace it. But what is it to repair the plunder of him whose robbery is of that which exists only within the heart; who steals not the object of regard only, but the very capacity of feeling affection and confidence again, and who, by a single crime, converts, in the eyes of the sufferer, that world of social harmony, which God had made so beautiful, into a world of deceivers and the deceived of pleasures that are but illusion, and of misery that is reality.—*Brown's Philos. Lectures*, 84.

⁵ Lu. 11. 21. ⁶ Pr. 23. 27. ⁷ Pr. 5. 11. ⁸ Pr. 7. 23.
⁹ Pr. 6. 26. ¹⁰ Lu. 15. 30. ¹¹ Pr. 6. 32, 33.

physician can heal. The adulterer, when he is dead, his shame lives. When his body rots under ground, his name rots above ground. His baseborn children will be the living monuments of his shame. Seventhly, this sin doth much eclipse the light of reason, it steals away the understanding, it stupifies the heart; 'whoredom takes away the heart.'¹ It eats out all heart for good. Solomon besotted himself with women, and they enticed him to idolatry. Eighthly, this sin of adultery ushers in temporal judgments. The Mosaical law made adultery death, 'the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death';² and the usual death was stoning.³ The Saxons commanded the persons taken in this sin to be burnt: the Romans caused their heads to be stricken off. This sin, like a scorpion, carries a sting in the tail of it. The adultery of Paris and Helena, a beautiful strumpet, ended in the ruin of Troy, and was the death both of Paris and Helena. 'Jealousy is the rage of a man,' and the adulterer is oft killed in the act of his sin. Adultery cost Otho the emperor, and pope Sixtus IV. their lives. I have read of two citizens in London, 1583, who, defiling themselves with adultery on the Lord's day, were immediately struck dead with a fire from heaven. If all that were now guilty of this sin should be punished in this manner, it would rain fire again, as on Sodom. Ninthly, adultery, without repentance, damns the soul; 'neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate,'⁴ shall enter into the kingdom of God. The fire of lust brings to the fire of hell, 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.'⁵ Though men may neglect to judge them, yet God will judge them. But will not God judge all other sinners? Yes. Why then doth the apostle say, 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge?' The meaning is, 1. He will judge them assuredly; they shall not escape the hand of justice. 2. He will punish them severely; 'the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished, but chiefly them that walk in the lust of uncleanness.'⁶ The harlot's breast keeps from Abraham's bosom, 'the pleasure is momentary, the torment everlasting.'⁷ Who would, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath? 'her guests are in the depths of hell.'⁸ A wise traveller, when he comes to his inn, though many pleasant dishes are set before him, yet he forbears to

taste, because of the reckoning which will be brought in: we are here all travellers to Jerusalem above, and though many baits of temptation are set before us, yet we should forbear, and think of the reckoning which will be brought in at death. With what stomach could Dionysius eat his dainties, when he imagined there was a naked sword hung over his head as he sat at meat? While the adulterer feeds on strange flesh, the sword of God's justice hangs over his head. Causinus speaks of a tree that grows in Spain, that is of a sweet smell, and pleasant to the taste, but the juice of it is poisonous: the emblem of a harlot, she is perfumed with powders, and fair to look on, but poisonous and damnable to the soul; 'she hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her.'⁹ Tenthly, the adulterer doth not only wrong his own soul, but doth what in him lies to destroy the soul of another, and so kill two at once. And thus the adulterer is worse than the thief; for, suppose a thief rob a man, yea, take away his life, yet that man's soul may be happy, he may go to heaven as well as if he had died in his bed. But he who commits adultery endangers the soul of another, and deprives her of salvation so far as in him lies. Now, what a fearful thing is it to be an instrument to draw another to hell! Eleventhly, the adulterer is abhorred of God; 'the mouth of strange women is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.'¹⁰ What can be worse than to be abhorred of God? God may be angry with his own children; but for God to abhor a man, is the highest degree of hatred.

Q. But how doth the Lord show his abhorrence of the adulterer?

In giving him up to a reprobate mind, and a seared conscience.¹¹ And now he is in such a condition that he cannot repent. This is to be abhorred of God; such a person stands upon the threshold of hell, and when death gives him a jog he tumbles in. All which may sound a retreat in our ears, and call us off from the pursuit of so damnable a sin as uncleanness. 'Come not nigh the door of her house;'¹² 'her house is the way to hell.'¹³ Twelfthly, adultery is a sower of discord; it destroys peace and love, the two best flowers which grow in a family. Adultery sets husband against wife, and wife against husband; and so it causeth the 'joints of the same body to smite one

¹ Ho. 4. 11. ² Le. 20. 10. ³ De. 22. 24. ⁴ 1 Co. 6. 9.
⁵ 11^a. 13. 4 ⁶ 2 Pe. 2. 9. ⁷ Pr. 9. 18.

⁸ Pr. 7. 26. ⁹ Pr. 22. 14. ¹⁰ Ro. 1. 28.
¹¹ Pr. 5. 8. ¹² Pr. 7. 27.

against another.' And this division in a family works confusion; for 'a house divided against a house falleth.' 'Every thing that is divisible is destructible.'

Q. How may we abstain from this sin of adultery?

I shall lay down some directions, by way of antidote, to keep you from being infected with this sin. 1. Come not into the company of a whorish woman; avoid her house, as a seaman doth a rock; 'come not near the door of her house.'¹ He who would not have the plague, must not come near houses infected; every whore-house hath the plague in it. Not to beware of the occasion of sin, and yet pray, 'lead us not into temptation,' is as if one should put his finger into the candle, and yet pray that it may not be burned. 2. Look to your eyes. Much sin comes in by the eye; 'having eyes full of adultery.'² The eye tempts the fancy, and the fancy works upon the heart. A wanton amorous eye may usher in sin. Eve first saw the tree of knowledge, and then she took.³ First she looked and then she loved. The eye oft sets the heart on fire; therefore Job laid a law upon his eyes, 'I made a covenant with my eyes, why then should I think upon a maid?'⁴ Democritus the philosopher plucked out his eyes because he would not be tempted with vain objects; the scripture doth not bid us do so, but set a watch before our eyes. 3. Look to your lips. Take heed of any unseemly word that may enkindle unclean thoughts in yourselves or others; 'evil communications corrupt good manners.'⁵ Impure discourse is the bellows to blow up the fire of lust. Much evil is conveyed to the heart by the tongue; 'set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.'⁶ 4. Look in a special manner to your heart; 'keep thy heart with all diligence.'⁷ Every one hath a tempter in his own bosom; 'out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.'⁸ And thinking of sin makes way for the act of sin. Suppress the first risings of sin in your heart. As the serpent, when danger is near, keeps his head; so keep your heart, which is the spring from whence all lustful motions do proceed. 5. Look to your attire. We read of 'the attire of a harlot';⁹ a wanton dress is a provocation to lust. Curlings and towerings of the hair, a painted face, naked breasts, are allurements to vanity. Where the bush is hung out, people will go in and taste of

the liquor. Hierom saith, such as by their lascivious attire endeavour to draw others to lust, though no evil follow, yet these tempters shall be punished, because they offered poison to others though they would not drink. 6. Take heed of evil company. Sin is a disease very catching; one man tempts another to sin, and hardens him in sin. There are three cords to draw men to adultery: the inclination of the heart, the persuasion of evil company, and the embraces of the harlot; and this three-fold cord is not easily broken. 'A fire was kindled in their company.'¹¹ I may allude to it, the fire of lust is kindled in bad company. 7. Beware of going to plays. A play-house is oft a preface to a whore-house. We are bid to avoid all appearance of evil: are not plays the appearance of evil? Such sights are there as are not fit to be beheld with chaste eyes. Both Fathers and Councils have shown their dislike of going to plays. A learned divine observes, that many have on their death-beds, confessed with tears, that the pollution of their bodies hath been occasioned by going to plays. 8. Take heed of mixed dancing. From dancing, people come to dalliance one with another, and from dalliance to uncleanness. There is, saith Calvin, for the most part, some unchaste behaviour in dancing. Dances draw the heart to folly by wanton gestures, by unchaste touches, by lustful looks. St Chrysostom did inveigh against mixed dancing in his time. 'We read,' saith he, 'of a marriage feast, and of virgins going before with lamps,' 'but of dancing there we read not.'¹² Many have been ensnared by dancing; as the duke of Normandy and others. 'Dancing is for adulteresses, not for the chaste.' AMB. Chrysostom saith, where dancing is, there the devil is: I speak chiefly of mixed dancing. And, whereas we read of dances in scripture,¹³ those were sober and modest. They were not mixed dances, but pious and religious, being usually accompanied with singing praises to God. 9. Take heed of lascivious books, and those pictures that provoke to lust. (1.) Books. As the reading of the scripture doth stir up love to God, so reading of bad books doth stir up the mind to wickedness. I could name one who published a book to the world full of effeminate, amorous, and wanton expressions; before he died he was much troubled for it, and did burn that book which made so many burn in lust. (2.) And to lascivious books, I may add

¹ Lu. 11. 17. ² Pr. 5. 8. ³ 2 Pe. 2. 14. ⁴ Ge. 3. 6.
⁵ Job. 31. 1. ⁶ 1 Co. 15. 33. ⁷ Ps. 141. 3. ⁸ Pr. 4. 23.

⁹ Ma. 15. 19.

¹⁰ Pr. 7. 10

¹¹ Ps. 106. 18

¹² Ma. 25. 10.

¹³ Ex. 15.

lascivious pictures, which bewitch the eye, and are the incendiaries of lust. They secretly convey poison to the heart. 'The innocent become guilty while they look at them.' Popish pictures are not more prone to stir up idolatry than unclean pictures are to stir up to concupiscence. 10. Take heed of excess in diet. When gluttony and drunkenness lead the van, chambering and wantonness bring up the rear. Any wine inflames lust; and fulness of bread is made the cause of Sodom's uncleanness.¹ The rankest weeds grow out of the fattest soil; uncleanness proceeds from excess:² when they were fed to the full, 'every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.' Get the 'golden bridal of temperance.' God allows recruits of nature, and what may fit us the better for his service; but beware of surfeit. Excess in the creature clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust. St Paul did keep under his body.³ The flesh pampered is apt to rebel. 11. Take heed of idleness. When a man is out of a calling, now he is fit to receive any temptation. We do not use to sow seed in fallow-ground: but the devil sows most seed of temptation in such as lie fallow. Idleness is the cause of sodomy and uncleanness.⁴ When David was idle on the top of his leads, then he espied Bathsheba, and took her to him.⁵ Hierom gave his friend this counsel, to be always well employed in God's vineyard; that when the devil came, he might have no leisure to listen to a temptation. 12. To avoid fornication and adultery, let every man have a chaste, entire love to his own wife. Ezekiel's wife was the desire of his eyes.⁶ When Solomon had dissuaded from strange women, he prescribes a remedy against it, 'rejoice with the wife of thy youth.'⁷ It is not the having a wife, but the loving a wife makes a man live chastely. He who loves his wife, whom Solomon calls his fountain, will not go abroad to drink of muddy, poisoned waters. Pure conjugal love is a gift of God, and comes from heaven; this, like the vestal fire, must be cherished, that it do not go out. He who loves not his wife, is the likeliest person to embrace the bosom of a stranger. 13. Labour to get the fear of God into your hearts, 'by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.'⁸ As the banks keep out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out uncleanness. Such as want the fear of God, want the bridle that should check them from sin. How did

Joseph keep from his mistress's temptation? The fear of God pulled him back; 'how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' St Bernard calls holy fear, 'the door-keeper of the soul.' As a nobleman's porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering. 14. Get a delight in the word of God; 'how sweet are thy words to my taste!'⁹ St Chrysostom compares God's word to a garden. If we walk in this garden, and suck sweetness from the flowers of the promises, we shall never care to pluck the 'forbidden fruit.' 'Let the scriptures be my chaste delights.' AUG. The reason why persons seek after unchaste, sinful pleasures, is, because they have no better. Cæsar riding through a city, and seeing the women play with dogs and parrots, said, 'sure they have no children:' so they that sport with harlots, it is because they have no better pleasures. He that hath once tasted Christ in a promise, is ravished with delight; and how would he scorn a motion to sin! Job said, 'the word was his necessary food.'¹⁰ No wonder then he made 'a covenant with his eyes.' 15. If you would abstain from adultery, use serious consideration. Consider,

(1.) God sees thee in the act of sin. He sees all thy curtain wickedness. 'He is all eye.' AUG. The clouds are no canopy, the night is no curtain to hide thee from God's eye. Thou canst not sin, but thy judge looks on; 'I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings;¹¹ 'they have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives;¹² even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.

(2.) Few that are entangled in the sin of adultery, recover out of the snare; 'none that go to her return again.'¹³ That made some of the ancients conclude that adultery was an unpardonable sin; but not so. David repented, and Mary Magdalene was a weeping penitent; her amorous eyes that had sparkled with lust, she seeks to be revenged of them, she washed Christ's feet with her tears; so that some have recovered out of the snare. But 'none that go to her return,' that is, 'very few;' it is rare to hear of any one who is enchanted and bewitched with this sin of adultery, that recovers out of it; 'her heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands.'¹⁴ 'Her heart is snares,' that is, she is subtle to deceive those who come to her; and her 'hands as bands,' that is, her

¹ Ez. 16. 49. ² Je. 5. 8. ³ 1 Co. 9. 27. ⁴ Ez. 16. 49.
⁵ 2 Sa. 11. 4. ⁶ Ez. 24. 16. ⁷ Pr. 5. 18. ⁸ Pr. 16. 6.

⁹ Ge. 39. 9. ¹⁰ Ps. 119. 103. ¹¹ Job 23. 12. ¹² Je. 13. 27.
¹³ Je. 29. 23. ¹⁴ Pr. 2. 19. ¹⁵ Ec. 7. 26.

embraces are powerful to hold and entangle her lovers. Plutarch said of the Persian kings, 'they were captives to their concubines;' they were so inflamed, that they had no power to leave their company. This consideration may make all fearful of this sin; 'none that go to her return again.' Soft pleasures harden the heart.

(3.) Consider what the scripture saith, that it may lay a bar in the way to this sin, 'I will be a swift witness against adulterers.'¹ It is good when God is a witness 'for us,' when he witnesseth for our sincerity, as he did for Job: but it is sad to have God 'a witness against us.' 'I,' saith 'God, will be a witness against the adulterer.' And who shall disprove his witness? And he is both witness and judge; 'whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.'²

(4.) Consider the sad farewell this sin of adultery leaves: it leaves a hell in the conscience, 'the lips of a strange woman drop as a honeycomb, but her end is bitter as wormwood.'³ The goddess Diana was so artificially drawn, that she seemed to smile upon those that came into her temple, but frown on those that went out. So the harlot smiles on her lovers as they come to her, but at last comes the frown and sting; 'a dart strikes through their liver,' 'her end is bitter.'⁴ When a man hath been virtuous, the labour is gone, but the comfort remains; but when he hath been vicious and unclean, the pleasure is gone, but the sting remains. 'It delights for a moment, but torments for ever,' JEROM. When the senses have been feasted with unchaste pleasures, the soul is left to pay the reckoning. Stolen waters are sweet; but, as poison, though it be sweet in the mouth, it torments the bowels. Sin always ends in a tragedy. Memorable is that which Fincelius reports of a priest in Flanders, who enticed a maid to uncleanness. She objected how vile a sin it was; he told her, by authority from the pope he could commit any sin; so at last he drew her to his wicked purpose. But when they had been together a while, in came the devil, and took away the harlot from the priest's side, and, notwithstanding all her crying out, carried her away. If all that are guilty of bodily uncleanness in this nation, should have the devil come and carry them away, I fear more would be carried away than would be left behind.

16. Pray against this sin. Luther gave a lady this advice, that when any lust began to

rise in her heart, she should go to prayer. Prayer is the best armour of proof; prayer quencheth the wild fire of lust. If prayer will 'cast out the devil,' why may it not cast out those lusts that come from the devil?

USE 4. If the body must be kept pure from defilement, much more the soul of a Christian must be kept pure. This is the meaning of the commandment, not only that we should not stain our bodies with adultery, but that we should keep our souls pure. To have a chaste body but an unclean soul, is like a fair face with bad lungs; or a gilt chimney-piece, that is all soot within; 'be ye holy, for I am holy.'⁵ The soul cannot be lovely to God, till it hath Christ's image stamped upon it, which image consists in righteousness and true holiness.⁶ The soul must especially be kept pure, because it is the chief place of God's residence.⁷ A king's palace must be kept clean, especially his presence-chamber. If the body is the temple, the soul is the 'holy of holies,' this must be consecrated. We must not only keep our bodies from carnal pollution, but our souls from envy and malice.

Q. *How shall we know our souls are pure?*

1. If our souls are pure, then we flee from the appearance of evil.⁸ We will not do that which looks like sin. When Joseph's mistress did court and tempt him, he 'left his garment in her hand, and fled.'⁹ It was suspicious to be near her. Polycarp would not be seen in company with Marcion the heretic, because it would not be of good report. 2. If our souls are pure, this light of purity will shine forth. Aaron had 'holiness to the Lord' written upon his golden plate: where there is sanctity in the soul, there 'holiness to the Lord' is engraven upon our life; we are adorned with patience, humility, good works, and shine as 'lights in the world.'¹⁰ Carry Christ's picture in your conversation.¹¹ O let us labour for this soul purity! Without it there is no 'seeing of God;' 'what communion hath light with darkness?'¹² And that we may keep our souls pure, (1.) Have recourse to the blood of Christ; this is the 'fountain set open for sin and uncleanness.'¹³ A soul steeped in the brinish tears of repentance, and bathed in the blood of Christ, is made pure. (2.) Pray much for pureness of soul; 'create in me a clean heart, O God.'¹⁴ Some pray for children, others for

¹ 1 Pe. 1. 16. ² Ep. 4. 14. ³ Ep. 3. 17. ⁴ 1 Th. 5. 22. ⁵ Ge. 39. 12. ⁶ Ph. 2. 15. ⁷ 1 Jno. 2. 6. ⁸ He. 12. 14.

⁹ Zu. 13. 1. ¹⁰ P. 51. 10.

¹ Mal. 3. 5. ² He. 13. 4. ³ Pr. 5. 3, 1. ⁴ Pr. 7. 23.

riches; but pray for soul-purity. Say, 'Lord, though my body is kept pure, yet, Lord, my soul is defiled, I pollute all I touch. O purge me with hyssop, let Christ's blood sprinkle me, let the Holy Ghost come upon me and anoint

me! O make me evangelically pure, that I may be translated to heaven, and placed among the cherubim, where I shall be as holy as thou wouldest have me to be, and as happy as I can desire to be!'

OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 13. *Thou shalt not steal.*

As the holiness of God sets him against uncleanness, 'thou shalt not commit adultery,' so the justice of God sets him against rapine and robbery, 'thou shalt not steal.' The thing forbidden in this commandment is, meddling with another man's property, 'thou shalt not steal.' The civil lawyers define stealth or theft, to be 'the laying hands unjustly on that which is another's,'—the invading another's right.

Q. 1. *Whence doth theft arise?*

1. The internal causes are: *1st.* Unbelief. A man hath an high distrust of God's providence: 'can God furnish a table in the wilderness?'¹ So saith the unbeliever, 'can God spread a table for me? no, he cannot.' Therefore he is resolved he will spread a table for himself, but it shall be at other men's cost, and both first and second course shall be served in with stolen goods. *2nd.* Covetousness. The Greek word for covetousness signifies 'an immoderate desire of getting;' this is the root of theft. A man covets more than his own, and this itch of covetousness makes him scratch what he can from another. Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold, which wedge did cleave asunder his soul from God.²

2. The external cause of theft is, Satan's solicitation: Judas was a thief;³ how came he to be a thief? 'Satan entered into him.'⁴ The devil is the great master-thief, he robbed us of our coat of innocency, and he persuades men to take up his trade; he tells men how bravely they shall live by thieving, and how they may catch an estate. And as Eve listened to the serpent's voice, so do they; and, as birds of prey, live upon spoil and rapine.

Q. 2. *How many sorts of thefts are there?*

1. There is stealing from God; and so they are thieves, who rob any part of God's day from him; 'remember to keep holy the sabbath day;' not a part of the day only, but the

whole day must be dedicated to God. And lest any should forget this, the Lord hath prefixed a 'remember.' Therefore to cut God short, and, after morning-sacrifice, to spend the other part of the sabbath in vanity and pleasure, this is spiritual thievery, it is to rob God of his due, and the very heathens will rise up in judgment against such Christians; for the heathens, as Macrobius notes, did observe a whole day to their false gods.

2. There is a stealing from others: *1st.* A stealing away their souls; and so heretics are thieves, by robbing men of the truth, they rob them of their souls. *2dly.* A stealing away their money and goods from them; and under this head of stealing away other's money, there may be several arraigned for thieves. *1st.* The highway thief who takes a purse contrary to the letter of this commandment, 'thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour,'⁵ 'do not steal.'⁶ This is not the violence which takes the 'kingdom of heaven.'⁷ *2nd.* The house-thief, who purloins and filches out of his master's cash, or steals his wares and drugs. The apostle saith, 'some have entertained angels unawares,'⁸ but many masters have entertained thieves into their houses unawares. The house-thief is an hypocrite, as well as a thief; he hath demure looks, and pretends he is helping his master, when he only helps to rob him. *3d.* The thief that shrouds himself under law, as the unjust attorney or lawgiver, who prevaricates and deals falsely with his client. This is to steal from the client. By deceit and prevarication the lawyer robs the client of his land, and may be the means to ruin his family; he is no better than a thief in God's account. *4th.* The church-thief or pluralist, who holds several benefices, but seldom or never preacheth to the people; he gets the golden fleece, but lets his flock starve; 'wo be to the shepherds of Israel!'⁹ 'they feed themselves, and not my

¹ Ps. 78. 19. ² Jos. 7. 21. ³ Jno. 12. 6. ⁴ Jno. 13. 27.

⁵ Le. 19. 13. ⁶ Mar. 10. 19. ⁷ Mat. 11. 12.
⁸ He. 13. 2. ⁹ Ez. 34. 2.

flock.¹ These ministers will be indicted for thieves at God's bar. *5th.* The shop-thief; he steals in selling, who useth false weights and measures, and so steals from others what is their due, 'making the ephah small.'² The ephah was a measure the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, gave scant measure, which was plain stealing; 'the balances of deceit are in his hand.'³ Men by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier. He steals in selling who puts excessive prices on his commodities. He takes thrice as much for a commodity as it cost him, or as it is worth; to overreach others in selling, is to steal men's money from them; 'thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him.'⁴ To defraud him is to rob him; this overreaching others in selling, which is a cunning way of stealing, is both against law and gospel. It is against the law of God; 'if thou sell ought to thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.'⁵ and against gospel; 'let no man go beyond, and defraud his brother.'⁶ It is stealing. *6th.* The usurer who takes of others even to extortion; he seems to help another by letting him have money in his necessity, but gets him into bonds, and sucks out his very blood and marrow. I read of a woman whom Satan had bound;⁷ and truly he is almost in as bad a condition whom the usurer hath bound: the oppressing usurer is a robber. An usurer once asked a prodigal, when he would leave spending? Saith the prodigal, 'then I will leave spending what is my own, when thou leavest off stealing from others.' Zaccheus was an extortioner, and after his conversion he made restitution;⁸ he thought all he got by extortion was theft. *7th.* The feoffee in trust, who hath the orphan's estate committed to him; he is deputed to be his guardian, and manage his estate for him, and he curtails the estate, and gets a fleece out of it for himself, and wrongs the orphan. This is a thief; this is worse than taking a purse, because he betrays his trust, which is the highest piece of treachery and injustice. *8th.* The borrower, who borrows money from others, with an intention never to pay them again; 'the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.'⁹ What is it but thievery to take money and goods from others, and not restore them again? The prophet Elisha bade the widow sell her oil, and pay her debts, and then live upon the rest.¹⁰ *9th.*

The last sort of thief is the receiver of stolen goods. The receiver, if he be not the principal, yet he is accessory to the theft, and the law makes him guilty. The thief steals the money, and the receiver holds the sack to put it in. The root would die if it were not watered, and thievery would cease if it were not encouraged by the receiver. I am apt to think he who doth not scruple to take stolen goods into his house would as little scruple to take a purse.

Q. What are the aggravations of this sin of stealing?

1. To steal when one has no need. To be a rich thief. 2. To steal sacrilegiously. To devour things set apart to holy uses; 'it is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy.'¹¹ Such an one was Dionysius, who robbed the temple, and took away the silver vessels. 3. To commit the sin of theft against checks of conscience, and examples of God's justice: this is like the dye to the wool, it doth dye the sin of a crimson colour. 4. To rob the widow and orphan; 'ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child';¹² it is a crying sin; 'if they cry unto me, I will surely hear them.' 5. To rob the poor. How did David disdain that the rich man should take away the poor man's lamb! 'As the Lord liveth, the man who hath done this thing shall surely die.'¹³ What is the enclosing of commons, but robbing of the poor?

3d. There is a stealing from a man's self. A man may be a thief to himself.

Q. How so?

1. By niggardliness. The niggard is a thief, he steals from himself, in that he doth not allow himself what is fitting; he thinks that lost which is bestowed upon himself; he robs himself of necessaries; 'a man to whom God hath given riches, yet God gives him not power to eat thereof.'¹⁴ He gluts his chest, and starves his belly; he is like the ass that is loaded with gold, but feeds upon thistles; he robs himself of that which God allows him. This is indeed to be punished with riches, to have an estate, and want a heart to take the comfort of it, this man is a thief to himself. 2. A man may be a thief to himself, and rob himself by prodigality, namely, wasting his estate. The prodigal lavisheth gold out of the bag; he is like Crates the philosopher who threw his gold into the sea. The prodigal boils a great estate to nothing; this is to be a thief to a man's

¹ Ez. 34. 8. ² Am. 8. 5. ³ Ho. 12. 7. ⁴ Le. 19. 13.

⁵ Le. 25. 14. ⁶ 1 Th. 4. 6. ⁷ Lu. 13. 16. ⁸ Lu. 19. 8.

⁹ Pa. 37. 21. ¹⁰ 2 Ki. 4. 7.

¹¹ Pr. 20. 25. ¹² Ex. 22. 22. ¹³ 2 Sa. 12. 5. ¹⁴ Ec. 1. 7.

self, to spend away that estate from himself which might conduce to the comfort of life. 3. He is a thief to himself, by idleness, when he mispends his time. To spend one's hours in pleasure and vanity, this is to rob himself of that precious time which God hath given him to work out salvation. Time is a rich commodity, because on the well-spending this present time an happy eternity depends. He that spends his time idly and vainly, is a thief to himself; he robs himself of his golden seasons, and by consequence, of salvation. 4. A man may be a thief to himself by suretyship, 'be thou not one of them that are sureties for debt.'¹ The creditor comes upon the surety for debt, and so by paying another's debt he is a thief to himself, he undoes himself. Let not any man say, he should have been counted unkind if he had not entered into bonds for his friend: better thy friend count thee unkind, than all men count thee unwise. Lend another what you can spare, nay, give him if he needs, but never be a surety; it is no wisdom for a man so to help another as to undo himself. This is to rob himself and his family.

USE 1. It confutes the doctrine of community that all things are common, and one man hath a right to another's estate.* The scripture confutes it; 'when thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour's, thou shalt not move a sickle into thy neighbour's corn.'² Property must be observed. God hath set this eighth commandment as a hedge about a man's estate, and this hedge cannot be broken without sin. If all things be common, then there is no stealth, and so this commandment were in vain.

USE 2. It reproves such as live upon stealing. Instead of living by faith, they live by

their shifts. The apostle exhorteth, that every man eat his own bread.³ The thief doth not eat of his own bread, but of another's. If there be any who are guilty of this sin, let them labour to recover out of the snare of the devil by repentance, and let them show their repentance by restitution. 'Without restitution, no remission.'⁴ AUG. 'If I have taken away any thing from any man unjustly, I restore him fourfold.'⁵ It may suffice to restore ill-gotten goods by one's own hand, or by proxy. Better a thousand times restore goods unlawfully gotten, than to stuff one's pillow with thorns, and have guilt trouble one's conscience upon a death-bed.

USE 3. Exhortation to all to take heed of this sin of thieving; it is a sin against the light of nature. Some may go to excuse this sin; hear the thief's plea; it is a coarse wool will take no dye, and a bad sin indeed that hath no excuse. 'I am,' saith one, 'grown low in the world, and trading is bad, and I have no other way to a livelihood.' 1. This shows a great distrust of God, as if he could not provide for thee without thy sin. 2. This shows sin is gotten to a great height, that, because a man is low in the world, therefore he will stir up hell, *i. e.* go to the devil, for a livelihood. Abraham would not have it said, that 'the king of Sodom had made him rich.'⁶ O let it never be said that the devil hath made thee rich! 3. Thou oughtest not to undertake any action which thou canst not pray for a blessing upon; but, if thou livest on thieving, thou canst not pray for a blessing upon stolen goods; therefore take heed of this sin; 'gain in the coffer is loss in the conscience,' AUG. 'Take heed of getting the world with the loss of heaven.'

To dissuade all from this horrid sin, consider, 1. Thieves are the caterpillars of the earth, enemies to civil society. 2. God hates them. In the law, the cormorant was unclean,⁷ because a thievish, devouring creature, a bird of prey; by which God showed his hatred of this sin. 3. The thief is a terror to himself, he is always in fear; 'there were they in great fear,'⁸ is true of the thief. Guilt breeds fear, if he hear but the shaking of a tree, his heart shakes. It is said of Catiline, he was afraid of every noise. If a brier doth but take hold of a thief's garment, he is afraid it is the officer to apprehend him; and 'fear hath torment.'⁹ 4. The

¹ Pr. 22. 26.

² De. 23. 25.

* If all things had been common to all, that common all would truly have been of little worth to the individuals, who would have seen nothing appropriated, indeed, but nothing enjoyed. Instead of that beautiful and populous earth which we behold, where cities pour wealth on the fields, and the fields, in their turn, send plenty to the cities,—where all are conferring aid and receiving aid, and the most sensual and selfish cannot consume a single luxury, without giving, however unintentionally, some comfort or the means of comfort to others,—instead of this noble dwelling-place of so many noble inhabitants, we should have had a waste or a wilderness, and a few miserable stragglers, half-famished on that wide soil which now gives abundance to millions. Nor would the loss of mere external convenience and splendour have been the chief evil. The intellectual sciences, arts, and systems of moral polity, which distinguish the civilized from the savage, by differences far more important than any which the eye can perceive, never would have arisen on such a scene. It was property, that very exclusive property, which is now better secured by the civilization to which it gave rise, that was itself, at a still earlier period, the great civilizer of men.—*Brown's Phil. Lect.* 83.

³ 2 Th. 3. 12.

⁴ Lu. 19. 8.

⁵ Ge. 14. 23.

⁶ Le. 11. 17.

⁷ Ps. 53. 5

⁸ 1 Jno. 4. 18.

judgments that follow this sin, 'Achan the thief was stoned to death;' 'what seest thou? And I answered, a flying roll;' 'this is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; I will bring it forth, saith the Lord, and it shall enter into the house of the thief.'⁸ Fabius, a Roman censor, condemned his own son to die for theft. Thieves die with ignominy, the ladder is their preferment; and there is a worse thing than death, while they rob others of money, they rob themselves of salvation.

Q. *What is to be done to avoid stealing?*

1. Live in a calling; 'let him that stole

steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands,' &c. Such as stand idle, the devil hires them, and puts them to the pilfering trade. An idle person tempts the devil to tempt him. 2. Be content with the estate God hath given you: 'be content with such things as ye have.'⁹ Theft is the daughter of avarice; study contentment. Believe that condition best God hath carved out to you. God can bless that little meal in the barrel. We shall not need these things long; we shall carry nothing out of the world with us but our winding sheet; if we have but enough to bear our charges to heaven, it is sufficient.

OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Ex. 20. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

THE tongue which at first was made to be an organ of God's praise, is now become an instrument of unrighteousness. This commandment binds the tongue to its good behaviour. God hath set two fences to keep in the tongue, the teeth and lips; and this commandment is a third fence set about it, that it should not break forth into evil; 'thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.' This commandment hath a prohibitory, and a mandatory part; the first is set down in plain words, the other is clearly implied.

1. The prohibitory part of the commandment; or, what it forbids in general. It forbids any thing which may tend to the disparagement or prejudice of our neighbour. More particularly, two things are forbidden in this commandment, 1st. Slandering. 2d. False witness.

1st. Slandering our neighbour. This is a sin against the ninth commandment. The scorpion carries his poison in his tail; the slanderer carries his poison in his tongue. Slandering is to report things of others unjustly; 'they laid things to my charge which I knew not.'¹ It is usual to bring in a Christian beheaded of his good name; they raised a slander of Paul, that he should preach, men might do evil, that good might come of it: 'we be slanderously reported; and as some affirm that we say, let us do evil, that good may come.'² Eminency is commonly blasted by slander. Holiness itself is no shield from slander. The lamb's innocency will not preserve it from the

wolf. Christ was the most innocent upon earth, yet was reported to be a friend of sinners; John Baptist was a man of a holy, austere life, yet they said of him 'he hath a devil.'³ The scripture calls slandering, smiting with the tongue; 'come, and let us smite him with the tongue.'⁴ You may smite another and never touch him. 'The wounds of the tongue are worse than those of the sword,' AUG. The wounds of the tongue no physician can heal; and to pretend friendship to a man, yet slander him, is most odious. St Jerome speaks thus: 'the Arian faction made a show of kindness; they kissed my hands, but slandered me, and sought my life.' And, as it is a sin against this commandment, to raise a false report of another, so it is a sin to receive a false report before we have examined it; 'Lord, who shall dwell in thy holy hill?'⁵ who in heaven? 'he that backbiteth not, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.'⁶ We must not only not raise a false report, but not take it up. He that raiseth a slander, carries the devil in his tongue: and he that receives it, carries the devil in his ear.

2d. The second thing forbidden in this commandment, is false witness. Here threesins are condemned: 1. speaking, 2. witnessing, 3. swearing that which is false against our neighbour.

1. Speaking that which is false; 'lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.'⁷ To lie is to speak that which one knows to be an untruth. There is nothing more contrary to God than a lie. The Holy Ghost is called the 'Spirit

¹ Jo. 7. and Ze. 5. 2.

² Ze. 5. 3.

³ Ps. 35. 11.

⁴ Ro. 3. 8.

⁵ Ep. 4. 28.

⁶ He. 13. 5.

⁷ Mat. 11. 18.

⁸ Je. 18. 18. ⁹ Ps. 15. 1. ¹⁰ Ps. 15. 3. ¹¹ Pr. 12. 22.

of Truth.¹ Lying is a sin that doth not go alone; it ushers in other sins; Absalom told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at Hebron,² and this lie was a preface to his treason. Where there is a lie in the tongue, it shows the devil is in the heart; 'why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?'³ Lying is such a sin as unfits men for civil society. How can you converse or bargain with him that you cannot trust a word he saith? This is a sin which highly provokes God. Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie.⁴ The furnace of hell is heated for liars; 'without are sorcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'⁵ O abhor this sin! 'When thou speakest, let thy word be as authentic as thy oath.' Hierom. Imitate God who is the pattern of truth. Pythagoras being asked what made men like God? answered, 'when they speak truth.' It is made the character of a man that shall go to heaven; 'he speaketh the truth in his heart.'

2. That which is condemned in the commandment is, witnessing that which is false; 'thou shalt not bear false witness.' There is a bearing of false witness for another, and a bearing false witness against another.* (1.) A bearing false witness for another. When we do give our testimony for a person that is criminal and guilty, we justify him as if he were innocent; 'which justify the wicked for a reward.'⁷ He that goes to make a wicked man just, makes himself unjust. (2.) There is a bearing false witness against another, that is, when we accuse another in open court falsely. This is to imitate the devil who is the 'accuser of the brethren.'⁸ Though the devil is no adulterer, yet he is a false witness. Solomon saith, 'a man that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul and a sword';⁹ in his face he is hardened like an hammer; he cannot blush, he cares not what lie he witnesseth to; and he is a sword; his tongue is a sword to wound him he witnesseth against, in his goods or life. Thus, 'there came in two men, children of Belial, and witnessed against Naboth, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king';¹⁰ and their witness took away his life. The queen of Persia being sick, the

magicians accused two godly virgins that they had by charms procured the queen's sickness; whereupon she caused these virgins to be sawn asunder. A false witness doth pervert the place of judicature; he corrupts the jury, his bearing false witness makes them give in a false verdict; and he corrupts the judge by making him pronounce a wrong sentence, and causes the innocent to suffer. Vengeance will find out the false witness; 'a false witness shall not be unpunished.'¹¹ 'if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother';¹² that is, if he had thought to have taken away his life, his own life shall go for it.

3. That which is condemned in the commandment is, swearing that which is false. When men take a false oath, and by that, take away the life of another. 'Love no false oath.'¹³ 'What seest thou?' 'I answered, a flying roll.'¹⁴ 'This is the curse that goeth forth, and it shall enter, saith the Lord, into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name; and it shall consume his house, with the timber thereof and stones thereof.'¹⁵ The Scythians made a law, when a man did bind two sins together, a lie with an oath, he was to lose his head, because this sin did take away all truth and faith from among men. The devil hath taken great possession of such who dare swear to a lie. This is a manifest breach of this commandment.

USE I. Branch 1. It reproves the church of Rome, who will dispense with a lie, or a false oath, if it be to promote the catholic cause. They approve of an *officious* lie; they hold some lies to be lawful; they may as well hold some sins to be lawful. God hath no need of our lie. It is not lawful to tell a lie for the glory of God, if we were sure to bring glory to God by it, as Austin speaks.

Branch 2. It reproves those who make no conscience of slandering others; they come under the breach of this commandment; 'thou sittest and slanderest thy own mother's son';¹⁶ 'report, say they, and we will report,'¹⁷ 'this city (Jerusalem) is a rebellious city, and hurtful to kings and provinces.'¹⁸ Paul was slandered as a mover of sedition, and the head of a faction.¹⁹ The same word signifies both a slanderer and a devil; 'not slanderers':²⁰ in the Greek, 'not devils.' Some think it is no great

¹ 1 Jno. 4. 5. 6. ² 2 Sa. 15. 7. ³ Ac. 5. 3. ⁴ Ac. 5. 5.
⁵ Re. 22. 15. ⁶ Ps. 15. 2. ⁷ Is. 5. 23. ⁸ Pr. 25. 18.

* Lies are, from their object, commonly distinguished into *pernicious*, which are used with the intention of doing harm, and tend to the injury of our neighbour; *officious*, which tend to the advantage of our neighbour, and are used for the purpose of doing him good; and *jocose*, which are used in jest, and for pleasure's sake.—*Turret. Theol. Loc. XI. Quest. 20.*

⁹ 1 Ki. 21. 13. ¹⁰ Pr. 19. 4. ¹¹ De. 19. 18, 19. ¹² Ze. 8. 17.
¹³ Ze. 5. 2. ¹⁴ Ze. 5. 3, 4. ¹⁵ Ps. 50. 20. ¹⁶ Je. 20. 10.
¹⁷ Err. 1. 15. ¹⁸ Ac. 24. 5. ¹⁹ 1 Tim. 3. 11.

matter to misreport and slander others; know that this is to act the part of a devil. Clipping a man's credit to make it weigh lighter, is worse than clipping of coin. The slanderer wounds three at once; he wounds him that he slanders; and he wounds him to whom he reports the slander, by causing uncharitable thoughts to arise up in his mind against the party slandered; and he wounds his own soul, by reporting that of another which is false. This is a great sin; and I would, I could not say, it is common. You may kill a man as well in his name as in his person. Some are loath to take away their neighbour's goods; conscience would fly in their face; but better take away their corn out of their field, their wares out of their shop, than take away their good name. This is a sin you can never make them reparation for: a blot in a man's name, being like a blot on white paper, which will never be got out. Surely God will visit for this sin. If idle words shall be accounted for, shall not unjust slanders? The Lord will make inquisition one day, as well for names as for blood. O therefore take heed of this sin! It is a breach of the ninth commandment. Was it not a sin under the law to defame a virgin,¹ and, is it not a greater sin to defame a saint who is a member of Christ! The heathens by the light of nature abhorred this sin of slandering. Diogenes used to say, 'of all wild beasts, a slanderer is the worst.' Antoninus made a law, that, if a person could not prove the crime he reported another to be guilty of, he should be put to death.

Branch 3. It reproves them who are so wicked as to bear false witness against others. These are monsters in nature, unfit to live in civil society. Eusebius relates of one Narcissus, a man famous for piety, who was accused by two false witnesses of unchastity; and, to prove their accusation, they bound it with oaths and curses after this manner: one said, 'if I speak not true, I pray God I may perish by fire,'—the other said, 'if I speak not true, I wish I may be deprived of my sight;' it pleased God that the first witness who foreswore himself, his house being set on fire, he was burned in the flames; the other witness, being troubled in conscience, confessed his perjury, and continued so long weeping, that he wept himself blind. Jezebel, who suborned two false witnesses against Naboth, was thrown down out of a

window, and 'the dogs licked her blood.' O tremble at this sin! A perjured person is the devil's excrement. He is cursed in his name, and seared in his conscience. Hell gapes for such a windfall.

USE 2. Branch 1. It exhorts all to take heed of the breach of this commandment, of lying, slandering, and bearing false witness; and to avoid these sins. 1. Get the fear of God. Why doth David say, 'the fear of the Lord is clean?'² Because it cleanseth the heart of malice, it cleanseth the tongue of slander. 'The fear of the Lord is clean:' it is to the soul as lightning to the air, which cleanseth it. 2. Get love to your neighbour.*³ Then there would not be *χεν συμπνεα*. If we a love a friend, we will not speak or attest anything to his prejudice. Men's minds are cankered with envy and hatred; hence comes slandering and false witnessing. Love is a lovely grace; 'lovethinketh no evil;'⁴ it makes the best interpretation of another's words. Love is a well-wisher, and it is rare to speak ill of him we wish well to. Love is that which cements Christians together; it is the healer of division, and the hinderer of slander.

Branch 2. To such whose lot it is to meet with slanderers and false accusers, 1. Labour to make a sanctified use of it. When Shimei railed on David, David made a sanctified use of it; 'the Lord hath said to him, curse David.'⁵ So, if you are slandered, or falsely accused, make a good use of it. See if you have no sin unrepented of for which God may suffer you to be calumniated and reproached. See if you have not at any time wronged others in their name, and said that of them which you cannot prove; then lay your hand on your mouth, and confess the Lord is righteous to let you fall under the scourge of the tongue. 2. If you are slandered, or falsely accused, but know your own innocency, be not too much troubled, let this be your rejoicing, the witness of your conscience. 'Let a man's wall of brass be his consciousness of innocency.' A good conscience is a wall of brass, that will be able to stand against a false witness. As no flattery can heal a bad conscience, so no slander can hurt a good. God will clear up the

² 2 Ki. 9. 33. ³ Ps. 19. 9. ⁴ Le. 19. 18. ⁵ 1 Co. 13. 5.
⁶ 2 Sa. 16. 10.

* When any one was speaking ill of another in the presence of Peter the Great, he at first listened to him attentively, and then interrupted him. 'Is there not,' said he, 'a fair side also to the character of the person of whom you are speaking? Come, tell me what good qualities you have remarked about him.'—*Whitecross on Catech.* p. 145.

names of his people ; ‘ he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.’¹ God, as he will wipe away tears from the eyes, so he will wipe off reproaches from the name. Believers shall come forth out of all their slanders and reproaches, as ‘ the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.’

Branch 3. It should exhort such to be very thankful to God, whom God hath preserved from slander and false witness. Job calls it ‘ the scourge of the tongue.’² As a rod doth scourge the back, so the slanderer’s tongue doth scourge the name. It is a great mercy to be kept from the scourge of the tongue ; a mercy, that God stops malignant mouths from bearing false witness. What mischief may not a lying report or a false oath do ? One destroys the name, the other the life. It is the Lord who muzzles the mouths of the wicked, and keeps those dogs that snarl at us, from flying upon us ; ‘ thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.’³ It is, I suppose, an allusion to kings, who being resolved to protect their favourites against the accusations of men, take them into their bed-chamber, or bosom, where none may touch them : so God hath a pavilion, or secret hiding-place for his favourites, where he preserves their credit and reputation untouched ; he keeps them from the ‘ strife of tongues.’ This is a mercy we ought to acknowledge to God.

II. The mandatory part of this commandment implied : that is, ‘ that we should stand up for others and vindicate them, when they are injured by lying lips.’ This is the sense of the commandment, not only that we should not slander or falsely accuse others, but that we should witness for them, and stand up in their defence, when we know them to be traduced. A man may wrong another as well by silence as by slander when he knows him to be wrongfully accused, yet doth not speak in his behalf. If others cast false aspersions on any, we should wipe them off. The apostles, who were filled with the wine of the Spirit, being charged with drunkenness, Peter was their compurgator, and openly cleared their innocency ; ‘ these are not drunken, as ye suppose.’⁴ Jonathan knowing David to be a worthy man, and all those things Saul said of him to be slanders, vindicated David ; ‘ David hath not sinned against thee, but his works to thee-ward have been very good ;’ ‘ wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, and slay David without a cause ?’ When the primitive Christians were falsely accused for incest, and killing their children, Tertullian made a famous apology in their vindication. This is to act the part both of a friend and of a Christian, to be an advocate for another, when he is wronged in his good name.

OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

EXOD. 20. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.*

THIS commandment forbids, 1st, covetousness in general, ‘ thou shalt not covet.’ 2d. in particular, ‘ thy neighbour’s house, thy neighbour’s wife,’ &c.

1. It forbids covetousness in general, ‘ thou shalt not covet.’ It is lawful to use the world, yea, and to desire so much of it as may : 1. keep us from the temptation of poverty ; ‘ give me not poverty, lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.’¹ 2. As may enable us to honour God with works of mercy ; ‘ honour the Lord with thy substance.’² But all the danger is, when the world gets into the heart. The water is useful for the sailing of the ship ; all the

danger is when the water gets into the ship ; so the fear is, when the world gets into the heart, ‘ thou shalt not covet.’

Q. *What is it to covet ?*

There are two words in the Greek, which set forth the nature of covetousness : 1. *Pleonexia*, which signifies an ‘ insatiable desire of getting the world.’ Covetousness is a dry dropsy. Austin defines covetousness, to desire more than enough ; to aim at a great estate, to be like the daughters of the horse-leech, crying, ‘ give, give,’³ or like Behemoth, ‘ he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.’⁴ 2. *Philargyria*, which signifies an ‘ inordinate

¹ Ps. 37. 6. ² Job 5. 21. ³ Ps. 31. 20. ⁴ Pr. 30. 8. ⁵ Pr. 3. 9.

⁶ Ac. 2. 15. ⁷ 1 Sa. 19. 4, 5. ⁸ Pr. 30. 15. ⁹ Job 40. 25

love of the world.' The world is the idol ; it is so loved, that a man will not part with it to any good use ; this is to come under the indictment of covetousness. He may be said to be covetous, not only who gets the world unrighteously, but who loves the world inordinately.

But, for a more full answer to the question, 'what is it to covet?' I shall show you in six particulars, when a man may be said to be given to covetousness.

1. When his thoughts are wholly taken up about the world. As a good man's thoughts are still in heaven ; he is thinking of Christ's love and eternal recompense ; 'when I awake, I am still with thee,'¹ that is divine contemplation : so a covetous man is still with the world ; his mind is wholly taken up about it ; he can think of nothing but his shop or farm. The faucy is a mint-house, and most of the thoughts a covetous man mints are worldly ; he is always plotting and projecting about the things of this life ; like a virgin that hath all her thoughts running upon her suitor.

2. A man may be said to be given to covetousness when he takes more pains for the getting of earth, than for the getting of heaven. He will turn every stone, break his sleep, take many a weary step for the world ; but will take no pains for Christ or heaven. The Gauls, who were an ancient people of France, after they had tasted of the sweet wine of the Italian grape, they inquired after the country, and never rested till they had arrived at it ; so a covetous man having had a relish of the world, pursues after it, and never leaves till he hath got it ; but he neglects the things of eternity. He could be content if salvation would drop into his mouth as a ripe fig drops into the mouth of the eater ;² but he is loath to put himself to too much sweat or trouble to obtain Christ or salvation. He *hunts* for the world ; he only *wisheth* for heaven.

3. A man may be said to be given to covetousness, when all his discourse is about the world ; 'he that is of the earth, is earthly and speaketh of the earth.'³ As it is a sign of godliness to be still speaking of heaven, to have the tongue turned to the language of Canaan, 'the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,'⁴ he speaks as if he had been already in heaven ; so, a sign of a man given to covetousness, he is speaking of secular things, his wares and drugs. A covetous man's breath, like a dying

man's, smells strong of the earth. As they said to Peter, 'thy speech bewrayeth thee,'⁵ so a covetous man's speech bewrayeth him ; he is like the fish in the gospel, which had a piece of money in the mouth.⁶ BERN. 'words are the looking-glass of the heart,'—they show what is within.

4. A man is given to covetousness when he doth so set his heart upon worldly things, that for the love of them, he will part with heavenly ; for the 'wedge of gold,' he will part with the 'pearl of great price.' The young man in the gospel, when Christ said, 'sell all and come and follow me ;' 'he went away sorrowful ;'⁷ he would rather part with Christ than with all his earthly possessions. Cardinal Bourbon said, he would forego his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris. When it comes to a critical point, that men must either relinquish their estate or Christ, and they will rather part with Christ, and a good conscience, than with their estate, it is a clear case they are possessed with the devil of covetousness.

5. A man is given to covetousness when he overloads himself with worldly business. He hath many irons in the fire ; he is in this sense a pluralist, he takes so much business upon him, that he cannot find time to serve God ; he hath scarce time to eat his meat, but no time to pray. When a man doth overcharge himself with the world, and as Martha, cumber himself about many things, that he cannot have time for his soul, sure he is under the power of covetousness.

6. He is given to covetousness whose heart is so set upon the world, that, to get it, he cares not what unlawful indirect means he useth ; he will have the world, 'by right or wrong ;' he will wrong and defraud, and raise his estate upon the ruins of another ; 'the balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress.'⁸ And Ephraim said, 'yet I am become rich.' Pope Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom.*

¹ Mat. 26. 73. ² Mat. 17. 27. ³ Mat. 19. 21, 22. ⁴ Ho. 12. 7, 8.

* To covet, is to desire inordinately what is lawful, and to desire, in any degree, what is forbidden. What is forbidden by this commandment, is the breach even in *wish* or *purpose* of any of the other precepts of the law ; especially those of the second table are referred to. What is denoted by the English word *covetousness*, is the spiritual violation of the *eighth* commandment. There is likewise specified the spiritual violation of the *seventh* commandment, or *coveting* the wife of our neighbour. This may therefore be regarded as a supplement to all the other precepts, enjoining us to observe them, not in the letter only, but also in the spirit. We fall far short of the meaning of this part of the law of God, if we take a more limited view of it ; for even in our own language the verb 'to covet,'

¹ Ps. 139. 18. ² Na. 3. 12. ³ Jno. 3. 31. ⁴ Ec. 10. 12.

USE. 'Take heed and beware of covetousness.'¹ It is a direct breach of this tenth commandment. Covetousness is a moral vice, it infects and pollutes the whole soul. The sin.

(1.) It is a subtle sin, a sin that many do not so well discern in themselves: as some have the scurvy, yet do not know it. This sin can dress itself in the attire of virtue. It is called the 'cloak of covetousness.'² Covetousness is a sin that wears a cloak, it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and good husbandry. It hath many pleas and excuses for itself, more than any other sin; as the providing for one's family. The more subtle the sin is, the less discernible.

(2.) Covetousness is a dangerous sin, it checks all that is good. It is an enemy to grace; it damps good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The hedgehog, in the fable, came to the cony-burrows, in stormy weather, and desired harbour; but when once he had gotten entertainment, he set up his prickles, and did never cease till he had thrust the poor conies out of their burrows; so covetousness, by fair pretences, winds itself into the heart; but, as soon as you have let it in, it will never leave till it hath choked all good beginnings, and thrust all religion out of your hearts. 'Covetousness hinders the efficacy of the word preached.' In the parable, the thorns, which Christ expounded to be the cares of this life, choked the good seed:³ many sermons lie dead, buried in earthly hearts. We preach to men, to get their hearts in heaven; but where covetousness is predominant, it chains them to the earth, and makes them like the woman which Satan had bowed together, that she could not lift up herself.⁴ You may as well bid an elephant fly in the air, as a covetous man live by faith. We preach to men to give freely to Christ's poor; but covetousness makes them to be like him in the gospel who had 'a withered hand.'⁵ They have a withered hand, and cannot stretch it out to the poor. It is impossible to be earthly-minded and charitably-minded. Thus covetousness obstructs the efficacy of the word, and makes it prove abortive. Such whose hearts are rooted in the earth will be so far from profiting by the word, that they will

be ready rather to deride it; the Pharisees, who were covetous, 'derided him.'⁶

(3.) Covetousness is a mother-sin,—a radical vice, 'the love of money is the root of all evil.'⁷ 'To what will the accursed craving for gold not prompt the human heart?' HOR.

He who hath an earthly itch, a greedy desire of getting the world, hath in him the root of all sin. Covetousness is a mother sin. I shall make it appear that covetousness is a breach of all the ten commandments. 1. It breaks the first commandment, 'thou shalt have no other gods before me.' The covetous man hath more gods than one; mammon is his god. He hath a god of gold, therefore he is called an idolater.⁸ 2. Covetousness breaks the second commandment, 'thou shalt not make any graven image, thou shalt not bow down thyself to them.' A covetous man bows down, though not to the graven image in the church, yet to the graven image in his coin. 3. Covetousness is a breach of the third commandment, 'thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' Absalom's design was to get his father's crown, there was covetousness; but he talks of paying his 'vow to God,' there he took God's name in vain. 4. Covetousness is a breach of the fourth commandment, 'remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy.' A covetous man doth not keep the sabbath holy; he will ride to fairs on a sabbath: instead of reading in the Bible, he will cast up his accounts. 5. Covetousness is a breach of the fifth commandment, 'honour thy father and thy mother.' A covetous person will not honour his father, if he doth not feed him with money; nay, he will get his father to make over his estate to him in his lifetime, and so the father shall be at the son's command. 6. Covetousness is a breach of the sixth commandment, 'thou shalt not kill.' Covetous Ahab killed Naboth, to get his vineyard.⁹ How many have swimm'd to the crown in blood? 7. Covetousness is a breach of the seventh commandment, 'thou shalt not commit adultery.' Covetousness causeth uncleanness; you read of the 'hire of a whore.'¹⁰ An adulteress for money sets both conscience and chastity to sale. 8. Covetousness is a breach of the eighth commandment, 'thou shalt not steal.' Covetousness is the root of theft; covetous Achan stole the wedge of gold. Therefore thieves and the covetous are put together.¹¹ 9. Covetousness is a breach of

¹ Lu. 12. 15. ² 1 Th. 2. 5. ³ Mat. 13. 7.

⁴ Ln. 13. 11. ⁵ Mar. 3. 1.

has a much more extensive meaning, than the adjective 'covetous,' and the noun 'covetousness,' which are derived from it. And this interpretation of the precept, the apostle Paul has taught us, (Ro. 7. 7, 8).—See *Frazer on Sanctification*, p. 159.

⁶ Lu. 16. 14.

⁷ 1 Ti. 6. 10.

⁸ Col. 3. 5.

⁹ 1 Ki. 21. 13.

¹⁰ De. 23. 18.

¹¹ 1 Co. 6. 10.

the ninth commandment, 'thou shalt not bear false witness.' What makes the perjurer take a false oath but covetousness? he hopes for a dividend. And, 10. It is plainly a breach of the last commandment, 'thou shalt not covet.' The mammonist covets his neighbour's house and goods, and endeavours to get them into his own hands. Thus you see how vile a sin covetousness is; it is a mother-sin, it is a plain breach of every one of the ten commandments.

(4.) Covetousness is a sin dishonourable to religion. For such as say their hopes are above, yet their hearts are below; for them who profess to be above the stars, to 'lick the dust' of the serpent, to be born of God, yet buried in the earth, how dishonourable is this to religion! The lapwing wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung: an emblem of such as profess to be crowned kings and priests unto God, yet feed immoderately on these terrene dunghill comforts; 'and seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not.'¹ What, thou Baruch, who art ennobled by the new-birth, and art illustrious by thy office, a Levite, dost thou seek earthly things, and seek them now? When the ship is sinking, art thou trimming thy cabin? O do not so degrade thyself, nor blot thy scutcheon! 'Seekest thou great things? seek them not.' The higher grace is, the less earthly should Christians be; the higher the sun is, the shorter always is the shadow.

(5.) Covetousness exposeth us to God's abhorrency: 'the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth.'² A king abhors to see his statue

abused: God abhors to see that man, made in his image, should have the heart of a beast given to him. Who would live in such a sin as makes him abhorred of God? Whom God abhors he curseth, and God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

(6.) Covetousness precipitates men to ruin; it shuts them out of heaven: 'this ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.'³ What should a covetous man do in heaven? God can no more converse with him, than a king can converse with a sow; 'they that will be rich fall into a snare, and many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition.'⁴ A covetous man is like a bee, that gets into a barrel of honey, and there drowns itself, he is like a ferryman, that takes in so many passengers to increase his fare, that he sinks his boat; so a covetous man takes in more gold to the increasing of his estate, that he damns himself in perdition. I have read of some inhabitants near Athens, who lived in a very dry, barren island, and they took much pains to draw a river to this island to water it and make it fruitful; but when they had opened the passages, and brought the river to it, the water broke in with such a force, that it drowned the land, and all the people in it: an emblem of a covetous man: he labours to draw riches to him, and at last they come in in such an abundance, that they drown him in hell and perdition. How many, to build up an estate, pull down their souls? Oh, therefore, flee from covetousness! I shall next prescribe some remedies against covetousness.

EXOD. 20. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, &c.*

I AM, in the next place, to resolve a question, How we may do to cure this itch of covetousness?

For answer to this, I shall prescribe some remedies and antidotes against this sin:

1st. Faith; 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'⁵ The root of covetousness is the distrust of God's providence; faith believes God will provide; God who feeds the birds, will feed his children, he who clothes the lilies, will clothe his lambs, and so faith overcomes the world. Faith is the

cure of care; faith not only purifies the heart, but satisfies the heart; faith makes God our portion, and so in him we have enough; 'the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'⁶ Faith, by a divine chemistry, extracts its chief comfort out of God. A little with God is sweet. Thus faith is a remedy against covetousness; faith overcomes, not only the fear of the world, but the love of the world.

2d. The second remedy is, judicious con-

¹ Jc. 45. 5. ² Ps. 10. 3. ³ 1 Jno. 5. 4.

⁴ Ep. 5. 5. ⁵ 1 Tim. 6. 9. ⁶ Ps. 16. 5, 6.

sideration. 1. What poor things these things below are, that we should covet them. They are below the worth of the soul, which carries in it an idea and resemblance of God. The world is but the workmanship of God, the soul is the image of God. You covet that which will not satisfy you; 'he that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver.'¹ Solomon had put all the creatures in an alembic, and stilled out the quintessence, and behold, 'all was vanity.'² Covetousness is a dry dropsy; the more a man hath, the more he thirsts. Worldly things cannot remove trouble of mind. King Saul being perplexed in conscience, all his crown-jewels could not administer comfort to him.³ The things of the world will no more ease a troubled spirit, than a gold cap will cure the headache. The things of the world, if you had more of them, cannot continue with you. The creature hath a little honey in its mouth, but it hath wings to fly away. These things either go from us, or we from them: what poor things are these to covet? 2. The frame and contexture of the body. 'God hath made the face to look upward towards heaven.' OVID. Anatomists observe, that whereas other creatures have but four muscles to their eyes, man hath a fifth muscle, by which he is able to look up to heaven; and as for the heart, it is made like a glass vial, narrow and contracted downwards, but wide and broad upwards. And as the frame and contexture of the body teacheth us to look to things above, so especially the soul is planted in the body, as a divine sparkle to ascend upwards. Can it be imagined that God gave us intellectual, immortal souls, to covet only earthly things? What wise man would fish for gudgeons with golden hooks? Did God give us glorious souls, only to fish for the world? Sure our souls are made for an higher end; to aspire after the enjoyment of God in glory. 3. The examples of those who have been contemners and despisers of the world. The primitive Christians, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, were sequestered from the world, and were wholly taken up in converse with God; they lived in the world above the world, like the birds of paradise, who soar above in the air, and seldom or never touch with their feet upon the earth. Luther saith, that he was never tempted to this sin of covetousness. The saints of old, though they did live in the world, they did trade in heaven;

'our conversation is in heaven;'⁴ the Greek word signifies, our commerce, or traffic, or burghership is in heaven. 'Enoch walked with God.'⁵ His affections were sublimated, he did take a turn in heaven every day. The righteous are compared to a palm-tree.⁶ Philo observes that whereas all other trees have their sap in their root, the sap of the palm-tree is towards the top: the emblem of the saints, whose hearts are above in heaven, where their treasure is.

3d. Covet spiritual things more, and you will covet earthly things less. Covet grace; grace is the best blessing, it is the seed of God,⁷ the angels' glory. Covet heaven; heaven is the region of happiness, it is the most pleasant climate. Did we covet heaven more, we should covet earth less. They that stand on the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but as small villages in their eyes: if we could have our hearts more fixed upon the Jerusalem above, how would all worldly things disappear, and be as nothing in our eyes! We read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right foot on the sea, and with his left foot on the earth! had we but once been in heaven, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we, in an holy scorn, trample with one foot upon the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea! O covet after heavenly things! There is the tree of life, the mountains of spices, the rivers of pleasure, the honeycomb of God's love dropping, the delights of angels, the flower of joy fully ripe and blown. There is the pure air to breathe in; no fogs nor vapours of sin arise to infect that air, but the Sun of Righteousness enlightens that horizon continually with his glorious beams. O let your thoughts and delights be always taken up about the city of pearl, the paradise of God! Did we covet heavenly things more, we should covet earthly things less. It is reported that after Lazarus was raised from the grave, he was never seen to smile or be delighted with the world: were our hearts raised by the power of the Holy Ghost, up to heaven, we should not be much taken with earthly things.

4th. Pray for an heavenly mind. 'Lord, let the loadstone of thy Spirit draw my heart upward! Lord, dig the earth out of my heart, teach me how to possess the world, and not love it, how to hold it in my hand, and not let

¹ Ec. 5. 10.² Ec. 2. 11.³ 1 Sa. 28. 15.⁴ Ph. 3. 20.⁵ Ge. 5. 24.⁶ Ps. 92. 12.⁷ 1 Jno. 3. 9.⁸ Re. 10. 2.

it get into my heart!' So much for the commandment in general, 'thou shalt not covet.'

II. I shall speak of it more particularly: 'thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife,' &c. Observe here the holiness and perfection of God's law; it forbids the first motions and risings of sin in the heart: 'thou shalt not covet.' The laws of men take hold of the actions, but the law of God goes further, it forbids not only the actions, but the affections; 'thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.' It is not said, thou shalt not take away his house; but 'thou shalt not covet it.' These lustings and desires after the forbidden fruit are sinful; 'the law had said, thou shalt not covet.'¹ Though the tree bears no bad fruit, it may be faulty at the root; though a man doth not commit any gross sin, yet who can say his heart is pure? There may be a faultiness at the root, there may be sinful covetings and lustings in the soul.

USE. Let us be humbled for the sin of our nature, the risings of evil thoughts, coveting that which we ought not. Our nature is a seed-plot of iniquity; it is like charcoal that is ever sparkling; the sparkles of pride, envy, covetousness, arise in the mind. How should this humble us? If there be not sinful actings, there are sinful covetings. Let us pray for mortifying grace which may be like the water of jealousy to make the thigh of sin to rot. But to come to the words more clearly, 'thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor thy neighbour's wife,' &c.

Q. *Why is the house put before the wife? in Deuteronomy the wife is put first; 'neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house.'*² *Here the house is put first?*

In Deuteronomy, the wife is set down first, in respect of her value. She, if a good wife, is of far greater value and estimate than the house, 'her price is far above rubies.'³ She is the furniture of the house, and this furniture is more worth than the house. When Alexander had overcome king Darius in battle, Darius seemed not to be much dismayed; but when he heard his wife was taken prisoner, now his eyes, like spouts, did gush forth water, as valuing his wife dearer than his life. But yet in this place in Exodus, the house is put before the wife: the reason is, because the house is first in order; the house is erected before the wife can live in

it; the nest is built before the bird is in it; the wife is first esteemed, but the house must be first provided.

1. Then, 'thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.' How depraved is man since the fall! man knows not how to keep within bounds, but is coveting more than his own. Ahab, one would think, had enough; he was a king, and one would suppose his crown-revenues should have contented him; but still he was coveting more; Naboth's vineyard was in his eye, and stood near the smoke of his chimney, and he could not be quiet till he had it in possession. Were there not so much coveting, there would not be so much bribing: one man pulls away another's house from him. It is only the prisoner lives in such a tenement as he may be sure none will go about to take from him.

2. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.' This commandment is a bridle to check the inordinancy of brutish lusts: 'thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.' It was the devil that 'sowed another man's ground.'⁴ But how is the hedge of this commandment trodden down in our times! There be many who do more than covet their neighbours' wives, they take them; 'cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; and all the people shall say, Amen.'⁵ If it were to be proclaimed, 'cursed be he that lieth with his neighbour's wife,' and all that were guilty should say, Amen, how many would curse themselves!

3. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's man-servant, nor his maid-servant.' Servants, when faithful, are a treasure. What a true and trusty servant had Abraham! He was his right hand; how prudent and faithful was he in the matter he was intrusted with, in getting a wife for his master's son!⁶ And surely it would have gone near to Abraham, to have had any one entice away his servant from him. But this sin of coveting servants is common; if one hath a better servant, others will be inveigling and laying baits for him, and endeavour to draw him away from his master. This is a sin against the tenth commandment. To steal away another's servant by enticement, is no better than thievery.*

¹ Mat. 13. 25.

² De. 27. 20.

³ Ge. 24. 9.

* We may desire the house of our neighbour, but not if his yielding it to us is to be injurious either to his worldly prosperity or his feelings. But among the Israelites it was otherwise; and the law most minutely provides for the preservation in its entrenchment of the property of each family and branch of a family. (Le. 25. 23—31.) We may desire to have the ser-

4. 'Nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.' Were there not coveting of ox and ass, there would not be so much stealing: first men break the tenth commandment by coveting, and then they break the eighth commandment by stealing. It was an excellent appeal that Samuel made to the people; 'witness against me before the Lord, whose ox have I taken, or whose ass, or whom have I defrauded.' And it was a brave speech of St Paul, 'I have coveted no man's gold, or silver, or apparel.'

Q. *But what means may we use, to keep us from coveting that which is our neighbour's?*

The best remedy is contentment. If we are content with our own, we shall not covet that which is another's. St Paul could say, 'I have coveted no man's gold or silver: whence was this? It was from contentment; I have learned, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.' Content saith, as 'I have enough;' I have a promise of heaven, and have sufficient to bear my charges thither; I have enough. And he who hath enough, will not covet that which is another's. Be content: and the best way to be contented, is, 1. Believe that condition best which God carves out to you by his providence. If God had seen it fit for us to

have more, we should have had it; but his wisdom sees this best for us. Perhaps we could not manage a great estate: it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Great estates may be snares; a boat may be overturned by having too great a sail. The believing that estate best God carves for us, makes us content; and being contented, we will not covet that which is another's.

2. The way to be content with such things as we have, and not to covet another's, is to consider the less estate we have, the less account we shall have to give at the last day. Every person is a steward, and must be accountable to God. They who have great estates have the greater reckoning; God will say, what good have you done with your estates? have you honoured me with your substance? where are the poor you have fed and clothed? If you cannot give a good account, it will be sad. This may make us contented with a less portion, to consider, the less estate, the less account we have to give; the less riches, the less reckoning. This is the way to have contentment; and no better antidote against coveting that which is another's than being content with that which is our own.

So much for the commandments.

MAN'S INABILITY TO KEEP THE MORAL LAW.

Q. LXXXII. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God.*

No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

'In many things we offend all.' Man in his primitive state of innocency was endowed with ability to keep the whole moral law: Adam had rectitude of mind, sanctity of will, perfection of power; Adam had the copy of

God's law written on his heart; no sooner did God command, but he did obey; as the key is suited to all the wards in the lock, and can open them, so Adam had a power suited to all God's commands, and could obey them. Adam's obedience did exactly run parallel with the moral law, as a well-made dial goes exactly with the sun. Man in innocency was like a well-tuned organ, he did sweetly tune to the will of God; he was adorned with holiness as the angels, but not confirmed in holiness as the angels; Adam was holy but mutable; he fell from his purity, and we with him. Sin cut the lock of original righteousness where our strength lay; sin hath brought such a languor and faintness into our souls, and hath so weakened us, that we shall never recover our full strength till we put on immortality. The thing I am now to demonstrate, is, that we cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law: 'in many things we offend all.'

1st. The case of an unregenerate man is such that he cannot perfectly obey all God's

¹ 1 Sa. 12. 3. ² Ac. 20. 33. ³ Ph. 4. 11. ⁴ Ge. 33. 9.
⁵ Ja. 3. 2.

vant of our neighbour, if the welfare of that servant is to be promoted by the change of situation: but the ancient people of God had, according to the law and for the space of time it prescribed, a right of property in the labour of those who were with them in servitude. Hence, in the tenth commandment, they occupy a middle place between a man's family and his chattels; and to allure them from him was, in one sense, like depriving him of his wife or children; and in another sense, like taking from him, without his consent or without just remuneration, his house or his field, his ox or his ass. Whatever our neighbour has, that he has a right to dispose of, we may desire; but not selfishly and without a regard to his feelings and interests, nor so vehemently, but that we may be fully content without it.—*Maresii Sup. Don. p. 62.*

commands; he may as well touch the stars, or span the ocean, as yield exact obedience to the law. A person unregenerate cannot act spiritually, he cannot pray in the Holy Ghost, he cannot live by faith, he cannot do duty out of love to duty, and if he cannot do duty spiritually, then much less perfectly. Now, that a natural man cannot yield perfect obedience to the moral law, is evident: 1. Because he is spiritually dead;¹ and being so, how can he keep the commandments of God perfectly? A dead man is not fit for action. A sinner hath the symptoms of death upon him: (1.) He hath no sense; a dead man hath no sense; he hath no sense of the evil of sin, of God's holiness and veracity; therefore he is said to be without feeling.² (2.) He hath no strength.³ What strength hath a dead man? A natural man hath no strength to deny himself, to resist temptation; he is dead, and can a dead man fulfil the moral law? 2. A natural man cannot perfectly keep all God's commandments because he is so interlarded with sin; he is born in sin; 'which drinketh iniquity like water.'⁴ All the imaginations of his thoughts are evil, and only evil.⁵ Now the least evil thought is a breach of the royal law; and, if there be defection, there cannot be perfection. And, as a natural man hath no power to keep the moral law, so he hath no will. He is not only dead, but worse than dead; a dead man doth no hurt, but there is a life of resistance against God goes along with the death of sin. A natural man not only cannot keep the law through weakness, but he breaks it through wilfulness, 'we will do whatsoever goeth forth out of our mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven.'⁶

2d. As the unregenerate cannot keep the moral law perfectly, so neither the regenerate: 'There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;⁷' nay, that 'sins not in doing good.'⁸ There is that in the best actions of a righteous man that is damnable, if God should weigh him in the balance of justice. Alas, how are his duties fly-blown! He cannot pray without wandering, nor believe without doubting: 'to will is present with me, but how to perform I find not.'⁹ In the Greek it is,

'How to do it thoroughly I find not.' Paul, though a saint of the first magnitude, was better at willing than at performing. Mary asked where they had laid Christ: she had a mind to have carried him away, but she wanted strength: so the regenerate have a will to obey God's law perfectly, but they want strength; their obedience is weak, and sickly; the mark they are to shoot at, is perfection of holiness; but though they take a right aim, yet do what they can, they shoot short; 'the good that I would, I do not.'¹⁰ A christian, while he is serving God, is hindered; like a ferryman, that plies the oar, and rows hard, but a gust of wind carries him back again: so saith Paul, 'the good that I would, I do not;' I am driven back by temptation. Now, if there be any failure in our obedience, we cannot make a perfect commentary upon God's law; no Christian alive can write a copy of holiness without blotting. The Virgin Mary's obedience was not perfect, she needed Christ's blood to wash her tears. Aaron was to make atonement for the altar,¹⁰ to show that the most holy offering hath defilement in it, and needs atonement to be made for it.

Q. 1. *But if a man hath no power to keep the whole moral law, then why doth God require that of man which he is not able to perform? How doth this stand with his justice?*

Though man hath lost his power of obeying, God hath not lost his right of commanding. If a master intrusts a servant with money to lay out, and the servant spends it dissolutely, may not the master justly demand this money? God gave us a power to keep the moral law; we, by tampering with sin, lost it, but may not God still call for perfect obedience? Or, in case of default, justly punish us?

Q. 2. *But why doth God suffer such an impotency to lie upon man that he cannot perfectly keep the law?*

The Lord doth it, 1. To humble us. Man

¹ Ro. 7. 19. ¹⁰ Ex. 29. 37.

whose spirit there is no guile; and even 'perfect and complete in the will of God,' because to that they will pay an entire and unreserved regard, not being dissemblers or partial in their obedience as hypocrites are. Perfection of holiness, in its most full and absolute sense, is the object of their desires, their prayers, and their pursuits: with renewed efforts they press forward to it, but still they lament their distance; 'not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.' They are not, therefore, so delivered from all depraved affections, or so conformed to the Image of God in any one principle, as to render all additional supplies of grace unnecessary or superfluous. But their entire and complete sanctification is what they look and ardently long for, as the great felicity of heaven.—*Robinson's Syst.* p. 395.

¹ Ep. 2. 1. ² Ep. 4. 19. ³ Ro. 5. 6. ⁴ Ps. 51. 5. Job 15. 16. ⁵ Ge. 6. 4. ⁶ Je. 41. 17. ⁷ Ec. 7. 20. ⁸ Ro. 7. 18.

* Several considerations are necessary for reconciling the various passages, which have reference to this subject. Believers are described as 'complete' or perfect in Christ Jesus; and so they are as to their justification and final security. They are denominated 'perfect,' as being sincere and upright, 'in

is a self-exalting creature; and, if he hath but any thing of worth, he is ready to be puffed up; but when he comes to see his deficiencies and failings, and how far short he comes of the holiness and perfection God's law requires, this is a means to pull down his plumes of pride, and lay them in the dust; he weeps over his impotency, he blushes over his leprous spots, he saith, as Job, 'I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' 2. God lets this impotency and infirmness lie upon us, that we may have recourse to Christ, to obtain pardon for our defects, and to sprinkle our best duties with his blood. When a man sees himself indebted, he owes perfect obedience to the law, but he hath nothing to pay; this makes him flee to Christ to be his friend, and answer all the demands and challenges of the law, and set him free in the court of justice.

USE 1. Is matter of humiliation for our fall in Adam. In the state of innocency we were perfectly holy: our minds were crowned with knowledge, and our wills, as a queen, did sway the sceptre of liberty; but now we may say 'the crown is fallen from our head.'¹ We have lost that power which was inherent in us. When we look back to our primitive glory when we shone as earthly angels, we may take up Job's words, 'O that I were as in months past!'² O that it were with us as at first, when there was no stain upon our virgin nature, when there was a perfect harmony between God's law and man's will! But, alas! how the scene is altered; our strength is gone from us, we tread awry every step, we come below every precept, our dwarfishness will not reach the sublimity of God's law, we fail in our obedience, and, while we fail, we forfeit. This may put us in close mourning, and spring a leak of sorrow in all our souls.

USE 2. Of Confutation. 1. It confutes the Arminians, who cry up the power of the will; they hold they have a will to save themselves, but by nature, we not only want strength,³ but we want will to that which is good. The will is not only full of impotency, but obstinacy; 'Israel would none of me.'⁴ The will hangs forth a flag of defiance against God. Such as speak of the sovereign power of the will, forget Phil. 2. 13, 'it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' If the power be in the will of man, then what needs God work in us to will? If the air can enlighten itself, what needs the sun to shine? Such as talk of the

power of nature, and the ability they have to save themselves, they disparage Christ's merits. I may say of them, 'Christ is become of no effect to them.'⁵ This I affirm, such as advance the power of their will in matters of salvation, without the medicinal grace of Christ, do absolutely put themselves under the covenant of works. And now I would ask them, can they perfectly keep the moral law? 'Evil springs from some defect.' If there be but the least defect in their obedience, they are gone; for one sinful thought, the law of God curseth them, and the justice of God arraigns them. Confounded be their pride, who cry up the power of nature, as if, by their own inherent abilities, they could rear up a building, the top whereof should reach to heaven! 2. It confutes a sort of people that brag of perfection,⁶ and according to that principle, they can keep all God's commandments perfectly. I would ask these, has there at no time a vain thought come into their minds? If there has, then they are not perfect. The Virgin Mary was not perfect; though her womb was pure, (being overshadowed with the Holy Ghost) yet her soul was not perfect; Christ doth tacitly imply a failing in her, Luke 2. 49. And, are they more perfect than the blessed Virgin was? 1st, Such as hold perfection, need not confess sin. David confessed sin,⁷ and Paul confessed sin,⁸ but they are got beyond David and Paul; they are perfect, they never transgress, and where there is no transgression, what needs confession? 2d, If they are perfect they need not ask pardon; they can pay God's justice what they owe; therefore what need they pray, 'forgive us our debts?' Oh that the devil should rock men so fast asleep as to make them dream of perfection! And whereas they bring that, 'let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded:'⁹ answer,

⁵ Ga. 5. 4. ⁶ Ps. 32. 5. ⁷ Ro. 7. 25. ⁸ Ph. 3. 15.

* The term *perfection* is not always used in the same sense in scripture. 1st. There is a perfection of *sincerity*, whereby a man serves God without hypocrisy, Job 1. 1; Is. 38. 3.—2d. A perfection of *parts*, subjective with respect to the whole man; 1 Thess. 5. 23; and objective with regard to the whole law, when also the duties prescribed by God are observed, Ps. 119. 128; Luke 1. 6.—3d. A *comparative* perfection, ascribed to those who are advanced in knowledge, faith, and sanctification, in comparison of those who are still infants and untaught, 1 John 2. 13; 1 Cor. 2. 6; Phil. 3. 15. 4th. An *evangelical* perfection; the righteousness of Christ being imputed to the believer, he is complete in him, and accepted of God as perfect through Christ, Col. 2. 10; Eph. 5. 27; 2 Cor. 5. 21. 5th. A perfection of *degrees*, by which a person performs all the commands of God, with the full exertion of all his powers, without the least defect. This is what the law of God requires, but the saints cannot attain to, in this life; though we willingly allow them all the other kinds above mentioned, Ro. 7. 24; Phil. 3. 12; 1 John 1. 8.—*Witsii Econ. Fœd. lib. 3. c. 12. § 124.*

¹ La. 5. 16. ² Job 29. 2. ³ Ro. 5. 9. ⁴ Ps. 81. 11.

perfection there, is meant of sincerity. God is best able to interpret his own word. He calls sincerity, perfection; 'a perfect and an upright man.'¹ But who is exactly perfect? A man full of diseases may as well say he is healthful, as a man full of sin say he is perfect!

USE 3. To regenerate persons. Though you fail in your obedience, and cannot keep the moral law exactly, yet be not discouraged.

Q. *What comfort may be given to a regenerate person under the failures and imperfections of his obedience?*

1. That a believer is not under the covenant of works, but under the covenant of grace. The covenant of works, requires perfect, personal, perpetual obedience; but in the covenant of grace, God will make some abatements, he will accept of less than he required in the covenant of works. (1.) In the covenant of works God required perfection of degrees, in the covenant of grace he accepts perfection of parts; there he required perfect working, here he accepts sincere believing; in the covenant of works God required us to live without sin, in the covenant of grace, God accepts of our combat with sin. (2.) Though a christian cannot, in his own person, perform all God's commandments, yet Christ, as his surety, and in his stead, hath fulfilled the law for him, and God accepts of Christ's obedience, which is perfect, to satisfy for that obedience which is imperfect. Christ being made a curse for believers, all the curses of the law have their sting pulled out. (3.) Though a christian cannot keep the commands of God to satisfaction, yet he may to approbation.

Q. *How is that?*

1. He gives his full assent and consent to the law of God: 'the law is holy and just';² there was assent in the judgment: 'I consent to the

law';⁴ there was consent in the will. 2. A christian mourns that he cannot keep the commands fully; when he fails, he weeps; he is not angry with the law because it is so strict, but he is angry with himself because he is so deficient. 3. He takes a sweet complacential delight in the law: 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man';⁵ Gr. 'I take pleasure in it.' 'O how love I thy law!'⁶ Though a Christian cannot keep God's law, yet he loves his law; though he cannot serve God perfectly, yet he serves him willingly. 4. It is his cordial desire to walk in all God's commands; 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!'⁷ Though his strength fails, yet his pulse beats. 5. He doth really endeavour to obey God's law perfectly; and wherein he comes short he runs to Christ's blood to make supply for his defects. This cordial desire, and real endeavour, God esteems as perfect obedience; 'if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted.'⁸ 'let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice.'⁹ Though the prayers of the righteous are mixed with sin, yet God sees they would pray better; God picks out the weeds from the flowers; he sees the faith and winks at the failing. The saint's obedience, though he falls short of legal perfection, yet having sincerity in it, and Christ's merits mixed with it, finds gracious acceptance. When the Lord sees endeavours after perfect obedience, this he takes well at our hands; as a father that receives a letter from his child, though there be blots in the letter, and false spellings, yet the father takes all in good part. O what blottings are there in our holy things! but God is pleased to take all in good part. Saith God, 'it is my child, and he would do better if he could; I will accept it.'

ALL SINS NOT EQUALLY HEINOUS.

Q. LXXXIII. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

Some sins, in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

'He that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater sin.'¹⁰ The Stoic philosophers held that all sins were equal: but this scripture clearly holds forth that there is a gradual difference in

sin; some are greater than others; some are 'mighty sins,'¹⁰ and 'erying sins.'¹¹ Every sin hath a voice to speak, but some sins cry. As some diseases are worse than others, and some poisons more venomous, so some sins are more heinous: 'you have done worse than your fathers,'¹² your sins have exceeded theirs. Some sins have a blacker aspect than others; to

¹ Job 1. 8. ² Ro. 7. 12. ³ Jno. 19. 11. ⁴ Ro. 7. 16. ⁵ Ro. 7. 22. ⁶ Ps. 119. 97. ⁷ Ps. 119. 5
⁸ 2 Co. 8. 12. ⁹ Ca. 2. 14. ¹⁰ Amos. 5. 12 ¹¹ Ge. 18. 21
¹² Ez. 16. 47. Je. 16. 12.

clip the king's coin is treason, but to strike his person is a higher degree of treason. A vain thought is a sin, but a blasphemous word is a greater sin. That some sins are greater than others, appears, 1. Because there was difference in the offerings under the law; the sin-offering was greater than the trespass-offering. 2. Because some sins are not capable of pardon as others are, therefore they must needs be more heinous; as the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.¹ 3. Because some sins have a greater degree of punishment than others; 'ye shall receive the greater damnation.'² Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? God will not punish one more than another, but that his sin is greater. It is true, 'all sins are equally heinous in respect to the object,' or the person against whom sin is committed, namely, the infinite God; but, in another sense, all sins are not alike heinous; some sins have more bloody circumstances in them, which are like the dye to the wool, to give it a deeper colour.

Q. *What sins may be said to be more heinous than others?*

1st. Such sins as are committed without any occasion offered; a man swears or is angry, and hath no provocation. The less the occasion of sin is, the greater is the sin. 2d. Such sins are more heinous, that are committed presumptuously. Under the law there was no sacrifice for presumptuous sins.³

Q. *What is it to sin presumptuously, which doth heighten and aggravate sin, and make it more heinous?*

To sin presumptuously,* is to sin against convictions and illuminations, or an enlightened conscience; 'they are of those that rebel against the light.'⁴ Conscience, like the cherubim, stands with a flaming sword in its hand to deter the sinner; yet he will sin. Did not Pilate sin against conviction, and with an high hand in condemning Christ? He knew that of envy the Jews had delivered him;⁵ he confessed he found 'no fault with him';⁶ and his own wife sent to him, saying, 'have thou nothing to do with

that just man;' yet for all this, he gave the sentence of death against Christ. Here he sinned presumptuously; against an enlightened conscience. To sin ignorantly doth something extenuate and pare off the guilt; 'if I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,'^a that is, their sin had been less; but to sin against illuminations and convictions, doth enhance and accent men's sins. These sins make deep wounds in the soul; other sins fetch blood, these are a stab at the heart.

Q. *How many ways does a man sin against illuminations and convictions?*

1. When he lives in the total neglect of duty. He is not ignorant that it is a duty to read the word, yet he lets the bible lie by as rusty armour, that he seldom makes use of; he is convinced that it is a duty to pray in his family, yet he can go days and months, and God never hear of him; he calls God father, but never asks his blessing. Neglect of family prayer doth, as it were, uncover the roof of men's houses, and make way for a curse to be rained down upon their table. 2. When a man lives in the same sins which he condemns in others, 'thou that judgest, doest the samething.'⁷ As Austin saith of Seneca, 'he wrote against superstition, yet he worshipped those images which he reproveth.' One man condemns another for rash censuring, yet lives in the same sin himself; a master reproveth his apprentice for swearing, yet he himself swears. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold; they who reprove and snuff the vices of others, had need themselves to be free from those sins. The snuffers must be of gold. 3. When a man sins after vows; 'thy vows, O God, are upon me.'⁸ A vow is a religious promise made to God, to dedicate ourselves to him. A vow is not only a purpose, but a promise. Every votary makes himself a debtor, he binds himself to God in a solemn manner. Now to sin after a vow, to vow himself to God, and give his soul to the devil, must needs be against the highest convictions. 4. When a man sins after counsels, admonitions, warning, he cannot plead ignorance; the trumpet of the gospel hath been blown in his ears, and sounded a retreat to call him off from his sins; he hath been told of his injustice, living in malice, keeping bad company, yet he would venture upon sin; this is to sin against conviction: it aggravates the sin, and is like a weight put into the scale, to make his sin weigh the heavier. If a

¹ Mat. 12. 31. ² Mat. 23. 14, 24. ³ Nu. 15. 30. ⁴ Job 24. 13. ⁵ Mat. 27. 18. ⁶ Lu. 23. 14.

* Many crimes will be found to be sins of presumption, which did not appear such to the offender, at the time when he committed them. Whenever we set our own inclinations in opposition to the known command of God; and when God saith, *Thou shalt not*, our conduct replies, *But I will*: we are guilty of sins of presumption; and though the matter be in itself trivial, yet the daring rebellion is exceedingly atrocious. For an offender of this kind no sacrifice was appointed; he was condemned to bear his own iniquity, and to be utterly cut off; in most cases by a public execution, in others by the immediate judgment of God.—*Scott's Com. Numb.* 15. 30, 31.

⁷ Mat. 27. 19. ⁸ Jno. 15. 22. ⁹ Ro. 2. 1. ¹⁰ Ps. 56. 12.

sea-mark be set up to give warning that there are shelves and rocks in that place, yet if the mariner will sail there, and split his ship, it is presumption; and, if he be cast away, who will pity him? 5. When a man sins against express comminations and threatenings. God hath thundered out threatenings against such sins; 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.'¹ Yet, though God set the point of his sword to the breast of a sinner, yet he will commit sin. The pleasure of sin doth more delight him, than the threatenings affright him; he, like the leviathan, laughs at the shaking of a spear.² Nay, he derides God's threatenings. 'Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it;' we have heard much what God intends to do, and of judgment approaching, we would fain see it. For men to see the flaming sword of God's threatenings brandished, yet to strengthen themselves in sin, is in a high manner to sin against illumination and conviction. 6. When a man sins under affliction. God doth not only thunder by threatening, but hath let his thunderbolt fall; he hath inflicted judgments on a person; he may read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins. His sin was uncleanness; he hath wasted his strength, as well as his estate. He hath had a fit of apoplexy; yea, though he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. This is to sin against conviction; 'in his distress did he trespass yet more: this is that king Ahaz.'³ This doth enhance and make the sin greater than other sins: for sinning against an enlightened conscience is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness; men can give no reason, make no defence for their sins, yet they are resolved to hold fast iniquity. This is desperate wilfulness; and, 'the will is the rule and measure of action;' the more of the will in a sin, the greater the sin: 'We walk after our own devices.'⁴ Though there be death and hell every step, we will march on under Satan's colours. This made the sin of the apostate angels so great, because it was wilful; they had no ignorance in their mind,—no passion to stir them up,—there was no tempter to deceive them, but they sinned obstinately, and out of choice. 7. To sin against convictions and illuminations, is joined with slighting and contempt of God. It is bad for a sinner to forget God, but it is worse to contemn him: 'Where-

fore do the wicked contemn God?'⁵ An enlightened sinner knows that by his sin he obligeth and angers God; but he cares not whether God be pleased or not, he will have his sin; therefore such an one is said to reproach God, 'the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord.'⁶ Every sin displeaseth God, but sins against an enlightened conscience reproach the Lord. To contemn the authority of a prince, is a reproach done to him. It is accompanied with impudence. Fear and shame are banished, the veil of modesty is laid aside; 'the unjust knoweth no shame.'⁷ Judas knew Christ was the Messiah; he was convinced of it by an oracle from heaven, and by the miracles he wrought, and yet he impudently goes on in his treason; nay, when Christ said, 'he that dips his hand with me in the dish, he shall betray me,' and Judas knew Christ meant him. And when Judas was going about his treason, Christ pronounced a woe to him,⁸ yet, for all that, he proceeded in his treason. Thus to sin presumptuously, against an enlightened conscience, dyes the sin of a crimson colour, and makes it greater than other sins.

3d. Such sins are more heinous than others, which are sins of continuance. The continuing of sin is the enhancing of sin. He who plots treason, makes himself a greater offender. Some men's heads are the devil's mint-house, they are minting of mischief; 'inventors of evil things.'⁹ Some invent new oaths, others new snares; such were those presidents that invented a decree against Daniel, and got the king to sign it.¹¹

4th. Those sins are greater which proceed from a spirit of malignity. To malign holiness is diabolical. It is a sin to want grace, it is worse to hate it. In nature there are antipathies, as between the vine and laurel. Some have an antipathy against God, because of his purity; 'cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.'¹² Sinners, if it lay in their power, would not only un-throne God, but un-be God; if they could help it, God should no longer be God. Thus sin is boiled up to a greater height.

5th. Those sins are of a greater magnitude, which are mixed with ingratitude. God cannot endure of all things to have his kindness slighted. God's mercy is seen in repriming

¹ Ps. 63. 21. ² Job. 41. 29. ³ Is. v. 19.
⁴ 2 Ch. 28. 22. ⁵ Je. 18. 12.

⁶ Ps. x. 13. ⁷ Nu. 15. 30. ⁸ Zep. 3. 5. ⁹ Lu. 22. 22.
¹⁰ Ro. 1. 30. ¹¹ Da. 6. 9. ¹² Is. 50. 11.

men so long, in wooing them by his Spirit and ministers to be reconciled, in crowning them with so many temporal blessings: now, to abuse all this love, when God hath been filling up the measure of his mercy, that men should fill up the measure of their sins, this is high ingratitude, and doth make their sins of a deeper crimson. Some are worse for mercy. The vulture, saith Ælian, draws sickness from perfumes: so the sinner contracts evil from the sweet perfumes of God's mercy. The English Chronicle reports of one Parry, who being condemned to die, queen Elizabeth sent him his pardon; and after he was pardoned, he conspired and plotted the queen's death: just so some deal with God; he bestows mercy, and they plot treason against him; 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.'¹ The Athenians, in lieu of the good service Themistocles had done them, banished him from their city. The snake, in the fable, being frozen, stung him that gave it warmth. Certainly sins against mercy are far more heinous.

6th. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed with delectation. A child of God may sin through a surprisal, or against his will; 'the evil which I would not, that do I.'² Like one that is carried down the stream involuntarily; but to sin with delight doth heighten and greaten the sin; a sign the heart is in the sin; 'they set their heart on their iniquity,'³ as a man follows his gain with delight: 'without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'⁴ To tell a lie, is a sin; but to love to tell a lie, is a greater sin.

7th. Those sins are more heinous than others, which are committed under a pretence of religion. To cozen and defraud is a sin; but to do it with a bible in one's hand, is a double sin. To be unchaste, is a sin; but to put on a mask of religion to pray the whore, makes the sin greater: 'I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows: come, let us take our fill of love.'⁵ She speaks as if she had been at church, and had been saying her prayers: who would ever have suspected her of dishonesty? But, behold her hypocrisy; she makes her devotion a preface to adultery. 'Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers.'⁶ The sin was not

in making long prayers, (for Christ was a whole night in prayer), but to make long prayers, that they might do unrighteous actions, did make their sin more horrid.

8th. Sins of apostasy are more heinous than others. Demas forsook the truth,⁷ and afterwards became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. To fall, is a sin; but to fall away, is a greater sin. Apostates cast a disgrace upon religion. The apostate, saith Tertullian, seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master. In which respect the apostate is said to put Christ to 'open shame.'⁸ This dyes a sin in grain, and makes it greater. It is a sin not to profess Christ, but it is a greater to deny him; not to wear Christ's colours is a sin, but to run from his colours is a greater sin. A pagan sins less than a baptized renegado.

9th. To persecute religion, makes sin greater.⁹ To have no religion, is a sin; but to endeavour to destroy religion is a greater. Antiochus Epiphanes took more tedious journeys, and ran more hazards, to vex and oppose the Jews, than all his predecessors had done in obtaining victories. 'Herod added yet this above all, that he put John in prison.'¹⁰ He sinned before by incest; but, by imprisoning the prophet, this added to his sin, and made it greater. Persecution fills up the measure of sin; 'fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.'¹¹ If you pour in a porringer of water into a cistern, that adds something to it; but pour in a bucketfull or two, and that fills up the measure of the cistern; so persecution fills up the measure of sin, and makes it greater.

10th. To sin maliciously makes sin greater. Aquinas and other of the schoolmen place the sin against the Holy Ghost in malice. The sinner doth all he can to vex God, and despite the Spirit of grace.¹² Thus Julian, who threw up his dagger in the air, as if he would have been revenged upon God. This swells sin to its full bigness, it cannot be greater. When a man is once come to this, blasphemously to despite the Spirit, there is but one step lower he can fall, and that is to hell.

11th. It aggravates sin, and makes it greater, when a man not only sins himself, but endeavours to make others sin. 1. Such as teach

¹ Is. 1. 2.² Ro. 7. 19.³ Ho. 4. 8.⁷ 2 Ti. 4. 10.⁸ He. 6. 6.⁹ Ac. 7. 22.⁴ Re. 22. 15.⁵ Pr. 7. 14, 18.⁶ Lu. 20. 47.¹⁰ Lu. 3. 20.¹¹ Mat. 23. 32.¹² He. 10. 29.

errors to the people, who decry Christ's deity, or deny his virtue, making him only a political head, not a head of influence, who preach against the morality of the sabbath, or the immortality of the soul, these men's sins are greater than others. If the breakers of God's law sin, what do they that teach men to break them?¹ 2. Such as destroy others by their bad example. The swearing father hath taught his son to swear, and damned him by his example. These men's sins are greater than others, and they shall have a hotter place in hell.

USE. You see all sins are not equal; some are more grievous than others, and bring greater wrath; therefore especially take heed of these sins; 'keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.'⁹ The least sin is bad enough; you need not aggravate your sins, and make them more heinous. He that hath a little wound will not make it deeper. O beware of these bloody circumstances which greaten your sin, and make it more heinous! The higher a man is in sinning, the lower he shall lie in torment.

WHAT SIN DESERVETH.

Q. LXXXIV. *What doth every sin deserve?*

God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come. 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'² Man having sinned, is like a favourite turned out of the king's favour, and deserves the wrath and curse of God.

1st. God's curse.³ As when Christ cursed the fig-tree, it withered,⁴ so, when God curseth any, he withers in his soul. God's curse blasts wherever it comes.

2d. God's wrath, which is nothing else but the execution of God's curse.

What is this wrath? In this wrath there is, 1. Something that is privative; that is, the being deprived of the smiles of God's face. It is hell enough to be excluded God's presence; in whose presence is fulness of joy.⁵ God's smiling face hath that splendour and orieney of beauty shining in it, as ravisheth the angels with delight. This is the diamond in the ring of glory. And, if it were such a misery for Absalom that he might not see the king's face,⁶ what will it be for the wicked to be shut out from beholding God's pleasant face! 'The want of the vision of God is the greatest of all punishments.'⁷ 2. God's wrath hath something in it positive. That is, his frown and enraged fury; which is 'wrath come upon them to the uttermost.'⁷

Here take three positions or maxims. 1. God's wrath is irresistible; 'who knows the power of thine anger?'⁸ Sinners may oppose God's ways, but not his wrath. Shall the briers contend with the fire? Shall finite con-

tend with infinite? 'hast thou an arm like God?'¹⁰

2. God's wrath is terrible. The Spanish proverb is, 'the lion is not so fierce as he is painted.' We are apt to have slight thoughts of God's wrath; but it is very tremendous and dismal, as if scalding lead should be dropt into one's eye. The Hebrew word for *wrath*, signifies *heat*. To show that the wrath of God is hot, therefore it is compared to fire in the text. Fire, when it is in its rage, is dreadful, (as we saw in the flames of London): so the wrath of God is like fire, it is the terrible of terribles. Other fire is but painted to this. If when God's wrath is kindled but a little, and a spark of it flies into a wicked man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what will it be when God 'stirs up all his wrath?'¹¹ How sad is it with a soul in desertion! Now God dips his pen in gall, and 'writes bitter things;' now his poisoned arrows stick fast in the heart; 'while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted; thy fierce wrath goeth over me.'¹² Luther, in desertion, was in such horror of mind, that he had no blood seen in his face, but he lay as one dead. Now, if God's wrath be such towards them whom he loves, what will it be towards them whom he hates? If they who sip of the cup find it so bitter, what will they do who drink the dregs of the cup?¹³ Solomon saith, 'the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion,'¹⁴ what then is God's wrath! When God musters up all his forces, and sets himself in battalia against a sinner, how can his heart endure?¹⁵ Who is able to lie under mountains of wrath? God is the sweetest friend, but the sorest

¹ Mat. 5. 19. ² Mat. 25. 41. ³ Ga. 3. 10. ⁴ Mat. 21. 19. ⁵ Ps. 16. 11. ⁶ 2 Ki. 14. 22. ⁷ 1 Th. 2. 16. ⁸ Ps. 90. 11.

⁹ Ps. 19. 13. ¹⁰ Job 40. 9. ¹¹ Ps. 78. 38. ¹² Ps. 88. 15, 16. ¹³ Ps. 75. 8. ¹⁴ Pr. 19. 12. ¹⁵ Ez. 22. 14.

enemy. To set forth the fearfulness of this wrath.

1st. The wrath of God shall seize upon every part of a sinner. Upon the body: the body, which was so tender it could not bear heat or cold, shall be tormented in the winepress of God's wrath; those eyes, which before could behold amorous objects, shall be tormented with the sight of devils; the ears, which before were delighted with music, shall be tormented with the hideous shrieks of the damned. The wrath of God shall seize upon the soul of a reprobate. Ordinary fire cannot touch the soul; when the martyrs' bodies were consuming, their souls did triumph in the flames: but God's wrath burns the soul. The memory shall be tormented to remember what means of grace have been abused. The conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations. The sinner shall accuse himself for presumptuous sins, for mis-spending his precious hours, for resisting the Holy Ghost.

2d. The wrath of God is without intermission. Hell is an abiding-place, but no resting-place; there is not a minute's rest. Outward pain hath some abatement; if it be the stone or colic, the patient hath sometimes ease; but the torments of the damned have no intermission; he that feels God's wrath, never saith, 'I have ease.'

3d. The wrath of God is eternal. So saith the text, 'everlasting fire.' No tears can quench the flame of God's anger; no, though we could shed rivers of tears. In all pains of this life, men hope for a cessation, the suffering will not continue long; either the tormentor dies, or the tormented; but the wrath of God is always feeding upon a sinner. The terror of natural fire is, that it consumes what it burns; but this makes the fire of God's wrath terrible, that it doth not consume what it burns. 'The damned shall die, so as to live for ever.'

BERN. The sinner shall ever be in the furnace; after innumerable millions of years, the wrath of God is as far from ending, as it was at the beginning. If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousand years a bird should come and take away one grain of this sand, it would be a long while ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; but, if after all that time, the damned might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word EVER breaks the heart.

Q. *But how doth it seem to consist with God's justice to punish sin, which perhaps was committed in a moment, with eternal fire?*

In respect of the heinous nature of sin. Consider the person offended; sin is committed against an infinite majesty; therefore the sin is infinite, and so the punishment must be infinite. Now, because the nature of man is but finite, and a sinner cannot at once bear infinite wrath, therefore he must in eternity of time be satisfying what he cannot satisfy at once.*

4th. While the wicked lie scorching in the flames of wrath, they have none to commiserate them. It is some ease of grief, to have some condole with us; but the wicked have wrath and no pity shown them. Who should pity them? God will not pity them. They derided his Spirit, and now he will laugh at their calamity.¹ The saints will not pity them. They persecuted the saints upon earth, therefore they will rejoice to see God's justice executed on them; 'the righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance.'²

5th. The sinner under wrath hath none to speak a good word for him. An elect person, when he sins, hath one to intercede for him 'we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.'³ Christ will say, 'it is one of my friends, one for whom I have shed my blood: Father, pardon him.' But the wicked, that die in sin, have none to solicit for them; they have an accuser, but no advocate. Christ's blood will not plead for them; they slighted Christ, and refused to come under his government, therefore Christ's blood cries against them.

3. God's wrath is just. The Greek word for *vengeance* signifies *justice*. The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but not one drop of injustice. It is just God's honour be repaired, and how can that be but by punishing offenders? Having shown you what this wrath of God is, I shall show you, that we have de-

¹ Pr. 1 26.

² Ps. 58. 10.

³ 1 Jno. 2. 1.

* Life is to be esteemed long or short, not from any proportion it may bear to eternity, which would be equally none at all, though it were protracted to ten thousand times its ordinary length, but according as the space of it may be more or less than is just sufficient for the purposes of such a state, as our present life is, of trial. There must be a certain space of time, within which, if at all, the means God uses with us must produce improvement in moral wisdom or virtuous habit. The ordinary period of life is sufficient for this trial and cultivation of character: those, therefore, who continue impenitent and incorrigible, will have no claim on the justice or the goodness of God to abridge the time of their misery. Qualities are not to be measured by duration. They bear no more relation to it, than they do to space. The hatefulness of is sin seated in itself, in its own internal quality of evil; and by this its ill-deservings are to be measured, and not by the narrowness of the limits either of time or place, within which the good providence of God hath confined its power of doing mischief.—*Bishop Horsley.*

served the curse and wrath of God; he who infringeth the king's laws, deserves the penalty. Mercy goes by favour, punishment by desert; 'to us belongeth confusion of face.'¹ Wrath is that which belongeth to us as we are sinners; it is as due to us as any wages that are paid.

USE 1. Of information. 1st. It justifies God in condemning sinners at the last day. Sinners deserve wrath, and it is no injustice to give them that which they deserve. If a malefactor deserves death, the judge doth him no wrong in condemning him. 2d. See what a great evil sin is, which exposeth a person to God's wrath for ever. You may know the lion by his paw; and you may know what an evil thing sin is, by the wrath and curse it brings. When you see a man drawn upon a hurdle to execution, you conclude he is guilty of some capital crime that brings such a punishment: when a man lies under the torrid zone of God's wrath, and roars out in flames, then say, 'how horrid an evil sin is!' They who now see no evil in swearing, or sabbath-breaking, they will see it look black in the glass of hell-torments.* 3d. See here a handwriting upon the wall; here is that which may check a sinner's mirth. He is now brisk and frolicsome, he chants 'to the sound of the viol, and invents instruments of music.'² He drinks 'stolen waters,' and saith, 'they are sweet.' Oh! but let him remember, that the wrath and curse of God hangs over him, which will shortly, without repentance, be executed on him. Dionysius thought, as he sat at table, he saw a naked sword hang over his head: the sword of God's justice hangs over a sinner; and when the slender thread of life is cut asunder, the sword falls upon him. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,'³ but know thou, for all these things, God will

bring thee into judgment. For a drop of pleasure, thou must drink a sea of wrath. Your pleasure cannot be so sweet as wrath is bitter; the delights of the flesh cannot countervail the horror of conscience; better want the devil's honey, than be so stung with the wrath of God. The garden of *Eden*, which signifies *pleasure*, had a flaming sword placed at the east end of it: the garden of carnal and sinful delight is surrounded with the flaming sword of God's wrath.

USE 2. Reproof. It reproves the stupidity of sinners, who are no more affected with the curse and wrath of God which is due to them: 'none considereth in his heart.'⁴ If they were in debt, and were ready to have the sergeant arrest them, they would be affected with that; but though the fierce wrath of God is ready to arrest them, they remember not. A beast though he hath no shame, yet he hath fear: he is afraid of fire; but sinners are worse than brutish, they fear not the 'fire of hell,' till they are in it. Most have their conscience asleep, or seared; but when they shall see the vials of God's wrath dropping, then they will cry out as Dives, 'I am tormented in this flame!'⁵

USE 3. Exhortation. 1st. Let us adore God's patience, who hath not brought this wrath and curse upon us all this while. We have deserved wrath, yet God hath not given us our desert. We may all subscribe to that, Ps. 103. 8, 'the Lord is slow to anger;' and verse 10, 'he hath not rewarded us according to our iniquities.' God hath deferred his wrath, and given us space to repent.⁶ God is not like a hasty creditor, that requires the debt, and gives no time for the payment; he shoots off his warning-piece, that he may not shoot off his murdering-piece; 'the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish.'⁷ God adjourns the assizes to see if sinners would turn; he keeps off the storm of his wrath; but if men will not be warned, let them know that long forbearance is no forgiveness. 2d. Let us labour to prevent the wrath we have deserved. How careful are men to prevent poverty or disgrace! O labour to prevent God's eternal wrath, that it may not only be deferred, but removed!

Q. *What shall we do to prevent and escape the wrath to come?*

1. By getting an interest in Jesus Christ. Christ is the only screen to stand betwixt us and the wrath of God; he did feel God's

¹ Da. 9. 8. ² Am. 6. 5. ³ Ec. 11. 9.

* The demerit of sin may be seen much more in Christ, a sacrifice to the awakened sword of divine vengeance. Go to Golgotha, and see the man that is God's fellow drinking up the cup of his Father's indignation! suffering unto blood! suffering unto death! for God spared him not, being now in the room of sinners. Behold the earth trembling under the mighty load of this terrible wrath! for there was a great earthquake while the sword of God's wrath was running through the man that was God's fellow. The heavens grew dark when this awful spectacle was exposed; the sun was eclipsed contrary to the common rules of nature, which made a heathen philosopher cry out, that either the frame of nature was dissolving, or the God of nature suffering. And what shall we that profess to be Christians say to these things? What shall we that are sinners say concerning that abominable evil, sin, which wrought this bloody tragedy? It was sin, and our sin too; for he was wounded for our iniquities. O how heavy did the man that is God's fellow find the weight of sin to be, when it pressed him to the ground, and made him sweat great drops of blood!—*Ralph Erskine, Beauties*, v. 1. p. 11.

⁴ Ge. 3. 24. ⁵ Is. 44. 19. ⁶ Lu. 16. 24.

⁷ Re. 2. 21. ⁸ 2 Pe. 3. 9.

wrath, that they who believe in him should never feel it; 'Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.'¹ Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace was a type of God's wrath, and that furnace did not singe the garments of the three children, 'nor had the smell of fire passed on them.'² Jesus Christ went into the furnace of his Father's wrath; and those that believe in him, the smell of the fire of hell shall never pass upon them.

2. If we would prevent the wrath of God, let us take heed of those sins which will bring the wrath of God. Edmund, successor of Anselm, had a saying, 'I had rather leap into a furnace of fire, than willingly commit a sin against God.' There are several fiery sins we must take heed of, which will bring the fire of God's wrath. (1.) The fire of rash anger. Some who profess religion, yet cannot bridle their tongue; they care not what they say in their anger, they will curse their passions. St James saith, 'the tongue is set on fire of hell.'³ O take heed of a 'fiery tongue,' lest it bring thee to 'fiery torment!' Dives begged a drop of water to cool his tongue: St Cyprian saith, he had offended most in his tongue, and now that was most set on fire. (2.) Take heed of the fire of malice. Malice is a malignant humour, whereby we wish evil to one another; it is a vermin lives on blood; it studies revenge. Caligula had a chest where he kept deadly poisons for them he had malice against. The fire of malice brings men to the fiery 'furnace of God's wrath.' (3.) Take heed of the sin of uncleanness; 'whoremongers and adul-

terers God will judge.'⁴ Such as burn in uncleanness, are in great danger to burn one day in hell. Let one fire put out another; let the fire of God's wrath put out the fire of lust.

3. To you who have a well-grounded hope that you shall not feel this wrath which you have deserved, let me exhort you to be very thankful to God, who hath given his Son to save you from this tremendous wrath. 'Jesus hath delivered you from wrath to come.' The Lamb of God was scorched in the fire of God's wrath for you. Christ did feel the wrath which he did not deserve, that you may escape the wrath which you have deserved. Pliny observes that there is nothing better to quench fire than blood: Christ's blood hath quenched the fire of God's wrath for you. 'Upon me, upon me be thy curse,' said Rebekah to Jacob;⁵ so said Christ to God's justice; 'upon me be the curse,' that my elect may inherit the blessing. Be patient under all the afflictions which you endure. Affliction is sharp, but this is not wrath, this is not hell. Who would not willingly drink in the cup of affliction, that knows he shall never drink in the cup of damnation? Who would not be willing to bear the wrath of men, that knows he shall never feel the wrath of God?

Christian, though thou mayest feel the rod, thou shalt never feel the bloody axe. Austin once said, 'strike, Lord, where thou wilt, if sin be pardoned.' So say, 'afflict me, Lord, as thou wilt in this life, seeing I shall escape the wrath to come.'

OF FAITH.

Q. LXXXV. *What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

Faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us, the benefits of redemption.

I. I begin with the first, 'faith in Jesus Christ;' 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.'⁶ The great privilege in the text is to have Christ for a propitiation; which is not only to free us from God's wrath, but to ingratiate us into God's love and favour. And the means of

having Christ to be our propitiation is, 'faith in his blood' There is a twofold faith, *Fides quæ creditur*, that is, 'the doctrine of faith;' and *Fides quâ creditur*, that is, 'the grace of faith.' The act of justifying faith lies in recumbency; we do rest on Christ alone for salvation. As a man that is ready to drown catcheth hold on the bough of a tree; so a poor trembling sinner, seeing himself ready to perish, catcheth hold by faith on Christ the tree of life, and so is saved. The work of faith is by the Holy Spirit; therefore faith is called the 'fruit of the Spirit.'⁷ Faith doth not grow in nature, it is an outlandish plant, a

¹ 1 Th. 1. 10. ² Da. 3. 27. ³ Ja. 3. 6. ⁴ Ro. 3. 22, 25.

⁵ He. 13. 4.

⁶ Ge. 27. 13.

⁷ Ga. 5. 22

fruit of the Spirit. This grace of faith is of all others, the most precious rich faith, and most holy faith, and faith of God's elect. Hence it is called 'precious faith.'¹ As gold is the most precious among the metals, so is faith among the graces. Faith is the queen of the graces; faith is the condition* of the gospel; 'thy faith hath saved thee,'² not thy tears. Faith is the 'vital artery of the soul,' it animates it; 'the just shall live by faith.'³ Unbelievers, though they breathe yet want life. Faith is, as Clemens Alexandrinus calls it, a mother-grace; it excites and invigorates all the graces; not a grace stirs till faith sets it a-work. Faith sets repentance a-work; it is like fire to the still. Faith sets hope a-work; first we believe the promise, then we hope for it. Did not faith feed the lamp of hope with oil, it would soon die. Faith sets love a-work; 'faith which worketh by love.'⁴ Who can believe in the infinite merits of Christ, and his heart not ascend in a fiery chariot of love? Faith is a catholicon, or remedy against all troubles, a sheet-anchor we cast out into the sea of God's mercy, and are kept from sinking in despair. Other graces have done worthily; thou, O faith, excellest them all! Indeed in heaven, love will be the chief grace; but, while we are here militant, love must give place to faith. Love takes possession of glory, but faith gives a title to it. Love is the crowning grace in heaven, but faith is the conquering grace upon earth; 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'⁵ Faith carries away the garland from all the other graces; other graces help to sanctify us,

but it is faith only that hath the honour to justify; 'being justified by faith.'⁶

Q. *But how comes faith to be so precious?*

Not as it is a more holy quality, or as if it had more worthiness than other graces, but 'objectively,' 'as it lays hold on Christ the blessed object,' and fetcheth in his fulness.' Faith in itself considered, is but 'the beggar's hand;' but as this hand receives the rich alms of Christ's merits, so it is precious, and doth challenge a superiority over the rest of the graces.

USE 1. Of all sins beware of the rock of unbelief; 'take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief.'⁷ Men think, as long as they are not drunkards or swearers, it is no great matter to be unbelievers. This is the gospel-sin, it dyes your other sins in grain. (1.) Unbelief is a Christ-reproaching sin. Unbelief disparageth Christ's infinite merit, as if it could not save; unbelief makes the wound of sin to be broader than the plaster of Christ's blood. This is an high contempt offered to Christ, and is a deeper spear than that which the Jews thrust into his side. (2.) Unbelief is an ungrateful sin. 'Avoid an ingrate, as you would all that is dire in wickedness; than him the world produces nothing filthier.' Ingratitude is a prodigy of wickedness; unbelief is ungrateful, being against the richest mercy. Suppose a king should redeem a captive, and to redeem him should part with his crown of gold from his head; and when he had done this, should say to the man redeemed, 'all I desire of thee in lieu of my kindness, is to believe that I love thee.' Now, if he should say 'no, I do not believe any such thing; or that thou carest at all for me;' I appeal to you were not this odious ingratitude? So is this case here: God hath sent his Son to shed his blood. God requires only to believe in him, that he is able and willing to save us. 'No,' saith unbelief, 'his blood was not shed for me, I cannot persuade myself that Christ hath any purpose of love to me.' Is not this horrid ingratitude? And this enhanceth a sin, and makes it of a crimson colour. (3.) Unbelief is a leading sin. It is the breeder of sin. 'It is unbelief gives to the life its real characters of wickedness.' Unbelief is a root-sin, and the devil labours to water this root, that the branches may be fruitful. Unbelief breeds hardness of heart; therefore they are put together.⁸ Christ upbraideth them with their unbelief and hard-

¹ 2 Pe. 1. 1. ² Lu. 7. 50. ³ Hla. 2. 4.

⁴ Ga. 5. 6. ⁵ 1 Jno. 5. 4.

* The use of the term *condition*, in reference to the covenant of grace, may be considered as objectionable, because it commonly means something, which, when done by one party, gives a right to what was promised by the other. To call faith, therefore, the condition of the covenant, may seem to imply, that there is merit in faith, which entitles us to salvation. This, however, is far from being the meaning of those whose sentiments we are at present considering. The term is used by them in a lower sense, and simply signifies something which goes before another, and without which the other cannot be obtained. They do not assign merit to faith, but simply precedence. According to them, faith is the condition of the covenant, because the promise of salvation will be performed to none but believers. If they err, it is not in sentiment, but in language; and we should be cautious in affirming that they err even here, lest the censure should recoil upon persons of whom we are accustomed to speak with great veneration, and to whom some are disposed to look up as almost infallible oracles, the framers of those public standards which we have adopted; for they did not hesitate to make use of the obnoxious term: Larger Catechism, Quest. 32. As, however, the word *condition*, has been often employed in an unscriptural sense, and is apt to suggest false ideas to the ignorant and unwary, it is more prudent to lay it aside — *Dick's Lect.* b. 2. p. 425.

⁶ Ro. 5. 1. ⁷ Jno. 9. 16. ⁸ He. 3. 12. ⁹ Mar. 16. 14.

ness of heart. Unbelief breeds the stone of the heart; he who believes not in Christ, is not affected with his sufferings, he melts not in tears of love. Unbelief freezeth the heart; first it defiles and then it hardens. Unbelief breeds profaneness; an unbeliever will stick at no sin; neither at false weights, nor false oaths. He will swallow down treason; Judas was first an unbeliever, and then a traitor.¹ He who hath no faith in his heart will have no fear of God before his eyes. (4.) Unbelief is a wrath-procuring sin; it is 'the enemy of our salvation.' BERN. 'Condemned already;' dying so, he is as sure to be condemned as if he were so already, 'he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'² He who believes not in the blood of the Lamb, must feel the wrath of the Lamb. The Gentiles that believe not in Christ will be as well damned as the Jews who blaspheme him. And if unbelief be so fearful and damnable a sin, shall we not be afraid to live in it?

2d. Above all graces, set faith awork on Christ: 'that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.'³ 'Above all, taking the shield of faith,' say as queen Esther, 'I will go in unto the king: and if I perish, I perish.' She had nothing to encourage her; she ventured against law; yet the golden sceptre was held forth to her. We have promises to encourage our faith; 'he that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'⁴ Let us then advance faith by a holy recumbency on Christ's merits. Christ's blood will not justify without believing: they are both put together in the text, 'faith in his blood.' The blood of God, without faith in God, will not save. Christ's sufferings are the plaster to heal a sin-sick soul, but this plaster must be applied by faith.* It is not money in a rich man's hand, though offered to us, will enrich us, unless we receive it; so it is not Christ's virtues or benefits will do us good, unless we receive them by the hand of faith. Above all graces, set faith on work; remember

¹ Jno. 6. 64.² Jno. 3. 18.³ Jno. 3. 36.⁴ Jno. 3. 15.⁵ Ep. 6. 16.⁶ Jno. 6. 37.

* We see how different the views given of it, [faith] in our catechism are from theirs who represent it as nothing more than a mere assent to the truth. It is important to observe, that in the New Testament the words rendered 'belief,' and 'I believe,' are never used to express belief in any fact that is not fitted to inspire confidence in God; and of more than 130 instances of their recurrence, there is only one at all doubtful. The gospel exhibition of Christ to us as sinners is intended to produce reliance on his righteousness and grace. 'In his name shall the Gentiles trust,' is the result that is promised to his glory, and to his people's salvation; and unless we are brought to this hope, to us his name is made known in vain.—*Befrag's Exp. of Cal. b. 2. p. 231.*

this grace is most acceptable to God, and that upon many accounts. (1.) Because it is a God-exalting grace; it glorifies God.⁷ Abraham being strong in faith, gave glory to God. To believe that there is more mercy in God, and merit in Christ than sin in us, and that Christ hath answered all the demands and challenges of the law, and that his blood hath fully satisfied for us, this is in a high degree to honour God. Faith in the Mediator brings more glory to God, than martyrdom, or the most heroic act of obedience. (2.) Faith in Christ is so acceptable to God, because it is such a self-denying grace; it makes a man go out of himself, renounce all self-righteousness, and wholly rely on Christ for justification. Faith is very humble, it confesseth its own indigence, and lives wholly upon Christ. As the bee sucks sweetness from the flower, so faith sucks all its strength and comfort from Christ. (3.) Faith is a grace so acceptable to God, because by faith we present a righteousness to God, which doth best please him; we bring the righteousness of Christ into the court, which is called the righteousness of God.⁸ To bring Christ's righteousness, is to bring Benjamin with us. A believer may say, 'Lord, it is not the righteousness of Adam, or of the angels, but of Christ who is God-man, that I bring before thee.' The Lord cannot choose but smell a sweet savour in Christ's righteousness.

USE 2. Trial. Let us try our faith. There is something that looks like faith, and is not. Pliny saith, there is a Cyprian stone, which is in colour like a diamond, but it is not of the right kind: there is a false, spurious faith in the world. Some plants have the same leaf with others, but the herbalist can distinguish them by the root and taste; something may look like true faith, but it may be distinguished several ways. (1.) True faith is grounded upon knowledge; knowledge carries the torch before faith. There is a knowledge of Christ's orient excellencies.⁹ He is all made up of love and beauty. True faith is a judicious intelligent grace, it knows whom it believes, and why it believes. Faith is seated as well in the understanding as the will. It hath an eye to see Christ, as well as a wing to fly to him. Such therefore as are invailed with ignorance, or have only an implicit faith, to believe as the church believes, have no true genuine faith. (2.) Faith lives in a broken heart; 'he cried

⁷ Ro. 4. 20.⁸ 2 Cor. 5. 21⁹ Ph. 3. 7.

out with tears, Lord, I believe.¹ True faith is always in a heart bruised for sin: such therefore, whose hearts were never touched for sin, have no faith. If a physician should tell us, there were an herb would help us against all infections, but it always grows in a watery place; if we should see an herb like it in colour, leaf, smell, blossom, but it grows upon a rock, we would conclude this were the wrong herb: so saving faith doth always grow in a heart humbled for sin; it grows in a weeping eye, a watery conscience; therefore, if there be a show of faith, but it grows upon a rock, a hard impenitent heart, this is not the true faith. (3.) True faith is at first nothing but an embryo, it is minute and small; it is full of doubtings, temptations, fears; it begins in weakness. It is like the smoking flax;² it smokes with desires, but doth not flame with comfort; it is at first so small that it is scarce discernible. Such as, at the first dash, have a strong persuasion that Christ is theirs, who leap out of sin into assurance, their faith is false and spurious;³ that faith, which is to come to its full stature on its birthday, is a monster. The seed that sprang up suddenly, withered.⁴ (4.) Faith is a refining grace, it consecrates and purifies. Moral virtue may wash the outside, faith washeth the inside.⁴ Having purified their hearts by faith, faith makes the heart a sacristy or temple with this inscription, 'holiness to the Lord;' such, whose hearts have legions of lusts in them, were never acquainted with true faith. For one to say, he hath faith, yet live in sin, is as if one should say, he were in health, yet his vitals are perished. Faith is a virgin-grace; it is joined with sanctity; 'holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.'⁵ The jewel of faith is always put in the cabinet of a pure conscience. The woman that touched Christ by faith, fetched a healing and cleansing virtue from him. (5.) True faith is obediential; 'the obedience of faith.'⁶ Faith melts our will into the will of God. If God commands duty, (though cross to flesh and blood) faith obeys; 'by faith

Abraham obeyed.'⁷ Faith doth not only believe the promise, but obey the command. It is not having a speculative knowledge will evidence you to be believers; the devil hath knowledge, but that which makes him a devil is, he wants obedience. (6.) True faith is increasing; 'from faith to faith,'⁸ that is, from one degree of faith to another. Faith doth not lie in the heart, as a stone in the earth; but, as seed in the earth it grows. Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ, but afraid to confess him; afterwards he went boldly to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus.⁹ A christian's increase in faith is known two ways:—1. By steadfastness. He is a pillar in the temple of God; 'rooted and built up in him; and stablished in the faith.'¹⁰ Unbelievers are sceptics in religion, they are unsettled; they question every truth, but, when faith is on the increasing hand, it doth corroborate a christian; he is able to prove his principles; he holds no more than he will die for; as that martyr woman said. 'I cannot dispute for Christ, but I can burn for him.' An increasing faith is not like a ship in the midst of the sea, that fluctuates, and is tossed upon the waves, but like a ship at anchor which is firm and steadfast. 2. A christian's increase in faith is known by his strength: he can do that now, which he could not do before. When one is man grown, he can do that which he was not able to do when he was a child; he can carry a heavier burden; so a christian can bear crosses with more patience.

OBJ. *But I fear I have no faith, it is so weak.*

If you have faith, though but in its infancy, be not discouraged, for, 1st, a little faith is faith, as a spark of fire is fire; 2d, a weak faith may lay hold on a strong Christ. A weak hand can tie the knot in marriage, as well as a strong. She, in the gospel, who but touched Christ, fetched virtue from him. 3d. The promises are not made to strong faith, but to true. The promise doth not say, he who hath a giant faith, who can believe God's love through a frown, who can rejoice in affliction, who can work wonders, remove mountains, stop the mouth of lions, shall be saved; but, who-soever believes, be his faith never so small. A reed is but weak, especially when it is bruised, yet the promise is made to it: 'a bruised reed will he not break.'¹¹ 4th. A weak faith may be fruitful. Weakest things multiply most. Tho

¹ Mar. 9. 24. ² Mat. 12. 20. ³ Mat. 13. 5. ⁴ Ac. 15. 9.
⁵ 1 Tim. 3. 9. ⁶ Ro. 16. 26.

* The exercise of faith is regulated by the word of God, and its object is there defined. But, it is nowhere revealed in the scriptures, that Christ died for any particular person, and that his sins are forgiven. How then can assurance of these things belong to the nature of faith? How then can it be our duty to believe what is not in the testimony?—We confess, says Bishop Davenant, that this confidence or assurance is not justifying faith, but its daughter, and that the justified soul is not wont to obtain it, but after many exercises of faith and holiness.—*Dick's Lect.* b. 3. p. 312.

⁷ He. 11. 8. ⁸ Ro. 1. 17. ⁹ Jno. 19. 36. ¹⁰ Col. 2. 7.
¹¹ Mat. 12. 20.

vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful. The thief on the cross, who was newly converted, was but weak in grace; but how many precious clusters grew upon that tender plant! He chides his fellow-thief, 'dost not thou fear God?' He judgeth himself; 'we indeed suffer justly.' He believes in Christ, when he said, 'Lord.' He makes a heavenly prayer; 'remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Weak christians may have strong affections. How strong is the first love, which

is after the first planting of faith! 5th. The weakest believer is a member of Christ, as well as the strongest; and the weakest member of the body mystical shall not perish. Christ will cut off rotten members, but not weak members. Therefore, christian, be not discouraged. God, who would have us receive them that are weak in faith,⁶ will not himself refuse them.

II. The second means whereby we escape the curse and wrath due to sin, is by repentance.

OF REPENTANCE.

Ac. 11. 18. *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.*

REPENTANCE seems to be a bitter pill to take, but it is to purge out the bad humour of sin. Repentance is by some Antinomian spirits cried down as a legal doctrine; but Christ himself preached it; 'from that time Jesus began to preach, and say, repent,¹ &c. And, in his last farewell, when he was ascending to heaven, he commanded that 'repentance should be preached in his name.'² Repentance is a pure gospel-grace. The covenant of works would not admit of repentance; it cursed all that could not perform perfect and personal obedience.³ Repentance comes in by the gospel; it is the fruit of Christ's purchase, that repenting sinners shall be saved. Repentance is wrought by the ministry of the gospel, while it sets before our eyes Christ crucified. Repentance is not arbitrary, but necessary; there is no being saved without it; 'except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.'⁴ And we may be thankful to God, that he hath left us this plank after shipwreck.

1st. I shall show the counterfeits of repentance. 1. Natural softness and tenderness of spirit. Some have a tender affection, arising from their complexion, whereby they are apt to weep and relent when they see any object of pity. These are not repenting tears; for many weep to see another's misery, who cannot weep at their own sin. 2. Counterfeit, legal affrightments. A man has lived in a course of sin; at last he is made a little sensible; he sees hell ready to devour him, and he is filled with anguish and horror; but, within a while the tempest of conscience is blown over, and he is quiet; then he concludes he is a true penitent,

because he hath felt some bitterness in sin: this is not repentance. Judas had some trouble of mind. If anguish and trouble were sufficient to repentance, then the damned should be most penitent, for they are most in anguish of mind. There may be trouble of mind, where there is no grieving for the offence against God. 3. Counterfeit, a slight superficial sorrow. When God's hand lies heavy upon a man, he is sick or lame, he may vent a sigh or tear, and say, 'Lord, have mercy;' yet this is no true repentance. Ahab did more than all this, 'he rent his clothes, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.'⁵ His clothes were rent, but not his heart. The eye may be watery, and the heart flinty. An apricot may be soft without, but it hath a hard stone within. 4. Counterfeit, good motions arising in the heart. Every good motion is not repentance. Some think if they have motions in their hearts to break off their sins, and become religious, this is repentance. As the devil may stir up bad motions in the godly, so the Spirit of God may stir up good motions in the wicked. Herod had many good thoughts and inclinations stirred up in him by John Baptist's preaching, yet he did not truly repent, for he still lived in incest. 5. Counterfeit, vows and resolutions. What vows and solemn protestations do some make in their sickness. If God recover them they will be new men, but afterwards are as bad as ever: 'thou saidst, I will not transgress;'⁶ here was a resolution; but for all this, she ran after her idols; 'under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.'⁷ 6. Counterfeit, leaving off some gross sin. But that is a mistake. A

¹ Lu. 23. 40. ² Mat. 4. 17. ³ Lu. 24. 47. ⁴ Ga. 3. 10
⁵ Lu. 13. 2.

⁶ Ro. 14. 1.

⁷ 1 Ki. 21. 27.

⁸ Je. 2. 20.

man may leave some sins, and keep others. Herod did reform many things amiss, but kept his Herodias. An old sin may be left, to entertain a new. A man may leave off riot and prodigality, and turn covetous; this is to exchange a sin. These are the counterfeits of repentance. Now, if you find that yours is a counterfeit repentance, and you have not repented aright, mend what you have done amiss; as in the body, if a bone be set wrong, the chirurgeon hath no way but to break it again, and set it aright: so must you do by your repentance; if you have not repented aright, you must have your heart broken again in a godly manner, and be more deeply afflicted for sin than ever.

2d. And that brings me to the second, to show wherein true repentance consists; it consists in two things. 1st. Humiliation; 'if their uncircumcised hearts be humbled.'¹ There is, as the schoolmen say, a twofold humiliation, or breaking of the heart. 1. Attrition; as when a rock is broken in pieces. This is done by the law, which is a hammer to break the heart. 2. Contrition; as when ice is melted into water. This is done by the gospel, which is as a fire to melt the heart.² It is the sense of abused kindness causeth contrition. 2d. Transformation, or change; 'be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'³ Repentance works a change in the whole man; as wine put into a glass where water is, the wine runs into every part of the water, and changeth its colour and taste: so true repentance doth not rest in one part, but doth diffuse and spread itself into every part.

1. Repentance causeth a change in the mind. Whereas, before a man did like well of sin, and say in defence of it, as Jonah, 'I do well to be angry.'⁴ So, I did well to swear, and break the sabbath. When once a man becomes a penitent, his judgment is changed, he now looks upon sin as the greatest evil. The Greek word for *repentance*, signifies *after-wisdom*; when, having seen how deformed and damnable a thing sin is, we change our mind. Paul, before conversion, verily 'thought within himself, I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus';⁵ but, when he became a penitent, now he was of another mind, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus.'⁶ Repentance causeth a change of judgment.

2. Repentance causeth a change in the affections which move under the will as the commander-in-chief. Repentance doth metamorphose the affections. It turns rejoicing in sin into sorrow for sin; it turns boldness in sin into holy shame; it turns the love of sin into hatred. As Amnon hated Tamar more than ever he loved her;⁷ so the true penitent hateth sin more than ever he loved it; 'I hate every false way.'⁸

3. Repentance works a change in the life. Though repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but goes into the life. I say it begins at the heart; 'O Jerusalem, wash thy heart.'⁹ If the spring be corrupt, there can no pure stream run from it. But though repentance begins at the heart, it doth not rest there, but changeth the life. What a change did repentance make in Paul! It changed a persecutor into a preacher. What a change did it make in the jailor?¹⁰ He took the apostles, and washed their stripes, and set meat before them. What a change did it make in Mary Magdalene? She that before did kiss her lovers with wanton embraces, now kisseth Christ's feet; she that did use to curl her hair, and dress it with costly jewels, now she makes it a towel to wipe Christ's feet; her eyes that used to sparkle with lust, and with impure glances to entice her lovers, now she makes them a fountain of tears to wash her Saviour's feet; her tongue that used to speak vainly and loosely, now it is an instrument set in tune to praise God. And this change of life hath two things in it. (1.) A breaking off sin, 'break off thy sins by righteousness.'¹¹ And this breaking off sin must have three qualifications, 1. It must be universal, a breaking off all sin. One disease may kill as well as more; one sin lived in may damn as well as more. The real penitent breaks off secret, gainful, complexion sins; he takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through the heart of his dearest lusts. 2. Breaking off sin must be sincere; it must not be out of fear or design, but upon spiritual grounds; from antipathy and disgust; from a principle of love to God. If sin had not such evil effects, yet a true penitent would forsake it out of love to God. The best way to separate things that are frozen, is by fire; when sin and the heart are frozen together, the best way to separate them is by the fire of love. Shall I sin against a gracious Father, and abuse that love which pardons me? 3. The

¹ Le. 26. 41.² Je. 23. 9.³ Ro. 12. 2.⁴ 1 m. 4. 9.⁵ Ac. 26. 9.⁶ Ph. 3. 8.⁷ 2 Sa. 13. 15.⁸ Ps. 119. 104.⁹ Je. 4. 14.¹⁰ Ac. 16. 33.¹¹ Da. 4. 27.

breaking off sin must be perpetual, so as never to have to do with sin any more; 'what have I to do any more with idols?'¹ Repentance is a spiritual divorce, which must be till death. (2.) Change of life hath in it, a returning unto the Lord. It is called 'repentance towards God.'² It is not enough, when we repent, to leave old sins; but we must engage in God's service; as when the wind leaves the west, it turns into a contrary corner. The repenting prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father.³ In true repentance the heart points directly to God, as the needle to the north pole.

Use. Let us all set upon this great work of repentance; let us repent sincerely and speedily; let us repent of all our sins, our pride, rash anger, unbelief. 'Without repentance no remission;' it is not consistent with the holiness of God's nature to pardon a sinner while he is in the act of rebellion. O meet God, not with weapons, but tears in your eyes! And, to stir you up to a melting, penitent frame,

1. Consider what is there in sin that you should continue in the practice of it. It is the 'accursed thing.'⁴ It is the spirits of mischief distilled. (1.) It defiles the soul's glory; it is like a stain to beauty; it is compared to a plague-sore.⁵ Nothing so changeth one's glory into shame, as sin. (2.) Without repentance, sin tends to final damnation. 'The act of sin is transient, its guilt permanent.' Sin at first shows its colour in the glass, but afterwards it bites like a serpent. Those locusts, were an emblem of sin: 'on their heads were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and there were stings in their tails.'⁶ Sin unrepented of ends in a tragedy. Sin hath the devil for its father, shame for its companion, and death for its wages.⁷ What is there in sin, then, that men should continue in it? Say not, it is sweet. Who would desire that pleasure which kills?

2. Repentance is very pleasing to God. No sacrifice like a broken heart; 'a contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.'⁸ St Austin caused this sentence to be written over his bed when he was sick. When the widow brought empty vessels to Elisha, the oil was poured into them: 'bring God the broken vessel of a contrite heart, and he will pour in the oil of mercy. Repenting tears are the joy

of God and angels.¹⁰ Doves delight to be about the waters; and surely God's Spirit (who once descended in the likeness of a dove) takes great delight in the waters of repentance. Mary stood at Jesus' feet weeping;¹¹ she brought two things to Christ, tears and ointment; her tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment.

3. Repentance ushers in pardon;^{*} therefore they are joined together; 'repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.'¹² Pardon of sin is the richest blessing; it is enough to make a sick man well; 'the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.'¹³ Pardon settles upon us the richer charter of the promises. Pardoning mercy is the sauce that makes all other mercies relish the sweeter; it sweetens our health, riches, honour. David had a crown of pure gold set upon his head.¹⁴ But that which David did most bless God for was, not that God had set a crown of gold upon his head, but that God set a crown of mercy upon his head: 'who crowneth thee with mercies.'¹⁵ But what was this crown of mercy? You may see; 'who forgiveth all thine iniquities.'¹⁶ David more rejoiced that he was crowned with forgiveness, than that he wore a crown of pure gold. Now, what is it makes way for pardon of sin, but repentance? When David's soul was humbled and broken, then the prophet Nathan brought him that good news; 'the Lord hath put away thy sin.'¹⁷

OBJ. *But sure, my sins are so great, that if I should repent, God would not pardon them.*

God will not go from his promise; 'return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you for

¹⁰ Lu. 15. ¹¹ Lu. 7. 38. ¹² Ac. 5. 31. ¹³ Is. 33. 24.
¹⁴ Ps. 21. 3. ¹⁵ Ps. 103. 4. ¹⁶ Ps. 103. 3. ¹⁷ 2 Sa. 12. 13.

* The question, whether a state of pardon goes before the first exercise of evangelical repentance, has been handled by various writers. When we speak of repentance being after justification, we speak of the order of nature, not of the order of time: for no justified person or true believer is impenitent. Farther, we speak of the formal exercise of repentance, not of the root of it. The root of repentance, being nothing else but the principle of spiritual life infused in regeneration, is the same with the root of all the other graces; in this respect, no one of these graces can be said to be either before or after another. When God is said to forgive the sin of his people, it is to be understood, 1st, of the act of his free grace in bringing them into an unalterable state of actual justification, (Col. 2. 13;) 2d, of the removal of rods with which they have been visited, in the way of fatherly correction, (2 Chron. 6. 25); 3d, of the intimations and comfortable sense which the Lord affords them of their justified state, (Ps. 32. 5.) It is granted, that the exercise of evangelical repentance is before the forgiveness of sin, in the second and third senses, but not in the first.—Anderson's (of King's Creek, America) *Precious Truth*, letter xl.

¹ Ho. 14. 8. ² Ac. 20. 21. ³ Lu. 15. 18. ⁴ Josh. 7. 11.
⁵ 1 Ki. 8. 38. ⁶ Re. 9. 7. ⁷ Ro. 6. 23. ⁸ Ps. 51. 17.
⁹ 2 Kz. 4. 6.

I am merciful.²¹ If thy sins are as rocks, yet upon thy repentance, the sea of God's mercy can drown these rocks; 'wash you, make you clean.'²² Wash in the laver of repentance, 'come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.'²³ Manasseh was a crimson sinner; but when he humbled himself greatly, the golden sceptre of mercy was held forth; when his head was a fountain to weep for sin, Christ's side was a fountain to wash away sin. It is not the greatness of sin, but impenitency, destroys. The Jews, some of them that had a hand in crucifying Christ, upon their repentance, the blood they shed was a sovereign balm to heal them. When the prodigal came home to his father, he had the robe and the ring put upon him, and his 'father kissed him.'²⁴ If you break off your sins, God will become a friend to you; all that is in God shall be yours; his power shall be yours to help you, his wisdom shall be yours to counsel you, his Spirit shall be yours to sanctify you, his promises shall be yours to comfort you, his angels shall be yours to guard you, his mercy shall be yours to save you.

4. There is much sweetness in repenting tears. The soul is never more enlarged and inwardly delighted than when it can melt kindly for sin. Weeping days are festival days. The Hebrew word to repent, signifies, 'to take comfort,' 'your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' Christ turns the water of tears into wine. David, who was the great mourner in Israel, was the sweet singer; and the joy a true penitent finds, is a prelibation and foretaste of the joy of paradise.

The wicked man's joy turns to sadness; the penitent's sadness turns to joy. Though repentance seems at first to be thorny and bitter, yet of this thorn a Christian gathers grapes. All which considerations may open a vein of godly sorrow in our souls, that we may both weep for sin, and turn from sin. If ever God restores comfort, it is to his mourners.' And when we have wept, let us look up to Christ's blood for pardon. Say, as that holy man, 'Lord, wash my tears in thy blood!' We drop sin with our tears, and need Christ's blood to wash them; and this repentance must be not only for a few days, like the mourning for a friend, which is soon over; but it must be the work of our lives; the issue of godly sorrow must not be stopt till death. After sin is pardoned, we must repent. We run afresh upon the score; 'we sin daily, therefore must repent daily.' Some shed a few tears for sin; and when their tears, like the widow's oil, have run a while they cease. Many, if the plaster of repentance begin to smart a little, pluck it off: whereas this plaster of repentance must lie still on, and not be plucked off till death; when, as all other tears, so these of godly sorrow, shall be wiped away.

Q. *What shall we do to obtain a penitential frame of heart?*

Seek to God for it. It is his promise to give a 'heart of flesh,' and to pour on us a spirit of mourning.' Beg God's Holy Spirit. 'He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.'²⁵ When the wind of God's Spirit blows upon us, then the waters of repentant tears will flow from us.*

THE WORD READ AND PREACHED, HOW EFFECTUAL.

III. THE third way to escape the wrath and curse of God, and obtain the benefit of redemption by Christ, is, 'the diligent use of ordinances,' in particular, 'the word, sacraments, and prayer.'

I begin with the first of these ordinances.

1. The 'word, which effectually worketh in you that believe.'²⁶

Q. *What is meant by the words working effectually?*

The word of God is said to work effectually, when it hath that good effect upon us for which it was appointed of God; namely, when the

word works powerful illumination, and thorough reformation; 'to open their eyes, and turn them from the power of Satan to God.'²⁷ The 'opening their eyes,' denotes illumination; and, 'turning them from Satan to God,' denotes reformation.

²⁷ Is. 57. 18. ²⁸ Ez. 36. ²⁹ Ze. 12. 10. ³⁰ Ps. 147. 18.
³¹ Ac. 26. 18.

* Be much in viewing the glorious perfections of the majesty of heaven, as they are displayed in the works of creation and providence, but especially as they shine in the face of Jesus Christ, and the glorious work of redemption through him. When the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple, he cried out, 'woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.' 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,' said Job, 'but now mine eyes see thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'—*Ebenr. Erskine, Beauties of*, p. 571.

¹ Je. 3. 12. ² Is. 1. 16. ³ Is. 1. 18. ⁴ Lu. 15.
⁵ Jno. 16. 20. ⁶ 1 Th. 2. 13.

Q 2. *How is the word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?*

This question consists of two branches. 1. *How may the word be read effectually?* 2. *How may it be heard effectually?*

First, I shall begin with the first branch of the question, 'how is the word to be read that it may become effectual to salvation?' That we may so read the word, that it may conduce effectually to our salvation,

1. Let us have a reverent esteem of every part of canonical scripture; 'more to be desired are they than gold.'¹ Value this book of God above all other books. It is a golden epistle, indited by the Holy Ghost, sent us from heaven. More particularly to raise our esteem, (1.) The scripture is a spiritual glass to dress our souls by; it shows us more than we can see by the light of a natural conscience; that may discover gross sins, but the glass of the word shows us heart-sins, vain thoughts, unbelief, &c. And it not only shows us our spots, but washeth them away. (2.) The scripture is a sacred magazine out of which we may fetch our spiritual artillery to fight against Satan. When the devil tempted our Saviour, he fetched armour and weapons from scripture, 'it is written.'² (3.) The holy scripture is a universal medicine for the soul; it gives a recipe to cure deadness of heart;³ pride,⁴ infidelity.⁵ It is a physic garden, where we may gather an herb or antidote to expel the poison of sin. The leaves of scripture, like the leaves of the tree of life, are for the 'healing of the nations.'⁶ And may not this cause a reverent esteem of the word?

2. If we would have the word written effectual to our souls, let us peruse it with 'intensity of mind;' 'search the scriptures.'⁷ The Greek word [*erynate*] signifies to search as for a 'vein of silver.'⁸ The Bereans 'searched the scriptures daily.'⁹ The word [*anakrimentos*] signifies to make a curious and critical search. And Apollos was mighty in the scriptures.¹⁰ Some gallop over a chapter in haste and get no good by it: if we would have the word effectual and saving, we must mind and observe every passage of scripture. And that we may be diligent in the perusal of scripture, consider, (1.) The word written is the rule and platform by which we are to square our lives; it contains in it all things needful to salvation;¹¹

what duties we are to do, what sins we are to avoid. God gave Moses a pattern how he would have the tabernacle made; and he was to go exactly according to the pattern.¹² The word is the pattern God hath given us in writing for modelling our lives; therefore, how careful should we be in the perusing and looking over this pattern? (2.) The written word, as it is our pattern, so it will be our judge; 'the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.'¹³ We read of the opening of the books;¹⁴ this is one book God will open, the book of the Scripture, and will judge men out of it. He will say, have you lived according to the rule of this word? The word hath a double work, to teach and to judge.

3. If we would have the word written effectual, we must bring faith to the reading of it, believing it to be the word of the eternal Jehovah. The word written comes with authority, —it shows its commission from heaven; 'thus saith the Lord.'¹⁵ It is of divine inspiration.¹⁶ The oracles of scripture must be surer to us than a voice from heaven.¹⁷ Unbelief enervates the virtue of scripture, and renders it ineffectual. First men question the truth of the scripture, and then fall away from it.

4. If we would have the word written effectual to salvation, we must delight in it as our spiritual cordial; 'thy words were found, and I did eat them, and the word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'¹⁸ All true solid comfort is fetched out of the word. The word, as Chrysostom saith, is a spiritual garden; and the promises are the fragrant flowers or spices in this garden. How should we delight to walk among these beds of spices? Is it not a comfort in all dubious perplexed cases, to have a counsellor to advise us? 'Thy testimonies are my counsellors.'¹⁹ Is it not a comfort to find our evidences for heaven? And where should we find them but in the word?²⁰ The word written is a sovereign elixir, or comfort in an hour of distress; 'this is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.'²¹ It can turn all our 'water into wine.'²² How should we take a great complacency and delight in the word? They only who come to the word with delight, go from it with success.

5. If we would have the scripture effectual and saving, we must be sure, when we have

¹ Ps. 19. 10. ² Mat. 4. 4, 7. ³ Ps. 119. 50. ⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 5. ⁵ Jno. 3. 36. ⁶ Re. 22. 2. ⁷ Jno. 5. 39. ⁸ Ac. 17. 11. ⁹ Ac. 18. 24. ¹⁰ Ps. 19. 7.

¹¹ Ex. 25. 9. ¹² Jno. 12. 48. ¹³ Re. 20. 12. ¹⁴ 2 Ti. 3. 16. ¹⁵ 1 Pe. 1. 18. ¹⁶ Je. 15. 16. ¹⁷ Ps. 119. 24. ¹⁸ 1 Th. 1. 4, 5. ¹⁹ Ps. 119. 50.

read the word, to hide it in our hearts; 'thy word have I hid in my heart.'¹ The word, locked up in the heart, is a preservative against sin. Why did David hide the word in his heart? In the next words, 'that I might not sin against thee.' As one would carry an antidote about him when he comes near a place infected, so David carried the word in his heart as a sacred antidote to preserve him from the infection of sin. When the sap is hid in the root, it makes the branches fruitful; when the seed is hid in the ground, then the corn springs up; so, when the word is hid in the heart, then it brings forth good fruit.

6. If we would have the word written effectual, let us labour not only to have the light of the word in our heads, but the power of the word in our hearts. Let us endeavour to have the word copied out, and written a second time in our hearts; 'the law of God is in his heart.'² The word saith, 'be clothed with humility;'³ let us be low and humble in our own eyes.* The word calls for sanctity: let us labour to partake of the divine nature, and to have something conceived in us which is of the Holy Ghost.⁴ When the word is thus copied out into our hearts, and we are changed into the similitude of it, now the word written is made effectual to us, and becomes a savour of life.

7. When we read the holy scriptures let us lock up to God for a blessing; beg the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that we may see the 'deep things of God.'⁵ Pray to God, that the same Spirit that wrote the scripture would enable us to understand it. Pray that God would give us that 'savour of knowledge,'⁶ that we may relish a sweetness in the word we read. David tasted it 'sweeter than the honeycomb.'⁷ Let us pray that God would not only give us his word as a rule of holiness, but his grace as a principle of holiness.

2D BRANCH OF THE SECOND QUESTION.

How may we so hear the word, that it may be effectual and saving to our souls?

¹ Ps. 119. 11. ² Ps. 37. 31. ³ 1 Pe. 5. 5. ⁴ 2 Pe. 1. 4.
⁵ 1 Cor. 2. 10. ⁶ 2 Cor. 2. 14. ⁷ Ps. 19. 10.

* Two learned physicians, and a plain honest countryman, happening to meet at an inn, sat down to dinner together. A dispute presently arose between the two doctors, on the nature of aliment, which proceeded to such a height, and was carried on with so much fury, that it spoiled their meal, and they parted extremely indisposed. The countryman in the mean time, who understood not the cause, though he heard the quarrel, fell heartily to his meat, gave thanks to God, digested it well, returned in the strength of it to his labour, and at evening received his wages. 'Is there not,' adds Bishop Horne, 'sometimes as much difference between the polemical and the practical Christian.'—*Whitcross's Ancer. Cat.* p. 176.

1. Give great attention to the word preached; let nothing pass without taking special notice of it; 'all the people were very attentive to hear him,'⁸ they hung upon his lips. 'Lydia, a seller of purple, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.'⁹ Give attention to the word, as to a matter of life and death. And to that purpose have a care to banish vain impertinent thoughts, which will distract you, and take you off from the work in hand. These fowls will be coming to the sacrifice,¹⁰ therefore we must drive them away. An archer may take a right aim; but if one stand at his elbow, and jog him when he is going to shoot, he will not hit the mark: christians may have good aims in hearing; but take heed of impertinent thoughts which will jog and hinder you in God's service. Banish dulness. The devil gives many hearers a sleepy sop, they cannot keep their eyes open at a sermon; they eat so much on a Lord's day, that they are fitter for the pillow and couch, than the temple. Frequent and customary sleeping at a sermon, shows high contempt and irreverence of the ordinance; it gives a bad example to others; it makes your sincerity to be called in question; it is the devil's seed-time; 'while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares.'¹¹ O shake off drowsiness, as Paul shook off the viper! Be serious and attentive in hearing the word, 'for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.'¹² When people do not mind what God speaks to them in his word, God doth as little mind what they say to him in prayer.

2. If you would have the word preached effectual, come with a holy appetite to the word.¹³ The thirsting soul is the thriving soul. In nature, one may have an appetite and no digestion; but it is not so in religion. Where there is a great appetite to the word, there is for the most part digestion; the word doth concoct and nourish. Come with hungerings of soul after the word; and therefore desire the word, that it may not only please you, but profit you. Look not more at the garnishing of the dish than at the meat, at eloquence and rhetoric more than solid matter. It argues both a wanton palate, and surfeited stomach, to feed on sallads and kickshaws rather than wholesome food.

3. If you would have the preaching of the

⁸ Lu. 19. 48. ⁹ Ac. 16. 14. ¹⁰ Ge. 15. 11.
¹¹ Mat. 13. 25. ¹² De. 32. 47. ¹³ 1 Pe. 2. 2.

word effectual, come to it with a tenderness upon your heart; 'thy heart was tender.'¹ If we preach to hard hearts, it is like shooting against a brazen wall, the word doth not enter; it is like setting a gold seal upon marble, which takes no impression. O come to the word preached with a melting frame of heart! It is the melting wax receives the stamp of the seal. When the heart is in a melting frame, it will better receive the stamp of the word preached. When Paul's heart was melted and broken for sin, then he cries, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do.'² Come not hither with hard hearts; who can expect a crop when the seed is sown upon stony ground?

4. If you would have the word effectual, 'receive with meekness the ingrafted word.'³ Meekness is a submissive frame of heart, a willingness to hear the counsels and reproofs of the word. Contrary to this meekness, is fierceness of spirit, whereby men are ready to rise up in rage against the word. Proud men, and guilty, cannot endure to hear of their faults. Proud Herod put John in prison.⁴ The guilty Jews being told of their crucifying Christ, stoned Stephen.⁵ To tell men of sin, is to hold a glass to one that is deformed, who cannot endure to see his own face. Contrary to meekness is stubbornness of heart, whereby men are resolved to hold fast their sins, let the word say what it will; 'we will burn incense to the queen of heaven.'⁶ O take heed of this! If you would have the word preached work effectually, lay aside fierceness and stubbornness, receive the word with meekness. By meekness the word preached comes to be ingrafted. As a good scion that is grafted in a bad stock, doth change the nature of the fruit and make it taste sweet; so when the word comes to be ingrafted into the soul, it sanctifies it, and makes it bring forth the sweet fruit of righteousness.

5. Mingle the word preached with faith; 'the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith.'⁷ If you leave out the chief ingredient in a medicine, it hinders the operation: do not leave out this ingredient of faith. Believe the word, and so believe it as to apply it. When you hear Christ preached, apply him to yourselves; this is to put on the Lord Jesus.⁸ When you hear a promise spoken of, apply it; this is to suck the flower of the promise, and turn it to honey.

6. Be not only attentive in hearing, but re-

tentive after hearing: 'we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip.'⁹ Lest we should let them run out, as water out of a sieve; if the ground doth not retain the seed sown into it, there can be no good crop. Some have memories like leaking vessels, the sermons they hear are presently gone, and then there is no good done. If meat doth not stay and concoct in the stomach, it will not nourish, Satan labours to steal the word out of our mind; 'when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown.'¹⁰ Our memories should be like the chest of the ark wherein the law was put.

7. Reduce your hearing to practice; live on the sermons you hear: 'I have done thy commandments.'¹¹ Rachel was not content that she was beautiful, but her desire was to be fruitful. What is a knowing head without a fruitful heart? 'Filled with the fruits of righteousness.'¹² It is obedience crowns hearing; that hearing will never save the soul, which doth not reform the life.

8. Beg of God that he will accompany his word with his presence and blessing. The Spirit must make all effectual; ministers may prescribe physic, but it is God's Spirit must make it work. 'He hath his pulpit in heaven that converts souls,' AUSTIN. 'While Peter yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard.'¹³ It is said, the alchemist can draw oil out of iron: God's Spirit can produce grace in the most obdurate heart.

9. If you would have the word work effectually to your salvation, make it familiar to you; discourse of the word you have heard when you come home; 'my tongue shall speak of thy word.'¹⁴ That may be one reason why some people get no more good by what they hear, because they never speak one to another of what they have heard; as if sermons were such secrets, that they must not be spoken of again; or as if it were a shame to speak of matters of salvation; 'they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written.'¹⁵

USE. Caution. Take heed, as you love your souls, that the word become not ineffectual to you. There are some to whom the word preached is ineffectual; such as censure the word, instead of judging themselves judge the word; such as live in contradiction to the

¹ Ch. 13. 7. ² Ac. 9. 6. ³ Ja. 1. 21. ⁴ Mar. 6. 17.
⁵ Ac. 7. 59. ⁶ Je. 41. 17. ⁷ He. 4. 2. ⁸ Ro. 13. 11.

⁹ He. 2. 1. ¹⁰ Mar. 4. 15 ¹¹ Ps. 119. 166. ¹² Ph. 1. 11.
¹³ Ac. 10. 44. ¹⁴ Ps. 119. 172. ¹⁵ Mat. 3. 16.

word; such as are more hardened by the word, 'they made their hearts as an adamant.'¹ And when men harden their hearts wilfully, God hardens them judicially; 'make their ears heavy.'² The word to these is ineffectual: were it not sad, if a man's meat should not nourish; nay, if it should turn to poison? O take heed that the word preached be not ineffectual and to no purpose! Consider three things. (1.) If the word preached doth us no good, there is no other way by which we can be saved. This is God's institution, and the main engine he useth to convert souls; 'if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'³ If an angel should come to you out of heaven, and preach of the excellency of the glorified estate, and the joys of heaven, and that in the most pathetic manner; if the word preached doth not persuade, neither would you be wrought upon by such an oration from heaven. If a damned spirit should come from hell, and preach to you in flames, and tell you what a place hell is, and roar out the torments

of the damned, it might make you tremble, but it would not convert, if the preaching of the word would not do it. (2.) To come to the word, and not be savingly wrought upon, is that which the devil is pleased with; he cares not though you hear frequently, if it be not effectually; he is not an enemy to hearing but profiting. Though the minister holds out the breasts of the ordinances to you, he cares not as long as you do not suck the sincere milk of the word. The devil cares not how many sermon-pills you take, so long as they do not work upon your conscience. (3.) If the word preached be not effectual to men's conversion, it will be effectual to their condemnation; the word will be effectual one way or other; if it doth not make your hearts better, it will make your chains heavier. We pity them who have not the word preached, but it will be worse with them who are not sanctified by it: dreadful is their case, who go loaded with sermons to hell. But I will conclude with the apostle, 'we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.'⁵

OF BAPTISM.

MAT. 28. 19, 20. *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them—*

WE are still upon that question in the catechism,

What are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

They are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer. I have spoken to the first, 'the word read and preached.' I now proceed to the second way whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption; the use of the sacraments.

Q. 1. *What are sacraments in general?*

They are visible signs of invisible grace.

Q. 2. *Is not the word of God sufficient to salvation? What need then is there of sacraments?*

We must not be wise above what is written: this may satisfy, it is God's will that his church should have sacraments; and it is God's goodness, thus by sacraments to condescend to our weak capacities; 'except ye see signs, ye will not believe.'⁴ God, to strengthen our faith, confirms the covenant of grace, not only by promises but by sacramental signs.

Q. 3. *What are the Sacraments of the New Testament?*

Two: Baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. 4. *But are there no more? The papists tell of five more, namely, confirmation, penance, matrimony, orders, and the extreme unction.*

1. There were but two sacraments under the law, therefore there are no more now.⁶ 2. These two sacraments are sufficient: the one signifying our entrance into Christ, and the other our growth and perseverance in him.

I begin with the first sacrament, Baptism: 'go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them.' 'Go teach all nations:' the Greek word is *make disciples of all nations*. If it be asked, how should we make them disciples? It follows; 'baptizing them and teaching them.' In a heathen nation, first teach them, and then baptize them; but in a christian church, first baptize them, and then teach them.

¹ Zech. 7. 12. ² Is. 6. 10. ³ Lu. 16. 31. ⁴ Jno. 4. 48.

⁵ Heb. 6. 9.

⁶ 1 Co. 10. 2, 3, 4.

Q. 5. *What is baptism?*

In general, it is a matriculation, or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ's flock. More particularly, 'baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing or sprinkling with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.'

Q. 6. *What is the meaning of the parent, in presenting his child to be baptized?*

The parent, in presenting his child to be baptized, doth, 1. Make a public acknowledgment of original sin; that the soul of his child is polluted, therefore needs washing away of sin by Christ's blood and Spirit; both which washings are signified by the sprinkling of water in baptism. 2. The parent by bringing his child to be baptized, doth solemnly devote his child to the Lord, and enrol him in God's family; and truly this may be a great satisfaction to a religious parent, that he hath given up his child to the Lord in baptism. How can a parent look with comfort on that child who was never yet dedicated to God?

Q. 7. *What then is the benefit of baptism?*

The party baptized hath, 1. An entrance into the visible body of the church. 2. The party baptized hath a right sealed to the ordinances, which is a privilege full of glory.¹ 3. The child baptized is under a more special providential care of Christ, who appoints the tutelage of angels to be the infant's lifeguard.*

Q. 8. *Is this all the benefit?*

No. To such as belong to the election, baptism is a 'seal of the righteousness of the faith,'² a laver of regeneration, and a badge of adoption.

Q. 9. *How doth it appear that children have a right of baptism?*

Children are parties of the covenant of

grace. The covenant was made with them: 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee.'³ And 'the promise is unto you and to your children.'⁴ The covenant of grace may be considered either, more strictly, as an absolute promise to give saving grace; and so none but the elect are in covenant with God; or, more largely, as a covenant containing in it many outward glorious privileges, in which respects the children of believers do belong to the covenant of grace: the promise is to you and to your seed. The infant-seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the covenant of grace as their parents; and having a right to the covenant, they cannot justly be denied baptism, which is the seal. I would ask this question of them who deny infant-baptism, it is certain the children of believers were once visibly in covenant with God, and did receive the seal of their admission into the church, now where do we find this covenant-interest, or church membership of infants, was ever repealed or made void? Certainly Jesus Christ did not come to put believers and their children into a worse condition than they were in before. If the children of believers should not be baptized, they are in a worse condition now than they were in before Christ's coming. Before I come to prove the baptizing of infants I shall answer the objections made against it.

OBJ. 1. *The scripture is silent herein, and doth not mention infant-baptism.*

Though there is not the word *infant-baptism* in scripture, yet there is the thing. There is not mention made in scripture of women's receiving the sacrament, but who doubts but the command, 'take, eat, this is my body,' concerns them? Doth not their faith need strengthening as well as others? So the word *Trinity* is not to be found in scripture, but there is that which is equivalent; 'there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.'⁵ So, though the word *infant-baptism* is not mentioned in scripture, yet the practice of baptizing infants may be drawn out of scripture by undeniable consequence.

Q. *How is that proved?*

The scripture mentions whole families baptized: as the household of Lydia, Crispus,

¹ Ro. 9. 4.

² Ro. 4. 11.

* 'In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.' The fathers looked on this as an argument, that each good man has his *particular guardian angel*. And Grotius also seems to allow the force of it. I apprehend this passage rather intimates, that the angels who sometimes attend the *little ones* spoken of, at other times stand in God's immediate presence; and consequently, that different angels are at different times employed in this kind of office, if it be incessantly performed. The general sense is plain, that the highest angels do not disdain, on proper occasions, to perform services of protection and friendship, for the meanest christian; but as Paul says, they are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. I say the *highest*; because, to behold the face of God, may signify waiting near his throne, and be an allusion to the office of chief ministers in earthly courts, who daily converse with their prince.—*Doddridge, Fam. Exp. Mat.* 18. 10.

³ Ge. 17. 7.

⁴ Ac. 2. 39.

⁵ 1 Jno. 5. 7.

and the jailor, 'was baptized, he and all his house.'¹ Wherein we must rationally imagine that there were some little children. If it be said, there is no mention there made of children: I answer, neither are servants named, yet it cannot be supposed but that, in so great a family, there were some servants.

OBJ. 2. *But infants are not capable of the end of baptism: for baptism signifies the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. Now infants cannot understand this; therefore, what benefit can baptism be to them?*

Whereas it is said, infants cannot understand the mystery of baptism, neither could the child that was to be circumcised understand circumcision; yet the ordinance of circumcision was not to be omitted or deferred. An infant, though it understand not the meaning of baptism, yet it may partake of the blessing of baptism. The little children that Christ took in his arms, understood not Christ's meaning, but they had Christ's blessing, 'he put his hands upon them and blessed them.'²

Q. *But what benefit can the child have of baptism, if it understand not the nature of baptism?*

It may have a right to the promise sealed up, which it shall have an actual interest in when it comes to have faith. A legacy may be of use to the child in the cradle, though it now understand not the legacy, yet when it is grown up to years, it is fully possessed of it. But it may be further objected:

OBJ. 1. *The party to be baptized is to be engaged to God; but how can the child engage?*

The parents can engage for it, which God is pleased to accept as equivalent to the child's personal engaging.

OBJ. 2. *If baptism comes in the room of circumcision, only the males were circumcised.³ Then what warrant is there for baptizing females?*

The females were included, and were virtually circumcised in the males. What is done to the head is done to the body; the man therefore being the head of the woman.⁴ What was done to the male sex was interpretatively done to the female. Having answered these objections, I come now to prove by argument, infant-baptism.

1. If children during their infancy are capable of grace, then they are capable of baptism; but children in their infancy are capable of grace, therefore they are capable of baptism.

I prove the minor, that they are capable of grace, thus: if children in their infancy may be saved, then they are capable of grace; but children in their infancy may be saved; which is proved thus: if the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, then they may be saved, but the kingdom of heaven may belong to them, as it is clear from Mark 10. 14, 'of such is the kingdom of God.' Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?

2. If infants may be among the number of God's servants, then there is no reason why they should be shut out of God's family; but infants may be in the number of God's servants, that is evident because God calls them his servants; 'he shall depart from thee and his children with him, for they are my servants.'⁵ Therefore children in their infancy being God's servants, why should they not have baptism, which is the mark or seal which God sets upon his servants?

3. 'Now are your children holy.'⁶ Children are not called holy, as if they were free from original sin; but in the judgment of charity they are to be esteemed holy, and true members of the church of God, because their parents are believers. Hence that excellent divine Mr Heldersam saith, 'that the children of the faithful as soon as they are born, have a covenant-holiness, and so a right and title to baptism, which is the token of the covenant.'

4. The opinion of the fathers and the practice of the church. The ancient fathers were strong asserters of infant-baptism, Irenæus, Basil, Lactantius, Cyprian, and Austin. It was the practice of the Greek church to baptize her infants. Erasmus saith, that infant-baptism hath been used in the church of God for above fourteen hundred years. And St Austin, in his book against Pelagius, affirms, that it hath been the custom of the church in all ages to baptize infants. Yea, it was an apostolical practice; St Paul affirms, that he baptized the whole house of Stephanus.⁷

And as you have seen scripture-argument, for infant-baptism, so let us consider whether the practice of those who delay the baptizing of children till riper years, be warrantable. For my part, I cannot gather it from scripture. For though we read of persons adult and grown up to years of discretion, in the apostles' times, baptized, yet those were such as were converted from heathenish idolatry to the true

¹ Ac. 16. 33. ² Mar. 10. 16. ³ Ge. 17. 27. ⁴ 1 Co. 11. 3.

⁵ Lu. 25. 41. 42. ⁶ 1 Co. 7. 14. ⁷ 1 Co. 1. 16.

orthodox faith; but that in a christian church the children of believers should be kept unbaptized several years, I know neither precept nor example for it in scripture, but it is wholly apocryphal. The baptizing of persons grown up to maturity, we may argue against* from the ill consequence of it: they dip the persons they baptize over head and ears in cold water, and naked, which as it is indecent, so it is dangerous, and hath been oftentimes the occasion of chronical diseases, yea, death itself, and so it is a plain breach of the sixth commandment. And how far God hath given up many persons, who are for the deferring of baptism, to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident, if we consult with history, especially if we read over the acting of the anabaptists in Germany.

USE. 1. See the riches of God's goodness, who will not only be the God of believers, but takes their seed into covenant. 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, to be a God unto thee and thy seed.'¹ A father counts it a great privilege, not only to have his own name, but his child's name put in a will.

USE 2. It blames those parents who forbid ittle children to be brought to Christ: they withhold the ordinance. By denying their infants baptism, they exclude them from having a membership in the visible church, and so their infants are sucking pagans. Such as deny their children baptism, make God's institutions under the law more full of kindness and grace to children, than they are now under the gospel; which how strange a paradox it is, I leave you to judge.

USE 3. Of exhortation. (1.) We that are baptized, let us labour to find the blessed fruits of baptism in our own souls; let us labour not only to have the signs of the covenant, but the grace of the covenant. Many glory in this, that they are baptized. The Jews gloried in

their circumcision, because of their royal privileges; to them belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants;² but many of them were a shame and reproach to their circumcision, 'for the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.'³ The scandalous Jews, though circumcised, were, in God's account, as heathens; 'are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me? saith the Lord.'⁴ Alas! What is it to have the name of Christ, and want his image? What is baptism of water, without the baptism of the Spirit. Many baptized Christians are no better than heathens. O labour to find the fruits of baptism: that Christ is formed in us,⁵ that our nature is changed, we are made holy and heavenly! This is to be baptized into Jesus.⁶ Such as live unsuitable to their baptism, may go with baptismal water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths, to hell. (2.) Let us labour to make a right use of our baptism. 1. Let us use it as a shield against temptations. 'Satan, I have given up myself to God by a sacred vow in baptism; I am not my own, I am Christ's; therefore I cannot yield to thy temptations, but I break my oath of allegiance which I made to God in baptism.' Luther tells us of a pious woman, who when the devil tempted her to sin, she answered Satan, 'I am baptized;' and so beat back the tempter. 2. Let us use it as a spur to holiness. By remembering our baptism, let us be stirred up to make good our baptismal engagements; renouncing the world, flesh, and devil, let us devote ourselves to God and his service. To be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, implies a solemn dedication of ourselves to the service of all the three persons in the Trinity. It is not enough that our parents dedicate us to God in baptism, but we must dedicate ourselves to him; this is called a living to the Lord.⁷ Our life should be spent in worshipping God, in loving God, in exalting God; we should walk as becomes the gospel,⁸ shine as stars in the world, and live as earthly angels. 3. Let us use it as an argument to courage. We should be ready to confess that holy Trinity into whose name we were baptized. With the conversion of the heart, must go the confession of the tongue, 'whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.'⁹ Peter openly confessed

¹ Ge. 17. 7.

* We have seen that nothing certain can be learned from the original term, because it has different meanings, signifying sometimes to *immerse* and sometimes to *wash*. When a word is used to denote an action that is figurative, it seems a fair way of determining its sense, to observe how the thing which the action represents, is in other places expressed. As the water in baptism is emblematical of the influences of the Spirit, we may bring to the illustration of the term to *baptize*, the passages of scripture, which speak of the communication of those influences: and there is not one of them which alludes to immersion. The Holy Ghost is said 'to fall' upon men, to be 'poured out' upon them; and in reference to the same subject, God promises to 'sprinkle clean water upon us,' 'to be as the dew unto Israel,' and that his grace shall 'come down as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers which water the earth'—*Dick's Lect.* b. 4. p. 156.

² Ro. 9. 4. ³ Ro. 2. 24. ⁴ Am. 9. 7. ⁵ Ga. 4. 19.
⁶ Ro. 6. 3. ⁷ Ro. 14. 8. ⁸ Ph. 1. 27. ⁹ Lu. 12. 8.

Christ crucified.¹ Cyprian, a man of a brave spirit, was like a rock whom no waves could shake, like an adamant whom no sword could cut: he confessed Christ before the proconsul, and suffered himself to be proscribed, yea, chose death, rather than he would betray the truths of Christ. He that dare not confess the holy Trinity, shames his baptism, and God will be ashamed to own him at the day of judgment.

USE.4. See the fearfulness of the sin of apostasy! It is a renouncing of our baptism. It is damnable perjury to go away from God, after a solemn vow: 'Demas hath forsaken me.'² He turned renegado, and afterwards

became a priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. Julian the apostate (Gregory Nazianzen observes) bathed himself in the blood of beasts offered in sacrifice to heathen gods; and so, as much as in him lay, washed off his former baptism. The case of such as fall away after baptism, is dreadful: 'if any man *draw back*,³ (the Greek word *to draw back*, alludes to a soldier that steals away from his colours) so, if any man steal away from Christ, and run over to the devil's side, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him;' that is, I will be severely avenged on him; I will make my arrows drunk with his blood. If all the plagues in the Bible can make that man miserable, he shall be so.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MAR. 14. 22. *And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, &c.*

HAVING spoken to the sacrament of baptism, I come now to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper is the most spiritual and sweet ordinance that ever was instituted: here we have to do more immediately with the person of Christ. In prayer, we draw nigh to God; in the sacrament we become one with him. In prayer we look up to Christ; in the sacrament, by faith, we touch him. In the word preached, we hear Christ's voice; in the sacrament we feed on him.

Q. 1. *What names and titles in scripture are given to the sacrament?*

1. It is called, the Lord's table.³ The papists call it an altar, not a table. The reason is, because they turn the sacrament into a sacrifice, and pretend to offer up Christ corporeally in the mass. It being the Lord's table, shows with what reverence and solemn devotion we should approach to these holy mysteries; the Lord takes notice of the frame of our hearts when we come to his table; 'the king came in to see the guests.'⁴ We dress ourselves when we come to the table of some great monarch; we should think with ourselves, we are going to the table of the Lord, therefore should dress ourselves by holy meditation and heart-consideration. Many think it is enough to come to the sacrament, but mind not whether they come in 'due order.'⁵ Perhaps they had scarce a serious thought before, whither they were going: all their dressing

was by the glass, not by the bible. Chrysostom calls it, 'the dreadful table of the Lord:' so it is to such as come unworthily.

2. The sacrament is called the Lord's supper,⁷ to import, it is a spiritual feast. It is indeed a royal feast; God is in this cheer; Christ, in both natures, God and man, is the matter of this supper.

3. The sacrament is called a communion; 'the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?'⁸ The sacrament being called a communion, shows, 1st, That this ordinance is only for believers, because none else can have communion with Christ in these holy mysteries. 'Communion presupposes union;' faith only gives us union with Christ, and by virtue of this we have communion with him in his body and blood. None but the spouse communicates with her husband; a stranger may drink of his cup, but she only hath his heart, and communicates with him in a conjugal manner: so strangers may have the sign, drink of the cup, but only believers drink of Christ's blood, and have communion with him in his privileges. 2d. The sacrament being a communion, shows, that it is a bond of that unity and charity which should be among christians; 'we being many are one body.'⁹ As many grains make one bread, so many christians are one body. A sacrament is a love-feast. The primitive christians (as Justin Martyr notes) had their holy saluta-

¹ Ac. 4. 10. ² Ti. 4. 10. ³ 1 Cor. 10. 21.
⁴ Mat. 22. 11. ⁵ 1 Ch. 15. 13.

⁶ He. 10. 38. ⁷ 1 Cor. 11. 20. ⁸ 1 Cor. 10. 16.
⁹ 1 Cor. 10. 17.

tions at the blessed supper, in token of that dearness of affection which they did bear to each other. It is a communion, therefore there must be love and union. The Israelites did eat the passover with bitter herbs; so must we eat the sacrament with bitter herbs of repentance, but not with bitter hearts of wrath and malice. The hearts of the communicants should be knit together with the bond of love: 'thou braggest of thy faith,' saith Austin, 'but show me thy faith by thy love to the saints.' For, as in the sun, light and heat are inseparable, so faith and love are twisted together inseparably. Where there are divisions, the Lord's supper is not properly a communion, but a disunion.

Q. 2. *What is the Lord's supper?*

It is a visible sermon, wherein Christ crucified is set before us. Or, it is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein by receiving the holy elements of bread and wine, our communion with Christ is signified and sealed up to us. Or thus, it is a sacrament divinely instituted, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, Christ's death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are, by faith made partakers of his body and blood, and all the benefits flowing from thence. For the further explaining of the nature of the Lord's supper, I shall look back to the institution.

1. 'Jesus took bread.' Here is the Master of the feast, or the institutor of the sacrament. The Lord Jesus he took bread. He only is fit to institute a sacrament, who is able to give virtue and blessing to it.

2. 'He took bread.' Christ's taking of the bread was one part of his consecration of the elements, and setting them apart for an holy use. And as Christ did consecrate the elements, so we must labour to have our hearts consecrated, before we receive these holy mysteries in the Lord's supper. How unseemly a sight is it to see any come to these holy elements, having hearts leavened with pride, covetousness, envy! These do, with Judas, receive the devil in the sop, and are no better than crucifiers of the Lord of glory.

3. 'And blessed it.' This is another part of the consecration of the element, Christ blessed it; he blesseth, and it shall be blessed, namely, he looked up to heaven for a benediction upon this ordinance newly founded.

4. 'And brake it.' The bread broken, and the wine poured out, was to signify to us the agony and ignominy of Christ's sufferings, the

rending of Christ's body on the cross, and that effusion of blood which was distilled from his blessed sides.

5. 'And gave it to them.' Christ's giving the bread, denotes Christ's giving of himself and all his benefits to us freely. Though Christ was sold, yet given; Judas did sell Christ, but Christ gave himself to us.

6. 'He gave it to them,' namely, the disciples. This is children's bread; Christ doth not cast these pearls before swine. Whether Judas was present at the supper, is controverted; I rather incline to think he was not; for Christ said to the disciples, 'this is my blood, which is shed for you.'¹ Christ knew his blood was never shed effectually and intentionally for Judas. In eating the passover, Christ gave Judas a sop, which was a bit of unleavened bread dipt in a sauce made with bitter herbs; Judas having received the sop, went immediately out.² But, suppose Judas was there, though he received the elements, yet not the blessing.

7. 'Take, eat.' This expression, of eating, denotes four things: (1.) The near mystical union between Christ and his saints. As the meat which is eaten incorporates with the body, and becomes one with it; so, by eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood spiritually, we partake of his merits and graces, and are mystically 'one with him;' 'I in them.'³ (2.) Eating shows the infinite delight the believing soul hath in Christ. Eating is grateful and pleasing to the palate; so feeding on Christ by a lively faith is delicious. 'The soul hath no sweeter food.' LACTANTIUS. No such sweet feeding as on Christ crucified. This is 'a feast of fat things, and wines on the lees well refined.' (3.) Eating denotes nourishment. Meat, as it is delicious to the palate, so it is nourishing to the body: so eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, is nutritive to the soul. The new creature is nourished at the table of the Lord to everlasting life; 'whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.'⁴ (4.) 'Take, eat,' shows the wisdom of God, who restores us by the same means by which we fell. We fell by taking and eating the forbidden fruit, and we are recovered again by taking and eating of Christ's flesh; we died by eating the tree of knowledge, and we live by eating the tree of life.

8. 'This is my body.' These words, have

¹ Lu. 22. 20. ² Jno. 13. 30. ³ Jno. 17. 23. ⁴ Jno. 6. 54

been much controverted between us and the papists. 'This is my body:' that is, by a metonymy: it is a sign and figure of my body. The papists hold transubstantiation, that the bread is, after consecration, turned into the very substance of Christ's body. We say, we receive Christ's body spiritually; they say, they receive Christ's body carnally: which is contrary to scripture. The scripture affirms, that the heavens must receive Christ's body 'until the times of the restitution of all things,'¹ Christ's body cannot be at the same time in heaven and in the host. Aquinas saith, 'it is not possible by any miracle, that a body should be locally in two places at once.' Besides, it is absurd to imagine that the bread in the sacrament should be turned into Christ's flesh, and that his body which was hung before, should be made again of bread. So that, 'this is my body,' is, as if Christ had said, 'this is a sign and representation of my body.'

9. 'He took the cup.' The cup is put, by a metonymy of the subject for the adjunct, for the wine in the cup. It signifies the blood of Christ shed for our sins. The taking of the cup denotes the redundancy of merit in Christ, and the fulness of our redemption by him. He not only took the bread, but the cup.

10. 'And when he had given thanks.' Christ gave thanks that God had given these elements of bread and wine to be signs and seals of man's redemption by Christ. Christ's giving of thanks, shows his philanthropy, or love to mankind, who did so rejoice and bless God, that lost man was now in a way of recovery, and that he should be raised higher in Christ than ever he was in innocency.

11. He gave the cup to them. Why then dare any withhold the cup? This is to pollute and curtail the ordinance, and alter it from its primitive institution. Christ and his apostles administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the cup.² And the cup was received in the ancient church for the space of 1400 years, as is confessed by two popish councils. Christ saith expressly, 'drink ye all of this.' He doth not say, eat ye all of this; but 'drink ye all;' as foreseeing the sacrilegious impiety of the church of Rome in keeping back the cup from the people. The popish council of Constance speaks plainly but impudently, 'that although Christ instituted and administered the sacrament in both kinds, the bread and the

wine; yet the authority of the holy canons, and the custom of the mother church, think good to deny the cup to the laity.' Thus, as the popish priests make Christ but half a Saviour, so they administer to the people but half a sacrament. The sacrament is Christ's last will and testament: in the text, 'this is my blood of the New Testament.' Now, to alter or take away anything from a man's will and testament, is a great impiety: What is it then to alter and mangle Christ's last will and testament? Sure it is an high affront to Christ.

Q. 3. *What are the ends of the Lord's supper?*

1. It is an ordinance appointed to confirm our faith; 'except ye see signs ye will not believe.'³ Christ sets the elements before us, that by these signs our faith may be strengthened. As faith cometh by hearing, so it is confirmed by seeing Christ crucified. The sacrament is not only a sign to represent Christ, but a seal to confirm our interest in him.

Q. *But it is the Spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament.*

This is not good logic. The Spirit confirms faith, therefore not the sacrament, is, as if one should say, God feeds our bodies, therefore bread doth not feed us; whereas God feeds us by bread; so the Spirit confirms our faith by the use of the sacrament.

2. End of the sacrament is to keep up the memory of Christ's death; 'this do ye in remembrance of me.'⁴ If a friend give us a ring at his death, we wear it to keep up the memory of our friend; much more then ought we to keep up the memorial of Christ's death in the sacrament; Christ's death lays a foundation for all the magnificent blessings which we receive from Christ. The covenant of grace was agreed on in heaven, but sealed upon the cross. Christ hath sealed all the articles of peace in his blood. Remission of sin flows from Christ's death, 'this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.'⁵ Consecration, or making us holy, is the fruit of Christ's death; 'how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience?'⁶ Christ's intercession is made available to us by virtue of his death; Christ could not have been admitted an advocate, if he had not been first a sacrifice. Our entering into heaven is the fruit of Christ's blood.⁷ Christ could not have prepared mansions for us, if he had not first

¹ Ac. 3. 21.

² 1 Co. 11. 24, 25

³ Jno. 4. 48. ⁴ 1 Co. 11. 25. ⁵ Mat. 26. 28.

⁶ He. 9. 14

⁷ He. 10. 19.

purchased them by his death: so that we have a great deal of cause to commemorate Christ's death in the sacrament.

Q. In what manner are we to remember the Lord's death in the sacrament?

It is not only a historical remembrance of Christ's death and passion; thus Judas remembers Christ's death, and how he betrayed him, and Pilate remembers Christ's death, and how he crucified him; but our remembering Christ's death in the sacrament, must be. (1.) A mournful remembrance. We must not be able to look on Christ with dry eyes; 'they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn over him.'¹ O Christian, when thou lookest on Christ in the sacrament, remember how oft thou hast crucified him! The Jews did it but once, thou often. Every oath is a nail with which thou piercest his hands; every unjust sinful action, is a spear with which thou woundest his heart. O remember Christ with sorrow, to think thou shouldst make his wounds bleed afresh! (2.) It must be a joyful remembrance; 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day.'² When a Christian sees a sacrament-day ap-

proach, he should rejoice. This ordinance of the supper is an earnest of heaven; it is the glass in which we see him whom our souls love; it is the chariot by which we are carried up to Christ. When Jacob saw the waggons and the chariots which were to carry him to his son Joseph, his spirit revived.³ God hath appointed the sacrament, on purpose to cheer and revive a sad heart. When we look on our sins, we have cause to mourn; but when we see Christ's blood shed for our sins, this may make us rejoice. In the sacrament our wants are supplied, our strength is renewed, here we meet with Christ, and doth not this call for joy? A woman that hath been long debarred from the society of her husband, how glad is she of his presence! At the sacrament the believing spouse meets with Christ; he saith to her, 'all I have is thine; my love is thine, to pity thee; my mercy is thine, to save thee.' How can we think in the sacrament on Christ's blood shed, and not rejoice? 'Christ's blood is the key which opens heaven,' else we had been all shut out.

MARK 14. 22, 23, 24. *Jesus took bread, &c.*

3. END of the sacrament is, to work in us an endeared love to Christ. When Christ bleeds over us, well may we say, behold how he loved us! Who can see Christ die, and not be 'sick of love?' That is an heart of stone whom Christ's love will not melt.

4. End of the sacrament, the mortifying of corruption. To see Christ crucified for us, is a means to crucify sin in us. Christ's death, like the water of jealousy, makes the 'thigh of of sin to rot.'⁴ How can a wife endure to see the spear which killed her husband? How can we endure those sins which made Christ veil his glory, and lose his blood? When the people of Rome saw Caesar's bloody robe, they were incensed against them that slew him: sin hath rent the white robe of Christ's flesh, and dyed it of a crimson colour: the thoughts of this will make us seek to be avenged on our sins.

5. End, the augmentation and increase of all the graces, hope, zeal, patience. The word preached begets grace, the Lord's supper nourisheth it; the body by feeding increaseth strength, so doth the soul by feeding on Christ

sacramentally. 'When my spiritual strength begins to fail, I know a remedy,' saith Bernard, 'I will go to the table of the Lord; there will I drink and recover my decayed strength.' There is difference between dead stones and living plants. The wicked, who are stones, receive no spiritual increase; but the godly, who are plants of righteousness, being watered with Christ's blood, grow more fruitful in grace.

Q. 4. Why are we to receive this holy supper?

1. Because it is a duty incumbent, 'take, eat.' And observe, it is a command of love. If Christ had commanded us some great matter, would not we have done it? 'If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?'⁵ If Christ had enjoined us to have given him thousands of rams, or to have parted with the fruit of our bodies, would we not have done it? Much more when he only saith, 'take,' and 'eat.' Let my broken body feed you, let my blood poured out, save you, 'take,' and 'eat.' This is a command of love, and shall we not readily obey? 2. We are to celebrate the Lord's

¹ Ze 12. 10.

² Jno. 8. 56.

³ Nu. 5. 27.

⁴ Ge. 45. 27.

⁵ 2 Ki. 5. 13.

supper, because it is a provoking of Christ to stay away.¹ Wisdom hath 'furnished her table.' So Christ hath furnished his table, set bread and wine, representing his body and blood, before his guests, and when they wilfully turn their backs upon the ordinance, Christ looks upon it as a slighting of his love, and that makes the fury rise up in his face; 'for I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.'² I will shut them out of my kingdom, I will provide them a black banquet, where weeping shall be the first course, and gnashing of teeth the second.

Q. 5. *Whether the Lord's supper be oft to be administered?*

Yes: 'as oft as ye eat of this bread.'³ The ordinance is not to be celebrated once in a year, or once in our lives, but often. A Christian's own necessities may make him come often hither. His corruptions are strong, therefore he had need come often hither for an antidote to expel the poison of sin; and his graces are weak. Grace is like a lamp,⁴ if it be not often fed with oil, it is apt to go out. How therefore do they sin against God, who come but very seldom to this ordinance? Can they thrive, who for a long time forbear their food? And others there are who do wholly forbear: this is a great contempt offered to Christ's ordinance. Men do as it were tacitly say, let Christ keep his feast to himself. What a cross-grained piece is man? He will eat when he should not, and he will not eat when he should. When God said, 'eat not of this forbidden fruit,'—then he will be sure to eat; when God saith, 'eat of this bread, and drink of this cup,'—then he refuseth to eat.

Q. 6. *Are all to come promiscuously to this holy ordinance?*

No: that were to make the Lord's table an ordinary. Christ forbids to 'cast pearls before swine.'⁵ The sacramental bread is children's bread, and it is not to be cast to the profane. As, at the giving of the law, God set bounds about the mount that none might touch it:⁶ so God's table should be guarded, that the profane should not come near. In the primitive times, after sermon was done, and they were going to celebrate the Lord's supper, an officer stood up and cried, 'holy things for holy men;' and then several of the congregation were to depart. 'I would have my hand ent

off,' saith Chrysostom, 'rather than I would give Christ's body and blood to the profane.' The wicked do not eat Christ's flesh but tear it; they do not drink his blood but spill it. These holy mysteries in the sacraments are mysteries that the soul is to tremble at. Sinners defile the holy things of God, they poison the sacramental cup. We read that the wicked are to be set at Christ's feet,⁷ not at his table.

Q. 7. *How may we receive the supper of the Lord worthily, that so it may become effectual to us?*

1st. That we may receive it worthily, and it may become efficacious. We must solemnly prepare ourselves before we come; we must not rush upon the ordinance rudely and irreverently, but come in due order. There was a great deal of preparation to the passover,⁸ and the sacrament comes in the room of it.

Q. *Wherein doth this solemn preparing for the ordinance consist?*

In examining ourselves: in dressing our souls before we come, which is by washing in the water of repentance: by exciting the habit of grace into exercise: in begging a blessing upon the ordinance.

I. Solemn preparing for the sacrament consists in self-examining; 'let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.'⁹ It is not only a counsel, but a charge: 'let him examine himself.' As if a king should say, 'let it be enacted.' Jesus Christ having by his institution consecrated these elements in the supper to an high mystery, they represent his 'body and blood:' therefore there must be preparation; and if preparation, then there must be first examining ourselves, without which there can be no preparation. Let us be serious in thus examining ourselves, our salvation depends upon it. We are curious in examining other things; we will not take gold, till we examine it by the touchstone; we will not take land, but we will examine the title; and shall not we be as exact and curious in examining the state of our souls?

Q. 1. *What is required of this self-examining?*

There must be a solemn retiring of the soul. We must set ourselves apart, and retire for some time from all secular employment, that we may be more serious in this work. There is no casting up of accounts in a crowd; nor can we examine ourselves when we are in a crowd of

¹ Pr. 9. 2.

² Lu. 14. 24.

³ 1 Co. 11. 26.

⁴ Re. 3. 2.

⁵ Mat. 7. 6.

⁶ Ex. 19. 12.

⁷ Ps. 110.

⁸ 2 Ch. 30. 18, 19.

⁹ 1 Co. 11. 28.

worldly business. We read, a man that was in a journey might not come to the passover,¹ because his mind was full of secular cares, and his thoughts were taken up about his journey. When we are upon self-examining work, we had not need to be in a hurry, or have any distracting thoughts, but to retire and lock ourselves up in our closet, that we may be more intent in the work.

Q. 2. *What is self-examination?*

It is a setting up a court of conscience and keeping a register there, that by a strict scrutiny a man may see how matters stand between God and his soul. Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition, an heart-anatomy, whereby a man takes his heart, as a watch, all in pieces, and sees what is defective there. It is a dialogue with one's self, 'I commune with my own heart.'² David called himself to account, and put interrogatories to his own heart. Self-examining is a critical descant or search; as the woman in the parable did light a candle, and search for her lost groat,³ so conscience is the candle of the Lord; search with this candle what thou canst find wrought by the Spirit in thee.

Q. 3. *What is the rule by which we must examine ourselves?*

The rule or measure we must examine ourselves by, is the holy scripture. We must not make fancy, or the good opinion which others have of us, the rule by which we judge of ourselves. But as the goldsmith brings his gold to the touchstone, so must we bring our hearts to a scripture touchstone, 'to the law, and to the testimony.'⁴ What saith the word? Are we divorced from sin? Are we renewed by the Spirit? Let the word decide whether we are fit communicants or not. We judge of colours by the sun, so we must judge of the state of our souls by the sunlight of scripture.

Q. 4. *What are the cogent reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's supper?*

1. It is a duty imposed; 'let him examine himself.' The passover was not to be eaten raw.⁵ To come to such an ordinance slightly, without examination, is to come in an undue manner, and is like eating the passover raw.

2. We must examine ourselves before we come, because it is not only a duty imposed, but opposed. There is nothing the heart naturally is more averse from that self-examination; we may know that duty is good

which the heart opposeth. But why doth the heart so oppose it? Because it doth cross the tide of corrupt nature; it is contrary to flesh and blood. The heart is guilty; and doth a guilty person love to be examined? The heart opposeth it: therefore is the rather set upon it; that duty is good which the heart opposeth.

3. Because self-examining is so needful a work; as appears, (1.) Without self-examination, a man can never tell how it is with him, whether he hath grace or not; and this must needs be very uncomfortable. He knows not if he should die presently, what will become of him, or to what coast he shall sail, whether to hell or heaven; as Socrates said, 'I am about to die, and the gods know whether I shall be happy or miserable. How needful therefore is self-examination, that a man by search may come to know the true state of his soul, and may guess how it will go with him to eternity!

(2.) Self-examination is needful in respect of the excellency of the sacrament. Let him eat 'of that bread,'⁶ that excellent bread, that consecrated bread, that bread which is not only the bread of the Lord, but the bread the Lord. Let him drink 'of that cup,' that precious cup which is perfumed and spiced with Christ's love, that cup which holds the blood of God sacramentally. Cleopatra put a jewel in a cup which contained the price of a kingdom: this sacred cup we are to drink of, enriched with the blood of God, is above the price of a kingdom; it is more worth than heaven. Therefore coming to such a royal feast, having whole Christ, his divine and human nature to feed on, how should we examine ourselves beforehand, that we may be fit guests for such a magnificent banquet! (3.) Self-examining is needful, because God will examine us. That was a sad question, 'friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?'⁷ Men are loath to ask themselves the question, 'O my soul! art thou a fit guest for the Lord's table? are there not some sins thou hast to bewail? are there not some evidences for heaven that thou hast to get?' Now, when persons will not ask themselves the question, then God will bring such a question as this to them, 'how came you in hither to my table not prepared; how came ye in hither with an unbelieving or profane heart?' It shall be such a question as will cause an heart-trembling. God will ex-

¹ Nu. 9. 13.

² Ps. 77. 6.

³ Lu. 15. 8.

⁴ Is. 8. 20.

⁵ Ex. 12. 19.

⁶ 1 Co. 11. 28.

⁷ Mat. 22. 12.

amine a man, as the chief captain did Paul, with scourging.¹ It is true, the best saint, if God should weigh him in the balance, would be found defective; but, when a Christian hath made an impartial search, and hath laboured to deal uprightly between God and his own soul, Christ's merits will cast in some grains of allowance into the scales. (4.) Self-examining is needful, because of that secret corruption in the heart, which will not be found out without searching. There are in the heart hidden pollutions. It is with a Christian, as with Joseph's brethren; when the steward accused them of having the cup, they were ready to swear they had not the cup in their sack, but upon search it was found there; little doth a Christian think what pride, atheism, uncleanness is in his heart till he searcheth. Therefore, if there be such hidden wickedness, like a spring that runs under ground, we had need examine ourselves, that finding out our secret sin, we may be humbled and repent. Hidden sins, if not searched out, defile the soul. If corn lie long in the chaff, the chaff defiles the corn; hidden sins lain long in, defile our duties. Needful therefore it is, before we come to the holy supper, to search out these hidden sins, as Israel searched for leaven before they came to the passover. (5.) Self-examining is needful, because without it we may easily have a cheat put upon us; 'the heart is deceitful above all things.'² Many a man's heart will tell him, he is fit for the Lord's table. As when Christ asked the sons of Zebedee, 'Are ye able to drink of the cup I shall drink of?'³ Can ye drink such a bloody cup of suffering! 'they say unto him, we are able.' So the heart will suggest to a man, he is fit to drink of the sacramental cup, he hath on the wedding-garment. 'The heart is a grand impostor.' It is like a cheating tradesman, which will put one off with bad wares; the heart will put a man off with seeming grace, instead of saving. A tear or two shed is repentance; a few lazy

desires is faith; blue and red flowers that grow among the corn, look like good flowers, but they are but beautiful weeds. The foolish virgins' lamps looked as if they had had oil in them, but they had none. Therefore to prevent a cheat, that we may not take false grace instead of true, we had need make a thorough disquisition and search of our hearts before we come to the Lord's table. (6.) Self-examining is needful, because of those false fears the godly are apt to nourish in their hearts, which make them go sad to the sacrament. As they who have no grace, for want of examining, presume; so they who have grace, for want of examining, are ready to despair.* Many of God's children look upon themselves through the black spectacles of fear; they fear Christ is not formed in them, they fear they have no right to the promise; and these fears in the heart cause tears in the eye; whereas, would they but search and examine, they might find they had grace. Are not their hearts humbled for sin? and what is this but the bruised reed? Do they not weep after the Lord? and what are these tears but seeds of faith? Do they not thirst after Christ in an ordinance? What is this but the new creature crying for the breast? Here are, you see, seeds of grace; and, would Christians examine their hearts, they might see there is something of God in them, and so their false fears would be prevented, and they might approach with comfort to these holy mysteries in the eucharist. (7.) Self-examining is needful, in respect of the danger in coming unworthily without examination; 'he shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.'⁴ 'God reckons with him as with a crucifier of the Lord Jesus.' He doth not drink Christ's blood, but sheds it; and so brings that curse upon him, as the Jews, 'his blood be upon us and our children.' Than the virtue of Christ's blood, nothing more comfortable: than the guilt of it, nothing more formidable.

MARK. 14. 22. *Jesus took bread, &c.*

4. WE must examine ourselves before the sacrament, in respect of the difficulty of self-examining work. Difficulty raiseth a noble spirit. Self-examining is difficult, 1st. Because it is an inward work, it lies most with the

heart. External acts of devotion are easy; to lift up the eye, to bow the knee, to read over a

⁴ 1 Co. 11. 27.

* True faith, even in the weakest measure, will look on sin as an enemy, though perhaps it dare not lay claim to Christ as a friend. True faith is said to 'purify the heart;' it is a living principle in the soul, which is always opposing the motions of indwelling corruption. Although indeed, sometimes, through

¹ Ac. 22. 24.

² Je. 17. 9.

³ Mat. 20. 22.

few prayers, this is as easy as for the papists to tell over a few beads; but to examine a man's self, to take the heart, as a watch, all in pieces, to make a scriptural trial of our fitness for the Lord's supper, this is not easy. Reflexive acts are hardest; the eye cannot see itself but by a glass; we must have the glass of the word and conscience to see our own hearts; it is easy to spy the faults of others, but it is hard to find out our own. 2d. Self-examination is difficult, in regard of self-love. As ignorance blinds, so self-love flatters; what Solomon saith of love, 'love covereth all sins,'¹ is most true of self-love: a man looking upon himself in the glass of self-love, that flattering glass, his virtues appear greater than they are, and his sins lesser. Self-love makes a man rather excuse himself than examine himself; self-love makes one think the best of himself; and he who hath a good opinion of himself doth not suspect himself; and not suspecting himself, he is not forward to examine himself. The work therefore of self-examination being so difficult, it requires the more impartiality and industry; difficulty should be a spur to diligence.

5. We must examine ourselves before we come, because of the beneficialness of self-examination. The benefit is great, which way soever things turn; if, upon examination, we find that we have no grace in truth, then the mistake is discovered, and the danger prevented; if we find that we have grace, we may take the comfort of it. He who, upon search, finds that he hath the least degree of grace, he is like one that hath found his box of evidences, he is an happy man, he is a fit guest at the Lord's table, he is heir to all the promises, he is as sure to go to heaven as if he were in heaven already. These are the reasons why we must examine ourselves before we approach to the Lord's table.

Q. 5. *What must we examine?*

1. Our sins. 2. Our graces.

¹ Pr. 10. 12

the prevalence of sin, it cannot be discerned, more than the living spring at the bottom of the well when the waters are muddied; yet, like the living spring, it is always working out the mud and filth, till the waters be perfectly clear. Perhaps the soul is so far from perceiving any real grace, any actual interest in Christ, that it can see nothing but atheism, enmity, unbelief, ignorance, pride, and such vermin of hell crawling in every corner; and yet at the same time the living principle of faith at the bottom of the heart will be working and wrestling against these, sometimes by groans, sometimes by looks to heaven for relief, sometimes by cries to heaven, sometimes by breathing desires after more holiness. By such things as these, the truth and reality of faith, may be discovered, even in its weakest measure and degree.—*Ebenr. Erskine, Beauties*, v. 78

1. Our sins. Search if any dead fly might spoil this sweet ointment. When we come to the sacrament, we should do as the Jews did before the passover; they searched for leaven, and having found it did burn it. 1. Let us search for the leaven of pride; this sours our holy things; we are born with a spiritual tympany. Will an humble Christ be received into a proud heart? Pride keeps Christ out. Pride swells the heart, and Christ cannot come into the heart, if it be full already. To a proud man Christ's blood hath no virtue; it is like *dioscordium* put into a dead man's mouth, which loseth its virtue. Let us search for this leaven of pride, and cast it away. 2. Let us search for the leaven of avarice. The Lord's supper is a spiritual mystery: it represents Christ's body and blood; what should an earthly heart do here? The earth puts out the fire; earthliness quencheth the fire of holy love. The earth is 'the weightiest of the elements;' it cannot ascend. A soul belimed, with earth cannot ascend to heavenly cogitations; 'covetousness which is idolatry.'² Will Christ come into that heart where there is an idol? Search for this leaven before you come to this ordinance. How can an earthly heart converse with that God which is a spirit? Can a clod of earth kiss the sun? 3. Search for the leaven of hypocrisy; 'beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.'³ Aquinas describes it 'as an imitation of virtue;' hypocrisy is a counterfeit of virtue. The hypocrite is a living pageant, he only makes a show of religion; he gives God his knee, but no heart; and God gives him bread and wine in the sacrament, but no Christ. Oh let us search for this leaven of hypocrisy and burn it!

2. We must examine our graces. I shall instance only in one, our knowledge; whether we have knowledge; and whether it be rightly qualified. 1st. We are to examine whether we have knowledge, else we cannot give God a reasonable service.⁴ Knowledge is a necessary requisite in a communicant; without knowledge there can be no fitness for the sacrament; a person cannot be fit to come to the Lord's table who hath no goodness, but without knowledge the mind is not good.⁵ Some say they have good hearts though they want knowledge; as if one should say, his eye is good, but it wants sight. Under the law, when the plague of leprosy was in a man's head, the priest was to

² Co. 3. 5. ³ Lu. 12. 1. ⁴ Ro. 13. 1. ⁵ Pr. 19. 2.

pronounce him unclean. The ignorant person hath the plague in his head, he is unclean; ignorance is the womb of lust.¹ Therefore it is requisite, before we come, to examine ourselves what knowledge we have in the main fundamentals of religion. Let it not be said of us, that 'to this day the veil is upon their hearts.'² But sure, in this intelligent age, we cannot but have some insight into the mysteries of the gospel. I rather fear, we are like Rachel, who was fair and well sighted, but barren; therefore,

2d. Let us examine whether our knowledge be rightly qualified. Is it influential? doth our knowledge warm our heart? Saving knowledge doth not only direct, but quicken; it is the light of life;³ is our knowledge practical? We hear much; do we love the truths we know? That is the right knowledge which doth not only adorn the mind, but reform the life.

II. This solemn preparing for the sacrament, as it consists in examining ourselves, so in dressing our souls before we come. And this soul-dress is in two things: (1.) Washing in the laver of repenting tears; to come to this ordinance with the guilt of any sin unrepented of, makes the way for the further hardening of our heart, and giving Satan fuller possession of us; 'they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him.'⁴ The cloud of sorrow must drop into tears. We must grieve as for the pollution, so for the unkindness in every sin. To sin against Christ's love who died for us. When Peter thought of Christ's love, who called him out of his unregeneracy, made him an apostle, and carried him up to the mount of transfiguration, where he saw the glory of heaven in a vision: and then, to think of his denying Christ, it broke his heart, 'he went out and wept bitterly.'⁵ To think, before we come to a sacrament, of the sins against the bowels-mercies of God the Father,—the bleeding wounds of God the Son,—the blessed inspirations of God the Holy Ghost,—it is enough to broach our eyes with tears, and put us into an holy agony of grief and compunction. And we must be so distressed for sin, as to be divorced from sin. The serpent before he drinks, casts up his poison; in this, we must be wise as serpents; before we drink of the sacramental cup, we must cast up the poison of sin by repentance. 'He doth truly bewail the sins he hath committed who doth not commit the sins he

hath bewailed.' AUG. And this is the dressing our souls before we come, washing in the waters of true repentance. (2.) The soul-dress is the exciting and stirring up the habit of grace into a lively exercise, 'I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee;⁶ the gifts and graces of the Spirit. The Greek word *to stir up* signifies *to blow up* grace into a flame. Grace is oft like fire in the embers, which needs blowing up; it is possible that even a good man may not come so well-disposed to this ordinance, because he hath not before taken pains with his heart to come in due order, he hath not stirred up grace into its vigorous exercise; and so, though he doth not eat and drink damnation, yet he doth not receive consolation in the sacrament. Thus you see what this dressing of our souls is, before we come.

III. This solemn preparing for the sacrament is in begging a blessing upon the ordinance. The sacrament is not like physic, which hath an inherent operative virtue; no; but the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the co-operation of the Spirit, and a word of blessing. In the institution, Christ blessed the elements: 'Jesus took bread and blessed it,' in the text. The sacrament will no farther do us good, than as it is blessed to us. We ought then, before we come, to pray for a blessing upon the ordinance, that the sacrament may be not only a sign to represent, but a seal to conform, and an instrument to convey Christ and all his benefits to us. We are to pray that this great ordinance may be poison to our sins, and food to our graces: that, as it was with Jonathan, when he had tasted the honeycomb, his 'eyes were enlightened,' so that by our receiving this holy eucharist, our eyes may be so enlightened, as to 'discern the Lord's body.' Thus should we implore a blessing upon the ordinance, before we come. The sacrament is like a tree hung full of fruit; but none of this fruit will fall, unless shaken by the hand of prayer.

2d. That the sacrament may be effectual to us; as there must be a due preparing for it, as a right partaking of it; which right participation of the sacrament is in four things. I. When we draw nigh to God's table in an humble sense of our unworthiness. We do not deserve one crumb of the bread of life; we are poor indigent creatures, who have lost our glory, and are like a vessel that is shipwrecked; we smite

¹ 1 Pe. 1. 14. ² 2 Co. 3. 15. ³ Jas. 1. 22.

⁴ Ze. 12. 10.

⁵ Mat. 26. 75.

⁶ 2 Ti. 1. 6.

⁷ 1 Sa. 14. 27.

on our breasts, as the publican, God be merciful to us sinners. This is a right partaking of the ordinance; it is a part of our worthiness to see our unworthiness. 2. We rightly partake of the sacrament, when at the Lord's table we are filled with anhelations of soul and inflamed desires after Christ, and nothing can quench our thirst but his blood; 'blessed are they that thirst.'¹ They are blessed not only when they are filled, but while they are thirsting. 3. A right participation of the supper is, when we receive in faith. Without faith we get no good; what is said of the word preached, it 'profiteth not,' 'not being mixed with faith:'² is as true of the sacrament. Christ turned stones into bread; unbelief turns the bread into stones, that it doth not nourish. Then we partake aright when we come in faith. Faith hath a twofold act, an adhering, and an applying: by the first act we go over to Christ, by the second act we bring Christ over to us.³ This is the great grace we must set a-work. Philo calls it 'faith that hath eyes;' faith is the eagle-eye that discerns the Lord's body; faith causeth a virtual contact, it toucheth Christ. Christ said to Mary, 'touch me not,'⁴ &c. She was not to touch him with the hands of her body; but he saith to us, 'touch me,' touch me with the hand of your faith. Faith makes Christ present to the soul; the believer hath a real presence in the sacrament. The body of the sun is in the firmament, but the light of the sun is in the eye; Christ's essence is in heaven, but he is in a believer's heart by his light and influence; 'that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith.'⁵ Faith is the palate which tastes Christ.⁶ Faith makes a concoction; it causeth the bread of life to nourish, 'believe and eat,' *Aug.* Faith causeth a coalition, it makes us one with Christ.⁷ Other graces make us like Christ, faith makes us members of Christ. 4. Then we partake aright of the sacrament, when we receive in love. (I.) Love to Christ. Who can see Christ pierced with a crown of thorns,—sweating in his agony,—bleeding on the cross,—but his heart must needs be endeared in love to him? 'How can we but love him who hath given his life a ransom for us?' Love is the spiced wine and juice of the pomegranate which we must give Christ.⁸ Our love to this superior and blessed Jesus must exceed our love to other things; as the oil runs above the water. Though we cannot with Mary bring

our costly ointment to anoint Christ's body, yet we do more than this, when we bring him our love, which is sweeter to him than all ointments and perfumes. (2.) Love to the saints. This is a love-feast: though we must eat this supper with the bitter herbs of repentance, yet not with the bitter herbs of malice. Were it not sad, if all the meat one eats should turn to bad humours? He who comes in malice to the Lord's table, all he eats is to his hurt: 'he eats and drinks damnation to himself.'⁹ Come in love. It is with love as it is with fire; you keep fire all the day upon the hearth, but upon special occasions you draw out the fire larger; so, though we must have love to all, yet to the saints, who are our fellow-members, here we must draw out the fire of our love larger; and we must show the largeness of our affections to them, by prizing their persons, by choosing their company, by doing all offices of love to them, counselling them in their doubts, comforting them in their fears, supplying them in their wants. Thus one Christian may be an Ebenezer to another, and as an angel of God to him; the sacrament cannot be effectual to him who doth not receive in love. If a man drinks poison, and then takes a cordial, the cordial will do him little good; he who hath the poison of malice in his soul, the cordial of Christ's blood will do him no good; come therefore in love and charity. And thus we see how we may receive the supper of the Lord, that it may be effectual to our salvation.*

USE I. From the whole doctrine of the sacrament learn, how precious should a sacrament be to us. It is a sealed deed to make over the blessings of the new covenant to us, justification, sanctification, glory. A small piece of wax put to a parchment is made the instrument to confirm a rich conveyance or lordship to another: so these elements in the sacrament of bread and wine, though in them-

⁹ 1 Co. 11. 29.

* Communicants are obliged to revise their communicating, to try whether they have obtained that blessed communion. It was our blessed Redeemer's way, after the first celebration of this sacrament, to set the communicants to search themselves, *John* 16. 31. 'Do ye now believe?' This was demanded of them when they had but lately risen from the Lord's table: and therefore it is a question that communicants ought to put to themselves, and have a ready answer, as these communicants had.—Our communicating should be carefully reviewed, lest we have eaten and drunk unworthily, and be found despisers of the warning, that such are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.—If thou shalt find, that thou didst obtain real spiritual communion, this will make thy thanksgiving sincere, &c.—*Cruickheal's Advice*, p. 188.

¹ Mat. 5. 6. ² He. 4. 2. ³ Ga. 2. 20. ⁴ Jno. 20. 17.
⁵ Ep. 3. 17. ⁶ 1 Pe. 2. 3. ⁷ Ep. 1. 23. ⁸ Ca. 8. 2.

selves of no great value, yet being consecrated to be seals to confirm the covenant of grace to us, so they are of more value than all the riches of the Indies.

USE 2. The sacrament being such an holy mystery, let us come to this holy mystery with holy hearts. There is no receiving a crucified Christ, but into a consecrated heart; Christ in his conception, lay in a pure virgin's womb, and, at his death, his body was wrapped in clean linen, and put into a new virgin tomb, never yet defiled with rottenness. If Christ would not lie in an unclean grave, sure he will not be received into an unclean heart; 'be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.'¹ If they who did carry the vessels of the Lord, were to be holy, then they who are to be the vessels of the Lord, and are to hold Christ's body and blood, ought to be holy.

USE 3. Consolation. Christ's body and blood in the sacrament is a most sovereign elixir or comfort to a distressed soul. Christ having poured out his blood, now God's justice is fully satisfied. There is in the death of Christ enough to answer all doubts. What if sin is the poison, here is the flesh of Christ an antidote against it! What if sin be red as scarlet, is not Christ's blood of a deeper colour, and can wash away sin! If Satan strikes us with his darts of temptation, here is a precious balm comes out of Christ's wounds to heal us!⁶ What though we feed upon the bread of affliction, as long as in the sacrament we feed upon the bread of life! So that Christ, received aright sacramentally, is an universal medicine for the healing, and an universal cordial for the cheering of our distressed souls.

OF PRAYER.

III. THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION ARE APPLIED TO US BY PRAYER.

Ps. 109. 4. *But I give myself unto prayer.*

I SHALL not expatiate upon prayer at large, being to speak more fully to it in the Lord's prayer. But to the words, 'I give myself unto prayer.' It is one thing to pray, and another thing to be given to prayer; he who prays frequently, is said to be given to prayer, as he who often distributes alms, is said to be given to charity. Prayer is a glorious ordinance; it is the soul's trading with heaven; God comes down to us by his Spirit, and we go up to him by prayer.

Q. 1. *What is prayer?*

'It is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ.'

1. 'Prayer is an offering up of our desires.' Therefore it is called a making known of our requests.² In prayer we come as humble petitioners, begging to have our suit granted.

2. It is 'offering up our desires to God.' Prayer is not to be made to any but God. The papists pray to saints and angels, but they know not our grievances; 'Abraham be ignorant of us.'³ And all angel-worship is forbidden.⁴ We must not pray to any but whom we may believe in: 'how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?'⁵ But we

cannot believe in an angel, therefore we must not pray to him.

Q. *Why must prayer be made only to God?*

1. Because he only hears prayer; 'O thou that hearest prayer.'⁷ Hereby God is known to be the true God, in that he hears prayer; 'hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God!'⁸

2. Because God only can help. We may look to second causes, and cry, as the woman did, 'help, my Lord, O king! And he said, if the Lord doth not help thee, whence shall I help thee?'⁹ If we are in outward distress, God must send from heaven and save; if we are in inward agonies, he only can pour in the oil of joy; therefore prayer is to be made to him only.

3. 'For things agreeable to his will.' When we pray for outward things, for riches or children, perhaps God sees these things are not good for us; our prayers must comport with God's will. We may pray absolutely for grace; 'for this is the will of God, our sanctification.'¹⁰ There might be no strange incense offered.¹¹ When we pray for things which are not agreeable to God's will, it is offering strange incense.

4. 'In the name of Christ.' To pray in the name of Christ, is not only to mention Christ's

¹ Is. 52. 11.² Ph. 4. 6.³ Is. 63. 16.⁴ Co. 2. 18, 19.⁵ Ro. 10. 14.⁶ Is. 53. 5.⁷ Ps. 65. 2.⁸ 1 Ki. 18. 37.⁹ 2 Ki. 6. 26, 27.¹⁰ 1 Th. 4. 3.¹¹ Ex. 30. 9.

name in prayer, but to pray in the hope and confidence of Christ's merits; 'Samuel took a sucking lamb and offered it,'¹ &c. We must carry the lamb Christ in the arms of our faith, and so we prevail in prayer. When Uzziah would offer incense without a priest, God was angry, and struck him with leprosy.² When we do not pray in Christ's name, in the hope of his mediation, we offer up incense, without a priest; and what can we expect but to meet with rebukes, and to have God answer us by terrible things?

Q. 2. *What are the parts of prayer?*

1. There is the confessory part, which is the acknowledgment of sin. 2. The supplicatory part, when we either deprecate and pray against some evil, or request the obtaining of some good. 3. The gratulatory part, when we give thanks for mercies received, which is the most excellent part of prayer. In petition, we act like men; in giving of thanks, we act like angels.

Q. 3. *What are the several sorts of prayer?*

1. There is mental prayer in the mind.³ 2. Vocal.⁴ 3. Ejaculatory, which is a sudden and short elevation of the heart to God; 'so I prayed to the God of heaven.'⁵ 4. Conceived prayer; when we pray for those things which God puts into our heart.⁶ The Spirit helps us with sighs and groans. Both the expressions of the tongue, so far as they are right, and the impressions of the heart, are from the Spirit. 5. Prescribed prayer; our Saviour hath set us a pattern of prayer. God prescribed a set form of blessing for the priests.⁷ 6. Public prayer; when we pray in the audience of others. Prayer is more powerful, when many join and unite their forces.⁸ 7. Private prayer; when we pray by ourselves: 'enter into thy closet.'⁹

Q. 4. *What is that prayer which is most like to prevail with God?*

When prayer is rightly qualified. That is a good medicine which hath the right ingredients; that prayer is good, and is most like to prevail with God, which hath these seven ingredients in it:

1. Prayer must be mixed with faith; 'let him pray in faith.'¹⁰ Believe God hears, and will in his due time grant; believe God's love and truth; believe that he is love, therefore will not deny you; believe that he is truth, therefore will not deny himself. Faith sets

God a-work. Faith is to prayer, as the feather is to the arrow: faith feathers the arrow of prayer, and makes it fly swifter, and pierce the throne of grace. Prayer that is faithless is fruitless.*

2. A melting prayer, 'the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.'¹¹ The incense was to be beaten, to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer. 'O!' saith a Christian, 'I cannot pray with such gifts and elocution as others; as Moses said, I am not eloquent.' But canst thou weep? Doth thy heart melt in prayer? Weeping prayer prevails. Tears drop as pearls from the eye. 'Jacob wept and made supplication; and had power over the angel.'¹²

3. Prayer must be fired with zeal and fervency; 'effectual fervent prayer prevails much.'¹³ Cold prayers, like cold suitors, never speed. Prayer, without fervency, is like a sacrifice without fire. Prayer is called a pouring out of the soul,¹⁴ to signify vehemency. Formality starves prayer. Prayer is compared to incense; 'let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.'¹⁵ Hot coals were to be put to the incense, to make it odoriferous and fragrant; fervency of affection is like coals put to the incense; it makes prayer ascend as a sweet perfume. Christ prayed with strong cries.¹⁶ 'That cry pierces the clouds,' LUTHER. Fervent prayer, like a petard set against heaven's gates, makes them fly open. To cause holy fervour and ardour of soul in prayer, consider, 1. Prayer without fervency, is no prayer; it is speaking, not praying; lifeless prayer is no more prayer, than the picture of a man is a man. One may say, as Pharaoh, 'I have dreamed a dream.'¹⁷ it is a dreaming, not praying. Life and fervency baptizeth a duty, and gives it a name. 2. Consider in what need we stand of those things which we ask in prayer. We come to ask the favour of God, and if we have not his love, all we enjoy is cursed to us. We pray

¹¹ Ps. 51. 17. ¹² Ho. 12. 4. ¹³ Ja. 5. 16. ¹⁴ 1 Sa. 1. 15.
¹⁵ Ps. 141. 2. ¹⁶ He. 5. 7. ¹⁷ Ge. 41.

* Faith is necessary in prayer, because it is by it alone our union is maintained with Christ in whom we are accepted, and by it alone can we derive, from our connexion with the Saviour, holy courage and confidence in approaching the throne of grace. It is of still farther use. Being 'the substantiation of things hoped for,' it gives elevation to the heart, and enables it to breathe its desires in a way glorifying to God's fatherly love. Being 'the evidence of things not seen,' it causes the suppliant to feel himself surrounded with those things with which in prayer he should be conversant: he believes in the omnipresence of God, and thus he worships one in whose presence he is: he believes in Christ's intercession, and his own union with the advocate, and thus he worships in the most holy place, and the feelings of his heart are identified with the perfume that arises from the censer of his High-priest.—*Alting. Exerc. Sac.* p. 107.

¹ 1 Sa. 7. 9. ² 2 Ch. 26. 16. ³ 1 Sa. 1. 13. ⁴ Ps. 77. 1.
⁵ Nu. 2. 4. ⁶ Ro. 8. 26. ⁷ Nu. 6. 23. ⁸ Mat. 18. 19.
⁹ Mat. 6. 6. ¹⁰ Ja. 1. 6.

that our souls may be washed in Christ's blood ; if he wash us not we have 'no part in him.'¹ When will we be in earnest, if not when we are praying for the life of our souls? 3. It is only fervent prayer hath the promise of mercy affixed to it ; 'then shall ye find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.'² It is dead praying without a promise ; and the promise is made only to arduency. The Ediles among the Romans, had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them : God's heart is ever open to fervent prayer.

4. Prayer must be sincere ; sincerity is the silver thread which must run through the whole duties of religion. Sincerity in prayer is, when we have gracious holy ends in prayer ; our prayer is not so much for temporal mercies as spiritual. We send out our prayer, as a merchant sends out his ship, that we may have large returns of spiritual blessings ; our aim in prayer is that our heart may be more holy, that we may have more communion with God ; our design is, that by prayer we may increase the stock of grace. Prayer which wants a good aim, wants a good issue.

5. Prayer that will prevail with God, must have a fixation of mind, 'O God, my heart is fixed !'³ Since the fall, the mind is like quicksilver, which will not fix ; it hath 'the principle of motion, but not of rest ;' the thoughts will be roving and dancing up and down in prayer, just as if a man that is travelling to such a place should run out of the road, and wander he knows not whither. In prayer, we are travelling to the throne of grace, but how often do we by vain cogitations, turn out of the road ! Which is rather wandering than praying.

Q. But how shall we cure these vain impertinent thoughts, which do so distract us in prayer, and we may fear, hinder their acceptance ?

1. Be very apprehensive in prayer of the infiniteness of God's majesty and purity. God's eye is upon us in prayer, and we may say, as David, 'thou tellest my wanderings.'⁴ The thoughts of this would make us mind the duty we are about. If a man were to deliver a petition to an earthly prince, would he at that time be playing with a feather? Set yourselves, when you pray, as in God's presence ; could you but look through the key-hole of heaven, and see how devout and intent the angels are in their worshipping of God, sure you would be

ready to blush at your vain thoughts and vile impertinences in prayer. 2. If you would keep your mind fixed in prayer, keep your eye fixed ; 'unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens !'⁵ Much vanity comes in at the eye. When the eye wanders in prayer, the heart wanders. To think to keep the heart fixed in prayer, and yet let the eye gaze, is as if one should think to keep his house safe, yet let the windows be open. 3. If you would have your thoughts fixed in prayer, get more love to God. Love is a great fixer of the thoughts. He who is in love, cannot keep his thoughts off the object. He who loves the world, his thoughts run undisturbedly upon the world. Did we love God more, our minds would be more intent upon him in prayer. Were there more delight in duty, there would be less distraction. 4. Implore the help of God's Spirit to fix your minds, and make them intent and serious in prayer. The ship without a pilot rather floats than sails ; that our thoughts do not float up and down in prayer, we need the blessed Spirit to be our pilot to steer us ; only God's Spirit can bound the thoughts. A shaking hand may as well write a line steadily, as we can keep our hearts fixed in prayer without the Spirit of God. 5. Make holy thoughts familiar to you in your ordinary course of life. David was oft musing on God ; 'when I awake, I am still with thee.'⁶ He who gives himself liberty to have vain thoughts out of prayer, will scarce have other thoughts in prayer. 6. If you would keep your mind fixed on God, watch your hearts ; not only watch them after prayer, but in prayer. The heart will be apt to give you the slip, and have a thousand vagaries in prayer. We read of angels ascending and descending on Jacob's ladder : so in prayer you shall find your hearts ascending to heaven, and in a moment descending upon earthly objects. O Christians, watch your hearts in prayer ! What a shame is it to think, that when we are speaking to God in prayer, our hearts should be in the fields, or in our counting-house, or one way or other, running upon the devil's errand ! 7. Labour for more degrees of grace. The more ballast the ship hath, the better it sails : so the more the heart is ballasted with grace, the steadier it will sail to heaven in prayer.

6. Prayer that is likely to prevail with God must be argumentative : God loves to have us

¹ *Jno.* 13. 8. ² *Je.* 29. 13. ³ *Ps.* 57. 7. ⁴ *Ps.* 56. 8.

⁵ *Ps.* 123. 1.

⁶ *Ps.* 139. 18.

plead with him, and use arguments in prayer. See how many arguments Jacob used in prayer; 'deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother.'¹ The arguments he used, are, from God's command, 'the Lord which saidst to me, return to thy country;'² as if he had said, I did not take this journey of my own head, but by thy direction; therefore thou canst not but in honour protect me. And he useth another argument, 'thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.'³ Lord, wilt thou go back from thy own promise? Thus he was argumentative in prayer; and he got not only a new blessing but a new name; 'thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God, and hast prevailed.'⁴ God loves to be overcome with strength of argument. Thus, when we come to God in prayer for grace, be argumentative; Lord, thou callest thyself the God of all grace; and whither should we go with our vessel, but to the fountain? Lord, thy grace may be imparted, yet not impaired: hath not Christ purchased grace for poor indigent creatures? Every drachm of grace cost a drop of blood. Shall Christ die to purchase grace for us, and shall not we have the fruit of his purchase? Lord, it is thy delight to milk out the breast of mercy and grace, and wilt thou abridge thyself of thy own delight? Thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to implant grace; can truth lie? can faithfulness deceive? God loves thus to be overcome with arguments in prayer.

7. Prayer that would prevail with God, must be joined with reformation; 'if thou stretch out thy hands towards him; if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away.'⁵ Sin, lived in, makes the heart hard, and God's ear deaf. It is foolish to pray against sin, and then sin against prayer; sin fly-blows our prayers; 'if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.'⁶ The loadstone loseth its virtue when bespread with garlic; so doth prayer when polluted with sin. The incense of prayer must be offered upon the altar of a holy heart.

Thus you see what is that prayer which is most likely to prevail with God.

USE 1. It reproves, 1. Such as pray not at all: it is made the note of a reprobate, he calls not upon God.⁷ Doth he think to have an alms who never asks it? do they think to have mercy from God who never seek it? Then God should befriend them more than he did

his own Son.⁸ Christ offered up prayers with strong cries. None of God's children are born dumb.⁹ 2. It reproves such as have left off prayer, a sign they never felt the fruit and comfort of it. He that leaves off prayer, gives a sign he leaves off to fear God; 'thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.'¹⁰ A man that hath left off prayer is fit for any wickedness. When Saul had given over inquiring after God, then he went to the witch of Endor.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Be persons given to prayer. 'I give myself,' saith David, 'to prayer.' Pray for pardon and purity; prayer is the golden key that opens heaven. The tree of the promise will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. All the benefits of Christ's redemption are handed over to us by prayer.

OBJ. *But I have prayed a long time for mercy, and have no answer: 'I am weary of crying.'*^{11*}

1. God may hear us, when we do not hear from him; as soon as prayer is made, God hears it, though he doth not presently answer. A friend may receive our letter, though he doth not presently send us an answer of it. 2. God may delay prayer, yet not deny.

Q. *But why doth God delay an answer of prayer?*

1. Because he loves to hear the voice of prayer; 'the prayer of the upright is his delight.'¹² You let the musician play a great while ere you throw him down money, because you love to hear his music.¹³ 2. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, that he may humble us; perhaps God hath spoken to us a long time in his word to leave such sins, but we would not hear him; therefore he lets us speak to him in prayer and seems not to hear us. 3. God may delay prayer when he will not deny, because he sees we are not yet fit

⁹ He. 5. 7.
¹¹ Ps. 69. 3.

⁹ Ga. 4. 6.
¹² Pr. 15. 8.

¹⁰ Job 15. 4.
¹³ Ca. 2. 14.

* When his word and his work, his promise and his providence seem to clash and contradict one another; this is a dark and hidden rod. What he doeth we know not then, when his dispensations seem, to human reason, to be driving on a design to defeat the promise; we cannot see through the cloud without an eagle eye of faith, nor pry into the depths of his infinite wisdom. Thus Moses was sent to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and to tell them the good news that now the Lord was to deliver them from their bondage; but beheld their bondage is increased, their slavery is doubled, they are filled with anguish. When things like this fall out to the church of God, or the child of God, that here is a promise, but where is the accomplishment, when the quite contrary appears? Then are we to think on his word, 'what I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.'—*Ralph Erskine, Beauties*, b. 2. p. 408.

¹ Ge. 32. 11. ² Ge. 32. 9. ³ Ga. 32. 12. ⁴ Ge. 32. 28.
⁶ Job 11. 13. 14. ⁶ Ps. 66. 18. ⁷ Ps. 144.

for the mercy; perhaps we pray for deliverance, we are not fit for it; our scum is not yet boiled away, we would have God swift to deliver, and we are slow to repent. 4. God may delay prayer, when he will not deny, that the mercy we pray for may be the more prized, and may be sweeter when it comes. The longer the merchant's ships stay abroad, the more he rejoiceth when they come home laden with spices and jewels; therefore be not discouraged,

but follow God with prayer: though God may delay, he will not deny. Prayer overcomes the Omnipotent.³ The Tyrians tied fast their god Hercules with a golden chain, that he should not remove: the Lord was held by Moses' prayer, as with a golden chain. 'Let me alone;'⁴ why; what did Moses? he only prayed. Prayer ushers in mercy. Be thy case ever so sad; if thou canst but pray, thou needest not fear.⁵ Therefore give thyself to prayer.

OF THE PREFACE TO THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our FATHER which art in Heaven.

HAVING, through the good providence of God, gone over the chief grounds and fundamentals of religion, and enlarged upon the decalogue or ten commandments, I shall now, at the close, speak something upon the Lord's prayer

'After this manner therefore pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed,'¹ &c.

In this scripture are two things observable; 1. The introduction to the prayer. 2. The prayer itself, which consists of three parts: 1. a preface; 2. petitions; 3. the conclusion.

I. The introduction to the Lord's prayer; 'after this manner therefore pray ye.' Our Lord Jesus, in these words prescribed to his disciples and us a directory for prayer. The ten commandments are the rule of our life; the creed is the sum of our faith; and the Lord's prayer is the pattern of our prayer. As God did prescribe Moses a pattern of the tabernacle,² so Christ hath here prescribed us a pattern of prayer; 'after this manner therefore pray ye,' &c. The meaning is, let this be the rule and model according to which ye frame your prayers. 'To this rule our prayers must be conformed.' CALVIN. Not that we are tied to the words of the Lord's prayer; Christ saith not, 'after these words, pray ye;' but 'after this manner;' that is, let all your petitions agree and symbolize with the things contained in the Lord's prayer; and indeed, well may we make all our prayers consonant and agreeable to this prayer, it being a most exact prayer. Tertullian calls it, a breviary and compendium of the gospel; it is like a heap of massy gold. The exactness of this prayer appears. 1. In the dignity of the Author; a

piece of work hath commendation from the artificer, and this prayer hath commendation from the Author; it is the Lord's prayer. As the moral law was written with the finger of God, so this prayer was dropt from the lips of the Son of God. 'The voice sounds not like man, but God.' 2. The exactness of this prayer appears in the excellency of the matter. I may say of this prayer, it 'is as silver tried in the furnace, purified seven times.'⁶ Never was there prayer so admirably and curiously composed as this. As Solomon's Song, for its excellency, is called, 'the song of songs;' so may this well be called, 'the prayer of prayers.' The matter of it is admirable, 1. For its succinctness, it is short and pithy, *multum in parvo*, a great deal said in a few words. It requires most art to draw the two globes curiously in a little map. This short prayer is a system or body of divinity. 2. Its clearness. This prayer is plain and intelligible to every capacity. Clearness is the grace of speech. 3. Its completeness. This prayer contains in it the chief things that we have to ask, or God hath to bestow.

USE. Let us have a great esteem of the Lord's prayer; let it be the model and pattern of all our prayers. There is a double benefit ariseth from framing our petitions suitably to the Lord's prayer. 1. Hereby error in prayer is prevented: it is not easy to write wrong after this copy; we cannot easily err, having our pattern before us. 2. Hereby mercies requested are obtained, for the apostle assures us, God will hear us, when we pray 'according to his will.'⁷ And sure we pray according to his will, when we pray according to the pattern

¹ Mat. 6. 9² Ex. 25. 9.³ Ho. 12. 4.⁴ Ex. 32. 10.⁵ Ps. 10. 17.⁶ Ps. 12. 6.⁷ 1 Jno. 5. 14.

he hath set us. So much for the introduction to the Lord's prayer, 'after this manner therefore pray ye.'

II. The prayer itself, which consists of three parts: 1. a preface; 2. petitions; 3. the conclusion.

First, The preface to the prayer: 1. 'our Father.' 2. 'Which art in heaven.' To begin with the first words of the preface.

'Our Father.' *Father* is sometimes taken personally; 'my Father is greater than I:'¹ but *Father* in the text is taken essentially for the whole Deity. This title, *Father*, teacheth us to whom we must address ourselves in prayer; to God alone. Here is no such thing in the Lord's prayer, as, 'O ye saints or angels that are in heaven, hear us!' but, 'our Father which art in heaven.'

Q. 1. *In what order must we direct our prayers to God? Here is only the Father named: may not we direct our prayers to the Son, and Holy Ghost?*

Though the Father only be named in the Lord's prayer, yet the other two Persons are not hereby excluded; the Father is mentioned because he is first in order; but the Son and Holy Ghost are included, because they are the same in essence. As all the three persons subsist in one Godhead; so, in our prayers, though we name but one person, we must pray to all. To come then more closely to the first words of the preface, 'our Father.' Princes on earth give themselves titles expressing their greatness, as, 'high and mighty;' God might have done so, and expressed himself thus, 'our King of glory, our Judge;' but he gives himself another title, 'our Father,' an expression of love and condescension. God, that he might encourage us to pray to him, represents himself under this sweet notion of a father, 'our Father.' The name *Jehovah* carries majesty in it, the name of *Father* carries mercy in it.

Q. 2. *In what sense is God a Father?*

A. 1. By creation; it is he that hath made us, 'we are also his offspring;'² 'have we not all one father?'³ Hath not one God created us? But there is little comfort in this; for so God is Father to the devils by creation; but he that made them will not save them. 2. God is a Father by election, having chosen a certain number to be his children, whom he will entail heaven upon: 'he hath chosen us in

him.'⁴ 3. God is a Father by special grace; he consecrates the elect by his Spirit, and infuseth a supernatural principle of holiness, therefore they are said to be born of God.⁵ Such only as are sanctified can say, 'our Father which art in heaven.'

Q. 3. *What is the difference between God being the Father of Christ, and the Father of the elect?*

A. God is the Father of Christ in a more glorious transcendent manner. Christ hath the primogeniture; he is the eldest Son, a Son by eternal generation; 'I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was:'⁶ 'who shall declare his generation?'⁷ Christ is a son to the Father; yet so as he is of the same nature with the Father, having all the incommunicable properties of the Godhead belonging to him: but we are sons of God by adoption and grace; 'that we might receive the adoption of sons.'⁸

Q. 4. *What is that which makes God our Father?*

A. Faith: 'ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.'⁹ An unbeliever may call God his Creator, and his Judge, but not his Father. Faith doth legitimate us and make us of the blood-royal of heaven: 'ye are the children of God by faith.' Baptism makes us church-members, but faith makes us children: without faith the devil can show as good a coat of arms as we.

Q. 5. *How doth faith make God to be our Father?*

A. As faith is an uniting grace; by faith we have coalition and union with Christ, and so the kindred comes in; being united to Christ, the natural Son, we become adopted sons. God is the Father of Christ; faith makes us Christ's brethren,¹⁰ and so God comes to be our Father.

Q. 6. *Wherein doth it appear that God is the best Father?*

A. 1. In that he is most ancient; 'the Ancient of days did sit.'¹¹ A figurative representation of God who was before all time, this may cause veneration. 2. God is the best Father, because he is perfect; 'your Father which is in heaven is perfect;'¹² he is perfectly good. Earthly fathers are subject to infirmities: Elias, though a prophet, 'was a man subject to like passions,'¹³ but God is perfectly good. All the perfection we can arrive at in this life is sim-

⁴ Ep. 1. 4.

⁶ 1 Jno. 3. 9.

⁸ Pr. 8. 23.

⁷ Is. 53. 8.

⁵ Ga. 4. 5.

⁹ Ga. 3. 26.

¹⁰ He. 2. 11.

¹¹ Da. 7. 9.

¹² Mat. 5. 48.

¹³ Ja. 5. 17.

¹ Jno. 14. 28.

² Ac. 17. 28.

³ Mal. 2. 10

cerity: we may a little resemble God, but not equal him; he is infinitely perfect. 3. God is the best Father in respect of wisdom; 'the only wise God.'¹ He hath a perfect idea of wisdom in himself; he knows the fittest mediums to bring about his own designs; the angels light at his lamp. In particular this is one branch of his wisdom, that he knows what is best for us. An earthly parent knows not, in some intricate cases, how to advise his child, or what may be best for him to do: but God is a most wise Father,—he knows what is best for us, he knows what comfort is best for us, he keeps his cordials for fainting; 'God that comforteth those that are cast down;'² he knows when affliction is best for us, and when it is fit to give a bitter potion: 'if need be ye are in heaviness.'³ He is the only wise God; he knows how to make evil things work for good to his children.⁴ He can make a sovereign treacle of poison: thus he is the best Father for wisdom. 4. He is the best Father, because the most loving; 'God is love.'⁵ He who causeth bowels of affection in others, must needs have more bowels himself. The affections in parents are but marble and adamant in comparison of God's love to his children; he gives them the cream of his love, electing love, saving love; 'he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.'⁶ No father like God for love! If thou art his child, thou canst not love thy own soul so entirely as he loves thee. 5. God is the best Father, for riches: God hath land enough to give to all his children, he hath unsearchable riches.⁷ He gives the hidden manna, the tree of life, rivers of joy, gates of pearl. Who ever saw gates of pearl? God hath treasures that cannot be emptied, pleasures that cannot be ended. Earthly fathers, if they should be ever giving, they would have nothing left to give: God is ever giving to his children, yet hath not the less; his riches are imparted not impaired; like the sun that still shines, yet hath not the less light. He cannot be poor who is infinite. Thus God is the best Father; he gives more to his children, than any father or prince can bestow. 6. God is the best Father, because he can reform his children. A father, when his son takes bad courses, knows not how to make him better; but God knows how to make the children of the election better; he can change their hearts. When Paul

was breathing out persecution against the saints, God soon altered his course, and set him a-praying; 'behold he prayeth.'⁸ None of those who belong to the election are so rough-cast and unhewn, but God can polish them with his grace, and make them fit for the inheritance. 7. God is the best Father, because he never dies; 'who only hath immortality.'⁹ Earthly fathers die, and their children are exposed to many injuries, but God lives for ever; 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.'¹⁰ God's crown hath no successors.

Q. 7. *Wherein lies the dignity of such as have God for their Father?*

A. 1. They have greater honour than is conferred on the princes of the earth; they are precious in God's esteem; 'since thou wast precious in my eyes, thou hast been honourable;'¹¹ the wicked are dross,¹² and chaff,¹³ but God numbers his children among his jewels.¹⁴ He writes all his children's names in the book of life; 'whose names are in the book of life.'¹⁵ Among the Romans the names of their senators were written down in a book; *patres conscripti*: God enrols the names of his children, and will not blot their names out of the register; 'I will not blot his name out of the book of life.'¹⁶ God will not be ashamed of his children, 'God is not ashamed to be called your God.'¹⁷ One might think it were something below God, and he might disdain to father such children as are dust and sin mingled: but he is not ashamed to be called our God; and that we may see he is not ashamed of his children, he writes his own name upon them; 'I will write upon him the name of my God;'¹⁸ that is, I will openly acknowledge him before all the angels to be my child; I will write my name upon him, as the son bears his father's name: what an honour and dignity is this!

2. God confers honourable titles upon his children: he calls them the *excellent* of the earth,¹⁹ or the *magnificent*, as Junius renders it. They must needs be excellent, who are of the blood royal of heaven; they are the spiritual phoenixes of the world, the glory of the creation. God calls his children his glory; 'Israel my glory.'²⁰ God honours his children with the title of kings; 'and hath made us kings.'²¹ All God's children are kings; though they have

¹ 1 Ti. 1. 17. ² 2 Co. 7. 6. ³ 1 Pe. 1. 6. ⁴ Ro. 8. 28.

⁵ 1 Jno. 4. 16. ⁶ Zep. 3. 17. ⁷ Ep. 3. 8.

⁸ Ac. 9. 11. ⁹ 1 Ti. 6. 16.

¹² Ps. 119. 119. ¹³ Ps. 1. 4. ¹⁴ Mal. 3. 17. ¹⁵ Ph. 4. 3.

¹⁶ Re. 3. 5. ¹⁷ He. 11. 16. ¹⁸ Re. 3. 12. ¹⁹ Ps. 16. 3.

²⁰ Is. 40. 13.

²¹ Re. 1. 6.

not earthly kingdoms: yet, *1st.* They carry a kingdom about them, 'the kingdom of God is within you,'¹ grace is a kingdom set up in the hearts of God's children; they are kings to rule over their sins, to bind those kings in chains.² *2d.* They are like kings; they have their ensigns of royalty and majesty. They have their crown; in this life they are kings in a disguise; they are not known, therefore they are exposed to poverty and reproach; they are kings in a disguise; 'now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'³ Why, what shall we be? Every son of God shall have his crown of glory,⁴ and white robes.⁵ Robes signify dignity, and white signifies sanctity.

3. This is their honour who have God for their Father, they are all heirs; the youngest son is an heir. 1. God's children are heirs to the things of this life; God being their Father, they have the best title to earthly things, they have a sanctified right to them; though they have often the least share, yet they have the best right; and they have a blessing with what they have, that is, God's love and favour. Others may have more of the venison, but God's children have more of the blessing: thus they are heirs to the things of this life. 2. They are heirs to the other world; 'heirs of salvation,'⁶ 'joint heirs with Christ.'⁷ They are co-sharers with Christ in glory. Among men commonly the eldest son carries away all, but God's children are all joint heirs with Christ, they have a co-partnership with him in his riches. Hath Christ a place in the celestial mansions? so have the saints; 'in my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you.'⁸ Hath he his Father's love? so have they; 'that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them.'⁹ Doth Christ sit upon a throne? so do God's children;¹⁰ what a high honour is this!

4. God makes his children equal in honour to the angels.^{11*} They are equal to the angels,

¹ Lu. 17. 21. ² Ps. 149. 8. ³ 1 Jno. 3. 2. ⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 4.
⁵ Re. 6. 11. ⁶ He. 1. 14. ⁷ Ro. 8. 17. ⁸ Jno. 14. 2.
⁹ Ps. 146. 8; Jno. 17. 26. ¹⁰ Re. 3. 21. ¹¹ Lu. 20. 36.

* Matthew and Mark say only that they are as the angels, and though Luke expresses it by a stronger word, *equal* to the angels, [that is, equally independent with them of the need of marriage] yet, all arguments drawn from hence, as proving an entire equality of glorified saints with angels in all respects, must be apparently weak and inconclusive. It is indeed the glorious scheme of redeeming love, to incorporate angels and saints into one happy society under Christ as their common head; but there are subordinations in united societies. And if the fall of the apostate spirits occasioned any thing like a vacancy in the celestial hierarchy; it would seem most probable it might be filled up from heavenly spirits of an inferior order, who might be preferred to the rank their degenerate brethren

may, those saints who have God for their Father, are in some sense superior to the angels, for Jesus Christ having taken our nature, hath ennobled and honoured it above the angelical.¹² God hath made his children, by adoption, nearer to himself than the angels. The angels are the friends of Christ, believers are the members of Christ, and this honour have all the saints. Thus you see the dignity of such as have God for their Father. What a comfort is this to God's children who are here despised, and loaded with calumnies and invectives? 'We are made as the filth of the world,'¹³ but God will put honour upon his children at the last day, and crown them with immortal bliss, to the envy of their adversaries.

Q. 8. *How may we know that God is our Father?* All cannot say, 'our Father:' the Jews boasted that God was their Father;¹⁴ 'we have one Father, even God.'¹⁵ Christ tells them their pedigree, 'ye are of your father the devil.'¹⁶ They who are of satanical spirits, and make use of their power to beat down the power of godliness, cannot say, God is their Father; they may say, 'our father which art in hell.' Well then how may we know that God is our Father?

A. I. By having a filial disposition: this is in four things, *1st.* To melt in tears for sin: a child weeps for offending his father. When Christ looked on Peter, and he remembered his sin in denying Christ, he fell a-weeping. Clemens Alexandrinus reports of Peter he never heard a cock crow, but he wept. This is a sign that God is our Father, when the heart of stone is taken away, and there is a gracious thaw in the heart; it melts into tears for sin; and he who hath a childlike heart, mourns for sin in a spiritual manner, as it is sin; he grieves for it, (1.) as it is an act of pollution. Sin deflowers the virgin-soul; it defaceth God's image; it turns beauty into deformity; it is called the 'plague of the heart.'¹⁷ It is the spirits of evil distilled. A child of God mourns for the defilement of sin; sin hath a blacker aspect than hell. (2.) He who hath a childlike heart, grieves for sin, as it is an act of enmity. Sin is diametrically opposite to God. It is called a walking contrary to God; 'if they shall confess their iniquity,

¹² He. 2. 16. ¹³ 1 Co. 4. 13. ¹⁴ Jno. 8. 41
¹⁵ Jno. 8. 44. ¹⁶ 1 Ki. 8. 38.

lost, as a reward for their approved fidelity to God. But it becomes us to be exceeding modest in our conjectures on such subjects as these, lest we incur the censure of intruding into things which we have not seen.—*Doddridge's Fum. Exp.* Luke 20. 36

and that also they have walked contrary to me." Sin doth all it can to spite God; if God be of one mind sin will be of another; sin would not only unthroned God, but it strikes at his very being; if sin could help it, God should be no longer God. A childlike heart grieves for this; 'O,' saith he, 'that I should have so much enmity in me, that my will should be no more subdued to the will of my heavenly Father!' This springs a leak of godly sorrow.

(3.) A childlike heart weeps for sin, as it is an act of ingratitude; sin is an abuse of God's love; it is taking the jewels of God's mercies, and making use of them to sin. God hath done more for his children than others; he hath planted his grace and given them some intimations of his favour; and to sin against kindness, dyes a sin in grain, and makes it crimson. Like Absalom, who, as soon as his father kissed him, and took him into favour, plotted treason against him: nothing so melts a childlike heart in tears, as sins of unkindness: 'O that I should sin against the blood of a Saviour, and the bowels of a Father! I condemn ingratitude in my child, yet I am guilty of ingratitude against my heavenly Father.' This opens a vein of godly sorrow, and makes the heart bleed afresh: certainly this evidenceth God to be our Father, when he hath given us this childlike frame of heart, to weep for sin as it is sin, an act of pollution, enmity, ingratitude: a wicked man may mourn for the bitter fruit of sin, but only a child of God can grieve for the odious nature of sin.

2. A filial, or childlike, disposition is to be full of sympathy; we lay to heart the dishonours reflected upon our heavenly Father; when we see God's worship adulterated, his truth mingled with the poison of error, it is as a sword in our bones, to see God's glory suffer; 'I beheld the transgressors and was grieved.'² Homer describing Agamemnon's grief when he was forced to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia, brings in all his friends weeping and condoling with him; so, when God is dishonoured, we sympathize, and are as it were clad in mourning. A child that hath any good nature, is cut to the heart to hear his father reproached: an heir of heaven takes a dishonour done to God more heinous than a disgrace done to himself.

3. A filial disposition, is to love our heavenly Father; he is unnatural that doth not love his

father. God who is crowned with excellency, is the proper object of delight; and every true child of God saith, as Peter, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.' But who will not say he loves God? If ours be a true genuine love to our heavenly Father, it may be known, *1st.* By the effects: then we have an holy fear; there is a fear which ariseth from love to God, that is, we fear the loss of the visible tokens of God's presence; 'Eli's heart trembled for the ark.'³ It is not said his heart trembled for his two sons Hophni and Phinehas; but his heart trembled for the ark because the ark was the special sign of God's presence; and if that were taken, the glory was departed. He who loves his heavenly Father, fears lest the tokens of his presence should be removed, lest profaneness should break in like a flood, lest popery should get head, and God should go from a people; the presence of God in his ordinances is the glory and strength of a nation. The Trojans had the image of Pallas, and they had an opinion that as long as that image was preserved among them, they should never be conquered: so long as God's presence is with a people, so long they are safe; every true child of God fears lest God should go, and the glory depart. Try by this, whether we have a filial disposition: Do we love God, and doth this love cause fear and jealousy? Are we afraid lest we should lose God's presence, lest the Sun of Righteousness remove out of our horizon? Many are afraid lest they should lose some of their worldly profits, but not lest they lose the presence of God; if they may have peace and trading, they care not what become of the ark of God. A true child of God fears nothing so much as the loss of his Father's presence: 'we also to them when I depart from them.'⁴ Love to our heavenly Father is seen by loving his day; 'if thou call the sabbath a delight.'⁵ The ancients called this 'the queen of days.' If we love our Father in heaven, we spend this day in devotion, in reading, hearing, meditating; on this day manna falls double. God sanctified the sabbath; he made all the other days in the week, but he hath sanctified this day; this day he hath crowned with a blessing. Love to our heavenly Father is seen by loving his children; 'every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.'^{6*} If we love

² 1 Sa. 4. 13. ³ Ho. 9. 12. ⁴ Is. 58. 13. ⁵ 1 Jno. 5. 1.

* If we were once enrolled in this blessed fellowship with the Father and the Son, then it follows as a fruit and result of

¹ Le 26. 40.

² Ps. 119. 158.

God, the more we see of God in any, the more we love them; we love though they are poor; a child loves to see his father's picture, though hung in a mean frame; we love the children of our Father, though they are persecuted; 'Onesiphorus was not ashamed of my chain.'¹ Constantine did kiss the hole of Paphnusius's eye, because he suffered the loss of his eye for Christ; it appears they have no love to God, who have no love to his children; they care not for their company; they have a secret disgust and antipathy against them; hypocrites pretend great reverence to the saints departed, they canonize dead saints but persecute living saints: I may say of these, as the apostle, 'then are ye bastards and not sons.'² If we love our heavenly Father, then we will be advocates for him, and stand up in the defence of his truth; he who loves his father will plead for him when he is traduced and wronged; he hath no childlike heart, no love to God, who can hear God's name dishonoured, and be silent. Doth Christ appear for us in heaven, and are we afraid to appear for him on earth? Such as dare not own God and religion in times of danger, God will be ashamed to be called their God; it would be a reproach to him to have such children as will not own him. *2d.* A childlike love to God is known, as by the effects, so by the degree; it is a superior love. We love our Father in heaven above all other things; above estate, or relations, as oil runs above the water.³ A child of God seeing a supereminency of goodness, and a constellation of all beauties in God, he is carried out in love to him in the highest measure; as God gives his children such a love as he doth not bestow upon the wicked, electing love, so God's children give such a love as they bestow upon none else, adoring love; they give him the flower and spirits of their love; they love him with a love joined with worship, this spiced wine they keep only for their Father to drink of.⁴

4. A childlike disposition is seen in honouring our heavenly Father, 'A son honoureth his father.'⁵

¹ 2 Ti. 1. 16.² He. 12. 8.³ Ps. 73. 25.⁴ Can. 8. 2.⁵ Mal. 1. 6.

this, that we should have fellowship one with another. And truly the more unity with God, the more unity among ourselves, for he is the uniting, cementing principle. He is the centre of all Christians, and as lines the farther they are from the centre, the farther distant they are from one another; so the distance and elongation of souls from God, sets them at farthest distance among themselves. The nearer we come every one to Jesus Christ, the nearer we join in affection to one another; and this is imported in that of Christ's prayer, 'that they may be one in us'—*Binning's Works*, p. 396.

Q. *How do we show our honour to our Father in heaven?*

A. 1. By having a reverential awe of God upon us; 'thou shalt fear thy God.'⁶ This reverential fear of God, is, when we dare do nothing that he hath forbidden in his word; 'how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'⁷ It is the part of the honour a son gives to his father, he fears to displease him. We show our honour to our heavenly Father, by doing all we can to exalt God, and make his excellencies shine forth: though we cannot lift up God higher in heaven, yet we may lift him higher in our hearts, and in the esteem of others. When we speak well of God, set forth his renown, display the trophies of his goodness; when we ascribe the glory of all we do to God; when we are the trumpeters of God's praise: this is an honouring our Father in heaven, and a certain sign of a childlike heart; 'whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me.'⁸

2. We may know God is our Father, by our resembling of him; the child is his father's picture; 'each one resembled the children of a king';⁹ every child of God resembles the King of heaven. Herein God's adopting children and man's differ: a man adopts one for his son and heir, that doth not at all resemble him, but whosoever God adopts for his child, is like him; he not only bears his heavenly Father's name, but image; 'and have put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him.'¹⁰ He who hath God for his Father, resembles God in holiness; holiness is the glory of the Godhead.¹¹ The holiness of God is the intrinsic purity of his essence. He who hath God for his father, partakes of the divine nature; though not of the divine essence, yet of the divine likeness; as the seal sets its print and likeness upon the wax, so he who hath God for his Father, hath the print and effigies of his holiness stamped upon him: 'Aaron the saint of the Lord.'¹² Wicked men desire to be like God hereafter in glory, but do not affect to be like him here in grace; they give it out to the world that God is their Father, yet have nothing of God to be seen in them; they are unclean; they not only want his image, but hate it.

3. We may know God is our Father, by having his Spirit in us; *1st.* By having the intercession of the Spirit; it is a spirit of prayer; 'because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the

⁶ Le. 25. 17. ⁷ Ge. 39. 9. ⁸ Ps. 50. 23. ⁹ Ju. 8. 18.¹⁰ Col. 3. 10.¹¹ Ex. 15. 11.¹² Ps. 106. 16.

Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.¹ Prayer is the soul's breathing itself into the bosom of its heavenly Father: none of God's children are born dumb. PROSPER. 'Behold, he prayeth:'² but it is not every prayer evidenceth God's Spirit in us. Such as have no grace may excel in gifts, and affect the hearts of others in prayer, when their own hearts are not affected; as the lute makes a sweet sound in the ears of others, but itself is not sensible. How therefore shall we know our prayers are indited by God's Spirit, and so he is our Father? 1. When they are not only vocal, but mental; when there are not only gifts but groans. The best music is in concert; the best prayer is when the heart and tongue join together in concert. 2. When they are zealous and fervent; 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'³ The eyes melt in prayer, the heart burns. Fervency is to prayer, as fire to the incense; it makes it ascend to heaven as a sweet perfume. 3. When prayer hath faith sprinkled in it; prayer is the key of heaven, and faith is the hand that turns it; 'we cry, Abba, Father!'⁴ 'We cry,' there is fervency in prayer; 'Abba, Father,' there is faith. Those prayers suffer shipwreck, which dash upon the rock of unbelief. Thus we may know God is our Father by having his Spirit praying in us; as Christ intercedes above, so the Spirit intercedes within. 2d. By having the renewing of the Spirit, which is nothing else but regeneration, which is called a being born of the Spirit.⁵ This regenerating work of the Spirit is a transformation, or change of nature; 'be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'⁶ He who is born of God, hath a new heart; new, not for substance, but for qualities. The strings of a viol may be the same, but the tune is altered. Before this regeneration, there are spiritual pangs, much heart-breaking for sin. Regeneration is called a circumcision of the heart.⁷ In circumcision there was a pain in the flesh; so in this spiritual circumcision there is a pain in the heart, there is much sorrow arising from the sense of guilt and wrath. The gaoler's trembling,⁸ was a pang in the new birth. God's Spirit is a spirit of bondage, before it be a spirit of adoption. This blessed work of regeneration spreads over the whole soul; it irradiates the mind; it consecrates the heart, and

reforms the life; though regeneration be but in part, yet it is in every part;¹⁰ regeneration is the signature and engraving of the Holy Ghost upon the soul; the new born Christian is bespangled with the jewels of the graces, which are the angels' glory. Regeneration is the spring of all true joy; at our first birth we come weeping into the world, but at our new birth there is cause of rejoicing, for now, God is our Father, and we are begotten to a lively hope of glory.¹¹ We may try by this our relation to God. Hath a regenerating work of God's Spirit passed upon our souls? are we made of another spirit, humble and heavenly? this is a good sign of sonship, and we may say, 'our Father which art in heaven.'¹² 3d. By having the conduct of the Spirit: we are led by the Spirit; 'as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.'¹³ God's Spirit doth not only quicken us in our regeneration but leads us on till we come to the end of our faith, salvation. It is not enough the child have life, but he must be led every step by the nurse, 'I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms;'¹⁴ as the Israelites had the cloud and pillar of fire to go before them, and be a guide to them, so God's Spirit is a guide to go before us, and lead us into all truth, and counsel us in all our doubts, and influence us in all our actions; 'thou shalt guide me with thy counsel.'¹⁵ None can call God Father, but such as have the conduct of the Spirit. Try then what spirit you are led by. Such as are led by a spirit of envy, lust, avarice, these are not led by the Spirit of God; it were blasphemy for them to call God, Father; these are led by the spirit of Satan, and may say, 'our father which art in hell.'¹⁶ 4th. By having the witness of the Spirit: 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that

¹⁰ 1 Th. 5. 23. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 1. 3. ¹² Ro. 8. 14.
¹³ Ho. 11. 3. ¹⁴ Ps. 73. 24.

* If the question be urged, as it is natural it should be, 'how does the Spirit bear witness to our minds or souls, that we are the children of God?' the answer is, 'by imparting the *spirit of adoption* or a *filial spirit* to us. It is this, then, which affords the evidence to our minds of being in a state of filiation, that is, of bearing the relation to God of spiritual children. And as this comes from the Spirit of God, so he may be said, in this case, to bear witness because he is the author of that Spirit, which affords the evidence. That the world deny any such testimony in the hearts of believers, and that they look on it with scorn or treat it with derision, proves only that they are unacquainted with it; not that it is an illusion. It was a sensible and true remark of the French philosopher Hemsterhuys, in regard to certain sensations which he was discussing; 'those who are so unhappy as never to have had such sensations, either through weakness of the natural organ, or because they have never cultivated them, will not comprehend me.—Stuart on the *Romans*, Ch. viii. v. 16.'

¹ Ga. 4. 6. ² Ac. 9. 11. ³ Ro. 8. 26.
⁴ Ja. 5. 16. ⁵ Ro. 8. 15. ⁶ Jhn. 3. 5.
⁷ Ro. 12. 2. ⁸ Col. 2. 11. ⁹ Ac. 16. 30.

we are the children of God.¹ This witness of the Spirit, suggesting that God is our Father, is not a vocal witness or voice from heaven; 'the Spirit in the word witnesseth;' the Spirit, in the word, saith, he who is qualified, who is a hater of sin, and a lover of holiness, is a child of God, and God is his Father. If I can find such qualifications wrought, here is the Spirit witnessing with my spirit, that I am a child of God. Besides, we may carry it higher; the Spirit of God witnesseth to our spirit, by making more than ordinary impressions upon our hearts, and giving some secret hints and whispers that God hath purposes of love to us, here is a concurrent witness of the Spirit with conscience, that we are heirs of heaven, and God is our Father; this witness is better felt than expressed; this witness scatters doubts and fears, silenceth temptations. But what shall one do that hath not this witness of the Spirit? If we want the witness of the Spirit, let us labour to find the work of the Spirit; if we have not the Spirit testifying, labour to have it sanctifying, and that will be a support to us.

4. If God be our Father, we are of peaceable spirits: 'blessed are the peace-makers, they shall be called the children of God.'² Grace infuseth a sweet, amicable disposition; it files off the ruggedness of men's spirits; it turns the lion-like fierceness into a lamb-like gentleness.³ They who have God to be their Father, follow peace as well as holiness. God the Father is called the 'God of peace;'⁴ God the Son, the 'Prince of peace;'⁵ God the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of peace; it is called 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'⁶ The more peaceable, the more like God. It is a bad sign God is not their Father, 1st. who are fierce and cruel, as if with Romulus, they had sucked the milk of a wolf; 'the way of peace have they not known,'⁷ they sport in mischief; these are they who are of a persecuting spirit, as Maximinus, Dioclesian, Antiochus, who (as Eusebius) took more tedious journies, and ran

more hazards in vexing and persecuting the Jews, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. These furies cannot call God Father! if they do, they will have as little comfort in saying Father, as Dives had in hell, when he said, 'father Abraham,'⁸ 2d. Who are makers of division; 'mark them which cause divisions, and avoid them.'⁹ Such as are born of God, are makers of peace; what shall we think of such as are makers of divisions? will God father these? The devil made the first division in heaven; they may call the devil father; they may give the cloven foot in their coat of arms; their sweetest music is in discord; they unite to divide. Samson's fox tails were tied together, only to set the Philistines' corn on fire.¹⁰ Papists unite, only to set the church's peace on fire. Satan's kingdom grows up by division. St Chrysostom observes of the church of Corinth, when many converts were brought in, Satan knew no better way to dam up the current of religion, than to throw in an apple of strife, and divide them into parties; one was for Paul, and another for Apollos, but few for Christ. Would not Christ have his coat rent, and can he endure to have his body rent? sure God will never father them who are not sons of peace. Of all them whom God hates, he is named for one, who is a sower of discord among brethren.¹¹

5. If God be our Father; then we love to be near God, and have converse with him. An ingenuous child delights to approach near to his father, and go into his presence. David envied the birds that they built their nests so near God's altars, when he was debarred his Father's house.¹² True saints love to get as near to God as they can; in the word they draw near to his holy oracle, in the sacrament they draw near to his table; a child of God delights to be in his Father's presence; he cannot stay away long from God; he seeth a sabbath-day approaching, and rejoiceth; his heart hath been often melted and quickened in an ordinance; he hath tasted the Lord is good, therefore he loves to be in his Father's presence; he cannot keep away long from God. Such as care not for ordinances cannot say, 'our Father which art in heaven.' Is God their Father, who cannot endure to be in his presence?

USE 1. Of instruction. See the amazing goodness of God, that is pleased to enter into this sweet relation of a Father. God needed

¹ Ro. 8. 16. ² Mat. 5. 9. ³ Is. 11. 7. ⁴ He. 13. 20.
⁵ Is. 9. 6. ⁶ Ep. 4. 3. ⁷ Ro. 3. 17.

* When the Saviour, acquainted both with the deepest root of dissension among mankind, and with the one only remedy by which it can be effectually extirpated, here pronounces blessed the disposition of the peace-maker, we can suppose nothing else but that peace-making in his view, that is, in the full sense of the word, coincides with the planting of the peace of God in the bosoms of men, and accordingly that the peace-makers are such as being already possessed of a heart more or less pure, and having thereby attained to peace with God themselves, spread that, and at the same time the peace of men among each other in the world.—*Tholuck on the Sermon on the Mount* vol. 1. p. 141.

⁸ Lu. 16. 24. ⁹ Ro. 16. 17. ¹⁰ Judges 15. 4.
¹¹ Pr. 6. 19. ¹² Ps. 84. 3.

not to adopt us; he did not want a Son, but we did a Father. God showed power in being our Maker, but mercy in being our Father; when we were enemies, and our hearts stood out as garrisons against God, that he should conquer our stubbornness, and of enemies make us children, and write his name, and put his image upon us, and bestow a kingdom of glory, what a miracle of mercy is this! Every adopted child may say, 'even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'¹

2d. Branch, or inference. If God be a Father, then hence I infer, whatever he doth to his children, is love.

1. If he smiles upon them in prosperity, it is love; they have the world not only with God's leave, but with his love. God saith to every child of his, as Naaman to Gehazi, 'be content, take two talents.'² So saith God to his child, 'I am thy Father, take two talents.' Take health, and take my love with it; take an estate, and take my love with it; take two talents. God's love is a sweetening ingredient into every mercy.

Q. *How doth it appear that a child of God hath worldly things in love?*

A. 1. Because he hath a good title to them. God is his Father, therefore he hath a good title. A wicked man hath a civil title to the creature, but no more; he hath it not from the hand of a father; he is like one that takes up cloth at the draper's, and it is not paid for; but a believer hath a good title to every foot of land he hath; his Father hath settled it upon him. 2. A child of God hath worldly things in love, because they are sanctified to him. They make him better, and are loadstones to draw him nearer to God. He hath his Father's blessing with them. A little blest is sweet; 'He shall bless thy bread and thy water.'³ Esau had the venison, but Jacob got the blessing. While the wicked have their meat sauced with God's wrath,⁴ believers have their comforts seasoned with a blessing. It was a secret blessing from God made Daniel's pulse nourish him more, and made him look fairer than they that eat of the king's meat.⁵ 3. A child of God hath worldly things in love, because whatever he hath is an earnest of more; every bit of bread is a pledge and earnest of glory.

2. God being a Father, if he frown, if he dip his pen in gall, and write bitter things; if he correct, it is in love; a father loves his child as well when he doth chastise and discipline him,

as when he settles his land on him; 'as many as I love, I rebuke.'⁶ Afflictions are sharp arrows (saith Gregory Nazianzen) but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father. 'Affliction is the school of virtue.' God afflicts with the same love he gives Christ; he doth it to humble and purify; gentle correction is as necessary as daily bread, nay, as needful as ordinances, as word and sacraments. There is love in all; God smites that he may save.

3. God being a Father, if he desert and hide his face from his child, it is in love. Deser-tion is sad in itself, a short hell.⁷ When the light is withdrawn, the dew falls: yet we may see a rainbow in the cloud, the love of a Father in all this. God hereby quickens grace. Perhaps grace lay dormant:⁸ it was as fire in the embers; and God withdraws comfort, to invigorate and exercise grace: faith is a star, sometimes shines brightest in the dark night of desertion.⁹ When God hides his face from his child, yet still he is a Father, and his heart is towards his child; as Joseph, when he spake roughly to his brethren, and made them believe he would take them for spies, still his heart was full of love, and he was fain to go aside and weep: so God's bowels yearn to his children, when he seems to look strange; 'in a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.'¹⁰ Though God may have the look of an enemy, yet still he hath the heart of a Father.

3d. Branch, or inference. Learn hence the sad case of the wicked; they cannot say, 'our Father in heaven;' they may say 'our Judge, but not 'our Father;' they fetch their pedigree from hell; 'ye are of your father the devil.'¹¹ Such as are unclean and profane are the spurious brood of the old serpent, and it were blasphemy for them to call God Father. The case of the wicked is deplorable; if they are in misery, they have none to make their moan to; God is not their Father, he disclaims all kindred with them; 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity;'¹² the wicked, dying in their sins, can expect no mercy from God as a Father; many say, He that made them will save them; but, 'it is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them.'¹³ Though God was their Father by creation, yet because they were not his children by adoption, 'therefore he that made them would not save them.'

¹ Mat. 11. 26. ² Ki. 5. 23. ³ Ex. 23. 25.

⁴ Pa. 73. 30, 31. ⁵ Da. 1. 15.

⁶ Re. 3. 19. ⁷ Job 6. 9. ⁸ Can. 5. 2. ⁹ Jo. 2. 4.
¹⁰ Is. 51. 8. ¹¹ Jno. 8. 41. ¹² Mat. 7. 23. ¹³ Is. 27. 11

USE 2. Of exhortation. To persuade all who are yet strangers to God, to labour to come into this heavenly kindred; never leave till you can say, 'our Father which art in heaven.'

Q. *But will God be a Father to me, who have profaned his name, and been a great sinner?*

A. If thou wilt now at last seek to God by prayer, and break off thy sins, God hath the bowels of a Father for thee, and will in no wise cast thee out. When the prodigal did arise and go to his father, 'his father had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.'¹ Though thou hast been a prodigal, and almost spent all upon thy lusts, yet, if thou wilt give a bill of divorce to thy sins, and flee to God by repentance, know that he hath the bowels of a father; he will embrace thee in the arms of his mercy, and seal thy pardon with a kiss. What though thy sins have been heinous? the wound is not so broad as the plaster of Christ's blood. The sea covers great rocks; the sea of God's compassion can drown thy great sins; therefore be not discouraged, go to God, resolve to cast thyself upon his fatherly bowels, God may be entreated of thee as he was of Manasseh. 'He prayed unto the Lord, and he was entreated of him.'² Manasseh made the streets run with blood, yet when his eyes ran with tears, God's fatherly bowels began to melt, and he was entreated of him.

USE 3. Of comfort, to such as can upon good grounds call God, Father. There is more sweetness in this word *Father*, than if we had ten thousand worlds. David thought it a great matter to be son-in-law to a king; 'what is my father's family, that I should be son-in-law to the king?'³ But what is it to be born of God, and have God for our Father?

Q. *Wherein lies the happiness of having God for our Father?*

A. 1. If God be our father, then he will teach us. What father will refuse to counsel his son? Doth God command parents to instruct their children,⁴ and will not he instruct his? 'I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.'⁵ 'O God thou hast taught me from my youth!'⁶ If God be our Father, he will give us the teachings of his Spirit: 'the natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them.'⁷ The natural man may have excellent notions in divinity, but God must teach us to know the mysteries of the gospel after a spiritual manner. A man may see the figures upon a dial, but he cannot tell how the

day goes, unless the sun shine; we may read many truths in the Bible, but we cannot know them savingly, till God by his Spirit shine upon our soul. God teacheth not only our ear but our heart; he not only informs our mind, but inclines our will; we never learn till God teach us. If God be our Father, he will teach us how to order our affairs with discretion,⁸ how to carry ourselves wisely; 'David behaved himself wisely.'⁹ He will teach us what to answer when we are brought before governors; he will put words into our mouths; 'ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, but take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.'¹⁰

2. If God be our Father, then he hath bowels of affection towards us. If it be so unnatural for a father not to love his child, can we think God will be defective in his love? All the affections of parents come from God, yet are but a spark from his flame. He is the 'Father of mercies.'¹¹ He begets all the mercies and bowels in the creature; his love to his children, is a love 'which passeth knowledge.'¹² It exceeds all dimensions; it is higher than heaven, it is broader than the sea. That you may see God's fatherly love to his children: 1. Consider God makes a precious valuation of them; 'since thou wast precious in my sight.'¹³ A father prizeth his child above his jewels; their names are precious, for they have God's own name written upon them; 'I will write upon him the name of my God.'¹⁴ Their prayers are a precious perfume; their tears God bottles.¹⁵ God esteems his children as a crown of glory in his hand.¹⁷ 2. God loves the places they were born in the better for their sakes; 'of Zion it shall be said, This man was born there;¹⁷ this and that believer was born there. God loves the ground his children tread upon; hence Judea, the seat of God's children and chosen, God calls a 'delightful land';¹⁸ it was not only pleasant for situation and fruitfulness, but because God's children, who were his *Hephzibah*, or delight, lived there. 3. He chargeth the great ones of the world not to prejudice his children; their persons are sacred; 'He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes, saying, touch not mine anointed.'¹⁹ By anointed, is meant the children of the high God, who have the unction

¹ Lu. 15. 20. ² Ch. 33. 13. ³ 1 Sa. 18. 18. ⁴ De. 4. 10.
⁵ Is. 48. 17. ⁶ Ps. 71. 17. ⁷ 1 Co. 2. 14.

⁸ Ps. 112. 5. ⁹ 1 Sa. 18. 5. ¹⁰ Mat. 10. 18, 19, 20.
¹¹ 2 Co. 1. 3. ¹² Ep. 3. 19. ¹³ Is. 43. 4. ¹⁴ Re. 3. 12.
¹⁵ Ps. 56. 8. ¹⁶ Is. 65. 3. ¹⁷ Ps. 87. 6. ¹⁸ Mal. 3. 12.
¹⁹ Ps. 105. 11, 15.

of the Spirit, and are set apart for God. 4. God delights in their company; he loves to see their countenance, and hear their voice.¹ He cannot refrain long from their company: let but two or three of his children meet and pray together, he will be sure to be among them; 'where two or three are met together in my name, I am in the midst of them.'² 5. God bears his children in his bosom, as a nursing father doth the sucking child.³ To be carried in God's bosom, shows how near his children lie to his heart. 6. God is full of solicitous care for them; 'he careth for you.'⁴ His eye is still upon them, they are never out of his thoughts. A father cannot always take care for his child, he sometimes is asleep; but God is a Father that never sleeps. He neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.⁵ 7. He thinks nothing too good to part with to his children; he gives them the kidneys of the wheat, and honey out of the rock, and 'wine on the lees well refined.'⁶ He gives them three jewels more worth than heaven; the blood of his Son, the grace of his Spirit, the light of his countenance. Never was there such an indulgent, affectionate father. 8. If God hath one love better than another, he bestows it upon them; they have the cream and quintessence of his love; 'he will rejoice over thee, he will rest in his love.'⁷ God loves his children with such a love as he loves Christ.⁸ It is the same love, for the unchangeableness of it; God will no more cease to love his adopted sons, than he will to love his natural Son.

3. If God be our Father, he will be full of sympathy; 'as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him':⁹ 'is Ephraim my dear son? my bowels are troubled for him.'¹⁰ God pities his children in two cases; 1. in case of infirmities; 2. injuries. (1.) In case of infirmities. If the child be deformed, or hath any bodily distemper, the father pities it: if God be our Father, he pities our weaknesses, and he so pities them as to heal them; 'I have seen his ways, and will heal him.'¹¹ As God hath bowels to pity, so he hath balsam to heal. (2.) In case of injuries. Every blow of the child goes to the father's heart: when the saints suffer, God doth sympathize; 'in all their afflictions he was afflicted.'¹² He did, as it were, bleed in their wounds: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou

me?' When the foot was trod on, the head cried out; God's soul was grieved for the children of Israel.¹³ As when one string in a lute is touched, all the rest of the strings sound: when God's children are stricken, his bowels sound; 'he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of my eye.'¹⁴

4. If God be our Father, he will take notice of the least good he sees in us; if there be but a sigh for sin, God hears it; 'my groaning is not hid from thee.'¹⁵ If there be but a penitential tear comes out of our eye, God sees it; 'I have seen thy tears.'¹⁶ If there be but a good intention, God takes notice; 'whereas it was in thy heart to build an house to my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.'¹⁷ God punisheth intentional wickedness, and crowns intentional goodness; 'thou didst well that it was in thine heart.' God takes notice of the least spark of grace in his children; 'Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord';¹⁸ the Holy Ghost doth not mention Sarah's unbelief, or laughing at the promise, he puts a finger upon the scar, winks at her failing, and only takes notice of the good that was in her, her obedience to her husband; she 'obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' Nay, that good which the saints scarce take notice of in themselves, God in a special manner observes; 'I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: then shall the righteous say, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee?'¹⁹ They did as it were overlook and disclaim their own works of charity, yet Christ doth take notice, 'I was an hungered and ye fed me.' What a comfort is this! God spies the least good in his children; he can see a grain of corn hid under chaff, grace hid under corruption.

5. If God be our Father, he will take all we do in good part. Those duties we ourselves censure, God will crown. When a child of God looks over his best duties, he sees so much sin cleaving to them, that he is even confounded: 'Lord,' saith he, 'there is more sulphur than incense in my prayers.' But for your comfort, if God be our Father, he will crown those duties which you yourselves censure; God sees there is sincerity in the hearts of his children, and this gold though light shall have grains of allowance: though there may be defects in the services of God's children, yet God will not cast away their offering; 'the Lord

¹ Can. 2. 13. ² Mat. 18. 20. ³ Nu. 11. 12; Is. 46. 4.

⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 7. ⁵ Ps. 121. 4. ⁶ Is. 25. 6. ⁷ Zep. 3. 17.

⁸ Juo. 17. 26. ⁹ Ps. 103. 13. ¹⁰ Je. 31. 20. ¹¹ Is. 57. 18.

¹² Is. 63. 9.

¹³ Ju. 10. 16. ¹⁴ Zec. 2. 8. ¹⁵ Ps. 38. 9. ¹⁶ Is. 38. 5.

¹⁷ 1 Ki. 8. 18. ¹⁸ 1 Pe. 3. 6. ¹⁹ Mat. 25. 35, 37.

healed the people.¹ The tribes of Israel being straitened in time, wanted some legal purifications; yet because their hearts were upright God healed them, he pardoned them. God accepts of the good will.² A father takes a letter from his son kindly, though there are blots or bad English in it. What blottings are there in our holy things? Yet our Father in heaven accepts: saith God, 'it is my child, and he will do better; I will look upon him, through Christ, with a merciful eye.'

6. If God be our Father, then he will correct us in measure. 'I will correct thee in measure;³ and that two ways: *1st*, It shall be in measure, for the kind; God will not lay upon us more than we are able to bear.⁴ He knows our frame.⁵ He knows we are not steel or marble, therefore will deal gently; he will not over-afflict; as the physician that knows the temper of the body, will not give physic too strong for the body; nor will he give one drachm or scruple too much. God hath not only the title of a father, but the bowels of a father; he will not lay too heavy burdens on his children, lest their spirits fail before him. *2d*, He will correct in measure for the duration; he will not let the affliction lie on too long, 'the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.'⁶ It may be there, and not rest; 'I will not contend for ever.'⁷ Our heavenly Father will love for ever, but he will not contend for ever. The torments of the damned are for ever; 'the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.'⁸ The wicked shall drink a sea of wrath, but God's children only taste of the cup of affliction, and their heavenly Father will say, let this cup pass away from them.⁹ A sting a-wing.

7. If God be our Father, he will intermix mercy with all our afflictions; if he gives us wormwood to drink, he will mix it with honey.*

¹ 2 Ch. 30. 20.

² 2 Co. 8. 12.

³ Je. 30. 11.

⁴ 1 Co. 10. 13.

⁵ Ps. 103. 14.

⁶ Ps. 125. 3.

⁷ Is. 57. 16.

⁸ Re. 14. 11.

⁹ Is. 35. 10.

* We are to account that, not only in nature, but in contingency and emergent events of providence, God makes compensation to us for all the evils of chance and hostilities of accident, and brings good out of evil; which is that solemn triumph which mercy makes over justice, when it rides on a cloud, and crows its darkness with a robe of glorious light.—Had not David suffered more, if he had suffered less? and had he not been miserable unless he had been afflicted? He understood it well, when he said, 'it is good for me that I have been afflicted.'—And if in our greatest misery, God's mercy is so conspicuous, what can we suppose him to be in the endearment of his loving-kindness? If his evil be so transparent, well may we know that on his face dwells glory, and from his eyes light and perpetual comforts run in channels larger than the returns of the sea, when it is driven and forced faster into its natural course by the violence of a tempest from the

In the ark the rod was laid up, and manna; with our Father's rod there is always some manna. 'Asher's shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipt in oil.'¹⁰ Affliction is the shoe of brass that pincheth; but there is mercy in the affliction, there is the foot dipt in oil. When God afflicts the body, he gives peace of conscience; there is mercy in the affliction. An affliction comes to prevent falling into sin; there is mercy in an affliction. Jacob had his thigh hurt in wrestling, there was the affliction; but then he saw God's face, and received a blessing from the angel,¹¹ there was mercy in the affliction. In every cloud a child of God may see a rainbow of mercy shining. As the limner mixeth dark shadows and bright colours together, so our heavenly Father mingles the dark and the bright together, crosses and blessings; and is not this a great happiness, for God thus to chequer his providences, and mingle goodness with severity?

8. If God be our Father, the evil one shall not prevail against us. Satan is called 'the evil one,' emphatically; he is the grand enemy of the saints; and that both in a military sense, as he fights against them with his temptations, and in a forensical or law sense, as he is an accuser, and pleads against them; yet neither way shall he prevail against God's children. As for his shooting his fiery darts, God will bruise Satan shortly under the saints' feet.¹² As for his accusing, Christ is advocate for the saints, and answers all bills of indictment brought in against them. God will make all Satan's temptations promote the good of his children. *1st*, As they set them more a-praying.¹³ Temptation is a medicine for security. *2d*, As they are a means to humble them, 'lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.'¹⁴ The thorn in the flesh was a temptation; this thorn was to prick the bladder of pride. *3d*, As they establish them more in grace; a tree shaken by the wind is more settled and rooted; the blowing of a temptation doth but settle a child of God more in grace. Thus the evil one, Satan, shall not prevail against the children of God.

¹⁰ De. 33. 24.

¹¹ Ge. 32. 30.

¹² Ro. 16. 20.

¹³ 2 Co. 12. 8.

¹⁴ 2 Co. 12. 7.

north. The sum is this; God intends every accident should minister to virtue, and every virtue is the mother and nurse of joy, and both of them daughters of the divine goodness; and, therefore, if our sorrows do not pass into comforts, it is beside God's intention; it is because we will not comply with the act of that mercy, which would save us by all means and all varieties.—*Jeremy Taylor's Miracles of the Divine Mercy*; part I. § 6.

9. If God be our Father, no real evil shall befall us; 'there shall no evil befall thee.'¹ It is not said, no trouble: but no evil. God's children are privileged persons; they are privileged from the hurt of every thing; 'nothing shall by any means hurt you.'² The hurt and malignity of the affliction is taken away: affliction to a wicked man hath evil in it; it makes him worse; 'men were scorched with great heat and blasphemed the name of God.'³ But no evil befalls a child of God; he is bettered by affliction; 'that ye might be made partakers of his holiness.'⁴ What hurt doth the furnace to the gold? it only makes it purer. What hurt doth afflictions to grace? only refine and purify it. What a great privilege is this, to be freed, though not from the stroke of affliction, yet from the sting! No evil shall touch a saint; when the dragon hath poisoned the water, they say, the unicorn with his horn doth draw out the poison: Christ hath drawn out the poison of every affliction, that it cannot prejudice a child of God. Again, no evil befalls a child of God, because no condemnation; 'no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'⁵ God doth not condemn them, and conscience doth not condemn them. Both jury and judge acquit them; then no evil befalls them, for nothing is really an evil but that which damns.

10. If God be our Father, this may make us go with cheerfulness to the throne of grace. Were a man to petition his enemy, there were little hope; but when a child petitions his father, he may come with confidence to speed. The word *father* works upon God, it toucheth his very bowels. What can a father deny his child? 'If a son ask bread will he give him a stone?'⁶ This may embolden us to go to God for pardon of sin, and further degrees of sanctity. We pray to a Father of mercy sitting upon a throne of grace; 'if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Spirit to them that ask him?' This did quicken the church, and add wings to prayer; 'look down from heaven;'⁷ 'doubtless thou art our Father.'⁸ Who doth God keep his mercies for, but his children? Three things may cause boldness in prayer: we have a Father to pray to, and the Spirit to help us to pray, and an Advocate to present our prayers. God's children should in all their troubles run to their heavenly Father,

as that sick child; 'he said unto his father, my head, my head.'⁹ So pour out thy complaint to God in prayer, 'Father, my heart, my heart! my dead heart! quicken it; my hard heart, soften it in Christ's blood! Father, my heart! my heart!' Sure, God, that hears the cry of the ravens, will hear the cry of his children.

11. If God be our Father, he will stand between us and danger; a father will keep off danger from his child. God calls himself a shield; a shield defends the head, guards the vitals: God shields off danger from his children; 'I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee.'¹⁰ God is a hiding-place.¹¹ God preserved Athanasius strangely; he put it into his mind to depart out of the house he was in, the night before the enemy came to search for him. As God hath a breast to feed, so he hath wings to cover his children; 'He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.'¹² God appoints his holy angels to be a lifeguard about his children.¹³ Never was any prince so well-guarded as a believer. The angels, *1st.* are a numerous guard; 'the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.'¹⁴ The horses and chariots of fire were the angels of God, to defend the prophet Elisha. *2d.* A strong guard; one angel, in a night, slew an hundred and fourscore, and five thousand.¹⁵ If one angel slew so many, what would an army of angels have done? *3d.* The angels are a swift guard; they are ready in an instant to help God's children: therefore they are described with wings to show their swiftness; they fly to our help; 'at the beginning of thy supplication the commandment came forth, and I am come to thee.'¹⁶ Here was a swift motion for the angel to come from heaven to earth between the beginning and ending of Daniel's prayer. *4th.* The angels are a watchful guard; not like Saul's guard, asleep when their lord was in danger.¹⁷ The angels are a vigilant guard, they watch God's children to defend them; 'the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him.'¹⁸ There is an invisible guardianship of angels about God's children.

12. If God be our Father, we shall not want any thing that he sees is good for us; 'they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.'¹⁹ God is pleased sometimes to keep his children to hard commons, but it is good for them; sheep

¹ Ps. 91. 10.² Lu. 10. 19.³ He. 16. 9.⁴ He. 12. 10.⁵ Ro. 8. 1.⁶ Mat. 7. 9.⁷ Lu. 11. 13.⁸ Is. 63. 15.

Is. 63. 16.

⁹ 2 Ki. 4. 19. ¹⁰ Ac. 18. 10. ¹¹ Ps. 27. 5. ¹² Ps. 91. 4.¹³ He. 1. 14. ¹⁴ 2 Ki. 6. 17. ¹⁵ 2 Ki. 19. 32. ¹⁶ Da. 9. 21, 23.¹⁷ 1 Sa. 26. 12.¹⁸ Ps. 34. 7.¹⁹ Ps. 34. 10.

thrive best on short pasture: God sees too much may not be good: plenty breeds surfeit. 'Our minds wax wanton in prosperity.' God sees it good sometimes to diet his children, and keep them short, that they may run the heavenly race the better; it was good for Jacob that there was a famine in the land, it was a means to bring him to his son Joseph: so it is that God's children sometimes see the world's emptiness, that they may acquaint themselves more with Christ's fulness. If God see it to be good for them to have more of the world, they shall have it: God will not let them want any good thing.

13. If God be our Father, all the promises of the Bible belong to us; God's children are called 'heirs of promise.' A wicked man can lay claim to nothing in the Bible but the curses; he hath no more to do absolutely with the promises, than a ploughman hath to do with the city charter; the promises are children's bread; the promises are the breasts of the gospel, milking out consolations; and who are to suck of these breasts but God's children? The promise of pardon is for them; 'I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me.'¹ The promise of healing is for them:² the promise of salvation.³ The promises are supports of faith; they are God's scaled deed; they are a Christian's cordial. O the heavenly comforts which are distilled from the limbeck of the promises! Saint Chrysostom compares the scripture to a garden, the promises are the fruit-trees that grow in this garden; a child of God may go to any promise in the Bible, and pluck comfort from it: he is an heir of the promise.

14. God makes all his children conquerors: They are born of God, and are conquerors. 1st. They conquer themselves; 'He who overcomes himself, is braver than the man who conquers the strongest fortifications.' The saints conquer their own lusts; they bind these princes in fetters of iron.⁴ Though the children of God may sometimes be foiled, and lose a single battle, yet not the victory. 2d. They conquer the world; the world holds forth her two breasts of profit and pleasure, and many are overcome by it, but the children of God have a world-conquering faith; 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'⁵ 3d. They conquer their enemies; how can that be, when they oft take away their lives? (1.) They conquer, by not complying with them; the three children would not fall down

to the golden image;⁷ they would rather burn than bow: here they were conquerors. He who complies with another's lust, is a captive; he who refuseth to comply, is a conqueror. (2.) God's children conquer their enemies by heroic patience. A patient Christian, like the anvil, bears all strokes invincibly; thus the martyrs overcame their enemies by patience. Nay, God's children 'are more than conquerors.'⁸ How are God's children more than conquerors? Because they conquer without loss; and because they are crowned after death, which other conquerors are not.

15. If God be our Father he will now and then send us some tokens of his love. God's children live far from home, and meet sometimes with coarse usage from the unkind world; therefore God, to encourage his children, sends them sometimes tokens and pledges of his love. What are these? He gives them a return of prayer, there is a token of love; he quickens and enlargeth their hearts in duty, there is a token of love; he gives them the firstfruits of his Spirit which are love-tokens.⁹ As God gives the wicked the first fruits of hell, horror of conscience and despair; so he gives his children the first fruits of his Spirit, joy and peace, which are foretastes of glory. Some of God's children having received those tokens of love from their heavenly Father, have been so transported, that they have died for joy, as the glass oft breaks with the strength of the wine put into it.

16. If God be our Father, he will indulge and spare us; 'I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'¹⁰ God's sparing his children, imports this his clemency towards them; he doth not punish them as he might; 'He hath not dealt with us according to our sins.'¹¹ We oft do that which merits wrath, grieve God's Spirit, relapse into sin; God passeth by much, and spares us; God did not spare his natural Son,¹² yet he will spare his adopted sons. God threatened Ephraim, to make him as the chaff driven with the whirlwind, but he soon repented; 'yet I am the Lord thy God';¹³ 'I will be thy king.'¹⁴ Here God spared him as a father spares his son. Israel oft provoked God with their complaints, but God used clemency toward them, he oft answered their murmurings with mercies; here he spared them as a father spares his son.

17. If God be our Father, he will put honour

¹ He. 6. 17.
⁴ Je. 23. 6.

² Je. 33. 8.
⁵ Ps. 149. 8.

³ Is. 57. 18.
⁶ 1 Jno. 5. 4.

⁷ Da. 3. 18. ⁸ Ro. 8. 37. ⁹ Ro. 8. 23. ¹⁰ Mal. 3. 17.
¹¹ Ps. 103. 10. ¹² Ro. 8. 22. ¹³ Ho. 13. 4. ¹⁴ Ho. 13. 10.

and renown upon us at the last day. 1. He will clear the innocency of his children.* God's children in this life are strangely misrepresented to the world. They are loaded with invectives, they are called factious, seditious; Elijah, the troubler of Israel; Luther was called the trumpet of rebellion; Athanasius was accused to the emperor Constantine, to be the raiser of tumults; the primitive Christians were accused to be 'killers of their children,' 'guilty of incest;' as Tertullus reported St Paul to be a pestilent person.¹ Famous Wickliffe was called the idol of the heretics, and that he died drunk. If Satan cannot defile God's children, he will disgrace them; if he cannot strike his fiery darts into their conscience, he will put a dead fly into their name; but God will one day clear his children's innocency, he will roll away their reproach. As God will make a resurrection of bodies, so of names; 'the Lord God shall wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away.'² God will be the saints' compurgator; 'He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.'³ The night casts its dark mantle upon the most beautiful flowers; but the light comes in the morning and dispels the darkness, and every flower appears in its orient brightness: so the wicked may by misreports darken the honour and repute of the saints; but God will dispel this darkness, and cause their names to shine forth: 'He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light.'⁴ As God did stand up for the honour of Moses, when Aaron and Miriam went about to eclipse his fame; 'wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?'⁵ so will God say one day to the wicked, 'wherefore were ye not afraid to defame and traduce my children? they having

my image upon them, how durst ye abuse my picture?' At last God's children shall come forth out of all their calumnies, as a 'dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.'⁶ 2. God will make an open and honourable recital of all their good deeds: as the sins of the wicked shall be openly mentioned, to their eternal infamy and confusion; so all the good deeds of the saints shall be openly mentioned, 'and then shall every man have praise of God.'⁷ Every prayer made with melting eyes, every good service, every work of charity, shall be openly declared before men and angels: 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me.'⁸ Thus God will set a trophy of honour upon all his children at the last day; 'then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'⁹

18. If God be our Father, he will settle a good land of inheritance upon us; 'blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath begotten us again to a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled.'¹⁰ A father may be fallen to decay, and have nothing to leave his son but his blessing; but God will settle an inheritance on his children, and an inheritance no less than a kingdom; 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'¹¹ This kingdom is more glorious and magnificent than any earthly kingdom; it is set out by pearls and precious stones, the richest jewels.¹² What are all the rarities of the world to this kingdom; the coasts of pearl, the islands of spices, the rocks of diamonds? In this heavenly kingdom is that which is satisfying; unparalleled beauty, rivers of pleasure; and this for ever: 'at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.'¹³ Heaven's eminency is its permanency; and this kingdom God's children shall enter into immediately after death: there is a sudden transition and passage from death to glory; 'absent from the body, present with the Lord.'¹⁴ God's children shall not wait long for their inheritance; it is but winking, and they shall see God. How may this comfort God's children, who perhaps are low in the world! Your Father in heaven will settle a kingdom upon you at death, such a kingdom as eye hath not seen; he will give you a crown not of gold, but glory; he will give you white

¹ Ac. 24. 4. ² Is. 25. 8. ³ Ps. 37. 6. ⁴ Nu. 12. 8.

* He meditates often on the probability of his being involved in such circumstances, as may render it necessary for him to subject himself to disgrace and obloquy; thus familiarizing himself with them betimes, and preparing himself, that, when the trying hour arrives, they may not take him unawares. But the cultivation of the desire of 'that honour which cometh from God,' he finds the most effectual means of bringing his mind into a proper temper, in what regards the love of human approbation. Christian wouldst thou indeed reduce this affection under just control? Rise on the wings of contemplation, until the praises and the censures of men die away upon the ear, and the still small voice of conscience is no longer drowned by the din of this nether world. — Here we dwell in a variable atmosphere; the prospect is at one time darkened by the gloom of disgrace, and at another the eye is dazzled by the gleamings of glory; but thou hast now ascended above this inconstant region; no storms agitate, no clouds obscure the air; the lightnings play, and the thunders roll beneath thee.—*Wilderforce's Practical View*, c. 4. s. 3.

⁵ Ps. 68. 13.

⁶ 1 Co. 4. 5.

⁷ Mat. 25. 35, 36.

⁸ Mat. 13. 43.

⁹ 1 Pe. 1. 3, 4.

¹⁰ Lu. 12. 32.

¹¹ Re. 12. 19.

¹² Ps. 16. 11.

¹³ 2 Co. 5. 4.

robes lined with immortality: 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.'

19. If God be our Father, it is a comfort, 1st, in ease of loss of relations. Hast thou lost a father? Yet, if thou art a believer, thou art no orphan, thou hast an heavenly Father, a Father that never dies, 'who only hath immortality.'¹ 2d. It is a comfort, in ease of death; God is thy Father, and at death thou art going to thy Father; well might Paul say, death is yours.² It is your friend that will carry you home to your Father. How glad are children when they are going home! This was Christ's comfort at death, he was going to his Father; 'I leave the world, and go to the Father';³ 'I ascend to my Father.'⁴ If God be our Father, we may with comfort, at the day of death, resign our souls into his hand: so did Christ; 'Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit.'⁵ If a child hath any jewel, he will, in time of danger, put it into his father's hands, where he thinks it will be kept most safe: our soul is our richest jewel, we may at death resign our souls into God's hands, where they will be safer than in our own keeping: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' What a comfort is this, death carries a believer to his Father's house, 'where are delights unspeakable and full of glory!' How glad was old Jacob when he saw the waggons and chariots to carry him to his son Joseph! The text saith, his spirit revived.⁶ Death is a triumphant chariot to carry every child of God to his Father's mansion-house.

20. If God be our Father, he will not disinherit his children; God may for a time desert them, but not disinherit them. The sons of kings have been sometimes disinherited by the cruelty of usurpers; as, Alexander the Great's son was put by his just right, by the violence and ambition of his father's captains; but what power on earth shall hinder the heirs of the promise from their inheritance? Men cannot, and God will not cut off the entail. The Arminians hold falling away from grace, and so a child of God may be defeated of his inheritance: but I shall show you that God's children can never be degraded or disinherited, their heavenly Father will not cast them off from being children. 1. It is evident God's children cannot be finally disinherited, by virtue of the eternal decree of heaven. God's decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saints' perseverance depends; God's decree ties the knot

of adoption so fast, that neither sin, death, not hell, can break it asunder; 'whom he did predestinate, them he also called,'⁷ &c. Predestination is nothing else but God's decreeing a certain number to be heirs of glory, on whom he will settle the crown; whom he predestinates, he glorifies. What shall hinder God's electing love or make his decree null and void? 2. Beside God's decree, he hath engaged himself by promise, that the heirs of heaven shall never be put by their inheritance. God's promises are not like blanks in a lottery, but as a sealed deed which cannot be reversed; the promises are the saints' royal charter; and this is one promise that their heavenly Father will not disinherit them; 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.'⁸ God's fidelity, which is the richest pearl of his crown, is engaged in this promise for his children's perseverance; 'I will not turn away from them.' A child of God cannot fall away, while he is held fast in these two arms of God, his love, and his faithfulness. 3. Jesus Christ undertakes, that all God's children by adoption shall be preserved in a state of grace till they inherit glory. As the heathens feigned of Atlas that he did bear up the heavens from falling: Jesus Christ is that blessed Atlas, that bears up the saints from falling away.

Q. *How doth Christ preserve the saints' graces, till they come to heaven?*

A. 1. By the influx of his Spirit. Christ carries on grace in the souls of the elect, by the influence and co-operation of his Spirit. Christ doth, by his Spirit, continually excite and quicken grace in the godly; his Spirit doth blow up the sparks of grace into a holy flame; the Spirit is Christ's vicar on earth, his proxy, his executor, to see that all that Christ hath purchased for the saints be made good. Christ hath obtained an inheritance incorruptible for them,⁹ and the Spirit of Christ is his executor, to see that this inheritance be settled upon them. 2. Christ carries on grace perseveringly in the souls of the elect, by the prevalency of his intercession: 'he ever lives to make intercession for them.'¹⁰ Christ prays that every saint may hold out in grace till he comes to heaven: can the children of such prayers perish? If the heirs of heaven should be disinherited, and fall short of glory, then God's de-

¹ 1 Ti. 6. 16. ² 1 Co. 3. 22. ³ Jno. 16. 28. ⁴ Jno. 20. 17.
⁵ Lu. 23. 46. ⁶ Ge. 45. 27.

⁷ Ro. 8. 30. ⁸ Je. 32. 40. ⁹ 1 Pe. 1. 5. ¹⁰ He. 7. 25.

cree must be reversed, his promise broken, Christ's prayer frustrated, which were blasphemy to imagine. 3. That God's children cannot be disinherited or put by their right to the crown of heaven, is evident from their mystical union with Christ. Believers are incorporated into Christ; they are knit to Christ, as the members to the head, by the nerves and ligaments of faith, so that they cannot be broken off; 'the church which is his body.'¹ What was once said of Christ's natural body, is as true of his mystical, 'a bone of it shall not be broken.' As it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled and kneaded together; so it is impossible, when Christ and believers are once united, that they should ever, by the power of death or hell, be separated. Christ and his spiritual members make one Christ: now, is it possible that any part of Christ should perish? How can Christ want any member of his body mystical and be perfect? Every member is an ornament to the body, and adds to the honour of it. How can Christ part with any mystical member, and not part with some of his glory too? So that by all this it is evident that God's children must needs persevere in grace, and cannot be disinherited. If they could be disinherited then the scripture could not be fulfilled which tells us of glorious rewards for the heirs of promise; 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous.'² Now, if God's adopted children should fall away finally from grace, and miss of heaven, what reward were there for the righteous? And Moses did indiscreetly to look for the recompense of the reward, and so there would be a door opened to despair.

OBJ. This doctrine of God's children persevering, and having the heavenly inheritance settled on them, may cause carnal security, and make them less circumspect in their walking?

A. Corrupt nature may, as the spider, suck poison from this flower; but a sober Christian, who hath felt the efficacy of grace upon his heart, dares not abuse this doctrine;^{*} he knows

perseverance is attained in the use of means, therefore he walks holily, that so in the use of means he may arrive at perseverance. Paul knew that he should not be disinherited, and that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ; but who more holy and watchful than he? 'I keep under my body';³ 'I press towards the mark.'⁴ God's children have that holy fear in them, which keeps them from security and wantonness; they believe the promise, therefore they rejoice in hope; they fear their hearts, therefore they watch and pray.

Thus you see what strong consolation there is for all the heirs of the promise. Such as have God for their Father are the happiest persons on earth; they are in such a condition that nothing can hurt them; they have their Father's blessing, all things conspire for their good; they have a kingdom settled on them, and the entail can never be cut off. How may God's children be comforted in all conditions, let the times be what they will! Their Father is in heaven, he rules all; if troubles arise, they shall but carry God's children so much the sooner to their Father. The more violently the wind beats against the sails of a ship, the sooner the ship is brought to the haven; and the more fiercely God's children are assaulted, the sooner they come to their Father's house; 'wherefore comfort one another with these words.'⁵

USE 4. Of exhortation. Let us behave and carry ourselves as the children of such a Father, in several particulars.

1. Let us depend upon our heavenly Father, in all our straits and exigencies; let us believe that he will provide for us. Children rely upon their parents for the supply of wants: if we trust God for salvation, shall we not trust him for a livelihood? There is a lawful provident care to be used, but beware of a distrustful care; 'consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap, and God feedeth them?' doth God feed the birds of the air, and will he not feed his children? 'Consider the lilies how they grow; they spin not; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these:'⁶ doth God clothe the lilies, and will he not clothe his lambs? Even the wicked taste of God's bounty; 'their eyes stand out with fatness:'⁷ doth God feed his slaves, and will he not feed his family?

¹ Ep. 1. 22, 23.

² Ps. 58. 11.

* We stand not, like Adam, upon our own bottom, but are branches of such a vine as never withers, members of such a head as never dies; sharers in such a spirit as cleanseth, heal-eth, and purifieth the heart: partakers of such promises as are sealed with the oath of God. Since, then, we live not by our own life, but by the life of Christ; are not led or sealed by our own spirit, but by the Spirit of Christ; do not obtain merriness by our own prayers, but by the intercession of Christ; stand not reconciled in virtue of our own endeavours, but by the propitiation wrought by Christ, who 'loved us when we were enemies'; who is both able and willing to save us to the uttermost, and to preserve his own mercies in us; to whose office it belongs to

³ 1 Co. 9. 27.

⁴ Ph. 3. 14.

⁵ 1 Th. 4. 18.

⁶ Lu. 12. 24.

⁷ Lu. 12. 27.

⁸ Ps. 73. 7.

take order that none who are given to him be lost; undoubtedly that life of Christ in us which is thus underproped; though it be not privileged from temptations, nor from backslidings, yet is an abiding life.—*Reynolds's Three Treatises*, p. 454.

God's children may not have so liberal a share in the things of this life,—but little meal in the barrel; they may be drawn low, but not drawn dry; they shall have so much as God sees is good for them; 'they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.'¹ If God gives them not always what they crave, he will give them what they need; if he gives them not a feast, he will give them a bait by the way; let God's children therefore depend upon God's fatherly providence: givenot way to distrustful thoughts, distracting cares, or indirect means; God can provide for you without your sins; 'casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.'² An earthly parent may have affection for his child, and would provide for him, but sometimes he is not able, but God can create a supply for his children, yea, he hath promised a supply; 'verily thou shalt be fed.'³ Will God give his children heaven, and will he not give them enough to bear their charges thither? Will he give them a kingdom, and deny them daily bread? O depend upon your heavenly Father! He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'⁴

2. If God be our Father, let us imitate him. The child doth not only bear his Father's image, but doth imitate him in his speech, gesture, behaviour: if God be our Father, let us imitate him; 'be ye followers of God as dear children.'⁵ *1st.* Imitate God in forgiving injuries; 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions.'⁶ As the sun scatters not only thin mists, but thick clouds, so God pardons great offences; imitate God in this, 'forgiving one another.'⁷ Cranmer was a man of a forgiving spirit, he did bury injuries, and requite good for evil; he who hath God for his Father, hath God for his pattern. *2d.* Imitate God in works of mercy; 'he looseth the prisoners';⁸ 'he opens his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing';⁹ he drops his sweet dew as well upon the thistle as the rose: imitate God in works of mercy, relieve the wants of others, be rich in good works, 'be merciful as your Father also is merciful.'¹⁰ Be not so hard-hearted, as to shut the poor out of the lines of communication. Dives denied Lazarus a crumb of bread, and Dives was denied a drop of water.

3. If God be our Father, let us submit patiently to his will; if he lay his strokes on us, they are the corrections of a Father, not the

punishments of a judge; this made Christ so patient; 'shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?'¹¹ He sees we need affliction,¹² he appoints it as a diet-drink, to purge and sanctify us,¹³ therefore dispute not, but submit: 'we had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence';¹⁴ they might correct out of a humour, but God doeth it for our profit;¹⁵ therefore say, as Eli, 'it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.'¹⁶ What gets the child by struggling, but more blows? What got Israel by their murmuring and rebelling, but a longer and more tedious march, and at last their carcasses fell in the wilderness?

4. If God be our Father, let this cause in us a childlike reverence; 'if I be a father, where is my honour?'¹⁷ This is a part of the honour we give to God, when we reverence and adore him. If you have not always a childlike confidence, yet always preserve a childlike reverence. And how ready are we to run into extremes, either to despond or grow wanton? Because God is a Father, therefore do not think you may be secure and take liberty to sin; if you do, God may carry it so as if he were no Father, he may throw hell into your conscience. When David presumed upon God's paternal affection, and began to wax wanton under mercy, God made him pay dear for it; he withdrew the sense of his love, and though he had the heart of a Father, yet he had the look of an enemy. David prayed, 'cause me to hear the voice of joy';¹⁸ he lay several months in desertion, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. Oh keep alive holy fear! With a childlike confidence, preserve an humble reverence; the Lord is a Father, therefore love to serve him; he is the mighty God, therefore fear to offend him.

5. If God be our Father, let us walk obediently; 'as obedient children.'¹⁹ When God bids you be humble and self-denying, deny yourselves; part with your bosom-sin; be sober in your attire, savoury in your speeches, grave in your deportment, obey your Father's voice; open to God, as the flower opens to the sun; as you expect your Father's blessing, obey him in whatever he commands, first and second table duties. A lutanist, that he may make sweet music, toucheth upon every string of the lute: the ten commandments are like a ten-

¹ Ps. 34. 10. ² 1 Pe. 5. 7. ³ Ps. 37. 3. ⁴ He. 13. 5.

⁵ Ep. 5. 1. ⁶ Is. 44. 22. ⁷ Ep. 4. 32. ⁸ Ps. 146. 7.

⁹ Ps. 145. 16.

¹⁰ Lu. 6. 36.

¹¹ Jno. 18. 11.

¹² 1 Pe. 1. 6.

¹³ Is. 27. 9.

¹⁴ He. 12. 9.

¹⁵ He. 12. 10.

¹⁶ 1 Sa. 3. 18.

¹⁷ Mal. 1. 6.

¹⁸ Ps. 51. 8.

¹⁹ 1 Pe. 1. 14.

stringed instrument, touch upon every string, obey every commandment, or you cannot make sweet melody in religion. Obey your heavenly Father, though he commands things contrary to flesh and blood. When he commands to mortify sin, that sin which hath been dear to you; pluck out this right eye, that you may see the better to go to heaven. When he commands you to suffer for him, be ready to obey. Every good Christian hath a spirit of martyrdom in him, and is ready rather to suffer for the truth, than the truth should suffer. Luther said he had rather be a martyr than a monarch; Peter was crucified with his head downwards, as Eusebius; Ignatius called his chains his spiritual pearls, and did wear his fetters as a bracelet of diamonds: this is to carry it as God's children, when we obey his voice, and count not our lives dear, so that we may show our love to our heavenly Father; 'they loved not their lives to the death.'²

6. If God be your Father, show it by your cheerful looks that you are the children of such a Father. Too much dropping and despondency disparageth the relation you stand in to God. What though you meet with hard usage in the world? You are now in a strange land far from home; it will be shortly better with you, when you are in your own country, and your Father hath you in his arms. Doth not the heir rejoice in hope? shall the sons of a king walk dejected; 'why art thou, being the king's son, lean?'³ is God an unkind Father? are his commands grievous? hath he no land to give his heirs? Why then do God's children walk so sad? Never had children such privileges as they who are of the seed-royal of heaven, and have God for their Father: they should rejoice, therefore, who are within a few hours to be crowned with glory.

7. If God be our Father, let us honour him by walking very holily; 'be ye holy, for I am holy.'⁴ A young prince asking a philosopher how he should behave himself, the philosopher said, 'remember thou art a king's son:' do nothing but what becomes the son of a king; so remember you are the adopted sons and daughters of the high God, do nothing unworthy of such a relation. A debauched child is the disgrace of his father. 'Is this thy son's coat?' said they to Jacob, when they brought it home dipped in blood:⁵ so when we see a person defiled with malice, passion, drunken-

ness, we may say, is this the coat of God's adopted son? doth he look as an heir of glory? It is a blaspheming the name of God, to call him Father, yet live in sin. Such as profess God is their Father, yet live unholy, they will slander and defraud; these are as bad to God as heathens; 'are ye not as children of the Ethiopians to me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord?'⁶ The Ethiopians were uncircumcised, a base, ill-bred people; when Israel grew wicked, they were no better to God than Ethiopians. Loose, scandalous livers under the gospel, are no better in God's esteem than pagans and Indians; nay, they shall have a hotter place in hell. O let all who profess God to be their Father, honour him by their unspotted lives. Scipio abhorred the embraces of a harlot, because he was the general of an army: abstain from all sin, because you are born of God, and have God for your Father: 'abstain from all appearance of evil.'⁷ It was a saying of Augustus, 'an emperor should not only be free from crimes, but from the suspicion of them.' By a holy life you would bring glory to your heavenly Father, and cause others to become his children. Causinus in his hieroglyphics, speaks of a dove, whose wings being perfumed with sweet ointments, did draw the other doves after her: the holy lives of God's children is a sweet perfume to draw others to religion, and make them to be of the family of God. Justin Martyr saith, that which converted him to Christianity, was the beholding the blameless lives of the Christians.*

8. If God be our Father, let us love all that are his children; 'how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!'⁸ It is compared to ointment, for the sweet fragraney of it; 'love the brotherhood.'⁹ 'The mind feels affected in the same way toward a thing, and towards its likeness.' The saints are the walking pictures of God; if God be our

⁶ Am. 9. 7. ⁷ 1 Th. 5. 22. ⁸ Ps. 133. 1.

⁹ Ps. 133. 1.

¹⁰ 1 Pe. 2. 17.

* Remember, we as Christians profess a peculiar relation to God as his children, his witnesses, his people, his temple; the character of that glorious Being and of his religion will be contemplated by the world, chiefly through the medium of our spirit and conduct, which ought to display, as in a mirror, the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. It is strictly appropriate to the subject of our present meditations to remind you that you are 'temples.' What purity, sanctity, and dignity, may be expected in persons who bear such a character! A Christian should look upon himself as something sacred and devoted, so that what involves but an ordinary degree of criminality in others, in him partakes of the nature of sacrilege; what is a breach of trust in others, is in him the profanation of a temple.—*Rev. Robt. Hall's Letter on the work of the Spirit.*

¹ Ac. 21. 13. ² Re. 12. 11. ³ 2 Sa. 13. 4.

⁴ 1 Pe. 1. 16.

⁵ Ge. 37. 32

Father, we love to see his picture of holiness in believers; we pity them for their infirmities, but love them for their graces; we prize their company above others.¹ It may justly be suspected that God is not their Father who love not God's children; though they retain the communion of saints in their creed, yet they banish the communion of saints out of their company.

9. If God be our Father, let us show heavenly-mindedness; they who are born of God do set their 'affections on things that are above.'² O ye children of the high God, do not disgrace your high birth by sordid covetousness! What, a son of God, and a slave to the world! What, sprung from heaven, and buried in the earth! For a Christian, who pretends to derive his pedigree from heaven, yet wholly to mind earthly things, is to debase himself; as if a king should leave his throne to follow the plough. 'Seekest thou great things for thyself?'³ as if the Lord had said, 'what! thou Barak, thou who art born of God, akin to angels, and by thy office a Levite, dost thou debase thyself, and spot the silver wings of thy grace, by beliming them with earth! seekest thou great things? seek them not.' The earth chokes the fire; earthliness chokes the fire of good affections.

10. If God be our Father, let us own our heavenly Father in the worst times; stand up in his cause, defend his truths. Athanasius owned God when most of the world turned Arians. If sufferings come, do not deny God; he is a bad son, who denies his father. Such as are ashamed of God in times of danger, God will be ashamed to own them for his children; 'whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.'⁴ So I have done with the first part of the preface, 'Our Father.'

II. The second part of the preface, which I shall but briefly touch on, is, 'which art in heaven.' God is said to be in heaven, not that he is so included there, that he is no where else; for the 'heaven of heavens cannot contain him';⁵ but the meaning is, God is chiefly resident in the empyrean heaven, which the apostle calls 'the third heaven';⁶ there God doth most give forth glory to his saints and angels.

Q. *What may we learn from this that God is in heaven?*

A. I. Hence we learn that we are to raise our minds in prayer above the earth. God is no where to be spoken with but in heaven; God never denied that soul his suit who went as far as heaven to ask it. 2. We learn from God's being in heaven, his sovereign power. 'By this word is meant, that all things are subject to his governing power,' CALVIN. 'Our God is in the heavens, he hath done whatever he pleased.'⁷ God being in heaven governs the universe, and orders all occurrences here below for the good of his children; when the saints are in straits and dangers, and see no way of relief, he can send from heaven and help them; 'he shall send from heaven, and save me.'⁸ 3. We learn God's glory and majesty; he is in heaven, therefore he is covered with light;⁹ 'clothed with honour,'¹⁰ and is far above all worldly princes as heaven is above earth. 4. We learn, from God's being in heaven, his omniscency. 'All things are naked, and opened to his eye.'¹¹ Men plot and contrive against the church; but God is in heaven, and they do nothing but what our Father sees. If a man were on the top of a tower or theatre, he might thence see all the people below: God is in heaven, as in a high tower or theatre, he might thence see all the people below: God is in heaven, as in a the backs of the righteous, and then pour in vinegar; God writes down their cruelty; 'I have surely seen the afflictions of my people.'¹² God is in heaven, and he can thunder out of heaven upon his enemies; 'the Lord also thundered in the heavens; yea, he sent out arrows, and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.'¹³ 5. We learn from God's being in heaven, comfort for the children of God; when they pray to their Father, the way to heaven cannot be blocked up. One may have a father living in foreign parts, but the way, both by sea and by land, may be so blocked up, that there is no coming to him; but thou, saint of God, when thou prayest to thy Father, he is in heaven; and though thou art ever so confined, thou mayest have access to him. A prison cannot keep thee from thy God; the way to heaven can never be blocked up.

So I have done with the word 'Father: I shall next speak of the pronoun 'Our, Father.'

¹ Ps. 119. 63.² Col. 3. 2.³ Je. 45. 5.⁴ Mar. 8. 38.⁵ 1 Ki. 8. 27⁶ 2 Co. 12. 2.⁷ Ps. 115. 3. ⁸ Ps. 57. 3. ⁹ Ps. 104. 2. ¹⁰ Ps. 104. 1.¹¹ He. 4. 13.¹² Ex. 3. 7.¹³ Ps. 18. 13, 14.

in the first there is an appellation, '*Father*;' in the second, an appropriation, '*Our Father*.' Christ, by this word *Our*, would teach us thus much; 'that in all our prayers to God, we should act faith.' '*Father*,' denotes reverence; '*Our Father*,' denotes faith. In all our prayers to God we should exercise faith, '*Our Father*.' Faith is that which baptizeth prayer, and gives it a name; it is called 'the prayer of faith;' without faith, it is speaking, not praying. Faith is the breath of prayer; prayer is dead unless faith breathe in it. Faith is a necessary requisite in prayer. The oil of the sanctuary was made up of several sweet spices, pure myrrh, cassia, cinnamon:² faith is the chief spice, or ingredient in prayer, which makes it go up to the Lord, as sweet incense; 'let him ask in faith;³ 'whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'⁴ '*Lord*,' said Cruciger, 'I pray, though with a weak faith, yet with faith.' Prayer is the gun we shoot with, fervency is the fire that dischargeth it, and faith is the bullet which pierceth the throne of grace. Prayer is the key of heaven, faith is the hand that turns it; pray in faith, '*our Father*.' Faith must take prayer by the hand, or there is no coming nigh to God; prayer without faith is unsuccessful. If a poor handy-craftsman, that lives by his labour, hath spoiled his tools that he cannot work, how shall he subsist? Prayer is the tool we work with, which procures all good for us: but unbelief spoils and blunts our prayers, and then we can get no blessing from God; a prayer that is faithless is fruitless. As Joseph said, 'you shall not see my face, unless you bring your brother Benjamin with you,'⁵ so prayer cannot see God's face, unless it bring its brother faith with it. What is said of Israel, 'they could not enter in because of unbelief,'⁶ is as true of prayer, it cannot enter into heaven, because of unbelief. This makes prayer often suffer shipwreck, because it dasheth upon the rock of unbelief. O sprinkle faith in prayer! We must say, '*our Father*.'

Q. 1. *What doth praying in faith imply?*

A. Praying in faith implies the having of faith; the act implies the habit. To walk implies a principle of life; so to pray in faith implies a habit of grace. None can pray in faith but believers.

Q. 2. *What is it to pray in faith?*

A. 1. To pray in faith, is to pray for that which

God hath promised; where there is no promise, we cannot pray in faith. 2. To pray in faith, is to pray in Christ's meritorious name; 'whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do.'⁷ To pray in Christ's name, is to pray in the hope of confidence in Christ's merit. When we present Christ to God in prayer, when we carry the Lamb slain in our arms, when we say 'Lord, we are sinners, but here is our surety, for Christ's sake be propitious;' this is coming to God in Christ's name, and this is to pray in faith. 3. To pray in faith, is, in prayer to fix our faith on God's faithfulness, believing that he doth hear, and will help; this is a taking hold of God.⁸ By prayer we draw nigh to God, by faith we take hold of him;⁹ the children of Judah cried unto the Lord; and this was the crying of faith; they 'prevailed, because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers.'¹⁰ Making supplication to God, and staying the soul on God, is praying in faith. To pray, and not rely on God for the granting our petitions, saith Pelican; 'is to abuse and put a scorn upon God.' By praying, we seem to honour God; by not believing we affront him. In prayer we say, '*almighty, merciful Father*;' by not believing, we blot out all his titles again.

Q. 3. *How may we know that we do truly pray in faith? We may say, our Father, and think we pray in faith, when it is in presumption: how therefore may we know that we do indeed pray in faith?*

A. 1. When our faith in prayer is humble. A presumptuous person hopes to be heard in prayer for some inherent worthiness in himself; he is so qualified, and hath done God good service, therefore he is confident God will hear his prayer. 'The Pharisee stood and prayed thus, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust: I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'¹¹ This was a presumptuous prayer; but a sincere heart doth as well act humility in prayer as faith; 'the publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner!¹² 'God be merciful!' there was faith; 'to me a sinner,' there was humility and a sense of unworthiness. 2. We may know we pray in faith, when, though we have not the present thing we pray for, yet we believe God will grant it, therefore we will stay his leisure. A Christian having a command to pray, and a

¹ Ja. 5. 15.

² Ex. 30. 23.

³ Ja. 1. 6.

⁴ Mat. 21. 22.

⁵ Ge. 43. 3.

⁶ He. 3. 19.

⁷ Jno. 14. 13.

⁸ Is. 64. 7.

⁹ 2 Ch. 13. 14.

¹⁰ 2 Ch. 13. 18.

¹¹ Lu. 18. 11, 12.

¹² Lu. 18. 13

promise, he is resolved to follow God with prayer, and not give over; as Peter knocked, yet the door was not opened, but he continued knocking, and at last it was opened:¹ so a Christian prays, and prays, but hath no answer, but he will continue knocking at heaven's door, knowing an answer will come; 'thou wilt answer me.'² Here is one that prays in faith. Christ saith, 'pray and faint not.'³ A believer, at Christ's word, lets down the net of prayer, and though he catch nothing, he will cast the net of prayer again, believing that mercy will come. Patience in prayer is nothing but faith spun out.

USE 1. It reproves them that pray in formality, not in faith; they question whether God hears or will grant; 'ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss.'⁴ He doth not say, ye ask that which is unlawful; but ye ask amiss; when men pray and believe not, they ask amiss, and therefore they receive not. Unbelief clips the wings of prayer, that it will not fly to the throne of grace; the rubbish of unbelief stops the current of prayer.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Let us set faith awork in prayer, 'our father.' The husbandman sows in hope: prayer is the seed we sow; when the hand of faith scatters this seed, it brings forth a fruitful crop of blessing; prayer is the ship we send out to heaven: when faith makes an adventure in this ship, it brings home large returns of mercy. O pray in faith! Say, 'our Father.' And that we may act faith in prayer, consider, 1. God's readiness to hear prayer. Did God forbid all addresses to him, it would put a damp upon the trade of prayer; but God's ear is open to prayer. It is one of the names by which God is known; 'O thou that hearest prayer.'⁵ The Ediles among the Romans had their doors always standing open, that all who had petitions might have free access to them: God is both ready to hear and grant prayer; this may encourage faith in prayer. And whereas some may say, they have prayed, but have had no answer: *1st.* God may hear prayer, though he do not presently answer. We write a letter to a friend; he may have received it, though we have yet had no answer of it. Perhaps thou prayest for the light of God's face; God may lend thee an ear, though he doth not show thee his face. *2d.* God may give an answer to prayer, when we do not perceive it. His giving a heart to pray, and inflaming the affections in prayer is an answer of

prayer; 'in the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' David's inward strength was an answer of prayer, therefore let God's readiness to hear prayer encourage faith in prayer. 2. That we may act faith in prayer, consider we do not pray alone. Christ prays over our prayers again; Christ's prayer is the ground why our prayer is heard: Christ takes the dross out of our prayer, and presents nothing to his Father but pure gold: Christ mingles his sweet odours with the prayers of the saints.⁶ Think of the dignity of his person, he is God; and the sweetness of his relation, he is a Son. O what encouragement is here, to pray in faith! Our prayers are put into the hand of a Mediator. Christ's prayer is mighty and powerful. 3. We pray to God for nothing but what is pleasing to him, and he hath a mind to grant; if a son ask nothing but what his father is willing to bestow, this may make him go to him with confidence. When we pray to God for holy hearts, there is nothing more pleasing to him; 'this is the will of God, even your sanctification.'⁷ We pray that God would give us a heart to love him, and there is nothing he more desires than our love. How may this make us pray in faith, when we pray for nothing but what is acceptable to God, and which he delights to bestow! 4. To encourage faith in prayer, consider the many sweet promises that God hath made to prayer. The cork keeps the net from sinking: the promises are the cork to keep faith from sinking in prayer. God hath bound himself to us by his promises. The bible is bespangled with promises made to prayer: 'he will be very gracious to thee at the voice of thy cry';⁸ 'the Lord is rich unto all that call upon him';⁹ 'then shall ye find me, when ye search for me with all your heart';¹⁰ 'he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him.'¹¹ The Tyrians tied their god Hercules with a golden chain that he should not remove: God hath tied himself fast to us by his promises. How should these animate and spirit faith in prayer? Faith gets strength in prayer by sucking from the breast of a promise. 5. That we may act faith in prayer, consider, Jesus Christ hath purchased that which we pray for; we may think the things we ask for in prayer too great for us to obtain, but they are not too great for Christ to purchase. We pray for pardon, Christ hath purchased it with his blood; we

¹ Ac. 12. 16. ² Ps. 86. 7. ³ Lu. 18. 1.
⁴ Ja. 4. 3. ⁵ Ps. 65. 2.

Ps. 138. 3. ⁷ Re. 5. 8. ⁸ 1 Th. 4. 3. ⁹ Is. 50. 19.
¹⁰ Ro. 10. 12. ¹¹ Jer. 29. 13. ¹² Ps. 143. 19.

pray for the Spirit to animate and inspire us, the sending down of the Holy Ghost into our hearts is the fruit of Christ's death.¹ This may put life into our prayers, and make us pray in faith; because the things we ask in prayer, though they are more than we deserve, yet not more than Christ hath purchased for us. 6. To make us pray in faith, consider there is such a bountifulness in God that he often exceeds the prayers of his people; he gives them more than they ask; as Hannah asked a son, and God not only gave her a son but a prophet. Solomon asked wisdom, and God gave him not only wisdom, but riches and honour besides; Jacob prayed that God would but give him food and raiment, and the Lord increased his pilgrim's staff into two bands.² God is oft better to us than our prayers; as when Gehazi asked but one talent, Naaman would needs force two upon him;³ we ask one talent of mercy, and God gives two talents. The woman of Canaan asked but a crumb, namely, to have the life of her child; and Christ gave her more, he sent her home with the life of her soul. 7. The great success the prayer of faith hath found; like Jonathan's bow, it hath not returned empty. Luther saith, this little word *Father*, pronounced in faith, hath overcome God; 'deliver me, I pray thee.'⁴ And this was mixed with faith in the promise; 'thou saidst I will surely do thee good;⁵ and this prayer had power with God, and prevailed.⁶ The prayer of faith hath opened prison-doors, stopt the chariot of the sun, locked and unlocked heaven.⁷ The prayer of faith hath strangled the plots of enemies in the birth; it hath routed their forces; Moses' prayer against Amalek did more than Joshua's sword; and may not this hearten and corroborate faith in prayer? 8. If all this will not prevail, consider how heartless and comfortless it is to pray, and not in faith; the heart misgives secretly, God doth not hear, nor will he grant. Faithless praying must needs be

comfortless; for there is no promise made to unbelieving prayer. It is sad sailing where there is no anchoring, and sad praying where there is no promise to anchor upon.⁸ The disciples toiled all night and caught nothing; the unbeliever toils in prayer and catcheth nothing; he receives not any spiritual blessings, pardon of sin, or grace; as for the temporal mercies the unbeliever hath, he cannot look upon them as the fruit of prayer, but as the overflowings and spillings of God's bounty. Oh therefore labour to exert and put forth faith in prayer!

OBJ. *But there is so much sin cleaves to my prayer, that I fear it is not the prayer of faith, and God will not hear it.*

If thou mournest for this, it hinders not but that thy prayer may be in faith, and God may hear it. Weakness in prayer shall not make void the saint's prayers; 'I said in my haste, I am cut off.'⁹ There was much unbelief in this prayer: 'I said in my haste;' in the Hebrew, 'in my trembling.' David's faith did tremble and faint, yet God heard his prayer. The saint's passions do not hinder the saint's prayers;¹⁰ therefore be not discouraged: though sin will cleave to thy holy offering, yet these two things may comfort, thou mayest pray with faith, though with weakness, and God sees the sincerity, and will pass by the infirmity.

Q. *How shall we do to pray in faith?*

A. Implore the Spirit of God. We cannot say, 'our Father,' but by the Holy Ghost. God's Spirit helps us, not only to pray with sighs and groans, but with faith. The Spirit carries us to God, not only as to a Creator, but a Father; 'he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.'¹¹ 'Crying,' there the Spirit causeth us to pray with fervency; 'Abba, Father,' there the Spirit helps us to pray with faith. Prayer is the key of heaven; the Spirit helps faith to turn this key, and then it unlocks heaven.

OF THE FIRST PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MAT. 6. 9. *Hallowed be thy name.*

HAVING spoken of the introduction to the Lord's prayer, 'after this manner pray ye,' and the preface, 'our Father which art in heaven,' I come now, thirdly, to the prayer itself, which consists of seven petitions. A short body of

divinity is contained in them. I begin with the first petition.

I. 'Hallowed be thy name.' In the Latin, it is, *sanctificetur nomen tuum*,—sanctified be thy name.* In this petition, 'hallowed be thy

¹ Jno. 16. ² Ge. 32. 10. ³ 2 Ki. 5. 23. ⁴ Ge. 32. 11.

⁵ Ge. 32. 12. ⁶ Ho. 12. 1. ⁷ Ja. 5. 17.

⁸ Ja. 1. 7. ⁹ Ps. 31. 22. ¹⁰ Ja. 5. 17. ¹¹ Ga. 4. 6.

* The term 'hallow,' is not used here in the sense of 'to

name,' we pray that God's name may shine forth gloriously, and that it may be honoured and sanctified by us in the whole course and tenor of our lives. It was the angels' song, 'glory to God in the highest;' that is, let his name be glorified and hallowed. This petition, 'hallowed be thy name,' is set in the forefront, to show, that the hallowing of God's name is to be preferred before all things. 1. It is to be preferred before life; we pray, 'hallowed be thy name,' before we pray, 'give us this day our daily bread.' It is to be preferred before salvation;¹ God's glory is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. As Christ said of love, 'this is the first and great commandment;'² so I may say of this petition, 'hallowed be thy name,' it is the first and great petition; it contains the most weighty thing in religion, God's glory. When some of the other petitions shall be useless and out of date; we shall not need to pray in heaven, 'give us our daily bread,' because there shall be no hunger; nor, 'forgive us our trespasses,' because there shall be no sin; nor, 'lead us not into temptation,' because the old serpent is not there to tempt: yet the hallowing of God's name shall be of great use and request in heaven; we shall be ever singing hallelujahs, which is nothing else but the hallowing of God's name. Every person in the blessed Trinity, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, must have this honour, to be hallowed; their glory being equal, and their majesty co-eternal: 'hallowed be thy name.' To admire God's name is not enough; we may admire a conqueror, but when we say, 'hallowed be *thy name*;' we set God's name above every name, and not only admire him, but adore him; and this is proper only to the Deity. For the further explication, I shall propound three questions: 1. *What is meant by God's name?* 2. *What is meant by hallowing God's name?* 3. *When may we be said to hallow or sanctify God's name?*

Q. 1. *What is meant by God's name?*

1. By God's name is meant his essence; 'the name of the God of Jacob defend thee';³ that is, the God of Jacob defend thee. 2. By

God's name is meant any thing by which God may be known; as a man is known by his name; God's name is his attributes, wisdom, power, holiness, goodness; by these God is known as by his name.

Q. 2. *What is meant by hallowing God's name?*

To hallow, is to set apart a thing from the common use to some sacred end. As the vessels of the sanctuary were said to be hallowed, so to hallow God's name, is to set it apart from all abuses, and to use it holily and reverently. In particular, hallowing of God's name is to give him high honour and veneration, and render his name sacred. We can add nothing to God's essential glory; but we are said to honour and sanctify his name, when we lift him up in the world, and make him appear greater in the eyes of others. When a prince is crowned, there is something added really to his honour; but when we go to crown God with our triumphs and hallelujahs, there is nothing added to his essential glory; God cannot be greater than he is, only we may make him appear greater in the eyes of others.

Q. 3. *When may we be said to hallow and sanctify God's name?*

1. When we profess his name. Our meeting in his holy assembly is an honour done to God's name; this is good, but it is not enough. All that wear God's livery by profession, are not true servants; there are some professors Christ will at the last day profess against; 'I will profess I never knew you.'⁴ Therefore, to go a little further,

2. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we have a high appreciation and esteem of God; we set him highest in our thoughts. The Hebrew word *to honour*, signifies *to esteem precious*; we conceive of God in our minds as the most superexcellent and infinite good; we apprehend in God, a constellation of all beauties and delights; we adore God in his glorious attributes, which are the several beams by which his divine nature shines forth; we adore God in his works, which are bound up in three great volumes, creation, redemption, providence; we hallow and sanctify God's name, when we lift him highest in our souls; we esteem him a supereminent, incomprehensible God.

3. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we trust in his name; 'we have trusted

¹ Ro. 9. 1.

² Mat. 22. 36.

³ Ps. 20. 1.

sanctify,' but to signify the veneration with which it [God's name] should be regarded. An object is hallowed when its excellence is believed and declared, when the obligations it lays upon us to be holy are acknowledged, when its impulse is felt quickening us to act suitably to it, and when we use every means in our power to dilute its sanctifying influence.—*Belraque, Exp. Cat. b. 2. p. 319.*

⁴ Mat. 7. 23.

in his holy name; ¹ no way can we bring more revenues of honour to God, or make his crown shine brighter, than by confiding in him; 'Abraham was strong in faith, giving glory to God; ² there was an hallowing of God's name, as unbelief stains God's honour, and eclipseth his name; 'he that believeth not, God hath made him a liar: ³ so faith doth glorify and hallow God's name. The believer trusts his best jewels in God's hands; 'into thy hands I commit my spirit; ⁴ faith in a Mediator doth more honour and sanctify God's name, than martyrdom, or the most sublime acts of obedience.

4. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we never make mention of his name but with the highest reverence; God's name is sacred, and it must not be spoken of, but with veneration. The Scripture, when it speaks of God, gives him his titles of honour: 'blessed be the most high God; ⁵ 'blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. ⁶ To speak vainly or slightly of God, is a profaning his name, and is a taking his name in vain; let his name be hallowed; by giving God his venerable titles, we do as it were hang his jewels on his crown.

5. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we love his name; 'let them that love thy name be joyful; ⁷ and that love which is honouring God's name, must be a special discriminating love, the cream and flower of our love, such a love as we give to none besides; as the wife honours her husband, by giving him such a love as she gives to none else, a conjugal love, so we hallow God's name by giving him such love as we give to none else, a love joined with worship; 'he is thy Lord, and worship thou him. ⁸

6. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we give him a holy and spiritual worship: *1st.* When we give him the same kind of worship that he hath appointed: 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh to me: ⁹ that is, I will be sanctified with that very worship I have appointed. It is purity of worship God loves better than the pomp. It is a dishonouring of God's name, to bring any thing into his worship which he hath not instituted: as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will be served. Men will go to prescribe him, and superadd their inventions: this

God looks upon as offering strange fire, and it is a high provocation. 2. We give God the same heart devotion in worship as he hath appointed; 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. ¹⁰ The word for *fervent*, is a metaphor that alludes to water that seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in holy duties. To give God outside worship, and not the devotion of the heart, is, instead of hallowing and sanctifying him in an ordinance, to abuse him: as if one calls for wine, and you give him an empty glass; it is to deal with God, as Prometheus did with Jupiter, who did eat the flesh and present Jupiter with nothing but bones covered over with skin. Then we hallow God's name, and sanctify him in an ordinance, when we give him the vitals of religion, and a heart flaming with zeal.

7. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we hallow his day; 'hallow ye the sabbath-day. ¹¹ Our Christian sabbath, which comes in the room of the Jews' sabbath, is called the Lord's day. ¹² This was anciently called 'a day of light,' wherein Christ the Sun of Righteousness shines in an extraordinary manner. It is an honour done to God, to hallow his sabbath. *1st.* We must rest on this day from all secular works; 'bear no burden on the sabbath-day. ¹³ As Joseph, when he would speak with his brethren, thrust out the Egyptians, so when we would have converse with God on this day, we must thrust out all earthly employments. It is observable, Mary Magdalene refused to anoint Christ's dead body on the sabbath-day; ¹⁴ she had before prepared her ointment and spices, but came not to the sepulchre till the sabbath was past; she rested on that day from civil work, though it were a commendable and glorious work, the anointing of Christ's dead body. *2d.* We must in a solemn manner devote ourselves to God on this day; we must spend this whole day with God. Some will hear the word, but leave all their religion at church; they do nothing at home, they do not pray or repeat the word in their houses, and so they rob God of a part of his day. It is bewailing to see how God's day is profaned! Let no man think God's name is hallowed while his sabbath is broken.

8. We hallow and sanctify God's name, when we ascribe the honour of all we do to him; 'give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. ¹⁵ Herod, instead of hallowing God's

¹ Ps. 33. 21.² Ro. 4. 20.³ 1 Jno. 5. 10.⁴ Ps. 31. 5.⁵ Ge. 14. 20.⁶ Ne. 9. 5.⁷ Ps. 5. 11⁸ Ps. 45. 11.⁹ Le. 10. 3.¹⁰ Ro. 12. 11.¹¹ Je. 17. 22.¹² Re. 1. 10.¹³ Je. 17. 22.¹⁴ Lu. 23. 56.¹⁵ Ps. 96. 8.

name, stained the honour of his name, in assuming that praise to himself which was due to God.¹ We ought to take the honour from ourselves and give it to God: 'I laboured more abundantly than they all;² one would think this had savoured of pride, but the apostle pulls the crown from his own head, and sets it upon the head of free grace: 'yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' If a Christian hath any assistance in duty, or victory over temptation, he rears up a pillar, and writes upon it, 'hitherto the Lord hath helped me.' John Baptist transferred all the honour from himself to Christ; he was content to be eclipsed that Christ might shine the more; 'he that cometh after me is preferred before me.'³ I am but the herald, the voice of one crying; he is the prince; I am but a lesser star, he is the sun; I baptize only with water, he with the Holy Ghost. This is a hallowing God's name when we translate all the honour from ourselves to God; 'not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory!⁴ The king of Sweden wrote that motto on the battle at Leipsic; '*Ista a Domino facta sunt*;' 'the Lord hath wrought this victory for us.'

9. We hallow and sanctify God's name by obeying him. How doth a son more honour his father, than by obedience? 'I delight to do thy will, O my God!⁵ The wise men showed honour to Christ, not only by bowing the knee

¹ Ac. 12. 23. ² 1 Cor. 15. 10. ³ Jno. 1. 15.
⁴ Ps. 115. 1. ⁵ Ps. 40. 8.

* Among the several momentous doctrines that are developed in the system of revelation, none seems to have experienced a reception less consistent with the natural order of things, than that of the influence of the Spirit of God upon the mind and conduct of man.—Although it is plainly declared in various portions of scripture, still the only persons, as far as I know, by whom it is positively and unhesitatingly denied and despised, are professing Christians.—Permit me to lay before you the opinions of philosophic heathens, relative to the subject of divine influences.—Xenophon represents Cyrus, with his dying breath, humbly ascribing it to a divine influence on his mind, that he had been brought to acknowledge the care of Providence, and to bear his prosperity with a becoming moderation. Plato describes Socrates as declaring, that wheresoever virtue comes, it is apparently the fruit of a divine dispensation.—Plato also himself observes, that virtue is not to be taught but by divine assistance. And he affirms, that 'if any man escape the temptations of life, and behave himself as becomes a worthy member of society, he has reason to own that it is God who saves him. Simplicius has a prayer to God as the father and guide of reason, so to co-operate with us, as to purge us from all carnal and brutish affections, that we may be enabled to act according to the dictates of reason, and to attain to the true knowledge of himself.'—Tully declares that 'no man was ever truly great without some divine influence.' And Seneca, 'it is God that comes to men; nay, which is yet mere, he enters into them; for no mind becomes virtuous, but by his assistance.'—With only our present knowledge of human intellect and divine power, the denial of spiritual influences is as unphilosophical as it is impious.—Dr *Olymthus Gregory's Letters*, let. 17.

to him, but by presenting him with gold and myrrh.⁶ We hallow God's name, not only by lifting up our eyes and hands to heaven, and bowing the knee in prayer, but by presenting God with golden obedience. As the factor trades for the merchant, so we trade for God, and lay out our strength in his service. It was a saying of reverend Dr Jewel, 'I have spent and exhausted myself in the labours of my holy calling.' 'To obey is better than sacrifice.' The cherubim representing the angels, are set forth with their wings displayed, to show how ready they are to do service to God. To obey is angelical. To pretend honour to God's name, yet not to obey, is but a devout compliment. Abraham honoured God by obedience; he was ready to sacrifice his son, though the son of his old age, and a son of the promise; 'by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son; that in blessing, I will bless thee.'

10. We hallow and sanctify God's name when we lift up God's name in our praises. God is said to sanctify, and man is said to sanctify: God sanctifies us, by giving us grace, and we sanctify him by giving him praise. What were our tongues given us for but to be organs of God's praise? 'Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day;⁷ 'blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever.'⁸ Thus God's name is hallowed and sanctified in heaven; the angels and glorified saints are singing hallelujahs; let us begin the work of heaven here. David did sing forth God's praises and doxologies in a most melodious manner, therefore was called the sweet singer of Israel.⁹ Praising God is a hallowing of God's name, it spreads his renown, it displays the trophies of his excellency, it exalts him in the eyes of others; 'who-so offereth praise glorifieth me.'¹⁰ This is one of the highest and purest acts of religion; in prayer we act like men, in praise we act like angels; this is the music of heaven, this is a work fit for a saint; 'let the saints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouths!¹¹ None but saints can in a right manner thus hallow God's name by praising him. As every one hath not skill to play on the viol and organ, so every one cannot rightly sound forth God's harmonious praises; only the saints can do it;

⁶ Mat. 2. 11. ⁷ Ge. 22. 16, 17. ⁸ Ps. 71. 8. ⁹ Re. 5. 13
¹⁰ 2 Sa. 23. 1. ¹¹ Ps. 50. 23. ¹² Ps. 149. 5, 6.

they only can make their tongue and heart join in concert: 'I will bless thee, O Lord, with my whole heart;' 'He was extolled with my tongue.'² There was joining in concert. This hallowing God's name by praise is very becoming a Christian; it is unbecoming to murmur, this is a dishonouring God's name, but it becomes the saints to be spiritual choristers in singing forth the honour of God's name. It is called 'the garment of praise.'³ How comely and handsome is this garment of praise for a saint to wear! 'praise is comely for the upright.'⁴ Especially, it is a high degree of hallowing God's name, when we can speak well of God, and bless him in an afflicted state; 'the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!'⁵ Many will bless God when he gives, but to bless him when he takes away is in an high degree to honour God and hallow his name. Let us thus magnify God's name. Hath not God given us abundant matter of praising him? He hath given us the nether and upper springs, he hath given us grace, a mercy spun and woven out of his bowels; and he intends to crown grace with glory; this should make us hallow God's name by being trumpets of his praise.

11. We hallow and sanctify God's name when we sympathize with him; we grieve when his name suffers. *1st.* We lay to heart his dishonour. How was Moses affected with God's dishonour! He broke the tables.⁶ We grieve to see God's sabbaths profaned, his worship adulterated, the wine of truth mingled with error. *2d.* We grieve when God's church is brought low, because now God's name suffers. Nehemiah lays to heart the miseries of Zion; his complexion begins to alter, and he looks sad; 'why is thy countenance sad?'⁷ What! sad, when the king's cupbearer, and wine is so near! O but it fared ill with the church of God, and religion seemed to lose ground, and God's name suffered: therefore Nehemiah grows weary of the court, he leaves his wine and mingles his drink with weeping! This holy sympathy and grieving when God's name suffers, God esteems an honouring and sanctifying his name. Hezekiah grieved when the king of Assyria reproached the living God;⁸ 'he went up into the house of the Lord, and spread the letter of blasphemy before the Lord.'⁹ And no doubt watered the letter with his tears; he

seemed not to be so much troubled at the fear of losing his own life and kingdom, as that God should lose his glory.

12. We hallow and sanctify God's name when we give the same honour to God the Son as we give to God the Father; 'that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.'¹⁰ The Socinians deny Christ's divinity, saying that he is a mere man: this is to make him below the angels,¹¹ for the human nature, considered in itself, is below the angelical; this is to reflect dishonour upon the Lord of glory. We must give equal honour to the Son as to the Father; we must believe Christ's Deity; he is the picture of his Father's glory.¹² If the Godhead be in Christ, he must needs be God; but the Godhead shines in him, 'in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily';¹³ therefore, he is God. How could these divine titles be given to Christ, omnipotency,¹⁴ ubiquity,¹⁵ a power of sealing pardons,¹⁶ coequality with God the Father, both in power and dignity;¹⁷ how, I say, could these titles of honour be ascribed to Christ, if he were not crowned with the Deity? When we believe Christ's Godhead, and build our hope of salvation on the corner-stone of his merit; when we see neither the righteousness of the law, nor of angels, can justify, but we flee to Christ's blood as to the altar of refuge; this is an honouring and sanctifying God's name. God never thinks his name to be hallowed, unless his Son be honoured.

13. We hallow God's name by standing up for his truths. Much of God's glory lies in his truths; God's truths are his oracles. God intrusts us with his truths as a treasure; we have not a richer jewel to intrust God with than our souls, and God hath not a greater jewel to intrust us with than his truths. God's truths set forth his glory; now when we are zealous advocates for God's truth, this is an honour done to God's name. Athanasius was called 'the bulwark of truth;' he stood up in the defence of God's truths against the Arians, and so was a pillar in the temple of God; better have truth without peace, than peace without truth. It concerns the sons of Zion to stand up for the great doctrines of the gospel: the doctrine of the Trinity, the hypostatical union, justification by faith, the saints' perseverance. We are bid to contend earnestly,¹⁸ to strive as in an agony for the faith, that is, the doctrine of faith; this

¹ Ps. 9. 1.² Ps. 66. 17.³ Is. 61. 3.¹⁰ Joh. 5. 23.¹¹ Ps. 8. 5.¹² He. 1. 3.⁴ Ps. 33. 1.⁵ Job 1. 21.⁶ Ex. 32. 19.¹³ Col. 2. 9.¹⁴ He. 1. 3.¹⁵ Mat. 28. 20.⁷ Ne. 2. 2.⁸ Is. 37. 17.⁹ 2 Ki. 19. 14.¹⁶ Mat. 9. 6.¹⁷ Joh. 5. 21. 23.¹⁸ Ju. 3.

contending for the truth, brings great revenues into heaven's exchequer; this is a hallowing of God's name. Contend for the truth; some can contend for ceremonies, but not for the truth. We should count him unwise, that contends more for a box of counters than for his box of evidences.

14. We hallow and sanctify God's name, by making as many proselytes as we can to him; when, by all holy expedients, counsel, prayer, example, we endeavour the salvation of others. How did Monica, St Austin's mother, labour for his conversion! She had sorer pangs in travail for his new birth, than for his natural birth. It is a hallowing of God's name, when we diffuse the sweet savour of godliness and propagate religion to others; when not only we ourselves honour God, but are instruments to make others honour him; certainly when the heart is seasoned with grace, there will be an endeavour to season others. God's glory is as dear to a saint as his own salvation; and that this glory may be promoted, he endeavours the conversion of souls; every convert is a member added to Christ. Let us thus hallow God's name by labouring to advance piety in others; especially, let us endeavour that those who are nearly related to us, or are under our roof, shall honour God; 'as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'¹ Let us make our houses *Bethels*, places where God's name is called upon; 'salute Nymphas, and the church that is in his house.'² Let the parent endeavour that his children may honour God, and the master that his servants honour him; read the word, drop holy instruction, perfume your houses with prayer; the Jews had sacrifices in their family as well as in the tabernacle.³ This is a hallowing God's name, when we make proselytes to him, and endeavour that all under our charge should honour and sanctify his name.*

¹ Jos. 24. 15.² Col. 4. 15.³ Ex. 12. 3.

* We should feel the tenderest compassion for the poor benighted heathen, who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Can no expedients be devised, no exertions made, to communicate to them that spiritual instruction in which both their present and eternal happiness are involved? Let every pious and benevolent plan for this purpose be encouraged: but especially let us commend their case to God, and beseech him to arise for his own glory. Even among ourselves, in this highly favoured kingdom, where the gospel is preached in its purity, and the divine ordinances are administered with regularity and decency, the way of truth and righteousness is not generally understood, and, therefore, God is not honoured. Something more is needful, we perceive, than the means of instruction: the illuminating influence of the Holy Ghost can alone render those means effectual. Let us supplicate this influence for ourselves and others; for till we know the Lord, we shall never hallow his name. Have we dear friends and relatives, of whose

15. We hallow God's name when we prefer the honour of God's name before the dearest things. *1st.* We prefer the honour of God's name before our own credit. The saints of old have, for the honour of God, been willing to endure reproach; 'for thy sake I have borne reproach.'⁴ David cared not what reproach he suffered so God's name might not suffer. The prophet Elijah was called in derision, 'the hairy prophet;' and the prophet Isaiah, 'the bearer of burdens;' and the prophet Zephaniah, 'the bitter prophet;' but they did bind these reproaches as a crown about their head; the honour of God's name was dearer to them than their own honour. Moses esteemed the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.⁵ The apostles went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ,⁶ that they were graced so far as to be disgraced for the name of Christ. This is a hallowing God's name, when we are content to have our name eclipsed, that God's name may shine the more. *2d.* We prefer the honour of God's name before our worldly profit and interest; 'we have forsaken all and followed thee.'⁷ When these two, God and estate, come in competition, we will rather let estate go than God's love and favour. Thus that noble marquis of Vico parted with a fair estate, using these words, 'let their moneys perish with them, that count all the gold and silver in the world worth one hour's communion with Jesus Christ.'⁸ *3d.* We prefer the honour of God's name before our life; 'for thy sake are we killed all the day long.'⁹ The honour done to God's name, is not by bringing that outward pomp and glory to him as we do to kings, but God's honour comes in another way, and that is by the sufferings of his people; when the world sees how entirely God's people love him, that they will die in his service, this exalts and honours God's name; God's crown doth flourish in the ashes of his martyrs. St Basil speaks of a virgin, condemned to the fire, who having her life and estate offered her, if she would bow to the idol, answered, 'let life and money go, welcome Christ.' When God's glory weighs heaviest in the balance, and we are willing to suffer the

⁴ Ps. 69. 7.⁵ He. 11. 26.⁶ Ac. 5. 41.⁷ Mat. 19. 27.⁸ Ro. 8. 36.

spiritual state we are jealous? let us bear them upon our hearts in this petition. But especially we should be solicitous for our own souls. We should pray therefore, that we, and all whom we remember in our supplications, may be brought, 'to glorify God:'—*Robinson's System*, p. 600.

loss of all rather than God's name should suffer, now we do in a high degree hallow God's name.

16. We do hallow and sanctify God's name, by an holy conversation; 'ye are a royal priesthood, a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you.'¹ as an unholy life doth dishonour God's name, 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you,'² so by our holy and bible-conversation we honour God's name. A holy life speaks louder than all the anthems and praises in the world; though the main work of religion lies in the heart, yet when our light so shines, that others behold it, now they glorify God; when our lives shine, now God's name shines. The Macedonians used one day in the year to wear the picture of Alexander set with pearl and costly jewels: so when we carry the picture of Christ about us in our holy example, now we bring honour to God's name.

USE 1. See the true note and character of a godly person; he is a sanctifier of God's name, 'hallowed be thy name.' A true saint doth ambitiously endeavour to advance God's name. This is the question he asks himself in every thing he is going about: 'will this action tend to the honour of God's name? will this exalt God?' This was Paul's chief design, that Christ might 'be magnified';³ that the crown upon his head might flourish. A godly man thinks it is scarce worth his while to live if he may not bring some revenues of honour to God's name.

USE 2. I may here take up a sad lamentation, and speak, as the apostle Paul, weeping,⁴ to consider how God's name, instead of being hallowed and sanctified, is dishonoured. God's name, which is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls, suffers deeply. We are apt to speak of our sufferings; alas! what are all our sufferings? God's name suffers most. God's name is the dearest thing he hath. How do men stand upon their name and honour? God's name is this day dishonoured, it is like the sun in an eclipse. Theodosius took it heinously when they threw dirt upon his statue; but now, which is far worse, disgrace is thrown upon the glorious name of Jehovah. God's name, instead of being hallowed, is dishonoured by all sorts; by heathens, Turks, Jews, papists, protestants

1. By heathens. They have a knowledge

of a Godhead by the light of nature;⁵ but they dishonour God, and sin against the light of nature. The Egyptians worshipped an ox; the Persians worshipped the sun; the Greeks and Romans, Jupiter; and the Parthians worshipped the devil.

2. God's name is dishonoured by the Turks. They adore Mahomet their great prophet, as one divinely inspired; Mahomet was of an impure, vicious life; Mahomet plucks the crown from Christ's head denying his Deity.

3. God's name is dishonoured by the Jews who give not equal honour and adoration to God the Son, as to God the Father. They expect a Messiah yet to come; they believe not in Christ, they blaspheme him, and slight righteousness imputed; they vilify the Christian sabbath.

4. God's name is dishonoured by the papists. Popery is a God-dishonouring religion; they dishonour God's name, 1st. by their idolatry, which is spiritual adultery.⁶ Idolatry is to worship a false God, or the true God in a false manner; this they are guilty of. (1.) They dishonour God by their idolatry, in making graven images, and giving the same honour to them as is due to God; images are teachers of lies;⁷ they represent God in a bodily shape. (2.) By their idolatry in the mass; worshipping the host, and offering it up as a sacrifice for sin. The apostle saith, 'by one offering Christ hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified';⁸ but as if Christ's offering on the cross were imperfect, they offer him up daily in the mass, which is a dishonour done to Christ's priestly office. 2d. The papist, instead of hallowing God's name, dishonours God's name, by locking up the scriptures in an unknown tongue; they, as the Philistines, pluck out the people's eyes, and then make sport with them; the bible is a shining light, but they draw a curtain over it; they take away the key of knowledge,⁹ and hinder God's glory by hindering men's salvation. 3d. Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it by giving men indulgences. They say, the pope, as Peter's successor, hath power to grant indulgences, by virtue whereof men are set free in the sight of God from the guilt of sin. This is a double dishonour to God. (1.) It is to steal a flower from the crown of heaven. The pope assumes a power to pardon, which is God's prerogative royal; 'who can forgive sin but God only?'¹⁰ (2.) The pope, by his indulgence, encourageth men to sin. What

¹ 1 Pe. 2. 9. ² Ro. 2. 24. ³ Ph. 1. 20. ⁴ Ph. 3. 18.

⁵ Ro. 1. 19.

⁶ Ez. 23. 37.

⁷ Ha. 2. 18.

⁸ He. 10. 14.

⁹ Lu. 11. 52.

¹⁰ Mar. 2. 7.

need the papists care what sins they commit, when they have a license and patent from the pope to bear them harmless! *4th.* Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour God's name, by their invocation to saints. We are to pray only to God; 'pray to thy Father;'¹ not pray to a saint, or the Virgin Mary, but pray to your Father in heaven; we may pray to none but whom we may believe in.² The saints in heaven are ignorant of our grievances; 'Abraham be ignorant of us.'³ *5th.* Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it by their luxury and uncleanness; they allow of stews. At Rome, fornication keeps open shop, and is in some cases preferred before honourable matrimony; 'the whole city is but one great brothel.'⁴ *6th.* Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their blasphemies. They give equal, nay, more honour to the Virgin Mary than to Christ; they ascribe more to her milk, than to his blood; they call her the 'ladder of heaven;' 'the gate of paradise.' In their doxologies they say, 'praise be to the Virgin Mary, and also to Christ.' What blasphemy is this, to set the creature above the Creator! They say to her, 'O happy mother of a Son that purgeth away our crimes!' *7th.* Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their lies; their golden legend is an imposture, and is full of lying wonders. They show John Baptist's forehead for a relic in Spain, yet his whole head they affirm to be seen in St Sylvester's in Rome; they show St Peter's shadow at Rome: indeed we read of St Peter's shadow,⁴ but it is strange how the papists could catch his shadow, and keep it by them so long. *8th.* Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by baptizing sin with the name of virtue. Breach of oaths is with the papists a virtue. If a man hath bound his soul to God by an oath, yet to violate this oath is virtuous, if it may propagate the catholic cause. Killing those who are of a different religion, is not only venial, but a virtue among catholics. Destroying two hundred thousand of the Albigenses who were protestants, was commended as a glorious action, honoured with a triumph at Rome, and crowned with his holiness's blessing. Is not this a high dishonour to God, to gild over the foulest crimes with the name of virtue and piety? *9th.* Instead of hallowing God's name, they dishonour it, by their damnable assertions; (1.) The papists affirm, that

the pope is above scripture; that he may dispense with it, and that his canons bind more than the word of God. (2.) They teach merit by good works; but if a debtor cannot pay his creditor, how can he merit at his hands? (3.) That the scripture is not a perfect rule of faith and manners; therefore they eke it out with their traditions, which they hold to be of equal authority. (4.) They teach, that an implicit faith is saving; though one may have an implicit faith, and yet be ignorant of all the articles of religion. (5.) They say, that the inward act of the mind is not required in God's worship; diversion of the mind in duty, though one prays and never thinks of God, is no sin, saith Angelus and Sylvester, and other papists. (6.) The papists make habitual love to God unnecessary; it is not needful, saith Bellarmine, to perform any acts of religion out of love to God. Stapleton and Cajetan affirm that the precept of loving God with all our heart is not binding; by which they cut asunder the sinews and soul of all religion. Thus, instead of honouring God's name, the papists dishonour it. Let us pray heartily, that this Romish religion may never again get footing in this nation. God grant that this poisonous weed of popery may never be watered here; but that, it being a plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted, it may be rooted up!

5. God's name is dishonoured by carnal protestants. How is God's name this day dishonoured in England? His name is like the sun in an eclipse. Christians, instead of hallowing God's name, reproach and dishonour it; by their tongues, and by their lives. *1st.* By their tongues. (1.) They speak irreverently of God's name. God's name is sacred; 'that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God.'⁵ The names of kings are not mentioned without giving them their titles of honour, high and mighty; but men speak irreverently of God, as if he were like one of them;⁶ this is a taking God's name in vain. (2.) They swear by his name. Many seldom name God's name but in oaths. How is God dishonoured when men rend and tear his name by oaths and imprecations! 'because of swearing the land mourns.'⁷ If God will reckon with men for idle words, shall not idle oaths be put in the account-book? 'O but,' saith one, 'I cannot help it; it is a custom of swearing I have got, and I hope God will forgive me!' Is

¹ Mat. 6. 6 ² Ro. 10. 14. ³ Is. 63. 16. ⁴ Ac. 5. 15.

⁵ De. 28. 58.

⁶ Ps. 50. 21.

⁷ Je. 23. 10.

this a good plea; a custom of swearing? This is no excuse, but an aggravation of sin; as if one that had been accused for killing a man should plead with the judge to spare him because it was his custom to murder; this were an aggravation of the offence; will not the judge say, 'thou shalt the rather die?' so it is here. 2*d*. As men dishonour God by their tongues, so by their lives. What is it to say, 'hallowed be thy name,' when in their lives they profane his name? They dishonour God by their atheism, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, perjury, intemperance, injustice. Men hang out a flag of defiance against heaven; as the Thracians, when it thunders, shoot their arrows against heaven, so men shoot their sins as bearded arrows against heaven. Sinners are hardened in sin, they despise counsel, they laugh at reproof, they have cast off the veil of modesty, Satan hath taken such full possession of them, that when they sin, they glory in their shame.¹ They brag how many new oaths they have invented, how oft they have been drunk, how many they have defiled; they declare their sin as Sodom; such horrid impieties are committed that a modest heathen would blush at. Men, in this age, sin at that rate, as if either they did not believe there were a hell, or as if they feared hell would be full ere they could get thither. Was God's name ever so openly dishonoured? All our preaching will not make them leave their sins. What a black veil is drawn over the face of religion at this day! 'We live in the dregs of time,' SEN. wherein the common shore of wickedness runs. Physicians call it [Gr. *kachexia*] when there is no part of the body free from distemper. England hath a kachexy; it is all over disease; 'the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint.'² As black vapours rising out of the earth, cloud and darken the sun, so the sins of people in our age, like hellish vapours, cast a cloud upon God's glorious name. O that our eyes were like limbecks, dropping the water of holy tears, to consider how God's name, instead of being hallowed, is polluted and profaned! And, may not we justly fear some heavy judgments? can God put up with our affronts any longer? can he endure to have his name reproached? will a king suffer his crown-jewels to be trampled in the dust? do not we see the symptoms of God's anger? do we not see his judgments hovering over us? Sure God is whetting his sword, he

hath bent his bow, and is preparing his arrows to shoot! 'like the lion roaring through the fields, and with threatening front causing the tawny ox to tremble,' SEN. The body politic is in a paroxysm, or burning fit; and may not the Lord cause a sad phlebotomy? seeing we will not leave our sins, he may make us lose our blood.* May we not fear that the ark should remove, the vision cease, the stars in God's church be removed, and we should follow the gospel to the grave? When God's name, which should be hallowed, is profaned among a people, it is just with God to write that dismal epitaph upon a nation's tomb, 'the glory is departed.' And, that I may speak to the consciences of all, and deal impartially, it were well if only the profane party were guilty; but, may not many professors be called to the bar, and indicted of this, that they have dishonoured God's name? 'Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?'³ are these the spots of God's children?⁴ If you are diamonds, have you no flaws? Have not you your vanities? If your discourse be not profane, is it not vain? Have not you your self-seekings, rash censures, indecent dresses? If the wicked of the land swear, do not you sometimes slander? If they are drunk with wine, are not you sometimes drunk with passion? If their sin be blaspheming, is not your sin murmuring? 'Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord?' The sins of God's children go nearer to his heart, than the sins of others; 'when the Lord saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons and daughters.'⁵ The sins of the wicked anger God; the sins of his own people grieve him; he will be sure to punish them; 'you only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.'⁶ O that our head were waters, that

¹ 2 Ch. 28. 10. ² De. 32. 5. ³ De. 32. 19. ⁴ Am. 3. 2.

* I have known a luxuriant vine, swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the wine-press, and a faint return to his heart, which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage; but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and made it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy bunches, and made accounts of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. So is an afflicted province cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins, and bleeds for its long riots, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness; and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of restitution, and gives God thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and the cloud into a perfume, the sword into a staff, and his anger into mercy.—*Jer. Taylor's Miracles of Mercy*, part i. s. 6.

¹ Ph. 3. 19.

² Is. 1. 6.

we could make this place a *Bochim*, a place of weepers,* that God's children might blushing with tears that they have so little hallowed, and so much eclipsed God's name! Truly God's own people have sinned enough to justify God in all his severe actings against them!

USE 3. Of exhortation. Let us hallow and sanctify God's name. Did we but see a glimpse of God's glory, as Moses did in the rock, the sight of this would draw adoration and praise from us. Could we see 'God face to face,' as the angels in heaven do; could we behold him sitting on his throne like a jasper-stone;¹ we should presently, at the sight of his glory, do as the twenty-four elders; 'they worship him that liveth for ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and power!' That we may be stirred up to this great duty, the hallowing, adoring, and sanctifying God's name, consider,

1. It is the very end of our being. Why did God give us our life, but that our living may be a hallowing of his name? Why did he give us souls but to admire him; and tongues, but to praise him? The excellency of a thing is, when it attains the end for which it was made; the excellency of a star is to give light, of a plant to be fruitful; the excellency of a Christian, is to answer the end of his creation, which is to hallow God's name, and live to that God by whom he lives. He who lives, and God hath no honour by him, buries himself alive, and exposeth himself to a curse. Christ cursed the barren fig-tree.

2. God's name is so excellent that it deserves to be hallowed; 'how excellent is thy name in all the earth!'² 'thou art clothed with honour and majesty.'³ As the sun hath its brightness, whether we admire it or not, so God's name is illustrious and glorious whether we hallow it or not. In God are all shining perfections, holi-

ness, wisdom, mercy; 'he is worthy to be praised.'⁵ God is worthy of honour, love, adoration. We oft bestow titles of honour upon them that do not deserve them; but God is worthy to be praised; his name deserves hallowing; he is above all the honour and praise which the angels in heaven give him.

3. We pray, 'hallowed be thy name:' that is, let thy name be honoured and magnified by us. Now, if we do not magnify his name, we contradict our own prayers: to say, 'hallowed be thy name,' yet not to bring honour to God's name, is to take his name in vain.

4. Such as do not hallow God's name, and bring revenues of honour to him, God will get his honour upon them; 'I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.'⁶ Pharaoh would not hallow God's name; 'who is the Lord, that I should obey him?' Well, saith God, if Pharaoh will not honour me, I will get me honour upon him. When God overthrew him and his chariots in the sea, then he got his honour upon him; God's power and justice were glorified in his destruction. There are some whom God hath raised to great power and dignity, and they will not honour God's name, they make use of their power to dishonour God, they cast reproach upon God's name, and revile his servants: well, they who will not honour God, he will get his honour upon them in their final ruin. Herod did not give glory to God, and God did get his glory upon him; 'the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory, and he was eaten of worms.'⁷

5. It will be no small comfort to us when we come to die that we have hallowed and sanctified God's name; it was Christ's comfort a little before his death; 'I have glorified thee on the earth.'⁸ Christ's redeeming mankind was a hallowing and glorifying of God's name; never was more honour brought to God's name than by this great undertaking of Christ; now, here was Christ's comfort before his death, that he had hallowed God's name, and brought glory to him. So, what a cordial will this be to us at last, when our whole life hath been a hallowing of God's name! We have loved him with our hearts, praised him with our lips, honoured him with our lives; we have been to the praise of his glory.⁹ At the hour of death all your earthly comforts will vanish; to think how rich you have been, or what pleasures you have enjoyed upon earth, this will not give

¹ Re. 4. 3. ² Re. 4. 10, 11. Ps. 8. 9. ⁴ Ps. 104. 1.

* Men of the world, however they may admit the operation of natural causes, and may therefore confess the effects of religion and morality in promoting the well-being of the community; may, yet, according to their humour, with a smile of complacent pity, or a sneer of supercilious contempt, read of the service which real Christians may render to their country, by conciliating the favour, and calling down the blessing of providence. It may appear in their eyes an instance of the same superstitious weakness, as that which prompts the terrified inhabitant of Sicily to bring forth the image of his tutelary saint, in order to stop the destructive ravages of Ætna. We are however sure, if we believe the scripture, that God will be disposed to favour the nation to which his servants belong; and that, in fact, such as they have often been the unknown and unhonoured instruments of drawing down on their country, the blessings of safety and prosperity.—*Hilberforce's Practical View*, c. 7. s. 4.

⁵ 2 Sa. 2. 4. ⁶ Ex. 14. 17.

⁷ Ac. 12. 23.

⁸ Juno. 17. 4.

⁹ Ep. 1. 6.

one drachm of comfort. What is one the better for an estate that is spent? But now, to have conscience witnessing that you have hallowed God's name, your whole life hath been a glorifying of him, what sweet peace and satisfaction will this give! That servant who hath been all day working in the vineyard, how glad is he when evening comes, that he shall receive his pay! Such as have spent their lives in honouring God, how sweet will death be when they shall receive the recompense of reward! What comfort was it to Hezekiah, when he was on his sick-bed, and could appeal to God, 'remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.'¹ I have hallowed thy name; I have brought all the honour I could to thee; 'I have done that which is good in thy sight.'

6. There is nothing lost by what we do for God; if we bring honour to his name, he will honour us. Honour is as Balak said to Balaam; 'am not I able indeed to promote thee to honour?'² So if we hallow and sanctify God's name, is he not able to promote us to honour? 1. He will honour us in our life. He will put honour upon our persons; he will number us among his jewels,³ he will make us a royal diadem in his hand,⁴ he will lift us up in the eyes of others; 'they shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up, as an ensign upon this land.'⁵ he will esteem us as the cream and flower of the creation; 'since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.'⁶ God will put honour upon your names; 'the memory of the just is blessed.'⁷ How renowned have the saints been in all ages who have hallowed God's name! How renowned was Abraham for his faith, Moses for his meekness, David for his zeal, Paul for his love to Christ? Their names as a precious ointment, sent forth a sweet perfume in God's church to this day. 2. God will honour us at our death; he will send his angels to carry us up with triumph into heaven; 'the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.'⁸ Amasis king of Egypt, had his chariot drawn by four kings which he had conquered in war: but what is this to the glory every believer shall have at his death? He shall be carried by the angels of God. 3. God will put honour upon us after death. He will put glory upon our bodies; we shall be as the angels, not for substance but quality; our bodies shall

be agile and nimble; now our bodies are as a weight, then they shall be as a wing moving swiftly from place to place; our bodies shall be full of clarity and brightness, like Christ's glorious body.⁹ The bodies of the saints shall be as cloth dyed into a scarlet colour, made more illustrious; they shall be so clear and transparent, that the soul shall sparkle through them as the wine through the glass. God will put glory upon our souls; if the cabinet of the body shall be so illustrious, of what orient brightness shall the jewel be? Then will be the great coronation day, when the saints shall wear the robe of immortality, and the crown of righteousness which fades not away. O how glorious will that garland be which is made of the flowers of paradise! Who then would not hallow and glorify God's name, and spread his renown in the world, who will put such immortal honour upon his people, 'as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive?'

7. Such as do not hallow God's name, but profane and dishonour it, God will pour contempt upon them; though they be ever so great, and though clothed in purple and scarlet, yet they are abhorred of God, and their name shall rot. Though the name of Judas be in the bible, and the name of Pontius Pilate be in the creed, yet their names stand there for infamy, as being traitors to the crown of heaven: 'I will make thy grave, for thou art vile.'¹⁰ This is spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes; he was a king, and his name signifies illustrious, yet God esteemed him a vile person. To show how base the wicked are in God's esteem, he compares them to things most vile; to chaff,¹¹ to dross,¹² and the filth that foams out of the sea.¹³ And as God doth thus vilely esteem of such as do not hallow his name, so he sends them to a vile place at last. Vagrants are sent to the house of correction; hell is the house of correction which the wicked are sent to when they die. Let all this prevail with us to hallow and sanctify God's name.

Q. *What may we do to honour and sanctify God's name?*

Let us get a sound knowledge of God; a sincere love to God. 1. A sound knowledge of God; take a view of his superlative excellencies: his holiness, his incomprehensible goodness. The angels know God better than we, therefore they sanctify his name, and sing hallelujahs to him. And let us labour to know him to be our

¹ Is. 38. 3. ² Nu. 22. 37. ³ Mal. 3. 17 ⁴ Is. 62. 3.
⁵ Ze. 9. 16. ⁶ Is. 43. 4. ⁷ Pr. 10. 7. ⁸ Lu. 16. 22.

⁹ Ph. 3. 21. ¹⁰ Na. 1. 14. ¹¹ Ps. 1. 4.
¹² Ps. 119. 119. ¹³ Is. 57. 20.

God; 'this God is our God.'¹ We may dread God as a judge, but we cannot honour him as a father, till we know he is our God. 2. Get a sincere love to God, a love of appreciation, and a love of complacency to delight in him; 'Lord, thou knowest I love thee.'¹⁷ He can never honour his master who doth not love him. The reason God's name is no more hallowed, is because his name is no more loved. So much for the first petition.

OF THE SECOND PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MAT. 6. 10. *Thy kingdom come.**

A SOUL truly devoted to God joins heartily in this petition, 'thy kingdom come!' 1st. In these words this great truth is implied, that God is a king. He who hath a kingdom, can be no less than a king; 'God is the king of all the earth.'² And he is a king upon his throne; 'God sitteth upon the throne of holiness.'³ 1. He hath a regal title, high and mighty; 'thus saith the high and lofty One.'⁴ 2. He hath the ensigns of royalty: his sword; 'if I whet my glittering sword:'⁵ his sceptre; 'a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.'⁶ 3. He hath his crown royal; 'on his head were many crowns.'⁷ He hath his kingly prerogatives; he hath power to make laws, to seal pardons, which are the flowers and jewels belonging to his crown. Thus the Lord is king.

2d. He is a great king, 'a great king above all gods.'⁸ He is great in, and of himself; and not like other kings, who are made great by their subjects. That he is so great a king appears, by the immenseness of his being; 'do not I fill heaven and earth?' saith the Lord.⁹ His centre is every where; he is no where included, yet no where excluded; he is so immensely great, that 'the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.'¹⁰ His greatness appears by the effects of his power, 'who made heaven and earth,'¹¹ and can unmake them. God can with a breath crumble us to dust; with a word he can unpin the world, and break the axle-tree of it in pieces; 'he pours contempt upon princes,'¹² 'he shall cut off the spirit of princes,'¹³ he is Lord paramount, who doth whatever he will,¹⁴ 'he weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.'¹⁵

3d. God is a glorious King; 'who is this King of glory?' The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.'¹⁶ He hath internal glory; 'the

Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty.'¹⁸ Other kings have royal and sumptuous apparel to make them appear glorious to the beholders; but all their glory and magnificence is borrowed; but God is clothed with majesty, his own glorious essence is instead of royal robes, and 'he hath girded himself with strength.'¹⁹ Kings have their guard about them to defend their persons, because they are not able to defend themselves; but God needs no guard or assistance from others; he hath girded himself with strength. His own power is his life-guard; 'who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?'²⁰ God hath a pre-eminence above all other kings for majesty; 'he hath on his vesture a name written, KING OF KINGS.'²¹ He hath the highest throne, the richest crown, the largest dominions, and the longest possession; 'the Lord sitteth King for ever.'²² Though God hath many heirs, yet no successors. He sets up his throne where no other king doth; he rules the will and affections; his power binds the conscience; angels serve him; all the kings of the earth hold their crowns and

¹⁷ Jno. 21. 15. ¹⁸ Ps. 93. 1. ¹⁹ Ps. 89. 6.
²⁰ Re. 19. 16. ²¹ Ps. 29. 10.

* That the import of the term is always either kingdom, or something nearly related to kingdom, is beyond all question; but it is no less so, that, if regard be had to the propriety of our own idiom, and consequently to the perspicuity of the version, the English word will not answer on every occasion.—This word is of more extensive meaning than the English, being equally adapted to express both our terms, *reign* and *kingdom*. The first relates to the time or duration of the sovereignty; the second to the place or country over which it extends. Now, though it is manifest in the gospels, that it is much oftener the time than the place that is alluded to; it is never, in the common version, translated *reign* but always *kingdom*.—Use indeed softens every thing. Hence it is that, in reading our bible, we are insensible of those improprieties which, in any other book, would strike us at first hearing. Such are those expressions which apply *motion* to a kingdom, as when mention is made of its *coming*, *approaching*, and the like.—The French have two words corresponding to ours, *reign* and *kingdom*. Their interpreters have often fallen into the same fault with ours, substituting the latter for the former; yet, in no French translation that I have seen, is this done so uniformly as in ours. In the Lord's prayer, for example, they all say, 'thy *reign* come,' not thy *kingdom*.—*Campbell on the Gospels*, dissertation, 5, part i.

¹ Ps. 48. 14. ² Ps. 47. 7. ³ Ps. 47. 8. ⁴ Is. 57. 15.
⁵ De. 32. 41. ⁶ He. 1. 8. ⁷ Re. 19. 12. ⁸ Ps. 95. 3.
⁹ Je. 23. 24. ¹⁰ 1 Ki. 8. 27. ¹¹ Ps. 124. 8. ¹² Job 12. 21.
¹³ Ps. 76. 12. ¹⁴ Ps. 115. 3. ¹⁵ Is. 40. 12. ¹⁶ Ps. 24. 10.

diadems by immediate tenure from this great King, 'by me kings reign;' and to this Lord Jehovah all kings must give account, and from God's tribunal there is no appeal.

USE 1. Branch 1. If God be so great a King, and sits King for ever, then it is no disparagement for us to serve him. 'To be a servant of God, is to reign as a prince;' it is an honour to serve a king. If the angels fly swiftly upon the King of heaven's message,¹ then well we may look upon it as a favour to be taken into his royal service. Theodosius thought it a greater honour to be God's servant, than to be an emperor. It is more honour to serve God than to have kings serve us. Every subject of this king is crowned with regal honour; 'hath made us kings.'² Therefore as the queen of Sheba, having seen the glory of Solomon's kingdom, said, 'happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee,'³ so, happy are those saints who stand before the King of heaven, and wait on his throne. Branch 2. If God be such a glorious King, crowned with wisdom, armed with power, bespangled with riches, then it shows us what prudence it is to have this King to be ours; to say, 'My King, and my God!'⁴ It is counted great policy to be on the strongest side: if we belong to the King of heaven, we are sure to be on the strongest side; the King of glory can with ease destroy his adversaries; he can pull down their pride, befool their policy, restrain their malice. That stone cut out of the mountain without hands, which smote the image,⁵ was an emblem (saith Austin) of Christ's monarchical power, conquering and triumphing over his enemies. If we are on God's side, we are on the strongest side; he can with a word destroy his enemies; 'then shall he speak unto them in his wrath:' nay, he can with a look destroy them; 'look upon every one that is proud and bring him low.'⁶ It needs cost God no more to confound those who rise up against him, than a look, a cast of his eye; 'in the morning watch the Lord looked to the host of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host, and took off their chariot-wheels.'⁷ What wisdom is it then to have this King to be ours? Then we are on the strongest side.

USE 2. Of exhortation.

Branch 1. If God be so glorious a King, full of power and majesty, let us trust in him:

'they that know thy name will put their trust in thee.'⁸ Trust him with your soul; you cannot put this jewel in safer hands. And trust him with church and state affairs; he is King, 'the Lord is a man of war.'⁹ He can make bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. If means fail he is never at a loss; there are no impossibilities with him; he can make the dry bones live.¹⁰ As a king he can command, and as a God he can create salvation; 'I create Jerusalem a rejoicing.'¹¹ Let us trust all our affairs with this great King. Either God can remove mountains or can leap over them.¹²

Branch 2. If God be so great a King, let us fear him; 'fear ye not me?' saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence?¹³ We have enough of fear of men. Fear makes danger appear greater, and sin less; but let us fear the King of kings, who hath power to cast body and soul into hell.¹⁴ As one wedge drives out another, so the fear of God would drive out all base carnal fear. Let us fear that God whose throne is set above all kings; they may be mighty, but he is almighty. Kings have no power, but what God hath given them; their power is limited, his is infinite. Let us fear this king, whose eyes, 'are as a flame of fire.'¹⁵ 'The mountains quake at him; and the rocks are thrown down by him.'¹⁶ If he stamps with his foot, all the creatures are presently up in a battalia to fight for him. O tremble and fear before this God! Fear is the door-keeper of the soul; it keeps sin from entering; 'how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?'¹⁷

Branch 3. If God be so glorious a King, he hath the power of life and death in his hand. Let all the potentates of the earth take heed how they employ their power against the king of heaven; they employ their power against God, who with their sceptre beat down his truth, which is the most orient pearl of his crown, who crush and persecute his people, who are the apple of his eye.¹⁸ Who trample upon his laws, and royal edicts, which he hath set forth.¹⁹ What is a king without his laws? Let all that are invested with worldly power and grandeur, take heed how they oppose the King of glory; the Lord will be too hard for all that come against him; 'hast thou an arm like God?'²⁰ wilt thou measure arms with the Almighty? shall

¹ Pr. 8. 15.

² Da. 9. 21.

³ Re. 1. 6.

⁴ 1 Ki. 10. 8.

⁵ Ps. 5. 2.

⁶ Da. 2. 34.

⁷ Ps. 2. 5.

⁸ Job 40. 12.

⁹ Ex. 14. 24, 25.

¹⁰ Ps. 9. 10. ¹¹ Ex. 15. 3. ¹² Ez. 37. 10. ¹³ Is. 65. 18.

¹⁴ Ca. 2. 8. ¹⁵ Je. 5. 22. ¹⁶ Lu. 12. 5. ¹⁷ Re. 1. 14.

¹⁸ Na. 1. 6. ¹⁹ Ge. 39. 9. ²⁰ Ze. 2. 8. ²¹ Ps. 2. 3.

²² Job 10. 9.

a little child go to fight with an archangel? 'can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?'¹ Christ will put all his enemies at last under his feet.² All the multitude of the wicked who set themselves against God shall be but as so many clusters of ripe grapes, to be cast into the wine press of the wrath of God, and to be trodden by him till their blood come forth. The King of glory will come off victor at last; men may set up their standard, but God always sets up his trophies of victory. The Lord hath a golden sceptre, and an iron rod;³ those who will not bow to the one, shall be broken by the other.

Branch 4. Is God so great a King having all power in heaven and earth in his hand? Let us learn subjection to him. Such as have gone on in sin, and by their impieties hung out a flag of defiance against the King of heaven, O come in quickly, and make your peace, submit to God; 'kiss the Son, lest he be angry!'⁴ Kiss Christ with a kiss of love, and a kiss of obedience; obey the King of heaven, when he speaks to you by his ministers and ambassadors.⁵ When God bids you flee from sin, and espouse holiness, obey him; to obey is better than sacrifice: 'to obey God,' saith Luther, 'is better than to work miracles.' Obey God willingly;⁶ that is the best obedience that is cheerful, as that is the sweetest honey which drops out of the comb: obey God swiftly; 'I lift up mine eyes, and, behold, two women, and the wind was in their wings.'⁷ Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness; such should our obedience to God be. Obey the King of glory.

USE 3. Comfort to those who are the subjects of the King of heaven; God will put forth all his royal power for their succour and comfort. 1. The King of heaven will plead their cause; 'I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee.'⁸ 2. He will protect his people; he sets an invisible guard about them; 'I will be unto her a wall of fire round about.'⁹ A wall, that is defensive; a wall of fire, that is offensive. 3. When it may be for the good of his people, he will raise up deliverance to them, 'the Lord saved them by a great deliverance.'¹⁰ God, reigning as a King, can save any way: by contemptible means; the blowing of trumpets, and blazing of lamps:¹¹ by contrary means he made the sea a wall to Israel, and the waters

were a means to keep them from drowning; the fish's belly was a ship in which Jonah sailed safe to shore. God will never want ways of saving his people; rather than fail, the very enemies shall do his work.¹² He set Ammon and Mount Seir one against another. And as God will deliver his people from temporal danger, so from spiritual, from sin, and from hell; 'Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.'¹³

USE. 4. Terror to the enemies of the church. If God be King, he will set his utmost strength against them who are the enemies of his kingdom; 'a fire goes before him and burneth up his enemies round about.'¹⁴ 1. He will set himself against his enemies; he will set his attributes against them, his power and justice; and, 'who knoweth the power of thine anger?'¹⁵ 2. God will set the creatures against them; 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.'¹⁶ Tertullian observes that the Persians fighting against the Christians, a mighty wind arose, which did make the Persians' arrows to fly back in their own faces. Every creature hath a quarrel with a sinner: the stone out of the wall,¹⁷ the hail and the frost; 'he destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.'¹⁸ 3. God will set men against themselves. He will set conscience against them. And how terrible is this rod when turned into a serpent? Melancthon calls it a hellish fury; it is called the worm of conscience.¹⁹ What a worm did Spira feel in his conscience? He was a terror to himself. The worst civil wars are between a man and his conscience. God will set the diseases of men's bodies against them.²⁰ The Lord smote Jehoram 'in his bowels with an incurable disease.' God can raise an army against a man out of his own bowels; he can set one humour of the body against another; the heat to dry up the moisture, and the moisture to drown the heat; the Lord needs not go far for instruments to punish the sinner; he can make the joints of the same body to smite one against another.²¹ God will set men's friends against them; where they used to have honey, they shall have nothing but aloes and wormwood. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he shall make even his enemies to be at peace with him,'²² but when he opposeth God, he maketh his friends to be his enemies. Commodus the emperor, his own wife gave him poison in perfumed wine.

¹ Ez. 22. 14. ² Ps. 110. 1. ³ Ps. 2. 9. ⁴ Ps. 2. 12.
⁵ 2 Co. 5. 20. ⁶ Is. 1. 19. ⁷ Ze. 5. 9. ⁸ Jer. 51. 36.
⁹ Ze. 2. 5. ¹⁰ 1 Ch. 11. 14. ¹¹ Ju. 7. 20.

¹² 2 Ch. 20. 23. ¹³ 1 Th. 1. 10. ¹⁴ Ps. 97. 3. ¹⁵ Ps. 90. 11.
¹⁶ Ju. 5. 20. ¹⁷ Hab. 2. 11. ¹⁸ Ps. 78. 47. ¹⁹ Mar. 9. 44.
²⁰ 2 Ch. 21. 18. ²¹ Da. 5. 6. ²² Pr. 16. 7.

Sennacherib's two sons were the death of him,¹ God will set Satan against them; 'let Satan stand at his right hand.'² What doth Satan at the sinner's elbows? 1. He helps him to contrive sin. 2. He tempts him to commit sin. 3. He terrifies him for sin. He that hath Satan thus standing at his right hand, is sure to be set at God's left hand. Here is the misery of such as oppose God's royal sceptre, he will set everything in the world against them; if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, sinners shall not be unpunished.

USE LAST. If God be such an absolute monarch, and crowned with such glory and majesty, let us all engage in his service, and stand up for his truth and worship; dare to own God in the worst time; he is King of kings, and is able to reward all his servants; we may be losers for him, we shall never be losers by him. We are ready to say as Amaziah, 'what shall we do for the hundred talents?'³ If I appear for God, I may lose my estate, my life. I say with the prophet, God is able to give you much more than this; he can give you for the present inward peace, and for the future a crown of glory which fadeth not away.

Q. *What kingdom doth Christ mean here?*

Neg. 1. He doth not mean a political or earthly kingdom. The apostles indeed did desire, 1st. Christ's temporal reign; 'wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'⁴ But Christ said, his kingdom was not of this world;⁵ so that, when Christ taught his disciples to pray, 'thy kingdom come,' he did not mean it of any earthly kingdom, that he should reign here in outward pomp and splendour. 2d. It is not meant of God's providential kingdom; 'his kingdom ruleth over all';⁶ that is, the kingdom of his providence. This kingdom we do not pray for, when we say, 'thy kingdom come; for this kingdom is already come; God exerciseth the kingdom of his providence in the world; 'he putteth down one and setteth up another.'⁷ Nothing stirs in the world but God hath a hand in it; he sets every wheel a-working; he humbles the proud, and raiseth the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes.⁸ The kingdom of God's providence ruleth over all; kings do nothing but what his providence permits and orders.⁹ This kingdom of God's providence we do not pray should come, for it is already come. What kingdom then is meant

here when we say, 'thy kingdom come?' Positively there is a twofold kingdom meant here. 1st. The kingdom of grace, which kingdom God exercises in the consciences of his people: this is God's lesser kingdom.¹⁰ Where we pray, 'thy kingdom come:' (1.) Here is something tacitly implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness. 1. We pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness. 2. That the devil's kingdom in the world may be demolished. (2.) Something positively intended. 1. We pray that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts and increased. 2. When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' we pray that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in God's good time be translated into it. These two kingdoms of grace and glory, differ not specifically, out gradually; they differ not in nature, but only in degree.* The kingdom of grace is nothing but the inchoation or beginning of the kingdom of glory; the kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the flower; the kingdom of grace is glory in the daybreak, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian; the kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connexion between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no passing into the one kingdom but by the other. At Athens there were two temples, a temple of virtue and a temple of honour, and there was no going into the temple of honour, but through the temple of virtue: so the kingdoms of grace and glory are so close joined together, that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory, but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory, but never look after grace; but these two, which God hath joined together, may not be put asunder; the kingdom of grace leads to the kingdom of glory.

I. I begin with the first thing implied in this petition, 'thy kingdom come;' it is implied, that we are in the kingdom of darkness and we pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness; the state of nature is a king-

¹⁰ Lu. 5. 3.

¹¹ Ro. 6. 12.

* The kingdom of heaven,—properly signifies the gospel dispensation, in which subjects were to be gathered to God by his Son on a society to be formed which was to subsist first in more imperfect circumstances on earth, but afterwards was to appear complete in the world of glory. In some places of scripture, the phrase more particularly signifies the former, and denotes the state of it on earth; (Mat. 13. 41, 47; and 20. 1.) and sometimes it signifies only the state of glory; (1 Cor. 6. 9; and 15. 50.) but it generally includes both.—*Doddridge, Fam. Exp. Mat. 3. 2.*

¹ 2 Kl. 19. 37.

² Ps. 109. 6.

³ 2 Ch. 25. 9.

⁴ Ac. 1. 6.

⁵ Jno. 18. 35.

⁶ Ps. 103. 19.

⁷ Ps. 75. 7.

⁸ 1 Sa. 2. 8.

⁹ Ac. 4. 27.

dom of darkness; it is a kingdom; sin is said to reign, and it is a kingdom of darkness; it is called, 'the power of darkness.' Man, before the fall, was illuminated with perfect knowledge, but this light is now eclipsed, and he is fallen into the kingdom of darkness.

Q. How many ways is a natural man in the kingdom of darkness?

1. He is under the darkness of ignorance; 'having the understanding darkened.'¹ Ignorance is a black veil drawn over the mind; men by nature may have a deep reach in the things of the world, but ignorant in the things of God. Nabash the Ammonite would make a covenant with Israel to thrust out their right eyes.² Since the fall, our left eye remains, a deep insight into worldly matters; but our right eye is thrust out, we have no saving knowledge of God; something we know by nature, but nothing as we ought to know.³ Ignorance draws the curtains round about the soul.⁴ 2. A natural man is under the darkness of pollution; hence sinful actions are called 'works of darkness.'⁵ Pride and lust darken the glory of the soul: a sinner's heart is a dark conclave, it looks blacker than hell. 3. A natural man is under the darkness of misery; he is exposed to divine vengeance; and the sadness of this darkness, is, that men are not sensible of it; they are blind, yet they think they see. The darkness of Egypt was such thick darkness as 'may be felt:'⁶ men are by nature in thick darkness, but here is the misery; the darkness cannot be felt; they will not believe they are in the dark, till they are past recovery.

Use 1. See what the state of nature is, it is a 'kingdom of darkness,' and it is a bewitching darkness; 'men loved darkness rather than light:'⁷ as the Atlantes in Ethiopia curse the sun. Such as are still in the kingdom of darkness, tremble to think of this condition; this darkness of sin leads to the 'chains under darkness.'⁸ What comfort can such take in earthly things? The Egyptians might have food, gold, silver, but they could take but little comfort in them, while they were in such darkness as might be felt: so the natural man may have riches and friends to delight in, yet he is in the kingdom of darkness, and how dead are all these comforts? Thou who art in the kingdom of darkness, knowest not whither thou goest. As the ox is driven to the shambles, but he knows not

whither he goes, so the devil is driving thee before him to hell, but thou knowest not whither thou goest. Shouldest thou die in thy natural estate, while thou art in the kingdom of darkness, blackness of darkness is reserved for thee; 'to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.'¹⁰

Use 2. Let us pray that God will bring us out of this kingdom of darkness. God's kingdom of grace cannot come into our hearts till first we are brought out of the kingdom of darkness.¹¹ Why should not we strive to get out of this kingdom of darkness? Who would desire to stay in a dark dungeon? O fear the 'chains of darkness.'¹² These chains are God's power binding men as in chains under wrath for ever. O pray that God will deliver us out of the kingdom of darkness! Be sensible of thy dark damned estate, that thou hast not one spark of fire to give thee light. Go to Christ to enlighten thee; 'Christ shall give thee light;'¹³ he will not only bring thy light to thee, but open thine eyes to see it. That is the first thing implied, 'thy kingdom come;' we pray that we may be brought out of the kingdom of darkness.

II. The second thing implied in 'thy kingdom come,' we do implicitly pray against the devil's kingdom, we pray that Satan's kingdom may be demolished in the world. Satan's kingdom stands in opposition to Christ's kingdom; and when we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' we pray against Satan's kingdom. Satan hath a kingdom; he got his kingdom by conquest; he conquered mankind in paradise. He hath his throne; 'thou dwellest even where Satan's seat is.'¹⁴ And his throne is set up in the hearts of men; he doth not care for their purses but their hearts.¹⁵ Satan is served upon the knee; 'they worshipped the dragon,'¹⁶ that is, the devil. Satan's empire is very large; the most kingdoms in the world pay tribute to him.

Satan's kingdom hath two qualifications or characters: 1st. It is a kingdom of impiety. 2d. It is a kingdom of slavery. 1. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of impiety; nothing but sin goes on in his kingdom; murder and heresy, lust and treachery, oppression and division, are the constant trade driven in Satan's kingdom: Satan is called 'the unclean spirit;'¹⁷ what else is propagated in his kingdom but a mystery of iniquity? 2. Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of slavery. Satan makes all his subjects slaves. Satan is a usurper and a tyrant; he is a worse tyrant than any other. (1.) Other tyrants do

¹ Col. 1. 13² Ep. 4. 18.³ 1 Sa. 11. 2.⁴ 1 Co. 8. 2.⁵ 1 Co. 2. 14.⁶ Ro. 13. 12.⁷ Ex. 10. 21.⁸ Jno. 3. 19.⁹ Ju. 6¹⁰ Ju. 13.¹¹ Col. 1. 13.¹² Ju. 6.¹³ Ep. 5. 14.¹⁴ Re. 2. 13.¹⁵ Ep. 2. 2.¹⁶ Re. 13. 4.¹⁷ Lu. 11. 24

lut rule over the body, but Satan's kingdom rules over the soul; Satan rides some men as we do horses. (2.) Other tyrants have some pity on their slaves; though they make them work in the galleys, yet they give them meat, and let them have their hours for rest, but Satan is a merciless tyrant, he gives his slaves poison instead of meat, he gives them 'hurtful lusts'¹ to feed on, nor will he let his slaves have any rest, he hires them out in doing his drudgery; 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity.'² When the devil had entered into Judas, he sends him to the chief priests, and from thence to the garden, and never let him rest till he had betrayed Christ, and hanged himself. Thus Satan is the worst tyrant; when men have served him to their utmost strength, he will welcome them to hell with fire and brimstone.

USE. Let us pray that Satan's kingdom, set up in the world, may be thrown down. It is sad to think that though the devil's kingdom be so bad, yet that it should have so many to support it. Satan hath more to stand up for his kingdom, than Christ hath for his. What a large harvest of souls hath Satan; and God only a few gleanings! The pope and the Turk give their power to Satan. If in God's visible church the devil hath so many loyal subjects that serve him with their lives and souls, then how do his subjects swarm in places of idolatry and paganism where there is none to oppose him but all vote on the devil's side? Men are willingly slaves to Satan; they will fight and die for him; therefore Satan is not only called 'the prince of this world,'³ and the 'god of this world,'⁴ to show what power Satan hath over men's souls. O let us pray that God may break the sceptre of the devil's kingdom,* that Michael may destroy the dragon, that by the help of a religious magistracy and ministry the hellish kingdom of the prince of darkness may

be beaten down! Satan's kingdom must be thrown down before Christ's kingdom can flourish in its power and majesty.

2. When we pray, 'thy kingdom come;' here is something positively intended: 1st. we pray that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts, and increased; 2d. That the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's due time, be translated into it.

I begin with the first, the kingdom of grace. When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' we pray, 1st. that the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts. This is God's lesser kingdom: 'the kingdom of God is righteousness;' 'the kingdom of God is within you.'⁶

Q. 1. Why is grace called a kingdom?

Because, when grace comes, there is a kingly government set up in the soul. Grace rules the will and affections, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ; grace doth king it in the soul; it sways the sceptre, it subdues mutinous lusts, and keeps the soul in a spiritual *decorum*.

Q. 2. Why is there such need that we should pray that this kingdom of grace may come into our hearts?

1. Because, till the kingdom of grace come, we have no right to the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace is sweetened with love, bespangled with promises; the covenant of grace is our *magna charta*, by virtue of which God passeth himself over to us to be our God. But who are heirs of the covenant of grace? Only such as have the kingdom of grace in their hearts; 'a new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;'⁷ there is the kingdom of grace set up in the soul; then it follows, 'I will be your God.'⁸ The covenant of grace is to an ungracious person a sealed fountain; it is kept as a paradise with a flaming sword, that the sinner may not touch it; without grace you have no more right to it than a farmer to the city-charter. 2. Unless the kingdom of grace be set up in our hearts, our purest offerings are defiled; they may be good as to the matter, but not as to the manner; they want that which should meliorate and sweeten them. Under the law, if a man who was unclean by a dead body, did carry a piece of holy flesh in his skirt, the holy flesh could not cleanse him, but he polluted it.⁹ Till the kingdom of grace be in our hearts, ordinances do not purify us, but we pollute them; the prayer of an ungracious person becomes sin.¹⁰

¹ 1 Ti. 6. 9. ² Je. 9. 5. ³ Jno. 14. 30. ⁴ 2 Co. 4. 4.

* The power of Satan and his whole destroying works, are founded in sin; the obligation of the sinner unto death, by virtue of the curse of the law, was that which gave him all his power to destroy and ruin lost sinners; and therefore, if that obligation be destroyed, Satan's power and all his works of darkness must of course dissolve; the foundation being destroyed, all that is lying upon it must fall to the ground. This was done in the death of Christ; justice was satisfied, reconciliation made for iniquity, the sinner redeemed from the curse. — Christ destroys the works of the devil by the light of his word. It is observable, that upon the very external manifestation of the gospel, the gross works of the devil fell down. And O, when the Spirit of the Lord comes along with the revelation and dispensation of the word, then the devil's prisoners are loosed, the captives of the mighty are delivered, and the soul that was bound for many years with the devil's chains is made 'partaker of the glorious liberty of the sons of God'.—*Eben. Ereline's Beauties*, pp. 335, 336.

⁵ Ro. 14. 17.
⁶ Ez. 36. 28.

⁷ Lu. 17. 21.
⁸ Ha. 2. 12.

⁹ Ez. 36. 26.
¹⁰ Pr. 15. 8.

In what a sad condition is a man before God's kingdom of grace be set up in his heart! Whether he comes or comes not to the ordinance, he sins; if he doth not come to the ordinance, he is a contemner of it; if he doth come, he is a polluter of it; a sinner's works are dead works,¹ and those works which are dead cannot please God: a dead flower hath no sweetness. 3. We had need pray that the kingdom of grace may come, because till this kingdom come into our hearts, we are loathsome in God's eyes; 'my soul loathed them.'² 'How great is the pollution of a vicious mind!' TULLY. A heart void of grace looks blacker than hell; sin transforms one into a devil; 'have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?'³ Envy is the devil's eye, hypocrisy is his cloven foot; thus it is before the kingdom of grace comes. So deformed is a graceless person, that when once he sees his own filth and leprosy, the first thing he doeth is to loathe himself; 'ye shall loathe yourself in your own sight for all your evils.'⁴ I have read of a woman, who always used flattering glasses; by chance seeing her face in a true glass, she ran mad: such as now dress themselves by the flattering glass of presumption, when once God gives them a sight of their filthiness, they will abhor themselves; 'ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils.'

4. Before the kingdom of grace comes into us, we are spiritually illegitimate, of the bastard-brood of the old serpent.⁵ To be illegitimate is the greatest infamy: 'a bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord even to his tenth generation.'⁶ He was to be kept out of the holy assemblies of Israel as an infamous creature; a bastard, by the law, cannot inherit. Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, a person is to God as one illegitimate, and so continuing he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. 5. Before the kingdom of grace be set up in men's hearts, the kingdom of Satan is set up in them; they are said to be under the power of Satan.⁷ Satan commands the will; though he cannot force the will, he can by his subtle temptations, draw it; the devil is said to 'take men captive at his will.'⁸ The Greek word signifies to *take them alive* as the fowler doth the bird in the snare. The sinner's heart is the devil's mansion-house; 'I will return unto my house.'⁹ It is Satan's shop,

where he works; 'the prince of the power of the air now worketh in the children of disobedience.'¹⁰ The members of the body are the tools which Satan works with; Satan possesseth men. In Christ's time many had their bodies possessed, but it is far worse to have their souls possessed; one is possessed with an unclean devil, another with a revengeful devil. No wonder the ship goes full sail, when the wind blows; no wonder men go full sail in sin, when the devil, the prince of the air, blows them; thus it is till the kingdom of grace come, men are under the power of Satan, who, like Draco, writes all his laws in blood. 6. Till the kingdom of grace comes, a man lies exposed to the wrath of God; 'and who knoweth the power of his anger?'¹¹ If, when but a spark of God's wrath flies into a man's conscience in this life, it is so terrible, what then will it be, when God stirs up all his anger? So inconceivably torturing is God's wrath, that the wicked call to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from it.¹² The hellish torments are compared to a fiery lake.¹³ Other fire is but painted in comparison of this; and this lake of fire burns for ever.¹⁴ God's breath kindles this fire,¹⁵ and where shall we find engines or buckets to quench it? Time will not finish it; tears will not quench it. To this fiery lake are men exposed, till the kingdom of grace be set up in them. 7. Till the kingdom of grace come, men cannot die with comfort; only he who takes Christ in the arms of his faith, can look death in the face with joy. But it is sad to have the king of terrors in the body, and not the kingdom of grace in the soul. It is a wonder every graceless person doth not die distracted. What will a grace-despiser do, when death comes to him with a writ of habeas corpus? Hell follows death; 'behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was death, and hell followed him.'¹⁶ Thus you see what need we have to pray that the kingdom of grace may come. He that dies without Christ, I may say as Christ; 'it had been good for that man he had not been born.'¹⁷ Few do believe the necessity of having the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, as appears by this, because they are so well content to live without it. Doth that man believe the necessity of a pardon, that is content to be without it? Most people, if they may have trading, and may sit

¹ He. 1. 6.² Ze. 11. 8.³ Jno. 6. 70.⁴ Ez. 20. 43.⁵ Jno. 8. 41.⁶ De. 23. 2.⁷ Ac. 26. 18.⁸ 2 Tim. 2. 26.⁹ Mat. 12. 44.¹⁰ Ep. 2. 2.¹¹ Ps. 90. 11.¹² Re. 6. 1.¹³ Re. 20. 15.¹⁴ Mar. 9. 44.¹⁵ Is. 30. 32.¹⁶ Re. 6. 8.¹⁷ Mat. 26. 24.

quietly under their vine and fig-trees, they are in their kingdom; though they have not the kingdom of God within them; if the candle of prosperity shine upon their head, they care not whether the grace of God shine in their hearts; do these men believe the necessity of grace? Were they convinced how needful it were to have the kingdom of God within them, they would cry out as the jailor, 'what must I do to be saved?'

Q. 3. How may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?

It concerns us to examine this; our salvation depends upon it: and we had need be curious in the search, because there is something looks like grace, which is not; 'if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.'² Many think they have the kingdom of grace come into their heart, and it is only a chimera, a golden dream. 'How many go to hell with a vain hope!' AUG. Zeuxis did paint grapes so lively that he deceived the living birds: there are many deceits about grace.

DECEIT 1. Men think they have the kingdom of grace in their hearts because they have the means of grace; they live where the silver trumpet of the gospel sounds; they are lift up to heaven with ordinances; 'I have a Levite to my priest,'³ sure I shall go to heaven. The Jews cried, 'the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord:'⁴ we are apt to glory in this; the oracles of God are committed to us, we have word and sacrament: alas! this is a fallacy; we may have the means of grace, yet the kingdom of grace may not be set up in our hearts; we may have the kingdom of God come nigh us,⁵ but not into us; the sound of the word in our ears, but not the savour of it in our hearts. Many of the Jews, who had Christ for their preacher, were never the better; hot clothes will not put warmth into a dead man. Thou mayest have hot clothes, warm and lively preaching, yet be spiritually dead; 'the children of the kingdom shall be cast out.'⁶

DECEIT 2. Men think they have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts, because they have some common works of the Spirit.

(1.) They have great enlightenings of mind, profound knowledge, and almost speak like angels dropped from heaven; but the apostle supposeth a case, that after men have been enlightened, they may fall away.⁷

Q. But wherein doth this illumination come short?

The illumination of hypocrites is not virtual; it doth not leave an impression of holiness behind; it is like weak physic that will not work. The mind is enlightened, but the heart is not renewed. A Christian that is all head but no feet, doth not walk in the ways of God.

(2.) Men have had convictions and stirrings of conscience for sin, they have seen the evil of their ways, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come; but, I say, convictions, though they are a step towards grace, yet they are not grace. Had not Pharaoh and Judas convictions?⁸

Q. What makes convictions prove abortive? Wherein is the defect?

1. They are not deep enough; a sinner never saw himself lost without Christ; the seed that wanted depth of earth withered.⁹ These convictions are like blossoms blown off before they come to maturity.

2. These convictions are involuntary; the sinner doth what he can to stifle these convictions; he drowns them in wine and mirth; he labours to get rid of them; as the deer, when it is shot, runs and shakes out the arrow, so doth he the arrow of conviction; or as the prisoner that files off his fetters, and breaks loose, so a man breaks loose from his convictions. His corruptions are stronger than his convictions.

(3.) Men have had some kind of humiliation, and have shed tears for their sins, therefore now they hope the kingdom of grace is come into their hearts. But this is no infallible sign of grace; Saul wept, Abab humbled himself.

Q. Why is not humiliation grace? Wherein doth it come short?

1. Tears in the wicked do not spring from love to God, but are forced by affliction,¹⁰ as water that drops from the still is forced by the fire. The tears of sinners are forced by God's fiery judgments. 2. They are deceitful tears, 'tears taught to lie.' Men weep, yet go on in sin; they do not drown their sins in their tears.

(4.) Men have begun some reformation,*

² Ex. 10. 16.

³ Mat. 13. 5.

⁴ Ge. 4. 13.

* It may be proper to premise, that certain particular vices, and likewise certain particular good and amiable qualities, seem naturally to belong to certain particular periods, and conditions of life. Now, if we would reason fairly in estimating our moral character, we ought to examine ourselves with reference to that particular sin which does most easily beset us, not to some other sin to which we are not nearly so liable.—The source of self-deception, which it is more particularly our present object to point out, is, a disposition to consider the relinquishment of any particular vice as an actual victory over the vice itself; when, in fact, we only forsake it on quitting the period or condition of life to which that vice belongs, and probably substitute for it the vice of the new period or condition on which we are entering. We thus mistake our merely out-

¹ Ac. 16. 30. ² Ga. 6. 3. ³ Ju. 17. 13. ⁴ Je. 7. 1.
⁵ Lu. 11. 20. ⁶ Mat. 8. 12. ⁷ He. 6. 4, 5, 6.

therefore sure now the kingdom of grace is come. But there may be deceit in this: 1. A man may leave his oaths and drunkenness, yet still be in love with sin; he may leave his sin out of fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury, but still his heart goes after it; 'they set their hearts on their iniquity;'² as Lot's wife left Sodom, but still her heart was in Sodom. Hypocrites are like the snake which casts her coat, but keeps her poison; they keep the love of sin, as one that hath been long suitor to another, though his friends break off the match, yet still he hath a hankering love to her. 2. It may be a partial reformation; he may leave off one sin, and live in another; he may refrain drunkenness, and live in covetousness; he may refrain swearing, and live in the sin of slandering; one devil may be cast out, and another as bad may come in his room. 3. A man may forsake gross sins, but have no reluctancy against heart sins; proud, lustful thoughts; though he dams up the stream, he lets alone the fountain. O therefore if there be so many deceits, and men may think the kingdom of grace is come into their hearts when it is not, how curious and critical had we need be in our search whether we have the kingdom of grace really come into our hearts! If a man be deceived in the title of his land, it is but the loss of his estate: but if he be deceived about his grace, it is the loss of his soul. I should now come to answer this question, how may we know that the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts?

Q. How may we know the kingdom of grace is set up in us?

1. In general, by having a metamorphosis or change wrought in the soul; this is called 'the new creature.'³ The faculties are not new, but there is a new nature; as the strings of a lute are the same, but the tune is altered. When the kingdom of grace is set up, there is light in the mind, order in the affections, pliability of the will, tenderness in the conscience; such as can find no change of heart, they are the same as they were, as vain, as earthly, as unclean as ever; there is no sign of God's kingdom of grace in them.

2. More particularly we may know the kingdom of grace is set up in our hearts:

1st. By having unfeigned desires after God;

this is the smoking flax Christ will not quench. A true desire of grace is grace; by the beating of this pulse, conclude there is life; 'O Lord let now thy ear be attentive to the prayers of thy servants who desire to fear thy name!'³ But may not a hypocrite have good desires! 'Let me die the death of the righteous.'⁴ Therefore, I say, *unfeigned* desires evidence the kingdom of God within a man.

Q. But how may these unfeigned desires be known?

1. An unfeigned desire is ingenuous; we desire God for himself, for his intrinsical excellencies, and the orieny of his beauty which shines; the savour of Christ's ointments, that is, his graces, draws the virgin's desires after him.⁵ A true saint desires Christ, not only for what he hath, but for what he is; not only for his rewards, but for his holiness. No hypocrite can thus desire God; he may desire him for his jewels, but not for his beauty. 2. An unfeigned desire is insatiable, it cannot be satisfied without God; let the world heap her honours and riches, they will not satisfy. Not flowers or music will content him who is thirsty; nothing will quench the soul's thirst but the blood of Christ; he faints away, his heart breaks with longing for God.⁶ 3. An unfeigned desire is active, it flourisheth into endeavour;⁷ 'with my soul have I desired thee in the night yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.'⁸ A soul that desires aright saith, 'Christ I must have, grace I must have; I will have heaven, though I take it by storm.' He who desires water, will let down the bucket into the well to draw it up. 4. An unfeigned desire is superlative; we desire Christ, not only more than the world, but more than heaven; 'whom have I in heaven but thee?'⁹ Heaven itself would not satisfy without Christ; Christ is the diamond in the ring of glory; if God should say to the soul, 'I will put thee into heaven, but I will hide my face from thee; I will draw a curtain between that thou shalt not behold my glory:' the soul would not be satisfied, but say, as Absalom, 'now therefore let me see the king's face.'¹⁰ 5. An unfeigned desire is gradual; it increaseth as the sun in the horizon; a little of God will not satisfy, but the pious soul desireth still more; a drop of water is not enough for the thirsty traveller. Though a Christian is thankful for the least degree of grace, yet he is not satisfied with the greatest;

¹ Ho. 4. 8.

² Co. 5. 17.

growing our vices, or relinquishing them from some change in our worldly circumstances, for a thorough, or at least for a sufficient, reformation.—*Wilberforce's View*, p. 269.

³ Ne. 1. 11. ⁴ Nu. 23. 10. ⁵ Cant. 1. 3. ⁶ Ps. 84. 2; 119. 20.

⁷ Is. 26. 9.

⁸ Ps. 73. 25.

⁹ 2 Sa. 14. 32.

still he thirsts for more of Christ, and his Spirit. Desire is a holy dropsy; a saint would have more knowledge, more sanctity, more of Christ's presence. A glimpse of Christ through the lattice of an ordinance is sweet; and now the soul will never leave longing till it sees him face to face. He desires to have grace perfected in glory. We would be swallowed up in God, and be ever bathing ourselves in those perfumed waters of pleasure, which run at his right-hand for ever. Sure this unfeigned desire after God is a blessed sign that the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, the beating of this pulse shows life! 'A good wish is from God.' AUG. If iron move upwards contrary to its nature, it is a sign some loadstone hath been there drawing it; if the soul move towards God in an unfeigned desire, it is a sign the loadstone of the Spirit hath been drawing it.

2d. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts by having the princely grace of faith. 'Faith is the holiest gem of the human breast.' Faith cuts us off from the wild olive of nature, and ingrafts us into Christ; faith is the vital artery of the soul; 'the just shall live by faith.'¹ Faith makes a holy adventure on Christ's merits; when this faith, as a princely grace reigns in the soul, now the kingdom of God is come unto us. The Hebrew word for faith comes from a radix which signifies to *nourish*: faith nourisheth the soul, and is the nurse of all the graces. But, who will not say he is a believer? Simon Magus believed,² yet was in the gall of bitterness. The hypocrite can put on faith's mantle, as the devil did Sammel's. How shall we know therefore that our faith is sound, that it is the faith of the operation of God,³ and so that the kingdom of God is within us?

1. True faith is wrought by the ministry of the word; 'faith comes by hearing.'⁴ Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. Let us examine how was our faith wrought? Did God in the ministry of the word humble us? Did he break up the fallow-ground of our heart, and then cast in the seed of faith? A good sign; but, if you know not how you came by your faith, suspect yourselves; as we suspect men to have stolen goods, when they know not how they came by them. 2. True faith is at first minute and small, like a grain of mustard-seed;

it is full of doubts and fears; it is smoking flax; it smokes with desire, but doth not flame with comfort; it is so small that a Christian can hardly discern whether he hath faith or not.*

3. True faith is long in working, it costs many searchings of heart, many prayers and tears; there is a spiritual combat, the soul suffers many sore pangs of humiliation before the child of faith be born. They whose faith is instantaneous, they leap out of sin into a confidence that Christ is theirs; I say, as Isaac concerning his son's venison, 'how is it that thou hast found it so quickly?'⁵ How is it that thou camest by thy faith so soon? The seed in the parable which sprung up suddenly withered.⁶ 4. True faith is joined with sanctity; as a little bezoar is strong in operation, and a little musk sweetens, so a little faith purifies; 'holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.'⁷ Faith, though it doth but touch Christ, fetcheth a healing virtue from him. Justifying faith doth that in a spiritual sense, which miraculous faith doth; it removes the mountains of sin, and casts them into the sea of Christ's blood. 5. True faith will trust God without a pawn. Though a Christian be cut short in provisions, the fig-tree doth not blossom, yet he will trust in God. 'Faith fears not famine.' God hath given us his promise as his bond, 'verily thou shalt be fed.'⁸ Faith puts this bond in suit; God will rather work a miracle, than his promise shall fail. He hath cause to suspect his faith, who saith, he trusts God for the greater, but dares not trust him for the less; he trusts God for salvation, but dares not trust him for a livelihood. 6. True faith is prolific, it brings forth fruit; faith

* Ge. 27. 20. ⁶ Mar. 4. 5. ⁷ 1 Ti. 3. 9. ⁸ Ps. 37. 3.

* Most, if not all, of the instances of conversion recorded in the New Testament were sudden. This operation of God on the souls of men was then frequently instantaneous, and they were transformed from unbelievers to believers at once.—When a man is thoroughly persuaded, that the course in which he is persevering is dangerous, does he not *immediately* quit it?—Apply this reasoning to religion, and you will perceive that conversion not only may be, but in many cases is, *necessarily* sudden. The inclination to deny this seems to have arisen from the confounding of two very different things, regeneration and sanctification.—*Dr O. Gregory's Letters*, let. 16.

When you are weighing things in a balance, you may add grain to grain, and it makes no turning or motion at all, till you come to the very last grain; and then, *suddenly*, that end which was downward is turned upward. So is it in the change of a sinner's heart and life. He is not changed while he is but deliberating whether he should choose Christ or the world. But the last reason that cometh in and determineth his will to Christ, and makes him say, 'I will have Christ for better or worse,' this maketh the greatest change that ever is made by any work in the world.—*Baxter's Directions for Spiritual Peace*.

¹ He. 10. 38. ² Ac. 8. 13. ³ Col. 2. 12. ⁴ Ro. 10. 17.

hath Rachel's beauty, and Leah's fruitfulness. Faith is full of good works. Faith believes as if it did not work, and it works as if it did not believe; faith is the spouse-like grace which marries Christ, and good works are the children which faith bears. By having such a faith we may know the kingdom of God is within us; grace is certainly in our hearts.

3d. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts, by having the noble grace of love; faith and love are the two poles on which all religion turns; 'the upright love thee.'¹ True love is to love God out of choice; love turns the soul into a seraph; it makes it burn in a flame of affection; love is the truest touchstone of sincerity; love is the queen of the graces, it commands the whole soul.² If our love to God be genuine and real, we let him have the supremacy; we set him in the highest room of our soul; we give him the purest of our love; 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.'³ If the spouse had any thing better than another, a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that; we should give the creature the milk of our love, but God the cream. In short, if we love God aright, we love his laws; we love his picture drawn in the saints by the pencil of the Holy Ghost; we love his presence in his ordinances. Sleidan saith that the protestants in France had a church which they called paradise; as if they thought themselves in paradise while they had God's presence in his sanctuary. The soul that loves God, loves his appearing.⁴ It will be a glorious appearing to the saints, when their union with Christ shall be complete, then their joy shall be full. The bride longs for the marriage day: 'the Spirit and the bride say, come: even so come, Lord Jesus.'⁵ By this sacred love we may know the kingdom of God is within us.

4th. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into our hearts by spiritualizing the duties of religion; 'ye are an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.'⁶ Spiritualizing duty consists in three things: 1. Fixedness of mind; 2. Fervency of devotion; 3. Uprightness of aim. 1. Fixedness of mind. Then we spiritualize duty, when our minds are fixed on God; 'that you may attend on the Lord without distraction.'⁷ Though impertinent thoughts sometimes come into the heart in duty, yet they are not allowed;⁸ they come as unwelcome guests, which are no

sooner spied but they are turned out. 2. Fervency of devotion; 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.'⁹ 'It is a metaphor alluding to water that seethes and boils over; so the affections boil over, the eyes melt in tears, the heart flows in holy ejaculations. We not only bring our offering to God, but our hearts. 3. Uprightness of aim. A heart that is upright hath three ends in duty: (1.) That he may grow more like God. As Moses on the mount had some of God's glory reflected on him, 'his face shined.'¹⁰ (2.) That he may have more communion with God; 'our fellowship is with the Father.'¹¹ (3.) That he may bring more glory to God; 'that Christ shall be magnified.'¹² Sincerity aims at God in all; though we shoot short, yet we take a right aim; this is a sure evidence of grace, the spiritualizing duty. The spirits of wine are best, so is the spiritual part of duty. A little spiritualness in duty is better than all the giddings of the temple, or outward pompous worship, which doth so dazzle carnal eyes.

5th. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, by antipathy and opposition against every known sin; 'I hate every false way.'¹³ Hatred is against the whole kind, hatred is implacable; anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot. A gracious soul not only forsakes sin (as a man forsakes his country never to return to it more) but hates sin. As there is an antipathy between the crocodile and the scorpion, so if the kingdom of God be within us, we not only hate sin for hell, but we hate it as hell, as being contrary to God's holiness and our happiness.

6th. We may know the kingdom of grace is come into us, when we have given up ourselves to God by obedience; as a servant gives up himself to his master, as a wife gives up herself to her husband, so we give up ourselves to God by obedience. And this obedience is, 1st. free; as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb. 2d. Uniform; we obey God in one thing as well as another; 'then shall I not be ashamed;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, 'I shall not blush when I have respect to all thy commandments.'¹⁴ A good Christian is like a pair of compasses: one foot of the compass stands upon the centre, and the other foot of it goes round the circle; so a Christian by faith stands on God the centre, and by obedience goes round the circle of God's commandments; a

¹ Can. 1. 4. ² Co. 5. 4. ³ Can. 8. 2. ⁴ 2 Ti. 4. 8. ⁵ Re. 22. 17. ⁶ 1 Pe. 2. 5. ⁷ 1 Co. 7. 35. ⁸ Ps. 119. 13.

⁹ Ro. 12. 11. ¹⁰ 1 Jno. 1. 3. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 4. 11; Ph. 1. 20. ¹² Ps. 119. 104. ¹³ Ps. 119. 6.

sign the kingdom of grace is not come into the heart, when it doth not reign there by universal obedience.* Hypocrites would have Christ to be their Saviour; but they pluck the government from his shoulders, they will not have him rule; but he who hath the kingdom of God within him, submits cheerfully to every command of God, he will do what God will have him do; he will be what God will have him be, he puts a blank paper into God's hand, and saith, 'Lord, write what thou wilt, I will subscribe.' Blessed is he that can find all these things in his soul, he 'is all glorious within.' He carries a kingdom about him; this kingdom of grace will certainly bring to a kingdom of glory.

I shall answer some doubts and objections, that a Christian may make against himself.

OBJ. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come into my heart?*

When a Christian is under temptation, or grace lies dormant, he is not fit to be his own judge; but in this case he must take the witness of others who have the spirit of discerning. But let us hear a Christian's objections against himself, why he thinks the kingdom of grace is not yet come into his heart.

OBJ. 1. *I cannot discern grace.*

A child of God may have the kingdom of grace in his heart, yet not know it. The cup was in Benjamin's sack, though he did not know it was there; thou mayest have faith in thy heart, the cup may be in thy sack, though thou knowest it not. Old Jacob wept for his son Joseph, when Joseph was alive; thou mayest weep for want of grace, when grace may be alive in thy heart. The seed may be in the ground, when we do not see it spring up; the seed of God may be sown in thy heart, though thou dost not perceive the springing of it up. Think not grace is lost because it is hid.

OBJ. 2. *Before the kingdom of grace come into the heart, there must be some preparation for it; the fallow ground of the heart must be broken up; I fear the plough of the law hath not gone*

¹ Ps. 45. 13.

* St Austin summed up the difference between the Pharisaical and evangelical righteousness in two words, 'fear and love.' They served the God of their fathers in the spirit of fear; and we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus in the spirit of love, and by the spirit of adoption. And as this slavish principle of theirs was the cause of all their former imperfections, so it finally and chiefly expressed itself in these two particulars: 1. they would do all they thought they lawfully could do; 2. they would do nothing but what was expressly commanded. Unless we be more righteous than they, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.—*Jos. Taylor's Righteousness Evangelical*, i. s. 5.

deep enough; I have not been humbled enough, therefore I have no grace.

God doth not prescribe a just proportion of sorrow and humiliation; the scripture mentions the truth of sorrow, but not the measure. Some are more flagitious sinners than others, these must have a greater degree of humiliation. A knotty piece of timber requires more wedges to be driven into it. Some stomachs are fouler than others, therefore need stronger physic. But wouldest thou know when thou hast been humbled enough for sin? When thou art willing to let go thy sins. Then the gold hath lain long enough in the furnace when the dross is purged out; so, when the love of sin is purged out, a soul is humbled enough to divine acceptance, though not to divine satisfaction. Now, if thou art humbled enough, though not so much as others, what needs more? If a needle will let out the imposthume, what needs a lance? Be not more cruel to thyself than God would have thee.

OBJ. 3. *If the kingdom of God were within me, it would be a kingdom of power; it would enable me to serve God with vigour of soul; but I have a spirit of infirmity upon me, I am weak and impotent, and untuned to every holy action.*

There is a great difference between the weakness of grace, and the want of grace: a man may have life, though he be sick and weak. Weak grace is not to be despised, but cherished; Christ will not break the bruised reed. Do not argue from the weakness of grace to the nullity. 1. Weak grace will give us a title to Christ, as well as strong. A weak hand of faith will receive the alms of Christ's merits. 2. Weak faith is capable of growth. The seed springs up by degrees, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; the faith that is strongest was once in its infancy. Grace is like the waters of the sanctuary, which did rise higher and higher; be not discouraged at thy weak faith, though it be but blossoming, it will by degrees come to more maturity. 3. The weakest grace shall persevere, as well as the strongest. A sucking child was as safe in the ark as Noah. An infant believer, that is but newly laid to the breast of the promise, is as safe in Christ as the most eminent heroic saint.

OBJ. 4. *I fear the kingdom of grace is not yet come, because I find the kingdom of sin so strong in me. Had I faith, it would purify my heart; but I find much pride, worldliness, passion.*

The best of the saints have remainders of corruption; 'they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season.'¹ So in the regenerate, though the dominion of sin be taken away, yet the life of it is prolonged for a season. What pride was there in Christ's own disciples, when they strove which should be greatest! The issue of sin will not be quite stopped till death. The Lord is pleased to let the in-being of sin continue, to humble his people, and make them prize Christ the more; but because you find corruptions stirring, do not therefore presently unsaint yourselves, and deny the kingdom of grace to be come into your souls. That you feel sin is an evidence of spiritual life; that you mourn for sin, what are these tears but fruits of love to God? that you have a combat with sin, argues antipathy against it. Those sins which you did once wear as a crown on your head, are now as fetters on the leg; is not all this from the Spirit of grace in you? Sin is in you, as poison in the body, which you are sick of, and use all scripture antidotes to expel. Should we condemn all those who have the indwelling of sin, nay, who have had sin at some times prevailing, we should blot some of the best saints out of the Bible.

OBJ. 5. *Where the kingdom of grace comes, it softens the heart; but I find my heart frozen and congealed into hardness; I can hardly squeeze out one tear. Do flowers grow on a rock? Can there be any grace in such a rocky heart?*

There may be grief where there are no tears, the best sorrow is rational. In your judgment you esteem sin the most hyperbolical evil, you have a disgust and displacency against sin; this is a rational sorrow, and such as God will accept. A Christian may have some hardness in his heart, yet not have a hard heart; a field may have tares in it, yet we call it a field of wheat; in the best heart is a mixture of hardness, yet because there is some softness and melting, God looks upon it as a soft heart; therefore, Christian, dispute not against thyself, if thou canst find but one thing, that the frame and temper of thy soul be holy. Art thou still breathing after God, delighting in him? Is the complexion of thy soul heavenly? Canst thou say, as David, 'when I awake, I am still with thee.'² As colours laid in oil, or a statue carved in gold, abide, so doth a holy complexion; the soul is still pointing towards

God. If it be thus with thee, assure thyself the kingdom of grace is come into the soul; be not unkind to God, to deny any work of his Spirit which he hath wrought in thee.

USE 1. Of exhortation. Labour to find that this kingdom of grace is set up in your hearts; while others aspire after earthly kingdoms, labour to have the kingdom of God within you.³ The kingdom of grace must come into us, before we can go into the kingdom of glory. 1st Motive. This kingdom of God within us is our spiritual beauty; the kingdom of grace adorns a person, and sets him off in the eyes of God and angels. This makes the king's daughter all glorious within.⁴ Grace sheds a glory and lustre upon the soul. As the diamond to the ring, so is grace to the soul. A heart beautified with grace hath the king of heaven's picture hung in it. 2d Motive. The kingdom of grace set up in the heart is our spiritual defence. Grace is called 'the armour of light.'⁵ It is light for beauty, and armour for defence. He who hath the kingdom of grace within him, is 'strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power';⁶ he hath the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast-plate of righteousness; this armour can never be shot through; it fortifies a Christian against the assaults of temptation, and the terrors of hell. 3d Motive. The kingdom of grace set up in the heart brings peace with it; 'the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace.'⁷ There is a secret peace breeds out of holiness. Peace is the best blessing of a kingdom: 'one peace is better than countless triumphs.' The kingdom of grace is a kingdom of peace; grace is the root, peace is the flower grows out of it; it is such peace that no worldly affliction can shake. The doors of Solomon's temple were made of olive-tree carved with open flowers:⁸ in a gracious heart is the olive of peace, and the open flowers of joy. 4th Motive. The kingdom of grace enriches the soul; a kingdom hath its riches. A believer is said to be rich in faith.⁹ How rich is he who hath God for his God, who is heir to all the promises!¹⁰ A man may be rich in bills and bonds; a believer, though he may say as Peter, 'silver and gold have I none,'¹¹ yet he is rich in bills and bonds, he is heir to all God's promises; and to be heir to the promises, is better than to be heir to a crown.

³ Lu. 17. 21.⁶ Col. 1. 11.⁴ Ja. 2. 5⁴ Ps. 45. 13.⁷ Ro. 14. 17.¹⁰ He. 6. 17.⁸ Ro. 13. 12.⁹ 1 Ki. 6. 32.¹¹ Ac. 3. 6.¹ Da. 7. 12.² Ps. 139. 18.

5th Motive. When the kingdom of grace comes, it doth fix and establish the heart; 'O God, my heart is fixed!'¹ Before the kingdom of grace comes, the heart is very unfixed and unsettled, like a ship without ballast, like quicksilver that cannot be made to fix: but when the kingdom of grace comes, it fixeth the heart upon God, and when the heart is fixed, it rests quiet as in its centre. 6th Motive. This kingdom of grace is distinguishing; it is a sure pledge of God's love. God may give kingdoms in anger; but wherever the kingdom of grace is set up, it is in love; God cannot give grace in anger. The crown always goes with this kingdom; let us therefore be ambitious of this kingdom of grace.

Q. *How should we do to obtain this kingdom?*

1. In general, take pains for it; we cannot have the world without labour, and do we think we can have grace? 'If thou seekest her as silver.'² A man may as well expect a crop without sowing, as grace without labour. We must not think to have grace as Israel had manna; they did not plough nor sow, but it was rained down from heaven upon them; no, we must take pains for grace. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat. 2. Let us go to God to set up this kingdom of grace in our hearts; God is called, 'the God of all grace.'³ Say, 'Lord, I want this kingdom of grace; I want an humble, believing heart; O enrich me with grace, let thy kingdom come! And be importunate suitors. As Aehsah said to her father Caleb, 'thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water:'⁴ so say, Lord, thou hast given me enough of the world, —here is a south land,—but Lord, give me the upper-springs of grace, let 'thy kingdom come.' What is the venison thou hast given me, without the blessing? When we are importunate with God, and will take no denial, then he will set up his kingdom within us. 3. Keep close to the word preached; the word preached is the rod of God's strength; it is the great engine God useth for the setting up the kingdom of grace in the heart; 'faith comes by hearing.'⁵ Though God could work grace immediately by his Spirit, or by the ministry of angels from heaven, yet he chooseth to work by the word preached; this is the usual mean by which he sets up the kingdom of grace in the heart; and the reason is, because he hath put his divine sanction upon it, he hath ap-

pointed it for the means of working grace, and he will honour his own ordinance.⁶ What reason could be given why the waters of Damascus should not have a sovereign virtue to heal Naaman's leprosy, as the waters of Jordan? Only this, because God did appoint and sanctify the waters of Jordan to heal, and not the others; therefore let us keep the word preached, because the power of God goes along with it.

USE 2. Such as have this kingdom of God set up in them, it calls for gratulation and thanksgiving. What will you be thankful for, if not for a kingdom? Grace is the best blessing, it is the result and product of God's electing love; God in setting up his kingdom of grace, hath done more for you, than if he had made you kings and queens; for now you are born of God, and of the blood-royal of heaven. O admire and exalt free grace; 'make his praise glorious.'⁷ The apostle seldom mentions the work of grace, but he joins praise; 'giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.'⁸ If God hath crowned you with the kingdom of grace, do you crown him with your praises.

II. The second thing intended by our Saviour in this petition is, that the kingdom of grace may increase, that it may come more into us. And this may answer a question.

Q. *Why do we pray, thy kingdom come, when the kingdom of grace is already come into the soul?*

Though the kingdom of grace be already come into us, yet still we must pray, 'thy kingdom come,' namely, that grace may be increased, and that this kingdom may flourish still more in our souls. Till we come to live among the angels, we shall need to pray this prayer, 'thy kingdom come;' Lord, let thy kingdom of grace come in more power into my soul; let grace be more augmented and increased.

Q. *When doth the kingdom of grace increase in the soul? When is it a flourishing kingdom?*

1. When a Christian hath further degrees added to his graces; there is more oil in the lamp, his knowledge is clearer, his love is more inflamed; grace is capable of degrees, and may rise higher as the sun in the horizon. It is not with us as it was with Christ, who received the Spirit without measure.⁹ Christ could not be more holy than he was; but our

¹ Ps. 57. 7. ² Pr. 2. 1. ³ 1 Pe. 5. 10.

⁴ Jos. 15. 19. ⁵ Ro. 10. 17.

⁶ 1 Co. 1. 21. ⁷ Ps. C6. 2. ⁸ Col. 1. 12. ⁹ Jno. 3. 34.

grace is receptive of further degrees; we may have more sanctity; we may add more cubits to our spiritual stature.

2. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath gotten more strength than he had; 'he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger:'¹ in the Hebrew: 'he shall add to his strength.' A Christian hath strength to resist temptation, to forgive his enemies, to suffer affliction. It is not easy to suffer; a man must deny himself before he take up the cross. The way to heaven is like the way which Jonathan and his armour-bearer had in climbing up a steep place; 'there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other.'² It requires much strength to climb up this rocky way. That grace which will carry us through prosperity, will not carry us through sufferings; the ship needs stronger tackling to carry it through a storm than a calm. Now, when we are so strong in grace that we can bear up under affliction, without murmuring or fainting, here is the kingdom of grace increased. What mighty strength of grace had he who told the emperor Valentinian, you may take away my life, but you cannot take away my love to the truth!

3. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian hath most conflict with spiritual corruptions, when he not only abstains from gross evils, but hath a combat with inward, nidden, close corruptions, as pride, envy, hypocrisy, vain thoughts, carnal confidence; these are spiritual wickednesses, and do both defile and disturb: 'let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.'³ Which shows there are two sorts of corruptions, one of the flesh, the other of the spirit. When we grieve for and combat with spiritual sin, as being the root of all gross sins; then the kingdom of grace increaseth, and spreads its territories in the soul.

4. Then the kingdom of grace flourisheth, when a Christian hath learned to live by faith; 'I live by the faith of the Son of God.'⁴ There is the habit of faith, and the drawing of this habit into exercise. For a Christian to graft his hope of salvation, only upon the stock of Christ's righteousness, and make Christ all in justification; to live on the promises, as a bee on the flower, and suck out the sweetness of them; to trust God where we cannot trace him; to believe his love through a frown; to

persuade ourselves, when he hath the face of an enemy, yet he hath the heart of a father; when we are arrived at this, here is the kingdom of grace flourishing in our souls.

5. When a Christian is arrived at holy zeal.⁵

Phinehas was zealous for his God. Zeal is the flame of the affections, it turns a saint into a seraph; a zealous Christian is impatient when God is dishonoured; he will wrestle with difficulties, he will swim to Christ through a sea of blood.⁶ Zeal loves truth when it is despised and opposed; 'they have made void thy law, therefore I love thy commandments.'⁷ Here is grace increasing like the sun in the horizon. Zeal resembles the Holy Ghost; 'there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.'⁸ Tongues of fire were an emblem of that fire of zeal, which the Spirit poured on them.

6. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian is as well diligent in his particular calling, as devout in his general. He is the wise Christian, that carries things equally; that doth so live by faith, that he lives in a calling. Therefore it is worth our notice, when the apostle had exhorted the Thessalonians to increase in grace,⁹ he presently adds, 'and that you do your own business, and work with your hands.'¹⁰ This is a sign grace is increasing, when Christians go cheerfully about their calling. Indeed to be all the day in the mount with God, and to have the mind fixed on glory, is more sweet to a man's self, and is an heaven upon earth; but to be conversant in our callings, is more profitable to others. I may allude to that of St Paul, 'to be with Christ is best for me; yet to abide here is more needful for you.'¹¹ So, to converse with God in prayer and sweet meditation all the week long, is more for the comfort of a man's own person; but to be sometimes employed in the business of a calling, is more profitable for the family to which he belongs. It is not good to be as the lilies, which toil not, neither do they spin. It shows the increase of grace, when a Christian keeps a due decorum; he joins piety and industry, when zeal runs forth in religion, and diligence is put forth in a calling.

7. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth, when a Christian is established in the belief and love of the truth. The heart by nature is as a ship without ballast, it wavers and fluctuates. Beza writes of one Bolezius, his religion

¹ Job 17. 9. ² 1 St. 14. 4. ³ 2 Co. 7. 1. ⁴ Ga. 2. 20.

⁵ Nu. 25. 13. ⁶ Re. 2. 2. ⁷ Ac. 21. 13. ⁸ Ps. 119. 126, 127
⁹ Ac. 2. 3. ¹⁰ 1 Th. 4. 10. ¹¹ 1 Th. 4. 11. ¹² Ph. 1. 24.

changed as the moon and planet Mercury. Such as are wandering stars, will be falling stars; but when a soul is built on the rock Christ, and no winds of temptation can blow it away, now the kingdom of grace flourisheth. One calls Athanasius an invincible adamant, in respect of his stability in the truth. 'Rooted and built up in him;' the rooting of a tree evidenceth the growth.

8. Then the kingdom of grace increaseth in a man's own heart, when he labours to be instrumental to set up this kingdom in others. Though it is the greatest benefit to have grace wrought in ourselves, yet it is the greatest honour to be instrumental to work it in others; 'of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you.'² Such as are masters of a family should endeavour to see the kingdom of grace set up in their servants; such as are godly parents, let not God alone by prayer, till you see grace in your children; what a comfort would it be to you, to be both the natural and spiritual fathers of your children? Austin saith, his mother Monica travailed with greater care and pain for his new birth, than his natural. This shows the increase of grace, when we labour to see the kingdom of grace set up in others; then the water abounds in the river, when it overflows and runs into the meadows; then grace increaseth in the soul when it bath influence upon others, and we endeavour their salvation.

Q. Wherein appears the needfulness of this, that the kingdom of grace should be increased?

1. This is God's design in keeping up a standing ministry in the church, to increase the kingdom of grace in men's hearts; 'he gave gifts unto men;'³ that is, ministerial gifts: why so? 'for the edifying of the body of Christ.'⁴ Not only for conversion, but for augmentation; therefore the word preached is compared not only to seed, but to milk; because by this breast-milk, God designs our growth in grace. 2. We had need have the kingdom of grace increase, in respect we have a great deal of work to do, and a little grace will hardly carry us through. A Christian's life is laborious, so many temptations to resist, so many promises to believe, so many precepts to obey, that it will require a great deal of grace. A Christian must not only pray, but 'be zealous, and repent,'⁵ not only love, but be sick of love.⁶ How had he need therefore to have the king-

dom of grace enlarged in his soul? As his work increaseth upon him, so his grace had need increase. 3. If the kingdom of grace doth not increase, it will decay; 'thou hast left thy first love.'⁷ Grace, for want of increasing, is sometimes like a winter plant, all the sap runs to the root, and it looks as if it were dead; 'strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die;'⁸ though grace cannot expire, it may wither; and a withering Christian loseth much of his beauty and fragraney. What great need then have we to pray 'thy kingdom come,' that this kingdom of grace may be increased? If grace be not improved, it will soon be impaired. A Christian, for want of increasing his grace, loseth his strength; he is like a sick man, that cannot either walk or work; his prayers are sick and weak, he is as if he had no life in him, his faith can hardly fetch breath, and you can scarce feel the pulse of his love to beat. 4. To have grace increasing is suitable to Christianity. Christians are 'called trees of righteousness.'⁹ The saints are not only jewels for sparkling lustre, but trees for growth. They are called the lights of the world.¹⁰ Light is still increasing: first there is the day-break, and so it shines brighter to the meridian. They who are the lights of the world must increase till they come to the meridian of glory. Not to grow is suspicious; painted things grow not. 5. As the kingdom of grace increaseth, so a Christian's comforts increase. Comfort belongs to the wellbeing of a Christian; it is like sweatmeat, delicious to the taste.¹¹ The more grace, the more joy; as the more sap in the root, the more wine in the grape. Who did more increase in grace than David? And who more in consolation? 'Thou hast put gladness in my heart.'¹² Grace turns to joy, as milk to cream.

Q. How may they be comforted, who bewail their want of growth, and weep that they cannot find the kingdom of grace increase?

1. To see and bewail our decay in grace, argues not only the life of grace, but growth. It is a sign a man recovers and gets strength, when he feels his weakness; it is a step forward in grace to see our imperfections. The more the Spirit shines in the heart, the more evil it discovers; a Christian thinks it worse with him than it was, whereas his grace may not grow lesser, but his light greater. 2. If a Christian doth not increase in one grace, he

¹ Col. 2. 7.
⁴ Ep. 4. 12.

² Ga. 4. 19.
⁵ Re. 3. 19.

³ Ep. 4. 8.
⁶ Cant. 2. 5.

⁷ Re. 2. 4.
¹⁰ Ph. 2. 15.

⁸ Re. 3. 2.
¹¹ Ps. 119. 103.

⁹ Is. 61. 3.
¹² Ps. 4. 7.

may in another; if not in knowledge, he may in humility. If a tree doth not grow so much in the branches, it may in the root; to grow downwards in the root, is a good growth.* 3. A Christian may grow less in affection, when he grows more in judgment. As a musician when he is old, his fingers are stiff, and not so nimble at the lute as they were, but he plays with more art and judgment than before; so a Christian may not have so much affection in duty as at the first conversion, but he is more solid in religion, and more settled in his judgment than he was before. 4. A Christian may think he doth not increase in grace, because he doth not increase in gifts; whereas there may be a decay of natural parts, the memory and other faculties, when there is not a decay of grace. Parts may be impaired, when grace is improved: be not discouraged, it is better to decay in parts and be enlarged in grace, than to be enlarged in parts, and to decay in grace. 5. A Christian may increase in grace, yet not be sensible of it. The seed may grow in the earth, when we do not perceive it to spring up: the grace may grow in time of desertion, and not be perceived. So I have done with the first thing intended in this petition, 'thy kingdom come;' we pray that the kingdom of grace may come into our hearts, and that it may increase and flourish.

I come to the second thing intended in this petition, 'that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may in due time be translated into it.'

When we pray, 'thy kingdom come,' here is something positively intended; we pray, *1st.* that the kingdom of grace may be set in our hearts; *2d.* that it may increase and flourish; *3d.* that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that God would in his due time translate us into it.

1. What this kingdom of glory is. 2. What are the properties of it. 3. Wherein it exceeds all other kingdoms. 4. When this kingdom comes. 5. Wherein appears the certainty of it. 6. Why we should pray for its coming.

First. What this kingdom of glory is.

By this kingdom is meant, that glorious estate which the saints shall enjoy when they

* The fruits of faith are good works; whether inward, within the roof of the heart, as love, awe, sorrow, piety, zeal, joy, and the rest; or outward toward God, or our brethren; obedience and service to the one; to the other relief and beneficence: these he bears in his time; sometimes all, but always some.—*Bishop Hall.*

shall reign with God and angels for ever. If a man stand upon the sea-shore, he cannot see all the dimensions of the sea, the length, breadth, and depth of it, yet he may see it is of a vast extension: so, though the kingdom of heaven be of that incomparable excellency that neither tongue of man or angels can express, yet we may conceive of it to be an exceeding glorious thing, such as the eye hath not seen.

Concerning the kingdom of heaven I shall show, what it implies; and what it imports. 1. What it implies.

It implies a blessed freedom from all evil. 2. What it imports.

It imports glorious fruition of all good

1st. What the kingdom of heaven implies.

1. It implies a freedom from all evil.

1. A freedom from the necessities of nature.

We are in this life subject to many necessities, we need food to nourish us, clothes to cover us, armour to defend us, sleep to refresh us; but in the kingdom of heaven there is no need of these things; and it is better not to need them, than to have them, as it is better not to need crutches, than to have crutches. What need will there be of food when our bodies shall be made spiritual? Though not spiritual for substance, yet for qualities. What need will there be of clothing when our bodies shall be like Christ's glorious body? What need will there be of armour when there is no enemy? What need will there be of sleep, when there is no night? The saints shall be freed, in the heavenly kingdom, from these necessities of nature to which they now lie exposed.

2. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the imperfections of nature. Since the fall, our knowledge hath suffered an eclipse. (1.) Our natural knowledge is imperfect, it is chequered with ignorance. There are many hard knots in nature, which we cannot easily untie: Why the sea should be higher than the earth, yet not drown it? What way the light is parted? What is the reason of all the occult qualities, sympathies, and antipathies? He who sees clearest, hath a mist before his eyes. Socrates said on his deathbed, there were many things he had yet to learn. Our ignorance is more than our knowledge. (2.) Our divine knowledge is imperfect; 'we know but in part,' saith Paul.⁴ Though he had many revelations, and was wrapt up into the third heaven. We have but dark conceptions of the Trinity;

¹ 1 Co. 15. 44. ² Re. 22. 5. ³ Job 38. 24. ⁴ 1 Co. 13. 9.

'canst thou by searching find out God?'¹ Our narrow capacities will no more contain the Trinity, than a little glass vial will hold all the water in the sea. We cannot unriddle the mystery of the incarnation, the human nature assumed into the person of the Son of God, the human nature not God, yet united with God; we see now in a glass darkly, but in the kingdom of heaven the veil shall be taken off, all imperfection of nature shall be done away. When the sunlight of glory shall begin to shine in the heavenly horizon, all dark shadows of ignorance shall fly away, our lamp of knowledge shall burn bright, we shall have a full knowledge of God though not know him fully.

3. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from the toilsome labours of this life. God enacted a law in paradise, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.'² There is the labour of the hand in manufacture, and the labour of the mind in study; 'all things are full of labour;'³ but in the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from our labours. (1.) There needs no man labour where a man hath got to the haven, he hath no more need of sailing. In heaven there needs no labour, because the saints shall have that glory which they laboured for. (2.) There shall be no labour; 'they rest from their labours.'⁴ As God when he had finished the work of creation, rested from his labours,⁵ so when his saints have finished the work of sanctification, they rest from their labours. Where should there be rest, but in the heavenly centre? Not that this sweet rest in the kingdom of heaven excludes all motion, for spirits cannot be idle; but the saints glorified shall rest from all wearisome employment; it shall be a labour full of ease, a motion full of delight; the saints in heaven shall love God, and what labour is that? Is it any labour to love beauty? They shall praise God, and that sure is delightful; when the bird sings, it is not so much a labour as a pleasure.

4. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from original corruption: this is the root of all actual sin. There would be no actual sin, if there were no original; there would be no water in the stream, if there were none in the fountain. Original sin is incorporated into our nature; it is as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted. This makes a Christian weary of his life; he offends that God whom he loves. What would a Christian give to have

his chains taken off, to be rid of vain thoughts? How did Paul, that bird of paradise, bemoan himself for his sins?⁶ We cannot act either our duties or our graces without sin. The soul that is most refined and clarified by grace, is not without some dregs of corruption; but in the kingdom of heaven the fountain of original sin shall be quite dried up. What a blessed time will that be, never to grieve God's Spirit more! In heaven are virgin-souls; there is beauty which is not stained with lust; nothing enters there that defiles.⁷

5. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from all sorrows; 'there shall be no more sorrow.'⁸ Our life here is interlarded with trouble.⁹ Either losses grieve, or lawsuits vex, or unkindness breaks the heart. We may as well separate moisture from air, or weight from lead, as troubles from man's life. 'Lengthened life, is but lengthened torture.'¹⁰ AUG. But, in the kingdom of heaven, sorrow and sighing shall fly away. Here the saints sit by the rivers weeping, but one smile from Christ's face will make them forget all their sufferings; their water then shall be turned into wine, their mourning into music.

6. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the immodesty of temptation. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison; but is like a prisoner that goes under bail; he walks about tempting, he labours to trepan us into sin, he is either laying off snares, or shooting off darts. 'The devil is in constant readiness for conflict.'¹¹ He laid a train of temptation to blow up the castle of Job's faith. This is as great a grief to a believer to be followed with temptations to sin, as it is for a virgin to have her chastity assaulted; but in the kingdom of heaven the saints shall be freed from the red dragon; he is cast out of paradise, and shall be for ever locked up in chains.¹²

7. In the kingdom of heaven we shall be freed from all vexing cares. The Greek word for *care*, comes from a primitive which signifies to cut the heart in pieces. Care disencumbers the mind, it wastes the spirits, it eats out the comfort of life. Care is an evil spirit that haunts us: care to prevent future dangers, and preserve present comforts. All care is full of fear, and fear is full of torment.¹³ God threatens it as a judgment; 'they shall eat their bread with carefulness.'¹⁴ Every comfort hath its care, as every rose hath its prickle;

¹ Job 11. 7. ² Ge. 3. 19. ³ Ec. 1. 8.
Re. 11. 13. ⁴ Ge. 2. 2.

⁶ Ro. 7. 24. ⁷ Re. 21. 27. ⁸ Re. 21. 4. ⁹ Ps. 31. 10.
¹⁰ Jude 6. ¹¹ 1 Jno. 4. 18. ¹² Ez. 12. 19.

but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall shake off this viper of care. What needs a saint glorified to take any care, who hath all things provided to his hand? There is the tree of life bearing all sorts of fruit. When the heart shall be freed from sin, the head shall be freed from care.

8. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all doubts and scruples. In this life the best saint hath his doubtings, as the brightest star hath his twinkling. If there were no doubtings, there would be no unbelief; assurance itself doth not exclude all doubting; 'thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes;'¹ but at another time, 'Lord, where are thy former loving-kindnesses?'² A Christian is like a ship at anchor, which though it be safe, yet it may sometimes be tossed upon the water. Sometimes a Christian questions his interest in Christ, and his title to the promise; and these doubtings, as they eclipse a Christian's comfort, so they are a bearing false witness against the Spirit. But, when the saints shall come into the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no more doubtings; then a Christian shall say, as Peter, 'now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and delivered me.'³ So, now I know, that I am passed from death to life, and I am got beyond all rocks, I have shot the gulf, now I am in my Saviour's embraces for ever.

9. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all society with the wicked. Here, we are forced sometime, to be in their company; 'wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, and dwell in the tents of Kedar!'⁴ Kedar was Ishmael's son, whose children dwelt in Arabia, a profane, barbarous people. Here the wicked are still raising persecutions against the godly, and crucifying their ears with their oaths and curses; Christ's lily is among thorns; but in the heavenly kingdom there shall be no more any pricking brier; 'the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend.'⁵ As Moses said, 'stand still and see the salvation of the Lord: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever:'⁶ so will God say, 'stand still and see the salvation of God; these your enemies, that vex and molest you, you shall see them again no more for ever.' At that day, God will separate the precious from the vile; then Christ will thoroughly purge his floor, he will gather the

wheat into the garner, and the wicked, which are the chaff, shall be blown into hell.

10. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all signs of God's displeasure. Here God may be angry with his people: though he hath the heart of a father, he may have the look of an enemy; this is sad. As when the sun is gone the dew falls; when the light of God's face is gone, tears drop from the saints' eyes. But in the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no spiritual eclipses; there shall never appear any tokens of God's displeasure; the saints shall have a constant aspect of love from God, they shall never complain any more, 'my beloved hath withdrawn himself.'⁷

11. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from all divisions. That, which is the saddest thing in the world, is to see divisions among them that are good. It is sad, that such as have one faith, yet should not be of one heart; Ephraim envies Judah, and Judah vexeth Ephraim; it is matter of tears, to see those who are united to Christ, to be divided one from another. The soldier's spear pierced Christ's side, but the divisions of saints wound his heart. But in the kingdom of heaven, there shall be no vilifying one another, or censuring; those who before could hardly pray together, shall praise God together; there shall not be one jarring string in the saints' music.

12. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from vanity and dissatisfaction. Job saith of wisdom, 'the depth saith, it is not in me; and the sea saith, it is not with me:'⁸ the same may I say concerning satisfaction; every creature saith, 'it is not in me.' Take things most pleasing, and which we promise ourselves most content from; distil the spirits and purest quintessence of them, and we shall say, as Solomon did, 'behold all was vanity!'⁹ God never did, nor will, put a satisfying virtue into any creature. In the sweetest music the world makes, either there is some string wanting, or out of tune. Who would have thought that Haman, who was so great in the king's favour, 'he set his seat above all the princes that were with him;'¹⁰ yet for the want of the bowing of a knee he is dissatisfied? but in the kingdom of heaven, we shall be freed from these dissatisfactions. The world is like a landscape, you may see gardens and fruit-trees, curiously drawn in the landscape, but you cannot enter into them; but you may enter into the joys of heaven; 'enter

¹ Ps. 26. 3.² Ps. 89. 49.³ Ac. 12. 11.⁴ Ps. 120. 5.⁵ Mat. 13. 41.⁶ Ex. 14. 13.⁷ Can. 5. 6.⁸ Job 28. 14.⁹ Ec. 2. 11.¹⁰ Es. 3. 1.

thou into the joy of thy Lord. The soul shall be satisfied while it bathes in those rivers of pleasure at God's right hand; 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.'¹ Thus you see what the kingdom of glory implies; namely, a blessed freedom from all evil.

13. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, be freed from the torments of hell; 'Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.'² (1.) The multiplicity of these torments. In this life, the body is usually exercised but with one pain, the stone or head-ach: but in hell there is a diversity of torments; there is a darkness to affright, fire to burn, a lake of sulphur to choke, chains to bind, the worm to gnaw. (2.) The torments of hell will seize upon every part of the body and soul; the eye shall be tortured with the sight of devils; the tongue that hath sworn so many oaths shall be tortured, 'send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.'³ The memory shall be tormented to remember what mercies have been abused, what seasons of grace neglected; the conscience shall be tormented with self-accusations. 3. In the pains of hell there is no mitigation, no mixture of mercy. In this life, God in anger remembers mercy;⁴ but in hell there is no alleviation, or lessening of the pains. As in the sacrifice of jealousy,⁵ God would have no oil or frankincense put into it: so in hell there is no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, no incense of prayer to appease God's wrath. (4.) In the pains of hell there is no intermission. The poets feign of Endymion, that he got leave of Jupiter always to sleep. What would the damned in hell give for one hour's sleep? 'they rest not day and night:'⁶ they are perpetually on the rack. (5.) In the pains of hell there is no expiration; they must always lie scorching in flames of wrath; 'the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever;'⁷ but, in the heavenly kingdom, the elect shall be freed from all infernal torments: 'Jesus hath delivered us from the wrath to come.' A prison is not made for the king's children. Christ drank that bitter cup of God's wrath, that the saints might never drink it.

II. In the kingdom of heaven there is a glorious fruition of all good. Had I as many tongues as hairs on my head, I could not fully describe this. I may say, as Judges 18. 9, 10. Heaven is called 'the excellent glory.'⁸ I may as well span the

firmament, or drain the ocean, as set forth the glory of this kingdom. 'The kingdom of heaven is above all hyperbole.' Were the sun ten thousand times brighter than it is, it could not parallel the lustre of this kingdom; Apelles' pencil would blot, angels' tongues would lessen it; I can but give you the *skiagraphia*, or dark shadow of it; expect not to see it in all its orient colours till you are mounted above the stars. But let us not stand afar off, as Moses, to behold this Canaan, but enter into it, and taste the honey. Concerning the fruitions and privileges of this heavenly kingdom, I. We shall have an immediate communion with God himself, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness; this divines call 'the beatific vision.' The Psalmist did triumph in that enjoyment he had of God in this life; 'whom have I in heaven but thee?'⁹ If God, enjoyed by faith, doth give so much comfort to the soul; how much more, when he is enjoyed by immediate vision! Here we see God but darkly through the glass of ordinances, but, in the kingdom of heaven we shall see him 'face to face.'¹⁰ We shall have an intellectual sight of God, that is, we shall see him with the eyes of our mind; we shall know God as much as we are known. We shall have a full knowledge of God, though not know him fully; as a vessel in the sea, is full of the sea, though it holds not all the sea. To see and enjoy God will be most delicious; in God are beams of majesty, and bowels of mercy. God hath all excellencies concentered in him. If one flower should have the sweetness of all flowers, how sweet would that flower be! All the beauty and sweetness which lie scattered in the creature, are infinitely to be found in God; therefore to see and enjoy him, will ravish the soul with delight. We shall so see God as to love him, and be made sensible of his love; and, when we shall have this sweet communion with God, then God shall be 'all in all;'¹¹ light to the eye, manna to the taste, music to the ear.

2. We shall, in the kingdom of heaven, with these eyes, see the glorified body of Jesus Christ. This our Saviour makes a great part of the glory of heaven, to view the glory of his human nature; 'that they may behold my glory.'¹² When Christ was transfigured upon earth, it is said, 'that his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.'¹³ If the glory of his transfiguration was so great,

¹ Ps. 17. 15. ² 1 Th. 1. 10. ³ Lu. 16. 24. ⁴ 1 Ha. 3. 2.
⁵ Nu. 5. 15. ⁶ He. 4. 8. ⁷ Re. 14. 11. ⁸ 2 Pe. 1. 17.

⁹ Ps. 73. 25. ¹⁰ 1 Co. 13. 12. ¹¹ Mat. 18. 10; 1 Co. 13. 12.
¹² 1 Co. 15. 28. ¹³ Jno. 17. 21. ¹⁴ Mat. 17. 2.

what will the glory of his exaltation be? Much of the glory of God shines in Christ, by virtue of the hypostatical union; 'in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'¹ Through Christ's humanity, as through a bright mirror, we may see some beams of the Divine Majesty shine forth. Put a back of steel to a glass, and you may see a face in it: Christ's human nature is as a back of steel put to the divine nature; through this we may see God; and then our capacities shall be enlarged to a wonderful degree, to receive this glorious object; and we shall not only see God's glory, but some of his glory shall be put upon us. 'Not only shall we be in glory, but glory shall be in us.' BERN. A beggar may behold the glory of a king, and not be the happier; but Christ's glory shall be ours; 'we shall be like him.'² We shall shine by his beams.

3. We shall in the kingdom of heaven enjoy the society of 'an innumerable company of angels.'³

Q. But is there not enough in God to fill the soul with delight? Can the sight of angels add to the soul's happiness? What need is there of the light of torches, when the sun shines?

Because the divine essence, the sight of angels is desirable; much of God's curious workmanship shines in the angels; the angels are beautiful glorious creatures: and as the several strings in a lute make the harmony sweeter, and the several stars make the firmament brighter, so the society with angels will make the delight of heaven the greater; and we shall not only see the angels with the glorified eye of our understanding, but converse with them.

4. We shall in the kingdom of heaven have sweet society with glorified saints; then the communion of saints will be illustrious. O what a blessed time will it be when those who have prayed, wept, suffered together, shall rejoice together! We shall see the saints in their white linen of purity, and see them as so many crowned kings; in beholding the saints glorified, we shall behold a heaven full of suns. Some move the question, whether we shall know one another in heaven? * Surely our

knowledge shall not be diminished, but increased. It is the judgment of Luther and Anselm, and many other divines, that we shall know one another; yea, the saints of all ages, whose faces we never saw; and, when we shall see the saints in glory without their spots, namely, their infirmities, pride, and passion, this will be a glorious sight. We see how Peter was transported when he saw but two prophets in the transfiguration;⁴ but, what a blessed sight will it be when we shall see such a glorious company of prophets, and martyrs, and holy men of God! How sweet will the music be, when they shall all sing together in concert, in the heavenly choir! And though, in this great assembly of saints and angels, 'one star may differ from another in glory,' yet no such weed as envy shall ever grow in the paradise of God; then there shall be perfect love, which, as it casts out fear, so also envy; though one vessel of glory may hold more than another, yet every vessel shall be full.

5. In the kingdom of heaven there shall be incomprehensible joy. Aristotle saith, 'joy proceeds from union.' When the saints' union with Christ is perfected in heaven, then their joy shall be full; all the birds of the heavenly paradise sing for joy. What joy when the saints shall see the great gulf shot, and know that they are passed from death to life! What joy, when they are as holy as they would be, and as God would have them to be! What joy to hear the music of angels, to see the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over the soul, to be drinking that water of life which is quintessential, and is sweeter than all nectar and ambrosia! What joy when the saints shall see

* Mat. 17. 3.

inexplicable restraint are prevented, amidst an intimate intercourse, from making mutual discoveries? Or have they forgotten what they themselves were, so that they cannot reveal it to their associates? What would be gained by this ignorance, no man can tell; but we can tell what would be lost by it. They would lose all the happiness of meeting again on the peaceful shore, those from whom they were separated by the storms of life; of seeing among the trophies of divine grace, many of whom they had despaired, and for whose sakes they had gone down with sorrow to the grave; of knowing the good they had been honoured to do, and being surrounded with the individuals who had been saved by means of their prayers, and instructions, and labours. How could those whom he had been the instrument of converting, and building up in the holy faith, be to the minister of the gospel, a crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord, if he did not recognize them when standing at his side? The saints will be free from the turbulence of passion, but their innocent affections will remain; and, could they spend eternal ages, without asking, Are our children here? are our still dearer relatives here? have our friends with whom we took sweet counsel together, found their way to this country, to which we travelled in company, till death parted us? And if to these questions no answer could be returned, would they be happy?—*Dick's Lect. v. 4. p. 62.*

¹ Col. 2. 9.

² 1 Jno. 3. 2.

³ He. 12. 22.

* Who can doubt whether the saints will know one another? What reason can be given why they should not? Would it be any part of their perfection to have all their former ideas obliterated, and to meet as strangers in the other world? Would it give us a more favourable notion of the assembly in heaven, to suppose it to consist of a multitude of unknown individuals, who never hold communication with each other; or by some

Christ clothed in their flesh, sitting in glory above the angels! Then they shall enter into the joy of their Lord.¹ Here joy enters into the saints, in heaven, 'they enter into joy.' O thou saint of God, who now hankest thy harp upon the willows, and minglest thy drink with weeping; in the kingdom of heaven thy water shall be turned into wine: you shall have so much felicity, that your souls cannot wish for more! The sea is not so full of water, as the heart of a glorified saint is of joy; there can be no more sorrow in heaven than there is joy in hell.

6. In heaven there is honour and dignity put upon the saints. A kingdom imports honour. All that come into heaven are kings; they have, 1. a crown; 'I will give thee a crown of life.'² 'A crown is the badge of regal power.' This crown is not lined with thorns, but hung with jewels; it is a never-fading crown. 2. The saints in heaven have their robes; they exchange their sackcloth for white robes; 'I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, clothed in white robes!'³ Robes signify their glory, white their sanctity. 3. They sit with Christ upon the throne.⁴ We read,⁵ the doors of the holy of holies were made of palm-trees and open flowers covered with gold: an emblem of that victory and that garland of glory which the saints shall wear in the kingdom of heaven. When all the titles and ensigns of worldly honour shall lie in the dust; the mace, the silver star, the garter: then shall the saints' honour remain.

7. We shall in the kingdom of heaven have a blessed rest. Rest is the end of motion; heaven is 'the blessed centre where the soul doth acquiesce and rest.' In this life we are subject to unquiet motions and fluctuations; 'we were troubled on every side:'⁶ like a ship on the sea having the waves beating on both sides: but in the kingdom of heaven there is rest.⁷ How welcome is rest to a weary traveller! When death cuts asunder the string of the body, the soul, as a dove, flies away, and is at rest. This rest is when the saints shall lie on Christ's bosom, that hive of sweetness, that bed of perfume.

8. The saints shall, in the kingdom of heaven, have their bodies richly bespangled with glory; they shall be full of clarity and brightness: as Moses' face shined that Israel were not able to behold the glory.⁸ The bodies of

the saints shall shine seven times brighter than the sun, saith Chrysostom; they shall have such a resplendency of beauty on them, that the angels shall fall in love with them; and no wonder, for they shall be made like Christ's glorious body.⁹ The bodies of saints glorified shall need no jewels, when they shall shine like Christ's body.

9. In the heavenly kingdom is eternity; it is an eternal fruition, they shall never be put out of the throne, 'they shall reign for ever and ever.'¹⁰ It is called 'the everlasting kingdom,'¹¹ and 'an eternal weight of glory.'¹² The flowers of paradise, of which the saints' garland is made, never wither. If there could be a cessation of heaven's glory, or the saints had but the least fear or suspicion of losing their felicity, it would infinitely abate and cool their joy; but their kingdom is for ever: the rivers of paradise cannot be dried up; 'at thy right hand there are pleasures for ever more.'¹³ The kingdom of heaven was typified by the temple, which was built with stone, covered with cedar overlaid with gold: to show the fixed permanent state of glory, the kingdom that abides for ever. Well may we pray, 'thy kingdom come.'

Having spoken of the kingdom of grace, and how we may know that kingdom is set up in our hearts, I am next to speak of the kingdom of glory, or heaven. 1. What is meant by the kingdom of heaven. 2. What are the properties of this kingdom. 3. Wherein this heavenly kingdom excels all the kingdoms upon earth. 4. When this kingdom shall be bestowed. 5. Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of it. 6. Why we should pray for the coming of this kingdom.

Q. 1. *What is meant by the kingdom of heaven?*

1. It imports a blessed freedom from all evil. 2. It implies a glorious fruition of all good. (1.) Immediate communion with God, who is the inexhausted sea of all happiness. (2.) A visible beholding the glorified body of Jesus Christ. (3.) A glorious vision of saints and angels. (4.) Dignity and honour, the crown, and white robes. (5.) A blessed rest.

Q. 2. *What are the properties or qualifications of the kingdom of heaven?*

1. The glory of this kingdom is solid and substantial; the Hebrew word for *glory* signifies a *weight*, to show how solid and weighty the glory of the celestial kingdom is. The glory

¹ Mat. 25. 21. ² Re. 2. 10. ³ Re. 7. 9. ⁴ Re. 3. 21.
⁵ 1 Ki. 6. 32. ⁶ 2 Co. 7. 5. ⁷ He. 4. 9. ⁸ Ex. 34. 30.

⁹ Ph. 3. 21. ¹⁰ Re. 22. 5. ¹¹ 2 Ps. 1. 11.
¹² 2 Co. 4. 17. ¹³ Ps. 16. 11.

of the worldly kingdom is airy and imaginary, like a blazing comet, or fancy. Agrippa and Bernice came with a great pomp, with a great fancy;¹ the earth hangs like a ball in the air, without any thing to uphold it:² the glory of the heavenly kingdom is substantial, it hath twelve foundations;³ that which God and angels count glory is true glory.

2. The glory of this kingdom is satisfying; 'with thee is the fountain of life.'⁴ How can they choose but be full, who are at the fountain-head? 'When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness,'⁵ that is, when I awake in the morning of the resurrection, having some of the beams of thy glory shining in me, I shall be satisfied. The creature saith concerning satisfaction, 'it is not with me.'⁶ If we go for happiness to the creature, we go to the wrong box; only heaven's glory is commensurate to the vast desires of an immortal soul. A Christian bathing himself in these rivers of pleasures, cries out in divine ecstasy, 'I have enough!' The soul is never satisfied till it hath God for its portion, and heaven for its haven. Dissatisfaction ariseth from some defect, but God is an infinite good, and there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

3. The glory of heaven's kingdom is pure and unmixed; the streams of paradise are not muddied, 'all clear, all delightful;' there gold hath no alloy; no bitter ingredient in that glory, but pure as the honey-drops from the comb; there grows a rose without prickles, the rose of Sharon; there is ease without pain, honour without disgrace, life without death.

4. The glory of this kingdom is constantly exhilarating and refreshing; there is fulness but no surfeit. Worldly comforts, though sweet, yet in time grow stale; a down-bed pleaseth a while, but within a while we are weary, and would rise. Too much pleasure is a pain; but the glory of heaven doth never surfeit or nauseate; the reason is, because, as there are all rarities imaginable, so every moment fresh delights spring from God into the glorified soul.

5. The glory of this kingdom is distributed to every individual saint. In an earthly kingdom the crown goes but to one, a crown will fit but one head: but in the kingdom above, the crown goes to all;⁷ all the elect are kings. The land is settled chiefly upon the heir, and the rest are ill provided for; but, in the kingdom of heaven, all the saints are heirs; 'heirs of

God and joint heirs with Christ.'⁸ God hath land enough to give to all his heirs.

6. Lucid and transparent. This kingdom of heaven is adorned and bespangled with light.⁹ Light is the glory of the creation; 'the light is sweet.'¹⁰ Hell is a dark dungeon;¹¹ fire, but no light. The kingdom of heaven is a *dianthum*,—all embroidered with light, clear as crystal. How can there want light where Christ the Sun of Righteousness displays his golden beams? 'the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'¹²

7. The glory of this kingdom is adequate and proportionable to the desire of the soul. In creature fruitions, that which doth commend them, and set them off to us, is suitableness; the content of marriage doth not lie either in beauty or portion, but the suitableness of disposition. The excellency of a feast is when the meat is suited to the palate: this is one ingredient in the glory of heaven, it exactly suits the desires of the glorified saints. We shall not say in heaven, here is a dish I do not love! There shall be music suits the ear; the anthems of angels; and food that suits with the glorified palate; the hidden manna of God's love.

8. The glory of this kingdom will be seasonable. The seasonableness of a mercy adds to its beauty and sweetness; it is like apples of gold to pictures of silver. After a hard winter in this cold climate, will it not be seasonable to have the spring-flowers of glory appear, and the singing of the birds of paradise come? When we have been wearied, and even tired out in battle with sin and Satan, will not a crown be seasonable?

Q. 3. *Wherein the kingdom of heaven infinitely excels all the kingdoms of the earth?*

1. It excels in the architect; other kingdoms have men to raise their structures, but God himself laid the first stone in this kingdom.¹³ This kingdom is of the greatest antiquity; God was the first king and founder of it; no angel was worthy to lay a stone in this building.

2. This heavenly kingdom excels in altitude; it is higher situated than any kingdom, the higher any thing is the more excellent; the fire being the most sublime element is most noble. The kingdom of heaven is seated above all the visible orbs. There is, *1st.* the airy heaven, which is the space from the earth to the sphere of the moon. *2d.* The starry heaven, the place

¹ A c. 25. 23. ² Job 26. 97. ³ Re. 21. 14. ⁴ Ps. 36. 9.
⁵ Ps. 17. 15. ⁶ Job 28. 14. ⁷ Re. 1. 6.

⁸ Ro. 8. 17. ⁹ 1 Ti. 6. 16.

¹⁰ Ec. 11. 7.

¹¹ Mat. 22. 13. ¹² Re. 21. 23.

¹³ He. 11. 10.

where are the planets of a higher elevation, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. 3*d*. The empyrean heaven, which Paul calls the third heaven; where Christ is, there is the kingdom of glory situated. This kingdom is so high that no scaling ladders of enemies can reach it; so high that the old serpent cannot shoot up his fiery darts to it. If wicked men could build their nests among the stars, yet the least believer would shortly be above them.

3. The kingdom of heaven excels all others in splendour and riches; it is described by precious stones.¹ What are all the rarities of the earth to this kingdom, coasts of pearl, rocks of diamonds, islands of spices? What are the wonders of the world to it, the Egyptian pyramids, the temple of Diana, the pillar of the sun offered to Jupiter? What a rich kingdom is that where God will lay out all his cost! Those who are poor in the world, yet, as soon as they come into this kingdom, grow rich, as rich as the angels; other kingdoms are enriched with gold, this is enriched with the Deity.

4. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in holiness. Kingdoms on earth are for the most part unholy; there is a common sewer of luxury and uncleanness running in them; kingdoms are stages for sin to be acted on, 'all tables are full of vomit.'² But the kingdom of heaven is so holy that it will not mix with any corruption, 'there shall enter into it nothing that defileth.'³ It is so pure a soil, that no serpent of sin will breed there; there is beauty which is not stained with lust, and honour which is not swelled with pride. Holiness is the brightest jewel of the crown of heaven.

5. The kingdom of heaven excels all other kingdoms in its pacific nature; it is a kingdom of peace. Peace is the glory of a kingdom. A king's crown is more adorned with the white lily of peace, than when it is beset with the red roses of a bloody war. But where shall we find an uninterrupted peace upon earth? Either home-bred divisions, or foreign invasions; 'there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in.'⁴ But the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of peace; there are no enemies to conflict with; all Christ's enemies shall be under his feet.⁵ The gates of that kingdom always stand open, 'the gates shall not be shut at all:'⁶ to show, that there is no fear of an assault of an enemy. The saints, when they die,

are said to enter into peace.⁷ There is no beating of drums or roaring of cannons; but the voice of harpers harping, in token of peace.⁸ In heaven, 'righteousness and peace kiss each other.'⁹

6. The kingdom of heaven excels in magnitude; it is of vast dimensions. Though the gate of the kingdom be strait, we must pass into it through the strait gate of mortification; yet when once we are in it, it is very large: though there be an innumerable company of saints and angels, yet there is room enough for them. The kingdom of heaven may be called by the name of that well, 'Jacob called the name of it Rehoboth; for he said, now the Lord hath made room for us.'¹⁰ Thou, who art now confined to a small cottage, when thou comest into the celestial kingdom, thou shalt not be straitened for room. As every star hath a large orb to move in, so it shall be with the saints, when they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of heaven.

7. The kingdom of heaven excels in unity; all the inhabitants agree together in love; love will be the perfume and music of heaven; as love to God will be intense, so to the saints. Perfect love, as it casts out fear, so it casts out envy and discord. Those Christians who could not live quietly together on earth, which was the blemish of their profession, yet, in the kingdom of heaven, the fire of strife shall cease; there shall be no vilifying, or censuring one another, or raking into one another's sores, but all shall be tied together with the heart-strings of love; there Luther and Zuinglius are agreed; Satan cannot put in his cloven foot there to make divisions; there shall be perfect harmony and concord, and not one jarring string in the saints' music. It were worth dying to be in that kingdom.

8. This kingdom exceeds all earthly kingdoms in joy and pleasure; therefore it is called paradise.¹¹ For delight, there are all things to cause pleasure; there is the water of life pure as crystal; there is the honeycomb of God's love dropping; it is called entering into the joy of our Lord.¹² There are two things which cause joy. (1.) Separation from sin. Sin shall be shaken off, then joy follows. There can be no more sorrow in heaven, than there is joy in hell. (2.) Perfect union with Christ. Joy, as Aristotle saith, flows from union with the object. When our union with Christ shall

¹ Re. 21. 19. ² Is. 28. 8. Re. 21. 27.
³ 2 Ch. 15. 5. ⁴ Ps. 110. 1. Re. 21. 25.

⁵ Is. 57. 2. ⁶ Re. 14. 2. ⁷ Ps. 85. 10.
⁸ Ge. 26. 22. ⁹ 2 Co. 12. 4. ¹⁰ Mat. 25. 23.

be perfect, then our joy shall be full. If the joy of faith be so great,¹ then what will the joy of sight be? Joseph gave his brethren provision for the way, but the full sacks of corn were kept till they came to their father's house: God gives the saints a taste of joy here, but the full sacks are kept till they come to heaven. Not only the organical parts, the outward senses, the eye, ear, taste, shall be filled with joy, but the heart of a glorified saint shall be filled with joy. The understanding, will, and affections, are such a triangle, as none can fill but the Trinity; there must needs be infinite joy, where nothing is seen but beauty, nothing is tasted but love.

9. This kingdom of heaven excels all earthly kingdoms in self-perfection. Other kingdoms are defective, they have not all provisions within themselves, but are fain to traffic abroad to supply their wants at home; king Solomon did send to Ophir for gold;² but there is no defect in the kingdom of heaven; it hath all commodities of its own growth:³ there is the pearl of price, the morning-star, the mountains of spices, the bed of love; there are those sacred rarities, wherewith God and angels are delighted.

10. This kingdom of heaven excels all others in honour and nobility. It doth not only equal them in the ensigus of royalty, the throne and white robes, but it doth far transcend them; other kings are of the blood-royal, but they in this heavenly kingdom are born of God; other kings converse with nobles, the saints glorified are fellow-commoners with angels; they have a more noble crown; it is made of the flowers of paradise, and is a crown that fadeth not away.⁴ They sit on a better throne. King Solomon,⁵ sat on a throne of ivory overlaid with gold, but the saints are in heaven higher advanced, they sit with Christ upon his throne.⁶ They shall judge the princes and great ones of the earth.⁷ This honour have all the saints glorified.

11. This kingdom of heaven excels all others in healthfulness. Death is a worm that is ever feeding at the root of our gourd; kingdoms are oft hospitals of sick persons; but the kingdom of heaven is a most healthful climate; physicians there are out of date; no distemper there, no passing bell, or bill of mortality, 'neither can they die any more.'⁸ In the heavenly climate are no ill vapours to breed diseases, but a sweet aromatical smell coming from Christ; all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia.

12. This kingdom of heaven excels in duration; it abides for ever. Suppose earthly kingdoms to be more glorious than they are, their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sapphure, yet they are corruptible and fading; 'I will cause thy kingdom to cease.'⁹ Troy and Athens now lie buried in their ruins. 'The crops now wave where Troy once stood.' Mortality is the disgrace of all earthly kingdoms; but the kingdom of heaven hath eternity written upon it; it is an everlasting kingdom.¹⁰ It is founded upon a strong basis, God's omnipotency: this kingdom the saints shall never be turned out of, or be deposed from their throne, as some kings have been, namely, Henry VI., &c., but shall reign for ever and ever.¹¹

How should all this affect our hearts! What should we mind but this kingdom of heaven, which doth more outshine all the kingdoms of the earth than the sun outshines the light of a taper!

Q. 4. *When shall this kingdom be bestowed?*

This glory in the kingdom of heaven shall be begun at death, but not perfected till the resurrection. 1. The saints shall enter upon the kingdom of glory immediately after death, before their bodies are buried, their souls shall be crowned; 'having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.'¹² From this connexion, departing, and being with Christ, we see clearly that there is a speedy passage from death to glory; no sooner is the soul of a believer divorced from the body, but it presently goes to Christ; 'absent from the body, present with the Lord.'¹³ It were better for believers to stay here, if immediately after death they were not with Christ in glory; for here the saints are daily increasing their grace; here they may have many sweet foretastes of God's love; so that it were better to stay here, if their soul should sleep in their body, and they should not have a speedy sight of God in glory. But this is the consolation of believers, they shall not stay long from their kingdom; it is but winking and they shall see God. It will be a blessed change to a believer, from a desert to a paradise, from a bloody battle to a victorious crown; and a sudden change: no sooner did Lazarus die, but he had a convoy of angels to conduct his soul to the kingdom of glory. You who now are full of bodily diseases, scarce a day well, 'my life is spent with grief;' be of good

¹ 1 Pe. 1. 8. ² 2 Ch. 8. 18. ³ Re. 21. 7. ⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 4.
⁵ 1 Ki. 10. 18. ⁶ Re. 3. 21. ⁷ 1 Co. 16. 2. ⁸ Lu. 20. 36.

⁹ Ho. 1. 4. ¹⁰ 2 Pe. 1. 11. ¹¹ Re. 22. 5.
¹² Ph. 1. 23. ¹³ 2 Co. 5. 8. ¹⁴ Ps. 31. 10

comfort, you may be happy before you are aware; before another week or month be over, you may be in the kingdom of glory, and then all tears shall be wiped away. 2. The glory in the kingdom of heaven will be fully perfected at the resurrection, and general day of judgment; then the bodies and souls of believers will be reunited. What joy will there be at the reunion and meeting together of the soul and body of a saint! O what a welcome will the soul give to the body! 'O my dear body, thou didst often join with me in prayer, and now thou shalt join with me in praise; thou wert willing to suffer with me, and now thou shalt reign with me; thou wert sown a vile body, but now thou art made like Christ's glorious body; we were once for a time divorced, but now we are married, and crowned together in a kingdom, and shall mutually congratulate each other's felicity!'

Q. 5. *Wherein appears the certainty and infallibility of this kingdom of glory?*

That this blessed kingdom shall be bestowed on the saints, is beyond all dispute.

1. God hath promised it; 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;' 'I appoint unto you a kingdom.'¹ [Gr. *diatitheimai*] 'I bequeath it as my last will and testament.' Hath God promised a kingdom, and will he not make it good? God's promise is better than any bond; 'in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised.'² The whole earth hangs upon the word of God's power; and cannot our faith hang upon the word of his promise?

2. There is a price laid down for this kingdom. Heaven is not only a kingdom which God hath promised, but which Christ hath purchased; it is called a 'purchased possession.'³ Though this kingdom is given us freely, yet Christ bought it with the price of his blood; Christ's blood is a heaven-procuring blood; 'having boldness to enter into the holiest,' that is, into heaven, 'by the blood of Jesus.'⁴ Christ's blood is the key that opens the gates of heaven. Should not the saints have this kingdom, then Christ should lose his purchase. Christ on the cross was in hard travail;⁵ he travailed to bring forth salvation to the elect: should not they possess the kingdom when they die, Christ should lose his travail, all his pangs and agonies of soul upon the cross should be in vain.

3. Christ prays that the saints may have this

kingdom settled upon them; 'Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am,'⁷ that is, in heaven. This is Christ's prayer that the saints may be with him in his kingdom, and be bespangled with some of the beams of his glory: now, if they should not go into this heavenly kingdom, then Christ's prayer would be frustrated; but that cannot be, for he is God's favourite; 'I know thou hearest me always';⁸ and besides, what Christ prays for, he hath power to give. Observe the manner of Christ's prayer, 'Father, I will;' *Father*, there he prays as man; '*I will*,' there he gives as God.*

4. The saints must have this blessed kingdom by virtue of Christ's ascension; 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'⁹ Where lies the comfort of this? Here it lies, Jesus Christ ascended to take possession of heaven for all believers. As a husband takes up land in another country in the behalf of his wife, so Christ went to take possession of heaven, in the behalf of all believers; 'I go to prepare a place for you.'¹⁰ My ascension is to make all things ready against your coming: I go to prepare the heavenly mansions for you. The flesh that Christ hath taken into heaven is a sure pledge that our flesh and bodies shall be where he is, ere long. Christ did not ascend to heaven, as a private person, but as a public person, for the good of all believers; his ascension was a certain forerunner of the saints ascending into heaven.

5. The elect must have this blessed kingdom, in regard of the previous work of the Spirit in their hearts. They have the beginning of the kingdom of heaven in them here; grace is heaven begun in the soul: besides, God gives them 'the first-fruits of the Spirit.'¹¹ The first-fruits are the comforts of the Spirit. These first-fruits under the law were a certain

⁷ Juo. 17. 21. ⁸ Juo. 11. 42. ⁹ Juo. 20. 17.
¹⁰ Juo. 14. 2. ¹¹ Ro. 8. 23.

* 'Father, I *would* that where I shall be, those whom thou hast given me may be with me,' expresses no more than a petition or request. It was spoken by our Lord in prayer to his heavenly Father, to whom he was obedient even unto death. But the words 'I will' in English, when the 'will' is not the sign of the future, expresses rather a command. That the sense of the Greek word is, in the New Testament, as I have represented it, the critical reader may soon satisfy himself, by consulting the following passages in the original; Mat. 12. 38, and 29. 39.; Mark 6. 25; and 10. 35. The sons of Zebedee also use the word, Mark 10. 35, in making a request to Jesus; but it would be doing great injustice to the two disciples, to say, either that they claimed as their right what they then asked, or that they called themselves equal to their Lord and Master.—*Campbell's Gospels*, note on John 17. 24.

¹ Lu. 12. 32.

² Lu. 22. 29.

³ Tit. 1. 2.

⁴ Ep. 1. 14.

⁵ He. 10. 19.

⁶ Is. 53. 11.

sign to the Jews of the full crop or vintage which they should after receive: the first-fruits of the Spirit, consisting of joy and peace, do assure the saints of the full vintage of glory they shall be ever reaping in the kingdom of God: and the saints in this life are said to have the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts.¹ As an earnest is part of payment, and an assurance of payment in full to be made in due time, so God's Spirit in the hearts of believers, giving them his comforts, bestows on them an earnest, or taste of glory, which doth further assure them of that full reward, which they shall have in the kingdom of heaven. 'Believing ye rejoice,'² there is the earnest of heaven; 'receiving the end of your faith,'³ salvation, there is the full payment.

6. The elect must have this blessed kingdom by virtue of their coalition and union with Jesus Christ. They are members of Christ, therefore they must be where their head is. Indeed the Arminians hold, that a justified person may fall from grace, and so his union with Christ may be dissolved, and the kingdom lost; but I will demand of them, can Christ lose a member of his body? then he is not perfect; and if Christ may lose one member of his body, why not as well all, by the same reason? And so he shall be a head without a body; but be assured a believer's union with Christ cannot be broken, and so long he cannot be hindered of the kingdom.⁴ What was said of Christ's natural body is as true of his mystical, 'a bone of him shall not be broken.'⁵ Look how every bone and limb of Christ's natural body was raised up out of the grave, and carried into heaven: so shall every member of his mystical body be carried up into glory.

7. We read of some who have been translated into this kingdom. Paul had a sight of it, for he was caught up into the third heaven.⁶ And the converted thief on the cross was translated into glory; 'to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'⁷ By all that hath been said, it is most evident that believers have a glorious kingdom laid up for them in reversion, and that they shall go to this kingdom when they die. There are none that doubt of the certainty of the heavenly kingdom, but such as doubt of the verity of scripture.

Q. 6. *Why should we so earnestly pray for this heavenly kingdom, thy kingdom come?*

1. Because it is a kingdom worth the pray-

ing for; it exceeds the glory of all the earthly kingdoms, it hath 'gates of pearl.'⁸ We have heard of a cabinet of pearl, but when did we hear of gates of pearl? In that kingdom is the bed of love, the mountains of spices; there are the cherubim, not to keep us out, but to welcome us into the kingdom. Heaven is a kingdom worth the praying for; there is nothing wanting in that kingdom, which may complete the saint's happiness, for, wherein does happiness consist? Is it in knowledge? we 'shall know as we are known.' Is it in dainty fare? we shall be at the 'marriage supper of the Lamb.' Is it in rich apparel? we shall be 'clothed in long white robes.' Is it in delicious music? we shall hear the choir of angels singing. Is it in dominion? we shall reign as kings and judge angels. Is it in pleasure? 'we shall enter into the joy of our Lord.' Sure then this kingdom is worth praying for! 'thy kingdom come!' Would God give us a vision of heaven a while, as he did Stephen, who saw heaven opened,⁹ we should fall into a trance; and being a little recovered out of it, how importunately would we put up this petition, 'thy kingdom come.'

2. We must pray for this kingdom of glory, because God will not bestow this kingdom on any without prayer; 'they seek for glory and immortality';¹⁰ and how do we seek but by prayer? God hath promised a kingdom, and we must by prayer put the bond in suit. God is not so lavish as to throw away a kingdom on them who do not ask it. And certainly, if Christ himself, who had merited glory, did yet pray for it, 'now, O Father, glorify me with thy own self';¹¹ how much more ought we to pray for the excellent glory, who have this kingdom granted as a charter of God's mere grace and favour?

3. We must pray that the kingdom of glory may come, that by going into it, we may make an end of sinning. I think sometimes, what a blessed time it will be, never to have a sinful thought more! We must not pray, 'thy kingdom come,' out of discontent, because we would be rid of the troubles and crosses of this life. This was Jonah's fault; he would die in a pet, because God took away his gourd; 'Lord,' saith he, 'take I beseech thee my life from me.'¹² But we must pray, 'thy kingdom come,' out of a holy design that the fetters of corruption may be pulled off, and we may be as the angels,

¹ 2 Co. 5. 5. ² 1 Pe. 1. 8. ³ 1 Pe. 1. 9. ⁴ Jno. 17. 12.
⁵ Jno. 19. 36. ⁶ 2 Co. 12. ⁷ Lu. 23. 43. ⁸ Re. 21. 21.

⁹ Ac. 7. 56 ¹⁰ Ro. 2. 7. ¹¹ Jno. 17. 5. ¹² Jo. 4. 8.

those virgin-spirits who never sin. This made the church pray, 'come, Lord Jesus.'

4. Because that all Christ's enemies shall be put under his feet; the devil shall have no more power to tempt, nor wicked men to persecute; the antichristian hierarchy shall be pulled down, and Zion's glory shall shine as a lamp, and the Turkish strength shall be broken.

5. We must pray earnestly that the kingdom of glory may come, that we may see God 'face to face,' and have an uninterrupted and eternal communion with him in the empyrean heaven. Moses desired but a glimpse of God's glory;² how then should we pray to see him in all his embroidered robes of glory, when he shall shine ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian splendour! Here, in this life, we do rather desire God, than enjoy him; how earnestly therefore should we pray, 'thy kingdom of glory come!' The beholding and enjoying God will be the diamond in the ring, the very quintessence of glory. And must we pray, 'thy kingdom come?' how then are they ever like to come to heaven, who never pray for it? Though God gives some profane persons 'daily bread,' who never pray for it; yet he will not give them a kingdom, who never pray for it. God may feed them, but he will never crown them.

USE I. Of information.

Branch 1. From all this you see then that there is nothing within the whole sphere of religion imposed upon unreasonable terms. When God bids us serve him, it is no unreasonable request; he will out of free grace enthrone us in a kingdom. When we hear of repentance, steeping our souls in brinish tears for sin, or of mortification, beheading our king-sin, we are ready to grumble, and think this is hard and unreasonable: 'but, do we serve God for nought?' Is it not infinite bounty to reward us with a kingdom? This kingdom is as far above our thoughts, as it is beyond our deserts. No man can say, without wrong to God, that he is a hard master; though he sets us about hard work, yet he is no hard master. God gives double pay; he gives great veils in his service, sweet joy and peace, and a great reward after 'an eternal weight of glory.' God gives the spring flowers, and a crop; he settles upon us such a kingdom as exceeds our faith: such as mortal eye hath not seen, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive.³ Alas, what an infi-

nite difference is there between duty enjoined, and the kingdom prepared! What is the shedding of a tear to a crown! So that God's 'commandments are not grievous.'⁴ Our service cannot be so hard, as a kingdom is sweet.

Branch 2. See hence the royal bounty of God to his children, that he hath prepared a kingdom for them, a kingdom bespangled with glory; it is infinitely above the model we can draw of it in our thoughts. The painter going to draw the picture of Helena, as not being able to draw her beauty to the life, drew her face covered with a veil: so, when we speak of the kingdom of heaven, we must draw a veil, we cannot set it forth in all its orient beauty and magnificence: gold and pearl do but faintly shadow it out.⁵ The glory of this kingdom is better felt than expressed. 1. They who inherit this kingdom are clothed with white robes.⁶ White robes denote three things: (1.) Their dignity; the Persians were arrayed in white, in token of honour. (2.) Their purity; the magistrates among the Romans were clothed in white, therefore called *candidati*, to show their integrity; thus the queen, the Lamb's wife, is arrayed in fine linen, pure and white, which is 'the righteousness of the saints.'⁷ (3.) Their joy; white is an emblem of joy; 'eat thy bread with joy, let thy garments be always white.'⁸ 2. The dwellers in this kingdom have 'palms in their hands,' in token of victory. They are conquerors over the world: and, being victors, they have now palm-branches. 3. They sit upon the throne with Christ.⁹ When Cesar returned from conquering his enemies, there was set for him a chair of state in the senate, and a throne in the theatre. Thus the saints in glory, after their heroic victories, shall sit upon a throne with Christ. Here is royal bounty in God, to bestow such an illustrious kingdom upon the saints. It is a mercy to be pardoned, but what is it to be crowned? It is a mercy to be delivered from wrath to come, but what is it to be invested into a kingdom? 'Behold, what manner of love is this?' Earthly princes may bestow great gifts and donations upon their subjects, but they keep the kingdom to themselves. Though king Pharaoh advanced Joseph to honour, and took the ring off his finger and gave it him, yet he would keep the kingdom to himself;¹⁰ but God enthrones the saints in a kingdom; God thinks nothing too good for his children; we are ready

¹ He. 22. 20.

² Ex. 33. 13

³ 1 Co. 2. 9.

⁴ 1 Jno. 5. 3.

⁵ Re. 21.

⁶ Re. 7. 9.

⁷ Re. 19. 8.

⁸ Ec. 9. 7, 8.

⁹ Re. 7. 9.

¹⁰ Re. 3. 21.

¹¹ Ge. 41. 40.

to think much of a tear, a prayer, or to sacrifice a sin for him, but he doth think much to bestow a kingdom upon us.

Branch 3. See hence that religion is no ignominious disgraceful thing. Satan labours to cast all the odium and reproach upon it that he can; that it is devout frenzy, folly-in-grain; 'as concerning this sect, we know that it is every where spoken against.'¹ But wise men measure things by the end. What is the end of a religious life? It ends in a kingdom. Would a prince regard the slights of a few frantics, when he is going to be crowned? You who are beginners, bind their reproaches as a crown about your head, despise their censures as much as their praise; a kingdom is a-coming.*

Branch 4. See what contrary ways the godly and the wicked go at death; the godly go to a kingdom, the wicked to a prison; the devil is the jailor, and they are bound with the 'chains of darkness.'² But what are these chains? Not iron chains, but worse; the chain of God's decree, decreeing them to torment, and the chain of God's power, whereby he binds them fast under wrath: this is the deplorable condition of impenitent sinners, they do not go to a kingdom when they die, but to a prison. O think what horror and despair will possess the wicked, when they see themselves engulfed in misery, and their condition hopeless, helpless, endless; they are in a fiery prison, and no possibility of getting out! A servant under the law, who had a hard master, yet every seventh year was a year of release when he might go free: but in hell there is no year of release when the damned shall go free; the fire, the worm, the prison, are eternal. If the whole world, from earth to heaven, were filled with grains of sand, and once in a thousand years an angel should come and fetch away one grain of sand, how many millions of ages would pass before that vast heap of sand would be quite spent? Yet, if after all this time the sinner

¹ Ae. 28, 22.

² Jude 6.

* While the children of God are childish and weak in faith, they are like some great heirs before they come to the years of understanding; they consider not their inheritance, and what they are come to; have not their spirits elevated to thoughts worthy of their estate, nor their behaviour conformed to it; but, as they grow up in years, they come by little and little to be sensible of those things, and the nearer they come to possession, the more apprehensive they are of their quality, and of what doth answerably become them to do. And this is the duty of such as are heirs of glory, to grow in the understanding and consideration of that which is prepared for them, and to suit themselves, as they are able, to those great hopes.—*Leighton* on 1 Pet i. 3, 4.

might come out of hell, there were some hope; but this word EVER breaks the heart with despair.

Branch 5. See then that which may make us in love with holy duties; every duty spiritually performed brings us a step nearer to the kingdom. 'The end can reconcile us to the means.' He whose heart is set on riches, counts trading pleasant, because it brings in riches. if our hearts are set upon heaven, we shall love duty because it brings us by degrees to the kingdom; we are going to heaven in the way of duty. Holy duties increase grace; and as grace ripens, so glory hastens; the duties of religion are irksome to flesh and blood, but we should look upon them as spiritual chariots to carry us apace to the heavenly kingdom. The protestants in France called their church paradise; and well they might, because the ordinances did lead them to the paradise of God. As every flower hath its sweetness, so would every duty, if we would look upon it as giving us a lift nearer heaven.

Branch 6. It shows us what little cause the children of God have to envy the prosperity of the wicked. The wicked have the 'waters of a full cup wrung out to them.'³ As if they had a monopoly of happiness, they have all they can desire; nay, they have 'more than heart could wish.'⁴ They steep themselves in pleasure; 'they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.'⁵ The wicked are high, when God's people are low in the world; the goats clamber up the mountains of preferment, when Christ's sheep are below in the valley of tears; the wicked are clothed in purple, while the godly are in sackcloth; the prosperity of the wicked is a great stumbling-block: this made Averroes deny a providence, and made Asaph say, 'verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.' But there is no cause of envy at their prosperity, if we consider two things. 1. This is all they must have; 'son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things,'⁶ thou hadst all thy heaven here. Luther calls the Turkish empire a bone which God casts to dogs. 2. That God hath laid up better things for his children; he hath prepared a kingdom of glory for them; they shall have the beatific vision, they shall hear the angels sing in concert, they shall be crowned with the pleasures of paradise for ever. O then envy not the flourishing prosperity of

³ Ps. 73. 10.

⁴ Ps. 73. 7.

⁵ Job 21. 12.

⁶ Ps. 73. 13.

⁷ Lu. 16. 25

the wicked; they go through fair way to execution, and the godly go through foul way to coronation!

Branch 7. Is there a kingdom of glory a-coming? then see how happy all the saints are at death; they go to a kingdom; they shall see God's face, which shines ten thousand times brighter than the sun in its meridian glory. The godly at death shall be installed into their honour, and have the crown royal set upon their head. They have, in the kingdom of heaven, the quintessence of all delights; they have the water of life clear as crystal; they have all aromatic perfumes; they feed not on the dew of Hermon, but the manna of angels; they lie in Christ's bosom, that bed of spices. There is such a pleasant variety in the happiness of heaven, that after millions of years it will be as fresh and desirable as at the first hour's enjoying. In the kingdom of heaven, the saints are crowned with all those perfections which the human nature is capable of. The desires of the glorified saints are infinitely satisfied; there is nothing absent, that they could wish might be enjoyed, there is nothing present that they could wish might be removed. They who are got into this kingdom would be loath to come back to the earth again, it would be much to their loss; they would not leave the fatness and sweetness of the olive, to court the bramble; the things which tempt us, they would scorn. What are golden bags to the golden beams of the Sun of Righteousness? In the kingdom of heaven there is glory in its highest elevation; in that kingdom is knowledge without ignorance, holiness without sin, beauty without blemish, strength without weakness, light without darkness, riches without poverty, ease without pain, liberty without restraint, rest without labour, joy without sorrow, love without hatred, plenty without surfeit, honour without disgrace, health without sickness, peace without war, contentation without cessation. O the happiness of those that die in the Lord! they go into this blessed kingdom. And if they are so happy when they die, then let me make two inferences. 1. What little cause have the saints to fear death! Are any afraid of going to a kingdom? What is there in this world should make us desirous to stay here? Do we not see God dishonoured, and how can we bear it? Is not this world 'a valley of tears,' and do we weep to leave it? Are we not in a wilderness among fiery serpents, and are we afraid to go from these serpents? Our best

friends live above: God is ever displaying the banner of his love in heaven, and is there any love like his? Are there any sweeter smiles, or softer embraces than his? What news so welcome as leaving the world, and going to a kingdom? Christian, thy dying day will be thy wedding day, and dost thou fear it? Is a slave afraid to be redeemed? Is a virgin afraid to be matched into the crown? Death may take away a few worldly comforts, but it gives that which is better; it takes away a flower, and gives a jewel; it takes away a short lease, and gives land of inheritance. If the saints possess a kingdom when they die, they have no cause to fear death. A prince would not be afraid to cross the sea, though tempestuous, if he were sure to be crowned as soon as he came to shore. 2. If the godly are so happy when they die, they go to a kingdom; then, what little cause have we to mourn immoderately for the death of godly friends? Shall we mourn for their preferment? Why should we shed tears immoderately for them who have all tears wiped from their eyes? Why should we be swallowed up of grief, for them who are swallowed up of joy? They are gone to their kingdom; they are not lost, but gone a little before; not perished, but translated. They are removed for their advantage; as if one should be removed out of a smoky cottage to a palace. Elijah was removed in a fiery chariot to heaven: shall Elisha weep inordinately because he enjoys not the company of Elijah? Shall Jacob weep when he knows his son Joseph is preferred and made chief ruler in Egypt? We should not be excessive in grief, when we know our godly friends are advanced to a kingdom. I confess when any of our relations die in their impenitency, there is just cause of mourning, but not when our friends take their flight to glory. David lost two sons: Absalom a wicked son; he mourned for him bitterly: he lost the child he had by Bathsheba; he mourned not when the child was departed. St Ambrose gives the reason, David had a good hope, nay assurance that the child was translated into heaven, but he doubted of Absalom; he died in his sins, therefore David wept so for him, 'O Absalom, my son, my son!' But though we are to weep to think any of our flesh should burn in hell, yet let us not be cast down for them who are so highly preferred at death as to a kingdom. Our godly friends who die in the Lord, are in that blessed estate, and are crowned with such infinite delights, that if we could hear them

speaking to us out of heaven, they would say, 'weep not for us, but weep for yourselves.'¹ We are in our kingdom, weep not at our preferment, 'but weep for yourselves,' who are in a sinful sorrowful world; you are tossing on the troublesome waves, but we are got to the haven: you are fighting with temptations, while we are wearing a victorious crown; 'weep not for us, but weep for yourselves.'

Branch 8. See the wisdom of the godly, they have the serpent's eye in the dove's head; wise virgins.² Their wisdom appears in their choice, they choose that which will bring them to a kingdom, they choose grace, and what is grace but the seed of glory? They choose Christ with his cross, but this cross leads to a crown. Moses chose 'rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.'³ It was a wise rational choice, he knew if he suffered he should reign. At the day of judgment, those whom the world accounted foolish will appear to be wise; they made a prudent choice, they chose holiness: and what is happiness but the quintessence of holiness? 'They chose affliction with the people of God;' but through this purgatory of affliction, they pass to paradise. God will proclaim the saints' wisdom before men and angels.

Branch 9. See the folly of those who,* for vain pleasures and profits, will lose such a glorious kingdom: like that cardinal of France, who said, 'He would lose his part in paradise, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris.' I may say, 'madness is in their heart.'⁴ Lysimachus, for a draught of water, lost his empire; so for a draught of sinful pleasure these will lose heaven. We too much resemble our grandfather Adam, who for an apple lost paradise; many for trifles, to get a shilling more in the shop or bushel, will venture the loss of heaven. This will be an aggravation of the sinner's torment, to think how foolishly he was undone; for a flash of impure joy he lost an eternal weight of glory. Would it not vex one who is the lord of a manor, to think he should

part with his stately inheritance for a fit of music? such are they who let heaven go for a song. This will make the devil insult at the last day, to think how he hath gulled men, and made them lose their souls and their happiness for 'lying vanities.' If Satan could make good his brag, in giving all the glory and kingdoms of the world, it could not countervail the loss of the celestial kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven.

USE 2. Of reproof. 1. It reproves such as do not at all look after this kingdom of glory; as if all we say about heaven were but a romance, they do not mind it. That they mind it not, appears, because they do not labour to have the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts. If they have some thoughts of this kingdom, yet it is in a dull careless manner; they serve God, as if they served him not; they do not put forth their strength for the heavenly kingdom. How industrious were the saints of old for this kingdom! 'Reaching forth unto those things which are before;'⁵ the Greek word is *epekteinomenes*, 'stretching out the neck,' a metaphor from racers, that strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. Luther spent three hours a-day in prayer. 'Anna, the prophetess, departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day.' How zealous and industrious were the martyrs to get into this heavenly kingdom! They wore their fetters as ornaments, snatched up torments as crowns, and embraced the flames as cheerfully as Elijah did the fiery chariot, which came to fetch him to heaven; and do we not think this kingdom worth our labour? The great pains the heathens took in their Olympic races, when they ran but for a crown made of olive intermixed with gold, will rise up in judgment against such as take little or no pains in seeking after the kingdom of glory. The dulness of many in seeking after heaven is such, as if they did not believe there was such a kingdom; or as if it would not countervail their labour; or, as if they thought it were indifferent whether they obtained this kingdom or not, which is as much as to say, whether they were saved or not, whether they were crowned in glory, or chained as galley-slaves in hell for ever. 2. It reproves them who spend their sweat more in getting the world than the kingdom of heaven; 'who mind earthly things.'

¹ Lu. 23. 28. ² Mat. 25. 2. ³ Ho. 11. 25. ⁴ Ec. 9. 3.

* As, in human courts of judicature, criminals are naturally inclined to estimate too lightly their own turpitude, and to think the punishment inflicted on them much too heavy; so, in like manner, may it be with regard to the transgressions against God. None of us estimates duly the 'exceeding sinfulness of sin:' for we have all been guilty of it, and are, therefore, all inclined to palliate it; and if to palliate it, then to lessen the punishment which we think it justly deserves: so that, on this account, as well as because of our ignorance of the attributes of Deity, we are totally unqualified to determine the adequate magnitude of future punishment.—*Dr O. Gregory*, let. 21.

⁵ Ph. 3. 13.

⁶ Lu. 2. 37.

⁷ Ph. 3. 19.

The world is the great Diana they cry up, as if they would fetch happiness out of the earth which God hath cursed; they labour for honour and riches. Many are like Korah and Dathan, 'the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up.' So the earth swallows up their time and thoughts; these, if they are not pagans, yet they are infidels; they do not believe there is such a kingdom; they go for Christians, yet question that great article in their faith, life everlasting; these, like the serpent, lick the dust. O what is there in the world, that we should so idolize it, when Christ and heaven are not regarded? What hath Christ done for you? died for your sins. What will the world do for you? can it pacify an angry conscience? can it procure God's favour? can it fly death? can it bribe our Judge? can it purchase for you a place in the kingdom of heaven? O how are men bewitched with worldly profits and honours, that for these things they will let go paradise!* It was a good prayer of St Bernard; 'let us so possess things temporal, that we do not lose things eternal.' It reproves such who delay and put off seeking this kingdom till it be too late; like the foolish virgins who came when the door was shut. 'Delay is perilous.' People let the lamp of life blaze out; and when the symptoms of death are upon them, and they know not what else to do, now will look up to the kingdom of heaven. Christ bids them seek God's kingdom first, and they will seek it last; they put off the kingdom of heaven to a deathbed, as if it were as easy to make their peace as to make their will. How many have lost the heavenly kingdom, through delays and procrastinations! Plutarch reports of Archias the Lacedemonian, being among his cups, one delivered him a letter, and desired him to read it presently, being of serious business: saith he, 'I will mind serious things to-morrow,' and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, thou wilt look after the kingdom of heaven to-mor-

¹ Nu. 16. 32.

* An Italian hishop struggled through great difficulties without repining, and met with much opposition without ever betraying the least impatience. 'I can teach you my secret with great facility,' said he to an intimate friend. 'It consists in nothing more than making a right use of my eyes. In whatever state I am, I first of all look up to heaven, and remember that my principal business here, is to get there: I then look down on the earth, and call to mind how small a space I shall occupy in it when I am Interred; I then look abroad on the world, and observe what multitudes there are who are in all respects more unhappy than myself; thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all our cares must end, and how very little reason I have to repine or complain.'—*Hilcross on Catech.* p. 146.

row, knowest not but that thou mayest be in hell before to-morrow. Sometimes death comes suddenly, it strikes without giving warning. What folly is it putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven till the day of grace expire, till the radical moisture be spent! As if a man should begin to run a race when a fit of the gout takes him. 4. It reproves such as were once great zealots in religion, and did seem to be touched with a coal from God's altar, but since have cooled in their devotion, and have left off the pursuing the celestial kingdom. 'Israel hath cast off the thing that is good;'² there is no face of religion to be seen, they have left off the house of prayer, and gone to play-houses; they have left off pursuing the heavenly kingdom.

Q. *Whence is this?*

1. For want of a supernatural principle of grace. That branch must needs die which hath no root to grow upon. That which moves from a principle of life lasts as the beating of the pulse; but that which moves only from an artificial spring, when the spring is down, the motion ceaseth. The hypocrite's religion is artificial, not vital, he acts from the outward spring of applause or gain, and if that spring be down, his motion toward heaven ceaseth. 2. From unbelief; 'an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God;'³ 'they believed not in God;'⁴ 'they turned back.'⁵ Sinners have hard thoughts of God, they think they may pray and hear, yet never the better.⁶ They question whether God will give them the kingdom at last; then they turn back, and throw away Christ's colours; they distrust God's love, no wonder then they desert his service: infidelity is the root of apostasy. 3. Men leave off pursuing the heavenly kingdom; it is from some secret lust nourished in the soul, perhaps a wanton or a covetous lust. Demas for love of the world forsook his religion, and afterwards turned priest in an idol-temple. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Covetousness will make men betray a good cause, and make shipwreck of a good conscience. If there be any lust unmortified in the soul, it will bring forth the bitter fruit either of scandal or apostasy. 4. Men leave off pursuing the kingdom of heaven out of timorousness; if they persist in religion, they may lose their places of profit, perhaps their lives. The reason, saith Aristotle, why the cameliion turns into so many colours, is through excessive fear.

² Ho. 8. 3.

³ He. 3. 12.

⁴ Ps. 78. 22.

⁵ Ps. 78. 41.

⁶ Mat. 3. 14.

When carnal fear prevails, it makes men change their religion as fast as the camelion doth its colours. Many of the Jews who were great followers of Christ, when they saw the swords and staves, deserted him. What Solomon saith of the sluggard, is as true of the coward; he saith, 'there is a lion without;' he sees dangers before him; he would go on in the way to the kingdom of heaven, but there is a lion in the way. This is dismal; 'if any man draw back,' in the Greek, if he steals as a soldier from his colours, 'my soul shall have no pleasure in him.'²

USE 3. Of trial. Let us examine whether we shall go to this kingdom when we die: heaven is called 'a kingdom prepared.'³

Q. *How shall we know this kingdom is prepared for us?*

If we are prepared for the kingdom.

Q. *How may that be known?*

By being heavenly persons; an earthly heart is no more fit for heaven, than a clod of dust is fit to be a star; there is nothing of Christ or grace in such a heart. It were a miracle to find a pearl in a gold mine, and it is as great a miracle to find Christ the pearl of price in an earthly heart. Would we go to the kingdom of heaven? are we heavenly?

1. Are we heavenly in our contemplations? Do our thoughts run upon this kingdom? Do we get sometimes upon Mount Pisgah, and take a prospect of glory? Thoughts are as travellers: most of David's thoughts travelled heaven's road;⁴ are our minds heavenized? 'Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks.'⁵ Do we walk into the heavenly mount, and see what a glorious situation it is? Do we tell the towers of that kingdom? While a Christian fixeth his thoughts on God and glory, he doth as it were tread upon the borders of the heavenly kingdom, and peep within the veil: as Moses, who had a sight of Canaan, though he did not enter into it, so the heavenly Christian hath a sight of heaven, though he be not yet entered into it.

2. Are we heavenly in our affections? Do we set our affections on the kingdom of heaven?⁶ If we are heavenly, we despise all things below in comparison of the kingdom of God; we look upon the world but as a beautiful prison, and we cannot be much in love with our fetters, though they are made of gold; our heart is in heaven. A stranger may be in a foreign land, to gather up his debts owing him,

but he desires to be in his own kingdom and nation; so we are here a while as in a strange land, but our desire is chiefly after the kingdom of heaven, where we shall be for ever. The world is the place of a saint's abode, not his delight: is it thus with us? do we, like the patriarchs of old, 'desire a better country?' This is the temper of a true saint; his affections are set on the kingdom of God, his anchor is cast in heaven, and he is carried thither with the sails of desire.

3. Are we heavenly in our speeches? Christ after his resurrection did speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.⁷ Are your tongues tuned to the language of the heavenly Canaan? 'Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.'⁸ Do you, in your visits, season your discourses with heaven? There are many say, they hope they shall be saved, but you shall never hear them speak of the kingdom of heaven; perhaps of their wares and drugs, or of some rich purchase they have got, but nothing of the kingdom. Can men travel together in a journey, and not speak a word of the place they are travelling to? Are you travellers for heaven, and never speak a word of the kingdom you are travelling to? Herein many discover they do not belong to heaven, for you shall never hear a good word come from them. 'The words are the looking-glass of the mind;' BERN, they show what the heart is.

4. Are we heavenly in our trading? Is our traffic and merchandise in heaven? Do we trade in the heavenly kingdom by faith? A man may live in one place, and trade in another, he may live in Ireland, and trade in the West Indies, so, do we trade in the heavenly kingdom? They shall never go to heaven when they die, who do not trade in heaven while they live. Do we send up to heaven volleys of sighs and groans? Do we send forth the ship of prayer thither, which fetcheth in returns of mercy? Is our communion 'with the Father and with his Son Jesus?'⁹

5. Are our lives heavenly? Do we live as if we had seen the Lord with bodily eyes? Do we emulate and imitate the angels in sanctity? Do we labour to copy out Christ's life in ours?¹⁰ It was a custom among the Macedonians, on Alexander's birth-day, to wear his picture about their necks set with pearl and diamond: do we carry Christ's picture about us, and resemble

¹ Pr. 22. 13.

² He. 10. 38.

³ Mal. 25.

⁴ Ps. 139. 17.

⁵ Ps. 48. 12.

⁶ Col. 3. 2.

⁷ He. 11. 16.

⁸ Ac. 1. 3.

⁹ Mal. 3. 16.

¹⁰ 1 Jno. 1. 3; Ph. 3. 20.

¹¹ 1 Jno. 2. 6.

him in the heavenliness of our conversation? If we are thus heavenly, then we shall go to the kingdom of heaven when we die; and truly there is a great deal of reason why we should be thus heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider, (1.) The main end why God hath given us our souls, is, that we may mind the kingdom of heaven; our souls are of noble extraction, they are akin to the angels, a glass of the Trinity, as Plato speaks. Now, is it rational to imagine, that God would have breathed into us such noble souls only to look after sensual objects? Were such bright stars made only to shoot into the earth. Were these immortal souls made only to seek after dying comforts? Had this been only the end of our creation, to eat and drink, and converse with earthly objects, worse souls would have served us; sensitive souls had been good enough for us; what need our souls be rational and divine, to do only that work which a beast may do? (2.) Great reason we should be heavenly in our thoughts, affections, conversation, if we consider what a blessed kingdom heaven is; it is beyond all hyperbole; earthly kingdoms do scarce deserve the names of cottages compared with it. We read of an angel coming down from heaven, who did tread with his right-foot upon the sea, and with his left-foot on the earth.¹ Had we but once been in the heavenly kingdom, and viewed the superlative glory of it, how might we in a holy scorn, trample with one foot on the earth, and with the other foot upon the sea? There are rivers of pleasure, gates of pearl, sparkling crowns, white robes; may not this make our hearts heavenly? It is a heavenly kingdom, and only such go into it as are heavenly.

USE 4. Of exhortation, to all in general.

Branch 1. If there be such a glorious kingdom to come, believe this great truth. Socinians deny it.* The rabbins say, the great

dispute between Cain and Abel, was about the world to come; Abel affirmed it, Cain denied it. This should be engraven upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond, there is a blessed kingdom in reversion; 'doubtless there is a reward for the righteous.'² Let us not hesitate through unbelief. Doubting of principles is the next way to denying them. Unbelief, as Samson, would pull down the pillars of religion. Be confirmed in this, there is a kingdom of glory to come. Whoever denies this, cuts asunder the main article of the creed, 'life everlasting.'

Branch 2. If there be such a blessed kingdom of glory to come, let us take heed lest we miss of this kingdom, let us fear lest we lose heaven by short shooting. Trembling, in the body is a malady; in the soul a grace. This fear is not a fear of diffidence or distrust, such a fear as discourageth the soul, for such a fear frights from religion, it cuts the sinews of endeavour; but this holy fear, lest we miss of the kingdom of heaven, is a fear of diligence; it quickens us in the use of means, and puts us forward that we may not fail of our hope: 'Noah, being moved with fear, prepared an ark.'³ Fear is a watch-bell to awaken sleepy Christians; it guards against security; it is a spur to a sluggish heart; he who fears he shall come short of his journey, rides the faster. And indeed this exhortation to fear, lest we miss of this kingdom, is most necessary if we consider two things.

First, There are many who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have fallen short of it, 'thou art not far from the kingdom of God;'⁴ yet he was not near enough.

Q. How many steps may a man take in the way to the kingdom of God, yet miss of it?

1. He may be adorned with civility, he may be

¹ Re. 10. 2.

* What Mr Watson here says of the Socinians is rather startling. Without exception, in their public deeds, such as the Racow catechism, and in the writings of individuals, they maintain that the soul is, by virtue in the present world, fitted for the highest honours and enjoyments in that which is eternal. The same doctrine is universally professed by their successors; those who in our own day take to themselves the name of unitarians. It is needless to give a list of the names of Socinian authors to prove this; I may remark, however, that Maresius, who certainly had no warm side to the disciples of the school of Socinus, reckons up in his 'Elenchus controversiarum præcipuarum,' 126 points in which they differ from the churches of the Reformation, but gives not a single hint of their denying a doctrine which so truly lies at the very foundation of religion, both natural and revealed. Perhaps Mr Watson only meant to charge them with denying those doctrines, without faith in which, we cannot scripturally cherish the hope of entering into the 'rest

² Ps. 58. 11.

³ He. 11. 7.

⁴ Mar. 12. 34.

that remaineth to the people of God; and with denying doctrines, the rejection of which involves, if we would be consistent, the rejection also of the doctrine referred to; and with reasoning from principles of criticism which, if carried their whole length, would banish from the Christian's creed the article of the 'life everlasting.'—He in all probability referred to their tenets regarding the way of man's salvation; the sleep of the soul after death, and until the day of the resurrection of the body; the denial by not a few of them of the resurrection of the wicked; the opinions held by others that the wicked will be finally annihilated, or after a lapse of ages saved; their refinements about the nature of the punishments and enjoyments of the world to come, &c.—We hold no man responsible for the inferences that may be deduced from his creed, farther than that it is his duty to perceive them, and if they are absurd or erroneous, to give up the doctrine from which they may be legitimately drawn: therefore we do not justify Mr Watson's accusation of the Socinians.

morally righteous, he may be prudent, just, temperate, he may be free from penal statutes; this is good, but not enough to bring a man to heaven. 2. He may hang out the flag of a glorious profession, yet fall short of the kingdom. The scribes and pharisees went far; they sat in Moses' chair, were expounders of the law, they prayed, gave alms, were strict in the observation of the sabbath, if one had got a thorn into his foot, they would not pull it out on the sabbath-day, for fear of breaking the sabbath, they were so externally devout in God's worship, that the Jews thought, that if but two in all the world went to heaven, the one should be a scribe, and the other a pharisee; but the mantle of their profession was not lined with sincerity: they did all for the applause of men, therefore they missed of heaven; 'except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of God.'¹ 3. A man may be a frequenter of ordinances, and yet miss of the kingdom. It is a good sight to see people flock as doves to the windows of God's house; it is good to lie in the way where Christ passeth by; yet, be not offended, if I say, one may be a hearer of the word, and fall short of glory. Herod heard John the Baptist gladly, yet beheaded John instead of beheading his sin: the prophet Ezekiel's hearers did come with as much delight to his preaching, as one would do to a fit of music; 'thou art to them as a lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not.'² What is it to hear one's duty, and not do it? As if a physician prescribe a good recipe, but the patient doth not take it. 4. A man may have some trouble for sin, and weep for it, yet miss of the heavenly kingdom. Whence is this? A sinner's tears are forced by God's judgments; as water which comes out of a still is forced by the fire. Trouble for sin is transient, it is quickly over again. As some that go to sea are sea-sick, but when they come to land they are well again; so hypocrites may be sermon-sick, but this trouble doth not last, the sick-fit is soon over. A sinner weeps, but goes on in sin; his sins are not drowned in his tears. 5. A man may have good desires, yet miss of the kingdom; 'let me die the death of the righteous!'³ Wherein do these desires come short? They are sluggish. A man would have heaven, but

will take no pains. As if one should say, he desires water, but will not let down the bucket into the well; 'the desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour.'⁴ The sinner desires mercy, but not grace; he desires Christ as a Saviour, but not as he is the Holy One: he desires Christ only as a bridge to lead him over to heaven. Such desires as these may be found among the damned. 6. A man may forsake his sins, oaths, drunkenness, uncleanness, yet come short of the kingdom. Whence is this? He may forsake gross sins, yet he hath no reluctancy against heart-sins, pride, unbelief, and the first risings of malice and concupiscence. Though he dams up the stream, yet he lets alone the fountain; though he lop and prune the branches, yet he doth not strike at the root of it. Though he leaves sin, for fear of hell, or because it brings shame and penury, yet he still loves sin; as if a snake should cast her coat, yet keep her poison; 'they set their heart on their iniquity.'⁵ It is but a partial forsaking of sin; though he leaves one sin, he lives in some other. Herod reformed very much; 'he did many things;⁶ but he lived in incest. Some leave drunkenness, and live in covetousness; they forbear swearing, and live in slandering. It is but a partial reformation, and so they miss of the kingdom of glory.* Thus you see there are some who have gone many steps in the way to heaven, yet have come short. Some have gone so far in profession, that they have been confident their estate hath been good, and they should go to the kingdom of heaven, yet, have missed it; 'when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.'⁷ How confident were these of salvation! They did not beseech, but knock, as if they did not doubt but to be let

¹ Pro. 21. 25. ² Ho. 4. 8. ³ Mar. 6. 20. ⁴ Lu. 13. 25.

* Certain it is there are very many men in the world, that would fain commute their severity in all other instances for a license in their one appetite; they would not refuse long prayers after a drunken meeting, or great alms together with one great lust. But then consider how easy it is for them to go to heaven. God demands of them, for his sake and their own, to crucify but one natural lust, or one evil habit, (for all the rest they are easy enough to do themselves) and God will give them heaven, where the joy is more than one. And I said it is but one mortification God requires of most men; for, if those persons would extirp but that one thing in which they are principally tempted, it is not easily imaginable that any less evil, to which the temptation is trifling, should interpose between them and their great interest. If Saul had not spared Agag, the people could not have expected mercy; and our little and inferior appetites, that rather come to us by intimation and consequent adherences than by direct violence, must not dwell with him who hath crossed the violence of his distempered nature in a beloved instance.—*Taylor's Miracles of Mercy*, part 3.

¹ Mat. 5. 20.

² Ez. 33. 32.

³ Nu. 23. 10.

into heaven; yet to these Christ saith, 'I know you not whence you are; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' Therefore fear and tremble, lest any of us miss of this kingdom of heaven.

Secondly, this fear is necessary, if we consider what a loss it is to lose the heavenly kingdom. All the tears in hell are not sufficient to lament the loss of heaven. They who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose God's sweet presence, the ravishing views and smiles of God's glorious face. God's presence is the diamond in the ring of glory; 'in thy presence is fulness of joy.'¹ If God be the fountain of all bliss, then, to be separated from him, is the fountain of all misery. They who lose the heavenly kingdom, lose the society of angels; and what sweeter music, than to hear them praise God in concert? They lose all their treasure, their white robes, their sparkling crowns; they lose their hopes; 'whose hope shall be cut off.'² Their hope is not an anchor, but a spider's web. If hope deferred makes the heart sick,³ what then is hope disappointed? They lose the end of their being. Why were they created, but to be enthroned in glory? Now, to lose this, is to lose the end of their being, as if an angel should be turned to a worm. There are many aggravations of the loss of this heavenly kingdom.

1. The eyes of the wicked shall be opened to see their loss; now they care not for the loss of God's favour, because they know not the worth of it. A man that loseth a rich diamond, and took it but for an ordinary stone, is not much troubled at the loss of it; but when he comes to know what a jewel he lost, then he laments. He, whose heart would never break at the sight of his sins, shall now break at the sight of his loss. Phinehas' wife, when she heard the ark was lost, cried out, 'the glory is departed.'⁴ When the sinner sees what he hath lost, that he hath lost the beatifical vision, he hath lost the kingdom of heaven; then he will cry out in horror and despair, 'the glory, the everlasting glory is departed.'

2. A second aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, that sinners shall be upbraided by their own conscience; this is the worm that never dies, namely, a self-accusing mind. When sinners shall consider they were in a fair way to the kingdom; they had a possibility of salvation, though the door of heaven was strait,

yet it was open; they had the means of grace, the jubilee of the gospel was proclaimed in their ears, God called, but they refused; Jesus Christ offered them a plaster of his own blood to heal them, but they trampled it under foot; the Holy Spirit stood at the door of their heart, knocking and crying to them to receive Christ and heaven, but they repulsed the Spirit, and sent away this dove; and now they have, through their own folly and wilfulness, lost the kingdom of heaven: this self-accusing conscience will be terrible, like a venomous worm gnawing at the heart.

3. A third aggravation of the loss of heaven, will be to look upon others that have gained the kingdom; the happiness of the blessed will be an eyesore; 'there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.'⁵ When the wicked shall see those whom they hated and scorned, to be exalted to a kingdom, and shine with robes of glory, and they themselves miss of the kingdom, this will be a dagger at the heart, and make them gnash their teeth for envy.

4. A fourth aggravation is, this loss of the kingdom of heaven is accompanied with the punishment of sense. He who leaps short of the bank falls into the river: such as come short of heaven, fall into the river of fire and brimstone; 'the wicked shall be turned into hell.'⁶ And how dreadful is that! If, when but a spark of God's anger lights into the conscience here, it is so torturing, what will it be to have mountains of God's wrath thrown upon the soul? 'who knoweth the power of thine anger?'⁷ The angel never poured out his vial, but some wo followed:⁸ when the bitter vials of God's wrath are poured out, damnation follows. Dives cries out, 'I am tormented in this flame!' In hell there is not a drop of mercy. There was no oil nor frankincense used in the sacrifice of jealousy.⁹ In hell no oil of mercy to lenify the sufferings of the damned, nor incense of prayer to appease God's wrath.

5. A fifth aggravation of the loss of this kingdom will be, to consider on what easy and reasonable terms men might have had this kingdom. If indeed God had commanded impossibilities, to have satisfied justice in their own persons, it had been another matter: but what God did demand was reasonable, only to

¹ Ps. 16. 11. ² Job 8. 14 ³ Pr. 13. 12. ⁴ 1 Sa. 4. 21.

⁵ Lu. 13. 28. ⁶ Ps. 9. 17. ⁷ Ps. 90. 11

⁸ Re. 16. 3. ⁹ Nu. 5. 15.

do that which was for their good, to accept of Christ for their Lord and husband, not only to part with that which would damn them, if they kept their sins. These were the fair terms on which they might have enjoyed the heavenly kingdom: now, to lose heaven, which might have been had upon such easy terms, will be a cutting aggravation; it will rend a sinner's heart with rage and grief, to think how easily he might have prevented the loss of the heavenly kingdom.

6. It will be an aggravation of the loss of heaven for sinners to think how active they were in doing that which lost them the kingdom; they were *felo de se*. What pains did they take to resist the Spirit, to stifle conscience? They sinned until they were out of breath; 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity'¹ What difficulties did men go through? what did they endure for their sins? how much shame and pain? how sick was the drunkard with his cups? how sore in his body was the adulterer? and what marks of sin did he carry about him? what dangers did men adventure upon for their lusts? They adventured God's wrath, and adventured the laws of the land. O how will this aggravate the loss of heaven! How will this make men curse themselves, to think how much pains they were at to lose happiness? How will this sting men's consciences, to think, had they but taken as much pains for heaven, as they did for hell, they had not lost it.

7. Aggravation of the loss of this kingdom, it will be an eternal irreparable loss; heaven, once lost, can never be recovered. Worldly losses may be made up again; if a man lose his health, he may have it repaired by physic; if a man be driven out of his kingdom, he may be restored to it again, as king Nebuchadnezzar was; 'my honour returned to me, and I was established in my kingdom.'² King Henry VI. was deposed from his throne, yet restored again to it. But they who once lose heaven, can never be restored to it again: after millions of years, they are as far from obtaining glory as at first. Thus you see how needful this exhortation is, that we should fear lest we fall short of this kingdom of heaven.

Q. *What shall we do, that we may not miss of this kingdom of glory?*

1st. Take heed of those things which will make you miss of heaven.

1. Take heed of spiritual sloth. Many Christians are settled upon their lees, they are loath to put themselves to too much pains. It is said of Israel, 'they despised the pleasant land.'³ Canaan was a paradise of delights, a type of heaven: ay, but some of the Jews thought it would cost them a great deal of trouble and hazard in the getting, and they would rather go without it; 'they despised the pleasant land.' I have read of certain Spaniards that live where there is great store of fish, yet are so lazy, that they will not be at the pains to catch them, but buy of their neighbours; such a sinful sloth is upon the most, that though the kingdom of heaven be offered to them, yet they will not put themselves to any labour for it. They have some faint velleities and desires, O that I had this kingdom! like a man that wisheth for venison, but will not hunt for it; 'the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing.'⁴ Men could be content to have the kingdom of heaven, if it would drop as a ripe fig into their mouth, but they are loath to fight for it. O take heed of spiritual sloth; God never made heaven to be a hive for drones! We cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have the kingdom of heaven? Heathens will rise up in judgment against many Christians: what pains did they take in their Olympic races, when they ran but for a crown of olive or myrtle intermixed with gold; and do we stand still when we are running for a kingdom; 'slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep.'⁵ Sloth is the soul's sleep. Adam lost his rib when he was asleep. Many a man loseth the kingdom of heaven when he is in this deep sleep of sloth.

2. Take heed of unbelief. Unbelief kept Israel out of Canaan;⁶ so we see 'they could not enter in because of unbelief.' And it keeps many out of heaven. Unbelief is an enemy to salvation, it is a damning sin; it whispers thus, 'to what purpose is all this pains for the heavenly kingdom? I had as good sit still; I may come near to heaven, yet come short of heaven:' 'and they said, there is no hope.'⁷ Unbelief destroys hope; and if you once cut this sinew, a Christian goes but lamely in religion, if he goes at all. Unbelief raiseth jealous thoughts of God, it represents him as a severe judge: this discourageth many a soul, and takes it off from duty. Beware of unbelief; believe the promises; 'God is good to the soul

¹ Je. 9. 5.

² Da. 4. 36.

³ Pr. 106. 24.

⁴ Pr. 13. 4.

⁵ Pr. 19. 15.

⁶ Ha. 3. 19.

⁷ Je. 18. 12.

that seeks him ;¹ seek him earnestly and he will open both heart and heaven to you. 'God never fails the willing.' Do what you are able, and God will help you. While you spread the sails of your endeavour, God's Spirit will blow upon these sails, and carry you swiftly to the kingdom of glory.

3. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of mistake, imagining the way to the kingdom of heaven to be easier than it is; it is but a sigh, or, 'Lord have mercy!' There's no going to heaven instantaneously; one cannot leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom. The sinner is 'dead in trespasses';² is it easy for a dead man to restore himself to life? Is regeneration easy? are there no pangs in the new birth? doth not the scripture call Christianity a warfare and a race? and do you fancy this easy? The way to the kingdom is not easy, but the mistake about the way is easy.

4. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom take heed of delays and procrastinations. 'Delay is perilous.' It is an usual delusion, I will mind the kingdom of heaven, but not yet; when I have gotten an estate and grown old, then I will look after heaven; and, on a sudden, death surpriseth men, and they fall short of heaven. Delay strengthens sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man. Take heed of adjourning and putting off seeking the kingdom of heaven, till it be too late. Cæsar, deferring to read a letter put into his hand, was killed in the senate-house. Consider how short your life is; it is a taper soon blown out. 'The life of every living thing is on the wing.' The body is like a vessel tunned with breath, sickness broacheth it, death draws it out. Delay not the business of salvation a day longer; sometimes death strikes, and gives no warning.

5. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of prejudice. Many take a prejudice at religion, and on this rock dash their souls. They are prejudiced at Christ's person, his truths, his followers, his ways. (1.) They are prejudiced at his person; 'they were offended in him.'³ What is there in Christ, that men should be offended at him? He is the 'pearl of price';⁴ are men offended at pearls and diamonds? Christ is the wonder of beauty, 'fairer than the children of men';⁵ is there any thing in beauty to offend? Christ is the mirror of mercy;⁶ why should mercy of-

ferend any? Christ is a Redeemer; why should a captive slave be offended at him who comes with a sum of money to ransom him? The prejudice men take at Christ is from the inbred depravity of their hearts. The eye that is sore cannot endure the light of the sun; the fault is not in the sun, but in the sore eye. There are two things in Christ men are prejudiced at: 1st. His meanness. The Jews expected a monarch for their Messiah; but Christ came not with outward pomp and splendour: 'his kingdom was not of this world.' The stars which are seated in the brightest orbs, are least seen; Christ, who is the bright morning-star, was not much seen; his divinity was hid in the dark lantern of his humanity; all who saw the man did not see the Messiah; this the Jews stumbled at, the meanness of his person. 2d. Men are prejudiced at Christ's strictness; they look upon Christ as austere, and his laws too severe; 'let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us.'⁷ Though to a saint, Christ's laws are no more burdensome than wings are to a bird; yet, to the wicked, Christ's laws are a yoke, and they love not to come under restraint: hence it is they hate Christ. Though they pretend to love him as a Saviour, yet they hate him as he is the holy One. (2.) Men are prejudiced at the truths of Christ. 1st. Self-denial. A man must deny his righteousness.⁸ His duties and moralities: he will graft the hope of salvation upon the stock of his own righteousness. 2d. He must deny his unrighteousness. The scripture seals no patents to sin: it teacheth us to 'deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts.'⁹ We must divorce those sins which bring in pleasures and profit. 3d. Forgiving of injuries.¹⁰ These truths men are prejudiced at; they can rather want forgiveness from God, than they can forgive others. (3.) Men are prejudiced at the followers of Christ. 1st. Their paucity; there are but few, in comparison, that embrace Christ: but why should this offend? Men are not offended at pearls and precious stones, because they are but few. 2d. Their poverty; many that wear Christ's livery are low in the world: but why should this give offence? Christ hath better things than these to bestow upon his followers: the holy anointing, the white stone, the hidden manna, the crown of glory. All Christ's followers are not humbled with poverty. Abraham was rich with gold and silver, as well as rich in faith.

¹ Lam. 3. 25. ² Ep. 2. 1. ³ Mat. 13. 57.

⁴ Mat. 13. 46. ⁵ Ps. 45. 2. ⁶ He. 2. 17.

⁷ Ps. 2. 3. ⁸ Ps. 3. 9. ⁹ Tit. 2. 11. ¹⁰ Mar. 11. 25.

Though not many noble are called, yet some noble; 'honourable women which were Greeks believed.'¹ Constantine and Theodosius were godly emperors. So that this stumbling-block is removed. 3d. Their scandals; some of Christ's followers, under a mask of piety, commit sin; this begets a prejudice against religion; but doth Christ or his gospel teach any such thing? The rules he prescribes are holy; why should the master be thought the worse of, because some of his servants prove bad? (4.) Men are prejudiced at the ways of Christ: they expose them to sufferings; 'let him take up his cross and follow me.'² Many stumble at the cross. There are, as Tertullian says, silken Christians, who love their ease; they will follow Christ to mount Tabor, to see him transfigured, but not to mount Golgotha, to suffer with him. But, alas, what is affliction to the glory that follows! The weight of glory makes affliction light. 'The saint may lose his head, but not his crown.' O take heed of prejudice; this hath been a stumbling-stone in men's way to heaven, and hath made them fall short of the kingdom!

6. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of presumption. Men presume all is well, and take it as a principle not to be disputed that they shall go to heaven. The devil hath given them opium to cast them into a deep sleep of security. The presumptuous sinner is like the leviathan, made 'without fear;' he lives as bad as the worst, yet hopes he shall be saved as well as the best; he blesseth himself, and saith, he shall have peace, though he goes on in sin:³ as if a man should drink poison yet not fear but he should have his health. But whence doth this presumptuous hope arise? Surely from a conceit that God is made up all of mercy.* It is true God is merciful, but withal he is just too; 'keeping

mercy for thousands, and that will by no means clear the guilty.'⁴ If a king did proclaim that only those should be pardoned, who came in and submitted, ought any still persisting in rebellion, to claim the benefit of that pardon? Dost thou hope for mercy, who wilt not lay down thy weapons, but stand out in rebellion against heaven. None might touch the ark but the priests; none may touch this ark of God's mercy, but holy, consecrated persons. Presumption is 'the great devourer of souls.' A thousand have missed of heaven, by putting on the broad spectacles of presumption.

7. If you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, take heed of the delights and pleasures of the flesh. Soft pleasures harden the heart; many people cannot endure a serious thought, but are for comedies and romances; they play away their salvation. 'Pleasure is the sugared bait men bite at,' CICERO; but there is a hook under; 'they take the timbrel and harp; and rejoice at the sound of the organ.'⁵ And a parallel scripture, 'that lie upon beds of ivory, that chant to the sound of the viol, that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments.' The pleasures of the world do keep many from the pleasures of paradise. What a shame is it, that the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is akin to angels, should be enslaved by sinful pleasure! Beard, in his theatre, speaks of one who had a room richly hung with fair pictures, he had most delicious music, he had the rarest beauties, he had all the candies, and curious preserves of the confectioner; thus did he gratify his senses with pleasure, and swore he would live one week as a god, though he were sure to be damned in hell the next day. Diodorus Siculus observes, that the dogs of Sicily while they are hunting among the sweet flowers, lose the scent of the hare; so, many while they are hunting after the sweet pleasures of the world lose the kingdom of heaven. 'It is,' saith Theophylact, 'one of the worst sights, to see a sinner go laughing to hell.'

8. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of worldly-mindedness; a covetous spirit is a dunghill spirit, it chokes good affections, as the earth puts out the fire. The world hindered the young man from following Christ; he went away sorrowful;⁶ which extorted these words from our Saviour,

¹ Ac. 17. 12. ² Mat. 16. 24. ³ De. 29. 19.

* To argue from the Divine perfections by mere inference is a very convenient, but not very complete, way of disproving any assertion we please. In such case the arguer and his opponent have only each to take it for granted that he has an adequate idea of the divine attributes, and the business is settled. But if this *cannot* be taken for granted, the *major* proposition of the syllogism is unfounded, and the whole necessarily falls. Now, this exactly occurs in the instance before us: on the one hand, it is affirmed that God is bound to be merciful, and, on the other hand it is admitted, that he *will* be merciful to a certain extent, limited by his other attributes: but we have no measure of that extent, (for 'who hath known the mind of the Lord?') except so far as he has furnished us with it in the scriptures; and there we are sufficiently cautioned against relying upon mere mercy, 'uncovenanted mercy,' by being assured that 'the wrath of God abideth on' unbelievers, and that 'he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.'—*Dr O. Gregorv.* letter 21.

⁴ Ex. 34 7. ⁵ Job 21. 12 ⁶ Am. 6, 4, 5, 6. ⁷ Lu. 18. 23.

‘how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!’¹ ‘Riches are golden snares.’ BERN. If a man were to climb up a steep rock, and had weights tied to his legs, it would hinder him from his ascent; too many golden weights will hinder him from climbing up that steep rock which leads to heaven; ‘they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.’² So it may be said of many, they are entangled in earthly affairs, the world hath shut them in; the world is no friend to grace; the more the child sucks the weaker the nurse is; and the more the world sucks and draws from us, the weaker our grace is; ‘love not the world.’³ Had a man a monopoly of all the wealth of the world, were he able to empty the western parts of gold and the eastern of spices, could he heap up riches to the starry heaven; yet his heart would not be filled: covetousness is a dry dropsy. Joshua, who could stop the course of the sun, could not stop Achan in his covetous pursuit of the wedge of gold; he whose heart is locked up in his chest, will be locked out of heaven. Some ships, that have escaped the rocks, have been cast away upon the sands: many, who have escaped gross sins, have been cast away upon the world’s golden sands.

9. If you would not come short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of indulging any sin; one millstone will drown, as well as more; and one sin lived in will damn, as well as more. ‘If any one sin reign, it will keep you from reigning in the kingdom of heaven.’ HIEROM. Especially keep from sins of presumption, which ‘waste conscience.’ TERTUL. And the sin of your natural constitution, thy darling sin; ‘I have kept myself from mine iniquity,’⁴ that sin which my heart would soonest decoy and flatter me into. As in the hive there is one master-bee, so in the heart one master-sin: O take heed of this!

Q. *How may this sin be known?*

(1.) That sin which a man cannot endure the arrow of a reproof should shoot at, that is the bosom-sin. Herod could not brook to have his incest meddled with, that was a *noli me tangere*; men can be content to have other sins declaimed against, but if a minister put his finger upon the sore, and touch upon one special sin, then ‘their eyes flash fire,’ they are enraged, and spit the venom of malice. (2.) That sin which a man’s heart runs out most to,

and he is most easily captivated by, that is the *Delilah* in the bosom. One man is overcome with wantonness, another by worldliness. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a beloved sin, that if it ask him to part with not only one half the kingdom, but the whole kingdom of heaven, he must part with it to gratify that lust. (3.) That sin which doth most trouble a man and fly in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the sin he hath allowed himself in, and is his complexion-sin. When Joseph’s brethren were distressed, their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance; ‘we are verily guilty concerning our brother:’⁵ so, when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, thou hast been guilty of such a sin, the sin of slandering or uncleanness, conscience reads a man a sad lecture; it affrights him most for one sin, that is the complexion-sin. (4.) That sin which a man is loathest to part with, that is the endeared sin. Jacob could of all his sons most hardly part with Benjamin; ‘ye will take Benjamin away.’⁶ So saith the sinner, this and that sin I have left, but must Benjamin go too? Must I part with this delightful sin? That goes to the heart. As it is with a castle that hath several forts about it; the first and second forts are yielded, but when it comes to the main castle, the governor will rather fight and die than yield that; so a man may suffer many of his sins to be demolished, but when it comes to one, that is like the taking of the castle, he will never yield to part with that; surely that is the master-sin. Take heed especially of this sin; the strength of sin lies in the beloved sin; that is like a humour striking to the heart, which brings death. I have read of a monarch, that being pursued by the enemy, he threw away the crown of gold on his head, that he might run the faster; so that sin, which thou didst wear as a crown of gold, throw it away, that thou mayest run the faster to the kingdom of heaven. O, if you would not lose glory, mortify the beloved sin; set it, as Uriah, in the forefront of the battle to be slain; by plucking out this right eye you shall see the better to go to heaven!

10. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of inordinate passion; many a ship hath been lost in a storm, and many a soul hath been lost in a storm of unruly passions. Every member of the body is in-

¹ Lu. 18. 24. ² Ex. 14. 3. ³ 1 Jno. 2. 15. ⁴ Ps. 18. 23.

⁵ Ge. 42. 51.

⁶ Ge. 42. 35.

fectured with sin, as every branch of wormwood is bitter; but 'the tongue is full of deadly poison.'¹ Some care not what they say in their passion; they will censure, slander, wish evil to others; how can Christ be in the heart, when the devil hath taken possession of the tongue? Passion disturbs reason, it is 'a short frenzy.' Jonah in a passion flies out against God, 'I do well to be angry even unto death.'² What! to be angry with God, and to justify it? 'I do well to be angry;' the man was not well in his wits. Passion unfits for prayer; 'I will, therefore, that men pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath.' He that prays in wrath may lift up his hands in prayer, but he doth not lift up holy hands. Water, when it is hot, soon boils over; so, when the heart is heated with anger, it soon boils over in fiery passionate speeches. Some curse others in their passion; they whose tongues are set on fire, let them take heed that they do not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool their tongue. O, if you would not miss of the heavenly kingdom, beware of giving way to your unbridled passions! Some say, words are but wind; but they are such a wind as may blow them to hell.

11. If you would not fall short of the heavenly kingdom, beware of too much indulging the sensual appetite; 'make no provision for the flesh.'³ The Greek word, 'to make provision,' signifies to be caterers for the flesh; 'whose god is their belly.'⁴ The throat is a slippery place; Judas received the devil in the sop; and often the devil slides down in the liquor; excess in meat and drink clouds the mind, chokes good affections, provokes lust; many a man digs his own grave with his teeth; a heathen could say, 'he was higher born than to be a slave to his body.' SEN. To pamper the body, and neglect the soul, is to feed the slave and to starve the wife. Take such a proportion of food as may recruit nature, not surfeit it; excess in things lawful hath lost any the kingdom of heaven. A bee may suck a little honey from the leaf, but put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned: to suck temperately from the creature, God allows, but excess ingulfs men in perdition.

12. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of injustice in your dealings; defrauding lies in two things, 1. Mixing commodities: as if one mix bad wheat with good, and sell it for pure wheat, this is to de-

fraud; 'thy wine is mixed with water.'⁵ 2. Giving scant measure, 'making the ephah small.'⁶ The ephah was a measure which the Jews used in selling; they made the ephah small, they scarce gave measure. I wish this be not the sin of many; 'he is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.'⁷ Can they be holy, which are not just? 'shall I count them pure with the wicked balances?'⁸ Is his heart sincere, who hath false weights? Many could not reach heaven, because of their overreaching.

13. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of evil company; there is a necessary commerce with men in buying and selling; else, as the apostle saith, we must go out of the world;⁹ but do not voluntarily choose the company of the wicked; 'I have written to you not to keep company.'¹⁰ Do not incorporate into the society of the wicked, or be too much familiar with them; the wicked are God-baters; shouldest thou join with them that hate the Lord?¹¹ A Christian is bound by virtue of his oath of allegiance to God in baptism, not to have intimate converse with such as are God's sworn enemies; it is a thing of bad report. What doth Christ's doves among birds of prey? what do virgins among harlots? The company of the wicked is very defiling, it is like going among them that have the plague; 'he that toucheth pitch shall be defiled,' 'they were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.'¹² If you mingle bright armour with rusty, the bright armour will not brighten the rusty, but the rusty armour will spoil the bright. Such as have had religious education, and have some inclinations to good, yet by mixing among the wicked, they will be apt to receive hurt: the bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad. Pharaoh learned Joseph to swear, but Joseph did not learn Pharaoh to pray. There is a strange attractive power in ill company to corrupt and poison the best dispositions; they damp good affections. Throw a fire-ball into the snow, and it is soon quenched. Among the wicked you lose your heat of zealous affections: by holding familiar correspondence with the wicked, one shall hear them dissuading him from strict godliness, that it will debar him of his liberty and pleasure; 'this sect is every where spoken against.'¹³ Hereupon he, who before did look towards heaven,

¹ Ja. 3. 8. ² Jon. 4. 9. ³ 1 Ti. 2. 8.
⁴ Ro. 13. 14. ⁵ Ph. 3. 19.

⁶ Is. 1. 22. ⁷ Am. 8. 5. ⁸ Ho. 12. 7.
⁹ Mi. 6. 11. ¹⁰ 1 Co. 5. 10. ¹¹ 1 Co. 5. 11.
¹² 2 Ch. 19. 2. ¹³ Ps. 106. 35. ¹⁴ Ac. 28. 22.

begins to be discouraged, and gradually declines from goodness. (1.) There steals upon him a dislike of his former religious course of life; that he was righteous over-much, stricter than needed. (2.) There is instilled into his heart a secret delight of evil, he begins to like foolish scurrilous discourse; he can hear religion spoken against, and be silent, nay, well pleased; he loves vanity, and makes sport of sin. (3.) He is by degrees so metamorphosed, and made like the company he converseth with, that he now grows into a disgust, and hatred of his former sober ways; he is ill-affected towards good men, he is transformed into scoffing Ishmael, a breathing devil; and becomes at last as much the child of hell, as any of that graceless damned crew he conversed with. And what is the end of all? A blot in the name, a moth in the estate, a worm in the conscience. O, if you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, beware of evil company! Bad company is the bane and poison of the youth of this age; such as were once soberly inclined, yet by coming among the profane, they grow familiar, till at last they keep one another company in hell.

14. If you would not miss of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of parleying with the fleshly part; the flesh is a bosom-traitor. When an enemy is gotten within the walls of a castle, it is in great danger to be taken. The flesh is an enemy within; the flesh is a bad counsellor; the flesh saith, 'there is a lion in the way.' It discourageth from a religious strictness, the flesh saith, as Peter did to Christ, 'spare thyself;' the flesh saith, as Judas, 'what needs all this waste?' what needs this praying? why do you waste your strength and spirits in religion? what needs all this waste? The flesh cries out for ease and pleasure. How many, by consulting with the flesh, have lost the kingdom of heaven!

15. If you would not fall short of heaven, take heed of carnal relations; our carnal friends are often bars and locks in our way to heaven; they will say, religion is preciseness and singularity. A wife in the bosom may be a tempter; Job's wife was so; 'dost thou still retain thy integrity? curse God, and die.'¹ What! still pray? what dost thou get by serving God? Job, where are thy earnings? what canst thou show thou hast had in God's service, but boils and ulcers? and dost thou still retain thy in-

tegrity? Throw off God's livery, renounce religion. Here was a tentation handed over to him by his wife; the woman was made of the rib, the devil turned this rib into an arrow, and would have shot Job to the heart, but his faith quenched this fiery dart. Beware of carnal relations: we read that some of Christ's kindred laid hold on him, and would have hindered him when he was going to preach; 'they said, he is beside himself.'² Our kindred sometimes would stand in our way to heaven, and judging all zeal rashness, would hinder us from being saved. Such carnal relations Spira had; for, advising with them whether he should remain constant in his orthodox opinion, they persuaded him to recant; and so, abjuring his former faith, he fell into horror and despondency of mind. Galeacius, marquis of Vico, found his carnal relations a great block in his way; and what ado had he to break through their tentations? Take heed of a snare in your bosom. It is a brave saying of Jerome, 'If my parent should persuade me to deny Christ; if my mother should show me her breast that gave me suck; if my wife should go to charm me with her embraces; I would forsake all, and fly to Christ.'

16. If you would not fall short of the kingdom of heaven, take heed of falling off; beware of apostasy; he misseth of the prize, who doth not hold out in the race; he who makes shipwreck of the faith, cannot come to the haven of glory. We live in the fall of the leaf; men fall from that goodness they seemed to have; some are turned to error, others to vice, some to drinking and dicing, and others to whoring; the very mantle of their profession is fallen off: It is dreadful for men to fall off from hopeful beginnings! The apostate, saith Tertullian, seems to put God and Satan in the balance, and having weighed both their services, prefers the devil's service, and proclaims him to be the best master; in which respect, the apostate is said to put Christ to open shame.³ This is sad at last.⁴ If you would not miss of the glory, take heed of apostasy; those who fall away, must needs fall short of the kingdom.

17. If we would not come short of this heavenly kingdom, let us be much in the exercise of self-denial, 'if any man will come after me, let him deny himself.'⁵ He who would go to heaven must deny self-righteousness; 'that I may be found in him, not having my own

¹ Job 2. 9.² Mar. 3. 21. ³ He. 6. 6. ⁴ He. 10. 38. ⁵ Mat. 16. 24

righteousness.¹ The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels; a hypocrite would spin a web of salvation out of his own righteousness, we must deny our civility in point of justification. Civility is a good staff to walk with among men, but it is a bad ladder to climb up to heaven. We must deny our holy things in point of justification. Alas, how are our duties chequered with sin! Put gold in the fire, and there comes out dross; our most golden services are mixed with unbelief. Deny self-righteousness; use duty, but trust to Christ; Noah's dove made use of her wings to fly, but trusted to the ark for safety! Let duties have your diligence, but not your confidence. There is no getting into heaven, but through this strait gate of self-denial.

2d. The second means for the obtaining of the kingdom, is serious consideration; most men fall short of heaven, for want of consideration.

First consideration. We should often consider what a kingdom heaven is; it is called a 'kingdom prepared,' which implies something that is rare and excellent. God hath prepared in his kingdom 'such things as eye hath not seen nor ear heard.'² Heaven is beyond all hyperbole. In particular, in this celestial kingdom are two things; a stately palace, a royal feast. 1. A stately palace. It is large, and hath several stories; for the dimensions of it, it is twelve thousand furlongs: or, as it is in some Greek copies, twelve times twelve thousand furlongs; a finite number put for an infinite; no arithmetician can number these furlongs; though there be an innumerable company of saints and angels in heaven, yet there is infinitely enough of room to receive them. The palace of this kingdom is lucid and transparent; it is adorned with light, the light is sweet. Hell is a dark dungeon, but the palace above is bespangled with light.³ Such illustrious beams of glory shine from God, as shed a brightness and splendour upon the empyrean heaven. This palace of the kingdom is well situated for a good air, and a pleasant prospect; there is the best air, which is perfumed with the odours of Christ's ointments; and a most pleasant prospect of the bright morning-star. The palace is rich and sumptuous; it hath gates of pearl;⁴ it is enriched with white robes and crowns of glory; and this palace never falls to decay, and the dwellers in it never die;

'they shall reign for ever and ever. 2. A royal feast. It is called, 'the marriage-supper of the Lamb,'⁵ which Bullinger and Gregory the Great understand of the magnificent supper prepared in the kingdom of heaven. A glorious feast it will be, in respect of the founder, God; the glorified saints shall feast their eyes with God's beauty, and their hearts with his love; a delicious feast it will be, in respect of the festivity and holy mirth; what joy when there shall be the anthems and triumphs of glorified spirits? When saints and angels shall twist together in an inseparable union of love, and lie in each other's sweet embraces: a royal banquet it shall be, where there is no surfeit, because continually a fresh course is served in. The serious consideration what a kingdom heaven is, would be a means to quicken our endeavours in the pursuit after it. What causeth men to make voyages to the Indies, but the consideration of the gold and spices which are to be had there? Did we survey and contemplate the glory of heaven, we would soon take a voyage, and never leave till we had arrived at the celestial kingdom.

Second consideration. How it will trouble you, if you should perish, to think you came short of heaven for want of a little more pains! The prophet Elisha bid the king of Israel smite the ground six times, and he smote but thrice, and stayed,⁶ and he lost many victories by it: so, when a man shall think thus, 'I did something in religion, but did not do enough; I prayed, but it was coldly; I did not put coals to the incense; I heard the word, but did not meditate on it; I did not chew the cud; I smote but thrice, and I should have smitten six times; had I taken a little more pains, I had been happy, but I have lost the kingdom of heaven by short-shooting;' the consideration, how terrible the thoughts of this will be, that we should lose heaven for want of a little more pains, will be a means to spur on our sluggish hearts, and make us more diligent to get the kingdom.

¹ Re. 22. 5.

² Re. 19. 9.

³ 2 Ki. 13. 19

* You are aware of what consequence it is in worldly concerns to embrace opportunities, and to improve critical seasons; and thus, in the things of the Spirit, there are times peculiarly favourable, moments of happy visitation where much more may be done toward the advancement of our spiritual interest than usual. There are gales of the Spirit, unexpected influences of light and power, which no assiduity in the means of grace can command, but which it is a mark of great wisdom to improve. If the husbandman is attentive to the vicissitudes of weather, and the face of the sky, that he may be prepared to take the full benefit of every gleam of sunshine, and every falling shower, how much more alert and attentive should we be, in watching for those influences from above, which are necessary to ripen and mature a far more precious crop!—*Rev. J. Hall, on the Work of the Spirit.*

⁴ Ph. 3. 9. ⁵ Mat. 25. 34. ⁶ 1 Co. 2. 9. ⁷ Re. 21. 15.

⁸ Col. 1. 12.

⁹ Re. 21. 21.

3d. The third means for obtaining this kingdom, is to keep up daily prayer; 'I give myself to prayer.'¹ Prayer inflames the affections, and oils the wheels of endeavour; prayer prevails with God, it unlocks his bowels, and then he unlocks heaven; all that have got to heaven have crept thither upon their knees; the saints now in heaven, have been men of prayer; Daniel prayed three times a day, Jacob wrestled with God in prayer, and as a prince prevailed; this prayer must be fervent, else it is, as Luther says, a golden censer without fire. O follow God with prayers and tears! Say, as Jacob to the angel, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'² Prayer 'conquers the Omnipotent.' Elijah by prayer opened heaven; by ardent and constant prayer heaven is at last opened to us.

4th. If you would obtain the heavenly kingdom, get a love to heaven. Love puts a man upon the use of all means to enjoy the thing loved. He that loves the world, how active is he? He will break his sleep and peace for it. He that loves honour, what hazards will he run? he will swim to the throne in blood. Jacob loved Rachel, and what would not he do, though it were serving a two seven-years' apprenticeship for obtaining her? Love carries a man out violently to the object loved: love is like wings to the bird, like sails to the ship; it carries a Christian full sail to heaven; heaven is a place of rest and joy, it is paradise and will you not love it? Love heaven, and you cannot miss it; love breaks through all opposition, it takes heaven by storm; love, though it labour, is never weary; it is like the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which makes him fresh and lively in his travel, and keeps him from being weary.

5th. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, make religion your business. What a man looks upon as a thing by the by, he doth not much mind. If ever we would have heaven, we must look upon it as our main concern; other things do but concern our livelihood, this concerns our salvation; then we make religion our business, when we wholly devote ourselves to God's service.³ We count those the best hours which are spent with God; we give God the cream of our affections, the flower of our time and strength; we traffic in heaven every day, we are merchants for the 'pearl of price.' He will not get an estate who doth not mind

his trade; he will never get heaven, who doth not make religion his main business.

6th. If you would obtain the kingdom of heaven, bind your hearts to God by sacred vows. Vow to the Lord, that, by his grace, you will be more intent upon heaven than ever; 'thy vows are upon me, O God!'⁴ A vow binds the votary to duty; he looks upon himself as obliged by his vow to cleave to God. Bees, when they fly in a great wind, ballast themselves with little stones, that they may not be carried away with the wind; so we must fortify ourselves with strong vows, that we may not be carried away from God with the violent wind of temptation. No question, a Christian may make such a vow, because the ground of it is morally good; he vows nothing but what he is bound to do by virtue of his baptismal vow, namely, to walk with God more closely, and to pursue heaven more vigorously.

7th. If you would obtain the kingdom, embrace all seasons and opportunities for your souls; 'redeeming the time.'⁵ Opportunity is the cream of time; the improving seasons of grace is as much as our salvation is worth. The mariner, by taking the present season while the wind blows, gets to the haven; by taking the season while we have the means of grace, and the wind of the Spirit blows, we may arrive at the kingdom of heaven. We know not how long we shall enjoy the gospel; the seasons of grace, like Noah's dove, come with an olive-branch in their mouth, but they soon take wings and fly. Though they are sweet, they are swift. God may remove the golden candlestick from us as he did from the churches of Asia. We have many sad symptoms; 'grey hairs are here and there'⁶ upon us: therefore let us lay hold upon the present seasons; they that sleep in seed-time, will beg in harvest.*

¹ Ps. 56. 12.

² Ep. 5. 16.

³ Ho. 7. 9.

* You have sometimes felt a peculiar seriousness of mind, the delusive glare of earthly objects has faded away, or become dim before your eyes; and death and eternity, appearing at the door, have filled the whole field of vision. Have you improved such seasons for fixing those maxims, and establishing those practical conclusions, which may produce an habitual sobriety of mind, when things appear under a different aspect? You have sometimes found, instead of a reluctance to pray, a powerful impulse to that exercise, so that you have felt as if you could do nothing else. Have you always complied with these motions, and suffered nothing but the claims of absolute necessity to divert you from pouring out your hearts at a throne of grace? The Spirit is said to make intercession for saints, with groanings which cannot be uttered; when you have felt those ineffable longings after God, have you indulged them to the utmost? Have you spread every sail, launched forth into the deep of the divine perfections and promises, and possessed yourselves as much as possible of the fulness of God? There are moments when the conscience of a good man is more

¹ Ps. 109. 4.

² Ge. 32. 26.

³ Ps. 139. 18.

8th. If you would go to the kingdom of heaven, you must keep a daily watch; 'I say unto all, watch.'¹ Many have lost heaven for want of watchfulness. Our hearts are ready to decoy us into sin, and the devil lies in ambush by his temptations; we must every day set a spy, and keep sentinel in our souls; 'I will stand upon my watch.'² We must watch our eyes; 'I made a covenant with my eyes.'³ Much sin comes in by the eye. When Eve saw the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, then she took; first she looked, and then she lusted: the eye by beholding an impure object, sets the heart on fire; the devil oft creeps in at the window of the eye. Watch your eyes. Watch your ear. Much poison is conveyed through the ear. Let your ear be open to God, and shut to sin. Watch your hearts; we watch suspicious persons; 'the heart is deceitful.'⁴ Watch your heart, when you are about holy things; it will be stealing out to vanity. When I am at prayer, saith St Hierom, either I am walking through galleries, or casting up accounts. Watch your hearts when you are in company. The basilisk poisons the herbs he breathes on; the breath of the wicked is infectious. Nay, watch your hearts when you are in good company; such as have some good in them, yet may be some grains too light; they may have much levity of discourse, and, if no scum boils up, yet too much froth. The devil is subtle, and he can as well creep into the dove as he did once into the serpent. Satan tempted Christ by an apostle. Watch your hearts in prosperity; now you are in danger of pride. The higher the water of the Thames riseth, the higher the boat is lifted up; the higher that men's estates rise, the higher their hearts are lifted up in pride. In prosperity, you are in danger not only to forget God, but to lift up the heel against him; 'Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.'⁵ It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and to carry a full prosperous estate without sinning. Samson fell asleep in Delilah's lap: many have fallen so fast asleep in the lap of prosperity, that they

have never awaked till they have been in hell. Watch your hearts after holy duties. When Christ had been praying and fasting, then the devil tempted him;⁶ after our combating with Satan in prayer, we are apt to grow secure, and put our spiritual armour off, and then the devil falls on and wounds us. O if you would get to heaven, be always upon your watch-tower, set a spy, keep close sentinel in your souls! Who would not watch when it is for a kingdom?

9th. If you would arrive at the heavenly kingdom get these three graces, which will undoubtedly bring you thither: (1.) Divine knowledge. There is no going to heaven blindfold. In the creation, light was the first thing that was made; so it is in the new creation: knowledge is the pillar of fire that goes before us, and lights us into the heavenly kingdom. It is light that must bring us to the 'inheritance of the saints in light.' (2.) Faith. Faith ends in salvation; 'receiving the end of your faith, salvation.'⁷ He who believes, is as sure to go to heaven, as if he were in heaven already.⁸ Faith toucheth Christ; and can he miss of heaven, who toucheth Christ? Faith unites to Christ; and shall not the members be where the head is? All have not the same degree of faith; we must distinguish between the direct act of faith, and the reflex act, affiance and assurance; yet the least seed and spark of faith gives an undoubted title to the heavenly kingdom. I am justified because I believe, not because I know I believe. (3.) Love to God. Heaven is prepared for those that love God.⁹ Love is the soul of obedience, the touchstone of sincerity: by our loving God, we may know he loves us.¹⁰ And those whom God loves, he will lay in his bosom. Ambrose, in his funeral oration for Theodosius, brings in the angels hovering about his departing soul, and being ready to carry it to heaven, asked him, 'what that grace was he had practised most upon earth?' Theodosius replied, 'I have loved! I have loved!' and straightway he was, by a convoy of angels, translated to glory. Love is a sacred fire kindled in the breast; in the flames of this fire, the devout soul ascends to heaven.

10th. If we would obtain this heavenly kingdom, let us labour for sincerity; 'whosoever walketh uprightly, shall be saved.'¹¹ The sincere Christian may fall short of some degrees of grace, but he never falls short of the king-

¹ Ma. 13. 37.² Ha. 2. 1.³ Job 31. 1.⁴ Je. 17. 9.⁵ De. 32. 15.

tender, has a nicer and a more discriminating touch than usual; the evil of sin in general, and of his own in particular, appears in a more pure and piercing light. Have you availed yourselves of such seasons as these for searching into the chambers of imagery, and, while you detected greater and greater abominations, been at the pains to bring them out and slay them before the Lord? Have such visitations effected something towards the mortification of sin, or have they been suffered to expire in mere ineffectual resolutions?—*Rev. R. Hall on the Work of the Spirit.*

⁶ Mat. 4. 3.⁷ Col. 1. 12.⁸ 1 Pe. 1. 9.⁹ Ac. 16. 31.¹⁰ 1 Co. 2. 9.¹¹ 1 Jno. 4. 19.¹² Pr. 28. 18.

dom. God will pass by many failings, where the heart is right.¹ True gold, though it be light, hath grains of allowance; 'thou desirest truth in the inward parts.'² Sincerity is the sauce which seasons all our actions, and makes them savoury: it is the ingredient into every grace; it is called 'faith unfeigned,'³ and 'love in sincerity'⁴ Coin will not go current that wants the king's stamp; grace is not current if it be not stamped with sincerity. Glorious duties soured with hypocrisy are rejected, when great infirmities sweetened with sincerity are accepted. If any thing in the world bring us to heaven, it is sincerity. Sincerity signifies plainness of heart; 'in whose spirit there is no guile.' The plainer the diamond is, the richer.

1. Sincerity is when we serve God with our heart; we do not only worship him, but love him. Cain brought his sacrifice, but not his heart; this is God's delight, a sacrifice flaming upon the altar of the heart. A sincere Christian, though he hath a double principle in him, flesh and spirit, yet he hath not a double heart, his heart is for God. 2. Sincerity is when we aim purely at God in all we do. The glory of God is more worth than the salvation of all men's souls. A sincere Christian, though he comes short in duty, yet he takes a right aim. As the herb heliotropium turns about according to the motion of the sun, so a godly man's actions do all move towards the glory of God.

11th. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom let us keep up fervency in duty. What is a dead form without the power? 'Because thou art lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.'⁵ Fervency puts life into duty; 'Fervent in spirit serving the Lord,'⁶ (Gr.) 'boiling over.' Christ prayed 'yet more earnestly.'⁷ When the fire on the golden censer was ready to go out, Aaron was to put more coals to the incense; praying with devotion, is putting more coals to the incense. It is not formality, but fervency, will bring us to heaven; the formalist is like Ephraim, a cake not turned, hot on one side, and dough on the other: in the external part of God's worship, he seems to be hot; but as for the spiritual part of God's worship, he is cold. Oh, if you would have the kingdom of heaven, keep up heat and fervour in duty! Elijah was carried up to heaven in a fiery chariot; if you would go to heaven, you must be carried thither in the

fiery chariot of zeal; it is violence that takes the kingdom of heaven.

12th. If we would arrive at the heavenly kingdom, let us cherish the motions of God's Spirit in our hearts. The mariner may spread his sails, but the ship cannot get to the haven without a gale of wind; so we may spread the sails of our endeavour, but we cannot get to the haven of glory, without the north and south wind of God's Spirit blow; how nearly therefore doth it concern us to make much of the motions of God's Spirit, motions to prayer, motions to repentance? 'When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee:'⁸ so, when we hear, as it were, a voice within us; a secret inspiration stirring us up to good duties, we should then bestir ourselves; while the Spirit works in us, we should work with the Spirit. Many men have God's Spirit striving with them, he puts good motions in their hearts and holy purposes; but they, neglecting to prosecute these good motions, the Spirit is thereby grieved; and, being grieved, withdraws his assistance; and, that assistance being gone, there is no getting to heaven. Oh make much of the motion of the Spirit, it is as much as your salvation is worth! The Spirit of God is compared to fire:⁹ if we are careful to blow this spark, we may have fire to inflame our affections, and to light our feet into the way of peace. If we quench the Spirit by our neglecting and resisting its motions, we cut ourselves off from salvation. The Spirit of God hath a drawing power;¹⁰ the blessed Spirit draws by attraction, as the loadstone the iron. In the preaching of the word, the Spirit draws the heart up to heaven in holy longings and ejaculations. Now when the Spirit is about thus to draw us, let us take heed of drawing back, lest it be to perdition.¹¹ We should do as Noah, when the dove came flying to the ark, he put forth his hand, and took it into the ark; so when the sweet dove of God's Spirit comes flying to our hearts, and brings a gracious impulse as an olive-branch of peace in its mouth, O take this dove into the ark, entertain the Spirit in your hearts, and it will bring you to heaven!

Q. But how shall we know the motions of the Spirit from a delusion?

The motions of the Spirit are always agreeable to the word. If the word be for holiness,

¹ Nu. 23. 21. ² Ps. 51. 6. ³ 2 Ti. 1. 5. ⁴ Ep. 6. 24.
⁵ Pa. 32. 2. ⁶ Re. 3. 16. ⁷ Ro. 12. 11. ⁸ Lu. 22. 41.

⁹ 2 Sa. 5. 24. ¹⁰ Ac. 2. 3. ¹¹ Can. 1. 4. ¹² Ho. 10.

so is the Spirit; the Spirit persuades to nothing but what the word directs; which way the tide of the word runs that way the wind of the Spirit blows.

13th. We obtain the kingdom of heaven by uniform and cheerful obedience. Obedience is the road through which we travel to heaven. Many say they love God, but refuse to obey him; doth he love the prince's person who slight his commands? 1. Obedience must be uniform; 'then shall I not be ashamed,' 'I shall not blush, when I have respect to all thy commandments.' As the sun goes through all the signs of the zodiac, so we must go through all the duties of religion. If a man be to go an hundred miles, and he goes ninety-nine miles, and there stops, he comes short of the place he is to travel to; if, with Herod, we do many things that God commands, yet, if we die in the total neglect of any duty, we come short of the kingdom of heaven: for instance, if a man seem to make conscience of duties of the first table, and not the duties of the second; if he seem to be religious, but is not just: he is a transgressor, and is in danger to lose heaven. A good heart is like the needle which points that way which the loadstone draws, so he moves that way which the word draws. 2. Obedience must be cheerful; 'I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart!'¹ That is the sweetest obedience which is cheerful, as that is the sweetest honey which drops from the comb freely. God doth sometimes accept of willingness without the work, but never of the work without willingness; 'there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings.'² Wings are swift, but wind in the wings denotes great swiftness: an emblem of the swiftness and cheerfulness which should be in obedience. We go to heaven in the way of obedience.

14th. If we would obtain this kingdom, be much in the communion of saints; one coal of juniper will warm and inflame another; when the heart is dead and frozen, the communion of saints will help to warm it; 'they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.'³ Christians should never meet, saith Mr Bolton, but speak of their meeting together in heaven. One Christian may be very helpful by prayer and conference to another, and give him a lift toward heaven. Old Latimer was much strengthened and comforted by hearing Mr Bilny's confession of faith. We read that when

'Moses's hands were heavy, and he was ready to let them fall, Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands.'⁴ A Christian who is ready to faint under tentation, and lets down the hands of his faith, by conversing with other Christians he is strengthened, and his hands are held up. A great benefit of holy conference is counsel and advice. If a man, saith Chrysostom, who hath but one head to advise him, could make that head a hundred heads to advise him, he would be very wise: a single Christian hath this benefit by the communion of saints, they are as so many heads to advise him what to do in such a case or exigency. By Christian conference the saints can say, 'did not our hearts burn within us?' Communion of saints we have in our creed, but it is too little in our practice; men usually travel fastest in company: we travel fastest to heaven in the communion of saints.

15th. If we would attain to this kingdom of heaven, let us be willing to come up to Christ's terms. Many will be cheapening, and bid something for the kingdom of heaven; they will avoid gross sin, and will come to church, and say their prayers; and yet all this while they are not willing to come up to God's price, that is, they will not resist the idol of self-righteousness, flying only to Christ as the horns of the altar; they will not sacrifice their bosom sin; they will not give God spirit-worship, serving him with zeal and intenseness of soul; they will not forgive their enemies; they will not part with their carnal profits for Christ; they would have the kingdom of heaven, but they will not come up to the price: if you would have this kingdom, do not article and indent with Christ, but accept of his terms; say, 'Lord, I am willing to have the kingdom of heaven, whatever it cost me; I am willing to pluck out my right eye, to part with all for the kingdom; here is a blank paper I put into thy hand, Lord, write thy own articles, I will subscribe to them.'^{*}

16th. If we would obtain the heavenly kingdom, let us attend to the holy ordinances; thus

¹ Ex. 17. 12

Jno. 4. 24.

* Sinners seem to think that heaven's glory may be obtained almost on any terms. This arises in a great measure from unworthy notions of the divine justice, but also from unworthy notions of heaven itself. They have no just sense of the excellency of its holiness, and is it wonderful they should imagine that vile as they are they may yet be fit for the inheritance of the saints in light. They have no desire for its peculiar enjoyments, and would prefer an asylum from everlasting misery, where they would not be troubled with these; and is it wonderful that they consider any fancied merit, however imperfect, a sufficient price for it? No man sets a high value on what his heart despises, or takes pains to possess himself of that which he hates — *Christ the Way*, p. 27.

God brings souls to heaven; 'except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved.'¹ Some people would leap out of the ship of ordinances, and then God knows whither they leap; but except ye abide in the ship of ordinances, ye cannot be saved. Especially, if you would get to heaven, attend to the word preached; it was by the ear, by our first parents listening to the serpent, that we lost paradise; and it is by the ear, by the hearing of the word, that we get to heaven: 'hear, and your soul shall live.'² God, sometimes in the preaching of the word, drops in that holy oil into the ear which softens and sanctifies the heart; the word preached is called the 'ministry of the Spirit,'³ because the Spirit of God makes use of this engine to convert souls. If the word preached doth not work upon men, nothing will; not judgments, nor miracles; no, nor though one should arise from the dead.⁴ If a glorified saint should come out of heaven, and assume a body, and tell you of all the glory of heaven, and the joys of the blessed, and persuade you to believe; if the preaching of the word will not bring you to heaven, neither would his rhetoric do it who rose from the dead. In heaven there will be no need of ordinances, but there is while we live here; the lamp needs oil, but the star needs none. While the saints have their lamp of grace burning here, they need the oil of ordinances to be continually dropping upon them; but there will be no need of this oil when they are stars in heaven. If you intend to get to heaven, be swift to hear; for faith comes by hearing.⁵ Peter let down the net of his ministry, and at one draught caught three thousand souls. If you would have heaven's door opened to you, wait at the posts of wisdom's door.

17th. If you would arrive at heaven, have this kingdom ever in your eye. Our blessed Lord looked at the joy that was set before him; and Moses 'had respect to the recompense of reward.'⁶ Let the kingdom be much in our thoughts; meditation is the means to help us to heaven.

Q. *How doth it help?*

I. As it is a means to prevent sin. No sword like this to cut asunder the sinews of temptation; it is almost impossible to sin presumptuously with the lively thoughts and hopes of heaven; it was when Moses was out of sight that Israel set up a calf and worshipped it; so

it is when the kingdom of heaven is out of sight, I mean, out of men's thoughts, that they set up their lusts, and idolize them. The meditation of heaven banisheth sin; he who thinks of the weight of glory, throws away the weight of sin. 2. To meditate on the kingdom of heaven, would excite and quicken obedience. We should think we could never pray enough, never love God enough, who hath prepared such a kingdom for us. 'The immensity of glory is a powerful stimulus.' St Paul had heaven in his eye, he was once caught up thither; and how active was he for God!⁷ This would oil the wheels of obedience. 3. It would make us strive after holiness, because none but such are admitted into this kingdom, only the pure in heart shall see God.⁸ Holiness is the language of heaven; it is the only coin will pass current in heaven; this considered, would make us 'cleansse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'⁹ Thus you see how the meditation of heaven would be a means to bring us thither.

18th. The last means for obtaining the heavenly kingdom is perseverance in holiness; 'be thou faithful unto death,'¹⁰ and thou shalt receive the crown of life. In Christians, 'not what is begun is praised, but what is completed.' **HIEROM.** 1. Is there such a thing as persevering? 2. How doth a Christian come to persevere? 3. What are the encouragements? 4. What the helps?

1st. Is there such a thing as persevering till we come to heaven? The Arminians deny it; and truly that any one holds out to the kingdom, is a wonder, if you consider. 1. What a world of corruption is mingled with grace; grace is apt to be stifled, as the coal to be choked with its own ashes; grace is oft like a spark in the sea, it is a wonder it is not quenched; it is a wonder sin doth not do to grace, as sometimes the nurse to the child, overlay it that it die, so that this infant of grace is smothered. 2. The implacable malice of Satan; he envies that we should have a kingdom, when he himself is cast out; it cuts him to the heart to see a piece of dust and clay be made a bright star in glory, and he himself an angel of darkness; he will move all the powers of hell, to hinder us from the kingdom; he spits his venom, shoots his fiery darts, raiseth a storm of persecution, yea, and prevails against

¹ Ac. 27. 31.

² Is. 55. 3.

³ 2 Co. 3. 8.

⁴ Lu. 16. 31.

⁵ Ro. 10. 14, 17.

⁶ He. 11. 26.

⁷ 1 Co. 16. 10.

⁸ Mat. 5. 8

⁹ 2 Co. 7. 1.

¹⁰ Re. 2. 10.

some; 'there appeared a great red dragon, and his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.'¹ By the red dragon is meant the heathenish empire; now when his tail cast so many to the earth, it is a wonder that any of the stars keep fixed in their orb. 3. The blandishments of riches. The young man in the gospel went very far, 'thou art not far from the kingdom of God;' but he had rich possessions, and these golden weights hindered him from the kingdom.² Jonathan pursued the battle till he came at the honeycomb, and then he stood still.³ Many are forward for heaven, till they taste the sweetness of the world; but when they come at the honeycomb, then they stand still, and go no further. Those who have escaped the rocks of gross sins, yet have been cast away on the golden sands: what a wonder therefore that any doth hold on till he come to the kingdom! 4. A wonder any holds out in grace, and doth not tire in his march to heaven, if you consider the difficulty of a Christian's work; he hath no time to lie fallow, he is either watching or fighting; nay, a Christian is to do those duties which to the eye of sense and reason seem inconsistent: while a Christian doth one duty, he seems to cross another; for example, he must come with holy boldness to God in prayer, yet must serve him with fear; he must mourn for sin, yet rejoice; he must be contented, yet 'covet';⁴ contemn men's impieties, yet reverence their authority: what difficult work is this! A wonder any saint arrives at the heavenly kingdom. To this I might add, the evil examples abroad which are so attractive; we may say, the devils are come among us in the likeness of men. What a wonder is it that any soul perseveres till he come to the kingdom of heaven? But as great a wonder as it is, there is such a thing as perseverance.

A saint's perseverance is built upon three immutable pillars. (1.) God's eternal love. We are inconstant in our love to God; but he is not so in his love to us: 'I have loved them with an everlasting love;'⁵ with a love of eternity. God's love to the elect is not like a king's love to his favourite, when it is at the highest spring-tide, it soonest ebbs; but God's love is eternized; God may desert, not disinherit; he may change his love into a frown, not into hatred; he may alter his providence, not his decree; when once the sunshine of God's

electing love is risen upon the soul, it never sets finally. (2.) A saint's perseverance is built upon the covenant of grace; it is a firm, impregnable covenant. This you have in the words of the sweet singer of Israel, 'God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.'⁶ It is a sweet covenant, that God will be our God, the marrow and quintessence of all blessing; and it is a sure covenant, that he will put his fear in our heart, and we shall never depart from him.⁷ This covenant is inviolable, it cannot be broken; indeed sin may break the peace of the covenant, but it cannot break the bond of the covenant.*

(3.) The third pillar perseverance is built upon, is the mystical union. Believers are incorporated into Christ, they are knit to him as members to the head, by the nerve and ligament of faith, that they cannot be broken off.⁸ What was once said of Christ's natural body, is as true of his mystical body; 'a bone of it shall not be broken.'⁹ As it is impossible to sever the leaven and the dough when they are once mingled, so it is impossible when Christ and believers are once united, ever by the power of death or hell to be separated. How can Christ lose any member of his body and be perfect? You see upon what strong pillars the saints' perseverance is built.

Q. 2. *How doth a Christian hold on till he comes to the kingdom? How doth he persevere?*

1. By the aid of the Spirit. God carries on a Christian to perseverance by the energy and vigorous working of his Spirit. The Spirit maintains the essence and seed of grace; it doth blow up the sparks of grace into a holy

¹ 2 Sa. 23. 5. ² Je. 32. 40. ³ Ep. 5. 23. ⁴ Jno. 19. 36.

* 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace,' Rom. 6. 14. Grace doth commonly signify free unmerited favour; yet in this place grace certainly signifies more than being in favour at present with God. Being at present in favour with God, would not secure things for the future, as in our text. Whilst Adam continued in his innocence, he was under divine favour; but this did not secure against his falling under the dominion of sin. If the apostle meant nothing here, but that Christians, being under grace, would be secure against falling under the dominion of sin, upon certain conditions depending merely and altogether on themselves; the comfort would amount to little. If man in his state of perfection fell short of the conditions prescribed to him; how likely would fallen man be to come short? But the grace of the new covenant doth 'reign unto eternal life,' and makes it 'sure to all the seed.' 'It is of faith, that it might be by grace;' the consequence is, 'that the promise might be sure to all the seed.' The first covenant, though it promised much good, upon most reasonable and equitable conditions; yet it made nothing sure. But the grace and promise of the new covenant made all sure. It secures to the believer eternal life, and the safety and success of his course and way to the enjoyment of it; according to Jer. 32. 40.—*Fraser on Sanctification*, p. 90.

¹ Re. 12. 3, 4. ² Lu. 18. 23. ³ 1 Sa. 14. 27
⁴ 1 Co. 12. 31. ⁵ Is. 31. 3.

flame. 'The Spirit is Christ's vicegerent.' TERTUL. It is Christ's deputy and proxy; it is every day at work in a believer's heart exerting grace into exercise, and ripening it into perseverance; the Spirit doth carve and polish the vessels of mercy, and make them fit for glory.

2. Christ causeth perseverance and carries on a saint till he come to the heavenly kingdom, by his intercession. Christ is an advocate as well as a surety; he prays that the saints may arrive safe at the kingdom; 'wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost,' perfectly, 'seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'¹ That prayer he made for Peter on earth, he prays now in heaven for the saints, 'that thy faith fail not;² that they may be with him where he is:³ and sure, if he pray that they may be with him in his kingdom, they cannot perish by the way. Christ's prayer is efficacious. If the saints' prayers have so much force and prevalency in them; Jacob had power with God, and as a prince prevailed;⁴ by prayer Elijah unlocked heaven: if the prayers of the saints have so much power with God, then, what hath Christ's prayer? How can the children of such prayers miscarry? How can they fall short of the kingdom, who have him praying for them, who is not only a Priest, but a Son? And besides, what he prays for as he is man, that he hath power to give as he is God. Thus you see how a Christian comes to persevere till he comes to the kingdom.

OBJ. *But methinks I hear some Christian say, if only perseverance obtains the kingdom, they fear they shall not come thither; they fear they shall faint by the way, and the weak legs of their grace will never carry them to the kingdom of heaven.*

Wert thou indeed to stand in thy own strength, thou mightest fall away; that branch withers and dies that hath no root to grow upon. Thou growest upon the root Christ, who will be daily sending forth vital influence to strengthen thee; thou art imbecile and weak in grace, yet fear not falling short of heaven: for, 1. God hath made a promise to weak believers. What is a bruised reed, but an emblem of a weak faith? yet it hath a promise made to it; 'a bruised reed shall he not break.'⁵ God hath promised to supply the weak Christian with so much grace as he shall need, till he comes to heaven. Beside the twopence which

the good Samaritan left to pay for the cure of the poor wounded man, he passed his word for all that he should need beside:⁶ so, Christ doth not only give a little grace in hand, but his bond for more, that he will give as much grace as a saint should need till he comes to heaven; 'the Lord will give grace and glory;⁷ that is a fresh supply of grace, till he be perfected in glory. 2. God hath most care of his weak saints, who fear they shall never hold out till they come to the kingdom. Doth not the mother tend the weak child most? 'He will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.'⁸ If thou thinkest that thou art so weak that thou shalt never hold out till thou comest to heaven, thou shalt be carried in the arms of the Almighty; he gathers the lambs in his arms; Christ the Lion of the tribe of Judah, marcheth before his people, and his power is their rereward, so that none of them faint or die in their march to heaven.

Q. 3. *What are the encouragements to make Christians hold on till they come to the kingdom of heaven?*

1. It is a great credit to a Christian, not only to hold forth the truth, but to hold fast the truth till he comes to heaven; when grace doth flourish into perseverance, and with the church of Thyatira, our last works are more than our first;⁹ this is a star of honour. It is matter of renown to see grey hairs shine with golden virtues: the excellency of a thing lies in the finishing of it. What is the excellency of a building? not when the first stone is laid, but when it is finished: so the beauty and excellency of a Christian is, when he hath finished his faith, having done his work, he is landed safe in heaven.

2. You that have made a progress in religion have not many miles to go before you come at the kingdom of heaven; 'now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.'¹⁰ You who have hoary hairs, your green tree is turned into an almond-tree; you are near to heaven, it is but going a little further and you will set your feet within heaven's gates; O therefore now be encouraged to hold out, your salvation is nearer than when you first began to believe! Our diligence should be greater when our salvation is nearer. When a man is almost at the end of the race, will he now tire and faint? will he not put forth all his strength, and strain every limb, that he may lay hold upon the prize?

¹ He. 7. 25. ² Lu. 22. 32. ³ Jno. 17. 24.
⁴ Ho. 12. 4. ⁵ Mat. 12. 20.

⁶ Lu. 10. 35. ⁷ Ps. 84. 11. ⁸ Is. 40. 11.
⁹ It. 2. 19. ¹⁰ Ro. 13. 11

Our salvation is now nearer; the kingdom is as it were within sight; how should we now put forth all our strength, that we may lay hold upon the garland of glory? Doctor Taylor, when he was going to his martyrdom, said, 'I have but two stiles to go over, and I shall be at my Father's house.' Though the way to heaven be uphill, you must climb the steep rock of mortification; and though there be thorns in the way, namely, sufferings, yet you have gone the greatest part of your way, you are within a few days' march of the kingdom; and will not you persevere? Christian, pluck up thy courage, fight the good fight of faith, pursue holiness; it is but a while and you shall put off your armour, and end all your weary marches, and receive a victorious crown; your salvation is nearer, you are within a little of the kingdom, therefore now persevere, you are ready to commence and take your degree of glory!

3. The blessed promise annexed to perseverance; the promise is 'a crown of life.'¹ Death is a worm that feeds in the crowns of princes, but behold here a living crown, and a never-fading crown.² He that overcometh, and keepeth my words to the end, 'I will give him the morning-star!' The morning-star is brighter than the rest: this morning-star is meant of Christ; as if Christ had said, I will give to him that perseveres some of my beauty; I will put some of my illustrious rays upon him; he shall have the next degree of glory to me, as the morning-star is next the sun; will not this animate and make us hold out? We shall have a kingdom, and that which is better than the kingdom, a bright morning-star.

Q. 4. *What are the means conducing to perseverance, or, what shall we do that we may hold out to the kingdom?*

1. Take up religion upon good grounds, not in a fit or humour, or out of worldly design; but be deliberate, weigh things well in the balance; 'which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?'³ Think with yourselves what religion must cost you, it must cost you the parting with your sins; and what it may cost you, it may cost you the parting with your lives; consider if a kingdom will not countervail your sufferings; weigh things well, and then make your choice: 'I have chosen the way of truth.'⁴ Why do many apostatize and fall away, but because they did never sit down and count the cost.

2. If we would hold out to the kingdom, let us cherish the grace of faith; 'by faith ye stand.'⁵ Faith, like Hercules's club, beats down all opposition before it; it is a conquering grace.

Q. *How comes faith to be so strong?*

Faith fetcheth Christ's strength into the soul.⁶ A captain may give his soldier armour, but not strength: faith partakes of Christ's strength, and faith gets strength from the promise; as the child by sucking the breast gets strength, so doth faith by sucking the breast of the promise; hence faith is such a wonder-working grace, and enables a Christian to persevere.

3. If you would hold out to the kingdom, set before your eyes the examples of those noble heroic saints, who have persevered to the kingdom. Examples have more influence upon us than precepts; 'my foot hath held his steps.'⁷ Though the way of religion hath flints and thorns in it, yet my foot hath held his steps; I have not fainted in the way, nor turned out of the way. Daniel held on his religion, and would not intermit prayer, though he knew the writing was signed against him, and a prayer might cost him his life.⁸ The blessed martyrs persevered to the kingdom through sufferings. Saunders, that holy man, said, 'welcome the cross of Christ; my Saviour began to me in a bitter cup, and shall I not pledge him?' Another martyr kissing the stake, said, 'I shall not lose my life but change it for a better; instead of coals I shall have pearls.' What a spirit of gallantry was in these saints! let us learn constancy from their courage. A soldier seeing his general fight valiantly, is animated by his example, and hath new spirits put into him.

4. Let us add fervent prayer to God, that he would enable us to hold out to the heavenly kingdom; 'hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.'⁹ Let us not presume on our own strength. When Peter cried to Christ on the water, 'Lord save me!' then Christ took him by the hand;¹⁰ but when he grew confident of his own strength, then Christ let him fall. O pray to God for auxiliary grace! The child is safe when held in the nurse's arms: so are we in Christ's arms. Let us pray that God will put his fear in our hearts, that we do not depart from him; and that prayer of Cyprian, 'Lord, perfect that which thou hast begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at the haven!'

¹ Re. 2. 10. ² 1 Pe. 5. 4; Re. 2. 28. ³ Lu. 14. 28.
⁴ Ps. 119. 30.

⁵ 2 Cor. 1. 24. ⁶ Ph. 4. 13. ⁷ Job 23. 11, 12.
⁸ Da. 6. 10. ⁹ Ps. 119. 117. ¹⁰ Mat. 14. 30.

Branch 3. Let us press forward with the greatest diligence to this kingdom. And here let me lay down some powerful persuasives, or divine arguments, to make you put to all your strength for the obtaining this blessed kingdom.

1. This is the great errand for which God hath sent us into the world, to prepare for this heavenly kingdom; 'seek ye first the kingdom of God:'¹ first in time before all things; and first in affection, above all things. Great care is taken for the achieving worldly things;² to see people labouring for the earth, as ants about a molehill, would make one think this were the only errand they came about: but alas! what is all this to the kingdom of heaven? I have read of a devout pilgrim travelling to Jerusalem, who passing through several cities, where he saw many stately edifices, wares and monuments, he would say, 'I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem:' so when we enjoy worldly things, peace and plenty, and have our presses burst out with new wine, we should say to ourselves, this is not the kingdom we are to look after, this is not heaven. It is wisdom to remember our errand. It will be but sad upon a death-bed for a man to think he was busying himself only about trifles, playing with a feather, and neglecting the main thing he came into the world about.

2. The seeking after the heavenly kingdom will be judged most prudent by all men at last. Those who are most regardless of their souls now, will, before they die, wish they had minded eternity more. When conscience is awakened, and men begin to come to themselves, now, what would they give for the kingdom of heaven? How happy were it, if men were of the same mind now, as they will be at death! Death will alter men's opinions; then those who did most slight and disparage the ways of religion, will wish their time and thoughts had been taken up about the excellent glory. At death, men's eyes will be opened, and they will see their folly when it is too late. If all men, even the worst, will wish at last that they had minded the kingdom of heaven, why should not he do that now, which all will wish they had done when they come to die?

3. This kingdom of heaven deserves our utmost pains and diligence; it is glorious, beyond hyperbole. Suppose earthly kingdoms more magnificent than they are; their foundations of gold, their walls of pearl, their windows of sap-

phire: yet they are not comparable to the heavenly kingdom. If the pavement of it be bespangled with so many bright shining lights, glorious stars, what is the kingdom itself? 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'³ This kingdom exceeds our faith. How sublime and wonderful is that place where the blessed Deity shines forth in his immense glory, infinitely beyond the comprehension of angels! (1.) The kingdom of heaven is a place of honour; there are the glorious triumphs and sparkling crowns. In other kingdoms, there is but one king, but in heaven all are kings;⁴ every saint glorified partakes of the same glory as Christ doth; 'the glory thou gavest me, I have given them.'⁵ (2.) This kingdom is a place of joy; 'enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'⁶ To have a continual aspect of love from God's face, to be crowned with immortality, to be as the angels of God, to drink of the rivers of pleasure for ever; this will cause raptures of joy. Sure it deserves our utmost pains in pursuing and securing this kingdom! Julius Cæsar coming towards Rome with his army, and hearing the senate and people had fled from it, said, 'they that will not fight for this city, what city will they fight for?' If we will not take pains for the kingdom of heaven, what kingdom will we take pains for? It was the speech of the spies to their brethren, 'we have seen the land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.'⁷ We have had a lively description of the glory of heaven; we find the kingdom is very good; why then do we sit still? why do we not put forth our utmost zeal and industry for this kingdom? The diligence of others in seeking after earthly kingdoms, shames our coldness and indifferency in pursuing after the kingdom of heaven.

4. The time we have to make sure of the heavenly kingdom is very short and uncertain; take heed it doth not slip away before you have prepared for the kingdom. Time passeth on apace; 'life moves on with hasty step;' it will not be long before 'the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl broken.'⁸ The skull wherein the brains are enclosed as in a bowl, this golden bowl will soon be broken. Our soul is in our body, as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks, and the bird flies out; the shell of the body broken, the soul flies into eternity. We know not whether we shall live to

¹ Mat. 6. 33.² Mat. 6. 25.³ 1 Jno. 3. 2.⁴ Re. 1. 6.⁵ Jno. 17. 22.⁶ Mat. 25. 21.⁷ Ju. 14. 9.⁸ Ec. 12.

another sabbath; before we hear another sermon-bell go, our passing-bell may go. Our life runs as a swift stream into the ocean of eternity. Brethren, if our time be so minute and transient, if the taper of life be so soon wasted, or perhaps blown out by violent death; how should we put to all our strength, and call in help from heaven that we may obtain the kingdom of glory? If time be so short, why do we waste it about things of less moment, and neglect 'the one thing needful,' which is the kingdom of heaven? A man that hath a great work to be done, and but one day for the doing of it, hath need to work hard: we have a great work to do, we are striving for a kingdom, and alas! we are not certain of one day to work in; therefore what need have we to bestir ourselves, and what we do for heaven, to do it with all our might!

5. To excite our diligence, let us consider how inexcusable we shall be, if we miss of the kingdom of heaven. Who have had such helps for heaven as we have had? Indians who have mines of gold, have not such advantages for glory as we; they have the light of the sun, moon and stars, and the light of reason, but this is not enough to light them to heaven: but we have had the light of the gospel shining in our horizon; we have been lifted up to heaven with ordinances; we have had the word in season and out of season. The ordinances are the pipes of the sanctuary, which empty the golden oil of grace into the soul; they are the ladder by which we ascend to the kingdom of heaven; 'what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?'¹ We have had heaven and hell set before us, we have had counsels of friends, warnings, examples, the motions and inspirations of the Holy Ghost; how should all these spur us quicken us in our pace to heaven? Should not that ship sail apace to the haven, which had wind and tide to carry it? the tide of ordinances, and the wind of the Spirit. Surely if we, through negligence, miss of the kingdom of heaven, we shall have nothing to say for ourselves; we shall be as far from excuse as from happiness.

6. You cannot do too much for the kingdom of heaven: you cannot pray too much, sanctify the sabbath too much, love God too much; you cannot overdo. In secular things a man may

labour too hard, he may kill himself with working; but there is no fear of working too hard for heaven. 'We need fear no excess in virtue.' *SENECA*. The world is apt to censure the godly, as if they were too zealous, and did overstrain themselves in religion. Indeed a man may follow the world too much, he may make too much haste to be rich; the ferryman may take in too many passengers into his boat, to the sinking of his boat: so a man may heap up so much gold and silver, as to sink himself in perdition.² But one cannot be too earnest and zealous for the kingdom of heaven; there is no fear of excess here, when we do all we can for heaven, we come short of the golden rule set us, and of Christ's golden pattern; when our faith is highest, like the sun in the meridian, yet still there is something lacking in our faith,³ so that all our labour for the kingdom is little enough. When a Christian hath done his best, yet still he hath sins, and wants to bewail.

7. By this you may judge of the state of your souls, whether you have grace or not, by your earnest pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. Grace infuseth a spirit of activity into a person; grace doth not lie dormant in the soul; it is not a sleepy habit, but it makes a Christian like a seraphim, swift and winged in his heavenly motion; grace is like a fire, it makes one burn in love to God; and, the more he loves him, the more he presseth forward to heaven, where he may fully enjoy him. Hope is an active grace, it is called 'a lively hope.'⁴ Hope is like the spring in the watch, it sets all the wheels of the soul a running; hope of a crop makes the husbandman sow his seed; hope of victory makes the soldier fight; and a true hope of glory makes a Christian vigorously pursue glory. Here is a spiritual touchstone to try our grace by: if we have the anointing of the Spirit, it will oil the wheels of our endeavour, and make us lively in our pursuit after the heavenly kingdom. No sooner had Paul grace infused, but presently, 'behold, he prays.'⁵ The affections are by divines called 'the feet of the soul:' if these feet move not towards heaven, it is because there is no life.

8. Your labour for heaven is not lost; perhaps you may think it is vain that you have served God; but know that your pains are not lost. The seed is cast into the earth, and it dies, yet at last it brings forth a plentiful crop; so your labours seem to be fruitless, but at last

¹ De. 4. 7.

² 1 Ti. 6. 9. ³ 1 Th. 3. 1. ⁴ 1 Pe. 1. 3. ⁵ Ac. 9. 11.

they bring you to a kingdom. Who would not work hard for one hour, when, for that hour's work, he should be a king as long as he lived? And let me tell you, the more labour you have put forth for the kingdom of heaven, the more degrees of glory you shall have. As there are degrees of torment in hell,¹ so of glory in heaven: 'as one star differs from another in glory,' so shall one saint.² Though every vessel of mercy shall be full, yet one vessel may hold more than another. Such as have done more work for God, shall have more glory in the heavenly kingdom. Could we hear the saints departed speaking to us from heaven, sure they would speak after this manner; were we to leave heaven a while and live on the earth again, we would do God a thousand times more service than ever we did; we would pray with more life, act with more zeal; for now we see, the more hath been our labour, the greater is our reward in heaven.*

9. While we are labouring for the kingdom, God will help us; 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.'³ The promise encourageth us, and God's Spirit enableth us. A master gives his servant work to do, but he cannot give him strength to work; but God, as he cuts us out work, so he gives us strength; 'give thy strength unto thy servant.'⁴ God not only gives us a crown when we have done running, but gives us legs to run; he gives exciting, assisting grace; 'the law demands, grace assists;' the Spirit helping us in our work for heaven, makes it easy. If the loadstone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's Spirit draw the heart, now it moves towards heaven with facility and alacrity.

10. The more pains we have taken for heaven, the sweeter heaven will be when we come there. As when an husbandman hath been grafting trees, or setting flowers in his garden, it is pleasant to review and look over his labours, so, when in heaven we shall remember our

former zeal and earnestness for the kingdom, it will sweeten heaven, and add to the joy of it. For a Christian to think, such a day I spent in examining my heart, such a day I was weeping for sin; when others were at their sport, I was at prayer, and now, have I lost any thing by my devotion? My tears are wiped away, and the wine of paradise cheers my heart; I now enjoy him whom my soul loves; I am possessed of a kingdom; my labour is over, but my joy remains.

11. If you do not take pains for the kingdom of heaven now, there will be nothing to be done for your souls after death; this is the only fit season for working, and if this season be lost, the kingdom is forfeited: 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.'⁵ It was a saying of Charles V. 'I have spent my treasure, but that I may recover again; I have lost my health, but that I may have again; but I have lost a great many brave soldiers, and them I can never have again.' So other temporal blessings may be lost and recovered again; but if the term of life wherein you should work for heaven, be once lost, it is past all recovery, you can never have another season again for your souls.

12. There is nothing else but this kingdom of heaven we can make sure of; we cannot make sure of life. 'Who knows whether the gods above shall add to-morrow to this day?' HOR. When our breath goes out, we know not whether we shall draw it in again! How many are taken away suddenly? We cannot make riches sure, it is uncertain whether we shall get them; the world is like a lottery, every one is not sure to draw a prize; or, if we get riches, we are not sure to keep them; 'riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away.'⁶ Experience seals the truth of this. Many who have had plentiful estates, yet, by fire, or losses at sea, they have been squeezed as sponges, and all their estates exhausted: but if men should keep their estates a while, yet death strips them of all. When death's gun goes off, away flies the estate; 'it is certain we can carry nothing'⁷ out of the world: so that there is no making sure of any thing here below, but we may make sure of the kingdom of heaven; 'to him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.'⁸ He who hath grace is sure of heaven, for he hath heaven begun in him. A

¹ Mat. 23. 14. ² 1 Cor. 15. 41. ³ Ez. 36. 27. ⁴ Ps. 86. 16.

* God is said to render to every one according to his works, and as there are various degrees of labour and suffering, so also shall there be of rewards. Nor let it be objected, that reference is made solely to works as distinguished into good and evil, and to the happiness of the good and the misery of the wicked, for this is not exclusively the sense of the words. The Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 3. 8, says, 'every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.' If therefore the labours of different men are different, so must be the rewards. Prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and others of like heroic spirit in the church, have laboured and suffered more than others; who does not perceive that in equity the reward of grace should be greater, as conferred on them?—*Turretin*. loc. vic. r. 14.

⁵ Ec. 9. 10. ⁶ Pro. 23. 5. ⁷ 1 Ti. 6. 7. ⁸ Pro. 11. 18.

believer hath an evidence of heaven; 'faith is the evidence of things not seen.' He hath an earnest of glory; 'who hath also given the earnest of the Spirit.'² An earnest is part of the whole sum. He hath a sure hope; 'which hope we have as an anchor.'³ This anchor is cast upon God's promise; 'in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised.'⁴ So that here is great encouragement to take pains for heaven, we may make sure of this kingdom.

13. The kingdom of heaven cannot be obtained without labour. A boat may as well get to land without oars, as we to heaven without labour. We cannot have the world without labour, and do we think to have heaven? If a man digs for gravel, much more for gold; 'I press toward the mark.' Heaven's gate is not like that iron gate which opened to Peter of its own accord;⁶ heaven is not like those ripe figs which 'fall into the mouth of the eater.'⁷ No, there must be taking pains. Two things are requisite for a Christian; a watchful eye, and a working hand. We must, as Hannibal, force a way to the heavenly kingdom through difficulties. We must win the garland of glory by labour, before we wear it with triumph. God hath enacted this law, that no man shall eat of the tree of paradise, but in the sweat of his brow: how then dare any censure Christian diligence? how dare they say you take more pains for heaven than needs? God saith, 'strive as in an agony,' fight the good 'fight of faith;' and they say, 'you are too strict:' but whom shall we believe? a holy God that bids us strive, or a profane atheist that saith we strive too much?

14. Much of our time being already misspent, we had need work the harder for the kingdom of heaven; he who hath lost his time at school, and often played truant, had need ply it the harder, that he may gain a stock of learning; he who hath slept and loitered in the beginning of his journey, had need ride the faster in the evening, lest he fall short of the place he is travelling to. Some here present are in their youth, others in the flower of their age, others have grey hairs, the almond-tree blossoms, and perhaps they have been very regardless of their souls and heaven. Time spent unprofitably is not time lived, but time lost; if there be any such here, who have misspent their golden hours, they have not only been slothful, but wasteful servants; how had you need now to

redeem the time, and press forward with might and main to the heavenly kingdom? 'The time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.'⁸ It may suffice us that we have lost so much time already, let us now work the harder; such as have crept as snails, had need now fly as eagles to the paradise of God; if, in the former part of your life, you have been as willows, barren in goodness, in the latter part be as 'an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits.'⁹ Recompense former remissness with future diligence.

15. How uncomely and sordid a slothful temper of soul is; 'I will punish the men that are settled on their lees:'¹⁰ (Heb.) 'cuddled on their lees.' Settling on the lees, is an emblem of a dull inactive soul. The snail, by reason of its slow motion, was reckoned among the unclean;¹¹ 'a slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom,'¹² he is loath to pull it out, though it be to lay hold on a crown; 'the heavenly gate admits no loiterer.' BRUGENS. The devil himself cannot be charged with idleness;¹³ he 'walketh about.' An idle soul stands in the world for a cipher, and God writes down no ciphers in the book of life; heaven is no hive for drones; an idle person is fit for a temptation. When the bird sits still upon the bough, then it is in danger of the gun; when one sits still in sloth, then the devil shoots him with a temptation; standing water putrefies. Heathens will rise up in judgment against supine Christians; what pains did they take in the Olympic games? they ran but for a garland of flowers, or olive; and do we sit still who run for a kingdom? How can he expect a reward that never works, or a crown that never fights? 'Sloth is the soul's sleep.' Adam when he was asleep lost his rib; and when a person is in the deep sleep of sloth, he loseth salvation.

16. Holy activity and industry doth ennoble a Christian. The more excellent any thing is, the more active. The sun is a glorious creature, it is ever in motion, going its circuit; fire is the purest element, and the most active, it is ever sparkling and flaming; the angels are the most noble creatures, they are represented by the cherubim, with wings displayed; the more active for heaven, the more illustrious, and the more do we resemble the angels. The phoenix flies with a coronet on its head; the indus-

¹ He. 11. 1. ² Co. 1. 22. ³ He. 6. 19. ⁴ Ti. 1. 2.
⁵ Ph. 3. 14. ⁶ Ac. 12. 10. ⁷ Na. 3. 12.

⁸ 1 Pe. 4. 3. ⁹ Cant. 4. 13. ¹⁰ Ze. 1. 12.
¹¹ Lc. 11. 50 ¹² Pr. 19. 24. ¹³ 2 P. 5. 5.

trious soul hath his coronet, his labour is his ensign of honour.

17. It is a mercy that there is a possibility of happiness, and that upon our pains taking we may have a kingdom; by our fall in Adam we forfeited heaven: why might not God have dealt with us as with the lapsed angels? They had no sooner sinned, but they were expelled heaven, never to come thither more; we may say, as the apostle, 'behold therefore the goodness, and severity of God.' To the apostate angels, behold the severity of God, that he should throw them down to hell for ever; to us, behold the goodness of God, that he hath put us into a possibility of mercy; and, if we do but take pains, there is a kingdom stands ready for us; how may this whet and sharpen our industry, that we are in a capacity of salvation? and, if we do but what we are able, we shall receive an eternal weight of glory.

18. Our labour for the kingdom of heaven is minute and transient, it is not to endure long, our labour expires with our life; it is but a while and we shall leave off working; for a little labour an eternal rest. Who would think much to wade through a little water, that were sure to be crowned as soon as he came on shore? Christians, let this encourage you, you have but a little more pains to take, a few tears more to shed, a few more sabbaths to keep, and, behold, an eternal recompense of reward; what are a few tears to a crown? a few minutes of time to an eternity of glory?

19. What striving is there for earthly kingdoms, which are corruptible, and subject to change? With what vigour and alacrity did Hannibal's soldiers continue their march over the Alps, and craggy rocks, and Cæsar's soldiers fight with hunger and cold? Men will break through laws and oaths, they will swim to the crown in blood; will they venture thus for earthly promotions, and shall not we strive more for an heavenly kingdom? This is 'a kingdom which cannot be moved,'² a kingdom where there is unparalleled beauty, unstained honour, unmixed joy; a kingdom where there shall be nothing present which we could wish were removed, nor nothing absent which we could wish were enjoyed. Sure if there be any spark of grace, or true generosity in our breasts, we will not suffer ourselves to be outstriven by others; we will not let them take more pains for earthly honours, than we do for that

excellent glory which will crown all our desires!

20. How much pains do some men take to go to hell, and shall not we take more pains to go to heaven? 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity.'³ Sinners hackney themselves out in the devil's service: what pains do some men take to satisfy their unclean lusts! They waste their estates, wear the shameful marks of their sin about them, they will visit the harlot's house, though it stands the next door to hell; 'her house is the way to hell.'⁴ What pains do others take in persecuting! holiness is the white they shoot at. It is said of Antiochus Epiphanes, he undertook more tedious journeys, and went upon greater hazards, to vex and oppose the Jews, than any of his predecessors had done in getting of victories. The devil blows the horn, and men ride post to hell, as if they feared hell would be full ere they would get thither. When Satan had entered into Judas, how active was Judas! he goes to the high priests, from them to the band of soldiers, and with them back again to the garden, and never left till he had betrayed Christ. How industrious were the idolatrous Jews! so fiercely were they bent upon their sin, that they would sacrifice their sons and daughters to their idol-gods.⁵ Do men take all this pains for hell, and shall not we take pains for the kingdom of heaven? The wicked have nothing to encourage them in their sins, they have all the threatenings of God as a flaming sword against them. O let it never be said, that the devil's servants are more active than Christ's; that they serve him better who rewards them only with fire and brimstone, than we do God, who rewards us with a kingdom!

21. The labour we take for heaven, is a labour full of pleasure.^{6*} A man sweats at his

² Je. 9. 5. ³ Pr. 7. 27. ⁴ Je. 32. 35. ⁵ Pr. 3. 17.

* Many take offence at religion and cease from their endeavours to work out their salvation, because they have not unmingled happiness, or perhaps happiness at all, in what they conceive to be the way and work of the Lord: nay, they have found their sorrows multiplied. Their experience is no strange thing; for, that they have stopped short, is a proof that they had never found his way, or put their hands to his work. Let us too beware, lest, expecting too much, our ardour be damped by disappointment. Our progress in godliness will wound every sinful feeling in our hearts, and pour bitterness into every capacity of sinful enjoyment; and the exercises of religion in a creature that is imperfect and always sinning will necessarily not seldom be of such a kind as is painful to his whole nature. Fear and trembling; an insight into the corruption of the heart and discoveries of the fearful amount of our guilt; feelings of abasement because of personal vileness, and of self-reproach because of our conduct toward God; all these are painful things: yet in and by these our salvation is wrought out. Let us be animated by the thoughts of the Christian's joys and triumphs;

recreation, tires himself with hunting, but there is a delight he takes in it, which sweetens it; 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man,'¹ (Gr.) I take pleasure. Not only is the kingdom of heaven delightful, but the way thither; what a delight hath a gracious soul in prayer! 'I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.'² While a Christian weeps, there is joy drops with tears; while he is musing on God, he hath such illapses of the Spirit, and, as it were, such transfigurations of soul, that he thinks himself half in heaven; 'my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee upon my bed.'³ A Christian's work for heaven is like a bridegroom's work on the morning of the marriage-day, he puts on his vesture and wedding-ropes, in which he shall be married to his bride; so, in all the duties of religion, we are putting on those wedding robes, in which we shall be married to Christ in glory. O what solace and inward peace is there in close walking with God! 'the work of righteousness shall be peace.'⁴ Serving of God is like gathering of spices or flowers, wherein there is some labour, but the labour is recompensed with delight. Working for heaven is like digging in a gold mine; the digging is labour, but getting the gold is pleasure. O then let us bestir ourselves for the kingdom of heaven; it is a labour full of pleasure! A Christian would not part with his joy for the most delicious music; he would not exchange his anchor of hope for a crown of gold. Well might David say, in keeping thy precepts 'there is great reward';⁵ not only after keeping thy precepts, but in keeping them; a Christian hath both the spring-flowers and the crop; inward delight in serving God, there is the spring-flowers; in the kingdom of glory at last, there is the full crop.

22. How industrious have the saints in former ages been! They thought they could never do enough for heaven; they could never serve God enough, love him enough. 'Lord, I have loved thee too little.' AUG. What pains did St Paul take for the heavenly kingdom? 'reaching forth unto those things which are before.'⁶ The Greek word *to reach forth*, signifies *to stretch out the neck*, a metaphor from

racers, who strain every limb, and reach forward to lay hold on the prize. Anna the prophetess, 'departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.'⁷ Basil the great, by much labour and watching, exhausted his bodily strength. 'Let racks, pulleys, and all torments come upon me,' said Ignatius, 'so I may win Christ!' The industry and courage of former saints, who are now crowned with glory, should provoke our diligence, that so at last we may sit down with them in the kingdom of heaven.

23. The more pains we take for heaven, the more welcome will death be to us. What is it makes men so loath to die? they are like a tenant that will not go out of the house till the sergeant pull him out: they love not to hear of death; why so? because their conscience accuseth them that they have taken little or no pains for heaven; they have been sleeping when they should have been working, and now they are afraid lest death should carry them prisoners to hell; whereas he who hath spent his time in serving of God, he can look death in the face with comfort; he was wholly taken up about heaven, and now he shall be taken up to heaven; he traded before in heaven, and now he shall go to live there; 'I desire to depart, and to be with Christ.'⁸ Paul had wholly laid out himself for God, and now he knew, there was a crown laid up for him, and he longed to take possession.

Thus I have given you twenty-three persuasives or arguments to exert and put forth your utmost diligence to the obtaining the kingdom of heaven. O that these arguments were written in all your hearts, as with the point of a diamond! And, because delays in these cases are dangerous, let me desire you to set upon this work for heaven presently; 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.'⁹ Many people are convinced of the necessity of looking after the kingdom of glory, but they say 'the time is not yet come.'¹⁰ They adjourn and put off till their time is slipped away, and so they lose the kingdom of heaven. Beware of this fallacy; delay strengthens sin, hardens the heart, and gives the devil fuller possession of a man; 'the king's business requires haste:'¹¹ so the business of salvation requires haste; do not put off an hour longer. What assurance have you that you shall live another day? have you any lease of life granted? why then do you not

¹ Ro. 7. 22.
⁴ Is. 32. 17.

² Is. 56. 7.
⁵ Ps. 19. 11.

³ Ps. 63. 5, 6.
⁶ Ph. 3. 13.

they are many, pure, and permanent; but let us also gird up the loins of our minds and be sober, for we have to hear up under the burden, as well as rejoice in the refreshing of the soul.—*Heyrick's Spiritual Peace* p. 121.

⁷ Lu. 2. 37.

⁸ Ph. 1. 23.

⁹ Ps. 119. 60

¹⁰ Isa. 1. 2.

¹¹ 1 Sa. 21. 8

presently arise out of the bed of sloth, and put forth all your strength and spirits, that you may be possessed of the kingdom of glory? Should not things of the highest importance be done first? Settling a man's estate, and clearing the title to his land, is not delayed, but done in the first place: what is there of such grand importance as this, the saving of your souls, and the gaining of a kingdom? Therefore to-day hear God's voice; now mind eternity; now get your title to heaven cleared before the decree of death bring forth. What imprudence is it to lay the heaviest load upon the weakest horse? So to lay the heavy load of repentance on thyself, when thou art enfeebled by sickness, the hands shake, the lips quiver, the heart faints. O be wise in time; now prepare for the kingdom! He who never begins his voyage to heaven but in the storm of death, it is a thousand to one if he doth not suffer an eternal shipwreck.

USE 6. Of Exhortation. If there be such a glorious kingdom a coming, then you who have any good hope through grace, you that are the heirs of this kingdom, let me exhort you to six things:

1. Often take a prospect of this heavenly kingdom; climb up the celestial mount; take a turn, as it were, in heaven every day, by holy meditation; 'walk about Zion, tell the towers, thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks;' see what a glorious kingdom heaven is; go tell the towers, view the palaces of the heavenly Jerusalem; Christian, show thy heart the gates of pearl, the beds of spices, the clusters of grapes which grow in the paradise of God. Say, 'O my soul, all this glory is thine, it is thy Father's good pleasure to give thee this kingdom!' The thoughts of heaven are very delightful and ravishing; can men of the world so delight in viewing their bags of gold, and fields of corn, and shall not the heirs of promise take more delight in contemplating the celestial kingdom? The serious meditation of the kingdom of glory would work these three effects. (1.) It would put a damp and slur upon all worldly glory. To those who stand upon the top of the Alps, the great cities of Campania seem but small in their eye: could we look through the perspective glass of faith, and take a view of heaven's glory, how small and minute would all other things appear? Moses slighted the honours of Pharaoh's court, having an eye to the recompense of reward.² St Paul, who had a vision of

glory, and St John, who was carried away in the Spirit, and saw the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven, having the glory of God in it; how did the world after appear in an eclipse to them? (2.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would much promote holiness in us. Heaven is a holy place, 'an inheritance undefiled;' it is described by transparent glass, to denote its purity.⁴ The contemplating heaven would put us upon the study of holiness, because none but such are admitted into that kingdom; heaven is not like Noah's ark, into which came clean beasts and unclean: only 'the pure in heart shall see God.'³ (3.) The meditation of the heavenly kingdom would be a spur to diligence; 'always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.'⁵ When the mariner sees the haven, he plies it harder with his oars; when we have a sight and prospect of glory, it should make us be much in prayer, alms, watching; it should add wings to duty, and make the lamp of our devotion burn brighter.

2. If you have hopes of this kingdom, be content though you have but a little of the world; contentment is a rare thing, it is a jewel that but few Christians wear; but if you have a grounded hope of heaven, it may work your heart to contentation. What though you have but little in possession? you have a kingdom in reversion. Were you to take an estimate of a man's estate, how would you value it? by what he hath in his house, or by his land? Perhaps he hath little money or jewels in his house, but he is a landed man, there lies his estate. A believer hath but little oil in the cruise, and meal in the barrel, but he is a lauded man, he hath a title to a kingdom, and may not this satisfy him? If a man who lived here in England, had a great estate befallen him beyond the seas, and perhaps had no more money at present but just to pay for his voyage, he is content; he knows when he comes to his estate, he shall have money enough; thou who art a believer, hast a kingdom befallen thee; though thou hast but little in thy purse, yet, if thou hast enough to pay for thy voyage, enough to bear thy charges to heaven, it is sufficient. God hath given thee grace, which is the fore-crop, and will give thee glory, which is the after-crop; and may not this make thee content?

3. If you have hope of this blessed kingdom,

¹ Ps. 48. 12, 13.

² He. 11. 26.

³ 1 Pe. 1. 4. ⁴ Rev. 21. 21. ⁵ Mat. 5. 8. ⁶ 1 Co. 15. 53

pray often for the coming of this glorious kingdom: 'thy kingdom come:' only believers can pray heartily for the hastening of the kingdom of glory. (1.) They cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come who never had the kingdom of grace set up in their hearts. Can the guilty prisoners pray that the assizes may come? (2.) They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who are lovers of the world; they have found paradise, they are in their kingdom already, this is their heaven, and they desire to hear of no other; they are of his mind, who said, if he might keep his cardinalship in Paris, he would lose his part in paradise. (3.) They cannot pray heartily that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, who oppose Christ's kingdom of grace; who break his laws, which are the sceptre of his kingdom; who shoot at those who bear Christ's name, and carry his colours: sure these cannot pray that Christ's kingdom of glory may come, for then Christ will judge them, and, if they say this prayer, they are hypocrites, they mean not as they speak. But you who have the kingdom of grace set up in your hearts, pray much that the kingdom of glory may hasten: 'thy kingdom come.' When this kingdom comes, then you shall behold Christ in all his embroidered robes of glory, shining ten thousand times brighter than the sun in all its meridian splendour. When Christ's kingdom comes, the bodies of the saints that sleep in the dust shall be raised in honour, and made like Christ's glorious body; then shall your souls like diamonds, sparkle with holiness; you shall never have a sinful thought more, you shall be as holy as the angels, you shall be as holy as you would be, and as holy as God would have you to be; then you shall be in a better state than in innocency. Adam was created a glorious creature, but mutable; a bright star, but a falling star: but in the kingdom of heaven is a fixation of happiness; when Christ's kingdom of glory comes, you shall be rid of all your enemies; as Moses said, 'the Egyptians, whom you have seen to-day, you shall see them again no more for ever.'¹ So those enemies who have ploughed on the backs of God's people, and made deep their furrows, when Christ shall come in his glory, you shall see these enemies no more. All Christ's enemies shall be 'put under his feet,'² and before the wicked be destroyed, the saints shall judge them; 'do ye

not know that the saints shall judge the world?'³ This will cut the wicked to the heart, that those whom they have formerly scorned and scourged, shall sit as judges upon them, and vote with Christ in his judicial proceedings. O then well may you pray for the hastening of the kingdom of glory, 'thy kingdom come!'

4. If you have any good hope of this blessed kingdom, let this make the colour come in your faces, be of a sanguine cheerful temper. Have you a title to a kingdom, and sad? 'we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.'⁴ Christians, the trumpet is ready to sound, an eternal jubilee is at hand, when a freedom from sin shall be proclaimed; your coronation-day is a coming; it is but putting off your clothes, and laying your head upon a pillow of dust, and you shall be enthroned in a kingdom, and invested with the embroidered robes of glory: doth not all this call for a cheerful spirit? Cheerfulness adorns religion; it is a temper of soul Christ loves; 'if ye loved me, ye would rejoice.'⁵ It makes many suspect heaven is not so pleasant, when they see those that walk thither so sad. How doth the heir rejoice in hope of the inheritance? Who should rejoice if not a believer, who is heir of the kingdom, and such a kingdom as eye hath not seen? When the flesh begins to droop, let faith lift up its head, and cause a holy jubilation and rejoicing in the soul.

5. Let the saints long to be in this blessed kingdom. A prince that travels in foreign parts doth he not long to be in his own nation, that he may be crowned? The bride desires the marriage-day; 'the Spirit and the bride say come: even so, come, Lord Jesus.'⁶ Sure our unwillingness to go hence, shows either the weakness of our faith in the belief of the heavenly kingdom, or the strength of our doubtings, whether we have an interest in it. Were our title to heaven more cleared, we should need patience to be content to stay here any longer. Again, our unwillingness to go hence declares, we love the world too much, and Christ too little. Love, as Aristotle saith, desires union; did we love Christ as we should, we would desire to be united to him in glory, when we might take our fill of love. Be humbled that ye are so unwilling to go hence; let us labour to arrive at that divine temper of soul as Paul had, 'I desire to depart and be with Christ.'⁷ We are compassed with a body

¹ Ex. 14. 13.² 1 Co. 15. 27.³ 1 Co. 6. 2.⁴ Ro. 5. 2.⁵ Jno. 14. 28.⁶ Re. 22. 17 20⁷ Ph. 1. 23.

of sin; should not we long to shake off this viper? We are in Mesech, and the tents of Kedar, in a place where we see God dishonoured; should not we desire to have our pass to be gone? We are in a valley of tears; is it not better being in a kingdom? Here we are combating with Satan; should not we desire to be called out of the bloody field, where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, that we may receive a victorious crown? O ye saints, breathe after the heavenly kingdom! Though we should be willing to stay to do service, yet we should ambitiously desire to be always sunning ourselves in the light of God's countenance. Think what it will be to be ever with the Lord. Are there any sweeter smiles or embraces than his? is there any bed so soft as Christ's bosom? is there any such joy as to have the golden banner of Christ's love displayed over us? is there any such honour as to sit upon the throne with Christ?¹ O then long for the celestial kingdom!

6. Wait for this kingdom of glory. It is not incongruous or improper to long for heaven, yet wait for it; long for it, because it is a kingdom, yet wait your Father's good pleasure. God could presently bestow this kingdom, but he sees it good that we should wait a while. (1.) Had we the kingdom of heaven presently as soon as ever grace is infused, then God would lose much of his glory. Where would be our living by faith, which is the grace that brings in the chief revenues of glory to God?² Where would be our suffering for God, which is a way of honouring him, which the angels in heaven are not capable of. Where would be the active service we are to do for God? Would we have God give us a kingdom, and we do nothing for him before we come there? would we have rest before labour, a crown before victory? this were disingenuous. Paul was content to stay out of heaven a while, that he might be a means to bring others thither.³ (2.) While we wait for the kingdom, our glory is increasing. Every duty religiously performed adds a jewel to our crown. Do we desire to have our robes of glory shine brighter? let us wait and work; the longer we stay for the principal, the greater will the interest be. The husbandman waits till the seed spring up: wait for the harvest of glory. Some have their waiting weeks at court; this is your waiting time. Christ saith, 'pray, and faint not,'⁴ so,

wait, and faint not. Be not weary, the kingdom of heaven will make amends for your waiting: 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,' said that dying patriarch.⁵

USE 5. Comfort to the people of God.

1. In all their sufferings. The true saint is, as Luther saith, heir to the cross. Affliction is his diet-drink, but here is that may be as bezoar stone to keep him from fainting, these sufferings bring a kingdom. The hope of the kingdom of heaven, saith Basil, should indurate and sweeten all our troubles; 'if we suffer, we shall reign with him:'⁶ it is but a short fight, but an eternal triumph: this light suffering produceth 'an eternal weight of glory.' 'A weight of glory:'⁷ things which are precious, the more weighty the more they are worth; the more weight is in a crown of gold, the more it is worth. It is a weight of glory. 'An eternal weight of glory:' did this glory last but a while, it would much abate and embitter the joys of heaven; but the glory of that kingdom runs parallel with eternity; God will be as a deep sea of blessedness, and the glorified saints shall for ever bathe themselves in that ocean. One day's wearing the crown, will abundantly pay for all the saints' sufferings; how much more then, when 'they shall reign for ever and ever?'⁸ O let this support under all the calamities and sufferings in this life; what a vast difference is there between a believer's sufferings and his reward; 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'⁹ For a few tears, rivers of pleasure; for mourning, white robes. This made the primitive Christians laugh at imprisonments, and snatch up torments as so many crowns. Though now we drink in a wormwood-cup, here is sugar in the bottom to sweeten it, 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.'

2. Comfort in death. Here is that which may take away from God's children the terror of death, they are now entering into the kingdom. Indeed no wonder, if wicked men be appalled and terrified at the approach of death, they die unpardoned. Death carries them to the goal, where they must lie for ever without bail or mainprize; but why should any of God's children be so scared and half-dead with the thoughts of death? What hurt doth death do to them, but lead them to a glorious kingdom? Faith gives a title to heaven, death a posses-

¹ Re. 3. 21. ² Ro. 5. 20. ³ Ph. 1. 23. ⁴ Lu. 18. 1.

⁵ Ge. 49. 18. ⁶ 2 Ti. 2. 12. ⁷ 2 Co. 4. 17.

⁸ Re. 22. 5.

⁹ Ro. 8. 18.

sion; let this be a gospel antidote to expel the fear of death. Hilarian, that blessed man, cried out, 'go forth, my soul! go forth! what fearest thou?' Let them fear death who do not fear sin; but let not God's children be overmuch troubled at the grim face of that messenger, which brings them to the end of their sorrow, and the beginning of their joy. Death is yours,¹ it is a part of the believer's inventory. Is a prince afraid to cross a narrow sea, who shall be crowned when he comes to shore? death to the saints shall be as an usher to bring

them into the presence of the King of glory. This puts lilies and roses into the ghastly face of death, and makes it look amiable. Death brings us to a crown of glory which fades not away; the day of death is better to a believer than the day of his birth; death is an entrance into a blessed eternity. Fear not death, but rather let your hearts revive when you think these rattling wheels of death's chariot are but to carry you home to an everlasting kingdom.*

OF THE THIRD PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MAT. 6. 10. *Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

WE come next to the third petition, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.' This petition consists of two parts. I. The matter; 'doing of God's will.' II. The manner; 'as it is in heaven.'

I. The matter of this petition is, 'the doing of God's will:' 'thy will be done.'

Q. 1. *What is meant by the will of God?*

There is a twofold will. 1. God's secret will, or the will of his decree; we pray not that God's secret will may be done by us. This secret will cannot be known, it is locked up in God's own breast, and neither man nor angel hath key to open it. 2. God's revealed will. This revealed will is written in the book of scripture; the scripture is a declaration of God's will, it discovers what he would have us do in order to our salvation.

Q. 2. *What do we pray for in these words, 'thy will be done?'*

We pray for two things: 1st. For active obedience; that we may do God's will actively in what he commands. 2d. For passive; that we may submit to God's will patiently in what he inflicts. We pray, that we may do God's will actively, subscribe to all his commands, believe in Jesus, the cardinal grace, lead holy lives. So Austin upon the petition; we pray that we may actively obey God's will. This is the sum of all religion, the two tables epitomized, the doing of God's will: 'thy will be done.' We must know God's will before we can do it; knowledge is the eye which must direct the foot of obedience. At Athens there was an altar set up, 'to the unknown God;'² it is as bad to offer the blind

to God as the dead. Knowledge is the pillar of fire to give light to practice; but though knowledge is requisite, yet the knowing of God's will is not enough without doing his will: 'thy will be done.' If one had a system of divinity in his head; if he had 'all knowledge,'³ yet, if obedience were wanting, his knowledge were lame, and would not carry him to heaven. Knowing God's will may make a man admired, but it is doing God's will makes him blessed; knowing God's will without doing it, will not crown us with happiness. 1. The bare knowledge of God's will is inefficacious, it doth not better the heart. Knowledge alone is like a winter-sun, which hath no heat or influence; it doth not warm the affections, or purify the

* It may be useful to add the two following quotations to Mr Watson's exposition of the second petition.

It is reasonable to believe this petition had a sense peculiar to the period in which it was prescribed, and that we, under this perfect revelation of the gospel, cannot properly use it precisely with the same meaning; but so extensive a phrase may justly admit of other senses, at least by accommodation, as the Assembly's catechism, with great propriety, illustrates it; and I believe there are few who decline the use of this prayer on this account, who do not often use scripture phrases with a much greater latitude.--*Doddridge's Fam. Exp.* on Mat. vi. 10.

In praying that the kingdom of glory may be hastened, we pray for the arrival of the millennial reign, when the kingdom and the dominion under the whole heaven shall be given to the people and the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Let not the vain dreams of those who have presumed to fix the period of its arrival, and to secularize its glories, make its moral splendour less pleasing, or our expectations of it more feeble; 'let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen.' Jehovah could, if he pleased, make righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations, quick as the burst of summer in some northern climes, where the verdure of luxuriant vegetation rises as it were by enchantment, where a few hours before nature seemed chained in bands of frost and snow, never to be broken; but we look for it, as in the usual process of nature, when the sky gradually brightens from the gloom of winter, and the earth gently opening bringeth forth her buds, and the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to come forth.--*Belfrage on Catech.* vol. ii. p. 361

¹ 1 Co. 3. 22. ² Ac. 17. 23. ³ 1 Co. 13. 2.

conscience. Judas was a great luminary, he knew God's will, but he was a traitor. 2. Knowing without doing God's will, will make one's case worse: it will heat hell the hotter; 'the servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.'¹ Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell. Thou who hast knowledge of God's will but dost not do it, wherein dost thou excel an hypocrite? nay, wherein dost thou excel the devil, 'who transforms himself into an angel of light?' It is improper to call such Christians, who are knowers of God's will but not doers of it. It is improper to call him a tradesman who never wrought in his trade; so to call him a Christian, who never wrought in the trade of religion. Let us not rest in the knowing of God's will. Let it not be said of us, as Plutarch speaks of the Greeks, 'they knew what was just, but did it not.' Let us set upon this, the doing of God's will, 'thy will be done.'

Q. 3. *Why is the doing of God's will so requisite?*

1. Out of equity. God may justly claim a right to our obedience; he is our founder, we have our being from him; and it is but equal that we should do his will, at whose word we were created. God is our benefactor, it is but just that, if God give us our allowance, we should give him our allegiance.

2. The great design of God in the word is, to make us doers of his will. All God's royal edicts and precepts are to bring us to this, to be doers of his will; what needed God been at the pains to give us the copy of his law, and write it out with his own finger else? The word of God is not only a rule of knowledge, but of duty, 'this day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes; thou shalt therefore keep and do them.'² If you tell your children what is your mind, it is not only that they may know your will, but do it. God gives us his word, as a master gives his scholar a copy, to write after it; he gives it as his will and testament, that we should be the executors to see it performed. This is the end of all God's promises, to draw us to God's will; the promises are loadstones to obedience, 'a blessing if ye obey';³ as a father gives his son money to bribe him to obedience, 'if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will set thee

on high above all nations of the earth; blessed shalt thou be in the city and in the field.'⁴ The promises are a royal charter settled upon obedience. The minatory part of the word, the threatenings of God, stand as the angel with a flaming sword to deter us from sin, and make us doers of God's will; 'a curse if ye will not obey.'⁵ 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of such a one as goeth on still in his trespasses.'⁶ These threatenings do often take hold of men in this life: they are made examples, and hung up in chains to scare others from disobedience. All God's providences are to make us doers of his will. As God makes use of all the seasons of the year for harvest, so all his various providences are to bring on the harvest of obedience. Afflictions are to make us do God's will;⁷ when Manasseh was in affliction, he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly. The rod hath this voice, 'be doers of God's will.'⁸ Affliction is called a furnace,⁹ the furnace melts the metal, and then it is cast into a new mould. God's furnace is to melt us and mould us into obedience. God's mercies are to make us do his will; 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.'¹⁰ Body is, by a synecdoche, put for the whole man; if the soul should not be presented to God as well as the body, it could not be reasonable service; now, saith the apostle, 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, present yourselves a living sacrifice.'¹¹ Mercies are the strongest obligations to duty, 'I drew them with the cords of a man';¹² that is, with the golden cords of my mercy. In a word, all that is written in the law or gospel tends to this, that we should be doers of God's will.

3. By doing the will of God, we evidence sincerity. As Christ said in another sense, 'the works which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me:'¹³ so, it is not all our golden words, if we could speak like angels, but our works, our doing of God's will which bears witness of our sincerity. We judge not of the health of a man's body by his high colour, but by the pulse of the arm, where the blood chiefly stirs; so a Christian's soundness is not to be judged by his profession, what is this high colour, but the estimate of a Christian is to be taken by his obediential acting, his doing the will of God; this is the best certificate, and letters testimonial to show for heaven.

¹ De. 28. 1, 3. ⁶ De. 11. 28. ⁸ Ps. 68. 21.

² Ch. 33. 12. ⁹ Is. 37. 19. ¹⁰ Ro. 12. 1.

¹¹ Ho. 11. 4. ¹² Jno. 10. 25.

³ Ln. 12. 47. ⁴ De. 13. 4; 26. 16. ⁵ De. 11. 27.

4. Doing God's will much propagates the gospel; this is the diamond that sparkles in religion. Others cannot see what faith is in the heart; but when they see we do God's will on earth, this makes them have a venerable opinion of religion, and become proselytes to it. Julian, in one of his epistles, writing to Arsadius, saith, 'that the Christian religion did much flourish, by the sanctity and obedience of them that professed it.'

5. By doing God's will, we show our love to Christ, 'he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' What greater love to Christ, than to do his will, though it cross our own? Every one would be thought to love Christ; but, how shall that be known but by this? do you do his will on earth? 'We do not revere the prince if we hate his laws,' ISID. It is a vain thing for a man to say he loves Christ's person, when he slights his commands. Not to do God's will on earth, is a great evil. It is sinful, foolish, and dangerous.

1. It is sinful. We go against our prayers; we pray, 'thy will be done,' and yet we do not obey his will; we confute our own prayer. We go against our vow in baptism; we have vowed to fight under the Lord's banner, to* obey his sceptre, and this vow we have often renewed in the Lord's supper: if we do not God's will on earth, we are forsworn, and God will indict us of perjury. 2. Not to do God's will on earth, is foolish: because there is no standing it out against God. If we do not obey him, we cannot resist him, 'are we stronger than he?'¹ 'Hast thou an arm like God?' canst thou measure arms with him? To oppose God, is, as if a child should fight with an archangel; as if an heap of briars should put themselves into a battalia against the flame. Not to do God's will is foolish; because, if we do not God's will, we do the devil's will. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? To do his will that seeks our ruin? But are any so wicked as to do the

devil's will? Yes; 'ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.'² When a man tells a lie, doth he not do the devil's will? 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost.'³ 3. Not to do God's will is dangerous; it brings a spiritual *premunire*. If God's will be not done by us, he will have his will upon us; if we obey not God's will in commanding, we shall obey his will in punishing: 'the Lord Jesus shall be revealed with his mighty angels in flames of fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not his gospel.'⁴ Either we must do God's will, or suffer it.

6. Whatever God wills us to do, is for our benefit; behold here self-interest. As if a king commands his subject to dig in a mine of gold, and then gives him all the gold he had digged: God bids us do his will, and this is for our good; 'and now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, and keep the commandments of the Lord, which I command thee this day for thy good?'⁵ It is God's will that we should repent, and this is for our good, repentance ushers in remission; 'repent, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.'⁶ It is God's will that we should believe; and why is it, but that we should be crowned with salvation? 'he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.'⁷ What God wills is not so much our duty, as our privilege; he bids us obey his voice, and it is greatly for our good; 'obey my voice, and I will be your God.'⁸ I will not only give you my angels to be your guard, but myself to be your portion; my Spirit shall be yours to sanctify you, my love shall be yours to comfort you, my mercy shall be yours to save you, 'I will be your God.'

7. To do God's will, is our honour. A person thinks it an honour to have a king speak to him to do such a thing: the angels count it their highest honour in heaven to do God's will: 'to serve God, is to reign; it is an ornament, not a burden.' SALVIAN. How cheerfully did the rowers row the barge that carried Cæsar. To be employed in this barge was an honour: to be employed in doing God's will is the highest ensign of honour that a mortal creature is capable of. Christ's precepts do not burden us, but adorn us.

8. To do God's will on earth, makes us

¹ Jno. 14. 21.

² 1 Co. 10. 22.

³ Job 40. 9.

* The title of a king is no better than an insult to him whose authority we will not submit to, and whose laws we will not obey. Do we profess allegiance to the great almighty Sovereign, and pray for the prosperity and enlargement of his government, 'thy kingdom come?' But can we add with sincerity, 'thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven?' The former portion without the latter would be hypocritical; and we cannot honestly join in the latter, unless we desire, at least, to profess an entire subjection to all the dispensations and commands of God. Is this the real state of our minds? Is it our most ardent wish and supplication, that, relinquishing all our opposition, we may be satisfied with the Lord's disposal, and yield unto him the most cheerful and unreserved obedience; or, in other words, 'that we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God?'—*Robinson's System*, p. 611.

⁴ Jno. 8. 44.

⁵ Acts 5. 3.

⁶ 2 Th. 1. 7, 8.

⁷ De. 10. 12, 13.

⁸ Acts 3. 19.

⁹ Ma. 16. 16.

¹⁰ Je. 7. 23

like Christ, and akin to Christ. It makes us like Christ: is it not our prayer that we may be like Christ? Jesus Christ did his Father's will; 'I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.'¹ God the Father and Christ, as they have but one essence, so but one will; Christ's will was melted into his Father's; 'my meat is to do the will of him that sent me.'² By our doing God's will on earth, we resemble Christ, nay, we are akin to Christ, and are of the blood-royal of heaven. Alexander called himself cousin to the gods; what honour is it to be akin to Christ! 'whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'³ Did king Solomon arise off his throne to meet his mother and set her on a throne by him?⁴ such honour will Christ bestow on such as are doers of God's will, he will salute them as his kindred, and set them on a glorious throne in the amphitheatre of heaven.

9. Doing God's will on earth brings peace in life and death. 1. In life, in keeping thy precepts 'there is great reward,' not only after keeping them, but in keeping them: when we walk closely with God in obedience, there is a secret joy let into the soul, and how swiftly and cheerfully do the wheels of the soul move when they are oiled with the oil of gladness! 2. Peace in death. When Hezekiah thought he was about to die, what gave him comfort? this, that he had done the will of God, 'remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and have done that which is good in thy sight.'⁵ It was Augustus's wish, that he might have an easy death, without much pain: if any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, 'we have endeavoured to do God's will on earth.' Did you ever hear any cry out on their death-bed, that they have done God's will too much? no; hath it not been, that they have done his will no more, that they have come so short in their obedience? Doing God's will, will be both your comfort and your crown.

10. If we are not doers of God's will, we shall be looked upon as contemners of God's will; let God say what he will, yet men will go on in sin; this is to contemn God; 'wherefore do the wicked contemn God?'⁶ To contemn God is worse than to rebel. The tribes of Israel

rebelled against Rehoboam, because he made their yoke heavier,⁷ but to contemn God is worse, it is to slight him; to contemn God is to put a scorn upon him, and affront him to his face, and an affront will make God draw his sword. Thus I have answered that question, why doing God's will on earth is so requisite? It is as necessary as salvation.

Q. 4. *In what manner are we to do God's will, that we may find acceptance?*

The manner of doing God's will is the chief thing. The schoolmen say well, 'the manner of a thing is as well required as the thing itself.' If a man build a house, if he doth not do it according to the mind of the owner, he likes it not, but thinks all his charges lost; so if we do not God's will in the right manner, it is not accepted; we must not only do what God appoints, but as God appoints; here lies the very life-blood of religion. So I come to answer this great question, 'In what manner are we to do God's will, that we may find acceptance?'

1. We do God's will acceptably, when we do duties spiritually, 'which worship God in the spirit.'⁸ To serve God spiritually, is to do duties from an inward principle; the Pharisees were very exact about the external part of God's worship; how zealous were they in the outward observation of the sabbath, charging Christ with the breach of it? but all this was but outward obedience, there was nothing of spirituality in it; then we do God's will acceptably, when we serve him from a renewed principle of grace. A crab-tree may bear as well as a pearmain, but it is not so good fruit as the other, because it doth not come from so sweet a root; an unregenerate person may do as much external obedience as a child of God, he may pray as much, hear as much, but his obedience is harsh and sour, because it doth not come from the sweet and pleasant root of grace; the inward principle of obedience is faith, therefore it is called 'the obedience of faith.'⁹ But why must this silver thread of faith run through the whole work of obedience? Because faith looks at Christ in every duty, it toucheth the hem of his garment; and through Christ, both the person and the offering are accepted.¹⁰

2. We do God's will acceptably, when we prefer his will before all other; if God wills one thing, and man wills the contrary, we do not

¹ Jno. 6. 38. ² Jnn. 4. 34. ³ Mat. 12. 50.
⁴ 1 Ki. 2. 19. ⁵ Ps. 19. 11. ⁶ Is. 38. 3.

⁷ Ps. 10. 13. ⁸ 1 Ki. 12. 16. ⁹ Ph. 3. 3.
¹⁰ Ro. 16. 26. ¹¹ Ep. 1. 6.

obey man's will, but rather God's, 'whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.'¹ God saith, 'thou shalt not make a graven image;' king Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image to be worshipped; but the three children, or rather champions, resolve God's will shall take place, and they would obey him, though with the loss of their lives, 'be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.'²

3. We do God's will acceptably, when we do God's will as it is done in heaven, that is, as the angels do it; to do God's will as the angels, denotes this much, that we are to resemble them, and make them our pattern. Though we cannot equal the angels in doing God's will, yet we must imitate them; a child cannot write so well as the scrivener, yet he imitates the copy. In particular,

1. We do God's will as the angels do it in heaven, when we do God's will regularly; we go according to divine institutions, not decrees of councils, or traditions; this is to do God's will as the angels; they do it regularly, they do nothing but what is commanded; angels are not for ceremonies; as there are statute laws in the land which bind, so the scripture is God's statute law which we must exactly observe. The watch is set by the dial; then our obedience is right, when it goes by the sun-dial of the word. If obedience hath not the word for its rule, it is not doing God's will, but our own; it is will-worship. The Lord would have Moses make the tabernacle according to the pattern.³ If Moses had left out any thing in the pattern, or added any thing to it, it would have been very provoking; to mix any thing of our own devising in God's worship, is to go beside, yea, contrary to the pattern; God's worship is the apple of his eye, that which he is most tender of; and there is nothing he hath more showed his displeasure against, than the corrupting his worship. How severely did God punish Nadab and Abihu for offering up 'strange fire?'⁴ that is, such fire as God hath not sanctified on the altar; whatever is not divinely appointed, is offering up strange fire. There is in many a strange itch after superstition; they love a gaudy religion, and are more for the pomp of worship than the purity; this cannot be pleasing to God, for, as if God were not wise enough to appoint the manner how he will

be served, man will be so bold as to prescribe for him. To thrust human inventions into sacred things is a doing our own will, not God's; and he will say, 'who hath required this at your hand?'⁵ Then we do God's will as it is done in heaven, when we do it regularly, we reverence God's institutions, and observe that mode of worship which hath the stamp of divine authority upon it.

2. We do God's will as it is done by the angels in heaven, when we do it entirely, without mutilation; we do all God's will. The angels in heaven do all that God commands, they leave nothing of his will undone: 'ye his angels that do his commandments.'⁶ If God sent an angel to the Virgin Mary, he goes on God's errand; if he gives his angels a charge to minister for the saints, they obey.⁷ It cannot stand with angelical obedience to leave the least *iota* of God's will unfulfilled; this is to do God's will as the angels, when we do all his will. This was God's charge to Israel, 'remember and do all my commandments.'⁸ And it was spoken of David, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, who shall perform all my will,' (Gr.) 'all my wills.'⁹ Every command hath the same authority; and if we do God's will uprightly, we do it uniformly; we obey every part and branch of his will, we join first and second table. Surely we owe that to God our Father which the papists say, we owe to our mother the church, unlimited obedience; we must incline to every command, as the needle moves that way which the loadstone draws. This discovers the unsoundness of many who do God's will by halves, they pick and choose in religion, they in some things comply with God's will, but not in others, like a foundered horse, who sets but some of his feet on the ground, he favours one foot. He who is to play upon a lute, must strike upon every string, or he spoils all the music. God's commandments may be compared to a ten-stringed lute, we must obey God's will in every command, strike upon every string, or we can make no good melody in religion. The badger hath one foot shorter than the other; hypocrites are shorter in some duties than others; some will pray, not give alms; hear the word, not forgive their enemies; receive the sacrament, not make restitution; how can they be holy who are not just?

¹ Ac. 4. 19. ² Da. 3. 18. ³ Ex. 25. 40. ⁴ Le. 10. 2.

⁵ Is. 1. 12. ⁶ Ps. 103. 20. ⁷ He. 1. 14. ⁸ Nu. 15. 40.
⁹ Ac. 13. 22.

Hypocrites profess fair, but when it comes to sacrificing the Isaac, crucifying the beloved sin, or parting with some of their estate for Christ, here they stick, and say as Naaman, 'in this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant.'¹ This is far from doing God's will as the angels do; God likes not such as do his will by halves; if your servant should do some of your work, which you set him about, but not all, how would you like that?

OBJ. *But who is able to do all God's will?*

Though we cannot do all God's will legally, yet we may evangelically; which is, 1st. When we mourn that we can do God's will no better; when we fail, we weep.² 2d. When it is the desire of our soul to do God's whole will; 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes.'³ What a child of God wants in strength, he makes up in desire. In great matters, to have been willing is enough. 3d. When we endeavour to do the whole will of God. A father bids his child lift such a burden, the child is not able to lift it; but he tries, and does his endeavour to lift it; the father accepts of it, as if he had done it, this is to do God's will evangelically, and God is pleased to take it in good part; though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.*

3. We do God's will as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it sincerely. To do God's will sincerely, lies in two things: to do it out of a pure respect to God's command, and with a pure eye to God's glory. 1st. To do God's will out of a pure respect to God's command. Abraham's sacrificing Isaac was contrary to flesh and blood; to sacrifice the son of his love, the son of the promise, and that no other hand but the father's own should do this, here was hard service; but, because God commanded it, out of pure respect to the command, Abraham obeyed. This is to do God's will aright, when though we feel no

present joy or comfort in duty, yet, because God commands, we obey; not comfort, but the command is the ground of duty. Thus the angels do God's will in heaven; God's command is the weight sets the wheels of their obedience a-going. 2d. To do God's will sincerely, is to do it with a pure eye to God's glory. The Pharisees did the will of God in giving alms; but that which was a dead fly in the ointment, was, that they did not aim at God's glory, but vain glory, they blew a trumpet. Jehu did the will of God in destroying the Baal-worshippers, and God commended him for doing it; but because he aimed more at settling himself in the kingdom, than at the glory of God, therefore God looked upon it no better than murder, and said, 'he would avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.'⁴ Let us look to our ends in obedience; though we shoot short, let us take a right aim; one may do God's will, yet not with a perfect heart, Amaziah 'did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.'⁵ The action was right for the matter, but his aim was not right; that action which wants a good aim, wants a good issue; he doth God's will rightly, that doth it uprightly, his end is to honour God, and lift up his name in the world. A gracious soul makes God his centre. As Joab, when he had taken Rabbah, sent for king David, that he might carry away the glory of the victory,⁶ so when a gracious soul hath done any duty, he desires that the glory of all may be given to God, 'that in all things God may be glorified.'⁷ This is to do God's will as the angels, when we not only advance God's glory, but design his glory; the angels are said to cast their crowns before the throne; crowns are signs of the greatest honour, but these crowns the angels lay at the Lord's feet, to show they ascribe the glory of all they do to him.

4. We do God's will, as it is done in heaven by the angels, when we do it willingly, without murmuring. The angels love to be employed in God's service; it is the angels' heaven to serve God; they willingly descend from heaven to earth, when they bring messages from God, and glad tidings to the church; now heaven being a place of such joy, the angels would not leave it a minute of an hour, only that they take such infinite delight in doing God's will. We resemble the angels, when we do God's will willingly, 'and thou Solomon, my son,

¹ 2 Ki. 5. 18. ² Ro. 7. 24. ³ Ps. 119. 5.

* Though we are far from thinking that sincere endeavours do now come in the place of exact and perfect obedience, in what concerns the sinner's justification; yet it is certain, that the sincere endeavours of believers in a justified state are now acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.—*Frazer on Sanctification*, p. 89.

This word, sincerity, like many others, is abused, and often becomes a subterfuge for the ungodly and the indolent, who think that their practice is nothing; but that sincerity, or a good heart, as they call it, is all in all. But such deceive themselves, for a tree is known by its fruits; and true godly sincerity will evidence itself by serious inquiry, impartial examination, desire of instruction, unprejudiced judgment, devotedness of spirit, and uniformity of conduct.—*Buck's Theol. Dict.*

⁴ Ho. 1. 4. ⁵ 2 Ch. 25. 2. ⁶ 2 Sa. 12. 27. ⁷ 1 Po. 4. 11.

serve the Lord with a willing mind.¹ God's people are called 'a willing people,'² (Heb.) 'a people of willingnesses;' they give God a free-will offering; though they cannot serve him perfectly, they serve him willingly. A hypocrite, though he doth what is good, yet he hath no delight in duty, he doth it rather out of fear of hell, than love to God; when he doth God's will, yet it is against his will. 'There is no virtue in that to which we are compelled.' Cain brought his sacrifice, but grudgingly; his worship was rather a task than an offering, rather penance than a sacrifice; he did God's will, but against his will; we must be carried upon the wings of delight in every duty. Israel were to blow the trumpets when they offered burnt-offerings:³ blowing the trumpets was to show their joy and cheerfulness in serving God; we must read and hear the word with delight, 'thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy words were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'⁴ A pious soul goes to the word as to a feast, or as one would go with delight to hear music. Sleidan reports, that the protestants of France had a church they called paradise, because, when they were in the house of God, they thought themselves in paradise; the saints flock as doves to the windows of God's house, 'who are these that fly as doves to their windows?'⁵ Not that a truly regenerate person is always in the same cheerful temper of obedience: he may sometimes find an indisposition and weariness of soul; but his weariness is his burden, he is weary of his weariness, he prays, weeps, useth all means to regain that alacrity and freedom in God's service, that he was wont to have; this is to do God's will acceptably, when we do it willingly, it is this crowns all our services; delight in duty is better than duty. The musician is not commended for playing long, but well; it is not how much we do, but how much we love, 'O how love I thy law!'⁶ Love is as musk among linen, that perfumes it; love perfumes obedience, and makes it go up to heaven as incense. This is doing God's will as the angels in heaven do it; they are ravished with delight while they are praising God, therefore the angels are said to have harps in their hands,⁷ as a sign of their cheerfulness in God's service.

5. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do God's will fervently, 'fervent in

spirit, serving the Lord:'⁸ a metaphor from water when it seethes and boils over; so our affections should boil over in zeal and fervency. The angels serve God with fervour and intensesness. The angels are called *seraphim*, from a Hebrew word which signifies *to burn*, to show how the angels are all on fire;⁹ they burn in love and zeal in doing God's will; grace turns a saint into a seraph; Aaron must put burning coals to the incense;¹⁰ incense was a type of prayer, burning coals of zeal, to show that the fire of zeal must be put to the incense of prayer. Formality starves duty; when we serve God dully and coldly, is this like the angels? Duty without fervency is as a sacrifice without fire; we should ascend to heaven in a fiery chariot of devotion.

6. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we give God the best in every service, 'out of all your gifts, ye shall offer all the best thereof:'¹¹ 'in the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering.'¹² The Jews might not offer to the Lord wine that was small or mixed, but the strong wine, to imply, that we must offer to God the best, the strongest of our affections; if the spouse had a cup more juicy and spiced, Christ should drink of that; 'I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.'¹³ Thus the angels in heaven do God's will, they serve him in the best manner, they give him their seraphic high-stringed praises; he who loves God, gives him the cream of his obedience. God challenged the fat of all the sacrifices as his due.¹⁴ Hypocrites care not what services they bring to God; they think to put him off with any thing; they put no cost in their duties; 'Cain brought of the fruit of the ground.'¹⁵ The Holy Ghost took notice of Abel's offering, that it was costly, 'he brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof;'¹⁶ but when he speaks of Cain's offering, he only saith, 'he brought of the fruit of the ground.' Then we do God's will aright, when we dedicate to him the best. Domitian would not have his image carved in wood or iron, but in gold: God will have the best we have; golden services.

7. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do it readily, and swiftly. The angels do not dispute or reason the case, but as soon

¹ Ch. 28. 9. ² Ps. 110. 3. ³ Nu. 10. 10. ⁴ Je. 15. 15.
⁵ Is. 60. 8. ⁶ Ps. 119. 97. ⁷ Re. 15. 2.

⁸ Ro. 12. 11. ⁹ Ps. 104. 4. ¹⁰ Ex. 16. 12.
¹¹ Nu. 18. 29. ¹² Nu. 28. 7. ¹³ Cant. 2. 2
¹⁴ Le. 3. 16. ¹⁵ Ge. 4. 3. ¹⁶ Ge. 4. 4.

as they have their charge and commission from God, they immediately obey; and, to show how ready they are to execute God's will, the cherubims, representing the angels, are described with wings, to show how swift and forward they are in their obedience; it is as if they had wings, 'the man Gabriel (that was an angel) being caused to fly swiftly.'¹ Thus should we do God's will as the angels; as soon as ever God speaks the word, we should be ambitious to obey. Alas! how long is it sometimes ere we can get leave of our hearts to go to a duty! Christ went more readily to his cross, than we to the throne of grace. How many disputes and excuses have we? Is this to do God's will as the angels in heaven do it? O let us shake off this backwardness to duty, as Paul shook off the viper! 'The grace of the Holy Spirit knows no slothful delays;' 'I saw two women, and the wind was in their wings.'² Wings are swift, but wind in the wings is great swiftness; such readiness should be in our obedience. As Peter, as soon as ever Christ commanded him to let down his net, at Christ's word he presently let down the net, and you know what success he had.³ It was prophesied of such as were brought home to Christ, 'as soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me.'⁴

8. We do God's will as the angels in heaven, when we do it constantly; the angels are never weary of doing God's will, they serve God day and night;⁵ thus must we imitate the angels; 'blessed is he that doth righteousness at all times.'⁶ Constancy crowns obedience. 'It belongs to virtue to finish all that it begins.'⁷ **CYR.** Our obedience must be like the fire of the altar which was continually kept burning.⁸ Hypocrites soon give over doing God's will; like the chrysolite which is of a golden colour, in the morning it is very bright to look on, but towards evening it grows dull, and hath lost its splendour. We should continue in doing God's will, because of that great loss that will befall us if we give over doing God's will. (1.) A loss of honour: 'that no man take thy crown;' implying, if the church of Philadelphia left off her obedience, she would lose her crown, namely, her honour and reputation. Apostasy creates infamy; Judas from an apostle came to be a traitor; that was a dishonour. (2.) If we give over our obedience it is a loss of all that hath been already done; as if one should work

in silver, and then pick out all the stitches. All a man's prayers are lost, all the sabbaths he hath kept are lost, he doth unravel all his good works; 'all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.'⁹ He undoes all he hath done; as if one draw a curious picture with the pencil, and then come with his sponge and wipe out all again. (3.) A loss of the soul and happiness. We were in a fair way for heaven, but, by leaving off doing God's will, we miss the excellent glory, and are plunged deeper in damnation; 'it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment.'⁹ Therefore let us continue in doing God's will; constancy sets the crown upon the head of obedience. Thus you see how we are to do God's will acceptably.

USE 1. Branch 1. See hence our impotency; we have no innate power to do God's will; what need we pray, 'thy will be done,' if we have power of ourselves to do it? I wonder free-willers pray this petition.

Branch 2. If we are to do God's will on earth, as it is done by the angels in heaven, see then the folly of those who go by a wrong pattern; they do as the most of their neighbours do; if they talk vain on the sabbath, they do but as their neighbours do; if now and then they swear an oath, it is the custom of their neighbours to do so; but we are to do God's will, as the angels in heaven; do the angels do such things? We must make the angels our patterns, and not our neighbours; if our neighbours do the devil's will, shall we do so too? if our neighbours go to hell, shall we go thither too for company.

Branch 3. See here that which may make us long to be in heaven, then we shall do God's will perfectly as the angels do. Alas, how defective are we in our obedience here! How far do we fall short? We cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting: our holy things are blemished, like the moon, which, when it shines brightest, hath a dark spot in it; but in heaven we shall do God's will perfectly, as the angels in glory.

USE 2. Of reproof.

Branch 1. It reproves such as do not God's will; they have the knowledge of God's will, (knowledge they count an ornament) but though they know God's will, yet they do it not. (1.) They know what God would have

¹ Da. 9. 21. ² Ze. 5. 9. ³ Lu. 5. 4. ⁴ Ps. 18. 44. ⁵ Re. 7. 15.

⁶ Ps. 106. 3. ⁷ Le. 6. 13. ⁸ Re. 3. 11.

⁹ Ez. 18. 24.

⁹ 2 Pe. 2. 21.

them avoid: they know they should not swear; 'swear not at all.' For this sin the land mourns. Yet though they pray 'hallowed be thy name,' they profane it by shooting oaths like chain-bullets against heaven; they know they should abstain from fornication and uncleanness, yet they cannot but bite at the devil's hook, if he bait it with flesh.³ (2.) They know what God would have them practise, but they 'leave undone those things which they ought to have done.' They know it is the will of God they should be true in their promises, just in their dealings, good in their relations; but they do not the will of God: they know they should read the scriptures, consult with God's oracles; but the Bible, like rusty armour, is hung up, and seldom used; they look oftener upon a pack of cards than a Bible; they know their houses should be nurseries of piety, yet have no face of religion in them; they do not perfume their houses with prayer. What hypocrites are these to kneel down in the church and lift up their eyes to heaven, and say, 'thy will be done,' yet have no care at all to do God's will! What is this but to hang out a flag of defiance against heaven? And rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.

Branch 2. It reproves those who do not God's will in a right acceptable manner. (1.) They do not God's will entirely, all God's will: they will obey God in some things, but not in others; as if a servant should do some of your work you set him about but not the rest. Jehu destroyed the idolatry of Baal, but let the golden calves of Jeroboam stand.⁴ Some will observe the duties of the second table, but not the first. Others make an high profession, as if their tongues had been touched with a coal from God's altar, but live idly, and out of a calling; these the apostle complains of; 'we hear there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all.'⁵ Living by faith, and living in a calling, must go together. This is an evil thing, not to do all God's will. (2.) They do not God's will ardently, nor cheerfully, they do not put coals to the incense, they bring their sacrifice, but not their heart; this is far from doing God's will as the angels; this loseth the reward: how can God like this, to serve him as if we served him not? How can God mind our duties when we ourselves scarce mind them?

USE 3. Of examination.

Let us examine all our actions whether they

are according to God's will. The will of God is the rule and standard, it is the sun-dial by which we must set all our actions; he is no good workman, that doth not work by rule; he can be no good Christian who goes not according to the rule of God's will. Let us examine our actions whether they agree to the will of God. Are your speeches according to God's will? are our words savoury, being seasoned with grace? Is our apparel according to God's will? 'in like manner, also that women adorn themselves with modest apparel;'⁶ not wanton and garish to invite comers. Our diet, is it according to God's will? do we hold the golden bridal of temperance, and only take so much as may rather satisfy nature than surfeit it? too much oil chokes the lamp. Is our whole carriage and behaviour according to God's will? are we patterns of prudence and piety? do we keep up the credit of religion, and shine as lights in the world? We pray 'thy will be done as it is in heaven;' are we like our pattern; would the angels do this if they were on earth? would Jesus Christ do this? This is to christianize, this is to be saints of degrees, when we live our prayer, and our actions are the counterpart of God's will.

USE 4. Of exhortation. Let us be doers of the will of God, 'thy will be done.' 1. It is our wisdom to do God's will. Keep and do these statutes, 'for this is your wisdom.'⁷ 2. It is our safety. Hath not misery always attended the doing of our own will, and happiness the doing of God's will? (1). Misery hath always attended the doing of our own will. Our first parents left God's will to fulfil their own, 'in eating the forbidden fruit.' And what came of it? the apple had a bitter core in it; they purchased a curse for themselves and all their posterity. King Saul left God's will to do his own; he spares Agag, and the best of the sheep, and what was the issue, but the loss of his kingdom? (2.) Happiness hath always attended the doing of God's will. Joseph obeyed God's will, in refusing the embrace of his mistress, and was not this his preferment? God raised him to be the second man in the kingdom. Daniel did God's will contrary to the king's decree; he bowed his knee in prayer to God, and did not God make all Persia bow their knees to Daniel? (3.) The way to have our will is to do God's will. Would we have a blessing in our estate? then let us do God's

¹ Mat. 5. 34. ² Je. 23. 10. ³ Jude 7.
⁴ 2 Ki. 10. 30. ⁵ 2 Th. 3. 11.

⁶ 1 Ti. 2. 9.

⁷ De. 4. 6.

will; 'if thou shalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God, to do all his commandments, the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.'¹ This is the way to have a good harvest. Would we have a blessing in our souls? then let us do God's will; 'obey my voice, and I will be your God';² I will entail myself upon you, as an everlasting portion; my grace shall be yours to sanctify you, my mercy shall be yours to save you. You see you lose nothing by doing God's will; this is the way to have your will; let God have his will in being obeyed, and you shall have your will in being saved.

Q. 5. *How shall we come to do God's will aright.*

1. Get sound knowledge; we must know God's will before we can do it; knowledge is the eye to direct the foot of obedience. The papists make ignorance the mother of devotion, but Christ makes ignorance the mother of error; 'ye do err, not knowing the scripture.'³ We must know God's will before we can do it aright. Affection without knowledge, is like a horse full of metal, but his eyes are out.

2. If we would do God's will aright, let us labour for self-denial; * unless we deny our own will, we shall never do God's will: God wills one thing, we will another; God calls us to be crucified to the world, by nature we love the world; God calls us to forgive our enemies, by nature we bear malice in our hearts; God's will and ours are contrary, like the wind and tide, and till we can cross our own will, we shall never fulfil God's.

3. Let us get humble hearts. Pride is the spring of disobedience; 'who is the Lord, that

¹ De. 28. 1, 3.

² Jer. 7. 23.

³ Mat. 22. 29.

* 'That which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do.' One might ask: 'is it true, then, that a man does what he is unwilling to do, and hates to do? This would be not only to represent him as acting against predominant motives, but as a machine, who could not follow his own inclination.' And on the ground of some systems of metaphysical philosophy, the whole would be an unaccountable affair, as it is here represented by the apostle; although such philosophy is not unfrequently insisted on, and urged as being all-important in theology. But still the apostle might make his appeal, for his triumphant vindication, to the breast of every man on earth, where the moral warfare has been carried on, as he describes it, between conscience and passion. And a most exact and striking picture it is too. The demonstration of its correctness is *internal*, in the very consciousness of the soul; it depends not on metaphysics or ratiocination. It is not true, indeed, that a man does what, on the whole, he is unwilling to do; nor is this what the apostle means to affirm. But it is true that men often do what conscience and reason disapprove.—*Stuart on the Romans*, p. 295.

I should obey his voice?' A proud man thinks it below him to stoop to God's will. Be humble; the humble soul saith, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' He puts, as it were, a blank paper into God's hand, and bids him write what he will, he will subscribe to it.

4. Beg grace and strength of God to do his will; 'teach me to do thy will:'⁴ as if David had said, 'Lord I need not be taught to do my own will, I can do it fast enough, but teach me to do thy will.' And that which may add wings to prayer, is God's gracious promise, 'I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.'⁵ If the loadstone draw the iron, it is not hard for the iron to move: if God's Spirit enable, it will not be hard, but rather delightful to do God's will.

II. In this petition, 'thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,' we pray that we may have grace to submit to God's will patiently in what he inflicts. The text is to be understood as well of suffering God's will as of doing it; so Maldonat, and the most judicious interpreters. I shall speak now of patient submission to God's will, in whatever he inflicts, 'thy will be done.' This should be the temper of a good Christian, when he is under any disastrous providence, to lie quietly at God's feet, and say, 'thy will be done.'

Q. 1. *What this patient submission to God's will is not?*

There is something looks like patience which is not, namely, when a man bears a thing because he cannot help it; he takes affliction as his fate and destiny, therefore he endures that quietly which he cannot avoid; this is rather necessity than patience.

Q. 2. *What is it may stand with patient submission to God's will?*

1. A Christian may be sensible of affliction, yet patiently submit to God's will; we ought not to be stoics, insensible and unconcerned with God's dealings; like the sons of Deucalion, who, as the poets say, were begotten of a stone. Christ was sensible when he swate great drops of blood, but there was submission to God's will; 'nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'⁶ We are bid to humble ourselves under God's hand,⁷ which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

2. A Christian may weep under an affliction yet patiently submit to God's will. God allows tears; it is a sin to be 'without natural affec-

⁴ Ex. 5. 2.

⁵ Ps. 143. 10.

⁶ Ez. 36. 27.

⁷ Mat. 26. 39.

⁸ 1 Pet. 5. 6.

tion.¹ Grace makes the heart tender: grief shut up chokes us, weeping gives vent to sorrow. Joseph wept over his dead father; Job, when he had so much ill news brought him at once, rent his mantle, an expression of grief, but did not tear his hair in anger; only worldly grief must not be immoderate; a vein may bleed too much; the water riseth too high when it overflows the banks.

3. A Christian may complain in his affliction, yet be submissive to God's will; 'I cried to the Lord with my voice, I poured out my complaint before him.'² We may, being under oppression, tell God how it is with us, and desire him to write down our injuries. Shall not the child complain to his father when he is wronged? And holy complaint may stand with patient submission to God's will; but though we may complain to God, we must not complain of God.

Q. 3. *What is it that cannot stand with patient submission to God's will?*

1. Discontentedness with providence. Discontent hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and, both these must needs raise a storm of passion in the soul. God having touched the apple of our eye, and smitten us in that we loved, we are touchy and sullen, and God shall not have a good look from us; 'why art thou wroth;'³ like a sullen bird that is angry, and beats herself against the cage.

2. Murmuring cannot stand with submission to God's will; murmuring is the height of impatience, it is a kind of mutiny in the soul against God; 'the people spake against God.'⁴ When a cloud of sorrow is gathered in the soul, and this cloud doth not only drop into tears, but out of this cloud come hailstones, murmuring words against God, this is far from patient submission to God's will. When water is hot the scum boils up; when the heart is heated with anger against God, then this scum of murmuring boils up. Murmuring is very evil; it springs, 1st. from pride: men think they have deserved better at God's hand; and when they begin to swell they spit poison. 2d. Distrust; men believe not that God can make a treacle of poison, bring good out of all their troubles, therefore they murmur; 'they believed not his word, but murmured.'⁵ Men murmur at God's providences, because they distrust his promises; God hath much ado to bear this sin.⁶ This is far from submission to God's will.

3. Discomposedness of spirit cannot stand with quiet submission to God's will. When a man saith, I am so encompassed with trouble, that I know not how to get out; head and heart are so taken up, that a person is not fit to pray. When the strings of a lute are snarled, the lute can make no good music: so, when a Christian's spirits are perplexed and disturbed, he cannot make melody in his heart to the Lord. To be under a discomposure of mind, is as when an army is routed, one runs this way, and another that, the army is put into disorder: so when a Christian is in a hurry of mind his thoughts run up and down distracted, as if he were undone; this cannot stand with patient submission to God's will.

4. Self-apology cannot stand with submission to God's will; instead of being humbled under God's hand, a person justifies himself. A proud sinner stands upon his own defence, and is ready to accuse God of unrighteousness, which is as if we should tax the sun with darkness; this is far from submission to God's will. God smote Jonah's gourd, and he stands upon his own vindication; 'I do well to be angry even unto death.'⁷ What, to be angry with God, and to justify this! 'I do well to be angry!' This was strange to come from a prophet, and was far from this prayer Christ hath taught us, 'thy will be done.'

Q. 4. *What is this patient submission to God's will?*

It is a gracious frame of soul, whereby a Christian is content to be at God's disposal, and doth acquiesce in his wisdom; 'it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;'⁸ 'the will of the Lord be done.'⁹ That I may further illustrate this, I shall show you wherein this submission to the will of God lies. It lies chiefly in three things.

1. In acknowledging God's hand; seeing God in the affliction; 'affliction cometh not forth of the dust;'¹⁰ it comes not by chance. Job did eye God in all that befell him; 'the Lord hath taken away.'¹¹ He complains not of the Chaldeans, or the influence of the planets; he looks beyond second causes, he sees God in the affliction, 'the Lord hath taken away. There can be no submission to God's will, till there be an acknowledging of God's hand.

2. Patient submission to God's will lies in our justifying of God;¹² 'O my God, I cry unto thee, yet thou hearest not, thou turnest a deaf

¹ Ro. 1. 31.

² Ps. 142. 1, 2.

³ Ge. 4. 6.

⁴ Nu. 21. 5.

⁵ Ps. 106. 23, 25.

⁶ Nu. 14. 27.

⁷ Jo. 4. 9.

⁸ I Sa. 3. 18.

⁹ Ac. 21. 4.

¹⁰ Job 5. 6.

¹¹ Job 1. 21.

¹² Ps. 22. 2.

ear to me in my affliction;’ ‘but thou art holy.’¹ God is holy and just, not only when he punisheth the wicked, but when he afflicts the righteous. Though God put wormwood in our cup, yet we vindicate God, and proclaim his righteousness. As Mauritius the emperor, when he saw his son slain before his eyes; ‘righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy ways.’ We justify God, and confess he punisheth us less than we deserve.²

Patient submission to God’s will lies in the accepting of the punishment; ‘they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity.’³ Accepting the punishment: that is, taking all that God doth in good part. He who accepts of the punishment, saith, ‘good is the rod of the Lord;’ he kisseth the rod, yea, blesseth God that he would use such a merciful severity, rather to afflict him than to lose him. This is patient submission to God’s will. This patient submission to God’s will in affliction shows a great deal of wisdom and piety. The skill of a pilot is most discerned in a storm, and a Christian’s grace in the storm of affliction; and indeed this submission to God’s will is most requisite for us while we live here in this lower region. In heaven there will be no need of patience more than there is need of the starlight when the sun shines. In heaven there will be all joy, and what need of patience then? It requires no patience to wear a crown of gold; but while we live here in a valley of tears, there needs patient submission to God’s will; ‘ye have need of patience.’⁴ (1.) The Lord sometimes lays *heavy* affliction upon us; ‘thy hand presseth me sore.’⁵ The word in the original for *afflicted* signifies to be *melted*. God sometimes melts his people in a furnace. (2.) God sometimes lays *divers* afflictions upon us: ‘he multiplies my wound.’⁶ God shoots divers sorts of arrows. Sometimes God afflicts with poverty. The widow had nothing left her save a pot of oil.⁷ Poverty is a great temptation. To have an estate reduced almost to nothing, is hard to flesh and blood; ‘call me not Naomi, but Mara; I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.’⁸ This exposeth to contempt. When the prodigal was poor, his brother was ashamed to own him; ‘this thy son;’⁹ he said not, ‘this my brother,’ but, this thy son; he scorned to call him brother. When the deer is shot and bleeds, the rest of the herd push it away; when God

shoots the arrow of poverty at one; others are ready to push him away; when Terence was grown poor, his friend Scipio cast him off. The muses, Jupiter’s daughters, the poets feign, had no suitors, because they wanted a dowry. God sometimes afflicts with reproach. Such as have the light of grace shining in them yet may be eclipsed in their name. The primitive Christians were reproached as if they were guilty of incest, saith Tertullian. Luther was called a trumpeter of rebellion. David calls reproach an heart-breaking;¹⁰ this God lets his dear saints oft be exercised with. Dirt may be cast upon a pearl; those names may be blotted, which are written in the book of life; sincerity, though it shields from hell, yet not from slander. God sometimes afflicts with the loss of dear relations; ‘son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke.’¹¹ This is like pulling away a limb from the body. He takes away an holy child. Jacob’s life was bound up in Benjamin;¹² and that which puts teeth into the cross, and is worse than the loss of children, is, when they are continued as living crosses; where the parents expected honey, there to have wormwood. What greater cut to a godly parent, than a child who disclaims his father’s God? A corrosive applied to the body may do well, but a bad child is a corrosive to the heart. Such an undutiful son had David, who conspired treason, and would not only have taken away his father’s crown, but his life. God sometimes afflicts with infirmness of body; scarce a well day. Sickness takes away the comfort of life, and makes one in deaths oft. Thus God tries his people with various afflictions, so that there is need of patience to submit to God’s will. He who hath divers bullets shot at him needs armour; when divers afflictions assault, we need patience as armour of proof. God sometimes lets the affliction continue long.¹³ As it is with diseases, there are some chronic that linger and hang about the body several years together: so it is with affliction, the Lord is pleased to exercise many of his precious ones with chronic affliction, such as lie upon them a long time: so that in all these cases we need patience and submissiveness of spirit to God’s will.

USE 1. It reproves such as have not yet learned this part of the Lord’s prayer, ‘thy will be done;’ they have only said it, but not learned it. If things be not according to their mind,

¹ Ps. 22. 3. ² Ezra 9. 13. ³ Le. 26. 41.

⁴ He. 10. 36. ⁵ Ps. 38. 2. ⁶ Job 9. 17.

⁷ 1 Ki. 17. 12. ⁸ Ru. 1. 20, 21. ⁹ Lu. 15. 30.

¹⁰ Ps. 69. 20. ¹¹ Ez. 24. 16. ¹² Ge. 44. 30. ¹³ Ps. 74. 9.

if the wind of providence crosseth the tide of their will, they are discontented and querulous. Where is now submission of will to God? To be displeased with God, if things do not please us, is this to lie at God's feet, and acquiesce in his will? This is a very bad temper of spirit, and God may justly punish us by letting us have our will. Rachel cried, 'give me children or I die;'¹ God let her have a child, but it cost her her life.² Israel is not content with manna (angels' food) they must have quails to their manna; God punished them by letting them have their will; 'there went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quails;³ and while the flesh was yet between their teeth, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a great plague.'⁴ They had better been without their quails, than had such sour sauce to them. Many have importunately desired the life of a child, and could not bring their will to God's to be content to part with it; and the Lord hath punished them by letting them have their will; the child hath lived and been a burden to them. Seeing their wills crossed God, their child shall cross them.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Let us be exhorted, whatever troubles God doth exercise us with 'to bear them with equanimity,' to resign up our wills to God, and say, 'thy will be done.' Which is fittest, that God should bring his will to ours, or we bring our will to his? Say as Eli, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;'⁵ and as David, 'behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him!'⁶ It was the saying of Harpulas, 'that pleaseth me which pleaseth the king;' so should we say, that which pleaseth God pleaseth us, 'thy will be done.' Some have not yet learned this art of submission to God; and truly he who wants patience in affliction, is like a soldier in battle who wants armour.

Q. *When do we not, as we ought, submit to God's will in affliction?*

1. When we have hard thoughts of God, and our hearts begin to swell against him.

2. When we are so troubled at our present affliction, that we are unfit for duty. We can mourn as doves, but not pray or praise God. We are so discomposed, that we are not fit to hearken to any good counsel; 'they hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.'⁷ Israel were so full of grief under their present bur-

dens, that they minded not what Moses said, though he came with a message from God to them: 'they hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit.'

3. We do not submit as we ought to God's will, when we labour to break loose from affliction by indirect means. Many, to rid themselves out of trouble, run themselves into sin; when God hath bound them with the cords of affliction, they go to the devil to loosen their bands. Better it is to stay in affliction, than to sin ourselves out of affliction. O let us learn to stoop to God's will in all afflictive providences.

Q. *But how shall we bring ourselves to this Christian temper, in all occurrences of providence, patiently to acquiesce in God's will, and say, 'thy will be done?'* We know not what trials, personal or relational, we may be exercised with. We seem now to be under the planet Saturn, which hath a malignant aspect. Our ship is steered so strangely, that we are in danger, on one hand, of the sands, on the other hand, of the rocks. If affliction comes, how shall we keep a Christian decorum? How shall we bear things with equanimity of mind, and say, 'thy will be done?'

The means for a quiet resignation to God's will in affliction are:

1. Judicious consideration, 'in the day of adversity consider.'⁸ When any thing burdens us, or runs cross to our desires, did we but sit down and consider, and weigh things in the balance of judgment, it would much quiet our minds, and subject our wills to God; 'in the day of adversity consider.' Consideration would be as David's harp, to charm down the evil spirit of frowardness and discontent.

Q. *But what should we consider?*

That which may make us submit to God in affliction, and say, 'thy will be done,' is,

1. To consider, that the present state of life is subject to afflictions, as a seaman's life is subject to storms. 'Nobody refuses to bear with the lot that falls to all.' 'Man is born to trouble;'⁹ he is heir apparent to it; he comes into the world with a cry, and goes out with a groan. The world is a place where much wormwood grows; 'he hath filled me with bitterness,'¹⁰ Heb. *with bitteresses*; he hath made me drunk with wormwood. Troubles arise like sparks out of a furnace. Afflictions are some of the thorns which the earth after the curse brings forth. We may as well think to stop the chariot of

¹ Ge. 30. 1. ² Ge. 35. 18. ³ Nu. 11. 31. ⁴ Nu. 11. 33.
⁵ 1 Sa. 3. 18. ⁶ 2 Sa. 15. 26. ⁷ Ex. 6. 9.

⁸ Ec. 7. 14.

⁹ Job 5. 7.

¹⁰ La. 3. 15.

the sun when it is in its swift motion, as put a stop to trouble. The consideration of this, our life is exposed to eclipses and sufferings, should make us say with patience, 'thy will be done.' Shall a mariner be angry that he meets with a storm at sea?

2d. Consideration. God hath a special hand in the disposal of all occurrences that fall out. Job eyed God in his affliction, 'the Lord hath taken away.'¹ He doth not complain of the Sabians, or the influences of the planets; he looked beyond all second causes, he saw God in the affliction, and that made him cheerfully submit; 'blessed be the name of the Lord.' And Christ looked beyond Judas and Pilate, he looked to God's determinate counsel in delivering him up to be crucified;² this made him say, Father, 'not as I will, but as thou wilt.'³ It is vain to quarrel with instruments: wicked men are but a rod in God's hand; 'O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger.'⁴ Whoever brings an affliction, God sends it: the consideration of this would make us say, 'thy will be done;' what God doeth, he sees a reason for. We read of a wheel within a wheel.⁵ The outward wheel, which turns all, is providence; the wheel within this wheel, is God's decree; this believed, would rock the heart quiet. Shall we mutiny at that which God doth? We may as well quarrel with the works of creation, as the works of providence.

3d. Consideration, which may make us humbly submit to God's will, is, that there is a necessity of affliction; 'if need be, ye are in heaviness.'⁶ It is needful some things be kept in brine: afflictions are needful upon several accounts. 1. To keep us humble. Oft-times there is no other way to have the heart low, but by being brought low; when Manasseh 'was in affliction he humbled himself greatly.'⁷ Corrections are corrosives to eat out the proud flesh; 'remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul is humbled in me.'⁸ 2. It is necessary that there should be affliction, for if God did not sometimes bring us into affliction, how could his power be seen in bringing us out? Had not Israel been in the Egyptian furnace, God had lost his glory in their deliverance. 3. If there were no affliction, then many parts of scripture could not be fulfilled. God hath promised to help us to bear affliction;⁹ how could we ex-

perience God's supporting us in trouble, if we did not sometimes meet with it? God hath promised to give us joy in affliction;¹⁰ how could we taste this honey of joy, if we were not sometimes in affliction? Again, God hath promised to wipe away tears from our eyes;¹¹ how could God wipe away our tears in heaven, if we never shed any? So that, in several respects, there is an absolute necessity that we should meet with affliction. And shall not we quietly submit? and say, 'Lord, I see there is a necessity of it; thy will be done.'^{*}

4th. Consideration, to make us submit to God's will in affliction, is, that whatever we feel, it is nothing but what we have brought upon ourselves; we put a rod into God's hand to chastise us. Christian, God lays thy cross on thee, but it is of thy own making. If a man's field be full of tares, it is nothing but what he hath sown in it; if thou reapest a bitter crop of affliction, it is nothing but what thou thyself hast sown. The cords that pinch thee are of thy own twisting. If children will eat green fruit, they may thank themselves if they are sick; if we eat the forbidden fruit, no wonder we feel it gripe. Sin is the Trojan horse that lands an army of afflictions upon us; 'a voice publisheth affliction';¹² 'thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness.'¹³ If we by sin run ourselves into arrears with God, no wonder if he set affliction as a sergeant on our back to arrest us. This may make us patiently submit to God in affliction, and say, 'thy will be done.' We have no cause to complain of God, it is nothing but what our sins have merited; 'hast not thou procured this unto thyself?'¹⁴ The cross, though it be of God's laying, it is of our own making; say then, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.'¹⁵

5th. Consideration, to cause submission to God's will in affliction; God is now about to make

¹⁰ Jno. 16. 20.

¹¹ Is. 25. 8.

¹² Je. 4. 15.

¹³ Je. 5. 18.

¹⁴ Je. 2. 17.

¹⁵ Mi. 7. 9.

* A man is not only unknown to others but to himself, that hath never met with such difficulties, as require faith and Christian fortitude and patience to surmount them. How shall a man know whether his meekness and calmness of spirit be real or not, while he meets with no provocation, nothing that contradicts or crosses him? But when somewhat sets upon him that is in itself very unpleasant and grievous to him, and yet, if in that case he retains his moderation of spirit, and flies not into impatience either against God or men, this gives experiment of the truth and soundness of that grace within him; whereas standing water which is clear at the top while it is untouched, yet, if it have mud at the bottom, stir it a little, and it presently rises.—*Leighton on 1 Peter i. 6.*

¹ Joh. 1. 21.

² Ac. 4. 27.

³ Mat. 26. 39.

⁴ Is. 10. 5.

⁵ Ez. 1. 15.

⁶ 1 Pe. 1. 6.

⁷ 2 Ch. 33. 12.

⁸ La. 3. 19.

⁹ Ps. 37. 24, 39.

an experiment, he doth it to prove and try us; 'then, O God, hast tried us as silver is tried, thou laidst affliction upon our loins.'¹ If there were no affliction, how should God have an opportunity to try men? Hypocrites can sail in a pleasure-boat, serve God in prosperity; but when we can keep close to God in times of danger, when we can trust God when we have no pawn, and love God when we have no smile; here is the trial of sincerity! This may make us say, 'thy will be done!' God is only trying us; what hurt is in that? what is the gold the worse of being tried?

6th. Consideration, to make us submit to God in affliction, and say, 'thy will be done,' is, that in all our crosses God hath a kindness for us. As there was no night so dark but Israel had a pillar of fire to give light, so there is no condition so cloudy, but we may see that which gives light of comfort. David would 'sing of mercy and judgment.'² This may make our wills cheerfully submit to God's, to consider in every path of providence we may see a footstep of kindness.

Q. *What kindness is there in affliction, when God seems most unkind?*

1. There is kindness in affliction, in that there is love in it. God's rod, and God's love may stand together; 'whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;'³ whom he cockereth above the rest, so Mercer. As Abraham, when he lifted up his hand to sacrifice Isaac, loved him; so when God afflicts his people, and seems to sacrifice their outward comforts, yet he loves them; the husbandman loves his vine, when he cuts it and makes it bleed; and shall not we submit to God? shall we quarrel with that which hath kindness in it, which comes in love? The chirurgeon binds the patient, and lanceth him, but no wise man will quarrel with the chirurgeon, it is in love, and in order to a cure.

2. There is kindness in affliction, in that God deals with us now as children; 'If ye endure chastening, God deals with you as sons.'⁴ God hath one Son without sin, but no son without stripes. Affliction is a badge of adoption; it is, saith Tertullian, 'God's seal by which he marks us for his own.' When Munster, that holy man, lay sick, his friends asked him how he did? He pointed to his sores, saying, these are the jewels with which God decks his children. Shall not we then say, 'thy will be done?' Lord, there is kindness in the cross,

thou usest us as children! The rod of discipline is to fit us for the inheritance.

3. There is kindness, that God hath, in all our afflictions, left us a promise; in the most cloudy providences, the promise appears as a rainbow in the cloud. (1.) That we shall have God's promise with us, 'I will be with him in trouble.'⁵ It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is. I will be with him to support, sanctify, sweeten; God's presence is a sweetening ingredient into every affliction. I had rather be in prison, and have God's presence, than be in a palace, and want it. (2.) Promise, that he will lay no more upon us than he will enable us to bear.⁶ God will not try us beyond our strength; either God will make the yoke lighter, or our faith stronger; may not this make us submit our wills to God, when afflictions have so much kindness in them? In all our trials, God hath left us promises which are like manna in the wilderness.

4. This is great kindness, that all the troubles that befall us shall be for our profit; 'he for our profit.'⁷

Q. *But what profit is in affliction?*

(1.) Afflictions are disciplinary, they teach us; 'the school of the cross, is the school of light and instruction.' Many psalms have this inscription, *Maschil*, 'a psalm giving instruction:' affliction may have this inscription upon it, *Maschil*, an affliction giving instruction; 'hear ye the rod.'⁸ Luther saith, he could never rightly understand some of the psalms, till he was in affliction; 'Gideon took thorns of the wilderness, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.'⁹ God by the thorns and briers of affliction teacheth us. Affliction shows us more of our own hearts than ever. Water in a glass vial looks clear, but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up; when God sets us upon the fire, then we see that corruption boils up which we did not discern before. Sharp afflictions are to the soul as a soaking rain to the houses, we know not that there are such holes in the house till the shower comes, and then we see it drop down here and there; so, we before did not know that there were such unmortified lusts in the soul, till the storm of affliction comes, then we spy unbelief, impatience, carnal fear, we see it drop down in many places. Thus affliction is a sacred *collyrium*, it clears our eyesight; the rod gives wisdom. Affliction brings those sins to remembrance

⁵ Ps. 91. 15. ⁶ 1. Co. 10. 13. ⁷ He. 12. 10.

⁸ Mi. 6. 9.

⁹ Ju. 8. 16.

¹ Ps. 66. 10, 11. ² Ps. 101. 1. ³ He. 12. 6. ⁴ He. 12. 7.

which before we buried in the grave of forgetfulness. Joseph's brethren, for twenty years together, were not at all troubled for their sin in selling their brother; but when they came into Egypt, and began to be in straits, then their sin in selling their brother came into their remembrance, and their hearts did smite them; 'they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother.'¹ When a man is in distress, now his sin comes fresh into his mind; conscience makes a rehearsal-sermon of all the evils which have passed in his life; now his expense of precious time, his sabbath-breaking, his slighting of the word, come into his remembrance, and he goes out with Peter and weeps bitterly. Thus the rod gives wisdom, it shows the hidden evil of the heart, and brings former sins to remembrance.

(2.) There is profit in affliction as it quickens a spirit of prayer; 'the righteous are oppressed, that oppression may make them cry.' Jonah was asleep in the ship, but at prayer in the whale's belly. Perhaps, in a time of health and prosperity, we prayed in a cold and formal manner, we put no coals to the incense, we did scarce mind our own prayers, and how should God mind them? Now, God sends some cross or other to make us stir up ourselves to take hold of God. When Jacob was in fear of his life by his brother, then he wrestles with God, and weeps in prayer, and would not leave God till he blessed him.² It is with many of God's children, as with those who formerly had the sweating sickness in this land, it was a sleepy disease, if they slept they died; therefore to keep them waking, they were smitten with rosemary branches; so, the Lord useth affliction as a rosemary branch to keep us from sleeping, and to awaken a spirit of prayer; 'they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening hand was upon them';³ now their prayer pierced the heavens. In times of trouble we pray feelingly; and we never pray so fervently as when we pray feelingly; and is not this for our profit?

(3.) Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to expectorate and purge out our sins, 'by this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged.'⁴ Affliction is God's physic to expel the noxious humour; it cures the imposthume of pride, the fever of lust; and is not this for our profit? Affliction is God's file to fetch off our rust, his flail to thrash off our husks: the water

of affliction is not to drown us, but to wash off our spots.

(4.) To be under the black rod is profitable, in that hereby we grow more serious, and are more careful to clear our evidences for heaven. In times of prosperity, 'when the rock poured me out rivers of oil,' we were careless in getting, at least clearing our title to glory. Had many no better evidences for their land, than they have for their salvation, they were but in an ill case; but when an hour of trouble comes, we begin to look after our spiritual evidences, and see how things stand between God and our souls; and is it not for our profit to see our interest in Christ more cleared than ever?

(5.) Affliction is for our profit, as it is a means to take us more off from the world; the world oft proves not only a spider's web, but a cockatrice egg; pernicious worldly things are great enchantments, they are 'the hinderances of hope.' TENTUL. They hinder us in our passage to heaven. If a clock be overwound, it stands still; so, when the heart is wound up too much to the world, it stands still to heavenly things. Affliction sounds a retreat to call us off the immoderate pursuit of earthly things; when things are frozen, and congealed together, the only way to separate them, is, by fire; so, when the heart and the world are congealed together, God hath no better way to separate them than by the fire of affliction.

(6.) Affliction is for our profit, as it is a refiner; it works us to further degrees of sanctity, 'he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.'⁵ The vessels of mercy are the brighter for scouring; you pour water on your linen when you would whiten it; God pours the waters of affliction upon us, to lay our souls a-whitening. The leaves of the fig-tree, and root are bitter, but the fruit is sweet; afflictions are in themselves bitter, but they bring forth the sweet fruits of righteousness;⁶ this may make us submit to God, and say, 'thy will be done';⁷ there is kindness in affliction, it is for our spiritual profit.

5. There is kindness in affliction, in that there is no condition so bad, but it might be worse: when it is duskish it might be darker. God doth not make our cross so heavy as he might; he doth not stir up all his anger;⁸ he doth not put so many nails in our yoke, so much wormwood in our cup, as he might. Doth God chastise thy body? he might torture thy con-

¹ Ge. 42. 21. ² Ho. 12. 1 ³ 1. 23. 16. ⁴ Is. 27. 9.

⁵ Job 29. 6. ⁶ He. 12. 10. ⁷ He. 12. 11. ⁸ Ps. 78. 33.

science. Doth he cut thee short? he might cut thee off. The Lord might make our chains heavier. Is it a burning fever? it might have been the burning lake. Doth God use the pruning-knife to lop thee? he might bring his axe to hew thee down. Do the waters of affliction come 'up to the ankles;' God might make them rise higher; nay, he might drown thee in the waters. This may make us submit quietly, and say, 'thy will be done;' because there is so much kindness in it; whereas God useth the rod, he might use the scorpion.

6. There is kindness in affliction, in that your case is not so bad as others; they are always upon the rack, they spend their 'years with sighing.'² Have you a gentle fit of the ague? others cry out of the stone and strangulation. Do you bear the wrath of men? others bear the wrath of God. You have but a single trial: others have them twisted together. God shoots but one arrow at you, he shoots a shower of arrows at others. Is there not kindness in all this? We are apt to say, never any suffered as we! Was it not worse with Lazarus, who was so full of sores, that the dogs took pity on him, and licked his sores? Nay, was it not worse with Christ, who lived poor, and died cursed? May not this cause us to say, 'thy will be done?' There is kindness in it, that God deals not so severely with us as with others.

7. There is kindness in affliction, in that, if we belong to God, it is all the hell we shall have. Some have two hells, they suffer in their body and conscience; here is one hell; and another hell is to come, unquenchable fire. Judas had two hells, but a child of God hath but one hell. Lazarus had all his hell here; he was full of sores, but had a convoy of angels to carry him to heaven when he died. Say then, 'lo, if this be the worst I shall have, if this be all my hell, I will patiently acquiesce; thy will be done!'

8. There is kindness in that God gives gracious supports in affliction. If he strikes with one hand he will support with the other; 'underneath are the everlasting arms.'¹ There is not the least trial, but if God would desert us, and not assist us with his grace, we should sink under it; the frown of a great man, the fear of reproach: Peter was frightened at the voice of a maid.² O therefore what mercy is it to have Christ strengthen us, and as it were bear the heaviest part of the cross with us! One said,

I have no ravishing joys in my sickness, but I bless God, I have sweet supports: and should not this cause submission to God's will, and make us say 'lo, if thou art so kind as to bear us up in affliction, that we do not faint, put us into what wine-press thou pleasest, thy will be done.'

9. There is kindness in affliction, in that it is preventive. God by this stroke of his would prevent some sin. Paul's 'thorn in the flesh' was to prevent his being lifted up in pride.³ As affliction is sometimes sent for the punishing of sin, so sometimes for the preventing of sin. Prosperity exposes to much evil; it is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. God's people know not how much they are beholden to their affliction; they might have fallen into some scandal, had not God set a hedge of thorns in their way to stop them. What kindness is this? God lets us fall into sufferings to prevent falling into snares; say then, 'Lord, do as it seems good in thy sight, thy will be done.' God by affliction would prevent damnation; 'we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.'⁴ A man, by falling into the briers, is saved from falling into the river: God lets us fall into the briers of affliction, that we may not drown in perdition. It is a great favour when a lesser punishment is inflicted to prevent a greater. Is it not clemency in the judge, when he lays some light penalty on the prisoner, and saves his life? so, when God lays upon us light affliction, and saves us from wrath to come. As Pilate said, 'I will chastise him, and release him:'⁵ so God chastiseth his children, and lets them go, frees them from eternal torment. What is the drop of sorrow the godly taste, to that sea of wrath the wicked shall be drinking of to all eternity? O what kindness is here! May not this make us say, 'thy will be done?' It is preventing physic.

10. There is kindness, in that God doth mix his providences; 'in anger he remembers mercy:'⁶ not all pure gall, but some honey mixed with it. Asher's shoes were iron and brass, but his foot was dipped in oil;⁷ affliction is the shoe of brass, but God causeth the foot to be dipped in oil. As the limner mixeth with his dark shadows bright colours, so the wise God mingles the dark and bright colours, crosses and blessings. The body is afflicted, but within is peace of conscience; there is a blessing. Joseph was sold into Egypt, and put in prison;

¹ Ezek. 47. 3. ² Ps. 31. 10. ³ De. 33. 27. ⁴ Ma. 26. 69.

⁵ 2 Co. 12. 7. ⁶ 1 Co. 11. 32. ⁷ Lu. 23. 16.

⁶ Ha. 3. 2. ⁷ De. 33. 24.

there was the dark side of the cloud. Job lost all that ever he had, his skin was clothed with boils and ulcers; here was a sad providence. But God gave a testimony from heaven of Job's integrity, and did afterwards double his estate; 'the Lord gave Job twice as much;'¹ here was the goodness of God seen towards Job. God doth chequer his works of providence, and shall not we submit and say, Lord, if thou art so kind, mixing so many bright colours with my dark condition, 'thy will be done.'

11. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth moderate his stroke; 'I will correct thee in measure.'² God will in the day of his east wind stay his rough wind.³ The physician that understands the crisis and temper of the patient will not give too strong physic for the body, nor will he give one draught or scruple too much: God knows our frame, he will not over-afflict, he will not stretch the strings of his viol too hard lest they break. And is there not kindness in all this? May not this work our hearts to submission? Lord, if thou usest so much gentleness, and correctest in measure, 'thy will be done.'

12. There is kindness in affliction, in that God often sweetens it with divine consolation: 'who comforteth us in all our tribulation.'⁴ After a bitter potion, a lump of sugar. God comforts in affliction, partly by his word; 'this is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.'⁵ The promises of the word are a shop of cordials. God comforts by his Spirit. Philip, landgrave of Hesse, said, that in his troubles, he felt the divine consolations of the martyrs. David had his pilgrimage-songs,⁶ and St Paul his prison-songs.⁷ Thus God candies our wormwood with sugar, and makes us gather grapes off thorns. Some of the saints have such ravishing joys in affliction, that they had rather endure their sufferings than want their comforts. O how much kindness is in the cross? In the belly of this lion is an honeycomb. May not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, when God lines the yoke with comfort, and gives us honey at the end of the rod?

13. There is kindness in affliction, in that God doth curtail and shorten it. He will not let it lie on too long; 'I will not contend for ever, for the Spirit should fail before me.'⁸ God will give his people a writ of ease, and proclaim

a year of jubilee; the wicked may plough upon the backs of the saints, but God will cut their traces.⁹ The goldsmith will not let his gold lie any longer in the furnace than till it be purified. The wicked must drink a sea of wrath, but the godly have only a cup of affliction, and God will say, 'let this cup pass away.'¹⁰ Affliction may be compared to frost, it will break, and spring-flowers will come on; 'sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'¹¹ Affliction hath a sting, but withal a wing; sorrow shall fly away; this land-flood shall be dried up. If then there be so much kindness in the cross, God will cause a cessation of trouble: say then 'thy will be done.'^{*}

14. There is kindness in affliction, in that it is a means to make us happy: 'behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth.'¹² This seems strange to flesh and blood, that affliction should make one happy. When Moses saw the bush burning and not consumed, 'I will,' saith he, 'turn aside and see this great sight:'¹³ so here is a strange sight, a man afflicted, yet happy. The world counts them happy who can escape affliction, but happy is the man whom God correcteth.

Q. But how do afflictions contribute to our happiness?

1. As they are a means to bring us nearer to God? The loadstone of prosperity doth not draw us so near to God, as the cords of affliction; when the prodigal was pinched with want then saith he, 'I will arise and go to my father.'¹⁴ The deluge brought the dove to the ark: the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ.

2. Afflictions make us happy, as they are manuductions to glory. The storm drives the ship into the harbour: happy is that storm which drives the soul into the heavenly harbour. Is it not better to go through affliction to glory, than through pleasure to misery? Not that afflictions merit glory; no cross ever merited, but that which Christ endured; but they dispose and prepare us for glory. Think, O Christian, what affliction leads to; it leads to

⁹ Ps. 129. 4.¹⁰ Mat. 26. 39.¹¹ Is. 35. 10.¹² Job 5. 17.¹³ Ex. 3. 3.¹⁴ Lu. 15. 18.

* Because we willingly forget eternity, therefore this moment seems much in our eyes; but if we could look upon it aright, of how little concernment is it what be our condition here! If it were as prosperous as we could wish or imagine it is, but for a *season*. The rich man in the gospel talked of many years: but 'thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee,' was the longest period. The many years are quickly drawn to a very great abatement, and if full of pains and griefs, those do help to put an end to themselves, and hasten to it.—*Leighton on 1 Peter i. 6*

¹ Job 42. 10. ² Je. 30. 11. ³ Is. 27. 8. ⁴ 2 Co. 1. 4.
⁵ Ps. 119. 50. ⁶ Ps. 119. 54. ⁷ Ac. 16. 25. ⁸ Is. 57. 16.

paradise, where are rivers of pleasure always running; may not this make us cheerfully submit to God's will, and say, Lord, if there be so much kindness in affliction, if all thou doest is to make us happy, 'thy will be done!'

7th Consideration. It is God's ordinary course, to keep his people to a bitter diet-drink, and exercise them with great trials. Affliction is the beaten road all the saints have gone in; the lively stones in the spiritual building have been all hewn and polished; Christ's lily hath grown among the thorns; 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.'¹ It is too much for a Christian to have two heavens, that is more than Christ had. It hath been ever the lot of the saints to encounter with sore trials: both of the prophets; 'take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of suffering affliction:'² and of the apostles; Peter was crucified with his head downward, James beheaded by Herod, John banished into the isle of Patmos, the apostle Thomas thrust through with a spear, Matthias, who was chosen apostle in Judas's room, was stoned to death, Luke, the evangelist, hanged on an olive-tree. Those saints, of whom the world was not worthy, did pass under the rod.³ Christ's kingdom is 'the kingdom of the cross;' this is the way God hath always gone in: such as God intends to save from hell, yet he doth not save from the cross. The consideration of this should quiet our minds in affliction, and make us say, 'thy will be done.' Do we think God will alter his course of providence for us? why should we look for exemption from trouble, more than others? why should we think to tread only upon roses and violets, when prophets and apostles have marched through the briars to heaven?

8th Consideration. God hath done that for thee, Christian, which may make thee content to suffer any thing at his hand, and say, 'thy will be done.' (1.) He hath adopted thee for his child. David thought it no small honour to be the king's son-in-law.⁴ What an honour is it to derive thy pedigree from heaven, to be born of God? why then art thou troubled, and murmurest at every slight cross? As Jonadab said to Amnon, 'why art thou, being the king's son, lean?'⁵ so, why art thou, who art son or daughter to the king of heaven, troubled at these petty things? What! the king's son, and look lean! This may quiet thy spirit, and bring thy will to God's; he hath dignified thee with

honour, he hath made thee his son and heir, and will entail a kingdom on thee. (2.) God hath given thee Christ. Christ is a magazine or storehouse of all heavenly treasure, a pearl of price to enrich, a tree of life to quicken, he is the quintessence of all blessings: why then art thou discontented at thy worldly crosses? They cannot be so bitter as Christ is sweet. As Seneca said once to Polybius, 'Why dost thou complain of hard fortune, is not Cæsar thy friend?' so, is not Christ thy friend? He can never be poor who hath a mine of gold in his field: nor he who hath the unsearchable riches of Christ. Say then, Lord, 'thy will be done;' though I have my cross, yet I have Christ with it. The cross may make me weep, but Christ wipes off all tears.⁶ (3.) God hath given thee grace. Grace is the rich embroidery and workmanship of the Holy Ghost; it is the sacred unction.⁷ The graces are a chain of pearl to adorn, and beds of spices which make us a sweet odour to God; grace is a distinguishing blessing, Christ gave Judas his purse but not his Spirit. May not this quiet the heart in affliction, and make it say, 'thy will be done?' Lord, thou hast given me that jewel which thou bestowest only on the elect; grace is a seal of thy love, it is both food and cordial, it is an earnest of glory.

9th Consideration. When God intends the greatest mercy to any of his people low in affliction. God seems to go quite cross to sense and reason; when he intends to raise us highest, he brings us lowest. As Moses' hand, before it wrought miracles, was leprous; and Sarah's womb before it brought forth the son of the promise, was barren; God brings us low before he raiseth us, as water is at the lowest ebb before there is a spring-tide. (1.) It is true in a temporal sense. When God would bring Israel to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, he first leads them through a sea and wilderness. When God intended to advance Joseph to be the second man in the kingdom, he cast him first into prison, and the iron entered into his soul.⁸ God usually lets it be darkest before the morning-star of deliverance appears. (2.) It is true in a spiritual sense. When God intends to raise a soul to spiritual comfort, he first lays it low in desertion.⁹ As the limner lays his dark colour first, and then lays his gold colour on it, so God first lays the soul in the dark of desertion, and then he lays

¹ 2 Ti. 3. 12. ² Ja. 5. 10. ³ He. 11. 36.

⁴ 1 Sa. 18. 18.

⁵ 2 Sa. 13. 1.

⁶ Re. 7. 17. ⁷ 1 Jo. 2. 27. ⁸ Ps. 105. 18. ⁹ Is. 12. 1.

his golden colour of joy and consolation. May not this make us cheerfully submit, and say, 'thy will be done;' perhaps now God afflicts me, he is about to raise me, he intends me a greater mercy than I am aware of?

Consideration 10. The excellency of this frame of soul, to lie at God's feet and say, 'thy will be done.' (1.) A soul that is melted into God's will shows variety of grace. As the holy ointment was made up of several aromatic spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia,¹ so this sweet temper of soul, submission to God's will in affliction, hath in it a mixture of several graces; in particular, it is compounded of three graces, faith, love, humility. Faith believes God doth all in mercy, that affliction is to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace, that God corrects in love and faithfulness;² the belief of this, causeth submission of will to God. Love 'thinks no evil,'³ takes all God doth in the best sense; it hath good thoughts of God; this causeth submission, 'thy will be done.' Let the righteous God smite me, saith love, it shall be a kindness, yea, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head. Humility looks on sin, and how it hath provoked God; he saith not his afflictions are great, but his sins are great; this makes him lie at God's feet and say, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.'⁴ Thus a submissive frame of heart is full of grace, it is compounded of several graces; it pleaseth God to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised; he saith of such a Christian, as David of Goliath's sword, 'none like that, give it me.'⁵ (2.) He who puts his *fiat* and *placet* to God's will, and saith, 'thy will be done,' shows not only variety of grace, but strength of grace. It argues much strength in the body, to be able to endure hard weather, yet not to be altered by it: so to endure hard trials, yet not faint or fret, shows more than ordinary strength of grace. You that can say you have brought your wills to God's; God's will and yours agree, as the copy and the original; let me assure you, you have outstript many Christians, who perhaps shine in a higher orb of knowledge than you. To be content to be at God's disposal, to be any thing that God will have us, shows a noble heroic soul. It is reported of the eagle, it is not like other fowls; they, when they are hungry, make a noise, the ravens cry for food, but the eagle is never heard to make a noise, though it wants meat; and it

is from the nobleness and greatness of its spirit; the eagle is above other fowls, and hath a spirit suitable to its nature; so it is an argument of a holy gallantry and magnitude of spirit, that whatsoever cross providences befall a Christian, he doth not cry and whine as others, but is silent, and lies quietly at God's feet: there is much strength of grace in such a soul, nay, the height of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much to say, 'Lord, thy will be done;' but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses and trials, now to say, 'thy will be done,' is a glorious thing indeed, and prepares for the garland of honour.*

Consideration 11. Persons are usually better in adversity than in prosperity, therefore stoop to God's will. A prosperous condition is not always so safe; it is true, it is more pleasing to the palate, and every one desires to get on the warm side of the hedge, where the sun of prosperity shines, but it is not always best; in a prosperous estate, there is more burden: many look at the shining and glittering of prosperity, but not at the burden. (1.) The burden of care, therefore Christ calls riches, "cares."⁶ A rose hath its prickles, so have riches; we think them happy that flourish in their silks and cloth of gold, but we see not the troubles and cares that attend them. A shoe may have silver lace on it, yet pinch the foot. Many a man that goes to his day-labour, lives a more contented life than he that hath his

⁶ Lu. 8. 14.

* Satan, and his temptations and suggestions, work together for good to God's children; for 'God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.' He would never have let the serpent bite their heel, if he had not designed to break his head, and to bruise him under their feet.—All their wants and weaknesses work for their good. From their wants he takes occasion to magnify his sufficiency; and from their weakness, to magnify his power; my grace shall be sufficient for thee, and my strength shall be perfected in thy weakness; most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' All their inward trials work for their good, even those that issue from the Lord's hiding and withdrawing himself; whether, in point of grace, withholding the influences of his Spirit; or in point of comfort, denying the light of his countenance. He frowns a little, that his after-smiles may do them the more good when they get them. 'Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee.' All their outward trials and afflictions work for their good; whether those that are punitive, for correcting their faults; or those that are probative, for trying their graces. 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted.' It is as good for a child of God to be punished, as it is for a young tree to be pruned: the pressure of affliction may press out the fragrant smell of their graces.—All their sufferings for the cause of Christ, work for their good; 'if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together.'—All things in the world, good or bad; all things past, present, and to come; the past decrees, the present dispensations, the future accomplishment of the purposes of God; all things in heaven, earth, and hell; all the mercies of heaven, all the malignities of earth, and all the malice of devils, shall work for their good.—*Ralph Erskine's Beauties*, v. 2. p. 517.

¹ Ex. 30. 23. ² Ps. 119. 75. ³ 1 Co. 13. 5.

⁴ Mi. 7. 9. ⁵ 1 Sa. 21. 9.

thousands *per annum*. Disquieting care is the evil spirit that haunts the rich man; when his chests are full of gold, his heart is full of care how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten; he is sometimes full of care whom he shall leave it to. A large estate, like a long trailing garment, is oft more troublesome than useful. (2.) In a prosperous estate there is the burden of account. Such as are in high places have a far greater account to give to God than others; unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.¹ The more golden talents any are intrusted with, the more they have to answer for; the more their revenues, the more their reckonings. God will say, 'I gave you a great estate, what have you done with it? how have you employed it for my glory?' I have read of Philip king of Spain, when he was to die, he said, 'O that I had never been a king! O that I had lived a private solitary life! Here is all the fruit of my kingdom, it hath made my accounts heavier.' So then, may not this quiet our hearts in a low adverse condition, and make us say, 'Lord, thy will be done?' as thou hast given me a less portion of worldly things, so I have a less burden of care, and a less burden of account. (3.) A prosperous condition hath more danger in it. Such as are on the top of the pinnacle of honour, are in more danger of falling, they are subject to many temptations: their table is oft a snare. Heliogabalus made ponds of sweet water to bathe in; millions were drowned in the sweet waters of pleasure. A great sail overturns the vessel; how many, by having too great sails of prosperity, have had their souls overturned? It must be a strong head that bears heady wine; he had need have much wisdom and grace that knows how to bear an high condition. It is hard to carry a full cup without spilling, and a full estate without sinning. Agur feared, if he were full, he should deny God and say, 'who is the Lord.'² Prosperity breeds pride: the children of Korah were in a higher estate than the rest of the Levites, they were employed in the tabernacle about the most holy things of all;³ they had the first lot;⁴ but as they were lifted up above others of the Levites in honour, so in pride.⁵ In the Thames, when the tide riseth higher, the boat riseth higher: so, when the tide of an estate riseth higher, many men's hearts rise higher in pride. Prosperity breeds security. Samson

fell asleep in Delilah's lap, so do men in the lap of ease and plenty: the world's golden sands are quick sands. How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven!⁶ The consideration of this should make us submit to God in adversity, and say, 'thy will be done.' God sees what is best for us; if we have less estate, we are in less danger; if we want the honours of others, so we want their temptations.

12th Consideration. The having of our wills melted into God's is a good sign that the present affliction is sanctified: then an affliction is sanctified, when it attains the end for which it was sent. The end why God sends affliction, is to calm the spirit, to subdue the will and bring it to God's will; when this is done, affliction hath attained the end for which it came; it is sanctified, and it will not be long ere it be removed. When the sore is healed, the smarting plaster is taken off.

13th Consideration. How unworthy it is of a Christian to be froward and unsubmissive, and not bring his will to God's. (1.) It is below the spirit of a Christian. The spirit of a Christian is dove-like, it is meek and sedate, willing to be at God's disposal; 'not my will, but thy will be done.'⁷ A Christian spirit is not fretful, but humble; not craving, but contented. See the picture of a Christian spirit in St Paul; 'I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.'⁸ Paul could be either higher or lower, as God saw good; he could sail with any wind of providence, either a prosperous or boisterous gale, his will was melted into God's will: now to be of a cross spirit that cannot submit to God's will, is unworthy of the spirit of a Christian; it is like the bird, that, because he is pent up in the cage, and cannot fly in the open air, beats himself against the cage. (2.) A froward unsubmissive frame, that cannot submit to God's will is unworthy of a Christian's profession; he professeth to live by faith, yet repines at his condition: 'faith lives not by bread alone,' it feeds on promises, it makes future glory present; it sees all in God: when the fig-tree doth not blossom, faith can joy in the God of its salvation.⁹ Now, to be troubled at our present estate, because low and mean, shows weak faith. Sure that is a weak faith, or no faith, which must have crutches to support it. O be ashamed to call thyself believer, if thou canst not trust God, and acquiesce in his will, in the deficiency of outward comforts!

¹ Lu. 12. 48. ² Pr. 30. 9. ³ Nu. 4. 4.
⁴ Jo. 21. 10. ⁵ Nu. 16. 3.

⁶ Lu. 18. 24. ⁷ Lu. 22. 42. ⁸ Ph. 4. 12. ⁹ Ha. 3. 17, 18.

(3.) To be of a froward unsubmitive spirit, that cannot surrender its will unto God, is unworthy of the high dignities God hath put upon a Christian. He is a rich heir; he is exalted above all creatures that ever God made, except the angels; yea, in some sense, as his nature is joined in an hypostatical union to the divine nature, so he is above the angels. O then, how is it below his dignity, for want of a few earthly comforts, to be froward, and ready to quarrel with the Deity! Is it not unworthy of a king's son, because he may not pluck such a flower, to be discontented and rebel against his royal father? A Christian is espoused to Jesus Christ. What! to be married to Christ, yet froward and unsubmitive? hast not thou enough in him? As Elkanah said to Hannah, 'am not I better to thee than ten sons?'¹ is not Christ better than a thousand worldly comforts? 'all good must be found in him who is supremely good.' It is a disparagement to Christ that his spouse should be froward when she is matched into the crown of heaven. (4.) To be of a froward unsubmitive spirit, is unsuitable to the prayers of a Christian; he prays, 'thy will be done;' it is the will of God he should meet with such troubles, whether sickness, loss of estate, crosses in children, God hath decreed, and ordered it; why then is there not submission? why are we discontented at that which we pray for? It is a saying of Latimer, speaking of Peter, who denied his master, 'Peter,' saith he, 'forgot his prayer, for that was, hallowed be thy name;' so, oft we forget our prayers, nay, contradict them; for we pray 'thy will be done.' Now, if unsubmitiveness to God be so unworthy of a Christian, should not we labour to bring our wills to God's, and say, Lord, let me not disparage religion, let me do nothing unworthy of a Christian.

14th Consideration. Frowardness and unsubmitiveness of will to God, is very sinful. (1.) It is sinful in its nature; to murmur when God crosseth us in our will, shows much ungodliness. The apostle Jude speaks of ungodly ones;² and that we may better know who these are, he sets a mark upon them; 'these are murmurers.'³ Some think they are not so ungodly as others, because they do not swear, nor get drunk, but you may be ungodly in murmuring; there are not only ungodly drunkards, but ungodly murmurers; nay, this is the height of ungodliness, namely, rebellion. Korah and his company

murmured against God, and see how the Lord interprets this; 'bring Aaron's rod to be kept for a token against the rebels;'⁴ to be a murmurer, and a rebel, is, in God's account, all one. 'This is the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel strove with the Lord:'⁵ how did they strive with God? because they murmured at his providence.⁶ What! wilt thou be a rebel against God? It is a shame for a servant to strive with his master, but what is it for a creature to strive with its Maker.

(2.) To quarrel with God's providence, and be unsubmitive to his will, is sinful in the spring and cause; it ariseth from pride. It was Satan's temptation, 'ye shall be as gods.'⁷ A proud person makes a god of himself; he disdains to have his will crossed; he thinks himself better than others, therefore he finds fault with God's wisdom, that he is not above others.

(3.) Quarrelsomeness and unsubmitiveness to God's will is sinful in the concomitants of it. It is joined with sinful risings of the heart. Evil thoughts arise; we think hardly of God, as if he had done us wrong, or, as if we had deserved better at his hands. Passions begin to arise; the heart secretly frets against God. Jonah was crossed in his will, and passion began to boil in him; 'he was very angry.'⁸ Jonah's spirit, as well as the sea, wrought, and was tempestuous. Unsubmitiveness of will is joined with unthankfulness, because in some one thing we are afflicted, we forget all the mercies we have; we deal with God, just as the widow of Sarepta did with the prophet, the prophet Elijah had been a means to keep her alive in the famine, but as soon as her child dies she quarrels with the prophet; 'O thou man of God, art thou come to slay my son?'⁹ So do we deal with God; we can be content to receive blessings at his hand, but as soon as he doth, in the least thing, cross us in our will, we grow touchy, and are ready in a passion to fly out against him: thus God loseth all his mercies, and is not this high ingratitude? (4.) Frowardness and unsubmitiveness to God's will, is evil in the effects. It unfits for duty: it is bad sailing in a storm, and it is ill praying when the heart is stormy and unquiet; it is well if such prayers do not suffer shipwreck. Unsubmitiveness of spirit sometimes unfits for the use of reason. Jonah was discontented, because he had not his will; God withered the gourd, and his heart fretted against God; and in the midst of his passion,

¹ 1 Sa. 1. 8.² Jude 15.³ Jude 16.⁴ Nu. 17. 10.⁵ Nu. 20. 13.⁶ Nu. 20. 3.⁷ Ge. 3. 5.⁸ Jon. 4. 1.⁹ 1 Ki. 17. 18.

he spake no better than nonsense and blasphemy; 'I do well to be angry, even unto death'.¹ Sure he did not know well what he said. What! to be angry with God, and die for anger? He speaks as if he had lost the use of his reason. Thus unsubmitiveness of will is sinful in its nature, causes, concomitants, effects; may not this martyr our wills, and bring them to God in every thing, making us say, 'thy will be done.'

15th Consideration. Unsubmitiveness to God's will is very imprudent, we get nothing by it, it doth not ease us of our burden, but rather makes it heavier. The more the child struggles with the parent, the more it is beaten; when we struggle with God, and will not submit to his will, we get nothing but more blows. Instead of having the cords of affliction loosened, we make God tie them the straiter. Let us then submit, and say, 'Lord, thy will be done.' Why should I spin out my own trouble by impatience and make my cross heavier? What got Israel by their frowardness? they were within eleven days' journey of Canaan, they fell a murmuring, and God leads them a march of forty years longer in the wilderness.

16th Consideration. The mischief of being unsubmitive to God's will in affliction, it lays a man open to many temptations. When the heart frets against God by discontent, there's good fishing for Satan in these troubled waters. He usually puts discontented persons upon indirect means. Job's wife fretted, so far was she from holy submission, and she presently puts her husband upon cursing of God; 'curse God and die.'² What is the reason why some have turned witches, and given themselves to the devil, but out of envy and discontent, because they have not had their will. Others being under a temptation of poverty, and not having their wills in living at such a high rate as others, have laid violent hands upon themselves. O the temptations that men of discontented spirits are exposed to! Here, saith Satan, is good fishing for me.

17th Consideration. How far unsubmitiveness of spirit is from that temper of soul which God requires in affliction. God would have us in patience possess our souls.³ The Greek word for *patience*, signifies to bear up under a burden without fainting or fretting; but to be froward in affliction, and quarrel with God's will, where is this Christian patience? God

would have us rejoice in affliction; 'count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,'⁴ that is, afflictions; count it joy, be as birds that sing in winter; 'ye received the word in much affliction with joy.'⁵ Paul could leap in his fetters, and sing in the stocks. How far is a discontented soul from this frame? He is far from rejoicing in affliction that hath not learned to submit.

18th Consideration. What is it makes the difference between a godly man, and an ungodly man in affliction, but only this, the godly man submits to God's will, the ungodly man will not submit: a wicked man frets and fumes, and is like a wild bull in a net. He in affliction blasphemes God; 'men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God.'⁶ Put a stone in the fire, and it flies in your face; stony hearts fly in God's face. A stuff that is rotten, the more it is rubbed, the more it frets and tears. When God afflicts the sinner, he tears himself in anger, but a godly man is sweetly submissive to God's will; this is his speech, 'shall not I drink the cup which my Father hath given me.' Spices, when they are bruised, send out a sweet fragrant smell: when God bruise his saints, they send out the sweet perfume of patience. Servulus, an holy man, was long afflicted with the palsy, yet this was his ordinary speech, 'let God be praised: O let us say, 'thy will be done.' Let us bear that patiently which God inflicts justly, else how do we show our grace? what difference is there between us and the wicked in affliction?

19th Consideration. Not to submit to God's providential will, is highly provoking to God. Can we anger God more than by quarrelling with him, and not let him have his will? Kings do not love to have their wills opposed, though they may be unjust: how ill doth God take it when we will be disputing against his righteous will? It is a sin God cannot bear; 'how long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me?'⁷ May not God justly say thus, how long shall I bear with this wicked person, who, when any thing falls out cross, murmurs against me? 'say unto them, as truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in my ears, so will I do unto you.'⁸ God swears against a murmurer, 'as I live;' and what will God do as he lives? 'your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness.'⁹ You see how provoking a discontented quarrelsome spirit is to God, it

¹ Jon. 4. 9.² Job 2. 9.³ Lu. 21. 19.⁴ Ja. 1. 2.⁵ 1 Th. 1. 6.⁶ Ac. 16. 23.⁷ Re. 16. 9.⁸ Nu. 14. 27.⁹ Nu. 14. 28.¹⁰ Nu. 11. 29.

may cost men their lives, nay their souls. God sent fiery serpents among the people for their murmuring;¹ he may send worse than fiery serpents, he may send hell fire.

20th Consideration. How much doth God bear at our hand, and shall not we be content to bear something at his hand? It would tire the patience of the angels to bear with us one day; 'the Lord is long-suffering towards us.'² How oft do we offend in our eye by envious impure glances? in our tongues by rash censuring? but God passeth by many injuries, he bears with us. Should the Lord punish us every time we offend, he might draw his sword every day. Shall God bear so much at our hands, and can we bear with nothing at his hand? Shall God be patient with us, and we impatient with him? Shall he be meek, and we murmur? Shall he endure our sins, and shall not we endure his strokes? Oh let us say, 'thy will be done.' Lord, thou hast been the greatest sufferer, thou hast borne more from me, than I can from thee.

21st Consideration. Submitting our wills to God in affliction disappoints Satan of his hope, and quite spoils his design. The devil's end is in all our afflictions to make us sin. The reason why Satan did smite Job in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind, and put him into a passion; he hoped that Job would have been discontented, and in a fit of anger not only have cursed his birth-day, but curse his God. But Job lying at God's feet, and blessing him in affliction, disappointed Satan of his hope, and quite spoiled his plot. Had Job murmured he had pleased Satan; had he fallen into a heat, and sparks of his anger flown about, the devil had warmed himself at this fire of Job's passion; but Job quietly submitted and blessed God; here Satan's design was frustrated, and he missed of his intent. The devil hath oft deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by quiet submission to God in all things, and saying, 'thy will be done.'

22d Consideration. It may rock our hearts quiet in affliction, to consider, that to the godly the nature of affliction is quite changed; to a wicked man, it is a curse, the rod is turned into a serpent; affliction to him is but an effect of God's displeasure; the beginning of sorrow; but the nature of affliction is quite changed to a believer, it is by divine chemistry turned into a blessing; it is like poison corrected, which

becomes a medicine; it is a love token, a badge of adoption, a preparatory to glory; should not this make us say, 'thy will be done?' The poison of the affliction is gone; it is not hurtful, but healing. This hath made the saints not only patient in affliction, but to sound forth thankfulness. As bells, when they have been cast in the fire, do afterwards make a sweeter sound, so the godly, after they have been cast into the fire of affliction, have sounded forth God's praise; 'it is good for me that I have been afflicted';³ 'blessed be the name of the Lord.'⁴

23d Consideration. To make us submit our will to God's in affliction, is, to think how many good things we receive from God, and shall not we be content to receive some evil? 'shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?'⁵ In the Hebrew, shall we receive good from God, and not evil? This may make us say, 'thy will be done.' How many blessings have we received at the hand of God's bounty? We have been bemaclred with mercy. What sparing, preventing, delivering mercy have we had? The honeycomb of mercy hath continually dropped upon us; his mercies are 'new every morning.'⁶ Mercy comes in as constantly as the tide: nay, how many tides of mercies do we see in one day. We never feed, but mercy carves every bit to us; we never drink, but in the golden cup of mercy; we never go abroad, but mercy sets a guard of angels about us; we never lie down in bed, but mercy draws the curtains of protection close about us: now, shall we receive so many good things at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Our mercies far outweigh our afflictions; for one affliction we have a thousand mercies, O then let us submit to God, and say, 'thy will be done.' The sea of God's mercy should swallow up a few drops of affliction.

24th Consideration. To bring our wills to God in affliction doth much honour the gospel; an unsubmitive Christian reproacheth religion, as if it were not able to subdue an unruly spirit. It is weak physic, which cannot purge out ill humours; and surely it is a weak gospel, if it cannot master our discontent, and martyr our wills. Unsubmitiveness is a reproach, but a cheerful resignation of our will to God sets a crown of honour upon the head of religion, it shows the power of the gospel, which can charm

¹ 1 Co. 10. 10.² 2 Pe. 3. 9.³ Ps. 119. 71. ⁴ Job 1. 21. ⁵ Job 2. 10. ⁶ La. 3. 23.

down the passions, and melt the will into God's will; therefore in scripture submissive patience is brought in as an adorning grace; 'here is the patience of the saints.'

25th Consideration, the example of our Lord Jesus, how flexible and submissive was he to his Father! He who taught us this prayer 'thy will be done,' had learned it himself; Christ's will was perfectly tuned to his Father's will; it was the will of his Father that he should die for our sins, and he 'endured the cross.'² It was a painful, shameful, cursed death; he suffered the very pains of hell equivalently, yet he willingly submitted; 'he opened not his mouth.'³ He opened his side when the blood ran out, but he opened not his mouth in repining; his will was resolved into the will of his Father; 'the cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?'⁴ Now the more our wills are subject to God's will in affliction, the nearer we come to Christ our pattern; is it not our prayer we may be like Christ? By holy submission we imitate him; his will was melted into his Father's will.

26th Consideration. To submit our wills to God is the way to have our will; every one would be glad to have his will; the way to have our will is to resign it; God deals with us as we do with froward children; while we fret and quarrel, God will give us nothing, but when we are submissive and say, 'thy will be done,' now God carves out mercy to us. The way to have our will is to submit it. David brought his will to God's; 'here am I, let him do to me as seems good to him.'⁵ And after he resigned his will he had his will: God brought him back to the ark and settled him again in his throne.⁶ Many a parent that hath had a dear child sick, when he could bring his will to God to part with it, God hath given him the life of his child; there is nothing lost by referring our will to God, the Lord takes it kindly from us, and it is the only way to have our will.

27th and last consideration. We may the more cheerfully surrender our souls to God when we die, when we have surrendered our will to God while we live. Our blessed Saviour had all along submitted his will to God; there was but one will between God the Father, and Christ. Now Christ in his lifetime having given up his will to his Father, at death he cheerfully gives up his soul to him; 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.'⁷ You

that resign up your wills to God, may at the hour of death comfortably bequeath your souls to him.

2d means to bring our will to God in affliction is to study the will of God.

1. It is a sovereign will; he hath a supreme right and dominion over his creatures, to dispose of them as he pleaseth; a man may do with his own as he lists; 'is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?'⁸ A man may cut his own timber as he will. God's sovereignty may cause submission, he may do with us as he sees good. God is not accountable to any creature for what he doth; 'he giveth not account of any of his matters.'⁹ Who shall call God to account? who is higher than the highest?¹⁰ what man or angel dare summon God to his bar? 'he giveth not account of any of his matters.' God will take an account of our carriage towards him, but he will give no account of his carriage towards us. God hath an absolute jurisdiction over us; the remembrance of this, God's will is a sovereign will, to do with us what he pleases, may silence all discontentments, and charm down all unruly passions; we are not to dispute but to submit.

2. God's will is a wise will, he knows what is conducive to the good of his people, therefore submit; 'the Lord is a God of judgment,'¹¹ that is, he is able to judge what is best for us therefore rest in his wisdom, and acquiesce in his will. We rest in the wisdom of a physician, we are content he should scarify and let us blood, because he is judicious, and knows what is most conducive to our health; if the pilot be skilful, the passenger saith, 'let him alone, he knows best how to steer the ship;' and shall we not rest in God's wisdom? Did we but study how wisely God steers all occurrences, and how he often brings us to heaven by a cross wind, it would much quiet our spirits, and make us say, 'thy will be done.' God's will is guided by wisdom; should God sometimes let us have our will, we would undo ourselves; did he let us carve for ourselves, we should choose the worst piece; Lot chose Sodom because it was well-watered, and was as the garden of the Lord, but God rained fire upon it out of heaven.¹²

3. God's will is a just will; 'shall not the judge of all the earth do right?'¹³ God's will is the rule of justice; the wills of men are corrupt, therefore unfit to give law; but God's will is a holy and unerring will, which may cause

¹ Re. 14. 12. ² He. 12. 2. ³ Is. 53. 7. ⁴ Jno. 18. 11.
⁵ 2 Sa. 15. 26. ⁶ 2 Sa. 19. ⁷ Lu. 23. 46.

⁸ Mat. 90. 15. ⁹ Job 33. 13. ¹⁰ Ec. 5. 8.
¹¹ Is. 30. 18. ¹² Ge. 19. 21. ¹³ Ge. 18. 25.

submission.¹ God may cross, but he cannot wrong us; severe he may be, not unjust; therefore we must strike sail, and say, 'thy will be done.'

4. God's will is a good and gracious will, it promotes our interest; if it be God's will to afflict us, he shall make us say at last, it was good for us that we were afflicted. God's flail shall only thrash off our husks. That which is against our will shall not be against our profit; study what a good will God's is, and we will say, 'thy will be done.'

5. God's will is an irresistible will; we may oppose it, but we cannot hinder it; the rising of the wave cannot stop the ship when it is in full sail, so the rising up of our will against God cannot stop the execution of his will: 'who hath resisted his will?'² Who can stay the chariot of the sun in its full career? Who can hinder the progress of God's will? Therefore it is in vain to contest with God, his will shall take place; there is no way to overcome God, but by lying at his feet.

3d means to submission to God in affliction is, get a gracious heart; all the rules and helps in the world will do but little good, till grace be infused; the bowl must have a good bias, or it will not run according to our desire, so till God put a new bias of grace into the soul, which inclines the will, it never submits to God; grace renews the will, and it must be renewed before it be subdued; grace teacheth self-denial, and we can never submit our will till we deny it.

4th means. Let us labour to have our covenant-interest cleared, to know that God is our God; 'this God is our God.' He whose faith does flourish in assurance, that can say, God is his, will say, 'thy will be done.' A wicked man may say, God hath laid this affliction upon me, and I cannot help it; but a believer saith, my God hath done it, and I will submit to it. He who can call God his, knows God loves him as he loves Christ, and designs his salvation; therefore he will, with St Paul, take pleasure in reproaches,³ and in every adverse providence yield to God, as the wax to the impression of the seal.

5th means to submission to God in affliction, is to get an humble spirit; a proud man will never stoop to God, he will rather break than bend; but when the heart is humble, the will is pliable. What a vast difference was there between

Pharaoh and Eli? Pharaoh cries out 'who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?'⁴ but Eli saith, 'it is the Lord, let him do what seems good in his sight.'⁵ See the difference between a heart that is swelled with pride, and that which is ballasted with humility; Pharaoh saith, 'who is the Lord?' Eli, 'it is the Lord.' A humble soul hath a deep sense of sin, he sees how he hath provoked God, he wonders he is not in hell; therefore, whatever God inflicts, he knows it is less than his iniquities deserve: this makes him say, 'Lord, thy will be done.' O get into a humble posture, the will is never flexible till the heart be humble!

6th means. Get your hearts loosened from things below; be crucified to the world. Whence is children's frowardness, but when you take away their play-things? When we love the world, and God takes away these things from us, then we grow froward and unsubmitive to God's will. Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd; and when God smote it, he grew froward, and because God had killed his gourd, kill me too, saith he.⁶ He who is a lover of the world, can never pray this prayer heartily, 'thy will be done;' his heart boils in anger against God; and when the world is gone, his patience is gone too. Get mortified affections to these sublunary things.

7th means for submission to God's will, is to get some good persuasion your sin is pardoned: 'smite, Lord, smite where thou wilt,' said Luther, 'because my sins are pardoned.' Pardon of sin is a crowning blessing; hath God forgiven my sin, I will bear any thing, I will not murmur but admire; I will not complain of the burden of affliction, but bless God for removing the burden of sin; the pardoned soul saith this prayer heartily, 'thy will be done.' Lord, use thy pruning-knife, so long as thou wilt not come with thy bloody axe to hew me down.

8th means. If we would have our wills submit to God, let us not look so much on the dark side of the cloud as the light side; that is, let us not look so much on the smart of affliction, as the good of affliction. It is bad to pore all on the smart, as it is bad for sore eyes to look too much on the fire; but we should look on the good of affliction; Samson did not only look on the lion's carcass, but on the honeycomb within it; 'he turned to see the carcass of the lion, and behold, there was honey in the carcass.'⁷ Affliction is the frightful lion, but

¹ Ps. 97 ² Ro. 9. 19. ³ Ps. 43. 14. ⁴ 2 Cor. 12. 10.

⁵ Ex. 5. 2. ⁶ 1 Sa. 3. 18. ⁷ Jonah 4. 8. ⁸ Ju. 14. 9.

see what honey there is in it; affliction humbles, purifies, fills us with the consolations of God; here is honey in the belly of the lion; could we but look upon the benefit of affliction, stubbornness would be turned into submissiveness, and we should say, 'thy will be done.'

9th means. Pray to God that he would calm our spirits, and conquer our wills. It is no easy thing to submit to God in affliction, there will be risings of the heart; therefore, let us pray that what God inflicts righteously, we may bear patiently. Prayer is the best spell or charm against impatience; prayer doth to the heart as Christ did to the sea, when it was tempestuous, he rebuked the wind, and there was a great calm; so, when the passions are up, and the will is apt to mutiny against God, prayer makes a gracious calm in the soul; prayer doth to the heart as the sponge doth to the cannon, when hot, cools it.

10th means. If we would submit to God's will in affliction, let us make a good interpretation of God's dealings, take all God doth in the best sense. We are apt to misconstrue God's dealings, and put a bad interpretation upon them, as Israel; 'ye have brought the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we should die there.' So God hath

brought this affliction upon us, because he hates us, and intends to destroy us; and such hard thoughts of God cause sullenness and stubbornness. O let us make a fair and candid interpretation of providence. Doth God afflict us? say thus, perhaps he intends us mercy in this; he will try us whether we love him in afflictions; he is about to mortify some sin, or exercise some grace; he smites the body that he may save the soul. Could we put such a good meaning upon God's dealings, we should say, 'thy will be done.' 'Let the righteous God smite me, and it shall be a kindness, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.'

11th and last means. If you would submit to God in affliction, believe that the present condition is the best for you. We are not competent judges; we fancy it is best to have ease and plenty, and have the rock pour out rivers of oil, but God sees affliction best; he sees our souls thrive best upon the bare common; the fall of the leaf is the spring of our grace. Could we believe the present condition is best which God carves out to us, the quarrel would soon be at an end, and we should sit down satisfied with what God doth, and say, 'thy will be done.' So much for this third petition.

OF THE FOURTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MAT. 6. 11. *Give us this day our daily bread.*

IN this petition there are two things observable: I. The order. II. The matter.

I. The order. First we pray 'hallowed be thy name,' before, 'give us this day our daily bread.' Hence we learn, that the glory of God ought to be preferred before our personal concerns. First we pray, 'hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done,' before we pray 'give us this day our daily bread.' God's glory ought to weigh down all before it; it must be preferred before our dearest concerns. Christ preferred his Father's glory before his own glory as he was man; 'I honour my Father, I seek not my own glory.'² God's glory is that which is most dear to him, it is the apple of his eye; all his riches lie here. As Micah said, 'what have I more?'³ so I may say of God's glory, what hath he more? God's glory is the most orient pearl of his crown, which he will not part with; 'my glory will I not give to another.'⁴

God's glory is more worth than heaven, more worth than the salvation of all men's souls; better kingdoms be demolished, better men and angels be annihilated, than God lose any part of his glory. First we pray that God's name may be hallowed and glorified before we pray, 'give us our daily bread.' We are to prefer God's glory before our nearest concerns; before there can be a preferring God's glory before our private concerns, there must be a new birth wrought; the natural man seeks his own secular interest before God's glory; 'he is of the earth, earthly.'⁶ Let him have peace and trading, let the rock pour out rivers of oil,⁷ and let God's glory go which way it will, he minds it not. A worm cannot fly and sing as a lark: a natural man, whose heart creeps upon the earth, cannot admire God, or advance his glory, as a man elevated by grace doth.

USE. Of trial. Do we prefer God's glory

¹ Nu. 20. 4. ² Jno. 8. 49, 50. ³ Ju. 18. 21. ⁴ Is. 42. 8.

⁶ Ps. 141. 5.

⁶ Jno. 3. 31.

⁷ Job 29. 6.

before our private concerns? Doth God's glory take place? 'He loves thee not who loves any thing along with thee, unless it be for thy sake.'

AUG. 1st, Do we prefer God's glory before our own credit? 'Character keeps equal pace with the life.' Credit is a jewel highly valued; like precious ointment, it casts a fragrant smell; but God's glory must be dearer than credit or applause; we must be willing to have our credit trampled upon, if God's glory may be raised higher.

The apostles rejoiced 'that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name;' that they were graced so far as to be disgraced for Christ.

2d, Do we prefer God's glory before our relations? Relations are dear, they are of our own flesh and bones; but God's glory must be dearer, 'if any man come after me, and hate not father and mother, he cannot be my disciple.'

Here hatred to our friends, is piety to God. 'If my friends,' saith Jerome, 'should persuade me to deny Christ, if my wife should hang about my neck, if my mother should show me her breasts that gave me suck, I would trample upon all, and flee to Christ.'

3d, We must prefer God's glory before estate; gold is but shining dust, God's glory must weigh heavier. If it come to this, I cannot keep my place of profit, but God's glory will be eclipsed; here I must rather suffer in my estate, than God's glory should suffer.

4th, We must prefer God's glory before our life; 'they loved not their own lives to the death.' Ignatius called his fetters his spiritual jewels, he wore them as a chain of pearl. Gordius the martyr said, 'it is to my loss if you bate me any thing of my sufferings.'

This argues grace crescent, and elevated in a high degree. Who but a soul inflamed in love to God, can set God highest on the throne, and prefer him above all private concerns?

II. The second thing in the petition is the matter of it: 'give us this day our daily bread.'

Ac. 5. 41. Lu. 14. 26. He. 10. 34. Re. 12. 11.

* The word translated *bread*, is used both in Greek and in Hebrew, in its proper signification; but it is also put, by a figure, for the whole of our temporal provision, because bread is called, in scripture, the staff of life; and among the eastern nations was a principal article of food. It is altogether fanciful to say, what you have no doubt heard, that the people of God should be content if they have only bread and water, because these only are contained in the promise, 'his bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.' Undoubtedly they should be pleased with the scantiest portion which may be assigned to them; but they have better reasons for contentment than this or any similar promise. The interpretation may be called pious, but it is entitled to no other praise, and betrays ignorance of the rules according to which scripture should be explained.

The sum of this petition is, that God would give us such a competency in these outward things as he sees most excellent for us. It is much like that prayer of Agur, 'feed me with food convenient for me' give me a *viaticum*, a bait by the way, enough to bear my charges till I come to heaven, and it sufficeth. Let me explain the words, 'give us this day our daily bread.' Give: hence note, that the good things of this life are the gifts of God: he is the donor of all our blessings. 'Give us:' not only faith, but food is the gift of God; not only daily grace is from God, but 'daily bread;' every good thing comes from God; 'every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.' Wisdom is the gift of God; 'his God doth instruct him to discretion.' Riches are the gift of God; 'I will give thee riches.' Peace is the gift of God; 'he maketh peace in thy borders.' Health, which is the cream of life, is the gift of God; 'I will restore health to thee.' Rain is the gift of God; 'who giveth rain on the earth.' All comes from God; he makes the corn to grow, and the herbs to flourish.

USE 1. See our own poverty and indigence: we live all upon alms, and upon free gifts; 'give us this day.' All we have is from the hand of God's royal bounty; we have nothing but what God gives us out of his storehouse; we cannot have one bit of bread, but from God. The devil persuaded our first parents, that by disobeying God, they should 'be as gods;' but we may now see what goodly gods we are, that we have not a bit of bread to put in our mouths, unless God give it us; here is an humbling consideration.

2d. Is all a gift? then we are to seek every mercy from God by prayer; 'give us this day.' The tree of mercy will not drop its fruit, unless shaken by the hand of prayer. Whatever we have, if it do not come in the way of prayer, it doth not come in the way of love; it is given, as Israel's quails, in anger. If every thing be a gift, we do not deserve it, we are not fit for it unless we ask for this alms. And must we go to God for every mercy? How wicked are they, who instead of going to God for food

Pr. 30. 8. Ja. 1. 17. Is. 28. 26. 2 Ch. 1. 12. Ps. 147. 14. Je. 30. 17. Job 5. 10. Ge. 3. 5.

Bread stands as a part for the whole, and denotes all the necessities of life; and our church gives a more rational view of the petition, when it represents it as teaching us, to ask not a bare subsistence, but 'a competent portion.'—*Dick's Lectures*, v. 4. p. 289

when they want, they go to the devil; they make a compact with him; and if he will help them to a livelihood, they will give him their souls. Better starve, than go to the devil for provender. I wish there be none in our age guilty of this, who, when they are in want, use indirect means for a livelihood; they consult with witches, who are the devil's oracles; the end of these will be fearful, as that of Saul was, whom the Lord is said to have killed, because he asked counsel at a familiar spirit.

3d. If all be a gift, then it is not a debt; we cannot say to God, as that creditor said, 'pay me that thou owest.' Who can make God a debtor, or do any act that is obliging and meritorious? Whatever we receive from God is a gift; we can give nothing to God but what he hath given to us; 'all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.'² David and his people offered to the building of God's house gold and silver, but they offered nothing but what God had given them; 'of thine own have we given thee.' If we love God, God it is that hath given us an heart to love him; if we praise him, he both gives us the organ of the tongue, and puts it in tune; if we give alms to others, God hath given alms to us first, so that we may say, 'we offer, O Lord, of thine own to thee.' Is all of gift, how absurd then is the doctrine of merit? That was a proud speech of the friar, that said, 'give me, Lord, eternal life which thou owest me.' We cannot deserve a bit of bread, much less a crown of glory. If all be a gift, then merit is exploded and shut out of doors.

4th. If all be a gift, 'give us this day;' then take notice of God's goodness: there is nothing in us can deserve or requite God's kindness; yet such is the sweetness of his nature, he gives us rich provision, and feeds us with the finest of the wheat. Pindar saith, it was an opinion of the people of Rhodes, that Jupiter rained down gold upon the city: God hath rained down golden mercies upon us; he is upon the giving hand. Observe three things in God's giving: (1.) He is not weary of giving; the springs of mercy are ever running. God did not only dispense blessings in former ages, but he still gives gifts to us; as the sun not only enriches the world with its morning light, but keeps light for the meridian. The honeycomb of God's bounty is still dropping. (2.) God delights in giving; 'he delighteth in mercy.'³ As the

mother delights to give the child the breast, God loves we should have the breast of mercy in our mouth. (3.) God gives to his very enemies. Who will send in provisions to his enemy? men use to spread nets for their enemies, God spreads a table. The dew drops on the thistle as well as the rose; the dew of God's bounty drops upon the worst. Those who have their mouths opened against God, yet God puts bread in those mouths. O the royal bounty of God! 'The goodness of God endureth continually.'⁴ Swinish sinners God puts jewels upon, and feeds them every day.

5th. If all be a gift, see then the odious ingratitude of men, who sin against their giver. God feeds them, and they fight against him; he gives them their bread, and they give him affronts. How unworthy is this? Would we not cry shame of him, who had a friend always feeding him with money, and he should betray and injure that friend. Thus ungratefully do sinners deal with God, they do not only forget his mercies, but abuse them; 'when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery.'⁵ O how horrid is this, to sin against a bountiful God! to strike, as it were, those hands that relieve us! This gives a dye and tincture to men's sins, and makes them crimson. How many make a dart of God's mercies, and shoot at him? He gives them wit, and they serve the devil with it; he gives them strength, and they waste it among harlots; he gives them bread to eat, and they lift up the heel against him; 'Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.'⁶ These are like Absalom, who as soon as David his father kissed him, plotted treason against him.⁷ Like the mule, who kicks the dam after she hath given it milk. Those who sin against their giver, and abuse God's royal favours, the mercies of God will come in as witnesses against them. What smoother than oil? but if it be heated, what more scalding? What sweeter than mercy? but if it be abused, what more dreadful? It turns to fury.

6th. If God gives us all, let God's giving excite us to thanksgiving; he is the founder and donor of all our blessings, let him have all our acknowledgments. 'All the rivers come from the sea, and thither they return again;'⁸ all our gifts come from God, and to him must all our praises return. We are apt to burn incense to our own drag;⁹ to attribute all we have to our own second causes. (1.) Our own skill and

¹ Mat. 18. 28.² 1 Ch. 29. 14.³ Mi. 7. 18.⁴ Ps. 52. 1.⁵ 2 Sa. 15. 10.⁶ Je. 5. 7.⁷ Ec. 1. 7.⁸ De. 32. 15.⁹ Ua. 1. 16.

industry. God is the giver; he gives daily bread;¹ he gives riches;² he it is that giveth thee power to get wealth. Or, (2.) We oft ascribe the praise to second causes, and forget God. If friends have bestowed an estate, we look at them and admire them, but not God who is the great giver; as if one should be thankful to the steward, and never take notice of the master of the family that provides all. O if God gives all, our eye sight, our food, our clothing, let us sacrifice the chief praise to him; let not God be a loser by his mercies! Praise is a more illustrious part of God's worship. Our wants may send us to prayer, nature may make us beg daily bread; but it shows a heart full of ingenuity and grace to be rendering praises to God. In petition we act like men, in praise we act like angels. Doth God sow seeds of mercy? Let thankfulness be the crop we bring forth. We are called the temples of God,³ and where should God's praises be sounded forth, but in his temples? 'While I live will I praise the Lord, I will sing praises to my God while I have any being.'⁴ God gives us daily bread, let us give him daily praise. Thankfulness to our donor is the best policy; there is nothing lost by it: to be thankful for one mercy, is the way to have more. Musicians love to sound their trumpets where there is the best echo, and God loves to bestow his mercies where there is the best echo of praise; and it is not only offering the calves of our lips is enough, but we must show our thankfulness by improving the gifts which God gives, and as it were putting them out to some use. God gives us an estate, and we honour the Lord with our substance;⁵ he gives us the staff of bread, and we lay out the strength we receive by it in his service; this is to be thankful. And that we may be thankful, be humble: pride stops the current of gratitude; a proud man will never be thankful; he looks upon all he hath, either to be of his own procuring or deserving. Let us see all we have is God's gift, and how unworthy we are to receive the least favour; and this will make us much in doxology and gratitude, we will be silver trumpets sounding forth God's praise.

First, *give*. Hence I note,

1. That the good things of this life are the gifts of God; he is the founder and donor.

2. From this word give, I note, that it is not unlawful to pray for temporal things; we may

pray for daily bread, 'feed me with food convenient for me;⁶ we may pray for health, 'O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed.'⁷ As these are in themselves good things, so they are useful for us; they are as needful for preserving the comfort of life, as the oil is needful for preserving the lamp from going out. Only let me insert two things. (1.) There is a great difference between our praying for temporal things and spiritual. In praying for spiritual things, we must be absolute. When we pray for pardon of sin, and the favour of God, and the sanctifying graces of the Spirit, these are indispensably necessary to salvation, and here we must take no denial: but when we pray for temporal things, here our prayers must be limited, we must pray conditionally so far as God sees them good for us. God sometimes sees cause to withhold temporal things from us: they may be snares, and draw our hearts from God, therefore we must pray for these things with submission to God's will. This was Israel's sin; they would be peremptory and absolute in their desire of temporal things. God's bill of fare did not please them, they must have dainties: 'who shall give us flesh to eat?'⁸ God hath given them manna, he fed them with a miracle from heaven, but their wanton palates craved more, they must have quails: God let them have their desire, but they had sour sauce to their quails; 'while the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them and slew them.'⁹ Rachel was importunate in her desires for a child; 'give me children, or I die.'¹⁰ God let her have a child, but it was a *Benoni*, a son of sorrow; it cost her her life in bringing forth.¹¹ We must pray for outward things with submission to God's will, else they come in anger. (2.) When we pray for things pertaining to this life, we must desire temporal things for spiritual ends; we must desire these things to be as helps in our journey to heaven. If we pray for health, it must be that we may improve this talent of health for God's glory, and may be fitter for his service; if we pray for a competency of estate, it must be for a holy end, that we may be kept from the temptations which poverty usually exposeth to, and that we may be in a better capacity to sow the golden seeds of charity, and relieve such as are in want. Temporal things must be prayed for, for spiritual ends. Hannah prayed for a child, but it was for this end, that her child might be devoted to

¹ Ps. 136. 25.

² De. 8. 18.

³ 1 Co. 3. 16.

⁴ Ps. 146. 2.

⁵ Pr. 3. 9.

⁶ Pr. 30. 8.

⁷ Ps. 6. 2.

⁸ Nu. 11. 18.

⁹ Pr. 78. 30. 31.

¹⁰ Ge. 30. 1.

¹¹ Ge. 35. 18.

God; 'O Lord, if thou wilt remember me, and wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life.'¹ Many pray for outward things only to gratify their sensual appetite; 'the ravens cry for food.'² To pray for outward things only to satisfy nature, is to cry rather like ravens than Christians. We must have an higher end in our prayers, we must aim at heaven, while we are praying for earth. And must we pray for temporal things for spiritual ends, that we may be fitter to serve God? Then, how wicked are they, who beg temporal mercies that they may be more enabled to sin against God? 'Ye ask that ye may consume it upon your lusts.'³ One man is sick, and he prays for health that he may be among his cups and harlots: another prays for an estate; he would not only have his belly filled, but his barns. And why would he be rich? that he may raise his name, or that, having more power in his hand, he may now take a fuller revenge on his enemies. This is impiety joined with impudence; to pray to God to give us temporal things, that we may be the better enabled to serve the devil.

USE. If we are to pray for temporal good things, then how much more for spiritual? if we are to pray for bread, then, how much more for the bread of life? if for oil, then, how much more for the oil of gladness? if to have our hunger satisfied, how much more to have our souls saved. Alas! what if God should hear our prayers, and grant us these temporal things, and no more, what were we the better? What is it to have food, and want grace? what to have the back clothed and the soul naked? to have a south land, and want the living springs in Christ's blood? What comfort could that be? O therefore let us be earnest for spiritual mercies! Lord, do not only feed me, but sanctify me; rather an heart full of grace, than an house full of gold; if we are to pray for daily bread, the things of this life, much more for the things of the life that is to come.

3. From this word *give*, I note, that they to whom God hath given a large measure of outward things, yet must pray, 'give us daily bread.' And this may answer a question.

Q. *Some may say, we have an estate already, and what need we pray, 'give us daily bread.'*

Supposing we have a plentiful estate, yet we need make this petition, 'give us daily bread,' and that upon a double account. (1.) That

we may have a blessing upon our food, and all that we enjoy; 'I will abundantly bless her provision.'⁴ 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of God's mouth.'⁵ What is that but a word of blessing? Though the bread is in our hand, yet the blessing is in God's hand, and it must be fetched out of his hand by prayer. Well therefore may rich men pray, 'give us our bread,' let it be seasoned with a blessing. If God should withhold a blessing, nothing we have would do us good; our clothes would not warm us, our food would not nourish us: 'he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul';⁶ that is, they pined away, and their meat did not nourish them. If God should withhold a blessing, what we eat would turn to bad humours, and hasten death. If God do not bless our riches, they will do us more hurt than good; 'riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.'⁷ So that, granting we have plentiful estates, yet we had need pray, 'give us our bread;' let us have a blessing with what we have. (2.) Though we have estates, yet we had need pray, *give*, that we may hereby engage God to continue these comforts to us. How many casualties may fall out? How many have had corn in their barn, and a fire hath come on a sudden and consumed all? How many have had losses at sea, and great estates boiled away to nothing? 'I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.'⁸ Therefore, though we have estates, yet we had need pray, 'give us,' Lord, give a continuance of these comforts, that they may not, before we are aware, take wings and fly from us. So much for this first word in the petition, *give*.

Secondly, *us*: 'give us.'

Q. *Why do we pray here in the plural? Why 'give us?' Why is it not said, 'give me?'*

To show that we are to have public spirits in prayer; we must not only pray for ourselves, but others; both the law of God, and the law of love bind us to this, 'we must love our neighbour as ourselves;' therefore we must pray for them as well as ourselves. Every good Christian hath a fellow-feeling of the wants and miseries of others, and he prays that God would extend his bounty to them, especially he prays for the saints; 'praying always for all saints.'⁹ These are children of the family.

USE 1. Should we have public spirits in prayer, 'give us?' It reproves such narrow-

¹ 1 Sa. 1. 11.

² Ps. 117. 9.

³ Ja. 4. 3.

⁴ Ps. 132. 15.

⁵ Mat. 4. 4.

⁶ Ps. 106. 15.

⁷ Ec. 5. 13.

⁸ Ru. 1. 21.

⁹ Ep. 6. 18.

spirited men as move only within their own sphere; they look only at themselves, but mind not the case of others; they leave others out of their prayers; if they have daily bread, they care not though others starve; if they are clothed, they care not though others go naked. Christ hath taught us to pray for others, 'give us;' but selfish persons are shut up within themselves, as the snail in the shell, and never speak a word in prayer for others; these have no commiseration or pity; they are like Judas, whose bowels fell out.

USE 2. Let us pray for others, as well as for ourselves, 'give us:' 'a good man is as useful to others as to himself.' Spiders work only for themselves, but bees work for the good of others; the more excellent any thing is, the more it operates for the good of others. The springs refresh others with their crystal streams, the sun enlightens others with its golden beams; the more a Christian is ennobled with grace, the more he besiegeth heaven with his prayers for others: if we are members of the body mystical, we cannot but have a sympathy with others in their wants, and this sympathy sets us a praying for them. David had a public spirit in prayer; 'do good, O Lord, unto those that be good.'¹ Though he begins the psalm with prayer for himself, 'have mercy upon me, O God';² yet he ends the psalm with prayer for others; 'do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion.'³

USE 3. It is matter of comfort to the godly, who are but low in the world, yet they have the prayers of God's people for them; they pray not only for the increase of their faith, but their food, that God will give them 'daily bread.' He is like to be rich, who hath several stocks going; so they are in a likely way to thrive, who have the prayers of the saints going for them in several parts of the world. So much for this second word in the petition, 'give us.'

Thirdly. The third word in the petition is, 'this day.' We pray not, give us bread for a month, or a year, but a day; 'give us this day.'

Q. *Is it not lawful to lay up for afterwards? Doth not the apostle say, he who provides not for his family, is worse than an infidel?*⁴

It is true, it is lawful to lay up for posterity, but our Saviour hath taught us to pray, 'give us this day our bread,' for two reasons; 1st. That we should not have carking care for the future. We should not set our wits upon the

tenter, or torment ourselves how to lay up great estates; if we have but enough to supply for the present, it may suffice, 'give us this day:' 'take therefore no thought for to-morrow.'⁵ God fed Israel with manna in the wilderness, and he fed them from hand to mouth; sometimes all their manna was spent; and if any one had asked them where they would have their breakfast next morning, they would have said, our care is only for this day, God will rain down what manna we need; if we have bread this day, do not distrust God's providence for the future. 2d. Our Saviour will have us pray, 'give us bread this day,' to teach us to live every day as if it were our last. We are not to pray, give us bread to-morrow, because we do not know whether we shall live till to-morrow; but, Lord, 'give us this day;' it may be our last day we shall live, and then we shall need no more.

USE. If we pray for bread only for a day, 'give us this day,' then you who have great estates have cause to be thankful; you have more than you pray for; you pray but for bread for one day, and God hath given you enough to suffice you all your life. What a bountiful God do you serve! Two things may make rich men thankful: 1. God gives them more than they deserve. 2. God gives them more than they pray for.

Fourthly. The fourth thing in the petition is, 'our bread.'

Q. *Why is it called 'our bread,' when it is not ours, but God's?*

1. We must understand it in a qualified sense; it is our bread, being gotten by honest industry. There are two sorts of bread that cannot properly be called our bread: the bread of idleness; the bread of violence. (1.) The bread of idleness; 'she eateth not the bread of idleness.'⁶ An idle person lives at another body's cost, and is at their finding; 'his hands refuse to labour.'⁷ We must not be as the drones which eat the honey that other bees have brought into the hive; if we eat the bread of idleness, this is not our own bread; 'there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all; such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ that they work, and eat their own bread.'⁸ The apostle gives this hint, that such as live idly do not eat their own bread. (2.) The bread of violence. We cannot call this 'our bread,' for it is taken away from others; that which is gotten by stealth or

¹ Ps. 125. 4. ² Ps. 51. 1. ³ Ps. 51. 18. ⁴ 1 Ti. 5. 8.

⁵ Mat. 6. 31. ⁶ Pr. 31. 27. ⁷ Pr. 21. 25. ⁸ 2 Th. 3. 11, 12.

fraud, or any manner of extortion, is not our bread, it belongs to another. He who is a bird of prey, who takes away the bread of the widow and fatherless, he eats that bread which is none of his, nor can he pray for a blessing upon it: can he pray God to bless that which he hath gotten unjustly?

2. It is called 'our bread' by virtue of our title to it. There is a twofold title to bread. 1st, A spiritual title; in and by Christ we have a right to the creature, and may call it 'our bread.' As we are believers, we have the best title to earthly things, we hold all *in capite*; 'all things are yours;' by what title? 'ye are Christ's.' 2d, A civil title, which the law confers on us; to deny men a civil right to their possessions, and make all common, opens the door to anarchy and confusion.

USE. See the privilege of believers; they have both a spiritual and a civil right to what they possess; they who can say, 'our Father,' can say, 'our bread.' Wicked men, though they have a legal right to what they possess, yet have not a covenant right; they have it by providence, not by promise; with God's leave, not with his love. Wicked men are in God's eye no better than usurpers; all they have, their money and land, is like cloth taken up at the drapers, which is not paid for; but this is the sweet privilege of believers, they can say 'our bread;' Christ being theirs, all is theirs. O how sweet is every bit of bread dipped in Christ's blood! How well doth that meat relish which is a pledge and earnest of more! The meal in the barrel is an earnest of our angels' food in paradise. Here is the privilege of saints, they have a right to earth and heaven.

Fifthly. The fifth and last thing in this petition is, the thing we pray for, 'daily bread.'

Q. *What is meant by bread?*

Bread here, by a synecdoche, is put for all the temporal blessings of this life, food, fuel, clothing: whatever may serve for necessity or sober delight.

USE. Learn to be contented with that allowance God gives us. If we have bread, a competency of these outward things, let us rest satisfied. We pray but for bread, 'give us our daily bread;'^{*} we do not pray for superfluities,

nor for quails or venison, but for bread, that which may support life. Though we have not so much as others, so full a crop, so rich an estate, yet if we have the staff of bread to shore us up from falling, let us be content. Most people are herein faulty: though they pray that God would give them bread, so much as he sees expedient for them, yet they are not content with God's allowance, but over-greedily covet more, and with the daughters of the horse-leech, cry 'give, give!'² This is a vice naturally ingrafted in us. Many pray Agur's first prayer, 'give me not poverty,' but few pray his last prayer, 'give me not riches.'³ They are not content with daily bread, but have the dry dropsy of covetousness; they are still craving for more; 'who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied.'⁴ 'There are,' saith Solomon, 'four things say not it is enough; the grave, the barren womb, the earth, the fire;'⁵ and I may add a fifth thing, the heart of a covetous man. Such as are not content with daily bread, but thirst insatiably after more, will break over the hedge of God's command, and to get riches will stick at no sin. 'The man that reckons nothing sufficient, will reckon nothing base.' TAC. Therefore covetousness is called a radical vice, 'the root of all evil.'⁶ 'To what does the accursed thirst for gold not prompt the human heart?' The Greek word for covetousness, *pleonexia*, signifies an inordinate desire of getting. Covetousness is not only in getting riches unjustly, but in loving them inordinately: this is a key opens the door to all sin. It causeth, 1st, Theft; Achan's covetous humour made him steal that wedge of gold which cleft asunder his soul from God.⁷ 2d, It causeth treason. What made Judas betray Christ? it was the thirty pieces of silver.⁸ 3d, It produceth murder. It was the inordinate love of the vineyard made Ahab conspire Naboth's death.⁹ 4th, It is the root of perjury.¹⁰ Men shall be covetous: and it follows, truce-breakers. Love of silver will make men take a false oath, and break a just oath. 5th, It is the spring of apostasy. 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.'¹¹ He did not only forsake Paul's company, but his doctrine. Demas afterwards became a

¹ 1 Co. 3. 12.

* The true sense of the word 'daily,' it is difficult to settle. The Greek term is *epiousios*, concerning which Origen observes, that it is not used by either the learned or the vulgar, and seems to have been formed by the Evangelists.—It is explained by Chrysostom and others, who were the most competent judges, to be bread which passes into the essence or substance of

² Pr. 30. 15. ³ Pr. 30. 8. ⁴ Ha. 2. 5. ⁵ Pr. 30. 15.
⁶ 1 Ti. 6. 10. ⁷ Jos. 7. 21. ⁸ Mat. 26. 5. ⁹ 1 Ki. 21. 13.
¹⁰ 2 Ti. 3. 3. ¹¹ 2 Ti. 4. 10.

our bodies, bread which is sufficient for the preservation of our bodily substance; and they understand by it, not the luxuries and superfluities of life, but those things which are necessary for its support.—*Dick's Lec.*, v. iv. p. 290.

priest in an idol-temple, saith Dorotheus. 6th, Covetousness will make men idolaters: 'covetousness which is idolatry.'¹ Though the covetous man will not worship graven images in the church, yet he will worship the graven image in his coin. 7th, Covetousness makes men give themselves to the devil. Pope Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom. Covetous persons forget this prayer, 'give us daily bread,' that which may satisfy nature, but they are insatiable in their desire. O let us take heed of this dry-dropsy: 'be content with such things as ye have.'² 'A little satisfies nature.' SENECA. That we may be content with daily bread, that which God in his providence carves out to us, and not covet or murmur; let me propose these things.

1. God can bless a little, 'he will bless thy bread and thy water.'³ A blessing puts sweetness into the least morsel of bread, it is like sugar in wine; 'I will bless her provision.'⁴ Daniel, and the three children, ate pulse, which was a coarse fare, yet they looked fairer than those who did eat of the king's meat.⁵ Whence was this? God did infuse a more than ordinary blessing into the pulse: God's blessing was better than the king's venison: a piece of bread with God's love is angels' food.

2. God, who gives us our allowance, knows what quantity of these outward things is fittest for us; a smaller provision may be fitter for some; bread may be better than dainties; every one cannot bear an high condition, no more than a weak brain can bear heady wine. Hath one a larger proportion of worldly things? God sees he can better manage such a condition; he can order his affairs with discretion, which perhaps another cannot; as he hath a large estate, so he hath a large heart to do good, which perhaps another hath not; this should make us content with a shorter bill of fare; God's wisdom is what we must acquiesce in, he sees what is best for every one; that which is good for one, may be bad for another.

3. In being content with daily bread, that which God carves for us, though it be a lesser piece; much grace is seen in this: all the graces act their part in a contented soul. As the holy ointment was made up of several spices, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia;⁶ so, contentment hath in it a mixture of several graces: there is faith, a Christian believes God doth all for the best; and love, which thinks no evil, but takes all

God doth in good part; and patience, submitting cheerfully to what God orders wisely. God is much pleased to see so many graces at once sweetly exercised, like so many bright stars shining in a constellation.

4. To be content with daily bread, the allowance God gives, though but sparingly, doth keep us from many temptations, which discontented persons fall into. When the devil sees a person just of Israel's humour, not content with manna, but must have quails, saith Satan, here is good fishing for me. Satan oft tempts discontented ones to murmuring, and to unlawful means, cozening and defrauding; and he who increaseth an estate by indirect means, stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. If you would be freed from the temptations which discontent exposeth to, be content with such things as ye have, bless God for 'daily bread.'

5. What a rare and admirable thing is it to be content with daily bread, though it be coarse, and though there be but little of it! A Christian, though he hath but a *viaticum*, or a little meal in the barrel; yet he hath that which gives him content. What he hath not in the cupboard, he hath in the promise; that bit of bread he hath, is with the love of God, and that sauce makes it relish sweet; that little oil in the cruise is a pledge and earnest of those dainties he shall taste of in the kingdom of God; this makes him content. What a rare and wonderful thing is this! It is no wonder to be content in heaven, when we are at the fountain-head, and have all things we can desire; but to be content when God keeps us to short commons, and we have scarce daily bread, this is a wonder. When grace is crowning, it is no wonder to be content; but when grace is conflicting with straits, now to be content is a glorious thing indeed, and deserves the garland of praise.

6. To make us content with daily bread, though God straitens us in our allowance, think seriously of the danger that is in an high prosperous condition. Some are not content with daily bread, but desire to have their barns filled, and heap up silver as dust; this proves a snare to them; 'they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.'⁷ Pride, idleness, wantonness, are three worms, that usually breed of plenty. Prosperity oft deafens the ear against God; 'I spake to thee in thy prosperity,

¹ Col. 3. 5.² He. 13. 5.³ Ex. 23. 25.⁴ Ps. 132. 15.⁵ Da. 1. 15.⁶ Ex. 30. 23.⁷ 1 Th. 6. 9.

but thou saidst, I will not hear.¹ Soft pleasures harden the heart. In the body, the more fat, the less blood in the veins, and the less spirits; the more outward plenty, often the less piety. Prosperity hath its honey, and also its sting; prosperity, like the full of the moon, makes many lunatic. The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. Anxious care is the evil spirit that haunts the rich man, and will not let him be quiet: when his chests are full of money, his heart is full of care, either how to manage or how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten. Sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorseth. Should not this make us content with what allowance God gives, if we have daily bread, though not dainties? Think of the danger of prosperity; the spreading of a full table may be the spreading of a snare; many have been sunk to hell with golden weights. The ferryman takes in all passengers, that he may increase his fare, and sometimes to the sinking of his boat: 'they that will be rich fall into many hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition.'² The world's golden sands are quicksands; this may make us take our daily bread, though it be but coarse, contentedly. What if we have less food, we have less snare; if less dignity, less danger; as we want the rich provisions of the world, so we want the temptations.

7. If God keeps us to a spare diet, if he gives us less temporals, he hath made it up in spirituals; he hath given us the pearl of price and the holy anointing. 1st, The pearl of price, the Lord Jesus, he is the quintessence of all good things. To give us Christ, is more than if God had given us all the world. God can make more worlds, but he hath no more Christs to bestow; he is such a golden mine, that the angels cannot dig to the bottom.³ From Christ we have justification, adoption, coronation. The sea of God's mercy in giving us Christ, saith Luther, should swallow up all our wants. 2d, The holy unction; God hath anointed us with the graces of his Spirit. Grace is a seed of God, a blossom of eternity; the graces are the impressions of the divine nature, stars to enlighten us; spices to perfume us; diamonds to enrich us; and if God hath adorned the hidden man of the heart with these sacred jewels, it may well make us content, though we have but short commons, and that coarse too. God hath given his people better things than corn and wine; he hath given them that which he

cannot give in anger, and which cannot stand with reprobation, and they may say as David, the lines are fallen to them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage.⁴ I have read of Didimus and Anthony: Didimus was a blind man, but very holy: Anthony asked him, if he was not troubled for the want of his eyes; he told him he was; why, saith Anthony, are you troubled? you want that which flies and birds have, when you have that which angels have. So I say to Christians, if God hath not given you the purse, he hath given you his Spirit; if you want that which rich men have, God hath given you that which angels have, and are you not content?

8. If you have but daily bread enough to suffice nature, be content. Consider it is not having abundance makes the life always comfortable; it is not a great cage will make the bird sing: a competency may breed contentment, when having more may make one less content; a staff may help the traveller, but a bundle of staves will be a burden to him. A great estate may be like a long trailing garment, more burdensome than useful. Many that have great incomes and revenues have not so much comfort in their lives as some that go to their hard labour.

9. If you have less daily bread, you will have less account to give. The riches and honours of this world, like alchymy, make a great show, and with their glistening dazzle men's eyes; but they do not consider the great account they must give to God; 'give an account of thy stewardship.' What good hast thou done with thy estate? Hast thou, as a good steward, traded thy golden talents for God's glory? Hast thou honoured the Lord with thy substance? The greater revenues the greater reckonings; this may quiet and content us, if we have but little daily bread, our account will be less.

10. You that have but a small competency in these outward things, your provisions are short, yet you may be content to consider how much you look for hereafter. God keeps the best wine till last. What though now you have but a small pittance, and are fed from hand to mouth? you look for an eternal reward, white robes, sparkling crowns, rivers of pleasure. A son is content though his father give him but now and then a little money, as long as he expects his father should settle all his land upon him at last; if God give you but a little at pre-

¹ Jer. 22. 21.² 1 Ti. 6. 9.³ Ep. 3. 8.⁴ Ps. 16. 6.⁵ Lu. 16. 2

sent, yet you look for that glory which eye hath not seen: may not you be content? The world is but a great inn: if God give you but sufficient to pay for your charges in your inn, you may be content, you shall have enough when you come to your own country.

Q. *How may we be content, though God cut us short in these externals; though we have but little daily bread and coarse?*

1. Think with yourselves, some have been much lower than you, who have been better than you. Jacob, an holy patriarch, goes over Jordan with his staff, and lived in a mean condition a long time; he had the clouds for his canopy, and a stone for his pillow. Moses, that might have been rich, (some historians say, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him for her son, because king Pharaoh had no heir, and so Moses was like to have come to the

crown,) yet leaving the honours of the court, in what a low mean condition did he live, when he went to Jethro his father-in-law: Musculus, famous for learning and piety, was put to great straits, he was put to dig in a town ditch, and had scarce daily bread, yet was content. Nay, Christ, who was heir of all, yet for our sakes 'became poor.'² Let all these examples make us content.

2. Let us labour to have the interest cleared between God and our souls. He who can say, 'my God,' hath enough to rock his heart quiet in the lowest condition. What can he want who hath *El-Shaddai*, the all-sufficient God, for his portion? Though the nether-springs fail, yet he hath the upper-springs; though the bill of fare grow short, yet an interest in God is a pillar of support to us; and we may, with David, encourage ourselves in the Lord our God.

OF THE FIFTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MAT. 6. 12. *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

BEFORE I speak strictly to the words I shall take notice, *1st*, That in this prayer there is but one petition for the body, 'give us our daily bread;' but two petitions for the soul; 'forgive us our trespasses,' 'lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' Hence observe, that we are to be more careful for our souls, than for our bodies, more careful for grace than for daily bread, more desirous to have our souls saved than our bodies fed. In the law, the weight of the sanctuary was twice as big as the common weight, to typify that spiritual things must be of far greater weight with us than earthly. The excellency of the soul may challenge our chief care about it.

1. The soul is an immaterial substance; it is a heavenly spark, lighted by the breath of God; it is the more refined spiritual part of man, it is of an angelical nature; it hath some faint resemblance of God. The body is the more dreggish part, it is but the cabinet, of which, though curiously wrought, the soul is the jewel; the soul is near akin to angels, it is capable of communion with God in glory. 2. It is immortal; it doth never expire. It can act without the body; though the body dissolve into dust, the soul lives.¹ The essence of the soul is eternal, it hath a beginning, but no end; it

is a blossom of eternity. Sure, then, if the soul be so ennobled and dignified, more care should be taken about the soul than the body. We make but one petition for the body, but two petitions for the soul.

USE 1. It reproves them that take more care for their bodies, than their souls. The body is but the brutish part, yet they take more care, *1st*, About dressing their bodies, than their souls. They put on the best clothes, are dressed in the richest garb, but care not how naked or undressed their souls are; they do not get the jewels of grace, to adorn their inner man. *2d*, About feeding their bodies, than their souls; they are caterers for the flesh, they make provision for the flesh,³ they have the best diet, but let their souls starve; as if one should feed his hawk, but let his child starve. The body must sit in the chair of state, but the soul, that princely thing, is made a lackey to run on the devil's errand.

USE 2. Let us be more careful for our souls. 'Lose all, but o'er the immortal spirit watch.' If it be well with the soul, it shall be well with the body; if the soul be gracious, the body shall be glorious, for it shall shine like Christ's body. Therefore it is wisdom to look chiefly to the soul, because in saving the soul, we se-

¹ Lu. 12. 4.

² 2 Co. 8. 9.

³ Ro. 13. 14.

cure the happiness of the body. And we cannot show our care for the soul more than in taking all seasons for our souls; reading, praying, hearing, meditating. O look to the main chance; let the soul be chiefly tended! The loss of the soul would be fatal; other losses may be made up again. If one loseth his health, he may recover it again; if he lose his estate, he may make it up again; but if he lose his soul, this loss can never be made up again. The merchant that ventures all he hath in one ship, if that ship be lost, he is quite broken.

2d. From the connexion in the text, as soon as Christ had said, give us 'daily bread,' he adds, 'and forgive us.' Christ joins this petition of forgiveness of sin, immediately to the other of daily bread, to show us, that though we have daily bread, yet all is nothing without forgiveness. If our sins be not pardoned, we can take but little comfort in our food. As it is with a man that is condemned, though you bring him meat in prison, yet he takes little comfort in it without a pardon; so, though we have daily bread, yet it will do us no good unless sin be forgiven. What though we should have manna, which was called angels' food; though the rock should pour out rivers of oil: all is nothing unless sin be done away. When Christ had said, 'give us our daily bread,' he presently adds, and 'forgive us our trespasses.' Daily bread may satisfy the appetite, but forgiveness of sin satisfies the conscience.

USE 1. It condemns the folly of most people: if they have daily bread, the delicious things of this life, they look no further, they are not solicitous for the pardon of sin; if they have that which feeds them, they look not after that which should crown them. Alas! you may have daily bread, and yet perish. The rich man in the gospel had daily bread, nay, he had dainties, he fared 'deliciously every day,' but in 'hell he lifted up his eyes.'¹

USE 2. Let us pray, that God would not give us our portion in this life, that he would not put us off with daily bread, but that he would give us forgiveness. This is the sauce that would make our bread relish the sweeter. A speech of Luther was: 'I did solemnly protest, that God should not put me off with outward things.' Be not content with that which is common to the brute creatures, the dog or elephant, to have your hunger satisfied; but, besides daily bread, get pardon of sin. A drop of Christ's blood, or

a dram of forgiving mercy, is infinitely more valuable than all the delights under the sun. Daily bread may make us live comfortably, but forgiveness of sin will make us die comfortably.

So I come to the words of the petition, 'forgive us our debts,' &c. 1st. Here is a term given to sin, it is a debt. 2d. The confessing the debt, 'our debts.' 3d. A prayer, 'forgive us.' 4th. A condition on which we desire forgiveness, 'as we forgive our debtors.'

First, I shall speak of the term given to sin, it is a debt. That which is here called a debt, is called sin, 'forgive us our sins.'² So then, sin is a debt, and every sinner is a debtor. Sin is compared to a debt of 'ten thousand talents.'

1. Why is sin called a debt? 2. Wherein is sin worse than other debts we contract? 3. Wherein have sinners the property of bad debtors?

Q. *Why is sin called a debt?*

Because it so fitly resembles it.

1. A debt ariseth upon non-payment of money, or the not paying that which is one's due. So we owe to God exact obedience, and, not paying what is due, thus we come to be in debt.

2. As in case of non-payment, the debtor goes to prison; so, by our sin we become guilty, and stand obliged to God's curse of damnation. Though God doth a while grant a sinner a reprieve, yet he stands bound to eternal death, if the debt be not forgiven.*

Q. 2. *In what sense is sin the worst debt?*

1. Because we have nothing to pay; if we could pay the debt, what need we pray, 'forgive us?' We cannot say, as he in the gospel, 'have patience with me, and I will pay thee all:' we can pay neither principal nor interest. Adam made us all bankrupts; in innocency Adam had a stock of original righteousness to begin the world with; he could give God personal and perfect obedience: but, by his sin, he is quite broken, and hath beggared all his posterity. We have nothing to pay, all our duties are mixed with sin, and so we cannot pay God in current coin.

2. Sin is the worst debt, because it is against

¹ Lu. 11. 4.

² Ma. 18. 24.

* The term 'debts' applied by our Lord to sin, strikingly illustrates its nature and deserts. God has granted to man the use of various talents, and these we have pledged ourselves to employ to his glory; yet health we use not in serving, but dishonouring him; time is occupied in the trifling of a day, not in preparing for the solemnities of eternity; reason is not pointed to true wisdom, but to vanity; and substance is not spent in honouring God, but in self-indulgence. And how awful is the penalty incurred by such conduct! 'The wages of sin is death.' — *Belfrage on Catech.* v. ii. p. 380.

an infinite majesty. An offence against the person of a king, is *crimen læsæ majestatis*, it doth enhance and aggravate the crime. Sin wrongs God, and so it is an infinite offence. The schoolmen say, every known sin strikes at the Godhead. The sinner would not only unthroned God, but ungod him, this makes the debt infinite.

3. Sin is the worst debt, because it is not a single, but a multiplied debt: forgive us 'our debts;' we have debt upon debt; 'innumerable evils have compassed me about.'¹ We may as well reckon all the drops in the sea, as reckon all our spiritual debts; we cannot tell how much we owe. A man may know his other debts, but we cannot number our spiritual debts. Every vain thought is a sin; 'the thought of foolishness is sin:'² and what swarms of vain thoughts have we? The first rising of corruption, though it never blossom into outward act, is a sin; then, 'who can understand his errors? We do not know how much we owe to God.'

4. Sin is the worst debt; because it is an inexcusable debt in two respects: 1. There is no denying the debt. 2. There is no shifting it off. (1.) There is no denying the debt; other debts men may deny. If money be not paid before witnesses, or if the creditor lose the bond, the debtor may say he owes him nothing; but there is no denying this debt of sin. If we say we have no sin, God can prove the debt; 'I will set thy sins in order before thee.'³ God writes down our debts in his book of remembrance, and God's book and the book of conscience do exactly agree, so that this debt cannot be denied. (2.) There is no shifting of the debt; other debts may be shifted off. We may get friends to pay them, but neither man nor angel can pay this debt for us: if all the angels in heaven should go to make a purse, they cannot pay one of our debts. In other debts men may get a protection, so that none can touch their persons, or sue them for the debt: but who shall give us a protection from God's justice? 'there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.'⁴ Indeed the Pope pretends that his pardon shall be men's protection, and now God's justice shall not sue them; but that is only a forgery, and cannot be pleaded at God's tribunal. 3. Other debts, if the debtor dies in prison, cannot be recovered, death frees them from debt; but if we die in debt to God, he knows how to recover it; as long as we have

souls to strain, God will not lose his debt. Not the death of the debtor, but the death of the surety, pays a sinner's debt. 4. In other debts men may flee from their creditor, leave their country, and go into foreign parts, and the creditor cannot find them; but we cannot flee from God. God knows where to find all his debtors; 'whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, there shall thy right hand hold me.'⁵

5. Sin is the worst debt, because it carries men, in case of non-payment, to a worse prison than any upon earth, to a fiery prison; and the sinner is laid in worse chains, chains of darkness, where the sinner is bound under wrath for ever.

Q. 3. *Wherein have we the properties of bad debtors?*

1. A bad debtor doth not love to be called to account. There is a day coming when God will call all his debtors to account; 'so then, every one shall give an account of himself to God.'⁶ But we play away the time, and do not love to hear of the day of judgment; we love not that ministers should put us in mind of our debts, or speak of the day of reckoning. What a confounding word will that be to a secure sinner, 'give an account of your stewardship.'

2. A bad debtor is unwilling to confess his debt, he will put it off, or make less of it; so we are more willing to excuse sin, than confess it. How hardly was Saul brought to confession? 'I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, but the people took of the spoil.'⁷ He rather excuseth his sin, than confesseth it.

3. A bad debtor is apt to hate his creditor; debtors wish their creditors dead; so wicked men naturally hate God, because they think he is a just judge, and will call them to account; (Gr.) God-haters. The debtor doth not love to see his creditor.

USE 1. It reproves them who are loath to be in debt, but make no reckoning of sin, which is the greatest debt; they use no means to get out of it, but run still further in debt to God. We would think it strange, if writs or warrants were out against a man, or a judgment granted to seize his body and estate, yet he is secure and regardless, as if he were unconcerned. God hath a writ out against a sinner, nay, many writs, for swearing, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, yet the sinner eats and drinks, and is

¹ Ps. 40. 12. ² Pr. 24. 9. ³ Ps. 50. 21. ⁴ Job 10. 7.

⁵ Ps. 139. 7, 8. ⁶ Ro. 14. 12. ⁷ 1 Sa. 15. 20, 21.

quiet, as if he were not in debt; what opium hath Satan given men?

USE 2. Exhortation. If sin be a debt. 1. Let us be humbled. The name of debt, saith St Ambrose, is grievous. Men in debt are full of shame, they lie hid, and do not care to be seen. A debtor is ever in fear of arrest. 'His heart beats at the barking of a dog.' O let us blush and tremble, who are so deeply indebted to God! A Roman dying in debt, Augustus the emperor sent to buy his pillow, because, saith he, I hope it has some virtue in it to make me sleep, on which a man so much in debt could take his ease. We that have so many spiritual debts lying upon us, how can we be at rest till we have some hope that they are discharged. 2. Let us confess our debt. Let us acknowledge that we are run in arrears with God, and deserve that he should follow the law upon us, and throw us into hell-prison. By

confession we give glory to God; 'my son, I pray thee give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession to him.'⁵ Say that God were righteous if he should distraint upon all we have; if we confess the debt, God will forgive it; 'if we confess our sins, he is just to forgive.'⁶ Do but confess the debt, and God will cross the book; 'I said, I will confess my transgression to the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.'⁷ 3. Labour to get our spiritual debts paid, that is, by our surety Christ. Say, 'Lord, have patience with me, and Christ shall pay thee all. He hath laid down an infinite price.' The covenant of works would not admit of a surety, it demanded personal obedience: but this privilege we have by the gospel, which is a court of chancery to relieve us, that if we have nothing to pay, God will accept of a surety. Believe in Christ's blood, and the debt is paid.

LUKE xi. 4. *And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

IN the words are two parts: 1st, A petition, 'forgive us our sins.' 2d, A condition, 'for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.' Our forgiving others is not a cause of God's forgiving us, but it is a condition without which God will not forgive us.

First. I begin with the first, the petition, 'forgive us our sins;' a blessed petition! the ignorant world say, 'who will show us any good?'¹ meaning a good lease, a good purchase; but our Saviour teacheth us to pray for that which is more noble, and will stand us in more stead, the pardon of sin, 'forgive us our sins.' Forgiveness of sins is a primary blessing; it is one of the first mercies God bestows, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you;'² that is, forgiveness. When God pardons, there is nothing he will stick at to do for the soul; he will adopt, sanctify, crown.

Q. 1. *What forgiveness of sin is?*

It is God's passing by sin,³ his wiping off the score, and giving us a discharge. The nature of forgiveness will more clearly appear: 1st, By opening some scripture-phrases. 2d, By laying down some divine aphorisms and positions.

1st. By opening some scripture-phrases, 1. To forgive sin, is to take away iniquity; 'why dost thou not take away my iniquity?'⁴ (Heb.)

to lift off. It is a metaphor taken from a man that carries a heavy burden ready to sink him, and another comes, and lifts off this burden; so when the heavy burden of sin is on us, God in pardoning, lifts off this burden from the conscience, and lays it upon Christ; 'the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.'⁸ 2. To forgive sin, is to cover sin; 'thou hast covered all their sin.'⁹ This was typified by the mercy-seat covering the ark, to show God's covering of sin through Christ. God doth not cover sin in the Antinomian sense, so as he sees it not, but he doth so cover it, as he will not impute it. 3. To forgive sin, is to blot it out; 'I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.'¹⁰ The Hebrew word, to blot out, alludes to a creditor, who, when his debtor hath paid him, blots out the debt, and gives him an acquittance; so God, when he forgives sin, blots out the debt, he draws the red lines of Christ's blood over our sins, and so crosseth the debt-book. 4. To forgive sin, is for God to scatter our sins as a cloud; 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions.'¹¹ Sin is the cloud interposed, God dispels the cloud, and breaks forth with the light of his countenance. 5. To forgive sin, is for God to cast our sins into the depths of the sea;¹² which implies God's burying them out of sight, that they shall not rise

¹ Ps. 4. 6. ² Ez. 36. 25. ³ Mi. 7. 18. ⁴ Job 7. 21.

⁵ Jos. 7. 19. ⁶ Jno. 1. 9. ⁷ Ps. 32. 5. ⁸ Is. 53. 6.
⁹ Ps. 85. 2. ¹⁰ Is. 43. 25. ¹¹ Is. 44. 22. ¹² Mi. 7. 19.

up in judgment against us. 'Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea:' God will throw them in, not as cork that riseth again, but as lead that sinks to the bottom.

2d. The nature of forgiveness will appear, by laying down some divine aphorisms or positions.

Aphorism 1. Every sin is mortal, and needs forgiveness: I say, mortal, that is, deserves death. God may relax the rigour of the law, but every sin merits damnation. The papists distinguish mortal sins from venial: some sins creep unawares into the mind, as vain thoughts, sudden motions of anger and revenge, these, saith Bellarmine, are in their own nature venial. It is true, the greatest sins are in one sense venial, that is, God is able to forgive them; but the least sin is not in its own nature venial, but deserves damnation. We read of 'the lusts of the flesh,'¹ and 'the works of the flesh.'² The lusts of the flesh are sinful, as well as the works of the flesh. That which is a transgression of the law merits damnation; but the first stirrings of corruption are a breach of the royal law,³ therefore they merit damnation. So that the east sin is mortal, and needs forgiveness.

Aphorism 2. It is God only that forgives sin. To pardon sin is one of the royal prerogatives, the flowers of God's crown; 'who can forgive sins but God only?'⁴ It is most proper for God to pardon sin; only the creditor can remit the debt. Sin is an infinite offence, and no finite power can discharge an infinite offence. That God only can forgive sin, I prove thus:—No man can take away sin unless he is able to infuse grace; for, as Aquinas saith, with forgiveness is always infusion of grace; but no man can infuse grace, therefore no man can forgive sin. He only can forgive sin, who can remit the penalty, but it is only God's prerogative royal to forgive sin.

OBJ. 1. *But a Christian is charged to forgive his brother: 'forgiving one another.'*⁵

In all second-table sins, there are two distinct things: 1. Disobedience against God. 2. Injury to man. That which man is required to forgive, is the wrong done to himself; but the wrong done to God, he cannot forgive. Man may remit a trespass against himself, but not a transgression against God.

OBJ. 2. *But the scripture speaks of the power committed to ministers to forgive sin: 'whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.'*⁶

Ministers cannot remit sin authoritatively and effectually, but only declaratively. They have a special office and authority to apply the promises of pardon to broken hearts. When a minister sees one humbled for sin, yet is afraid God hath not pardoned him, and is ready to be swallowed up of sorrow; in this case, a minister, for the easing of this man's conscience, may, in the name of Christ, declare to him, that he is pardoned; the minister doth not forgive sin by his own authority, but as an herald, in Christ's name, pronounceth a man's pardon. As it was with the priest in the law, God did cleanse the leper, the priest only did pronounce him clean, so it is God, who, by his prerogative, doth forgive sin, the minister only pronounceth forgiveness to the sinner, being penitent. Power to forgive sin authoritatively in one's own name, was never granted to any mortal man. A king may spare a man's life, but not pardon his sin; Pope's pardons are insignificant, like blanks in a lottery, good for nothing but to be torn.

Aphorism 3. Forgiveness of sin is purely an act of God's free grace. There are some acts of God which declare his power, as making and governing the world; other acts that declare his justice, as punishing the guilty; other acts that declare his free grace, as pardoning of sinners: 'I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own name's sake:'⁷ as when a creditor freely forgives a debtor; 'I obtained mercy:'⁸ I was all over besprinkled with mercy. When God pardons a sin, he doth not pay a debt, but give a legacy. Forgiveness is spun out of the bowels of God's mercy; there is nothing we can do can deserve it; it is not our prayers, or tears, or good deeds can purchase pardon. When Simon Magus would have bought the gift of the Holy Ghost with money, 'thy money,' saith Peter, 'perish with thee;'⁹ so they who think they can buy pardon of sin with their duties and alms, their money perish with them; forgiveness is an act of God's free grace, here he displays the banner of love. This is that will raise the trophies of God's glory, and will cause the saints' triumph in heaven, that when there was no worthiness in them, when they lay in their blood, God took pity on them, and held forth the golden sceptre of love in forgiving? Forgiveness is a golden thread spun out of the bowels of free grace.

Aphorism 4. Forgiveness is through the

¹ Ro. 3. 14. ² Ga. 5. 19. ³ Ro. 7. 7. Pr. 24. 9.
⁴ Ma. 2. 7. ⁵ Col. 3. 13. ⁶ Jno. 20. 23.

⁷ Is. 43. 25.

⁸ 1 Ti. 1. 15.

⁹ Ac. 8. 20.

blood of Christ. Free grace is the inward cause moving. Christ's blood is the outward cause meriting pardon; 'in whom we have redemption through his blood.'¹ All pardons are sealed in Christ's blood; the guilt of sin was infinite, and nothing but that blood which was of infinite value could procure forgiveness.

OBJ. But if Christ laid down his blood as the price of our pardon, then how can we say, God freely forgives sin? If it be by purchase, how is it by grace?

1. It was God's free grace that found out a way of redemption through a mediator. Nay, God's love appeared more in letting Christ die for us, than if he had forgiven us without exacting any satisfaction. 2. It was free grace moved God to accept of the price paid for our sins: that God should accept a surety; that one should sin, and another suffer; this was free grace. So that forgiveness of sin, though it be purchased by Christ's blood, yet it is by free grace.

Aphorism 5. In forgiveness of sin, God remits the guilt and penalty. Guilt is an obligation to punishment, guilt cries for justice: now God in forgiving doth indulge the sinner as to the penalty: God seems to say to the sinner thus 'though thou art fallen into the hands of my justice, and deservest to die, yet I will take off the penalty; whatever is charged upon thee shall be discharged;' when God pardons a soul, he will not reckon with him in a purely vindictive way, he stops the execution of justice.

Aphorism 6. By virtue of this pardon God will no more call sin into remembrance; 'their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.'² God will pass an act of oblivion, he will not upbraid us with former unkindnesses; when we fear God will call over our sins again after pardon, look into this act of indemnity, 'their iniquities will I remember no more.' God is said therefore to 'blot out our sin.' A man doth not call for a debt, when he hath crossed the book; when God pardons a man, his former displeasure ceaseth; 'mine anger is turned away.'²

Q. But is God angry with his pardoned ones?

Though a child of God, after pardon, may incur God's fatherly displeasure, yet God's judicial wrath is removed; though God may lay on the rod, yet he hath taken away the curse; correction may befall the saints, but not destruction: 'my loving-kindness will I not utterly take away.'³

Aphorism 7. That sin is not forgiven till it be repented of; therefore they are put together; 'repentance and remission.'⁴ 'Lord, first grant repentance and then forbearing kindness.' FULGENTIUS. Now in repentance there are three main ingredients, and all these must be before forgiveness: contrition, confession, conversion.

(1.) Contrition, or brokenness of heart; 'they shall be like doves of the valleys, all of them mourning every one for his iniquity.'⁵ This contrition or rending of the heart, is expressed sometimes by smiting on the breast;⁶ sometimes by plucking off the hair;⁷ sometimes by watering the couch.⁸ But all humiliation is not contrition; some have only pretended sorrow for sin, and so have missed of forgiveness; Ahab humbled himself, his garments were rent, not his heart.

Q. What is that remorse and sorrow which goes before forgiveness of sin?

It is an holy sorrow, it is a grieving for sin, as it is sin, and as it is a dishonouring of God, and a defiling of the soul. Though there were no sufferings to follow, yet the true penitent would grieve for sin; 'my sin is ever before me.'¹⁰ This contrition goes before remission; 'I repented, I smote upon my thigh; is Ephraim my dear son? my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him.'¹¹ Ephraim was troubled for sinning, and God's bowels were troubled for Ephraim; the woman in the gospel stood at Jesus's feet weeping, and a pardon followed; 'wherefore I say, her sins which are many, are forgiven her.'¹² The seal is set upon the wax when it melts; God seals his pardon upon melting hearts.

(2.) The second ingredient in repentance is confession; 'against thee, thee only have I sinned.'¹³ This is not auricular confession; this the papists make a sacrament, and affirm, that without confession of all one's sins in the ears of the priest, no man can receive forgiveness of sin; the scripture is ignorant of it, nor do we read that any general council, till the Lateran council, which was about twelve hundred years after Christ, did ever decree auricular confession.

OBJ. But doth not the scripture say, 'confess your sins one to another?'¹⁴

This is absurdly brought for auricular confession; for, by this, the priest must as well

⁵ Lu. 24. 47. ⁶ Ez. 7. 16. ⁷ Lu. 18. 13. ⁸ Ezr. 9. 3.

⁹ Ps. 6. 6. ¹⁰ Ps. 51. 3. ¹¹ Jer. 31. 19, 20.

¹² Lu. 7. 47. ¹³ Ps. 51. 4. ¹⁴ Ja. 5. 15.

confess to the people, as the people to the priest. The sense of that place is, in case of public scandals, or private wrongs; here confession is to be made to others; but chiefly, confession is to be made to God, who is the party offended; 'against thee, thee only have I sinned.' Confession gives vent to sorrow; confession must be free without compulsion, ingenuous without reserve, cordial without hypocrisy; the heart must go along with the confession. This confession makes way for forgiveness; 'I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest me.'¹ When the publican and the thief on the cross confessed, they had that pardon; the publican smote upon his breast, there was contrition; and said, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' there was confession, he went away justified, there was forgiveness: and the thief on the cross, 'we indeed suffer justly,' there was confession: and Christ absolved him before he died; 'to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'² Which words of Christ might occasion that saying of St Austin, confession shuts the mouth of hell, and opens the gate of paradise.

(3.) The third ingredient in repentance is, conversion, or turning from sin; 'we have sinned';³ there was confession: 'they put away the strange gods';⁴ there was conversion. And it must be an universal turning from sin; 'cast away from you all your transgressions.'⁵ You would be loath God should forgive only some of your sins; would you have God forgive all, and will not you forsake all? He that hides one rebel, is a traitor to the crown; he that lives in one known sin, is a traitorous hypocrite. And it must not only be a turning from sin, but a turning unto God: therefore it is called 'repentance towards God.'⁶ The heart points towards God, as the needle to the north-pole. The prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but did arise and go to his father.⁷ This repentance is the ready way to pardon; 'let the wicked forsake his way, and turn to the Lord, and he will abundantly pardon.'⁸ A king will not pardon a rebel whilst he continues in open hostility. Thus you see repentance goes before remission; they who never repented, can have no ground to hope that their sins are pardoned.

Aphorism 8. That sin is not forgiven till it be repented of.*

¹ Ps. 32. 5. ² Lu. 23. 43. ³ Ju. 10. 15. ⁴ Ju. 10. 16.
⁵ Ez. 18. 31. ⁶ Ac. 20. 21. ⁷ Lu. 15. 20. ⁸ Is. 55. 7.

* The doctrine that a state of pardon goes before the exercise of true repentance, is most agreeable to the order according

Caution. Not that repentance doth merit the forgiveness of sin; to make repentance satisfactory is popish; by repentance we please God, but we do not satisfy him. Alas! 'Christ's blood must wash our tears.' Repentance is a condition, not a cause; God will not pardon for repentance, nor yet without it; God seals his pardons on melting hearts; repentance makes us prize pardon the more. He who cries out of his broken bones, will the more prize the mercy of having them set again; when there is nothing in the soul but clouds of sorrow, and now God brings a pardon, which is a setting up of a rainbow in the cloud, to tell the soul the flood of God's wrath shall not overflow, O what joy at the sight of this rainbow! The soul now burns in love to God.

Aphorism 9. The greatest sins come within the compass of forgiveness. Incest, sodomy, adultery, theft, murder, which are sins of the first magnitude, yet these are pardonable. Paul was a blasphemer, and so sinned against the first table; a persecutor, and so he sinned against the second table; yet he obtained mercy;⁹ was all besprinkled with mercy. Zaccheus, an extortioner; Mary Magdalene, an unchaste woman, out of whom seven devils were cast; Manasseh, who made the streets run with blood; yet these had pardon. Some of the Jews, who had a hand in crucifying Christ, were forgiven. God blots out not only the cloud, but 'the thick cloud';¹⁰ enormities as well as infirmities. The king in the parable, forgave his debtor that owed him 10,000 talents;¹¹ a talent weighed 3000 shekels; 10,000 talents contained almost 12 tons of gold. This was an emblem of God's forgiving great sins; 'though your sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be as white as snow.'¹² Scarlet, in the Greek,

⁹ 1 Ti. 1. 13. ¹⁰ Is. 44. 22. ¹¹ Mat. 18. 27. ¹² Is. 1. 18.

to which God hath promised to bestow these blessings upon his people.—Hos. 14. 4, 6. Is. 44. 22. Ez. 16. 62, 63. & 36. 25—31. The argument from these passages is not merely, that a justified state is mentioned before repentance; but that the latter is mentioned as the native effect of the former. Ephraim's resolution to have no more to do with idols, is the native effect of the healing of his backslidings. The Lord's grace manifested towards Israel, in his being pacified towards them for all that they have done, fills them with ingenuous shame and self-loathing. That there is another sort of repentance going before pardon and proceeding from legal convictions and the dread of the divine judgments, is not to be doubted, but that there is any exercise of repentance of a gracious nature, or acceptable to God, different from that godly sorrow and self-loathing which the Lord secures to his people in these promises, has never been proved.—It is granted, however, that the exercise of evangelical repentance is before 'the forgiveness of sins,' when this phrase is used to signify, either the removal of the rods with which we are corrected for our sins, or, the intimation and comfortable sense of our being in a justified state. 2 Ch. 6. 25. Ps. 32. 5. —*Anterson's Precious Truth*, letter 11.

is called twice dipped, and the art of man cannot wash out the dye again. But though our sins are of a scarlet dye, God's mercy can wash them away: the sea can as well cover great rocks as little sands. This I mention that sinners may not despair. God counts it a glory to him to forgive great sins; now mercy and love ride in triumph; 'the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant,'¹ it was exuberant, it did overflow as Nilus. We must not measure God by ourselves: God's mercy excels our sins, as much as heaven doth earth.² If great sins could not be forgiven, then great sinners should not be preached to; but the gospel is to be preached to all. If they could not be forgiven, it were a dishonour to Christ's blood; as if the wound were broader than the plaster. God hath first made great sinners 'broken vessels,' he hath broken their hearts for sin; and then he hath made them 'golden vessels,' he hath filled them with the golden oil of pardoning mercy; this may encourage great sinners to come in and repent. Indeed the sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, not but that there is mercy enough in God to forgive it, but because he who hath committed this sin, will have no pardon; he despites God, scorns his mercy, spills the cordial of Christ's blood, and tramples it under foot; he puts away salvation from him; but else the greatest sins are pardonable.* When a poor sinner looks upon himself, and sees his guilt, and when he looks on God's justice and holiness, he falls down confounded: but here is what may be as a cork to the net, to keep him from despair, if thou wilt leave thy sins, and come to Christ, mercy can seal thy pardon.

Aphorism 10. When God pardons a sinner, he forgives all sins; 'I will pardon all their iniquities:'³ 'having forgiven you all trespasses.'⁴ The mercy-seat covered the whole ark; the mercy-seat was a type of forgiveness, to show that God covers all our transgressions. He doth not leave one sin upon the score; he doth not take his pen, and for fourscore sins write

down fifty, but blots out all sin; 'who forgives all thine iniquities.'⁵ When I say, God forgiveth all sins, I understand it of sins past, but sins to come are not forgiven till they are repented of. Indeed God hath decreed to pardon them; and when God forgives one sin, he will in time forgive all; but sins future are not actually pardoned till they are repented of; it is absurd to think sin should be forgiven, before it is committed. 1. If all sins past and to come are at once forgiven, then, what need a man pray for the pardon of sin? It is a vain thing to pray for the pardon of that which is already forgiven. 2. This opinion, that sins to come, as well as past, are forgiven, doth take away and make void Christ's intercession. Christ is an advocate to intercede for daily sins;⁶ but if sin be forgiven before it be committed, what need is there of Christ's daily intercession? What need have I of an advocate if sin be pardoned before it be committed? So that God, though he forgives all sins past to a believer, yet sins to come are not forgiven, till repentance be renewed.

Aphorism 11. Faith doth necessarily antecedently forgiveness, there must be believing on our part, before there is forgiving on God's part; 'to him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.'⁷ So that faith is a necessary antecedent to forgiveness. There are two acts of faith; to accept Christ, and to trust in Christ; to accept of his terms, to trust in his merits; and he who doth neither of these, can have no forgiveness; he who doth not accept Christ, cannot have his person; he that doth not trust in him, cannot have benefit by his blood. So that, without faith there is no remission.

Aphorism 12. Though justification and sanctification are not the same, yet God never pardons a sinner, but he doth sanctify him. Justification and sanctification are not the same. 1. Justification is without us, sanctification is within us. The one is by righteousness imputed, the other is by righteousness imparted. 2. Justification is equal, sanctification is gradual. Sanctification doth admit of degrees; one is sanctified more than another, but one is not justified more than another; one hath more grace than another, but he is not more a believer than another. 3. The matter of our justification is perfect, namely, Christ's right-

¹ 1 Ti. 1. 14. ² Is. 55. 9. ³ Je. 33. 8. ⁴ Col. 2. 13.

* The unpardonableness of any sin, cannot arise from the extent of its demerits: for the merit of Christ is infinite, and therefore sufficient for it. Nor can it arise from the law as a covenant having connected unpardonableness with it, as a circumstance of its punishment; for Christ has endured the whole curse of the law, and has removed every legal obstacle out of the way of a sinner's return to God. It must therefore arise out of the relation in which it brings the sinner to stand to the means of grace, and to that measure of the Holy Spirit's operation which God has been pleased to connect with them.—*Christ the Holy*, p. 172.

⁵ Ps. 103. 3. ⁶ 1 Jno. 2. 1. ⁷ Ac. 10. 43.

eousness; but our sanctification is imperfect, there are the spots of God's children.¹ Our graces are mixed, our duties are defiled.

Thus justification and sanctification are not the same; yet, for all that, they are not separated. God never pardons and justifies a sinner, but he doth sanctify him; 'but ye are justified, but ye are sanctified.'² 'This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ.'³ Christ comes to the soul by blood, that denotes remission; and by water, that denotes sanctification. Let no man say he is pardoned, that is not made holy. And this, I the rather urge against the Antinomians, who talk of being forgiven their sin, and having a part in Christ, and yet remain unconverted, and live in the grossest sins. Pardon and healing go together: 'I create the fruit of the lips, peace. And I will heal him.'⁴ Peace is the fruit of pardon; and then it follows, 'I will heal him.' Where God pardons he purifies. As in the inauguration of kings, with the crown there is the oil to anoint; so when God crowns a man with forgiveness, there he gives the anointing oil of grace to sanctify; 'I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name.'⁵ A 'white stone,' that is absolution; and a 'new name' in the stone, that is sanctification. 1. If God should pardon a man, and not sanctify him, this would be a reproach to him; then he should love and be well-pleased with men in their sins, which is diametrically contrary to his holy nature. 2. If God should pardon and not sanctify, then he could have no glory from us. God's people are formed to show forth his praise;⁶ but if he should pardon and not sanctify us, how could we show forth his praise? How could we glorify him? What glory can God have by a proud ignorant profane heart? 3. If God should pardon and not sanctify, then that should enter into heaven which defileth; but 'nothing shall enter that defileth.'⁷ Then God should settle the inheritance upon men before they are fit for it, contrary to that 'he hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance;⁸ how is that but by the divine unction? So that, whoever God forgives, he transforms. Let no man say his sins are forgiven, who doth not find an inherent work of holiness in his heart.

Aphorism 13. Where God remits sin, he imputes righteousness. This righteousness of Christ imputed is a salvo to God's law, and makes full satisfaction for the breaches of it.

This righteousness procures God's favour. God cannot but love us, when he sees us in his Son's robe, which both covers and adorns us. In this spotless robe of Christ we outshine the angels: theirs is but the righteousness of creatures, this is the righteousness of God himself; 'that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'⁹ How great a blessing then is forgiveness? With remission of sin is joined imputation of righteousness.

Aphorism 14. They whose sins are forgiven, must not omit praying for forgiveness; 'forgive us our trespasses.' Believers who are pardoned must be continual suitors for pardon. When Nathan told David, 'the Lord hath also put away thy sin,'¹⁰ yet David, after that composed a penitential psalm for the pardon of his sin. Sin, after pardon, rebels. Sin, like Samson's hair, though it be cut, will grow again. We sin daily, and must as well ask for daily pardon, as for daily bread. Besides, a Christian's pardon is not so sure, but he may desire to have a clearer evidence of it.

Aphorism 15. A full absolution from all sin is not pronounced till the day of judgment. The day of judgment is called 'a time of refreshing,' when sin shall be completely blotted out. Now God blots out sin truly, but then it shall be done in a more public way; God will openly pronounce the saints' absolution before men and angels; their happiness is not completed till the day of judgment, because then their pardon shall be solemnly pronounced, and there shall be the triumphs of the heavenly host. At that day it will be true indeed that God sees no sin in his children; they shall be as pure as the angels; then the church shall be presented without wrinkle.¹¹ She shall be as free from stain as guilt; then Satan shall no more accuse, Christ will show the debt-book crossed in his blood. Therefore the church doth so pray for Christ's coming to judgment; the bride saith, 'come, Lord Jesus:'¹² light the lamps, then burn the incense.

USE 1. Of information. 1. From this word, 'forgive,' we learn that if the debt of sin be no other way discharged but by being forgiven, then we cannot satisfy for it. Among other damnable opinions of the church of Rome, this is one, man's power to satisfy for sin. The council of Trent holds that God is satisfied by our undergoing the penalty imposed by the censure of priests; and again, we have works of

¹ De. 32. 5. ² 1 Cor. 6. 11. ³ 1 Jno. 5. 6. ⁴ Is. 57. 19.
⁵ Re. 2. 17 ⁶ Is. 43. 21. ⁷ Re. 21. 27. ⁸ Col. 1. 12.

⁹ 2 Cor. 5. 21. ¹⁰ 2 Sa. 12. 13. ¹¹ Ac. 3. 19.
¹² Ep. 5. 27. ¹³ Re. 22. 17.

our own, by which we may satisfy for the wrongs done to God: by these opinions, let any judge what the popish religion is. They intend to pay the debt they owe God themselves, to pay it in part, and do not look to have it all forgiven; but why did Christ teach us to pray, 'forgive us our sins,' if we can of ourselves satisfy God for the wrong we have done him? This doctrine robs God of his glory, Christ of his merit, and the soul of salvation. Alas! Is not the lock cut where the strength lay? Are not all our works fly-blown with sin, and can sin satisfy for sin? This doctrine makes men their own saviours: it is most absurd to hold; for, can the obedience of a finite creature satisfy for an infinite offence? Sin being forgiven, clearly implies we cannot satisfy for it.

2. From this word *us*, 'forgive us,' we learn that pardon is chiefly to be sought for ourselves: for though we are to pray for the pardon of others, 'pray one for another,'¹ yet in the first place, we are to beg pardon for ourselves. What! will another's pardon do us good? Every one is to endeavour to have his own name in the pardon. A son may be made free by his father's copy, but he cannot be pardoned by his father's pardon, he must have a pardon for himself. In this sense, selfishness is lawful, every one must be for himself, and get a pardon for his own sins, 'forgive us.'

3. From this word *our*, 'our sins,' we learn how just God is in punishing us. The text says, 'our sins;' we are not punished for other men's sins, but our own. 'There is nothing we can call so properly ours, as sin.' AUG. Our daily bread we have from God, our daily sins we have from ourselves. Sin is our own act, a web of our own spinning; how righteous therefore is God in punishing us? We sow the seed, and God only makes us reap what we sow; 'I give every man the fruit of his doings.'² When we are punished, we but taste the fruit of our own grafting.

4. From this word *sins*, see from hence the multitude of sins we stand guilty of. We pray not forgive us our sin, as if it were only a single debt, but sins, in the plural: so vast is the catalogue of our sins, that David cries out, 'who can understand his errors?'³ Our sins are like the drops of the sea, like the atoms in the sun, they exceed all arithmetic. Our debts we owe to God, we can no more number, than we can satisfy; which, as it should humble us to con-

sider how full of black spots our souls are, so it should put us upon seeking after the pardon of our sins. And this brings to the second use.

USE 2. Exhortation. To labour to have the forgiveness of sin sealed up to us. How can we eat, or drink, or sleep without it? 'It is sad dying without a pardon; this is to fall into the labyrinth of despair; of this the next time.

Let us labour for the forgiveness of sin. If ever this was needful, then now, when the times ring changes, and danger seems to be marching towards us. Labour, I say, for the forgiveness of sin; this is a main branch of the charter or covenant of grace; 'I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, and your sins and iniquities I will remember no more.'⁴ It is mercy to feed us, but it is rich mercy to pardon us; this is spun and woven out of the bowels of free grace. Earthly things are no signs of God's love; he may give the venison, but not the blessing; but when God seals up forgiveness, he gives his love, and heaven with it; 'thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.'⁵ A crown of gold was a mercy, but if you look into Ps. ciii. you shall find a greater mercy; 'who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness.'⁶ To be crowned with forgiveness and loving-kindness, is a far greater mercy than to have a crown of pure gold set upon the head. It was a mercy when Christ cured the palsied man; but when Christ said to him, 'thy sins be forgiven,'⁷ this was more than to have his palsy healed: forgiveness of sin is the chief thing to be sought after; and sure, if conscience be once touched with a sense of sin, there is nothing a man will thirst after more than forgiveness; 'my sin is ever before me.'⁸ This made David so earnest for pardon; 'have mercy upon me, O God; blot out my transgressions.'⁹ If one should have come to David, and asked him, 'David, where is thy pain? what is it troubles thee? is it the fear to shame which shall come upon thee and thy wives? is it the fear of the sword which God hath threatened shall not depart from thy house?' He would have said, 'no, it is only my sin pains me; my sin is ever before me.' Were but this removed by forgiveness, though the sword did ride in circuit in my family, I would be well enough content. When the arrow of guilt sticks in the conscience, nothing is so desirable as to have this arrow plucked out by forgiveness. O therefore seek after 'forgive-

¹ Ja. 5. 16.² Jer. 17. 10.³ Ps. 19. 12.⁴ He. 8. 12.⁵ Ps. 21. 3.⁶ Ver. 3. 4.⁷ Mar. 2. 5.⁸ Ps. 51. 3.⁹ Ps. 51. 1.

ness of sin! You can make a shift to live without it; but how will you do to die without it? Will not death have a sting to an unpardoned sinner? How do you think to get to heaven without forgiveness? As at some solemn festivals, there is no being admitted unless you bring a ticket: so, unless you have this ticket to show, 'forgiveness of sin,' there is no being admitted into the holy place of heaven. Will God ever crown those that he will not forgive? O be ambitious of pardoning grace! When God had made Abraham great and large promises, Abraham replies, 'Lord, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?'¹ so, when God hath given thee riches, and all thy heart can wish, say to him, 'Lord, what is all this, seeing I want forgiveness? let my pardon be sealed in Christ's blood.' A prisoner in the Tower is in an ill case, notwithstanding his brave diet, great attendance, soft bed to lie on, because, being impeached, he looks every day for his arraignment, and is afraid of the sentence of death: in such a case, and worse, is he, that swims in the pleasures of the world, but his sins are not forgiven; a guilty conscience doth impeach him, and he is in fear of being arraigned and condemned at God's judgment seat. Give not then sleep to your eyes, or slumber to your eyelids, till you have gotten some well-grounded hope that your sins are blotted out. Before I come to press the exhortation to seek after forgiveness of sin, I shall propound one question.

Q. *If pardon of sin be so absolutely necessary, without it no salvation, what is the reason that so few in the world seek after it? If they want health, they repair to the physician; if they want riches, they take a voyage to the Indies; but if they want forgiveness of sin, they seem to be unconcerned, and do not seek after it: whence is this?*

1. Inadvertency, or want of consideration; they do not look into their spiritual estate, or cast up their accounts to see how matters stand between God and their souls; 'my people do not consider.'² They do not consider they are indebted to God in a debt of ten thousand talents, and that God will, ere long, call them to account; 'so then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.'³ But people shun serious thoughts; 'my people do not consider.' Hence it is they do not look after pardon.

2. Men do not seek after forgiveness of sin, for want of conviction. Few are convinced what a deadly evil sin is; it is the spirits of mischief distilled, it turns a man's glory into shame, it brings all plagues on the body, and curses on the soul. Unless a man's sins be forgiven, there is not the vilest creature alive; the dog, serpent, toad, but is in a better condition than the sinner; for when they die, they go but to the earth; but he dying without pardon, goes into hell-torments for ever. Men are not convinced of this, but play with the viper of sin.

3. Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness, because they are seeking other things: they seek the world immoderately. When Saul was seeking after the asses, he did not think of a kingdom. The world is a golden snare. The wedge of gold hinders many from seeking after a pardon. Ministers cry to the people 'get your pardon sealed!' But if you call to a man that is in a mill, the noise of the mill drowns the voice, that he cannot hear: so when the mill of a trade is going, it makes such a noise, that the people cannot hear the minister when he lifts up his voice like a trumpet, and cries to them to look after the sealing of their pardon. He who spends all his time about the world, and doth not mind forgiveness, will accuse himself of folly at last. You would judge that prisoner very unwise, that should spend all his time with the cook to get his dinner ready, and should never mind getting a pardon.

4. Men seek not after the forgiveness of sin, through a bold presumption of mercy; they conceit God to be made up all of mercy, and that he will indulge them, though they take little or no pains to sue out their pardon. It is true, God is merciful, but withal he is just, he will not wrong his justice by showing mercy. Read the proclamation; 'the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious; and that will by no means clear the guilty.'⁴ Such as go on in sin, and are so slothful or wilful, that they will not seek after forgiveness, though there be a whole ocean of mercy in the Lord, not one drop shall fall to their share; 'he will by no means clear the guilty.'

5. Men seek not earnestly after forgiveness, out of hope of impunity. They flatter themselves in sin, and because they have been spared so long, therefore think, God never intends to reckon with them; 'he hath said in his heart,

¹ Ge. 15. 2.² 1s. 1. 3.³ Ro. 14. 12.⁴ Ex. 34. 6, 7.

God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.¹ Atheists think, either the judge is blind or forgetful; but let sinners know, that long forbearance is no forgiveness. God did bear with Sodom a long time, but at last rained down fire and brimstone upon them: the adjourning of the assizes doth not acquit the prisoner: the longer God is taking the blow, the heavier it will be at last, if sinners repent not.

6. Men do not seek earnestly after forgiveness through mistake; they think getting a pardon is easy, it is but repeating at the last hour, a sigh, or a Lord have mercy, and a pardon will drop into their mouths. But, is it so easy to repent, and have a pardon? Tell me, O sinner, is regeneration easy? Are there no pangs in the new birth? Is mortification easy? Is it nothing to pluck out the right eye? Is it easy to leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? This is the draw-net, by which the devil drags millions to hell; the facility of repenting and getting a pardon!

7. Men do not look after forgiveness through despair. Oh, saith the desponding soul, it is a vain thing for me to expect pardon; my sins are so many and heinous, that surely God will not forgive me: 'they said there is no hope.'² My sins are huge mountains, and, can they ever be cast into the sea? Despair cuts the sinews of endeavour; who will use means that despairs of success? The devil shows some men their sins at the little end of the perspective glass, and they seem little or none at all; but he shows others their sins at the great end of the perspective, and they fright them into despair. This is a soul-damning sin; Judas's despair was worse than his treason. Despair spills the cordial of Christ's blood; this is the voice of despair, 'Christ's blood cannot pardon me.' Thus you see whence it is that men seek no more earnestly after the forgiveness of sin.

Having answered this question, I shall now come to press the exhortation upon every one of us, to seek earnestly after the forgiveness of our sins.

1. Our very life lies upon the getting of a pardon: it is called 'the justification of life.'³ Now, if our life lies upon our pardon, and we are dead and damned without it, doth it not concern us above all things to labour after forgiveness of sin? 'for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.'⁴ If a man be under a

sentence of death, he will set his wits a-work, and make use of all his friends to get the king to grant his pardon, because his life lies upon it: so we are, by reason of sin, under a sentence of damnation; now, there is one friend at court we may make use of to procure our pardon, namely, the Lord Jesus; how earnest then should we be with him to be our advocate to the Father for us, and that he would present the merit of his blood to the Father, as the price of our pardon?

2. There is that in sin may make us desire forgiveness. Sin is the only thing that disquiets the soul. 1. Sin is a burden, it burdens the creation;⁵ it burdens the conscience.⁶ A wicked man is not sensible of sin, he is dead in sin; and if you lay a thousand weight upon a dead man, he feels it not. But to an awakened conscience, there is no such burden as sin; when a man seriously weighs with himself the glory and purity of that majesty which sin hath offended, the preciousness of that soul which sin hath polluted, the loss of that happiness which sin hath endangered, the greatness of that torment which sin hath deserved; to lay all this together, surely must make sin burdensome. And should not we labour to have this burden removed by pardoning mercy? 2. Sin is a debt; 'forgive us our debts;'⁷ and every debt we owe, God hath written down in his book; 'behold it is written before me,'⁸ and one day God's debt-book will be opened; 'the books were opened.'⁹ And is not this that which may make us look after forgiveness? Sin being such a debt as we must eternally lie in the prison of hell for, if it be not discharged, shall not we be earnest with God to cross the debt-book with the blood of his Son? There is no way to look God in the face with comfort, but by having our debts either paid, or pardoned.

3. There is nothing but forgiveness can give ease to a troubled conscience. There is a great difference between the having the fancy pleased, and having the conscience eased. Worldly things may please the fancy, but not ease the conscience; nothing but pardon can relieve a troubled soul. It is strange what shifts men will make for ease when conscience is pained, and how many false medicines they will use, before they will take the right way for a cure. When conscience is troubled, they will try what merry company can do; they may perhaps drink away trouble of conscience; perhaps they may

¹ Ps. 10. 11. ² Je. 18. 12. ³ Ro. 5. 18. ⁴ De. 32. 17.

⁵ Ro. 8. 22.

⁶ Is. 65. 6

⁷ Ps. 38. 4.

⁸ Ma. 6. 12.

⁹ Re. 20. 12.

play it away at cards; perhaps a Lent-whipping may do the deed; perhaps multitude of business will so take up their time, that they shall have no leisure to hear the clamours and accusations of conscience; but how vain are all these attempts! still their wound bleeds inwardly, their heart trembles, their conscience roars, and they can have no peace. Whence is it? Here is the reason, they go not to the mercy of God, and the blood of Christ, for the pardon of their sins: and hence it is, they can have no ease. Suppose a man hath a thorn in his foot which puts him to pain; let him anoint it, or wrap it up, and keep it warm; yet, till the thorn be plucked out, it aches and swells, and he hath no ease: so when the thorn of sin is gotten into a man's conscience, there is no ease till the thorn be pulled out; when God removes iniquity, now the thorn is plucked out. How was David's heart finely quieted, when Nathan the prophet told him, 'the Lord also hath put away thy sin.'¹ How should we therefore labour for forgiveness! Till then we can have no ease in our mind; nothing but a pardon sealed with the blood of the Redeemer, can ease a wounded spirit.

4. Forgiveness of sin is feasible; it may be obtained. Impossibility destroys endeavour; but, 'there is hope in Israel concerning this.'² The devils are past hope; a sentence of death is upon them, which is irrevocable; but there is hope for us of obtaining a pardon; 'there is forgiveness with thee.'³ If pardon of sin were not possible, then it were not to be prayed for; but it hath been prayed for, 'I beseech thee, O Lord, take away mine iniquity;'⁴ and Christ bids us pray for it, 'forgive us our trespasses.' That is possible which God hath promised, but God hath promised pardon upon repentance; 'let the wicked forsake his way and return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.'⁵ (Heb.) He will multiply to pardon. That is possible which others have obtained: but others have arrived at forgiveness, therefore it is haveable; 'thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.'⁶ This may make us endeavour after pardon, because it is feasible it may be had.

5. Consideration, to persuade to it, is, forgiveness of sin is a choice eminent blessing; to have the book cancelled, and God appeased, is worth obtaining; which may whet our endea-

your after it. That it is a rare transcendent blessing, appears by three demonstrations,

1st, If we consider how this blessing is purchased, namely, by the Lord Jesus. There are three things in reference to Christ, which set forth the choiceness and preciousness of forgiveness. 1. No mere created power in heaven or earth could expiate one sin, or procure a pardon; only Jesus Christ; 'he is the propitiation for our sins.'⁷ No merit can buy out a pardon. Paul had as much to boast of as any man; his high birth, his learning, his legal righteousness; but he disclaims all in point of justification, and lays them under Christ's feet to tread upon. No angel could, with all his holiness, lay down a price for the pardon of one sin; 'if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?'⁸ What angel durst be so bold, as to open his mouth to God for a delinquent sinner? Only Jesus Christ, who is God-man, could deal with God's justice, and purchase forgiveness. 2. Christ himself could not procure a pardon, but by dying; every pardon is the price of blood. Christ's life is a rule of holiness, and a pattern of obedience; he fulfilled all righteousness.⁹ And certainly, Christ's active obedience was of great value and merit, but here is that which raiseth the worth of forgiveness, Christ's active obedience had not fully procured a pardon for us, without the shedding of his blood: therefore our justification is ascribed to his blood; 'being now justified by his blood.'¹⁰ Christ did bleed out our pardon. There is much ascribed to Christ's intercession, but his intercession had not prevailed with God for the forgiveness of one sin, had not he shed his blood. It is worth our notice, that when Christ is described to John as an intercessor for his church, he is represented to him in the likeness of a lamb slain,¹¹ to show that Christ must die, and be slain, before he can be an intercessor. 3. Christ, by dying, had not purchased forgiveness for us, if he had not died an execrable death; he endured the curse.¹² All the agonies Christ endured in his soul, all the torments in his body, could not purchase a pardon, except he had been made a curse for us. Christ must be cursed, before we could be blessed with a pardon.

2dly, Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, if we consider what glorious attributes God puts forth in the pardoning of sin. 1. God puts forth infinite power: when Moses was pleading with

¹ 2 Sa. 12. 13. ² Eze. 10. 2. ³ Ps. 130. 4.
⁴ 2 Sa. 24. 10 ⁵ Isa. 55. 7. ⁶ Ps. 32. 5. Is. 38. 17.

⁷ 1 Jno. 2. 2. ⁸ 1 Sa. 2. 25. ⁹ Ma. 3. 15.
¹⁰ Ro. 5. 9. ¹¹ Re. 5. 6. ¹² Ga. 3. 13.

God for the pardon of Israel's sin, he speaks thus, 'let the power of my Lord be great.'¹ God's forgiving of sin is a work of as great power as to make heaven and earth, nay, a greater; for, when God made the world, he met with no opposition; but, when he comes to pardon, Satan opposeth, and the heart opposeth. A sinner is desperate, and slights, yea, defies a pardon, till God, by his mighty power, convinceth him of his sin and danger, and makes him willing to accept of a pardon. 2. God, in forgiving sins, puts forth 'infinite mercy;' 'pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy.'² It is mercy to have a reprieve; and if there be mercy in sparing a sinner, what mercy then is in pardoning him? This is the cream of mercy. For God to put up with so many injuries, to wipe so many debts off the score; this is infinite favour; forgiveness of sin is spun out of the bowels of God's mercy.

3dly, Forgiveness of sin is a choice blessing, as it lays a foundation for other mercies. It is a leading mercy. 1. It makes way for temporal good things. It brings health. When Christ said to the palsied man, 'thy sins are forgiven,' this made way for a bodily cure; 'arise, take up thy bed and go into thine house.'³ The pardon of his sin made way for the healing of his palsy. It brings prosperity.⁴ 2. It makes way for spiritual good things. Forgiveness of sin never comes alone, but hath other spiritual blessings attending it. Whom God pardons, he sanctifies, adopts, crowns. It is a voluminous mercy; it draws the silver link of grace, and the golden link of glory after it. It is an high act of indulgence; God seals the sinner's pardon with a kiss. And should not we above all things seek after so great a blessing as forgiveness?

6. Consideration, that which may make us seek after forgiveness of sin is, God's inclinableness to pardon; 'thou art a God ready to pardon.'⁵ In the Hebrew it is, 'a God of pardon.'⁶ We are apt to entertain wrong conceits of God, that he is inexorable, and will not forgive; 'I knew that thou art an hard man.'⁷ But God is a sin-pardoning God, 'the Lord, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.'⁸ Here is my name, saith God, if you would know how I am called, I tell you my name, 'the Lord, the Lord God, merciful, forgiving iniquity.' A pirate or rebel,

that knows there is a proclamation out against him, will never come in; but, if he hears that the prince is full of clemency, and there is a proclamation of pardon to him, if he submit, this will be a great incentive to him to lay down his arms, and become loyal to his prince. See God's proclamation to repenting sinners; 'go and proclaim these words, and say, return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon thee, for I am merciful.'⁹ God's mercy is a tender mercy. The Hebrew word for *mercy* signifies *bowels*. God's mercy is full of sympathy; he is of a most sweet indulgent nature; 'thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive.'¹⁰ The bee doth not more naturally give honey, than God shows mercy.

OBJ. 1. *But doth not God seem to delight in punitive acts, or acts of severity?* 'I will laugh at your calamity.'¹¹

Whom doth God say so to? 'ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof.'¹² God delights in their destruction who despise his instruction; but an humble penitent breaking off sin, and suing out his pardon, the Lord delights in showing mercy to such an one, 'he delighteth in mercy.'¹³

OBJ. 2. *But though God be so full of mercy, and ready to forgive, yet his mercy reacheth not to all; he forgives only such as are elected, and I question my election?*

1. No man can say he is not elected: God hath not revealed this to any particular man, that he is a reprobate, excepting him only who hath sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost: which sin thou art far enough from, who mournest for sin, and seekest after forgiveness. 2. These thoughts of non-election, that we are not elected, and that there is no pardon for us; come from Satan, and are the poisoned arrows he shoots. He is the accuser; he accuseth us to God, that we are great sinners; and, he accuseth God to us, as if he were a tyrant, one that did watch to destroy his creature: these are diabolical suggestions; say, 'get thee behind me, Satan.' 3. It is sinful for any to hold that he is not elected; it would take him off from the use of means, from praying, and repenting; it would harden him, and make him desperate; therefore pry not into the secrets of heaven. Remember what befell the men of Bethshemesh, for looking into the ark.¹⁴ Know that we are not to go by God's secret will, but

¹ Nu. 14. 17. ² Nu. 14. 19. ³ Ma. 9. 6. ⁴ Je. 32. 8, 9.
⁵ No. 9. 17. ⁶ Ma. 25. 24. ⁷ Ex. 34. 6, 7.

⁸ Je. 3. 12.
¹¹ Pr. 1. 25.

⁹ Ps. 86. 5.
¹² Mi. 7. 18.

¹⁰ Pr. 1. 26.
¹³ 1 Sa. 6. 19.

by his revealed will; look into God's revealed will, and there we shall find enough to cherish hope, and encourage us to go to God for the pardon of our sins. God hath revealed in his word, that 'he is rich in mercy;'¹ that he doth not delight in the destruction of a sinner.² He swears by his essence, 'as I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.'³ Hence it is God waits so long, and puts off the sessions from time to time, to see if sinners will repent, and seek to him for pardon; therefore let God's tender mercies and precious promises encourage us to seek to him for the forgiveness of our sins.

7. Consideration. Not to seek earnestly for pardon is the unspeakable misery of such as want forgiveness; it must needs be ill with that malefactor that wants his pardon.

1. The unpardoned sinner that lives and dies so, is under the greatest loss and privation. Is there any happiness like to the enjoying of God in glory; this is the joy of angels, the crown of saints glorified; but the unforgiven sinner shall not behold God's smiling face; he shall see God as an enemy, not as a friend; he shall have an affrighting sight of God, not beatifical; he shall see the black rod, not the mercy-seat. Sins unpardoned are like the angel with a flaming sword, who stopped the passage to paradise: sins unpardoned stop the way to the heavenly paradise: and how doleful is the condition of that soul which is banished from the place of bliss, where the King of glory keeps his court?

2. The unpardoned sinner hath nothing to do with any promise; the promises are the breasts that hold the sincere milk of the word, which fills the soul with precious sweetness; they are the royal charter: but what hath a stranger to do to meddle with the charter? It was the dove plucked the olive-branch; it is only the believer plucks the tree of the promise. Till the condition of the promise be performed, no man can have right to the comfort of the promise; and how sad is that, not to have one promise to show for heaven?

3. An unpardoned sinner is continually in danger of the outcry of an accusing conscience. An accusing conscience is a little hell. We tremble to hear a lion roar; how terrible are the roarings of conscience! Judas hanged himself to quiet his conscience: a sinner's conscience at present is either asleep, or seared; but

when God shall awaken conscience, either by affliction or at death, how will the unpardoned sinner be affrighted! When a man shall have all his sins set before his eyes, and drawn out in their bloody colours, and the worm of conscience begins to gnaw; sinner, here are thy debts, and the book is not cancelled, thou must to hell: O what a trembling at heart will the sinner have!

4. All the curses of God stand in full force against an unpardoned sinner. His very blessings are cursed; 'I will curse your blessings.'⁴ His table is a snare; he eats and drinks a curse. What comfort could Dionysius have at his feast, when he imagined he saw a naked sword hanging by a twine thread over his head? This is enough to spoil a sinner's banquet; a curse, like a naked sword, hangs over his head. Cæsar wondered to see one of his soldiers so merry that was in debt. One would wonder that man would be merry who is heir to all God's curses; he doth not see these curses; but is blinder than Balaam's ass, who saw the angel's sword drawn.

2. The unpardoned sinner is in an ill case at death. Luther professed there were three things which he durst not think of without Christ: of his sins, of death, of the day of judgment. Death to a Christless soul is the 'king of terrors.' As the prophet Ahijah said to Jeroboam's wife, 'I am sent to thee with heavy tidings; so death is sent to the unpardoned soul with heavy tidings;'⁵ it is God's jailor to arrest him. Death is a prologue to damnation; in particular, (1.) Death is a voider, to take away all his earthly comforts; it takes away his sugared morsels; no more drinking wine in bowls, no more mirth or music; 'the voice of harpers and musicians shall be heard no more at all in thee.'⁶ The sinner shall never taste of luscious delights more to all eternity; his honey shall be turned into 'the gall of asps.'⁷ (2.) At death there shall be an end put to all reprieves. Now God reprieves a sinner, he spares him such a fit of sickness; he respites him many years; the sinner should have died such a drinking-bout, but God granted him a reprieve; he lengthened out the silver thread of patience to a miracle; but the sinner dying without repentance, unpardoned, now the lease of God's patience is run out, and the sinner must appear in person before the righteous God, to receive his sentence; after which there shall be none to

¹ Ep. 2. 4.² Ez. 18. 32.³ Ez. 33. 11.⁴ Mal. 2. 2. ⁵ 1 Kl. 14. 6. ⁶ Re. 18. 22 ⁷ Job. 20. 14.

bail him, nor shall he hear of a reprieve any more.

6. The unpardoned sinner, dying so, must go into damnation; this is the second death, 'an undying death.' The unpardoned soul must for ever bear the anger of a sin-revenging God; as long as God is God, so long the vial of his wrath shall be dropping upon the damned soul; this is an helpless condition. There is a time when a sinner will not be helped; Christ and salvation are offered to him, but he slights them, he will not be helped; and there is a time shortly coming, when he cannot be helped; he calls out for mercy, 'O a pardon, a pardon!' but then it is too late, the date of mercy is expired. O how sad then is it to live and die unpardoned! You may lay a grave-stone upon that man, and write this epitaph upon it, 'it had been good for that man that he had never been born.' Now if the misery of an unpardoned state be so inexpressible, how should we labour for forgiveness, that we may not be engulfed in so dreadful a labyrinth of fire and brimstone to all eternity?

7. Such as are unpardoned must needs lead uncomfortable lives; 'thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night.'¹ Thus the unpardoned sinner must needs have a palpitation and trembling at the heart; he fears every bush he sees; 'fear hath torment.'² The Greek word for torment, (*hōlasis*,) is used sometimes for hell: fear hath hell in it. A man in debt fears every step he goes, lest he should be arrested; so the unpardoned sinner fears, what if this night, death, which is God's serjeant, should arrest him? 'Why dost not thou pardon my transgression? for now shall I sleep in the dust.'³ As if Job had said, 'Lord, I shall shortly die, I shall sleep in the dust; and what shall I do if my sins be not pardoned?' What comfort can an unpardoned soul take in any thing? Sure no more than a prisoner can take in meat or music, that wants his pardon! Therefore, by all these powerful motives, let us labour for the forgiveness of sin.

OBJ. 1. *But I am discouraged from going to God for pardon, for I am unworthy of forgiveness; what am I, that God should do such a favour for me?*

God forgives, not because we are worthy, but because he is gracious, 'the Lord, the Lord merciful and gracious.'⁴ God forgives out of

his clemency; acts of pardon are acts of grace. What worthiness was there in Paul before conversion? He was a blasphemer, and so he sinned against the first table; he was a persecutor, and so he sinned against the second table; but free grace sealed his pardon; 'I obtained mercy.'⁵ I was all bestrewed with mercy. What worthiness was in the woman of Samaria? she was ignorant,⁶ she was unclean,⁷ she was morose and churlish; she would not give Christ so much as a cup of cold water; 'how is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria?'⁸ What worthiness was here? yet Christ overlooked all, and pardoned her ingratitude; and though she denied him water out of the well, yet he gave her the water of life. 'Free grace doth not find us worthy, but makes us worthy.' Therefore, notwithstanding unworthiness, seek to God, that your sins may be pardoned.

OBJ. 2. *But I have been a great sinner, and sure God will not pardon me.*

David brings it as an argument for pardon; 'pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.'⁹ When God forgives great sins, now he doth a work like himself. The desperateness of the wound doth the more set forth the virtue of Christ's blood in curing it. Mary Magdalene was a great sinner, out of whom seven devils were cast, yet she had her pardon. Some of the Jews, who had a hand in crucifying of Christ, upon their repentance, the very blood they shed did seal their pardon. Consider sins either for their number as the sands of the sea; or for their weight as the rocks of the sea, yet there is mercy enough in God to forgive them; 'though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow.'¹⁰ Scarlet signifies twice dipped, which no art of man can get out; yet God can wash out this scarlet dye. There is no sin excepted from pardon, but that sin which despiseth pardon, namely, the sin against the Holy Ghost.¹¹ Therefore, O sinner, do not cast away thy anchor of hope, but go to God for forgiveness. The vast ocean hath bounds set to it, but God's pardoning mercy is boundless. God can as well forgive great sins as less; as the sea can as well cover great rocks as little sands. Nothing hinders pardon, but the sinner's not asking it. That a great sinner should not despair of forgiveness, consult that scripture, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.'¹² If you look on the foregoing words, you would wonder how this verse comes in, 'thou hast

¹ De. 28. 66. ² 1 Jno. 4. 18. ³ Job 7. 21. ⁴ Ex. 34. 6.

⁵ 1 Ti. 1. 13. ⁶ Jno. 4. 22. ⁷ Jno. 4. 18. ⁸ Jno. 4. 9.
⁹ Ps. 25. 11. ¹⁰ Is. 1. 18. ¹¹ Mat. 12. 13. ¹² Is. 43. 25.

made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities;" and then it follows 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.' One would have thought it should have run thus, 'thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities; I, even I, am he that will punish thy iniquities;' but God comes in a mild loving strain, 'thou hast wearied me with thy iniquities, I am he that blots out thy iniquities.' So that the greatness of our sins should not discourage us from going to God for forgiveness. Though thou hast committed acts of impiety, yet God can come with an act of indemnity, and say, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions.' God counts it his glory to display free grace in its orient colours; 'where sin aboundeth grace did much more abound.* When sin becomes exceeding sinful, free grace becomes exceeding glorious. God's pardoning love can conquer the sinner, and triumph over the sin. Consider, thou almost despairing soul, there is not so much sin in man as there is mercy in God; man's sin in comparison of God's mercy, is but as a spark to the ocean: and who would doubt whether a spark could be quenched in an ocean?

OBJ. 3. *But I have relapsed into the same sins, and how can I have the face to come to God for pardon of those sins which I have more than once fallen into?*

I know that the Novatians held that after a relapse no forgiveness by the church. But doubtless that was an error; Abraham did twice equivocate, Lot committed incest twice, Peter sinned thrice by carnal fear; but these repenting, had their absolution. There is a twofold relapse, 1. A wilful relapse, when, after a man hath solemnly vowed himself to God, he falls into a league with sin, and returns back to it; 'I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.'³ 2. There is a relapse through infirmity, when the bent and resolution of a man's heart is against sin, but, through the violence of temptation, and withdrawing of God's grace, he is carried down the stream against his will. Now, though wilful and continued relapses are desperate, and do, as Tertullian, 'waste the conscience,' and run men upon the precipice of damnation, yet if they are through infirmity, and we mourn for them, we may obtain forgiveness. A godly man doth not march after sin as his general, but is led captive by it; and the Lord will pity a captive-prisoner. Christ com-

mands us to forgive a trespassing brother, 'seventy times seven.'⁴ If he bids us do it, much more will he forgive a relapsing sinner, in case he repent; 'return thou backsliding Israel,'⁵ for I am merciful, saith the Lord. It is not falling once or twice into the mire that drowns, but lying there; it is not once relapsing into sin, but lying in sin impenitently that damns.

OBJ. 4. *But God requires so much sorrow and humiliation before remission, that I fear I shall never arrive at it.*

God requires no more humiliation than may fit a soul for mercy. Many a Christian thinks, because he hath not filled God's bottle so full of tears as others, therefore he is not humbled enough to receive a pardon. But we must know God's dealings are various; all have not the like pangs in the new birth; some are won with love, the sense of God's mercy abused, causeth ingenuous tears to flow; others are more flagitious and hardened, and these God deals more roughly with. This is sure, that soul is humbled enough to receive a pardon who is brought to a thorough sense of sin, and sees the need of a Saviour, and loves him as the fairest of ten thousand; therefore be not discouraged, if thy heart be bruised from sin and broken off from it, thy sin shall be blotted out. No sooner did Ephraim fall a-weeping, but God's bowels fell a-working; 'my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him.'⁶

Having answered these objections, let me beseech you, above all things, labour for the forgiveness of sin; think with yourselves how great a mercy it is; it is one of the richest jewels in the cabinet of the new covenant; 'blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.'⁷ In the Hebrew it is blessedness. And think with yourselves the unparalleled misery of such whose sins are not forgiven. Such as had not the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon their door-posts were destroyed by the angel;⁸ so they who have not Christ's blood sprinkled on them, to wash away the guilt of sin, will fall into the gulf of perdition. And if you resolve to seek after forgiveness, do not delay. Many say they will go about the getting their pardon, but they procrastinate and put it off so long, till it be too late; when the shadows of the evening are stretched forth, and the night of death approacheth, then they begin to look after their pardon. This hath been the undoing of millions; they purpose they will look after

¹ Is. 43. 24.

² Ro. 5. 20.

³ Je. 2. 25.

⁴ Ma. 18. 22.

Je. 3. 22.

⁶ Je. 31. 20.

⁷ Ps. 32. 1.

⁸ Ex. 12. 7.

their souls, but they stay so long till the lease of mercy be run out. Oh, therefore hasten the getting of a pardon! Think of the uncertainty of life! What security have you that you shall live another day? Our life is a taper soon blown out; it is made up of a few flying minutes. O thou dust and ashes! thou mayest fear every hour to be blown into thy grave; and what if death come to arrest thee before thy pardon be sealed? Plutarch reports of one Archias, who being among his cups, one delivered to him a letter, and desired him to read it presently, being about serious business, saith he, 'I will mind serious things to-morrow;' and that night he was slain. Thou that sayest, 'to-morrow I will repent, I will get my pardon,' thou mayest suddenly be slain; therefore to-day, while it is called to-day, look after the forgiveness of sin; after a while, all the conduits of mercy will be stopped, there will not be one drop of Christ's blood to be had, there is no sealing of pardons after death.

2d Branch of exhortation. Let us labour to have the evidence of pardon, to know that our sins are forgiven. A man may have his sins forgiven, and not know it; he may have a pardon in the court of heaven, when he hath it not in the court of conscience. David's sin was forgiven as soon as he repented; and God sent Nathan the prophet to tell him so:¹ but David did not feel the comfort of it at present, as appears by the penitential psalm composed after; 'make me to hear joy and gladness;² 'cast me not away from thy presence.'³ It is one thing to be pardoned, and another thing to feel it. The evidence of pardon may not appear for a time, and this may be, 1. From the imbecility and weakness of faith. Forgiveness of sin is so strange and infinite a blessing, that a Christian can hardly persuade himself that God will extend such a favour to him. As it is said of the apostles, when Christ appeared to them first, 'they believed not for joy, and wondered;⁴ so the soul is so stricken with admiration, that the wonder of pardon doth almost stagger his faith. 2. A man may be pardoned and not know it, from the strength of temptation. Satan accuseth the godly of sin, and tells him that God doth not love them; what should such sinners think of pardon? Believers are compared to bruised reeds,⁵ and temptations to winds.⁶ Now, a reed is easily shaken with the wind. Temptations shake the godly;

and though they are pardoned, yet they know it not. Job in a temptation thought God his enemy,⁷ yet then he was in a pardoned condition.

Q. *But why doth God sometimes conceal the evidence of pardon?*

Though God doth pardon, yet he may withhold the sense of it a while: 1. Because hereby he would lay us lower in contrition. God would have us see what an evil and bitter thing it is to offend him; we shall therefore lie the longer stepping ourselves in the brinish tears of repentance, before we have the sense of pardon; it being long before David's broken bones were set, and his pardon sealed, the more contrite his heart was, and this was a sacrifice God delighted in. 2. Though God hath forgiven sin, yet he may deny the manifestation of it for a time, to make us prize pardon, and make it sweeter to us when it comes. The difficulty of obtaining a mercy enhanceth the value. When we have been a long time tugging at prayer for a pardon of sin, and still God withholds, but at last, after many sighs and tears, pardon comes, now we esteem it the more, and it is sweeter. The longer mercy is in the birth, the more welcome will the deliverance be.

Let me now resume the exhortation to labour for the evidence and sense of pardon. He who is pardoned and knows it not, is like one who hath an estate befallen him, but knows it not. Our comfort consists in the knowledge of forgiveness; 'make me to hear joy and gladness.'⁸ This is a proclaiming a jubilee in the soul, when we are able to read our pardon; and to the witness of conscience God adds the witness of his Spirit; in the mouth of these two witnesses our joy is confirmed. O labour for this evidence of forgiveness!

Q. *How shall we know that our sins are forgiven?*

We must not be our own judges in this case, 'he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.'⁹ 'The heart is deceitful,'¹⁰ and it is folly to trust a deceiver. The Lord only by his word must be judge in this case, whether we are pardoned or not. As it was under the law, no leper might judge himself to be clean; but the priest was to pronounce him clean;¹¹ so, we are not to judge of ourselves to be clean from the guilt of sin, till we are such as the word of God hath pronounced to be clean.

Q. *How then shall we know by the word whether our guilt is done away, and our sins pardoned?*

¹ 1 Sa. 12. 13.
⁴ Lu. 24. 41.

² Ps. 51. 8.

³ Ps. 51. 11.

⁵ Ma. 12. 20.

⁶ Ma. 7. 15.

⁷ Job 16. 9.

¹⁰ Je. 17. 9.

⁸ Ps. 51. 8.

⁹ Pr. 28. 26.

¹¹ Le. 13. 37.

1. The pardoned sinner is a great weeper. The sense of God's love melts his heart; that free grace should ever look upon me, that such crimson sins should be washed away in Christ's blood; this makes the heart melt, and the eyes drop with tears: never did any man read his pardon with dry eyes; 'she stood at his feet weeping,'¹ her heart was a spiritual limbeck, out of which those tears were distilled. Mary's tears were more precious to Christ than her ointment; her eyes, which before did sparkle with lust, whose amorous glances had set on fire her lovers, now she makes them a fountain, and washeth Christ's feet with her tears. She was a true penitent, and had her pardon; 'wherefore, I say, her sins which were many, are forgiven.'² A pardon will make the hardest heart relent, and cause the stony heart to bleed and, is it thus with us? Have we been dissolved into tears for sin? God seals his pardons upon melting hearts.

2. We may know our sins are forgiven, by having the grace of faith infused; 'to him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.'³ In saving faith there are two things, renunciation, and recumbency. 1. Renunciation: a man renounceth all opinion of himself; digged out of his own burrow, he is quite taken off himself.⁴ He sees all his duties are but broken reeds; though he could weep a sea of tears, though he had all the grace of men and angels, it could not purchase his pardon. 2. Recumbency. Faith is an assent with affiance; the soul doth get hold of Christ, as Adonijah did of the horns of the altar.⁵ Faith casts itself upon the stream of Christ's blood, and saith, 'if I perish, I perish.' If we have but the least drachm of this precious faith, we have something to show for pardon. 'To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.' This faith is acceptable to God; it pleaseth God more than offering up ten thousand rivers of oil, than working miracles, than martyrdom, or the highest acts of obedience. Faith is profitable to us; it is our best certificate to show for pardon: no sooner doth faith reach forth its hand to receive Christ, but Christ sets his hand to our pardon.

3. The pardoned soul is a God-admirer; 'who is a God like thee, that pardoneth iniquity?'⁶ O that God should ever look upon

me! I was a sinner, and nothing but a sinner, yet I obtained mercy! Who is a God like thee! Mercy hath been despised, yet that mercy should save me! Christ hath been crucified by me, yet his cross crowns me! God hath displayed the ensigns of free grace, he hath set up his mercy above my sin, nay, in spite of it; this causeth admiration: 'who is a God like thee?' A man that goes over a narrow bridge in the night, and the next morning comes and sees the danger he was in, and how miraculously he escaped, he is stricken with admiration: so, when God shows a soul how near he was a-falling into hell, and how that this gulf is shut, all his sins are pardoned, he is amazed, and cries out, 'who is a God like thee, that pardoneth iniquity!' That God should pardon one and pass by another, one taken, another left; this fills the soul with wonder and astonishment.

4. Wherever God pardons sin, he subdues it; 'he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities.'⁷ Where men's persons are justified, their lusts are mortified. There is in sin a commanding power, and a condemning. Then is the condemning power of sin taken away, when the commanding power is taken away. When we know whether our sins are forgiven, are they subdued. If a malefactor be in prison, how shall he know that his prince hath pardoned him? if the jailor come and knock off his chains and fetters, and lets him out of prison, then he may know he is pardoned: so how shall we know God hath pardoned us; if the fetters of sin be broken off, and we walk at liberty in the ways of God. 'I will walk at liberty';⁸ this is a blessed sign we are pardoned. Such as are washed in Christ's blood from their guilt, are made kings to God;⁹ as kings they rule over their sins.

5. He whose sins are forgiven is full of love to God. Mary Magdalene's heart was fired with love: 'her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.'¹⁰ Her love was not the cause of her remission, but a sign of it. A pardoned soul is a monument of mercy, and he thinks he can never love God enough; he wishes he had a coal from God's altar, to inflame his heart in love; he wisheth he could borrow the wings of the cherubim, that he might fly swifter in obedience; a pardoned soul is sick of love. He whose heart is like marble, locked up in impenitency, that doth not melt in love, gives evidence his pardon is yet to seal.

¹ Lu. 7. 38.² Lu. 7. 47.³ Ac. 10. 43.⁴ Ph. 3. 9.⁵ 1 Ki. 1. 51.⁶ Mi. 7. 18.⁷ Mi. 7. 19.⁸ Ps. 119. 45.⁹ Re. 1. 6¹⁰ Lu. 7. 47.

6. Where the sin is pardoned, the nature is purified; 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them.' Every man, by nature, is both guilty and diseased: where God remits the guilt, he cures the disease; 'who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases.'² Herein God's pardon goes beyond the king's pardon; the king may forgive a malefactor, but he cannot change his heart, he may have a thievish heart still: but God, when he pardons changeth the heart; 'a new heart also will I give you.'³ A pardoned soul is adorned and embellished with holiness; 'this is he that came by water and blood.'⁴ Where Christ comes with blood to justify, he comes with water to cleanse; 'I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.'⁵ I will cause thy iniquity to pass from thee, there is pardoning grace; and I will clothe thee with change of raiment, there is sanctifying grace; let not him say, he hath pardon, that wants grace. Many tell us, they hope they are pardoned, but were never sanctified: yea, but they believe in Christ; but what faith is it? A swearing faith, a whoring faith; the faith of devils is as good.

7. Such as are in the number of God's people, forgiveness of sin belongs to them; 'comfort ye my people, tell them their iniquity is pardoned.'⁶

Q. *How shall we know that we are God's elect people?*

By three characters. 1st. God's people are an humble people, the livery which all Christ's people wear, is humility; 'Be clothed with humility.'⁷ A sight of God's glory humbles. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle when God's glory passed by; 'now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself.'⁸ The stars vanish when the sun appears. A sight of sin humbles. In the glass of the word the godly see their spots, and these are humbling spots. Lo, saith the soul, I can call nothing my own but sins and wants! this humbles. An humble sinner is in a better condition than a proud angel. 2. God's people are a willing people: 'a people of willingness.'⁹ Love constrains them; they serve God freely, and out of choice. They stick at no service; they will run through a sea, and a wilderness; they will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. 3d. They are an heavenly people, stars; 'they are not of the world.'¹⁰

As the *primum mobile* in the heavens hath a motion of its own, contrary to the other orbs; so God's people have an heavenly motion of soul, contrary to the men of the world; they use the world as their servant, but do not follow the world as their master; 'our conversation is in heaven.'¹¹ Such as have these three characters of God's people, have a good certificate to show that they are pardoned. Forgiveness of sin belongs to them: 'comfort ye my people, tell them their iniquity is forgiven.'

8. A sign we are pardoned, if, after many storms, we have a sweet calm and peace within; 'being justified we have peace.'¹² After many a bitter tear shed, and heartbreaking, the mind hath been more sedate, and a sweet serenity of still music hath followed; this brings tidings, God is appeased; whereas before conscience did accuse, now it doth secretly whisper comfort; this is a blessed evidence a man's sins are pardoned. If the bailiffs do not trouble and arrest the debtor, it is a sign his debt is compounded or forgiven: so if conscience do not vex or accuse, but upon good grounds whisper consolation, this is a sign the debt is discharged, the sin is forgiven.

9. A sign sin is forgiven, when we have hearts without guile; 'blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,' unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.'¹³

Q. *What is this to be without guile?*

He who is without guile, 1st, Hath plainness of heart; he is without collusion, he hath not a double heart; his heart is right with God. A man may do a right action, but not with a right heart; Amaziah 'did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart.'¹⁴ To have the heart right with God, is to serve God from a right principle, love; by a right rule, the word; to a right end, the glory of God. 2d. A heart without guile dares not allow itself in the least sin; he avoids secret sins. He dares not hide any sin, as Rachel did her father's images, under her.¹⁵ He knows God sees him, which is more than if men and angels did behold him. He avoids complexion-sins; 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from my iniquity.'¹⁶ As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin. A heart without guile takes the sacrificing knife of mortification, and runs it through his beloved sin. 3d. A heart

¹ Ho. 14. 4. ² Ps. 103. 3. ³ Ez. 36. 26. ⁴ 1 Jno. 5. 6.

⁵ Ze. 3. 4.

⁶ Is. 60. 1, 2.

⁷ 1 Pe. 5. 5.

⁸ Job 42. 5.

⁹ Ps. 110. 3.

¹⁰ Jno. 17. 16.

¹¹ Ph. 3. 20.

¹² Ro. 5. 1.

¹³ Ps. 32. 1, 2.

¹⁴ 2 Ch. 25. 2.

¹⁵ Ge. 31. 34.

¹⁶ Ps. 18. 23.

without guile desires to know the whole mind and will of God. An unsound heart is afraid of the light, he is not willing to know his duty. A sincere soul saith, 'what I know not, teach thou me:'¹ Lord show me what is my duty, and wherein I offend; let me not sin for want of light: what I know not, teach thou me.

4th. A heart without guile is uniform in religion: he hath an equal eye to all God's commands. He makes conscience of private duties; he worships God in his closet as well as in the temple. Jacob, when he was alone, wrestled with the angel;² so a Christian, when he is alone, wrestles with God in prayer, and will not let him go till he hath blessed him. He performs difficult duties, wherein the heart and spirit of religion lie, and which do cross flesh and blood; he is much in self-humbling, and self-examining. He rather useth the looking glass of the word to look into his own heart, than the broad spectacles of censure to spy the faults of others.

5th. An heart without guile is true to God's interest. He grieves to see it go ill with the church. Nehemiah, though the king's cup-bearer, and wine so near, yet was sad when Zion's glory was eclipsed.³ Like the tree I have read of, if any of the leaves are cut, the rest of the leaves begin to shrink up themselves, and for a time to hang down the head; so a sincere soul, when God's church suffers, feels himself as it were touched in his own person. He rejoiceth to see the cause of God get ground; to see truth triumph, piety lift up her head, and the flowers of Christ's crown flourish. This is an heart without guile, it is loyal and true to God's interest.

6th. An heart without guile is just in his dealings; as he is upright in his words, so he is upright in his weights. He makes conscience of the second table as well as the first; he is for equity as well as piety; 'that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter.'⁴ A sincere heart thinks he may as well rob as defraud: his rule is to do to others what he would have them do to him.

7th. An heart without guile is true in his promises; his word is as good as his bond. If he hath made a promise, though it be to his prejudice, and doth entrench upon his profit, he will not go back. The hypocrite plays fast and loose, flees from his word; there is no more binding him with oaths and promises, than Samson could be bound with green withes. A sincere soul saith as Jephtha, 'I

have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back.'⁵

8th. An heart without guile is faithful in his friendship; he is what he pretends; his heart goes along with his tongue, as a well-made dial goes with the sun. He cannot flatter and hate, commend and censure. Counterfeiting of love is hypocrisy. It is too usual to betray with a kiss: 'Joab took Abner by the beard to kiss him, and smote him in the fifth rib that he died.'⁶ Many deceive with sugar words. Physicians use to judge of the health of the body by the tongue; if that look well, the body is in health. But we cannot judge of friendship by the tongue; the words may be full of honey, when the heart hath the gall of malice; sure his heart is not true to God, who is treacherous to his friend. Thus you see what an heart without guile is; now, to have such an heart is a sign sin is pardoned: 'God will not impute sin to him in whose spirit there is no guile.'⁷ What a blessed thing is this, not to have sin imputed? If our sins be not imputed, it is as if we had no sin; sins remitted, are as if they had not been committed; this is the blessing belongs to a sincere soul, God imputes not iniquity to him in whose spirit is no guile.

10. He whose sins are forgiven, is willing to forgive others who have offended him; 'forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'⁸ An hypocrite will read, come to church, give alms, build hospitals; but cannot forgive wrongs: he will rather want forgiveness from God than he will forgive his enemies. A pardoned soul argues thus: 'hath not God been so good to me, to forgive me my sins, and shall not I imitate him in this? Hath he forgiven me pounds, and shall I not forgive pence?' It is noted of Cranmer, 'he usually forgets nothing except injuries.'⁹ CICERO. He was of a forgiving spirit, and would do offices of love to them that had injured him; like the sun, which having drawn up black vapours from the earth, returns them back in sweet showers. By this touchstone, we may try whether our sins are pardoned; we need not climb up into heaven to see whether our sins are forgiven, but let us look into our hearts; are we of forgiving spirits? Can we bury injuries, requite good for evil? a good sign we are forgiven of God. If we can find all these things wrought in our souls, they are happy signs that our sins are pardoned, and are good letters testimonial to show for heaven.

¹ Job 34. 32 ² Ge. 32. 21, 25. ³ Ne. 2. 3. ⁴ 1 Th. 4. 6.

⁵ Ju. 11. 35.

⁶ 2 Sa. 20. 9.

⁷ Eph. 4. 32.

USE 3. Consolation. I shall open a box of cordials, and show you some of the glorious privleges of a pardoned condition. This is a peculiar favour, it is a spring shut up, broached for none but the elect. The wicked may have forbearing merey, but only an elect person hath forgiving merey. Forgiveness of sin makes way for solid joy; 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,'¹—or, as in the Hebrew, 'speak to her heart.' What was this must cheer her heart? 'tell her that her iniquity is pardoned.' If any thing would comfort her, the Lord knew it was this. When Christ would cheer the palsied man, 'son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.'² It was a greater comfort to have his sins forgiven, than to have his palsy healed. This made David put on his best clothes and anoint himself.³ It was strange; his child was newly dead, and God had told him the sword should not depart from his house, yet now he spruceeth up himself, he puts on his best clothes, and anoints himself: whence was this? David had heard good news; God sent him his pardon by Nathan the prophet; 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.'⁴ This could not but revive his heart, and in token of joy, he anoints himself. Philo saith, it was an opinion of some of the philosophers that among the heavenly spheres there was such sweet harmonious melody, that if the sound of it could reach our ears, it would affect us with wonder and delight: sure he who is pardoned hath such a divine melody in his soul, as doth replenish him with infinite delight. When Christ had said to Mary Magdalene, 'thy sins are forgiven;' he presently adds, 'go in peace.'⁵ More particularly,

1st, Comfort. God looks upon a pardoned soul, as if he had never sinned. As the cancelling of a bond nulls the bond, and makes it as if the money had never been owing, forgiving sin makes it not to be. Where sin is remitted, it is as if it had not been committed.⁶ So that, as Rachel wept because her children were not, so a child of God may rejoice because his sins are not. God looks upon him as if he had never offended; though sin may remain in him after pardon, yet God doth not look upon him as a sinner, but as a just man.

2d, God having pardoned sin, will pass an act of oblivion; 'I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'⁷ When

a creditor hath crossed the book, he doth not call for the book again. God will not reckon with the sinner in a judicial way. When our sins are laid upon the head of Christ, our scape-goat, they are carried into a land of forgetfulness.

3d, The pardoned soul is for ever secured from the wrath of God. How terrible is God's wrath! 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?'⁸ If a spark of God's wrath, when it lights upon a man's conscience, fills it with such horror, as in the case of Spira, then, what is it to be always scorching in that torrid zone, to lie upon beds of flames? Now, from this avenging wrath of God every pardoned soul is freed; though he may taste of the bitter cup of affliction, yet he shall never drink of the sea of God's wrath; 'being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.'⁹ Christ's blood quencheth the flames of hell.

4th, Sin being pardoned, conscience hath no more authority to accuse. Conscience roars against the unpardoned sinner, but it hath nothing to do to terrify or accuse him that is pardoned. God hath discharged the sinner, and if the creditor discharge the debtor, what hath the sergeant to do to arrest him? The truth is, if God absolve, conscience, if rightly informed, absolves; if once God saith, thy sins are pardoned, conscience saith, 'go in peace.' If the sky be clear, and no storms blow there, then the sea is calm; if all be clear above, and God shine with pardoning mercy upon the soul, then conscience is calm and serene.

5th, Nothing that befalls a pardoned soul shall hurt him; 'no evil shall touch thee:'¹⁰ that is, no destructive evil. Every thing to a wicked man is hurtful. Good things are for his hurt. His very blessings are turned into a curse; 'I will curse your blessings.'¹¹ Riches and prosperity do him hurt. 'They are not gifts but snares,' SENECA; 'golden snares: 'riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt:'¹² like Haman's banquet, which did usher in his funeral. Ordinances do a sinner hurt; they are a 'savour of death.'¹³ Cordials themselves kill. The best things hurt the wicked, but the worst things which befall a pardoned soul shall do him no hurt; the sting, the poison, the curse is gone: his soul is no more hurt, than David hurt Saul, when he cut off the lap of his garment.

6th, To a pardoned soul every thing hath a commission to do him good. Afflictions shall

¹ Is. 40. 1. ² Ma. 9. 2. ³ 2 Sa. 12. 20. ⁴ 2 Sa. 12. 13.
⁵ Lu. 7. 50. ⁶ Je. 50. 20. ⁷ Je. 31. 34.

⁸ Ps. 90. 11.

⁹ Ro. 5. 9.

¹⁰ Ps. 91. 10.

¹¹ Mal. 2. 2.

¹² Ec. 5. 13.

¹³ 2 Co. 2. 16.

do him good; poverty, reproach, persecution: 'ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good.'¹ As the elements, though of contrary qualities, yet God hath so tempered them, that they work for the good of the universe, so the most cross providences shall work for good to a pardoned soul. Correction shall be a corrosive to eat out sin; it shall cure the swelling of pride, the fever of lust, the dropsy of avarice. It shall be a refining fire to purify grace, and make it sparkle as gold. Every cross providence, to a pardoned soul, shall be like Paul's Euroclydon or cross wind,² which though it broke the ship, yet Paul was brought to shore upon the broken pieces.

7th, A pardoned soul is not only exempted from wrath, but invested with dignity; as Joseph was not only freed from prison, but advanced to be second man in the kingdom.

8th, A pardoned soul is made a favourite of heaven. A king may pardon a traitor, but will not make him one of his privy-council; but whom God pardons, he receives into favour. I may say to him, as the angel to the virgin Mary, 'thou hast found favour with God.'³ Hence such as are forgiven, are said to be 'crowned with loving-kindness.' Whom God pardons he crowns. Whom God absolves, he marries himself to; 'I am merciful, and I will not keep anger for ever;' there is forgiveness: and 'I am married to you;' and he who is matched into the crown of heaven, is as rich as the angels, as rich as heaven can make him.

9th, Sin being pardoned, we may come with humble boldness to God in prayer; guilt makes us afraid to go to God. Adam having sinned. 'was afraid,' and hid himself. Guilt clips the wings of prayer, it fills the face with blushing: but forgiveness breeds confidence; we may look upon God as a Father of mercy, holding forth a golden sceptre; he that hath got his pardon, can look upon his prince with comfort.

10th, Forgiveness of sin makes our services acceptable; God takes all we do in good part. A guilty person, nothing he doth pleaseth God. His prayer is 'turned into sin;' but when sin is pardoned, now God accepts our offering. We read of Joshua standing before the angel of the Lord. 'Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,'⁴ that is, he was guilty of divers sins: now, saith the Lord, 'take away his filthy garments, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee:'⁵

and then he stood and ministered before the Lord, and his services were accepted.

11th, Forgiveness of sin is the sauce which sweetens all the comforts of this life. As guilt embitters our comforts, it puts wormwood into our cup: so pardon of sin sweetens all; it is like sugar to wine. Health and pardon, estate and pardon, relish well. Pardon of sin gives a sanctified title! and a delicious taste to every comfort. As Naaman said to Gehazi, 'take two talents,' so saith God to the pardoned soul, 'take two talents;' take the venison, and take a blessing with it; take the oil in the cruise, and take my love with it; take two talents. It is observable, Christ joins these two together, 'give us our daily bread,' 'forgive us our trespasses:' as if Christ would teach us, there is little comfort in daily bread, unless sin be forgiven. Forgiveness doth perfume and drop sweetness into every earthly enjoyment.

12th, If sin be forgiven, God will never upbraid us with our former sins. When the prodigal came home to his father, the father received him into his loving embraces, and never mentioned his former luxury, or spending his estate among harlots, so God will not upbraid us with former sins, nay, he will entirely love us, we shall be his jewels, and he will put us in his bosom. Mary Magdalene, a pardoned penitent, after Christ arose, he appeared first to her;⁶ so far was Christ from upbraiding her, that he brings her the first news of his resurrection.

13th, Sin being pardoned, is a pillar of support in the loss of dear friends. God hath taken away thy child, thy husband; but withal, he hath taken away thy sins. He hath given thee more than he hath taken away; he hath taken away a flower, and given thee a jewel. He hath given thee Christ and the Spirit, and the earnest of glory. He hath given thee more than he hath taken away.

14th, Where God pardons sins, he bestows righteousness. With remission of sin goes imputation of righteousness; 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.'⁷ If a Christian can take any comfort in his inherent righteousness, which is so stained and mixed with sin, O then what comfort may he take in Christ's righteousness, which is a better righteousness than that of Adam! Adam's righteousness was mutable; but suppose it had been unchangeable,

Ge. 50. 20. ² Ac. 27. ³ Lu. 1. 30. ⁴ Ps. 103. 3, 4. ⁵ Je. 3. 12. ⁶ Je. 3. 11. ⁷ Ge. 3. 10. ⁸ Ze. 3. 3. ⁹ Ze. 3. 4.

¹⁰ Mar. 16. 9.

¹¹ Is. 61. 10.

yet it was but the righteousness of a man ; but that righteousness which is imputed, is the righteousness of him who is God ; 'that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'¹ O blessed privilege, to be reputed, in the sight of God, righteous as Christ, having his embroidered robe put upon the soul ! This is the comfort of every one that is pardoned, he hath a perfect righteousness ; and now God saith of him, 'thou art all fair my love, and there is no spot in thee.'²

15th, A pardoned soul needs not fear death. He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith. To a pardoned soul death hath lost his sting. Death, to a pardoned sinner, is like the arresting a man after the debt is paid ; death may arrest, but Christ will show the debt-book crossed in his blood. A pardoned soul may triumph over death, 'O death, where is thy sting ! O grave, where is thy victory !' He who is pardoned need not fear death, it is not a destruction but a deliverance ; it is to him a day of jubilee or release ; it releaseth him from all his sins. Death comes to a pardoned soul, as the angel did to Peter : it smote him, and beat off his chains, and carried him out of prison : so doth death to him who is pardoned, it smites his body and the chains of sin fall off. Death frees a pardoned soul from all his labours.³ 'A happy change from labour to rest.' BERN. Death, as it will wipe off our tears, so it will wipe off our sweat. Death will do a pardoned Christian the greatest good turn, therefore it is made a part of the inventory ; 'death is yours.'⁴ Death is like the waggon which was sent for old Jacob ; it came rattling with its wheels, but it was to carry Jacob to his son Joseph : so the wheels of death's chariot may rattle, and make a noise, but they are to carry a believer to Christ. While a believer is here, he is 'absent from the Lord.'⁵ He lives far from court, and cannot see him whom his soul loves : but death gives him a sight of the king of glory, 'in whose presence is fulness of joy.' To a pardoned soul, death is 'a translation to a kingdom ;' it removes him to the place of bliss, where he shall hear the triumphs and anthems of praise sung in the choir of angels. No cause hath a pardoned soul to fear death ; what needs he fear to have his body buried in the earth, who hath his sins buried in Christ's wounds ? What hurt can death do to him ? it is but his

ferry-man to ferry him over to the land of promise. The day of death to a pardoned soul, is his ascension-day to heaven, his coronation-day, when he shall be crowned with those delights of paradise, which are unspeakable and full of glory. Thus you see the rich consolations which belong to a pardoned sinner : well might David proclaim him blessed ; 'blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven ;' in the Hebrew it is in the plural, *blessednesses*. Here is a plurality of blessings. Forgiveness of sin is like the first link of a chain, which draws all the links after it ; it draws these fifteen privileges after it ; it crowns with grace and glory. Who then would not labour to have his sins forgiven ? 'blessed is he whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered.'

Now follow the duties of such as have their sins forgiven. Mercy calls for duty. Be much in praise and doxology.

1. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities.' Hath God crowned you with pardoning mercy ? set the crown of your praise upon the head of free grace. Pardon of sin is a discriminating mercy, a jewel hung only upon the elect : this calls for acclamations of praise. You will give thanks for 'daily bread,' and will you not much more for pardon ? You will give thanks for deliverance from sickness, and will you not for deliverance from hell ? God hath done more for you in forgiving your sin, than if he had given you a kingdom. And that you may be more thankful, do but set the unpardoned condition before your eyes : how sad is it to want a pardon ! All the curses of the law stand in full force against such an one. The unpardoned sinner dying, he drops into the grave and hell both at once ; he must quarter among the damned ; and will not this make you thankful, that this is not your condition, but that you are 'delivered from the wrath to come.'

2. Let God's pardoning love inflame your hearts with love to God. For God to pardon freely without any desert of yours ; to pardon so many offences ; that he should pardon you and pass by others ; that he should take you out of the ruins of mankind, and of a cloud of dust and sin, make you a jewel sparkling with heavenly glory : will not this make you love God much ? Three prisoners that deserve to die, if the king pardon one of these, and leave the other two to the severity of the law, will not he that is pardoned love his prince,

¹ 2 Co. 5. 21. ² Ca. 4. 7. ³ Re. 14. 13.

⁴ 1 Co. 3. 22.

⁵ 2 Co. 5. 6.

⁶ Ps. 32. 1.

who hath been so full of clemency? How should your hearts be endeared in love to God? The schoolmen distinguish of a twofold love, a love of bounty; that is, God's love to us in forgiving; and a love of duty; that is, our love to God by way of retaliation. We should show our love by admiring God, by sweetly solacing ourselves in him, and binding ourselves to him in a perpetual covenant.

3. Let the sense of God's love in forgiving, make you more cautious and fearful of sin for the future; 'There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared.'¹ O fear to offend this God, who hath been so gracious to you in forgiving. If a friend hath done a kindness for us, we will not disoblige him, or abuse his love. After Nathan had told David, 'the Lord hath put away thy sin,' how tender was David's conscience! how fearful was he of staining his soul with the guilt of more blood! 'Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God!'² Men committing gross sins after pardon, God changeth his carriage towards them, he turns his smile into a frown; they lie, as Jonah, in 'the belly of hell;' God's wrath falls into their conscience, as a drop of scalding lead into the eye; the promises are as a fountain sealed, not a drop of comfort comes from them. O Christians, do you not remember what it cost you before to get your pardon! How long it was before your 'broken bones' were set; and will you again venture to sin? You may be in such a condition, that you may question whether you belong to God or not: though God doth not damn you, he may send you to hell in this life.*

4. If God hath given you good hope that you are pardoned, walk cheerfully; 'we joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.'³ Who should rejoice, if not he that hath his pardon? God rejoiceth when he shows us mercy, and should not we rejoice when we receive mercy? In the saddest times a pardoned soul may rejoice.

¹ Ps. 130. 4. ² Ps. 51. 14. ³ Ro. 5. 11.

* Nor is the withholding or the withdrawing spiritual influences merely an arbitrary act. It is the just punishment of men's wickedness, perverseness, and folly, in trifling with the means of grace, doing despite unto the Spirit, and thus grieving that Spirit, till it is compelled to withdraw. Hence, by the way, results the necessity of a constant self-denial: because it is evident that so far as we indulge any vanity of mind, or corruption of heart, so far we resist the graces of the Spirit, and render ourselves indisposed to relish and improve its inspiration: we should, therefore, sedulously avoid all those tempers and employments, all those enjoyments and indulgences, which may cause us to be 'less able and less disposed, to improve those degrees of divine grace that are communicated to us.—Dr. O. Gregory, letter 17.

Afflictions have a commission to do him good, every cross wind of providence shall blow him nearer to the haven of glory. Christian, God hath pulled off your prison-fetters, and clothed you with the robe of righteousness, and crowned you with loving-kindness, and yet art thou sad? 'We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'⁴ Can the wicked rejoice who have only a short reprieve from hell, and not they who have a full pardon sealed?

5. Hath God pardoned you? Do all the service you can for God; 'always abounding in the work of the Lord.'⁵ Let your head study for God, let your hands work for him, let your tongue be the organ of his praise. Paul got his pardon; 'I obtained mercy:'⁶ and this was as oil to the wheels, it made him move faster in obedience; 'I laboured more abundantly than they all.'⁷ Paul's obedience did not move slow, as the sun on the dial; but swiftly as the sun in the firmament, he did spend, and was spent for Christ. The pardoned soul thinks he can never love God enough or serve him enough.

The last thing is to lay down some rules or directions, how we may obtain forgiveness of sin

First, We must take heed of mistakes about pardon of sin.

1st Mistake. That our sins are pardoned, when they are not. Whence is this mistake? From two grounds. 1. Because God is merciful. God's being merciful, shows, that a man's sins are pardonable. But there is a great deal of difference between sins pardonable and sins pardoned; thy sins may be pardonable, yet not pardoned. Though God be merciful, yet whom is God's mercy for? Not for the presuming sinner, but the repenting sinner. Such as go on in sin, cannot lay claim to it. God's mercy is like the ark, none but the priests, might touch the ark: none but such as are spiritual priests, sacrificing their sins, may touch this ark of God's mercy. 2. Because Christ died for their sins, therefore they are forgiven.

That Christ died for remission of sin is true; but, that therefore all have remission, is false; then Judas should be forgiven. Remission is limited to believers; 'by him all that believe are justified:'⁸ but all do not believe, some slight and trample⁹ Christ's blood under foot, so that notwithstanding Christ's death, all are not pardoned. Take heed of this dangerous

⁴ Ho. 5. 2. ⁵ 1 Cor. 15. 58. ⁶ 1 Ti. 1. 16.
⁷ 1 Cor. 15. 10. ⁸ Ac. 13. 39. ⁹ He. 10. 27.

mistake. Who will seek after pardon, that thinks he hath it already?

2d Mistake. That pardon is easy to be had; it is but a sigh, or, Lord have mercy. But, how dearly hath pardon cost them who have obtained it? How long was it ere David's broken bones were set? Happy are we, if we have the pardon of sin sealed, though at the very last hour! But why do men think pardon of sin so easy to be obtained? Their sins are but small, therefore venial. The devil holds the small end of the perspective glass before their eyes. But, *1st*, There is no sin small, being against a Deity. Why is he punished with death that clips the king's coin, or defaceth his statue, but because it is an abuse offered to the person of the king? *2dly*, Little sins, when multiplied, become great; a little sum, when multiplied, comes to millions. What is less than a grain of sand? but, when the sand is multiplied, what heavier? *3dly*, Thy sins cost no small price. View thy sins in the glass of Christ's sufferings; Christ did veil his glory, lose his joy, and pour out his soul an offering for the least sin. *4thly*, Little sins unrepented of will damn thee, as well as greater. Not only great rivers fall into the sea, but little brooks; not only greater sins carry men to hell, but lesser; therefore do not think pardon easy, because sin is small: beware of mistakes.

The Second means for pardon of sin, is, see yourselves guilty; come to God as condemned men: 'they put ropes upon their heads, and came to the king of Israel.' Let us come to God in profound humility. Say not thus, 'Lord, my heart is good, and my life blameless;' God hates this. Lie in the dust, be covered with sackcloth; say as the centurion, 'Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof;'² I deserve not the least smile from heaven. This is the way for pardon.

The Third means for pardon is, hearty confession of sin; 'I will confess my transgressions, and thou forgavest me.'³ Would we have God cover our sins? we must discover them; 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.'⁴ One would have thought it should have run thus, if we confess our sins, he is merciful to forgive them; nay, but he is just to forgive them. Why just? Because he hath bound himself by a promise to forgive an humble confessor of sin. When we accuse ourselves, God absolves us. We are

apt to hide our sins⁵ which is as great a folly as for one to hide his disease from the physician; but when we open our sins to God by confessing, he opens his mercy to us by forgiving.

The Fourth means for pardon is sound repentance: repentance and remission are put together.⁶ There is a promise of a fountain opened for the washing away the guilt of sin:⁷ but see what goes before; 'they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him.'⁸ 'Wash you, make you clean;⁹ that is, wash in the waters of repentance; and then follows a promise of forgiveness, 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.' It is easy to turn white into scarlet, but not so easy to turn scarlet into white: yet, upon repentance, God hath promised to make the scarlet sinner of a milk-like whiteness. *Caution.* Not that repentance merits pardon, but it prepares for it. We set our seal on the wax when it melts: God seals his pardons on melting hearts.

The Fifth means, faith in the blood of Christ. It is Christ's blood washeth away sin:¹⁰ but this blood will not wash away sin, unless it be applied by faith. The apostle speaks of the 'sprinkling of the blood of Christ.'¹¹ Many are not pardoned, though Christ's blood be shed, because it is not sprinkled: now it is faith that sprinkles Christ's blood on the soul, for the remission of sin. As Thomas put his hands into Christ's sides, so faith puts its hand into Christ's wounds, and takes of the blood and sprinkles it upon the conscience for the washing away of guilt. Hence in scripture, we are said to obtain pardon through faith: 'by him all that believe are justified;¹² 'thy sins are forgiven;¹³ whence was this? 'thy faith has saved thee.'¹⁴ O let us labour for faith! Christ is a propitiation or atonement to take away sin; but how? 'through faith in his blood.'¹⁵

The Sixth means, pray much for pardon; 'take away all iniquity.'¹⁶ 'The publican smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.'¹⁷ And the text saith, 'he went away justified.' Many pray for health, riches, children; but Christ hath taught us what to pray for chiefly, 'forgive us our sins.' And be earnest suitors for pardon; consider what guilt of sin is; it binds one over to the wrath of God; better thy house were haunted with devils, than

⁵ Joh. 31. 33. ⁶ Lu. 24. 47. ⁷ Ze. 13. 1. ⁸ Ze. 12. 10. ⁹ Is. 1. 16.
¹⁰ Re. 1. 5. ¹¹ 1 Pe. 1. 2. ¹² Ac. 13. 39. ¹³ Lu. 7. 48
¹⁴ Lu. 7. 50. ¹⁵ Ro. 3. 25. ¹⁶ Ho. 14. 2. ¹⁷ Lu. 18. 13.

¹ 1 Ki. 20. : 2. ² Mat. 8. 8. ³ Ps. 32. 5. ⁴ 1 Jno. 1. 9.

thy soul with guilt. He who is in 'the bond of iniquity,' must needs be 'in the gall of bitterness.'¹ A guilty soul wears Cain's mark, which was a trembling at the heart, and a shaking in his flesh; guilt makes the sinner afraid, lest every trouble he meets with should arrest him, and bring him to judgment. If guilt be so dismal, and breed such convulsion-fits in the conscience, how earnest should we be in prayer that God would remove this guilt, and so earnest as to resolve to take no denial. Plead hard with God for pardon, as a man would plead with a judge for his life. Fall upon thy knees, say, 'Lord, hear one word.' 'Why,' may God say, 'what canst thou say for thyself, that thou shouldst not die?' 'Lord, I can say but little, but I put in my surety, Christ shall answer for me. O look upon that blood which speaks better things than that of Abel! Christ is my priest, his blood is my sacrifice, his divine nature is my altar.' As Rahab was to show the scarlet thread in the window, and when Joshua saw it, he did not destroy her:² so show the Lord the scarlet thread of Christ's blood, and that is the way to have mercy. 'But,' will God say, 'why should I pardon thee? thou hast no-

wise obliged me.' 'But, Lord, pardon me because thou hast promised it; I urge thy covenant.' When a man is to die by the law, he calls for his book; so say, 'Lord, let me have the benefit of my book: thy word saith, if the sinner forsake his evil way, thou wilt pardon abundantly;³ Lord, I have forsaken my sins, let me therefore have mercy: I plead the benefit of the book.' 'But, for whose sake should I pardon, thou canst not deserve it.' 'Lord, for thy own name's sake; thou hast said, thou wilt blot out sin, for thy own name's sake.'⁴ It will be no eclipsing to thy crown; how will thy mercy shine forth, and all thy other attributes ride in triumph, if thou shalt pardon me.' Thus plead with God in prayer, and resolve not to give him over till thy pardon be sealed. God cannot deny importunity; he delights in mercy. As the mother, saith Chrysostom, delights to have her breast milked, so God delights to milk out the breast of mercy to the sinner. These means being used will procure this great blessedness; the forgiveness of sin. Thus I have done with the first part of this fifth petition, 'forgive us our sins;' I come to the second part of this petition, 'as we forgive our debtors.'

MAT. VI. 12. *As we forgive our Debtors:** Or, *As we forgive them that trespass against us.*

I PROCEED to the second part of the petition, 'as we forgive them that trespass against us.'

'As we forgive.' This word, *as*, is not a note of equality, but similitude; not that we equal God in forgiving, but imitate him.

This great duty of forgiving others, is a crossing the stream; it is contrary to flesh and blood. Men forget kindnesses, but remember injuries. But it is an indispensable duty to forgive; we are not bound to trust an enemy; but we are bound to forgive him. We are naturally prone

to revenge. Revenge, saith Homer, is sweet as dropping honey. The heathen philosophers held revenge lawful. 'When provoked by injury you may revenge.' CICERO. But we learn better things out of the oracles of scripture; 'When ye stand praying, forgive;' 'if a man hath a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.'⁵

Q. 1. *How can I forgive others, when it is only God forgives sin?*

In every breach of the second table, there are two things; an offence against God, and a trespass against man: so far as it is an offence against God, he only can forgive; but so far as it is a trespass against man, so we may forgive.

Q. 2. *When do we forgive others?*

When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; if it be in our power to do our enemies mischief, we will not; we wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, we pray for them, we seek reconciliation with them, we show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them; this is gospel-forgiving.

¹ Ac. 8. 23.

² Jos. 2. 18, 21, & 6. 22, 23.

* The same authority which requires justice on the part of the debtor, also warrants the man, to whom it is justly due, to require satisfaction. The 'debts' then, the forgiveness of which our religion requires, have no reference to the pecuniary obligations which are daily contracted in the ordinary intercourse of society. There are certain relative duties, which, by the laws of God, we are bound to perform one to another. The omission of these, or the commission of the contrary crime, subjects the offender to a certain penalty. Now, as this penalty is contracted by the omission of a duty which we were *legally* bound to perform, (Le. 19. 17, 18. Ro. 13. 8.) its contraction comes clearly under the idea of a debt; a debt, for which we are accountable not only to that God whose law it opposes, but also to those men who may be more particularly injured thereby.—*Christus & Mag.*, v. iiii. p. 349.

³ Is. 55. 7.

⁵ Mar. 11. 25.

⁴ Is. 43. 25.

⁶ Mat. 5. 41; Col 3. 13.

OBJ. 1. *But I have been much injured and abused, and to put it up will be a stain to my reputation.*

1. To pass by an injury without revenge, is no eclipsing one's credit; the scripture saith, 'it is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression.'¹ It is more honour to bury an injury, than revenge it; wrathfulness denotes weakness; a noble heroic spirit overlooks a petty offence. 2. Suppose a man's credit should be impaired with those whose censure is not to be valued: yet consider the folly of challenging another to a duel; it is little wisdom for a man to redeem his credit by losing his life, and to run to hell to be counted valorous.

OBJ. 2. *But the wrong he hath done me is great.*

But thy not forgiving him is a greater wrong; he in injuring thee hath offended against a man, but thou in not forgiving him offendest against God.

OBJ. 3. *But if I forgive one injury, I shall occasion more.*

If the more injuries thou forgivest, the more thou meetest with, this will make thy grace shine the more. Often forgiving will add more to the weight of his sin, and to the weight of thy glory. If any say, 'I strive to excel in other graces, but as for this of forgiving, I cannot do it, I desire in this to be excused;' what dost thou talk of other graces? The graces are linked and chained together; where there is one, there is all; he that cannot forgive, his grace is counterfeit, his faith is fancy, his devotion is hypocrisy.

Q. 3. *But suppose another hath wronged me in my estate, may not I go to law for my debt?*

Yes, else what use were there of law-courts? God hath set judges to decide cases in law, and to give every one his right. It is with going to law, as it is with going to war; when the just rights of a nation are invaded, here it is lawful to go to war, so when a man's estate is trespassed upon by another, he may go to law to recover it. But the law must be used in the last place, when no entreaties or arbitrations will prevail, then the chancery must decide it. Yet this is no revenge, it is not so much to injure another, as to right one's self; this may be, yet one may live in charity.

USE 1st. Here is a bill of indictment against such as study revenge, and cannot put up the least discourtesy. They would have God forgive them, but they will not forgive others;

they will pray, come to church, give alms; but, as Christ said, 'yet lackest thou one thing,' they lack a forgiving spirit; they will rather want forgiveness from God, than they will forgive their brother. How sad is it, that, for every slight wrong, or disgraceful word, men should let malice boil in their hearts! Would there be so many duels, arrests, murders, if men had the art of forgiving? Revenge is the proper sin of the devil; he is no drunkard or adulterer, but this old serpent is full of the poison of malice; and what shall we say to them who make profession of religion, yet instead of forgiving, pursue others despitefully? It was prophesied, 'the wolf should dwell with the lamb';² but what shall we say, when such as profess to be lambs become wolves? These open the mouths of the profane against religion; they will say these are as full of rancour as any. O whither is love and mercy fled! If the son of man did come, should he find charity on the earth? I fear but little! Such as but cherish anger and malice in their hearts, and will not forgive, how can they pray, 'forgive us, as we forgive others?' Either they must omit this petition, as Chrysostom saith some did in his time, or else they pray against themselves.

USE 2d. Let it persuade us all, as ever we hope for salvation, to pass by petty injuries and discourtesies, and labour to be of forgiving spirits, 'forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.'³

1. Herein we resemble God. He is 'ready to forgive,'⁴ he befriends his enemies, he opens his hands to relieve them, who open their mouths against him. It was Adam's pride to go to resemble God in omniscency, but here it is lawful to resemble God in forgiving enemies, this is a God-like disposition; and what is godliness, but God-likeness?

2. To forgive is one of the highest evidences of grace. When grace comes into the heart, it makes a man, as Caleb, of another spirit.⁵ It makes a great metamorphosis; it sweetens the heart, and fills it with love and candour. When a scion is grafted into a stock, it partakes of the nature and sap of the tree, and brings forth the same fruit; take a crab, graft it into a pepin, it brings forth the same fruit as the pepin, so he who was once of a sour crabby disposition, given to revenge, when he is once ingrafted into Christ, he partakes of the sap of

¹ Pr. 19. 11.

² Is. 11. 6. ³ Col. 3. 13. ⁴ Ps. 86. 5. ⁵ Nu. 14. 24.

this heavenly olive, and bears sweet and generous fruit; he is full of love to his enemies, and requites good for evil. As the sun draws up many thick noxious vapours from the earth, and returns them in sweet showers; so a gracious heart returns the unkindnesses of others with the sweet influences of love and mercifulness; 'they rewarded me evil for good; but as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting.'¹ This is a good certificate to show for heaven.

3. The blessed example of our Lord Jesus; he was of a forgiving spirit; his enemies reviled him, but he did pity them; their words were more bitter than the gall and vinegar they gave him, but Christ's words were smoother than oil; they spat upon him, pierced him with the spear and nails, but he prayed for them, 'Father forgive them;' he wept over his enemies, he shed tears for them that shed his blood. Never such a pattern of amazing kindness! Christ bids us learn of him;² he doth not bid us learn of him to work miracles, but he would have us learn of him to forgive our enemies. If we do not imitate Christ's life, we cannot be saved by his death.

4. The danger of an implacable unforgiving spirit; it hinders the efficacy of ordinances; it is like an obstruction in the body, which keeps it from thriving. A revengeful spirit poisons our sacrifice, our prayers are turned into sin; will God receive prayer mingled with this strange fire? Our coming to the sacrament is sin, we come not in charity; so that ordinances are turned into sin. It were sad if all the meat one did eat should turn to poison; malice poisons the sacramental cup, men eat and drink their own damnation. Judas came to the passover in malice, 'and after the sop Satan entered.'³

5. God hath tied his mercy to this condition; if we do not forgive, neither will he forgive us; 'if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.'⁴ A man may as well go to hell for not forgiving, as for not believing. How can they expect mercy from God, whose bowels are shut up, and are merciless to their trespassing brethren? 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.'⁵ I cannot forgive, said one, though I go to hell.

6. The examples of the saints who have been of forgiving spirits. Joseph forgave his brethren, though they put him into a pit, and sold

him; 'fear ye not, I will nourish you, and your little ones.'⁶ Stephen prayed for his persecutors. Moses was of a forgiving spirit; how many injuries and affronts did he put up? The people of Israel dealt unkindly with him, they murmured against him at the waters of Marah, (the water was not so bitter as their spirits) but he fell to prayer for them; 'he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.'⁷ When they wanted water, they fell a-chiding with Moses, 'why hast thou brought us out of Egypt, to kill us with thirst?'⁸ As if they had said, 'if we die, we will lay our death to thy charge;' here was enough to have made Moses call for fire from heaven upon them: but he passeth by this injury, and, to show he forgave them, he becomes an intercessor for them, and set the rock a broach for them. The prophet Elisha feasted his enemies;⁹ he prepared a table for them who would have prepared his grave. Cranmer was famous for forgiving injuries. When Luther had reviled Calvin, saith Calvin, 'though he call me a devil a thousand times,' yet I will love and honour him as a precious servant of Christ. When one had abused and wronged a Christian, asking him what wonders hath your master Christ wrought? saith he, he hath wrought this wonder, that though you have so injured me, yet I can forgive you, and pray for you.

7. Forgiving and requiting good for evil is the best way to conquer and melt the heart of an enemy. Saul having pursued David with malice, and hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains, yet David would not do him mischief when it was in his power. David's kindness melted Saul's heart; 'is this thy voice, my son David? and Saul lifted up his voice and wept, and said, thou art more righteous than I, for thou hast rewarded me good.'¹⁰ This forgiving is heaping coals which melt the enemy's heart.¹¹ This is the most noble victory, to overcome an enemy without striking a blow, to conquer him with love. Philip of Macedon, when it was told him that one Nicanor did openly rail against him, the king, instead of putting him to death, sent him a rich present, which did so overcome the man and make his heart relent, that he went up and down to recant what he had said against the king, and did highly extol the king's clemency.

8. Forgiving others is the way to have for-

¹ Ps. 35. 12, 13. ² Mat. 11. 29. ³ Jno. 13. 27.
⁴ Mat. 6. 15. ⁵ Ja. 2. 13

⁶ Ge. 50. 21. ⁷ Ex. 15. 25. ⁸ Ex. 17. 3.
⁹ 2 Kl. 6. 23. ¹⁰ 1 Sa. 24. 16. ¹¹ Ro. 12. 20

giveness from God, and is a sign of forgiveness. (1.) It is the way to have forgiveness; 'if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you.'¹ But one would think other things should sooner procure forgiveness from God, than our forgiving others: no surely, nothing like this to procure forgiveness, for all other acts of religion may have leaven in them. God forbade leaven in the sacrifice;² one may give alms, yet there may be the leaven of vain-glory in this; the Pharisees sounded a trumpet, they did not give alms, but sell them for applause.³ One may give his body to be burned; yet there may be leaven in this, it may be a false zeal: there may be leaven in many acts of religion which sours the whole lump; but to forgive others that have offended us, this can have no leaven in it, no sinister aim, this is a duty wholly spiritual, and is done purely out of love to God: hence it is God rather annexeth forgiveness to this than to the highest and most renowned works of charity, which are so cried up in the world. (2.) It is a sign of God's forgiving us. It is not a cause of God's forgiving us, but a sign; we need not climb up into heaven, to see whether our sins are forgiven; let us look into our hearts, and see if we can forgive others. Then we need not doubt but God hath forgiven us: our loving others is nothing but the reflection of God's love to us. Oh therefore, by all these arguments, let us be persuaded to the forgiving others. Christians, how many offences hath God passed by in us? Our sins are innumerable and heinous: is God willing to forgive us so many offences, and cannot we forgive a few? No man can do so much wrong to us all our life, as we do to God in one day.

Q. *But how must we forgive?*

As God forgives us. 1. Cordially. God doth not only make a show of forgiveness, and keep our sins by him, but doth really forgive; he passeth an act of oblivion.⁴ So we must not only say, we forgive, but do it with the heart; 'if ye from your hearts forgive not.'⁵ 2. God forgives fully; he forgives all our sins. He doth not for fourscore write down fifty; 'who forgiveth all thy iniquities'⁶ Hypocrites pass by some offences, but retain others. Would we have God deal so with us to remit only some trespasses, and call us to account for the rest. 3. God forgives often; we run afresh upon the score, but God multiplies pardon.⁷ Peter asks

the question, 'Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven.'⁸ If he say, 'I repent,' you must say, 'I remit.'

Q. *But this is one of the highest acts of religion; flesh and blood cannot do it; how shall I attain to it?*

1. Let us consider how many wrongs and injuries we have done against God; what volume can hold our *errata*? Our sins are more than the sparks in a furnace. 2. If we would forgive, see God's hand in all that men do or say against us. Did we look higher than instruments, our hearts would grow calm, and we would not meditate revenge. Shimei reproached David, and cursed: David looked higher; 'let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.'⁹ What made Christ, that when he was reviled he reviled not again? he looked beyond Judas and Pilate, he saw his father putting the bitter cup into his hand. And as we must see God's hand in all the affronts and incivilities we receive from men, so we must believe God will do us good by all, if we belong to him: 'it may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.'¹⁰ 'He that injures me shall add to my reward,' Aug.; he that clips my name to make it weigh lighter, shall make my crown weigh heavier. Well might Stephen pray for his enemies, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'¹¹ He knew they did but increase his glory in heaven; every stone his enemies threw at him, added a pearl to his crown. 3. Lay up a stock of faith; 'if thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, and say, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.'¹² And the apostles said to the Lord, 'increase our faith:' as if they had said, 'we can never do this without a great deal of faith; Lord, increase our faith.' Believe God hath pardoned you, and you will pardon others; only faith can throw dust upon injuries, and bury them in the grave of forgetfulness. 4. Think how thou hast sometimes wronged others; and may it not be just with God that the measure you mete to others, should be measured to you again? Hast not thou wronged others, if not in their goods, yet in their name? If thou hast not borne false witness against them, yet perhaps thou hast spoken falsely of them: the consideration of this may make Christians bury injuries

¹ Mat. 6. 14. ² Ex. 34. 25. ³ Mat. 6. 2. ⁴ Je. 31. 34.
⁵ Mat. 18. 35. ⁶ Ps. 103. 3. ⁷ Is. 57. 7.

⁸ Mat. 18. 21. ⁹ 2 Sa. 16. 11. ¹⁰ 2 Sa. 16. 12.
¹¹ Ac. 7. 60. ¹² Lu. 17. 4.

in silence. 5. Get humble hearts. A proud man thinks it a disgrace to put up with an injury. What causeth so many duels and murders but pride? 'Be clothed with humility;' he who is low in his own eyes, will not be troubled much though others lay him low: he knows there is a day coming, when there shall be a resurrection of names as well as bodies, and God will avenge him of his adversaries; 'shall not God avenge his own elect?'¹ The humble soul leaves

all his wrongs to God to requite, who hath said, 'vengeance is mine.'²

USE. Of comfort. Such as forgive, God will forgive them. You have a good argument to plead with God for forgiveness. 'Lo, I am willing to forgive him who makes me no satisfaction, and wilt not thou forgive me who hast received satisfaction in Christ my surety.' So ends the fifth petition.

OF THE SIXTH PETITION IN THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MAT. vi. 13. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

THIS petition consists of two parts. First, deprecatory, 'lead us not into temptation.' Secondly, petitionary, 'but deliver us from evil.'

First, 'Lead us not into temptation.' Doth God lead into temptation? God tempts no man to sin; 'let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God tempteth not any man.'³ God doth permit sin, but doth not promote it. He who is an encourager of holiness cannot be a patron of sin. God doth not tempt to that which he hath an antipathy against. What king will tempt his subjects to break those laws which he himself hath established.

Q. *But is it not said, God tempted Abraham.*⁴

Tempting *there* was no more than trying. God tried Abraham's faith, as a goldsmith tries gold in the fire: but there is a great deal of difference between God's trying his people's grace, and exciting their corruptions; he trieth their grace, but doth not excite their corruptions; man's sin cannot be justly fathered on God. God tempts no man.

Q. *What then is the meaning of this, lead us not into temptation?*

When we pray, 'lead us not into temptation,' the meaning is, we desire of God that he would not suffer us to be overcome by temptation. That we may not be given up to the power of temptation, which is when we are trepanned into sin.*

Q. *Whence do temptations come?*

From ourselves. The heart is the breeder of all evil. Our own hearts are the greatest tempters: 'every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.'⁵ The heart is a perfect decoy.

2. Temptations come from Satan. He is called 'the tempter;' he lies in ambush to do us mischief, 'he is always ready for battle;' the devil lays a train of temptation to blow up the fort of our grace; the devil is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail; the world is his diocese where he visits; we are sure to find Satan, whatever we are doing, reading, praying, meditating; we find him within, how he came there we know not; we are sure of his company, uncertain how he came by it. A saint's whole life, saith Austin, is a temptation. Elias, who could shut heaven by prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation. This is a great molestation to a child of God; as it is a trouble to a virgin to have her chastity daily assaulted. The more one is tempted to evil, the more he is hindered from good; we are in great danger of Satan 'the prince of the air;' and we had need often pray, 'lead us not into temptation.' That we may see in what danger we are of Satan's temptations,

Consider *Ist*, his malice in tempting. This bellish serpent is swelled with the poison of malice. Satan envies man's happiness; to see

¹ 1 Pe. 5. 5.

² Ja. 1. 13.

³ Lu. 18. 7.

⁴ Ge. 22. 1.

⁵ Ro. 12. 19.

⁶ Ja. 1. 14.

⁷ Mat. 4. 3.

* 'Abandon us not to temptation.' The words, *give me*, may either mark a request to my Maker, or an order to my servant. Yet so much, in most cases, do the attendant circumstances fix the sense, that little inconvenience arises from this latitude. In the New Testament there appear several examples of this extent of meaning in verbs. Mark 5. 12. 'The

devils besought him, saying, *send us into the swine.*' Here the words 'send us,' mean no more than the words 'suffer us to go,' do in Matthew. In this sense, the word is used also in other places, as when God is said to 'send strong delusions,' 2 Th. 2. 11. *Send away* in Ge. 24. 54, 56, 59, means no more than *let go*.—*Campbell's Gospels*, v. iii. p. 44.

a clod of dust so near to God, and himself, once a glorious angel, cast out of the heavenly paradise, this makes him pursue mankind with inveterate hatred; 'the devil is come down to you having great wrath.'¹ If there be any thing this infernal spirit of hell can delight in, it is to ruin souls, and bring them into the same condemnation with himself. This malice of Satan in tempting must needs be great, if we consider three things: 1. That when Satan is so full of torment, yet, that at such a time he should tempt. One would think that Satan should scarce have a thought free from thinking of his own misery; yet such is his rage and malice, that, when God is punishing him he is tempting. 2. Satan's malice is great, that he will tempt where he knows he cannot prevail; he will put forth his sting, though he cannot hurt. He tempted Christ; 'if thou be the Son of God.'² He knew well enough Christ was God as well as man, yet he would tempt him. Such was his malice against Christ, that he would put an affront on Christ, though he knew he could not conquer him. He tempts the elect to blasphemy; he knows he cannot prevail against the elect; yet such is his malice, that though he cannot storm the garrison of their hearts, yet he will plant his pieces of ordnance against them. 3. Satan's malice is great, that though he knows his tempting men to sin will increase his own torment in hell, yet he will not leave off tempting; every temptation makes his chain heavier, and his fire hotter, yet he will tempt. Therefore Satan being such a malicious revengeful spirit, had we not need pray that God would not suffer him to prevail by his temptations? 'Lead us not into temptation.'

Consider 2*d*, Satan's diligence in tempting; 'he walketh about.'³ He neglects no time; he who would have us idle, yet he himself is always busied. This lion is ever hunting after his prey, he compasseth sea and land to make a proselyte, he walks about, he walks not as a pilgrim, but a spy, he watcheth where he may throw in the fire-ball of a temptation. He is a restless spirit; if we repulse him, yet he will not desist, but come again with a temptation. Like Marcellus, a Roman captain Hannibal speaks of, whether he was conquered, or did conquer, he was never quiet. More particularly, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this. 1. If he gets the least advantage by temptation, he

pursues it to the utmost. If his motion to sin begins to take, he follows it close, and presseth to the act of sin. When he tempted Judas to betray Christ, and found that Judas was inclinable, and began to bite at the bait of thirty pieces of silver, he hurries him on, and never leaves him till he had betrayed his Lord and Master. When he had tempted Spira to renounce his religion, and saw Spira begin to yield, he follows his temptation close, and never left till he had made him go to the legate at Venice, and there abjure his faith in Christ. 2. Again, Satan's diligence in tempting is seen in this, the variety of temptations he useth. He doth not confine himself to one sort of temptation, he hath more plots than one; if he finds one temptation doth not prevail, he will have another; if he cannot tempt to lust, he will tempt to pride; if a temptation to covetousness doth not prevail, he will tempt to profuseness; if he cannot fright men into despair, he will see if he can draw them to presumption; if he cannot make them profane, he will see if he can make them formalists; if he cannot make them vicious, he will tempt them to be erroneous. He will tempt them to leave off ordinances; he will pretend revelations. Error damns as well as vice; the one pistols, the other poisons; thus Satan's diligence in tempting is great, he will turn every stone, he hath several tools to work with; if one temptation will not do, he will make use of another. Had not we need then to pray, 'lead us not into temptation?'

Consider 3*d*. Satan's power in tempting. He is called 'the prince of the world,'⁴ and the 'strong man,'⁵ and the 'great red dragon who with his tail drew down the third part of the stars.'⁶ He is full of power, being an angel; though Satan hath lost his holiness, yet not his strength. The devil's power in tempting is seen several ways.

1. He, as a spirit having an intellectual being, can convey himself into the fancy, and poison it with bad thoughts. As the Holy Ghost doth cast in good motions, so the devil doth bad; he put it into Judas's heart to betray Christ.⁷

2. Satan though he cannot compel the will, yet he can present pleasing objects to the senses, which have a great force in them. He set a 'wedge of gold' before Achan, and so enticed him with that golden bait.

3. The devil can excite and stir up the cor-

¹ Re. 12. 12.² Mat. 4. 3.³ 1 Pe. 5. 8.⁴ Jno. 12. 31.⁵ Lu. 11. 21.⁶ Re. 12. 4.⁷ Jno. 13. 2

ruption within, and work some inclinableness in the heart to embrace the temptation; thus he stirred up corruption in David's heart, and provoked him to number the people.¹ Satan can blow the spark of lust into a flame. 4. Herein lies much of his power, that he being a spirit, can so strangely convey his temptations into our minds, that we cannot easily discern whether they come from Satan, or from ourselves; whether they are his suggestions, or the natural births of our own hearts. A bird may hatch the egg of another bird, thinking it is her own: often we hatch the devil's motions, thinking they come from our own hearts. When Peter dissuaded Christ from suffering, sure Peter thought it came from the good affection which he did bear to his master;² little did Peter think Satan had a hand in it. Now, if the devil hath such power to instil his temptations, that we hardly know whether they be his or ours, we are in a great deal of danger, and had need pray, not to be led into temptation. Here, I know, some are desirous to move the question,

Q. *How shall we perceive when a motion comes from our own hearts, and when from Satan?*

It is hard, as Bernard saith, to distinguish *inter morsum serpentis, et morbum mentis*,—between those suggestions which come from Satan, and which breed out of our own hearts. But I conceive there is this threefold difference. 1. Such motions to evil as come from own hearts, spring up more leisurely, and by degrees; a sin is long concocted in the thoughts, ere consent be given, but usually we may know a motion comes from Satan by its suddenness; therefore a temptation is compared to a dart,³ because it is shot suddenly. David's numbering the people was a motion which the devil did inject suddenly. 2. The motions to evil which come from our own hearts are not so terrible; few are frightened at the sight of their own children; but motions coming from Satan are more ghastly and frightful, as motions to blasphemy and self-murder. Hence it is temptations are compared to fiery darts,⁴ for their terribleness, because they do, as flashes of fire, startle and affright the soul. 3. When evil thoughts are thrown into our mind, when we loathe, and have reluctance against; when we strive against them, and flee from them, as Moses did from the serpent, this shows they are not the natural birth of our own heart, but the hand of Joab is

in this. Satan hath injected these impure motions.*

5. Satan's power in tempting appears by the long experience he hath gotten in the art; he hath been a tempter, well nigh as long as he hath been an angel. Who are fitter for action than men of experience? Who is fitter to steer a ship than an old experienced pilot? Satan hath gained much experience, by his being so long versed in the trade of tempting. He having such experience, knows what are the temptations which have foiled others, and are most likely to prevail; the fowler lays those snares which have caught other birds. Satan having such power in tempting, we are in danger, and had need pray, 'lead us not into temptation.'

5th. Consider Satan's subtilty in tempting. The Greek word to tempt, signifies to deceive. Satan in tempting, useth many subtile policies to deceive; we read of the depths of Satan;⁵ and his devices and stratagems;⁶ we read of his snares and his darts; his snares are worse than his darts; he is called a lion for his cruelty, and an old serpent for his subtilty; he hath several sorts of subtilty in tempting.

1st Subtilty. The devil observes the natural temper and constitution. The devil doth not know the hearts of men, but he may feel their pulse, know their temper, and so accordingly can apply himself. As the husbandman knows what seed is proper to sow in such a soil, so Satan finding out the temper, knows what temptations are proper to sow in such a heart. That way the tide of a man's constitution runs, that way the wind of temptation blows; Satan tempts the ambitious man with a crown, the sanguine man with beauty, the covetous man with a wedge of gold. He provides savoury meat, such as the sinner loves.

2d Subtilty. Satan chooseth the fittest season to tempt in. As a cunning angler casts in his angle when the fish will bite best; the devil can hit the very joint of time when a temptation is likeliest to prevail. There are several seasons he tempts in.

⁵ Re. 2. 21.

⁶ 2 Co. 2. 11.

* It is evident that Satan's temptations can prove effectual only by means of the wickedness that resides and is fixed in our own souls. It is not therefore necessary that we should be able to distinguish those evil suggestions in which he has a hand, from those that arise from our own hearts. It is not necessary for watchfulness, for if we keep our hearts, he has no power over us; as he can work only by what is there, and going on there. It is not necessary for estimating our amount of guilt; for if Satan leads us into sin, he leads us as those who voluntarily follow him; and the guilt is all ours, whether he be guiltless or not.—*Tuckney on the Life of Faith*, p. 102.

1st Season. In our first initiation and entrance into religion, when we have newly given up our names to Christ. Satan will never disturb his vassals; but when we have broke his prison in conversion, now he pursues us with violent temptations. 'He is wont to set upon us more keenly amid the beginnings of our conversion.' BERN. When Israel were got a little out of Egypt, then Pharaoh pursues them. Herod, as soon as Christ was born, sent to destroy him; so when the child of grace is newly born, the devil labours to strangle it with temptation. When the first buddings and blossoms of grace begin to appear, the devil would nip these tender buds with the sharp blasts of his temptations. Indeed, at first conversion, grace is so weak, and temptation so strong, that one would wonder how the young convert escapes with his life; Satan hath a spite at the new creature.

2d Season. The devil tempts when he finds us idle, unemployed. We do not sow seed in fallow ground; but Satan sows most of his seed in a person that lies fallow. When the fowler sees a bird sit still, and perch upon the tree, now he shoots it; so when Satan observes us to sit still, now he shoots his fiery darts of temptation at us; 'while men slept, the enemy sowed tares;'¹ so, while men sleep in sloth, Satan sows his tares. When David was walking on the leads, and unemployed, now the devil set a tempting object before him, and it prevailed.²

3d Season. When a person is reduced to outward wants and straits, now is the devil's tempting time. When Christ had fasted forty days and was hungry, then the devil comes and tempts him with the glory of the world.³ When provisions grow short, now Satan sets in with a temptation; 'what! wilt thou starve rather than steal? reach forth thy hand, pluck the forbidden fruit!' How oft doth this temptation prevail! how many do we see, who, instead of living by faith, live by their shifts, and will steal the venison, though they lose the blessing!

4th Season. Satan tempts after an ordinance. When we have been at hearing of the word, or prayer, or sacrament; now Satan casts in the angle of temptation. When Christ had been fasting and praying, then came the tempter.⁴

Q. Why doth Satan choose this time to tempt in, after an ordinance? One would think this were the most disadvantageous time, for now the soul is raised to an heavenly frame?

1. Malice puts Satan upon it. The ordinances that cause fervour in a saint, cause fury in Satan. He knows in every duty we have a design against him, in every prayer we put up a suit in heaven against him, in the Lord's supper, we take the sacrament upon it, to fight under Christ's banner against the devil; therefore now Satan is more enraged, he now lays his snares, and shoots his darts against us. 2. Satan tempts after an ordinance, because he thinks he shall now find us more secure. After we have been at the solemn worship of God, we are apt to grow remiss, and leave off former strictness, like a soldier, that after the battle leaves off his armour; now Satan watcheth his time. He doth as David did to the Amalekites, after they had taken the spoil, and were secure, they did eat and drink, and dance, now David fell upon them, and did smite them;⁵ so when we grow remiss after an ordinance, and perhaps too much indulge ourselves in carnal delights, now Satan falls upon us by a temptation, and oft foils us. As after a full meal, men are apt to grow drowsy, so after we have had a full meal at an ordinance, we are apt to slumber and grow secure, and now Satan shoots his arrow of temptation, and hits us between the joints of our armour.

5th Season. Satan tempts after some discoveries of God's love. Satan, like a pirate, sets on a ship that is richly laden: so when a soul hath been laden with spiritual comforts, now the devil will be shooting at him to rob him of all. The devil envies to see a soul feasted with spiritual joy. Joseph's party-coloured coat made his brethren envy him, and plot against him. After David had the good news of the pardon of his sin, which must needs fill him with consolation, Satan presently tempted him to a new sin in numbering the people; and so all his comfort leaked out, and was spilt.

6th Season. Satan tempts when he sees us weakest. He breaks over the hedge where it is lowest; as the sons of Jacob came upon the Schemites when they were sore, and could make no resistance.⁶ At two times Satan comes upon us in our weakness. (1.) When we are alone; so he came to Eve when her husband was away, and she the less able to resist his temptation. Satan hath this policy, he gives his poison privately, when nobody is by; others might discover his treachery. Satan is like a cunning suitor that woos the daughter when

¹ Mat. 13. 25. ² 2 Sa. 11. 3. ³ Mat. 4. 8. ⁴ Mal. 4. 3.

⁵ 1 Sa. 30. 17.

⁶ Ge. 34. 25.

the parents are from home; so, when one is alone, and none near, now the devil comes a-wooing with a temptation, and hopes to have the match struck up. (2.) When the hour of death approaches. As the poor sheep when it is sick and weak and can hardly help itself, now the crows lie pecking at it; so, when a saint is weak on his death-bed, now the devil lies pecking at him with a temptation; he reserves his most furious assaults till the last. The people of Israel were never so fiercely assaulted, as when they were going to take possession of the promised land; then all the kings of Canaan combined their forces against them; so when the saints are leaving the world, and going to set their foot on the heavenly Canaan, now Satan sets upon them by temptation; he tells them they are hypocrites; all their evidences are counterfeit. Thus, like a coward, he strikes the saints when they are down: when death is striking at the body, he is striking at the soul.

This is the second subtilty, Satan chooseth the fittest season when to throw in a temptation.

3d Subtilty. A third subtle policy of Satan in tempting, is he baits his hook with religion; the devil can hang out Christ's colours, and tempt to sin under pretences of piety. Now he is the white devil and transforms himself into an angel of light. Celsus wrote a book full of error, and he entitled it, 'the book of truth:' so Satan can write the title of religion upon his worst temptation. He comes to Christ with scripture in his mouth, 'it is written:' so he comes to many, and tempts them to sin, under the pretence of religion; he tempts to evil, that good may come of it; he tempts men to such unwarrantable actions, that they may be put into a capacity of honouring God the more. He tempts them to accept of preferment against conscience, that hereby they may be in a condition of doing more good; he put Herod upon killing John Baptist, that hereby he might be kept from the violation of his oath. He tempts many to oppression and extortion, telling them, they are bound to provide for their families. He tempts many to make away with themselves that they may live no longer to sin against God: thus he wraps his poisonous pills in sugar. Who would suspect him when he comes as a divine, and quotes scripture.

4th Subtilty of Satan is, to tempt to sin gradually. The old serpent winds himself in by degrees, he tempts first to lesser sins, that so he may bring on greater. A small offence

may occasion a great crime; as a little prick of an artery may occasion a mortal gangrene. Satan first tempted David to an impure glance of the eye, to look on Bathsheba, and that unclean look occasioned adultery and murder. First the devil tempts to go into the company of the wicked, then to twist into a cord of friendship, and so, by degrees, to be brought into the same condemnation with them; this is a great subtilty of Satan, to tempt to lesser sins first; for these harden the heart, and fit men for the committing of more horrid and tremendous sins.

5th Subtilty. Satan's policy is to hand over temptations to us, by those whom we least suspect. 1. By near friends; he tempts us by them who are near in blood. He tempted Job by a proxy, he handed over a temptation to him, by his wife; 'dost thou still retain thy integrity?' As if he had said, 'Job, thou seest how for all thy religion, God deals with thee; his hand is gone out sore against thee: what! and still pray, and weep? cast off all religion! turn atheist! curse God, and die!' Thus Satan made use of Job's wife to do his work; the woman was made of the rib, and Satan made a bow of this rib, out of which he shot the arrow of his temptation. 'Through the rib he aims at the heart.' The devil oft stands behind the curtain, he will not be seen in the business, but puts others to do his work. As a man makes use of a serjeant to arrest another, so Satan makes use of a proxy to tempt; as he did creep into the serpent, so he can creep into a near relation. 2. He tempts sometimes by religious friends; the devil keeps still out of sight, that his cloven foot may not be seen. Who would have thought to have found the devil in Peter? When he dissuaded Christ from suffering, Master, 'spare thyself,' Christ spied Satan in the temptation; 'get thee behind me, Satan!' When our religious friends would dissuade us from doing our duty, Satan is a lying spirit in their mouths, and would by them entice us to evil.

6th Subtilty. Satan tempts some persons more than others; some are like wet tinder, who will not so soon take the fire of temptation as others. Satan tempts most where he thinks his policies will more easily prevail; some are fitter to receive the impression of temptations, as soft wax is fitter to take the stamp of the seal. The apostle speaks of 'vessels of wrath fitted for destruction';² so there are vessels

¹ Job. 2. 9.

² Ro. 9. 22.

fitted for temptation. Some, like the sponge, suck in Satan's temptations. There are five sorts of persons that Satan doth most fit for brooding upon by his temptations. *1st*, Ignorant persons. The devil can lead them into any snare; you may lead a blind man any whither. God made a law, that the Jews should not put a stumbling-block in the way of the blind.¹ Satan knows it is easy to put a temptation in the way of the blind, at which they shall stumble into hell. When the Syrians were smitten with blindness, the prophet Elisha could lead them whither he would into the enemy's country.² The bird that is blind is soon shot by the fowler: Satan, the god of this world, blinds men, and then shoots them. An ignorant man cannot see the devil's snares: Satan tells them such a thing is no sin, or but a little one, and he will do well enough; it is but repent. *2d*, Satan tempts unbelievers. He who, with Diagoras, doubts of a Deity, or, with the Phocinians, denies hell, what sin will not this man be drawn to? he is like metal that Satan can cast into any mould; he can dye him of any colour. An unbeliever will stick at no sin; luxury, perjury, injustice. Paul was afraid of none so much as them that did not believe; 'that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea.'³ *3d*, Satan tempts proud persons; these he hath more power of. None is in greater danger of falling by a temptation, than he who stands high in his own conceit. When David's heart was lifted up in pride, then the devil stirred him up to number the people.⁴ 'The higher the tower, the heavier its fall, and it is the top of the mountain that is struck by the lightning.' HORACE. Satan made use of Haman's pride to be his shame. *4th*, Melancholy persons. Melancholy is a black humour, seated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy clothes the mind in sable; it doth disturb reason; Satan doth work much upon this humour. There are three things in melancholy, which give the devil great advantage: 1. It unfits for duty, it pulls off the chariot-wheels, it dispirits a man. Lute-strings, when they are wet, will not sound; when the spirit is sad and melancholy, a Christian is out of tune for spiritual actions. 2. Melancholy sides often with Satan against God: the devil tells such a person God doth not love him, there's no mercy for him; and the melancholy soul is apt to think so too, and sets his hand to the devil's

lies. 3. Melancholy breeds discontent, and discontent is a cause of many sins, unthankfulness, impatience, and oft it ends in self-murder. Judge then what an advantage Satan hath against a melancholy person, and how easily he may prevail with his temptations. A melancholy person tempts the devil to tempt him. *5th*, Idle persons. He who is idle, the devil will find him work to do. Jerome gave his friend this counsel: to be ever well-employed, that when the tempter came, he might find him working in the vineyard. If the hands be not working, the head will be plotting sin.⁵

7th Subtily of Satan is, to give some little respite, and seem to leave off tempting a while, that he may come on after with more advantage: as Israel made as if they were beaten before the men of Ai, and fled; but it was a policy to draw them out of their fenced cities, and ensnare them by an ambush:⁶ the devil sometimes raiseth the siege, and feigns a flight, that he may the better obtain the victory. He goes away for a time, that he may return when he sees a better season,⁷ 'when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, I will return to my house, whence I came out.' Satan, by feigning a flight, and leaving off tempting a while, causeth security in persons, and they think they are safe, and are become victors, when, on a sudden, Satan falls on, and wounds them. As one that is going to leap, runs back a little, that he may take the greater jump, Satan seems to retire and run back a little, that he may come on again with a temptation more furiously and successfully; therefore we need always to watch and have on our spiritual armour.

8th Subtily of the old serpent is, either to take men off from the use of means, or to make them miscarry in the use of means. He labours to take men off from duty, from praying and bearing; his design is to discourage them; and, to do that, he hath two artifices: he discourageth them from duty, by suggesting to them their unworthiness; they are not worthy to approach to God, or have any signals of his love and favour. They are sinful, and God is holy, how dare they presume to bring their impure offering to God? this is a temptation indeed. That we should see ourselves unworthy is good, and argues humility; but to think we should not approach to God because of unworthiness,

¹ Le. 19. 14. ² 2 Ki. 6. 20. ³ Ro. 15. 31. ⁴ 2 Sa. 21. 2.

Mi. 2. 1.

⁶ Jos. 8. 15.

⁷ Lu. 11. 24.

is a conclusion of the devil's making. God saith, 'come, though unworthy:' by this temptation, the devil takes many off from coming to the Lord's table. 'O,' saith he, 'this is a solemn ordinance, and requires much holiness; how darest thou so unworthily come, lest thou eat and drink unworthily?' Thus, as Saul kept the people from eating honey, so the devil, by this temptation, scares many from this ordinance, which is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.* Satan endeavours to discourage from duty, by objecting want of success. When men have waited upon God in the use of ordinances, and yet find not that comfort they desire, now Satan disheartens them, and puts them upon resolves of declining all religion; they begin to say, as that wicked king, 'why should I wait for the Lord any longer?' 'When Saul saw God answered him not by dreams and visions,' Satan tempted him to leave God's worship, and seek to the witch of Endor. No answer of prayer comes, 'therefore,' saith Satan, 'leave off praying; who will sow seed where no crop comes up?' Thus the devil would, by his subtle logic, dispute a poor soul out of duty. But if he sees he cannot prevail this way, to take men off from the use of means, then he labours to make them miscarry in the use of means. By this artifice he prevails over multitudes of professors. The devil stands as he did at Joshua's right hand, to resist men.¹ If he cannot hinder them from duty, he will be sure to hinder them in duty; by causing distraction in the service of God; and this he doth by proposing objects of vanity, or by whispering in men's ears, that they can scarce mind what they are doing. Satan hinders by putting men upon doing duties in a wrong manner. In a dead formal manner, that so they may fail of the

¹ Ze. 3. 1.

* What promise is there in the word of God, assuring me of success in the use of means for attaining an interest in Christ? The Spirit may never render them effectual, all my labour may be lost, and my diligence only aid me in the work of self-deception: where then is my encouragement? Here, O man, thou mayest find it. God appointed these means, and did he appoint them to tantalise thee? He commanded thee diligently to use them; and wilt thou say that he has bidden thee, or any one else, seek his face in vain? What encouragement has the husbandman after a first, a second, a third year of barrenness, still to plough and sow in hope? the appointment of God regarding seed-time and harvest, and the assurance arising from it, that temporary failure is not final disappointment, where diligence is still maintained. Is there a certainty in the promises of God relating to this world, which extends not to the world of grace? The course of nature cannot be surer than the promises that are all 'yea and amen in Christ Jesus;' else he has ceased to be 'the faithful and true,' and he sits not on the throne as the 'same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.'—*Marini Sap. Dom.*, p. 46.

success. Satan knows duties done superficially were as good to be left undone. That prayer that doth not pierce the heart, will never pierce heaven. He puts them upon doing duties for wrong ends. 'The end characterizes the action.' He will make them look asquint, and have by-ends in duty: 'be not as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.'² Prayer is good, but to pray to be seen of men, this was a dead fly in the box of ointment; the oil of vain-glory feeds their lamp; sinister aims corrupt and fly-blow our holy things. Here is Satan's policy, either to prevent duty, or pervert it; either to take men off from the use of means or make them miscarry in the use of means.

9th Subtily. Satan can colour over sin with the name and pretence of virtue. Alcibiades hung a curtain curiously embroidered, over a foul picture of satyrs; so Satan can put the image of virtue over the foul picture of sin. Satan can cheat men with false wares; he can make them believe that presumption is faith; that intemperate passion is zeal, revenge is prudence, covetousness is frugality, and prodigality good hospitality. 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord,' saith Jehu. Satan persuaded him it was a fire from heaven, when it was nothing but the wildfire of his own ambition; it was not zeal, but state policy. This is a subtle art of Satan, to deceive by tempting, and put men off with the dead child instead of the live child,—to make men believe that is a grace, which is a sin; as if one should write balm-water upon a glass of poison. If Satan hath all these subtle artifices in tempting, are we not in great danger from this prince of the air? and had we not need often pray, 'Lord, suffer us not to be led into temptation?' As the serpent beguiled Eve with his subtily, let us not be beguiled by the snares and policies of this hellish Machiavel. Satan hath a dexterity in subtle contrivances; he doth more hurt as a fox, than a lion; his snares are worse than his darts; we are not ignorant of his devices.³

10th. The next subtily of Satan is, he labours to ensnare us by lawful things. More are hurt by lawful things, than unlawful, as more are killed with wine than poison; gross sins affright, but how many take a surfeit and die, in using lawful things inordinately? Recreation is lawful, eating and drinking are lawful; but many offend by excess, and their table

² Mat. 6. 5.

³ 2 Co. 2. 11.

is a snare. Relations are lawful, but how oft doth Satan tempt to overlove! how oft is the wife and child laid in God's room! Excess makes things lawful become sinful.

11th Subtilty of Satan is, to make the duties of our general and particular calling hinder and jumble out one another. Our general calling is serving God; our particular calling is minding our employments in the world. It is wisdom to be regular in both these, when the particular calling doth not eat out the time for God's service, nor the service of God hinder diligence in a calling. The devil's art is to make Christians defective in one of these two; some spend all their time in hearing, reading, and under a pretence of living by faith, do not live in a calling; others Satan takes off duties of religion, under a pretence that they must provide for their families; he makes them so careful for their bodies, that they quite neglect their souls. This is the subtilty of the old serpent, to make men negligent in the duties either of the first table or the second.

12th Subtilty of Satan in tempting is, to misrepresent true holiness, that he may make others out of love with it. He paints the face of religion full of scars, and with seeming blemishes, that he may create in the minds of men prejudice against it. Satan represents religion as the most melancholy thing, and that he who embraceth it, must banish all joy out of his diocese; though the apostle saith, 'joy and peace in believing.' Satan suggests that religion exposeth men to danger; he shows them the cross, but hides the crown from them; he labours to put all the disgrace he can upon holiness, that he may tempt men to the renouncing of it. Satan abuseth the good Christian, and gives him a wrong name: the truly zealous man, Satan calls hot-headed and factions; the patient man, that bears injuries without revenge, Satan represents him as a coward; the humble man as low-spirited; the heavenly man Satan calls fool, he lets go things that are seen, for things that are not seen: thus the devil misrepresents religion to the world. As John Huss, that holy man, was painted with red devils, so Satan paints holiness with as deformed, misshapen a face as he can, that he may, by this temptation, draw men off from solid piety, and make them rather scorn than embrace it. The hand of Joab is in this: Satan is tempting persons to atheism, to cast off all religion.

13th Subtilty of Satan in tempting is, to draw men off from the love of the truth to em-

brace error, 'that they should believe a lie.' Satan is called, in scripture, not only an unclean spirit, but a lying spirit. As an unclean spirit, so he labours to defile the soul with lust; and as a lying spirit, so he labours to corrupt the mind with error; and indeed this is dangerous, because many errors do look so like the truth, as alchymy represents true gold. Satan thus beguiles souls. Though the scripture blames heretics for being the promoters of error, yet it chargeth Satan with being the chief contriver of it. They spread the error, but the devil is a lying spirit in their mouths. This is Satan's great temptation; he makes men believe such are glorious truths, which are dangerous impostures; thus he transforms himself 'into an angel of light.' What is the meaning of Satan's sowing tares in the parable,² but Satan's sowing error instead of truth? How quickly had the devil broached false doctrine in the apostles' times? That it was necessary to be circumcised, that angel-worship was lawful, and that Christ was not yet come in the flesh. Now the devil tempts by drawing men to error, because he knows how deadly this snare is, and the great mischief error will do when it comes. Error is of a spreading nature; it is compared to leaven because it sours;³ and to a gangrene, because it spreads.⁴ One error spreads into more, like a circle in the water, that multiplies into more circles, one error seldom goes alone. Error spread's from one person to another; it is like the plague, which infects all round about. Satan, by infecting one person with error, infects more. The error of Pelagius did spread on a sudden to Palestine, Africa, Italy, the Arian error was at first but a single spark, but at last it set almost all the world on fire. The devil lays this snare of error, because error brings divisions into the church; and divisions bring an opprobrium and scandal upon the ways of God. The devil danceth at discord: division destroys peace, which was Christ's legacy; and love, which is the bond of perfection. Not only Christ's coat hath been rent, but his body, by the divisions which error hath caused. In churches and families, where error creeps in, what animosities and factions doth it make! It sets the father against the son, and the son against the father. What slaughters and bloodshed have been occasioned by errors broached in the church! The devil's policy in raising errors, is to hinder reformation;

¹ 2 Th. 2. 11. ² Mat. 13. 25. ³ Mat. 16. 11. ⁴ 2 Ti. 2. 17

the devil was never a friend to reformation. In the primitive times, after the apostles' days, 'the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman.' Which was a deluge of heresies, that so he might hinder the progress of the gospel. Satan tempts to error, because error devours godliness. The Gnostics, as Epiphanius observes, were not only corrupted in their judgments, but in their morals, they were loose in their lives; 'ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness.'¹ The Familists afterwards turned ranters, and gave themselves over to vices and immoralities; and this they did, boasting of the Spirit and perfection. The devil's design in seducing by error, is, he knows error is pernicious to souls. Error damns, as well as vice; poison kills as well as a pistol: 'they shall privily bring in damnable heresies.'² Now, if Satan be thus subtle in laying snares of error to deceive, had not we need to pray that God would not suffer us to be led into temptation; that he would make us wise to keep out of the snare of error, or, if we have fallen into it, that he would give us to recover out of the snare by repentance?

14th. Another subtilty of Satan is, to bewitch and ensnare men, by setting pleasing baits before them; the riches, pleasures, honours of the world; 'all this will I give thee.'³ How many doth Satan tempt with this golden apple! Pride, idleness, luxury, are the three worms which breed of plenty; 'they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.'⁴ Satan kills with these silver darts. How many surfeit on luscious delights! The pleasures of the world are the great engine by which Satan batters down men's souls. His policy is to tickle them to death, to damn them with delights. The flesh would fain be pleased, and Satan prevails by this temptation; he drowns them in the sweet waters of pleasure; such as have abundance of the world, walk in the midst of golden snares. We had need watch our hearts in prosperity, and pray not to be led into temptation. We have as much need to be careful that we are not endangered by prosperity, as a man hath to be careful at a feast, where there are some poisoned dishes of meat.

15th Subtilty of Satan in tempting is, to plead necessity. Satan's policy in tempting men under a plea of necessity is this, he knows that necessity may in some cases seem to palliate and excuse a sin. It may seem to make

a lesser evil good to avoid a greater, as Lot offered to expose his daughters to the Sodomites, and was willing that they should defile them, that he might preserve the angel-strangers that were come into his house.⁵ Doubtless Satan had a hand in this temptation, and made Lot believe that the necessity of this action would excuse the sin. The tradesman pleads a necessity of unlawful gain, else he cannot live; another pleads a necessity of revenge, else his credit would be impaired: thus Satan tempts men to sin, by telling them of the necessity. Nay, the devil will quote scripture for it, that in some cases extraordinary, there may be a necessity of doing that which is not justifiable. Did not David, in case of necessity, 'eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him, but only the priests?'⁶ Nor do we read he was blamed; then will Satan say, why may not you in cases extraordinary trespass a little, and take the forbidden fruit? O beware of this temptation; see Satan's cloven foot in it; nothing can warrant a thing in its own nature sinful; necessity will not justify impiety!

16th Subtilty of Satan in tempting is, to draw men to presumption. Presumption is a confidence without ground; it is made up of two ingredients, audacity and security; this temptation is common. Satan tempts men to presume of their own hearts, that they are better than they are; they presume they have grace, when they have none; they will not take gold on trust, but they will take grace upon trust; the foolish virgins presumed that they had oil in their vessels when they had none. Here that rule of Epicharmus is good, 'distrust a fallacious heart.' Satan tempts men to presume of God's mercy; though they are not so good as they should be, yet God is merciful. They look upon God's mercy with the broad spectacles of presumption. Satan soothes men up in their sins; he preacheth to them 'all hope, no fear;' and so he deludes them with these golden dreams. 'Vain hope carries thousands to hell.'⁷ AUG. Presumption is Satan's draw-net, by which he drags millions to hell; Satan by this temptation, oft draws the godly to sin; they presume upon their privileges, or graces, and so venture on occasions of sin. Jehoshaphat twisted into a league of amity with king Ahab, presuming his grace would be antidote strong enough against the infection.⁸ Satan tempted Peter to presume

¹ Jude 4. ² Pe. 2. 1. ³ Mat. 4. 9. ⁴ 1 Ti. 6. 9.

⁵ Ge. 19. 8.

⁶ Mat. 12. 4.

⁷ 2 Ch 18. 3.

upon his own strength, and when it came to a trial, he was foiled, and came off with shame. We had therefore need pray, 'that we may not be led into this temptation;' and with David, 'keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.'¹

17th Subtily of Satan in tempting is, to carry on his designs against us under the highest pretences of friendship; he thus puts silver upon his bait, and dips his poisoned pills in sugar. Satan doth, as some courtiers, make the greatest pretences of love, where they have the most deadly hatred. Joab's sword was ushered in with a kiss: 'he kissed Abner and then smote him under the fifth rib.' Satan puts off his lion's skin, and comes in sheep's clothing; he pretends kindness and friendship, he would consult what might be for our good. Thus Satan came to Christ; 'command that these stones be made bread.'² As if he had said to Christ, 'I see thou art hungry, and here there is no table spread for thee in the wilderness; I therefore, pitying thy condition, wish thee to get something to eat: turn stones to bread, that thy hunger may be satisfied.' But Christ spied the temptation, and with the sword of the Spirit wounded the old serpent. Thus Satan came to Eve and tempted her under the notion of a friend: 'eat,' saith he, 'of the forbidden fruit; for the Lord knows, that, in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as gods:' as if he had said, 'I persuade you only to that which will put you into a better condition than now you are; eat of this tree, and it will make you omniscient, 'ye shall be as gods.' What a kind devil was here! But it was a subtle temptation, she greedily swallowing the bait, it uiddid her and all her posterity. Let us fear his fallacious flatteries.

18th Subtily is, when Satan hath tempted men to sin, he persuades them to keep his counsel; like them that have some foul disease, they will rather die than tell the physician. It were wisdom, in case of sore temptation, to open one's mind to some experienced Christian, whose counsel might be an antidote against the temptation; but the danger of a temptation lies in the concealing of it; it is like the concealing of a distemper, which may prove mortal. How had we need renew this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation!'

19th Subtily of Satan in tempting is to make use of fit tools and engines, for the car-

rying on of his work; that is, he makes use of such persons as may be likely means to promote his tempting designs. The devil lays the plot of a temptation, and as it were cuts out the work, and then he employs others to finish it. Satan makes use of such as are in places of dignity. Men of renown. He knows, if he can get these on his side, they may draw others into snares; when the princes and heads of the tribes joined with Korah, they presently drew a multitude into the conspiracy.³ The devil makes use of such to carry on his tempting designs, as are men of wit and parts; such as, if it were possible, should deceive the very elect. He must have a great deal of cunning that shall persuade a man to be out of love with his food; the devil can make use of such heretical spirits as shall persuade men to be out of love with the ordinances of God, which they profess they have found comfort in. Many who once seemed to be strict frequenters of the house of God, are now persuaded, by Satan's cunning instruments, to leave off all and follow an *ignis fatuus*, the light within them. This is a great subtily of the devil, to make use of such cunning, subtle-pated men, as may be fit to carry on his tempting designs. Satan makes use of bad company to be instruments of tempting; they draw youth to sin. First, they persuade them to come into their company, then to twist into a cord of friendship, then to drink with them, and by degrees, debauch them. These are the devil's decoys to tempt others.

20th Subtily of Satan is, he, in his temptation, strikes at some grace more than others; as in tempting, he aims at some persons more than others, so he aims at some grace more than others; and if he can prevail in this, he knows what an advantage it will be to him. If you ask, what grace is it that Satan in his temptations doth most strike at? I answer, it is the grace of faith; he lays the train of his temptation to blow up the fort of our faith. Why did Christ pray more for Peter's faith, than any other grace?⁴ because Christ saw that his faith was most in danger; the devil was striking at this grace. Satan, in tempting Eve, did labour to weaken her faith; 'yea bath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'⁵ The devil would persuade her, that God had not spoken truth; and when he had once wrought her to distrust, then she took of the tree. It is called 'the shield of faith':⁶

¹ Ps. 19. 13.² Mat. 6. 3.³ Nu. 16. 2, 10. ⁴ Lu. 22. 32. ⁵ Ge. 3. 1. ⁶ Ep. 6. 16.

Satan in tempting, strikes most at our shield, he assaults our faith. True faith, though it cannot be wholly lost, yet it may suffer a great eclipse; though the devil cannot by temptation take away the life of faith, yet he may the lively acting!* But why doth Satan in tempting chiefly set upon our faith.

'Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king.' So faith is as it were the king of the graces; it is a royal princely grace, and puts forth the most majestic and noble acts, therefore Satan fights chiefly with this kingly grace. I shall show you the devil's policy in assaulting faith most. 1st, Because this is the grace doth Satan most mischief; it makes the most resistance against him; 'whom resist, steadfast in the faith.'¹ No grace doth more bruise the serpent's head than faith. Faith is both a shield and a sword, defensive and offensive. It is a shield; a shield guards the head, defends the vitals; the shield of faith causeth that the fiery darts of temptation do not pierce us through. Faith is a sword; it wounds the red dragon. How comes faith to be so strong, that it can resist Satan and put him to flight? Because faith brings the strength of Christ into the soul; Samson's strength lay in his hair, ours lies in Christ. If a child be assaulted, it runs and calls to its father for help, so, when faith is assaulted, it runs and calls Christ, and in his strength overcomes. Faith furnishes itself with store of promises; the promises are faith's weapons to fight with. Now as David, by five stones in his sling, wounded Goliath, so faith puts the promises, as stones, into its sling; 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'² He will not break the bruised reed; 'he will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.'³ The Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet;⁴ 'none is able to pluck them

them out of my Father's hand.'⁵ Here are five promises, like five stones, put in the sling of faith, and with these a believer wounds the red dragon. Now faith being such a grace, that doth so resist and wound Satan, he will watch his opportunity that he may batter our shield, though he cannot break it. 2d, Satan strikes most at our faith, and would weaken and destroy it, because faith hath a great influence upon all the other graces; faith sets all the graces a-work. Like some rich clothier, that gives out a stock of wool to the poor and sets them all a-spinning, so faith gives out a stock to all the other graces, and sets them a-working. Faith sets love a-work; 'faith which worketh by love.'⁶ When once the soul believes God's love, this kindles love to God. The believing martyrs burned hotter in love than in fire. Faith sets repentance a-work. When the soul believes there is mercy to be had, and that this mercy is for him, this sets the eyes a-weeping. O saith the soul, that ever I should offend such a gracious God! Repenting tears drop from the eye of faith; 'the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe.'⁷ Faith sets his eyes abroad with tears; therefore the devil hath most spite at faith, and by his temptations would undermine it, because it hath such an operative grace, it sets all the other graces on work. If the devil cannot destroy our faith, yet if he can disturb it, if he can hinder and stop the actings of faith, he knows all the other graces will be lame and inactive. If the spring in a watch be stopped, it will hinder the motion of the wheels: if faith be down, all the other graces are at a stand.

21st Subtily of Satan in tempting, is, in broaching those doctrines that are flesh-pleasing. Satan knows the flesh loves to be gratified, it cries out for ease and liberty; it will not endure any yoke, unless it be lined and made soft. The devil will be sure so to lay his bait of temptation, as to please and humour the flesh. The word saith, 'strive, as in an agony' to enter into glory; crucify the flesh, take the kingdom of heaven by holy violence; now Satan, to enervate and weaken these scriptures, comes with temptations and flatters the flesh. He tells men, there needs no such strictness, why so much zeal and violence? a softer pace will serve, sure there is an easier way to heaven, there needs no breaking the heart for sin, do but confess to a priest, or tell over a few beads, or say

¹ 1 Pe. 5. 9. * He. 13. 5. ² 1 Co. 10. 13. ⁴ Ro. 16. 20.

³ True, said an Arminian, Christ's sheep 'cannot be plucked forcibly out of his hand, by others; but they themselves may slip through his hands, and so fall into hell, and be eternally lost.' They may slip, may they? as if the Mediator, in preserving his people, held only a parcel of eels by the tail! Is not this a shameless way of slipping through a plain text of scripture? But I would fain ask the slippery sophister, how we are to understand that part of the last cited passage, which expressly declares, concerning Christ's people, that they shall never perish? since, perish they necessarily must, and certainly would, if eventually separated from Christ; whether they were to be plucked out of his hands, or whether they were only to slip through them. I conclude, then, that the promise made to the saints, that they shall never perish, secures them, equally, against the possibility of being either wrested from Christ's hands, or of their own falling from it: since, could one or other be the case, perish they must, and Christ's promise would fall to the ground.—*Toplady's Caveat*, p. 38.

⁵ Jno. 10. 29.

⁶ Ga. 5. 6.

⁷ Mar. 9. 23.

some *Ave Marias*, and this will procure you a pardon, and give you admission into paradise. Or, the devil can go another way to work; if he sees men startle at popery, then he stirs up the flattering Antinomian, and he comes in another disguise, and saith, 'what needs all this cost? what needs repenting tears? these are legal: what need you be so strict in your obedience? Christ hath done all for you, you may make use of your Christian liberty.' This temptation draws many away; it takes them off from strictness of life. He who sells cheapest shall have most customers; the devil knows this is a cheap easy doctrine, which will please the flesh, and he doth not doubt but he shall have customers enough.

22d Subtily of Satan in tempting, is, in reference to holy duties. His policy is either to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men too far in duty. 1. To hinder from duty; 'I would have come once and again, but Satan hindered me.' So many duties of religion had been performed, 'but Satan hindered.' The band of Joab is in this. There are three duties which the devil is an enemy to, and labours to keep us from. He will let men profess, or pray and hear in a formal manner; this doth him no hurt, nor them no good; but he doth oppose meditation, as being a means to compose the heart, and make it serious. Satan can stand your small shot; if you do not put in this bullet, he cares not how much you hear, nor how little you meditate. Meditation is a chewing of the cud; it makes the word digest, and turn to nourishment; meditation is the bellows of the affections, the devil is an enemy to this. When Christ was alone in the wilderness, giving himself to divine contemplations, then the devil comes and tempts him, to hinder him. He will thrust in worldly business, something or other to keep men off from holy meditation. Satan, by tempting, would keep us from mortification. This is as needful as heaven; 'mortify your members which are upon the earth, uncleanness, inordinate affection.'² Satan will let men be angry with sin, exchange sin, restrain sin, which is keeping sin prisoner, that it doth not break out; but when it comes to the taking away the life of sin, Satan labours to stop the warrant and hinder the execution. When sin is mortifying, Satan is crucifying. 'Examine yourselves,' is a metaphor from metal, that is pierced through, to see if it be gold within.

Self-examination is a spiritual inquisition set up in one's soul; a man must search his heart for sin, as one would search a house for a traitor, or, as Israel sought for leaven to burn it. Satan, if it be possible, will, by his temptations, keep men from this duty; he useth a great deal of subtilty. Here, first he tells them, their estate is good, and what need they put themselves to the trouble of examination? Though men will not take their money on trust, but will examine it by the touchstone, yet Satan persuades them to take their grace on trust. The devil persuaded the foolish virgins, they had oil in their lamps. Satan hath another policy, he will show men the faults of others, to keep them from searching their own: see what a proud covetous man goes there. He will allow them spectacles to see what is amiss in others, but not a looking-glass to behold their own faces, and see what is amiss in themselves. 2. Satan's policy is, to discourage us in duty. When one hath been about the performing of holy duties, then the devil stands up and tells him he hath played the hypocrite, he hath served God for a livre, he hath had sinister ends, his duties have been full of distraction, they have been fly-blown with pride, he hath offered the blind and lame, and can he expect a reward from God? Satan tells a Christian, he hath increased his sin by prayer: and, by this temptation, he would make a child of God quite out of conceit with his duties, he knows not whether he had best pray or not. 3. Or thirdly, if this plot will not take, Satan labours by temptation to put a Christian on too far in duty; if he cannot keep a child of God from duty, he will run him on too far in it. For instance humiliation and mourning for sin is a duty, but Satan will put one on too far in it; thou art not, saith he, humbled enough; and indeed Satan never thinks a man is humbled enough, till he despair. He would make a Christian wade so far in the waters of repentance, that he should wade beyond his depth, and be drowned in the gulf of despair. Satan comes thus to the soul, 'thy sins have been great, and thy sorrow shall be proportionable to thy sins. But is it so? canst thou say thou hast been as great a mourner as thou hast been a sinner? thou didst for many years drive no other trade but sin, and is a drop of sorrow enough for a sea of sin? No! thy soul must be more humbled, and lie steeping longer in the brinish waters of repentance.' Satan would have a Christian weep himself blind, and in a desperate mood throw away the

¹ 1 Th. 2. 18.

² Co. 3. 5.

anchor of hope. Now, lest any here be troubled with this temptation, let me say this, this is a mere fallacy of Satan; for sorrow proportionable to sin is not attainable in this life, nor doth God expect. It is sufficient for thee, Christian, if thou hast a gospel sorrow, if thou grieveest so far as to see sin hateful, and Christ precious, if thou grieveest so as to break off iniquity, if thy remorse end in divorce, this is to be humbled enough. Then the gold hath lain long enough in the fire, when the dross is purged out; then a Christian hath lain long enough in humiliation, when the love of sin is purged out: this is to be humbled enough to divine acceptance. God, for Christ's sake, will accept of this sorrow for sin; therefore let not Satan's temptations drive to despair. You see how subtle an enemy he is, to hinder from duty, or discourage in duty, or put men on too far in duty, that he may run them upon the rock of despair. Had we not then need, having such a subtle enemy, pray 'Lord, lead us not into temptation?' As the serpent beguiled Eve, let us not be beguiled by this hellish Machiavel.

23*d* Subtilty of Satan in tempting to the act of sin, is the hope of returning out of it by speedy repentance. But this is a fallacy; it is easy for the bird to fly into the snare, but it is not easy to get out of the snare. Is it so facile a thing to repent? Are there no pangs in the new birth? Is it easy to leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? How many has Satan flattered into hell by this policy, that if they sin, they may recover themselves by repentance? Alas! is repentance in our power? a spring-lock can shut of itself, but it cannot open without a key; we can shut of ourselves to God, but we cannot open by repentance, till God open our heart, who hath the key of David in his hand.

24*th* Subtilty of Satan in tempting, is, to put us upon doing that which is good unseasonably. To mourn for sin is a duty; the sacrifices of God are a broken heart. But yet there is a time when it may not be so seasonable; after some eminent deliverance, which calls for rejoicing, now to have the spirits dyed of a sad colour, and to sit weeping, is not seasonable. There was a special time at the feast of Tabernacles, when God called his people to cheerfulness; 'seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast to the Lord thy God, and thou shalt surely rejoice.' Now, if at this time, the Israelites

had hung their harps upon the willows, and been disconsolate, it had been very unseasonable, like mourning at a wedding. When God by his providence calls us to thanksgiving, and we sit drooping, and, with Rachel, refuse to be comforted, this is very evil, and savours of ingratitude. This is Satan's temptation; the hand of Joab is in this. To rejoice is a duty; 'praise is comely for the upright.'² But when God, by his judgments, calls us to weeping, now joy and mirth is unseasonable; 'in that day did the Lord call to weeping, and behold joy and gladness.'³ Oecolampadius, and other learned writers, think it was in the time of king Ahaz, when the signs of God's anger, like a blazing star, did appear: now to be given to mirth was very unseasonable. To read the word is a duty, but Satan will sometimes put men upon it when it is unseasonable. To read it at home when God's word is preaching, or the sacrament administering, is unseasonable, yea sinful, as Hushai said; 'the counsel is not good at this time.' There was a set time enjoined for the passover, when the Jews were to bring their offering to the Lord.⁴ Had the people been reading the law at home in the time of the passover, it had not been in season, and God would have punished it for a contempt. This is the devil's subtle temptation, either to keep us from duty, or to put us upon it, when it is least in season. Duties of religion not well timed, and done in season, are dangerous. Snow and hail are good for the ground when they come in their season; but in harvest, when the corn is ripe, then a storm of hail would do hurt.

25*th* Subtilty of Satan in tempting, is, to persuade men to delay their repenting and turning to God. He saith, 'the time is not come.' Now youth is budding, or you are but in the flower of your age, it is too soon to repent; 'the time is not yet come.' This temptation is the devil's draw-net, by which he draws millions to hell; it is a dangerous temptation. Sin is 'a pleasant poison.' BERN. The longer poison lies in the body, the more mortal; by delay of repentance, sin strengthens, and the heart hardens. The longer ice freezeth, the harder it is to be broken: the longer a man freezeth in impenitency, the more difficult it will be to have his heart broken. When sin hath gotten a haunt, it is not easily shaken off. Besides, the danger of this temptation to delay repen-

¹ De. 16. 15.² Ps. 33. 1.³ Is. 22. 12, 11.⁴ Nu. 9. 2.

taunce appears in this, because life is hazardous and may on a sudden expire. What security have you that you shall live another day? Life is made up of a few flying minutes; it is a taper soon blown out; 'what is your life? it is even a vapour.' The body is like a vessel, tunned with a little breath; sickness broacheth this vessel, death draws it out: how dangerous therefore is this temptation, to procrastinate and put off turning to God by repentance! Many now in hell did purpose to repent, but death surprised them.

26th Subtily of Satan in tempting is, to infringe and weaken the saints' peace. If he cannot destroy their grace, he will disturb their peace. Satan envies a Christian should have a good day; and if he cannot keep them from heaven, he will keep them from an heaven upon earth. There is nothing, next to holiness, a Christian prizeth more, than peace and tranquillity of mind; this is the cream of life, a bunch of grapes by the way. Now, it is Satan's great policy to shake a Christian's peace; that, if he will go to heaven, he shall go thither through frights, and plenty of tears. The devil throws in his fire-balls of temptation, to set the saints' peace on fire. Of such great concern is spiritual peace, that no wonder if Satan would, by his intricate subtillies, rob us of this jewel. Spiritual peace is a token of God's favour. As Joseph had a special testimony of his father's kindness in the party-coloured coat he gave him, so have the saints a special token of God's good-will to them, when he gives them inward peace, which is, as it were, the party-coloured coat to wear. No wonder, then, if Satan so much rage against the saints' peace, and would tear off this comfortable robe from them! The devil troubles the waters of the saints' peace, because hereby he hopes to have the more advantage of them. By this perplexing of their spirits, Satan takes off their chariot-wheels,—unfits them for the service of God; body and mind are both out of temper, like an instrument out of tune. Sadness of spirit prevailing, a Christian can think of nothing but his troubles; his mind is full of doubts, fears, surmises, so that he is like a person distracted, and is scarce himself; either he neglects the duties of religion, or his mind is taken off from them while he is doing them. Especially there is one duty that melancholy and sadness of spirit unfits for, and

that is thankfulness. Thankfulness is a tribute or quit-rent due to God; 'let the saints be joyful, let the high praises of God be in their mouth.'² But when Satan hath disturbed a Christian's spirit, and filled his mind full of black, and almost despairing thoughts, how can he be thankful? It rejoiceth Satan to see how his plot takes; by making God's children unquiet, he makes them unthankful. Satan, by troubling the saints' peace, hath this advantage of laying a stumbling-block in the way of others; by this policy, the devil gets an occasion to render the ways of God unlovely to those who are looking heaven-ward. He sets before new beginners, the perplexing thoughts, the tears, the groans of them who are wounded in spirit, to scar them quite off from all seriousness in religion. He will object to new beginners, 'do you not see how these sad souls torture themselves with melancholy thoughts, and will you change the comforts and pleasures of this life to sit always in the house of mourning? Will you espouse that religion, which makes you a terror to yourselves, and a burden to others? Can you be in love with such a religion, as is ready to fright you out of your wits?' This advantage the devil gets by troubling the saints' peace, he would discourage others who are looking towards heaven, he would beat them off from prayer, and hearing all soul-awakening sermons, lest they fall into this black humour of melancholy, and end their days in despair. By this subtle policy of Satan, in disturbing the saints' peace, and making them believe God doth not love them, he hath this advantage, he sometimes so far prevails over them, as to make them begin to entertain hard thoughts of God.* Through the black spectacles of melancholy, God's dealings look sad and ghastly. Satan tempts the godly to have strange thoughts of God, to think he hath cast off all pity, and hath forgotten to be gracious, and to make sad conclusions; 'I reckoned, that as a lion, so will he

² Ps. 149. 5, 6.

* If I believe, with the apostle, that 'all things are of God,' I shall be less liable to perturbation, when afflicted, and learn more easily to possess my soul in patience. This was Job's support: he was not overcome with rage and despair, when he received news that the Sabeans had carried off his cattle, and slain his servants, and that the remainder of both were consumed with fire; that the Chaldeans had robbed him of his camels; and that his seven sons were crushed to death, by the falling of the house where they were sitting: he resolved all these misfortunes into the agency of God, his power and sovereignty, and even thanked him for doing what he would with his own. If another should slander me in word, or injure me in deed, I shall not be prone to anger, when, with David, I consider that the Lord hath bidden him.—*Toplady on Predestination*, p. 48.

break all my bones: from day, even to night, wilt thou make an end of me.¹ The devil setting in with melancholy, causeth a sad eclipse in the soul; it begins to think, God hath shut up the springs of mercy, and there is no hope. Hereupon Satan getteth further advantage of a troubled spirit; sometimes he puts the troubled soul upon sinful wishes and execrations against itself; Job, in distemper of mind, cursed his birth-day.² Job, though he did not curse his God, yet he cursed his birth-day. Thus you see what advantages the devil gets by raising storms, and troubling the saints' peace; and let me tell you, if the devil is capable of any delight, it is to see the saints' disquiets, their groans are his music, it is a sport to him to see them torture themselves upon the rack of melancholy, and almost drown themselves in tears. When the godly have unjust surmises of God, question his love, deny the work of grace, and fall to wishing they had never been born, now Satan is ready to clap his hands, and shout for a victory.

Having shown you the advantages the devil gets by this temptation of disturbing the saints' peace, I shall answer a question, *By what arts and methods doth Satan, in tempting, disturb the saints' peace?*

1. Satan slyly conveys evil thoughts, and then makes a Christian believe they come from his own heart. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack, but it was of Joseph's putting in: so a child of God often finds atheistical, blasphemous thoughts in his mind, but Satan hath cast them in. The devil doth as some, lay their children at another's door: so Satan lays his temptations at our door, fathers them upon us, and then we trouble ourselves about them, and nurse them, as if they were our own. 2. Satan disturbs the saints' peace, by drawing forth their sins in the most black colours, to affright them, and make them ready to give up the ghost. Satan is called the accuser of the brethren, not only because he accuseth them to God, but accuseth them to themselves; he tells them they are guilty of such sins, and they are hypocrites; whereas the sins of a believer show only that grace is not perfect, not that he hath no grace. When Satan comes with this temptation, show him that scripture; 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.'³

27th Subtily of Satan is, by plausible arguments, to tempt men to be *felo de se*,—to make

away themselves. This temptation doth not only cross the current of scripture, but is abhorring to nature, to be one's own executioner: yet such cunning artifices hath Satan, that he persuades many to lay violent hands upon themselves, which the bills of mortality witness. He tempts some to do this in terror of conscience, telling them, All the hell they shall have is in their conscience, and death will give them present ease. He tempts others to make away themselves, that they may live no longer to sin against God. Others he tempts to make away themselves, that they may presently arrive at happiness; he tells them, the best of the saints desire heaven, and the sooner they are there the better. Austin speaks of Cleombrotas, who hearing Plato read a lecture on the immortality of the soul, and the joys of the other world, threw himself down a steep precipice, or rock, and killed himself. This is Satan's plot; but we must not break prison by laying violent hands upon ourselves, but stay till God send and open the door. Let us pray, 'lead us not into temptation.' Still bear in mind that scripture, 'thou shalt not kill.' 'Blood cries to heaven.' If we may not kill another, much less ourselves; and take heed of discontent, which often opens the door to self-murder.

Thus I have shown you twenty-seven subtilities of Satan in tempting, that so you may the better know them, and avoid them. There is a story of a Jew that would have poisoned Luther; but a friend sent to Luther the picture of this Jew, warning him to take heed of such a man when he saw him; by which means he knew the murderer, and escaped his hands. I have told you the subtle devices of Satan in tempting; I have shown you, as it were, the picture of him that would murder you; I beseech you, being forewarned, take heed of the murderer.

USE. From this subtily of Satan in tempting, let me draw three inferences. 1. It may administer matter of wonder to us how any soul is saved. How may we admire, that Satan, this Abaddon, or 'angel of the bottomless pit,' this Apollyon, this soul devourer, doth not ruin all mankind! What a wonder is it that some are preserved, that neither Satan's hidden snares prevail, nor his fiery darts, that neither the head of the serpent, nor the paw of the lion destroys them! Sure it will be matter of admiration to the saints when they come to heaven, to think

¹ Is. 28. 13.² Job 3. 3.³ 1 Jno. 1. 7.

how strangely they came thither; that, notwithstanding all the force and fraud, the power and policy of hell, yet they should arrive safe at the heavenly port; this is through the safe conduct of Christ, the captain of our salvation; Michael is too hard for the dragon. 2. Is Satan subtle? See then what need we have to pray to God for wisdom to discern the snares of Satan, and strength to resist them. We cannot of ourselves stand against temptation; if we could, this prayer were needless, 'lead us not,' &c. Let us not think we can be too cunning for the devil, we can escape his wiles and darts. If David and Peter, who were 'pillars in God's temple,' fell by temptation, how soon should such weak reeds as we be blown down, did God leave us. Take Christ's advice, 'watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.' 3. See what the end of all Satan's subtilties in tempting is; he is a tempter, that he may be an accuser. He lays the plot, enticeth men to sin, and then brings in the indictment; as if one should make another drunk, and then complain of him to the magistrate for being drunk. The devil is first a tempter, and then an informer; first a liar, and then a murderer. Having shown you the subtilties of Satan in tempting, I shall answer two questions:

Q. 1. *Why doth God suffer his saints to be so hurried and buffeted by Satan's temptations?*

The Lord doth it for many wise and holy ends. 1. He lets them be tempted to try them. The Hebrew word *nissa* in *pyhil*, signifies both to tempt and to try; temptation is a touchstone to try what is in the heart; the devil tempts that he may deceive, but God lets us be tempted to try us. 'The man that has never been tempted, is yet untried.' AUG. Hereby God tries our sincerity. Job's sincerity was tried by temptation; the devil told God that Job was a hypocrite, and served God only for a livery; but, saith he, 'touch him,' that is, let me tempt him, 'and then see if he will not curse thee to thy face?'¹ Well, God did let the devil touch him by a temptation, yet Job remains holy, he worships God, and blesseth God. Here Job's sincerity was proved; Job had fiery temptations, but he came out of the fire a golden Christian. 'Temptation is a touchstone of sincerity.' By temptation, God tries our love. The wife of Tigranes did never so show her chastity and love to her husband, as when she was tempted by Cyrus, but did not yield, so, our love to God

is seen in this, when we can look a temptation in the face, and turn our back upon it; though the devil come as a serpent subtilly, and offers a golden apple, yet we will not touch the forbidden fruit. When the devil showed Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, such was Christ's love to his Father that he abhorred the temptation. True love will not be bribed. When the devil's darts are most fiery, a saint's love to God is most fervent. By temptation, God tries our courage; 'Ephraim also is like a silly dove without an heart.'² So it may be said of many, they are without an heart; they have no heart to resist a temptation; no sooner doth Satan come with his solicitations, but they yield; like a coward, as soon as the thief approacheth, he delivers his purse; but he is a valorous Christian, that brandisbeth the sword of the Spirit against Satan, and will rather die than yield. The courage of the Romans was never more seen than when they were assaulted by the Carthaginians; the heroic spirit of a saint is never more seen than in a field-battle, when he is fighting with the red dragon, and by the power of faith puts the devil to flight. 'The strength of faith can be shaken, but not overcome.' TER-TUL. This is one reason why God lets his people be tempted; that their metal may be tried, their sincerity, love, magnanimity; when grace is proved, the gospel is honoured. 2. God suffers his children to be tempted, that they may be kept from pride. Pride crept once into the angels, and into the apostles when they disputed 'which of them should be greatest;' and in Petet, 'though all men forsake thee, yet I will not,' as if he had more grace than all the apostles. Pride keeps grace low, that it cannot thrive; as the spleen swells, so the other parts of the body consume; as pride grows, so grace consumes. God resists pride; and, that he may keep his children humble, he suffers them sometimes to fall into temptation; 'lest I should be exalted, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.'³ When Paul was lifted up in revelations, he was in danger to be lifted up in pride, now came the messenger of Satan to buffet him, that was, some sore temptation to humble him. The thorn in the flesh was to prick the bladder of pride; better is that temptation that humbles me, than that duty which makes me proud. Rather than a Christian

¹ Job 1. 11.

² Ho. 7. 11.

³ 2 Co. 12. 7.

should be proud, God lets him fall into the devil's hands a while, that he may be cured of his imposthume. 3. God lets his people be tempted, that they may be fitter to comfort others who are in the same distress; they can speak a word in due season to such as are weary. St Paul was trained up in the fencing-school of temptation.¹ And he was able to acquaint others with Satan's wiles and stratagems. A man that hath rid over a place where there are quicksands, is the fittest to guide others through that dangerous way; he who hath been buffeted by Satan, and hath felt the claws of this roaring lion, is the fittest man to deal with one that is tempted. 4. God lets his children be tempted to make them long more for heaven, where they shall be out of gunshot; there they shall be freed from the hissing of the old serpent. Satan is not yet fully cast into prison, but is like a prisoner that goes under bail, he doth vex and molest the saints; he lays his snares, throws his fireballs, but this is only to make the people of God long to be gone from hence, and that they may pray that they had 'the wings of a dove,' to fly away beyond Satan's temptations. God suffered Israel to be vexed with the Egyptians, that they might long the more to be in Canaan. Heaven is a place of rest; no bullets of temptation fly there. The eagle that soars aloft in the air, and sits perching upon the tops of high trees, is not troubled with the stinging of serpents: so, when believers are gotten above into the empyrean heaven, they shall not be stung with the old serpent. The devil is cast out of the heavenly paradise. Heaven is compared to an exceeding high mountain;² it is so high that Satan's fiery darts cannot reach up to it. The temptations here are to make the saints long till death sound a retreat, and call them off the field where the bullets of temptation fly so thick, that they may receive a victorious crown. Thus I have answered this question, why God lets his dear servants be tempted.

Q. 2. *What rocks of support are there, or what comfort for tempted souls?*

1st, That is not our case alone, but hath been the case of God's eminent saints, 'there hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man,'³ yea, to the best men; Christ's lambs, which have had the ear-mark of election upon them, have been set upon by the world. Elijah, that could shut heaven by

prayer, could not shut his heart from a temptation. Job was tempted to curse God. Peter to deny Christ; hardly ever any saint hath got to heaven but hath met with a lion by the way. Nay, Jesus Christ himself, though he was free from sin, yet not from temptation: we read of Christ's baptism; 'then he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.' No sooner was Christ out of the water of baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation; and if the devil would set upon Christ, no wonder if he set upon us. There was no sin in Christ, no powder for the devil's fire; temptation to Christ, was like a bur on a crystal glass, which glides off, or like a spark of fire on a marble pillar, which will not stick; yet Satan was so bold as to tempt Christ. This is some comfort, such as have been our betters have wrestled with temptations.

2d Rock of support, that may comfort a tempted soul, is, that temptations, where they are burdens, evidence grace. Satan doth not tempt God's children, because they have sin in them, but because they have grace in them. Had they no grace, the devil would not disturb them; where he keeps possession all is in peace.⁴ His temptations are to rob the saints of their grace. A thief will not assault an empty house, but where he thinks there is treasure; a pirate will not set upon an empty ship, but one that is full fraught with spices and jewels; so the devil most assaults the people of God, because he thinks they have a rich treasure of grace in their hearts, and he would rob them of that. What makes so many cudgels be thrown at a tree, but because there is so much fruit hanging upon it? The devil throws his temptations at you, because he sees you have so much fruit of grace growing upon you. Though to be tempted is a trouble, yet to think why you are tempted is a comfort.

3d Rock of support or comfort, is, that Jesus Christ is near at hand, and stands by us in all our temptations. Here take notice of two things: Christ's sympathy in temptation, and Christ's succour in temptation. 1. Christ's sympathy in our temptations. 'We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.'⁵ Jesus Christ doth sympathize with us; he is so sensible of our temptations as if he himself lay under them and did feel them in his own soul. As in music, when one string is touched all the rest sound, so

¹ 2 Co. 2. 11.

² Re. 22. 10.

³ 1 Co. 10. 13.

⁴ Lu. 11. 21.

⁵ He 4. 15.

Christ's bowels sound; we cannot be tempted but he is touched. If you saw a wolf worry your child, would you not pity your child? You cannot pity it so as Christ doth tempted ones. Christ had a fellow-feeling when he was upon earth, much more now in glory. But how can it stand with Christ's glory now in heaven, to have a fellow-feeling of our miseries and temptations? This fellow-feeling in Christ ariseth not from an infirmity or passion, but from the mystical union between him and his members: 'he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye.'¹ Every injury done to a saint Christ takes as done to him in heaven: every temptation is a striking at Christ, and he is touched with the feeling of our temptations. 2. Christ's succour in temptation. As the good Samaritan first had compassion on the wounded man, there was sympathy; then he poured in wine and oil, there was succour: so when we are wounded by the red dragon, Christ is first touched with compassion, and then he pours in wine and oil; 'in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.' The Greek word *to succour*, signifies *to run speedily to one's help*: so fierce is Satan, so frail is man, that Christ, who is God-man, runs speedily to his help. When Peter was ready to sink, and said, 'Lord, save me!' Christ presently stretched forth his hand, and caught him: so when a poor soul is tempted, and cries to heaven for help, 'Lord, save me!' Christ comes in with his auxiliary forces; our Lord Jesus knows what it is to be tempted, therefore he is so ready to succour such as are tempted. It hath been an observation, that child-bearing women are more pitiful to others in their travails, than such women as are barren: so the Lord Jesus having been in travail by temptations and sufferings, is more ready to pity and succour such as are tempted. Concerning Christ's succouring the tempted, consider two things: Christ's ability, and his agility to succour. 1. Christ's ability to succour; 'he is able to succour them that are tempted.'² Christ is called *Michael*, which signifies 'who is like God.'³ Though the tempted soul is weak, yet he fights under a good captain, 'the lion of the tribe of Judah.' When a tempted soul fights, Christ comes into the field as his second. Michael would be too hard for the dragon; when the devil lays the siege of a temptation, Christ can raise the

siege when he pleases; he can beat through the enemy's quarters, and can so rout Satan that he shall never be able to rally his forces any more. Jesus Christ is on the saint's side, and who would desire a better lifeguard than omnipotency? 2. Christ's agility in succouring. As Christ is able to succour the tempted, so he will certainly succour them. Christ's power enables him, his love inclines him, his faithfulness engages him to succour tempted souls. This is a great comfort to a soul in temptation, he hath a succouring Saviour. As God did succour Israel in the wilderness among fiery serpents, they had the rock set abroad, the manna, the pillar of cloud, the brazen serpent; what was this but a type of God's succouring a poor soul in the wilderness of temptation, stung by the devil, that fiery serpent? Alexander being asked how he could sleep so securely, when his enemies were about him, said, 'Antipater is awake, who is always vigilant:' so when our tempting enemy is near us, Jesus Christ is awake, who is a wall of fire about us. There is a great deal of succour to the tempted in the names given to Christ: as Satan's names may terrify, so Christ's names may succour. The devil is called *Apollyon*, the devourer, Christ is called a Saviour. The devil is called the 'strong man,' Christ is called the 'Mighty God.' The devil is called 'the accuser;' Christ is called 'the Advocate.' The devil is called 'the tempter;' Christ is called 'the comforter.'⁴ The devil is called 'the prince of darkness;' Christ is called 'the Sun of Righteousness.' The devil is called 'the old serpent;' Christ is called 'the brazen serpent' that heals. Thus the very names of Christ have some succour in them for tempted souls.

Q. *How and in what manner, doth Christ succour them that are tempted?*

Several ways: i. Christ succours them, by sending his Spirit, whose work it is to bring those promises to their mind, which are fortifying; 'he shall bring all things to your remembrance.' The Spirit furnishes us with promises as so many weapons to fight against the old serpent; 'the Lord will shortly bruise Satan under your feet;'⁵ 'God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.' The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head. We are oft in times of temptation, as a man that hath his house beset, and cannot find his weapons, he hath his sword and gun to seek:

¹ Ze. 2. 8.² He. 2. 18.³ Re. 12. 7.⁴ Lu. 2. 25.⁵ Ro. 16. 20.

now, in this case, Christ sends his Spirit, and he brings things to our remembrance that helps us in our combat with Satan. The Spirit of Christ doth to one that is tempted, as Aaron and Hur did to Moses, they put a stone under him, and held up his hands, and then Israel prevailed; so God's Spirit puts the promises under the hand of faith, and then a Christian overcomes the devil, that spiritual Amalek. The promise is to the soul, as the anchor is to the ship, which keeps it steady in a storm. 2. Christ succours them that are tempted by his blessed 'interceding for them.' When the devil is tempting, Christ is praying. That prayer Christ put up for Peter when he was tempted,¹ extends to all his saints, Lord, saith Christ, 'it is my child that is tempted; Father, pity him.' When a poor soul lies bleeding of his wounds the devil hath given him, Christ presents his wounds to his Father, and, in the virtue of those, pleads for mercy. How powerful must Christ's prayer needs be! He is a favourite; he is both an high priest and a son; if God could forget that Christ were a priest, yet he cannot forget that he is a Son. Besides, Christ prays for nothing but what is agreeable to his Father's will; if a king's son petitions only for that which his father hath a mind to grant, his suit will not be denied. 3. Christ succours his people, by taking off the tempter. A shepherd, when the sheep begin to straggle, may set the dog on the sheep to bring them nearer the fold, but then he calls off the dog again; God will take off the tempter; 'he will with the temptation make a way to escape';² he will make an outlet. Christ will rebuke the tempter, 'the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.' This is no small support, that Christ succours the tempted. The mother succours the child most when it is sick; she sits by its bed-side, brings it cordials; so, when a soul is most assaulted, it shall be most assisted. But I have dealt unkindly with Christ and sinned against his love; and sure he will not succour me, but let me perish in the battle. Christ is a merciful high priest, and will succour thee notwithstanding thy failings. Joseph was a type of Christ; his brethren sold him away, and the 'irons entered into his soul;' yet afterwards, when his brethren were ready to die in the famine, he forgot their injuries, and succoured them with money and corn; 'I am,' saith he, 'Joseph your brother!' So will Christ

say to a tempted soul, 'I know thy unkindnesses, how thou hast distrusted my love, grieved my Spirit, but I am Joseph, I am Jesus, therefore I will succour thee, when thou art tempted.'

4th Rock of support. The best man may be most tempted. A rich ship may be violently set upon by pirates: he who is rich in faith, yet may have the devil, that pirate, set upon him by his battering pieces. Job, an eminent saint, yet how fiercely was he assaulted? Satan did smite his body, that he might tempt him, either to question God's providence, or quarrel with it. St. Paul was a chosen vessel, but how was this vessel battered with temptation? But is it not said, He who is born of God, the wicked one toucheth him not?³ It is not meant, that the devil doth not tempt him, but he toucheth him not, that is, with a deadly touch: 'there is a sin unto death.'⁴ Now Satan with all his temptations doth not make a child of God sin 'a sin unto death.' Thus he toucheth him not.

5th Rock of support. Satan can go no farther in tempting than God will 'give him leave;' the power of the tempter is limited. A whole legion of devils could not touch one swine, till Christ gave them leave. Satan would have sifted Peter till he sifted out all his grace; but Christ would not suffer him, 'I have prayed for thee,' &c. Christ binds the devil in a chain.⁵ If Satan's power were according to his malice, not one soul should be saved; but he is a chained enemy; this is a comfort, Satan cannot go a hairs breadth beyond God's permission. If an enemy could not touch a child further than the father did appoint, sure he should do the child no great hurt.

6th Rock of support. It is not the having a temptation makes guilty, but the giving consent; we cannot hinder a temptation; Elijah, that could by prayer shut heaven, could not shut out a temptation; but if we abhor the temptation, it is our burden, not our sin. We read in the old law, if one went to force a virgin, and she cried out, she was reputed innocent: if Satan would by temptation commit a rape upon a Christian, and he cries out, and will not give consent, the Lord will charge it upon the devil's score. It is not the laying the bait hurts the fish, if the fish do not bite.

7th Rock of support. Our being tempted is no sign of God's hating us. A child of God oft thinks God doth not love him, because he

¹ Lu. 22. 32.² 1 Cor. 10. 13³ 1 Joh. 5. 18.⁴ 1 Joh. 5. 16.⁵ Re. 20. 1.

lets him be haunted with the devil: this is a wrong conclusion. Was not Christ himself tempted? yet by a voice from heaven proclaimed, 'this is my beloved Son.' Satan's tempting, and God's loving, may stand together. The goldsmith loves his gold in the fire; God loves a saint, though shot at by fiery darts.

8th Rock of support. Christ's temptation was for our consolation. Jesus Christ is to be looked upon as a public person, as our head and representative; and what Christ did, he did for us; his prayer was for us, his suffering was for us, when he was tempted, and overcame the temptation, he overcame for us. Christ's conquering Satan was to show that elect persons shall at last be conquerors over Satan; when Christ overcame Satan's temptation, it was not only to give us an example of courage, but an assurance of conquest; we have overcome Satan already in our head, and we shall at last perfectly overcome.

9th Rock of support. The saints' temptation shall not be above their strength. The lutenist will not stretch the strings of his lute too hard lest they break; 'God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.'¹ God will proportion our strength to the stroke; 'my grace is sufficient for thee.'² The torch-light of faith shall be kept burning, notwithstanding all the winds of temptation blowing.

10th Rock of support. These temptations shall produce much good. They shall quicken a spirit of prayer in the saints, they shall pray more and better; temptation is the exciter of prayer; perhaps, before, the saints came to God as cold suitors in prayer, they prayed as if they prayed not. Temptation is a medicine for security; when Paul had a messenger of Satan to buffet him he was more earnest in prayer; 'for this thing I besought the Lord thrice;³ the thorn in his flesh was a spur in his sides to quicken him in prayer.* The deer being shot

with the dart, runs faster to the water: when a soul is shot with the fiery darts of temptation, he runs the faster to the throne of grace; now he is earnest with God, either to take off the tempter, or to stand by him when he is tempted. God makes the temptation to sin a means to prevent sin. The more a Christian is tempted, the more he fights against the temptation; the more a chaste woman is assaulted, the more she abhors the motion; the stronger Joseph's temptation was, the stronger his opposition; the more the enemy attempts to storm a castle, the more he is repelled and beat back. A godly man's temptations cause the increase of grace. 'One tempted Christian,' saith Luther, 'is worth a thousand.' He grows more in grace; as the bellows increaseth the flame, so the bellows of a temptation doth increase the flame of grace. By these temptations God makes way for comfort; as Christ after he was tempted, the 'angels came and ministered unto him.'⁴ As, when Abraham had been warring, Melchizedek brought him bread and wine to revive his spirits; so, after the saints have been warring with Satan, now God sends his Spirit to comfort them; which made Luther say, that temptations were 'Christ's embraces,' because he doth then most sweetly manifest himself to the soul. Thus you see what rocks of support there are for tempted souls. That I may further comfort such as are tempted, let me speak to two cases of the tempted.

1st Case. I have horrid temptations to blasphemy. Did not the devil tempt Christ after this manner; 'all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me?'⁵ What greater blasphemy can be imagined, than that the God of heaven and earth should worship the devil? Yet Christ was tempted to this. If when blasphemous thoughts are injected, you tremble at them, and are in a cold sweat, they are not yours, Satan shall answer for them; let him that plots the treason, suffer.

2d Case. But my case is yet worse; I have been tempted to such sins, and have yielded; the tempter hath overcome me. I grant, that through the withdrawing of God's grace, and the force of a temptation, a child of God may be overcome. David was overcome by a temptation in the case of Bathsheba, and numbering

¹ 1 Co. 10. 13.

² 2 Co. 12. 9.

³ 2 Co. 12. 8.

* We are not to pray absolutely against temptation, but conditionally. We should pray to be kept from the sin we are tempted to, and that we may not only be preserved from becoming the victims of temptation, but from giving the least place to its influence. But we must not pray that we may never be tempted, for the graces of religion are improved in the struggle to which inward corruption calls the good; the gospel is honoured by the influence which it manifests, in the superiority of its disciples to the allurements by which the world tries to seduce them from their duty, and by the patience and the hope which they maintain under its persecutions; and Satan is put to shame, by the detection of his wiles, the repelling of those suggestions by which he would lead them to the violation of moral principle, and by their emerging from the cloud by which he thought to fill them with horror and despair. But we

⁴ Mat. 4. 11.

⁵ Mat. 4. 9.

may lawfully pray that we may be kept from such temptations as would be peculiarly perilous to us, either from the violence of the passions in us to which they are addressed, or from the circumstances in which we are placed.—*Belfrage on Catechism*, vol. ii. p. 402.

the people. There is a party of grace in the heart true to Christ; but sometimes it may be over-voted by corruption, and then a Christian yields; it is sad thus to yield to the tempter. But let not a child of God be wholly discouraged, and say there is no hope: let me pour in some balm of Gilead into this wounded soul.

1. Though a Christian may fall by a temptation, yet the seed of God is in him; 'his seed remaineth in him.'¹ A man may be bruised by a fall, yet there is life in him: a Christian, being foiled by Satan, may be like him, who, going to Jericho, fell among thieves, 'wounded and half dead.'² But still there is a vital principle of grace, his seed remains in him.

2. Though a child of God may be overcome in a skirmish; yet not in the main battle; an army may be worsted in a skirmish, but may overcome at last. Though Satan may foil a child of God in a skirmish, by a temptation, yet the believer shall overcome at last; a saint may be foiled, not conquered; he may lose ground, not lose the victory.

3. God doth not judge of his children by one action, but by the frame of their heart; as God doth not judge of a wicked man by one good action, so neither of a godly man by one bad action; a holy person may be worsted by a temptation; but God doth not measure him by that. Who measures milk when it seethes and boils up? God doth not take the measure of a saint when the devil hath boiled him up in a passion, but God judgeth of him by the pulse and temper of his heart; he would fear God; when he fails he weeps. God looks which way the bias of his heart stands: if his heart be set against sin, God will pardon.

4. God will make a saint's being foiled by temptation, turn to his spiritual advantage. He may let a regenerate person fall by a temptation, to make him more watchful; perhaps he walks loosely, and so was decoyed into sin, but for the future, he grows more curious and cautious in his walking. The foiled Christian is a vigilant Christian; he will have a care of coming within the lion's chain any more, he will be shy and fearful of the occasion of sin; he will not go abroad without his spiritual armour, and he girds on his armour by prayer. When a wild beast gets over the hedge, and hurts the corn, a man will make his fence stronger: so, when the devil gets over the fence by a temptation, and foils a Christian, he will be sure to mend his fence, and be more

vigilant against a temptation afterwards. God lets his children be sometimes foiled by a temptation, that they may see their continual dependence on God, and may go to him for strength. We need not only habitual grace, to stand against temptation, but auxiliary grace; as the boat needs not only the oars, but wind, to carry it against a strong tide. God lets his children sometimes fall by a temptation, that, seeing their own weakness, they may rest more on Christ and free grace. God, by suffering his children to be foiled by a temptation, will settle them the more in grace: they shall get strength by their foils. The poets feign, that Antæus the giant, in wrestling with Hercules, got strength by every fall to the ground: it is true here; a saint, being foiled in wrestling with Satan, gets more spiritual strength. Peter had never such a strengthening in his faith, as after his being foiled in the high priest's hall. How was he fired with zeal, steeled with courage? He who before was dashed out of countenance by the voice of a maid, now dares openly confess Christ before the rulers and the councils! The shaking of the tree settles it the more: God lets his children be shaken with the wind of temptation, that they may be more settled in grace afterwards. This I have spoken that such Christians as God hath suffered to be foiled by temptation, may not cast away their anchor, or give way to sad despairing thoughts. But this may seem to make Christians careless whether they fall into a temptation or not, if God can make their being foiled by a temptation advantageous to them. We must distinguish between one who is foiled through weakness and through wilfulness.* If a soldier fights, but is foiled for want of strength, the general of the army will pity him, and bind up his wounds; but if he be wilfully foiled, and proves treacherous, he must expect no favour: so, if a Christian fight it out with Satan, but is foiled for want of strength, as it was with Peter, God will pity him, and do him good by his being

* Some say, 'God will leave some remains of sin within us, lest we should become proud by being innocent.' So vainly do men argue against God's goodness, and their own blessings and salvation. If by remains we mean any part of the habit of sin, any affection, any malice and perverseness of the will, then it is a contradiction to say, that God leaves in us such remains of sin lest by innocence we become proud; for how should pride spring in a man's heart, if there be no remains of sin left? And is it not the best, the surest way, to cure the pride of our hearts, by taking out every root of bitterness, even the root of pride itself? Let God leave what remains he please, all will be well on that side; but let us be careful, as far as we can, that we leave none, lest it be severely imputed to us, and the fire break out and consume us.—*Taylor's Christian's Conquest*, iv. 1.

¹ 1 Jno. 3. 9.

² Lu. 10. 30.

foiled; but if he be foiled wilfully, and runs into a temptation, as it was with Judas, God will show him no favour, but will execute martial law upon him.

USE I. Branch 1. See in what continual danger we are. Satan is an exquisite artist, a deep head-piece, he lies in ambush to ensnare, he is the tempter, it is his delight to make the saints sin; and he is subtle in tempting, he hath ways and methods to deceive. He brings a saint into sin, by making him confide in his habitual graces. Satan makes him believe he hath such a stock of grace as will antidote him against all temptations; thus Satan deceived Peter, he made him trust in his grace; he had such a cable of faith and strong tacklings, that though the winds of temptation did blow never so fierce, he could weather the point: 'though all men forsake thee, yet will not I!' as if he had more grace than all the apostles. Thus he was led into temptation, and fell in the battle: a man may make an idol of grace. Habitual grace is not sufficient without auxiliary. The boat needs not only oars, but a gale of wind to carry it against the tide, so we need not only habitual grace, but the blowing of the Spirit, to carry us against a strong temptation. Satan tempts to sin by the baits and allurements of the world. One of Christ's own apostles was caught with a silver bait. Such as the devil cannot debauch with vice, he will corrupt with money: 'all these things will I give thee,' was his last temptation.¹ Achan was deluded by a wedge of gold. Sylvester II. did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom. Satan tempts to sin, under a mask and show of good; his temptations seem gracious motions. He tempts men to duties of religion. You would think this strange, that Satan should tempt to duty, but it is so. He tempts men to duty out of sinister ends. Thus he tempted the Pharisees to pray and give alms, that they might be seen of men. Prayer is a duty, but to look asquint in prayer, to do it for vain-glory, this prayer is turned into sin. He tempts to duty when it is not in season; 'my offering, and my bread for my sacrifices, shall ye offer unto me in their due season.' Satan tempts to duty when it is out of season; he tempts to read the word at home, when we should be hearing the word; he will so tempt to one duty, as it may hinder another. He tempts some to duty, out of design that it may be a cloak for sin. He tempts them

to frequency in duty, that they may sin and be less suspected. He tempted the Pharisees to make long prayers, that they might devour widows' houses under this pretence. Who would suspect him of false weights, that so oft holds a bible in his hand? Thus cunning is Satan, he tempts to duty. He tempts men to sin, out of a show of love to Christ. You will think this strange, but there is truth in it. Many a good heart may think that what he doth is in love to Christ, and all this while he may be under a temptation. Christ told Peter he must suffer at Jerusalem; Peter took him and rebuked him; 'be it far from thee, Lord:' as if he had said to Christ, Lord, thou hast deserved no such shameful death, and this shall not be unto thee. Peter, as he thought, did this out of love to Christ, but Peter was all this while under a temptation. What had become of us, if Christ had hearkened to Peter, and had not suffered? So when Christ washed his disciples' feet, Peter was so mannerly that he would not let Christ wash his feet; 'thou shalt never wash my feet.'² This Peter did, as he thought, out of love and respect to Christ; Peter thought Christ was too good to wash his feet, and therefore would have put Christ off, but this was a temptation, the devil put Peter upon this sinful modesty, he struck at Peter's salvation, insomuch that Christ saith, 'if I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.' So again, when the Samaritans would not receive Christ, the disciples, James and John, said, 'Lord, wilt thou that we command fire from heaven and consume them?'³ they did this, as they thought, out of love to Christ; they would wish for fire to consume their enemies, but they were under a temptation; it was not zeal, but the wild fire of their own passion: 'ye know not,' saith Christ, 'what spirits ye are of.' Satan tempts to that sin which a man's heart is naturally most ineliable to; he will not tempt a civil man to gross sin, this is abhorring to the light of nature. Satan never sets a dish before men that they do not love: but he will tempt a civil man to pride, and to trust in his own righteousness, and to make a saviour of his civility. The spider weaves a web out of her own bowels; the civil man would weave a web of salvation out of his own righteousness. See then, in what danger we are, when Satan is continually lying in ambush with his temptations.

Branch 2. See man's inability of himself to

¹ Mat. 4. 9.

² Jno. 13. 8.

³ Lk. 9. 54.

resist a temptation. Could he stand of himself against a temptation, this prayer were needless, 'lead us not into temptation;' no man hath power of himself to resist a temptation, further than God gives him strength; 'O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself!'¹ If Peter, who had true grace, and Adam who had perfect grace, could not stand against temptation, much less can any stand by the power of nature; which confutes the doctrine of free-will; what freedom of will hath man, when he cannot resist the least temptation?

Branch 3. Here is matter of humiliation, that there is in us such an aptitude and proneness to yield to temptation. We are as ready to swallow a temptation, as the fish to swallow the bait. If the devil tempt to pride, lust, envy, revenge, how do we symbolize with Satan, and embrace his snares? Like a woman that hath a suitor come to her, and she doth not need much wooing, she presently gives her consent: Satan comes a-wooing by temptation, and we soon yield; he strikes fire, and we are as dry tinder that catcheth the first spark;* he knocks by temptation, and it is sad to think how soon we open the door to the devil, which is as if one should open the door to a thief; this may cause a spring of tears.

Branch 4. See hence, a Christian's life is no easy life; it is military; he hath a Goliath in the field to encounter with, one that is armed with power and subtilty; he hath his wiles and darts. A Christian must be continually watching and fighting. Satan's desigus carry death in the front; 'seeking whom he may devour';² therefore we had need be always with our weapons in our hand. How few think their life a warfare? Though they have an enemy in the field, that is always laying of snares, or shooting of darts, yet they do not stand sentinel or get their

spiritual artillery ready; they put on their jewels, but not their armour; 'they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ,'³ as if they were rather in music than in battle. Many are asleep in sloth, when they should be fighting against Satan; and no wonder the devil shoots them when he finds them asleep!

USE 2. It reproves them who pray, 'lead us not into temptation,' yet run themselves into temptation: such are they who go to plays and masquerades, and hunt after strange flesh. Some go a slower pace to hell, but such as run themselves into temptation, these go galloping thither; we have too many of these in this debauched age, who, as if they thought they could not sin fast enough, tempt the devil to tempt them.

USE 3. Exhortation. Let us labour that we be not overcome by temptation. What means may be used, that Satan's temptations may not prevail against us?

1. Avoid solitariness. It is no wisdom in fighting with an enemy to give him the advantage of the ground: we give Satan advantage of the ground when we are alone. Eve was foiled in the absence of her husband. A virgin is not so soon set upon in company; 'two are better than one.'⁴ Get into the communion of saints, and that is a good remedy against temptation.

2. If you would not be overcome of temptation, beware of the predominancy of melancholy; this is a black humour, seated chiefly in the brain. Melancholy disturbs reason, and exposeth to temptation. One calls melancholy 'the devil's bath;' he bathes himself with delight in such a person. Melancholy clothes the mind in sable; it fills it with such dismal apprehensions, as oft end in self-murder.

3. If you would not be overcome of temptation study sobriety; 'be sober, because your adversary walketh about.'⁵ Sober-mindedness consists in the moderate use of earthly things; an immoderate desire of these things oft brings men into the snare of the devil: 'they that will be rich fall into a snare.'⁶ He who loves riches inordinately, will purchase them unjustly. Ahab would swim to Naboth's vineyard in blood. He who is drunk with the love of the world, is never free from temptation; he will pull down his soul to build an estate. Be sober, take heed of being drunk with the love of the world, lest ye fall into temptation.

¹ Je. 10. 23.

² 1 Pe. 5. 8.

* There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell: there are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments in us as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea; for the present God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, 'hitherto shalt thou come and no farther;' but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it.—*Edwards on the Salvation of all Men*, p. 271.

³ Job 21. 12. ⁴ Ec. 4. 9. ⁵ 1 Pe. 5. 8. ⁶ 1 Ti. 6. 9.

4. Be always upon your guard, watch against Satan's wiles and subtilties; 'be vigilant, because your adversary the devil walks about.'¹ A Christian must keep watch and ward; see where Satan labours to make a breach, see what grace he most strikes at, or what sin he most tempts to: 'I say unto you all, watch.'² Watch all the senses, the eye, the ear, the touch; Satan can creep in here. O how needful is the spiritual watch! Shall Satan be watchful, and we drowsy? Doth he watch to devour us, and shall not we watch to save ourselves? Let us see what sin our heart most naturally inclines to, and watch against this.

5. Beware of idleness; Satan sows most of his seed in fallow ground. It was Hierom's counsel to his friend, to be ever busied, that if the devil did come, he might find him working in the vineyard. Idleness tempts the devil to tempt; the bird that sits till it is shot; he that wants employment, never wants temptation; when a man hath nothing to do, Satan will bring grist to the mill, and find him work enough.

6. Make known thy case to some godly friend; the hiding a serpent in the bosom, is not the way to be safe; when the old serpent hath gotten into your bosom by a temptation, do not hide him there by keeping his counsel. If a spark be got into the thatch, it is not wisdom to conceal it, it may set the house on fire; conceal not temptation. The keeping of secrets is for familiar friends: be not so great a friend to Satan, as to keep his secrets; reveal your temptations, which is the way to procure other's prayers and advice; let all see that you are not true to Satan's party, because you tell all his plots, and reveal his treasons. Besides, the telling of our ease to some experienced Christian, is the way to have ease; as the opening of a vein gives ease, so the opening of our ease to a friend gives ease to the soul, and a temptation doth not so much inflame.

7. Make use of the word. This the apostle calls 'the sword of the Spirit';³ a fit weapon to fight against the tempter. This 'sword of the Spirit' is 'a two-edged sword'; it wounds carnal lust, and it wounds Satan. He who travels a road where there is robbing, will be sure to ride with his sword; we are travelling to heaven, and in this road there is a thief will always beset us. Satan is in every place where we go; he meets us at church, he doth not miss a sermon, he will be tempting us there,

sometimes to drowsiness; when you sleep at sermon, the devil rocks you asleep: sometimes he tempts by distracting the mind in hearing, sometimes he tempts to question the truth of what you hear; thus we meet with the tempter at church. And he tempts in the shop, he tempts you to use collusion and deceit; 'the balances of deceit are in his hand'; so that we meet with the tempter every where. Therefore this thief being in the road, we had need ride with a sword; we must have 'the sword of the Spirit' about us. We must have skill to use this sword, and have an heart to draw it out, and this sword will put the devil to flight. Thus our blessed Saviour, when Satan tempted him to distrust and blasphemy, he used a scripture weapon, 'it is written.' Three times Christ wounded the old serpent with this sword. Christ could with his power and authority have rebuked the prince of the air, as he did the winds; but he stops the devil's mouth with scripture, 'it is written.' It is not our vows and resolutions will do it, it is not the papist's holy water or charms will drive away the devil; but let us bring the word of God against him: this is such an argument as he cannot answer. It was a saying of Luther, 'I have had great troubles of mind; but so soon as I laid hold on any place of scripture, and stayed myself upon it, as upon my chief anchor, straightway my temptations vanished away.' There is no temptation but we have fit scripture to answer it. If Satan tempts to sabbath-breaking, answer him, 'it is written, remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.' If he tempts to uncleanness, answer him, 'it is written, whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' If he tempts to carnal fear, say, 'it is written, fear not them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do.' No such way to confute temptation as by scripture; the arrows which we shoot against Satan must be fetched out of this quiver. Many people want this sword of the Spirit, they have not a Bible; others seldom make use of this sword, but let it rust; they look seldom into the scripture, therefore no wonder they are overcome by temptations. He who is well skilled in the word is like one who hath a plaster ready, to lay upon the wound as soon as it is made, and so the danger is prevented. Oh study the scripture, and you will be too hard for the devil; he cannot stand against this!

8. Let us be careful of our own hearts that they do not decoy us into sin. The apostle

¹ 1 Pe. 5. 8.² Mat. 13. 37.³ Ep. 6. 17.

saith, 'a man is drawn away of his own heart, and enticed.' 'Every man hath a tempter in his own bosom.' BERN. A traitor within the castle is dangerous. The heart can bring forth a temptation, though Satan do not midwife it into the world; if Satan were dead and buried, the heart could draw us to evil. As the ground of all diseases lies in the humours of the body, so the seed of all sin lies in the original lust. Look to your hearts.

9. If you would not be overcome of temptation, flee the 'occasions of sin.' Occasions of sin have a great force in them to awaken lust within. He that would keep himself free from infection, will not come near an infected house: if you would be sober, avoid drunken company. Joseph, when he was enticed by his mistress, shunned the occasion; the text saith, he would not be with her.² If you would not be ensnared with popery, do not hear the mass. The Nazarite, who was forbid wine, might not eat grapes, which might occasion intemperance. Come not near the borders of a temptation. Suppose one had a body made of gunpowder, he would not come near the least spark of fire, lest he should be blown up: many pray 'lead us not into temptation,' and they run themselves into temptation.

10. If you would not be overcome by temptation, make use of faith, 'above all things take the shield of faith.' Faith wards off Satan's fiery darts, that they do not hurt; 'whom resist, stedfast in the faith.'³ Mariners in a storm flee to their anchor: flee to your anchor of faith; faith brings Christ along with it; duellers bring their seconds with them into the field: faith brings Christ along for its second. Faith puts into Christ, and then the devil cannot hurt us. The chicken is safe from the birds of prey, under the wings of the hen: and we are secure from the tempter, under the wings of the Lord Jesus. Though other graces are of use to resist the impulsions of Satan, yet faith is the conquering grace; faith takes hold of Christ's merits, value, and virtue; and so a Christian is too hard for the devil. The stars vanish when the sun appears: Satan vanisheth when faith appears.

11. If you would not be overcome of temptation, be much in prayer. Such as walk in infectious places, carry antidotes about them: prayer is the best antidote against temptation. When the apostle had exhorted to 'put on the

whole armour of God,'⁴ he adds, 'praying always with all prayer.' Without this, 'all other weapons will do little good.' ZANCI. Christ prescribes this remedy, 'watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.'⁵ A Christian fetcheth down strength from heaven by prayer. Let us cry to God for help against the tempter, as Samson cried to heaven for help; 'O Lord God, remember me and strengthen me, I pray thee, that I may be avenged of the Philistines!'⁶ And 'the house fell upon the lords and all the people.' Prayer whips and torments the devil; the apostle bids us 'pray without ceasing.'⁷ It was Luther's advice to a lady, when temptation came, to fall upon her knees by prayer. Prayer doth assuage the force of a temptation. Prayer is the best charm or spell we can use against the devil. Temptation may bruise our heel; but by prayer we wound the serpent's head. When Paul had 'a messenger of Satan to buffet him,' what remedy doth he use? He betook himself to prayer; 'for this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.' When Satan assaults furiously, let us pray fervently.

12. If you would not be overcome of temptation be humble in your own eyes: such are nearest falling, who presume of their own strength. Penelton, who said, his fat flesh should melt in the fire, instead of his fat melting, his heart melted, and he turned from the truth: when men grow into a big conceit, God lets them fall, to prick the bladder of pride. O be humble! such are like to hold best out in temptation, who have most grace; but God gives more grace to the humble.⁸ Beware of pride; an imposthume is not more dangerous in the body, than pride in the soul. The doves, saith Pliny, take a pride in their feathers, and in their flying high; at last they fly so high that they are a prey to the hawk; when men fly high in pride and self-confidence, they become a prey to the tempter.

13. If you would not be foiled by temptation, do not enter into a dispute with Satan. When Eve began to argue the case with the serpent, the serpent was too hard for her; the devil, by his logie, disputed her out of paradise! Satan can mince sin, make it small, and varnish it over, and make it look like virtue; Satan is too subtle a sophister to hold an argument with him. Dispute not, but fight. If you enter into a parley with Satan, you give him half the victory.

¹ Ja. 1. 14.² Ge. 39. 10.³ 1 Pe. 5. 9.⁴ Ep. 6. 11.⁵ Mar. 14. 38.⁶ Ju. 16. 28.⁷ 1 Th. 5. 17.⁸ Ja. 4. 6.

14. If we would not be overcome of Satan, let us put on Christian fortitude. An enemy we must expect who is either shooting of darts, or laying of snares, therefore let us be armed with courage; 'deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.'¹ The coward never won victory! We have a good captain that marcheth before us; Christ is called 'the captain of our salvation.'² We have good armour; grace is armour of God's making.³ Satan is beaten in part already, Christ hath given him his death-wound upon the cross.⁴ Satan is a chained enemy, his power is limited, he cannot force the will; it was all Eve complained of that the serpent *deceived* her, not *constrained* her.⁵ Satan may persuade, not compel. He is a cursed enemy, and God's curse will blast him: therefore put on holy gallantry of spirit and magnanimity. Fear not Satan. Greater is he that is in you, than he that is against you.

15. If we would not be overcome of a temptation, let us call in the help of others. If an house be set on fire, would not you call in help? Satan tempts, that he may rob you of your soul; acquaint some friends with your case, and beg for their counsel and prayers. Who knows but Satan may be cast out by the joint prayers of others? In case of temptation, how exceeding helpful is the communion of saints?

16. If we would not be overcome of temptation, let us make use of all the encouragements we can. If Satan be a roaring lion, 'Christ is the lion of the tribe of Judah.'⁶ If Satan tempts, Christ prays. If Satan be a serpent to sting, Christ is a brazen serpent to heal. If the conflict be hard, look to the crown.⁷ Whilst we are fighting, Christ will succour us; and when we overcome he will crown us. What makes the soldier endure a bloody fight, but the hope of a golden harvest? Think, that shortly God will call us out of the field where the bullets of temptation fly so fast, and he will set a garland of glory upon our head. How will the case be altered! Instead of fighting, singing; instead of an helmet, a diadem; instead of a sword, a palm-branch of victory; instead of armour, white robes; instead of Satan's skirmishes, the kisses and embraces of a Saviour; the viewing these eternal recompenses, would keep us from yielding to temptation. Who would, to gratify a lust, lose a crown?

USE 4. A word of counsel to such as are

tempted; be so wise as to make good use of your temptation. As we should labour to improve our afflictions, so to improve our temptations. We should pick some good out of temptation, as Samson got honey out of the lion. What good comes out of a temptation? Can there be any good in being set upon by an enemy? Can there be any good to have fiery darts shot at us? Yes, God that can make a treacle of poison, can make his people get much good by their temptations. First, hereby a Christian sees that corruption in his heart, which he never saw before. Water in a glass looks pure, but set it on the fire, and the scum boils up: so in temptation a Christian sees that scum of sin boil up, that passion and distrust of God, as he thought had not been in his heart. Secondly, hereby a Christian sees more of the wiles of Satan, and is better able to withstand them; St Paul had been in the fencing-school of temptation, and he grew expert in finding out Satan's stratagems; 'we are not ignorant of his devices.'⁷ Thirdly, hereby a Christian grows more humble; God will rather let his children fall into the devil's hands, than be proud; temptation makes the plumes of pride fall; 'lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a thorn in the flesh.'⁸ Better is that temptation that humbles, than that duty which makes one proud. Thus you see how much good a Christian may get by temptation; which made Luther say, three things make a good divine; prayer, meditation, temptation.

USE 5. To such as have been under sore temptations and buffetings of Satan, to lust, revenge, self-murder, but God hath stood by them, and given them strength to overcome the tempter. 1. Be very thankful to God; say, 'thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory!'⁹ Be much in doxology. Why were we kept more than others from falling into sin? Was it because temptation was not so strong? no! Satan shoots his darts with all his force. Was the cause in our will? no! such a broken shield would never have conquered Satan's temptations; know, that it was free grace that beat back the tempter, and brought us off with trophies of victory. O be thankful to God! Had you been overcome by temptation, you might have put black spots in the face of religion, and given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme.¹⁰ Had you been overcome, you

¹ 2 Ch. 19. 11.

² He. 2. 10.

³ Ep. 6. 11.

⁴ Col. 1. 16.

⁵ Ge. 3. 13.

⁶ Ja. 1. 12.

⁷ 2 Co. 2. 11. ⁸ 2 Co. 12. 7. ⁹ 1 Co. 15. 57. ¹⁰ 2 Sa. 12. 14.

might have lain sick of 'a wounded spirit,' and cried out, with David, of 'broken bones.' After David yielded to temptation, he lay for three quarters of a year in horror of mind; and some divines think, he never recovered his full joy to the day of his death. O therefore, what cause have they to stand upon mount Gerizim blessing of God, who in a field of battle have got the better of Satan, and been more than conquerors! Say, 'blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us a prey to their teeth!'¹ blessed be God, who hath not given us a prey to Satan, that roaring lion! When God puts mercy in the premises, we must put praise in the conclusion. 2. You that have been tempted, and come off victors, be full of sympathy, pity-tempted souls, show your piety in your pity. Do you see Satan's darts sticking in their sides? do what you can to pull out these darts; communicate your experiences to them; tell them how you broke the devil's snare, and your Saviour was your succourer. The apostle speaks of restoring others, 'in the spirit of meekness.'² The Greek word for *rest*, alludes to churgeons, who set bones out of joint: so when we see such as are tempted, and Satan hath, as it were, put their bones out of joint, labour to put them in joint again, with all love, meekness, and compassion. 'A word spoken in season' may relieve a soul fainting in temptation; and you may do, as the good Samaritan, drop in oil and wine into the wound.³ 'A spiritual man thinks of advices rather than reproaches.' AUG. 3. You that have got a conquest of Satan, be not secure. Think not that you shall never be troubled with the tempter more; he is not like the Syrians; 'the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.'⁴ A cock, if he be made once to run away, he will fight no more; but, it is not so with Satan, he is a restless enemy, and if you have beaten him back, he will make a fresh onset. Hannibal said of Marcellus, a Roman captain, that whether he did beat or was beaten, he was never quiet. When Christ had worsted Satan, he went away from Christ, but 'for a season,'⁵ as if he meant to come again. When we have gotten the better of Satan, we are apt to grow secure, to lay aside our armour, and leave off our watch; which, when Satan perceives, then he comes upon us with a new temptation, and wounds us; he deals with us as David did with the Amalekites, when

they had taken the spoil, and were secure; 'they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing:' then, 'David smote them, and there escaped not a man of them.'⁶ Therefore, after we have got the better of the tempter, we must do as the mariners in a calm, mend our tackling, as not knowing how soon another storm may come. Satan may for a time retreat, that he may afterwards come on more fiercely; he may go away a while, and bring other seven spirits with him.⁷ Therefore, be not secure, but stand upon your watch-tower, lie in your armour, always expect a fight. Say, as he that hath a short respite from an ague, I look every day when my fit shall come: so say, I look every day when the tempter should come; I will put myself into a warlike posture. Satan, when he is beaten out of the field, is not beaten out of heart, he will come again. He had little hope to prevail against Christ; Christ gave him three deadly wounds, and made him retreat; yet he departed only 'for a season.' If the devil cannot conquer us, yet he knows he shall molest us; if he cannot destroy us, he will surely disturb us; therefore we must, with the pilot, have our compass ready, and be able to turn our needle to any point where temptation shall blow. If the tempter come not so soon as we expect, yet, by putting ourselves into a posture, we have this advantage, we are always prepared.

To conclude all: let us oft make this prayer, 'lead us not into temptation.' If Satan woo us by a temptation, let us not give consent. But in case a Christian hath, through weakness, and not out of a design, yielded to a temptation, yet let him not 'cast away his anchor;' take heed of despair, this is worse than the fall itself. Christian, steep thy soul in the brinish waters of repentance, and God will be appeased. Repentance gives the soul a vomit; Christ loved Peter after his denial of him, and sent the first news of his resurrection to him; 'go tell the disciples and Peter.' It is an error to think that one act of sin can destroy the habit of grace. It is a wrong to God's mercy and a Christian's comfort, to make this despairing conclusion, that after one hath fallen by temptation, his estate is irrecoverable. Therefore, Christian, if thou hast fallen with Peter, repent with Peter, and God will be ready to seal thy pardon.

¹ Ps. 124. 6.² Ga. 6. 1.³ Lu. 10. 34.⁴ 2 Ki. 6. 23.⁵ Lu. 4. 13.⁶ 1 Sa. 30. 16.⁷ Lu. 11. 26.

MAT. vi. 13. *But deliver us from evil.*

THE second branch of this sixth petition is, 'deliver us from evil.' There is more in this petition than is expressed; the thing expressed is, that we may be kept from evil; the thing further intended is, that we may make a progress in piety; 'denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts;' there is being delivered from evil; 'that we should live soberly, righteously, and godly;' there is a progress in piety. I begin with the first thing in this petition expressed, 'deliver us from evil.'

Q. *What evil do we pray to be delivered from?**

First, in general, from the evil of sin. Secondly, more particularly, we pray to be delivered, 1. From the evil of our own heart; it is called 'an evil heart.'¹ 2. From the evil of Satan; he is called 'the wicked one.'² 3. From the evil of the world; it is called 'the present evil world.'³

First, in general, 'deliver us from evil:' we pray to be delivered from the evil of sin. Not that we pray to be delivered immediately from the presence and in-being of sin, for that cannot be in this life, we cannot shake off this viper; but we pray, that God would deliver us more and more from the power and practice, from the scandalous acts of sin, which cast a reflection upon the gospel. Sin then is the deadly evil we pray against: 'deliver us from evil.' With what pencil shall I be able to draw the deformed face of sin? The devil would baptize sin with the name of virtue: it is easy to lay fair colours on a black face. But I shall endeavour to show you what a prodigious monster sin is; and there is great reason we should pray, 'deliver us from evil.' Sin is, as the apostle saith, 'exceeding sinful.'⁴ Sin is the very spirits of mischief distilled; it is called, 'the accursed thing.'⁵ That sin is the most execrable evil, appears several ways; 1. Look upon sin in its original. 2. Look upon sin in its nature. 3. Look upon sin in the judgment and opinion of the godly. 4. Look upon sin in the comparative. 5. Look upon sin in the

manner of cure. 6. Look upon sin in its direful effects; and when you have seen all these, you will apprehend what an horrid evil sin is, and what great reason we have to pray, 'deliver us from evil.'

Ist, Look upon sin in its original; it fetcheth its pedigree from hell. Sin is of the devil.⁶ Sin calls the devil, father. It is, as Austin saith, the poison the old serpent bath spit into our virgin-nature.

2dly, Look upon sin in its nature, and so it is evil. 1. See what the scripture compares it to. Sin hath got a bad name, it is compared to the vomit of dogs;⁷ to a menstruous cloth,⁸ which, as Jerome saith, was the most unclean thing under the law; it is compared to the plague,⁹ to a gangrene.¹⁰ Persons under these diseases we would be loath to eat and drink with. 2. Sin is evil in its nature, as it is injurious to God. It is a breach of God's royal law; 'sin is a transgression of the law:'¹¹ it is high treason against heaven. What greater injury can be offered to a prince than to trample upon his royal edicts? 'They have cast thy laws behind their backs.'¹² Sin is a contumacious affront to God, it is a walking contrary to him.¹³ The Hebrew word for *sin* signifies *rebellion*: sin flies in the face of God; 'he stretcheth out his hand against God.'¹⁴ We ought not to lift up a thought against God, much less to lift up an hand against him; but the sinner doth so. Sin would not only unthrone God, but ungod him; if sin could help it, God should be no longer God. Sin is injurious to God, as it is an act of high ingratitude. God feeds a sinner, screens off many evils from him; yet he not only forgets God's mercies, but abuseth them; 'I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver, which they prepared for Baal.'¹⁵ God may say, I gave thee wit, health, and riches, which thou hast employed against me. A sinner makes an arrow of God's mercies, and shoots at him. 'Is this thy kindness to thy friend?'¹⁶ did God give thee life to sin? did he give thee wages to serve the devil? O what an ungrateful thing is sin! Ingratitude forfeits mercy, as the merchant forfeits his goods by not paying custom. 3. Sin is evil in its nature, as it is a foolish thing; 'thou fool,

¹ He. 3. 12. ² Mat. 13. 19. ³ Ga. 1. 4.
⁴ Ro. 7. 13. ⁵ Jo. 7. 13.

* 'Preserve us from evil;' English translation, 'deliver us from evil.' The import of the word *deliver*, in such an application as this, is no more than to rescue from an evil into which one has already fallen: but the verb *ruomat*, which is frequently used by the Seventy for a Hebrew word, signifying to *save*, or *preserve*, denotes here as evidently, keep us from falling into evil, as, deliver us from the evils into which we are fallen.—*Campbell's Gospels*, vol. iii. p. 45.

⁶ Jan. 8. 34. ⁷ 2 Pe. 2. 22. ⁸ Is. 30. 22. ⁹ 1 Ki. 8. 38.
¹⁰ 2 Ti. 2. 17. ¹¹ 1 Jno. 3. 4 ¹² Ne. 10. 26. ¹³ Le. 26. 40.
¹⁴ Job 15. 25 ¹⁵ Ho. 2. 8. ¹⁶ 2 Sa. 16. 17.

this night thy soul shall be required of thee!¹ Is it not foolish to prefer a short lease before an inheritance? A sinner prefers the pleasures of sin for a season before those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. Is it not folly to gratify an enemy? sin gratifies Satan. 'Men's sins feast the devil.' Is it not folly for a man to be guilty of his own destruction, to give himself poison? A sinner hath an hand in his own death; 'they lay wait for their own blood';² no creature did ever willingly kill itself but man. 4. Sin is a polluting thing. Sin is not only a defection, but a pollution; it is as rust to gold, as a stain to beauty; it is called 'filthiness of the flesh and spirit.'³ It makes the soul red with guilt, and black with filth. 'How great is the filthiness of a vicious mind!' CICERO. This filth of sin is inward; a spot in the face may easily be wiped off, but to have the liver and lungs tainted is far worse: sin hath got into the conscience;⁴ defiles all the faculties, the mind, memory, affections, as if the whole mass of blood were corrupted; and pollutes and fly-blows our holy things: the leper, in the law, if he had touched the altar, the altar had not cleansed him, but he had polluted the altar; an emblem of sin's leprosy spotting our holy things. 5. Sin is a debasing thing, it degrades us of our honour.⁵ In those days 'shall stand up a vile person.' This was spoken of Antiochus Epiphanes, who was a king, and his name signifies illustrious; but sin had made him vile. Sin blots a man's name; nothing so turns a man's glory into shame as sin doth; sin makes one like a beast.⁶ It is worse to be like a beast than to be a beast; it is no shame to be a beast, but it is a shame for a man to be like a beast. Lust makes a man brutish, and wrath makes him devilish. 6. Sin is an enslaving thing. A sinner is a slave when he sins most freely. Sin makes men the devil's servants; Satan bids them sin, and they do it; he bade Judas betray Christ, and he did it; he bade Ananias tell a lie, and he did it.⁷ When a man commits a sin, he is the devil's lackey and runs on his errand; they who serve Satan have such a bad master, that they will be afraid to receive their wages. 7. Sin is an unsavoury thing; 'they are altogether become filthy';⁸ in the Hebrew, they are become stinking. Sin is very noisome to God; that person who shall worship in God's house, yet live in the sin of uncleanness, let him be perfumed with all the spices of Arabia, his

prayers are unsavoury; 'incense is an abomination to me';⁹ therefore God is said to behold the proud afar off.¹⁰ He will not come near the dunghill-sinner, that hath such noisome vapours coming from him. 8. Sin is a painful thing, it costs men much labour and pains to accomplish their wicked designs; 'they weary themselves to commit iniquity.'¹¹ 'Sin is its own punishment.' What pains did Judas take to bring about his treason! He goes to the high priest, and then after to the band of soldiers, and then back again to the garden. What pains did the powder-traitors take in digging through a thick stone-wall! what pains in laying their barrels of powder, and then covering them with crows of iron! how did they tire out themselves in sin's drudgery! Chrysostom saith, virtue is easier than vice; it is easier to be sober than intemperate; it is easier to serve God than to follow sin. A wicked man sweats at the devil's plough, and is at great pains to damn himself. 9. Sin is a disturbing thing; whatever defiles, disturbs. Sin breaks the peace of the soul; 'no peace to the wicked.'¹² When a man sins presumptuously, he stuffs his pillow with thorns, and his head will lie very uneasy when he comes to die. Sin causeth a trembling at the heart. When Spira had sinned, he had a hell in his conscience; he was in that horror, that he professed he envied Cain and Judas. Charles IX., who was guilty of the massacre in Paris, was afterwards a terror to himself; he was frightened at every noise, and could not endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music. Sin breaks the peace of the soul. Cain, in killing Abel, stabbed half the world at a blow, but could not kill the worm of his own conscience. Thus you see what an evil sin is in the nature of it; and had we not need pray, 'deliver us from evil?'

3dly, Look upon sin in the judgment and opinion of the godly, and it will appear to be the most prodigious evil. 1. Sin is so great an evil, that the godly will rather do any thing than sin; 'Moses chose rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin.'¹³ The primitive Christians said, they chose rather to be devoured by lions without than lusts within. Irenæus was carried to a place where was a cross on one side and an idol on the other, and he was put to his choice, either to bow to the idol, or suffer on the cross, and he chose the latter. A wise man will choose

¹ Lu. 12. 20. ² Pr. 1. 18. ³ 2 Co. 7. 1. ⁴ Tit. 1. 15.
⁵ Da. 11. 21. ⁶ Ps. 49. 20. ⁷ Ac. 5. 3. ⁸ Pr. 14. 3.

⁹ Is. 1. 13. ¹⁰ Ps. 138. 6. ¹¹ Je. 9. 5.
¹² Is. 57. 21. ¹³ He. 11. 24, 25.

rather to have a rent in his coat than in his flesh; the godly will rather endure outward sufferings than a rent in their conscience. So great an evil is in sin, that the godly will not sin for the greatest gain; they will not sin though they might purchase an estate by it, nay though they were sure to promote God's glory by it. 2. The godly testify sin is a great evil, in that they desire to die upon no account more than this, that they may be rid of sin; they are desirous to put off the clothing of the flesh, that they may be unclothed of sin; it is their greatest grief that they are troubled with such inmates, they have the stirrings of pride, lust, envy. It was a cruel torment Mezentius used, he tied a dead man to a living: thus a child of God hath corruption joined with grace; here is a dead man tied to the living. So hateful is this, that a believer desires to die for no other reason more than this, that death shall free him from sin. Sin brought death into the world, and death shall carry sin out of the world. Thus you see, in the opinion of the godly, sin is the most hyperbolical and execrable evil.

4thly, Look upon sin in the comparative, and it will appear to be the most deadly evil. Compare what you will with it: 1. Afflictions. 2. Death. 3. Hell, and still sin is worse.

1. Compare sin with affliction: there is more evil in a drop of sin, than in a sea of affliction.

(1.) Sin is the cause of affliction, the cause is more than the effect. Sin brings all mischief; sin hath sickness, sword, famine, and all judgments in the womb of it. Sin rots the name, consumes the estate, wastes the radical moisture. As the poets feigned of Pandora's box, when it was opened, it filled the world full of diseases: so when Adam broke the box of original righteousness, it caused all the penal evils in the world. Sin is the Phaeton that sets the world on fire. Sin turned the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise. Sin causeth mutinies, divisions, massacres; 'O thou

sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet!' The sword of God's justice lies quietly in the scabbard, till sin draws it out and whets it against a nation. So that sin is worse than affliction, it being the cause of it; the cause is more than the effect.

(2.) God is the author of affliction; 'shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?'² It is meant of the evil of affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but no hand in sin; God is the cause of every action, so far as it is natural, but not as it is sinful. He who makes an instrument of iron, is not the cause of the rust and canker which corrupts the iron; so God made the instrument of our souls, but the rust and canker of sin which corrupts our souls God never made. God can no more act evil, than the sun can darken. In this sense sin is worse than affliction. God hath an hand in affliction, but disclaims having any hand in sin.

(3.) Affliction doth but reach the body, and make that miserable, but sin makes the soul miserable. The soul is the most noble part. The soul is a diamond set in a ring of clay; it is excellent in its essence, a spiritual, immortal substance; excellent in the price paid for it, redeemed with the blood of God.³ It is more worth than a world; the world is of a coarser make, the soul of a finer spinning; in the world we see the finger of God, in the soul the image of God. To have the precious soul endangered is far worse than to have the body endangered. Sin wrongs the soul;⁴ casts this jewel of the soul overboard. Affliction is but skin-deep, it can but take away the life, but sin takes away the soul.⁵ The loss of the soul is an unparalleled loss, it can never be made up again. 'God,' saith Chrysostom, 'hath given thee two eyes, if thou losest one thou hast another; but thou hast but one soul, and, if that be lost, it can never be repaired.'⁶ Thus sin is worse than affliction; the one can but reach the body, the other ruins the soul. Is there not great reason then, that we should often put up this petition, 'deliver us from evil?'

(4.) Afflictions are good for us; 'it is good for me that I have been afflicted.'⁷ Many can bless God for affliction. Affliction humbles; 'remembering my affliction, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me'⁸ Afflictions are compared to thorns;⁹ these thorns are to

* The scripture, so far from declaring those who suffer chastisement and disciplinary pains, *accursed*, merely on that account, expressly declares them *blessed*. 'Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord.' But where are the damned ever said to be blessed? They are constantly declared to be accursed.—It would be dreadful to suffer the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity; there will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery: when you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your souls, and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance. All that we can say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexorable and inconceivable: for 'who knows the power of God's anger?'—*Edwards on Salvation of all Men*, pp. 81-82

¹ Jer. 47. 6. ² Am. 3. 6. ³ Ac. 20. 28. ⁴ Pr. 8. 36.
⁵ u. 12. 20. ⁶ Ps. 119. 71. ⁷ La. 3. 19, 20. ⁸ Ho. 2. 6.

prick the bladder of pride. Affliction is the school of repentance; 'thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; I repented.'¹ The fire being put under the still, makes the water drop from the roses: the fire of affliction makes the water of repentance drop from the eyes. Affliction brings us nearer to God. The loadstone of mercy doth not draw us so near to God as the cords of affliction. When the prodigal was pinched with want, then, he saith, 'I will arise and go to my father.'² Afflictions prepare for glory; 'our light affliction worketh for us an eternal weight of glory':³ the limner lays his gold upon dark colours, so God lays first the dark colours of affliction, and then the golden colour of glory. Thus affliction is for our good; but sin is not for our good, it keeps good things from us; 'your sins have withholden good things from you.'⁴ Sin stops the current of God's mercy, it precipitates men to ruin. Manasseh's affliction brought him to humiliation; but Judas's sin brought him to desperation.

(5.) A man may be afflicted, and his conscience may be quiet. Paul's feet were in the stocks, yet he had the witness of his conscience.⁵ The head may ache, yet the heart may be well; the outward man may be afflicted, yet the soul may dwell at ease.' The hail may beat upon the tiles of the house, when there is music within; in the midst of outward pain, there may be inward peace. Thus, in affliction, conscience may be quiet; but when a man commits a presumptuous, scandalous sin, conscience is troubled; by defiling the purity of conscience, we lose the peace of conscience. When Spira had sinned and abjured the faith, he was a terror to himself, he had an hell in his conscience. Tiberius the emperor felt such a sting in his conscience, that he told the senate, he suffered death daily.

(6.) In affliction we may have the love of God. Afflictions are love-tokens; 'as many as I love, I rebuke.'⁷ Afflictions are sharp arrows, but shot from the hand of a loving father. If a man should throw a bag of money at another, and it should bruise him a little, and raise the skin, he would not be offended, but take it as a fruit of love: so, when God bruise us with affliction, it is to enrich us with the golden graces of his Spirit, all is love: but when we commit sin, God withdraws his love; it is the sun overcast with a cloud, nothing appears but anger and displeasure. When David had sin-

ned in the matter of Uriah, 'the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.'⁸

(7.) There are many encouragements to suffer affliction. God himself suffers with us; 'in all their afflictions he was afflicted.'⁹ God will strengthen us in our sufferings; 'he is their strength in the time of trouble.'¹⁰ Either God makes our burden lighter, or our faith stronger. He will compensate and recompense our sufferings; 'every one that hath forsaken houses of lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit life everlasting.'¹¹ Here are encouragements to suffer affliction, but there is no encouragement to sin. God hath brandished a flaming sword of threatenings to deter us from sin; 'God shall wound the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses.'¹² There is a flying roll of curses which enters into the house of a sinner;¹³ if a man sin, be it at his peril: 'I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.'¹⁴ God will make men weary of their sins, or he will make them weary of their lives. Thus sin is worse than affliction; there are encouragements to suffer affliction, but no encouragement to sin.

(8.) When a person is afflicted, only he himself suffers; but by sinning openly he doth hurt to others. He doth hurt to the unconverted; one man's sin may lay a stone in another man's way, at which he may stumble and fall into hell; O the evil of scandalous sin! Some are discouraged, others hardened; thy sinning may be the cause of another's damning.¹⁵ The priests going wrong caused others to stumble. He doth hurt to the converted; by an open scandalous sin he offends weak believers, and so sins against Christ.¹⁶ Thus sin is worse than affliction, because it doth hurt to others.

(9.) In affliction the saints may rejoice; 'ye receive the word in much affliction, with joy':¹⁷ 'ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods.'¹⁸ Aristotle speaks of a bird that lives among thorns, yet sings sweetly; so a child of God can rejoice in afflictions. Paul had his prison songs; 'we glory in tribulation.'¹⁹ The Greek word signifies an exuberancy of joy, a joy with boasting and triumph. God doth oft pour in such divine consolations as cause the saints to rejoice in afflictions: they had rather have their afflictions, than want their comforts; God doth candy their wormwood with sugar.²⁰ You have seen the sunshine when it rains: the saints have had

¹ 2 Sa. 11. 27. ² Is. 63. 9. ¹⁰ Ps. 37. 39. ¹¹ Mat. 19. 29.

¹² Ps. 68. 21. ¹³ Ze. 5. 4. ¹⁴ De. 32. 42.

¹⁵ Mal. 2. 7, 8. ¹⁶ 1 Co. 8. 12. ¹⁷ 1 Th. 1. 6.

¹⁸ He. 10. 34. ¹⁹ Ro. 5. 3. ²⁰ Ro. 5. 5.

Je. 31. 18, 19. ³ Lu. 15. 18. ⁴ 2 Co. 4. 17. ⁵ Je. 5. 25.

⁶ 2 Co. 1. 12. ⁷ Ps. 25. 13. ⁸ Re. 3. 19.

the shinings of God's face, when afflictions have rained and dropped upon them. Thus we may rejoice in affliction, but we cannot rejoice in sin; 'rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people, for thou hast gone a-whoring from thy God.'¹ Sin is matter of shame and grief, not of joy. David having sinned in numbering of the people, his 'heart smote him.'² As the pricking of a vein lets out the blood, so, when sin hath pricked the conscience it lets out the joy.

(10.) Affliction is a magnifying of a person; 'what is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, and visit him every morning!'^{3*} That is, visit him with affliction. How do afflictions magnify us? They are signs of sonship; 'if ye endure chastening, God deals with you as sons.'⁴ Every print of the rod is a badge of honour. The sufferings of the godly have raised their fame and renown in the world; the zeal and constancy of the martyrs in their sufferings have eternized their name. O how eminent was Job for his patience! 'ye have heard of the patience of Job.'⁵ Job the sufferer was more renowned than Alexander the conqueror. Thus afflictions magnify a person, but sin doth not magnify but vilify him. When Eli's sons had sinned and profaned their priesthood, they turned their glory into shame; the text saith, 'they made themselves vile.'⁶ Sin casts an indelible blot on a man's name; 'whoso commits adultery with a woman, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.'⁷

(11.) A man may suffer affliction, and bring honour to religion. Paul's iron chain made the gospel wear a gold chain; suffering credits and propagates the gospel, but committing of sin brings a dishonour and scandal upon the ways of God. Cyprian saith, when in the primitive times a virgin, who vowed herself to religion, had defiled her chastity, 'shame and grief filled the face of the whole congregation.' When scandalous sins are committed by a few, they

bring a reproach upon all them that profess; as three or four brass shillings in a sum of money make all the rest suspected.

(12.) When a man's afflictions are upon a good account, when he suffers for Christ, he hath the prayers of God's people. It is no small privilege to have a stock of prayer going; it is like a merchant that hath a part in several ships; suffering saints have a large share in the prayers of others; 'Peter was in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God for him.'⁸ What greater happiness than to have God's promises, and the saints' prayers? But when a man sins presumptuously and scandalously, he hath the saints' bitter tears and just censures, he is a burden to all that know him; as David speaks in another case, 'they that did see me without, fled from me.'⁹ So a scandalous sinner, the people of God flee from him, he is like an infected person, every one shuns and avoids him.

(13.) Affliction can hurt a man only while he is living, but sin doth hurt him when he is dead. As a man's virtues and alms may do good when he is dead, so a man's sins may do him mischief when he is dead. When a spider is killed, the poison of it may do hurt; so the poison of an evil example may do much hurt, when a man is in his grave. Affliction at most can but last a man's life, but sin lives and doth hurt when he is gone. Thus you see sin is far worse than affliction.

2. Sin is worse than death. Aristotle calls death 'the terrible of terribles,' and Job calls it 'the king of terrors,'¹⁰ but sin is more deadly than death itself. Death, though it be painful, yet it were not hurtful but for sin; it is sin that imbitters death and makes it sting; 'the sting of death is sin.'¹¹ Were it not for sin, though death might kill us, it could not curse us. Sin poisons death's arrow, so that sin is worse than death, because it puts a sting into death. Death doth but separate between the body and the soul: but sin, without repentance, separates between God and the soul; 'ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?'¹² Death doth but take away our life from us, but sin takes away our God from us: so that sin is worse than death.

3. Sin is worse than hell. In hell there is the worm and the fire, but sin is worse. Hell is of God's making, but sin is none of his making, it is a monster of the devil's creating. The tor-

¹ Ho. 9. 1. ² 2 Sa. 24. 10. ³ Job 7. 17, 18. ⁴ He. 12. 7.
⁵ Ja. 5. 11 ⁶ 1 Sa. 3. 13. ⁷ Pr. 6. 32, 33.

* Addressing God as the author of his sufferings, Job inquired whether he were like a tempestuous ocean, or some whale or unruly monster, that it was needful he should be restrained from doing mischief, by such heavy afflictions; which confined him like chains, a prison, and a guard, so that he could not move. Why should the Almighty God magnify such a poor worm as man, in thus contending with him, and setting his heart upon subduing him; watching his opportunities of afflicting him, or making continual trial how much he could support, without allowing him a moment's respite?—It is difficult to expound the language of one, who spoke the dictates of passion rather than of reason, and whose soul was engaged in a continual conflict between temptation and divine grace.—*Scott's Comment. Job 7. 12, 17—19.*

⁸ Ac. 12. 5.

⁹ Ps. 31. 11.

¹⁰ Job 14. 11.

¹¹ 1 Co. 15. 56.

¹² Ju. 18. 24.

ments of hell are a burden only to the sinner, but sin is a burden to God; 'I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.' In hell-torments there is something that is good, there is the execution of God's justice, there is justice in hell; but sin is the most unjust thing; it would rob God of his glory, Christ of his purchase, the soul of its happiness; so that it is worse than hell.

5thly, Look upon sin in the manner of its cure; it cost dear to be done away; the guilt of sin could not be removed but by the blood of Christ; he who was God must die, and be made a curse for us, before sin could be remitted. How horrid is sin, that no angel or archangel, nor all the powers of heaven, could procure the pardon of sin, but it cost the blood of God! If a man should commit an offence, and all the nobles should kneel upon their knees before the king for him, but no pardon could be had, unless the king's son be arraigned and suffer death for him; all must conceive it was an horrible fact that must be the cause of this; such is the case here, the Son of God must die to satisfy God's justice for our sins. O the agonies and sufferings of Christ! 1. In his body: his head crowned with thorns, his face spit upon, his side pierced with the spear, his hands and feet nailed; 'the whole body one universal wound.' 2. He suffered in his soul; 'my soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.'² He drank a bitter cup, mingled with curses; which made him, though he was sanctified by the Spirit, supported by the Deity, comforted by angels, yet sweat drops of blood, and cry out upon the cross, 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' All this was to do away our sin. View sin in Christ's blood, and it will appear of a crimson colour.

6thly, Look upon sin in the dismal effects of it, and it will appear the most horrid prodigious evil; 'the wages of sin is death,'³ that is, 'the second death.'⁴ Sin hath shame for its companion, and death for its wages.* A wicked

man knows what sin is in the pleasure of it, but doth not know what sin is in the punishment of it. Sin draws hell at the heels of it. This hellish torment consists of two parts. 1. The punishment of loss; 'depart from me.'⁵ It was a great trouble to Absalom, that he might not see the king's face; to lose God's smiles, to be banished from his presence, in whose presence is fulness of joy, how sad and tremendous; this word, 'depart,' saith Chrysostom, is worse than the fire. Sure sin must be the greatest evil, which separates us from the greatest good. 2. The punishment of sense; 'depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'⁶ 'Why,' might sinners plead, 'Lord, if we must depart from thee, let us have thy blessing:' 'no! go ye cursed.' 'But if we must depart from thee, let it be into some place of ease and rest:' 'no! go into fire.' 'But if we must into fire, let it be for a little time; let the fire be quickly put out:' 'no! go into everlasting fire.' 'But if it be so, that we must be there, let us be with good company:' 'no! with the devil and his angels.' O what an evil is sin! all the torments of this life are but a kind of sport to hell-torments. What is a burning fever to the burning in hell! it is called, 'the wrath of Almighty God.'⁷ The Almighty God inflicts the punishment, therefore it will be heavy. A child cannot strike very hard, but if a giant strike, he kills with a blow: to have the Almighty God to lay on the stroke, it will be intolerable. Hell is the EMPHASIS of misery. The body and soul, which have sinned together, shall suffer together; and those torments shall have no period put to them; 'they shall seek death and shall not find it:' 'and the smoke of their torments ascendeth for ever and ever!'⁸ Here the wicked thought a prayer long, a sabbath long, but how long will it be to lie upon beds of flames for ever! This word, *ever*, breaks the heart. Thus you see sin is the most deadly and execrable evil; look upon it in its original, in its nature, in the judgment and estimate of the wise; look upon it comparatively, it is worse than affliction, death, hell; look upon it in the manner of cure, and in the dismal effect, it brings eternal damnation; is there not then a great deal of reason

¹ Am. 2. 13. ² Mat. 26. 38. ³ Ro. 6. 23. ⁴ Re. 21. 8.

* I would to God they would consider what that saying of Christ meaneth; 'he that transgresseth one of the least of these commandments, and teacheth men so, shall he counted least in the kingdom of heaven.' Is not this spoken of them, since they dared to extenuate the transgression of the law, as if it were not worthy of death? But they ought to have considered not only what is commanded, but who he is that hath commanded it. Is it a small matter to them, that God's majesty be offended in any thing? But although they grant it to be a sin, for they cannot deny it; yet they obstinately persist in this, that it is no deadly sin. All sin is deadly, because it is rebellion against the will of God, which necessarily provokes his wrath, because it is a breach of the law, upon which the judgment of God is pronounced without exception: and the sins of the saints are

⁵ Mat. 7. 23.
⁶ Re. 9. 6.

⁶ Mat. 25. 41.

⁷ Re. 19. 15.

⁸ Re. 14. 11.

venial or pardonable, not of their own nature, but because pardon is obtained by the mercy of God.—*Calvin's Inst.* b. ii. c. 8. s. 59.

that we should make this prayer, 'deliver us from evil?'

USE 1. Branch 1. Is sin such a deadly, pernicious evil, the evil of evils? See then what it is we are to pray most to be delivered from, and that is from sin, our Saviour hath taught us to pray, 'deliver us from evil.' Hypocrites pray more against temporal evils than spiritual. Pharaoh prayed more to have the plague of hail and thunder to be removed, than his hard heart should be removed.¹ The Israelites prayed, take away the serpents from us, more than to have their sin taken away.² The hypocrite's prayer is carnal, he prays more to be cured of his deafness and lameness, than of his unbelief; more that God would take away his pain, than take away his sin. But our prayer should be, 'deliver us from evil.' Spiritual prayers are best. Hast thou a diseased body? pray more that the disease of thy soul may be removed, than thy body; 'heal my soul, for I have sinned.'³ The plague of the heart is worse than a cancer in the breast. Hast thou a child that is crooked? pray more to have its unholiness removed than its crookedness. Spiritual prayers are more pleasing to God, and are as music in his ears. Christ hath here taught us to pray against sin, 'deliver us from evil.'

Branch 2. If sin be so great an evil, then admire the wonderful patience of God that bears with sinners. Sin is a breach of God's royal law, it strikes at his glory; now, for God to bear with sinners, who provoke him, it shows admirable patience; well may he be called 'the God of patience.'⁴ It would tire the patience of the angels, to bear with men's sins one day; but what doth God bear? how many affronts and injuries doth he put up? God sees all the intrigues and horrid impieties committed in a nation; 'they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery; even I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord.'⁵ God could strike men 'dead in their sins;' but he forbears and respites them. Methinks I see the justice of God with a flaming sword in his hand, ready to strike the stroke; and patience steps in for the sinner, Lord, spare him a while longer. Methinks I hear the angel saying to God, as the king of Israel to the prophet; 'shall I smite them? shall I smite them? Lord, here is such a sinner, shall I smite him? shall I take off the head of such a drunkard, swearer, sabbath-breaker?'⁶ And God's patience saith, as the

dresser of the vineyard; 'let him alone this year.'⁷ O the infinite patience of God, that sin being so great an evil, and so contrary to God, he should bear with sinners so long! 'If a man finds his enemy, will he let him go well away?'⁸ God finds his enemies, yet he lets them go, he is not presently avenged on them. Every sin hath a voice to cry to God for vengeance; Sodom's sin cried;⁹ yet God spares men: but let not sinners presume upon God's patience; if they repent not, long forbearance is no forgiveness; God's patience abused will leave men more inexcusable.

Branch 3. If sin be so great an evil, then there is no sin little. There is no little treason; every sin strikes at God's crown and dignity, and in this sense it may be said, 'are not thy iniquities infinite?'¹⁰ The least sin, as the schoolmen say, is infinite objective, because it is committed against an infinite majesty; and besides, nothing can do away sin, but that which hath an infiniteness in it; for though the sufferings of Christ as man were not infinite, yet the divine nature did shed forth an infinite value and merit upon his sufferings. So that no sin is little, there is no little hell for sin. As we are not to think any of God's mercies little, because they are more than we can deserve, so neither are we to think any of our sins little, because they are more than we can answer for. That sin we esteem lightest, without Christ's blood, will be heavy enough to sink us into perdition.

Branch 4. If sin be so great an evil, then see whence all personal or national troubles come; they come from the evil of sin; our sin grows high, that makes our divisions grow wide: sin is the Achan that troubles us, it is the cockatrice egg out of which comes a fiery flying serpent. Sin is like Phaeton, who, as the poets feign, driving the chariot of the sun, set the world on fire. Sin, like the planet Saturn, hath a malignant influence: sin brings us into straits; 'David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait.'¹¹ 'As keepers of a field are they against her round about;'¹² as horses or deer in a field are so enclosed with hedges, and so narrowly watched, that they cannot get out, so Jerusalem was so closely besieged with enemies and watched, that there was no escape for her. Whence was this? 'this is thy wickedness.'¹³ All our evils are from the evil of sin. The cords that pinch us are of our own twisting.

¹ Ex. 9. 28.² Nu. 21. 8.³ Ps. 41. 4.⁴ Ro. 15. 4, 5.⁵ Je. 29. 23.⁶ 2 Ki. 6. 21⁷ Lu. 13. 8. ⁸ 1 Sa. 24. 19. ⁹ Ge. 18. 20. ¹⁰ Job 22. 5¹¹ 2 Sa. 24. 14.¹² Je. 4. 17.¹³ Je. 4. 18.

Sin raiseth all the storms in conscience; the sword of God's justice lies quiet till sin draws it out of the scabbard, and makes God whet it against a nation.

Branch 5. If sin be so great an evil, then how little reason hath any one to be in love with sin. Some are so infatuated with sin that they delight in it. The devil can so cook and dress sin that it pleaseth the sinner's palate; 'though wickedness be sweet in his mouth.'¹ Sin is as delightful to corrupt nature, as meat to the taste. Sin is a feast on which men feed their lusts; but there is little cause to be so in love with sin; 'though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, it is the gall of asps within him.'² To love sin is to hug an enemy. Sin puts a worm into conscience, a sting into death, a fire into hell. Sin is like those locusts; 'on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions, and they had tails like scorpions, and they had stings in their tails.'³ After the woman's hair comes in the scorpion's sting.

Branch 6. If sin be so great an evil, then what may we judge of them who make light of sin, as if there were no danger in it; as if God were not in earnest when he threatens sin; or as if ministers were about a needless work, when they preach against sin? Some people make nothing of breaking a commandment; they make nothing of telling a lie, of cozening, of slandering; nothing of living in the sin of uncleanness. If you weigh sin in the balance of some men's judgments, it weighs very light; but, who are those that make so very light of sin? Solomon hath described them; 'fools make a mock at sin.'⁴ 'The fool quickly falls into crimes.' ISIDOR. Who but fools would make light of that which grieves the Spirit of God? Who but fools would put such a viperous thing in their bosom? Who but fools would laugh at their own calamity, and make sports while they give themselves poison?

Branch 7. If sin be so great an evil, then I infer, that there is no good to be gotten by sin; of this thorn we cannot gather grapes. If sin be so deadly an evil, then we cannot get any profit by it; no man did ever thrive upon this trade. Those atheists said, 'it is vain to serve God, and what profit is it?'⁵ But we may say more truly, what profit is there in sin? 'what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are

now ashamed?'⁶ where are your earnings? what have you gotten by sin? it bath shame for its companion; and death for its wages. What profit had Achan of his wedge of gold? that wedge seemed to cleave asunder his soul from God. What profit had Ahab of the vineyard he got unjustly? the dogs licked his blood. What profit had Judas of his treason? for thirty pieces he sold his Saviour, and bought his own damnation. All the gain men get by their sins, they may put in their eye; nay, they must, and weep it out again.

Branch 8. If sin be so great an evil, see then the folly of those who venture upon sin, because of the pleasure they have in it; 'but had pleasure in unrighteousness.'⁷ As for the pleasure of sin, it is but seeming, it is but a pleasant fancy, a golden dream. And besides, it is a mixed pleasure, it has bitterness intermingled; 'I have, saith the harlot, perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.'⁸ For one sweet, here are two bitters; cinnamon is sweet, but myrrh and aloes are bitter; the harlot's pleasure is mixed. There are those inward fears and lashes of conscience, as imbitter the pleasure. If there be any pleasure in sin, it is only to the body, the brutish part; the soul is not at all gratified by the pleasure: 'soul, take thy ease;⁹ he might have more properly said, 'body take thy ease;' the soul cannot feed on sensual objects. In short, that pleasure men talk of in sin, is their disease. Some take pleasure in eating chalk or coals, this is from their disease: so, when men talk of pleasure in eating the forbidden fruit, it is from the sickness and disease of their souls, 'they put bitter for sweet.'¹⁰ O what folly is it, for a cup of pleasure, to drink a sea of wrath! Sin will be bitter in the end; 'look not on the wine when it is red, when it gives its colour in the cup; at last it bites like a serpent.'¹¹ Sin will prove like Ezekiel's roll, sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly. Ask Cain now how he likes his murder? Achan, how he likes his golden wedge? O remember that saying of Austin, 'the pleasure of sin is soon gone, but the sting remains.'

Branch 9. If sin be so great an evil, then, what wisdom is it to depart from evil! 'To depart from evil is understanding.'¹² To sin is to do foolishly: therefore, to depart from sin, is to do wisely. Solomon saith, in every transgression is a snare.¹³ Is it not wisdom to avoid

¹ Job 20. 12. ² Job 20. 12, 14. ³ Ec. 8. 10.
⁴ Pr. 14. 9 ⁵ Mal. 3. 11.

⁶ Ro. 6. 21. ⁷ 2 Th. 2. 12. ⁸ Pr. 7. 17. ⁹ Lu. 12. 19
¹⁰ Is. 5. 20. ¹¹ Pr. 23. 31, 32. ¹² Job 28. 28. ¹³ Pr. 29. 6.

a snare? Sin is a deceiver, it cheated our first parents; instead of being as gods, they became as the beasts that perish.¹ Sin hath cheated all that have meddled with it; is it not wisdom to shun such a cheater? Sin hath many fair pleas, and tells how it will gratify all the senses with pleasure: 'but,' saith a gracious soul, 'Christ's love is sweeter, peace of conscience is sweeter, what are the pleasures of sin to the pleasures of paradise?' Well may the saints be called wise virgins, because they spy the deceits that are in sin, and avoid the snares: 'the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.'

Branch 10. If sin be so great an evil, then, how justifiable and commendable are all those means which are used to keep men from sin? How justifiable are a minister's admonitions and reproofs? 'Rebuke them *sharply*;² or *cuttingly*; a metaphor from a chirurgeon that searches a wound, and cuts out the proud flesh that the patient may be sound; so God's minister comes with a cutting reproof, but it is to keep you from sin, and to save your souls. 'If any one has justly chid you, know that it is for your profit.' SENECA. Esteem them your best friends who would keep you from sinning against God. If a man were going to poison or drown himself, were not he his friend who would hinder him from doing it? All a minister's reproofs are but to keep you from sin, and hinder you from self-murder; all is in love: 'knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'³ It is the passion of most to be angry with them that would reclaim them from sin; 'they hate him that rebuketh in the gate.'⁴ Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion, seeing it is to purge out the peccant humour? It is mercy to men's souls to tell them of their sins. And surely those are priests for the devil,⁵ who see men go on in sin, and ready to drop into hell, yet never pull them back by a reproof, nay, perhaps flatter them in their sins. God never made ministers as false glasses, to make bad faces look fair; such make themselves guilty of other men's sins.

Branch 11. If sin be so great an evil, the evil of evils; then see what a bad choice they make, who choose sin to avoid affliction: as if, to save the coat from being rent, one would suffer his flesh to be rent. It was a false charge that Elihu brought against Job, 'thou hast

chosen iniquity rather than affliction.'⁶ This is a bad choice. Affliction hath a promise made to it,⁷ but sin hath no promise made to it. Affliction is for our good, but sin is not for our good; it would entail hell and damnation upon us. Spira chose iniquity rather than affliction, but it cost him dear; he at last repented of his choice. He who commits sin to avoid suffering, is like one that runs into a lion's den to avoid the stinging of a gnat.

Branch 12. If sin be so great an evil, see then what should be a Christian's great care in this life, to keep from sin; 'deliver us from evil.' Some make it all their care to keep out of trouble; they had rather keep their skin whole than their conscience pure; but our care should be chiefly to keep from sin. How careful are we to forbear such a dish, as the physicians tell us is hurtful for us; it will bring the stone or gout: much more should we be careful that we eat not the forbidden fruit, which will bring divine vengeance; 'keep thyself pure.'⁸ It hath always been the study of the saints to keep aloof off from sin; 'how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' 'Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.'⁹ It was a saying of Anselm, 'if sin were on one side, and hell on the other, I would rather leap into hell, than willingly sin against my God.' O what a mercy is it to be kept from sin! We count it a great mercy to be kept from the plague and fire, but what is it to be kept from sin?

Branch 13. Is sin so great an evil? see then that which may make us long for heaven, when we shall be perfectly freed from sin, not only from the outward acts of sin, but from the inbeing of sin. In heaven we shall not need to pray this prayer, 'deliver us from evil.' What a blessed time will it be, when we shall never have a vain thought more? Then Christ's spouse shall be without spot or wrinkle.¹⁰ Now there is a dead man tied to the living; we cannot do any holy duty, but we mix sin; we cannot pray without wandering, we cannot believe without doubting, but *then*, our virgin-soul shall not be capable of the least tincture of sin, but we shall all be as the angels of God. In heaven we shall have no temptation to sin. The old serpent is cast out of paradise, and his fiery darts shall never come near to touch us.

USE 2. Exhortation. And it hath two distinct branches.

¹ Ps. 49. 20.² Ti. 1. 13.³ 2 Co. 5. 11.⁴ Am. 5. 10.⁵ 2 Co. 11. 15.⁶ Job 36. 21.⁷ 2 Sa. 22. 28.⁸ 1 Ti 5. 22.⁹ Ge. 39. 9.¹⁰ Ps. 19. 13.¹¹ Ep. 5. 27.

Branch 1. To all in general. If sin be so great and prodigious an evil, then, as you love your souls, take heed of sin. If you taste of the forbidden fruit, it will cost you dear; it will cost you bitter tears, it may cost you lying in hell: O therefore flee from sin!

1. Take heed of sins of omission.¹ It is as really dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do things forbidden. Some think it no great matter to omit reading scripture; the Bible lies by like rusty armour, which they never use; they think it no great matter to omit family or closet-prayer; they can go several months, and God never hear of them. These have nothing sanctified to them; they feed upon a curse; for every creature is sanctified by prayer.² The bird may shame many, it never takes a drop but its eye is lifted up towards heaven. O take heed of living in the neglect of any known duty! It was the prayer of a reverend holy man on his death-bed, 'Lord, forgive my sins of omission.'

2. Take heed of secret sins. Some are more modest than to sin openly in a balcony; but they will carry their sins under a canopy, they will sin in secret. Rachel did not let her father's images be seen, but she put them under her, 'and sat upon them.'³ Many will be drunk and unclean, if they may do it when nobody may see them; they are like one that shuts up his shop-windows, but follows his trade within doors. But if sin be so great an evil, let me warn you this day not to sin in secret; know, that you can never sin so privately, but that there are two witnesses always by; God and conscience.

3. Take heed of your complexion-sin, that sin which your nature and constitution doth most incline you to. As in the hive there is a master-bee, so in the heart there is a master-sin; 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.'⁴ There is some sin that is a special favourite, the darling sin that lies in the bosom; and thus doth bewitch and draw away the heart. O beware of this!

Q. *How may this darling sin be known?*

1 That sin which a man doth most cherish, and to which all other sins are subservient; this is the sin which is most tended and waited upon. The Pharisees' darling-sin was vain-glory; all they did was to feed this sin of pride; 'that they may have glory of men';⁵ when they gave alms, they sounded a trumpet. If a

stranger had asked the question, 'why doth this trumpet sound?' the answer was, 'The Pharisees are going to give alms to the poor.' Their lamp of charity was filled with the oil of vain-glory.⁶ All their works they did to be seen of men: pride was their bosom-sin. Oftentimes covetousness is the darling-sin; all other sins are committed to maintain this. Why do men equivocate, oppress, defraud, take bribes? all is to uphold covetousness. 2. That sin which a man doth not love to have reprov'd, is the darling-sin. Herod could not endure to have his incest spoken against: if John the Baptist meddles with that sin it shall cost him his head. 3. That sin which hath most power over one, and doth most easily lead him captive, that is the beloved of the soul. There are some sins a man can better put off, and give a repulse to; but there is one sin, which, if it comes to be a suitor, he cannot deny, but is overcome by it: this is the bosom-sin. The young man in the gospel had a complexion-sin which he could not resist, and that was the love of the world; his silver was dearer to him than his Saviour. It is a sad thing a man should be so bewitched by a lust, that he will part with the kingdom of heaven to gratify it. 4. That sin which men use arguments to defend is the darling sin. To plead for sin, is to be the devil's attorney; if the sin be covetousness and we vindicate it; if it be rash anger, and we justify it; 'I do well to be angry;' this is the complexion-sin. 5. That sin which doth most trouble one, and flee in his face in an hour of sickness and distress, that is the beloved sin. When Joseph's brethren were distressed, their sin came to remembrance in selling their brother:⁸ so, when a man is upon his sick-bed, and conscience shall say, dost not thou remember how thou hast lived in such a sin, though thou hast been often warned, yet thou wouldst not leave it? Conscience reads a curtain-lecture; sure that was the darling-sin. 6. That sin which a man is most unwilling to part with, that is the darling-sin. Jacob could of all his sons, most hardly part with Benjamin;⁹ 'Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away:' so saith the sinner, this and that sin have I parted with; but must Benjamin go? must I part with this delightful sin? that goes to the heart. This is the Delilah, the beloved sin. O if sin be such a deadly evil, dare not to indulge any bosom-sin! This is of all the most dangerous: like an

¹ Mat. 23. 23. ² 1 Ti. 4. 5. ³ Ge. 31. 21.

⁴ Ps. 18. 23.

⁵ Mat. 6. 2.

⁶ Mat. 23. 5. ⁷ Jon. 4. 9. ⁸ Ge. 45. 2. ⁹ Ge. 42. 36.

humour striking to the heart, which is mortal, leave open but one gap, 'the wild beast may enter at it; one darling sin lived in, is setting open a gap for Satan to enter.

4. Take heed of the sins which attend your particular callings. A calling you must live in; Adam in paradise tilled the ground; God never sealed warrants to idleness; but every calling hath its snare; as some sin in living out of a calling, so others sin in a calling. Remember how deadly an evil sin is; avoid those sins which you may be exposed to in your trade; take heed of all fraud and collusion in your dealings; 'whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.'¹ Take heed of a deceitful tongue in selling. The scripture makes it the character of one that goes to heaven; 'he speaketh the truth from his heart.'² It is the custom of many to say, the commodity stands them more, yet take less. This is hardly credible. Beware of a deceitful balance; 'the balances of deceit are in his hand.'³ Men by making their weights lighter, make their accounts heavier. Beware of sophisticating, mingling and embasing commodities: 'they sell the refuse of the wheat.'⁴ They would pick out the best grains of the wheat, and sell the worst at the same price as they did the best; to mix a coarser commodity with a fine, and yet sell it all for fine, is no better than deceit. Beware of stretching your consciences too far, or taking more for a commodity than it is worth; 'if thou sellest ought unto thy neighbour, ye shall not oppress one another.'⁵ There is a lawful gain allowed, yet one may not so advantage himself as to damnify another. Let that be the tradesman's motto, 'a conscience void of offence, toward God and toward man.'⁶ He hath an hard bargain that doth purchase the world with the loss of his soul. Sin being so deadly an evil, 'take heed of the appearance of sin.' Abstain not only from apparent evil, but the appearance of evil; if it be not absolutely a sin, yet if it looks like sin, avoid it. He who is loyal to his prince, not only forbears to have his hand in treason, but he will take heed of that which hath a show of treason. Joseph's mistress tempted him, and he fled and would not be with her.⁷ An appearance of good is too little, and an appearance of evil is too much. The appearance of evil is oft an occasion of evil; dalliance is an appearance of evil, and often-

times it occasions evil. Touching the forbidden fruit, may occasion tasting: dancing in masquerades, hath often been the occasion of uncleanness. The appearance of evil may scandalise another; when ye sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ:⁸ sinning against a member of Christ, is a sinning against Christ. Thus you see sin being so deadly an evil, we should avoid all sin,—sins of omission,—secret sins,—complexion-sins,—sins that attend our particular calling,—yea, the appearance of evil.

Q. *What means shall we use to be kept from the acts of sin?*

1. If you would be preserved from actual and scandalous sins, labour to mortify original sin. If you would not have the branches bud and blossom, smite at the root. I know original sin cannot in this life be removed, but labour to have it subdued. Why do men break forth into actual sins, but because they do not mortify heart sins? Suppress the first risings of pride, lust, passion; original sin unmortified, will prove such a root of bitterness, as will bring forth the cursed fruit of scandalous sin.

2. If you would be kept from actual sins, think what an odious thing sin is. Besides what you have heard, remember, sin is, 'the accursed thing.'⁹ It is the abominable thing God hates; 'O do not this abominable thing that I hate!'¹⁰ Sin is the spirit of witchcraft; it is the devil's excrement; it is called 'filthiness.'¹¹ If all the evils of the world were put together, and their quintessence strained out, they could not make a thing so filthy as sin doth. So odious is a sinner, that God loathes the sight of him; 'my soul loathed them.'¹² He who defiles himself with avarice, what is he but a serpent licking the dust? He who defiles himself with the lust of uncleanness, what is he but a swine with a man's head? He who defiles himself with pride, what is he but a bladder, which the devil hath blown up? He who defiles himself with drunkenness, what is he but a beast that hath got the staggers? To consider how odious and base a thing sin is would be a mean to keep us from sinning.

3. If you would be kept from actual sins, get the fear of God planted in your hearts; 'by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.'¹³ Fear is a bridle to sin, and a spur to holiness. Fear puts a holy awe upon the heart, and binds it to its good behaviour. By the fear of the

¹ Mat. 7. 12. ² Ps. 15. 2. ³ Ho. 12. 7. ⁴ Am. 8. 6.
⁵ Le. 25. 14. ⁶ Ac. 24. 16. ⁷ Ge. 39. 12.

⁸ 1 Co. 8. 12. ⁹ Jo. 7. 13. ¹⁰ Je. 44. 5.
¹¹ Ja. 1. 21. ¹² Ze. 11. 8. ¹³ Pr. 16. 6.

Lord men depart from evil. When the empress Eudoxia threatened to banish Chrysostom, 'tell her,' saith he, 'I fear nothing but sin.' Fear stands as a porter at the door of the soul, and keeps sin from entering; all sin is committed for want of the fear of God; 'whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood: there is no fear of God before their eyes.'¹ Holy fear stands sentinel, and is ever watching against security, pride, wantonness. Fear is a Christian's life-guard to defend him against the fiery darts of temptation. The way to be safe, is always to fear.

4. If we would be kept from actual sins, let us be careful to avoid all the inlets and occasions of sin; run not into evil company; he that would not have the plague, will not go into an infected house.² Guard your senses, which may be the inlets to sin. Keep the two portals, the eye and the ear; especially, look to your eyes: much sin comes in by the eye; the eye is oft an inlet to sin; sin takes fire at the eye, the first sin in the world began at the eye; 'when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and was pleasant to the eyes, then she took of the fruit thereof.'³ Looking begat lusting. Intemperance begins at the eye: looking on the wine when it is red and gives its colour in the glass, causeth excess of drinking.⁴ Covetousness begins at the eye; 'when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and a wedge of gold, I coveted and took them.'⁵ The fire of lust begins to kindle at the eye: David walking upon the roof of his house, saw a woman washing herself, and she was, saith the text, 'very beautiful to look upon,' and he sent messengers and took her, and defiled himself with her.⁶ O therefore look to your eyes! Job made a covenant with his eyes.⁷ If the eye be once inflamed, it will be hard to stand out long against sin; if the outworks are taken by the enemy, there is great danger of taking the whole castle.

5. If you would be kept from actual gross sin, study sobriety and temperance; 'be sober.'⁸ Check the inordinancy of appetite; sin doth frequently make its entrance this way. By gratifying the sensitive appetite, the soul, that is akin to angels, is enslaved to the brutish part. Many drink, if not to drunkenness, yet to drowsiness. The not denying the sensitive appetite, makes men's consciences so full of guilt,

and the world so full of scandal. If you would be kept from running into sin, lay restraint upon the flesh. What hath God given reason and conscience for, but to be a bridle to check inordinate desires?

6. If you would be kept from actual sins, be continually upon your spiritual watch. Watch your thoughts; 'how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?'⁹ Sin begins at the thoughts. First, men cherish revengeful thoughts, then they dip their hands in blood. Set a spy over your thoughts. Watch your passions: passions of anger, passions of lust. The heart is ready to be destroyed by its own passions, as the vessel is to be overturned by the sail. Passion transports beyond the bounds of reason; it is 'a short frenzy.' Moses in a passion spake unadvisedly with his lips.¹⁰ The disciples in a passion called for fire from heaven. A man in a passion is like a ship in a storm, that hath neither pilot nor sails to help it, but is exposed to the waves and rocks. Watch your temptations. Satan continually lies in ambush, and watcheth to draw us to sin: he is fishing for our souls, he is either laying of snares or shooting of darts; therefore we had need watch the tempter, that we be not decoyed into sin. Most sin is committed for want of watchfulness.

7. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, consult with the oracles of God, be well versed in scripture; 'thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.'¹¹ The word is a two-edged sword, to cut asunder men's lusts. When the fogs and vapours of sin begin to arise, let but the light of scripture shine into the soul, and it dispels those fogs; 'let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.'¹² Alphonsus, king of Arragon, read over the bible fourteen times. The word shows the damnable evil of sin; it furnisheth us with precepts, which are so many recipes and antidotes against sin. When Christ had a temptation to sin, he beat back the tempter, and wounded him three times with his sword of the Spirit, 'it is written.' Why do men live in sin, but because they either do not read the word, or do not believe it?

8. If you would be preserved from gross, presumptuous sin, get your hearts fired with love to God. Love hath great force in it, it is 'strong as death,' it breaks the league between the heart and sin. Two things in God cause love. (1.) His glorious beauty: Moses desired to see some glimpse of it: 'Lord, show me thy

¹ Ro. 3. 14. 15. 18. ² Pr. 2. 14. ³ Ge. 3. 6. ⁴ Pr. 21. 31. ⁵ Jo. 7. 21. ⁶ 2 Sa. 11. 2. ⁷ Jo. 31. 1. ⁸ 1 Pe. 5. 8.

⁹ Je. 4. 14. ¹⁰ Ps. 106. 33. ¹¹ Ps. 119. 11. ¹² Col. 3. 16

glory.' (2.) His amazing love. What a prodigy of love was it to give his Son out of his bosom, and lay such a jewel to pawn for our redemption! These two, the glories of God's beauty and the magnitude of his love, may, like two loadstones, draw our love to God; and if we love him, we will not sin against him; he that loves his friend, will not by any means displease him. I have read of four men meeting together, who asked one another what it was that kept them from sinning? One said, the fear of hell; another said, the joys of heaven; the third said, the odiousness of sin; the fourth said, that which keeps me from sin, is, love to God; shall I sin against so good a God? shall I abuse love? Love to God is the best curbing bit to keep from sin.

9. If you would be kept from the evil of sin, be diligent in a calling. 'The blessings of providence are the wages of our labours.' Adam in paradise must till the ground. Such as live idly, expose themselves to sin; if we have no work to do, Satan will find us work; he sows most of his seed in fallow-ground. A woman being much tempted to sin, came to the reverend Mr Greenham for advice, what she should do to resist the temptation; he gave her this answer: be always well employed, so that when Satan comes, he may find thee busy in thy calling, and thou mayest not be at leisure to listen to his temptation.'

10. If you would be kept from sin, fix the eye of your mind upon 'the beauty of holiness.' Holiness consists in our conformity to God; holiness is the sparkling of the divine nature, a beam of God shining in the soul. How lovely is Christ's bride, when decked and bespangled with the jewels of holiness! What makes the seraphim angels of light; but their holiness? Do but think with yourselves what a splendid, glorious thing holiness is, and it will cause a disgust and hatred of sin, which is so contrary to it. The beholding of beauty, makes one out of love with deformity.

11. If you would keep from the evil of sin, meditate frequently on death: first, the unavoidable-ness of it; 'it is appointed unto all men once to die.'¹ We are not so sure to lie down this night in bed, as we are to lie down in the grave. Secondly, the uncertainty of the time. We are but tenants at will: we hold our life at the will of our landlord, and how soon may God turn us out of this house of clay?

Death oft comes when we least look for it. The flood, as some learned writers observe, came in the month Ziph, or April; in the spring, when the trees were blossoming, and the birds singing, then came the flood, when they least looked for it: so oft in the spring of youth, when the body is most healthy, and the spirits most sprightly and vigorous, and death is least thought on, then it comes. Could we think often and seriously of death, it would give a death-wound to sin. No stronger antidote against sin than this: I am now singing, and to-morrow may be dying? What if death should take me doing the devil's work, would it not send me to him to receive my wages? Would but the adulterer think, I am now in the act of sin, but how soon may death come, and then I who have burned in lust, must burn in hell: this sure would strike a damp into him; and make him afraid of going after strange flesh.

12. If ye would be kept from gross scandalous sins, beware of a covetous heart. Covetousness is a dry drunkenness. He who thirsts insatiably after the world will stick at no sin, he will betray Christ and a good cause for money. 'He who reckons nothing sufficient, will reckon nothing vile.' TACITUS. 'The love of money is the root of all evil.'² From this root comes, first, theft: Achan's covetous humour made him steal the wedge of gold.³ Covetousness makes the gaols so full. Secondly, from this root comes murder. Why did Ahab stone Naboth to death, but to possess his vineyard?⁴ Covetousness hath made many swim to the crown in blood. Thirdly, from this bitter root of covetousness proceeds cozenage; it is the covetous hand holds false weights. Fourthly, from this root of covetousness comes uncleanness. You read of the hire of a whore;⁵ for money she would let both her conscience and chastity be set to sale. O if you would be kept from the evil of sin, beware of covetousness which is the inlet to so many sins!^{*}

13. Let us be much in prayer to God, to

¹ 1 Ti. 5. 10. ² Jo. 7. 21. ³ 1 Ki. 21. 13. ⁴ De. 23. 18.

* God often lets the wicked go on to more ungodliness; which he does, 1. negatively, by withholding that grace which alone can restrain them from evil: 2. remotely, by the providential concurrence and mediation of second causes; which second causes meeting and acting in concert with the corruption of the reprobate's unregenerate nature, produce sinful effects: 3. judicially, or in a way of judgment; 'the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord,' &c., Pr. 21. 1.; and if the king's heart, why not the hearts of all men? Hence we find that the Lord bade Shimei curse David; that he moved David himself to number the people &c.; every one of which implies more than a bare permission of sin.—*Topology on Predestination*, p. 43.

keep us from ingulping ourselves in sin; 'keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.'¹ We have no power inherent to keep ourselves from evil. Arnoldus saith, that man, in his corrupt estate, hath 'some relics of spiritual life left.' And Arminius saith, man hath a sufficiency of grace in himself whereby he may abstain from evil; free-will is a sufficient curb to check and pull him back from sin. But then what needed Christ to have taught us this prayer: 'deliver us from evil?' If we have power of ourselves to keep from sin, what need we pray to God for power? Alas! if David and Peter, who had an habit of grace, fell, for want of a fresh gale of the Spirit to hold them up, much more will they be in danger of falling, who have only the power of free-will to hold them. Let us therefore sue to God for strength to keep us from sinning; pray that prayer of David, 'hold thou me up, and I shall be safe':² and that other prayer, 'hold up my goings in thy paths that my footsteps slip not.'³ Lord, keep me from dishonouring thee, keep me from the defiling sins of the age, that I may not be worse for the times, nor the times the worse for me; 'keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.' Lord, whatever I suffer, keep me from sin. The child is safe in the nurse's arms; and we are only safe from falling into sin, while we are held up in the arms of Christ and free-grace.* The

2d Branch of the exhortation hath an aspect to God's children. You that are professors, and carry Christ's colours, I beseech you above all others, to take heed of sin; beware of any action that is scandalous and unbefitting the gospel. You have heard what a prodigious hyperbolical evil sin is. Come not near the forbidden fruit; 'though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend.'⁴ So, though wicked men run into sin, yet let not the spouse of Christ defile the breasts of her virginity. Sin doth ill become any, but doth worse become

professors. Dung is unhandsome in the street; but to see it in the temple, how offensive is it? Leprosy in the foot doth ill, but to see a leprous sore in the face is much worse; to see sin break forth in them who have a face of religion is most to be abominated. The sins of the wicked are not so much wondered at; 'the wicked shall do wickedly.'⁵ It is no wonder to see a toad spit poison; it was not so much wondered to see Cain or Ahab sin; but to see Lot's incest, to see David's hands stained with blood; this was strange. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it: so when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse. The sins of God's people do, in some sense, more provoke God than the sins of the wicked. We read 'of the provoking of his sons and daughters;'⁶ the sins of the wicked anger God, but the sins of his people grieve him. The sins of God's people have a more malignant aspect, and are of a blacker dye, than others; there are those aggravations in the sins of God's people, as are not to be found in the sins of the unregenerate, in eight particulars.

For, 1. The godly have something which may restrain them from sin. Wicked men, when they sin, have no principle to restrain them; they have wind and tide to carry them, but have nothing to pull them back from sin; but a child of God hath a principle of grace to give check to sin; he hath the impulses of God's Spirit dissuading him from evil; therefore, for him to commit sin, is far worse than for others; this is to sin more desperately; it is, as if a woman should go about to kill the babe in her womb. Christian, this thou art to do, when thou sinnest presumptuously, thou doest what in thee lies to kill the babe of grace in thy soul.

2. The sins of God's people are greater than others, because they sin against more mercy. This is like a weight put in a scale, it makes sin weigh heavier. God hath given Christ to a believer; he hath cut him off from the wild stock of nature, and grafted him into the true olive; and for him to abuse all this mercy, it is to outdo the wicked, and to sin with a higher aggravation, because it is to sin against greater love. How was Peter's sin enhanced and accented, that when Christ had done more for him than others, had dropped some of the holy oil upon him, had taken him into the number of the apostles, had carried him up into the

¹ Ps. 19. 13. ² Ps. 119. 117. ³ Ps. 17. 5. ⁴ Ho. 4. 15.

* It is abundantly evident from most express testimonies of scripture, that God, occasionally, in the course of his providence, puts both elect and reprobate persons in circumstances of temptation; by which temptations are meant, not those trials that are of an outward afflictive nature, but those also that are inward and spiritual; even such as shall cause the persons so tempted, actually to turn aside from the path of duty to commit sin, and involve both themselves and others in evil. Hence we find the elect complaining, 'O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear? But there is also a kind of temptation peculiar to the non-elect; whereby God, in a way of just judgment, makes them totally blind and obdurate; inasmuch as they are vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction.—Bucer in Rom. i. lect. 7.

⁵ Da. 12. 10.

⁶ De. 29. 10

mount of transfiguration, and shown him the glory of heaven in a vision; now, that Peter should deny Christ after all this mercy, this was heinous, and could not be forgiven but by a miracle and prodigy of love.

3. The sins of the godly are worse, and have this aggravation in them that they sin against more clear illumination than the wicked; 'they are of those that rebel against the light:' light is here taken figuratively for knowledge. It cannot be denied, but the wicked sin knowingly: but the godly have a light beyond them; such a divine penetrating light, as no hypocrite can attain unto; they have better eyes to see sin than others; and for them to meddle with sin, and embrace this dunghill, how must this needs provoke God, and make the fury rise up in his face! Oh therefore, you that are the people of God, flee from sin; your sins are more enhanced, and have worse aggravations in them than the sins of the unregenerate!

4. The sins of the godly are worse than the sins of the unregenerate, for, when they sin, it is against great experiences. They have felt the bitterness of sin in the pangs of the new-birth, and afterwards God hath spoken peace, and they have had an experimental taste how 'sweet the Lord is;' and yet, after these experiences, that they should touch the forbidden fruit, venture upon a presumptuous sin; how doth this enhance and aggravate their guilt? it is like putting a weight more in the scale to make their sin weigh heavier. The wicked, when they sin, never tasted the sweetness of an heavenly life, they never knew what it was to have any smiles from God, they never tasted any thing sweeter than corn and wine, therefore no wonder if they sin: but for a child of God, who hath had such love-tokens from heaven, and signal experiences from God, for him to gratify a lust, how horrid is this! It was an aggravation of Solomon's sin, that 'his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel which had appeared to him twice.'

5. The sins of the godly are greater than others, because they sin against their sonship. When wicked men sin, they sin against the command; but when the godly sin, they sin against a privilege, they abuse their sonship. The godly are adopted into the family of heaven, they have a new name. Is it a light thing, said David, to be son-in-law to a king? So, to be called the sons of God, to be heirs of the

promises, is no small honour; now, for such to run into an open offence, it is a sinning against their adoption; they hereby make themselves vile, as if a king's son should be tumbling in the mire, or lie among swine.

6. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they are committed against more vows and engagements. They have given up their names to God; they have bound themselves solemnly to God by oath; 'I have sworn that I will keep thy righteous judgments.'³ And in the supper of the Lord they have renewed this sacred vow; and, after this, to run into a presumptuous sin, it is a breach of vow, a kind of perjury, which dyes the sin of a crimson colour.

7. The sins of the godly are worse than others, because they bring a greater reproach upon religion. For the wicked to sin, there is no other expected from them; swine will wallow in the mire, but when sheep do so, when the godly sin, that redounds to the dishonour of the gospel; 'by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.'⁴ A stain in scarlet, every one's eye is upon it: for the godly to sin, it is like a spot in scarlet, it is more taken notice of, and it reflects a greater dishonour upon the ways of God. When the sun is eclipsed, every one stands and looks upon it, so, when a child of light is eclipsed by scandalous sin, all stand and gaze at this eclipse. How doth the gospel suffer by the miscarriages of the godly? Their blood never can wash off the stain that they bring upon religion.

8. The sins of the godly are worse, because they are a mean to encourage and harden wicked men in sin. If the wicked see the godly to be loose and uncircumspect in their lives, they think they may do so too: the wicked make the godly their pattern, not in imitating their virtues, but their vices, and is not this fearful to be a mean to damn others? These are the aggravations of the sins of the godly; therefore you, above all others, beware of presumptuous sin; your sins wound conscience, weaken grace, and do more highly provoke God than the sins of others, and God will be sure to punish you. Whoever escapes, you shall not, 'you only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.'⁵ If God doth not damn you, yet he may send you to hell in this life; he may cause such

¹ Job 21. 13² 1 Ki. 11. 9³ Ps. 119. 106.⁴ 2 Sa. 12. 24.⁵ Am. 3. 3.

agonies and tremblings of heart, that you will be a terror to yourselves; you may draw nigh to despair, and be ready to look upon yourselves as castaways. When David had stained himself with adultery and murder, he complained of his 'broken bones;'¹ a metaphor to set forth the grief and agony of his soul; he lay in sore desertion three quarters of a year, and it is thought he never recovered his full joy to his dying day. Oh, therefore, you who belong to God, and are enrolled in his family, take heed of blemishing your profession with scandalous sin; you will pay dear for it! Think of the broken bones: though God doth not blot you out of his book, yet he may cast you out of his presence.² He may keep you in long desertion. You may feel such lashes in your conscience, that you may roar out, and think yourselves half in hell.

So much for the first, 'deliver us from evil;' we pray to be delivered from evil, in general, that is sin.

Secondly, in special. 'Deliver us from evil.' We pray to be delivered from evil, under a three-fold notion. 1. From the evil of our heart; it is called 'an evil heart.'³ 2. From the evil of Satan; he is called 'the wicked one.'⁴ 3. From the evil of the world; it is called 'an evil world.'⁵

Ist, In this petition, 'deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of our heart, that it may not decoy and trepan us into sin. The heart is the poisoned fountain from whence all actual sins flow; 'out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, fornications, murders.'⁶ The cause of all evil lies in a man's own breast, all sin begins at the heart. Lust is first conceived in the heart, and then it is brought into the world. Whence comes rash anger? The heart sets the tongue on fire. The heart is a shop or workhouse where all sin is contrived and hammered out; how needful therefore is this prayer, 'deliver us from evil,' from the evil of our hearts? The heart is the greatest seducer, therefore the apostle James saith, 'every man is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.'⁷ The devil could not hurt us, if our own hearts did not give consent; all that he can do is, to lay the bait, but it is our fault to swallow the bait. O let us pray to be delivered from the lusts and deceits of our own heart! Luther feared his heart more than the pope or cardinal; and it was Austin's prayer, 'Lord, deliver me from myself.' It was a good advice one gave

to his friend; 'beware of the bosom traitor, the flesh.' The heart of a man is the Trojan horse, out of which comes a whole army of lusts.

2dly, In this petition, 'deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of Satan. He is 'the evil one.'⁸

Q. *In what respect is Satan the wicked one?*

1. He was the first inventor of evil;⁹ he plotted the first treason. 2. His inclination is only to evil.¹⁰ 3. His constant practice is doing evil.¹¹ 4. All the evils and mischiefs that fall out in the world, he hath some hand in them. (1.) He hinders from good; 'he showed me Joshua the high-priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.'¹² (2.) He provokes to evil; he put it into Ananias' heart to lie; 'why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?'¹³ The devil blows the fire of lust and strife. When men are proud, the old serpent hath poisoned them, and makes them swell. Thus he is the evil one; and well may we pray, 'Lord, deliver us from the evil one.' The word *Satan* in the Hebrew signifies an opponent or adversary. He is a restless adversary, he never sleeps; spirits need no sleep. He is a peripatetic; 'he walks about.'¹⁴ And how doth he walk? not as a pilgrim, but as a spy; he narrowly observes where he may plant his pieces of battery, and make his assaults with most advantage against us. Satan is a subtle engineer; there is no place that can secure us from Satan's assaults and inroads. We find him while we are praying, hearing, meditating. We are sure of his company, uncertain how we came by it. Satan is a puissant adversary, he is armed with power. He is called 'the strong man.'¹⁵ He takes men captive at his pleasure; 'who are taken captive by him at his will';¹⁶ who are taken alive by him. It alludes to a bird that is taken alive in the snare. Thus you see he is the evil one. The devil's work is to angle for men's souls; he lays suitable baits; he allures the ambitious man with honour; the covetous man with riches, he hooks his baits with silver; he allures the lustful man with beauty, he tempts men to Delilah's lap to keep them from Abraham's bosom. The devil glories in the damnation of souls. How needful then is this prayer, 'deliver us from evil.' Lord, keep us from the evil one; though Satan may solicit us to sin, suffer us not to give consent; though he may assault the castle of our hearts,

¹ Ps. 51. 8. ² Ps. 51. 11. ³ He. 3. 12. ⁴ Mat. 13. 19.
⁵ Gal. 1. 4. ⁶ Mar. 7. 21. ⁷ Ja. 1. 14.

⁸ Mat. 13. 19.

⁹ Jno. 8. 44.

¹⁰ Ep. 6. 12.

¹¹ 1 Pe. 5. 8.

¹² Ze. 3. 1.

¹³ Ac. 5. 3.

¹⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 8.

¹⁵ Lu. 11. 21.

¹⁶ 2 Ti. 2. 26.

yet let us not deliver up the keys of the castle to our mortal enemy.

3dly, In this petition, 'deliver us from evil,' we pray to be delivered from the evil of the world. It is called an 'evil world;' not but that the world, as God made it, is good, but through our corruption it becomes evil, and we had need pray, deliver us from an evil world.

Q. *In what sense is it an evil world?*

1. As it is a defiling world. It is like living in an infectious air; it requires a high degree of grace to 'keep ourselves unspotted from the world.'¹ It is as hard to live in the world and not be defiled, as to go much in the sun, and not be tanned. The opinions of the world are defiling; that a little religion will serve the turn, like leaf-gold, it must be spread but thin; that morality runs parallel with grace; that to be zealous, is to be righteous overmuch; that it is better to keep the skin whole, than the conscience pure; that the flesh is rather to be gratified than mortified. These opinions of the world are defiling. The examples of the world are defiling. Examples have a great force in them to draw us to evil. A prince is great by his authority, but greater by his example. Princes are looking-glasses which we dress ourselves by; if they do evil, we are apt to imitate them. Great men are copies we set before us, and usually we write most like the copy when it is blotted. There is a great proneness in us to follow the examples of the world; therefore God hath put in a caveat against it; 'thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.'² How easily are we hurried to sin, when we have the tide of natural corruption, and the wind of example to carry us! Lot was the world's wonder; the complexion of his soul kept pure in Sodom's infectious air. The river of Peru in America, after it hath run into the main sea, keeps fresh, and doth not mingle with the salt waters: to this river might Lot be compared, whose piety kept fresh in Sodom's salt water. Bad examples are catching, 'they were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.'³ Had not we need then pray, Lord, deliver us from this evil world? Living in the world is like travelling in a dirty road.

2. It is an evil world, as it is an ensnaring world. The world is full of snares. Company is a snare, recreations are snares, oaths are snares, riches are golden snares. The apostle speaks of 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.'⁴ The lust of the flesh is beauty, the lust of the eye is money, the

pride of life is honour; these are the natural man's trinity. 'In the world, the splendour of wealth, the majesty of glory, the enticements of pleasure, draw us from the love of God.' The world is a flattering enemy; whom it kisses, it oft betrays; it is a silken halter; the pleasures of the world, like opium, cast men into the sleep of security. Lysimachus sold his crown for a draught of water: so many part with heaven for the world. It is an ensnaring world: the king of Armenia was sent prisoner to queen Cleopatra in golden fetters; too many are enslaved with the world's golden fetters. The world bewitched Demas.⁵ One of Christ's own apostles was caught in a silver bait. It is hard to drink the wine of prosperity, and not be giddy. Thus the world, through our innate corruption, is evil, as it is a snare; 'they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare.'⁶ If an angel were to live here, there were no danger of the world's ensnaring him, because he hath no principle within to receive the temptation, but we have a corrupt principle that suits with the temptation, and that makes us always in danger.

3. It is an evil world as it is a discouraging world. It casts scorn and reproach upon them who live virtuously. What! will you be holier than others, wiser than your ancestors? The world deals with the professors of religion as Sanballat did with the Jews when they were building; 'he mocked the Jews, and said, what do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish that are burnt?'⁷ So the wicked world casts out squibs of reproach at the godly: what! will ye build for heaven? what needs all this cost? what profit is it to serve the Almighty? Thus the world would pluck off our chariot-wheels when we are driving towards heaven. They are called 'cruel mockings.'⁸ It requires a great measure of sanctity to withstand the discouragements of the world, to dance among serpents, to laugh at reproaches, and bind them as a crown about our head.

4. It is an evil world, as it is a deadening world. It dulls and deadeneth the affections to heavenly objects. The world cools holy motions, like a damp in a silver mine which puts out the light; earthly things choke the seed of the word. A man entangled in the world is so taken up about secular concerns, that he can no more mind the things above than the earth can ascend, or the elephant fly in the air; and, even such as have grace in them, yet, when their affections are

¹ Ga. 1. 4. ² Ja. 1. 27. ³ Ex. 23. 2.

⁴ Ps. 106. 35.

⁵ 1 Juo. 2. 16.

⁶ 2 Ti. 4. 10. ⁷ 1 Ti. 6. 9. ⁸ Ne. 4. 1. 2. ⁹ He. 11. 36.

belimed with the earth, they find themselves much indisposed to meditation and prayer; it is like swimming with a stone about the neck.

5. It is an evil world, as it is a maligning world. It doth disgust and hate the people of God; 'because ye are not of the world therefore the world hateth you.'¹ Hatred is, as Aristotle saith, against the whole kind. Haman's hatred was against the seed of the whole Jews. When you can find a serpent without a sting, or a leopard without spots, then you may expect to find a wicked world without hatred. The white that is shot at, is piety; 'they are mine adversaries, because I follow the thing that is good.'² The world pretends to hate the godly for something else, but the ground of the quarrel is holiness. The world's hatred is implacable; anger may be reconciled, hatred cannot: you may as well reconcile heaven and hell, as the two seeds. If the world hated Christ, no wonder it hates us; 'the world hated me before it hated you.'³ Why should any hate Christ? this blessed dove had no gall, this rose of Sharon did send forth a most sweet perfume; but this shows the world's baseness, it is a Christ-hating and a sainting-hating world. Had not we need to pray, Deliver us from this evil world?

6. It is an evil world, as it is a deceitful world. (1.) There is a deceit in dealing; 'he is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand.'⁴ The Hebrew word signifies both to deceive and oppress. He who dares use deceit, will not spare to oppress. (2.) There is a deceit in friendship: 'a faithful man who can find?'⁵ 'To deceive under the guise of friendship, what more common!' Some use too much courtship in friendship; they are like trumpets which make a great noise, but within they are hollow. Some can flatter and hate, commend and censure: 'honey in the mouth, gall in the heart.' Dissembled love is worse than hatred. (3.) There is deceit in riches; 'the deceitfulness of riches.'⁶ The world makes us believe it will satisfy our desires, and it doth but increase them; it makes us believe it will stay with us, and it takes wings.⁷

7. It is an evil world, as it is a disquieting world. It is full of trouble.⁸ The world is like a bee hive; when we have tasted a little honey, we have been stung with a thousand bees. St Basil was of opinion, that before the fall, the rose did grow without prickles; but now every sweet flower of our life hath its prickles. There are many things cause dis-

quiet: loss of friends, lawsuits, crosses in estate; relations are not without their troubles; some are troubled that they want children, others troubled that they have children; the world is a vexing vanity. If a man be poor, he is despised by the rich; if he be rich, he is envied by the poor. If we do not find it an ensnaring world, we shall find it an afflicting world; it hath more in it to wean us than tempt us. The world is a sea, where we are tossed upon the surging waves of sorrow, and often in danger of shipwreck; the world is a wilderness full of fiery serpents. What storms of persecution are raised against the righteous!⁹ The wicked are briers,¹⁰ where Christ's sheep lose some of their golden fleece. Then had we not need pray, Lord, deliver us from being hurt by this evil world? Why should we love the world? Though we are commanded to love our enemies, yet this enemy we must not love; 'love not the world.'¹¹

I have been all this while opening the first sense of this petition, 'deliver us from evil;' we pray to be delivered from sin in general, and to be delivered from evil under this threefold notion; from the evil of our heart, from the evil of Satan, from the evil of the world. Ere I leave this let me insert a

CAUTION. Not that our abstaining from, or forbearing the external acts of sin, is sufficient to entitle us to salvation: but when we pray, 'deliver us from evil,' there is more implied in it, namely that we make a progress in holiness. Being divorced from sin is not enough, unless we are espoused to virtue; therefore in scripture these two are joined, 'depart from evil, and do good';¹² 'cease to do evil, learn to do well';¹³ 'let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness.'¹⁴ Leaving sin is not enough, unless we embrace righteousness. 'Virtue consists more in well-doing, than in avoiding what is evil.' As it is in the body, it is not enough that the disease be stopped, but it must grow in health, so it is in the soul, it is not enough acts of sin be forborne, which is the stopping a disease; but it must be healthy, that is, grow in holiness.

USE. Which reproves those who labour only to suppress the outward acts of sin, but do not press on to holiness; they cease from doing evil, but do not learn to do well. Their religion lies only in negatives; they glory in this, that they are given to no vice, none can charge them with any foul miscarriages; 'God, I thank

¹ Jno. 15. 19. ² Ps. 38. 20. ³ Jno. 15. 18. ⁴ Ho. 12. 7. ⁵ Pr. 20. 6. ⁶ Mat. 13. 22. ⁷ Pr. 23. 5. ⁸ Jno. 16. 33.

⁹ 2 Ti. 3. 12. ¹⁰ Mi. 7. 4. ¹¹ 1 Jno. 2. 15. ¹² Ps. 34. 14. ¹³ Ro. 12. 9. and Is. 1. 16. ¹⁴ 2 Co. 7. 1.

thee, that I am not as other men are; extortioners, unjust, adulterers.¹ This is not enough, you must advance a step further in solid piety; it is not enough that a field be not sown with tares or hemlock, but it must be sown with good seed. Consider two things: 1. If this be the best certificate you have to show that you are not guilty of gross sins, God makes no account of you. A piece of brass, though it be not so bad as clay, yet not being so good as silver, it will not pass for current coin: so though you are not grossly profane, yet not being of the right metal, wanting the stamp of holiness, you will never pass current in heaven. 2. A man may abstain from evil, yet he may go to hell for not doing good; 'every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.'² Why were the foolish virgins shut out; they had done no hurt, they had not broke their lamps; yea, but their fault was, there was no goodness in them, they had no oil in their lamps. Oh therefore let us not content ourselves in being free from gross acts of sin, but let us launch forth further in holiness; let us cleanse ourselves from all pollution, 'perfecting holiness.'

Secondly, 'Deliver us from evil,' that is, from temporal evil. We pray that God will either prevent temporal evils, or deliver us out of them.

1. We pray that God will prevent temporal evils; that he will be our screen, to stand between us and danger; 'save me from them that persecute me.'³ We may lawfully pray against the plots of the wicked, that they may prove abortive, that, though they have a design upon us, they may not have their desire upon us: 'keep me from the snares which they have laid for me.'⁴

2. We pray that God will deliver us out of temporal evils; that he will remove his judgments from us, whether famine, sword, pestilence; 'remove thy stroke away from me.'⁵ Yet with this

CAUTION. We may pray to be delivered from temporal evils only so far as God sees it good for us. We may pray to be delivered from the evil of sin absolutely, but we must pray to be delivered from temporal evils conditionally, so far as God sees it fitting for us, and may stand with his glory.*

¹ Lu. 18. 11. ² Mat. 3. 10. ³ Ps. 7. 1.
⁴ Ps. 141. 9. ⁵ Ps. 39. 10.

* We have whatsoever we ought, or should permit ourselves to ask from God, set forth in this form and rule of prayer,

Use. In all the troubles that lie upon us, let us look up to God for ease and succour; 'deliver us from evil.' 'Should not a people seek unto their God?'⁶ To blame then are the papists, who knock at the wrong door; when they are in any trouble, they pray to the saints to deliver them; when they are in danger of shipwreck, they pray to St Nicholas; when they are in the fit of a fever, they pray to St Petronelle; when they are in travail, they pray to St Margaret. How unlawful it is to invoke saints in prayer, I will prove from one scripture; 'how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?'⁷ We may pray to none but such as we believe in; but we ought not to believe in any saint, therefore we may not pray to him. The papists have, in their Lady's psalter, directed their prayers for deliverance to the virgin Mary: 'deliver me, O Lady!' 'O thou blessed Lady, in thy hands our salvation is laid up.' But 'Abraham is ignorant of us;⁸ the saints and virgin Mary are ignorant of us. To pray to saints, is idolatry advanced to blasphemy. Our Saviour hath taught us better, in all our distresses to pray to God for a cure; 'deliver us from evil.' He only knows what our troubles are, and can give us help from trouble; he only that laid the burden on, can take it off. David went to God; 'O bring thou me out of my distresses!'⁹ God can, with a word, heal; 'he sent forth his word, and healed them.'¹⁰ He delivered the three children out of the fiery furnace, Joseph out of prison, Daniel out of the lion's den; this proves him to be God, because none can deliver as he doth; 'There is no other God that can deliver after this sort.'¹¹ Let us then, in all our straits and exigencies, seek to God, and say, 'deliver us from evil.†

⁶ Is. 8. 19. ⁷ Ro. 10. 14. ⁸ Is. 63. 16.
⁹ Ps. 25. 17. ¹⁰ Ps. 107. 20. ¹¹ Da. 3. 29.

taught us by the best whom the Lord hath ever set over us to be our teacher, and whom alone he commands us to hear. He has always been God's eternal wisdom, and being made man is given to men as the angel of great counsel. And this prayer is in all points so perfect, that whatever foreign and strange petition is added in our prayers, and which cannot be referred to it, is ungodly and unworthy to be allowed of God. In this summary he hath set forth, what is meet for him, what is pleasing to him, what is necessary for us, and finally, what he will grant.—*Calvini Instit.* b. iii. e. 20. s. 48.

† 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.' This dextology is wanting, not only in several ancient Greek manuscripts, but in the Vulgate, Coptic, Saxon, and Arabic versions. It was not in the Greek copies used by Origen, Gregory, Nysseu, or Cyril. Cesarius quotes it, not as from the scripture, but as from the liturgy used in the Greek churches, whence, in all human probability, according to the judgment of the most celebrated critics, it has first been taken.—*Campbell's Gospels*, vol. iii. p. 45.

SELECT SERMONS,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS WATSON.

SELECT SERMONS.

SERMON I.

MAT. x. 16. *'Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.'*¹

THE apostle saith, 'all scripture is given by inspiration.'¹ God's word is compared to a lamp, for its enlightening quality,² and to silver refined, for its enriching quality.³ Among other parts of sacred writ, this, in the text, is not the least; 'be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' This is the speech of our blessed Saviour; his lips were a tree of life which fed many; his works were miracles; his words were oracles, and deserve to be engraved upon our hearts as with the point of a diamond. This is a golden sentence; 'be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' Our Lord Jesus, in this chapter, 1st, gives his apostles their commission; 2dly, foretells their danger; 3dly, gives them several instructions.

I. Christ gives his apostles their commission. Before they went abroad to preach, Christ ordains them; 'these twelve Jesus sent forth.'⁴ Those who exercise in the ministerial function must have a lawful call; 'no man takes this honour to himself, but he who is called of God.'⁵ Christ gave not only the apostles and prophets a call to their office (who were extraordinary ministers) but even 'pastors and teachers.'⁶

Q. *But if one have gifts, is not this sufficient to the ministerial office?*

No: as grace is not sufficient to make a minister, so neither is gifts; therefore it is observable, that the scripture puts a difference between gifting and sending; 'how shall they preach unless they be sent?'⁷ If gifts were enough to constitute a minister, the apostle should have said, 'how shall they preach unless they be gifted?' But he saith, 'unless they be sent' which denotes a lawful call, or investiture into the office. The attorney that pleads at the bar may have as good gifts as the judge that sits upon the bench; but he must have a lawful

commission before he sit as a judge: if it be thus in matters civil, much more in church-matters, which are of higher concern. Those therefore, who usurp the work of the ministry without being solemnly set apart for it, discover more pride than zeal, and they can expect no blessing; 'I sent them not, nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.'⁸ So much for the first: the apostles' commission; 'these twelve Jesus sent forth.'

II. Christ foretells their danger, 'behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.'⁹ The apostles were going about a glorious work, but an hazardous work; they would meet with enemies fierce and savage, like wolves. As all that will live godly in Christ shall meet with sufferings, so commonly Christ's ambassadors encounter the deepest trials. Most of the apostles died by the hands of tyrants; Peter was crucified with his head downwards; Luke the evangelist was executed on an olive-tree; John was cast by Domitian into a vessel of scalding oil. Maximinus the emperor, as Eusebius relates, gave charge to his officers to put none to death but the governors and pastors of the church. The ministers are Christ's ensign-bearers, to carry his colours, therefore they are most shot at: they hold forth his truth; 'I am set for the defence of the gospel.'¹⁰ The Greek word alludes to a soldier that is set in the forefront of the battle, and hath all the bullets flying about his ears. The minister's work is to part between men and their sins; and this causeth opposition. When Paul preached against Diana, all the city was in an uproar.¹¹ This may stir up prayer for Christ's ministers, that they may be able to withstand the assaults of the enemy.¹²

² Ti. 3. 16. ³ Ps. 119. 105. ⁴ Ps. 12. 6. ⁵ Mat. 10. 5.
⁶ He. 5. 4. ⁷ Ep. 4. 11. ⁸ Ro. 10. 15.

⁹ Je. 23. 32. ¹⁰ Mat. 10. 16. ¹¹ Ph. 1. 17.
¹² Ac. 19. ¹² 2 Th. 3. 2.

III. Christ gives the apostles their instructions, whereof this in the text was one, 'be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' 1. The exhortation, 'be ye wise;' 2. The simile, 'as serpents;' 3. The qualification of this wisdom; a wisdom mixed with innocency, 'harmless as doves.' This union of the dove and the serpent is hard to find; 'who then is a wise and faithful servant?'¹ On which place, saith St Chrysostom, it is an hard matter to find one faithful and wise. Faithful, there is the dove; wise, there is the serpent: it is hard to find both. If one would seek for a faithful man, questionless he may find many; if for a wise man, he may find many; but if he seek for one both wise and faithful, this is hard to find, yet it is possible though not common. Moses, a man 'learned, in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;'² there was the wisdom of the serpent: and the meekest man alive, 'now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth;'³ there was the innocency of the dove. Daniel was an excellent person, 'excellent wisdom is found in thee,'⁴ there was the prudence of the serpent; and, 'the president and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel, but they could find no occasion nor fault;'⁵ behold here the innocency of the dove. Look on St Paul; 'when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out, I am a Pharisee;'⁶ by which speech Paul got all the Pharisees on his side; here was the wisdom of the serpent: and, 'I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day,'⁷ here was the innocency of the dove. How amiable is this, the union of the dove and serpent! The scripture joins these two together, 'meekness and wisdom;'⁸ wisdom, there is the serpent; meekness, there is the dove. This beautifies a Christian, when he hath the serpent's eye in the dove's head. We must have innocency with our wisdom, else our wisdom is but craftiness; and we must have wisdom with our innocency, else our innocency is but weakness. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not circumvent others; and we must have the wisdom of the serpent, that others may not circumvent us. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not betray the truth; and the wisdom of the serpent, that we may not betray ourselves. In short, religion without policy, is too weak to be safe; policy without religion

is too subtle to be good. When wisdom and innocency, like Castor and Pollux, appear together, they presage the soul's happiness.

DOCTRINE. *That Christians must be both wise and innocent.*

1. I begin with the first, wise: be ye 'wise as serpents.'

1. I shall speak concerning wisdom in general. Solomon saith, 'wisdom is the principal thing.'⁹ It is better than riches; 'happy is the man that findeth wisdom; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver.'¹⁰ If the mountains were pearl, if every sand of the sea was a diamond, they were not comparable to wisdom. Without wisdom, a person is like a ship without a pilot, in danger to split upon rocks. Job sets forth the encomium and praise of wisdom; 'the price of wisdom is above rubies.' The ruby is a precious stone, transparent, of a red fiery colour. It is reported of one of the kings of India, that he wore a ruby of that bigness and splendour, that he might be seen by it in the dark: but wisdom casts a more sparkling colour than the ruby, it makes us shine as angels. No chain of pearl you wear doth so adorn you as wisdom. Wisdom consists chiefly in three things: (1.) Knowledge to discern wherein happiness lies. (2.) Skill to judge what will be the fittest means to conduce to it. (3.) Activity to prosecute those things which will certainly accomplish that end. So much for wisdom in general.

2. More particularly: wisdom is variously distinguished. It is either natural, moral, or theological. (1.) A natural wisdom, which is seen in finding out the secrets of nature. Aristotle was by some of the ancients called an eagle fallen from the clouds, because he was of such raised intellectuals, and had so profound an insight into the causes of things. This natural wisdom is adorning, but it is not sufficient to salvation. St Hierom brings in Aristotle with his syllogisms, and Tully with his rhetoric, crying out in hell. (2.) A moral wisdom, which consists in two things. It lies in the rejection of those things which are prejudicial, and the election of those things which are beneficial; this is called prudence. Knowledge without prudence may do hurt; many a man's wit hath undone him, for want of wisdom. (3.) A theological or sacred wisdom, which is our knowing of God, who is the supreme and sovereign good. Greece was counted the eye of the world, for

¹ Mat. 24. 45. ² Ac. 6. 22. ³ Nu. 12. 3. ⁴ Da. 5. 14.
⁵ Da. 6. 4. ⁶ Ac. 23. 6. ⁷ Ac. 5. 1. ⁸ Ja. 3. 13.

⁹ Pr. 4. 7.

¹⁰ Pr. 3. 13.

¹¹ Job 28. 13, 18.

wisdom; and Athens the eye of Greece; but neither of them knew God; 'I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God.'¹ To know God, in whom is both truth and goodness, is the master-piece of wisdom; 'thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father.'² And this knowledge of God is through Christ; Christ is the glass in which the face of God is seen.³ And then we know God aright, when we know him not only with a knowledge of speculation, but appropriation; 'this God is our God.'⁴ This knowledge of God is the most sublime wisdom; therefore it is called, 'wisdom from above.'⁵

3. But to come nearer to the text, and speak of the wisdom of the serpent: 'be ye wise as serpents.'

Q. But must we in every thing be like the serpent?

No: our Saviour meant not that in every thing we should imitate the serpent. I shall show you, 1. Wherein we should not be like the serpent; 2. Wherein we should be like the serpent.

1st. Wherein we should not be like the serpent.

(1.) The serpent eats dust; 'dust shall be the serpent's meat.'⁶ It was a curse upon the serpent. Thus we should not be like the serpent, to feed immoderately upon earthly things. It is absurd for him that hath an heaven-born soul, capable of communion with God and angels, to eat greedily the serpent's meat; a Christian hath better food to feed on; the heavenly manna, the precious promises, the body and blood of Christ. It is counted a miracle to find a diamond in a golden mine; and it is as great a miracle to find Christ, the pearl of price, in an earthly heart. The lapwing wears a little coronet on its head, yet feeds on dung: to have a crown of profession on the head, yet feed inordinately on these dung-hill-comforts, is unworthy of a Christian. What a poor contemptible thing is the world! It cannot fill the heart. If Satan should take a Christian up to the top of the pinnacle, and show him all the kingdoms and glory of the world, what could he show him, but a show, a pleasant delusion? There is a lawful use God allows of these outward things, but the sin is in the excess. The bee may suck a little honey from the leaf, but put it in a barrel of honey, and it is drowned. The wicked are thus characterized; 'who mind

earthly things.'⁷ They are like Saul, 'hid among the stuff.' We should be as eagles flying aloft towards heaven, and not as serpents, creeping upon the earth, and licking the dust.

(2.) The serpent is deceitful. The serpent useth many shifts, and glides so cunningly, that we cannot trace him. This was one of those four things which wise Agur could not find out, 'the way of a serpent upon a rock.'⁸ It is a deceitful creature: we should not in this sense be like the serpent, for deceitfulness. Naturally we too much resemble the serpent for fraud and collusion; 'the heart is deceitful above all things.'⁹ There is deceit towards man: as, to dissemble friendship, to cover malice with pretences of love, to commend and censure, to flatter and hate, a Judas's kiss, and a Joab's sword: to dissemble honesty; to pretend just dealing, yet use false weights. There is deceit towards God: to draw nigh to God with the lips, while the heart is far from him, to serve God, and seek ourselves, to pretend to love God, and yet be in league with sin; we should not in this sense be like the serpent, deceitful and given to shifts. O be upright! be what you seem to be! God loves plainness of heart.¹⁰ The plainer the diamond is, the more it sparkles; the plainer the heart is, the more it sparkles in God's eye. What a commendation did Christ give Nathaniel? 'behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.'¹¹

(3.) The serpent cast the coat, but another new coat comes in the room; in this we should not be like the serpent, to cast the coat, to cast off one sin, and another sin as bad come in the room. The drunkard leaves his drunkenness, because it impairs his health, his credit, his purse, and falls to the sin of cozenage; the prodigal leaves his prodigality, and turns usurer; this is as if one disease should leave a man, and he should fall into another as bad; his ague leaves him, and he falls into a consumption. O be not like the serpent, that casts one coat and another comes! This is like him in the gospel, that had one devil go out of him, and seven worse spirits came in the room.¹²

(4.) The serpent is a venomous creature, it is full of poison. In this be not like the serpent. It is said of wicked men, their poison is like the poison of a serpent.¹³ What is this poison? it is the poison of malice. Malice is the devil's picture. Lust makes men brutish, and malice makes them devilish. Malice carries in it its

¹ Ac. 17. 23.² 1 Ch. 28. 9.³ Col. 1. 15.⁴ Ps. 48. 14.⁵ Ja. 3. 17.⁶ Is. 65. 21.⁷ Eph. 3. 19.⁸ Pr. 30. 19.⁹ Je. 17. 9.¹⁰ Ps. 51. 6.¹¹ Joh. 1. 47.¹² Mat. 12. 45.¹³ Ps. 58. 4.

own punishment ; a malicious man, to hurt another, will injure himself. Quintillian speaks of one who had a garden of flowers, and he poisoned his flowers that his neighbour's bees sucking from them might be poisoned, and die : Oh be not venomous like the serpent ! Malice is mental murder ; you may kill a man, and never touch him ; 'whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.'¹ Malice spoils all your good duties ; the malicious man defiles his prayer, poisons the sacramental cup ; he eats and drinks his own damnation. I have read of one who lived in malice, and being asked how he could say the Lord's prayer, he answered, I leave out these words, 'as we forgive them that trespass against us.' But St Austin brings in God replying thus to him : 'because thou dost not say my prayer, therefore, I will not hear thine.' The malicious man is not likely to enjoy either earth or heaven : not the earth, for the 'meek shall inherit the earth ;'² nor is he like to enjoy heaven, for God 'will beautify the meek with salvation :'³ so that the malicious man is cut off both from earth and heaven.

(5.) The serpent is given to hissing : so it is said of the basilisk. In this be not like the serpent, to hiss out reproaches and invectives against the saints and people of God ; they are the seed of the serpent that hiss at godliness. The Lord will one day reckon with men for all their hard speeches.⁴ Lucian was such an one who did hiss out and scoff against religion : and as a just judgment of God, he was afterwards torn in pieces by dogs.

(6.) The serpent stops her ear : it is an obstinate deafness ; 'they are like the deaf adder, which stoppeth her ear.'⁵ In this be not like the serpent, obstinately to stop your ears to the voice of God's word. While God calls you to repent of sin, be not as the basilisk to stop your ear ; 'they refused to hearken, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear.'⁶ The word denounceth threatenings against sin ; but many, instead of being like the publican, smiting on their breast, they are as deaf adders, stopping their ears. If you shut your ear against God's word, take heed God doth not shut heaven against you ; if God cries to you to repent, and you will not hear ; when you cry for mercy, God will not hear : 'as he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts.'⁷

(7.) The serpent casts her coat, but keeps

her sting : in this sense be not like the serpent, to cast off the outward acts of sin, and keep the love of sin. He whose heart is in love with any sin, is an hypocrite. A man may forbear sin, yet retain the love of it ; he may forbear the act of gross sin, for fear of hell, as a man may forbear a dish he loves, for fear it should bring his disease upon him, the stone or gout. A man may forsake sin, yet keep the love of sin : he may forsake sin either out of policy or necessity : vice will impair his health, eclipse his credit, therefore out of policy, he will forbear it ; or, necessity : perhaps he can follow the trade of sin no longer, the adulterer is grown old, the prodigal poor, either the purse fails or the strength. Thus a man may refrain the act of sin, yet retain the love of sin ; this is like the serpent, which casts her coat, but keeps her sting. O take heed of this ! herein be not like the serpent ; remember that saying of Hierom, 'it is worse to love sin than to commit it.' A man may commit sin through a temptation, or out of ignorance, and when he knows it to be a sin, he is sorry for it ; but he that loves sin, his will is in the sin, and that aggravates it, and is like the dye, which makes the wool of a crimson colour.

(8.) Serpents are chased away with sweet perfumes : the perfume of harts-horn, or the sweet odour of the styrax will drive the serpent away. In this be not like the serpent, to be driven away with the sweet perfumes of holiness. Carnal hearts are for things only which delight the senses ; they will discourse of news or traffic, here they are in their element ; but let a man bring with him the sweet perfume of religious discourse, let him talk of Christ, or living by faith, this spiritual perfume drives them away : Oh, be not in this like the serpent ! How do you think to live with the saints in heaven, that cannot endure their company here ? You hate the sweet savour of their ointments, the fragrant perfume of their graces.

(9.) The serpent, as is noted of the stellio, a kind of serpent, doth no sooner cast his skin, but he eats it up again : in this be not like the serpent to forsake sin, and then take it up again ; 'it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is returned to his own vomit again.'⁸ Such were Demas and Julian. Many, after a divorce, espouse their sins again ; as if one's ague should leave him a while, and then come again ; the devil seemed to be cast

¹ 1 Jno. 3. 15. ² Mat. 5. 4. ³ Ps. 149. 4. ⁴ Jud. 15.
⁵ Ps. 58. 4. ⁶ Ze. 7. 11. ⁷ Ze. 7. 13

⁸ 2 Pe. 2. 22.

out, but comes the second time : and the end of that man is worse than his beginning,¹ because his sin is greater; he sins knowingly and wilfully, and his damnation will be greater.

(10.) Serpents are great lovers of wine. Pliny, who writes the natural history, saith, 'if serpents come where wine is, they drink insatiably.' In this be not like the serpent; though the scripture allows the use of wine,² yet it forbids the excess; 'be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.'³ Be not like the serpent in this, 'lovers of wine.' Because this sin of drunkenness doth so abound in this age, I shall enlarge something more on this head. It is said of the old world, 'they did eat, they drank, till the flood came.'⁴ Drinking is not a sin, but the meaning is, they drank to intemperance, they disordered themselves with drink : and God let them have liquor enough, first they were drowned in wine, and then in water.

There is no sin which doth more deface God's image than drunkenness, it disguiseth a person, and doth even unman him; drunkenness makes him have the throat of a fish, the belly of a swine, and the head of an ass; drunkenness is the shame of nature, the extinguisher of reason, the shipwreck of chastity, and the murder of conscience; drunkenness is hurtful for the body, the cup kills more than the cannon; it causeth dropsies, catarrhs, apoplexies; drunkenness fills the eyes with fire, and the legs with water, and turns the body into an hospital; but the greatest hurt is that it doth to the soul; excess of wine breeds the worm of conscience. The drunkard is seldom reclaimed by repentance, and the ground of it is partly because, by this sin, the senses are so enchanted, reason so impaired, and lust so inflamed; and partly, it is judicial, the drunkard being so besotted with this sin, God saith of him as of Ephraim; 'Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone';⁵ so, this man is joined to his cups, 'let him alone,' let him drown himself in liquor till he scorch himself in fire. How many woes hath God pronounced against this sin; 'wo to the drunkards of Ephraim!'⁶ 'howl ye drinkers of wine!'⁷ Drunkenness excludes a person from heaven; 'drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God';⁸ a man cannot go to heaven reeling. King Solomon makes an oration full of invectives against this sin; 'who hath wo? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath redness of eyes? they that tarry long

at the wine. Who hath contentions?'⁹ Drink when abused, breeds quarrels, it causeth duels: 'who hath babbling?' When one is in drink, his tongue runs; he will reveal any secrets of his friend. 'Who hath redness of eyes?' Redness of eyes comes sometimes from weeping, but too often from drinking; and what is the issue? at last, the wine bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder.¹⁰ The wine smiles in the glass, but stings in the conscience. Drunkenness is a sin against all the ten commandments. Drunkenness casts off the true God, 'wine takes away the heart.'¹¹ it takes the heart off from God. It makes the belly a god;¹² to this the drunkard pours drink-offerings; there is a breach of the second commandment. The drunkard in his cups takes God's name in vain by his oaths. The drunkard makes no difference of day; he is seldom sober on a sabbath; he on that day worships Bacchus. The drunkard honours neither his natural father, nor the magistrate his civil father; he will be intemperate though the laws of the land forbid it. The drunkard commits murder. Alexander killed his friend Clytus when he was drunk, for whom he would have given half his kingdom when he was sober. The drunkard's wine proves lust. Austin calls wine the inflamer of lust. I never did believe a drunken man to be chaste, saith Hierom. The drunkard is a thief; he spends that money upon his drunken lust, which should have been given to charitable uses; so he robs the poor. The drunkard is a slanderer; he cares not, when he is on the ale-bench, how he doth defame and belie others: when he hath taken his full cups, he is now fit to take a false oath. The drunkard sins against the tenth commandment; for he covets to get another's estate, by circumvention and extortion, that he may be the better able to follow his drunken trade. Thus he sins against the ten commandments. If this sin of drunkenness be not reformed, I pray God, the sword be not drunk with blood. And whereas some will go to shift off this sin from themselves, that they are no drunkards, because they have not drunk away their reason and senses, they are not so far gone in drink that they cannot go; he is a drunkard in the scripture-sense who is 'mighty to drink wine.'¹³ He is a drunkard, saith Solomon, that tarrys long at the wine.¹⁴ He who sits at it from morning to night, that drinks away his precious time, though he doth

¹ Lu. 11. 26. ² 1 Ti. 5. 23. ³ Ep. 5. 18. ⁴ Lu. 17. 27.

⁵ Ho. 4. 17. ⁶ Is. 28. 1. ⁷ Joel 1. 5. ⁸ 1 Co. 6. 10.

⁹ Pr. 23. 29, 30.

¹⁰ Pr. 23. 32.

¹¹ Ho. 4. 11.

¹² Ph. 3. 19.

¹³ Is. 5. 22.

¹⁴ Pr. 23. 30.

not drink away his reason; he is a drunkard that drinks more than doth him good, and that, though he be not himself drunk, yet he makes another drunk; 'woe to him that gives his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and maketh him drunken!'¹ Oh, I beseech you, be not in this like the serpent, lovers of wine! This I fear is one cause why the word preached doth so little good to many in this city, they drink away sermons; they do as the hunted deer when it is wounded, runs to the water and drinks; so, when they have been at a sermon, and the arrows of reproof hath wounded their conscience, they run presently, and drink away those convictions; they steep the sermon in wine. The tavern-bell doth more hurt than the sermon-bell doth good. Thus you have seen wherein we should not be like serpents.

2d. Wherein we should be like the serpent, and that is in prudence and wisdom: 'be ye wise as serpents.' The serpent is a most prudent creature, therefore the devil made use of the serpent to deceive our first parents, because it was such a subtle creature; 'the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field.'² There is a natural wisdom and subtilty in every part of the serpent, and we should labour to imitate them, and be 'wise as serpents.'

(1.) The serpent hath a subtilty in his eye, he hath a singular sharpness of sight; therefore among the Greeks, a serpent's eye was a proverbial speech for one of a quick understanding; in this we should be like the serpent. Get the serpent's eye, have a quick insight into the mysteries of the Christian religion. Knowledge is the beauty and ornament of a Christian; 'the prudent are crowned with knowledge.'³ Get the serpent's eye, be divinely illuminated. Faith without knowledge is presumption; zeal without knowledge is passion.⁴ Without knowledge, the heart is not good; for one to say he hath a good heart, who hath no knowledge, is as if one should say he hath a good eye, when he hath no sight. In this be like the serpent, of a quick understanding.

(2.) The serpent hath a prudence and subtilty in his ear; the serpent will not be deluded with the voice of the charmer, but stops its ear; in this we must be 'wise as serpents;' stop our ears to false teachers who are the devil's charmers. We must stop our ears to Arminian teachers, who place the chief power in the will, as if that were the helm that turns about

the soul in conversion; 'who maketh thee to differ from another?'⁵ Said Grevinchovius, I have made myself to differ. Be as the serpent, stop your ears to such doctrine. We must stop our ears to Socinian teachers, who raze the foundation of all religion, and deny Christ's divinity. This the apostle calls 'a damnable heresy.'⁶ We must stop our ears to Popish teachers, who teach merit, indulgencies, transubstantiation; who teach that the pope is the head of the church. Christ is called 'the head of the church:'⁷ for the pope to be head, is, to make the church monstrous, to have two heads. Popish teachers teach the people nonsense and blasphemy; they cause the people to pray without understanding, to obey without reason, to believe without sense; it is a damnable religion; therefore worshipping the beast, and drinking the cup of God's indignation are put together.⁸ Oh, in this be 'wise as serpents;' stop your ears to the charming of false teachers! God hath given his people this wisdom, to stop their ears to heretics; 'a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him.'⁹

(3.) The serpent hath a chief care to defend his head, a blow there is deadly: so in this we should 'be wise as serpents;' our chief care should be to defend our head from error. The plague in the head is worst. Loose principles breed loose practices. If the head be tainted with erroneous opinions; that believers are free from the moral law, that there is no resurrection, that we may do evil that good may come of it; what sin will not this lead to? Oh keep your head! Error is a spiritual gangrene,¹⁰ which spreads, and, if not presently cured, is mortal. Heresies destroy the doctrine of faith, they rend the mantle of the church's peace, and eat out the heart of religion. The Gnostics, as Epiphanius observes, did not only pervert the judgment of their proselytes, but brought them at last to corporeal uncleanness: error damns as well as vice. Vice is like killing with a pistol, and error killing with poison. Oh, be wise as serpents; defend your head! 'be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' Our Saviour Christ here commends to us the wisdom of the serpent, and the innocency of the dove. The elect are called wise virgins;¹¹ virgins, there is the dove; wise, there is the serpent. We must have innocency with our wisdom, else our wisdom is but craftiness; and we must have wisdom with our innocency, else

¹ Hab. 2. 15. ² Ge. 3. 1. ³ Pr. 14. 13. ⁴ Pr. 19. 2.

⁵ 1 Cor. 4. 7. ⁶ 2 Pe. 2. 1. ⁷ Ep. 5. 23. ⁸ Re. 14. 9.

⁹ Jno. 10. 5. ¹⁰ 2 Ti. 2. 17. ¹¹ Mat. 25. 4.

our innocency is but weakness. We must have the innocency of the dove, that we may not circumvent others; and we must have the wisdom of the serpent, that others may not circumvent us.

This union of the dove and serpent is hard to find, but it is possible; Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,¹ there was the prudence of the serpent; and he was 'meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth,'² there was the innocency of the dove. But the most famous instance of wisdom and innocency was in our Saviour: when the Jews came to him with an ensnaring question, 'is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?'³ Christ answers wisely, 'render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's;' deny not Cæsar his civil right, nor God his religious worship; let your loyalty be mixed with piety; here he shewed the wisdom of the serpent. And would you see Christ's innocency? 'There was no guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;⁴ he opened his mouth in praying for his enemies, but not in reviling them; behold here the innocency of the dove.

II. The second thing I am to speak of is the dove: 'be harmless as doves.' The dove is an excellent creature; it was so acceptable, that in the old law, God would have the dove offered in sacrifice. The Holy Ghost, when he would appear in a visible shape, assumed the likeness of a dove.⁵ We should be as doves in three respects: 1. In respect of meekness; 2. In respect of innocency; 3. In respect of purity.

1. In respect of meekness. The dove is the emblem of meekness. It is without gall; we should be as doves for meekness; we must avoid unruly passion, which is a short frenzy; we must be without the gall of bitterness and revenge; we must be of mild spirits, praying for our enemies: so Stephen, 'Lord, lay not this to their charge.'⁶ This dove-like meekness is the best jewel and ornament we can wear; 'the ornament of a meek spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.'⁷ Passion doth disguise, meekness adorns.

2. We should be as doves for innocency. The innocency of the dove is seen in two things: 1. Not to deceive; 2. Not to hurt. (1.) Not to deceive. The dove is, as without gall, so without guile; it doth not deceive or lie at the

catch; thus we should be as the dove, without fraud and craft. There is a holy simplicity commendable; 'I would have you simple concerning evil;⁸ to be a bungler at sin, not to have the art to beguile, this is a good simplicity; as Nathaniel, in whose spirit there is no guile.⁹ Where almost is this dove-like innocence to be found? We live in an age wherein there are more foxes than doves; persons are full of guile, they study nothing but fallacies, so that one knows not how to deal with them; 'with a double heart do they speak.'¹⁰ (2.) Not to hurt. The dove hath no horns or talons to hurt, only wings to defend itself by flight; other creatures are commonly well-armed; the lion hath its paw, the boar its tusk, the stag its horns, but the dove is a most harmless creature, it hath nothing wherewith to offend: thus we should be as doves for harmlessness, we should not do wrong to others, but rather suffer wrong. Such a dove was Samuel; 'whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?'¹¹ He did not get men's estates into his hands, or raise himself upon the ruins of others. How rare is it to find such doves! Sure they are flown away! How many birds of prey are there! 'They all lie in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with a net;¹² these are not doves, but vultures; they travail with mischief, and are in pain till they bring forth.

3. We should be as doves for purity. The dove is the emblem of purity; it loves the purest air, it feeds on pure grain; the raven feeds on the carcass, but the dove feeds pure. Thus let us be as doves for sanctity, cleansing ourselves from all pollution both of flesh and spirit.¹³ Christ's dove is pure; 'my dove, my undefiled.'¹⁴ Let us keep pure among dregs; 'keep thyself pure.'¹⁵ Better have a rent in the flesh, than a hell in the conscience; the dove is a chaste pure creature; let us be doves for purity.

USE 1. See here the nature of a good Christian; he is wise and innocent; he hath so much of the serpent, that he doth not forfeit his discretion, and so much of the dove, that he doth not defile his conscience. A godly man is looked upon by a carnal eye as weak and indiscreet, as having something of the dove but nothing of the serpent; to believe things not seen, to choose sufferings rather than sin, this is counted folly: but the world is mistaken

⁸ Ro. 16. 19. ⁹ Jno. 1. 47. ¹⁰ Ps. 12. 2.

¹¹ 1 Sa. 12. 3. ¹² Mi. 12. 2. ¹³ 2 Cor. 7. 1.

¹⁴ Cant. 5. 2. ¹⁵ 1 Ti. 5. 22.

¹ Ac. 7. 22. ² Nu. 12. 3. ³ Mar. 12. 14. ⁴ 1 Pe. 2. 22.

⁵ Mal. 3. 16. ⁶ Ac. 7. 60. ⁷ 1 Pe. 3. 4.

in a believer; he hath his eyes in his head, he knows what he doth: he is prudent, as well as holy; he is wise that finds the pearl of price, he is wise that provides for eternity, he is the wisest man that hath wit to save his soul, he is wise that makes him his friend who shall be his judge. The godly man acts both the politician and the divine; he retains his ingenuity, yet he doth not part with his integrity.

USE 2. Reproof. It reproves them who have too much of the serpent, but nothing of the dove; 'wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge;' these are like the devil, who retains his subtilty, but not his innocency. We have many in this age like the serpent for craftiness; 'through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper.'² Men have the head-piece of subtilty, but want the breast-plate of honesty; they are wise to contrive sin, to forge plots, to study compliance, rather than conscience; the port they aim at, is preferment; the compass they sail by is policy; the pilot that steers them, is Satan. These have the craftiness of the serpent; 'they are wise to do evil.' They are like the serpent for mischief. You know the fiery serpents did sting Israel: these have the sting of the serpent, they have a sting in their tongues, stinging the people of God with bitter slanders and invectives, calling them factious and seditious, and they sting with their indictments and excommunications.³ Such stinging serpents were Nero, Dioclesian, and Julian; and their spirit is yet alive in the world. These have too much of the serpent in them, but nothing of the dove; 'their damnation slumbereth not.'

USE 3. Exhortation. To put in practice our Saviour's counsel in the text, join the serpent and the dove together, wisdom and holiness: here lies the knot; this is the great difficulty, to unite these two together, the serpent and the dove, prudence and innocency; if you separate these two, you spoil all. Wherein doth a Christian join these two together, the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness? This I shall answer in twelve particulars.

1. To be wise and innocent consists in this, to be sensible of an injury yet not revenge it. A Christian is not a stoic, nor yet a fury: he is so wise, that he knows when an injury is done him; but so holy, that he knows how to pass it by; this is a most excellent temper of soul, I had almost said, angelical. As the wind doth

allay the heat of the air, so grace doth allay the heat of revenge. Moses herein shewed a mixture of the serpent and the dove: Miriam murmured against him, 'hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses?' is he the only prophet to declare God's mind to us? Moses was so wise as to discern her pride and slighting of him; yet so meek as to bury the injury. When God struck her with leprosy, he prays for her, 'heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.' And upon his prayer, she was cured of her leprosy. A good Christian hath so much wisdom as to discern his enemy's malice, but so much grace as to conquer his own; he knows it is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression.⁴ Though a Christian hath so much prudence as to vindicate himself, yet so much goodness as not to avenge himself. Behold here the serpent and the dove united, sagacity and innocency.

2. The mixing wisdom and innocency is seen in this, to be humble, but not base. Humility is part of the dove's innocency; 'be ye clothed with humility.'⁵ Paul, though the chief of the apostles, calls himself the least of saints. A gracious soul hath low thoughts of himself, and carries himself lowly toward others; but, though he be humble, he is not base: though he will not saucily resist his superiors, he will not sinfully humour them; though he will not do such proud actions as to make his enemies hate him, yet he will not do such sordid actions as to make them despise him; here is the serpent and the dove united. A good Christian is so humble as to oblige others, but not so unworthy as to di-obey God. Paul, as far as he could with a good conscience, did 'become all things to all, that he might save some;' but he would not break a commandment to gratify any. When God's glory lay at stake, who more resolute than Paul?⁶ The three children were humble, they gave the king his title of honour, but they were not sordidly timorous; 'be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods.' Though they shewed reverence to the king's person, yet no reverence to the image he had set up. A good Christian will not do any thing below himself; though he is for obeying of laws, yet he will not prostitute himself to men's lusts. He is humble, there he shews the innocency of the dove; but not base, there he shews the wisdom of the serpent.

3. The prudence of the serpent and inno-

¹ Jer. 4. 22.

Da. 8. 25.

² Gal. 4. 29.⁴ Pr. 19. 11.⁵ 1 Pe. 5. 5.⁶ Gal. 2. 5.

gency of the dove is seen in this, to reprove the sin, yet love the person. We are commanded to reprove; 'thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him.' Not to reprove sin is to approve it; but this sword of reproof is a dangerous weapon, if it be not well-handled; to reprove and yet love is to act both the serpent and the dove. How may a Christian so reprove sin, as to show love to the person? (1.) In taking a fit season to reprove another; that is, when his anger is over. As, when God did rebuke Adam, he came to him 'in the cool of the day,' so, when we are to reprove any, we are to come to them when their spirits are more cool, and fit to receive a reproof. To reprove a man when he is in a passion, is to give strong water in a fever; it doth more hurt than good. By observing a fit season, we show both prudence and holiness, we discover as well discretion as affection. (2.) Reproving sin so as to show love to the person is seen in this, when, though we tell him plainly of his sin, yet it is in mild, not provoking words; 'in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.' Peter tells the Jews plainly of their sin in crucifying Christ, but useth suaves and gospel-lenitives, to allure and encourage them to believe; 'him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified;' 'repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin: for the promise is to you, and to your children.' Reproof is a bitter pill, and hard to swallow, therefore we must dip it in sugar; use those sweet mollifying expressions, that others may see love coming along with the reproof. David compares reproof to oil:¹ oil supple the joints when they are hard and stiff; our reproofs being mixed with the oil of compassion, they work most kindly, and do most soften stiff obdurate hearts. (3.) Reproving sin, yet love to the person, is when the end of our reproof is not to revile him but to reclaim him. While we go to heal men's consciences, we must take heed of wounding their names. The chirurgeon, in opening a vein, shows both skill and love; skill in not cutting an artery, and love in letting out the bad blood; here is the mixing the serpent and the dove; the wisdom of the serpent is seen in not reproaching the sinner; the innocency of the dove is seen in reclaiming him from sin.

4. Prudence and holiness is seen in this, to 'know what we should do, and do what we

know.' To know what we should do, there is the wisdom of the serpent; to do what we know, there is the innocency of the dove. Knowledge is a jewel which adorns him that wears it; it is the enriching and bespangling of the mind; knowledge is the eye of the soul, to guide it in the right way; but this knowledge must be joined with holy practice; to separate practice from knowledge, is to separate the dove from the serpent. Many illuminated heads can discourse fluently in matters of religion, but they do not live up to their knowledge; this is to have good eyes, but to have the feet cut off; they know they should not break the sabbath, they should not defame nor defraud: but they do not practise what they know; here they separate the dove from the serpent, virtue from knowledge. How vain is knowledge without practice! as if one should know a sovereign medicine and not apply it. Satan is a knowing spirit, he hath enough of the serpent; but that which makes him a devil is, he wants the dove, he doth not practice holiness.

5. To mix the serpent and dove, is to keep two trades going. To understand worldly affairs, there is the wisdom of the serpent; yet not neglect the soul, there is the innocency of the dove. God hath said, 'six days shalt thou labour;' religion did never grant a patent to idleness; there is a lawful care to be had about secular things; to have insight into one's calling is a commendable wisdom, but with this wisdom join the dove's innocency; so follow your calling, as not to neglect your soul. The soul is a precious thing, it would beggar the angels to give half the price of a soul. Our greatest care should be to get grace. While you put gold in your bag, do not forget to put oil in your vessel. Trade beyond the East Indies; drive a trade of holiness: 'this merchandise is better than the merchandise of silver.' Live in a calling, but especially live by faith; look to the providing for your families, but especially to the saving of your souls. The soul is the angelical part, the loss of this can never be made up again. God, saith Chrysostom, hath given a man two eyes, if he lose one he hath another; but he hath but one soul, if he lose that, it is irrecoverable, it can never be made up again. Oh unite the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness! Use the world, but love your soul; trade on earth, but beware of breaking in your trade for heaven. How many part these two, the serpent and the dove? They are wise for the world, but fools for their

¹ Le. 19. 17. ² Ti. 2. 25. ³ Ac. 2. 23. ⁴ Ps. 91. 5.

souls. It is too often seen, that men pull down their souls to build up an estate.

6. To join the serpent and the dove, prudence and innocency, consists in this, to know how to give counsel, and how to keep counsel. He hath the wisdom of the serpent that can give counsel; he knows how to advise another in difficult cases, and speak a word in due season; 'the counsel of Abithophel was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God.' But this is not enough to have the wisdom of the serpent, in being able to give counsel; but there must be the innocency of the dove too, in keeping counsel. If a friend's secret be imparted to us unless in case of blood we are not to reveal it. A friend is as one's own soul; and what he imparts of his heart should be kept under lock and key; 'discover not a secret to another, lest he that hear thee put thee to shame,'¹ &c. To disclose a friend's secret, though it be not treason, it is treachery, it is most unchristian; a word may be spoken in secret, which, when it is trumpeted out, may occasion quarrels or law-suits. He that cannot keep a matter committed to him, is like a vessel that runs out, or a sick stomach that cannot keep the meat, but brings it up again. He that publisheth his friend's secret, doth publish his own shame.

7. To mix these two, prudence and holiness, is to know the seasons of grace, and improve them; to know the seasons of grace, there is the wisdom of the serpent. It is wisdom in the husbandman to know the fit time for pruning of trees, sowing of seed: so it is no less wisdom to know the golden seasons of grace; while we hear the joyful sound, while we have praying hours, while the Spirit of God blows on our hearts; here is a gale for heaven. The day of grace will not always last; the shadows of the evening seem to be stretched out; things look as if the gospel tented apace to a sun-setting; be wise as serpents, to know what a prize is put in your hands. And with the serpent join the dove, that is, in improving the seasons of grace. The stork and turtle not only know their season, but improve it; they approach to the warmer climate against the spring, saith Pliny: here is the serpent and dove united, knowing and improving the day of grace; when we profit by ordinances, when we mix the word with faith, when an ordinance hath stamped holiness upon us, as the seal leaves its print upon the wax; this is to improve the seasons of grace.

8. The serpent and the dove, wisdom and innocency, is to be moderate yet zealous. Moderation is good in some cases; 'let your moderation be known to all.'² Moderation is good in case of anger. When the passions are up, moderation sits as queen and governess in the soul; it allays the heat of passion. Moderation is the bridle of anger. Moderation is good in case of law-suits; so the Greek word for moderation is properly taken. If there be a dispute in law between us and others, we are not to take the extremity of the law, but use Christian equity and mildness; nay, for peace's sake, rather part with some of our right than oppress them: this much honours the gospel. Moderation is good in things indifferent. Things ought not to be rigorously imposed on God's worship which are not of divine injunction; God never made governors of the church to be like pilots of a ship, to steer men's consciences which way they please. Moderation and Christian forbearance, in things indifferent, would much tend to the peace and unity of the church. All this moderation is commendable, and shows the wisdom of the serpent: but remember to join the dove with the serpent,—we must so exercise moderation as withal to cherish zeal. Paul in some things was moderate, he did not press circumcision; he was tender of laying a yoke upon the consciences of the disciples; but he had zeal with his moderation; when he saw their idolatry at Athens, the fire of his zeal broke forth, 'his spirit was stirred in him.'³ It was good advice Calvin gave to Melancthon, that he should not so affect the name of moderate, as to lose all his zeal. To be cool and silent when God's blessed truths are undermined or adulterated, is not moderation, but lukewarmness, which is to God a most hateful temper; 'I would thou wert cold or hot';⁴ and any thing but luke-warm. This is to show prudence and holiness, when we are moderate, yet zealous.

9. To unite serpent and dove, consists in this, when we defend the truth by argument and adorn it by life; defending the truth is the serpent's wisdom; an intelligent Christian can convince gainsayers. This wisdom of the serpent was eminently in Stephen; 'there arose certain of the synagogue, disputing with Stephen, and they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.' We read in the acts and monuments of the church, John Fryth, martyr,

¹ Pr. 25. 9, 10.

² Ph. 4. 5.

³ Ac. 17. 16.

⁴ Re. 3. 15.

being opposed by three papists, he, like another Hercules, fighting with all the three at once, did by his wisdom so convince them, that one of them turned from popery and became a zealous protestant. Herein is the wisdom of the serpent, not only to love them that profess the truth, but silence them that oppose it. But with this wisdom of the serpent, there must be joined the innocency of the dove; together with defending the truth by argument, there must be adorning it by life; 'that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.'¹ There are some who can dispute for the truth, but disgrace it by their bad living; this is to act both the serpent and the dove, when we not only plead for the truth, but walk in the truth, like Nazianzen, of whom it was said, he did thunder in his doctrine, and lighten in his conversation.

10. The uniting the serpent and the dove, is to be serious in religion, yet cheerful. Seriousness puts the heart in an holy frame; it fixeth it on God; seriousness is to the soul, as ballast to the ship, it keeps the soul from being overturned with vanity; the heart is ever best when it is serious. But this seriousness in religion must be mixed with cheerfulness; cheerfulness conduceth to health.² It honours religion, it proclaims to the world we serve a good master; cheerfulness is a friend to grace, it puts the heart in tune to praise God.³ Uncheerful Christians, like the spies, bring an evil report on the good land: others suspect there is something unpleasant in religion, that they who profess it hang their harps upon the willows, and walk so dejectedly. Be serious, yet cheerful; 'rejoice in the Lord alway.'⁴ Why was Christ anointed, but to give the oil of joy for mourning?⁵ Joy is as well a fruit of the Spirit as faith.⁶ One way of grieving the Spirit, saith Heinsius, is by Christians' uncheerful walking; if you would render the gospel lovely, mix the dove and the serpent; be serious, yet cheerful in God.

11. The uniting of the serpent and the dove, wisdom and holiness, consists in this, when we so lay up as we lay out. It is a duty to provide for our charge; 'if any man provide not for his own, he is worse than an infidel.'⁷ To lay up for our family; here is the wisdom of the serpent: but we must lay out for the poor too;

here is the mixture of the dove: 'charge them that are rich in the world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works.'⁸ The poor man is as it were an altar, if we bring our alms and lay upon it, with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Faith, though it hath sometimes a trembling hand, it must not have a withered hand, but must stretch forth itself to works of mercy; there is nothing lost by charitableness; 'the liberal soul shall be made fat:'⁹ 'blessed is he that considereth the poor, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.'¹⁰ While men do so remember their family, that they do not forget the poor, they show both prudence and piety: they unite the serpent and the dove.

12. The serpent's wisdom and the dove's innocency is seen in this; so to avoid danger, as not to commit sin, to preserve our liberty, yet keep our integrity. There is a sinful escaping danger, namely, when we are called to suffer for the truth, and we decline it; but there is an escaping danger without sin; as thus, when we do not betray ourselves into the enemies' hands by rashness, nor yet betray the truth by cowardice. We have a pattern of this in our Saviour; he avoided his enemies in one place, that he might preach the gospel in another; 'they led him unto the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down headlong; but he passing through the midst of them, went his way;'¹¹ there was Christ's wisdom in not betraying himself to his enemy; 'I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also;' there was his holiness. Christ's securing of himself was in order to the preaching of the gospel. This is to mix prudence and innocency, when we so avoid danger as we do not commit sin.

Thus I have, as briefly and as clearly as I could, shown you how we must unite these two, the serpent and the dove, prudence and holiness. For want of coupling these two together religion doth much suffer in the Christian world: 'what Christ hath joined together, let no man put asunder.' Observe these two, prudence and holiness; here is the serpent's eye in the dove's head. When these two, wisdom and innocency, like Castor and Pollux, appear together, they presage much good and happiness that will befall a Christian.

¹ Ti. 2. 10. ² Pr. 17. 22. ³ Ps. 71. 21. ⁴ Ph. 4. 4.
⁵ Is. 16. 1. ⁶ Gal. 5. 22. ⁷ 1 Ti. 5. 8.

⁸ 1 Ti. 6. 17, 18. ⁹ Pr. 11. 25. ¹⁰ Ps. 61. 1. ¹¹ Lu. 4. 29, 30.

SERMON II.

1 Cor. v. 17. *Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*

In this scripture consists the essence and soul of religion. I note here two things. 1st, That the true definition of a Christian is to be in Christ: 'if any man be in Christ.' He may be in the Church visible, yet not in Christ; it is not to be baptized into Christ's name, makes a true Christian: but to be in Christ, that is to be grafted into him by faith. And if to be in Christ makes a Christian, then there are but few Christians. Many are in Christ nominally not really; they are in Christ by profession, not by mystical union. Are they in Christ that do not know him? Are they in Christ who persecute them that are in Christ? Sure such an holy head as Christ will disclaim such spurious members. 2d, That whosoever is in Christ is a new creature. For illustration, I shall show, 1. What a new creature is; 2. What kind of work it is.

I. What a new creature is. It is a second birth added to the first.¹ It may be thus described: it is a supernatural work of God's Spirit, renewing and transforming the heart into the divine likeness. 1. The efficient cause of the new creature is the Holy Ghost; no angel or archangel is able to produce it: who but God can alter the hearts of men, and turn stones into flesh? If the new creature was not produced by the Holy Ghost, then the greatest glory in a man's conversion would belong to himself; but this glory God will not give to another. The turning of the will to God is from God; 'after I was turned, I repented.'² 2. The organical cause or instrument by which the new creature is formed, is the word of God; 'of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.'³ The word is the seed out of which springs the flower of the new creature. 3. The matter of which the new creature consists is, the restoring God's image lost by the fall. But doth God in the new creature, give a new soul? No: he doth not bestow new faculties, but new qualities. As in the altering of a lute, the strings are not new, but the tune is mended: so, in the new creature, the substance of the soul

is not new, but is new tuned by grace; the heart that before was proud, is now humble; the eyes, that before were full of lust, are now full of tears. Here are new qualities infused.

II. What kind of work the new creature is.

1. The new creature is a work of divine power; so much it imports, because it is a creation. The same power which raised Christ from the grave, goes to the production of the new creature.⁴ It is a work of greater power to produce the new creature, than to make a world. It is true, in respect to God, all things are alike possible to him; but as to our apprehension, it requires a greater power to make a new creature, than to make a world, for (1.) When God made the world he met with no opposition; but when God is about to make a new creature he meets with opposition; Satan opposeth him, and the heart opposeth him. (2.) It cost God nothing to make the world, but to make the new creature costs him something; Christ himself was fain to become man. In making the world, it was but speaking a word; but in making of the new creature, it cost Christ the shedding of his blood. (3.) God made the world in six days, but he is carrying on the new creature in us all our lives long. The new creature is but begun here, it is not perfected or drawn in all its orient colours till it come to heaven. 2. The new creature is a work of free-grace. There is nothing in us to move God to make us anew: by nature we are full of pollution and enmity, yet now God forms the new creature. Behold the banner of love displayed! The new creature may say, 'by the grace of God I am, what I am.' In the creation we may see the strength of God's arm: in the new creature we may see the working of God's bowels. That God should consecrate any heart, and anoint it with grace, is an act of pure love; that he should pluck one out of the state of nature, and not another, must be resolved into free-grace; 'even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'⁵ This will increase the saints' triumphs in heaven, that the

¹ Jno. 3. 3.² Je. 31. 19.³ Ja. 1. 18⁴ Ep. 1. 20.⁵ Mat. 11. 26.

lot of free-grace should fall upon them, and not on others. 3. The new creature is a work of rare excellency. A natural man is a lump of earth and sin, God loathes him; but upon the new creature is a spiritual glory, as if we should see a piece of clay turned into a sparkling diamond; 'who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense?' That is the natural man coming out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the Spirit. The new creature must needs be glorious, for it partakes of the divine nature.¹ A soul beautified with holiness, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars; it is God's lesser heaven. In the incarnation, God made himself in the image of man; in the new creation, man is made in the image of God: by our being creatures, we are the sons of Adam; by being new creatures, we are the members of Christ: reason makes one live the life of a man; the new creature makes him live the life of God; a new creature excels the rational nature, and equals the angelical. It is excellent to hear of Christ's being crucified for us, but more excellent to have Christ formed in us.

Concerning the new creature, I shall lay down two positions. 1st Position. That it is not in the power of a natural man to convert himself: because it is a new creation. As we cannot make ourselves creatures, so not new creatures. But why doth God command us to convert ourselves, if we have no power? 'Make you a new heart.'² (1.) We once had power. God gave us a stock of holiness, but we lost it. If a master give his servant money to employ in his service, and he waste and embezzle it, may not the master require his money of him? Though we have lost our power to obey, God hath not lost his right to command. (2.) Though men cannot convert themselves, and make themselves new creatures, yet they may do more than they do in a tendency to it; they may avoid temptations, they may read the word; the same feet that carry them to a play, will carry them to a sermon; they may implore divine grace. But they do not what they are able; they do not improve the power of nature to the utmost, and put God to the trial whether he will give grace. (3.) God is not wanting to them who seek to him for grace. He is willing to put to his helping hand. With his command there goes a promise; 'make you a

new heart;³ and there is a promise, 'a new heart also will I give you.'⁴

2d Position. When God converts a sinner, he doth more than use a moral persuasion, for conversion is a new creation.⁵ The Pelagians talk much of free-will; they say, 'the will of man is by nature asleep, and conversion is nothing but the awakening a sinner out of sleep, which is done by moral persuasion.' But man is by nature dead in sin,⁶ and God must do more than awaken him; he must enliven him before he be a new creature.

1st USE. Terror to such as are not new creatures. Such as are still growing upon the stock of old Adam, who continue in their sins, and are resolved so to do, these are in the gall of bitterness, and are the most miserable creatures that ever God made, except the devils. These stand in the place where all God's arrows fly; these are the centre where all God's curses meet. An unregenerate person is like one in debt that is in fear to be arrested; he is every hour in fear to be arrested by death, and carried prisoner to hell. Can that traitor be happy, who is fed by his prince in prison, only to be kept alive for execution? God feeds the wicked as prisoners, they are reserved for the day of wrath.⁷ How should this fright men out of their natural condition, and make them restless till they are new creatures.

2d USE. Trial. Whether we are new creatures: our salvation depends upon it.

1. I shall show you the counterfeit of the new creature, or that which seems to be the new creature, and is not. 1. Natural honesty, moral virtue, prudence, justice, liberality, temperance; these make a glorious show in the eye of the world, but differ as much from the new creature as a meteor from a star. Morality indeed is commendable, and it were well if there were more of it; this our Saviour loves; 'then Jesus beholding him, loved him.'⁸ It was a love of compassion, not election. Morality is but nature at best, it doth not amount to grace. There is nothing of Christ in morality; and that fruit is sour which grows not on the root Christ. Moral actions are done out of a vain-glorious humour, not any respect to God's glory. The apostle calls the heathen magistrates unjust:⁹ while they were doing justice in their civil courts, they were unjust; their virtues became vices, because faith was wanting, and they did all to raise them trophies for their

¹ 2 Pe. 1. 4.² Ez. 18. 31.³ Ez. 18. 31. ⁴ Ez. 36. 26. ⁵ Eph. 4. 24. ⁶ Eph. 2. 1.⁷ 2 Pe. 2. 9.⁸ Mar. 10. 21.⁹ 1 Cor. 6. 1.

own praise and fame. So that morality is but the wild olive of nature, it doth not amount to grace. Heat water to the highest degree, you cannot make wine of it, it is water still: so let morality be raised to the highest, it is nature still; it is but old Adam put in a better dress. I may say to a civil man, 'yet lackest thou one thing.'¹ Moral virtue may stand with the hatred of godliness. A moral man doth as much hate holiness, as he doth vice. The Stoics were moralists, and had sublime notions about virtue, yet were the deadliest enemies Paul had.² So that this is a counterfeit jewel.

2. Religious education is not the new creature. Education doth much cultivate and refine nature; education is a good wall to plant the vine of grace against, but it is not grace. King Jehoshaphat was good as long as his uncle Jehoiada lived; but when Jehoiada died, all Jehoshaphat's religion was buried in his uncle's grave. Have not we seen many who have been trained up religiously under their parents, and were very hopeful, yet these fair blossoms of hope have been blown off, and they have lived to be a shame to their friends? 3. A form of godliness is not the new creature. Every bird that hath fine feathers, hath not sweet flesh; all that shine with the golden feathers of profession, are not saints, 'having a form of godliness, but denying the power.'³ What is a lifeless form? Formality is the ape of piety; formalists may perform all the external parts of religion, pray, fast, give alms. Whatever duties a believer doth in sincerity, the same may a formalist do in hypocrisy. How devout were the Pharisees! how humble was Ahab! what a reformer was Jehu! yet this was but a formal show of religion. Dædalus, by art, made images to move of themselves, insomuch that people thought they were living: formalists do so counterfeit, and play a devotion, that others think they are living saints; they are religious mountebanks. 4. Every change of opinion doth not amount to the new creature; man may change from error to truth, yet be no new creature; here is a change in the head, but not in the heart; one may be orthodox in his judgment, yet not cordially embrace the gospel; he may be no papist, yet no true believer. He who is changed only in opinion, is but almost a Christian, and shall be but almost saved. 5. Every sudden passion, or stirring of the affections, is not the new creature. There may be affections of sorrow;

some, upon the reading the history of Christ's passion, may be ready to weep, but it is only a natural tenderness, which relents at any tragical sight. Affections of desire may be stirred; 'lord, evermore give us this bread:'⁴ but these basely deserted Christ, and would walk no more with him. Many desire heaven but will not come up to the price. Affections of joy may be stirred. In the parable, the second sort of hearers are said to 'receive the word with joy.'⁵ What was this but to have the affections moved with delight in hearing! Yet, that this did not amount to the new creature, is plain, 1st, because those hearers are said to have no root. 2d, because they fell away. King Herod did hear John the Baptist gladly; he was much affected with John's preaching; where then was the defect? why was not Herod a new creature? The reason was, because Herod was not reformed by the Baptist preaching; his affections were moved, but his sin was not removed. Many have sweet motions of heart, and seem to be much affected with the word, but their love to sin is stronger than their love to the word; therefore all their good affections prove abortive, and come to nothing. 6. One may have trouble for sin, yet not be a new creature. Trouble of spirit may appear, while God's judgments lie upon men; when these are removed, their trouble ceaseth: 'when he slew them, then they sought him; nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouths.'⁶ Metal that melts in a furnace, take it out of the furnace, and it returns to its former hardness: many in time of sickness seem to be like melted metal. What weeping and wringing of hands! what confessions of sin will they make? do not these look like new creatures? But as soon as they recover, they are as oad as ever; their pangs go off again, and it never comes to a new birth. 7. A man may have the Spirit, yet not be a new creature. The apostle supposeth a case, that one might be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, yet fall away.⁷ A man may have some slight transient work of the Spirit, but it doth not go to the root; he may have the common gifts of the Spirit but not the special grace; he may have the Spirit to convince him, not to convert him; the light he hath is like a winter-sun, which hath little or no influence, it doth not make him more holy; he hath the motions of the Spirit, but walks after the flesh. 8. Every abstaining from sin

¹ Mar. 10. 21. ² Ac. 17. 18. ³ 2 Ti. 3. 5.

⁴ Luc. 6. 34. ⁵ Mat. 13. 20. ⁶ Ps. 78. 34, 36. ⁷ He. 6. 4.

is not the new creature. This abstaining may be, from restraining grace, not renewing grace: as God withheld Laban from hurting Jacob. The Lord may restrain men from sin, by the terror of a natural conscience. Conscience stands as the angel with a drawn sword, and saith, 'do not this evil.' Men may be frightened from sin, but not divorced. Men may abstain from sin for a while, and then return to it again; as Saul left off pursuing David for some time, and then hunted him again. This is like a man that holds his breath under water, and then takes breath again; 'ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight: but ye turned and polluted my holy name.'¹ Men may leave gross sin, and yet live in more spiritual sins: leave drunkenness and live in pride; leave uncleanness, and live in malice. The Pharisee boasted he was no adulterer, but he could not say he was not proud or superstitious; here he left gross sin, and lived in spiritual sins. Men may leave sin partially, abstain from some sins, not all; they feed some sin in a corner. Herod left many sins, but one sin he lived in, namely, incest. All this doth not amount to the new creature.

II. I shall show you wherein the essence of the new creature consists.

1st, In general. To the constituting of the new creature there must be a great change wrought. He who is a new creature is not the same man he was. He is of another spirit; 'my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit.'² When the harlot, Lais, came to one of her old acquaintance after he was converted, and tempted him to sin, saith he, 'I am not the same man.' When one becomes a new creature, there is such a visible change that all may see it; therefore it is called a change 'from darkness to light.'³ Paul, a persecutor, when converted, was so altered that all who saw him, wondered at him, and could scarce believe that he was the same; as if another soul had lived in the same body. Mary Magdalene, an unchaste sinner, when once savingly wrought upon, what a penitent creature did she become! Her eyes, that were enticements to lust, she takes penance of them, and washed Christ's feet with her tears; her hair, which she was so proud of, and which was a net to entangle her lovers, she now takes penance of it, and wipes Christ's feet with it. Thus the new creature makes a visible change. Such as are the same as they were, as vain and proud as ever, here is no new

creature to be seen: for then a mighty change, would appear; 'and such were some of you but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified,'⁴ &c. But every change doth not evidence the new creature. There is a change from one extreme to another, from a prodigal to an usurer, from a Turk to a Papist. This is as if one should recover of one disease, and die of another. There is an outward change, which is like the washing of a swine. Ahab was much changed to outward view, when he 'rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth,' insomuch that God stands and wonders at him: 'seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself?' Yet for all this he was but an hypocrite. What change then is that which is requisite in the new creature? It is an inward change, a change of heart. Though the heart be not new-made, it is new moulded; 'wash thy heart, O Jerusalem.'⁵ Ahab's clothes were rent, but not his heart. The outward change will do no good without the inward; what will become of them then, who have not so much as an outward change? Thus you see in general, that, in the production of the new creature there must be a change.

2dly, More particularly. The change in the new creature consists in two things, and they are both set down in the text: 'old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.'

1. 'Old things are passed away.' Old pride, old ignorance, old malice; the old house must be pulled down ere you can set up a new. But if all old things must pass away, then there are no new creatures. Who can be quite freed from sin? Doth not Paul complain of a body of death? We must know that the change wrought in the new creature, though it be a thorough change, yet it is not a perfect change; sin will remain. As there is a principle of grace, so of corruption; like wine and water mixed, there is in the regenerate flesh as well as spirit. Here a question ariseth. If sin in the regenerate is not quite done away, then how far must one put off the old man, that he may be a new creature? (1.) There must be a grieving for the remains of corruption; 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?'⁶ Paul did not cry out of his sufferings, his being beaten with rods, shipwrecked, stoned; but, like the bird of paradise, he bemoaned himself for sin. In the new creature there must be a daily mourning for the indwelling presence of corruption; a child of

¹ Jo. 24, 15, 16.² Nu. 14, 24.³ Ac. 26, 18.⁴ 1 Co. 6, 11.⁵ Je. 4, 14.⁶ Ro. 7, 24.

God doth not wear sin as a gold chain, but as a fetter. (2.) In the new creature there must be a detestation of old things, as one would detest a garment in which is the plague. It is not enough to be angry with sin; but we must hate it; 'I hate and abhor lying.'¹ Hatred is the highest degree of enmity; and we must hate sin not only for its hurtful effect, but its loathsome nature; as one hates a toad for its poisonous quality. (3.) In the new creature there is an opposition against all old things; a Christian not only complains of sin, but fights against it.² But may not a natural man oppose sin? Yes; but there is a great difference between his opposing sin, and the new creature's opposing it. There is a difference in the manner of opposition. The natural man opposeth sin, only for the shame of it, as it eclipseth his credit: but the new creature opposeth sin for the filth of it; it is the spirit of mischief, it is like rust to gold, or as a stain to beauty. The natural man doth not oppose all sin. He doth not oppose inward sins; he fights against such sins as are against the light of a natural conscience, but not against heart-sins; the first risings of vain thoughts, the stirrings of anger and concupiscence, the venom and impurity of his nature. He doth not oppose gospel sins, pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, spiritual barrenness; he is not troubled that he can love God no more. He opposeth not complexion sins, such as the bias of his heart carries him more strongly to, as lust or avarice; he saith of his constitution sins, as Naaman; 'in this thing the Lord pardon thy servant.'³ But the new creature opposeth all kinds of sin: as he that hates a serpent, hates all kinds of serpents; 'I hate every false way.'⁴ There is a difference between the natural man's opposing sin, and the new creature's opposing sin, in regard of the motives. A natural man opposeth sin, from carnal motives; to stop the mouth of conscience, and to prevent hell. But the new creature opposeth sin upon more noble motives; out of love to God, and fear of dishonouring the gospel. (4.) In the new creature there is mortifying old corrupt lusts; 'they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.'⁵ The new creature is said to be 'dead indeed unto sin.'⁶ He is dead as to the love of sin, that it doth not bewitch: and as to the power of it, that it doth not command. The new creature is continually crucifying sin; some limb of the old Adam every day drops off;

though sin doth not die perfectly, it dies daily. A gracious soul thinks he can never kill sin enough; he deals with sin as Joab with Absalom; 'he took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom.'⁷ So, with the three darts of faith, prayer, and repentance, a Christian thrusts through the body of sin he never thinks this Absalom is enough dead. Try then, if we have this first sign of the new creature, 'old things are passed away.'⁸ There is a grieving for sin, a detesting it, an opposing it, a mortifying it; this is the passing away of old things, though not in a legal sense, yet in an evangelical; and though it be not to satisfaction, yet it is to acceptance.

2. The second trial of the new creature, is 'all things are become new.'⁹ The new creature is new all over; grace, though it be but in part, yet it is in every part. By nature every branch of the soul is defiled with sin, as every part of wormwood is bitter; so, in regeneration, every part of the soul is replenished with grace, therefore grace is called the 'new man.'¹⁰ Not a new eye, or a new tongue, but a new man; there are new dispositions, new principles, new aims, 'all things are become new.' (1.) In the new creature there is a new understanding; 'be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind.'¹¹ The first thing a limner draws in a picture is the eye: when God newly limns us, and makes us new creatures, the first thing he draws in our souls is a new eye: the new creature is enlightened to see that which he never saw before. He knows Christ after another manner. An unconverted man, by the light of common grace, may believe Christ to be the Son of God: but the new creature knows Christ after another guise, manner, so as to esteem him above all, to adore him, to touch him by faith, to fetch an healing virtue from him. The new creature knows himself better than he did. When the sun shines into a room, it discovers all the dust and cobwebs in it: so, when the light of the Spirit shines into the heart, it discovers that corruption which before lay hid; it shows a man his own vileness and nothingness; 'behold I am vile.'¹² A wicked man blinded with self-love, admires himself; like Narcissus, that seeing his own shadow upon the water, fell in love with it. Saving-knowledge works self-abasement: 'Lord, thou art in heaven, and I am in hell,' said a martyr. Hath this day-star of knowledge shined on our mind? (2.) The

¹ Ps. 119. 163. ² Gal. 5. 17. ³ Ps. 119. 104.

⁴ Gal. 5. 21.

⁵ Ro. 6. 11.

⁶ Ep. 4. 24.

⁷ Ep. 3. 21.

⁸ Job 40. 4.

new creature is renewed in his conscience. The conscience of a natural man is either blind, or dumb, or seared; but conscience in the new creature is renewed. Let us examine, doth conscience check for sin? The least hair makes the eye weep; and the least sin makes conscience smite. How did David's heart smite him for cutting off the lap of Saul's garment! A good conscience is a star to guide, a register to record, a judge to determine, a witness to accuse or excuse; if conscience doth all these offices right, then it is a renewed conscience, and speaks peace. (3.) In the new creature the will is renewed. An old bowl may have a new bias put into it: the will having a new bias of grace put into it, is strongly carried to good. The will of a natural man opposeth God; when the wind goes one way and the tide another, then there is a storm: so it is when God's will goes one way and ours another. But when our will goes with God's, as the wind with the tide, then there is a sweet calm of peace in the soul, the sanctified will answers to God's will, as the echo to the voice; 'when thou saidst, seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'¹ And the will being renewed, carries all the affections along with it. (4.) The new creature hath a new conversation. Grace alters a man's walk; before he walked proudly, now humbly; before loosely, now holily; he makes the word his rule, and Christ's life his pattern; 'our conversation is in heaven.'² As a ship that is sailing eastward, there comes a gale of wind and blows it westward: so, before a man did sail hellward, and on a sudden the Spirit of God comes upon him, and blows him heavenward; here is a new conversation. It was a speech of *Æcolampadius*, 'I would not speak nor do any thing that I thought Jesus Christ would not approve of, if he were here corporally present.' Where there is circumcision of heart, there is circumspection of life; if we find it thus, that 'all things are become new,' then we are new creatures, and shall go to the new Jerusalem when we die.

3d USE. Exhortation. Labour to be new creatures: nothing else will avail us, 'neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.'³ We are for new things; we love new fashions, and why not new hearts? but people are full of prejudices against the new creature. 1. If we are new creatures, there must be so much strictness in religion, so

much praying and watching, as discourageth. Is there any thing excellent to be obtained without labour? What pains is taken in searching for a vein of silver, or seeking for pearl? Men cannot have the world without labour, and would they have salvation so? The labour in religion bears no proportion with the reward. What are a few tears shed, to a weight of glory? The soldier is content to wrestle with difficulties, and undergo a bloody fight, for a glorious victory. In all labour for heaven there is profit: it is like a man that digs in a golden mine, and carries away all the gold. Men take more pains to go to hell; what pains doth an ambitious man take to climb to the pinnacle of honour? *Tullia* rode over the dead body of her father to be made queen. How doth the covetous man tire himself, break his sleep, and his peace, to get the world? Thus some men take more pains in the service of sin, than others do in pursuit of holiness. Men talk of pains in religion; when God's Spirit comes into one it turns labour into delight. It was Paul's heaven to serve God.⁴ The ways of wisdom 'are ways of pleasantness.'⁵ It is like walking among beds of spices, which cast forth a sweet perfume. 2. But if we leave our old company, and become new creatures, we shall be exposed to many reproaches. Who are they that speak evil of religion but such as are evil? Besides, is it not better that men reproach us for being good, than that God damn us for being wicked! 'blessed are ye when men shall revile you.'⁶ Stars are nevertheless glorious though they have ugly names given them, as the bear and the dragon. A saint's reproaches are like a soldier's scars, honourable; 'if ye are reproached for the name of Christ, the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon you.'⁷ While men clip your credit to make it weigh lighter, they make your crown heavier.

Having answered these objections, I come now to resume the exhortation: above all things labour to be new creatures.

1st, In this, true Christianity consists. It is not baptism makes a Christian: many are no better than baptised heathens. The essential part of religion lies in the new creature; 'circumcision is that of the heart.'⁸ Every thing hath a name from the better part. We call a man a reasonable creature, because of his soul, which is the more noble part: so one is called a Christian, because he acts from a principle of

¹ Ps. 27. 8. ² Ph. 3. 20. ³ Gal. 6. 15.

⁴ Ro. 7. 22.

⁷ 1 Pe. 4. 14.

⁵ Pr. 3. 17.

⁶ Mat. 5. 11.

⁸ Ro. 2. 29.

the new creature, which the carnal man doth not.

2dly, It is the new creature fits us for communion with God; we cannot converse with God till then. Birds cannot converse with men unless they had a rational nature put into them, nor can men converse with God, unless, being made new creatures, they partake of the divine nature. Communion with God is a mystery to most; every one that hangs about the court doth not speak with the king: all that meddle with holy duties, and, as it were hang about the court of heaven, have not communion with God. It is only the new creature enjoys God's presence in ordinances, and sweetly converses with him as a child with a Father.

3dly, The necessity of being new creatures.

1. Till then we are odious to God; 'my soul loathed them.'¹ A sinner is to God worse than a toad; a toad hath no poison, but what God hath put into it; but a sinner hath that which the devil hath put into him; 'why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie?'² A wicked man is possessed with an evil spirit, one man is possessed with the devil of pride, another with the devil of malice; this must needs make persons odious to God, to be possessed with the devil. Thus it is till we become new creatures. 2. Till we are new creatures, our duties are not accepted with God; they are but wild grapes. Because God accepts no man, but where he sees his image. The new creature is called the renewing of God's image.³ When they brought Tamarlane a pot of gold, he asked what stamp it had on it, and when he saw the Roman stamp on it, he refused it: so, if God doth not see his own stamp and image on the soul, he rejects the most specious services. Duties of religion are not accepted without the new creature, because there is that wanting which should make them a sweet savour to God. The holy oil for the tabernacle was to be made of several spices and ingredients; now, if any of these spices had been left out, it had not been pleasing. The unregenerate man leaves out the chief spice in his duties, and that is faith: 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'⁴ Faith lays hold on Christ, and so is accepted. 3. Such as are not new creatures, but grow upon the stock of old Adam, get no benefit by ordinances; they are to them, as dioscordium in a dead man's mouth; they lose their virtue; nay, not only ordinances do them no good, but

hurt. It were sad, if all a man did eat should turn to poison. The word preached is a 'savour of death;' it is not healing, but hardening; nay Christ himself is accidentally a 'rock of offence.'⁵ The wicked stumble at a Saviour, and suck death from the tree of life. 4. Without being new creatures, we cannot arrive at heaven; 'there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth.'⁶ Heaven is not like Noah's ark, that received clean and unclean. A sinner is compared to swine,⁷ and shall a swinish creature tread upon the golden pavement of heaven? Indeed, the frogs came into king Pharaoh's court, but in heaven⁸ there is no entertainment for such vermin. It is only the new creature qualifies us for glory: this consecrates the heart, and only the pure in heart shall see God. The new creature elevates the soul as the loadstone elevates the iron. A soul renewed by grace, is fit to ascend to the heavenly glory.

4thly, The excellency of the new creature; the nobility; the immortality. 1. The nobility. The new creature fetcheth its pedigree from heaven; it is born of God; God counts none else of the blood royal; it ennobles a man's spirit; he aspires after the favour of God, and looks no lower than a crown. The new creature raiseth one to honour; he excels the princes of the earth,⁹ and is fellow-commoner with angels. 2. The immortality. The new creature is begotten of the incorruptible seed of the word, and never dies; it lasts as long as the soul, as angels, as heaven. God hath laid out much cost upon it, and if it perish, he should lose all his cost. When Xerxes destroyed all the temples in Greece, he caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure; the new creature is God's temple, adorned with all the graces, which he will not suffer to be demolished. Riches take wings, king's crowns tumble in the dust; nay, some of the graces may cease: faith and hope shall be no more, but the new creature abideth for ever.⁹

5thly, The misery of the unregenerate creature, dying so, I may say so of him, as Christ said of Judas, 'good were it for that man if he had never been born.'¹⁰ Better have been a toad, a serpent, any thing, if not a new creature; the old sinner must go into old Tophet.¹⁰ Damned caitiffs will have nothing to ease their torments, not one drop of honey in all their gall. In the sacrifice of jealousy there was no oil put to it;¹¹ in hell there is no oil of mercy

¹ Ze. 11. 8. ² Ac. 5. 3. ³ Ep. 4. 24. ⁴ He. 11. 6.

⁵ 1 Pe. 2. 8. ⁶ Re. 21. 27. ⁷ 2 Pe. 2. 22. ⁸ Ps. 89. 27.

⁹ 1 Jno. 2. 27. ¹⁰ Is. 30. 33. ¹¹ Nu. 5.

put to the sufferings of the damned to lenify them.

Therefore get out of the wild olive of nature: labour to be new creatures, lest you curse yourselves at last. A sinful life will cause a despairing death. What shall we do to be new creatures? 1. Wait on the ordinances. The preaching of the word is the seed of which the new creature is formed; this is the trumpet which must make the dead in sin come out of their grave. 2. Pray earnestly for the new creature: 'Lord, thou hast made me once, make me again; what shall I do with this old heart? it defiles all it toucheth.' Urge God with his promise, 'a new heart also will I give you.' Say, 'Lord, I am as the dry bones, but thou didst cause breath to come into them;'² do the same to me: breathe a supernatural life of grace into me.'

4th USE. Thankfulness. Let such as are new creatures stand upon mount Gerizim, bles-

sing and praising God; ascribe all to the riches of God's love; set the crown upon the head of free grace. God hath done more for you than if he had made you kings and queens; though you have not so much of the world as others, you are happier than the greatest monarchs upon earth; and, I dare say, you would not change with them. The apostles seldom speak of the new creation, but they join some thankful praises with it; 'blessed be God, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope:'⁴ 'giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance in light.'⁵ The new creature is a sign of election, a badge of adoption. What distinguishing love is this, that God should make any of us new creatures, when he hath left the greatest part of the world to perish in their sins! Such as are patterns of mercy, should be trumpets of praise.

SERMON III.

JAMES iii. 6. *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.*

THE apostle James in this scripture, describes the evil of the tongue; 'the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.' 'It is a fire.' It burns with intemperate heat; it causeth the heat of contention; it sets others in a flame. 'A world of iniquity.' It was at first made to be an organ of God's praise, but it is become an instrument of unrighteousness. All the members of the body are sinful, as there is bitterness in every branch of wormwood, but the tongue is excessively sinful, 'full of deadly poison.'

Doctrine. The tongue, though it be a little member, yet it hath a world of sin in it; the tongue is an unruly evil. I shall show you some of the evils of the tongue.

1. The evil tongue is the silent tongue; it is wholly mute in matters of religion; it never speaks of God or of heaven, as if it cleaved to the roof of the mouth. Men are fluent and discursive enough in other things, but in matters of religion their lips are sealed up. If we come into some people's company, we do not know what religion they are of, whether Jews or Mahometans, for they never speak of Christ; they are like the man in the gospel, who was possessed with a dumb spirit.³

2. The evil tongue is the earthly tongue; men talk of nothing but the world, as if all their hopes were here, and they looked for an earthly eternity; these have earthly minds, 'he that is of the earth, speaketh of the earth.'⁶

3. The evil tongue is the hasty or angry tongue; they have no command of passions but are carried away with them, as a chariot with wild horses. I know there is an holy anger, when we are angry with sin: Christ had this anger when they made the temple a place of merchandise.⁷ That anger is without sin, which is against sin; but that is an evil tongue, which is presently blown up into exorbitant passion; this 'tongue is set on fire from hell.' A wrathful spirit is unsuitable to the gospel, it is a gospel of peace, and its author is the Prince of Peace, and it is sealed by the Spirit, who came in the form of a dove, a meek peaceable creature. Thou who art given much to passion, whose tongue is often set on fire, take heed thou dost not one day in hell desire a drop of water to cool thy tongue.

4. The evil tongue is the vain tongue, that vents itself in idle words: 'under his tongue is vanity.'⁸ A vain tongue shows a light heart;

¹ Ez. 36. 26.

² Ez. 17. 10.

³ Mar. 9. 17.

⁴ 1 Pe. 1. 3.

⁵ Jno. 2. 15.

⁶ Co. 1. 12.

⁷ Jno. 3. 31.

⁸ Ps. 10. 7.

a good man's words are weighty and prudent; his lips are as a tree of life to feed many; his speech is edifying; 'the tongue of the just is as choice silver:'¹ but 'the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.'² How many idle away the day of grace in frivolous discourses? A wise man's words are like gold, weighty, and will sink into the hearts of others; but the words of many are light and feathery, and will make no impression; 'every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.'³

5. The evil tongue is the censorious tongue; 'who art thou that judgest another?'⁴ Some make it a part of their religion to judge and censure others; they do not imitate their graces, but censure their failings; such an one is an hypocrite; this comes from pride. Were men's hearts more humble, their tongues would be more charitable. The censurer sits in the chair of pride, and passeth sentence upon another, and doth reprobate him; this is to usurp God's prerogative, and take his work out of his hands; it is God's work to judge, not ours. He who spends his time in censuring others, spends but little time in examining himself; he doth not see his own faults. There is not a greater sign of hypocrisy, than to be over hasty in judging and censuring persons.

6. The evil tongue is the slanderous tongue, 'thou sittest and slanderest thy own mother's son.'⁵ Slandering is when we speak to the prejudice of another, and speak that which is not true. Worth and eminency are commonly blasted by slander; holiness itself is no shield from slander; 'John Baptist came neither eating nor drinking, yet they say he hath a devil.'⁶ Come and let us smite him with the tongue. A slanderer wounds another's fame, and no physician can heal these wounds. The sword doth not make so deep a wound as the tongue. The Greek word for slanderer, signifies devil. Some think it is no great matter to belie and defame another; but know, this is to act the part of a devil. The slanderer's tongue is a two-edged sword, it wounds two at once; while the slanderer wounds another in his name, he wounds himself in his conscience. This is contrary to scripture; 'speak not evil one of another.'⁷ God takes this ill at our hands, to speak evil of others, especially such as are eminently holy, and help to bear up the honour of religion: 'were ye not afraid to speak

against my servant Moses?'⁸ What! my servant who hath wrought so many miracles, whom I have spoken with in the mount face to face; were not ye afraid to speak against him? So will God say, Take heed of this, it is a sin our nature is very prone to; and remember, it is no less sin to rob another of his good name, than to steal his goods or wares out of his shop

7. The evil tongue is the unclean tongue, that vents itself in filthy and scurrilous words; 'let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.'⁹ A sign of a great distemper, that the fever is high, when the tongue is black: a sign men's hearts are very evil, when such black words come from them.

8. The evil tongue is the lying tongue; 'lie not one to another.'¹⁰ The Cretians were noted for liars; 'the Cretians are always liars.'¹¹ It becomes not Christians to be Cretians. Nothing is more contrary to God than a lie; it shows much irreligion; lying is a sin that doth not go alone, it ushers in other sins. Absalom told his father a lie, that he was going to pay his vow at Hebron, and this lie was a preface to his treason. Lying is such a sin as takes away all society and converse with men; how can you have converse with him, that you cannot trust a word he saith? It is a sin so sordid, that when the liar is convicted he is ashamed. God's children have this character, they are 'children that will not lie,'¹² the new creature in them will not suffer them. The liar is near akin to the devil, and the devil will shortly claim kindred with him; 'the devil is a liar, and the father of it.'¹³ He seduced our first parents by a lie. How doth this sin incense God? he struck Ananias dead for telling a lie;¹⁴ the furnace of hell is heated to throw liars into; 'without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.'¹⁵

9. The evil tongue is the flattering tongue, that will speak fair to one's face, but will defame; 'he that hateth, dissembleth with his lips.'¹⁶ When he speaketh fair, believe him not; dissembled love is worse than hatred. Some can commend and reproach, flatter and hate; honey in their mouths, but a sting of malice in their hearts: better are the wounds of a friend, than the kisses of such an enemy. Hierom saith, 'the Arian faction pretended friendship; they, saith he, kissed my hands, but

¹ Pr. 10. 20. ² Pr. 15. 2. ³ Mat. 12. 36. ⁴ Ja. 4. 12.

⁵ Ps. 50. 20.

⁶ Mat. 11.

⁷ Ja. 4. 11.

⁸ Nu. 12. 8.

¹¹ Tit. 1. 12.

¹⁴ Ac. 5. 5.

⁹ Eph. 4. 29.

¹² Is. 63. 8.

¹⁵ Re. 22. 15.

¹⁰ Col. 3. 9.

¹³ Jno. 8. 44.

¹⁶ Pr. 26. 24.

slandered me and sought my ruin.' Many have dissembling tongues, they can say, your servant, and lay snares, 'a man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet.'¹ You oft think you have a friend in your bosom, but he proves a viper. To dissemble love is no better than to lie; for there is a pretence of that love which is not. Many are like Joab; 'Joab said to Amasa, art thou in health, my brother; and he took him by the beard to kiss him and he smote him in the fifth rib that he died.' For my part, I must question his truth towards God, that will flatter and lie to his friend. God will bring such an one to shame at last; 'whose hatred is covered by deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation.'²

10. The evil tongue is the tongue given to boasting; 'the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.'³ There is an holy boasting; 'In God we boast all the day,'⁴ when we triumph in his power and mercy: but it is a sinful boasting, when men display their trophies, boast of their own worth and eminency, that others may admire and cry them up; a man's self is his idol, and he loves to have this idol worshipped; 'there arose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody.'⁵ Sinful boasting is when men boast of their sins; 'why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?'⁶ Some boast how wicked they have been; how many they have made drunk; how many they have deflowered; as if a beggar should boast of his sores; or a thief boast of being burnt in the hand; such as boast of their sinful exploits, will have little cause to rejoice, or hang up their trophies when they come to hell.

11. The evil tongue is the swearing tongue; 'swear not at all.'⁷ The scripture allows an oath for the ending of a controversy, and to clear the truth,⁸ but in ordinary discourse to use an oath, and so to take God's name in vain, is sinful. Swearing may be called 'the unfruitful works of darkness,' there is neither pleasure nor profit in it; it is like an hook the fish comes to without a bait; 'because of swearing the land mourneth.'⁹ Some think it the grace of their speech; but, if God will reckon with men for idle words, what will he do for sinful oaths? But it is only a petty oath, they swear by their faith? Sure they which have so much faith in their mouth, have none in their heart. 'But

it is my custom:' is this an excuse, or an aggravation of the sin? If a malefactor should be arraigned for robbing, and he should say to the judge, spare me it is my custom to rob on the highway; the judge would say, thou shalt the rather die. For every oath thou swearest, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial. But, may some think, what though now and then I swear an oath? Words are but wind. But they are such a wind as will blow thee into hell, without repentance.

12. The railing tongue is an evil tongue: this is a plague-sore breaking out at the tongue, when we give opprobrious language. When the dispute was between the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses, 'the archangel durst not bring a railing accusation against him, but said, the Lord rebuke thee.'¹⁰ The archangel durst not rail against the devil. Railing oft ends in reviling, and so men bring themselves into a premunire, and are 'in danger of hell fire.'¹¹

13. The seducing tongue is an evil tongue. The tongue that by fine rhetoric decoys men to error; 'by fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple.'¹² A fair tongue can put off bad wares; error is bad ware, which a seducing tongue can put off. The deceit lies in this; a smooth tongue can make error look so like truth, that you can hardly know them asunder; as thus, in justification, Christ bears infinite love to justified persons; this is a glorious truth, but under this notion, the Antinomian presseth *libertinism*; believers may take more liberty to sin, and God sees no sin in them. Thus, by crying up justification, they destroy sanctification; here is the seducing tongue; and error is as dangerous as vice; one may die by poison as well as by a pistol.

14. The evil tongue is the cruel tongue, that speaks to the wounding the hearts of others. The tongue is made almost in the fashion of a sword; and the tongue is sharp as a sword; 'their tongue is a sharp sword.'¹³ Kind, loving words should be spoken to such as are of a heavy heart: 'to him that is afflicted, pity should be shown.'¹⁴ Healing words are fittest for a broken heart: but that is a cruel, unmerciful tongue, which speaks such words to the afflicted, as to cut them to the heart; 'they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.'¹⁵ Hannah was a woman of a troubled spirit, 'she was in bitterness of soul, and wept sore.'¹⁶ And

¹ Pr. 29. 5.² Pr. 26. 26.³ Ja. 3. 5.⁴ Ps. 41. 8.⁵ Ac. 5. 36.⁶ Ps. 52. 1.⁷ Mat. 5. 34.⁸ He. 6. 16.⁹ Jer. 22. 10.¹⁰ Jude 9. ¹¹ Mat. 5. 22. ¹² Ro. 16. 18. ¹³ Ps. 57. 4.¹⁴ Job 6. 11.¹⁵ Ps. 69. 26.¹⁶ 1 Sa. 1. 10.

now Eli 'said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.' This word was like pouring vinegar into the wound. When Job was afflicted with God's hand, his friends, instead of comforting him, told him he was an hypocrite.¹ These were cutting words, which went to his heart: instead of giving him cordials in his fainting, they use corrosives. This is to lay more weight upon a dying man.

15. The evil tongue is the murmuring tongue; 'these are murmurers.'² Murmuring is discontent breaking out at the lips; men quarrel with God, and tax his providence as if he had not dealt well with them. Why should any murmur or be discontented at their condition? Doth God owe them any thing? Or, can they deserve any thing at his hands? O, how uncomely is it to murmur at providence! It is fittest for a Cain to be wroth with God. Murmuring proceeds from unbelief. When men distrust God's promise, then they murmur at his providence; 'they believed not his word, but murmured'³ When faith grows low, then passion grows high. Murmuring proceeds from pride. Men think they have deserved better; and, because they are crossed, therefore they utter discontented expressions against God. He who is humble bears any thing from God; he knows his punishment is less than his sin, therefore saith, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord.'⁴ But pride raises discontent; and hence comes murmuring. Murmuring is a sin that God cannot bear; 'how long shall I bear with this evil congregation that murmur against me?'⁵ The murmurer discovers much ingratitude; a murmuring tongue is always an unthankful tongue; he considers not how much he is a debtor to free grace, and whatever he hath is more than God owes him; he considers not that his mercies outweigh his afflictions; there is more honey than wormwood in his cup; he considers not what God hath done for him, more than such as are better than he; he hath the finest of wheat, when others feed, as Daniel, on pulse. The murmurer, I say, doth not consider this; but, because he is crossed in some small matter, he repines against God. O ingratitude! Israel, though they had manna from heaven, to satisfy their hunger, angel's food, yet murmured for want of quails; not content that God should supply their want, but must satisfy their lust too. O unthankful! Israel's murmuring cost many of them their lives; 'neither murmur ye,

as some of them did, and were destroyed of the destroyer.'⁶ Their speeches were venomous, and God punished them with venomous serpents.

16. The evil tongue is the scoffing tongue. The scoffer sits in the chair of scorners, and derides religion; surely the devil hath taken great possession of men, when they have arrived at such a degree of sin, as to scoff at holiness. It was foretold as a sin of the last times, 'there shall come in the last days scoffers.'⁷ Some scoff at the authority of scripture, the Deity of Christ, the immortality of the soul; this is the worst sort of tongues. When men have laid aside the veil of modesty, and their consciences are seared, then they fall a scoffing at religion; and when once they are come to this, their case is desperate; no reproofs will reclaim them; tell them of their sin, and they will hate you the more; 'reprove not the scorner, lest he hate thee.'⁸ Such a man is on the threshold of damnation.

17. The evil tongue is the tongue given to cursing; 'his mouth is full of cursing:'⁹ a wishing some great evil to befall another; cursing is the scum that boils off from a wicked heart. Though it is true, the curse causeless shall not come; it is not in man's power to make another cursed: yet to wish a curse is a fearful sin. If to hate our brother be murder;¹⁰ then to curse him, which is the highest degree of hatred, must needs be murder. To use an execration or curse, is for a man to do what in him lies, to damn another. Some wish a curse upon themselves: so the Jews, 'his blood be upon us,' &c. And so do your 'God damn-me's,' as if damnation did not come fast enough; 'as he loved cursing so let it come to him.'¹¹

18. The evil tongue is the unjust tongue; that will for a piece of money open its mouth in a bad cause. The lawyer hath a tongue that will be sold for money; 'how long will you judge unjustly?'¹² Some will plead any cause, though never so bad: though it appears the deeds are forged, the witnesses bribed, there is perjury in the cause; yet they will plead it. When a man pleads a bad cause he is the devil's attorney: as God hates false weights, so a false cause. Better be born dumb, than open one's mouth in a bad cause. O what times are we in! Many pervert justice, and, for enriching themselves, overthrow a righteous cause; these are worse than they that

¹ Job 11. 2.
⁴ Mi. 7. 9.

² Ju. 16.

³ Ps. 106. 24, 25.
⁵ Nu. 14. 27.

⁶ 1 Co. 10. 10. ⁷ 2 Pe. 3. 3. ⁸ Pr. 9. 8. ⁹ Ps. 10. 7.
¹⁰ 1 Jno. 3. 15. ¹¹ Ps. 109. 17. ¹² Ps. 82. 2.

rob, for they fleece men's estates under a colour of law, and ruin them under a pretence of doing justice.

USE I. 1st, See what a blow we have sustained by the fall; it hath put out of frame the whole course of nature. Original sin hath diffused itself as a poison into all the members of the body; it hath made the eye unchaste, the hands full of bribes, amongst the rest it hath defiled the tongue, 'it is a world of iniquity.' That which was made to be the organ of God's praise, is become a weapon of unrighteousness. 2d, If there be so much evil in the tongue, what is the heart? if the stream be so full of water, how full of water is the fountain? if there be a world of iniquity in the tongue, how many worlds of sin are there in the heart? 'their inward part is very wickedness.'¹ If the tongue, which is the outward part, be so wicked, the inward part is very wickedness; 'the heart is deep';² it is such a deep as cannot be fathomed; deep pride, hypocrisy, atheism. The heart is like the sea, where is the leviathan, and creeping things innumerable.³ If the skin hath boils of leprosy in it, how much corruption is in the blood? if the tongue be so bad, how diabolical is the heart? It is the heart sets the tongue awork: 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh:' there are the seeds of all atheism and blasphemy; 'out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries; these defile a man.'⁴ If a branch of wormwood be so bitter, then how bitter is the root? O, what a root of bitterness grows in a man's heart! Some say they have good hearts; but if the tongue be so bad, what is the heart? If I see a smoke come out of the top of the chimney, what a fire burns within? 'a wicked man walketh with a froward mouth; frowardness is in his heart.'⁵ Solomon shows the reason why the mouth is so froward; 'frowardness is in his heart.' The heart is a store-house of wickedness, therefore called the 'evil treasure of the heart.'⁶ Original righteousness was a good treasure, but we were robbed of that; and now there is an evil treasure of sin. The word treasure, denotes plenty; to show the fulness and abundance of sin that is in the heart. The heart is a lesser hell, which is a matter of deep humiliation; the heart is, like the Egyptian temples, full of spiders and serpents.

USE II. Of reproof. It reproves such as abuse their tongues in all manner of evil speak-

ing, lying, slandering, rash anger. The heart is a vessel full of sin, and the tongue sets it abroad. O how fast do men's tongues gallop in sin! They say, they give God their hearts; but let the devil take possession of their tongues; 'our lips are our own, who is the Lord over us?'⁷ Who hath any thing to do with our words? who shall control us? who is our Lord? There is no engine the devil makes more use of than the tongue; what errors, contentions, impieties, have been propagated this way, to the dishonour of the High God! David calls his tongue his glory; 'awake my glory.'⁸ Why did he call his tongue his glory, but because by it he did set forth God's glory in praising him? But a wicked man's tongue is not his glory, but his shame; with his tongue he wounds the glory of God; 'it is set on fire of hell.'

USE III. Confutation. It confutes the Catharists and Perfectists, that plead for perfection in this life. If the tongue hath so many evils in it, how are they perfect? 'who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?'⁹ He makes a challenge to all the world. But the Perfectist saith, he is pure from sin: like Isidore the monk, 'I have nothing, Lord, for thee to pardon.' If pure and perfect, then they put Christ out of office, he hath nothing to do for them as an advocate, they have no need of his intercession: but, 'there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not;' how proud and supercilious are they who hold they are perfect, when the holiest men alive, at some time or other, offend in their tongues? There is no perfection on this side the grave. It confutes the Arminians, those patrons of free-will: they say, they have power to their own salvation, they can change their heart. The apostle saith, 'the tongue can no man tame.'¹⁰ If they cannot bridle their tongue, how can they conquer their will? If they cannot master this little member, how can they change their nature?

USE IV. Caution. Take heed to your tongue; have a care that ye offend not with your tongue; 'Keep thy tongue from evil.'¹¹ 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.'¹² An hard lesson! Pambas said he was above twenty years learning that scripture, not to offend with his tongue. The tongue is an unruly member; God hath set a double hedge before the tongue, the teeth and lips, to keep it within its bounds, that it do not

¹ Ps. 5. 9.

² Ps. 61. 6.

³ Ps. 104.

⁴ Mat. 15. 19 20. ⁵ Pr. 6. 12, 14

⁶ Mat. 12. 35.

⁷ Ps. 12. 4.

⁸ Ps. 57. 8.

⁹ Pr. 20. 9.

¹⁰ Ja. 3. 8.

¹¹ Ps. 34. 14.

¹² Ps. 39. 1

speak vainly. O look to your tongue! When a city is besieged, he that keeps the gates of the city, keeps the whole city safe; so if you keep the gates or doors of your mouth, you keep your whole soul.

RULES for the well ordering and regulating your words, or the governing of your tongue, that you do not dishonour God therewith. 1st. If you would have better tongues, labour for better hearts. It is the heart hath influence upon the tongue. If the heart be vain and earthly, the tongue will be so; if the heart be holy, the tongue will be so. Look to thy heart, get a better heart, and a better tongue. How shall I get my heart bettered? Get a principle of grace infused. Grace is like the salt cast into the spring; grace changeth the heart, and sanctifies all the members of the body, it sanctifies the eyes, and makes them chaste, it sanctifies the tongue, and makes it meek and calm. When the Holy Ghost came upon the apostles, 'they began to speak with other tongues:' when God's Spirit comes on a man with a sanctifying work, he speaks with another tongue; the speech is heavenly. Grace makes the heart serious, and that cures the levity of the tongue; when the heart is serious, the words are savoury. 2d. If you would not sin in your tongue, call to mind how you have formerly offended in your tongue, and that will make you more watchful for the future. Have not you spoken words that have savoured of discontent or envy? have not you been guilty of censuring and slandering? have not you been disgusted with passion? hath not your tongue out-run your discretion? have not you spoken words that you have been sorry for afterwards, and have caused either shame or tears? O observe former failings, how you have sinned in your tongue, and that will be a good help for the future! David certainly made a critical observation upon some of his words, wherein he had offended: words of pride, 'in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.'² 'I said in my haste all men are liars;'³ even Samuel, and all the prophets who promised me the kingdom, they are all liars; and I shall die before I can come to enjoy it. David having observed how he had offended in his tongue, he is more careful of his words, and made a strict vow with himself, that he would look better to them, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.'⁴ Look to the former slips

of your tongue, and how you have by your words provoked God, and that will be a good means to make you more cautious for the future. A mariner that hath twice touched upon a rock, and been like to be cast away, will be more careful how he comes there again. 3d. Watch your tongue: most sin is committed for want of watchfulness. As the tongue hath a double fence set about it, so it had need have a double watch. The tongue, when it is let loose, will be ready to speak loosely; watch it, lest it run beyond its bounds in frothy and sinful discourse, 'if thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth:'⁵ that is, say some, lay thy hand upon thy mouth, in token of repentance. But it may bear another sense: if thou hast thought evil, if angry malicious thoughts come into thy mind, lay thy hand upon thy mouth to stop thy lips, that thy thoughts come not into words. 4th. If you would not offend in your tongue, ponder your words well before you speak; 'be not rash with thy mouth.'⁶ Some speak vainly, because inconsiderately; they do not weigh their words before they speak them. A talkative man doth not mind his words, but gives his tongue liberty; he may speak not only unadvisedly, but unholily, and give just offence. 5th. If you would not offend in your tongue, pray to God to guard your tongue; 'set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth.'⁷ Set not about this work in your own strength, but implore God's help; 'the tongue can no man tame.'⁸ But God can tame it; therefore go to him by prayer; pray, 'Lord, set a watch before the door of my lips;' keep me, that I may speak nothing to grieve thy Spirit, or that may tend to thy dishonour. 6th. If you would be kept from evil speaking, inure your tongues to good speaking. If you would not have the cask have a bad scent, put good liquor into it; so, if you would not have your tongue run out sinfully, let it be used to good discourse; speak often one to another of Christ, and the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. The spouse's lips dropped as an honey-comb.⁹

MOTIVES. To beware of tongue sins. 1st. If you have no care of your tongue, all your religion is vain; 'if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, this man's religion is vain.'¹⁰ Many an one will hear the word, and make a profession of religion, but cares not what liberty he takes in his tongue, to reproach and vilify others: this man's religion

¹ Ac. 2. 4. ² Ps. 30. 6. ³ Ps. 116. 11. ⁴ Ps. 39. 1.

⁵ Pr. 30. 32.

⁶ Ec. 5. 2.

⁷ Ps. 141. 3.

⁸ Ja. 3. 8.

⁹ Can. 4. 11.

¹⁰ Ja. 1. 26.

is vain; that is, he hath no religion, his religion is but a show or pretence: It is vain, also, because it is ineffectual; it hath not that force upon him as religion ought. 2d. The tongue discovers much of the heart; such as the tongue is, such commonly the heart is. A lascivious tongue shows a lustful heart; an earthly tongue a covetous heart; a murmuring tongue a discontented heart. The tongue is oft a commentary upon the heart. 3d. To allow ourselves in the abuse of the tongue, cannot stand with grace. I know a good man may sometimes speak unadvisedly with his lips; he may fly out in words, be in a passion, but he doth not allow himself in it; when his passion is over, he weeps; 'that which I do, I allow not:'¹ but for a man to allow himself in sin, censuring, slandering, dropping words like coals of fire: sure it is not consistent with grace. 4th. The sins of the tongue are very defiling; 'the tongue defileth.'² Defiling to one's self, and chiefly defiling to others. The tongue conveys poison into the ear of another; sometimes by false suggestions, raising prejudices in the mind of another against such a person; sometimes by passionate speeches, the spirit of another is provoked. 5th. The sins of the tongue are provoking to God, and prejudicial to us. Provoking to God;³ Moses spake unadvisedly with his lips; what was this unadvised speech? 'hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?'⁴ Though he were a favourite, and God had spoken with him face to face, yet God gives him a check for it; it turned his smile into a frown. Prejudicial to us; Moses' rash speech shut him out of Canaan; it may shut us out of heaven, of which that was but a type. Origen notes, he had sinned most in his

tongue; and God punished him most in his tongue. 6th. He who offends not in his tongue, is a perfect man; an high expression; 'if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man;' that is, attains to a very high degree, in the highest form of Christ's school. A prudent man, or an upright man; or comparatively, in comparison of others, such as have not gotten the conquest over their passions, he is far above them, and, in comparison of them, he is a perfect man; such an one was holy Cranmer, that could not be provoked by the ill carriage of others, but requited injuries with kindness. 7th. You must give an account to God, as well of your speeches, as your actions; 'every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment;'⁵ words of no account, will have an heavy account. And, if God will reckon with men for every idle, angry word, then, what will he do for sinful oaths? 'Oh that my words were now written!'⁷ Truly, if many people's words were written, they would be ashamed of them. And, let me tell you, your words are written: 'the books were opened.'⁸ In the book of God's remembrance all your words are written; you had need then be careful you offend not with your tongue; God writes down all you speak, and you must give an account to him. When Latimer heard the pen going behind the hangings, he was careful in his answers; and let me tell you, as your words are, such will your sentence be; when the books are opened, God will proceed with you in judicature, according to your words; by your words you shall be saved or condemned: 'by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.'⁹

SERMON IV.

GAL. 6. 9. And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

In the verses before the text, the apostle had laid down a proposition; 'what a man soweth that shall he reap;'⁵ he that sows in sin shall reap in sorrow; he that sows the seeds of grace shall reap glory; there is the proposition. In the text, the apostle makes the application. Let us not be weary in well-doing. We that have sown the good seed of repentance, and an holy life, 'let us not be weary; for in due sea-

son we shall reap, if we faint not.'¹ I. A Dethortation: 'let us not be weary.' II. The argument: 'we shall reap in due season.'

I. A Dethortation; 'let us not be weary.' Where there is, 1. Something implied; that we are apt to be weary in well-doing. 2. Something expressed, that we ought not to be weary in well-doing.

1. The thing implied, that, we are apt to be

¹ Ro. 7. 15.

² Ja. 3. 6.

³ Ps. 106. 33.

⁴ Nu. 20. 10.

⁵ Ga. 6. 7.

⁶ Mat. 12. 36.

⁷ Job 19. 23.

⁸ Re. 15.

⁹ Mat. 12. 37.

weariness in well-doing. This weariness is not from the regenerate part, but the fleshly; as Peter's sinking in the water, was not from the faith in him, but the fear; this weariness in a Christian course is occasioned from four things: (1.) From the revilings of the world; 'my enemies speak against me.'¹ Innocency is no shield against reproach. But why should this make us weary of well-doing? Did not Jesus Christ undergo reproach for us, when the Jews put a crown of thorns on him, and bowed the knee in scorn? Is it any dishonour to us to be reproached for doing that which is good? Is it any disparagement to a virgin to be reproached for her beauty and chastity? Our reproaches for Christ, we should bind as a crown about our head. Now a Spirit of glory rests upon us; 'if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of God and of glory resteth upon you.'² He that clips our credit to make it weigh lighter, makes our crown heavier. (2.) That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the present sufferings we are exposed to; 'we are troubled on every side.'³ But why should this make us weary in well-doing? is not our life a warfare? it is no more strange to meet with sufferings in religion, than for a mariner to meet with storms, or a soldier to meet with bullets. Do not we consider upon what terms we are entered into religion? did not we vow in baptism to fight under Christ's banner? doth not our Lord tell us, we must take 'up the cross and follow him'⁴ Is not this part of the legacy Christ hath bequeathed us?⁵ We would partake of Christ's glory but not of his sufferings: besides, doth not many a man suffer for his sins? Do not men's lusts bring them to an untimely end? Do men suffer for their sins, and do we think much to suffer for Christ? How did Paul rejoice in sufferings?⁶ How did he glory in it? 'As a woman that is proud of her jewels.' CHRYSOSTOM. Why should sufferings make us faint? who would not be willing to tread upon a few thorns, that is going to a kingdom. (3.) That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the deferring of the reward. We are apt to be discouraged and grow weary, if we have not what we desire presently; we are all for present pay. But consider, our work is not yet done; we have not yet finished the faith; the servant doth not receive his pay till his work be done. Even Christ's reward was referred till he had

done his work; when he had completed our redemption, and said upon the cross, 'It is finished,' then he entered into glory. God defers the reward, to make heaven more welcome to us. After all our praying, weeping, suffering, how sweet will the joys of paradise taste! (4.) That which is apt to occasion weariness in well-doing, is the greatness and difficulty of a Christian's work; but why should this make us weary? Difficulty whets a generous mind; the soldier's life hath its difficulties, but they raise his spirits the more; he loves to encounter hardship, and will endure a bloody fight for a golden harvest. Besides, where is the least principle of grace, it renders the way of religion, easy and pleasant. When the loadstone draws, it is easy for the iron to move: When God's Spirit draws we move in the way of religion with facility and delight. Christ's service is freedom; 'I will walk at liberty.'⁷ To serve God, to love God, to enjoy God, is the sweetest liberty in the world. Besides, while we serve God, we gratify ourselves; as he who digs in a mine, while he sweats, he gets gold; while we glorify God, we promote our own glory.

II. The second thing expressed is, that we should not grow weary in a Christian course, we should not tire in our race; 'let us not be weary in well-doing.' The Greek word, to be weary, signifies, to shrink back, as cowards in war; let it not be thus with us; let us not shrink back from Christ's colours; 'let us hold fast our profession':⁸ we must not only hold forth our profession, but hold fast our profession. The crown is not given to him that fights, but to him that overcomes.

USE 1st. Of reproof. It reproves such as are weary of well-doing. These are falling stars.⁹ Demas forsook God, and afterwards became a priest in an idol temple, Dorotheus. 'Israel hath cast off the thing that is good.'¹⁰ Many have thrown off Christ's livery; they have left off an holy course of life; they have turned to worldliness or wantonness; 'ye did run well, who did hinder you?'¹¹ Why did you tire in your race? 'It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment.'¹²

USE 2d. Exhortation: 'let us not be weary in well-doing.' Consider, 1. The way of religion is of good report; by faith 'the elders

¹ Ps. 71. 10.² 1 Pet. 4. 14.³ 2 Cor. 4. 8.⁷ Ps. 119. 45.⁸ Heb. 4. 14.⁹ 2 Tim. 4. 10.⁴ Mat. 16. 24.⁵ Jno. 16. 33.⁶ 2 Cor. 7. 4.¹⁰ Hos. 8. 3.¹¹ Gal. 5. 7.¹² 2 Pet. 2. 21.

obtained a good report.¹ Shall we be weary of that which is our credit? If indeed the Christian religion were a thing that would bring shame or loss, as the ways of sin do, then we had cause to desert it, and grow weary of it; but it brings honour; 'she shall give to thy head an ornament of grace.'² Why then should we be weary of well-doing? 2. The beauty of a Christian is to hold on in piety without being weary: 'Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple.'³ It is a beautiful sight to see silver hairs crowned with golden virtue. The beauty of a thing is when it comes to be finished; the beauty of a picture is, when it is drawn out in its full lineaments, and laid in its orient colours; the beauty of a Christian is, when he hath finished his faith.⁴ It was the glory of the church of Thyatira, she kept her best wine till last; 'I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first.'⁵ 3. Such as are weary of well-doing it is a sign they never acted in religion from choice, or from a principle of faith, but from the external spring of applause or preferment, so that, when these fail, their seeming goodness ceaseth. 4. God is never weary of doing us good; therefore we should not be weary of serving him. A king that is continually obliging his subjects by gifts and gratitudes, those subjects have no cause to be weary of serving their prince. 5. If we grow weary, and throw off religion, we make all we have done null and void; 'when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned.'⁶ He who hath been serving God, and doing angel's work, if once he grows weary and desists, he unravels all his work, and misseth of the recompense of reward. He that runs half a race, and then tires, loseth the garland! O what folly is it to do well a while, and by apostasy to undo all! As if a limner with a pencil should draw a fair picture, and then come with his sponge and wipe it out again. 6. Consider the examples of such as have continued their progress unweariably in a Christian course. The apostle sets before our eyes a cloud of witnesses; 'being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race that is set before us:'⁷ let us run it with swiftness and constancy. How many noble martyrs and confessors of old, have walked in the ways of God, though they have been strewed with thorns? They scorned preferments, laughed at imprisonments,

and their love to Christ burned hotter than the fire. Polycarp, when he came before the proconsul, and he bade him deny Christ, replied, 'I have served Christ these eighty-six years, and he hath not once hurt me, and shall I deny him now?' Tertullian saith, such was the constancy of the primitive saints, that the persecutors cried out, 'what a misery is this, that we are more weary in tormenting, than they are in enduring torment! Let us tread in their steps, who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 7. It will be our comfort on our death-bed, to review a well-spent life. It was Augustin's wish, that he might have a quiet easy death. If any thing make our pillow easy at death, it will be this, that we have been unweariably in God's work; this will be a death-bed cordial. Did you ever know any repent at death that they had been too holy? Many have repented that they have followed the world too much, not that they have prayed too much, that they have repented too much. What hath made death sweet, but that they have 'finished their course, and kept the faith.' 8. Think of the great reward we shall have, if we do not give over, or grow weary, and that is, glory and immortality. This glory is ponderous; it is called a 'weight of glory.'⁸ The weight adds to the worth; the weightier a crown of gold is, the more it is worth. It is satisfying; 'I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness.'⁹ This glory will abundantly recompense all our labours and sufferings. The joy of harvest will make amends for all the labour in sowing. O what harvest shall the saints reap! It will be always reaping time in heaven; and this reaping will be in due season; so the apostle saith in the text, 'we shall reap in due season.' The husbandman doth not desire to reap till the season; he will not reap his corn while it is green, but when it is ripe; so we shall reap the reward of glory in due season; when our work is done, when our sins are purged out, when our graces are come to their full growth; then is the season of reaping; therefore let us not be weary of well-doing, but hold on in prayer, reading, and all the exercises of religion; we shall 'reap in due season, if we faint not.' To keep us from fainting, know, that the reward promised is very near; 'our salvation is nearer than when we believed.'¹⁰ We are but within a few days' march of the heavenly Canaan; it is but a few more prayers and tears shed, and we shall be perfect in glory: as that martyr,

¹ He. 11. 2. ² Pr. 4. 9. ³ Ac. 21. 16. ⁴ 2 Tim. 4. 7.
⁵ Rev. 2. 19. ⁶ Ez. 18. 24. ⁷ He. 12. 1.

⁸ 2 Cor. 1. 17.

⁹ Ps. 17. 15.

¹⁰ Rom. 13. 11.

Dr Taylor said, 'I have but one stile more to go over, and I shall be at my Father's house.' Stay but a while, Christians, and your trouble shall be over, and your coronation-day shall come. Christ who is the oracle of truth hath said, 'surely I come quickly.'¹ And yet death's coming is sooner than Christ's personal coming, and then begins the saint's blessed jubilee.

What means shall we use, that we may not wax weary in a Christian course. 1. Let us shake off spiritual sloth; sloth saith, 'there is a lion in the way.' He who is slothful, will soon grow weary; he is fitter to lie on his couch, than to run a race. It is a strange sight, to see a busy devil, and an idle Christian. 2. If we would not grow weary, let us pray for persevering grace. It was David's prayer, 'hold thou me up, and I shall be safe';² and it was Beza's prayer, 'Lord, perfect what thou hast begun in me.' That we may hold on a Christian course, let us labour for three persevering graces. Faith keeps from fainting; faith gives a substance to things not seen, and makes them to be as it were present.³ As a perspective

glass makes those things which are at a distance near to the eye, so doth faith: heaven, and glory seem near. A Christian will not be weary of service, that hath the crown in his eye. The second persevering grace is hope. Hope animates the spirits: it is to the soul as cork to the net, which keeps it from sinking. Hope breeds patience, and patience breeds perseverance. Hope is compared to an anchor: the Christian never sins, but when he casts away his anchor. The third persevering grace is love. Love makes a man that he is never weary. Love may be compared to the rod of myrtle in the traveller's hand, which refresheth him, and keeps him from being weary in his journey. He who loves the world, is never weary of following the world; he who loves God will never be weary of serving him; that is the reason why the saints and angels in heaven are never weary of praising and worshipping God; because their love to God is perfect, and love turns service into delight. Get the love of God in your hearts, and you will run in his ways, and not be weary.

SERMON V.

JAMES 4. 17. *To him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

THE apostle, in the former verses, had met with a sin common in those days, a sinful boasting among men; 'go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow; you may be in your graves before to-morrow; for what is your life? it is even a vapour.' A vapour being an exhalation, it cannot continue long; as it is raised by the sun so it is dispersed by the wind; such is your life, a vapour, a short breath, a flying shadow; it appears for 'a little time, and then vanisheth.' Well might they say, what need we be taught such a plain lesson? who knows not all this, that life is a vapour, and that we ought not to boast what we will do to-morrow? The apostle seems in the text to meet with them by way of answer, do ye know all this? Then the greater is your sin that you do it not, 'to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.' I shall only explain this phrase, 'to him it is sin;' that is, it

is an heinous sin; it is sin with a witness; every infirmity, every thing that falls short of the rule is sin, much more, that which contradicts the rule. This man's sin hath an emphasis, it is a crimson sin, and it shall have a greater punishment; he that 'knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.'⁴ If he that sins ignorantly be damned, then he that sins knowingly shall be double damned. 1. Doctrine implied, that we ought to know to do good; know our duty. 2. That we ought not only to know to do good, but to do it. 3. That he that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, is of all others the most guilty.

I. Doctrine implied, that we ought to know to do good; we ought to be well-informed of those things which are to be done by us, in order to salvation. The word written is a rule of knowledge, and the word preached is a commentary upon the word written; and both of them are to enrich our understanding, and to nurse us up in the knowledge of that which is

¹ Re. 22. 20.

² Ps. 119. 117.

³ He. 11.

⁴ He. 6. 19.

⁵ Lu. 12. 47.

good. The reasons why we should know to do good, are, 1. Knowledge is our lamp and star to guide us in the truth. It shows us what we are to do, and what we are to leave undone. If we do not know that which is good, we can never practise it. 2. Knowledge is the foundation of all grace: of faith: 'they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee;'¹ and of love; 'this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge;'² and of perseverance; the apostle joins these two, such as are unlearned, will be unstable. 3. The chief work in conversion consists in knowledge; 'be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.'³ The mind being renewed, the man is transformed. The first part of God's image consists in knowledge.⁴ 4. There is nothing in religion, though never so excellent, can do us good without knowledge.

USE. See how necessary it is to get the knowledge of what is good; it ushers in salvation.⁵ Ignorance of God is the cause of all sin.⁶ Ignorance of God damns.⁷ It is sad to be ignorant in gospel-times; but many, alas! do not only not know God, but they are not willing to know; 'they refuse to know me, saith the Lord.'⁸

II. Doctrine. That we ought not only to know to do good, but to do it. This the apostle implies, 'to him that knows to do good, and doth it not;' he implies, that he who knows to do good should do it; the end of knowledge is practice. Search from one end of the Bible to the other, and you will find, that it is the practical part of religion is chiefly intended. The crown is not set upon the head of knowledge, but practice; 'blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.'⁹

USE 1. It shows us wherein most Christians are defective in the times of gospel: in the doing part of religion, they know how to do good, but do it not. They know they should abstain from evil and pursue holiness; but though they know this, yet they do it not. (1.) They know they should abstain from evil. Thus they know they should not swear; 'swear not at all;'¹⁰ yet they do it; they are more free of their oaths than their alms. They know uncleanness to be a sin; that it wastes the body, wounds the conscience, blots the name, and damns the soul, yet they will go on in that sin, and for a cup of

pleasure, drink a sea of wrath. They know drunkenness to be a sin; that it doth make them like beasts, takes away their reason, unfits them for happiness, for they cannot think on going reeling to heaven; they know that God is preparing a cup for the drunkard,¹¹ yet for all that, they will not leave their drunken fits. Men know that rash censuring is a sin; 'speak not evil one of another, brethren;'¹² yet they are guilty of this; they will not swear, but they will slander, and speak to the prejudice of others; they can never make them recompense for this: no physician can heal the wounds of the tongue. Thus they know that covetousness is a sin, yea, the root of all evil; yet the world engrosseth all their time and thoughts; they thirst after gold more than grace, and labour more to have a full purse than a good conscience. They know they should not vent their passions; 'if any man among you seems to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, this man's religion is vain.'¹³ Origen observes of the rich man in the gospel, he had no water to cool his tongue: he had sinned most in his tongue, therefore was punished most in it. How unworthy is it for men to have their eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, and their tongues set on fire from hell; at one time praying, and another time cursing? How can such pray in a family, that are possessed with an angry devil? Thus men know they should abstain from evil, but they do it not. (2.) They know they should pursue holiness, but they do it not. They know they should read the word, sanctify the sabbath, use holy conference, pray in their families, redeem the time, walk circumspectly; they know to do good, but do it not.

Whence is it that men know to do good, yet do it not? 1. It is for want of sound conviction. Men are not thoroughly convinced of the necessity of practical godliness; they think there is a necessity of knowledge, because else there is no salvation; they will get some notions of Christ, that he is a Saviour, and has satisfied divine justice, and they hope they believe in him. Well then; we tell them that faith and obedience go together: then God is merciful, and though they are not so good as they should be, yet free grace will save them. Thus men content themselves with general notions of religion, but are not convinced of the practical part of godliness. 2. Men know to do good, yet do it not, because they are not awakened

¹ Ps. 9. 10. ² Ph. 1. 9. ³ Ro. 12. 2. ⁴ Col. 3. 10.

⁵ 1 Ti. 2. 4. ⁶ Je. 9. 3. ⁷ Ho. 4. 6.

⁸ Ja. 9. 6. ⁹ Re. 22. 14. ¹⁰ Mat. 5. 34.

¹¹ Re. 16. 19.

¹² Ja. 4. 11.

¹³ Ja. 1. 26.

out of their spiritual sloth. It is easy to get the knowledge of a truth, to give assent to it, to commend it, to profess it; but to digest knowledge into practice, is the difficulty. 3. Men know to do good, but do it not, through incredulity; they are in part atheists. Did they believe that sin was so bitter, that wrath and hell followed it, would they not leave off their sins? Did they believe that to do the will of God was a privilege, religion was their interest, that there is joy in the way of godliness, and heaven at the end, would they not espouse holiness? But people, though they have some slight transient thoughts of these things, yet they are not brought to the belief of them; therefore though they know to do good, yet they do it not. The reason why there are so few doers of the word, is, because there are so few believers. 4. Men know to do good, but do it not, because the knowledge in their head never works into their hearts; it doth not quicken them, nor warm their affections with love to the truth. 5. Men know to do good, but do it not, because of prejudicate opinion. The things to be done in religion are judged to be too strict and severe; they restrain sin too much, or they press too much to holiness. 6. Men know to do good, yet do it not, because they love their sin more than they love the word; 'they set their heart on their iniquity.'¹ Some content themselves with having means of knowledge; 'then said Micah, now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.'² But what is one the better to know what physic he should take, if he doth not take it.

USE 2. Of exhortation. Let me beseech you all who have been hearers of the word and have gotten a great measure of knowledge, that, as you know to do good, you would do it. This is the soul of religion. Luther says, I had rather do the will of God, than be able to work miracles. To do what you know, evidenceth your relation to Christ. You count it an honour to be near allied to the crown, but it is more honour to be a-kin to Christ. To know to do good, and do it, sets a crown upon the gospel; 'your obedience is come abroad unto all men';³ not your knowledge, but your obedience. To know to do good, and not to do it, hardens others in sin, scandalizeth religion, and makes people ready to turn atheists. When some of the Spaniards came to Hispaniola, the Spaniards'

carriage being loose and profane, the Indians asked them, what God they served? They answered, the God of heaven. The Indians replied, sure your God is not a good God that hath such bad servants. Thus to know to do good, yet do it not, puts a scar in the face of religion, and brings an evil report upon it; but to do what we know, trumpets forth the fame of the gospel, and makes them that oppose it, to admire it. To know to do good and to do it, entitles you to blessedness; 'he shall be blessed in his deed':⁴ not for the deed, but in the deed.

III. Doctrine. That he who knoweth to do good, and doth it not, is of all others the most guilty; to him it is sin, crimson sin; that is, it is heinous sin, capital sin, sin emphatically, sin with a witness, and punished with a vengeance. What is it to sin presumptuously? To sin presumptuously, is to sin against the light which shines in a man's conscience, that is, a man is convinced those things he doth are sin. Conscience saith, O do not this great evil! Conscience, like the cherubims, hath a flaming sword in its hand to affright and deter the sinner; yet he will pluck the forbidden fruit. This is to sin presumptuously. This sin is highly aggravating, for two reasons: (1.) Because sinning presumptuously against conscience is after counsels, admonitions, warnings. Such an one cannot say, he was never told of his sin, he hath had ministers rising up early, who have told him what a damnable thing sin was, yet he would venture on; so that now he hath no excuse; 'now you have no cloak for your sin.'⁵ (2.) It is an aggravation to sin presumptuously against conscience, when it is after afflictions. After God hath made him hear the voice of the rod, he hath made him to feel sin bitter, to read his sin in his punishment, yet he sins; his sin was following evil company, and God hath punished him for it; he hath almost wasted his estate with riotous living, or he hath almost drunk himself blind, yet he will not leave his sin; his sin was uncleanness, and his body is diseased, and full of noxious humours; yet though he feels the smart of sin, he retains the love of sin. Here is an aggravation of sin; 'in the time of his distress, did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz.'⁶

USE 3. To know what is good, yet not to do it, is to sin presumptuously,—is full of obstinacy and pertinaciousness; it is so, because men

¹ Hos. 4. 8.² Ju. 17. 13.³ Ro. 16. 19.⁴ Ja. 1. 25.⁵ Amo 15. 22.⁶ 2 Ch. 28. 22

can say nothing for their sins, can bring no reason, they make no defence for themselves, yet they are resolved to hold fast their iniquity; 'they said, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do after the imagination of his own evil heart.'¹

USE 4. Take heed of presumptuous sin. If God hath been so terrible against sins of infirmity and passion, as we see in Moses and Uzziah: O how fierce will his anger be against the presumptuous sinner! Better never have known the ways of God, than to know and not to do them! Oh! as you love your souls, take heed of this.

1. Presumptuous sins are desperate sins, because they are committed with much premeditation and forethought. The presumptuous sinner doth not sin unawares, but he doth project and cast in his mind how to bring his sin about, as Joseph's brethren did in betraying him, as Judas did in betraying Christ, and as those Jews did that laid wait for Paul. 2. Presumptuous sins are desperate, because they are accompanied with pride. The sinner who knows the mind of God, yet will act contrary to it, says, like Pharaoh, 'who is the Lord that I should obey him?' 3. Presumptuous sins are desperate, because they are accompanied with impudency. Such sinners are hardened, fearless, and without shame. Like Judas, they are hardened; though woes be pronounced against them, they will sin; they are without fear like the leviathan,² and they have sinned away shame; 'the unjust knoweth no shame,'³ he hath a forehead of brass. Nay, some are so far from blushing, that they glory in their shame.⁴ 4. To sin presumptuously, to know what is good, yet not to do it, is heinous, because it is ingratitude; it is an high abuse of God's kindness; and God cannot endure, of all things, to have his kindness abused. God's kindness is seen in this that he hath acquainted the sinner with his mind and will, that he hath not only instructed him, but persuaded him, made mercy stoop and kneel to the sinner, he hath wooed him with his Spirit, that he would flee from sin, and pursue holiness; kindness is seen in this, that God hath spared the sinner so long, and not struck him dead in the act of sin; kindness in this, that though the sinner hath sinned against his conscience, yet now, if he will repent of sin, God will repent of his judgments, and mercy shall be held forth; 'thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me,

saith the Lord.'⁵ But the sinner is of a base spirit; he is not melted with all this love; but his heart like clay hardens under the sun. Here is an apparent abuse of God's kindness; and God cannot endure to have his kindness abused. The vulture draws sickness from perfumes; so the sinner contracts wickedness from the mercy of God. Here is high ingratitude. 5. To sin presumptuously, to know what is good, yet not to do it, is a contempt done to God. He cares not whether God be pleased or not, he will have his sin. Therefore the presumptuous sinner is said to reproach God; 'the soul that doth ought presumptuously, the same reproacheth the Lord;'⁶ he reproacheth the Lord, though not explicitly, yet interpretatively; by his presumptuous sin makes as if God was either ignorant, and did not know his wickedness; or impotent, and was not able to punish him. How horrid is this! there is a kind of blasphemy against God in every presumptuous sin. 6. To sin presumptuously, to know what is good yet not to do it, is a bold contest with God, a daring of God to punish. The man that sins against conscience presumptuously, and will not be reclaimed, doth in effect say, what care I for the commandment? It shall be no check upon me, but I will go on in sin, and let God do his worst. A godly man is said to fear the commandment.⁷ He dares not sin, because the law of God stands in his way; but the presumptuous sinner doth not value the commandment; he will sin in spite of God's law. O desperate madness, to dare God to his face! 'Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?'⁸ Good reason then we should take heed of presumptuous sin, since it is so heinous and desperate! 'to him that knows to do good, yet doth it not, to him it is sin;' it is sin with a witness.

USE 5. Trial. Let us examine if we are not guilty of sinning thus presumptuously, knowing to do good yet not to do it. Is it not to sin presumptuously, when we live in the total neglect of duty? We know we ought to pray in our families, yet do it not. To live in the neglect of family duties, is not this to sin presumptuously? Is it not to sin presumptuously, when we will venture upon the same sins which we condemn in others? Thou (Christian) condemnest another for pride, and yet thou livest in that sin thyself. A father condemns his son for swearing, yet he himself swears: the master

¹ Je. 18. 12. ² Job 41. 33. ³ Za. 3. 5. ⁴ Ph. 3. 19.

⁵ Je. 3. 1. ⁶ Nu. 15. 30. ⁷ Pr. 13. 13. ⁸ 1 Co. 10. 22.

reproves his servant for being drunk, yet he himself will be drunk. Is not this to sin presumptuously, to live in those sins which we condemn in others? Do not they sin presumptuously against conscience, who will sin in spite of heaven? Though they see the judgments of God executed on others, yet will adventure on the same sins? 'And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thy heart, though thou knewest all this:'¹ that is, thou sawest the judgments I inflicted on thy father. Do not they sin presumptuously, they know to do good, yet do it not, who labour to stifle the convictions of their conscience, and will not let conscience speak freely to them? This the scripture calls, 'holding the truth in unrighteousness.'² Do not they sin presumptuously, who after they have felt the smart of sin, it hath bred a worm in their conscience, a moth in their estate; yet, after all this, they again embrace their sins

That I may show you what you have to fear, and that I may beat you off from presumptuous sins, let these things be seriously laid to heart: 1. These presumptuous sins, do much harden the heart. These are two of the greatest blessings, a sound judgment and a soft heart; but sinning presumptuously and knowingly doth congeal the heart, it doth both waste the conscience and sear it.³ By sinning knowingly, a person gets a custom of sin; and the custom of sinning takes away the sense of sinning; 'being past feeling.'⁴ Tell the presumptuous sinner, there are treasures of wrath laid up for him, he fears not; his heart is like a piece of marble or adamant that will take no impression. When men know to do good, yet do it not, their hearts are hardened insensibly, and that is dangerous. 2. Such as sin presumptuously, or they who know to do good, yet do it not, are self-condemned.⁵ The sinner knows in his conscience he is guilty; that he hath sinned against warnings, education, conviction; therefore his own heart does and must condemn him. And when God judges and condemns him, he will clear his judge. 3. Presumptuous sins make deep wounds in the soul. They lead to despair, and despair is the agony of the soul. Spira, in despair, was like a living man in hell; despair did suck out his marrow and vital blood; it made him a very anatomy. The sinner goes on stubbornly, yet his foolish heart tells him all will be well; but, when God begins to set his sins in order before him, and conscience,

which was before like a lion asleep, begins to be awakened and roars upon him, and he sees death and hell before him, now his heart faints, his presumption is turned to despair, and he cries out as Cain; 'my punishment is greater than I can bear.'⁶ Now the sinner begins to think with himself thus: I would have my sins and I had them; and now I have the wrath of God upon them; O how foolish was I to refuse instruction! But it is too late now; the mercy-seat is quite covered with clouds; I am shut out from all hopes of mercy; my wounds are such, that the balm of Gilead will not heal. The more presumption in the time of life, the more despair at the hour of death. 4. To know to do good and not to do it, to sin presumptuously, God may, in just judgment, leave such an one to himself. It is a terrible thing, when God shall say, thou hast, by thy presumptuous sin, affronted me, and provoked me to my face; therefore I will give thee up to thine own heart, thou shalt sin still; seeing thou wilt be filthy, thou shalt be filthy still. 5. To know what is good, yet not to do it; to sin presumptuously, is a great degree of the sin against the Holy Ghost. Such as sin presumptuously, sin wilfully. Though presumption is not final apostasy, yet it comes very near to it; and a little matter more will make thee so guilty, that there remains no more sacrifice for sin. To sin presumptuously against light, may in time bring on malice and despite to the Spirit; as it was with Julian, who threw up his dagger in the air, as if he would be revenged on God. When once it is come to this, there is but one step lower a man can fall, and that is into hell. 6. There is little hope for such as know to do good, yet do it not, know what is evil, but will not forbear. There were sacrifices for sins of ignorance, but no sacrifices for sins of presumption.⁷ Indeed presumptuous sinners hope all will be well; 'the fool rageth and is confident.'⁸ Such a fool is spoken of, 'when he heareth the words of this curse, he blesseth himself in his heart saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but the anger and jealousy of the Lord shall smoke against that man.'⁹ 7. Such as sin presumptuously, that know to do good, yet do it not, know what is evil, yet will not forbear it, God refuseth all their services, whether reading hearing, praying, or communicating. God ab-

¹ Dan. 5. 22. ² Ro. 1. 18. ³ 1 Ti. 4. 2. ⁴ Ep. 4. 19.

⁵ Ti. 3. 11.

⁶ Gen. 4. 13.

⁸ Pr. 11. 10.

⁷ Nu. 15. 30.

⁹ Deut. 29. 19.

hows their sacrifice; 'when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.'¹ 'They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings; but the Lord accepted them not: now will he remember their iniquities, and visit their sins.'² Thus you see what cause you have to tremble, who are guilty in this kind: you see your misery.

Besides all that hath been said, consider these two things. 1. You that sin presumptuously, that know to do good and do it not, that know what is evil, yet will not forbear, you cannot sin so cheap as others; though sin will cost every one dear, yet it will cost you dearer. You go directly against conscience; and if there be either justice in heaven, or fire in hell, you shall be sure to be punished. 2. You who sin presumptuously, cannot take so much pleasure in your sin as another may have. One whose conscience is less enlightened, though his sin will be bitter to him afterwards, yet at present he may roll it as honey under his tongue, and find pleasure in it: but you that sin against your knowledge, you cannot have so much pleasure in sin as he, for conscience will put forth a sting, and all the threatenings of the word will set themselves in battle array against you, so that you can have no quiet. And that trouble thou feelest now in thy conscience, is but the beginning of sorrow.

What shall we do, that we may not sin presumptuously against conscience? 1. Take heed of little sins; though, to speak properly, there

are no such things as little sins, no little treason, but comparatively, one sin may be lesser than another. Take heed of little sins. The frequent committing of lesser sins, will prepare for greater. A lesser distemper of the body, if it be let alone, prepares for a greater distemper; being unjust in a little, prepares for being unjust in much.³ Such as were at first more modest, yet by accustoming themselves to lesser sins, by degrees their sins have grown up to a greater height; jail sins have begun at little sins. 2. If you would not sin presumptuously: knowingly and wilfully; then reverence the dictates of conscience; get conscience well-informed by the word, as you set your watch by the sun, and then be ruled by it; do nothing against conscience. If conscience saith do such a thing, though never so unpleasing, set upon the duty. When conscience saith, take heed of such a thing? come not near the forbidden fruit. Conscience is God's deputy or proxy in the soul; the voice of conscience is the voice of God; do not trifle with checks of conscience, lest God suffer thee to harden in sin, and by degrees come to presumptuous sin. 3. Labour to have your knowledge sanctified. Men sin against their knowledge, because their knowledge is not sanctified. Sanctified knowledge works upon the soul; it inclines us to do good; it makes us flee from sin; sanctified knowledge is like a breastplate, which keeps the arrow of presumptuous sin from entering.

SERMON VI.

Col. iii. 11. *But Christ is all in all.*

THE philosopher saith every science takes its dignity from the object; the more noble the object, the more rare the knowledge. Hence it is, that Jesus Christ being the most sublime and glorious object, that knowledge which leads us to Christ must needs be most excellent; it is called 'the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.'¹ So sweet is this knowledge, that Paul, 'determined to know nothing but Christ.'² And indeed what needed he to know more? for 'Christ is all in all.' In the text there is a negation and an assumption: something the apostle sets down privatively, and something positively.

1st. Privatively. Paul tells the Colossians what will not avail them, 'neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth,' &c. Circumcision was a great privilege; it was a badge and cognizance to distinguish the people of God from those who were foreign; it was a pail between the garden enclosed, and the common. The people of circumcision were a people of God's circumspection, they were under his eye, and his wing, they were his household family; rather than they should want, God would make the heavens a granary, and rain down manna upon them,—he would set the rock abroach, and make it a lively spring. How glorious was cir-

¹ 1st Cor. 1. 13. ² Titos. 8. 13. ³ Ph. 3. 8. ⁴ 1st Cor. 2. 2.

⁵ Lu. 16. 10.

circumcision¹ what rich jewels hung upon Israel's crown! But in matters of salvation, all this was nothing, 'neither circumcision nor uncircumcision.' &c. From whence we may observe, that external privileges commend no man to God; whether wise, or rich, or noble, this doth not set us off in God's eye;² God sees not as man sees. We are taken with beauty and parts; these things avail not with God: God lays his left hand upon these, as Jacob did upon Manasseh.³ God often passeth by those who cast a greater splendour and lustre in the world, and looks upon them of an inferior alloy; the reason is, 'that no flesh should glory in his presence.'⁴ If God should graft his grace only upon wisdom and parts, some would be ready to say, my wisdom, or my eloquence, or my nobility hath saved me; therefore 'not many wise, not many noble are called.' God will have no priding or vaunting in the creature. Use. Rest not in outward privileges or excellencies, these are no stocks to graft the hopes of salvation upon; many of Christ's kindred went to hell. Paul is called, 'the servant of the Lord,' and James is called 'the brother of the Lord.'⁵ It is better to be the servant of the Lord, than the brother of the Lord. The virgin Mary was saved, not as she was the mother of Christ, but as she was the daughter of faith; it is grace, not blood, gives the precedency; an heart that hath Christ formed in it, is God's delight, and this brings me to the next.

2d. The apostle sets down something positively; but 'Christ is all in all;' in which words there is, 1. The subject, Christ. His name is sweet, it is 'as ointment poured forth.'⁶ It was Job's wish, 'O that my words were now written! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!' And it is my wish, O that this name, this sweet name, of Christ, were now written, that it were graven with the pen of the Holy Ghost in our hearts for ever. The name of Christ hath in it, saith Chrysostom, a thousand treasures of joy. 2. The predicate, 'all in all.' Christ is all fulness, all sweetness; he is all that is imaginable, all that is desirable; he who hath Christ, can have no more, for 'Christ is all.'

The proposition out of the words, is that Jesus Christ is the quintessence of all good things, 'he is all.' 1. Sometimes faith is said to be all.⁷ Nothing availeth but faith; faith is

all, as it is an instrument to lay hold on Christ, whereby we are saved; as a man is saved by catching hold on a bough. 2. Sometimes the new creature is said to be all.⁸ Nothing availeth 'but a new creature;' the new creature is all, as it qualifies and fits for glory; 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.'⁹ It is a saying of Chrysostom, at the day of judgment God will ask that question, as our saviour did, 'whose is this image and superscription.'¹⁰ So will God say, whose image is this? If thou canst not show him his image consisting in holiness, he will reject thee; thus the new creature is all. 3. Here in the text Christ is said to be all; but in what sense is Christ all? (1.) Christ is all by way of eminency; all good things are eminently to be found in him, as the sun doth virtually contain in it the light of the lesser stars. (2.) Christ is all, by way of derivation; all good things are transmitted and conveyed to us through Christ; as your rich commodities, jewels and spices come by sea, so all heavenly blessings sail to us through the red sea of Christ's blood; 'through him and to him are all things.'¹¹ Christ is that spiritual pipe, through which the golden oil of mercy empties itself into the soul. Christ must needs be all, for 'in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead.'¹² He hath a partnership with God the Father; 'all things that the Father hath are mine;¹³ so that there is enough in him to scatter all our fears, to remove all our burdens, to supply all our wants; there can be no defect in that which is infinite.

USE 1st. Information. And it hath six branches.

1st. It shows us the glorious fulness of Jesus Christ; 'he is all in all.' Christ is a panoply, a magazine and storehouse of all spiritual riches; you may go with the bee from flower to flower, and suck here and there a little sweetness, but you will never have enough till you come to Christ, for he is 'all in all.' Now in particular, Christ is all in six respects: (1.) Christ is all in regard of righteousness: 'he is made to us righteousness.'¹⁴ The robe of innocency, like the vail of the temple, is rent asunder, ours is a ragged righteousness: 'our righteousness is as filthy rags.'¹⁵ As under rags the naked body is seen; so under the rags of our righteousness, the body of death is seen; we can defile our duties, but they cannot justify us; but Christ is all in regard of righteousness: 'Christ is the

¹ Ro. 9. 4. 5. ² 1 Co. 1. 26. ³ Ge. 48. 14. ⁴ 1 Co. 1. 29.
⁵ Gal. 1. 19. ⁶ Ca. 1. 3. ⁷ Gal. 5. 6.

⁸ Gal. 6. 15. ⁹ He. 12. 14. ¹⁰ Mat. 22. 20. ¹¹ Ro. 11. 36
¹² Col. 2. 9. ¹³ Joh. 16. 15. ¹⁴ 1 Co. 1. 30. ¹⁵ Is. 64. 6.

end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth:¹ that is, through Christ we are as righteous as if we had satisfied the law in our own persons. Jacob got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother: so in the garment of Christ our elder brother, we obtain the blessing; Christ's righteousness is a coat woven without seam: 'we are made the righteousness of God in him.' (2.) Christ is all in regard of sanctification: 'he is made to us sanctification.'² Sanctification is the spiritual enamel and embroidery of the soul; it is nothing else but God's putting upon us the jewels of holiness; the angels glory by it, we are made as the king's daughter, 'all glorious within.'³ This doth tune and prepare the soul for heaven; it turns iron into gold; it makes the heart which was Satan's picture, Christ's epistle. The virgins,⁴ had their 'days of purification;' they were first to be perfumed and anointed, and then they were to stand before the king; we must have the anointing of God,⁵ and be perfumed with the graces of the Spirit, those sweet odours; and then we shall stand before the King of heaven. There must be first our days of purification before our days of glorification. What a blessed work is this! a soul beautified and adorned with grace, is like the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. O what a metamorphose is there! I may allude to that;⁶ so, who is this that comes out of the wilderness of sin, perfumed with all the graces of the Spirit? Holiness is the signature and engraving of God upon the soul. But whence is this? Christ is all; he is made to us sanctification; he it is that sends his Spirit into our hearts to be a refiner's fire, to burn up our dross, and make our graces sparkle like gold in the furnace; Christ ariseth upon the soul 'with healing in his wings.'⁷ He heals the understanding, and saith, 'let there be light;' he heals the heart by dissolving the stone in his blood; he heals the will, by filing off its rebellion. Thus he is all in regard of sanctification. (3.) Christ is all in regard of divine acceptance.⁸ He hath made us favourites; so Chrysostom and Theophylact render it; through Christ God is propitious to us, and takes all we do in good part. A wicked man being out of Christ, is out of favour; as his ploughing is sin,⁹ so his praying is sin.¹⁰ God will not come near him, his breath is infectious; God will hear his sins,

and not his prayers; but now in Christ God accepts us.¹¹ As Joseph did present his brethren before Pharaoh, and brought them into favour with the king,¹² so the Lord Jesus carries the names of the saints upon his breast, and presents them before his Father, so bringing them into repute and honour; through Christ God will treat and parley with us.¹³ Through the red glass every thing appears of a red colour; through the blood of Christ we look of a sanguine complexion, ruddy and beautiful in God's eyes. (4.) Christ is all in regard of divine assistance; a Christian's strength lies in Christ.¹⁴ Whence is it a Christian is able to do duty, to resist temptation, but through Christ's strengthening? Whence is it that a sparkle of grace lives in a sea of corruption, the storms of persecution blowing, but that Christ holds this sparkle in the hollow of his hand? Whence is it that the roaring lion hath not devoured the saints, but that the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath defended them? Christ not only gives us our crown but our shield; he not only gives us our garland when we overcome, but our strength whereby we overcome; 'they overcame him, that is, the accuser of the brethren, by the blood of the Lamb.'¹⁵ Christ keeps the fort-royal of grace that it be not blown up; Peter's shield was bruised, but Christ kept it that it was not broken: 'I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not,' that it be not in a total eclipse. The crown of all the saints' victories must be set upon the head of Christ.¹⁶ Write the name of Michael upon all your conquests. (5.) Christ is all in regard of pacification; when conscience is in an agony, and burns as hell in the sense of God's wrath; now Christ is all, he pours the balm of his blood into these wounds, he maketh the storm a calm. Christ doth not only make peace in the court of heaven, but in the court of conscience; he not only makes peace above us, but within us.¹⁷ Saith Cyprian, all our golden streams of peace flow from this fountain: 'peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.'¹⁸ Jesus Christ not only purchased peace for us, but speaks peace to us, he is called the 'Prince of peace.'¹⁹ Thus Christ is all in regard of pacification, he makes peace for us, and in us, this honey and oil flow out of the rock Christ. (6.) Christ is all in regard of remuneration; he it is that crowns us after all our labours and sufferings; he died to

¹ Ro. 10. 4. ² 1 Cor. 1. 30. ³ Ps. 45. 13. ⁴ Es. 2. 12.⁵ 1 Jno. 2. 27. ⁶ Can. 3. 6. ⁷ Ma. 4. 2.⁸ Ep. 1. 6. ⁹ Pr. 21. 4. ¹⁰ Pr. 15. 8.¹¹ Ec. 9. 7.¹² Ge. 47. 2.¹³ Is. 42. 4.¹⁴ Ph. 4. 13.¹⁵ Re. 12. 11.¹⁶ Ro. 8. 38.¹⁷ Jno. 16.¹⁸ Jno. 11. 27.¹⁹ Is. 9. 6.

advance us; his lying in the wine-press, was to bring us into the wine-cellar; he is gone before, to take possession of heaven in the name of all believers: 'whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus.' Christ is gone to bespeak a place for the saints;² he makes heaven ready for them, and makes them ready for heaven. Thus Christ is all in regard of remuneration: 'behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.'³

2d. If Christ be all, it shows what a vast disproportion there is between Christ and the creature; there is as much difference as between *ens* and *nilhil*; Christ is all in all, and the creature is nothing at all: 'wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?'⁴ The creature is a nonentity; though it hath a physical existence, yet considered theologically, it is nothing; it is but a gilded shadow, a pleasant fancy; when Solomon had sifted up the finest flour, and distilled the spirit of all created excellency, here is the result, 'ALL WAS VANITY.'⁵ We read the earth in the creation was void;⁶ so are all earthly comforts void; they are void of that which we think is in them, they are void of satisfaction, therefore they are compared to wind.⁷ A man can no more fill his heart with the world, than he can fill his belly with the air he draws in. Now the creature is said to be nothing, in a threefold sense. 1. It is nothing to a man in trouble of spirit; if the spirit be wounded, outward things will no more give ease than a crown of gold will cure the headach. 2. The creature is nothing to a man that hath heaven in his eye; when St Paul had seen that light shining from heaven, surpassing the glory of the sun,⁸ though his eyes were open, 'he saw no man:'⁹ so he that hath the glory of heaven in his eye, is blind to the world, he sees nothing in it to allure him, or make him willing to stay here. 3. The creature is nothing to one that is dying. A man at the hour of death is most serious, and is able to give the truest verdict of things; now at such a time the world is nothing, it is in an eclipse; the sorrow of it is real, but the joy imaginary. O then what a vast difference is there between Christ and the creature! Christ is 'all in all,' and the creature nothing at all; yet how many damn their souls for nothing?

3d. It shows whither the soul is to go in the want of all. Go to Christ who is all in all. Dost thou want grace? go to Christ, 'in whom

ledge.' Christ is the great Lord treasurer; go then to Christ: say, 'Lord, I am indigent of grace, but in thee are all my fresh springs, fill my cistern from thy spring. Lord, I am blind, thou hast eye-salve to anoint me; I am defiled, thou hast water to cleanse me; my heart is hard, thou hast blood to soften me; I am empty of grace, bring thy fulness to my emptiness.' In all our spiritual wants, we should repair to Christ, as Jacob's sons did to their brother Joseph. He opened all the store-houses, and 'gave to his brethren corn and provision for the way. Thus the Lord hath made Christ our Joseph; 'in whom are hid all treasures.'¹⁰ O then, sinners, make out to Christ; he is 'all in all,' and to encourage you to go to him, remember there is in him not only fulness, but freeness. 'O every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!' Christ is not only full as the honey-comb, but he drops as the honey-comb.

4th. If Christ be all, see here the Christian's inventory, how rich is he that hath Christ! he hath all that may make him completely happy. Plutarch reports that the wife of Phocion being asked where her jewels were, she answered, 'my husband, and his triumphs are my jewels!' so, if a Christian be asked, where are his riches, he will say, 'Christ is my riches.' A true saint cannot be poor; if you look into his house, perhaps he hath scarce a bed to lie on; 'even to this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling-place.'¹¹ Come to many a child of God, and bid him make his will, he saith as Peter, 'silver and gold have I none:'¹² yet he can at the same time make his triumph with the apostle, 'as having nothing, yet possessing all';¹³ he hath Christ who is all. When a believer can call nothing his, he can say all is his. The tabernacle was covered with badgers' skins, yet most of it was of gold; so a saint may have a poor covering, ragged clothes, but he is inlaid with gold; 'Christ is formed in his heart,' and so he is all glorious within.

5th. How could a Christian sit down satisfied with Christ! 'Christ is all.' What though he wants other things, is not Christ enough? If a man hath sunshine, he doth not complain he wants the light of a candle: hath he not enough who hath 'the unsearchable riches of Christ?' I have read of a godly man, who being blind, his friend asked him if he was not troubled for the want of his sight; he confessed he was;

¹ He. 6, 20. ² Jno. 11, 2. ³ Rev. 22, 12. ⁴ Pr. 23, 5. ⁵ Ec. 2, 11. ⁶ Gen. 1, 2. ⁷ Ho. 12, 1. ⁸ Ac. 26, 13. ⁹ Ac. 9, 8.

¹⁰ Col. 2, 3. ¹² Ac. 3, 6.

¹¹ 1 Co. 4, 11. ¹³ 2 Co. 6, 10.

‘ why, ’ saith his friend, ‘ are you troubled because you want that which flies have, when you have that which angels have? ’ So I say to a Christian, why art thou troubled for wanting that which a reprobate has, when thou hast that which the glorified saints have? Thou hast Christ with all his perquisites and royalties! Suppose a father should deny his son furniture for his house, but should settle all his land upon him, had he any cause to complain? If God denies thee a little furniture in the world, but in the mean time settles his land upon thee, he gives thee the field wherein the pearl of price is hid, hast thou any cause to repine? a Christian that wants necessaries, yet having Christ, he hath the one thing needful; ‘ ye are complete in him. ’¹ What! complete in Christ, and not content with Christ? Luther saith, the sea of God’s mercy should swallow up our particular afflictions; surely this sea of God’s love in giving us Christ, should drown all our complaints and grievances; let the Christian take the harp and the viol, and bless God.

6th. If Christ be all, see the deplorable condition of a Christless person; he is poor, he is worth nothing; ‘ thou art wretched, miserable and poor, ’² &c. The sadness of a man that wants Christ, will appear in these seven particulars. (1.) He hath no justification. What a glorious thing is it when a poor sinner is absolved from guilt; but this privilege flows from Christ; all pardons are sealed in his blood; ‘ by him all that believe are justified; ’³ so that he who is out of Christ is unjustified; the guilt of sin cleaves to him; he must be responsible to justice in his own person, and the curse stands in full force against the sinner. (2.) He that wants Christ, wants the beauty of holiness; Jesus Christ is a living spring of grace; ‘ full of grace and truth. ’⁴ Now a Christless person, is a graceless person, he hath not one shred of holiness. The scions must first be ingrafted into the stock, before it can receive sap and influence from the root; we must first be ingrafted into Christ, before we can ‘ of his fulness receive grace for grace. ’⁵ A man out of Christ is red with guilt, and black with filth; he is an unhallowed person, and dying in that condition, is rendered incapable of seeing God;⁶ (3.) He that wants Christ, hath no true nobility; it is through Christ that we are a-kin to God, of the blood-royal of heaven; it is through Christ that ‘ God is not ashamed to be called our

God. ’ But out of Christ we are looked upon as ignoble persons; the traitors’ blood runs in our veins; a man out of Christ is base born; whoever is his natural father, the devil is his spiritual father. (4.) He that wants Christ, wants his freedom; ‘ if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed. ’⁷ A man out of Christ, is a slave, when he sins most freely. (5.) He that wants Christ, hath no ability for service; he is as Samson, when his locks were cut, his strength is gone from him, he wants a vital principle, he cannot walk with God, he is like a dead member in the body, that hath neither strength nor motion; ‘ without me ye can do nothing. ’⁸ The organs will make no sound, unless you blow in them: so unless Christ by his Spirit breathe in the soul, it cannot make any harmony, or put forth strength to any holy action. (6.) He that wants Christ, hath no consolation; Christ is called ‘ the consolation of Israel. ’⁹ A Christless soul is a comfortless soul; how can such an one have comfort when he comes to die? He is in debt, and hath no surety; his wounds bleed, and he hath no physician; he sees the fire of God’s wrath approaching, and hath no screen to keep it off; he is like a ship in a tempest; sickness begins to make a tempest in his body, and sin to make a tempest in his conscience, and he hath no where to put in for harbour; oh the terror and anguish of such a man at the hour of death! ‘ their face shall be as flames; ’¹⁰ an elegant expression. The meaning is, such fear and horror shall seize upon sinners in the evil day, that their countenances shall change and be as pale as a flame. What are all the comforts of the world to a dying sinner? He looks upon his friends, but they cannot comfort him; bring his bags of gold and silver, they are as smoke to sore eyes, it grieves him to part with them; bring him music, what comfort is the harp and viol to a condemned man? There are in Spain tarantulas, venomous spiders, and those who are stung with them, are almost dead, but are cured with music; but those that die without Christ, who is the consolation of Israel, are in such hellish pangs and agonies, that no music is able to cure them. (7.) He that wants Christ, hath no salvation. ‘ He is the Saviour of the body; ’¹¹ he saves none but those who are members of his body mystical; a strong scripture against the doctrine of universal redemption; Christ leaped into the sea of his father’s wrath, only

¹ Col. 2. 10.² Rev. 3. 17.³ Ac. 13. 39.⁴ Jno. 1. 14.⁵ Jno. 1. 16.⁶ Heb. 12. 14.⁷ He. 11. 16.⁸ Jno. 8. 36⁹ Jno. 15. 5.¹⁰ Lu. 2. 25.¹¹ Is. 13. 8.¹² Eph. 5. 23.

to save his spouse from drowning; 'he is the Saviour of the body;' so that those who die out of Christ, are cut off from all hopes of salvation.

USE 2d. It reproves them who busy themselves about other things with a neglect of Christ: 'wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?'¹ If you get all the world, you are but golden beggars without Christ. The physician finds out noxious diseases, but is ignorant of soul-diseases; and while he gets receipts to cure others, he neglects the receipt of Christ's blood to cure himself. The lawyer while he clears other men's titles to their land, he himself wants a title to Christ. The tradesman is busied in buying and selling, but neglects to trade for the pearl of price; like Israel, who went up and down to gather straw, or like the loadstone, that draws iron to it, but refuseth gold. Those who mind the world, so as to neglect Christ, their work is but spider-work: 'Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity?'²

1. If Christ be all, then set a high valuation upon Jesus Christ; 'to you which believe, he is precious.'³ If there were a jewel which contained in it the worth of all jewels, would you not prize that? Such a jewel is Christ; so precious is he, that St Paul counted all things 'dung,' that he 'might win Christ.'⁴ O that I could raise the appreciation of Jesus Christ! Prize Christ above your estates, above your relations; that man doth not deserve Christ at all, who doth not prize Christ above all. Jesus Christ is an incomprehensible blessing; whatever God can require for satisfaction, or can desire for salvation, is to be found in Christ; O then let him be the highest in our esteem! No writing shall please me, saith St Bernard, if I do not read the name of Christ there. The name of Christ is the only music to a Christian's ear, and the blood of Christ is the only cordial to a Christian's heart.

2. If Jesus Christ be all, then make sure of Christ; never leave trading in ordinances, till you have gotten this pearl of price. In Christ there is the accumulation of all good things; O then let not your souls be quiet, till this bundle of myrrh lie between your breasts!⁵ In other things we strive for property, this house is mine, these jewels are mine, and why is not this

Christ mine? There are only two words which will satisfy the soul, Deity and property. What was it better for the old world they had an ark, as long as they did not get into the ark?

And that I may persuade all to get Christ, let me show what an enriching blessing Christ is. (1.) Christ is a supreme good; put what you will in the balance with Christ, he doth infinitely outweigh. Is life sweet? Christ is better: he is the life of the soul;⁶ 'his loving-kindness, is better than life.'⁷ Are relations sweet? Christ is better: he is the friend that 'sticks closer than a brother.' (2.) Christ is a sufficient good; he who hath Christ, needs no more; he who hath the ocean, needs not the cistern. If one had a manuscript that contained all manner of learning in it, having all the arts and sciences, he need look in no other book, so he that hath Christ, needs look no further. Christ gives grace and glory:⁸ the one to cleanse us, the other to crown us; as Jacob said, 'it is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive,' so he that hath Christ, may say, it is enough, Jesus is yet alive. (3.) Christ is a suitable good; in him dwells all fulness;⁹ he is whatever the soul can desire, &c. Christ is beauty to adorn, gold to enrich, balm to heal, bread to strengthen, wine to comfort, salvation to crown; if we are in danger, Christ is a shield, if we are disconsolate, he is a sun; he hath enough in his wardrobe abundantly to furnish the soul. (4.) Christ is a sanctifying good, he makes every condition happy to us, he sweetens all our comforts, and sanctifies all our crosses. Christ sweetens all our comforts; he turns them into blessings; health is blessed; estate is blessed; relations are blessed. Christ's love is as the pouring sweet water on flowers, which makes them cast a more fragrant perfume. A wicked man cannot have that comfort in outward things which a godly man hath; he may possess more, but he enjoys less; he who hath Christ may say, this mercy is reached to me by the hand of my Saviour, this is a love-token from him, an earnest of glory. Christ sanctifies all our crosses, they shall be medicinal to the soul; they shall work sin out, and work grace in. God's stretching the strings of his viol, is to tune it, and make the music better: Christ sees to it that his people loose nothing in the furnace but their drossy impurities. (5.) Christ is a rare blessing, there are but few that have him; the best things when they grow com-

¹ Is. 55. 2. ² Ha. 2. 13. ³ 1 Pe. 2. 7.

⁴ Ph. 3. 8. ⁵ Can. 1. 13.

⁶ Col. 3. 4. ⁷ Ps. 63. 3. ⁸ Ps. 84. 11. ⁹ Col. 1. 19.

mon, begin to be slighted; when silver was in 'Jerusalem as stones,' it was apt to be trod upon; Christ is a jewel that few are enriched with, which may both raise our esteem of him, and quicken our pursuit after him; those to whom God hath given both the Indies, he hath not given them Christ; they have the fat of the earth, but not the dew of heaven; and among us protestants, many who hear of Christ, but few that have him. There are many in this city who have Christ sounded in their ears, but few who have Christ formed in their hearts. O how should we labour to be of this few! They who are Christians, should be restless. (6.) Christ is a select choice good. God shows more love in giving us Christ, than in giving us crowns and kingdoms. God may give us other things, and hate us; but in giving Christ to a man, he gives him the blessings of the throne. What though others have a crutch to lean on, if thou hast a Christ to lean on? Abraham sent away the sons of the concubines with gifts, but 'he gave all he had to Isaac.'¹ God may send away others with a little gold and silver; but if he gives thee Christ, he gives thee all that ever he hath; for 'Christ is all, and in all.' (7.) Christ is such a good, as without which nothing is good, without Christ health is not good, it is fuel for lust; riches are not good, they are golden snares; ordinances are not good, though they are good in themselves, yet not good to us, they profit not, they are as breasts without milk, as bottles without wine, nay, they are not only a dead letter, but a savour of death; without Christ, they will damn us; for want of Christ, millions go loaded to hell with ordinances. (8.) Christ is an enduring good; other things are like the lamp, which while it shines it spends, the heavens 'shall wax old like a garment.'² But Jesus Christ is a permanent good, with him are durable riches.³ They last as long as eternity itself lasts. (9.) Christ is a diffusive communicative good; he is full, not only as a vessel, but as a spring, he is willing to give himself to us. Now then if there be all this excellency in Jesus Christ, it may make us ambitiously desirous of an interest in him.

But how shall I get a part in Christ? 1. See your need of Christ, know that you are undone without him. How obnoxious are you to God's eye! how odious to his nature! how obnoxious to his justice! O sinner, how near is the ser-

geant to arrest thee! The furnace of hell is heating for thee, and what wilt thou do without Christ? It is only the Lord Jesus can stand as a screen to keep off the fire of God's wrath from burning thee. Tell me then, is there not need of Christ? 2. Be importunate after Christ. 'Lord, give me Christ, or I die!' As Achsah said to her father Caleb, 'thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water:' so should a poor soul say, 'Lord, thou hast given me an estate in the world, but this south land will not quench my thirst, give me also springs of water; give me those living springs which run in my Saviour's blood; thou hast said, 'let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely';⁴ Lord I thirst after Jesus Christ, nothing but Christ will satisfy me; I am dead, I am damned without him, O give me this water of life!' 3. Be content to have Christ, as Christ is offered, a Prince and a Saviour.⁵ Be sure you do not compound or indent with Christ. Some would have Christ and their sins too. Is Christ all, and will you not part with something for this all? Christ would have you part with nothing but what will damn you, if you keep, namely, your sins. There are some bid fair for Christ, they will part with some sins, but keep a reserve. Doth that man think he shall have Christ's love that feeds sin in a corner? O part with all for him who is all! Part with thy lusts, nay thy life if Christ calls. It exhorts us not only to get Christ, but to labour to know that we have Christ; 'hereby ye do know that we know him.'⁶ This reflex act of faith is more than the direct act. Some divines call it the preception, or sensible feeling of faith.

Now concerning this knowledge that Christ is ours—which is the same with assurance—I shall lay down these four corollaries or conclusions:

First. That this knowledge is feasible,—it may be had; 'these things have I written to you that believe, that ye may know ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.'⁷ 1. Why else doth God bid us make our 'calling and election sure.'⁸ if assurance may not be had? and to 'prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith,'⁹ if we cannot come to this knowledge that Christ is ours? 2. What are all the signs which the scripture gives of a man in Christ but so many ciphers, if the knowledge of this

¹ Ge. 25.² Ps. 102. 26.³ Pr. 8. 18.⁴ Re. 22. 17, 18.⁵ Ac. 5. 31.⁶ Jno. 2. 3.⁷ 1 Jno. 5. 13.⁸ 2 Pe. 1. 10.⁹ 2 Cor. 13. 5.

interest may not be had? 3. There are some duties enjoined in scripture which to perform is utterly impossible, if the knowledge of an interest in Christ be not attainable; we are bid 'to rejoice in God,'² and 'to rejoice in tribulation.'³ How can he rejoice in suffering, who doth not know whether Christ be his or not? 4. Why hath Christ promised to send the Comforter,⁴ whose very work it is to bring the heart to this assurance, if assurance that Christ is ours may not be had? 5. Some of the saints have arrived at this certainty of knowledge; therefore it may be had. Job knew that his Redeemer lived,⁵ and Paul had this assurance.⁶ Yea, may some say, Paul was an eminent believer, a Christian of the first magnitude, no wonder if he had this jewel of assurance! nay, but the apostle speaks of it as a case incident to other believers; 'who shall separate us from the love of Christ?'⁷ He doth not say, 'who shall separate *me*?' but *us*! so that by all it appears that a believer may come to spell out his interest. Caution 1. Not that the saints have always the same certainty, or that they have such an assurance as excludes all doubtings and conflicts; there will be flowings and ebbings in their comforts, as well as in their graces. Was it not so in David? Sometimes we hear him say, God's loving-kindness was before his eyes:⁸ as it is a proverbial speech, 'I have such a thing in my eye, I see it just before me.' But at another time, 'where are thy former loving-kindnesses?'⁹ These doubtings and convulsions God suffers in his children sometimes, that they may long the more for heaven, where they shall have a constant spring-tide of joy. Caution 2. Not that all believers have the same assurance. Assurance is rather the fruit of faith, than faith: now as the root of the rose or tulip may be alive, where the flower is not visible, so faith may live in the heart, where the flower of assurance doth not appear.

Secondly. Assurance is difficult to be obtained; it is a rare jewel, but hard to come by; not many Christians have this jewel. God sees it good sometimes to withdraw assurance from his people, that they may walk humbly. Satan doth what he can to way-lay and obstruct our assurance; he is called 'the red dragon.'¹⁰ If he cannot blot a Christian's evidence, yet sometimes he casts such a mist before his eyes, that he cannot read his evidence; the devil envies

that God should have any glory, or the soul any comfort. That we want assurance, the fault for the most is our own; we walk carelessly, neglect our spiritual watch, let go our hold of promises, comply with temptations; no wonder then if we walk in darkness, and are at such a loss, that we cannot tell whether Christ be ours or not.

Thirdly. Assurance is very sweet; this wine of paradise cheers the heart.

Fourthly. Assurance is very useful. It will put us upon service for Christ. (1.) It will put us upon active obedience. Assurance will not, as the Papists say, breed security in the soul, but agility; it will make us mount up with wings, as eagles, in holy duties; faith makes us living, assurance makes us lively; if we know that Christ is ours, we shall never think we can love him enough, or serve him enough; 'the love of Christ constrains us.'¹¹ (2.) Assurance will put us upon passive obedience; 'we glory in tribulation, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts.'¹² Mr. Fox speaks of a woman in Queen Mary's days, who, when the adversaries threatened to take her husband from her, answered, 'Christ is my husband;' when they threatened to take away her children, she answered, 'Christ is better to me than ten sons;' when they threatened to take away all from her, saith she, 'Christ is mine, and you cannot take away him from me.' No wonder Paul was willing to be bound and die for Christ,¹³ when he knew that Christ loved him, and had given himself for him.¹⁴ Though I will not say, Paul was proud of his chain, yet he was glad of it, he wore it as a chain of pearl.

But how shall I get this jewel of assurance?

1. Make duty familiar to you. When the spouse sought Christ diligently, she found him joyfully.¹⁵ 2. Preserve the virginity of conscience. When the glass is full you will not pour wine into it, but when it is empty: so when the soul is cleansed from the love of every sin, now God will pour in the sweet wine of assurance; 'let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.'¹⁶ 3. Be much in the actings of faith; the more active the child is in obedience, the sooner he hath his father's smile; if faith be ready to die.¹ If it be like armour hung up, or like a sleepy habit in the soul, never look for assurance. 4. If Christ be all, then make him so to you.

¹ 1 Jno. 3. 14. Jno. 4. 13. ² Phil. 4. 4. ³ 1 Pet. 4. 13.
⁴ Jno. 14. 16. ⁵ Job 19. 25. ⁶ 2 Tim. 1. 12. Gal. 2. 20.
⁷ Rom. 8. 35. ⁸ Ps. 26. 3. ⁹ Ps. 89. 49. ¹⁰ Rev. 12. 3.

¹¹ 2 Cor. 5. 14. ¹² Ro. 5. 3, 5. ¹³ Ac. 21. 13. ¹⁴ Gal. 3. 20.
¹⁵ Can. 3. 4. ¹⁶ He. 10. 22. ¹⁷ Rev. 3. 2.

(1.) Make Christ all in your understanding, be ambitious to know nothing but Christ.¹ What is it to have knowledge in physic? To be able with Esculapius and Galen to discourse of the causes and symptoms of a disease, and what is proper to apply, and in the mean time to be ignorant of the healing under Christ's wings? What is it to have knowledge in astronomy, to discourse of the stars and planets, and to be ignorant of Christ, that bright morning-star which leads to heaven? What is it to have skill in a shop, and be ignorant of that commodity which doth both enrich and crown? What is it to be versed in music, and to be ignorant of Christ, whose blood makes atonement in heaven, and music in the conscience? What is it to know all the stratagems of war, and to be ignorant of 'the Prince of peace?' O make Christ all; be willing to know nothing but Christ; though you may know other things in their due place, yet know Christ in the first place; let the knowledge of Jesus Christ have the pre-eminence; as the sun among the lesser planets. This is the crowning knowledge; 'the prudent are crowned with knowledge.'² We cannot know ourselves unless we know Christ, he it is who lights us into our hearts and shews us the spots of our souls, whereby we abhor ourselves in dust and ashes. Christ shows us our own vacuity and indigency; and until we see our own emptiness, we are not fit to be filled with the golden oil of mercy. We cannot know God, but through Christ.³ (2.) Make Christ all in your affections. Desire nothing but Christ; he is the accumulation of all good things. 'Ye are complete in him.' Christ is the Christian's perfection; what should the soul desire less? What can it desire more? Love nothing but Christ; love is the choicest affection, it is the richest jewel the creature hath to bestow; O if Christ be all, love him better than all! Consider, if you love other things, when they die, your love is lost; but Christ lives for ever to requite your love. You may love other things in the excess, but you cannot love Christ in the excess. When you love other things, you love that which is worse than yourselves; if you love a fair house, a pleasant garden, a curious picture, these things are worse than yourselves; if I would love any thing more intensely and ardently, it should be something which is better than myself, and that is Jesus Christ. He who is all, let him have

all: give him your love who desires it most, and deserves it best. (3.) Make Christ all in your abilities, do all in his strength, 'be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.'⁴ When you are to resist a temptation, to mortify a corruption, do not go out in your own strength, but in the strength of Christ: 'be strong in the Lord.' Some go out to duty in the strength of parts, and go out against sin in the strength of resolution, and they come home foiled. Alas! What are our resolutions, but like the green withes which did bind Samson! A sinful heart will soon break these; do as David when he was to go up against Goliath; saith he, 'I come to thee in the name of the Lord.' So say to thy Goliath lust, I come to thee in the name of Christ. Then we conquer, when the Lion of the tribe of Judah marches before us. (4.) Make Christ all in your aims; do all to his glory. (5.) Make Christ all in your affiance; trust to none but Christ for salvation; the Papists make Christ something but not all. And is there not naturally a spice of popery in our hearts? We would be grafting happiness upon the stock of our own righteousness. 'Every man,' saith Luther, 'is born with a pope in his heart.' O make Christ all in regard of recumbency; let him be your city of refuge to flee to, and your ark. (6.) Make Christ all in your joy. 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁵ O Christian, hast thou seen the Lord Jesus? hath this morning-star shone into thy heart with its enlightening, quickening beams? Then rejoice and be exceeding glad. Shall others rejoice in the world; and will not you rejoice in Christ? How much better is he than all other things? It reflects disparagement upon Christ when his saints are sad and drooping. Is not Christ yours, what would you have more?

OBJ. 1st. But, saith one, 'I am low in the world, and that takes off the chariot-wheels of my joy, and makes me drive heavily.' But hast thou not Christ? and is not Christ all?⁶

OBJ. 2d. If indeed I knew Christ were mine, then I could rejoice; but how shall I know that? 1. Is thy soul filled with pantings after Christ? Dost thou desire as well water out of Christ's side to cleanse thee, as blood out of his side to save thee? These sighs and groans are stirred up by the Spirit of God; by the beating of this pulse, judge of the life of faith in thee. 2. Hast thou given up thyself by an

¹ 1 Co. 2. 2.² Pr. 14. 15.³ 2 Co. 4. 6.⁴ Eph. 6. 10.⁵ Gal. 6. 11.⁶ Ps. 16. 5, 6

universal subjection to Christ? this is a good sign that Christ is thine. 3. Be thankful for Christ; God hath done more for you in giving you Christ, than if he had set you with the princes of the earth, or had made you angels; or had given you the whole world. In short, God cannot give a greater gift than Christ; for in giving Christ he gives himself to us; and all this calls aloud for thankfulness.

USE *ult.* Here is a breast of comfort to every man that hath Christ, 'Christ is all;' it is good lying at this fountain-head. When a Christian sees a deficiency in himself, he may see an all-sufficiency in his Saviour: 'happy is that people whose God is the Lord!'¹ That servant

needs not want who hath his master's full purse at command: he needs not want who hath Christ, for 'Christ is all and in all.' What though the fig-tree doth not flourish, if thou hast Christ the tree of life, and all fruit growing there? In the hour of death, a believer may rejoice; when he leaves all, he is possessed of all. As Ambrose said to his friend, 'I fear not death, because I have a good Lord,' so may a godly man say, 'I fear not death, because I have a Christ to go to; death will but carry me to that torrent of divine pleasure which runs at his right hand for evermore.' I will end with that; 'wherefore, comfort one another with these words.'²

SERMON VII.

PHIL. 4. 9. *Those things which you have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do, and the God of peace shall be with you.*

WHAT the particular reason of my choice of this scripture this day is, if you compare my present situation,† with the intent of the apostle, in these words, you will easily understand. These words of the apostle, being part of the close of his epistle to the Philippians, are his valediction or farewell to them: It is not unknown to you, that I must now be parted from you; and I have pitched on this scripture, to be the close of my twenty years' ministry among you. God hath sent me among you to be a builder; and I have chosen this text, to be a hammer to fasten and drive home those nails of instruction and consolation, which I have been so long endeavouring to enter into you. God hath sent me among you as a fisherman; and I have chosen these words to be as the closing of the net. Behold! once more the net is spread, and I am now making my last draught; and O that it might have the same good speed as Peter's last had:³ it would then pay the charges, though the net brake. God hath sent me among you as an husbandman, to plough, and to sow; and I am now come to cover what hath been sown. What is my aim in preaching, let it be yours in hearing: O that both preacher and hearers might heartily join in this desire! This once more, God speed the plough. In this desire and hope I drive on.

In the text observe, a precept; a promise; an entail of the promise on the precept. In the precept we have, *1st.* An act, 'do.' *2d.* An object, 'the things that you have learned, received, heard, and seen.' The promise is in these words, 'the God of peace shall be with you.' The entail of the promise on the precept you have in the connective particle 'and,' which knits them up together. Do the work, and have the reward; obey the precept, and enjoy the promise; 'do what you have received and heard, and the God of peace shall be with you.' Be careful of the former, and be not careful about the latter; if the precept be performed, the promise shall be made good.

DOCT. 1. Christians must be learners, before they can be doers: 'what you have learned, that do.'

DOCT. 2. He hath learned well, that hath learned to do well.

DOCT. 3. Christians' eyes, as well as their ears, may help them on in religion; or, the holy examples of ministers should be living sermons to people: 'what you have seen in me.' Therefore the apostle exhorts, 'mark them which so walk, as you have us for an example;⁴ and be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ;⁵ that is, either, I have been a follower of Christ, be ye therefore followers of me; or else, be ye followers of me as far forth as I have been a follower of Christ. Those ministers may go

¹ Ps. 144. 15.

² Lu. 5. 6.

† This sermon was preached by Mr Watson on the eve of his ejection from the rectorship of St Stephens, Walbrook, for nonconformity, after the restoration.

³ 1 Th. 4. 18.

⁴ Ph. 3. 17.

⁵ 1 Cor. 11. 1.

off the stage with honour and comfort, who have left behind them the good seed of sound doctrine, and the good savour of an holy example. For my own part, what my doctrine and manner of life hath been among you, you are witnesses, and God also. And, however, I have great reason to judge and condemn myself before the Lord, and to bewail it, that my conversation hath been less exemplary and useful, than, O that it had been! yet I go off from you, with this testimony upon my heart, that I have not been of those who bind heavy burdens, and lay them on other men's shoulders, but will not touch them with one of their fingers; but my endeavour hath been, to press on my own soul, and hold out in my own practice, that word of life which I have preached to you; and therefore am bold, in this sense, to exhort you, in the words of the apostle, 'be ye followers of me,' as far forth as you have seen me a follower of Christ.

DOCT. 4. Godly ministers, when they are parting from their people, would fain leave God behind them. Though it be not unusual, when the Lord sends them away, he goes with them; God and his messengers, do not seldom take their farewell of people together; yet their earnest desire is, that though they must away, yet the Lord would stay.

DOCT. 5. Faithful ministers would be messengers of peace, going, as well as coming. As the apostles' first words were to be, 'peace be unto you,' so some of this apostle's last words were, 'the God of peace shall be with you.'

DOCT. 6. Whenever ministers part with their people, if they can but leave godliness in them, they shall certainly leave God with them. Or, those that obey the gospel, whatsoever, or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed condition. 'These things do,' that is, live in the practice and power of that doctrine of godliness 'which you have received and heard,' and then fear not, 'the God of peace shall be with you.'

This doctrine, I shall fully prove to you, after I have premised, First, that the doctrine which I have preached to you is the doctrine of godliness; the sum whereof take in these four particulars: 1. That Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, came also to sanctify and purge them from their sins. 2. That those that believe in Jesus, must be careful to maintain good works, or to live a godly life. 3. That this godliness is not such a slight, and easy, and empty thing, as the mistaken

world imagine; but stands in an exact conformity of the whole man, heart and life, to the whole will of God. 4. That as whosoever believes not in Jesus, so whosoever is short of this true sincere godliness, cannot be saved. This is the sum of that doctrine, which I have preached unto you; which being the eternal truth of God, I herein embark my whole soul and life, desiring to be found in that same Jesus, and to be found walking in that same way of righteousness which I have declared unto you.

Secondly, that my design and aim, in preaching this doctrine to you, hath been, to beget in you, and through the influence and assistance of the eternal Spirit, to bring you to this true godliness. I have travailed in birth with you that Christ might be formed in you, that I might leave you possessors and partakers of that grace, which accompanies salvation, that your faith might stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, that your repentance might be repentance unto life, not to be repented of, that you might obey from the heart, that form of doctrine that hath been delivered unto you, that you might stand complete in all the will of God, that you might be holy, and harmless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked generation, amongst whom you must shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, that being rooted and grounded in love, you might comprehend with all saints, what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and might know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God; to this end have I taught every one, and warned every one, that I might present you perfect in Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, that as far forth as the success hath answered my design and aim upon any of your souls, so far forth stand you entitled to this glorious promise in the text, 'the God of peace shall be with you.' Look how many souls there are amongst you, that live in the power and obedience of those truths you have received: to so many can I, with confidence, give this farewell of the apostle, without ifs, or ands; 'the God of peace shall be with you.' To whomsoever the Lord hath been a God of grace, to them will he be a God of peace. Whoever amongst you, hath this God of grace dwelling and ruling in you, shall certainly find this God of peace, dwelling and abiding with you.

These things premised, I shall now give you the full proof of the doctrine, in the following reasons. The doctrine you remember is, those

that obey the gospel, whatsoever, or whomsoever they want, shall ever be in a peaceful and blessed condition. The reasons are, *1st.* The God of peace shall be with them. *2d.* If God be with them, all things, whatsoever befall them, shall make for their good.

Reason *1st.* The God of peace shall be with them; these things do, live in the obedience of the holy doctrine which you have received, and the God of peace shall be with you. This glorious promise is pregnant with all the blessings that heaven and earth can afford. If you ask, why, what is there in it? I demand of you, what is there in God? God is in the promise; all that is in God is here assured to the godly. The philosophers of old attained to some glimmerings of the excellencies that are in God, by these three ways. 1. Negatively, conceiving of him as a Being removed from all things signifying imperfection: as ignorance, impotence, iniquity, corruptibility, composition, alteration, or any limits or bounds of his essence, power and glory. 2. In respect of his works, conceiving of him as the fountain of all other beings: and thence concluding, that whatsoever excellencies or perfections are scattered up and down in the whole creation, are all united in him from whom they had their original. 3. By way of excellency; so that whatever perfection, whatever goodness, is to be found in any creature, though it be not to be found in God, *formally*, yet there is that in him, he being the first cause of all, that doth infinitely, superabundantly answer them all. Though there be not the same specific excellencies in him, nor those very pleasures and delights issuing from him, which the creatures yield, yet there are such excellencies, such perfections, as transcend and surpass them all. The scriptures tell us more positively and plainly, that God is almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, all-sufficient, holy, righteous, gracious, the portion, the protection, the rewarder, yea, the exceeding great reward of them that diligently seek him. And this is he that is in the promise. God is in the promise. I must not enlarge in this spacious field; I shall keep nearer the text, and shall confine myself to these four particulars:

1. God is in the promise, as the God of peace, as the author and bestower of peace. The greatest of blessings is the blessing of peace; peace hath all blessings included in it. It hath possession, fruition, and security; it

hath plenty, pleasure, and safety; where there is no peace, there is no security for the holding, nor opportunity of enjoying what we have. Whatever we have, we have it as if we had it not. Peace is the greatest of blessings. Peace with God is the most glorious of peace. What is there that is excellent, what is there that is desirable, that is not comprehended in this peace with God? Where there is peace, there is pardon; guilt cannot consist with this peace; 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Where there is peace, there is grace and holiness; 'there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. Where there is peace, there is love and good will. As love, so peace is the union of hearts. 'the God of peace is with you,' signifies no less than this; the Almighty God bears you good will. These two, peace and good will are twins: 'on earth peace, good will towards men.' Where there is peace, there is life, everlasting life; internal is the seed of eternal peace. This peace is a portion, peace with God is our possession of the God of peace; this peace is a sanctuary, if the God of peace be with us, the peace of God will keep our hearts. Christians, in the world you must have trouble: suppose you have, yet in him you shall have peace, who hath overcome the world; 'thou wilt keep him in perfect peace,' (in *peace, peace*, as it is in the original) 'whose mind is stayed on thee: 'I will hear what the Lord God will speak; he will speak peace to his people, and to his saints.'² What a clattering is there in the world! What tumults and commotions are raised about the followers of Christ, as if the world were falling about their ears! The devil speaks wrath; evil men speak death and bonds to them; breathing out threatenings, reproaches, persecutions against them. In the midst of all this fearful noise, I will hearken, saith the Psalmist, what the Lord God will speak. Whatsoever men or devils speak, I will hearken, if the Lord God speaks at the same rate. O no, he will speak peace to his saints! Let the sons of contention do what they can, the sons of God shall be sons of peace; they shall live in peace, they shall die in peace, they shall dwell in peace for ever: 'the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness shall be quietness and assurance for ever: and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.'³ O

¹ Is. 26. 3.² Ps. 85. 8.³ Is. 32. 17, 18.

how great is the peace that they have who love thy law! Christians, fear not to follow God; let not that sad word, nor the fulfilling of it, scare you out of your duty, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.' What if they do; whilst you are able to say, I am persecuted, but I have peace; I am poor, but I have peace; in a prison, but I have peace; in a wilderness, but I have peace, though all the world be against me, God is at peace, my soul is in peace, what discouragement should all that be to you?

2. He that is the God of peace is the God of power. He promises peace, and he promises no more than he can perform. He can create peace, he can make their enemies to be at peace with them. He can make a league for them with the beasts of the field, with the lions, with the wolves, with the most brutish among the people. He can say to the proud winds and waves, 'peace, be still,' and they obey him. He can give them rest *from* the days of adversity; he can give them rest *in* the days of adversity; he can give his beloved sleep upon the points of swords and spears.

3. He that is the God of peace, is the God of patience. 'This is my great fear, that though God gives, yet I shall break my peace. The God of peace with me! Oh! this is he whom I dishonour, and disoblige daily, by my distrusts, discontents, impatiences, murmurings; and what peace to such an heart? what peace, so long as such unbelief, so much iniquity as I find daily within me, remains upon me? Will he, with whom no iniquity can dwell, dwell in that heart, where there is so much iniquity, by which he is provoked every day? But he that is the God of peace, is also the God of patience: who though he will not bear the iniquities of his adversaries, yet he will bear much with the infirmities of his people: '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 transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes: nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.'¹

4. He that is the God of peace, is the God of hope. I have no peace in possession, whatever there be in the promise. I live in the fire, am born a man of contention. What likelihood is there that I should ever live to see a

good day? My comforts are broken, my estate is lost, my liberty is gone; friends I have none, enemies I have many, and mighty; I dwell in Mesech, I have my habitation in the tents of Kedar; I am for peace, they are for war; wherever I look, round about me, before me, behind me, on the right hand, or on the left, all speaks trouble and terror to me. I have no peace. What, nor no hope of peace, neither? Where is thy God, man? hast thou a God in thee, and yet no hope in thee? The God of peace, and yet no peace! the God of hope, and yet no hope! 'the God of hope will yet fill thee with joy and peace in believing.'² 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.'³ The God of hope will open a window of hope in the darkest times, a door of hope in the most desperate cases. The God of hope will bear up the spirits of his saints, in hope against hope; and this hope will never disappoint them. It shall never be said, there is no peace, there is no hope, till it can be said there is no God in Israel.

But how, or in what sense, is it to be understood, that this God of peace will be with us? —I answer in three particulars:

1. The heart of God will be with you. Joseph's blessing, 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush,' will be thy portion.⁴ What was that bush? the church or Israel of God. What case was the bush in? it was all on a light fire; it was all in a flame. Who was it that dwelt in the bush? God was in the bush; and that kept it from consuming, though not from burning. The good will of this God shall be with thee, his love, his favour, his care. 'I love them that love me.'⁵ 'The Lord loveth the righteous.'⁶ The love of God is the womb of all good. Hence sprang 'the morning-star;' from the love of God came the Son of God; hence came that 'womb of the morning,' the blessed gospel, which is so big with glorious grace, with light, life, pardon, peace, glory, immortality; from the love of God came the glorious gospel of God. 'The upper springs,' all spiritual and heavenly blessings, 'the nether springs,' all earthly and outward blessings, do all rise, and bubble up out of this fountain, the love of God. The precious things of heaven, the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, the precious fruits put forth by the moon, the

¹ Ps. 89. 30. &c.

² Ro. 15. 13.

³ Ps. 43. 5.

⁴ Deu. 23. 16.

⁵ Pr. 8. 17.

⁶ Ps. 146. 8.

chief things of the ancient mountains, the precious things of the lasting hills, the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof, all these flow in with 'the good will of him that dwelt in the bush.' Love is all. The apostle tells us, our love to God is 'the fulfilling of the law,' that is, it will bring forth all that to God, all that duty and obedience, which the law requires. I may tell you, that God's love to us is the fulfilling of the gospel, that is, it will pour down all that upon us, it will do all that for us, which the gospel promises. Look over the whole gospel, read and study every precious leaf and line of that blessed book, and if there be enough in all that to make thee blessed, and to encourage thee on in thy holy course, all this is thine. Thou hast that love of God with thee, which will fulfil the gospel; there shall not one jot or tittle fail thee of all that the gospel promises: 'the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.'¹

2. The help of God will be with you, the Lord will be your helper in the day of your distress: 'he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'² So that we may boldly say, 'the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me.' He hath said, 'I will not leave thee;' and therefore we may say, 'I will not fear.' He hath said, 'I will be,' and therefore we may boldly say, 'the Lord is my helper.' He hath said, he will not forsake, he will help; and who is he that shall say, there is no help for thee in thy God. There is no man, whose case may not be so desperate as to be above all human help. If he should cry out, as the woman to the king of Israel, 'help, O king!' the king must answer, 'if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?' If he should cry out, help, O man of God! the man of God must answer, 'if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?' If he cry out, help, O my friends! my wit, my policy, my purse, all these must answer, 'if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall we help thee?' But what case is there, wherein an 'help, Lord!' will not do? Foolish men count their case desperate, when they come to their 'God, help;' that is an usual expression to set forth the extremity and helplessness of any man's case. When we see men even lost in any misery, and their case even utterly hopeless, then to signify our sense of such men's lost condition, we cry out, 'God help that man!

God help that woman, they are lost creatures! Ay, but if men did understand and consider what the help of the Lord is, they would see there could be no case so desperate, but an 'help, Lord!' might recover all.³ When David was greatly distressed, and all was gone, 'he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' Consider here two things: (1.) What his case then was. He was in great distress; he had lost all that ever he had; his spoils that he had taken were all gone, his corn, and his cattle, his wives and his city were all lost, he had not an habitation in all the world, he had nothing left him but a poor army, and these were worse than lost, they were even ready to fall upon him: 'the people spake of stoning him, but he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.' (2.) What the event hereupon was. Why God helped him to all he had again; 'there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters; neither spoil, nor any thing they had taken: David recovered all.' Hence note, that a Christian when he hath lost all, hath yet a God to go to at last. Whilst a Christian hath a God to go to, his case is never desperate; let him but encourage himself in his God, and all will be recovered. Sinners, triumph not over the poor people of God: when they are at their worst, when they are brought as low as your pride and malice can lay them, though they should be stript naked, and left destitute of all their comforts, though all the world should ride on their backs, and tread on their necks, yet rejoice not against them; though they fall they shall arise; when they are at their worst, there is still help for them in their God.

3. The presence of the Lord shall be with them. Whithersoever they may be scattered, they shall not be scattered from their God. That promise made to Moses; 'my presence shall go with thee,' belongs to all the Israel of God. 'My presence;' in the original, it is, 'my face;' in the Septuagint, 'myself shall go with thee.' The presence of God is either general, or special. By his general presence, he is everywhere. 1. By his essence, he fills all things. 2. By his knowledge he beholds all things. 3. By his sustaining power he upholds all things. 4. By his ruling power he governs all things. But to let this pass, as not so proper to our purpose.

2. There is his *special* or gracious presence,

¹ Is. 9. 7.

² He. 13. 5, 6.

³ 1 Sa. 30. 6.

⁴ Ex. 33. 14.

whereby he manifests himself to be with his people. (1.) In some visible and standing tokens of his presence; as in those extraordinary, the pillars of the cloud and of the fire; and in those ordinary, the ark and the temple of old, and the ordinances of the gospel now. (2.) In some inward influences and irradiations upon the heart of his people. (3.) In some visible and signal effects of his presence; whereof there are very many. There are, amongst others, these two notable effects of God's gracious presence, which his people, by virtue of this promise, may with confidence expect, conduction, covering. They shall be led in their way; and they shall be hid in their way.

1st. Conduction. The Lord will be with them, to lead them and guide them in the way that they should go; 'the meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way.'¹ 'He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.'² 'Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.'³ The Lord leads his people in their way, chiefly by his word, which is a light to their feet, and a lantern to their paths; and sometimes also by his providences, hedging up all by-ways, and leaving but one way open to them, that hath the least appearance of the way of God; so ordering the matter, that any other way that is before them, looks with too foul a face to leave any doubt upon them, whether that be the way of God or not. It is never uncomfortable to the people of God, while they see their way before them; doubts about their way, are more perplexing than dangers in their way. When they know what God would have them do, they can cheerfully trust him for any thing they are like to suffer. Dost thou meet with wolves or lions in thy way? thou mayest bless God it is there thou meetest them, it would be ill meeting them elsewhere.

2d. Covering or protection in their way: 'thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence, from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues.'⁴ 'thou shalt hide them in thy presence,' or 'face;' thy light shall be their dark place to cover them; 'thou art my hiding-place.' 'In the secret of thy presence;⁵ the saint's hiding-place is a secret: such, where neither the pride of man can find them, nor can they understand what it is. Reproaches shall

not find them, persecutions shall not find them, whose souls are hid in God; they are not found, when they are found; they are hid when they seem to lie most open, and most exposed to men's will and lust. Sinners do not understand what refuge the saints have in God. It is a great secret, a mystery to them; as the joy of the saints, the comforts of the saints, are a secret, a stranger shall not meddle with his joy; so is their safety of security; they do not understand what kind, or how great security; what sure, nor what sweet repose the saints find in God. The secret of God's presence is a sure and a sweet resting-place for all his saints; but how sure, and how sweet, no man knows, but they that enjoy it. The secret intimations of the care of God for them, of his everlasting kindness to them, of his governing hand, in all that befalls them, working it to their greater good, the secret supports and refreshings darted in, as the beams of his countenance, their secret sense that their head, their main part is in safety, though they have bruises in their heel, will yield such rest in the day of greatest adversity, as men can neither see, nor take from them. The pillar of the cloud interposed, did both hinder the Egyptians' pursuit, and hid from their eyes, the comfort of that light which shined upon the camp of Israel. Moses knew what the comfort of God's presence meant, when he said, 'if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.'⁶ It is (if considered) a great word; Israel was then in a wilderness; among wild beasts, among briers and thorns, in a weary pilgrimage; but they had God among them. The Lord was carrying them to Canaan, the land of their rest, a land flowing with milk and honey; but Moses prays, 'if thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.' We had rather be where we are, in a wilderness with God, than go to Canaan, and leave our God behind us. If thy presence go with us, we are willing to go; when thou wilt, whither thou wilt, which way thou wilt; though by the tents of Edomites, Ishmaelites, Moabites, Hagarenes; though through the armies of Anakims, Zamzummims; we will go any where, so God go with us. The absence of God makes a Canaan worse than a wilderness: the presence of God makes a wilderness better than a Canaan. And this presence of God shall be the lot of all his saints.

Reason *2d.* If God be with you, all shall

¹ Ps. 25. 9.

² Ps. 107. 7.

³ Ps. 5. 8.

⁴ Ps. 31. 20.

⁵ Ps. 32. 7.

⁶ Ex. 33. 15.

make for you : all providential occurrences and events whatsoever, all difficulties, straits, disasters, disappointments whatsoever, that may come upon you, shall make for your good : 'If God be with us, who can be against us?'¹ Who can be against us? that is, none can be against us; or if any be, yet those that are against you shall be for you : 'Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, (said old Jacob) and must Benjamin away too! all these things are against me :'² but yet as old as he was, he lived to see all making for him : 'we know all things shall work together for good to those that love God.'³ This is such a promise, as, if it were thoroughly believed, would set our feet on the necks of all our fears and dangers; and will prove the truth of Samson's riddle, 'out of the eater came meat, and out of the strong, sweetness.'

Now because there is so great encouragement to godliness in it, I shall spend the more time in enlarging upon it; and shall show, *1st.* What those things are, which are especially intended, in that comprehensive term, 'all things.' *2d.* What that good is, which these things shall work to. *3d.* To whom these things shall work for good. *4th.* How these things shall work for good. *5th.* That they shall undoubtedly work for good to them that love God.

1st. What those things are, which are especially intended, in that comprehensive term, 'all things.' Some there are, as Augustine with others, who understand it universally, of all things whatsoever, whether good or evil, extending it even to the sins of the saints. It is true, God doth often bring good out of these evils; making use of former sins to be forces against future. There is nothing that doth make the sinner more weary and wary of sin, than sin itself; the review of what we have done, doth oftenest fright us from doing so any more. When you look back on sin, and see its face, for sin carries its face on its back, you will fear it the more, whenever you meet it again. There is no argument doth more effectually humble and break the heart, and make it more fearful and watchful against sin, than the shame and the smart of those sins we have fallen by. This is true, God doth often make this use of sin, to be its own cure; and therefore it is not seldom seen, that the chief of sinners have come to be the chief of saints. Yet, besides, that this is not the subject-matter that the apostle is here treating of, let those that bring sin within the

compass of this promise, and make this to run into the sense of it, that even all the sins of the saints shall work for their good; let such tell us, how, or in what way it is imaginable, that the sinful decays of such who backslide from God, and never recover to their former life and vigour, but live and die in a languishing state of soul, let them tell us, how such sins can be imagined to work for their good: till then, we must enter our dissent from this interpretation. This then is not the sense of the promise, that all sins shall work together for good. And yet if it were, it would be but a poor argument, to take the more liberty to sin, because God will turn it to good; this would be even as rational, as for a man to tear his flesh, break his bones, pluck out his eyes, burn his house, &c. because God will turn all his suffering to good: he is little better than mad, that would not conclude such a man out of his wits. Others restrain it to the evil things that befall the saints, their sufferings and afflictions; to that vanity, and those vexations, they are in bondage under, and under which, with the whole creation, they groan and travail in pain, waiting for their redemption, of which the apostle had been treating in the former part of this chapter. And yet while they pitch the sense, especially on such things as these, they grant it may be extended to all other things, sin only excepted; to all things and events, whether prosperous or afflicting. So Paræus with others. And these I take to have hit the right. All heavy things, all the sufferings and afflictions of the saints, and not only these, but all things else whatsoever, that in the whole course of Providence be their lot or portion; all the dealings of God with them, all the dispensations of Providence towards them, shall all work for their good.

2d. What is that good, which these things work to the saints; or in what sense all things may be said to work good to them. The sense in general is this: They shall all work to their welfare,—they shall all happen to them for the better,—there shall nothing befall them, but one time or other, they shall have reason to say, "It was well for me, that it was thus with me." The wisdom and goodness of God did cut out such portions continually for me, did lead me through such a series and succession of cases and events, which though I could not understand, yet now I see that every condition, every contingency and occurrence of my life, through which Providence led me, was useful, and could not well have been wanted, but it would

¹ Rom. 8. 31.² Gen. 42. 36.³ Rom. 8. 28.

have been the worse for me. Thus in the general.

Particularly, for the fuller understanding what good it is that all things work to, consider, that there is a twofold good of the saints; such as they obtain and enjoy, whilst they are in their way or course; or such as they shall obtain when they are gotten to the end of their way, when they are come to their place. Or thus; there is a threefold good of the saints, temporal, spiritual, eternal. 1. Temporal good, or the outward good things of this life, which may serve, and please, and delight us in these days of our pilgrimage; which may abide with us, and attend us to our graves, but there will take their leave of us. 2. Spiritual good things, and those are either, (1.) External, as the ordinances of God, the light, liberties, and privileges of the gospel, the society, and communion of saints, and our peaceful and plentiful enjoying of them. (2.) Internal, as spiritual grace, faith, love, hope, patience, &c. 3. Eternal good, or that glory and joy, that everlasting rest and peace, the possession of that inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, that is reserved in heaven for us.

Now here note these things. (1.) That our outward good things, are only good for us, as they are conducive to the good of our souls. The blessings of the way, are only good in the event, when they tend to the happiness of our eternal abode. This world is but a nursery for eternity; we are planted in this, in order to our transplanting into the other world; and whatever we have here, is either good or evil, according to the respect that it bears to hereafter. As far forth as our immortal part is improved by these perishing things, so far forth only, are they good for us. He that hath this world's goods, and is not hereby made more rich towards God, he who prospers in this world, and yet his soul doth not prosper, much more, he whose worldly fulness becomes the emptiness and leanness of his soul, are these good things good for him? Is he in prosperity upon a true account, whose soul prospers not? It is not ever good to prosper in the world; it cannot be universally said it is good to be rich, it is good to be in health, it is good to be in honour, it is good to be at liberty; the contrary may sometimes be true; it is good to be poor, to be sick, to be in disgrace, to be in bonds; the necessity of our souls doth not seldom require it; then alone is it good to be full, and to abound, when our outward abundance furthers our spiritual wel-

fare. Christians, could we receive this truth, that our outward good things are only good for us, as far forth as they conduce to our spiritual good, could we receive this truth, and live under the power of it, what a different judgment should we then have of all these worldly matters, from what we have? And how strangely would the course of the world be then changed? Would there then be such violent and eager pursuing these carnal things? Would there then be such whining, and complaining, and murmuring at every cross providence; We should then say, this may be good for me; good for my soul, how sad soever it looks. (2.) That external spiritual good things, the ministry, and ordinances of the gospel, &c. are so far good to us, as they conduce to our eternal spiritual good; and they being ordinarily so, it must be concluded, that ordinarily it is good for us, that we enjoy them, and be not deprived of them. God may see the cutting Christians short of those privileges, and liberties, to be sometimes needful for them; and then even this also makes for their good: whereof more anon. (3.) That our inward spiritual good, is good for us, so far forth as it tends to our eternal good: and therefore grace is ever good for us. It is ever true it is good to be holy, good to be humble, to be in the fear of God, and to flourish in his grace. We may have too much money, too much credit, but we can never have too much grace. Our greatest flourishing and fruitfulness in grace, will certainly abound to our more full reward. (4.) That this is the plain sense, and meaning of the promise, 'all things shall work for good,' that is, whatsoever befalls, shall certainly promote our internal and eternal welfare; and as far forth as the outward privileges of the gospel, yea, and the good things of this life, conduce towards this, all shall work for these also. If it be good for us to be rich, if it be good for us to be in honour, good for us to be at liberty, good for our souls, good in reference to our eternal state, if it be good for us that we enjoy the ministry of the gospel, there shall nothing befall us, that shall hinder; there shall be nothing wanting to us, that might further this our good.

The sum is, that all providential dispensations shall be so ordered, that we shall want nothing but what it is better to want than have; we shall suffer nothing but what we cannot well be without, but what the good of our souls requires; and that which we do possess, and that which we do suffer, shall not fail of bringing about its

end, the advancing our eternal good. And if this be the meaning, what a glorious promise is this? What can any rational man desire more? Nothing shall befall him but shall be for his good: he shall be deprived or kept short of nothing, but what he had better be without than have. He that is unsatisfied with this promise, it is either from lust or unbelief; either he doth not believe that God is true and will perform this word, or else it is because his lust must be satisfied, though with the denial of his reason and interest. He that desires an estate in the world, ease, pleasure, liberty, or any thing else upon any other terms, but as they may be for his real good, hath as much lost his wits as his faith; and he that will take upon him to know what is good for him, better than God, may as well take upon him to govern the world. You may with as good reason, desire a fever, or a dropsy, that you may have the pleasure of your drink; as for the pleasures that carnal things would bring you in, to desire them, when they would be a snare to your souls.

3d. To whom these things shall work for good; to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose,—to the people of God who you see, are here described by their election and vocation, ‘the called according to his purpose,’ and their sanctification, ‘they that love God.’ Love God, and you will live in the obedience of his whole will. These are the people, to whom the promise is made; prove your calling and election, prove your sanctification, and you may write your names in this glorious promise; ‘all things shall work for your good.’ To those that are rebels, and reprobates from God, all things shall work together for evil. Whilst things hurtful work together for good to the saints; all good things work together for the hurt of sinners; their peace hurts them, their plenty hurts them, their pleasure hurts them; yea, both their prosperity and adversity, their plenty and their poverty, their pleasure and their trouble, their honour and disgrace, every thing that befalls them, turns to their prejudice; their prosperity destroys them; their table is their snare; their pleasures are their plagues; and their very punishments are turned into sin; every thing that befalls them, heightens and hardens them in their wickedness, and ripens them for vengeance. God is not with them, and therefore nothing prospers with them. God is with his saints, and therefore nothing comes amiss to them, but all for their greater advantage.

Christians, this is your portion, and your peculiar, wherein the men of this world shall neither partake with you, nor be ever able to deprive you of it!

4th. How all things shall work for their good; in special, how shall the evil things, the sufferings of this life be for their good? How can this be? Must we disbelieve our senses, lay down our reason, ere we can believe the scriptures? Must we call evil good, and good evil? Must we count darkness light, and light darkness? Is pleasure pain, and pain pleasure? Is loss gain, and gain loss? Is ease torment, and torment ease? Doth religion make things cease to be what they are, and to be what they are not? or at least, must we believe, that darkness is the mother of light, that good is the daughter of evil? Can we gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Can darkness give light, or death itself bring forth life? Must we say, that contraries no longer destroy, but produce each other, and that the womb brings forth its own destruction? How can these things be? But must God give a reason of his actions, or else they are not? Though evil cannot bring good, darkness cannot bring forth light, yet, cannot God bring forth good out of evil, light out of darkness? Though darkness cannot bring forth light, evil cannot bring forth good, by a natural causation; yet, cannot God make evil an occasion of good? Though it do not work efficiently, yet can it not work objectively neither to it? Though the torment the medicine puts men to, be not ease, yet may it not work towards ease? May not the storm, though it help not, yet hasten the labourer on his work, the traveller on his way? May not the darkness of the night, make more diligent in the day? May not sickness teach men more temperance, and poverty more frugality? But to proceed more distinctly: How can the saints’ evil things work to their good? That they do so, cannot be denied, unless we will deny, not only scripture, but common sense, and experience; but how comes it to pass? I answer, in four particulars:

1. The afflictions and tribulations of the saints are the way that leads them on to the possession of that good which God hath intended to them; afflictions are the way of the kingdom; the cross is the way to the crown: ‘through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.’ ‘Thou broughtest us into the

net; thou hast laid affliction upon our loins; thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; thou broughtest us into a wealthy place.¹ Observe it: their troubles are their way to their triumph, their very falling into the net, their way to escape. Their enemies boast: 'escape! arise! yes, let them free themselves with such hopes while they will, we have them sure enough; we have them under foot: we have them in the net; if this be their way, we will keep them in their way long enough; now we have them down, they shall not be able to rise.' Ay, but yet it appears, through all this the Lord led them forth into a wealthy place. The highway of the proud is not their more ready way to the dust, than the dust of saints is their sure way to honour. When Israel were to go to Canaan, they must take the brick-kilns, the Red Sea, the wilderness, Jordan, in their way: could any one have imagined, that the bondage, the straits they were under, the doubling their tasks, the cruelty of their task-masters, their enclosure at the Red Sea, did mean any good to them? yet, how fell it out at last? their darkest dispensations had light in their latter end? their greatest bondage led on to their greatest liberty. Every cross providence, is a step to the accomplishment of the promise; the wheel is ever moving on to its end; it moves still forwards, even when it seems to go quite backwards: as the river, by its many turnings and windings, forwards and backwards, is still in motion to the sea, when it seems to be running quite contrary. Christians, if ever the salvation of God seems to be removed farther off from you, if the work of God should at any time seem to go backwards, if cross winds should turn the whole course, so that you appear rather to be marching back to Egypt, than on to Canaan, yet be not discouraged; though your way be an unlikely and unpromising way, though you be led about forwards and backwards, yet still you are making on; though the lesser wheels be never so cross and contrary in their motions, yet the great wheel is still moving right on to your blessed and hoped end. God intends your good; your spiritual good here, your eternal good hereafter; and believe it now, for he will let you see it hereafter, that those very things which most threaten your miscarriage, and a total abortion of your hopes, are made all to concur to the bringing them about, and

to your more full and speedy possession of them.

Note further here two things: (1.) All things work: not they *shall* work, but they *do* work. As the apostle says, 'the mystery of iniquity,' so we may say, the mystery of the saints' redemption 'doth already work;' the work is already on the wheel, and every wheel is in its motion for you; not only your brethren, the saints and angels, who are all praying for your peace, and seeking your good, but your enemies also, the dragon, with all his armies, are at work for you; all the councils of this world, are already sitting upon the very matter; God hath called them together for this purpose, the pope, with all his conclave, the Jesuits, priests, monks and friars, with all their convent, yea, the devil, with all his conclave of hell, are all at work for the good of saints. It is true, they mean not, nor intend any such thing, their designs are against you; they count they are working for themselves; as it is said concerning the Assyrian.² God sent him forth upon a design of his own, to execute his counsel, in the punishing of hypocrites, to purge out the chaff from the wheat, nevertheless, he meaneth not so, nor doth his heart think so; the Assyrian minds not what God's design is, but follows his own design, fights for himself, and spoils for himself, but God's design is still carried on by him, though he thinks not of it. All the events in the world are driving the same way; every disease or infirmity that comes upon you, every loss that you sustain, every scoff or reproach that you suffer, the shame in your faces, the sorrow of your hearts, the torment in your bowels, the aches in your bones, all are working your good. All the changes of your conditions, your fair weather and your foul, your sunshine and your clouds, your plenty and your wants, your eases and your pains, your liberties and your prisons, are all making for you; your good is already working by all these things. See, Christians, what an harvest of blessedness is growing up to you, out of this promise. The seed is already sowing, your good is already working, God is at work, the whole creation is at work, men and angels, good men and bad men, friends and enemies, heaven and earth, and hell, are already engaged to work your good. (2.) They work together, that is, as some understand it, they work together with God. All these second causes work together

¹ Ps. 66. 11, 12.

² Is. 10. 6, 7.

with the first cause : or as others, they work together amongst themselves. There is such a concatenation and concentring of all these second causes in the same design, that however they seem to thwart, and cross, and destroy some of them, what the others build and advance, yet they are all united in their end; they jointly contribute to the weal of the saints. Though, if I mistake not, this latter be the best sense of the two: yet I know no reason, why both may not be understood. In the hand, and under the conduction of providence, all these lower things concur and co-operate in the good of the church. By the way, observe what an harmony there is in all the works of providence. The most cross and thwarting occurrences do all conspire, and go hand in hand, to bring about the same end. As the differing virtues of various drugs do all concur to make up the medicine: as the differing sounds of several strings or instruments, do altogether make up the melody: as the differing colours in a picture, the dark as well as the brighter, do jointly contribute to the beauty of the piece: no less do the most contrary, and contradictory actions and events, both make up the beauty of providence, and jointly subserve that one end, to which, by an unseen hand, and an all-seeing eye, they are directed and intended.

2. The evil things that befall the saints, come upon them to keep out worse things. Wherever the cross comes, if it had not come, something worse might. The cross may be a means to secure from the curse; the curse was slain on the cross of Christ, and our cross also hath its use, to the delivering us from it: 'we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world;'¹ I had died, if I had not suffered. It is more men's cases, besides his that spake it; it is no bad exchange to have a cross instead of a curse.

3. The evil things of the saints prepare them for better things; that they may work good for them, they are working them to good; working out their sin and iniquity, wearying them of sin; 'I will hedge up her way with thorns, then shall she say, I will return.'² Sin brought in afflictions into the world, and afflictions help to carry sin out; the cross, to which sin was once nailed, is now nailed to sin; the saints can seldom be meddling with sin, but they find it too heavy for them. Our Lord beats the devil with his own weapons; by those very means

purguing his saints, by which he endeavours to pollute them; making those very persecutions, by which he labours to force them from holiness, to fix them in it. Christians, comfort your hearts; those floods that are cast against you, shall but wash you the whiter, and make you more meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; your purgatory prepares you for your Paradise. No unclean thing must enter in thither; and you are not like to be made so clean, as by falling into the hands of the unclean. The saints never look so well, like sheep come from the washing, as when they come up from the pots, their very black makes them comely. O Christians what a comfort would it be, if your experiences might come in, and seal to this truth; if you could say, thus it hath been with me; 'before I was afflicted I went astray;' I was proud, and vain, and wanton, and slothful, and carnal, 'but now have I kept thy word.' Sinners, whatever your mind be, in persecuting the saints, never think to debauch them by it; if that be your aim, you mistake your course; the living spark which God hath kindled in them will not be blown out, but be blown up, by your puffing at it; the dirt you cast upon them, doth but scour them the brighter. You take the best course you can to keep them closer to the Lord, and his way; the warm sun will more hazard the loss of their garments, than the blustering wind; let them alone, the Spirit of the Lord within them will be too hard for hell, with all its black regiments, and will not only secure them, but advance them yet higher, by all their assaults. These stars shine the brightest, when the night is darkest: when you have done your worst, it will be the better with them; though they will not thank you, yet they will thank God for what they have suffered by you. If this be your aim, to make them like yourselves, you may set your hearts at rest, and give over such a vain attempt; your fury is like to do as little to force them, as your virtues are to invite them to a compliance with you. Your faces are too foul to draw them into your love, and yet not fierce enough to drive them into your fear. Satan, try thy utmost strength and skill, and if thou lovest not by thine own play at last, if thou findest not the poor people of God gotten nearer heaven, by thy attempts of plucking them down to hell, then let thy lies be believed before the everlasting gospel! Christians, make me not ashamed in this same confident boasting of you; yea, contradict not your God, by suffering

¹ 1 Cor. 11. 32.

² Hos. 2. 6

yourselves to be corrupted by evil men. The Lord himself hath adventured deep upon your integrity and stedfastness. The honour of his truth and faithfulness lies at stake, he hath said, that 'they shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, their heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.' He hath said, 'by this shall their iniquity be purged, and this shall be all the fruit, to take away their sin.' God hath said, 'all things shall work together for good to them.' They shall not be the worse, but the better, for all that befalls them; they shall love me and my holy ways the more; they shall cleave unto me the closer; they shall be made more pure, and more tender, by all they suffer for righteousness' sake; they shall love conscience, and their integrity, and faithfulness to it, never the worse, for that it hath cost them so dear; but shall prize it the more, and be the more wary and tender, how they pollute and turn aside from it. God hath ventured deep on you, make not him a liar; the devil and his instruments will be ready to say, concerning you, as once he did to the Lord concerning his servant Job: 'put them into our power, let us have the handling of them a while, and thou shalt quickly see, what truth there is in them, or what trust there is to them; they will curse thee to thy face, they will deny thee to thy face, they will eat their own words, they will be ashamed of their God, their godliness and confidence.' Let God be true, Christians, and the devil a liar: be living commentaries on this blessed text; let the world, and their black prince see, that they cannot make you miserable, because they cannot make you sinners like themselves; that you are still the more upright, for falling into the hands of a crooked generation; let them see, that though your God will not suffer you, yet you are contented to serve him for nothing! That though his hedge be removed from you, yet your heart is not removed from him, be able to say, 'though all this be come upon us, our heart is not turned back; neither have we declined thy way.' Let your standing and increasing in the grace of God, and abounding in the works of righteousness, be a standing witness for God in the world, and a seal to his scriptures, and in special to the glorious truth of this text.

4. The evil things of the saints, prepare better things for them; their sufferings go into their reward: 'as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth

by Christ.' Every suffering comes with a comfort in its belly; and the sweet is so great as swallows up the bitter; it is an hundred fold that the saints gain by all their losses in this life, but how great shall their reward be in heaven! 'our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'² They shall not only have weight for weight, measure for measure, their load of glory for their load of sufferings; but they shall have over-weight, over-measure; good measure, pressed down, heaped together, and running over, shall then be given unto them: according to their deep poverty, shall be the height of their riches; according as their blackness hath been in their houses of bondage, shall be their brightness in the land of promise; 'for all thy shame thou shalt have double,' the double of thy reproach in renown, the trouble of thy tears in triumphs; all thy bottled tears shall be returned in flagons of joy, yea, in rivers of eternal pleasure.

By this time, Christians, you see what glory there is in this good word: 'all things shall work together for good to them that love God.' And that none may have the face to say all this is but conceit, I shall in the next place, bring in clear and undeniable evidence, that it is certainly and unquestionably so as hath been said: and therefore know,

5th. That all things do, and shall certainly work 'for good to them that love God.' This, (besides the testimony of the scripture,) I shall make evident from these three propositions: 1. There is a Divine providence that governs the world. 2. The design of providence is the accomplishment of the good purpose and promise of God. 3. The providence of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end. 1. There is a Divine providence which governs the world. The Epicureans, who deny providence, and leave all on chance and fortune, may as well deny that there is a God, which yet they are ashamed to stand to. Of Epicurus himself it was said, that though he thought nothing shameful, yet he thought shame to deny God! It can be no way reconcileable to the infinite wisdom of God, who made this glorious fabric, with the various creatures therein, either not to determine them to their ends, or else to take no care for their accomplishing those ends they are determined to. The whole current of scripture is so plain in these matters, that he

¹ Ps. 112. 7.

² 2 Cor. 4. 17.

that runs may read. Let the following scriptures, amongst others, be considered: 'The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the isles be glad.'¹ 'The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season: thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desires of every living thing.'² 'Thou preservest man and beast.'³ 'Promotion cometh, neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another.'⁴ 'Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?'⁵ 'Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword; from men which are thy hand.'⁶ The confessions of those infidels, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius speak the same. 'All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?'⁷ 'I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom, men tremble, and fear, before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God; and steadfast for ever; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed; and his dominion shall be even to the end: He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and earth; who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.'⁸ But more distinctly, the Lord governs all inanimate and sensitive creatures in their actions; he orders the stars in their courses. The stars in their courses he made to fight against Sisera. He governs the winds and the floods; he bringeth forth the winds out of his treasures, he rides upon the wings of the wind. He maketh the clouds his chariots, he sitteth on the floods; the thunder, and the hail, and the rain, and the frosts, are all at his command. He giveth snow like wool, and scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth the ice like morsels: he sets bounds to the sea, which it shall not pass; the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, the fishes of the sea, yea, the stones and dust of the earth, are all at his beck. More especially, he rules and governs the men of this world. He sits in all the councils of men, though they see him not; he orders all their decrees: there is no decree can pass unless God gives his vote. He rules in all the actions of men; even those things that are acted through our improvidence come not to pass without the providence of God. He rules in

all the changes that are in the world; he changes the times and the seasons; he changes kingdoms and governments; he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he makes war, and creates peace; he bendeth the bow, and breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire; peace and war, health and sickness, plenty and famine, life and death, are all the disposures of his hand. He orders all the events and causalities of the world: even from the greatest to the smallest. Without him not a sparrow shall fall, nor a hair of the head shall perish; though there be to men, yet to the Lord there are no causalities or contingencies. But all things come to pass according as his hand and counsel had before determined.

2. The design of providence, as it respects the elect, is the accomplishment of God's good purpose and promise. Providence governs the world, and the purpose and promise governs providence. All the works of providence have 'a relation of means to an end.' God doth nothing in vain; it is not consistent with the wisdom of God to do any thing for nothing. God would have his people look farther than to the things that are before them, because all those things have a farther aspect themselves. All the works of providence have a double aspect: they look backward to the purpose and promise, and they look forward to the end for which they are; as they look backward, so they have truth in them, exactly answering the purpose and promise from which they have their birth. As they look forward to their end, so they have good in them, and that good their subservience to their end, is the reason of their being. Here note two things. (1.) That the subserviency of things to their end, is the goodness of them; if the end be good, the means must as such be good also; if what God hath purposed and promised be good, then all things that fall in between, having the respect of means to their accomplishment, must upon that account be good. If our crosses and afflictions do subserve the bringing about of God's good will and good word, we must say concerning them, 'good are the works of the Lord.' It is not how any thing looks or feels at present, but what it means, and to what it tends. If the potion be bitter, and yet it tends to health, if the messenger be ill-looking and ill-favoured, and yet come upon a good errand, you may bid him welcome. And thus all the providences of God are good. If you should ask of

¹ Ps. 97. 1. ² Ps. 165. 15, 16. ³ Ps. 36. 6. ⁴ Ps. 75. 6, 7.
⁵ Am. 3. 6. ⁶ Ps. 17. 13, 14. ⁷ Da. 4. 35. ⁸ Ib. 6. 26.

any providence, wherefore art thou come? comest thou peaceably? comest thou for good? they must all answer, yes, peaceably; for good, and no hurt. It is but to help all that good into thy hand which hath been in the heart, and hath proceeded out of the mouth of thy God that loves thee. There is not a messenger of Satan that comes to buffet thee but is also a messenger from God that comes to thee for good. The very thorns in thy flesh shall serve thee for plasters, thine eye-sores shall be thine eye-salve, and thy very maladies thy medicines. (2.) That this relative goodness of all the works of providence, is the reason of their being. Therefore God doth what he doth, that hereby he may do what he hath said and intended. I do not say that the reason of God's taking this or that means, is always from any thing in itself, or for its natural tendency to such an end above any thing else; God hath his choice of means, he can choose here or there at pleasure, can make use of what he will to serve his design; but the reason why things are, is this, God in his wisdom, saw their ordinability to this good end, and thereupon in his providence, he orders and brings them to pass. So that now, whatever befalls a Christian, he hath this to allay and take off the grievousness and sharpness of it; this had never been, but for the good will and good word of the Lord to me. The Lord God hath said he will bless me, and do me good; he will heal me, and sanctify, and save me, and now he is about it; by this, he is working that salvation for me. Christians, you have no reason to say, if the Lord be with me, why am I thus? why so poor, why so pained, why so persecuted, so scorned and trampled upon? sure, if the Lord, had meant my good, it would have been better than it is with me; no, no, it is because the Lord is with thee, and means thee well, that he deals in this manner with thee. The design of his providence toward thee, is the accomplishment of his promise.

3. The providence of God shall never fail of accomplishing its end. There is nothing wanting that might give us the fullest assurance hereof. For, (1.) The providence of God hath power with it. He is the Almighty that hath promised; he that ruleth in the earth dwelleth in the heaven, and doth whatsoever he will. Our God is in heaven, and doth whatsoever he will: 'I will work, and who shall let it?'¹ 'who can stay his hand, or say to him,

what doest thou?' Were it not for our unbelief, our case would be still the same, in greatest difficulties, as when the coasts are most clear. We might say of difficulties, as the Psalmist of darkness; 'there is no darkness with thee, to thee the day and night are both alike.' Difficulties are no difficulties with thee, nor is there difference betwixt hard and easy. He can save with many or with few; and with none as well as with some. We once read he had too many, but never that he had too few, to bring about his work. O how do we disparage the power of God, when our difficulties make us doubt? Is he God, and not man? is he spirit and not flesh? wherefore then dost thou doubt? Whatever God hath said he can do: believe he is a God, and thou wilt never say, how can these things be? (2.) The providence of God hath wisdom with it. He is the only wise, he is the all-wise God: 'the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.'² He knoweth what is good for his saints, and when it will be in season; he understandeth what is proper and pertinent to every case; what is proper to every purpose, to every people, to every person, and for every season; he knows when it is a season to abate, and when to exalt, when to afflict, and when to deliver, when to put on the yoke, and when to take off the yoke, when to pull down, and when to build up; every thing is beautiful in its season. If mercies come out of season, mercies would be no mercies; and if troubles come in their season, troubles should be no troubles; he knows the best method and means to his end; the fittest means; he sees sometimes, the unfittest to be the fittest; the most unlikely unpromising means, do often best serve God's end. Christians, if you would receive every dispensation, as coming from the hands of the wise God; you would never quarrel with your lot, nor say of any thing that befalls, I might be happy, but this stands in my way. If you would give God leave to be wiser than you, you would say wherever you are, it is good for me to be here, this is my way to my rest. (3.) The providence of God hath faithfulness with it; 'all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep his covenant and his testimonies.'³ His works are done in truth.⁴ God's works may be said to be done in truth in a double sense. In reality, in fidelity. *1st.* In reality, not in species, or in show only, for God's comforts are comforts indeed; God's salvation,

¹ Is. 43. 13.² 2 Pet. 2. 9.

Ps. 25. 10.

⁴ Ps. 111. 8.

is salvation indeed. The devil will come with his gifts, comforts, and deliverances, but they are for the most part but *spectra* like himself; shows and apparitions, quite another thing than that they seem to be; sinners' comforts, deliverances, enjoyments, wherewith the devil feeds them, do leave them in as poor a case, and worse than they found them. You will never thank the devil for his kindnesses when you have proved them what they are. If you do not find yourselves as fast bound in the midst of all your liberties; if you be not wrapped up in as many sorrows, after all the joys he hath procured to you; if the glittering glories, the glorying pleasures he entices you by, and entertains you with, prove not trash and dirt, and mere lies in the end, then say, the devil hath forgotten his trade of lying. The devil's works will be even like himself, false and deceitful; but God is true, and all his works are done in truth. 2d. In fidelity; his works are according to his word; 'thou hast spoken with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled with thine hand;¹ 'in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me;² not only in thy faithfulness thou hast saved me, in thy faithfulness thou hast comforted me, in thy faithfulness thou hast succoured me; but in thy faithfulness thou hast afflicted me; in thy faithfulness thou hast humbled, and broken me, and cast me down. The promise of God is, that we shall want nothing; we shall neither want his staff nor his rod, neither comforts nor crosses, neither joys nor sorrows; we cannot well want either, and we shall want neither, because God is faithful. You may not only write down with the apostle, 'God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able to bear.' But you may write also, God is faithful, and will not suffer you to fall into temptation. When it is seasonable, your hearts shall be glad; and if need be, for a season, you shall be in heaviness. God is faithful, he will ever be true to himself, and therefore to you: 'he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.'³ Should he be false to his people, he cannot be true to himself, to his purpose and promise; his word is not yea and nay. God is not as a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent, that he should say, and unsay, that he should say, and not do; you may write God's name upon every word he hath spoken, you may write his name, I AM, upon all that he hath said: it shall be. Now Christians, put

these three particulars together, and if you cannot spell out the conclusion of them, the providence of God will certainly accomplish his good purpose and promise concerning you, you are of little understanding as well as of little faith. If God governs the world, and nothing comes to pass but by his providence; if providence governs according to God's purpose and promise, providence cannot fail of accomplishing both. If God be almighty and can, if God be wise and knows how, if God be faithful and true; let the devil if he can with all his sophistry evade the conclusion, that he will certainly do all that good for you, which he hath purposed and promised. If God be not able to perform; he is not almighty; if he mistake his way, if he use impertinent, improper means, he is not the all-wise God. If he do not actually perform what he is able, and knows how to do, when he hath said it, he ceases to be the true God: so that the matter is brought plainly to this issue, if God be God, if God be the all-wise God, if God be the true and faithful God, this word which he hath spoken, 'all things shall work together for good to those that love God,' shall not fail of its accomplishment in its season. Having thus proved the doctrine, I shall add a few words by way of caution.

Caution 1. Limit not the Lord to your time and way. God will make good his word, but you must give him leave to take his own season: 'he that believeth shall not make haste.' Believe God, but do not prejudice nor precipitate, lest you fall into temptation. Put no more into the promise, neither for matter nor circumstance, than God hath put in it; put not that into the promise, which God hath not put in it, lest you miss and come short of that which God hath put in it. Let others' mistakes and miscarriages be warnings to you. Till God hath manifestly said, do you not say, 'this is the time.' Build not your confidence on conjectures, your faith on the strongest presumptions, lest your faith prove but a fancy, and your confidence your confusion; make not the promise of God of none effect, by looking for its effect out of season. Believe not yourselves into infidelity. Consider 'it is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which God hath put in his own power.'⁴ Study the word, and its commentary, the works of God; but be sober in your conclusions. This you may safely depend upon, and this will be enough, if you have

¹ 1 Ki. 8. 24.² Ps. 119. 75.³ 2 Ti. 2. 13.⁴ Ac. 1. 7.

no more. God will make good his word to you, sooner or later, in one time or other, in one way or other; in the best time, in the best way, in the appointed time; the vision shall speak, and shall not lie: 'though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not tarry.' At least, at the end of the days, when you shall stand in your lot, when you shall be gotten on the banks of Canaan, and shall thence look back on the promises and providences of God, you shall see and say, God is faithful, there hath not failed one word, of all that he hath promised. Now I understand, though once I could not, how every wheel was turning, every instrument was moving, every event was working towards my good and everlasting welfare.

2. Let not your expectation cause an abortion. Let not your looking for mercy hinder the working of your affliction. It is not seldom, and the Lord grant it be not too common a case, that our door of hope becomes a door of sin. We do not set ourselves with that seriousness to humble, to purge ourselves from our iniquities, as we would do, did we apprehend our case more desperate; our fears and our sorrows have not their kindly work upon us; our hope hinders it. We might have been more broken-hearted, had it not been for our hopes of building up; as it is with a person who conceives himself to be dying, he then falls to praying and repenting, and setting his heart in order, because he must die; but upon a little hope of recovery, he lays by his dying thoughts and preparations. Christians, whenever you are under afflictions, take heed that your expectation of deliverance to be near put it not so much the farther off. Watch narrowly over yourselves, and look diligently to it, that your hope of redemption do not harden your hearts, nor hinder your humiliation and repentance. Hope in God, and wait for the promise of his coming; but know, that till the rod hath done its work, it is not like in mercy to be laid by; and it is better to be continued in the furnace, than to be brought forth with your dross unpurged away.

By the way, learn hence two things. 1. Rejoice in this promise of God. Hath the Lord put in thy name here: let thine heart say, it is enough. Be more joyful in this, that God hath thus undertaken the care of thee, than if God had wholly put thee to thine own hand; giving thee power to help, and liberty to choose

for thyself. In what wilt thou rejoice, if not in this, that the whole creation is engaged to do thee a kindness, to help thee into the possession of thy God? Thou mayest now not only submit to, but thankfully embrace every providence, knowing upon what errand it comes to thee; for good, and not for hurt. Thou mayest now triumph, not only in the consternations, but in the triumphs of thine enemies. Whether they ride over thy back, or thou tread upon their neck, it is all one, the issue will be the same. Thy troubles and thy consolations differ only in their countenance: with whatever grim face thy afflictions look, there are smiles under: learn to see through them, and thou mayest see light on the further side. Believe this word, thou mayest read it written upon every thing that befalls thee: there is no messenger that comes, but brings this promise in his hand; 'even this shall work for good:' read it, and rejoice. 2. Lay thyself down quietly under it. No more perplexing or distracting cares, what shall become of thee; no more unwarrantable shifting for thyself; let God alone. Shift not for thyself, lest God leave thee to thine own shifts. Let not the violence of evil men disturb thy peace, or provoke thee to unpeaceableness. Whatever provocations thou mayest have, avenge not thyself, neither give place unto wrath, murmuring, or fears. In thy patience possess thy soul, thy God, and his good word; thy strength is to sit still. Stand still and see the salvation of God; thou hast nothing to do but to be holy; let that be thine only care; thy God will see to it thou shalt be happy; he is faithful that hath promised. Love God, and leave thyself and thy whole interest in this blessed word; 'all things shall work to thee for good.'

By this time you see something of the riches of this promise. God is in the promise, the God of peace, the God of power, the God of patience, the God of hope, the heart of God, the help of God, the presence of God; by virtue whereof, all that ever befalls them shall work for their good. Methinks the hearing of this promise opened, should set your souls, and all that is within you a crying out, O that this were my portion! Wherever my lot do fall, as to outward things, though in a prison, though in a desert, though on a dunghill, let the lot of my soul lie in this promise, 'the God of peace shall be with you.' Why brethren, will you take up with godliness? You have learned, and received, and heard the word of the Lord, the word of faith,

¹ Hab. 2. 3.

the word of righteousness and holiness; will you hearken to, will you obey these words? 'these things do, and the God of peace shall be with you.' O what foolish creatures are we, that ever we should be afraid of religion, afraid of holiness, afraid to own, obey, and follow God and his holy ways! What unreasonable fears are these, to those that believe the scriptures? If the scriptures be true, this is the only way, this following God in holiness, to put yourselves out of all danger, to put yourselves into the heart, arms, presence and protection, of the Almighty God of heaven and earth. O that I could persuade you in thither, and there leave you! If you are once in the Lord's arms, you are safe enough, into whatever hands you fall.

Christians, my business whilst I have been with you, hath been to bring you to God, to espouse you to Christ; and you that have already, or will yet, at last, be persuaded to give your consent, and will give me leave to make up the match, I can give you assurance that he will shortly come and make up the marriage; and must say to you, as Naomi to Ruth, 'sit still, my daughter, till thou see how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, till he have finished the thing this day.'¹ Sit still, Christians, till you see how matters will fall; and however they fall, know, your Lord will not be in rest, till he have finished this thing, and brought you home, to be with him where he is. I am now parting from you in this confidence, that, however, after a few days I shall see your faces no more in this world; yet, I shall shortly meet you in the bride-chamber of glory, where we shall ever be with the Lord.

Beloved in the Lord, I must now leave you, but give me leave ere I go, to deal freely with you, and yet a little farther, in the close of my day, this once more to open my heart to you; and to tell you, I. What my parting fears. II. What my parting wishes for you are, which I carry upon my spirit. I. My parting fears, I go off from you with, are especially these: 1. I am afraid, that there are many of you, upon whom I have bestowed my labour in vain; I am afraid that I have instructed you in vain, exhorted, persuaded, beseeched, and reproved you in vain. It was the apostle's case, and his fear, concerning the Galatians.² It is my grief, that when I would have no more to speak, but an healing word, a comforting word, I must yet

drop down a bitter word on some of you; that when I would speak only from Mount Gerizzim, I must yet again speak to some from Mount Ebal; that when I would leave a blessing behind me upon you all, I am like to leave some bound under a curse. It is grievous to me thus to speak, yet for the discharge of my duty, and for your own necessity, bear with me. I am afraid, that whilst I have been preaching to you, of an incorruptible crown, of an everlasting rest, a kingdom of joy and glory, I am afraid there are many of you, that have no part nor lot in this matter, but are still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity. 'If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:' and are there none among you, from whom this gospel is hid, hid as to the light of it, hid as to the saving power and efficacy of it? I am afraid there is many a blind eye, many a hard heart, many a spirit still in prison, under the power of their lusts and brutish sensuality: I am afraid there are many such among you; and are not you afraid so too? O that you were! 2. I have a greater fear than this; I am afraid of some of you, that not only all my past labours, but this last will be lost also. Those that stand it out to their last day, do usually stand it out in their last day. Blessed be God that there are amongst you, those over whom my soul is comforted, to whom I can speak in the words of the apostle; 'God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart, that form of doctrine that hath been delivered unto you; and being now made free from sin, you are become the servants of righteousness.'³ O that I could thus speak! O that I could thus rejoice over you all! But, as the apostle said to the Corinthians, 'I fear lest when I come, I shall find you such as I would not;'⁴ so must I say, with a grieved heart; I fear, that now I am going, I shall leave you such as I would not. I would not leave one blind person, one vain person, one loose liver, not one unbeliever, or impenitent, amongst you all. O what a good day would this day of my departure be! what light would there be in this dark evening, were it thus with you! If I might see you all recovered out of the snares of the devil, every man's eyes opened, every man's fetters off, every man's prison broken, and his soul escaped from that deadly bondage; if every poor deadly creature among you, who yet lies bound hand and foot in his grave-clothes, might

¹ Ru. 3. 12.² Ga. 4. 11.³ Ro. 6. 17⁴ 2 Cor. 12. 20

now at last stand up from the dead, and live the life of God: this would be mine and your great rejoicing! But O I fear with this apostle, 'my God will humble me,' and grieve me, and afflict me, to see in what a woful plight I must leave divers of you! O ye sons of the night, you poor, ignorant, and dark souls, upon whom the light hath shined, but your darkness comprehendeth it not; O you poor obstinate, and hardened souls, upon whom I have been ploughing as upon rocks, and hewing as upon adamants, who still remain under as great harness, as if no dew nor rain had ever fallen on you; O you poor, half-baked, almost Christians, that have taken up your stand in your present attainments; my soul is under great fears, and must weep in secret for you, whilst my tongue must henceforth be silent! O every soul, that is without fear of himself, my soul is afraid for you: the fearless soul is in a fearful state! Sinners, let my fears be your fears. What, is there such astonishing guilt upon you, and yet not afraid? such a dreadful roll writ against you, and yet not afraid? so many sabbaths, sermons, warnings lost, and never to be recalled; nor any assurance left of one sermon, or warning more; and yet not afraid? such a subtle devil, such a deceitful heart, such a tempting world, that you have to deal withal; such a black and bottomless pit, into which you are falling; and yet not afraid? O what stocks and stones hath the gospel to deal withal! Beloved, I have laboured much with you, both publicly, and from house to house, to bring you under a due fear and jealousy of yourselves; but hitherto your hearts have been too hard for me. O yet for trembling hearts; tremble and sin not; fear and pray, fear and hope, fear and repent; 'work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' O if my fears were once become your fears; your fears would become my hopes! O what a day-spring of hopes would arise from the shaking of secure hearts! These fears would be as the thicker darkness, forerunners of the break of day.

II. My parting wishes, and desires for you are, 1. That the good seed which hath been sown amongst you were well-rooted in every heart: I wish that my twenty years' ministry among you may not be lost labour to any one of your souls. 2. I wish that your next seedsman may be more skilful and successful; that the good Lord will provide you a man, that

may teach you in wisdom, gain you in love, lead you on to life, by an holy example; and if the Lord grant you this mercy, I wish that such an one may be dearly prized, and cheerfully accepted by you. God keep this flock from a ravening wolf, and a deceitful shepherd! 3. I wish that there may be no root of bitterness springing up amongst you; that there be no divisions or contentions, but that you may live in peace and love, that the God of peace and love may be with you. 4. I wish that this place, where so much good seed hath been sown, may become a fruitful field; that the fruits of faith and repentance, the fruits of righteousness and holiness may be in you and abound; that you may be neither barren, nor unfruitful; that religion, in the power and practice of it, may so visibly flourish, in the several persons, in the several families of this congregation, that they that go by may see and say, 'this is the field which the Lord hath blessed.' 5. I wish, that whatever clouds may at any time gather over you, may not fall down in a withering storm, or a sweeping flood, but may pass away in a mist, or dissolve into a fruitful dew; that no persecutions or temptations may ever carry you down the stream with evil men, nor blight any hopeful beginnings, that are budding forth in any of your souls. If tribulation should be any of your lots, I wish it may not be to you as the hail of Egypt, but as the dew of Hermon. I wish you a joyful harvest, that you may reap in eternity, what hath been sown in time; may you now sow in righteousness, and hereafter reap in mercy; may every one that is now sowing in tears for ever reap in joy; may you that go on your way weeping, bearing precious seed, return with joy and bring your sheaves with you; may the showers of this day be the watering of your seed, that it may spring up to eternal life. 6. Brethren, my heart's desire for you all is, that you may be saved; and if there be any persons that bear evil will to me, my particular wish for them is, the good-will of him that dwelt in the bush, be those men's portion for ever. These are some of my wishes for you; will you join your wishes with mine; will you turn your wishes into prayers, and let this be your prayer, 'the Lord grant thee thine heart's desire, and fulfil all thy mind!'

Brethren, do I wish you any harm in all this? If not; if it be to be wished that the word of Christ were rooted in your hearts, and your souls thereby rooted in the grace of God; if it be to be wished, that your lust were rooted out, your

sins dead and dried up, your foot gotten out of the snare, your souls brought into the fold, your fruits of righteousness and holiness abounding and growing up to eternal life; if all this be to be wished, then give in your votes with mine: wish and pray, pray and press on, press on, and wait, for the accomplishment of this grace in you all. I tell you again, I wish you well; and not only I, but the Lord God hath sent me to you. The Lord Jesus wishes you well; he wishes and woos, woos and weeps, weeps and dies, that your souls might live, and be blessed for ever. He hath once more sent me to you, even to the worst amongst you, to tell you from him, that he is unwilling you should perish; that he hath a kindness for you in his heart, if you will accept it; he hath blood and bowels for you, blood to expiate your guilt, to wash away your filth, and bowels to offer you the benefit of his blood; with this wish, 'O that it were theirs! O that they would hearken and accept!' Only I must add, that the Lord hath two sorts of wishes concerning sinners; the first is, 'O that they would hearken!' O that they would come in, be healed, and be saved.¹ This wish is an olive branch that brings good tidings, and gives great hopes of peace and mercy. His last wish is, 'O that they had hearkened, that they had accepted!' 'O that my people had hearkened to me!'² 'if thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace.'³ This wish hath nothing but dread and death in it; it is the black flag hung out, that proclaims eternal wars. The sense is, Israel had once a fair time of it, a time of love, a time of grace, a time of peace; O that they had hearkened then, that they had known the things that concern their peace! But wo, wo to them, it is now too late, the door is shut, the season is over, the day is past! 'now they are hid from thine eyes.'

There are three deadly darts in this wish, 'O that thou hadst!' It includes in it these three cutting words, thou hast not: thou mightest; thou shalt not for ever. 1. There is this in it, thou hast not. What have I not? why, 'thou hast not known the things that belong to thy peace;' thou hast had the door of glory, the gate of heaven open to thee, and hast been called for, and invited in, but thou hast lost the opportunity; thou knewest not when thou wert well-offered, nor wouldest take notice what a day was before thee, what a prize was in thine

hand: thy peace, the gospel of peace, the Prince of Peace, a kingdom of peace was set open, offered, and brought home to thy doors, but thou hadst so many other matters to look after, that thou tookest no notice of it, but hast let it slip. There is one dart, 'thou hast not known.' There is a gospel gone, there is a Christ gone, there is a soul, a kingdom lost! 2. There is this in it, 'thou mightest.' O that thou hadst? Why, might I? Yes, thou mightest; if thou wouldest thou mightest. Thy God did not mock thee, when he preached peace to thee; he was willing, and wished it thine; if thou wouldest thou mightest have made it thine own; but whilst he would thou wouldest not. There is another dart, 'I might have known.' I have none to thank but myself for the loss; mine undoing was mine own doing. There are no such torments as when the soul flies upon itself and takes revenge on itself. O the gashes that such self-reflections make! Soul, how camest thou in hither into all this misery; O it is of myself, myself, that my destruction is: the door was open, and I was told of it, and was bid come in, but I would not. That I am lost and undone, was not my fate, which I could not avoid, but my fault and my folly. It seems to give some ease of our torment when we can shift off the fault. It was not I, but the woman, said Adam; It was not I, but the serpent, said the woman. If that had been true, it would have given ease, as well as serve for an excuse. This thought (it was mine own doing) tears the very caul of the heart. O I have none to blame but myself; mine own foolish and forward heart. This is my ignorance, this is my unbelief, this is my wilfulness, my lust, and my pleasures, and my idols, that I was running after, that have brought me under this dreadful loss. It was my own doing. 3. There is this sin in it, thou shalt not for ever.' O that thou hadst! Why, may I not yet? is there no hope of recovering the opportunity? not one word more, not one hour more, may not the sun go one degree backward? No, no, it is too late, too late; thou hast had thy day; from henceforth no more for ever. There is the last dart, time is past; there is the death, the hell, the anguish, the worm that shall gnaw to eternity! This one word, 'time is past,' sets all hell a roaring; and when it is once spoken to a sinner on earth, there is hell begun. Go thy way, wretch, fill up thy measure, and fall into thy place! The gospel hath no more to say to thee, but this one word: 'because I have called, and

¹ De. 5. 29.² Ps. 81. 13.³ Lu. 19. 42.

thou refusedst; I have stretched out my hand, and thou regardedst not; but hast set at nought all my counsels, and wouldest none of my reproofs: I also will laugh at thy calamities, and mock when thy fear cometh; when thy fear cometh as desolation, and thy destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon thee: then shalt thou call, but I will not answer, thou shalt seek me early, but shalt not find me.'

Beloved, my hopes are—and I am not able to say, but that you are yet under the first wish, 'O that they would!' Christ is yet preaching to you faith, and sends his wish along with his word, 'O that they would believe!' Christ is yet preaching repentance and conversion to you, and wishes, 'O that they would repent!' that they would be converted; and to this wish of my Lord, my soul, and all that is within me, says Amen. Brethren, will you yet again say your Lord nay? shall Christ have his wish? shall your servant for Jesus' sake, shall I have my wish? will you now at last consent to be sanctified, and to be saved? Let me have this wish, and I dare promise you from the Lord, you shall have yours, even whatever your soul can desire. Brethren, this once hear, this once be prevailed upon; be content that your lusts be rooted out, and your Lord planted into your souls. Be content to be pardoned, content to be converted, content to be saved. This once hear, lest if you now refuse, ye no more be persuaded with, 'O that they would!' but be for ever confounded with, 'O that they had!' Lest all our wishes, and wooings of you be turned into weepings and mournings over you; this once hear; O that you would! I heartily thank you, for your good wishes, and good-will towards me; for your willing and cheerful entertainment of my person, and attendance on my ministry; and particularly for your passionate desire of my longer stay among you. Which desire, if God had not, my soul could not have denied you. Though the Almighty, to whose pleasure it is meet that we all submit, hath said nay to that wish of yours, yet let your souls say Amen, to this last of mine, that the Lord God would dwell among you, and in you, both now and for ever.

And having thus finished my labours among you, I shall now close up with this double account. 1. Of my discharge of my ministry in this place. 2. Of my deprivation. And shall so commit you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to

give you an inheritance amongst all them that are sanctified.

1. Of my discharge of my ministry. What my doctrine and manner of life hath been, is known to you; and what my aim and intent hath been, is known to God. The searcher of hearts knows that it is the salvation of souls that hath been the mark at which I have levelled. My way hath been to use all plainness, that I might be made manifest in your consciences. Weaknesses, and infirmities, both natural and sinful, the Lord pardon it, I have had many. I am sensible that much more might have been done, both in public and in private, had it not been for a weakly body, and a slothful heart. I repent that I have had no more zeal for God, no more compassion to souls; I repent that I have been no more constant and importunate with you, about the matters of eternity. O eternity, eternity! that thou wert no more in the heart and lips of the preacher, in the hearts and ears of the hearers! But while I thus judge myself for my failings, blessed be God, I have a witness in my conscience, and I hope in yours also, that I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Brethren, I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, good and evil, and have not ceased from day to day, to warn you to choose life, and that good way that leads to it; and to escape for your lives from the way of sin and death! O remember the many instructions I have given you, the many arguments whereby I have striven with you, the many prayers that have been offered up for the guiding and gaining your souls into the path of life, and the turning your feet out of the way of destruction. O might I be able to give this testimony concerning you all at my departure: 'they have trodden in the right path; they have chosen the good part that shall not be taken from them!' Brethren, beloved, with whom I have travailed in birth, that Christ might be formed in you, I must shortly give up my account in a more solemn assembly, will you help me to give it up with joy, by showing your souls before the Lord, as the seals of my ministry? Every sincere convert among you will be a crown of rejoicing to me in that day. So let me rejoice, and let my joy be the joy of you all.

What shall I say more? If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, any bowels and mercy; if the glory of the Eternal God, the honour of the everlasting

gospel, the safety of your immortal souls, the incorruptible crown, the exceeding eternal weight of glory, weigh any thing with you; then, once more, let me beseech you by all this, to hearken to that word of the gospel, which God hath spoken to you by me.

2. Of my deprivation. The most glorious morning hath its evening; the hour is come wherein the sun is setting upon not a few of the prophets; the shadows of the evening are stretched forth upon us; our day draws, our work seems to be at an end. Our pulpits and places must know us no more. This is the Lord's doing, let all the earth keep silence before him. It is not a light thing for me, brethren, to be laid aside from the work, and cast out of the vineyard of the Lord; and it must be something of weight that must support under so severe a doom. I know there are not a few that will add to the affliction of the afflicted, by telling the world it is their own fault, they might prevent it if they would. Whether this be so or no, God knoweth, and let the Lord be judge. Blessed be God, whatever be, this is not laid to our charge as the reason of our seclusion, either insufficiency or scandal! You are not ignorant what things there are imposed on us, as the condition of our continuing our ministration; which how lawful and expedient soever they seem in the judgment of many, yet have the most specious arguments that plead for them, left me utterly dissatisfied in my conscience about them. I must profess before God, angels, and men, that my non-submission is not from any disloyalty to authority, nor from pride, humour, or any factious disposition, or design; but because I dare not contradict my light, nor do any thing concerning which my heart tells me, the Lord says, do it not. After all my most impartial inquiries, after all my seeking counsel from the Lord, after all my considering, and consulting with men of all persuasions about these matters; I find myself so far short of satisfaction, that I am plainly put to this choice, to part with my ministry or my conscience. I dare not lie before God and the world; nor come and tell you, I approve, I allow, I heartily consent, to what I neither do nor can; but must choose rather, that my ministry be sealed up by my sufferings, than lengthened out by a lie, through the grace of God, though men do, yet my heart shall not reproach me while I live. 'If our heart con-

demn us, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things.' But however, though I must now no longer act as a minister, I shall, through the grace of God, endeavour peaceably, and patiently, to suffer as a Christian. I should, to testify my obedience to authority, have become all things to all men, to the uttermost that I could, with any clearness of heart: but since matters stand so, I must lose my place, or my peace, I cheerfully suffer myself to be thrust off the stage.

And now welcome the cross of Christ; welcome reproach; welcome poverty, scorn and contempt, or whatever else may befall me on this account! This morning I had a flock, and you had a pastor; but now, behold a pastor without a flock, a flock without a shepherd! This morning I had an house, but now I have none! This morning I had a living, but now I have none! 'The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'

Beloved, I am sensible of many weaknesses and disadvantages I am under, which may render a suffering state the harder to be borne; help me by your prayers, and not me only, but all my brethren also, with whom my lot must fall; 'pray for us: for we trust that we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.' Pray, 1. That God would make our silence speak, and preach the same holy doctrine that we have preached with our lips. 2. That he would give supports answerable to our sufferings; that he who comforteth those that are cast down, will also comfort his servants that are cast out. 3. That, according to our earnest expectation, and our hope, as always, so now also, Christ may be magnified in us, whether it be by life or by death. And thus, brethren, I bid you all farewell, in the words of the apostle; 'finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.' 'And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'

THE ART OF DIVINE CONTENTMENT.

PHIL. 4. 11. *'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.'*

CHAP. I. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE
TEXT.

THESE words are brought in by way of prolepsis to anticipate and prevent an objection. The apostle had, in the former verses, laid down many grave and heavenly exhortations: among the rest, 'to be careful for nothing.' Not to exclude, 1. A prudential care; for, he that provideth not for his own house, 'hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.'¹ Nor, 2. a religious care; for, we must give all 'diligence to make our calling and election sure.'² But, 3. to exclude all anxious care about the issues and events of things; 'take no thought for your life, what you shall eat.'³ And in this sense it should be a Christian's care not to be careful. The word careful in the Greek comes from a primitive, that signifies 'to cut the heart in pieces,' a soul-dividing care; take heed of this. We are bid to 'commit our way unto the Lord;'⁴ the Hebrew word is, 'roll thy way upon the Lord.' It is our work to cast away care;⁵ and it is God's work to take care. By our immoderacy we take his work out of his hand. Care, when it is eccentric, either distrustful or distracting, is very dishonourable to God; it takes away his providence, as if he sat in heaven and minded not what became of things here below; like a man that makes a clock, and then leaves it to go of itself. Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things; and usually while we are thinking how we shall do to live, we forget how to die. Care is a spiritual canker that doth waste and dispirit; we may sooner by our care add a furlong to our grief than a cubit to our comfort. God doth threaten it as a curse, 'they shall eat their bread with carefulness.'⁶ Better fast than eat of that bread. 'Be careful for nothing.' Now, lest any one should say, yea, Paul thou preachest that to us which thou hast scarce learned thyself; hast thou learned not to be careful? the apostle seems tacitly to answer that, in the words of the text; 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content:' a speech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to

be written in letters of gold upon the crowns and diadems of princes.

The text doth branch itself into these two general parts. I. The scholar, Paul; 'I have learned.' II. The lesson; 'in every state to be content.'

CHAP. II. THE FIRST BRANCH OF THE
TEXT, THE SCHOLAR, WITH THE FIRST
PROPOSITION.

I begin with the first: The scholar, and his proficiency; 'I have learned.' Out of which I shall by the bye, observe two things by way of paraphrase. 1. The apostle doth not say, I have *heard*, that in every estate I should be content: but, I have *learned*. Whence our first doctrine, that it is not enough for Christians to hear their duty, but they must learn their duty. It is one thing to hear and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. St Paul was a practitioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There were four sorts of ground in the parable,⁷ and but one good ground: an emblem of this truth, many hearers, but few learners. There are two things which keep us from learning. 1. Slighting what we hear. Christ is the pearl of price; when we disesteem this pearl, we shall never learn either its value, or its virtue. The gospel is a rare mystery; in one place,⁸ it is called 'the gospel of grace;' in another,⁹ 'the gospel of glory; because in it, as in a transparent glass, the glory of God is resplendent. But he that hath learned to contemn this mystery, will hardly ever learn to obey it; he that looks upon the things of heaven as things by the bye, and perhaps the driving of a trade, or carrying on some politic design to be of greater importance, this man is in the high road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of his peace. Who will learn that which he thinks is scarce worth learning? 2. Forgetting what we hear. If a scholar have his rules laid before him, and he forgets them as fast as he reads them, he will never learn.¹⁰ Aristotle calls the memory the scribe of the soul; and Bernard calls it the stomach of the soul, because it hath

¹ 1 Ti. 5. 8.

² 2 Pe. 1. 10.

³ Mat. 6. 25.

⁴ Ps. 37. 5.

⁵ 1 Pe. 5. 7.

⁶ Ec. 12. 1.

⁷ Lu. 8. 5.

⁸ Ac. 20. 24.

⁹ 1 Cor. 4. 4.

¹⁰ Ja. 1. 25.

a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits; we have great memories in other things, we remember that which is vain. Cyrus could remember the name of every soldier in his huge army. We remember injuries: this is to fill a precious cabinet with dung; but, as Hierom saith, how soon do we forget the sacred truths of God? We are apt to forget three things: our faults, our friends, our instructions. Many Christians are like sieves; put a sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out: so, while they are hearing of a sermon, they remember something: but like the sieve out of the water, as soon as they are gone out of the church, all is forgotten. 'Let these sayings, (saith Christ) sink down into your ears;' in the original it is, 'put these sayings into your ears,' as a man that would hide a jewel from being stolen, locks it up safe in his chest. Let them sink: the word must not fall only as dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which soaks to the root of the tree, and makes it fructify. O how often doth Satan, that fowl of the air, pick up the good seed that is sown!

USE. Let me put you upon a serious trial. Some of you have heard much,—you have lived forty, fifty, sixty years under the blessed trumpet of the gospel,—what have you learned? You may have heard a thousand sermons, and yet not learned one. Search your consciences. 1. You have heard much against sin: are you hearers; or are you scholars? How many sermons have you heard against covetousness, that it is the root, on which pride, idolatry, treason do grow? One calls it a metropolitan sin; it is a complex evil, it doth twist a great many sins in with it. There is hardly any sin, but covetousness is a main ingredient into it; and yet are you like the two daughters of the horse-leech, that cry, 'give! give!' How much have you heard against rash anger, that it is a short frenzy, a dry drunkenness; that it rests in the bosom of fools; and upon the least occasion do your spirits begin to take fire? How much have you heard against swearing? It is Christ's express mandate, 'swear not at all.'² This sin of all others may be termed the unfruitful work of darkness. It is neither sweetened with pleasure, nor enriched with profit, the usual vermilion wherewith Satan doth paint sin. Swearing is forbidden with a *subpana*. While the swearer shoots his oaths, like flying arrows at God to

pierce his glory, God shoots 'a flying roll' of curses against him. And do you make your tongue a racket by which you toss oaths as tennis-balls? do you sport yourselves with oaths, as the Philistines did with Samson, which will at last pull the house about your ears? Alas! how have they learned what sin is, that have not learned to leave sin! Doth he know what a viper is, that will play with it? 2. You have heard much of Christ: have you learned Christ? The Jews, as Jerom saith, carried Christ in their Bibles, but not in their heart; their sound 'went into all the earth;'³ the prophets and apostles were as trumpets, whose sound went abroad into the world: yet many thousands who heard the noise of these trumpets, had not learned Christ; 'they have not all obeyed.'⁴ (1.) A man may know much of Christ, and yet not learn Christ: the devils knew Christ.⁵ (2.) A man may preach Christ, and yet not learn Christ, as Judas and the pseudo-apostles.⁶ (3.) A man may profess Christ, and yet not learn Christ: there are many professors in the world that Christ will profess against.⁷

Q. *What is it then to learn Christ?*

1 To learn Christ is to be made like Christ, to have the divine characters of his holiness engraven upon our hearts: 'we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.'⁸ There is a metamorphosis made; a sinner, viewing Christ's image in the glass of the gospel, is transformed into that image. Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but he went away quite changed. A true saint is a divine landscape or picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively portrayed and drawn forth; we hath the same spirit, the same judgment, the same will, with Jesus Christ. 2. To learn Christ, is to believe in him; 'my Lord, and my God:'⁹ when we do not only believe God, but in God, which is the actual application of Christ to ourselves, and as it were the spreading of the sacred medicine of his blood upon our souls. You have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, 'my Jesus;' be not offended if I tell you, the devil can say his creed as well as you. 3. To learn Christ, is to love Christ. When we have Bible-conversations, our life like rich diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the church of God, and are, in some sense, parallel with the life of Christ, as the transcript with

¹ Lu. 9. 41.

² Mat. 5. 34.

³ Ro. 10. 18. ⁴ ver. 16. ⁵ Mat. 1. 24. ⁶ Ph. 5. 15.

⁷ Mat. 7. 22, 23. ⁸ 2 Cor. 3. 18. ⁹ Jno. 20. 28.

the original. So much for the first notion of the word.

CHAP. III. CONCERNING THE SECOND PROPOSITION.

II. This word, 'I have learned,' is a word imports difficulty; it shows how hardly the apostle came by contentment of mind; it was not bred in nature. St Paul did not come naturally by it, but he had learned it. It cost him many a prayer and tear, it was taught him by the Spirit. Whence our second doctrine: good things are hard to come by. The business of religion is not so facile as most do imagine. 'I have learned,' saith St Paul. Indeed you need not learn a man to sin; this is natural,¹ and therefore facile, it comes as water out of a spring. It is an easy thing to be wicked; hell will be taken without storm; but matters of religion must be learned. To cut the flesh is easy, but to prick a vein, and not cut an artery is hard. The trade of sin needs not to be learned, but the art of divine contentment is not achieved without holy industry: 'I have learned.'

There are two pregnant reasons, why there must be so much study and exercitation: 1. Because spiritual things are against nature. Every thing in religion is antipodes to nature. There are in religion two things, and both are against nature. (1.) Matters of faith: as, for men to be justified by the righteousness of another, to become a fool that he may be wise, to save all by losing all; this is against nature. (2.) Matters of practice: as, Self-denial; for a man to deny his own wisdom, and see himself blind; his own will, and have it melted into the will of God; plucking out the right eye, beheading and crucifying that sin which is the favourite, and lies nearest to the heart; for a man to be dead to the world, and in the midst of want to abound; for him to take up the cross, and follow Christ, not only in golden, but in bloody paths; to embrace religion, when it is dressed in night-clothes, all the jewels of honour and preferment being pulled of; this is against nature, and therefore must be learned. Self-examination; for a man to take his heart, as a watch, all in pieces; to set up a spiritual inquisition, or court of conscience, and traverse things in his own soul; to take David's candle and lantern,² and search for sin; nay, as judge, to pass the sentence upon himself:³ this is against

nature, and will not easily be attained to without learning. Self-reformation; to see a man, as Caleb, of another spirit, walking antipodes to himself, the current of his life altered, and running into the channel of religion: this is wholly against nature. When a stone ascends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent; the motion of the soul heaven-ward is a violent motion, it must be learned; flesh and blood is not skilled in these things; nature can no more cast out nature, than Satan can cast out Satan. 2. Because spiritual things are above nature. There are some things in nature that are hard to find out, as the cause of things, which are not learned without study. Aristotle, a great philosopher, whom some have called an eagle fallen from the clouds, yet could not find out the motion of the river Euripus, and therefore threw himself into it; what then are divine things, which are in sphere above nature, and beyond all human disquisition; as the Trinity, the hypostatical union, the mystery of faith to believe against hope? Only God's Spirit can light our candle here. The apostle calls these 'the deep things of God.' The gospel is full of jewels, but they are locked up from sense and reason. The angels in heaven are searching into these sacred depths.⁴

USE. Let us beg the Spirit of God to teach us; we must be 'divinely taught;' the eunuch could read, but he could not understand, till Philip joined himself to his chariot.⁵ God's Spirit must join himself to our chariot; he must teach, or we cannot learn: 'all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.'⁶ A man may read the figure on the dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the sun shines upon the dial: we may read the Bible over, but we cannot learn to purpose, till the Spirit of God shine into our hearts.⁷ O implore this blessed Spirit! It is God's prerogative-royal to teach: 'I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit.'⁸ Ministers may tell us our lesson, God only can teach us; we have lost both our hearing and eye-sight, therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever since Eve listened to the serpent, we have been deaf; and since she looked on the tree of knowledge we have been blind; but when God comes to teach, he removes these impediments.⁹ We are naturally dead;¹⁰ who will go about to teach a dead man? yet, behold, God undertakes to make dead men to understand mysteries! God is the grand teacher.

¹ Ps. 58. 3. ² Ps. 119. 105. ³ 2 Sa. 34. 17.

⁴ 1 Pe. 1. 22. ⁵ Ac. 8. 29. ⁶ Is. 54. 13. ⁷ 2 Cor. 4. 6
⁸ Is. 48. 17. ⁹ Is. 35. 5. ¹⁰ Ep. 2. 1.

This is the reason the word preached works so differently upon men; two in a pew, the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the ordinances as a dead child at the breast, and gets no nourishment. What is the reason? Because the heavenly gale of the Spirit blows upon one, and not upon the other; one hath the anointing of God, which teacheth him all things;¹ the other hath it not. God's Spirit speaks sweetly, but irresistibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could sing the new song, but those who were sealed in their foreheads;² reprobates could not sing it. Those that are skilful in the mysteries of salvation, must have the seal of the Spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer: Lord, breathe thy Spirit into thy word; and we have a promise, which may add wings to prayer; 'if ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?'³ And thus much of the first part of the text, the scholar, which I intended only as a short gloss or paraphrase.

CHAP. IV. THE SECOND BRANCH OF THE TEXT, THE LESSON ITSELF, WITH THE PROPOSITION.

II. I come to the second, which is the main thing, the lesson itself; 'in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and is certainly more to be wondered at in St Paul, that he knew how to turn himself to every condition, than all the learning in the world besides, which hath been so applauded in former ages, by Julius Cæsar, Ptolemy, Xenophon, the great admirers of learning. The text hath but few words in it; 'in every state content:' but if that be true, which once Fulgentius said, that the most golden sentence is ever measured by brevity and suavity, then, this is a most accomplished speech; the text is like a precious jewel, little in quantity, but great in worth and value.

The main proposition I shall insist upon, is this, that a gracious spirit is a contented spirit. The doctrine of contentment is very superlative, and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be Christians.

1. It is an hard lesson. The angels in heaven had not learned it; they were not contented. Though their estate was very glorious, yet they were still soaring aloft, and aimed at

something higher; 'the angels which kept not their first estate.' They kept not their estate, because they were not contented with their estate. Our first parents, clothed with the white robe of innocency in paradise, had not learned to be content; they had aspiring hearts, and thinking their human nature too low and home-spun, would be crowned with the Deity, and 'be as gods.' Though they had the choice of all the trees of the garden, yet none would content them but the tree of knowledge, which they supposed would have been as eye-salve to have made them omniscient. O then, if this lesson was so hard to learn in innocency, how hard shall we find it, who are clogged with corruption!

2. It is of universal extent, it concerns all. *1st.* It concerns rich men. One would think it needless to press those to contentment whom God hath blessed with great estates, but rather persuade them to be humble and thankful; nay, but I say, be content. Rich men have their discontents as well as others! When they have a great estate, yet they are discontented that they have no more; they would make the hundred talents a thousand. A man in wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts; covetousness is a dry dropsy; an earthly heart is like the grave, that is 'never satisfied;' therefore I say to you, rich men, be content. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their estates, which is seldom; yet, though they have estate enough, they have not honour enough: if their barns are full enough, yet their turrets are not high enough. They would be somebody in the world, as Theudas, 'who boasted himself to be somebody.'⁴ They never go so cheerfully as when the wind of honour and applause fills their sails; if this wind be down they are discontented. One would think Haman had as much as his proud heart could desire; he was set above all the princes, advanced upon the pinnacle of honour, to be the second man in the kingdom;⁵ yet in the midst of all his pomp, because Mordecai would not uncover and kneel, he is discontented, and full of wrath, and there was no way to assuage this pleurisy of revenge, but by letting all the Jews' blood, and offering them up in sacrifice. The itch of honour is seldom allayed without blood; therefore I say to you rich men, be content. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their honour and magnificent titles, yet

¹ 1 Jno. 2. 27.

² Re. 14. 2.

³ Lu. 11. 13.

⁴ Ac. 5. 36

⁵ Ps. 3. 1.

they have not always contentment in their relations. She that lies in the bosom, may sometimes blow the coals; as Job's wife, who in a pet would have him fall out with God himself; 'curse God, and die.' Sometimes children cause discontent. How often is it seen that the mother's milk doth nourish a viper? and that he that once sucked her breast, goes about to suck her blood? Parents do often of grapes gather thorns, and of figs thistles. Children are sweet-briar; like the rose, which is a fragrant flower, but hath its prickles. Our relative comforts are not all pure wine, but mixed; they have in them more dregs than spirits, and are like that river Plutarch speaks of, where the waters in the morning run sweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no charter of exemption granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called upon to be content.

2dly. The doctrine of contentment concerns poor men. You that do suck so liberally from the breasts of providence, be content; it is an hard lesson, therefore it had need be set upon the sooner. How hard is it when the livelihood is even gone, a great estate boiled away almost to nothing, then to be contented. The means of subsistence is in scripture called our life, because it is the very sinews of life. The woman in the gospel spent 'all her living upon the physicians;'¹ in the Greek it is, she spent her *whole life* upon the physicians, because she spent her means by which she should live. It is much when poverty hath clipped our wings then to be content; but, though hard, it is excellent; and the apostle here had 'learned in every state to be content.' God had brought St Paul into as great variety of conditions as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; else sure he could never have gone through it with so much cheerfulness. See into what vicissitudes this blessed apostle was cast: 'we are troubled on every side,'² there was the sadness of his condition; 'but not distressed,' there was his content in that condition: 'we are perplexed,' there is his affliction; 'but not in despair,' there is his contentation. And, if we read a little further, 'in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults,'³ &c. there is his trouble: and behold his content, 'as having nothing, yet possessing all things.' When the apostle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that sweet contentment of mind which was like music in his soul, he pos-

essed all. We read a short map or history of his sufferings; 'in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft,'⁴ &c. yet behold the blessed frame and temper of his spirit, 'I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' Which way soever providence did blow, he had such heavenly skill and dexterity, that he knew how to steer his course. For his outward estate he was indifferent; he could be either on the top of Jacob's ladder, or the bottom; he could sing either the dirge or the anthem; he could be any thing that God would have him: 'I know how to want, and how to abound.' Here is a rare pattern for us to imitate. Paul, in regard of his faith and courage, was like a cedar, he could not be stirred; but for his outward condition, he was like a reed bending every way with the wind of providence. When a prosperous gale did blow upon him, he could bend with that, 'I know how to be full;' and when a boisterous gust of affliction did blow, he could bend in humility with that, 'I know how to be hungry.' St Paul was, as Aristotle speaks, like a die that hath four squares; throw it which way you will, it falls upon a bottom: let God throw the apostle which way he would, he fell upon this bottom of contentment. A contented spirit is like a watch: though you carry it up and down with you yet the spring of it is not shaken, nor the wheels out of order, but the watch keeps its perfect motion: so it was with St Paul, though God carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other; the spring of his heart was not broken, the wheels of his affections were not disordered, but kept their constant motion towards heaven; still content. The ship that lies at anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks; flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them: a Christian, having cast anchor in heaven, his heart never sinks; a gracious spirit is a contented spirit. This is a rare art. Paul did not learn it at the feet of Gamaliel: 'I am instructed,'⁵ I am initiated into this holy mystery; as if he had said, I have gotten the divine art, I have the knack of it; God must make us right artists. If we should put some men to an art that they are not skilled in, how unfit would they be for it? put an husbandman to limning or drawing pictures, what strange work would he make? this is out of his sphere. Take a limner that is exact in laying of colours,

¹ Lu. 8. 43. ² 2 Cor. 4. 8. ³ 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5.

⁴ 2 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25.

⁵ Ph. 4. 11.

and put him to plough, or set him to planting or grafting of trees, this is not his art, he is not skilled in it: bid a natural man live by faith, and when all things go cross, be contented, you bid him do what he hath no skill in, you may as well bid a child guide the stern of a ship; to live contented upon God in the deficiency of outward comforts, is an art which 'flesh and blood hath not learned:' nay, many of God's own children, who excel in some duties of religion, when they come to this of contentment, how do they bungle? They have scarce commenced masters of this art.

CHAP. V. THE RESOLVING OF SOME QUESTIONS.

For the illustration of this doctrine, I shall propound these questions.

Q. 1. *Whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented?*

Yes; for else he is not a saint, but a stoic. Rachel did well to weep for her children, there was nature; but her fault was, she refused to be comforted, there was discontent. Christ himself was sensible, when he sweat great drops of blood, and said, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' yet he was contented, and sweetly submitted his will: 'nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.' The apostle bids us humble ourselves 'under the mighty hand of God,'¹ which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it.

Q. 2. *Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented?*

Yes: 'unto thee have I opened my cause;'² and David poured out his complaint before the Lord.³ We may cry to God, and desire him to write down all our injuries: shall not the child complain to his father? When any burden is upon the spirit, prayer gives vent, it easeth the heart. Hannah's spirit was burdened; 'I am,' says she, 'a woman of a sorrowful spirit.' Now having prayed, and wept, she went away, and was no more sad; only here is the difference between a holy complaint and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain to God, in the other we complain of God.

Q. 3. *What is it properly that contentment doth exclude?*

There are three things which contentment doth banish out of its diocese, and which can by no means consist with it. 1. It excludes a vexatious repining; this is properly the daughter

of discontent: 'I mourn in my complaint.'⁴ He doth not say I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart; it is a rising up against God. When the sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam: when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blasphemy. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boils off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an uneven discomposure: when a man saith, I am in such straits, that I know not how to evolve or get out, I shall be undone; when his head and heart are so taken up, that he is not fit to pray or meditate, &c. he is not himself: just as when an army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that, the army is put into disorder; so a man's thoughts run up and down distracted, discontent doth dislocate and unjoint the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a childish despondency; and this is usually consequent upon the other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate, or wind himself out of the present trouble, begins to faint and sink under it. For care is to the mind as a burden to the back; it loads the spirits, and, with overloading, sinks them. A despondent spirit is a discontented spirit.

CHAP. VI. SHEWING THE NATURE OF CONTENTMENT.

Having answered these questions, I shall in the next place, come to describe this contentment. It is a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a Christian carries himself in an equal poise in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three aphorisms.

1. Contentment is a divine thing; it becomes ours, not by acquisition, but infusion; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the garden of philosophy, but is of an heavenly birth; it is therefore very observable that contentment is joined with godliness, and goes in equipage; 'godliness with contentment is great gain.'⁵ Contentment being a consequent of godliness, or concomitant, or both, I call it divine, to contradistinguishing it to that of contentment, which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have seemed to have this contentment, but it was only the shadow and picture of it;—the beryl, not the true diamond:

¹ 1 Pe. 5. 6.

² Jer. 20. 12.

³ Ps. 142. 2.

⁴ Ps. 55. 2.

⁵ 1 Tim. 6. 6.

theirs was but civil, this is sacred; theirs was only from principles of reason, this of religion; theirs was only lighted at nature's torch, this at the lamp of scripture. Reason may a little teach contentment, as thus: whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to; and if I meet with crosses, it is but catholic misery: all have their share, why therefore should I be troubled? Reason may suggest this; and indeed, this may be rather constraint; but to live securely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature supplies, only religion can bring this into the soul's exchequer.

2. Contentment is an intrinical thing; it lies within a man; not in the bark, but the root. Contentment hath both its fountain and stream in the soul. The beam hath not its light from the air; the beams of comfort which a contented man hath, do not arise from foreign comforts, but from within. As sorrow is seated in the spirit; 'the heart knoweth its own bitterness:'¹ so contentment lies within the soul, and doth not depend upon externals. Hence I gather, that outward troubles cannot hinder this blessed contentment: it is a spiritual thing, and ariseth from spiritual grounds; the apprehension of God's love. When there is a tempest without, there may be music within; a bee may sting through the skin, but it cannot sting to the heart; outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christian's heart, where contentment lies. Thieves may plunder us of our money and plate, but not of this pearl of contentment, unless we are willing to part with it, for it is locked up in the cabinet of the heart; the soul which is possessed of this rich treasure of contentment, is like Noah in the ark, that can sing in the midst of a deluge.

3. Contentment is an habitual thing, it shines with a fixed light in the firmament of the soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some stars which are seen but seldom; it is a settled temper of the heart. One action doth not denominate; he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so: but he is said to be liberal, that is, 'given to hospitality,' that is, who upon all occasions is willing to relieve the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man that is given to contentment. It is not casual but constant. Aristotle, in his rhetoric, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from passion, and those which

arise from complexion; the pale face may look red when it blusheth, but this is only a passion; he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man, who is so upon an occasion, and perhaps when he is pleased: but who is so constantly; it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

CHAP. VII. REASONS PRESSING TO HOLY CONTENTMENT.

Having opened the nature of contentment, I come next to lay down some reasons or arguments to contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The first is, God's precept. It is charged upon us as a duty: 'be content with such things as you have.'² The same God, who hath bid us believe, hath bid us be content: if we obey not, we run ourselves into a spiritual *premunire*. God's word is a sufficient warrant; it hath authority in it, and must be a *supersedeas*, or sacred spell to discontent. *Ipse dixit* was enough among Pythagoras's scholars: 'be it enacted,' is the royal style. God's word must be the star that guides, and his will the weight that moves our obedience; his will is a law, and hath majesty enough in it to captivate us into obedience; our hearts must not be more unquiet than the raging sea, which at his word is stilled.

The second reason enforcing contentment, is, God's promise: for he hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'³ Here God hath engaged himself, under hand and seal for our necessary provisions. If a king should say to one of his subjects, I will take care for thee; as long as I have any crown-revenues, thou shalt be provided for; if thou art in danger, I will secure thee,—if in want, I will supply thee; would not that subject be content? Behold, God hath here made promise to the believer, and as it were entered into bond for his security, 'I will never leave thee;' shall not this charm down the devil of discontent? 'Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will preserve them alive.'⁴ Methinks I see the godly man on his death-bed much discontented, and hear him complaining what will become of my wife and children when I am dead and gone? They may come to poverty: saith God, 'trouble not thyself, be content, I will take care of thy children; and let thy widow trust in me.' God hath made a promise to us, that he will not

¹ Pr. 14. 10.

² He. 13. 5.

³ He. 13. 5.

⁴ Jer. 49. 11.

leave us, and hath entailed the promise upon our wife and children; and will not this satisfy? True faith will take God's single bond, without calling for witnesses.

Be content, by virtue of a decree. Whatever our condition be, God the umpire of the world hath from everlasting decreed that condition for us, and by his providence ordered all appertinances thereunto. Let a Christian often think with himself, who hath placed me here, whether I am in a high sphere, or in a lower. Not chance or fortune, as the purblind heathens imagined; no, it is the wise God that hath by his providence fixed me in this orb. We must act that scene which God would have us; say not, such an one hath occasioned this to me; look not too much at the under-wheel. We read in Ezekiel, of 'a wheel within a wheel.' God's decree is the cause of the turning of the wheels, and his providence is the inner-wheels that move all the rest. God's providence is that helm which turns about the whole ship of the universe. Say then, as holy David, 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou, Lord, didst it.'¹ God's providence, which is nothing else but the carrying on of his decree, should be a counterpoise against discontent; God hath set us in our station, and he hath done it in wisdom. We fancy such a condition of life is good for us; whereas if we were our own carvers, we should often cut the worst piece. Lot, being put to his choice did choose Sodom, which soon after was burned with fire. Rachel was very desirous of children, 'give me children or I die,' and it cost her her life in bringing forth a child. Abraham was earnest for Ishmael, 'O that Ishmael might live before thee!' but he had little comfort either of him or his seed; he was born a son of strife, his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him. The disciples wept for Christ's leaving the world, they chose his corporeal presence: whereas it was best for them that Christ should be gone, for else 'the comforter would not come.'² David chose the life of his child, 'he wept and fasted for it';³ whereas if the child had lived, it would have been a perpetual monument of his shame. We stand oft in our own light; if we should sort, or parcel out our own comforts, we should hit upon the wrong. Is it not well for the child, that the parent doth choose for it? were it left to itself, it would perhaps choose a knife to cut its own finger. A man in a paroxysm calls for wine, which if he had,

it were little better than poison; it is well for the patient, that he is at the physician's appointment. The consideration of a decree determining, and a providence disposing of all things that fall out, should work our hearts to holy contentment. The wise God hath ordered our condition; if he sees it better for us to abound, we shall abound; if he sees it better for us to want, we shall want; be content to be at God's disposal.

God sees, in his infinite wisdom, the same condition is not convenient for all; that which is good for one, may be bad for another; one season of weather will not serve all men's occasions, one needs sunshine, another rain; one condition of life will not fit every man, no more than one suit of apparel will fit every body; prosperity is not fit for all, nor yet adversity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater stock of grace, more faith and patience; he can 'gather grapes of thorns,' pick some comfort out of the cross: every one cannot do this. Another man is seated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it; perhaps it is a place requires more parts of judgment, which every one is not capable of; perhaps he can use his estate better, he hath a public heart as well as a public place. The wise God sees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is he placeth men in different orbs and spheres; some higher, some lower. One man desires health, God sees sickness is better for him; God will work health out of sickness, by bringing the body of death, into a consumption. Another man desires liberty, God sees restraint better for him; he will work his liberty by restraint; when his feet are bound, his heart shall be most enlarged. Did we believe this, it would give a check to the sinful disputes and cavils of our hearts: shall I be discontented at that which is enacted by a decree, and ordered by a providence? Is this to be a child or a rebel?

CHAP. VIII. USE I. SHEWING HOW A CHRISTIAN MAY MAKE HIS LIFE COMFORTABLE.

It shows how a Christian may come to lead a comfortable life, even an heaven upon earth, be the times what they will: by Christian contentment. The comfort of life doth not stand in having much; it is Christ's maxim, 'man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he doth possess,'⁴ but it is in being con-

¹ Ez. 1. 16. ² Ps. 39. 9. ³ Job. 16. 7. ⁴ 2 Sa. 12. 16.

⁵ Lu. 12. 15.

tented. Is not the bee as well contented with feeding on the dew, or sucking from a flower, as the ox that grazeth on the mountains? Contentment lies within a man, in the heart; and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our barns filled, but our minds quiet. The contented man, saith Seneca, is the happy man; discontent is a fretting humour, which dries the brains, wastes the spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life; discontent makes a man that he doth not enjoy what he doth possess. A drop or two of vinegar will sour a whole glass of wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of discontent will imbitter and poison all. Comfort depends upon contentment; Jacob went halting, when the sinew upon the hollow of his thigh shrank: so, when the sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as necessary to keep the life comfortable, as oil is necessary to keep the lamp burning; the clouds of discontent do often drop the showers of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? we may have it if we will: a Christian may carve out what condition he will to himself. Why dost thou complain of thy troubles? it is not trouble that troubles, but discontent; it is not the water without the ship, but the water that gets within the leak, which drowns it; it is not outward affliction that can make the life of a Christian sad; a contented mind would sail above these waters,—but when there's a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks. Do therefore as the mariners, pump the water out, and stop the spiritual leak in thy soul, and no trouble can hurt thee.

CHAP. IX. USE II. A CHECK TO THE DISCONTENTED CHRISTIAN.

Here is a just reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost epidemical. Some not content with the calling which God hath set them in, must be a step higher, from the plough to the throne; who like the spider in the Proverbs, will 'take hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces.' Others from the shop to the pulpit;¹ they would be in the temple of honour, before they are in the temple of virtue; who step into Moses' chair, without Aaron's bells and pomegranates; like apes, which do most shew their deformity

when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God hath bestowed gifts upon men, in private to edify; that he hath enriched them with many mercies? but, 'seek ye the priesthood also?'² What is this but discontent arising from high-flown pride? These do secretly tax the wisdom of God, that he hath not screwed them up in their condition a peg higher. Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better. One man commends this kind of life, another commends that; one man thinks a country-life best, another a city-life; the soldier thinks it best to be a merchant, and the merchant to be a soldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God would have them. How is it that no man is contented? Very few Christians have learned St Paul's lesson: neither poor nor rich know how to be content, they can learn any thing but this. 1. If men are poor, they learn to be envious; they malign those that are above them. Another's prosperity is an eye-sore. When God's candle shines upon their neighbour's tabernacle, this light offends them. In the midst of wants, men can, in this sense, abound, namely, in envy and malice; an envious eye is an evil eye. They learn to be querulous, still complaining, as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling their wants, they want this and that comfort, whereas their greatest want is a contented spirit. Those that are well enough content with their sin, yet are not content with their condition. 2. If men are rich, they learn to be covetous; thirsting insatiably after the world, and by unjust means seraping it together; their 'right hand is full of bribes,' as the Psalmist expresseth it.³ Put a good cause in one scale, and a piece of gold in the other, and the gold weighs heaviest. There are, saith Solomon, four things that say, 'it is not enough:'⁴ I may add a fifth; the heart of a covetous man. So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content. Never certainly since the creation did this sin of discontent reign or rather rage more than in our times: never was God more dishonoured; you can hardly speak with any, but the passion of his tongue betrays the discontent of his heart; every one lisps out his trouble, and here even the stammering tongue speaks too freely and fluently. If we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good look from us, but presently we are sick of discontent, and ready to

¹ Nu. 12. 2.

² Nu. 16. 10.

³ Ps. 26. 10.

⁴ Pr. 30. 15.

die out of an humour. If God will not forgive the people of Israel for their lusts, they bid him take their lives; they must have quails to their manna. Ahab, though a king, and one would think his crown-lands had been sufficient for him, yet is sullen and discontented for Naboth's vineyard. Jonah though a good man and a prophet, yet ready to die in a pet; and because God killed his gourd, kill me too, saith he. Rachel, 'give me children, or I die;' she had many blessings, if she could have seen them, but wanted this contentation. God will supply our wants, but must he satisfy our lusts too? Many are discontented for a very trifle; another hath a better dress, a richer jewel, a newer fashion. Nero, not content with his empire, was troubled that the musician had more skill in playing than he. How fantastic are some, that pine away in discontent for the want of those things which if they had, would but render them more ridiculous!

CHAP. X. USE III. A SUASIVE TO CONTENTMENT.

It exhorts us to labour for contentation; this is that which doth beautify and bespangle a Christian, and as a spiritual embroidery, doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

OBJ. *But methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, Alas! how is it possible to be contented? 'The Lord hath made my chain heavy;' 'he hath cast me into a very sad condition.'*

There is no sin, but labours either to hide itself under some mask; or, if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate itself by some apology. This sin of discontent I find very witty in its apologies, which I shall first discover, and then make a reply. We must lay it down as a rule, that discontent is a sin; so that all the pretences and apologies wherewith it labours to justify itself, are but the painting and dressing of a strumpet.

The first apology which discontent makes is this; I have lost a child. Paulina, upon the loss of her children, was so possessed with a spirit of sadness, that she had like to have entombed herself in her own discontent; our love to relations is oftentimes more than our love to religion.

1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he takes away. If we must 'in every thing give thanks,'¹ then in nothing be discontented.

2. Perhaps God hath taken away the cistern, that he may give you the more of the spring; he hath darkened the starlight, that you may have more sun-light. God intends you shall have more of himself, and is not he better than ten sons? Look not so much upon a temporal loss, as a spiritual gain; the comforts of the world run dregs; those which come out of the granary of the promise, are pure and sweet.

3. Your child was not given but lent: 'I have, saith Hannah, lent my son to the Lord;² she lent him! the Lord hath lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent; what a man lends he may call for again when he pleases. God hath put out a child to thee a while to nurse; wilt thou be displeased if he take his child home again; O be not discontented that a mercy is taken away from you, but rather be thankful that it was lent you so long.

4. Suppose your child to be taken from you, either he was good or bad; if he was rebellious, you have not so much parted with a child, as a burden; you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you; if he was religious, then remember, he 'is taken away from the evil to come,' and placed in his centre of felicity. This lower region is full of gross and hurtful vapours; how happy are those who are mounted into the celestial orbs! The righteous are taken away, in the original it is, *he is gathered*; a wicked child is cut off, but the pious child is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and candy them, and preserve them by them, so hath God gathered thy child as a sweet flower that he may candy it with glory, and preserve it by him for ever. Why then should a Christian be discontented? why should he weep excessively? 'Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for yourselves;³ so, could we hear our children speaking to us out of heaven, they would say, weep not for us who are happy; we lie upon a soft pillow, even in the bosom of Christ; the Prince of Peace is embracing us and kissing us with the kisses of his lips; be not troubled at our preferment; 'weep not for us,' but weep for yourselves, who are in a sinful sorrowful world: you are in the valley of tears, but we are on the mountain of spices; we have gotten to our harbour, but you are still tossing upon the waves of inconstancy. O Christian! be not discontented that thou hast parted with such a child;

¹ 1 Th. 5. 18.

² 1 Sa. 1. 28.

³ Lu. 23. 28.

but rather rejoice that thou hadst such a child to part with. Break forth into thankfulness.

What an honour is it to a parent to beget such a child, that while he lives increaseth the joy of the glorified angels,¹ and when he dies increaseth the number of the glorified saints.

5. If God hath taken away one of your children, he hath left you more, he might have stripped you of all. He took away Job's comforts, his estate, his children; and indeed his wife was left, but as a cross. Satan made a bow of this rib, as Chrysostom speaks, and shot a temptation by her at Job, thinking to have him shot to the heart; 'curse God and die:' but Job had upon him the breast-plate of integrity; and though his children were taken away, yet not his graces; still he is content, still he blesseth God. O think how many mercies you still enjoy; yet your base hearts are more discontented at one loss, than thankful for an hundred mercies! God hath plucked one bunch of grapes from you; but how many precious clusters are left behind? OBJ. *But it was my only child,—the staff of my age,—the seed of my comfort,—and the only blossom out of which my ancient family did grow.*

6. God hath promised you, if you belong to him, 'a name better than of sons and daughters.'² Is he dead that should have been the monument to have kept up the name of a family? God hath given you a new name, he hath written your name in the book of life; behold your spiritual heraldry; here is a name that cannot be cut off. Hath God taken away thy only child? he hath given thee his only Son: this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses, that hath Christ? He is his Father's brightness,³ his riches,⁴ his delight.⁵ Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? and is there not enough in him to ravish us with holy delight. He is wisdom to teach us, righteousness to acquit us, sanctification to adorn us; he is that royal and princely gift; he is the bread of angels, the joy and triumph of saints; he is all in all.⁶ Why then art thou discontented? Though thy child be lost, yet thou hast him for whom all things are loss.

7. Let us blush to think that nature should outstrip grace. Pulvillus, an heathen, when he was about to consecrate a temple to Jupiter, and news was brought him of the death of his son, would not desist from his enterprize, but

with much composure of mind gave order for decent burial.

The second apology that discontent makes, is, I have a great part of my estate strangely melted away, and trading begins to fail. God is pleased sometimes to bring his children very low, and cut them short in their estate; it fares with them as with that widow, who had nothing in her house, 'save a pot of oil:'⁷ but be content.

1. God hath taken away your estate, but not your portion. This is a sacred paradox, honour and estate are no part of a Christian's jointure; they are rather luxuries than essentials, and are extrinsical and foreign; therefore the loss of those cannot denominate a man miserable, still the portion remains; 'the Lord is my portion, saith my soul.'⁸ Suppose one were worth a million of money, and he should chance to lose a pin off his sleeve, this is no part of his estate, nor can we say he is undone; the loss of sub-lunary comforts is not so much to a Christian's portion, as the loss of a pin is to a million. 'These things shall be added to you;'⁹ they shall be cast in as overplus. When a man buys a piece of cloth he hath an inch or two given in to the measure; now, though he lose his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone, for still the whole piece remains: our outward estate is not so much in regard of the portion, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece; why then should a Christian be discontented, when the title to his spiritual treasure remains? A thief may take away all the money that I have about me, but not my land; still a Christian hath a title to the land of promise. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.

2. Perhaps, if thy estate had not been lost, thy soul had been lost; outward comforts do often quench inward heat. God can bestow a jewel upon us, but we fall so in love with it, that we forget him that gave it. What pity is it that we should commit idolatry with the creature! God is forced sometimes to drain away an estate: the plate and jewels are often cast over-board to save the passenger. Many a man may curse the time that ever he had such an estate; it hath been an enchantment to draw away his heart from God; 'they that will be rich, fall into a snare:' art thou troubled that God hath prevented a snare? Riches are thorns;¹⁰ art thou angry because God hath pulled away a thorn from thee? Riches are compared to 'thick clay;'¹¹ perhaps thy affections, which

¹ Lu. 20. 10.² Is. 56. 5.³ He. 1. 3.⁴ Col. 2. 9.⁵ Ps. 42. 1.⁶ Col. 3. 10.⁷ 2 Ki. 4. 2.⁸ La. 3. 21.⁹ Mat. 6. 33.¹⁰ Mat. 13. 7.¹¹ Ha. 2. 6.

are the feet of the soul, might have stuck so fast in this golden clay that they could not have ascended up to heaven. Be content; if God dam up our outward comforts, it is, that the stream of our love may run faster another way.

3. If your estate be small, yet God can bless a little. It is not how much money we have, but how much blessing. He that often curseth the bags of gold, can bless the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruise. What if thou hast not the full flesh-pots? yet thou hast a promise, 'I will abundantly bless her provision,'¹ and then a little goes a great way. Be content thou hast the dew of a blessing distilled; a dinner of green herbs, where love is, is sweet; I may add, where the love of God is. Another may have more estate than you, but, more care; more riches, less rest; more revenues, but with all more occasions of expense; he hath a greater inheritance, yet perhaps God doth not give 'him power to eat thereof,'² he hath the dominion of his estate, not the use; he holds more but enjoys less; in a word, thou hast less gold than he, perhaps less guilt.

4. You did never so thrive in your spiritual trade; your heart was never so low, as since your condition was low; you were never so poor in spirit, never so rich in faith. You did never run the ways of God's commandments so fast as since some of your golden weights were taken off. You never had such trading for heaven all your life; this is most abundant gain. You did never make such adventures upon the promise as since you left off your sea-adventures. This is the best kind of merchandize. O Christian, thou never hadst such incomes of the Spirit, such spring-tides of joy; and what though weak in estate, if strong in assurance? Be content: what you have lost one way, you have gained another.

5. Be your losses what they will in this kind, remember in every loss there is only a suffering, but in every discontent there is a sin, and one sin is worse than a thousand sufferings. What! because some of my revenues are gone, shall I part with some of my righteousness? shall my faith and patience go too? Because I do not possess an estate, shall I not therefore possess my own spirit? O learn to be content.

The third apology is, it is sad with me in my relations: where I should find most comfort, there I have most grief. This apology or ob-

jection brancheth itself into two particulars, whereto I shall give a distinct reply.

1st. My child goes on in rebellion; I fear I have brought forth a child for the devil. It is indeed, sad to think, that hell should be paved with the skulls of any of our children; and certainly the pangs of grief which the mother hath in this kind, are worse than her pangs of travail; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented; for, consider, 1. You may pick something out of your child's undutifulness; the child's sin is sometimes the parent's sermon; the undutifulness of children to us, may be a *memento* to put us in mind of our undutifulness once to God. Time was when we were rebellious children; how long did our heart stand out as garrisons against God? How long did he parley with us and beseech us, ere we would yield? He walked in the tenderness of his heart towards us, but we walked in the frowardness of our hearts towards him; and since grace hath been planted in our souls, how much of the wild olive is still in us? How many motions of the Spirit do we daily resist? How many unkindnesses and affronts have we put upon Christ? Let this open a spring of repentance; look upon your child's rebellions and mourn for your own rebellion. 2. Though to see him undutiful is your grief, yet not always your sin. Hath a parent given the child, not only the milk of the breast, but 'the sincere milk of the word?' hast thou seasoned his tender years with religious education? Thou canst do no more; parents can only work knowledge, God must work grace; they can only lay the wood together, it is God must make it burn; a parent can only be a guide to show his child the way to heaven, the Spirit of God must be a loadstone to draw his heart into that way. 'Am I in God's stead,' saith Jacob, 'who hath withheld the fruit of the womb?'³ Can I give children? So, is a parent in God's stead to give grace? who can help it, if a child having the light of conscience, scripture, education, these three torches in his hand, yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of sin? Weep for thy child, pray for him; but do not sin for him by discontent. 3. Say not, you have brought forth a child for the devil; God can reduce him; he hath promised to 'turn the heart of the children to their fathers,'⁴ and 'to open springs of grace in the desert.'⁵ When thy child is going full sail to the devil, God can blow

¹ Ps. 132. 15.² Ec. 6. 2.³ Ge. 30. 2.⁴ Mal. 4. 6.⁵ Is. 35. 6

with a contrary wind of his Spirit, and alter his course. When Paul was breathing out persecution against the saints, and was sailing hellward, God turns him another way; before he was going to Damascus, God sends him to Ananias; before a persecutor, now a preacher. Though our children are for the present fallen into the devil's pond, God can turn them from the power of Satan, and bring them in the twelfth hour. Monica was weeping for her son Augustine: at last God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous instrument in the church of God.

2. The second branch of the objection is, but my husband takes ill courses; where I looked for honey, behold a sting.

It is sad to have the living and the dead tied together; yet, let not your heart fret with discontent; mourn for his sins, but do not murmur. For, 1. God hath placed you in your relation, and you cannot be discontented but you quarrel with God. What! for every cross that befalls us, shall we call the infinite wisdom of God in question? O the blasphemy of our hearts! 2. God can make you a gainer by your husband's sin; perhaps you had never been so good, if he had not been so bad. The fire burns hottest in the coldest climate. God often by a divine *antiperistasis* turns the sins of others to our good, and makes our maladies our medicines. The more profane the husband is, oft the more holy the wife grows; the more earthly he is, the more heavenly she grows; God makes sometimes the husband's sin a spur to the wife's grace. His exorbitances are as a pair of bellows to blow up the flame of her zeal and devotion the more. Is it not thus? Doth not thy husband's wickedness send thee to prayer? thou perhaps hadst never prayed so much, if he had not sinned so much. His deadness quickens thee the more, the stone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The apostle saith, 'the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband;'¹ but in this sense, the believing wife is sanctified by the unbelieving husband; she grows better, his sin is a whetstone to her grace, and a medicine for her security.

The next apology that discontent makes is, but my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false.

It is sad, when a friend proves like a brook in summer.² The traveller being parched with

heat, comes to the brook, hoping to refresh himself, but the brook is dried up, yet be content.

1. Thou art not alone, others of the saints have been betrayed by friends; and when they have leaned upon them, they have been as a foot out of joint. This was true in the type David; 'it was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou, O man, my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together:'³ and in the antitype Christ; he was betrayed by a friend: and why should we think it strange to have the same measure dealt out to us as Jesus Christ had? 'the servant is not above his master.'

2. A Christian may often read his sin in his punishment: hath not he dealt treacherously with God? How oft hath he grieved the Comforter, broken his vows, and through unbelief sided with Satan against God? how oft abused love, taken the jewels of God's mercies, and made a golden calf of them, serving his own lusts? how oft made the free grace of God, which would have been a bolt to keep out sin, rather a key to open the door to it? These wounds hath the Lord received in the house of his friends. Look upon the unkindness of thy friend, and mourn for thy own unkindness against God; shall a Christian condemn that in another, which he hath been too guilty of himself?

3. Hath thy friend proved treacherous? perhaps you did repose too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon a house than the pillars will bear, it must needs break. God saith, 'trust ye not in a friend:'⁴ perhaps you did put more trust in him, than you did dare to put in God. Friends are as Venice-glasses; we may use them, but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break; behold matter of humility, but not of sullenness and discontent.

4. You have a friend in heaven who will never fail you; 'there is a friend'—saith Solomon—'that sticketh closer than a brother:'⁵ such a friend is God; he is very studious and inquisitive in our behalf; he hath a debating with himself, a consulting and projecting how he may do us good; he is the best friend which may give contentment in the midst of all discourtesies of friends. Consider, (1.) He is a loving friend. 'God is love;'⁶ hence he is said sometimes to engrave us on the 'palm of his hand,'⁷

¹ 1 Cor. 7. 14.

² Joh 6. 15.

³ Ps. 55. 12, 13, 14.

⁴ Mi. 7. 5.

⁵ Pr. 18. 24.

⁶ 1 Jo. 1. 16.

⁷ Is. 49. 16.

that we may never be out of his eye; and to 'carry us in his bosom,'¹ near to his heart. There is no stop or stint in his love; but as the river Nilus, it overflows all the banks; his love is as far beyond our thoughts, as it is above our deserts. O the infinite love of God, in giving the Son of his love to be made flesh, which was more than if all the angels had been made worms! God in giving Christ to us gave his very heart to us: here is love penciled out in all its glory, and engraven as with the 'point of a diamond.' All other love is hatred in comparison of the love of our Friend. (2.) He is a careful friend; 'he careth for you.'² He minds and transacts our business as his own, he accounts his people's interests and concerns as his interest. He provides for us, grace to enrich us, glory to ennoble us. It was David's complaint, 'no man careth for my soul:'³ a Christian hath a friend that cares for him. (3.) He is a prudent friend.⁴ A friend may sometimes err through ignorance or mistake, and give his friend poison instead of sugar; but 'God is wise in heart;'⁵ he is skilful as well as faithful; he knows what our disease is, and what physic is most proper to apply; he knows what will do us good, and what wind will be best to carry us to heaven. (4.) He is a faithful friend. And he is faithful in his promises; 'in hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie hath promised.'⁶ God's people are 'children that will not lie;' but God is a God that cannot lie; he will not deceive the faith of his people; nay, he cannot: he is called 'the Truth;' he can as well cease to be God as cease to be true. The Lord may sometimes change his promise, as when he converts a temporal promise into a spiritual; but he can never break his promise. 5. He is a compassionate friend, hence in scripture we read of the yearning of his bowels.⁷ God's friendship is nothing else but compassion; for there is naturally no affection in us to desire his friendship, nor no goodness in us to deserve it; the loadstone is in himself. When we were full of blood, he was full of bowels; when we were enemies, he sent an embassage of peace; when our hearts were turned back from God, his heart was turned towards us. O the tenderness and sympathy of our Friend in heaven! We ourselves have some relentings of heart to those which are in misery; but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us,

therefore he is called 'the Father of mercies.'⁸ (6.) He is a constant friend: 'his compassions fail not.'⁹ Friends do often in adversity drop off as leaves in autumn: these are rather flatterers than friends. Joab was for a time faithful to king David's house; he went not after Absalom's treason; but within a while proved false to the crown, and went after the treason of Adonijah.¹⁰ God is a friend for ever: 'having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.'¹¹ What though I am despised? yet God loves me. What though my friends cast me off? yet God loves me; he loves to the end, and there is no end of that love. This methinks, in case of discourtesies and unkindnesses, is enough to charm down discontent.

The next apology is, I am under great reproaches.

Let not this discontent: for, 1. It is a sign there is some good in thee; saith Socrates, what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? The applause of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their censure imports some good.¹² David wept and fasted, and that was turned to his 'reproach.'¹³ As we must pass to heaven through the pikes of suffering, so through the clouds of reproach. 2. If your reproach be for God, as David's was, 'for thy sake I have borne reproach;'¹⁴ then it is rather matter of triumph, than dejection. Christ doth not say, when you are reproached be discontented; but rejoice!¹⁵ Wear your reproach as a diadem of honour, for now a spirit of 'glory and of God rests upon you.'¹⁶ Put your reproaches into the inventory of your riches; so did Moses.¹⁷ It should be a Christian's ambition to wear his Saviour's livery, though it be sprinkled with blood and sullied with disgrace. 3. God will do us good by reproach: as David of Shimei's cursing; 'it may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.'¹⁸ This puts us upon searching our sin: a child of God labours to read his sin in every stone of reproach that is cast at him; besides, now we have an opportunity to exercise patience and humility. 4. Jesus Christ was content to be reproached for us; he despised the shame of the cross.¹⁹ It may amaze us to think that he who was God could endure to be spit upon, to be crowned with thorns, in a kind of jeer; and when he was ready to bow his head upon

¹ 1s. 40. 11. ² 1 Pe. 5. 7. ³ Ps. 142. 4. ⁴ Da. 2. 20.
⁵ Job 9. 4. ⁶ Tit. 1. 2. ⁷ 1s. 63. 8. ⁸ Jer. 31. 20.

⁹ 2 Cor. 1. 3. ¹⁰ La. 3. 22. ¹¹ 1 Ki. 1. 7. ¹² Jno. 13. 1.
¹³ Ps. 38. 20. ¹⁴ Ps. 69. 10. ¹⁵ Ps. 69. 7. ¹⁶ Mat. 5. 12.
¹⁷ 1 Pe. 1. 14. ¹⁸ He. 11. 26. ¹⁹ 2 Sa. 16. 12. ²⁰ He. 12. 2

the cross, to have the Jews in scorn, wag their heads and say, 'he saved others, himself he cannot save.' The shame of the cross was as much as the blood of the cross; his name was crucified before his body. The sharp arrows of reproach that the world did shoot at Christ, went deeper into his heart than the spear; his suffering was so ignominious, that as if the sun did blush to behold, it withdrew its bright beams, and masked itself with a cloud; (and well it might when the Sun of Righteousness was in an eclipse;) all this contumely and reproach did the God of glory endure or rather despise for us. O then let us be content to have our names eclipsed for Christ; let not reproach lie at our heart, but let us bind it as a crown about our head! Alas, what is reproach? this is but small shot, how will men stand at the mouth of a cannon? These who are discontented at a reproach, will be offended at a faggot. 5. Is not many a man contented to suffer reproach for maintaining his lust? and shall not we for maintaining the truth? Some glory in that which is their shame,¹ and shall we be ashamed of that which is our glory? Be not troubled at these petty things. He whose heart is once divinely touched with the loadstone of God's Spirit, doth account it his honour to be dishonoured for Christ,² and doth as much despise the world's censure, as he doth their praise. 6. We live in an age wherein men dare reproach God himself. The divinity of the Son of God is blasphemously reproached by the Socinian; the blessed Bible is reproached by the Antiscripturist, as if it were but a legend of lies, and every man's faith a fable; the justice of God is called to the bar of reason by the Arminians; the wisdom of God in his providential actings, is taxed by the Atheist; the ordinances of God are decried by the Familists, as being too heavy a burden for a free-born conscience, and too low and carnal for a sublime seraphic spirit; the ways of God, which have the majesty of holiness shining in them, are calumniated by the profane; the mouths of men are open against God, as if he were an hard master, and the path of religion too strict and severe. If men cannot give God a good word, shall we be discontented or troubled that they speak hardly of us? Such as labour to bury the glory of religion, shall we wonder that 'their throats are open sepulchres,'³ to bury our good name? O let us be contented, while

we are in God's scouring-house, to have our names sullied a little; the blacker we seem to be here, the brighter shall we shine when God hath set us upon the celestial shelf.

The sixth apology that discontent makes is disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men as is suitable to my quality and grace.

And doth this trouble? Consider, 1. The world is an unequal judge; as it is full of change so of partiality. The world gives her respects, as she doth her places of preferment; more by favour often, than desert. Hast thou the ground of real worth in thee; that is best worth that is in him that hath it; honour is in him that gives it; better deserve respect, and not have it, than have it and not deserve it. 2. Hast thou grace? God respects thee, and his judgment is best worth prizing. A believer is a person of honour, being born of God: since thou wast precious in mine eyes, 'thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.'⁴ Let the world think what they will of you; perhaps in their eyes you are a cast-away, in God's eyes, a dove,⁵ a spouse,⁶ a jewel.⁷ Others account you the dregs and offscouring of the world;⁸ but God will give whole kingdoms for your ransom.⁹ Let this content: no matter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world, if God thinks well of me. It is better that God approve, than man applaud. The world may put us in their rubric and God put us in his black book. What is a man the better that his fellow-prisoners commend him, if his judge condemn him? O labour to keep in with God; prize his love! Let my fellow-subjects frown, I am contented, being a favourite of the king of heaven. 3. If you are a child of God, you must look for disrespect. A believer is in the world, but not of the world; we are here in a pilgrim condition, out of our own country, therefore must not look for the respects and acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own country.¹⁰ It is dangerous to be the world's favourite. 4. Discontent arising from disrespect, savours too much of pride; an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, cries out, as Agur, 'I am more brutish than any man,'¹¹ and therefore is contented, though he be set among 'the dogs of

¹ Ph. 3. 19.² Ac. 15. 4.³ Ro. 3. 13.⁴ Is. 43. 4.⁵ Ca. 2. 11.⁶ Ca. 5. 1.⁷ Mal. 3. 17.⁸ 1 Cor. 1. 14.⁹ Is. 43. 3.¹⁰ He. 13. 14.¹¹ Pr. 3. 2.

my flock.¹ Though he be low in the thought of others, yet he is thankful that he is not laid in 'the lowest bell.'² A proud man sets an high value upon himself; and is angry with others, because they will not come up to his price: take heed of pride! O had others a window to look into their breast, as Crates once expressed it, or did thy heart stand where thy face doth, thou wouldst wonder to have so much respect.

The next apology is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth.

Consider, 1. Your sufferings are not so great as your sins; put these two in the balance, and see which weighs heaviest; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins; he looks upon one at the great end of the perspective, but upon the other at the little end of the perspective. The carnal heart cries out, take away the frogs: but a gracious heart cries out, 'take away the iniquity.'³ The one saith, never any one suffered as I have done; but the other saith, never one sinned as I have done.⁴ 2. Art thou under sufferings: thou hast an opportunity to show the valour and constancy of thy mind. Some of God's saints would have accounted it a great favour to have been honoured with martyrdom. One said, 'I am in prison till I be in prison.' Thou countest that a trouble, which others would have worn as an ensign of their glory. 3. Even those who have gone only upon moral principles, have shown much constancy and contentment in their sufferings. Curtius, being bravely mounted and in armour, threw himself into a great gulf, that the city of Rome might, according to the oracle, be delivered from the pestilence; and we, having a divine oracle, 'that they who kill the body cannot hurt the soul,' shall we not with much constancy and patience devote ourselves to injuries for religion, and rather suffer for the truth than the truth suffer for us? The Decii among the Romans, vowed themselves to death, that their legions and soldiers might be crowned with the honour of the victory. O what should we be content to suffer, to make the truth victorious! Regulus having sworn that he would return to Carthage, though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there, yet not daring to infringe his oath, he did adventure to go; we then who are Christians, having made a vow to Christ in baptism, and so often

renewed it in the blessed sacrament, shou'd with much contentation rather choose to suffer, than violate our sacred oath. Thus the blessed martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulness did they yield up their souls to God? and when the fire was set to their bodies, yet their spirits were not at all fired with passion or discontent. Though others hurt the body, let them not the mind through discontent; show by your heroic courage, that you are above those troubles which you cannot be without.

The next apology is, the prosperity of the wicked. I confess it is so often, that the evil enjoy all the good, and the good endure all the evil, that David, though a good man, stumbled at this, and had like to have fallen.⁵

Well, be contented; for remember, 1. These are not the only things, nor the best things; they are mercies without the pale; these are but acorns with which God feeds swine; ye who are believers have more choice fruit, the olive, the pomegranate, the fruit which grows on the true vine Jesus Christ; others have the fat of the earth, you have the dew of heaven; they have a south-land, you have those springs of living water which are clarified with Christ's blood, and indulcerated with his love. 2. To see the wicked flourish is matter rather of pity than envy; it is all the heaven they must have; 'wo to you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation.'⁶ Hence it was that David made it his solemn prayer, 'deliver me from the wicked, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.'⁷ The words (methinks) are David's litany; from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, 'good Lord, deliver me.' When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The world is first musical and then tragical; if you would have a man fry and blaze in hell, let him have enough of the fat of the earth. O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out of the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his vial! Therefore as that soldier said to his fellow, 'do you envy my grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them;' so I say, do you envy the wicked? alas their prosperity is like Haman's banquet before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the gallows through pleasant fields and fine galleries, or to see him go up the lad-

¹ Job 20. 1. ² Ps. 86. 13. ³ 2 Sa. 21. 10. ⁴ Mt. 7. 7.

⁵ Ps. 73. 2.

⁶ Lu. 6. 24.

⁷ Ps. 17. 15

der in clothes of gold? The wicked may flourish in their bravery a while; but, when they flourish as the grass, 'it is, that they shall be destroyed for ever;' the proud grass shall be mown down. Whatever a sinner enjoys, he hath a curse with it,² and shall we envy? What if poisoned bread be given the dogs? The long furrows in the backs of the godly have a seed of blessing in them, when the table of the wicked becomes a snare, and their honour their halter.

The next apology that discontent makes for itself, is, the evils of the times. The times are full of heresy and impiety, and this is that which troubles me. This apology consists of two branches, to which I shall answer *in specie*; and,

Branch 1. The times are full of *heresy*. This is indeed sad; when the devil cannot by violence destroy the church, he endeavours to poison it; when he cannot with Samson's fox-tails set the corn on fire, then he sows tares; as he labours to destroy the peace of the church by division, so the truth of it by error; we may cry out, we live in times wherein there is a sluice open to all novel opinions, and every man's opinion is his Bible.

Well; this may make us mourn, but let us not murmur through discontent: consider, 1. Error makes a discovery of men. Bad men; error discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the leprosy brake forth in the forehead, then was the leper discovered. Error is a spiritual bastard; the devil is the father, and pride the mother; you never knew an erroneous man but he was a proud man. Now, it is good that such men should be laid open, to the intent, first, that God's righteous judgment upon them may be adored; secondly, that others, who are free, be not infected. If a man have the plague, it is well it breaks forth; for my part, I would avoid an heretic, as I would avoid the devil, for he is sent on his errand. I appeal unto you; if there were a tavern in this city, where under a pretence of selling wine, many hogsheads of poison were to be sold, were it not well that others should know of it, that they might not buy? It is good that those that have poisoned opinions should be known, that the people of God may not come near either the scent or taste of that poison. Error is a touch-stone to discover good men: it tries the gold: 'there must be heresies, that they which are approved, may be made manifest.'³ Thus

our love to Christ, and zeal for truth doth appear. God shows who are the living fish; such as swim against the stream: who are the sound sheep; such as feed in the green pastures of the ordinances: who are the doves; such as live in the best air, where the spirit breathes: God sets a garland of honour upon these, 'these are they which came out of great tribulation;' so these are they that have opposed the errors of the times, these are they that have preserved the virginity of their conscience, who have kept their judgment sound and their heart soft. God will have a trophy of honour set upon some of his saints, they shall be renowned for their sincerity, being like the cypress, which keeps its greenness and freshness in the winter-season. 2. Be not sinfully discontented, for God can make the errors of the church advantageous to truth. Thus the truths of God have come to be more beaten out and confirmed; as it is in the law, one man laying a false title to a piece of land, the true title hath by this means been the more searched into and ratified; some had never so studied to defend the truth by scripture, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by sophistry; all the mists and fogs of error that have risen out of the bottomless pit, have made the glorious Sun of truth to shine so much the brighter. Had not Arius and Sabellius broached their damnable error, the truth of those questions about the blessed Trinity had never been so disensed and defended by Athanasius, Augustine, and others; had not the devil brought in so much of his princely darkness, the champions for truth had never run so fast to scripture to light their lamps. So that God with a wheel within a wheel, over-rules these things wisely, and turns them to the best. Truth is an heavenly plant, that settles by shaking. 3. God raiseth the price of his truth the more; the very shreds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is much counterfeit metal abroad, we prize the true gold the more; pure wine of truth is never more precious, than when unsound doctrines are broached and vented. 4. Error makes us more thankful to God for the jewel of truth. When you see another infected with the plague, how thankful are you that God hath freed you from the infection? When we see others have the leprosy in the head, how thankful are we to God that he hath not given us over to believe a lie and so be damned? It

¹ Ps. 92. 7.² Mal. 2. 2.³ 1 Cor. 11. 19.⁴ Re. 7. 14.

is a good use that may be made even of the error of the times when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free grace of God, who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poison.

Branch 2. The second branch of the apology that discontent makes, is, the *impiety* of the times; I live and converse among the profane: 'O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.'¹

It is indeed sad, to be mixed with the wicked. David beheld 'transgressors and was grieved;' and Lot (who was a bright star in a dark night) was vexed, or, as the word in the original may bear, wearied out with the unclean conversation of the wicked; he made the sins of Sodom spears to pierce his own soul. We ought, if there be any spark of divine love in us, to be very sensible of the sins of others, and to have our hearts bleed for them; yet let us not break forth into mourning or discontent, knowing that God in his providence hath permitted it, and surely not without some reasons; for, *1st.* The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly; the wise God often makes those who are wicked and peaceable, a means to safeguard his people from those who are wicked and cruel. The king of Babylon kept Jeremiah, and gave special order for his looking to, that he did want nothing.² God sometimes makes brazen sinners to be brazen walls to defend his people. *2d.* God doth but interline and mingle the wicked with the godly, that the godly may be a means to save the wicked; such is the beauty of holiness that it hath a magnetical force in it to allure and draw even the wicked. Sometimes God makes a believing husband a means to convert an unbelieving wife, and *e contra*: 'what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?'³ The godly living among the wicked, by their prudent advice and pious example, have won them to the embracing of religion; if there were not some godly among the wicked, how in a probable way, without a miracle, can we imagine that the wicked should be converted? those who are now shining saints in heaven, sometimes served diverse lusts.⁴ Paul once a persecutor; Augustine once a manichee; Luther once a monk; but by the severe and holy carriage of the godly, were converted to the faith.

The next apology that discontent makes, is,

lowness of parts and gifts; I cannot (saith the Christian) discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegancy, as others.

1. Grace is beyond gifts; thou comparest thy grace with another's gifts, there is a vast difference; grace without gifts is infinitely better than gifts without grace. In religion, the vitals are best; gifts are a more extrinsical and common work of the Spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more distinguishing work, and is a jewel hung only upon the elect. Hast thou the seed of God, the holy anointing? be content. (1.) Thou sayest, Thou canst not discourse with that fluency as others. Experiments in religion are beyond notions, and impressions beyond expressions. Judas (no doubt) could make a learned discourse of Christ, but well-fared the woman in the gospel that felt virtue coming out of him;⁵ a sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. There is as much difference between gifts and graces, as between a tulip painted on the wall, and one growing in the garden. (2.) Thou sayest, thou canst not pray with that elegancy as others. Prayer is a matter more of the heart than the head. In prayer it is not so much fluency prevails, as fervency;⁶ nor is God so much taken with the elegancy of speech, as the efficacy of the Spirit. Humility is better than volubility; here the mourner is the orator; sighs and groans are the best rhetoric.

2. Be not discontented, for God doth usually proportion a man's parts to the place to which he calls him; some are set in an higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities; but the most inferior member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

The next apology is, the troubles of the church. Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for myself, as the public! The church of God suffers.

I confess it is sad, and we ought for this 'to hang our harps upon the willows.' He is a wooden leg in Christ's body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a Christian must not be proud flesh, so neither dead flesh. When the church of God suffers, he must sympathise: Jeremiah wept for the virgin daughter of Sion. We must feel our brethren's hard cords through our soft beds. In music, if one string be touched, all the rest sound: when God strikes upon our brethren, our 'bowels must sound like

¹ Ps. 55. 6. ² Jer. 39. 11, 12. ³ 1 Cor. 7. 16. ⁴ Ti. 3. 3.

⁵ Lu. 8. 47.

⁶ Ja. 5. 16.

an harp.' Be sensible, but give not way to discontent. For consider, 1. God sits at the stern of his church.¹ Sometimes it is a ship tossed upon the waves, 'afflicted and tossed!'² but cannot God bring this ship to haven, though it meet with a storm upon the sea? This ship in the gospel was tossed because sin was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, because Christ was in it. Christ is in the ship of this church, fear not sinking; the church's anchor is cast in heaven. Do not we think God loves his church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve tribes were on Aaron's breast, signifying how near to God's heart his people are; they are his portion,³ and shall that be lost? his glory,⁴ and shall that be finally eclipsed? No certainly. God can deliver his church, not only from, but by opposition; the church's pangs shall help forward her deliverance. 2. God hath always propagated religion by sufferings. The foundation of the church hath been laid in blood, and these sanguine showers have ever made it more fruitful. Cain put the knife to Abel's throat, and ever since the church's veins have bled: but she is like the vine, which by bleeding grows, and like the palm-tree, which the more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riseth. The holiness and patience of the saints, under their persecutions, hath much added both to the growth of religion, and the crown. Basil and Tertullian observe of the primitive martyrs, that divers of the heathens seeing their zeal and constancy turned Christians: religion is that Phoenix which hath always revived and flourished in the ashes of holy men. Isaiah sawn asunder, Peter crucified at Rome with his head downwards, Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and Polycarp of Smyrna, both martyred for religion; yet evermore the truth hath been sealed by blood, and gloriously dispersed; whereupon Julian did forbear to persecute, not out of pity, but envy, because the church grew so fast, and multiplied, as Nazianzen well observes.

The twelfth apology that discontent makes for itself, is this, it is not my trouble that troubles me, but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent me.

Be sure it be so; do not prevaricate with God and thy own soul; in true mourning for sin when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed. But suppose the apology be real, that sin is the ground of your

discontent; yet I answer, a man's disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds, in these three cases. 1. When it is disheartening, that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. If Israel had only pored upon their sting, and not looked up to the brazen serpent, they had never been healed. That sorrow for sin which drives us away from God, is not without sin, for there is more despair in it than remorse; the soul hath so many tears in its eyes, that it cannot see Christ. Sorrow, as sorrow, doth not save, that were to make a Christ of our tears, but is useful, as it is preparatory in the soul, making sin vile, and Christ precious. O look up to the brazen serpent, the Lord Jesus! A sight of his blood will revive, the plaster of his merits is broader than our sore. It is Satan's policy either to keep us from seeing our sins, or, if we will needs see them that we may be swallowed up of sorrow;⁵ either he would stupify us, or affright us; either keep the glass of the law from our eyes, or else pencil out our sins in such crimson colours, that we may sink in the quicksands of despair. 2. When sorrow is indisposing, it untunes the heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloisters up the soul. This is not sorrow but rather sullenness, and doth render a man not so much penitential as cynical. 3. When it is out of season. God bids us rejoice, and we hang our harps upon the willows; he bids us trust and we cast ourselves down, and are brought even to the margin of despair. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be sure to put us upon it when it is least in season. When God calls us in a special manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white robes, Satan will be putting us into mourning, and instead of a garment of praise, clothe us thus with a spirit of heaviness; so God loseth the acknowledgment of mercy, and we the comfort. If thy sorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Christ, if it hath raised in thee high prizings of him, strong hungerings after him, sweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a Christian doth but sin to vex and torture himself further upon the rack of his own discontent.

And thus I hope I have answered the most material objections and apologies which this sin of discontent doth make for itself. I see no reason why a Christian should be discontented, unless for his discontent. Let me, in the next place, propound something which may be

¹ Ps. 46 5. ² 1c. 51. 11. ³ De. 27. 9. ⁴ 1c. 46. 13.

⁵ 2 Cor. 2. 7.

both as a loadstone and a whet-stone to contentation.

CHAP. XI. DIVINE MOTIVES TO CONTENTMENT.

SECT. I. *The first argument to contentation.*

I. Consider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent if I could prescribe a receipt or antidote against poverty: but behold here is that which is more excellent, for a man to want, and yet have enough, this alone contentment of spirit doth bring. Contentation is a remedy against all our trouble, an alleviation to all our burdens, it is the cure of care. Contentation, though it be not properly a grace (it is rather a disposition of mind,) yet in it there is a happy temperature and mixture of all the graces: it is a most precious compound, which is made up of faith, patience, meekness, humility, &c. which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are in species these seven rare excellencies in contentment.

1st. Excellency. A contented Christian carries heaven about him: for, what is heaven, but that sweet repose and full contentment that the soul shall have in God? In contentment there is the first fruits of heaven. There are two things in a contented spirit, which make it like heaven. (1.) God is there; something of God is to be seen in that heart. A discontented Christian is like a rough tempestuous sea; when the water is rough you can see nothing there; but when it is smooth and serene, then you may behold your face in the water.¹ When the heart rageth through discontent, it is like a rough sea, you can see nothing there, unless passion and murmuring; there is nothing of God, nothing of heaven in that heart: but by virtue of contentment, it is like the sea when it is smooth and calm, there is a face shining there; you may see something of Christ in that heart, a representation of all the graces. (2.) Rest is there. O what a sabbath is kept in a contented heart! What an heaven! A contented Christian is like Noah in the ark; though the ark were tossed with waves, Noah could sit and sing in the ark. The soul that is gotten into the ark of contentment, sits quiet, and sails above all the waves of trouble; he can sing in this spiritual ark; the wheels of

the chariot move, but the axle-tree stirs not; the circumference of the heavens is carried about the earth, but the earth moves not out of its centre. When we meet with motion and change in the creatures round about us, a contented spirit is not stirred nor moved out of its centre. The sails of a mill move with the wind, but the mill itself stands still, an emblem of contentment; when our outward estate moves with the wind of providence, yet the heart is settled through holy contentment; and when others are like quicksilver, shaking and trembling through disquiet, the contented spirit can say, as David, 'O God my heart is fixed:'² what is this but a piece of heaven?

2d. Excellency. Whatever is defective in the creature is made up in contentment. A Christian may want the comforts that others have, the land, and possessions; but God hath instilled into his heart that contentment which is far better: in this sense that is true of our Saviour, 'he shall receive a hundred fold.'³ Perhaps he that ventured all for Christ, never hath his house or land again: aye, but God gives him a contented spirit, and this breeds such joy in the soul, as is infinitely sweeter than all his houses and lands which he left for Christ. It was sad with David in regard of his outward comforts, he being driven as some think from his kingdom; yet in regard of that sweet contentment he found in God, he had more comfort than men use to have in the time of harvest and vintage.⁴ One man hath house and lands to live upon, another hath nothing, only a small trade; yet even that brings in a livelihood. A Christian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment; and so he knows as well how to want, as to abound. O the rare art, or rather miracle of contentment! Wicked men are often disquieted in the enjoyment of all things; the contented Christian is well in the want of all things. But how comes a Christian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts? A Christian finds contentment distilled out of the breasts of the promises. He is poor in purse, but rich in promise. There is one promise brings much sweet contentment into the soul: 'they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing'⁵ If the thing we desire be good for us, we shall have it; if it be not good, then the not having is good for us. The resting satisfied with the promise gives contentment.

¹ Pr. 27. 19.

² Ps. 57. 7. ³ Mat. 19. 29. ⁴ Ps. 4. 7. ⁵ Ps. 34. 10.

3d. Excellency. Contentment makes a man in tune to serve God; it oils the wheels of the soul and makes it more agile and nimble; it composeth the heart, and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, &c. How can he that is in a passion of grief, or discontent, 'attend upon the Lord without distraction?' Contentment doth prepare and tune the heart. First you prepare the viol, and wind up the strings, ere you play a fit of music: when a Christian's heart is wound up to this heavenly frame of contentment, then it is fit for duty. A discontented Christian is like Saul, when the evil spirit came upon him: O what jarrings and discords doth he make in prayer! When an army is put into a disorder, then it is not fit for battle; when the thoughts are scattered and distracted about the cares of this life, a man is not fit for devotion. Discontent takes the heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the present trouble, so that a man's mind is not upon his prayer, but upon his cross. Discontent doth disjoint the soul; and it is impossible now that a Christian should go so steadily and cheerfully in God's service. O how lame is his devotion! The discontented person gives God but a half-duty, and his religion is nothing but bodily exercise, it wants a soul to animate it. David would not offer that to God which cost him nothing.¹ Where there is too much worldly care, there is too little spiritual cost in a duty. The discontented person doth his duties by halves; he is just like Ephraim, 'a cake not turned';² he is a cake baked on one side; he gives God the outside but not the spiritual part; his heart is not in duty: he is baked on one side, but the other side dough; and what profit is there of such raw indigested services? He that gives God only the skin of worship, what can he expect mere than the shell of comfort? Contentation brings the heart into frame, and then only do we give God the flower and spirits of a duty, when the soul is composed. Now a Christian's heart is intent and serious. There are some duties which we cannot perform as we ought without contentment: as, (1.) To rejoice in God. How can he rejoice that is discontented? he is fitter for repining, than rejoicing. (2.) To be thankful for mercy. Can a discontented person be thankful? he can be fretful, not thankful. (3.) To justify God in his proceedings. How can he do this who is discontented with his condition? he will sooner

censure God's wisdom, than clear his justice. O then, how excellent is contentation, which doth prepare, and as it were, string the heart for duty? Indeed contentment doth not only make our duties lively and agile, but acceptable. It is this that puts beauty and worth into them; for contentment settles the soul. Now, as it is with milk, when it is always stirring, you can make nothing of it, but let it settle a while, and then it turns to cream: when the heart is over-much stirred with disquiet and discontent, you can make nothing of those duties. How thin, how fleeting and jejune are they! but when the heart is once settled by holy contentment, now there is some worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4th. Excellency. Contentment is the spiritual arch, or pillar of the soul; it fits a man to bear burdens; he whose heart is ready to sink under the least sin, by virtue of this hath a spirit invincible undersufferings. A contented Christian is like the camomile, the more it is trodden upon the more it grows: as physic works diseases out of the body, so doth contentment work trouble out of the heart. Thus it argues, 'if I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; if I am in want, God can relieve me.' 'Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water:'³ thus holy contentment keeps the heart from fainting. In the autumn, when the fruit and leaves are blown off, still there is sap in the root: when there is an autumn upon our external felicity, the leaves of our estate drop off, still there is the sap of contentment in the heart: a Christian hath life inwardly, when his outward comforts do not blossom. The contented heart is never out of heart. Contentation is a golden shield, that doth beat back discouragements. Humility is like the lead to the net which keeps the soul down when it is rising through passion; and contentment is like the cork which keeps the heart up when it is sinking through discouragements. Contentment is the great under-prop; it is like the beam which bears whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a rock that breaks the waves. It is strange to observe the same affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themselves under it. The contented Christian is like Samson, that carried away the gates of the city upon his back; he can go away with his cross cheerfully, and makes nothing of it:

¹ 2 Sa. 24. 24.² Ho. 7. 8.³ 2 Ki. 3. 17.

the other is like Issachar, couching down under his burden:¹ the reason is, the one is content, and that breeds courage; the other discontented, and that breeds fainting. Discontent swells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this sacred sinew of contentment begins to shrink, we go limping under our afflictions; we know not what burdens God may exercise us with; let us therefore preserve contentment; as is our contentment, such will be our courage. David with his five stones and his sling defied Goliath, and overcame him. Get but contentment into the sling of your heart; and with this sacred stone you may both defy the world and conquer it; you may break those afflictions, which else would break you.

5th. Excellency. Contentment prevents many sins and temptations.

First, It prevents many sins. Where there wants contentment, there wants no sin; discontentedness with our condition is a sin that doth not go alone, but is like the first link of the chain which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, there are two sins which contentment prevents: (1.) Impatience. Discontent and impatience are twins: 'this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait on the Lord any longer?'² as if God were so tied, that he must give us the mercy just when we desire it. Impatience is no small sin; as will appear if you consider whence it ariseth. It is for want of faith. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent grace; it believes that God's wisdom tempers, and his love sweetens all ingredients; this works patience: 'shall I not drink the cup which my Father hath given me?' Impatience is the daughter of infidelity. If a patient have an ill opinion of the physician, and conceits that he comes to poison him, he will take none of his receipts: when we have a prejudice against God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we storm and cry out, like a foolish man, (it is Chrysostom's simile) that cries out 'away with the plaster!' though it be in order to a cure; is it not better that the plaster smart a little, than the wound fester and rankle? Impatience is for want of love to God. We will bear his reproofs whom we love not only patiently, but thankfully; 'love thinketh no evil';³ it puts the fairest, and most candid gloss upon the actions of a friend; 'love covers evil.' If it were possible for God in the least manner to err, which were blas-

phemy to think, love would cover that error: love takes every thing in the best sense, it makes us bear any stroke 'it endureth all things.'⁴ Had we love to God, we should have patience. Impatience is for want of humility. An impatient man was never humbled under the burden of sin; he that studies his sins, the numberless number of them, how they are twisted together, and sadly accented; is patient and saith, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.' The greater noise drowns the lesser; when the sea roars the rivers are still; he that lets his thoughts expatiate about sin, is both silent and amazed, he wonders it is no worse with him. How great then is this sin of impatience! And how excellent is contentment, which is a counterpoise against this sin? The contented Christian believing that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to say, unless to justify God. That is the sin that contentment prevents. (2.) It prevents murmuring, a sin which is a degree higher than the other; murmuring is quarrelling with God, and enveighing against him; 'they spake against God.'⁵ The murmurer saith interpretatively, that God hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deserved better from him. The murmurer chargeth God with folly: this is the language, or rather blasphemy of a murmuring spirit; God might have been a wiser and better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The Israelites are called in the same text murmurers and rebels:⁶ and is not rebellion as the sin of witchcraft? Thou that art a murmurer art in the account of God as a witch, a sorcerer, as one that deals with the devil: this is a sin of the first magnitude. Murmuring oft ends in cursing: Micah's mother fell to cursing when the talents of silver were taken away;⁷ so doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away. Our murmuring is the devil's music; this is that sin which God cannot bear: 'how long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me?'⁸ It is a sin which whets the sword against a people: it is a land-destroying sin; 'neither murmur ye as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.'⁹ It is a ripening sin this; without mercy it will hasten England's funerals. O then how excellent is contentment, which prevents this sin! To be contented, and yet murmur, is a solecism: a contented Christian doth acquiesce in his present condition, and doth not

¹ Ge. 49. 14.² 2 Ki. 6. 33.³ 1 Cor. 13. 5.⁴ 1 Cor. 13. 7.⁷ Ju. 17. 2.⁵ Nu. 21. 5.⁶ Nu. 11. 7.⁸ Nu. 17. 10.⁹ 1 Cor. 10. 10.

murmur, but admire. Herein appears the excellency of contentation; it is a spiritual antidote against sin.

Secondly. Contentment prevents many temptations; discontent is a devil that is always tempting. *1st.* It puts a man upon indirect means. He that is poor and discontented, will attempt any thing; he will go to the devil for riches; he that is proud and discontented, will hang himself, as Abithophel did when his counsel was rejected. Satan takes great advantage of our discontent; he loves to fish in these troubled waters. Discontent doth both eclipse reason and weaken faith; and it is Satan's policy; he doth usually break over the hedge where it is weakest: discontent makes a breach in the soul, and usually at this breach the devil enters by a temptation, and storms the soul. How easily can the devil by his logic dispute a discontented Christian into sin? He forms such a syllogism as this, 'he that is in want must study self-preservation: but you are now in want; therefore you ought to study self-preservation.' Hereupon to make good his conclusion, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not distinguishing between what is needful, and what is lawful. 'What?' saith he, 'dost thou want a livelihood? never be such a fool as starve; take the rising side at a venture, be it good or bad; 'eat the bread of deceit, drink the wine of violence.' Thus you see how the discontented man is a prey to that sad tentation, to steal and take God's name in vain. Contentment is a shield against tentation; for he that is contented, knows as well how to want as to abound. He will not sin to get a living; though the bill of fare grows short, he is content. He lives as the birds of the air upon God's providence, and doubts not but he shall have enough to pay for his passage to heaven. *2d.* Discontent tempts a man to atheism and apostacy. Sure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he suffer them to be in want who 'have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?' saith discontent: throw off Christ's livery, desist from thy religion! Thus Job's wife being discontented with her condition, saith to her husband, 'dost thou still retain thy integrity?' As if she had said, 'dost thou not see, Job, what is become of all thy religion? thou fearest God and eschewest evil, and what art thou the better? see how God turns his hand against thee; he hath smitten thee in thy body, estate, relations, and dost thou still retain thy integrity? What! still de-

vout? still weep and pray before him? thou fool, cast off religion, turn atheist!' Here was a sore tentation that the devil did hand over to Job by his discontented wife; only his grace, as a golden shield, did ward off the blow from his heart: 'thou speakest as one of the foolish women.' 'What profit is it,' saith the discontented person, 'to serve the Almighty? those that never trouble themselves about religion, are the prosperous men, and I in the mean while suffer want: as good give over driving the trade of religion, if this be all my reward.' This is a sore tentation, and oft it prevails; atheism is the fruit that grows out of the blossom of discontent. O then, behold the excellency of contentment! It doth repel this tentation. 'If God be mine,' saith the contented spirit, 'it is enough; though I have no lands or tenements, his smile makes heaven; his loves are better than wine; better is the gleanings of Ephraim than the vintage of Abiezar;¹ I have little in hand, but much in hope; my livelihood is short, but this is his promise, even eternal life; I am persecuted by malice, but better is persecuted godliness, than prosperous wickedness.' Thus divine contentment is a spiritual antidote both against sin and tentation.

6th. Excellency. Contentment sweetens every condition. Christ turned the water into wine; so contentment turns the waters of Marah into spiritual wine. Have I but little? yet it is more than I can deserve or challenge. This modicum is in mercy; it is the fruit of Christ's blood, it is the legacy of free grace: a small present sent from a king is highly valued. This little I have is with a good conscience; it is not stolen waters; guilt hath not muddied or poisoned it; it runs pure. This little is a pledge of more: this bit of bread is an earnest of that bread which I shall eat in the kingdom of God; this little water in the cruise is an earnest of that heavenly nectar which shall be distilled from the true vine. Do I meet with some crosses? my comfort is, if they be heavy, I have not far to go; I shall but carry my cross to Golgotha and there I shall leave it; my cross is light in regard of the weight of glory. Hath God taken away my comforts from me? it is well, the Comforter still abides. Thus contentment, as an honey-comb, drops sweetness into every condition. Discontent is a leaven that sours every comfort; it puts aloes and wormwood upon the breast of the creature; it

¹ Lu. 8. 2.

lessens every mercy, it trebles every cross; but the contented spirit sucks sweetness from every flower of providence; it can make a treacle of poison. Contentation is full of consolation.

7th. Excellency. Contentment hath this excellency, it is the best commentator upon providence; it makes a fair interpretation of all God's dealings. Let the providence of God be never so dark or bloody, contentment doth construe them ever in the best sense. I may say of it, as the apostle of charity, 'it thinketh no evil.'¹ Sickness (saith contentment) is God's furnace to refine his gold, and make it sparkle the more: the prison is an oratory, or house of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from it? he saw perhaps my heart grew so much in love with it; had I been long in that fat pasture I should have surfeited, and the better my estate had been, the worse my soul would have been. God is wise; he hath done this either to prevent some sin or to exercise some grace. What a blessed frame of heart is this! A contented Christian is an advocate for God against unbelief and impatience: whereas discontent takes every thing from God in the worst sense; it doth implead and censure God: this evil I feel is but a symptom of greater evil: God is about to undo me: the Lord hath brought us hither into the wilderness to slay us. The contented soul takes all well; and when his condition is ever so bad, he can say, 'truly God is good.'²

Sect. II. *The second argument to contentment.*

A Christian hath that which may make him content. 1. Hath not God given thee Christ? in him there are 'unsearchable riches';³ he is such a golden mine of wisdom and grace, that all the saints and angels can never dig to the bottom. As Seneca said to his friend Polybius, never complain of thy hard fortune as long as Cæsar is thy friend: so I say to a believer, never complain as long as Christ is thy friend; he is an enriching pearl, a sparkling diamond; the infinite lustre of his merits makes us shine in God's eyes.⁴ In him there is both fulness and sweetness; he is unspeakably good. Screw up your thoughts to the highest pinnacle, stretch them to the utmost period, let them expatiate to their full latitude and extent; yet they fall infinitely short of these ineffable and inexhaustible treasures which are locked up in Jesus Christ: and is not here enough to give

the soul content? A Christian that wants necessaries, yet having Christ, he hath the 'one thing needful.' 2. Thy soul is exercised and enamelled with the graces of the Spirit, and is not here enough to give contentment? Grace is of a divine birth, it is the new plantation, it is the flower of the heavenly paradise, it is the embroidery of the Spirit, it is the seed of God,⁵ it is the sacred unction,⁶ it is Christ's portraiture in the soul; it is the very foundation on which the superstructure of glory is laid. O, of what infinite value is grace! what a jewel is faith! Well may it be called 'precious faith.'⁷ What is love, but a divine sparkle in the soul? A soul beautified with grace, is like a room richly hung with arras, or tapestry, or the firmament bespangled with glittering stars. These are the 'true riches,'⁸ which cannot stand with reprobation: and is not here enough to give the soul contentment? what are all other things but like wings of a butterfly, curiously painted? but they defile our fingers. Earthly riches, saith Augustine, are full of poverty; so indeed they are, for, they cannot enrich the soul: oftentimes under silken apparel there is a thread-bare soul. They are corruptible: 'riches are not for ever, as the wise man saith.'⁹ Heaven is a place where gold and silver will not go. A believer is rich towards God:¹⁰ why then art thou discontented? hath not God given thee that which is better than the world? What if he doth not give thee the box, if he gives thee the jewel? what if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coin? he gives thee gold; spiritual mercies. What if the water in the bottle be spent? thou hast enough in the fountain. What need he complain of the world's emptiness, that hath God's fulness? The Lord is my portion, saith David,¹¹ then let the lines fall where they will, in a sick-bed or prison, I will say, 'the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.' 3. Art thou not heir to all the promises? Hast thou not a reversion of heaven? When thou lettest go thy hold of natural life, art thou not sure of eternal life? Hath not God given thee the earnest and first fruits of glory? Is not here enough to work the heart to contentment?

Sect. III. *The third argument is,*

Be content, for else we confute our own prayers. We pray, 'thy will be done:' it is the will of God that we should be in such a condition; he hath decreed it, and he sees it

¹ 1 Cor. 13. 5. ² Ps. 73. 1. ³ Ep. 3. 8. ⁴ Ep. 1. 7.

⁵ 1 Jno. 3. 9. ⁶ 1 Jno. 2. 20. ⁷ 2 Pe. 1. 1. ⁸ Lu. 16. 11
⁹ Pr. 27. 24. ¹⁰ Lu. 12. 21. ¹¹ Ps. 16. 5.

best for us; why then do we murmur, and are discontented at that which we pray for? either we are not in good earnest in our prayer, which argues hypocrisy; or we contradict ourselves when we pray.

Sect. IV. *The fourth argument to contentment is,*

Because now God hath his end, and Satan nisseth of his end. 1. God hath his end. God's end in all his cross providences is to bring the heart to submit and be content; and indeed this pleaseth God much, he loves to see his children satisfied with that portion he doth carve and allot them; it contents him to see us contented; therefore let us acquiesce in God's providence, now God hath his end. 2. Satan misseth of his end. The end why the devil, though by God's permission, did smite Job in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind; he did vex his body on purpose that he might disquiet his spirit. He hoped to bring Job into a fit of discontent, and then that he would in a passion break forth against God: but Job being so well-contented with his condition as that he falls to blessing of God, he did disappoint Satan of his hope. 'The devil will cast some of you into prison;¹ why doth the devil throw us into prison? It is not so much the hurting our body, as the molesting our mind, that he aims at; he would imprison our contentment, and disturb the regular motion of our souls, this is his design. It is not so much the putting us into a prison, as the putting us into a passion, that he attempts; but by holy contentation, Satan loseth his prey, he misseth of his end. The devil hath often deceived us; the best way to deceive him, is by contentation in the midst of temptation; our contentment will discontent Satan. O, let us not gratify our enemy! discontent is the devil's delight; now it is as he would have it, he loves to warm himself at the fire of our passions. Repentance is the joy of the angels, and discontent is the joy of the devils; as the devil danceth at discord, so he sings at discontent. The fire of our passions makes the devil a bonfire; it is a kind of heaven to him to see us torturing ourselves with our own troubles; but by holy contentment, we frustrate him of his purpose, and do as it were put him out of countenance.

Sect. V. *The fifth argument is,*

By contentment a Christian gains a victory over himself. For a man to be able to rule his

own spirit, this of all others is the most noble conquest. Passion denotes weakness; to be discontented is suitable to flesh and blood; but to be in every state content, reproached, yet content, imprisoned, yet content; this is above nature; this is some of that holy valour and chivalry which only a divine spirit is able to infuse. In the midst of the affronts of the world to be patient, and in the changes of the world to have the spirit calmed, this is a conquest worthy indeed of the garland of honour. Holy Job, divested and turned out of all, leaving his scarlet, and embracing the dunghill, (a sad catastrophe!) yet had learned contentment. It is said, 'he fell down upon the ground and worshipped.'² One would have thought he should have fallen upon the ground and blasphemed! no, he fell and worshipped. He adored God's justice and holiness. Behold the strength of grace! here was an humble submission, yet a noble conquest; he got the victory over himself. It is no great matter for a man to yield to his own passions, this is facile and feminine; but to content himself in denying of himself, this is sacred.

Sect. VI. *The sixth great argument to work the heart to contentment, is,*

The consideration that all God's providences, how cross or bloody soever, shall do a believer good; 'and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.'³ Not only all good things, but all evil things work for good; and shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? Suppose our troubles are twisted together, and sadly accented: what if sickness, poverty, reproach, lawsuits, &c. do unite and muster their forces against us? all shall work for good; our maladies shall be our medicines; and shall we repine at that which shall undoubtedly do us good? 'Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.'⁴ Affliction may be baptized Marah; it is bitter, but physical. Because this is so full of comfort, and may be a most excellent catholicon against discontent, I shall a little expatiate.

It will be inquired how the evils of affliction work for good? Several ways.

First, They are disciplinary; they teach us. The Psalmist having very elegantly described the church's trouble,⁵ prefixed this title to the psalm, *Maschil*, which signifies a psalm giving instruction; that which seals up instruction,

¹ Re. 2. 10.

² Job 1. 20.

³ Ro. 8. 28.

⁴ Ps. 112. 4.

⁵ Ps. 74

works for good. God puts us sometimes under the black rod; but it is a rod of discipline; 'hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.'¹ God makes our adversity our university. Affliction is a preacher; 'blow the trumpet in Tekoa:'² the trumpet was to preach to the people; 'be thou instructed, O Jerusalem.'³ Sometimes God speaks to the minister to lift up his voice like a trumpet,⁴ and here he speaks to the trumpet to lift up its voice like a minister. Afflictions teach us humility. Commonly prosperous, and proud, corrections are God's corrosives to eat out the proud flesh. Jesus Christ is the lily of the vallies;⁵ he dwells in an humble heart: God brings us into the valley of tears, that he may bring us into the valley of humility; 'remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.'⁶ When men are grown high, God hath no better way with them, than to brew them a cup of wormwood. Afflictions are compared to thorns;⁷ God's thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Suppose a man run at another with a sword to kill him; accidentally, it only lets out his imposthume; this doth him good: God's sword is to let out the imposthume of pride; and shall that which makes us humble, make us discontented? Afflictions teach us repentance; 'thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised: I repented, and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh.'⁸ Repentance is the precious fruit that grows upon the cross. When the fire is put under the still, the water drops from the roses; fiery afflictions make the waters of repentance drop and distil from the eyes; and is here any cause of discontent? Afflictions teach us to pray better, 'they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them;'⁹ before, they would say a prayer; now they poured out a prayer. Jonah was asleep in the ship, but awake and at prayer in the whale's belly. When God puts under the fire-brands of affliction, now our hearts boil over the more; God loves to have his children possessed with a spirit of prayer. Never did David, the sweet singer of Israel, tune his harp more melodiously, never did he pray better, than when he was upon the waters. Thus afflictions do in discipline; and shall we be discontent at that which is for our good?

Secondly, Afflictions are probatory.¹⁰ Gold

is not the worse for being tried, or corn for being fanned. Affliction is the touchstone of sincerity, it tries what metal we are made of; affliction is God's fan and his sieve. It is good that men be known; some serve God for a livery; they are like the fisherman, that makes use of the net, only to catch the fish; so they go a-fishing with the net of religion, only to catch preferment: affliction discovers these. The Donatists went to the Goths when the Arians prevailed: hypocrites will fail in a storm, true grace holds out in the winter-season. That is a precious faith which, like the stars, shines brightest in the darkest night. It is good that our graces should be brought to trial; thus we have the comfort, and the gospel the honour, and why then discontented?

Thirdly, Afflictions are expurgatory, these evils work for our good, because they work out sin, and shall I be discontented at this? What if I have more trouble, if I have less sin? The brightest day hath its clouds; the purest gold its dross; the most refined soul hath some lees of corruption. The saints lose nothing in the furnace but what they can well spare; their dross: is not this for our good? Why then should we murmur? 'I am come to send fire on the earth.'¹¹ Tertullian understands it of the fire of affliction. God makes this like the fire of the three children, which burned only their bonds and set them at liberty in the furnace, so the fire of affliction serves to burn the bonds of iniquity: 'by this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged: and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin.'¹² When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away his soul; when it comes to a godly man, it only takes away his sin; is there any cause why we should be discontented? God steeps us in the brinish waters of affliction that he may take out our spots. God's people are his husbandry;¹³ the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods: God's ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of sin; his harrowing of us is to break the hard clouds of impenitency that the heart may be the fitter to receive the seeds of grace; and if this be all, why should we be discontented?

Fourthly, Afflictions do both exercise and increase our grace. They exercise grace; affliction doth breathe our graces; every thing is most in its excellency when it is most in its ex-

¹ Mi. 6. 9. ² Je. 6. 1. ³ Je. 6. 8. ⁴ Is. 58. 1.

⁵ Can. 2. 1. ⁶ La. 3. 19, 20.

⁷ Ho. 2. 6. ⁸ Je. 31. 18, 19. ⁹ Is. 26. 16.

¹⁰ Ps. 66. 10, 11

¹¹ Lu. 12. 49.

¹² Is. 27. 9

¹³ 1 Cor. 3. 2.

ercise. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be asleep, and hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers, or the sun when it is masked with a cloud! A sick man is living, but not lively; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to see grace in the eclipse. Now faith puts forth its purest and most noble acts in times of affliction: God makes the fall of the leaf the spring of our graces. What if we are more passive, if graces be more active. Afflictions do increase grace; as the wind serves to increase and blow up the flame, so doth the windy blasts of affliction augment and blow up our graces; grace spends not in the furnace, but it is like the widow's oil in the cruise, which did increase by pouring out. The torch, when it is beaten burns brightest, so doth grace when it is exercised by sufferings. Sharp frosts nourish the good corn, so do sharp afflictions grace. Some plants grow better in the shade than in the sun, as the bay and the cypress; the shade of adversity is better for some than the sun-shine of prosperity. Naturalists observe that the colewort thrives better when it is watered with salt water than with fresh, so do some thrive better in the salt water of affliction; and shall we be discontented at that which makes us grow and fructify more?

Fifthly, These afflictions do bring more of God's immediate presence into the soul. When we are most assaulted, we shall be most assisted; 'I will be with him in trouble.'¹ It cannot be ill with that man with whom God is, by his powerful presence in supporting, and his gracious presence in sweetening the present trial. God will be with us in trouble, not only to behold us, but to uphold us, as he was with Daniel in the lion's den, and the three children in the fiery furnace. What if we have more trouble than others, if we have more of God with us than others have? We never have sweeter smiles from God's face than when the world begins to look strange: thy statutes have been my song; where? not when I was upon the throne, but 'in the house of my pilgrimage.'² We read, the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire;³ but in a metaphorical and spiritual sense, when the wind of affliction blows upon a believer, God is in the wind; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, to sanctify, to support, to sweeten. If God be with us, the furnace

shall be turned into a festival, the prison into a paradise, the earthquake into a joyful dance. O why should I be discontented, when I have more of God's company!

Sixthly, These evils of affliction are for good, as they bring with them certificates of God's love, and are evidences of his special favour. Affliction is the saint's livery; it is a badge and cognizance of honour: that the God of glory should look upon a worm, and take so much notice of him, as to afflict him rather than lose him, is an high act of favour. God's rod is a sceptre of dignity. Job calls God's afflicting of us, his magnifying of us.⁴ Some men's prosperity hath been their shame, when others' afflictions have been their crown.

Seventhly, These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us a far more exceeding weight of glory.⁵ That which works for my glory in heaven, works for my good. We do not read in scripture that any man's honour or riches do work for him a weight of glory, but afflictions do; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory; not that our sufferings do merit glory, (as the papists do wickedly gloss,) but though they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it; and God makes us, as he did our captain, 'perfect through sufferings.'⁶ And shall not all this make us contented with our condition? O I beseech you, look not upon the evil of affliction, but the good! Afflictions in scripture are called 'visitations.'⁷ The word in the Hebrew, to visit, is taken in a good sense, as well as a bad: God's afflictions are but friendly visits. Behold here God's rod, like Aaron's rod blossoming; and Jonathan's rod, it hath honey at the end of it. Poverty shall starve out our sins; the sickness of the body cures a sin-sick soul; O then, instead of murmuring and being discontented, bless the Lord! Hadst thou not met with such a rub in the way, thou mightest have gone to hell and never stopped.

Sect. VII. *The seventh argument to contentation* is, consider the evil of discontent. Malcontent hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man? Sometimes he will sit up on his bed, by and by he will lie down, and when he is down he is not quiet; first he turns on the one side

¹ Ps. 91. 15.² Ps. 119. 54.³ 1 Ki. 19. 11.⁴ Job 7. 17. ⁵ 2 Cor. 4. 17. ⁶ He. 2. 10. ⁷ Job. 7. 12.

and then on the other; he is restless; this is just the emblem of a discontented spirit. The man is not sick, yet he is never well; sometimes he likes such a condition of life but is soon weary; and then another condition of life; and when he hath it, yet he is not pleased; this is an evil under the sun. Now the evil of discontent appears in three things.

Evil 1st. The sordidness of it is unworthy of a Christian. (1.) It is unworthy of his profession. It was the saying of an heathen, bear thy condition quietly; 'know thou art a man;' so I say, bear thy condition contentedly, 'know thou art a Christian.' Thou professest to live by faith; what? and not content? Faith is a grace that doth substantiate things not seen;¹ faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promises; faith lives not by bread alone; when the water is spent in the bottle, faith knows whither to have recourse; now to see a Christian dejected in the want of visible supplies and recruits, where is faith? 'O,' saith one, 'my estate in the world is down.' Ay, and which is worse, thy faith is down. Wilt thou not be contented unless God let down the vessel to thee, as he did to Peter, 'wherein were all manner of beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air?' Must you have the first and second course? This is like Thomas, 'unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe;' so, unless thou hast a sensible feeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content. True faith will trust God where it cannot trace him, and will adventure upon God's bond though it hath nothing in view. You who are discontented because you have not all you would, let me tell you, either your faith is a nonentity, or at best but an embryo; it is a weak faith that must have stilts and crutches to support it. Nay, discontent is not only below faith, but below reason: why are you discontented? Is it because you are dispossessed of such comforts? Well, and have you not reason to guide you? Doth not reason tell you that you are but tenants at will? And may not God turn you out when he pleases? You hold not your estate by juridical right, but upon favour and courtesy. (2.) It is unworthy of the relation we stand in to God. A Christian is invested with the title and privilege of sonship;² he is an heir of the promise. O consider the lot of free-grace is fallen upon thee; thou art nearly allied to Christ, and of the blood royal; thou art ad-

vanced in some sense, above the angels; 'why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day?'³ why art thou discontented? O, how unworthy is this! as if the heir to some great monarch should go pining up and down because he may not pick such a flower.

Evil 2d. Consider the sinfulness of it; which appears in three things; the causes, the concomitants, the consequences of it. (1.) It is sinful in the causes; such as *Pride*. He that thinks highly of his deserts, usually esteems meanly of his condition: a discontented man is a proud man, he thinks himself better than others, therefore finds fault with the wisdom of God that he is not above others. Thus the thing formed saith to him that formed it, 'why hast thou made me thus?'⁴ why am I not higher? Discontents are nothing else but the estimations, and boilings over of pride. The second cause of discontent is, *envy*, which Augustine calls the sin of the devil. Satan envied Adam the glory of paradise, and the robe of innocency: he that envies what his neighbour hath, is never contented with that portion which God's providence doth parcel out to him. As envy stirs up strife, (this made the Plebeian faction so strong among the Romans) so it creates discontent: the envious man looks so much upon the blessings which another enjoys, that he cannot see his own mercies, and so doth continually vex and torture himself. Cain envied that his brother's sacrifice was accepted, and his rejected; hereupon he was discontented, and presently murderous thoughts began to arise in his heart. The third cause is *covetousness*. This is a radical sin. Whence are vexing law-suits, but from discontent? and whence is discontent, but from covetousness? Covetousness and contentedness cannot dwell in the same heart. Avarice is an belluo, that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like Behemoth, 'behold he drinketh up a river, he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.'⁵ 'There are four things (saith Solomon) say not, it is enough.' I may add a fifth, the heart of a covetous man; he is still craving. Covetousness is like a wolf in the breast, which is ever feeding; and because a man is not satisfied, he is never content. The fourth cause of discontent is, *jealousy*, which is sometimes occasioned through melancholy, and sometimes misapprehension. The spirit of jealousy causeth this evil spirit. 'Jealousy is

¹ He. 11. 1.² Ep. 1. 5.³ 2 Sa. 13. 4.⁴ Ro. 9. 20.⁵ Job 40. 23.

the rage of a man.¹ And oft this is nothing but suspicion and fancy: yet such as creates real discontent. The fifth cause of discontent is distrust, which is a great degree of Atheism. The discontented person is ever distrustful. The bill of provision grows low; I am in these straits and exigencies, can God help me? 'can he prepare a table in the wilderness?' sure he cannot. My estate is exhausted, can God recruit me? my friends are gone, can God raise me up more? sure the arm of his power is shrunk. I am like the dry fleece, can any water come upon this fleece? 'If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?'² Thus the anchor of hope, and the shield of faith, being cast away, the soul goes pining up and down. Discontent is nothing else but the echo of unbelief: and remember, distrust is worse than distress.

2. Discontent is joined with a sullen melancholy. A Christian of a right temper should be ever cheerful in God; 'serve the Lord with gladness';³ a sign the oil of grace hath been poured into the heart when the oil of gladness shines in the countenance. Cheerfulness credits religion; how can the discontented person be cheerful? Discontent is a dogged, sullen humour; because we have not what we desire God shall not have a good word or look from us; as the bird in the cage, because she is pent up, and cannot fly in the open air, therefore beats herself against the cage, and is ready to kill herself. Thus that peevish prophet; 'I do well to be angry even unto death.'⁴ 2. Discontent is accompanied with unthankfulness; because we have not all we desire, we never mind the mercies which we have. We deal with God as the widow of Sarepta did with the prophet: the prophet Elijah had been a means to keep her alive in the famine, for it was for his sake, that her meal in the barrel, and her oil in the cruise failed not; but as soon as ever her son dies, she falls into a passion, and begins to quarrel with the prophet: 'what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my sin to remembrance, and slay my son?'⁵ So ungratefully do we deal with God: we can be content to receive mercies from God, but if he doth cross us in the least thing, then, through discontent, we grow touchy and impatient, and are ready to fly upon God; thus God loseth all his mercies. We read in scripture of the thank-offering; the dis-

contented person cuts God short of this; the Lord loseth his thank-offering. A discontented Christian repines in the midst of mercies, as Adam who sinned in the midst of paradise. Discontent is a spider that sucks the poison of unthankfulness out of the sweetest flower of God's blessing, and is a devilish chymistry that extracts dross out of the most refined gold. The discontented person thinks every thing he doth for God too much, and every thing God doth for him too little. O what a sin is unthankfulness! it is an accumulative sin. What Cicero said of parricide, I may say of ingratitude: 'there are many sins bound up in this one sin.' It is a voluminous wickedness; and how full of this sin is discontent? A discontented Christian, because he hath not all the world, therefore dishonours God with the mercies which he hath. God made Eve out of Adam's rib, to be an helper, but the devil hath made an arrow of this rib, and shot Adam to the heart: so doth discontent take the rib of God's mercy, and ungratefully shoot at him; estate, liberty shall be employed against God. Thus it is oftentimes. Behold then how discontent and ingratitude are interwoven and twisted one within the other: thus discontent is sinful in its concomitants.

(3.) It is sinful in its consequences, which are these. 1. It makes a man very unlike the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is a meek Spirit. The Holy Ghost descended in the likeness of a dove;⁶ a dove is the emblem of meekness; a discontented spirit is not a meek spirit. 2. It makes a man like the devil; the devil being swelled with the poison of envy and malice, is never content: just so is the malcontent. The devil is an unquiet spirit, he is still 'walking about,'⁷ it is his rest to be walking. And herein is the discontented person like him; for he goes up and down vexing himself, 'seeking rest, and finding none;' he is the devil's picture. 3. Discontent disjoins the soul, it untunes the heart for duty. 'Is any among you afflicted, let him pray.'⁸ But, is any man discontented? how shall he pray? 'Lift up holy hands without wrath.'⁹ Discontent is full of wrath and passion; the malcontent cannot lift up pure hands; he lifts up leprous hands, he poisons his prayers; will God accept of a poisoned sacrifice? Chrysostom compares prayer to a fine garland; those, saith he, that make a garland, their hands had need to be clean; prayer is a

¹ Pr. 6. 31. ² 2 Ki. 7. 2. ³ Ps. 100. 2.
⁴ Jon. 4. 9. ⁵ 1 Ki. 17. 18.

⁶ Mat. 3. 16. ⁷ 1 Pe. 5. 8. ⁸ Ja. 5. 13. ⁹ 1 Ti. 2. 8.

precious garland, the heart that makes it had need to be clean. Discontent throws poison into the spring, which was death among the Romans, discontent puts the heart into a disorder and mutiny, and such an one cannot serve the Lord 'without distraction.' 4. Discontent sometimes unfits for the very use of reason. Jonah, in a passion of discontent, spake no better than blasphemy and nonsense: 'I do well to be angry even unto death.'¹ What? to be angry with God! and to die for anger! Sure he did not know well what he said. When discontent transports, then, like Moses, we speak unadvisedly with our lips. This humour doth even suspend the very acts of reason. 5. Discontent doth not only disquiet a man's self, but those who are near him. This evil spirit troubles families, parishes, &c. If there be but one string out of tune, it spoils all the music: one discontented spirit makes jarrings and discords among others. It is this ill-humour that breeds quarrels and law-suits. Whence are all our contentions, but for want of contentation? 'From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts?'² in particular from the lust of discontent. Why did Absalom raise a war against his father, and would have taken off not only his crown but his head? was it not his discontent? Absalom would be king. Why did Ahab stone Naboth? was it not discontent about the vineyard? Oh this devil of discontent! Thus you have seen the sinfulness of it.

Evil 3d. Consider the simplicity of it. I may say, as the Psalmist, 'surely they are disquieted in vain';³ which appears thus, 1. Is it not a vain simple thing to be troubled at the loss of that which is in its own nature perishing and changeable? God hath put a vicissitude into the creature; all the world rings changes; and for me to meet with inconstancy here, to lose a friend, estate, to be in a constant fluctuation; is no more than to see a flower wither or a leaf drop off in autumn: there is an autumn upon every comfort, a fall of the leaf; now it is extreme folly to be discontented at the loss of those things which are in their own nature loseable. What Solomon saith of riches, is true of all things under the sun, 'they take wings.' Noah's dove brought an olive-branch in its mouth, but presently flew out of the ark, and never returned more: such a comfort brings to us honey in its mouth, but it hath wings;

and to what purpose should we be troubled, unless we had wings to fly after and overtake it? 2. Discontent is a heart-breaking: 'by sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken.'⁴ It takes away the comfort of life. There is none of us but may have many mercies if we can see them; now because we have not all we desire, therefore we will lose the comfort of that which we have already. Jonah having his gourd smitten, a withering vanity, was so discontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the whale's belly; he takes no comfort of his life, but wisheth that he might die. What folly is this? We must have all or none; herein we are like children, that throw away the piece which is cut them because they may have no bigger. Discontent eats out the comfort of life. Besides, it were well if it were seriously weighed how prejudicial this is even to our health; for discontent, as it doth discruciate the mind, so it doth pine the body. It frets as a moth; and by wasting the spirits, weakens the vitals. The pleurisy of discontent brings the body into a consumption; and is not this folly? 3. Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but it makes the cross heavier. A contented spirit goes cheerfully under its affliction. Discontent makes our grief as unsupportable as it is unreasonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain; but if the leg be sore, then the fetters trouble. Discontent of mind is the sore that makes the fetters of affliction more grievous. Discontent troubles us more than the trouble itself, it steeps the affliction in wormwood. When Christ was upon the Cross, the Jews brought him gall and vinegar to drink, that it might add to his sorrow. Discontent brings to a man in affliction, gall and vinegar to drink; this is worse than the affliction itself. Is it not folly for a man to embitter his own cross? 4. Discontent spins out our troubles the longer. A Christian is discontented because he is in want, and therefore he is in want, because he is discontented; he murmurs because he is afflicted, and therefore he is afflicted, because he murmurs. Discontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deals herein with us, as we use to do with our children; when they are quiet and cheerful, they shall have any thing; but if we see them cry and fret, then we withhold from them: we get nothing from God by our discontent but blows; the more the child struggles, the more it is

¹ Jen. 1. 9.² Ja. 1. 1.³ Ps. 39. 6⁴ Pr. 15. 13.

beaten: when we struggle with God by our sinful passions, he doubles and trebles his strokes; God will tame our curst hearts. What got Israel by their peevishness? they were within eleven days journey of Canaan; and now they were discontented and began to murmur, God leads them a march of forty years long in the wilderness. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have seen the evil of discontent.

Sect. VIII. *The eighth argument to contentation* is this; why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? Perhaps if he had more he would be less content; covetousness is a dry drunkenness. The world is such that the more we have the more we crave; it cannot fill the heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? not by putting oil on the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdrawing the fuel. When the appetite is inflamed after riches, how may a man be satisfied? not by having just what he desires, but by withdrawing the fuel, &c. moderating and lessening his desires. He that is contented has enough. A man in a fever or dropsy thirsts; how do you satisfy him? not by giving him liquid things, which will inflame his thirst the more; but by removing the cause, and so curing the distemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his heart lower.

Sect. IX. *The ninth argument to contentation* is the shortness of life. It is 'but a vapour,' saith James.¹ Life is a wheel ever-running. The poets painted time with wings to show the volubility and swiftness of it. Job compares it to a swift post;² our life rides post; and to a day, not a year. It is indeed like a day. Infancy is as it were the day-break, youth is the sun-rising, full growth is the sun in the meridian, old age is sun-setting, sickness is the evening, then comes the night of death. How quickly is this day of life spent! Oftentimes this sun goes down at noon-day; life ends before the evening of old age comes. Nay, sometimes the sun of life sets presently after sun-rising. Quickly after the dawning of infancy the night of death approaches. O, how short is the life of man! The consideration of the brevity of life may work the heart to contentment. Remember thou art to be here but a day; thou hast but a short way to go, and what needs a long provision for a short way? If a traveller

hath but enough to bring him to his journey's end he desires no more. We have but a day to live, and perhaps we may be in the twelfth hour of the day; why if God gives us but enough to bear our charges, till night, it is sufficient, let us be content. If a man had the lease of an house, or farm, but for two or three days, and he should fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiscreet? so, when we have but a short time here, and death calls us presently off the stage, to thirst immoderately after the world, and pull down our souls to build up an estate, is an extreme folly. Therefore, as Esau said once, in a profane sense, concerning his birth-right, 'lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birth-right do me?' so let a Christian say in a religious sense, 'lo, I am even at the point of death, my grave is going to be made, and what good will the world do me? If I have but enough till sun-setting, I am content.'

Sect. X. *The tenth argument to contentation* is, consider seriously the nature of a prosperous condition. There are in a prosperous estate three things,

1. More trouble. Many who have abundance of all things to enjoy, yet have not so much content and sweetness in their lives, as some that go to their hard labour. Sad, solicitous thoughts do often attend a prosperous condition. Care is the evil spirit which haunts the rich man, and will not suffer him to be quiet. When his chest is full of gold, his heart is full of care, either how to manage, or how to increase, or how to secure what he hath gotten. O the troubles and perplexities that do attend prosperity! The world's high seats are very uneasy; sunshine is pleasant, but sometimes it scorseth with its heat; the bee gives honey, but sometimes it stings: prosperity hath its sweetness and also its sting; 'competency with contentment is far more eligibile.' Never did Jacob sleep better than when he had the heavens for his canopy, and a hard stone for his pillow. A large voluminous estate is but like a long trailing garment, which is more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous condition there is more danger; and that two ways: First, in respect of a man's self. The rich man's table is oft his snare; he is ready to ingulf himself too deep in these sweet waters. In this sense it is hard to know how to abound. It must be a strong brain that bears heady wine; he had need have much wisdom and grace, that knows how to

¹ Ja. 4. 14.

² Job 9. 25.

bear an high condition; either he is ready to kill himself with care, or to surfeit himself with luscious delights. O the hazard of honour, the damage of dignity! Pride, security, rebellion, are the three worms that breed of plenty.¹ The pastures of prosperity are rank and surfeiting. How soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease? Prosperity is often a trumpet that sounds a retreat, it calls men off from the pursuit of religion. The sun of prosperity oft dulls and puts out the fire of zeal; how many souls hath the pleurisy of abundance killed? They that 'will be rich, fall into snares.'² The world is birdlime at our feet, it is full of golden sands, but they are quick-sands. Prosperity, like smooth Jacob, will supplant and betray; a great estate, without much vigilancy, will be a thief to rob us of heaven; such as are upon the pinnacle of honour are in most danger of falling. A lower estate is less hazardous; the little pinnacle rides safe by the shore, when the gallant ship advancing with its mast and top-sail, is cast away. Adam in paradise was overcome, when Job on the dung-hill was a conqueror. Samson fell asleep in Delilah's lap: some have fallen so fast asleep on the lap of ease and plenty, that they have never awaked till they have been in hell. The world's fawning is worse than its frowning, and it is more to be feared when it smiles than when it thunders. Prosperity, in scripture, is compared to a candle; 'his candle shined upon my head:'³ how many have burnt their wings about this candle! 'The corn being over-ripe, sheds; and fruit, when it mellow, begins to rot; when men do mellow with the sun of prosperity, commonly their souls begin to rot in sin. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!'⁴ His golden weights keep him from ascending up the hill of God; and shall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower orb? What if we are not in so much bravery and gallantry as others? we are not in so much danger; as we want the honour of the world, so the temptations. O the abundance of danger that is in abundance! We see, by common experience, that lunatics, when the moon is declining, and in the wane, are sober enough, but when it is full they are wild and more exorbitant: when men's estates are in the wane, they are more serious about their souls, more humble, but when it is the full of the moon, and they have abundance, then their hearts begin to

swell with their estates, and are scarcely themselves. Those that write concerning the several climates, observe, that such as live in the northern parts of the world, if you bring them into the south part, lose their stomachs, and die quickly: but those that live in the more southern and hot climates, bring them into the north, and their stomach's mend, and they are long-lived; give me leave to apply it. Bring a man from the cold, starving climate of poverty, into the hot southern climate of prosperity, and he begins to lose his appetite to good things, he grows weak, and a thousand to one if all his religion doth not die; but bring a Christian from the south to the north, from a rich flourishing estate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry air, and then his stomach mends, he hath a better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Christ, he thirsts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life, than at six before; this man is now like to live and hold out in his religion. Be content then with a modicum; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to heaven, it sufficeth. Secondly, a prosperous condition is dangerous in regard of others. A great estate, for the most part, draws envy to it, whereas in little there is quiet. David a shepherd was quiet, but David a courtier was pursued by his enemies; envy cannot endure a superior; an envious man knows not how to live but upon the ruins of his neighbours; he raiseth himself higher by bringing others lower. Prosperity is an eyesore to many. Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleeced. The barren tree grows peaceably; no man meddles with the ash or willow, but the apple-tree and the damasin shall have many rude suitors. O then be contented to carry a lesser sail! He that hath less revenues hath less envy; such as bear the fairest frontispiece, and make the greatest show in the world, are the white for envy and malice to shoot at.

3. A prosperous condition hath in it a greater reckoning; every man must be responsible for his talents. Thou that hast great possessions in the world, dost thou trade thy estate for God's glory? art thou rich in good works? Grace makes a private person a common good. Dost thou disburse thy money for public uses? It is lawful, in this sense, to put out our money to use. O let us all remember an estate is a depositum; we are but stewards; and our Lord and Master will ere long say, 'give an account of your stewardship;' the greater our estate,

¹ De. 32. 15. ² 1 Ti. 6. 9. ³ Job 29 3. ⁴ Lu. 18. 24.

the greater our charge, the more our revenues, the more our reckonings. You that have a lesser mill going in the world, be content: God will expect less from you, where he hath sowed more sparingly.

Sect. XI. *The eleventh argument to contentation* is the example of those who have been eminent for contentation. Examples are usually more forcible than precepts. Abraham being called out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bid him offer up his son Isaac. This was great work: Isaac was the son of his old age; the son of his love; the son of the promise; Christ the Messiah was to come of his line, 'in Isaac shall thy seed be called:' so that to offer up Isaac seemed not only to oppose Abraham's reason, but his faith too; for, if Isaac die, the world for ought he knew, must be without a Mediator. Besides, if Isaac be sacrificed, was there no other hand to do it but Abraham's? must the father needs be the executioner? must he that was the instrument of giving Isaac his being, be the instrument of taking it away? Yet Abraham doth not dispute or hesitate, but believes 'against hope,' and is content with God's prescription: so, when God called him to leave his country, he was content. Some would have argued thus: 'what! leave my friends, my native soil, my brave situation, and go turn pilgrim?' Abraham is content. Besides Abraham went blindfold, 'he knew not whither he went.' God held him in suspense; he must go wander he knows not where; and when he doth come to the place God hath laid out for him, he knows not what oppositions he shall meet with there. The world doth seldom cast a favourable aspect upon strangers. Yet he is content, and obeys; 'he sojourned in the land of promise.'¹ Behold a little his pilgrimage. First, he goes to Charran, a city in Mesopotamia. When he had sojourned there a while, his father dies. Then he removed to Sichem, then to Bethlehem in Canaan; there a famine ariseth; then he went down to Egypt; after that he returns into Canaan. When he comes there, it is true he had a promise, but he found nothing to answer expectation; he had not there one foot of land, but was an exile. In this time of his sojourning he buried his wife: and as for his dwellings, he had no sumptuous buildings, but led his life in poor cottages: all this was enough to have broken any man's

heart. Abraham might think thus with himself: 'is this the land I must possess? here is no probability of any good; all things are against me.' Well, is he discontented? no; God saith to him, 'Abraham, go, leave thy country,' and this word was enough to lead him all the world over; he is presently upon his march. Here was a man had learned to be content. But let us descend a little lower, to heathen Zeno, of whom Seneca speaks, who had once been very rich, hearing of a shipwreck, and that all his goods were drowned at sea: 'Fortune,' saith he, (he spake in an heathen dialect) 'hath dealt with me, and would have me now study philosophy.' He was content to change his course of life, to leave off being a merchant, and turn a philosopher. And if a heathen said thus, shall not a Christian much more say, when the world is drained from him, God would have me leave off following the world, and study Christ more, and how to get to heaven? Do I see an heathen contented, and a Christian disquieted? How did heathens vilify those things which Christians did magnify? Though they knew not God, or what true happiness meant; yet, they would speak very sublimely of a numen or deity, and of the life to come, as Aristotle and Plato; and for those elysian delights, which they did but fancy, they undervalued and contemned the things here below! It was the doctrine they taught their scholars, and which some of them practised, that they should strive to be contented with a little; they were willing to make an exchange, and have less gold, and more learning; and shall not we be content then to have less of the world, so we may have more of Christ? May not Christians blush to see the heathens content with a *viaticum*, so much as would recruit nature; and to see themselves so transported with the love of earthly things, that if they begin a little to abate, and the bill of provision grows short, they murmur, and are like Micah, Have ye taken away my gods, and do you ask me what aileth me?² Have heathens gone so far in contentation, and is it not sad for us to come short of heaven? These heroes of their time, how did they embrace death itself! Socrates died in prison; Hercules was burnt alive; Cato, whom Seneca calls the lively image and portraiture of virtue, thrust through with a sword; but how bravely, and with contentment of spirit did they die? 'Shall I (said Seneca) weep for Cato, or Regulus, or

¹ He. 11. 9.

² Ju. 18. 24.

the rest of those worthies, that died with so much valour and patience?' Did not cross providence make *them* to alter their countenance? and do I see a Christian appalled and amazed? Did not death affright them? and doth it distract us? Did the spring-head of nature rise so high? and shall not grace, like the waters of the sanctuary, rise higher; We that pretend to live by faith, may we not go to school to them who had no other pilot but reason to guide them? Nay, let me come a step lower, to creatures void of reason; we see every creature is contented with its allowance; the beasts with their provender, the birds with their nests; they live only upon providence: and shall we make ourselves below them? Let a Christian go to school to the ox and the ass to learn contentedness; we think we never have enough, and are still laying up: the fowls of the air do not lay up, they reap not, nor gather into barns.¹ It is an argument which Christ brings to make Christians contented with their condition; the birds do not lay up, yet they are provided for, and are contented; are ye not, saith Christ, 'much better than they?' But if you are discontented, are you not much worse than they? Let these examples quicken us.

Sect. XII. *The twelfth argument to contentation,*

Is, whatever change of trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the hell he shall have. Whatever eclipse may be upon his name or estate, I may say of it, as Athanasius of his banishment, it is a little cloud that will soon be blown over, and then his gulf is shot, his hell is past. Death begins a wicked man's hell, but it puts an end to a godly man's hell. Think with thyself, what if I endure this? It is but a temporary hell: indeed if all our hell be here, it is but an easy hell. What is the cup of affliction to the cup of damnation? Lazarus could not get a crumb; he was so diseased that the dogs took pity on him, and, as if they had been his physicians, licked his sores: but this was an easy hell, the angels quickly fetched him out of it. If all our hell be in this life, in the midst of this hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more hell but paradise. If our hell be here, we may see to the bottom of it; it is but skin-deep, it cannot touch the soul, and we may see to the end of it; it is an hell that is short-lived; after a wet night of affliction, comes the bright morning of the resurrection;

if our lives are short, our trials cannot be long as our riches take wings and fly, so do our sufferings; then let us be contented.

Sect. XIII. *The thirteenth argument to contentation is this;*

To have a competency, and to want contentment, is a great judgment. For a man to have a huge stomach, that whatever meat you give him he is still craving and never satisfied, you use to say, this is a great judgment upon the man: thou who art a devourer of money, and yet never hast enough, but still criest, give, give, this is a sad judgment: 'They shall eat, and not have enough.'² The throat of a malicious man is an open sepulchre:³ so is the heart of a covetous man. Covetousness is not only a sin, but the punishment of a sin. It is a secret curse upon a covetous person; he shall thirst, and thirst, and never be satisfied: 'he that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver.'⁴ And is not this a curse? What was it but a severe judgment upon the people of Judah? 'Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink.'⁵ O let us take heed of this plague! Did Esau say to his brother, 'I have abundance, my brother,'⁶ or, as we translate it, I have enough; and shall not a Christian say so much more; It is sad that our hearts should be dead to heavenly things, and a sponge to suck in earthly. Yet all that hath been said, will not work our minds to heavenly contentation.

CHAP. XII. THREE THINGS INSERTED BY WAY OF CAUTION.

In the next place, I come to lay down some necessary cautions. Though I say a man should be content in every estate, yet there are three estates in which he must not be contented.

1st. He must not be contented in a natural estate: here we must learn not to be content. A sinner in his pure naturals is under the wrath of God,⁷ and shall he be content when that dreadful vial is going to be poured out? Is it nothing to be under the scorings of divine fury? 'who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' A sinner, as a sinner, is under the power of Satan,⁸ and shall he in this estate be contented? Who would be contented to stay in the enemies' quarters? While we sleep in the lap of sin, the devil doth to us as the Philistines did to Samson, cut out the lock of our strength,

¹ Mat. 6. 26.

² Ho. 4. 10. ³ Ro. 3. 13. ⁴ Ec. 5. 10. ⁵ Ha. 1. 6.
⁶ Ge. 37. 9. ⁷ Jno. 3. 16. ⁸ Ac. 26. 18.

and put out our eyes. Be not content, O sinner, in this estate! For a man to be in debt, body and soul; in fear every hour to be arrested and carried prisoner to hell, shall he now be content? Here I preach against contentation. Oh get out of this condition! I would hasten you out of it as the angel hastened Lot out of Sodom;¹ there is the smell of the fire and brimstone upon you. The longer a man stays in his sin, the more sin doth strengthen. It is hard to get out of sin, when the heart as a garrison is victualled and fortified. A young plant is easily removed, but when the tree is once rooted, there is no stirring of it: thou who art rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will cost thee many a sad pull ere thou art plucked out of thy natural estate.² It is an hard thing to have a brazen face and a broken heart; 'he travaileth with iniquity';³ be assured, the longer you travail with your sins, the more and the sharper pangs you must expect in the new birth. O be not contented with your natural estate! David saith, 'why art thou cast down, O my soul?'⁴ But a sinner should say to himself, why art thou not disquieted, O my soul? Why is it that thou layest afflictions so to heart, and canst not lay sin to heart? It is a mercy when we are disquieted about sin. A man had better be at the trouble of setting a bone, than to be lame, and in pain all his life; blessed is that trouble that brings the soul to Christ. It is one of the worst sights to see a bad conscience quiet; of the two, better is a fever than a lethargy. I wonder to see a man in his natural estate content. What! content to go to hell?

2d. Though, in regard of externals, a man should be in every estate content, yet he must not be content in such a condition wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a man's trade be such that he can hardly use it, but he must trespass upon a command, and so make a trade of sin, he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case, had better knock off and divert, better lose some of his gain, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So, for servants that live in a profane family, the suburbs of hell, where the name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain, they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come out of the tents of these sinners; there is a double danger in living among the profane.

1. Lest we come to be infected with the poison of their ill example. Joseph, living in Pharaoh's court, had learned to swear 'by the life of Pharaoh.'⁵ We are prone to suck in example: men take in deeper impressions by the eye than by the ear. Dives was a bad pattern, and he had many brethren that seeing him sin, trode just in his steps, therefore saith he, 'I pray thee send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.'⁶ Dives knew which way they went; it is easy to catch a disease from another, but not to catch health. The bad will sooner corrupt the good, than the good will convert the bad. Take an equal quantity and proportion, so much sweet wine with so much sour vinegar; the vinegar will sooner sour the wine than the wine will sweeten the vinegar. Sin is compared to the plague,⁷ and to leaven,⁸ to shew of what a spreading nature it is. A bad master makes a bad servant. Jacob's cattle, by looking on the rods which were speckled and ring-straked, conceived like the rods. We do as we see others do before us, especially those that are above us. If the head be sick, the other parts of the body are distempered. If the sun shines not upon the mountains, it must needs set in the vallies. We pray, 'lead us not into temptation:' Lot was the world's miracle, who kept himself fresh in Sodom's salt water. 2. By living in an evil family, we are liable to incur their punishment: 'pour out thy wrath upon the families that call not upon thy name.'⁹ For want of pouring out of prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be poured out. It is dangerous living in the tents of Kedar. When God sends his flying roll, written within and without with curses, it enters into the house of the thief and the perjurer, 'and consumes the timber and the stones thereof.'¹⁰ Is it not of sad consequence to live in a profane perjured family, when the sin of the governor pulls his house about his ears? If the stones and timber be destroyed, how shall the servant escape? And suppose God send not a temporal roll of curses in the family, there is a spiritual roll, and that is worse.¹¹ Be not content to live where religion dies. 'Salute the brethren, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.'¹² The house of the godly is a little church, the house of the wicked a little hell.¹³ Oh, incorporate

⁵ Gen. 42. 15.⁶ Lu. 16. 27, 28.⁷ 1 Ki. 8. 37.⁸ 1 Cor. 5. 7.⁹ Jer. 10. 25.¹⁰ Ze. 5. 4.¹¹ Pt. . 33.¹² Col. 4. 15.¹³ Pt. 7. 27.¹ Gen. 19. 15. ² Jer. 6. 16. ³ Ps. 7. 11. ⁴ Ps. 43. 5.

yourselves into a religious family; the house of a good man is perfumed with a blessing.¹ When the holy oil of grace is poured on the head, the savour of this ointment sweetly diffuseth itself, and the virtue of it runs down upon the skirts of the family. Pious examples are very mag-netical and forcible. Seneca said to his sister, though I leave you not wealth, yet I leave you a good example. Let us ingraft ourselves among the saints; by being often among the spices, we come to smell of them.

3d. The third caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content ourselves with a little grace. Grace is the best blessing. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of Christ's ascension to heaven, to give gifts; and the end of those gifts 'that we may grow up into him in all things who is the head, even Christ.'² Where the apostle distinguisheth between our being in Christ, and our growing in him; our ingrafting, and our flourishing; be not content with a modicum in religion. It is not enough that there be life, but there must be fruit. Barrenness in the law was accounted a curse: the farther we are from fruit, the nearer we are to cursing.³ It is a sad thing when men are fruitful only in the unfruitful works of darkness. Be not content with a drachm or two of grace; next to a still-born, a starveling in Christ is worst. O covet more grace! never think thou hast enough.⁴ We are bid to covet the best things. It is an heavenly ambition when we desire to be high in God's favour; a blessed contention when all the strife is who shall be most holy. St Paul, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not a little grace: 'he reached forward, and pressed towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'⁵ A true Christian is a wonder; he is the most contented, and yet the least satisfied; he is contented with a morsel of bread, and a little water in the cruise, yet never satisfied with grace; he doth pant and breathe after more; this is his prayer, 'Lord, more conformity to Christ, more communion with Christ; he would fain have Christ's image more lively pictured upon his soul. True grace is always progressive; as the saints are called lamps and stars, in regard of their light, so trees of righteousness,⁶ for their growth: they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth

several sorts of fruit. A true Christian grows in beauty. Grace is the best complexion of the soul; it is at the first plantation, like Rachel, fair to look upon; but still the more it lives, the more it sends forth its rays of beauty. Abraham's faith was at first beautiful; but at last did shine in its orient colours, and grew so illustrious, that God himself was in love with it, and makes his faith a pattern to all believers. A true Christian grows in sweetness. A poisonous weed may grow as much as the hys-sop or rosemary, the poppy in the field as the corn, the crab as the pearmain; but the one hath a harsh sour taste, the other mellows as it grows: an hypocrite may grow in outward dimensions, as much as a child of God, he may pray as much, profess as much; but he grows only in magnitude, he brings forth only sour grapes, his duties are leavened with pride; the other ripens as he grows; he grows in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweeten his duties, and make them come off with a better relish. The believer grows as the flower, he casts a fragrant perfume. A true Christian grows in strength: he grows still more rooted and settled. The more the tree grows, the more it spreads its root in the earth: a Christian who is a plant of the heavenly Jerusalem, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Christ, and sucks spiritual juice and sap from him; he is a dwarf in regard of humility, but a giant in regard of strength,—he is strong to do duties, to bear burdens, resist temptations. 4. He grows in the exercise of his grace; he hath not only oil in his lamp, but his lamp is also burning and shining. Grace is agile and dexterous. Christ's vines do flourish;⁷ hence we read of 'a lively hope,'⁸ and 'a fervent love';⁹ here is the activity of grace. Indeed sometimes grace is a sleepy habit of the soul, like sap in the vine, not exerting its vigour, which may be occasioned through spiritual sloth, or by reason of falling into some sin: but this is only for a while: the spring of grace will come, 'the flowers will appear, and the figtree put forth her green figs.' The fresh gales of the Spirit do sweetly revive and refacilitate grace. The church of Christ, whose heart was a garden, and her graces as precious spices, prays for the heavenly breathings of the Spirit, that her sacred spices might flow out.¹⁰ A true Christian grows both in the kind and in the degree of grace. To his spiritual living he gets an augmentation, he adds to

¹ Pr. 3. 33.² Ep. 4. 15.³ He. 6. 8.⁴ 1 Cor. 12. 31.⁵ Ph. 3. 13. 14.⁶ Is. 61. 3.⁷ Ca. 6. 11.⁸ 1 Pe. 1. 3.⁹ 1 Pe. 1. 22.¹⁰ Ca. 6. 16.

'faith, virtue: to virtue, knowledge: to knowledge, temperance,' &c.¹ Here is grace growing in its kind. And he goes on 'from faith to faith;' there is grace growing in the degree: 'we are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because your faith groweth exceedingly;' it increaseth over and above. And the apostle speaks of those spiritual plants which were laden with gospel-fruit.² A Christian is compared to the vine, (an emblem of fruitfulness) he must bear full clusters: we are bid to perfect that which is lacking in our faith.³ A Christian must never be so old as to be past bearing; he brings forth fruit in his old age.⁴ An heaven-born plant is ever growing; he never thinks he grows enough; he is not content unless he add every day one cubit to his spiritual stature. We must not be content just with so much grace as will keep life and soul together, a drachm or two will not suffice, but we must be still increasing, 'with the increase of God.'⁵ We had need renew our strength as the eagle.⁶ Our sins are renewed, our wants are renewed, our tentations are renewed, and shall not our strength be renewed? O be not content with the first *embryo* of grace; grace in its infancy and minority! You look for degrees of glory, be ye Christians of degrees. Though a believer should be contented with a *modicum* in his estate, yet not with a *modicum* in religion. A Christian of the right breed labours still to excel himself, and come nearer to that holiness in God, who is the original, the pattern, and prototype of all holiness.

CHAP. XIII. USE IV. SHOWING HOW A CHRISTIAN MAY KNOW WHETHER HE HATH LEARNED THIS DIVINE ART.

Thus having laid down these three cautions, I proceed, in the next place, to an use of trial. How may a Christian know that he hath learned this lesson of contentment? I shall lay down some characters by which you shall know it.

Character 1st. A contented spirit is a silent spirit; he hath not one word to say against God; 'I was dumb and silent, because thou didst it.'⁷ Contentment silenceth all dispute: 'he sitteth alone and keepeth silence.'⁸ There is a sinful silence; when God is dishonoured, his truth wounded, and men hold their peace, this silence is a loud sin; and there is a holy silence, when the soul sits down quiet and con-

tent with its condition. When Samuel tells Eli that heavy message from God, that he would 'judge his house, and that the iniquity of his family should not be purged away with sacrifice for ever,'⁹ doth Eli murmur or dispute? no, he hath not one word to say against God: 'it is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.' A discontented spirit saith as Pharaoh, 'who is the Lord?' why should I suffer all this? why should I be brought into this low condition? 'who is the Lord?' But a gracious heart saith, as Eli, 'it is the Lord,' let him do what he will with me. When Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, had offered up strange fire, and fire went from the Lord and devoured them,¹⁰ is Aaron now in a passion of discontent? no, 'Aaron held his peace.' A contented spirit is never angry unless with himself for having hard thoughts of God. When Jonah said, 'I do well to be angry,' this was not a contented spirit, it did not become a prophet.

Character 2d. A contented spirit is a cheerful spirit; the Greeks call it *euthema*. Contentment is something more than patience; for patience denotes only submission, contentment denotes cheerfulness. A contented Christian is more than passive; he doth not only bear the cross, but take up the cross.¹¹ He looks upon God as a wise God; and whatever he doth, though it be not willingly, yet sensibly, it is in order to a cure. Hence the contented Christian is cheerful, and with the apostle, 'takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses,' &c.¹² He doth not only submit to God's dealings, but rejoice in them; he doth not only say, 'just is the Lord in all that hath befallen me,' but 'good is the Lord.' This is to be contented. A sullen melancholy is hateful. It is said, 'God loveth a cheerful giver,'¹³ aye and God loves a cheerful liver. We are bid in scripture, 'not to be careful,' but we are not bid not to be cheerful. He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy; and indeed he hath that within him which is the ground of cheerfulness; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart.¹⁴

Character 3d. A contented spirit is a thankful spirit. This is a degree above the other; 'in every thing giving thanks.'¹⁵ A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore hath his heart screwed up to thankfulness; others will bless God for prosperity, he blesseth him for affliction. Thus he reasons with him-

¹ 2 Pe. 1. 5, 6. ² Ro. 1. 17. ³ 2 Th. 1. 3. ⁴ Ph. 1. 11.

⁵ 1 Th. 3. 10. ⁶ Ps. 92. 14. ⁷ Col. 2. 19.

⁸ Is. 40. 31. ⁹ Ps. 39. 9. ¹⁰ La. 3. 28.

¹¹ 1 Sa. 3. 13, 14. ¹² Le. 10. 1. ¹³ Mat. 6. 24. ¹⁴ 2 Cor. 12. 10.

¹⁵ 2 Cor. 9. 7. ¹⁶ Mat. 9. 2. ¹⁷ 1 Th. 5. 18.

self; am I in want? God sees it better for me to want than to abound; God is now dieting of me, he sees it better for my spiritual health sometimes to be kept fasting; therefore he doth not only submit but is thankful. The malcontent is ever complaining of his condition; the contented spirit is ever giving thanks. O what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a temple where the praises of God are sung forth, not a sepulchre wherein they are buried. A contented Christian in the greatest straits hath his heart enlarged and dilated in thankfulness; he oft contemplates God's love in election; he sees that he is a monument of mercy, therefore desires to be a pattern of praise. There is always gratulatory music in a contented soul; the Spirit of grace works in the heart like new wine, which under the heaviest pressures of sorrow will have a vent open for thankfulness: this is to be content.

Character 4th. He that is content, no condition comes amiss to him; so it is in the text, 'in whatever state I am.' A contented Christian can turn himself to any thing; either want or abound. The people of Israel knew neither how to abound, nor yet how to want; when they were in want they murmured; 'can God prepare a table in the wilderness?' and when they ate, and were filled, then they lifted up the heel. Paul knew how to manage every state; he could be either a note higher or lower; he was in this sense an universalist, he could do any thing that God would have him: if he were in prosperity, he knew how to be thankful; if in adversity, he knew how to be patient; he was neither lifted up with the one, nor cast down with the other. He could carry a greater sail, or lesser. Thus a contented Christian knows how to turn himself to any condition. We have those who can be contented in some condition, but not in every estate; they can be content in a wealthy estate, when they have the streams of milk and honey; while God's candle shines upon their head, now they are content, but if the wind turn and be against them, now they are discontented. While they have a silver crutch to lean upon, they are contented; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are discontented. But Paul had learned in every estate to carry himself with an equanimity of mind. Others could be content with their affliction, so God would give them leave to pick and choose. They could be content to bear such a cross; they could better endure sickness than poverty, or bear loss of estate than loss of children; if

they might have such a man's cross they could be content. A contented Christian doth not go to choose his cross, but leaves God to choose for him; he is content both for the kind and the duration. A contented spirit saith, 'let God apply what medicine he pleaseth, and let it lie on as long as it will; I know when it hath done its cure, and eaten the venom of sin out of my heart, God will take it off again.' In a word, a contented Christian, being sweetly captivated under the authority of the word, desires to be wholly at God's disposal, and is willing to live in that sphere and climate where God has set him. And if at any time he hath been an instrument of doing noble and brave service in the public, he knows he is but a rational tool, a servant to authority, and is content to return to his former condition of life. Cincinnatus, after he had done worthily, and purchased to himself great fame in his dictatorship, did notwithstanding afterwards voluntarily return to till and manure his four acres of ground: thus should it be with Christians, professing godliness with contentment, having served Mars, daring to offend Jupiter; lest otherwise they discover only to the world a brutish valour, being so untamed and head-strong, that when they had conquered others, yet they are not able to rule their own spirits.

Character 5th. He that is contented with his condition, to rid himself out of trouble, will not turn himself into sin. I deny not but a Christian may lawfully seek to change his condition: so far as God's providence doth go before, he may follow. But when men will not follow providence but run before it, as he that said, 'this evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?'¹ if God doth not open the door of his providence, they will break it open, and wind themselves out of affliction by sin; bringing their souls into trouble; this is far from holy contentation, this is unbelief broken into rebellion. A contented Christian is willing to wait God's leisure, and will not stir till God open a door. As Paul said in another case, 'they have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out:'² so, with reverence, saith the contented Christian, God hath cast me into this condition; and though it be sad, and troublesome, yet I will not stir, till God by a clear pro-

¹ 2 Ki. 6. 53.

² Ac. 16. 37

vidence fetch me out. Thus those brave spirited Christians; 'they accepted not deliverance,' that is, upon base dishonourable terms. They would rather stay in prison than purchase their liberty by carnal compliance. Estius observes on the place, 'they might not only have had their enlargements, but been raised to honour, and put into offices of trust, yet the honour of religion was dearer to them, than either liberty or honour.' A contented Christian will not remove, till as the Israelites he sees a pillar of cloud and fire going before him. 'It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.'² It is good to stay God's leisure and not to extricate ourselves out of trouble, till we see the star of God's providence pointing out a way to us.

CHAP. XIV. USE V. CONTAINING A CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY, OR RULES ABOUT CONTENTMENT.

I proceed now to an use of direction, to show Christians how they may attain to this divine art of contentation. Certainly it is feasible, others of God's saints have reached to it. St Paul here had it; and what do we think of those we read of in that little book of martyrs,³ who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, who wandered about in deserts and caves, yet were contented; so that it is possible to be had. And here I shall lay down some rules for holy contentment.

Rule 1. *Advance faith.* All our disquiets do issue immediately from unbelief. It is this that raiseth the storm of discontent in the heart. O set faith a-work! It is the property of faith to silence our doubtings, to scatter our fears, to still the heart when the passions are up. Faith works the heart to a sweet serene composure; it is not having food and raiment, but having faith, which will make us content. Faith chides down passion; when reason begins to sink, let faith swim.

How doth faith work contentment? 1. Faith shows the soul that whatever its trials are yet it is from the hand of a father; it is indeed a bitter cup, but 'shall I not drink the cup which my father hath given me to drink?' It is in love to my soul: God corrects me with the same love he crowns me; God is now training me up for heaven; he carves me, to make me a polished shaft. These sufferings bring forth patience,

humility, even the peaceful fruits of righteousness.⁴ And if God can bring such sweet fruit out of a sour stock, let him graft me where he pleases. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment. 2. Faith sucks the honey of contentment out of the hive of the promise. Christ is the vine, the promises are the clusters of grapes that grow upon this vine, and faith presseth the sweet wine of contentment out of these spiritual clusters of the promises. I will show you but one cluster, 'the Lord will give grace and glory;'⁵ here is enough for faith to live upon. The promise is the flower out of which faith distills the spirits and quintessence of divine contentment. In a word, faith carries up the soul, and makes it aspire after more generous and noble delights than the earth affords, and to live in the world above the world. Would ye live contented lives? Live up to the height of your faith.

Rule 2. *Labour for assurance.* O let us get the interest cleared between God and our souls! Interest is a word much in use,—a pleasing word,—interest in great friends,—interest-money. O, if there be an interest worth looking after, it is an interest between God and the soul! Labour to say, 'my God.' To be without money, and without friends, and without God too, is sad; but he whose faith doth flourish into assurance, that can say, 'I know whom I have believed,'⁶ that man hath enough to give his heart contentment. When a man's debts are paid, and he can go abroad without fear of arresting, what contentment is this! O, let your title be cleared! If God be ours, whatever we want in the creature, is infinitely made up in him. Do I want bread? I have Christ the bread of life. Am I under defilement? his blood is like the trees of the sanctuary; not only for meat, but medicine.⁷ If any thing in the world be worth labouring for, it is to get sound evidences that God is ours. If this be once cleared, what can come amiss? No matter what storms I meet with, so that I know where to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God, is so well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing else. To rest in a condition where a Christian cannot say God is his God, is matter of fear; and if he can say so truly, and yet is not contented, it is matter of shame. 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.'⁸ It was sad

¹ He. 11. 35.

² La. 3. 26.

³ He. 11.

⁴ He. 12. 11.

⁵ Ps. 84. 11.

⁶ 2 Ti. 1. 12.

⁷ Ez. 47. 12.

⁸ 1 Sa. 30. 6.

with him, Ziklag burnt, his wives taken captive, his all lost, and like to have lost his soldiers' hearts too, (for they spake of stoning him,) yet he had the ground of contentment within him; an interest in God, and this was a pillar of supportment to his spirit. He that knows God is his, and all that is in God is for his good, if this doth not satisfy, I know nothing that will.

Rule 3. *Get an humble spirit.* The humble man is the contented man; if his estate be low, his heart is lower than his estate, therefore be content. If his esteem in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himself, than others can have of him. The humble man studies his own unworthiness; he looks upon himself as 'less than the least of God's mercies:'¹ and then a little will content him: he cries out with Paul, that he is the chief of sinners,² therefore doth not murmur, but admire. He doth not say his comforts are small, but his sins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore he is contented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himself; he knows the worst piece God cuts him is better than he deserves. A proud man is never contented; he is one that hath an high opinion of himself; therefore under small blessings is disdainful, under small crosses impatient. The humble spirit is the contented spirit; if his cross be light, he reckons it the inventory of his mercies; if it be heavy, yet he takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his estate is worse, it is to make him the better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, contentment will be the superstructure.

Rule 4. *Keep a clear conscience.* Contentment is the manna that is laid up in the ark of a good conscience: O take heed of indulging any sin! it is as natural for guilt to breed disquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermin. Sin lies as Jonah in the ship, it raiseth a tempest. If dust or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cause a soreness in it; if the eye be clear, then it is free from that soreness; if sin be gotten into the conscience, which is as the eye of the soul, then grief and disquiet breed there; but keep the eye of conscience clear, and all is well. What Solomon saith of a good stomach, I may say of a good conscience, 'to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet:'³ so to a good conscience

every bitter thing is sweet; it can pick contentment out of the cross. A good conscience turns the waters of Marah into wine. Would you have a quiet heart? Get a smiling conscience. I wonder not to hear Paul say he was in every state content, when he could make that triumph, 'I have lived in all good conscience to this day.' When once a man's reckonings are clear, it must needs let in abundance of contentment into the heart. Good conscience can suck contentment out of the bitterest drug, under slanders; 'our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.'⁴ In case of imprisonment, Paul had his prison songs, and could play the sweet lessons of contentment, when his feet were in the stocks.⁵ Augustine calls it 'the paradise of a good conscience;' and if it be so, then in prison we may be in paradise. When the times are troublesome, a good conscience makes a calm. If conscience be clear, what though the days be cloudy? is it not a contentment to have a friend always by to speak a good word for us? Such a friend is conscience. A good conscience, as David's harp, drives away the evil spirit of discontent. When thoughts begin to arise, and the heart is disquieted, conscience saith to a man, as the king did to Nehemiah, 'why is thy countenance sad?' so saith conscience, hast not thou the seed of God in thee? art not thou an heir of the promise? hast not thou a treasure that thou canst never be plundered of? why is thy countenance sad? O keep conscience clear, and you shall never want contentment! For a man to keep the pipes of his body, the veins and arteries, free from colds and obstructions, is the best way to maintain health: so, to keep conscience clear, and to preserve it from the obstructions of guilt, is the best way to maintain contentment. First, conscience is pure, and then peaceable.

Rule 5. *Learn to deny yourselves.* Look well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things: mortify your desires; moderate your delights.

1. Mortify your desires. We must not be of the dragon's temper, who, they say, is so thirsty, that no water will quench his thirst: 'mortify therefore your inordinate affections.'⁶ In the Greek it is, your evil affections; to show that our desires, when they are inordinate, are evil. Crucify your desires; be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite.

¹ Ge. 32. 10.² 1 Ti. 1. 15.³ Pr. 27. 7.⁴ 2 Cor. 1. 12.⁵ Ac. 16. 25.⁶ Col. 3. 5.

How should a Christian martyr his desires?

(1.) Get a right judgment of the things here below; they are mean beggarly things; 'wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?'

The appetite must be guided by reason; the affections are the feet of the soul; therefore they must follow the judgment, not lead it.

(2.) Often seriously meditate of mortality: death will soon crop these flowers which we delight in, and pull down the fabric of those bodies which we so garnish and beautify. Think, when you are locking up your money in your chest, who shall shortly lock you up in your coffin.

2. Moderate your delights. Set not your heart too much upon any creature;² what we over-love, we shall over-grieve. Rachel set her heart too much upon her children, and when she had lost them, she lost herself too; such a vein of grief was opened as could not be staunched, 'she refused to be comforted.' Here was discontent. When we let any creature lie too near our heart, when God pulls away that comfort, a piece of our heart is rent away with it. Too much fondness ends in frowardness. Those that would be content in the want of mercy, must be moderate in the enjoyment. Jonathan dipt the rod in honey, he did not thrust it in. Let us take heed of ingulphing ourselves in pleasure; better have a spare diet, than, by having too much, to surfeit.

Rule 6. *Get much of heaven into your heart.* Spiritual things satisfy; the more of heaven is in us, the less earth will content us. He that hath once tasted the love of God,³ his thirst is much quenched towards sublunary things; the joys of God's Spirit are heart-filling and heart-cheering joys; he that hath these, hath heaven begun in him,⁴ and shall not we be content to be in heaven? O get a sublime heart, 'seek those things which are above.'⁵ Fly aloft in your affections, thirst after the graces and comforts of the Spirit; the eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the stinging of the serpent; the serpent creeps on his belly, and stings only such creatures as go upon the earth.

Rule 7. *Look not so much on the dark side of your condition, as on the light.* God doth chequer his providences, white and black, as the pillar of cloud had its light side and dark: look on the light side of thy estate; who looks on the back side of a landscape? Suppose thou art cast in a law-suit, there is the dark side; yet

thou hast some land left, there is the light side. Thou hast sickness in thy body, there is the dark side; but grace in thy soul, there is the light side. Thou hast a child taken away, there is the dark side; thy husband lives, there is the light side. God's providences in this life are variously represented by those speckled horses among the myrtle-trees which were red and white.⁶ Mercies and afflictions are interwoven: God doth speckle his work. O, saith one, I want such a comfort! but weigh all thy mercies in the balance, and that will make thee content. If a man did want a finger, would he be so discontented for the loss of that, as not to be thankful for all the other parts and joints of his body? Look on the light side of your condition, and then all your discontents will easily disband; do not pore upon your losses, but ponder upon your mercies. What! wouldst thou have no cross at all? Why should one man think to have all good things, when himself is good but in part; Wouldst thou have no evil about thee, who has so much evil in thee? Thou art not fully sanctified in this life, how then thinkest thou to be fully satisfied? Never look for perfection of contentment till there be perfection of grace.

Rule 8. *Consider in what a posture we stand here in the world.* 1. We are in a military condition, we are soldiers;⁷ now a soldier is content with any thing: what though he hath not his stately house, his rich furniture, his soft bed, his full table, yet he doth not complain; he can lie on straw as well as down; he minds not his lodging, but his thoughts run upon dividing the spoil, and the garland of honour shall be set upon his head; and for hope of this, is he content to run any hazard, endure any hardship. Were it not absurd to hear him complain, that he wants such provision and is fain to lie out in the fields? A Christian is a military person, he fights the Lord's battles, he is Christ's ensign-bearer. Now, what though he endures hard fate, and the bullets fly about? He fights for a crown, and therefore must be content. 2. We are in a peregrine condition, pilgrims and travellers. A man that is in a strange country, is contented with any diet or usage, he is glad of any thing; though he hath not that respect or attendance which he looks for at home, nor is capable of the privileges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows, when he comes into his own country, he hath lands to inherit,

¹ Pr. 23. 5.

² Is. 62. 10.

³ Ps. 63. 5.

⁴ Ro. 14. 27.

⁵ Col. 3. 1.

⁶ Ze. 1. 1

⁷ 2 Ti. 2. 3.

and there he shall have honour and respect: so it is with a child of God, he is in a pilgrim condition; 'I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.'¹ Therefore let a Christian be content he is in the world, but not of the world: he is born of God, and is a citizen of the New Jerusalem;² therefore, though 'he hunger and thirst, and have no certain dwelling-place,'³ yet he must be content: it will be better when he comes into his own country. 3. We are in a mendicant condition; we are beggars, we beg at heaven's gate, 'give us this day our daily bread;' we live upon God's alms, therefore must be content with any thing; a beggar must not pick and choose, he is contented with the refuse. Oh, why dost thou murmur that art a beggar, and art fed out of the alms-basket of God's providence?

Rule 9. *Let not your hope depend upon these outward things.* Lean not upon sandy pillars; we oft build our comfort upon such a friend or estate; and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our hearts begin either to fail or fret. A lame man leans on his crutches; and if they break, he is undone. Let not thy contentment go upon crutches, which may soon fail; the ground of contentment must be within thyself. The Greek word which is used for contentment signifies self-sufficiency. A Christian hath that from within that is able to support him; that strength of faith, and good hope through grace, as bears up his heart in the deficiency of outward comforts. The philosophers of old, when their estates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the mind, learning and virtue: and shall not a believer much more in the graces of the Spirit, that rich enamel and embroidery of the soul? Say with thyself, 'if friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within which comforts me, an heavenly treasure; when the blossoms of my estate are blown off, still there is the sap of contentment in the root of my heart; I have still an interest in God, and that interest cannot be broken off.' O never place your felicity in these dull and beggarly things here below!

Rule 10. *Let us often compare our condition.* Make this five-fold comparison.

Comparison 1st. Let us compare our condition and our desert together; if we have not what we desire, we have more than we deserve.

For our mercies, we have deserved less; for our afflictions, we have deserved more. First, In regard of our mercies, we have deserved less. What can we deserve? Can man be profitable to the Almighty? We live upon free grace. Alexander gave a great gift to one of his subjects; the man being much taken with it, 'this,' saith he, 'is more than I am worthy of.' 'I do not give thee this,' saith the king, 'because thou art worthy of it, but I give a gift like Alexander.' Whatever we have is not merit, but bounty; the least bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower to the garland of our salvation; he that hath the least mercy, will die in God's debt. Secondly. In regard of our afflictions, we have deserved more: 'thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.'⁴ Is our condition sad? we have deserved it should be worse. Hath God taken away our estate from us? he might have taken away Christ from us. Hath he thrown us into prison? he might have thrown us into hell; he might as well damn us, as whip us; this should make us contented.

Comparison 2d. Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content. We look at them who are above us, let us look at them who are below us; we see one in his silks, another in his sackcloth; one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with tears; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not sickness, but want hath brought into a consumption! Think of this, and be content. It is worse with them, who perhaps deserve better than we, and are higher in God's favour. Am I in prison? Was not Daniel in a worse place? the lion's den. Do I live in a mean cottage? look on them who are banished from their houses. We read of the primitive saints, 'that they wandered in sheep's skins and goats' skins, of whom the world was not worthy.'⁵ Hast thou a gentle fit of an ague? look on them who are tormented with the stone and gout, &c. Others of God's children have had greater afflictions, and have borne them better than we. Daniel fed upon pulse and drank water, yet was fairer than they who ate of the king's portion;⁶ some Christians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulse and water, have looked better, been more patient and contented than we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoice

¹ Ps. 30. 12.² He. 12. 22.³ 1 Cor. 4. 11.⁴ Ec. 9. 13.⁵ He. 11. 37, 38.⁶ Dan. 1. 15.

in affliction, and do we repine? Can they take up their cross and walk cheerfully under it, and do we under a lighter cross murmur?

Comparison 3d. Let us compare our condition with Christ's upon earth. What a poor, mean condition was he pleased to be in for us? he was contented with any thing. 'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.'¹ He could have brought down an house from heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth, but he was contented to be in the wine-press, that we might be in the wine-cellar, and to live poor that we might be rich; the mauger was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy; he who is now preparing mansions for us in heaven, had none for himself on earth, 'he had no where to lay his head.' Christ came in *forma pauperis*; who, 'being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant.'² We read not of any sums of money he had; when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it.³ Jesus Christ was in a low condition, he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the cross, and that was his humility: he was content to live poor, and die cursed. O compare your condition with Christ's!

Comparison 4th. Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content. First, Let us compare our spiritual estate with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood? we were heirs apparent to hell, having no right to pluck one leaf from the tree of promise; it was a Christless and hopeless condition;⁴ but now God hath cut off the entail of hell and damnation; he hath taken you out of the wild olive of nature, and ingrafted you into Christ, making you living branches of that living vine; he hath not only caused the light to shine upon you, but into you;⁵ and hath interested you in all the privileges of sonship: is not here that which may make the soul content. Secondly, Let us compare our temporal estate with what it was once. Alas! we had nothing when we stepped out of the womb; 'for we brought nothing into this world.'⁶ If we have not that which we desire, we have more than we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us but sin; other creatures bring something with them into the world; the lamb brings wool, the silk-worm silk, &c. but we brought nothing with us.

What if our condition at present be low? It is better than it was once; therefore, having food and raiment, let us be content. Whatever we have, God's providence fetcheth it unto us; and if we lose all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This was what made Job content, 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb;⁷ as if he had said, though God hath taken away all from me, yet why should I murmur? I am as rich as I was when I came into the world? I have as much left as I brought with me; naked came I hither; therefore blessed be the name of the Lord.

Comparison 5th. Let us compare our condition with what it shall be shortly. There is a time shortly coming, when, if we had all the riches of India, they would do us no good; we must die, and can carry nothing with us; so saith the apostle, 'it is certain we can carry nothing out of the world;⁸ therefore it follows, 'having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.' Open the rich man's grave and see what is there; you may find the miser's bones, but not his riches, says Bede. Were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented, when we look upon our empty bags. But it is not so; God may presently seal a warrant for death to apprehend us: and when we die, we cannot carry our estate with us: honour and riches descend not into the grave, why then are we troubled at our outward condition? Why do we disguise ourselves with discontent? O lay up a stock of grace! Be rich in faith and good works, these riches will follow us.⁹ No other coin but grace will pass current in heaven, silver and gold will not go there; labour to be rich towards God,¹⁰ and as for other things, be not solicitous, we shall carry nothing with us.

Rule 11. *Go not to bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.* The way for a Christian to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his spirit lower; not by making his barns wider, but his heart narrower. One man, a whole lordship or manor will not content; another is satisfied with a few acres of land; what is the difference? The one studies to satisfy curiosity, the other necessity; the one thinks what he may have, the other what he may spare.

Rule 12. *Study the vanity of the creature.* It matters not whether we have less or more of

¹ 2 Cor. 8, 9.² Ph. 2, 7.³ Mat. 17, 27.⁴ Ep. 2, 12.⁵ 2 Cor. 6, 6.⁶ 1 Ti. 6, 7.⁷ Job 1, 21. ⁸ 1 Ti. 6, 7. ⁹ Re. 11, 13. ¹⁰ Lu. 12, 21.

these things, they have vanity written upon the frontispiece of them; the world is like a shadow that declineth; it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiseth more than we find, and it fails us when we have most need of it. All the world rings changes, and is constant only in its disappointments: what then, if we have less of that which is at best but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of mutation as motion; and what if God cut us short in sublunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to ice, which is smooth, but slippery; or to the Egyptian temples, without very beautiful and sumptuous, but within nothing to be seen but the image of an ape; every creature saith concerning satisfaction, it is not in me. The world is not a filling, but a flying comfort. It is like a game at tennis; providence bandies her golden balls, first to one, then to another. Why are we discontented at the loss of these things, but because we expect that from them which is not, and repose that in them which we ought not? 'Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.'¹ What a vanity was it? It is much to see a withering gourd smitten! Or to see the moon dressing itself in a new shape and figure?

Rule 13. *Get fancy regulated.* It is the fancy which raiseth the price of things above their real worth. What is the reason one tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one shilling? Fancy raiseth the price; the difference is rather imaginary than real; so, why it should be better to have thousands than hundreds, is, because men fancy it so; if we could fancy a lower condition better, as having less care in it, and less account, it would be far more eligible. The water that springs out of the rock, drinks as sweet as if it came out of a golden chalice; things are as we fancy them. Ever since the fall, the fancy is distempered; God saw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evil.² Fancy looks through wrong spectacles; pray that God will sanctify your fancy; a lower condition would content, if the mind and fancy were set right. Diogenes preferred his cynical life before Alexander's royalty: he fancied his little cloister best. Fabricius a poor man, yet despised the gold of king Pyrrhus. Could we cure a distempered fancy, we might soon conquer a discontented heart.

Rule 14. *Consider how little will suffice nature.* The body is but a small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray for our daily bread; nature is content with a little. Not to thirst, not to starve, is enough, saith Gregory Nazianzen; meat and drink are a Christian's riches, saith St Hierom; and the apostle saith, 'having food and raiment let us be content.' The stomach is sooner filled than the eye; how quickly would a man be content, if he would study rather to satisfy his hunger than his humour.

Rule 15. *Believe the present condition is best for us.* Flesh and blood is not a competent judge. Surfeiting stomachs are for banquetting stuff, but a man that regards his health, is rather for solid food. Vain men fancy such a condition best and would flourish in their bravery; whereas a wise Christian hath his will melted into God's will, and thinks it best to be at his finding. God is wise, he knows whether we need food or physic; and if we could acquiesce in providence, the quarrel would soon be at an end. O what a strange creature would man be, if he were what he could wish himself! Be content to be at God's allowance; God knows which is the fittest pasture to put his sheep in; sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank pasture may rot. Do I meet with such a cross? God shows me what the world is; he hath no better way to wean me, than by putting me to a step-mother. Doth God stint me in my allowance? he is now dieting me. Do I meet with losses? it is, that God may keep me from being lost. Every cross wind shall at last blow me to the right port. Did we believe that condition best which God doth parcel out to us, we should cheerfully submit, and say, 'the lines are fallen in pleasant places.'

Rule 16. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.* We have taken an oath in baptism to forsake the flesh. The flesh is a worse enemy than the devil, it is a bosom-traitor; an enemy within is worst. If there were no devil to tempt, the flesh would be another Eve, to tempt to the forbidden fruit. O take heed of giving way to it! Whence is all our discontent but from the fleshy part? The flesh puts us upon the immoderate pursuit of the world; it consults for ease and plenty, and if it be not satisfied, then discontents begin to arise. O let it not have the reins! Martyr the flesh! In spiritual things the flesh is a sluggard, in secular things an horse-leech, crying, 'give, give.' The flesh is

¹ Jon. 4. 6.² Ge. 6. 5.

an enemy to suffering: it will sooner make a man a courtier, than a martyr. O keep it under! Put its neck under Christ's yoke, stretch and nail it to his cross; never let a Christian look for contentment in his spirit, till there be confinement in his flesh.

Rule 17. *Meditate much on the glory which shall be revealed.* There are great things laid up in heaven. Though it be sad for the present yet let us be content in that it shortly will be better; it is but a while and we shall be with Christ, bathing ourselves in the fountain of love; we shall never complain of wants and injuries any more; our cross may be heavy, but one sight of Christ will make us forget all our former sorrows. There are two things should give contentment. 1. That God will make us able to bear our troubles.¹ God, saith Chrysostom, doth like a lutanist, who will not let the strings of his lute be too slack lest it spoil the music of prayer and repentance? nor yet too much adversity, 'lest the spirit fail before me; and the souls that I have made.'² 2. When we have suffered a while, we shall be perfected in glory; the cross shall be our ladder by which we shall climb up to heaven. Be then content, and then the scene will alter; God will ere long turn our water into wine; the hope of this is enough to drive away all distempers from the heart. Blessed be God it will be better: 'we have no continuing city here,' therefore our afflictions cannot continue. A wise man looks still to the end; 'The end of the just man is peace.'³ Methinks the smoothness of the end should make amends for the ruggedness of the way. O eternity, eternity! Think often of the kingdom prepared. David was advanced from the field to the throne: first he held his shepherd's staff, and shortly after the royal sceptre. God's people may be put to hard services here: but God hath chosen them to be kings, to sit upon the throne with the Lord Jesus. This being weighed in the balance of faith, would be an excellent means to bring the heart to contentment.

Rule 18. *Be much in prayer.* The last rule for contentment is, be much in prayer. Beg of God, that he will work our hearts to this blessed frame. 'Is any man afflicted? let him pray;⁴ so, is any man discontented? let him pray. Prayer gives vent: the opening of a vein lets out bad blood; when the heart is filled

with sorrow and disquiet, prayer lets out the bad blood. The key of prayer oiled with tears, unlocks the heart of all its discontents. Prayer is an holy spell, or charm, to drive away trouble; prayer is the unbosoming of the soul, the unloading of all our cares in God's breast; and this ushers in sweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our spirits, by opening our mind to a friend we find our hearts finely eased and quieted. It is not our strong resolutions, but our strong requests to God, which must give the heart ease in trouble; by prayer the strength of Christ comes into the soul, and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. Paul could be in every state content; but that you may not think he was able to do this himself, he tells you that though he could want and abound, and 'do all things;' yet it was through Christ strengthening him.⁵ It is the child that writes, but it is the scrivener guides his hand.

CHAP. XV. USE VI. OF CONSOLATION TO THE CONTENTED CHRISTIAN.

The last use is of comfort, or an encouraging word to the contented Christian. If there be an heaven upon earth thou hast it. O Christian! thou mayest insult over thy troubles, and, with the leviathan, laugh at the shaking of a spear.⁶ What shall I say? Thou art a crown to thy profession; thou dost hold it out to all the world, that there is virtue enough in religion to give the soul contentment; thou showest the highest of grace. When grace is crowning, it is not so much for us to be content; but when grace is conflicting, and meets with crosses, temptations, agonies; now to be content, this is a glorious thing indeed.

To a contented Christian, I shall say two things for a farewell. 1. God is exceedingly taken with such a frame of heart. God saith of a contented Christian, as David once said of Goliath's sword, 'there is none like that, give it me.' If you would please God, and be men of his heart, be contented. God hates a forward spirit. 2. The contented Christian shall be no loser. What lost Job by his patience? God gave him twice as much as he had before. What lost Abraham by his contentment? he was content to leave his country at God's call: the Lord makes a covenant with him, that he would be his God: he changeth his name; no more Abram, but Abraham, the father of many

¹ 1 Cor. 10. 13. ² Is. 57. 16. ³ Ps. 37. 37. ⁴ Ja. 5. 14.

⁵ Ph. 4. 13.

⁶ Job. 41. 7.

nations:¹ God makes his seed as the stars of heaven; nay, honours him with this title, 'the father of the faithful:'² the Lord makes known his secrets to him, 'shall I hide from Abraham the things that I will do?' God settles a rich inheritance upon him, that land which was a type of heaven, and afterwards translated him to the blessed paradise. God will be sure to reward the contented Christian. As our Saviour said in another case, to Nathaniel, 'because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree,

believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these:'³ so I say, art thou contented (O Christian) with a little? thou shalt see greater things than these. God will distill the sweet influences of his love into thy soul; he will raise thee up friends; he will bless the oil in the cruise; and when that is done, he will crown thee with an eternal enjoyment of himself; he will give thee heaven, where thou shalt have as much contentment as thy soul can possibly thirst after.

THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL.

Mat. xvi. 26. *'For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'*

EVERY man doth carry a treasure about with him, a DIVINE SOUL; and that this jewel should not be undervalued, our Saviour here sets a price upon it, he lays the soul in balance with the whole world, and being put in the scales, the soul weighs heaviest. 'What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' The world is a stately fabric, enriched with beauty and excellency; it is like a curious piece of arras, set about with divers colours; it is a bright mirror and crystal, in which much of the wisdom and majesty of God is resplendent: but as glorious as this world is, every man doth carry a more glorious world about him, a precious soul. It would bankrupt the world to give half the price of a soul; it will undo the world to buy it, and it will undo him that shall sell it. If we can save our souls, though we lose the world, it is a gainful loss; if we lose our souls, though we gain the world, our very gains will undo us: 'for what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'

The words branch themselves into these five parts: 1. A supposal of a purchase, 'if a man shall gain.' The proposition is hypothetical; Christ doth not say he shall gain, but puts a case: it is not a certain purchase, it is only supposed. 2. The purchase itself, the world. 3. The extent of the purchase, the whole world, the world with all its revenues and perquisites. 4. The terms of this purchase, 'he shall lose his soul,' not that his soul shall be annihilated

(that were happy,) but he shall lose the end of his creation; he shall miss of glory, he shall lose his soul. And the loss of the soul is amplified by two things: 1st. The propriety, his own soul, that which is nearest to him, that which is most himself; the soul is the most noble part, it is the man of the man, he shall lose his own soul. 2d. The irrecoverableness of the loss; 'what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' The words are a *misosis*, there is less said, and more intended. What shall he give? as if Christ had said, alas! he hath nothing to give; or, if he had something to give, yet nothing will be taken for it; the soul cannot be exchanged, there shall be no bail or mainprise taken for it: 'what shall a man give in exchange for his soul.' 5. Our Saviour's verdict upon this purchase, 'for what is a man profited?' as if Christ had said, he will have a hard bargain of it, he will repent him at last, it is but the fool's purchase: for what is a man profited, &c.

Doct. The observation is, that the soul of man is a jewel more precious than a world; all souls are of one price: in this sense that maxim in philosophy holds true, all souls are alike. The soul of prince and peasant, all are equal; and every soul of more value than a world. For the illustration of the doctrine there are two things to be demonstrated. 1st. That the soul is very precious. 2d. That it is more precious than a world.

First Part. That the soul is very precious. What Job saith of wisdom, I may fitly apply to

¹ Ge. 17.

² Ge. 18. 17.

³ Jno. 1. 50.

the soul: 'man knows not the price thereof, it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire, the gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold.'¹ The soul is the glory of the creation; the soul is a beam of God; it is a sparkle of celestial brightness, as Damascen calls it; it is, according to Plato, a glass of the Trinity. There is, in the soul, an idea and resemblance of God: an analogy of similitude, not proportion, as the schoolmen speak. If David did so admire the rare texture and workmanship of his body, 'I am wonderfully made, I was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth:'² if the cabinet be so curiously wrought, what is the jewel? how richly and gloriously is the soul embroidered! it is divinely inlaid and enamelled. The body is but the sheath; 'I was grieved in the midst of my body;'³ in the Chaldee it is, in the midst of my sheath. The most beautiful body is but like a velvet sheath, the soul is the blade of admirable metal. The soul is a sparkling diamond set in a ring of clay, &c. The soul is a vessel of honour; God himself is served in this vessel. The soul is the bird of paradise that soars aloft; it may be compared to the wings of the cherubims, it hath a winged swiftness to fly to heaven. The soul is capable of communion with God and angels. The soul is God's house he hath made to dwell in;⁴ the understanding, will, and affections are the three stories in this house. What pity is it that this goodly building should be let out, and the devil become tenant in it. The preciousness of the soul is seen in two particulars. It hath I. An intrinsecal worth. II. An estimative worth.

I. The soul hath an intrinsecal worth. Which appears in two things: 1. Spirituality. 2. Immortality.

1. Spirituality. The soul is a spiritual substance. It is a saying among the ancients, our souls are tempered in the same mortar with the heavenly spirits. Now the soul is spiritual three manner of ways: in its essence, object, operation. (1.) The soul is spiritual in its essence. God breathed it in;⁵ it is a sparkle lighted by the breath of God. The soul may be compared to the spirits of the wine, the body to the dregs: the spirits are the more pure refined part of the wine, such is the soul; the body is more feculent, the soul is the more refined, sublimated part of man. Mistake me

not; when I say the soul is spiritual, and that it is a beam of God; I do not mean that it is of the same substance with him, as Servetus, Osiander, and others have held; for when it is said God breathed into man the breath of life, they erroneously thought that the soul being infused did convey into man the spirit and substance of God, which opinion is absurd and sinful: for if the soul should be part of the Divine essence, then it will follow, that the essence of God should be subject not only to change and passion, but which is worse, to sin; which were blasphemy to assert; so that when we say the soul is spiritual, the meaning is, God hath invested it with many noble endowments, he hath made it a mirror of beauty, and printed upon it a surpassing excellency; as the sun shining upon crystal, conveys its beauty, not its being. (2.) The soul is spiritual in its object, it contemplates God and heaven; God is the orb and centre where the soul doth fix; if you could lift up a stone into the highest region, though it did break in a hundred pieces, it would fall to its centre. The soul moves to God, as to its rest; 'return to thy rest, O my soul.'⁶ He is the ark to which this dove flies; nothing but God can fill a heaven-born soul; if the earth were turned into a globe of gold, it could not fill the heart, it would still cry, give, give. The soul being spiritual, God only can be the adequate object of it. (3.) The soul is spiritual in its operation; it being immaterial, doth not depend upon the body in its working. The senses of seeing, hearing, and the rest of those organs of the body, cease and die with the body, because they are parts of the body, and have their dependance on it; but the soul (as Aristotle saith) hath a nature distinct from the body, it moves and operates of itself though the body be dead, and hath no dependance upon, or co-existence with the body. Thales Milesius, an ancient philosopher, calls the soul a self-moveable, it hath an intrinsecal principle of life and motion, though it be separate from the body. And thus you have seen the soul's spirituality.

2. The preciousness of the soul appears in its immortality. There are some that say the soul is mortal; indeed it were well for those who do not live like men, if they might die like beasts; but as Julius Scaliger well observes, it is impossible for any thing of a spiritual, uncompounded nature, to be subject to death and

¹ Job 28. 13, 16, 17. ² Ps. 139. 13, 15. ³ Da. 7. 15.
⁴ He. 3. 6. ⁵ Gen. 2. 7.

⁶ Ps. 116. 7.

corruption: the souls of believers are with Christ after death.¹ Ecolampadius said to his friend, who came to visit him on his death bed; good news, I shall be shortly with Christ my Lord. And the devout soul shall be ever with the Lord.² The heathens had some glimmerings of the soul's immortality. Cicero saith that the swan was dedicated to Apollo, because she sings sweetly before her death; by which hieroglyphic they intimated the joyfulness of virtuous men before their death, as supposing the Elysian delights, which they should always enjoy after this life. And we read it was a custom among the Romans, that when their great men died, they caused an eagle to fly aloft in the air, signifying hereby that the soul was immortal, and did not die as the body. The soul's immortality may be proved by this argument; that which is not capable of killing, is not capable of dying; but the soul is not capable of killing; our Saviour Christ proves the minor proposition, that it is not capable of killing, 'fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.'³ Therefore the soul not being capable of killing, is not in a possibility of dying; the essence of the soul is metaphysical, it hath a beginning, but no end; it is eternal, *a parte post*. The soul doth not wax old, it lives for ever, which can be said of no sublunary created glory. Worldly things are as full of mutation as motion, and like Jonah's gourd, have a worm eating at the root.

II. The soul hath an estimative worth. 1. Jesus Christ hath set a high value and estimate upon the soul; he made it, and he bought it, therefore he best knows the price of it. He did sell himself to buy the soul. 'They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.'⁴ Nay, he was content not only to be sold, but to die; this enhanceth the price of the soul, it cost the blood of God: 'ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.'⁵ God must die, that the soul may live; the heir of heaven was mortgaged, and laid to pawn for the soul of man. What could Christ give more than himself? what in himself dearer than his blood? O precious soul, that hast the image of God to beautify thee, and the blood of God to redeem thee! Christ was the priest, his divine nature the altar, his blood the sacrifice which he did offer up as an atonement for our souls. Now

reckon what a drop of Christ's blood is worth; and then tell me what a soul is worth. 2. Satan doth value souls, he knows their worth; he saith as the king of Sodom did to Abraham, 'give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.' So saith Satan, 'give me the persons.' He cares not how rich you are, he doth not strive to take away your estates, but your souls. Give me the persons, saith he, take you the goods; whence are all his warlike stratagems, his subtle snares, but to catch souls? Why doth this lion so roar but for his prey? he envies the soul its happiness, he lays the whole train of tentation to blow up the whole fort-royal of the soul. Why doth he lay such suitable baits? he allures the ambitious man with a crown, the covetous man with a golden apple; the sanguine man with beauty; why doth he tempt to Delilah's lap, but to keep you from Abraham's bosom? the devil is angling for the precious soul; to undo souls is his pride; he glories in the damnation of souls; it is next to victory to die revenged. If Samson must die, it is some comfort that he shall make more die with him; if Satan, that lion, must be kept in his hellish den, it is all the heaven he expects, to reach forth his paw, and pull others into the den with him.

Second Part. Having showed you the soul's preciousness; the next thing to be demonstrated, is, that the soul is more precious than a world; the world is made of a more impure lump; the world is of a coarser make, of an earthly extract; the soul is heaven-born, of a finer spinning, of a more noble descent; the world is a great book or volume, wherein we read the majesty and wisdom of him that made it; but the soul is the image of God.⁶ The soul is a studied piece; when God made the world, it was but 'let it be,' and it was done; but when he made the soul, all the persons in the Trinity sat together at the council table; 'come let us make man in our own likeness.'⁷ The soul is a glass wherein some rays of divine glory shine, much of God is to be seen in it; though this glass be cracked by the fall, yet it shall one day be perfect; we read of spirits of just men made perfect.⁸ The soul since the fall of Adam, may be compared to the moon in its conjunction, very much obscured by sin; but when it is sanctified by the Spirit, and translated from hence, it shall be as the moon in the full, it shall shine forth in its perfect glory.

¹ Ph. 1. 23.² 1 Th. 4. ult.³ Lu. 12. 4.⁴ Ze. 11. 12.⁵ Ac 20. 28. 1 Pe. 1. 19.⁶ Ge. 1.⁷ Ge. 1. 26.⁸ He. 12. 23.

Use I. branch 1. If the soul be so precious, see then what that worship is that God doth expect and accept; namely, that which comes from the more noble part of the soul: 'to thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.'¹ David did not only lift up his voice, but his soul; though God will have the eye and the knee, the service of the body; yet he complains of them that draw near him with their lips, when their hearts were far from him.² The soul is the jewel; David not only put his lute and viol in tune, but his soul in tune to praise God: 'bless the Lord, O my soul';³ his affections joining together in worship, made up the concert. The soul is both altar, fire and incense; it is the altar on which we offer up our prayers, the fire which kindles our prayers, and the incense which perfumes them. God's eye is chiefly upon the soul: bring an hundred dishes to table, he will carve of none but this; this is the savoury meat he loves. He who is best, will be served with the best; when we give him the soul in a duty, now we give him the flower and the cream; by a holy chemistry we still out the spirits. A soul inflamed in service, is, 'the cup of spiced wine, and the juice of the pomegranate,'⁴ which the spouse makes Christ to drink of: without the worship of the soul, all our religion is but bodily exercise, which profits nothing; without the soul we give God but a carcase. What are all the Papists' fastings, penance, pilgrimages, but going to hell in more pomp and state? What are the formalist's prayers, which do even cool between his lips, but a dead devotion? It is not sacrifice but sacrilege; he robs God of that which he hath a right to, his soul.

2. Branch. If the soul be so precious, then of what precious account should ordinances and ministers be? 1. Ordinances are the golden ladder by which the soul climbs up to heaven, they are conduits of the water of life. O how precious should these be to us: they that are against ordinances, are against being saved. 2. Of how precious account should ministers be, whose very work is to save souls; their feet should be beautiful. (1.) Their labours should be precious; they are, in the Greek, *sunergoi*;⁵ they labour with God, and they labour for your souls; all their sweat, their tears, their prayers are for you; they woo for your souls, and oftentimes spend their lives in the suit. (2.) Their liberty should be precious. Constantine was a

great honourer of the ministry; if indeed you see any of them who are of this holy and honourable function, like that drug the physicians speak of, which is hot in the mouth, but cold in operation; if you see them either idle or ravenous, if they do not divide the word rightly, and live uprightly, censure and spare not. God forbid I should open my mouth for such. In the law, the lips of the leper were to be covered; that minister who is by office an angel, but by his life a leper, ought to have his lips covered, he deserves silencing. A good preacher, but a bad liver, is like a physician that hath the plague; though his advice and receipts which he gives may be good, yet his plague infects the patient: so though ministers may have good words, and give good receipts in the pulpit, yet the plague of their lives infects their people. If you find a Hophni and Phinehas among the sons of Levi, whose unholy carriage makes the offering of God to be abhorred, you will save God a labour in ejecting them; but be sure you distinguish between the precious and the vile; while you let out the bad blood, have a care to preserve the heart-blood; while you purge out the ill humours, do not destroy the spirits; while you are taking away the snuffs do not eclipse the lights of God's sanctuary; it is a work fit for a Julian to suppress the orthodox ministry, and open the temple of the idol. The Romans sacked the city of Corinth, and rased it down to the ground for some incivility offered to their ambassador. God will avenge the affronts offered to his ministers.⁶ O take heed of this! if souls be of such infinite value, how precious should their liberties be, whose very design and negotiation is to save souls.⁷

Use 2. Exhort. Branch 1. If the soul be so precious, take heed of abusing your souls. Socrates exhorted young men that they should look their faces in a glass, and if they saw they were fair, they should do nothing unworthy of their beauty. Christians, God hath given you souls that sparkle with divine beauty; O do nothing unworthy of these souls, do not abuse them: there are four sorts of persons that abuse souls.

1. They that degrade their souls. (1.) That set the world above their souls; 'who pant after the dust of the earth';⁸ as if a man's house were on fire, and he should take care to preserve the lumber, but let his child be burnt

¹ Ps. 25. 1.
⁴ Ca. 8. 2

² Is. 29. 13.

³ Ps. 103. 1.

⁵ 2 Cor. 6. 1.

⁶ Ps. 105. 15.

⁷ 1 Ti. 4. 16, Ju. 23.

⁸ Am. 2. 7.

in the fire. (2.) That make their souls lackeys to their bodies. The body is but the brutish part, the soul is the angelical; the soul is the queen-regent, who is adorned with the jewels of knowledge, and sways the sceptre of liberty; oh what a pity it is that this excellent soul shall be made a vassal, and be put to grind in the mill, when the body in the meantime sits in a chair of state! Solomon complains of an evil under the sun; 'I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.'¹ Is it not an evil under the sun to see the body riding in pomp and triumph, and the soul of man, that royal and heaven-born thing, as a lackey walking on foot.

2. They abuse their souls that sell their souls. The covetous person sells his soul for money; as it is said of the lawyer, he hath a tongue that will be sold for a fee; so the covetous man hath a soul that is to be set for money. Achan did sell his soul for a wedge of gold. Judas did sell his soul for silver; Judas sold cheap pennyworths; for thirty pieces of silver he did sell Christ, who was more worth than heaven; and his own soul which was more worth than a world! how many have damned their souls for money? It is observed that the eagles' quills or feathers mixed with hens' feathers, will in time consume them; such is the world to the soul; if you mix these earthly things with your souls, and let them lie too near you, they will in time consume and undo your souls. The ambitious person sells his soul for honour; as Alexander the sixth did sell his soul to the devil for a popedom; and what is that honour but a torch lighted by the breath of people, with the least puff of censure blown out! how many souls have been blown into hell with the wind of popular applause? The voluptuous person sells his soul for pleasure. Heliogabalus drowned himself in sweet water; so many drown their souls in the sweet perfumed waters of pleasure. Plato calls pleasure the bait that catcheth souls: pleasure is a silken halter, a flattering devil, it kills with embracing.

3. They abuse their souls that poison their souls; error is a sweet poison. Ignatius calls it the invention of the devil. A man may as well damn his soul by error as vice, and may as soon go to hell for a drunken opinion as for a drunken life.

4. They abuse their souls that starve their souls; these are they that say they are above

ordinances; but sure we shall not be above ordinances, till we are above sin. The apostle saith, that in the blessed sacrament we are to remember the Lord's death till he come; that is, until Christ comes to judgment. How then can any omit sacraments without a contempt and affront offered to Christ himself? if Saint Paul and the apostles, those giants in grace, needed the Lord's supper to confirm and corroborate them, much more do we need such holy ordinances, who have but an infant faith; but Satan likes these fasting days, he would have men fast from ordinances: if the body be kept from food, it cannot live long.

Branch 2. If the soul be so precious a thing, take heed you do not lose your souls; consider what a loss it is, as appears in two things.

1. It is a foolish loss to lose the soul: 'thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.'² It is a foolish loss to lose the soul, in a threefold respect. (1.) Because there is a possibility of saving the soul; we have time to work in, we have light to work by, we have the Spirit offering us help. The soul is like a ship laden with jewels, the Spirit is a gale of wind to blow; if we would but loosen anchor from sin, we might arrive at the port of happiness. (2.) It is a foolish loss, because we lose the soul for things of no value; worldly things are infinitely below the soul, they are *nonentities*: 'wilt thou set thine eyes on that which is not?'³ The world is but a bewitchery, these things glister in our eyes; but at death we shall say, we have set our eyes on that which is not: he that thinks to find happiness here is like Ixion, that hugged the cloud instead of Juno, and like Apollo, that hugged the laurel-tree instead of Daphne. Now to lose the soul for such poor inconsiderate things, is a foolish thing; it is as if one should throw a diamond at a pear-tree, he loseth his diamond. (3.) It is a foolish loss, for a man to lose his soul, because he himself hath a hand in it; is it not folly to give one's self poison? a sinner hath his hands imbrued in the blood of his own soul: 'thy destruction is of thyself';⁴ 'they lay wait for their own blood.'⁵ The foolish sinner nourisheth those lusts that kill his soul; the tree breeds the worm, and the worm eats the tree; were it not folly for a garrison to open to the enemy that besiegeth it; the sinner opens to those lusts which war against his soul; this is a foolish loss.

¹ Ec. 10. 7.

² Lu. 12. 20. ³ Pr. 23. 5. ⁴ Ho. 13. 9. ⁵ Pr. 1. 18.

2. It is a fatal loss to lose the soul. (1.) It is an unparalleled loss, because in losing the soul there are so many things lost with it; as a merchant in losing his ship, loseth many things with it; his money, plate, jewels, spices. Thus he that loseth his soul, he loseth Christ, he loseth the Comforter, he loseth the society of angels, he loseth heaven. (2.) It is an irreparable loss: other losses may be made up again; if a man lose his health, he may recover it again; if he lose his estate, he may get it up again; but if he lose his soul, this loss can never be made up again. Are there any more saviours to die for the soul? as Naomi said to her daughters, 'are there yet any more sons in my womb?'¹ Hath God any more sons? or will he send his son any more into the world? Oh no, if the soul be lost! Christ's next coming is not to save it, but to judge it. Christian, remember thou hast but one soul, and if that be gone, all is gone. God, saith Chrysostom, hath given thee two eyes, if thou losest one, thou hast another; but thou hast but one soul, and if that perish, thou art quite undone. The merchant that ventures all in one ship, if that ship be lost, he is quite broken.

(3.) The loss of the soul is an eternal loss; the soul once lost, is lost for ever; the sinner and the furnace shall never be parted.² As the sinner's heart will never be emptied of sin, so God's vial shall never be emptied of wrath: it is an eternal loss.

Branch 3. Do what you can to secure the main chance, to save these precious souls. In times of danger men call in their debts, and labour to secure their estates; let me tell you, all you who are yet in your natural estate, your souls are mortgaged; if your land were mortgaged, you would endeavour to redeem it; your souls are mortgaged: sin hath mortgaged them, sin hath laid your souls to pawn, and where do you think your souls are? the pawn is in the devil's hand, therefore a man in the state of nature is said to be 'under the power of Satan.'³ Now there are but two ways to fetch home the pawn; and both are set down; 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.'⁴ Unravel all your works of sin by repentance, honour Christ's merits by believing: divines call it saving faith, because upon this wing the soul flies to the ark Christ, and is secured from danger.

THE SOUL'S MALADY AND CURE.

Luke v. 31. *'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'*

THE occasion of the words is set down in the context; Levi was called from the receipt of custom (he was a custom-house man,) but Christ called him, and there went out power with the word, 'he left all, rose up, and followed him.'¹ Levi did not consult with flesh and blood, he did not say, 'what shall I do for the hundred talents?'² how shall I live and maintain my charge? I shall lose many a sweet bit at the custom-house; poverty is like to be my patrimony; nay, in case I follow Christ, I must espouse persecution: he doth not reason thus; but having a call he hastens away after Christ, 'he rose up and followed him;' and that he might give Christ a pledge and specimen of his love, he makes him a feast; 'and Levi made him a great feast in his own house;'³ a better guest he could not invite. Christ always came with his cost; Levi feasted Christ with his cheer, and Christ feasted him with

salvation. Well, Christ being at this feast, the Pharisees begin to murmur; 'why do ye eat and drink with publicans?'⁴ The Pharisees, I. were offended at him that he should go in and eat with publicans. The publicans were counted the worst of sinners; sinners of the deepest dye; yet the Pharisees were not so much offended at the sins of the publicans, as they had a mind to pick a quarrel with Christ. He who was the horn of salvation to some, was a rock of offence to these Jews; others did feed on him, these did stumble at him. 2. They accuse Christ; for these words carry in them a charge and accusation, 'why do ye eat with publicans and sinners?' The Pharisees impeached Christ for eating with sinners; malice will never want matter of accusation. Though the devils proclaimed Christ's holiness, 'let us alone, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God:'⁵ Yet the Pharisees tax him for a sin-

¹ Ru. 1. 11. ² Lu. 5. 28. ³ 2 Ch. 25. 9. ⁴ Lu. 5. 29.

⁵ Is. 33. 14.
⁶ Lu. 5. 30.

⁷ Ac. 26. 18.

⁸ Ac. 20. 21.
⁹ Lu. 4. 34.

ner: see what malice will do, it will make a man speak that which the devil himself will not speak. The devils justify Christ, the Pharisees accuse him. And Christ, who was a Lamb without spot, could not escape the world's censures, no wonder if his people are loaded with the calumnies and censures of the wicked.

But let us examine the matter of the charge they bring against Christ, and see how groundless it was. They indict Christ for going in with sinners. *1st.* Christ did nothing but what was according to his commission; the commission he received from his Father, was, that he should come to save sinners.¹ *2d.* Christ went in with sinners, not to join with them in their sins, but to heal them of their sins; to accuse Christ was, as Austin saith, as if the physician should be accused, because he goes among them that are sick of the plague. This groundless accusation Christ overhears, and in the text gives these envious Pharisees a silencing answer, 'they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' As if Christ had said; you Pharisees think yourselves righteous persons, you need no Saviour; but these poor publicans are sick and ready to die, and I come as a physician to cure them; therefore be not angry at a work of mercy; though you will not be healed, yet do not hinder me from healing others: 'they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'

In the words there are two general parts: 1. The dying patients. 2. The healing physician.

1. The dying patients, They that are sick. Whence observe,

Doct. 1. That sin is a soul-disease; 'he hath borne our griefs,'² in the Hebrew it is our sicknesses. Man at first was created in a healthful temper, he had no sickness of soul, he ailed nothing; the soul had its perfect beauty and glory. The eye was clear, the heart pure, the affections tuned with the finger of God into a most sweet harmony. God made man upright; but Adam, by eating the apple, fell sick, and had died for ever, had not God found out a way for his recovery. For the amplification of the doctrine, there are three things to be considered. 1. In what sense sin is resembled to sickness. 2. What the diseases of the soul are. 3. That sin-sickness is the worst.

I. In what sense sin is resembled to sickness.

1. Sin may be compared to sickness for the manner of catching. *1st.* Sickness is caught often through carelessness; some get cold by leaving off clothes. So when Adam grew careless of God's command, and left off the garment of his innocency, he caught a sickness; he could stay no longer in the garden, but lay bedrid; his sin hath turned the world, which was a paradise, into an hospital. *2d.* Sickness is caught sometimes through superfluity and intemperance. Excess produceth sickness. When our first parents lost the golden bridle of temperance and did eat of the forbidden tree, they, and all their posterity surfeited on it, and took a sickness. The tree of knowledge had sickness and death under the leaves; it was fair to the eye, but poison to the taste; we all grew desperately sick by eating of this tree. Adam's intemperance hath brought us to fasting and weeping; and besides that disease at first by propagation, we have added to it by actual perpetration. We have increased our sickness, therefore sinners are said to wax worse and worse.³

2. Sin may be resembled to sickness for the nature of it.

(I.) Sickness is of a spreading nature, it spreads all over the body, it works into every part, the head, stomach, it disorders the whole body: so sin doth not rest in one part, but spreads into all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body: 'The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores,'⁴ &c. Sin doth corrupt the understanding; Gregory Nazianzen calls the understanding the lamp of reason, this lamp burns dim; 'having their understanding darkened,'⁵ sin hath drawn a veil over the understanding, it hath cast a mist before our eyes, that we neither know God nor ourselves; naturally we are only wise to do evil.⁶ Witty at sin, wise to damn ourselves; the understanding is defiled.⁷ We can no more judge of spiritual objects till the Spirit of God anoint our eyes, than a blind man can judge of colours; our understandings are subject to mistakes; 'we call evil good, and good evil; we put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.'⁸ A straight stick under water seems crooked; so to a natural understanding the straight line of truth seems crooked. The memory is diseased; the memory at first was

¹ 1 Ti. 1. 15.

² Ps. 103. 3. Is. 53. 4.

³ 2 Ti. 3. 13.

⁴ Is. 1. 5. 6.

⁵ Ep. 4. 18.

⁶ Je. 4. 21.

⁷ 1 Cor. 2. 14.

⁸ Is. 5. 20.

like a golden cabinet in which divine truths were locked up safe; but now it is like a colander or leaking vessel, which lets all that is good run out. The memory is like a searcer, which sifts out the flour, but keeps the bran. So the memory lets saving truths go, and holds nothing but froth and vanity. Many a man can remember a story, when he hath forgot his creed. Thus the memory is diseased; the memory is like a bad stomach that wants the retentive faculty, all the meat comes up again: so the most precious truths will not stay in the memory, but are gone again. The will is diseased; the will is the soul's commander-in-chief, it is the master-wheel; but how irregular and eccentric is it! The will in the creation was like that golden bridle which Minerva was said to put upon Pegasus to guide and rule him; it did answer to God's will: this was the language of the will in innocency, 'I delight to do thy will, O God,' but now it is distempered, it is like an iron sinew that refuseth to yield and bend to God; 'ye will not come to me that ye may have life.'¹ Men will rather die than come to their physician. The Arminians talk of free will; the will is sick, what freedom hath a sick man to walk; the will is a rebel against God, 'ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.'² The affections are sick: the affection of desire; a sick man desires that which is hurtful for him, he calls for wine in a fever; so the natural man being sick, he desires that which is prejudicial for him; he hath no desire after Christ, he doth not hunger and thirst after righteousness; but he desires poison, he desires to take his fill of sin, he loves death: the affection of grief; a man grieves for the want of an estate, but not for the want of God's favour; he grieves to see the plague or cancer in his body, but not for the plague of his heart: the affection of joy; many can rejoice in a wedge of gold, not in the cross of Christ. Thus the affections are sick and distempered. The conscience is diseased; 'their mind and conscience is defiled.'³ Conscience is either, 1. Erroneous, binding to that which is sinful; 'I verily thought with myself I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus.'⁴ Conscience is an *ignis fatuus*, leading out of the right way. Or, 2. Dumb, it will not tell men of sin; it is a silenced preacher. Or, 3. Dead. Conscience is stupefied and senseless; the custom of sinning hath taken away the sense of sinning. Thus the

sickness of sin hath gone over the whole soul, like that cloud which overspread the face of the heavens.⁵

(2.) Sickness doth debilitate and weaken the body; a sick man is unfit to walk: so this sickness of sin weakens the soul; 'when we were without strength Christ died.'⁶ In innocency Adam was, in some sense, like the angels, he could serve God with a winged swiftness, and filial cheerfulness; but sin brought sickness into the soul, and this sickness hath cut the lock where his strength lay; he is now disarmed of all ability for service; and where grace is wrought, though a Christian be not so heart-sick as before, yet he is very faint. The saints' prayers do but whisper in God's ears, and if Christ did not pray them over again, God could not hear them; we sin fervently, but pray faintly; as David said, 'I am this day weak, though anointed king';⁷ so Christians, though they have the oil of grace poured upon them, and they are anointed spiritual kings, yet they are weak: sin hath enfeebled them; they take their breath short, and cannot put forth such strong desires after God as they ought. When we find ourselves dead in duty, our holy affections languishing, think thus, this is my sickness, sin hath made me weak; as Jephtha said to his daughter, 'alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low';⁸ so may the soul say, alas, my sin, thou hast brought me very low, thou hast brought me almost to the gates of death.

(3.) Sickness doth eclipse the beauty of the body: this I ground on that scripture, 'when thou with rebukes dost correct man, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.'⁹ The moth consumes the beauty of the cloth; so a fit of sickness consumes the beauty of the body. Thus sin is a soul-sickness, it hath eclipsed the glory and splendour of the soul, it hath turned ruddiness into paleness; that beauty of grace which once sparkled as gold, now it may be said, 'how is this gold become dim!' That soul which once had an orient brightness in it, it was more ruddy than rubies, its polishing was of sapphire, the understanding bespangled with knowledge, the will crowned with liberty, the affections like so many seraphim, burning in love to God, now the glory is departed. Sin hath turned beauty into deformity; as some faces by sickness are so disfigured, and look so ghastly, they can hardly be known:

¹ Is. 48. 4. Jno. 5. 40.² Ac. 7. 51.³ Tit. 1. 15.⁴ Jno. 16. 2. Ac. 26. 9⁵ Ep. 4. 16.⁶ 1 Ki. 18. 45.⁷ Ro. 5. 6.⁸ 2 Sa. 3. 39.⁹ Ju. 11. 35.¹⁰ Ps. 39. 11.

so the soul of man is, by sin, so sadly metamorphosed (having lost the image of God) that it can hardly be known. 'The sun shall be turned into darkness:¹ sin hath turned that sun of beauty which shined in the soul into a Cimmerian darkness; and where grace is begun to be wrought, yet the soul's beauty is not quite recovered, but is like the sun under a cloud.

(4.) Sickness takes away the taste; a sick man doth not taste that sweetness in his meat; so the sinner by reason of soul-sickness, hath lost his taste to spiritual things. The word of God is bread to strengthen, wine to comfort; but the sinner tastes no sweetness in the word. A child of God who is spiritualized by grace, tastes a savouriness in ordinances, the promise drops as an honey-comb;² but a natural man is sick, and his taste is gone; since the tasting of the forbidden tree, he hath lost his taste.

(5.) Sickness takes away the comfort of life; a sick person hath no joy of any thing, his life is a burden to him. So the sin-sick soul is void of all true comfort, and his laughter is but the pleasing dream of a sick man; he hath no true title to comfort, his sin is not pardoned, he may be in hell before night for any thing he knows.

(6.) Sickness ushers in death, it is the prologue to death; sickness is as it were the cutting of the tree, and death is the falling of the tree; so this disease of sin (if not cured in time) brings the second death.

II. What the diseases of the soul are. Adam by breaking the box of original righteousness, hath filled the soul full of diseases; the body is not subject to so many diseases as the soul: I cannot reckon them all up, 'who can understand his errors?'³ Only I shall name some of the worst of these diseases. Pride is the tympany of the soul, lust is the fever, error the gangrene, unbelief the plague of the heart, hypocrisy the scurvy, hardness of heart the stone, anger the phrenzy, malice the wolf in the breast, covetousness the dropsy, spiritual sloth the green sickness, apostasy the epilepsy; here are eleven soul-diseases, and when they come to the full height they are dangerous, and most frequently prove mortal.

III. The third thing to be demonstrated is, that sin is the worst sickness. To have a body full of plague sores is sad; but to have the soul, which is the more noble part, spotted with sin,

and full of the tokens, is far worse; as appears:

1. The body may be diseased, and the conscience quiet: 'the inhabitant of the land shall not say I am sick.'⁴ He should scarce feel his sickness, because sin was pardoned; but when the soul is sick of any reigning lust, the conscience is troubled: 'there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God.'⁵ When Spira had abjured his former faith, he was put *in little ease*, his conscience burned as hell, and no spiritual physic that divines did apply, could ever allay that inflammation.

2. A man may have bodily diseases, yet God may love him. 'Asa was diseased in his feet.'⁶ He had the gout, yet a favourite with God. God's hand may go out against a man, yet his heart may be towards him; diseases are the arrows which God shoots; pestilence is called God's arrow.⁷ This arrow (as Gregory Nazianzene saith) may be sent from the hand of an indulgent father: but soul diseases are symptoms of God's anger, as he is a holy God, he cannot but hate sin, 'he beholds the proud afar off.'⁸ God hates a sinner for his plaguesores: 'my soul loathed them.'⁹

3. Sickness, at worst, doth but separate from the society of friends; but this disease of sin, if not cured, separates from the society of God and angels. The leper was to be shut out of the camp; the leprosy of sin, without the interposition of mercy, shuts men out of the camp of heaven.¹⁰ This is the misery of them that die in their sins, they are allowed neither friend nor physician to come at them, they are excluded God's presence for ever, in whose presence is fulness of joy.

USE 1. *Information* 1. See into what a sad condition sin hath brought us; it hath made us desperately sick; nay, we die away in our sickness, till we are fetched again with the water of life. O how many sick bedrid souls are there in the world! sick of pride, sick of lust; sin hath turned our houses and churches into hospitals, they are full of sick persons. What David's enemies said reproachfully of him, is true of every natural man; 'an evil disease cleaveth fast unto him:'¹¹ he hath the 'plague of the heart.'¹² And even those who are regenerate are cured but in part, they have some grudgings of the disease, some ebullitions and stirrings of corruption; nay, sometimes the

⁴ 1s. 33. 24.

⁵ 1s. 57. ult.

⁶ 2 Ki. 15. 23.

⁷ Ps. 91. 5.

⁸ Ps. 138. 6.

⁹ Ze. 11. 8.

¹⁰ Re. 21. 8.

¹¹ Ps. 41. 8.

¹² 1 Ki. 8. 38.

¹ Jo. 2. 31. ² Ps. 10. 10. ³ Ps. 10. 12. Ps. 40. 12.

king's evil breaks forth to the scandal of religion, and from this sin-sickness ariseth all other diseases, plague, gout, stone, fever. 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; for this cause many are weak and sickly among you.'¹ 2. If sin be a soul-sickness, then how foolish are they that hide their sins; it is folly to hide a disease! 'If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding my iniquity in my bosom, let thistles grow instead of wheat,'² &c. The wicked take more care to have sin covered than cured; if they can but sin in private and not be suspected, they think all is well; there is a curse belongs to him who puts sin in a secret place.³ The hiding and concealing a disease proves mortal: 'he that covereth his sins, shall not prosper.'⁴ 3. If sin be a soul-sickness, then what need is there of the ministry? Ministers are physicians under God to cure sick souls: God hath set in his church pastors and teachers.⁵ The ministers are a college of physicians, their work is to find out diseases and apply medicines: it is a hard work, while ministers are curing others, they themselves are nigh unto death. They find their people sick of several diseases; some have poisoned themselves with error, some are surfeited with the love of the creature, some have stabbed themselves at the heart with gross sin. O how hard is it to heal all these sick gangrened souls! many ministers do sooner kill themselves by preaching, than cure their patients; but though the work of the ministry be a laborious work, it is a needful work; while there are sick souls, there will be need of spiritual physicians. How unworthy then are they who malign and persecute the ministers of God! O unkind world, thus to use thy physicians; can there be a greater injury to souls? would it not be a piece of the highest cruelty and barbarism, if there were an act made that all physicians should be banished out of the land? and is it not worse to see multitudes of sick souls lie bleeding, and to have their spiritual physicians removed from them, which should under God heal them? this is a wrath-procuring sin; 'they misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.'⁶ See what is inscribed in Levi's blessing; 'of Levi he said, let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one; bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work

of his hands; smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.'⁷ The Lord will wither that arm which is stretched out against his prophets.

Use 2. Exhort. Branch 1. If sin be a soul-disease, let this serve to humble us; the scripture often calls upon us to humility; 'be ye clothed with humility:'⁸ if any thing will humble, this consideration may; sin is a soul-disease: if a woman had a fair face, but a cancer in her breast, it would keep her from being proud of her beauty. So Christian, though thou art endued with knowledge and morality, which are fair to look upon, yet remember thou art diseased in thy soul, here is a cancer in the breast to humble thee; this certainly is one reason why God leaves sin in his own children; (for though sin be healed as to the guilt of it, yet not as to the stain of it) that the sight of their sores may make their plumes of pride fall. There are two humbling sights; a sight of God's glory, and a sight of our diseases. Uzziah the king had no cause to be proud; for though he had a crown of gold on his head, he had the leprosy in his forehead. Though the saints have their golden graces, yet they have their leprous spots; seeing sin hath made us vile, let it make us humble; seeing it hath taken away our beauty, let it take away our pride; if God (saith Saint Austin) did not spare the proud angels, will he spare thee, who art but dust and rottenness? O look upon your boils and ulcers, and be humble! Christians are never more lovely in God's eyes, than when they are loathsome in their own; those sins which humble, shall never damn.

Branch 2. If sin be a soul-disease, and the most damnable disease, let us be afraid of it. Had we diseases in our bodies, an ulcer in the lungs, or hectic fever, we would fear lest they should bring death; O fear sin-sickness, lest it bring the second death. Thou who art a drunkard or a swearer, tremble at thy soul-maladies. I wonder to see sinners like the leviathan, made without fear. Why do not men fear sin? why do they not shake with this disease? surely the reason is, 1. Stupidity; as they have the fever of sin, so withal a lethargy; 'having their conscience seared with a hot iron.'⁹ He that hath an unbelieving heart, and a seared conscience, you may ring out the bell; that man's case is desperate. 2. Presumption. Many

¹ 1 Cor. 11. 29, 30. ² Job 31. 33, 40. ³ De. 27. 15.
⁴ Pr. 28. 13. ⁵ Ep. 4. 11. ⁶ 2 Ch. 36. 16.

⁷ De. 33. 8, 11. ⁸ 1 Pe. 5. 5. ⁹ 1 Ti. 4. 2.

fancy that they can lay a fig upon the boil; though they be sick, they can make themselves well; it is but saying a few prayers, it is but a sigh or a tear, and they shall presently recover; but is it so easy to be healed of sin? is it easy to make old Adam bleed to death? is it easy when the pangs of death are on thee, in an instant to have the pangs of the new birth? O take heed of a spiritual lethargy, fear your disease, lest it prove mortal and damnable. Physicians tell of a disease that makes men die laughing; so Satan tickles many with the pleasure of sin, and they die laughing.

Branch 3. If sin be a soul distemper, then account them your best friends that would reclaim you from your sins. The patient is thankful to the physician that tells him of his disease, and useth means to recover him. When ministers tell you, in love, of your sins, and would reclaim you, take it in good part; the worst they intend is to cure you of your sickness. David was glad of a healing reproof; 'let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head.'¹ Ministers are charged by virtue of their office to reprove;² they must as well come with corrosives as lenitives; 'rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.'³ The Greek word is cuttingly; as a surgeon searcheth a wound and then lanceth, and cuts out the gangrened flesh; or as a physician useth leeches and cupping glasses, which put the patient in pain, but it is to restore him to health; so must the ministers of Christ rebuke sharply, that they may help to save their dying patients. Who is angry with the physician for prescribing a bitter potion? Why should any be angry with Christ's ministers for reproof, when, in regard of their office, they are physicians, and, in regard of their bowels, they are fathers? But how few are they who will take a reproof kindly! 'they hate him that rebuketh in the gate.'⁴ But why do not men love a reproof? 1. Because they are in love with their sins; a strange thing that any should love their disease, but so it is; 'how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?'⁵ Sin is the poison of the soul, yet men love it; and he who loves his sin, hates a reproof. 2. Sin possesseth men with a lunacy.⁶ People are mad in sin; '*they are mad on their idols.*'⁷ When sickness grows so violent that men lie raving, and are mad, they then quarrel

with their physician, and say he comes to kill them. So when sin is grown to a head, the disease turned to a phrenzy, then men quarrel with those that tell them of their sins, and are ready to offer violence to their physicians. It argues wisdom to receive a reproof: 'rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.'⁸ A wise man had rather drink a sharp potion, than die of his disease.

Branch 4. If sin be a soul-sickness, then do not feed this disease; he that is wise, will avoid those things which will increase his disease; if he be feverish, he will avoid wine which would inflame the disease; if he have the stone, he will avoid salt meats; he will forbear a dish he loves, because it is bad for his disease: why should not men be as wise for their souls? Thou that hast a drunken lust, do not feed it with wine; thou that hast a malicious lust, do not feed it with revenge; thou that hast an unclean lust, make not provision for the flesh.⁹ He that feeds a disease, feeds an enemy. Some diseases are starved. Starve thy sins by fasting and humiliation. Either kill thy sin, or thy sin will kill thee.

Branch 5. If sin be a soul-disease, and worse than any other, then labour to be sensible of this disease. There are few who are sensible of their soul-sickness; they think they are well and ail nothing; they are whole and need not a physician. It is a bad symptom to hear a sick dying man say he is well. The church of Laodicea was a sick patient, but she thought she was well; 'thou sayest I am rich, and have need of nothing.'¹⁰ Come to many a man and feel his pulse, ask him about the state of his soul, he will say, he hath a good heart, and doubts not but he shall be saved. What should be the reason that when men are so desperately sick in their souls, and ready to drop into hell, yet they conceit themselves in a very good condition? 1. There is a spiritual cataract upon their eye, they see not their sores. Laodicea thought herself rich, because she was blind. The god of this world blinds men's eyes, that they can neither see their disease nor their physician. Many bless God their estate is good, not from the knowledge of their happiness, but from the ignorance of their danger, when Haman's face was covered, he was near execution. Oh pray with David, 'lighten mine eyes, that I sleep not the sleep of death.'¹¹ 2. Men that are sick think themselves well, from

¹ Ps. 141. 5. ² 2 Ti. 4. 2. ³ Tit. 1. 13. ⁴ Am. 5. 10.
⁵ Pr. 1. 22. ⁶ Lu. 15. 7. ⁷ Je. 50. 33.

⁸ Pr. 9. 8. ⁹ Ro. 13. 14. ¹⁰ Re. 3. 17. ¹¹ Ps. 13. 3.

the haughtiness of their spirits. Alexander thought himself a while to be the son of Jupiter, and no less than a god; what an arrogant creature is man! though he be sick unto death, he thinks it too much a disparagement to acknowledge a disease; either he is not sick, or he can heal himself. If he be poisoned, he runs to the herb, or rather weed, of his own righteousness to cure him. 3. Men that are sick conceit themselves well, through self-love. He that loves another, will not credit any evil report of him. Men are self-lovers;¹ every man is a dove in his own eye, therefore doth not suspect himself of any disease; he will rather question the scripture's verity than his own malady. 4. Self-deceit and the deceit of the heart appear in two things. (1.) In hiding the disease; the heart hides sin as Rachel hid her father's images. Hazael did not think he was so sick as he was; he could not imagine that so much wickedness, like a disease, should lie lurking in him; 'is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?'² As the viper hath his teeth hid in his gums, so that if one should look into his mouth he would think it a harmless creature; so though there be much corruption in the heart, yet the heart hides it, and draws a veil over, that it be not seen. (2.) The heart holds a false glass before the eye, making a man appear fair, and his estate very good. The heart can deceive with counterfeit grace; hence it is that men are insensible of their spiritual condition, and think themselves well when they are sick unto death. 5. Men take up a reverend opinion of themselves, and fancy their spiritual estate better than it is, through mistake. And this mistake is double. (1.) They enjoy glorious privileges; they were born within the sound of Aaron's bells, they were baptized with holy water, they have been fed with manna from heaven, therefore they hope they are in a good condition. 'Micah said, now I know the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.'³ But alas! this is a mistake; outward privileges save not. What is any man the better for the ordinances, unless he be the better by ordinances? A child may die with the breast in its mouth. Many of the Jews perished, though Christ himself was their preacher. (2.) The other mistake is set down by the apostle; 'they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves amongst themselves, are not

wise.'⁴ Here is a double error or mistake. 'They measure themselves by themselves:' that is, they see they are not so bad as they were, therefore they judge their condition is good. A dwarf may be taller than he was, yet a dwarf still; the patient may be less sick than he was, yet far from well; a man may be better than he was, yet not good. 'They compare themselves amongst themselves.' They see they are not so flagitious and profane as others; therefore they think themselves well, because they are not so sick as others: this is a mistake; one may as well die of a consumption as the plague. One man may not be so far off heaven as another, yet he may not be near heaven; one line may not be so crooked as another, yet not straight. To the law, to the testimony; the word of God is the true standard and measure by which we are to judge of the state and temper of our souls. Oh let us take heed of this rock, the fancying of our condition better than it is; let us take heed of a spiritual apoplexy, to be sick in our souls, yet not sensible of this sickness. What do men talk of a light within them? the light within them by nature is not sufficient to show them the diseases of their souls; this light tells them they are whole, and have no need of a physician. Oh what infinite mercy is it for a man to be made sensible of sin, and seeing himself sick, to cry out with David, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'⁵ Were it not a mercy for a person that is distracted, to be restored to the use of his reason; so for him that is spiritually distempered, and in a lethargy, to come to himself, and see both his wound and his remedy: till the sinner be sensible of his disease, the medicine of mercy doth not belong to him.

Branch 6. If sin be a soul sickness, then labour to get this disease healed; if a man had a disease in his body, a pleurisy or cancer, he would use all the means for a cure; the woman in the gospel who had a bloody issue, spent her whole estate upon the physicians. Be more earnest to have thy soul cured than thy body. Make David's prayer; 'heal my soul for I have sinned.'⁶ Hast thou a consumptive body, rather pray God to heal the consumption in thy soul; go to God first for the cure of thy soul: 'is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him;'⁷ the apostle doth not say, let him call for the physician, but the elders, that is, the minis-

¹ 2 Ti. 3. 2.² 2 Ki. 8. 13.³ Ju. 17. 13.⁴ 2 Cor. 10. 12. ⁵ 2 Sa. 12. 13. ⁶ Ps. 11. 1. ⁷ Ja. 5. 14

ters. Physicians are to be consulted in their due place, but not in the first place. Most men send first for the physician, and then for the minister; which shows they are more desirous and careful for the recovery of their bodies than their souls; but if soul diseases are more dangerous and deadly, then we should prefer the spiritual cure before the bodily; 'heal my soul, for I have sinned;' let us consider, 1. Till we are cured, we are not fit to do God any service. A sick man cannot work; while the disease of sin is violent, we are not fit for any heavenly employment; we can neither work for God nor work out our salvation. The philosopher defines happiness the operation of the mind about virtue. To be working for God, is both the end of our life, and the perfection. Would we be active in our sphere? let us labour to have our souls cured. So long as we are diseased with sin, we are lame and bed-ridden, we are unfit for work. We read indeed of a sinner's works, but they are dead works.¹ 2. If we are not cured, we are cursed; if our diseases abide on us, the wrath of God abides on us.

Quest. But how shall we get this disease of sin cured? this brings to the second thing in the text; the healing physician; the whole need not a physician. Whence observe:

Doct. 2. That Jesus Christ is a soul-physician. Ministers (as was said before) are physicians, whom Christ doth in his name delegate, and send abroad into the world. He saith to the apostles, and in them to all his ministers; 'lo I am with you to the end of the world;'² that is, I am with you to assist and bless you, and to make your ministry healing; but though ministers are physicians, yet but under-physicians. Jesus Christ is the chief physician; he it is that teacheth us all our receipts, and goes forth with our labours, else the physic we prescribe would never work; all the ministers under heaven would not do any cure without the help of this great Physician. For the amplification of this I shall show, 1. That Christ is a physician. 2. Why he is a physician. 3. That he is the only physician. 4. How he heals his patients. 5. That he is the best physician.

I. That Christ is a physician; it is one of his titles; 'I am the Lord that healeth thee.'³ He is a physician for the body; he 'anointed the blind, cleansed the lepers, healed the sick, raised the dead.'⁴ He it is that puts virtue into

physic, and makes it healing. And he is a physician for the soul; 'he healeth the broken in heart.'⁵ We are all as so many impotent, diseased persons; one man hath a fever, another a dead palsy, another hath a bloody issue, he is under the power of some hereditary corruption; now Christ is a soul-physician, he healeth these diseases, therefore in Scripture, the Lord Jesus, to set forth his healing virtue, is resembled, (1.) By the brazen serpent.⁶ Those who were stung, were cured by looking on the brazen serpent; so when the soul is stung by the old serpent, it is cured by that healing under Christ's wings. (2.) Christ is resembled by the good Samaritan. 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead; but a certain Samaritan as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil,'⁷ &c. We have wounded ourselves by sin, and the wound had been incurable, had not Christ, that good Samaritan, poured in wine and oil. (3.) Christ as a physician is resembled by the trees of the sanctuary; 'the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof shall be for medicine.'⁸ Thus the Lord Jesus, that tree of life in paradise, hath a sanative virtue; he heals our pride, unbelief, &c. As he feeds our graces, so he heals our corruptions.

II. Why Christ is a physician.

1. In regard of his call; God the Father called him to practise physic, he anointed him to the work of healing; 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel: he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted.'⁹ Christ came into the world as into an hospital, to heal sin-sick souls: this, though it was a glorious work, yet Christ would not undertake it, till he was commissioned by his Father: 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he hath sent me.' Christ was anointed and appointed to the work of a physician, this was for our imitation; we are not to meddle many matters without a call; that is acting out of our sphere.

2. Jesus Christ undertook this healing work, because of that need we were in of a physician. Christ came to be our physician, not because we deserved him, but because we needed him;

¹ He. 6. 1. ² Mat. 28. 20. ³ Ex. 15. 26. ⁴ Mat. 8. 16.

⁵ Ps. 147. 3.
⁶ Ez. 47. 12.

⁷ Nu. 21. 9.

⁸ Lu. 10. 33, 34.
⁹ Ju. 4. 18.

not our merit, but our misery, drew Christ from heaven; had he not come, we must of necessity have perished, and died of our wounds; our disease was not ordinary, it had seized on every part; it made us not only sick but dead; and such receipts were necessary as none but Christ could give.

3. Christ came as a physician out of the sweetness of his nature; he is like the good Samaritan, who had compassion on the wounded man. A physician may come to the patient only for gain; not so much to help the patient as to help himself: but Christ came purely out of sympathy; there was nothing in us to tempt Christ to heal us; for we had no desire of a physician, nor had we any thing to give our physician; as sin made us sick, so it made us poor; so that Christ came as a physician, not out of hope to receive any thing from us, but was prompted to it out of his own goodness; 'I will heal their backslidings, I will love them.'¹ Love set Christ a work; not only his Father's commission, but his own compassion moved him to his spiritual physic and chirurgery. King David banished the blind and lame out of the city;² Christ comes to the blind and lame, and cures them; it is the sounding of his bowels that causeth the healing under his wings.

III. The third particular is, that Christ is the only physician; 'neither is there salvation in any other,'³ &c. There is no other physician besides. The papists would have other healers besides Christ, they would make angels their physicians; all the angels in heaven cannot heal one sick soul; indeed they are described by their wings,⁴ but they have no healing under their wings. Papists would heal themselves by their own merits. Adam did eat that apple which made him and his posterity sick; but he could not find any herb in paradise to cure him; our merits are rather damning than healing; to make use of other physicians and medicines, is as if the Israelites, in contempt of that brazen serpent which Moses set up, had erected other brazen serpents. O let us take heed of that crowd of physicians. Indeed in bodily sickness it is lawful to multiply physicians; when the patient hath advised with one physician, he desires to have others joined with him; but the sick soul, if it joins any other physician with Christ, it surely dies.

IV. How Christ heals his patients.

There are four things in Christ that are healing.

1. His word is healing; 'he sent his word, and healed them.'⁵ His word in the mouth of his ministers is healing; when the spirit is wounded in desertion, Christ doth create the lips that speak peace.⁶ The word written is a repository in which God hath laid up sovereign oils and balsams to recover sick souls; and the word preached is the pouring out of these oils, and applying them to the sick patient: 'he sent his word and healed them.' We look upon the word as a weak thing. What is the breath of a man to save a soul? but 'the power of the Lord is present to heal.'⁷ Christ makes use of his word as a healing medicine; the receipts which his ministers prescribe, he himself applies; he makes his word convincing, converting, comforting. Caution, not that the word heals all; to some it is not a healing but a killing word; 'to the one we are a savour of death unto death.'⁸ Some die of their disease; two sorts of patients die. (1.) Such as sin presumptuously; though they know a thing to be sin,⁹ they are of those that rebel against the light; this is dangerous. David prays, 'keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.'¹⁰ (2.) Such as sin maliciously; when the disease comes to this head, the patient will die.¹¹ But to them who belong to the election of grace, the word is the healing medicine Christ useth; 'he sent his word, and healed them.'

2. Christ's wounds are healing; 'with his stripes we are healed.'¹² Christ made a medicine of his own body and blood; the physician died to cure the patient. The pelican when her young ones are bitten by serpents, feeds them with her own blood to recover them. Thus when we were bitten by the old serpent, then Jesus Christ prescribes a receipt of his own blood to heal and restore us. The blood of Christ being the blood of him who was God as well as man, had infinite merit to appease God, and infinite virtue to heal us; this, this is the balm of Gilead, that recovers a soul which is sick even unto death. Balm, as naturalists say, is a juice which a little shrub, being cut with glass, doth weep out. This was anciently of very precious esteem, the savour of it was odoriferous, the virtue of it sovereign; it would cure ulcers, and the stinging of serpents. This balm may be an emblem of Christ's blood; it hath a most sovereign virtue in it, it heals the ulcer of sin, the stinging of temptation, it merits

¹ Ho. 11. 4. ² 2 Sa. 5. 8. ³ Ac. 4. 12. ⁴ Is. 6. 2.

⁵ Ps. 107. 20. ⁶ Is. 57. 19. ⁷ Lu. 5. 17. ⁸ 2 Cor. 2. 16.
⁹ Job 24. 13. ¹⁰ Ps. 19. ¹¹ He. 10. 29. ¹² Is. 55. 3.

for us justification.¹ O how precious is this balm of Gilead! by this blood we enter into heaven.

3. Christ's Spirit is healing; the blood of Christ heals the guilt of sin; the Spirit of Christ heals the pollution of sin; the Spirit is compared to oil, it is called the anointing of the Spirit,² to show the healing virtue of the Spirit; oil is healing. Christ by his Spirit heals the rebellion of the will, the stone of the heart; though sin be not removed, it is subdued.

4. Christ's rod is healing;³ Christ never wounds but to heal; the rod of affliction is to recover the sick patient. David's bones were broken that his soul might be healed. God useth affliction as the surgeon doth his lance, to let out the venom and corruption of the soul, and make way for a cure.

Quest. But if Christ be a physician, why are not all healed?

1. Because all do not know they are sick; they see not the sores and ulcers of their souls; and will Christ cure them who see no need of him? Many ignorant people thank God they have good hearts; but that heart can no more be good which wants grace, than that body can be sound which wants health. 2. All are not healed, because they love their sickness; 'thou lovest evil;⁴ many men hug their disease. Augustine saith, before his conversion, he prayed against sin, but his heart whispered, not yet Lord; he was loath to leave his sin too soon; how many love their disease better than their physician! while sin is loved, Christ's medicines are loathed. 3. All are not healed, because they do not look out after a physician. If they have any bodily distemper upon them, they presently send to the physician; their souls are sick, but mind not their physician Christ; 'ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.'⁵ Christ takes it as an undervaluing of him that we will not send to him; some send for Christ when it is too late; when other physicians have given them over, and there is no hope of life, then they cry to Christ to save them, but Christ refuseth such patients as make use of him only for a shift; thou that scornest Christ in time of health, Christ may despise thee in the time of sickness. 4. All are not healed, because they would be self-healers: they would make their duties their saviours; the papists would be their own physicians; their daily sacrifice of the mass is a blasphemy against Christ's priestly office;

but Christ will have the honour of the cure, or he will never heal us; not our tears, but his blood saves. 5. All are not healed, because they do not take the physic which Christ prescribes them; they would be cured, but they are loath to put themselves into a course of physic. Christ prescribes them to drink the bitter potion of repentance, and to take the pill of mortification, but they cannot do this, they had rather die than take physic; if the patient refuseth to take the receipts the physician prescribes, no wonder he is not healed. Christians, you have had many receipts to take, have you taken them? ask conscience. There are many hearers of the word do like foolish patients, who send to the doctor for physic, but when they have it, they let the physic stand by in the glass, but do not take it; it is probable you have not taken the receipts which the gospel prescribes, because the word hath no operation on your hearts, you are as proud, as earthly, as malicious as ever. 6. All are not healed, because they have not confidence in their physician; it is observable when Christ came to work any cure, he first put this question, 'believe ye that I am able to do this?'⁶ This undoes many; O, saith the sinner, there is no mercy for me, Christ cannot heal me. Take heed, thy unbelief is worse than all thy other diseases. Did not Christ pray for them that crucified him? 'FATHER FORGIVE THEM!' Some of those were saved that had a hand in shedding his blood!⁷ Why then dost thou say Christ cannot heal thee? unbelief dishonours Christ, it hinders from a cure, it closeth the orifice of Christ's wounds, it stauncheth his blood.⁸ Millions die of their disease, because they do not believe in their physician.

V. The fifth and last particular is, that Christ is the best physician. That I may set forth the praise and honour of Jesus Christ, I shall show you wherein he excels other physicians; no physician like Christ.

1. He is the most skilful physician; there is no disease too hard for him; 'who healeth all thy diseases.'⁹ The pool of Bethesda might be an emblem of Christ's blood; 'whosoever first after the troubling of the water stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.'¹⁰ There are certain diseases physicians cannot cure; as a consumption in the lungs, some kind of obstructions and gangrenes. Some diseases are the reproach of physicians, but there is no

¹ Ro. 5. 9. ² Is. 61. ³ Is. 27. 9. ⁴ Ps. 52. 3. ⁵ Jno. 5. 40.

⁶ Mat. 9. 28.

⁷ Ac. 2. 36, 37.

⁸ Mat. 15. 58.

⁹ Ps. 103. 3.

¹⁰ Jno. 5. 5.

disease can pose Christ's skill; he can cure the gangrene of sin when it is come to the heart; he healed Mary Magdalene, an unchaste sinner; he healed Paul, who breathed out threatenings against the church; insomuch that Paul stands and wonders at the cure; 'I obtained mercy;¹ I was bemedied. Christ heals head distempers and heart distempers, which may keep poor trembling souls from despair. Oh, saith the sinner, never was any so diseased as I! but look up to thy physician Christ, who hath healing under his wings; he can melt a heart of stone, and wash away black sins in the crimson of his blood; there are no desperate cases with Christ; he hath those salves, oils, balsams, which can cure the worst disease. Indeed, there is one disease which Christ doth not heal, namely, the sin against the Holy Ghost; this is called 'a sin unto death;' if we knew any who had sinned this sin, we were to shut them out of our prayers: 'there is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.'² There is no healing of this disease; not but that Christ could cure this, but the sinner will not be cured. The king could pardon a traitor, but if he will have no pardon he must die. The sin against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, because the sinner will have no pardon; he scorns Christ's blood, despites his Spirit, therefore his sin hath no sacrifice.³

2. Christ is the best physician, because he cures the better part, the soul; other physicians can cure the liver or spleen, Christ cures the heart; they can cure the blood when it is tainted, Christ cures the conscience when it is defiled; 'how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works?'⁴ Galen and Hippocrates might cure the stone in the kidneys, but Christ cures the stone in the heart; he is the best physician which cures the most excellent part. The soul is immortal, angelical: man was made in the image of God, not in regard of his body, but his soul: now if the soul be so divine and noble, then the cure of the soul doth far exceed the cure of the body.

3. Christ is the best physician, for he causeth us to feel our disease. The disease of sin, though it be most damnable, yet is least discernible; many a man is sin-sick, but the devil hath given him such stupifying physic, that he sleeps the sleep of death, and all the thunders of the word cannot awaken him; but the Lord

Jesus, this blessed physician, awakes the soul out of its lethargy, and then it is in a hopeful way of recovery. The jailor was never so near a cure, as when he cried out, 'Sirs what must I do to be saved?'⁵

4. Christ shows more love to his patients than any physician besides; which appears five ways: (1.) In that long journey he took from heaven to earth. (2.) In that he comes to his patients without sending for. The sick send to their physicians, and use many entreaties; here the physician comes unsent for; 'I am found of them that sought me not.'⁶ He doth prevent us with mercy, he entreats us to be healed; if Christ had not first come to us, and, with the good Samaritan, poured in wine and oil, we must have died of our wounds. (3.) The physician lets himself bleed to cure his patient; 'he was wounded for our transgressions;'⁷ through his wounds we may see his bowels. (4.) Our repulses and unkindnesses do not drive Christ away from us. Physicians, if provoked by their patients, go away in a rage, and will come no more. We abuse our physician, thrust him away, we bolt out our physician, yet Christ will not forsake us, but comes again, and applies his sovereign oils and balsams; 'I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people.'⁸ Christ puts up wrongs and incivilities, and is resolved to go through with the cure. O the love of this heavenly physician! (5.) Christ himself drank that bitter cup which we should have drunk; and by his taking the potion we are healed and saved. Thus Christ hath shown more love than ever physician did to the patient.

5. Christ is the most cheap physician. Sickness is not only a consumption to the body but the purse; physicians' fees are chargeable; but Jesus Christ gives us our physic freely, he takes no fee: 'come without money and without price.'⁹ He desires us to bring nothing to him but broken hearts; and when he hath cured us he desires us to bestow nothing upon him but our love; and one would think that were very reasonable.

6. Christ heals with more ease than any other: other physicians apply pills, potions, bleeding; Christ cures with more facility. Christ made the devil go out with a word speaking;¹⁰ so when the soul is spiritually possessed, Christ can with a word heal: nay, he can cure with a look; when Peter had fallen

¹ Ti. 1. 13. ² 1 Jno. 5. 16. ³ He. 10. 26 29. ⁴ He. 9. 14.

⁵ Ac. 16. 30.

⁶ Is. 65. 1.

⁷ Is. 53. 5.

⁸ Is. 65. 3.

⁹ Is. 55. 1.

¹⁰ Mar. 9. 25.

into a relapse, Christ looked on Peter, and he wept. Christ's look melted Peter into repentance; it was a healing look. If Christ doth but cast a look upon the soul, he can recover it: therefore David prays to have a look from God; 'look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me.'¹

7. Christ is the most tender-hearted physician. He hath ended his passion, yet not his compassion. How doth he pity sick souls! he is not more full of skill than sympathy; 'my heart is turned within me.'² Christ shows his compassion in that he doth proportion his physic to the strength of the patient. Physic, if it be too sharp for the constitution, endangers the life. Christ gives such gentle physic as works kindly and savingly. Though he will bruise sinners, yet 'he will not break the bruised reed.' O the soundings of Christ's bowels to poor souls that feel themselves heart-sick with sin! he holds their head and heart when they are fainting; he brings the cordials of his promises to keep the sick patient from dying away. Christians, you perhaps may have hard thoughts of your physician Christ, and think he is cruel, and intends to destroy you; but O the workings of his bowels towards humble broken-hearted sinners! 'he heals the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.'³ Every groan of the patient goes to the heart of this physician.

8. Physicians oft prescribe such physic as is prejudicial to the patient, in two cases; 1. Either in case they find not out the cause of the disease, and then they may give that which is contrary, hot things instead of cooling: or, 2. In case they do find out the cause, they may give that which is good for one thing and bad for another. As it falls out when the liver and spleen are both distempered, the physic which helps the liver may hurt the spleen. But Christ always prescribes that physic which is suitable, and withal he bleaseth the physic. If the disease of the soul be pride, he humbles it with affliction: God turned Nebuchadnezzar to grass, to cure him of his tympany. If the disease of the soul be sloth, Christ applies some awakening scripture.⁴ If the disease be the stone of the heart, Christ useth proper medicines; sometimes the terrors of the law, sometimes mercies, sometimes he dissolves the stone in his own blood. If the soul be fainting through unbelief, Christ brings some scripture cordial to revive it; 'a bruised reed he will not

break;⁵ 'I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.'⁶ Thus the Lord Jesus always prescribes that physic which is proper for the disease, and shall work effectually to the cure.

9. Christ never fails of success. Physicians may have skill, but not always success; patients often die under their hands; but Christ never undertakes to heal any but he makes a certain cure: 'those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.'⁷ Judas was not given to Christ to be healed; but never any who was given to Christ did miscarry.

How shall I know that I am given to Christ to be cured? If it be with thee as with a sick patient, who sees himself dying without a physician. Art thou undone without Christ? dost thou perceive thyself bleeding to death without the balm of Gilead; then thou art one of Christ's sick patients, and thou shalt never miscarry under his hands. How can any of those be lost whom Christ undertakes to cure? as he pours in the balsam of his blood, so he pours out the perfume of his prayers for them: 'holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given me.'⁸ Satan could never upbraid Christ with this, that any of his sick patients were lost.

10. Other physicians can only cure them that are sick, but Christ cures them that are dead: 'you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.'⁹ A sinner hath all the signs of death on him; the pulse of his affections doth not beat, he is without breath, he breathes not after holiness, he is dead; but Christ is a physician for the dead; of every one whom Christ cures, it may be said, 'he was dead and is alive again.'¹⁰

11. Christ cures not only our diseases, but our deformities. The physician can make the sick man well; but if he be deformed, he cannot make him fair. Christ gives not only health, but beauty. Sin hath made us ugly and misshapen; Christ's medicines do not only take away our sickness, but our spots; he doth not only make us whole, but fair: 'I will heal their backslidings;¹¹ 'his beauty shall be as the olive-tree.'¹² Jesus Christ never thinks he hath fully healed us, till he hath drawn his own beautiful image upon us. 'Arise my fair one;¹³ fair with justification, fair with sanctification. Christ

¹ Ps. 119. 132. ² Ho. 11. 8. ³ Ps. 147. 3.

⁴ Mat. 12. 11. Lu. 13. 24. 1 Pe. 4. 18.

⁵ Mat. 12. 20.

⁶ Is. 57. 16.

⁷ Jno. 17. 12.

⁸ Jno. 17. 11.

⁹ Ep. 2. 1.

¹⁰ Lu. 15. 32.

¹¹ Ho. 14. 4.

¹² Ho. 14. 6.

¹³ Ca. 2. 13.

doth not only heal, but adorn: he is called the Sun of righteousness,¹ not only because of the healing under his wings, but because of those rays of beauty which he puts upon the soul.²

12. And lastly, Christ is the most bountiful physician. Other patients do enrich their physicians, but here the physician doth enrich the patient. Christ prefers all his patients; he doth not only cure them, but crown them.³ Christ doth not only raise from the bed, but to the throne; he gives the sick man not only health, but heaven.

USE 1. Good news this day, there is balm in Gilead; there is a physician to heal sin-sick souls; the angels that fell had no physician sent them, we have; there are but few in the world to whom Christ is revealed; they that have the gold of the Indies want the blood of the Lamb; but the Sun of righteousness is risen in our hemisphere, with healing in his wings. If a man were poisoned, what a comfort would it be to him to hear that there was an herb in the garden could heal him! If he had a gangrene in his body, and were given over by all his friends, how glad would he be to hear of a surgeon that could cure him! O sinner, thou art full of peccant humours, thou hast a gangrened soul: but there is a physician that can recover thee: 'there is hope in Israel concerning this;' though there be an old serpent to sting us with his tentations, yet there is a brazen serpent to heal us with his blood.

USE 2. If Christ be a physician, then let us make use of this physician for our diseased souls: 'When the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.'⁴ You that have neglected a physician all this while, now when the sun of the gospel, and the sun of your life is even setting, bring your sick souls to Christ to be cured. Christ complains that though men are sick even to death, yet they will not come or send to the physician; 'ye will not come to me that ye might have life.'⁵ In bodily diseases the physician is the first that is sent to; in soul diseases the physician is the last that is sent to. But here there are many sad objections that poor souls make against themselves, why they do not come to Christ their soul physician.

OBJ. 1. Alas, I am discouraged to go to Christ to cure me, because of my unworthiness;

just like the centurion, who sent to Christ about his sick servant; 'Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof.'⁶ Christ was coming to heal his servant, but the centurion would have staved off Christ from coming: 'I am not worthy.' So saith many a trembling soul, Christ is a physician, but who am I that Christ should come under my roof, or heal me? I am unworthy of mercy: as Mephibosheth said to king David; 'what is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?'⁷ Now to such as have their hearts broken with a sense of their unworthiness, and are discouraged from coming to Christ to heal them, let me say these five things by way of reply. 1. Who did Christ shed his blood for but such as are unworthy? 'Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.'⁸ Christ came into the world as into an hospital, among a company of lame bed-rid souls. 2. Though we are not legally worthy, we may be evangelically; it is part of our worthiness to see our unworthiness; 'fear not, thou worm Jacob.'⁹ Thou mayest be a worm in thine own eye, yet a dove in God's eye. 3. Though we are unworthy, yet Christ is worthy; we do not deserve a cure, but Christ hath merited mercy for us; he hath store of blood to supply our want of tears. 4. Who was ever yet saved because he was worthy? what man could ever plead this title, Lord Jesus heal me, because I am worthy? What worthiness was in Paul before his conversion? what worthiness was there in Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven devils were cast? but free grace did pity and heal them; God doth not find us worthy, but makes us worthy. 5. If we never come to Christ to be healed till we are worthy, we must never come; and let me tell you, this talking of worthiness savours of pride, we would have something of our own; had we such preparations and self-excellencies, then we think Christ would accept of us, and we might come and be healed; this is to fee our physician; O let not the sense of unworthiness discourage: go to Christ to be healed: 'arise, he calleth thee.'¹⁰

OBJ. 2. But I fear I am not within Christ's commission, I am not of the number that shall be saved; and then though Christ be a physician, I shall not be healed. 1. We must take heed of drawing desperate conclusions against ourselves; it is high presumption for us to make ourselves wiser than the angels. All the angels

¹ Ma. 4. 2.² Re. 12. 1.³ Re. 2. 10.⁴ Lu. 7. 6.⁵ 2 Sa. 9. 8.⁶ 1 Ti. 1. 14.⁷ Lu. 4. 40.⁸ Jno. 5. 40.⁹ Is. 41. 14.¹⁰ Mar. 10. 40.

in heaven are not able to resolve this question, Who are elected, and who are reprobated? 2. Thou that sayest thou art not within Christ's commission, read over Christ's commission, see who he comes to heal; 'he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted.'¹ Hath God touched thy heart with remorse? dost thou lay to heart thy gospel unkindnesses? dost thou weep more out of love to Christ, than fear of hell; then thou art a broken-hearted sinner, and art within Christ's commission; a bleeding Christ will heal a broken heart.

OBJ. 3. But my sins are so many that sure I shall never be healed, I am sick of many diseases at once. Thou hast the more need of a physician; one would think that was a strange speech of Peter to Christ, 'depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;'² rather, Lord come near to me. Is it a good argument to say to a physician, I am diseased, therefore depart from me? no, therefore come and heal me. Our sins should serve to humble us, not to beat us from Christ. I tell you, if we had no diseases, Christ would have no work to do in the world.

OBJ. 4. But my disease is inflamed, and grown to a paroxysm; my sin is greatly heightened. The plaster of Christ's blood is broader than thy sore; 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.'³ The blood of the Lamb takes away the poison of the serpent: all diseases are alike to Christ's blood; he can cure the greatest sin as well as the least. Hast thou a bloody issue of sin running? the issue of blood in Christ's side can heal thine.

OBJ. 5. But mine is an old inveterate disease, and I fear it is incurable. Though thy disease be chronical, Christ can heal it. Christ doth not say, if this disease had been taken in time, it might have been cured: he is good at old sores. The thief on the cross had an old festering disease, but Christ cured it; it was well for him his physician was so near. Zaccheus, an old sinner, a custom-house man, he had wronged many a man in his time, but Christ cured him. Christ sometimes grafts his grace upon an old stock. We read Christ cured at sunseting;⁴ he heals some sinners at the sunseting of their lives.

OBJ. 6. But after I have been healed, my disease hath broken out again; I have relapsed into the same sin; therefore I fear there is no healing for me. It is rare that the Lord leaves his children to these relapses, though, through

the suspension of grace, and the prevalency of temptation, it is possible they might fall back into sin; these sins of relapse are sad. It was an aggravation of Solomon's offence, that he sinned after the Lord had appeared to him twice.⁵ These sins after healing, open the mouth of conscience to accuse, and stop the mouth of God's Spirit, which should speak peace. These sins exclude from the comfort of the promise; it is as it were sequestered; but if the soul be deeply humbled, if the relapsing sinner be a relenting sinner, let him not cast away the anchor of hope, but have recourse to his soul-physician; Jesus Christ can cure a relapse, he healed David's and Cranmer's relapse: 'if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ.'⁶ Christ appears in the court as the advocate for the client. As he poured out his blood upon the brazen altar of the cross: so he pours out his prayers at the golden altar in heaven; 'he ever liveth to make intercession for us.'⁷ Christ, in the golden work of intercession, presents the merit of his blood to his Father, and so obtains our pardon, and applies the virtue of his blood to us, and so works our cure; therefore be not discouraged from going to thy physician; though thy disease hath broken out again, yet Christ hath fresh sprinklings of his blood for thee, he can cure a relapse.

OBJ. 7. But there is no healing for me, I fear I have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost? 1. The fear of sinning it, is a sign thou hast not sinned it. 2. Let me ask, why dost thou think thou hast sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost? 'I have grieved the Spirit of God.' Every grieving the Spirit of God is not that fatal sin. We grieve the Spirit when we sin against the illumination of it; the Spirit being grieved, may depart for a time, and carry away all its honey out of the hive, leaving the soul in darkness;⁸ but every grieving the Spirit is not the sin against the Holy Ghost. A child of God when he hath sinned, his heart smites him; and he whose heart smites him for sin, hath not committed the unpardonable sin. A child of God having grieved the Spirit, doth as Noah, when the dove did fly out of the ark, he opened the windows of the ark to let it in again. A godly man doth not shut his heart against the Spirit, as a wicked man doth.⁹ The Spirit of God would come in, he keeps him out; but a gracious soul opens his

¹ Lu. 4. 13. ² Lu. 5. 8. ³ 1 Jno. 1. 7. ⁴ Lu. 4. 40.

⁵ 1 Ki. 11. 9.
⁶ Is. 50. 10.

⁷ 1 Jno. 2. 1.

⁸ He. 7. 25.

⁹ Ac. 7. 51.

heart to let in the Spirit, as Noah opened the door of the ark to let in the dove. Christian, is it not so with thee? then be of good comfort, thou hast not sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; that sin is a malicious despiting of the Spirit, which thou tremblest to think of.

Therefore, laying aside these arguments and disputes, whatever the diseases of the soul are, come to Christ for a cure, believe in his blood, and thou mayest be saved? You see what a skilful and able physician Christ is, what sovereign oils and balsams he hath, how willing he is to cure sick souls; O then what remains, but that you cast yourselves upon his merits to heal and save you! of all sins unbelief is the worst, because it casts disparagement on Christ, as if he were not able to work a cure. O Christian, believe in thy physician, 'that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish.'¹ Say as queen Esther, 'I will go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish.' So say, the Lord Jesus is a physician to heal me, I will adventure on his blood, if I perish, I perish. Queen Esther ventured against the law, she had no promise that the king would hold out the golden sceptre; but I have a promise which invites me to come to Christ: 'he that comes unto me I will in no wise cast him out.'² Faith is a healing grace: we read, when the Israelites were burying a man, for fear of the soldiers of the Moabites, they cast him for haste into the grave of Elisha; now the man, as soon as he was down, and had touched the dead body of the prophet, revived, and stood up on his feet:³ so if a man be dead in sin, yet let him be cast in Christ's grave, and by faith touch Christ, who was dead and buried, he will revive, and his soul will be healed. Remember there is no way for a cure but by believing; Christ himself will not avail us, 'whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.'⁴ Faith is the applying of Christ's merits. A plaster, though it be ever so rare and excellent, yet if it be not applied to the wound, will do no good; though the plaster be made of Christ's blood, yet it will not heal, unless applied by faith. The brazen serpent was a sovereign remedy for the cure of those that were stung; but if they had not looked upon it, they received no benefit: So though there be a healing virtue in Christ, yet unless we look upon him by the eye of faith, we cannot be cured. Above all things labour

for faith; this is the all-healing grace; this hand touching Christ fetcheth virtue from him. Not that faith hath more worthiness than other graces; but only it is influential, as it makes us one with Christ. If a man had a stone in a ring that could cure many diseases, we say this ring heals; but it is not the ring, but the stone in that ring that doth the cure; so faith saves and heals, not by its own virtue, but as it lays hold on Christ, and fetcheth down his sacred influences into the soul.

2. If Jesus Christ be a spiritual physician, let us labour to hasten the cure of our souls. Consider, (1.) What a little time we have to stay here, and let that hasten the cure. Solomon saith, 'there is a time to be born, and a time to die,'⁵ but mentions no time of living; as if that were so short that it were not worth the naming. The body is called a vessel;⁶ this vessel is filled with breath, sickness broacheth it, and death draws it out. O hasten thy soul's cure, death is upon its swift march, and if that surprise you suddenly, there is no cure to be wrought in the grave; 'there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.'⁷ (2.) Now is properly the time of healing, now is the day of grace, now Christ pours out his balsams, now he sends abroad his ministers and Spirit; 'now is the accepted time.'⁸ There were certain healing days, wherein the king healed them that had the evil. The day of grace is a healing day: if we neglect the day of grace, the next day will be a day of wrath.⁹ O therefore hasten the cure of thy soul; rather neglect thy food than thy cure; sin will not only kill, but damn. To get a cure, come to the healing pool of the sanctuary; the Spirit of God may on a sudden stir these waters; the next Sabbath, for ought thou knowest, may be a healing day to thy soul. Pray others to pray for you; when any disease is upon your body you desire the prayers of others; the prayers of the saints are precious balms and medicines to cure sick souls.

3. Is Jesus Christ a soul physician? then let me speak to you who are in some measure healed of your damnable disease. I have four things to say. 1. Break forth into thankfulness; though sin be not quite cured (there are still some grudgings of the disease,) yet the reigning power of it is taken away; you are so healed that you shall not die.¹⁰ Those that were cured by the brazen serpent afterwards

¹ Jno. 3. 15. ² Jno. 6. 37 ³ 2 Ki. 13. 21. ⁴ Ro. 3. 25.

⁵ Ec. 3. 2.

⁶ 1 Th. 4. 4.

⁷ Ec. 9. 10.

⁸ 2 Cor. 6. 2.

⁹ Ro. 2. 5.

¹⁰ Jno. 3. 16. 11. 26.

died; but such as are healed by Christ, shall never die. Sin may molest, it shall not damn; O then what cause have you to admire and love your physician? The Lord Jesus hath taken out the core of your disease, and the curse; publish your experiences; 'I will tell you what God hath done for my soul:' as a man that hath been cured of an old disease, how glad and thankful is he? he will tell others of the medicine that cured him: so say, 'I will tell you what God hath done for my soul:' he hath cured me of an old disease, a hard, unbelieving heart, a disease that hath sent millions to hell. Truly we may cheerfully bear any other sickness, if this soul-sickness be cured; Lord (saith Luther) strike and wound where thou wilt, if sin be pardoned. O! 'let the high praises of God be in your mouth.' God expects thankfulness as a tribute; he wonders men bring not their thank-offering; 'were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?'² 2. Are you healed? take heed of coming into infected company, lest you take the infection; the wicked are devils to tempt to sin. Lot was the world's wonder that lived in Sodom when it was a pest-house, yet did not catch the disease. 3. Take heed of relapses: men are afraid of a relapse after they are cured; beware of soul relapses. Hath God softened thy heart? take heed of hardening it. Hath he cured thee in some measure of deadness? do not relapse into a drowsy security. Thou mayest have such an uproar and agony in thy conscience, as may make thee go weeping to thy grave. O take heed of falling sick again! 'sin no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.'³ 4. Pity your friends that are sick unto death; show your piety in your pity. Hast thou a child that is well and lusty, but hath a sick soul? pity him, pray for him. David wept and fasted for his sick child; thy child hath the plague sore of the heart, and thou hast conveyed the plague to him; weep and fast for thy child. Hast thou a wife or a husband that though they do not keep their bed, yet the Lord knows they are sick, they are under the raging power of sin? O let thy bowels yearn over them! lift up a prayer over them; the prayer of faith may save a sick soul. Prayer is the best physic can

be used in a desperate case; you that have felt the disease of sin, and the mercy of your physician, learn to pity others.

4. And lastly, Is Christ a soul physician? then let us go to Christ to cure this sick, dying nation. Britain, God knows, is a sick patient, 'the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint.' The body politic hath a *cachexy*, it is ill all over: magistracy, ministry, commonalty are diseased; and those who pretend to be our healers, are physicians of no value. We have spent our money upon these physicians, but yet our sores are not healed; 'why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?'⁴ Instead of healing us, those who should have been our physicians, have increased the nation's malady, by giving a toleration; this is like giving strong water in a fever, which doth more inflame the disease. Ah, sick Britain, because sinful Britain! sick of error, uncleanness, drunkenness; so sick, that we may fear our funerals are approaching: and, which is the worst symptom, though balm hath been poured into our wounds, the precious ordinances of God have been applied, yet we are not healed; a sign of bad flesh that is so ill to be cured. This sin-sickness in the land hath produced many direful effects, division, oppression, bloodshed, the very bowels and arteries of the nation are almost torn asunder, so that now God hath fulfilled that threatening upon us; 'I will make thee sick with smiting thee.'⁵ We had made ourselves sick with sinning, and God hath made us sick with smiting. Now what remains, but that we should go to the great physician, whose blood sprinkles many nations, that he should apply some healing medicines to dying Britain; God can with a word heal; he can give repentance as well as deliverance; he can put us in joint again. Let all the people of the land lie between the porch and the altar, saying, 'spare thy people, O Lord.'⁶ Our prayers and tears may set Christ on work to heal us; 'therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his servant stood in the breach to turn away his wrath.'⁷ Let us never leave imploring our heavenly physician, till he lay a fig on England's boil, and cause it to recover.

¹ Ps. 66. 16.² Lu. 17. 17.³ Jno. 5. 14.⁴ Je. 14. 19. ⁵ Mi. 6. 13. ⁶ Jo. 3. 17. ⁷ Ps. 106. 23.

THE BEAUTY OF GRACE.

1 Pet. 1. 2. *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.*

THE blessed apostle having felt the efficacy and sovereignty of grace, is taken up with the thoughts of it; and so sweet is this wine of paradise, that he commends it to those dispersed Christians to whom he writes, wishing them all increase. *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.* The words run in the form of a salutation, 'grace unto you, and peace.' When we salute our friends, we cannot wish them a greater blessing than grace and peace: other mercies lie without the pale, and are dispersed in common to men; but grace is a special congiary and gift bestowed on them who are the favourites of heaven. In the words observe,

1. The connexion. 2. The order.

1. The connexion, Grace and peace. The way to have peace, is to have grace; grace is the breeder of peace; the one is the root, the other the flower; peace is the sweet water that drops from the limbeck of a gracious heart.

2. The order, First grace, then peace; grace hath the priority; grace and peace are two sisters, but grace is the eldest sister; and give me leave at this time to prefer the elder before the younger: 'grace unto you be multiplied.'

For the illustration, consider, 1. What is meant by grace. 2. The author of it. 3. Why it is called grace. 4. The cogeny of it.

I. What is meant by grace. This word GRACE hath various acceptations in scripture.

1. Grace is sometimes taken for the favour of God; 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;'¹ God did cast a gracious aspect upon him. 2. Grace is taken for beauty; as we say such a thing is graceful; 'the flower falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it peri-heth.'² 3. Grace is taken figuratively, and improperly, for the show of grace; as we call that a face in a glass which is but the idea and resemblance of a face; 'many believed in his name.'³ That believing was but a show of faith, as Austin and Theophilact note. 4. Grace is taken in a genuine and proper sense; so in the text, 'grace be multiplied.'

It may admit of this description; grace is the infusion of a new and holy principle into the heart, whereby it is changed from what it was, and is made after God's own heart. Grace

makes not only a civil, but sacred change; it biasseth the soul heaven-ward, and stamps upon it the image and superscription of God.

II. The author or efficient of grace; namely, the Spirit of God, who is therefore called the Spirit of grace.⁴ The spirit is the fountain from whence crystal streams of grace flow. Man, as Clemens Alexandrinus observes, is God's harp or timbrel; the harp will not sound unless touched with the finger; so the heart of man cannot put forth any sweet melody or harmony, till first it be touched with the finger of God's Spirit; this blessed Spirit works grace in the subject, 1. Universally. 2. Progressively.

1. Universally; 'the God of peace sanctify you wholly.'⁵ The Spirit of God infuseth grace into all the faculties of the soul; though grace be wrought but in part, yet in every part, in the understanding light, in the conscience tenderness, in the will consent, in the affections harmony; therefore grace is compared to leaven,⁶ because it swells itself in the whole soul, and makes the conversation to swell and rise as high as heaven.

2. The Spirit of God works grace progressively, he carries it on from one degree to another. The Pelagians hold that the beginning of grace is from God; but the progress of grace is from ourselves; so God shall be the author of our faith, and we the finishers. God shall lay the first stone, and we the superstructure; but alas, there needs the continual influence of the Spirit to the carrying on the work of grace in our hearts. Should God withdraw his Spirit from the most holy men, their grace might fail and annihilate: if the sun withdraw its light, though ever so little, there follows darkness in the air; we need not only habitual grace, but assisting, exciting, subsequent grace. The ship needs not only the sails, but the winds to carry it; there needs not only the sails of our abilities and endeavours, but the wind of the Spirit to blow us to the heavenly port.

III. Why is the work of holiness in the heart called grace? 1. Because it hath a supereminency above nature; it is a flower which doth not grow in nature's garden; it is of a divine

¹ Ge. 6. 8.

² Ja. 1. 11.

³ Jno. 2. 23.

⁴ Ze. 12. 10.

⁵ 1 Th. 5. 10.

⁶ Mat. 13. 33.

extraction.¹ By reason we live the life of men, by grace we live the life of God. 2. It is called grace, because it is a work of free grace; every link in the golden chain of our salvation is wrought and enamelled with free-grace; that one should be sanctified, and not another, this is of grace; that God should pass by many of the noble, rich, learned, and graft his heavenly endowments upon a more wild and luxuriant stock, a crabbed nature, weaker parts, well may it be called grace!

But why is not grace bestowed upon all? We must hold with Zanchy, there is always a just reason of God's will; but in particular, I answer,

1. God gives grace to one, and denies it to another, to show his prerogative: God is not bound to give grace to all; 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.'² Suppose two malefactors brought before the king, one he will pardon, but not the other; if any demand the reason, he will answer, it is my prerogative: so God will give grace to one, not to another; he will make one a vessel of mercy, the other a vessel of wrath, this is his prerogative. The apostle hath silenced all disputes of this kind; 'who art thou that repliest against God? hath not the potter power over the clay?'³ If we could suppose a plant to speak, why was not I made a bird, or a beast? why should not I have reason? just so it is when vain man enters into contest with God; why should not I have grace as well as another? dispute not against prerogative; let not the clay syllogize with the potter.

2. God may justly deny his grace to any wicked man, for two reasons. (1.) Because once he had grace, and lost it; if a father gave his son a stock to trade with, and the son breaks, the father is not bound to set him up again. God gave Adam a stock of grace to begin the world with; Adam did break, and make all his children bankrupts; God is not tied to give him grace again. (2.) God may justly deny his grace to every wicked man, because he is a despiser of grace, he tramples this pearl under foot.⁴ Is God bound to give grace to them that despise it? if a king's pardon be rejected once, he is not bound to tender it any more; but I shall not launch forth any further into this.

IV. The cogency and necessity of grace; it is most needful, because it fits us for communion

with God; 'what communion hath light with darkness?'⁵ God can no more converse with an ungracious soul, than a king can converse with a sow; it is by grace that we keep a constant intercourse with heaven.

USE I. *Exhort.* Let me with the greatest zeal and earnestness persuade all who have souls to save, to endeavour after grace; grace will be desirable at death; it is as useful now, and more seasonable to look after; 'with all thy getting get understanding.'⁶ Alexander being presented with a rich cabinet of king Darius, he reserved it to put Homer's works in, as being of great value. The heart is a spiritual cabinet into which the jewel of grace should be put; we should desire grace above other things; above the gifts of the Spirit; nay, above the comforts of the Spirit. Comfort is sweet, but grace is better than comfort; bread is better than honey; we may go to heaven without comfort, not without grace; it is grace makes us blessed in life and death. I shall show you twelve rare excellencies in grace: I shall set this fair virgin of grace before you, hoping that you will be tempted to fall in love with it.

1. Grace hath a soul-quickenig excellency in it; 'the just shall live by faith.'⁷ Men void of grace are dead; they have breath, yet want life; they are walking ghosts.⁸ The life of sin is the death of the soul; a sinner hath all the signs of one that is dead; he hath no pulse; the affections are the pulse of the soul; his pulse doth not beat after God, he hath no sense; 'being past feeling.'⁹ Dead things have no beauty, there is no beauty in a dead flower; dead things are not capable of privilege; the dead heir is not crowned; but grace is the vital artery of the soul; it doth not only irradiate, but animate; therefore it is called 'the light of life:'¹⁰ and believers are said to have their grave clothes pulled off, and to be alive from the dead.¹¹ By grace the soul is grafted into Christ the true vine,¹² and is made not only living but lively.¹³ Grace puts forth a divine energy into the soul.

2. Grace hath a soul-enriching excellency; 'ye are enriched in all knowledge.'¹⁴ As the sun enricheth the world with its golden beams, so doth knowledge bespangle and enrich the mind. Faith is an enriching grace; 'rich in faith';¹⁵ faith brings Christ's riches into the soul, it entitles to the promises; the promises

¹ 2 Cor. 6. 14. ² Pr. 4. 7. ³ He. 10. 38. ⁴ Ep. 2. 1.
⁵ Ep. 4. 18. ⁶ Jno. 8. 12. ⁷ Ro. 6. 13 ⁸ Jno. 15. 5.
⁹ 1 Pe. 1. 3. ¹⁰ 1 Cor. 1. 5. ¹¹ Ja. 2. 5.

¹ Ja. 3. 17. ² Ro. 9. 15 ³ Ro. 9. 20, 21. ⁴ Pr. 1. 7.

are full of riches, justification, adoption, glory: faith is the key that unlocks this cabinet of the promises, and empties out their treasure into the soul. The riches of grace excel all other riches: 'the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver.'¹ (1.) These riches make a man wise: wisdom is the best possession; other riches cannot make one wise. A man may have a full purse, and an empty brain. Many a rich heir, though he lives till he become of age, yet he never comes to years of discretion: but these riches of grace have power to make a man wise; 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.'² The saints are compared to wise virgins.³ Grace makes a man wise to know Satan's devices and subtleties;⁴ it makes him wise unto salvation;⁵ it gives the serpent's eye in the dove's head. (2.) These spiritual riches sanctify other riches. Riches without grace are hurtful, they are golden snares; they are the bellows of pride, the fuel of lust; they set open hell gates for men; they are unblest blessings; but grace sanctifies our riches, it corrects the poison, it takes away the curse, it makes them beneficial to us; riches shall be certificates of God's love, wings to lift us up to paradise. Thus grace, by a divine chemistry, extracts heaven out of earth, and gives us not only venison but the blessing. (3.) Grace satisfies; other riches cannot. Riches can no more fill the heart, than a triangle can fill a circle; but grace fills up every chink and hiatus of the soul; it dilates the heart, it ravisheth the affections with joy, which joy, as Chrysostom saith, is a foretaste of heaven.

3. Grace hath a soul adorning excellency, it puts a beauty and lustre upon a person; 'whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price; for after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves.'⁶ If a man hath plate and jewels, cloth of gold, hangings of arras, these adorn the house, not the man: the glory of a man is grace; 'she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace.'⁷ The graces are a chain of pearl that adorns Christ's bride; the heart inlaid and enamelled with grace, is like the 'King's daughter, all glorious within.'⁸ A gracious soul is the image of God, curiously drawn with the pencil of

the Holy Ghost; a heart beautified with grace, is the angels' joy,⁹ and is God's lesser heaven.¹⁰ Reason doth not so far exceed sense, as grace doth reason; grace changeth corruption into perfection; nothing so graceth a man as grace doth; grace is the purest complexion of the soul, for it makes it like God. Grace is the flower of delight which Christ loves to smell to; grace is to the soul, as the eye to the body, as the sun to the world, as the diamond to the ring, it doth bespangle and beautify. A soul decked with grace, is as the dove covered with silver wings, and golden feathers.

4. Grace hath a soul-cleansing excellency. By nature we are defiled; sin is an impure issue, it is a befiling thing.¹¹ A sinner's heart is so black, that nothing but hell can pattern it; but grace is a spiritual laver; therefore it is called 'the washing of regeneration.'¹² The grace of repentance cleanseth; Mary's tears, as they washed his feet, so they washed her heart; faith hath a cleansing virtue; 'having purified their hearts by faith.'¹³ Grace lays the soul a-whitening, it takes out the leopard spots, and turns the cypress into an azure beauty. Grace is of a celestial nature; though it doth not wholly remove sin, it doth subdue it; though it doth not keep sin out, it keeps it under; though sin in a gracious soul doth not die perfectly, yet it dies daily. Grace makes the heart a spiritual temple, which hath this inscription upon it, 'holiness to the Lord.'

5. Grace hath a soul-strengthening excellency, it enables a man to do that which exceeds the power of nature. Grace teacheth to mortify our sins, to love our enemies, to prefer the glory of Christ before our own lives. Thus the three children by the power of grace marched in the face of death; neither the sound of the music could allure them, nor the heat of the furnace affright them.¹⁴ Grace is a Christian's armour of proof, which doth more than any other armour can; it not only defends him, but puts courage into him. Tertullian calls Athanasius an invincible adamant; grace makes us not only bear suffering, but glory in suffering.¹⁵ A soul steeled and animated with grace, can tread upon the lion and adder,¹⁶ and with the leviathan, can laugh at the shaking of a spear.¹⁷ Thus doth grace infuse an heroic spirit, and drive strength into a man, making him act above the sphere of nature.

¹ Pr. 3, 14. ² Ps. 111, 10. ³ Mat. 25. ⁴ 2 Cor. 2, 11.

⁵ 2 Ti. 3, 15.

⁶ 1 Pe. 3, 4, 5.

⁷ Pr. 4, 9.

⁸ Ps. 15, 13.

⁹ Lu. 15, 7.

¹² Tit. 3, 5.

¹⁵ Ro. 5, 3.

¹⁰ Is. 57, 15. Ep. 3, 17.

¹³ Ac. 15, 9.

¹⁶ Ps. 93, 13.

¹¹ 2 Cor. 7, 1

¹⁴ Da. 3, 17.

¹⁷ Job 41, 29

6. Grace hath a soul-raising excellency; it is a divine sparkle that ascends; when the heart is divinely touched with the load-stone of the Spirit, it is drawn up to God: 'the way of life is above to the wise.'¹ Grace raiseth a man above others; he lives in the altitudes, while others creep on the earth, and are almost buried in it; a Christian by the wings of grace flies aloft; the saints 'mount up as eagles.'² A believer is a citizen of heaven, there he trades by faith: grace shoots the heart above the world.³ Grace gives us conformity to Christ, and communion with Christ; 'our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus.'⁴ A man full of grace, hath Christ in his heart, and the world under his feet; grace humbles, yet elevates.

7. Grace hath a perfuming excellency; it makes us a sweet odour to God. Hence grace is compared to those spices which are most odoriferous and fragrant. 'Myrrh, cinnamon, frankincense.'⁵ There is a double perfume that grace sends forth. (1.) It perfumes our names; 'by faith the elders obtained a good report.'⁶ Grace was the spice which perfumed their names. How renowned was Abraham for his faith, Moses for his meekness, Phinehas for his zeal? what a fresh perfume do their names send forth to this day! the very wicked cannot but see a resplendent majesty in the graces of the saints; and though with their tongues they revile grace, yet with their hearts they reverence it. Thus grace is aromatical, it embalms the names of men; a gracious person when he dies, carries a good conscience with him, and leaves a good name behind him. (2.) Grace perfumes our duties; 'let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.'⁷ Noah's sacrifice was a perfume;⁸ the Lord smelled a sweet savour. The sighs of a wicked man are an unsavoury breath, his solemn sacrifice is dung.⁹ There is such a noisome stench comes from a sinner's duties, that God will not come near; 'I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.'¹⁰ Who can endure the smell of a dead corpse? but grace gives a fragraney and redolency to our holy things; 'by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, God testifying of his gifts.'¹¹ Abel's sacrifice was better scented, God smelled a sweet savour of it; for he testified of his gifts. If it be asked what this testimony was God gave of Abel's sacrifice? Hieron saith, God set his sacrifice on fire;¹² so from

heaven testifying his acceptance of Abel's offering; and if grace doth so perfume you, wear this flower, not in your bosoms, but in your hearts.

8. Grace hath a soul-ennobling excellency, it doth ennoble a man: grace makes us vessels of honour, it sets us above princes and nobles. Theodosius thought it more dignity to be Christ's servant, and wear his livery laced with the silver graces of the Spirit, than to be great and renowned in the world; 'since thou wert precious in my sight thou hast been honourable.'¹³ Sin doth debase a man; Christ tells wicked men their pedigree, 'ye are of your father the devil:'¹⁴ they may put the cloven foot in their scutcheon. An ungracious person is a vile person; 'I will make thy grave, for thou art vile:'¹⁵ the Hebrew word for vile signifies to be lightly esteemed: there is nothing so vile but an ungracious man will do; he is ductile and facile to any thing, like wire, which will be bent awry; he will snare his conscience, stain his credit, run as a lackey after the sinful injunctions of men; but grace ennobles; he who is divinely inspired, as he is high born, so he acts suitably to his birth; he hates whatever is disingenuous and sordid. The saints are called kings and priests for their dignity,¹⁶ and jewels for their value.¹⁷

9. Grace hath a soul-securing excellency, it brings safety along with it. You all desire to be safe in dangerous times; if sword or pestilence come, if death peep in at your windows, would you not now be safe; nothing will secure you in times of danger but grace; grace is the best life-guard; it sets Christians out of gunshot, and frees them from the power of hell and damnation; 'righteousness delivers from death.'¹⁸ Do not righteous men die? yes, but righteousness delivers from the sting of the first death, and the fear of the second. It was the saying of one, 'I am not afraid to die, but to be damned;' but here is a believer's comfort, the fire of God's wrath can never kindle upon him; grace is God's own image stamped on the soul, and he will not destroy his own image. Xerxes, the Persian, when he destroyed all the temples in Greece, he caused the temple of Diana to be preserved for its beautiful structure; that soul which hath the beauty of holiness shining in it, shall be preserved for the glory of the structure; God will not suffer his own temple to be destroyed. Would you be secured in evil times? get grace and fortify this garri-

Pr. 15. 24. ² Is. 40. 31. ³ Ps. 139. 17. Ph. 3. ult. ⁴ 1 Jno. 1. 3.
⁵ Ca. 4. 13. ⁶ He. 11. 2. ⁷ Ps. 141. 2. ⁸ Ge. 8. 21.
⁹ Ma. 2. 3. ¹⁰ Am. 5. 21. ¹¹ He. 11. 4. ¹² 1 Ki. 18. 38.

¹³ Is. 63. 4.
¹⁶ Re. 1. 6.

¹⁴ Jno. 8. 44.
¹⁷ Mal. 3. 17.

¹⁵ Na. 1. 14.
¹⁸ Pr. 10. 2

son; a good conscience is a Christian's fort-royal. David's enemies lay round about him; yet, saith he, 'I laid me down and slept.'¹ A good conscience can sleep in the mouth of a cannon; grace is a Christian's coat of mail, which fears not the arrow or bullet. True grace may be shot at, but can never be shot through; grace puts the soul into Christ, and there it is safe, as the bee in the hive, as the dove in the ark; 'there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.'²

10. Grace hath a heart-establishing excellency; 'it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.'³ Before the infusion of grace, the heart is like a ship without a ballast; it wavers and tosseth, being ready to overturn: therefore a man void of grace is called a double-minded man;⁴ he acts for and against, as if he had two souls; he is unresolved, to-day of one mind, to-morrow of another; to-day he will hear a preacher that is orthodox, to-morrow one that is heterodox: he will be as the times are, and change his religion as fast as the chameleon doth his colour. Hearts unsanctified will be unsettled; they will face about to the rising side; they will follow not what is best, but what is safest; they are not for that religion which hath the word to guide it, but for that which hath the sword to back it; this Seneca calls a mind that rolls up and down, and settles no where. But grace doth consolidate and fix the heart; 'my heart is fixed, O God.'⁵ Hypocrites are like meteors in the air; David was a fixed star: grace keeps the heart upright; and the more sincere, the more steadfast; grace carries the heart to God as the centre, and there it rests.⁶ A gracious heart cleaves to God, and let whatever changes come, the soul is settled as a ship at anchor.

11. Grace hath a preparatory excellency in it; it prepares and fits for glory. Glory is the highest peg of our felicity, it transcends all our thoughts; glory can have no hyperbole. Now grace tunes and fits the soul for glory; 'who hath called us to glory and virtue.'⁷ Virtue leads to glory. First you cleanse the vessel, and then pour in wine. God doth first cleanse us by his grace, and then pour in the wine of glory; the silver link of grace draws the golden link of glory after it: indeed grace differs little from glory; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the flower. In short, glory is nothing else but grace commencing and taking its degrees.

12. Grace hath an abiding excellency; temporal things are for a season, but grace hath eternity stamped upon it, it is called durable riches.⁸ Other riches take wings and fly from us; grace takes wings and flies with us to heaven. Some tell us of falling away from grace; I grant seeming grace may be lost; a blazing comet will spend and evaporate; nay, saving grace may fail in the degree, it may suffer an eclipse, it may lose all its sweet fruit of joy and peace; but still there is sap in the vine, and 'the seed of God remains.'⁹ Grace is a blossom of eternity; 'the anointing that abides.'¹⁰ Colours laid in oil are durable; those hearts which are laid in oil, and have the anointing of God, hold their colours, and endure for ever. Grace is compared to a 'river of the water of life;'¹¹ this river can never be dried up, for the Spirit of God is the spring that feeds it. Grace is not like a lease which soon expires; so the Pelagians would make it; to-day a believer, to-morrow an unbeliever; to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified; this would be like a lease soon run out; but God settles grace on the saints as an inheritance, and he will see that the entail shall never be cut off. He who hath true grace, can no more fall away than the angels, which are fixed stars in their heavenly orbs.

The arguments to prove the perpetuation of grace are: (1.) God's election; this I ground upon 'whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate.'¹² Predestination is the grand cause of the saints' preservation; God chooseth as well to salvation as to faith.¹³ What shall make God's election void? (2.) The power of God; 'we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.'¹⁴ I deny not but grace in itself may perish, (our grace is no better coin than Adam's,) but grace in God's keeping cannot; the saints' graces of themselves may break as glasses, but these glasses in the hand of God never break. (3.) God's solemn engagement; the Lord hath passed it under hand and seal; he hath given bond for the saints' perseverance; I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, and they shall not depart from me.¹⁵ A believer's charter is confirmed under the broad seal of heaven; and if grace doth not endure to eternity, it is either because God wants power to make good what he hath decreed, or truth to make good what he hath promised; either

¹ Ps. 3. 5. ² Ro. 8. 1. ³ He. 13. 9. ⁴ Ja. 1. 8.
⁵ Ps. 57. 7. ⁶ Ps. 116. Ps. 7. ⁷ 2 Pe. 1. 3.

⁸ Pr. 8. 18. ⁹ 1 Jno. 3. 4. ¹⁰ 1 Jno. 2. 27. ¹¹ Jno. 7. 38.
¹² Ro. 8. 29, 30. ¹³ 2 Th. 2. 13. ¹⁴ 1 Pe. 1. 5. ¹⁵ Je. 32. 40.

of which to assert were blasphemy. (4.) Besides all this, Jesus Christ, our blessed high priest, who hath the golden plate on his forehead, appears in the court; and as he poured out blood on the cross, so he pours forth prayers in heaven for the saints' perseverance; 'he ever liveth to make intercession for them.'¹ And Christ is not only a priest, but a son; therefore likely to prevail; and which puts the matter out of doubt. What Christ prays for as he is man, he hath power to give as he is God: 'Father, I will:'² 'Father,' there he prays as man; 'I will,' there he gives as God. So that grace is an abiding thing; Christians, you may lose your friends, your estates, your lives, but you shall never lose your grace. Those who hold falling away from grace, would make a believer wear Cain's mark, which was a continual shaking and trembling in his flesh; they would spill a Christian's cordial, and break a link of the chain of salvation.

2. USE. Trial: let us try whether our grace be true; there is something looks like grace which is not. Chrysostom saith the devil hath a counterfeit chain to all the graces, and he would deceive us with it. Lapidaries have ways to try their precious stones; let us try our grace by a scripture touchstone: the painted Christian shall have a painted paradise. 1. The truth of grace is seen by a displacency and antipathy against sin; 'I hate every false way:'³ grace sets itself against complexion sins,⁴ and against the sins of the times.⁵ 2. Grace is known by the growth of it, growth evidenceth life. Dead things grow not; a picture will not grow; a hypocrite, who is but a picture of religion, doth not grow; a good Christian grows in love to Christ, in humility, in good works; 'he shall grow as the lily, his branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.'⁶ When the Spirit of God distils as dew upon the soul, it makes grace flourish, and put forth into maturity. 3. True grace will make us willing to suffer for Christ. Grace is like gold, it will abide the 'fiery trial.' And if upon a serious scrutiny and trial we find that we have the right jewel, 'the grace of God in truth,' this will be a deathbed cordial; we may with Simeon, 'depart in peace' being assured that though we cannot resist death, yet we shall overcome it.

USE 3. Direction. Let me lay down two or

three directions for the attaining of grace. 1. If we would be enriched with this jewel of grace, let us take pains for it; we are bid to make a hue and cry after knowledge, and to search for it, as a man that searcheth for a vein of gold. Our salvation cost Christ blood, it will cost us sweat. 2. Let us go to God for grace; he is called 'the God of all grace.'⁷ We could lose grace of ourselves, but we cannot find it of ourselves. The sheep can wander from the fold, but cannot return without the help of the shepherd; go to the God of all grace; God is the first planter, the promoter, the perfecter of grace; God is the Father of lights.⁸ He must light up this candle of grace in the soul; grace is in his gift; it is not an impropriation, but a donative: O then go to God in prayer, lay thy heart before him; Lord, I want grace; I want an humble, believing heart, and thou art 'the God of all grace, all my springs are in thee.' O enrich me with grace, deny me not this before I die: what is gold in the bag, if I have no oil in the lamp? give me 'that anointing of God.' I read in thy word of 'the fruits of the Spirit;' Lord, my heart is a barren soil, plant some of these supernatural fruits in me, that I may be more useful and serviceable; Lord, I cannot be put off with other things. Who wilt thou give grace to, if not to such as ask, and are resolved not to give over asking? 3. If you would have grace, engage the prayers of others in your behalf; he is like to be rich, who hath several stocks going; he is in the way of spiritual thriving, who hath several stocks of prayer going for him. If you had a child that were sick, you would beg the prayers of others; thou hast a soul that is sick, sick of pride, lust, 'sick unto death;' O beg the prayers of godly friends, that God will heal thee with his grace; a Moses and Jacob have much power with God: believers can prevail sometimes not only for themselves, but for their friends.⁹ A godly man's prayers may do you more good than if he should bestow upon you all his lands of inheritance. 4. If you would have grace, frequent the means of grace, lie at the pool of Bethesda, wait at the posts of wisdom's door. Inward grace is wrought by outward means; the preaching of the word is God's engine that he useth for working grace; it is called 'the rod of his strength,'¹⁰ and 'the breath of his lips.'¹¹ By this he causeth breath to enter; out of this golden pipe of the sanctuary, God

¹ He. 7. 25.² Jno. 17. 24.³ Ps. 119. 104.⁴ Ps. 18. 23.⁵ Re. 2. 2.⁶ Ps. 92. 12. Ro. 11. 5.⁷ 1 Pe. 5. 10.⁸ Ja. 1. 17.⁹ Ja. 5. 16.¹⁰ Ps. 110. 2.¹¹ Is. 11. 4.

empties the golden oil of grace into the soul; the ministry of the gospel is called 'the ministry of the Spirit,' because the Spirit of God ordinarily makes use of this to work grace; this ministry of the Spirit is to be preferred before the ministry of angels.

Why is the word preached the ordinary means to convey grace? why not conference or reading? The reason is, because God hath appointed it to this end, and he will grace his own ordinances; 'it pleased God.'² What reason could be given why the waters of Damascus should not have as sovereign virtue to heal Naaman's leprosy as the waters of Jordan?

only this, because the Lord did appoint and sanctify the one to this work, and not the other; if therefore we would have grace, let us wait where the manna falls, and there expect the dew of the Spirit to fall with manna; the power of God goes along with his word. How should we delight in ordinances! Sleidan saith there was a church in France formerly, which the Protestants called Paradise; as if they thought themselves in paradise while they were in the house of God; those ordinances should be our paradise, which are 'the power of God to salvation.'

THE TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BLOSSOMING, AND BRINGING FORTH FRUIT.

PHIL. 1. 11. *'Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.'*

THE blessed apostle in this chapter makes a solemn prayer to God for these Philippians; and amongst the rest, he puts up two rare petitions for them. 1. That they might be sincere. 2. That they might be fruitful; in the words of the text, 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness,' &c. Where is observable, 1. The matter, 'being filled with fruits.' 2. The manner of production, 'by Jesus Christ.' 3. The end, 'which are to the glory and praise of God.' Doctrine. From whence this great truth doth result, 'that Christians should above all things endeavour after fruitfulness.' The saints are called 'trees of righteousness.'³ These rational trees must not only bring forth leaves, but fruit; 'being filled with the fruits of righteousness. For the further amplifying of this, there are two things to be inquired into. 1. How a Christian brings forth fruit. 2. What is the fruit he brings forth.

I. How a Christian brings forth fruit. I answer; he brings forth fruit 'in the vine;' by nature we are barren; there is not one good blossom growing on us; but when by faith we are ingrafted into Christ, then we grow and fructify; 'as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.'⁴ Jesus Christ is that blessed root which shoots up that sap of grace into his branches. The Pelagians tell us we have sufficiency of ourselves to bring forth

good fruit: but how improper is this? doth not the root contribute to the branches? is it not of Christ's precious fulness that we receive?⁵ Therefore it is observable Christ calls the spouse's grace his grace; 'I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.'⁶ Christ saith not, thy myrrh, but my myrrh. If the saints bear any spiritual fruit, they are beholden to Christ for it, it is his myrrh; 'from me is thy fruit found.'

II. What that fruit is which a good Christian brings forth. It is, 1. Inward fruit. 2. Outward fruit. 3. Kindly fruit. 4. Seasonable fruit.

1. A Christian brings forth inward fruit: 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.'⁷ This fruit is sweet, and mellow, growing under the Sun of righteousness; this is that ripe fruit God delights to taste of.⁸

2. A Christian brings forth outward fruit. (1.) The fruit of good discourse; 'a wholesome tongue is a tree of life.'⁹ Gracious speeches fall from the lips of a godly man, as fruit from a tree. (2.) The fruit of good works.¹⁰ God will say at the last day, show me thy faith by thy works.¹¹ A true saint doth all the good he can, 'honouring the Lord with his substance;' he knows he is to be in the world but a while, therefore lives much in a little time, and crowds up a great deal of work in a little room; it was Christ's speech not long before his suffering, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest

¹ 2 Cor. 8. ² 1 Cor. 1. 21. ³ Is. 61. 3. ⁴ Jno. 15. 4.

⁵ Jno. 1. 16. ⁶ Ca. 5. 1. ⁷ Ho. 14. 8. ⁸ Ga. 5. 22.
⁹ Mi. 7. 1. ¹⁰ Pr. 15. 4. ¹¹ Col. 1. 10. ¹² Jn. 2. 19.

me to do.¹ How can they be said to finish their work, that never yet began a good work?

3. A Christian brings forth kindly fruit. The godly man bringeth forth his fruit;² that is, he brings forth that fruit which is proper for him to bear. But what is this kindly and proper fruit? I answer, when we are good in our callings and relations: in a magistrate, justice is kindly fruit;³ in a minister, zeal;⁴ in a parent, instruction;⁵ in a child, reverence;⁶ in a master, good example;⁷ in a servant, obedience:⁸ in the husband, love;⁹ in the wife, submission;¹⁰ in a tradesman, diligence;¹¹ in a soldier, innocence.¹² A tree of God's planting brings forth his fruit, that which is suitable and proper. I shall never believe him to be good, that doth not bear kindly fruit; a good Christian, but a bad master; a good Christian, but a bad parent, doth not sound well. That minister can no more be good which wants zeal, than that wine is good which wants spirits; that magistrate can no more be good which wants justice, than that pillar is good which is not upright. That child can no more be good who doth not honour his parent, than a traitor can be said to be loyal. When Absalom did rise up in rebellion against his father, the mule which he rode upon (as if she were weary of carrying such a burden) resigns up her load to the great thick oak, and there left him hanging by the head betwixt heaven and earth, as neither fit to ascend the one, nor worthy to tread upon the other. Let Christians be persuaded to bring forth proper and genuine fruit, and shine forth in their relations: consider, (1.) He who is not good in his relations, goes under the just suspicion of an hypocrite; let a man seem to be a penitent, or zealot, yet if he bear not fruit proper to his station, he is no tree of righteousness, but some wild degenerate plant. There are some will pray, hear sermons, discourse well; this is good; but 'what means the bleating of the sheep?' they are not good in their relations; this discovers they are foundered and unsound. A good Christian labours to fill his relations, and to go through all the parts of religion, as the sun through all the signs of the zodiac. I like not those Christians, who, though they seem to be travelling to heaven, yet leave the duties of their relations as a *terra incognita*, which they never come near. (2.) The excellency of a Christian is to bring forth proper

fruit; wherein lies the goodness of a member in the body, but to discharge its proper office? the eye is to see, the ear to hear, &c. So the excellency of a Christian is to bring forth that fruit which God hath assigned to him: what is a thing good for which doth not do its proper work? what is a clock good for that will not strike? what is a ship good for that will not sail? what is a rose good for that doth not smell; what is that professor good for that doth not send forth a sweet perfume in his relation? the commendation of a thing is when it puts forth its proper virtue. (3.) Not to bring forth suitable fruit, spoils all the other fruit which we bring forth. If a man were to make a medicine, and should leave out the chief ingredient, the medicine would lose its virtue. If one were to draw a picture, and should leave out an eye, it would spoil the picture; there are many to whom Christ will say at the day of judgment as to the young man, 'yet lackest thou one thing.'¹³ Thou hast prayed, and fasted, and heard sermons, 'yet lackest thou one thing,' thou hast not been good in thy relations. (4.) Relative graces do much beautify and set off a Christian: it is the beauty of a star to shine in its proper orb; relative grace doth bespangle a Christian.

5. A good Christian brings forth seasonable fruit,¹⁴ he that bringeth forth fruit in his season; every thing is beautiful in his time.¹⁵ That may be good at one time, which at another may be out of season. There is a great deal of skill in the right timing of a thing; duties of religion must be performed in the fit juncture of time.

(1.) Christian duties that relate to our neighbour must be observed in their season. Our reproving others must be seasonable. Reproof is a duty; when we see others walk irregularly, like soldiers that march out of rank and file, we ought mildly, yet gravely, to tell them of their sin,¹⁶ but let this fruit be brought forth in its season. Do it privately; 'go and tell him his faults between him and thee alone.'¹⁷ Do it when thou seest him in the best temper, not when his passions are up; that were pouring oil on the flame; but when his spirit is meekened and calmed; you put the seal on the wax when it is soft and pliable; there is a time when men's spirits are more flexible and yielding; now is the fittest time to stamp a reproof upon them, and it is likeliest to take impression. When Abigail reproved Nabal, it was in the

¹ Jno. 17. 4. ² Ps. 1. 3. ³ De. 16. 19. ⁴ Ac. 17. 16.
⁵ De. 4. 10. ⁶ Ep. 6. 1. ⁷ Ge. 18. 19. ⁸ Ep. 6. 9. ⁹ 1 Pe. 2. 18.
¹⁰ Ep. 5. 25. ¹¹ Ep. 5. 22. ¹² Ex. 20. 9. ¹³ Lu. 3. 14.

¹⁴ Lu. 18. 22.

¹⁵ Ps. 1. 3.

¹⁶ Ec. 3. 11.

¹⁷ Mat. 18. 15.

right season; not when he was in wine, but when he was in his wits, and was fit to hear a reproof.¹ Another season for reproof is in the time of affliction: affliction tames men's spirits, and now a word of reproof spoken prudentially may work with the affliction: a bitter potion is not refused if in case of extremity of pain. Affliction opens the ear to discipline. Our comforting others must be seasonable; 'a word spoken in due season, how good is it?'² When we see one fallen into sin, and with Peter weeping bitterly, O now a word of comfort will do well. The incestuous Corinthian being deeply humbled, the apostle calls for oil and wine to be poured into his wounds; 'ye ought rather to comfort him,'³ and the reason is given, 'lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up of sorrow.' When the soul is wounded for sin, now bring the mollifying ointment of a promise;⁴ hang out free grace's colours, display the glory of God's attributes; his mercy and truth to the sinner; when the spirit is broken, a word of comfort spoken in season, is the putting it in joint again, this is to bring forth seasonable fruit, when we give wine to them that are of a heavy heart; 'pleasant words are as an honey-comb, sweet to the soul.' Job's friends pretended to comfort him, but instead of pouring oil into the wound, they poured in vinegar.

(2.) Duties of religion that relate to God must be performed in their season. Mourning for sin is a duty; God loves a contrite heart;⁵ how powerful with God is the weeping rhetoric that a poor sinner useth! but yet there is a time when weeping may not be so seasonable; when God hath given us some eminent signal deliverance, and this mercy calls aloud to us to rejoice, but we hang our harps on the willows and sit weeping; this sadness is fruit out of season; there was a special time at the feast of tabernacles, when God called his people to rejoicing; 'seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God, and thou shalt surely rejoice.' Now, if the Israelites had sat heavy and disconsolate at that time when God called them to rejoicing, it had been very unseasonable, like mourning at a wedding; when we are called to thanksgiving, and we mingle our drink with tears, is not this to be highly unthankful for mercy? God would have his people humble, but not ungrateful. It is the devil's policy either to keep us from duty, or

else to put us upon it when it is least in season. Rejoicing is a duty;⁶ but when God by some special providence calls us to weeping, now joy is unseasonable; this is that which God complains of; 'in that day did the Lord of hosts call to weeping, and behold joy and gladness,'⁷ &c. Œcolampadius and others think it was in the time of king Ahaz, when the signs of God's anger, like a blazing star, did appear; now to be given to mirth was very unseasonable; 'surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts';⁸ it is a concise form of an oath, as if God had said, I swear it shall not by any prayer or sacrifice be expiated; the fruit of joy must be brought forth in its season. To read at home, when the word is a-preaching, or the sacrament celebrating, is unseasonable, nay sinful; as Hushai said, 'the counsel is not good at this time:'⁹ one duty is to prepare for another, but not to jostle out another; fruit must put forth seasonably. The great God who hath appointed the duties of his worship, hath appointed also the time. If, when public ordinances are administered, any person, whether out of pride or sloth, shall stay at home, though he may have his private devotions, yet he brings forth fruit out of season, and let that man know he shall bear his sin.

Let all the trees of righteousness bring forth seasonable fruit; in prosperity be thankful, in adversity patient. 'To every thing there is a season.'¹⁰ The Psalmist saith, 'he appointed the moon for seasons.'¹¹ To excite to seasonable fruit, consider, 1. The seasonableness of a thing puts a value and preciousness upon it. Duties of religion performed in their season are glorious. 2. Creatures, by the instinct of nature, observe their season; 'yea the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle,¹² &c. and shall not Christians observe their seasons, when to mourn, when to rejoice? 3. Duties of religion not well timed are dangerous: mourning in a time of joy, private duties in time of public, is unseasonable, and will prove prejudicial.

USE I. *Information.* It shows us who is a Christian in God's calendar, namely, the fruit bearing Christian. As soon as the sap of grace is infused, it puts forth itself in evangelical fruit. No sooner was Paul converted, but he became a plant of renown, he did bring forth rare fruit, humility, faith, heavenly-mindedness; he was

¹ 1 Sa. 25, 37.² Pr. 15, 23.³ 2 Cor. 2, 7.⁴ Ps. 33, 1. ⁷ Is. 22, 12. ⁸ Is. 22, 14. ⁹ 2 Sa. 17, 7.⁵ Je. 3, 1.⁶ Ps. 51, 17.¹⁰ Ec. 3, 1.¹¹ Ps. 101, 19.¹² Je. 8, 7.

one of the most fruitful trees that ever God planted in his vineyard. The jailer, when God had changed him from a wild tree, to a tree of righteousness, brought forth sweet and generous fruit. How kindly did he use the apostles? he set meat before them, and washed their wounds; he who was before their jailer, becomes now their nurse and physician.

USE 2. *Reproof.* Here is an endictment against three sorts.

1. Such as bring forth no fruit; 'Israel is an empty vine.'¹ O how many unfruitful hearers are there, who evaporate into nothing but froth and fume, being like those ears which run out all into straw! they give God neither the early fruit nor the latter. There are many Christians like arbours, covered only with the leaves of profession; they may be compared to the wood of the vine, which is good for nothing. He who hath not the fruits of the Spirit, hath not the Spirit, and 'he who hath not the Spirit is none of Christ's,'² and if he be not Christ's, whose is he then? I fear the sin of this age is unfruitfulness. Never more labouring in God's vineyard, and yet never less fruit; instead of the fig-tree and the pomegranate, we have abundance of barren willows growing among us; ministers say they fear they 'spend their labour in vain;' many are perverted, few converted. To the unfruitful Christian let me say four things. (1.) Unfruitfulness is a shame: barrenness of old was counted a great shame. For a tree in winter to be unfruitful is no great wonder; but in the spring and summer, to be without fruit, is a reproach to the tree: so, in the winter of ignorance and popery, to have less fruit was less culpable; but in the spring-time of the gospel, when the Sun of Righteousness hath shined so gloriously in our horizon, now to be without fruit is a reproach not to be wiped away. (2.) What account can the unfruitful Christian give to God? God will come with this question, where is your fruit? a godly man dies full of fruit; 'thou shalt come to thy grave in full age, like as a shock of corn,'³ &c. The unfruitful Christian comes to his grave, not as a shock of corn, but as a bundle of straw, fit only for the fire; it is good to bethink ourselves what answer we shall give to God for our barrenness. The Lord hath planted us in a rich soil; he may say to us as to his vineyard, 'my beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it, and planted it with the choicest

vines,'⁴ &c. 'and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes;' (in a hill) hilly places are judged the fittest for vines to grow in,⁵ there the sun comes best, and is of more force for ripening the grapes. In a fruitful hill, that is, in a very fat, rich soil. So may God say to us, I have planted you in a hilly place, you have been higher than the nations round about you, you have been lifted up to heaven with ordinances; the sunbeams of mercy, and Sion's silver drops, have fallen upon you; but where is your fruit? your enjoyments are great, but what are your improvements? whom God finds without fruit, he leaves without excuse. (3.) They that do not bring forth good fruit, shall never taste of the fruits that grow in heaven. Heaven is the garden of God, the paradise of pleasure, where the most rare delicious fruits grow; there are fruits that the angels themselves delight to feed on: now, if you do not bring God *your* fruit, you shall never taste *his* fruit: you that do not bring forth the fruits of righteousness, shall never taste the fruits of paradise. O present Christ with your sweet spices, give him your myrrh, your spiced wine; your myrrh, that is, repentance; this, though it be bitter to you, is sweet to Christ. Those who have no myrrh or wine to give to God, shall never feed upon the Tree of Life, which bears several sorts of fruit. (4.) Think of the heavy doom which will be passed upon the unfruitful person, 'cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.'⁶ This man had not embezzled his talent, but because he did not trade with it, and bring forth fruit, he is therefore sentenced.

2. It reproves such as bring forth evil fruit. They are not the trees of the garden, but the wilderness; their hearts are a fruitful soil for sin, they bring forth pride, malice, superstition, &c.

3. It reproves such as bring forth good fruit, but to a bad end; 'Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself:'⁷ a man had as good bring forth no fruit, as bring forth fruit unto himself. What is it for one to bring forth fruit unto himself? When all the good he doth is for the magnifying of himself; the worm of pride gets into his fruit and spoils it. Prayer is good; but when a man prays only to show his parts, this is to bring forth fruit unto himself: some pride it in their humbling confessions, which is as if Benhadad's servants had

¹ Ho. 10. 1.² Ro. 8. 9.³ Job 5. 26.⁴ Is. 5. 1.⁵ Ps. 60. 10.⁶ Mat. 25. 30.⁷ Ho. 10. 1.

been proud when they came before the king with ropes upon their heads.¹ Works of mercy are good, but when a man gives alms, not so much to feed the poor, as to feed his pride, now he brings forth fruit to himself, and this fruit is worm-eaten. God will say to all such self-seekers, as once he did to the people of the Jews, 'when ye fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?'² Sinners, did ye not bring forth fruit unto yourselves?

USE 3. *Exhortation.*

Branch 1. Let this exhort all to fruitfulness. How happy were it, if it might be said of us as of Joseph, 'Joseph is a fruitful bough?'³ We love to see every thing fruitful: if there be a tree in our orchard, though with ever such fair leaves, we value it not unless there be fruit; when you come into your garden, you complain if you see no fruit; such a root is set, but it doth not grow; we love to see fruitfulness every where, and why not in our hearts? O let the precious grapes and figs we bear, evidence that we are trees of God's planting. We often plant trees to be a shade to the house; God cares for no such trees as are only for shade, he loves fruit. Arabia is called Felix, because of the sweet fruits which grow there, frankincense, with other perfumes and spices. That Christian may be entitled Felix, i. e. happy, that hath the sweet fruits of the Spirit growing in his heart; be fruit-bearing trees. This is the emblem of a good Christian, he is never without fruit, either blooming in his affections, or fructifying in his conversation. That I may persuade Christians to fruitfulness, I desire them to weigh these five things.

1. Fruit is that which God expects from us, we are his plantations; and, 'who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?' Let us not be as Pharaoh's kine, which devoured the fat, and yet still were lean; let us not be still devouring sermons, yet never the fatter.

2. Fruitfulness is one of the most distinctive characters of a Christian; 'the root of the righteous yieldeth fruit.'⁴ Fruitfulness differeth a saint from a hypocrite? the hypocrite is all for show and pretence, he hath fair leaves, but the 'root of the righteous yieldeth fruit;' fruit can no more be separated from faith, than moisture from the air, it is the very definition of a branch in Christ, 'it bears fruit.'⁵ As a man differs from a beast by reason, a beast

differs from a plant by sense, a plant differs from a stone by vegetation; so a good Christian differs from a hypocrite by fruit. Fruitfulness puts a difference between the sound tree and the hollow tree. But may not hypocrites bring forth fruit? (1.) They do not bring forth fruit in the Vine; they bring forth in the strength of parts, not in the strength of Christ. (2.) Hypocrites bring forth something like fruit, but it is not the right fruit. The fruit they bear is not sweet. The crab may bear fruit as well as the pearmain; but this excels in sweetness. The hypocrite may pray and give alms as well as a child of God, but there is a difference in the fruit; the fruit of the regenerate is mellow, it is sweetened with faith, it is ripened with love. The hypocrite's fruit is sour and harsh; he doth not bring forth pomegranates, but crabs, not figs, but wild grapes. The seeming fruit of hypocrites dies and comes to nothing; 'he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.'⁶ The hypocrite's fruit is like the grass upon the house tops, which withereth before it groweth up.⁷

3. Fruitfulness adorns a Christian; the fruit adorns the tree; a fruit-bearing Christian is an ornament to religion; the more fruitful the branch is, the more fair to look on. A dead tree, as it is unserviceable, so it is uneomely. A Christian, decked with the fruits of righteousness, is beautiful and glorious.

4. Fruitfulness is a good evidence to show for heaven; the fruits of love, humility, good works, are (as St Bernard saith) seeds of hope, signs of predestination, the happy presages of future glory. The righteousness of faith is always accompanied with the fruits of righteousness. He that can show good fruit, goes full sail to heaven.

5. God delights in his fruitful trees; when his garden flourisheth he will walk there; he who curseth the barren tree, will taste of the fruitful tree; 'I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.'⁸

2. *Branch.* It exhorts them that do bear fruit, that they would bring forth more fruit; do not think you have fruit enough, but bring forth further degrees of sanctity; 'every branch that beareth fruit, he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.'⁹ Grace is like the morning light which increaseth more and more to the full meridian of glory. Christians should

¹ 1 Ki. 20. 31.

² Ze. 7. 5.

³ Ge. 49. 22.

⁴ Pr. 12. 12.

⁵ Jno. 15. 2.

⁶ Jno. 15. 6.

⁷ Ps. 129. 6. Mat. 13. 6.

⁸ Ca. 5. 1.

⁹ Jno. 15. 2.

be like that ground in the parable which brought forth 'some sixty, some an hundred fold.'¹ He who hath a little gold, labours to increase it; and is not grace more precious than gold? some Christians have a little fruit, and they think that is well; like trees that have an apple or two growing upon them to show that they are of the right kind: 'two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough.'² They are like the church of Philadelphia which had 'a little strength';³ so they have a little faith, a spark of love. Christ chides a little faith,⁴ Christians should increase with the increase of God.⁵ Christ compares the breasts of the spouse to clusters of grapes, for fruitfulness.⁶ O labour to be Christians of degrees; the apostle prays for the Philippians that their love might abound 'yet more and more.' Now that I may press Christians who have fruit, to bring forth more fruits of patience, humility, love, &c. consider,

1. This is the end why we have new cost laid out upon us, that we should bring forth more fruit. The Lord is still manuring us; not a week, not a day, but he is at new cost with us, he rains down golden showers; and why is God at all this charge with us, but that we may bring forth more fruit?

2. The fuller we are of fruit, the more we are like Christ, who was 'full of grace and truth.'⁷ He received the Spirit without measure.⁸ This tree of life was ever bearing; and he brought forth several sorts of fruit, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, &c. The more we are filled with the fruits of righteousness, the more we resemble the Sun of Righteousness. We were elected to this end, to be made like Christ,⁹ and then are we most like this blessed Vine when we bear full clusters.

3. The more fruit a Christian brings forth, the more will Christ love him: 'now, saith Leah, will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons.' When we bear much fruit, now will Christ's heart be joined to us. Christ will pardon a weak faith, he will honour a great faith. It was not a sparkle of faith Christ commended in Mary Magdalene, but love flaming; 'she loved much.'¹⁰ Christians, would you be like that beloved disciple which 'leaned on the bosom of Jesus?' would you have much love from Christ? let him have much fruit from you.

4. Bearing much fruit will usher in abun-

dance of comfort into the soul in these two exigencies. (1.) In the hour of tentation. Satan will be sure to besiege the weakest Christian; all his darts fly that way, and a strong tentation may overcome a weak faith; but a flourishing faith stands like a cedar, and is not blown down by the wind of tentation; a strong faith can stop the mouth of the devil, that roaring lion. (2.) Store of fruit will give comfort in the hour of death: a little grace will make us above the fear of death; O what joy will it be on the deathbed, when a Christian can bring his sheaves full of corn! when he can show his five talents that he hath gained by trading! when there is not only a drop or two of oil, but his lamp full of oil! what though the devil show God our debts, if we can show him our fruit. O how sweet will death be! it will not be a destruction, but a deliverance: like a whirlwind, it may blow down the tree of the body, but it cannot blast the fruit of our graces. The trees of righteousness carry their fruit with them; 'their works follow them.'¹¹ The Christian who abounds in holiness may say as Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.' He who bears but a little fruit departs in safety; but he who bears much fruit departs in peace.

5. Consider what need we have to be putting forth still more fruit; our graces are yet in their nonage; indeed in heaven this doctrine will be out of season, we shall not need to hear it; then we shall have done growing, being arrived at our full stature; then our light shall be clear, and our love perfect; but while we live here, there is something 'lacking in our faith,' therefore we had need increase the stock of grace, and bring forth more fruit. Our grace is eclipsed with sin, our faith is full of unbelief; now as when the sun is eclipsed, it is by degrees getting out of the eclipse, and it shines brighter and brighter, till it recovers its perfect lustre; so it must be with us, we must be getting out of the eclipse till once we shall arrive at our perfect lustre in glory.

6. He who doth not increase to more fruitfulness will soon be on the losing hand; he that hath not more faith will quickly have less; 'thou hast left thy first love.' It is with grace as it is with fire; if it be not blown up and increased, it will soon decay. Such as thrive not in their spiritual estate, we may perceive sadly to decline. Though a Christian cannot lose the seed of

¹ Mat. 13. 8. ² Is. 17. 6. ³ Re. 3. 8. ⁴ Mat. 14. 31.

⁵ Col. 2. 19. ⁶ Ca. 7. 7. ⁷ Jno. 1. 14. ⁸ Jno. 3. 31.

⁹ Ro. 8. 30.

¹⁰ Lu. 7. 74.

¹¹ Re. 14. 13.

grace, yet he may lose the actings of grace, and the comfort; therefore bring forth more fruit: no sooner doth a Christian begin to stand still, but you may perceive him going backward.

7. The more your fruit is increased, the more your glory is increased; he whose pound gained ten, was made ruler over ten cities. If you would have your crown hung full of jewels, let your boughs be hung full of fruit.

USE 4. *Direction.* The last use is of direction. I shall lay down some means to fruitfulness.

1. Be sensible of unfruitfulness. Many might have been fruitful in grace, if they had not conceited themselves so; he that thinks himself fruitful enough, is barren enough; be sensible of your wants; it is better to complain than presume.

2. If you would be fruitful, remove those things which will hinder fruitfulness. (1.) Cherishing any secret lust in the heart; sin lived in, is like vermin to the tree, which destroys the fruit; grace cannot thrive in a sinful heart. (2.) The love of riches; 'the cares of the world choked the seed;' the love of sin poisons the fruit, the love of riches chokes it.

3. The third means to fruitfulness is weeping for sin. Moisture helps germination in trees; holy tears do water the trees of God, and make them more fruitful. Mary Magdalene, a weeping plant, how fruitful was she in love to Christ? moist grounds, as your marshes, are most fertile: the soul that is moistened and steeped in tears, is most frugiferous: never did David's graces flourish more, than when he watered his couch with tears.

4. If you would be fruitful, often apply the blood of Christ, and the promises. (1.) Apply the blood of Christ. Naturalists say, that blood applied to the root of some trees makes them bear better. Sure I am, the blood of Christ applied to the heart, makes it flourish more in holiness. None so fruitful as a believer; 'I know,' saith St Paul, 'whom I have believed;' there was the applying blood to the root of the tree, and how fruitful was he in zeal, love to Christ, heroical courage! He that believes Christ died for him, never thinks he can do or suffer enough for Christ. When we read and pray, now we do but water the branches; when we believe, now we water the root of the tree and make it fruitful. (2.) Apply the pro-

mises. Husbandmen have an art to comfort the spirits of the root to make the tree bear better: apply the promises; these are for comforting the spirits of a Christian, and then he puts forth fruit more vigorously. It is an experiment in nature, the root of the pine tree watered with wine, doth cause it to flourish; the promises are as wine to water the trees of righteousness, whereby they spread and augment more in grace. Ever preserve the spirits of the tree if you would have it bear; a pensive dejected soul is less fruitful; but when through the promises, a Christian's heart is cheered and comforted, now he is enriched with pleasant fruits; he is like a tree laden with fruit.

5. Another means to fruitfulness is humility. The low grounds are most fruitful: 'the valleys are covered with corn;' the humble heart is the fruitful heart. The largest and fairest fruits of the Spirit grow in a lowly Christian: 'God gives grace to the humble.' Paul calls himself the least of saints, yet he was the chief of the apostles. The Virgin Mary was low in her own eyes, but this lowly plant did bear that blessed Vine which brought the fruit of salvation into the world.

6. If you would be fruitful in grace, be much in good conference; 'then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another.' There is an observation some have concerning the sympathy of plants; some plants will bear better near other trees than when they grow alone, as is seen in the myrtle and olive: this holds true in divinity; the trees of righteousness, when they associate and grow near together, thrive best in godliness. The communion of saints is an excellent means for fruitfulness. Christians increase one another's knowledge, strengthen one another's faith, clear one another's evidences. When the trees planted in God's orchard stand at a distance, and grow strange one to another, they are less fruitful.

7. If you would be fruit-bearing trees, be near the water of the sanctuary; 'he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out the roots by the river; her leaf shall be green, nor shall it cease from yielding fruit.' The word preached will not only make us knowing Christians, but growing Christians. Ministers are compared to clouds, their doctrine drops as the rain, and makes the trees of God fruitful. I wonder not that they are barren trees and nigh unto cursing, that are not

¹ Mat. 13.

² Ps. 65. 13.

³ Je. 17. 8.

⁴ 1 Pe. 5. 5.

⁵ Ma. 3. 16.

⁶ Is. 5. 6.

under the droppings of the sanctuary; a Christian can no more be fruitful without ordinances, than a tree without showers.

8. And lastly, if you would fructify apace, go to God and desire him to make you fruitful; God is called the husbandman,¹ and he hath an art above all other husbandmen; they can plant and prune trees, but if they be dead they cannot make them bear. God can make the barren tree bear, he can put life into a dead tree.² It is not Paul's planting, but the Spirit's watering, must give the increase. Pray to God to make you fruitful, though it be by affliction; oftentimes God makes us grow in grace this way; 'no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.'³ The bleeding vine bears best: it is an observation that the pulling off some of the blossoms of a tree makes the fruit fairer; the

reason is, because the sap hath the less to nourish, some writers say, they have known a tree by having too many blossoms, hath blossomed itself dead. The notion holds true in a spiritual sense; God, by pulling off some of the blossoms of our comforts, makes us bring forth fairer fruit; some have so blossomed in prosperity, that they have blossomed themselves into hell. It is an ancient experiment, that the planting some tender trees near the west sun doth them hurt, and parcheth the fruit, the sun being so extremely hot: too much prosperity, like the west sun, doth Christians much hurt, and parcheth all good affections.⁴ O pray to God that he would make you fruitful, though it be by bleeding. Say as Luther, Lord, wound where thou wilt, prune and cut me till I bleed, so that I may 'have my fruit unto holiness, and my end everlasting life.'⁵

¹ Jno. 15. 1.

² Ep. 2. 5.

³ He. 12. 11.

⁴ Je. 22. 21.

⁵ Ro. 6. 22.

THE END.

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