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L. H.

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THE
RETURNING
BACKSLIDER,

OR,
A COMMENTARIE
upon the whole XIII. Chapter
of the Prophecy of the Prophet HOSEA.

Wherein is shewed the large extent of GODS free
Mercy, even unto the most miserable forlorne and
wretched sinners that may be, upon their
Humiliation and Repentance.

Preached by that Learned and Judicious Divine,
Dr. SIBBS, late Preacher to the Honourable Society
of Grays Inn, and Master of Katherine Hall in
CAMBRIDGE

Published by his owne Permission before
his Death.

JEREM. 3. 10, 11.

*Goe and Proclaime these words towards the North, and say,
Returne thou Backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will
not cause mine Anger to fall upon you: for I am mercifull, saith
the LORD, and I will not keepe Anger for ever.
Onely acknowledge thine Iniquity, &c.*

LONDON,

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at the signe of the Angel, MDCXXXIX.

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To the Reader.

Good Reader this Treatise begs the favour of those, concerning whom especially it is said Christ came for, poore trembling sinners, the blind, the prisoners of hope, & such who by the assiduity, iteration and multitude of Satans discouragements & temptations, sit as it were in darknes, & in the valley of death, to whom every sowre thing is sweet. Because these most of all relish and stand in need of mercy: for when

the least flame of that unsupportable wrath, breakes forth in shew, which is powred out like fire, and kindled by the breath of the Lord of Hostes like a river of brimstone, which can make the mountaines quake, the hills melt, burne up the earth and all that is therein, the poore soule for the time thinking on nothing but blackenesse and darkenesse of tempest, whilst by past sinnes, without sight of the Mediator stares them in the face with millions of unconceivable horrors and astonishments; then to see light in darknesse, Mercy in wrath, the Sunshine of righteousnesse, a gracious God appeased by a Mediator, with some sight and sense of
its

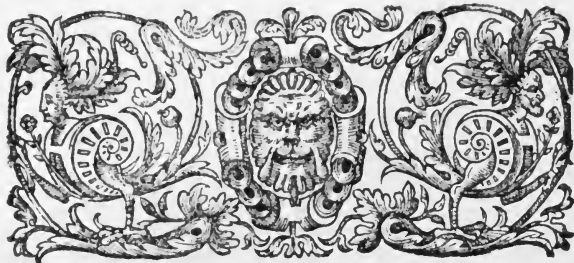
its interest therein, this must needs
overjoy the troubled soule:
which is the maine subject of
this booke: how gracious God
is to encourage miserable sin-
ners to returne: what incou-
ragements and helps hee gives
them: what effects his gracious
working hath in them: and
how sweetly they close with
him againe. Wherefore though
this messe comes not unto thee
set forth in a Lordly dish, not
having passed since the preach-
ing thereof, under the exqui-
site hand of the most worthy
Author, yet despise it not: for
many times though things of
greater judgement affect the
understanding most, yet things
of lesser concisenesse, worke

To the Reader.

more upon the affections in a
plaine flowing way: which hap-
pinesse with all other felicities
he wisheth thee, who is ever

Thine in the best bonds

J H.



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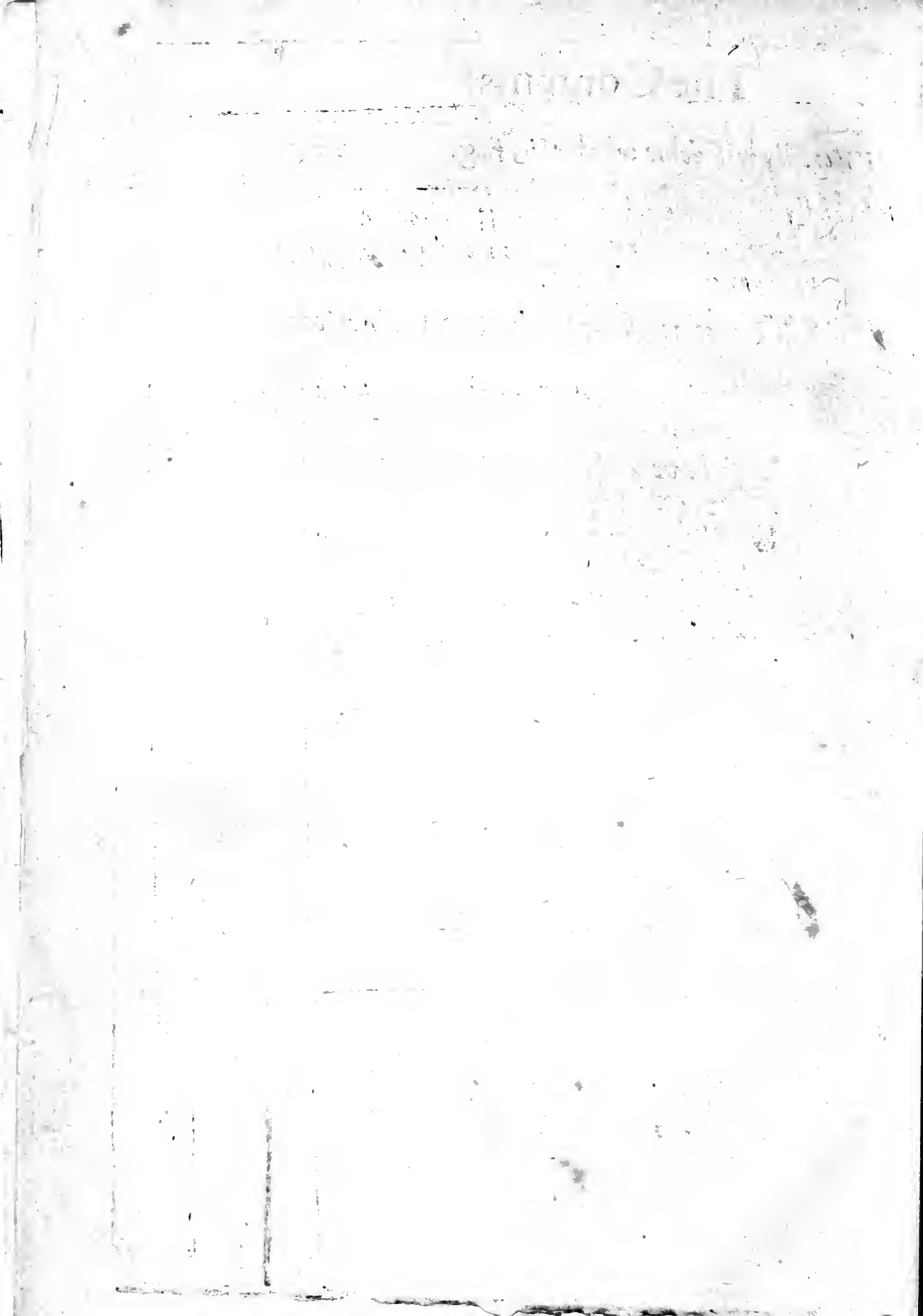
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THE
RETURNING
BACKSLIDER;

SERMON. I.

HO s. 14. 1, 2.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God: For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity, &c.

THE whole frame of Godli-
nesse is a Myserie, The A-
postle calleth it, a great
Myserie, comprehending
all under these particulars:
*God was manifested in the
flesh, Iustified in the Spirit,
Scene of Angels; Preached unto the Gentiles: Be-
lieved on in the world: received up into Glory.*
Amongst

Amongst which *Mysterie*s, this may well be the *Mysterie of Mysterie*s; God was manifest in the flesh: which includeth also another *Mysterie*; The *Gratioufnesse* and *abundant tender Mercy* of God towards miserable wretched and sinnefull Creatures, even in the height of their Rebellion; appointing such a remedy to heale them; which is the subject of this Chapter, and last part of this Prophecie: which, as it thunders out terrible Judgements against hardhearted impenitent sinners: (such as were the most part of *Israel*) so is it mingled full of many and sweet Consolations to the faithfull in those times, scattered amongst the wicked troupe of Idolaters then living.

The time when *Hosea* prophecied was under the Reigne of *Vzziah*, *Iotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah* Kings of *Judah*: and in the dayes of *Ieroboam*, the sonne of *Ioash*, King of *Israel*: In whose daies Idolatry was first universally set up and countenanced by Regall power; This *Ieroboam* (who caused *Israel* to sinne) that he might strengthen himselfe, made use of Religion and profanely mixed it with his civill affaires in carnall pollicie, and so leavened the whole lump of *Israel* with Idolatry, that shortly after the whole ten Tribes for their sin, and their injustice, cruelty, lust, securitie, and such other sins as accompanied and sprang from this brutish Idolatry, were led away captive by the King of *Assyria*, and the Lords righteous Judgement made manifest upon them.

There

There being notwithstanding amongst these some faithfull ones though thinly scattered, who mourned for, and by their good examples reprov'd these abominable courses. There being also a seed of the Elect unconverted, and of the converted some that were carried down too far in the strength of this streame of wickednesse. In this Chapter therefore being the conclusion of this Propheisie there are many excellent and heavenly encouragements, also many earnest incitements to repentance and returning to the Lord, with free and gracious promises not only of pardon and acceptance, but of great rewards in things spirituall and temporall to such as should thus returne.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Take with you words, and turne to the Lord, say unto him, Take away all iniquity, &c.

In this Chapter.

1. Wee have an *Exhortation to Repentance*, with the *Motives* enforcing the same. [*O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God.*] V. 1.
2. The *Forme* [*Take with you words, and say unto the Lord, &c.*] Ver. 2.
3. A *Restipulation*, what they should doe and Returne backe againe, having their Prayers granted. 1. *Thanksgiving* [*So will we render the Calves of our lips.*] 2. *Sound Reformation* of their beloved sin, [*Asbur shall not save us, &c.*] with the *Reason* thereof, [*For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth Mercy,* Ver. 3.

4. *Gods answer to their Petitions.* 1. In what Hee will doe for them. [*Heale their backsliding. Love them freely: and be as the Dem unto Israel*] with the Reason thereof, [*For mine Anger is turned away from him*] V.4.
2. What hee will Worke in them: *A proportionable speedie growth in height, bredth and depth: [He shall grow as the Lillie, and cast forth his rootes as Lebanon, &c.]* Which Mercy is further amplified; by a blessing powred out also upon their Families. [*They that dwell under his shadow shall returne.*] Verse.5,6,7.
5. There is set downe a further effect of this Repentance, and gracious worke in them: A sound and strong well rooted Indignation against their former darling sinnes [*Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to doe with Idols?*] Backt with a strong Consolation: [*I have heard him, and observed him, &c.*] Verse.8.
6. The divers Event and Issue of this Gods so gracious dealing is shewed: both in the godly and Wicked. 1. The Wise and Prudent, understand and know, that the wayes of the Lord are right, and shall walke in them. But 2. [*The transgressors shall fall therein*] Ver.9.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity.

Every word hath his waight, and in a manner is an Argument to inforce this Returning.

O Israel!

Israel we know is a word of Covenant: *Jacob* was *Israel*, a Prince and Wrestler with God, (as they also ought to be) Therefore he enforceth, you also ought to *Returne*, because you are *Israel*. And 2. It was also an *Incouragement* for them to *Returne*, because God so acknowledgeth them to be *Israel*: and will be gracious unto them, though they were such hideous sinners.

Returne (saith he) unto the Lord *Iehovah*, who is the chiefe good; for when a man returneth to the creature, which is a particular changeable good unsatisfying the soule, he is restless still untill hee come unto *Iehovah*, who is the all-sufficient universall good, who fills and fills the soule abundantly: therefore, *Returne* to him who is the fountaine of all good, and giveth a being unto all things: and not to broken *Cisternes*. Hee is *Iehovah*, like himselfe and *changeth not*. And then He is thy God. Therefore *Returne* to him who is thy God in Covenant, who will make good his gracious Covenant unto thee, and did choose thee to be his people, before all the nations of the world; this therefore is also an *Incouragement* to *Returne*. And then

Jerem. 2. 13.

Thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity.

Therefore because thou art fallen by thy Iniquities, and thine own Inventions have brought these miseries upon thee, and none but God can helpe thee out of these miseries, seeing he only can, and is willing to forgive thy sinnes, and revive thee: Therefore,

SERM. I.

O Israel, Returne unto the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Now in that hee forewarneth them of the fearefull Judgements to come, which were to fall upon them, unlesse they were prevented by true Repentance; hence in generall it is to be observed;

Observ.

That God comes not as a suddaine storme upon his people, but gives them warning before hee smites them.

Gen. 18. 20, 21

This is verified in Scripture: when the crie of Sodomie and Gomorrah was great, *The Lord said, Because the cry of Sodomie and Gomorrah is great, and because their sinne is very grievous: I will goe downe now and see whether they have done altogether according to the crie of it which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.* And wherefore was the Arke of Noah so long in building, but to give warning to that sinnefull age, which were nothing bettered by it. The like we have of Pharaoh, and all the Egyptians who had so many warnings and miracles shewed before their destruction came. Thus God dealt in Amos: *Therefore thus will I doe unto thee; and because I will doe this unto thee; Prepare to meet thy God O Israell. O Hierusalem, Hierusalem (saith Christ) thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together: even as a Henne gathereth the chickens under her wings and ye would not? What need wee stand upon proofes? are not all the Threatnings of Scripture, as so many*
warning

Exod. 11. 1.

Amos. 4. 12.

Mat. 23. 37.

warning peeces of approaching Judgements.

The Reason hereof is, *His owne nature, he is a God of long suffering,* he made the world in six dayes; yet hath continued it six thousand yeares, notwithstanding the many sinnes and provocations thereof, *His mercies being over all his works.*

And partly, *from a speciall regard to his own deare children,* these terrible threatnings not being killing and wounding, but like *Jonathans* warning Arrowes, who though he shot, yet ment no other harme to *David*, save to forewarne him of harme.

Let us therefore observe Gods gracious and milde dealing in so much mercy, who giveth us so many warnings by his servants, and lesser judgements, which we have had amongst us; Let us take notice and believe, so as believe may stirre up feare, and feare may provoke care, and care stirre up indeavours, to provide us an *Arke* even a hiding place betimes before winter and worse times come upon us.

Hence issueth another generall Point: That *The best provision for preventing of destruction is spirituall meanes.*

God himselte is a Spirit, and spirituall meanes reach unto him, who is the first mover of the great wheele of all the affaires of this world: It is preposterous to beginne at the second cause, we trouble our selves in vaine there, when we neglect the first. Wee should therefore begin the worke in Heaven, and first of all, take up that quarrell which is betweene God and our

Reason. I.
Exod. 34. 6.

Psal 145. 2.
2.

1 Sam. 30.

Use.

Observe.

SERM. I.

Rom. 8. 28.

Iſa. 4. 5.

Observ.

In Returning,
1. There must
be a stop.

soules: If this be done first, we need not feare the carriage of second things, all which God out of his good providence, and gracious care will frame to worke for good to his: for whose sakes (rather then helpe should faile) he will create new helpes. Wherefore in all things it is best to beginne with God.

The third generall point, is this: That
Of all Spirituall meanes, the best is to returne to the Lord.

In this *Returning*, 1. *There must be a stop*: those who have run on in evill waies, must first stop their lewd courses, for naturally from our birth and childhood wee are posting on to Hell; and yet such is our madnesse, (unlesse the Spirit of God shew us our selves) to be angry with these who stand in our way.

To make this *stop* then (which is alwayes before *Returning*) 1. There must be Examination and Consideration whether our wayes tend: there be stopping Considerations, which both waken a man, and likewise put rubs in his way. If a man upon *Examination* find his waies displeasing unto God, disagreeing from the Rule, and *consider* what will be the end and issue of them, (nothing but death and damnation) and withall *consider* of the day of Judgement, the houre of Death, the all-seeing eye of God and the like. So the Consideration of a mans owne wayes, and of Gods wayes towards him, partly when God meetes him with goodnesse: *I have hitherto beene a vile wretch; and God hath beene*

beene good to me, and spared me: and partly when God stops a wicked mans waies with thornes, meetes him with crosses and afflictions, these will worke upon an ingenious Spirit to make him have better thoughts and deeper considerations of true happinesse and the way unto it. God puts into the heart of a man (whom he intends to save) serious and sad considerations, what estate hee is in, whither his course leads; and withall hee lets them feele some displeasure of his towards them in those waies, by his wayes towards them, whereupon they make a stop.

2. There must be *Humiliation*, with displeasure against our selves, judging and taking revenge of our selves, working and reflecting on our hearts, taking shame to our selves, for our wayes and courses. And withall, *there must concurre some hope of mercy*: for, so long as there is hue and crie (as we say) after a Traitor, he returnes not, but flies still and hasts away; but offer a pardon, and he returneth. So, unlesse there be hope of pardon to draw a man againe to God, as the *Prodigall* was moved to *Returne* by hope of *mercy* and favour from his father, we will not, we dare not else *Returne*.

2. Humiliation.

Luk. 15.

3. There must be a *Resolution* to overcome impediments, for when a man thinks or resolves to turne to God, Satan will stirre up all his instruments, and labour to kill Christ in his Infancie, and to quench good while it is in the purpose only, the Dragon stood watching for the

3. Resolution.

SERM. I.

Birth of the Childe so doth Satan observethe birth of every good resolution and purpose so farre as he can know them to destroy them.

Vse.

Let it be thought of by us in all our distreffes, and in whatsoever other evidences of Gods anger, whether this meanes have bin taken up by us. It will be thus knowne.

I.

1. Turning is a change of the posture of the body, so is this of the frame of the mind, by this we know a man is in a state of turning, the looke of his Intentions, Purposes, the whole bent of his soule is set another way, even upon God, and his Word is the starre of Direction towards which he bends all his thoughts.

2.

There is a
Change of Ac-
tions.

2. *His present actions also be contrary to his former:* there is not only a change of the disposition of his soule: *Behold all things are become new.* Not some things but all, not only *new*, but with a *Behold new.* This change undoubtedly sheweth that there is a true conversion and unfained.

2 Cor. 5. 17.

3.

By our associa-
tion.

3. By our association, he that turnes to God, turnes presently *to the company of Gods people*: together with the change of his nature and course of life, there is a change of company, that is of such as we make choice of for amity and friendship; other company by reason of our callings, and occasionally may be frequented.

Isa. 11.

4.

4. It is a signe that one is not only *Turned*, but hath gone backwards from sinne a great way, when the things of Heaven only are great things in his eyes, for, as the further a man goeth from a place, the lesser the things behind him seeme,

so the greater the things before, he being nearer to them. The more sublime and high thoughts a man hath of the wayes of God, and the meaner thoughts of the world and worldly matters he esteemed so highly of in the dayes of his vanity: the more he is Turned unto God.

This Returning is further inforced, saying, *Returne, unto the Lord thy God.*

It is very emphaticall and significant in the Originall, *returne [usquè ad Iehovam]* even to *Iehovah*, as though he should say, do not only beginne to *Returne* towards *Iehovah*: but so *Returne*, as you never cease comming till you come to *Iehovah*.

Even unto the Lord thy God.

It is not enough to make a stop and forbear the practising of our former sinnes: but we must come home, even unto the Lord our God, to be pardoned and healed of him.

The Prodigall sonne, had beene never a whit the better, to see his sinne and misery, and to be grieved for his wicked life past, unlesse he had come unto his father for *Pardon* and *Comfort*. And when those were pricked in their hearts at *Peters Sermon*, asking *Peter* what they should do: hee exhorted them, *To Repent, every one to be Baptised in the name of Iesus Christ, for the Remission of sinnes: and so they should receive the Holy Ghost*. And when *Christ* invites all those who are weary and heavy laden to come unto him; he bids them not now be further humbled and grieved for their sinnes: but by Faith to come

Observ.

Luk. 15.

Act. 2. 38.

Mat. 11: 28.

SERM. I.

come unto him to be healed, and so they should find rest and peace to their soules. It is not sufficient for a wounded man to be sorry for his brawling and fighting, and to say he will fight no more: but he must come to the Surgeon to have his wounds stoppt, dressed and healed, or else it may cost him his life: So it is not enough to be humbled and grieved for sin; and to resolve against it: we shall relapse againe do what we can, unlesse we come under the wing of Christ to be healed by his blood.

Use.

Many think they have repented and are deceived upon this false ground: they are and have bin grieved for their sins and offences, are determined to leave and forsake them, and that is all they do, they never lay hold on Christ and come home to God.

For thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity.

Here divers points might be insisted on.

Observ.

1. *That where there is a falling into sinne, there will be a falling into miserie and judgement.*

This is made good in the experience of all times, ages, persons, and states; still the more sinfull any were, the more fearefull judgements fell upon them: and as soone as any man came into a sinfull state, he entered into a declining state, as *Jacob* said of his sonne *Reuben* who had defiled his bed: *unstable as water, Thou shalt not excell; because thou wentest up to thy fathers bed.* So sinne still debaseth a man: so much sin, so much losse of excellencie.

Gen. 49.4.

The Use hereof is first against those, that
complaine

complainte of their troubles and miseries, as though God and men had dealt hardly with them, whereas their owne wayes indeed have brought all these evils upon them, God is a sufficient wise and holy disposer and orderer of all the wayes of men; and rewarder of good and evill doings; God being wise and just in his disposing of all things, it must needs follow, that it shall goe well with those that are good; as the Prophet speakes; *Say unto the just, that it shall be well with them; for the reward of their workes shall be given them.* And if it fall out other wayes then well with men, the blame must be laid on their owne sinne. As the Church confesseth, and therefore resolveth: *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; untill he plead my cause, and execute judgement for me: he will bring me forth in the light; and I shall see his Righteousnesse.* If Adam sinne he shall find a Hell in a Paradiſe, if Paul returne and returne to God he shall find a Heaven in a Dungeon.

Lam. 3. 39.

Micah. 7. 9.

It should move us therefore to seeke unto God by unfeined Repentance to have our sinnes taken away and pardoned, or else, howsoever wee may change our plagues; yet they shall not be taken away, nay wee shall still (like Pharaoh) change for the worst, who though he had his judgements changed: yet sinne, the cause remaining, he was never a whit the betrer, but the worse for changing, untill his finall ruine came.

Vse. 2.

SERM. I.

Rom. 6.23.

The wages of sinne is Death, Sinne will crie till it hath its wages. Where Iniquity is, there cannot but be falling into judgement. Therefore they are cruell to their owne soules, that walke in evill wayes, for undoubtedly God will turne their owne wayes upon their owne heads. Wee should not therefore envie any man (be hee what he will) who goeth on in ill courses, seeing some judgement is owning him first or last, unlesse he stop the current of Gods wrath by Repentance. God in much mercy hath set up a Court in our hearts to this end, that if we judge our selves in this inferiour Court, we may escape, and not be brought up into the higher: if first they be judged rightly in the inferiour Court, then there needs no review. But otherwise, if wee by Repentance take not up the matter, sinne must be judged some where, either in the Tribunall of the heart and conscience, or else afterwards there must be a reckoning for it.

Vse. 3.

Thirdly, hence we learne; since the cause of every mans miserie is his owne sinne; *that therefore all the power of the world, and of Hell, cannot keepe a man in miserie, nor hinder him from comfort and happinesse, if he will part with his sinnes by true and unfained Repentance, as we know Manasses, as soone as he put away sin the Lord had mercy upon him, and turned his captivity. So the people of Israell in the Judges, looke how often they were humbled and returned to God, still he forgave them all their sins, as soone as they*

2 Chro. 33. 12,
13.

they put away sinne, God and they met againe. So that, if we come to Christ by true Repentance, neither sinne nor punishment can cleave to us.

Thou hast fallen, &c.

Fallen blindly as it were, thou couldest not see which way thou wentest, or to what end thy courses did tend, therefore thou art come into misery, before thou knowest where thou art. A sinner is blind, the god of this world hath put out his eyes, they see not their way, nor foresee their successe. The Divell is ever for our falling, that we fall into sinne, and then fall into misery, and so fall into despaire, and into hell, this pleaseeth him. *Cast thy selfe downe*, saith hee to Christ, downe with it, downe with it, saith *Edom*, Hell is beneath, the Divell drives all that way.

Take heed of sinne, take heed of blindness, ponder the path of your feet, keepe your thoughts heaven-ward, stop the beginnings, the first stumblings, pray to God to make our way plaine before us, and not to lead us into temptation.

Ver. 2. *Take with you words, and turne to the Lord say unto him, &c.*

These *Israelites* were but a rude people, and had not so good meanes to thrive in grace, as *Judah* had: Therefore he prompts them here with such words as they might use to God in their returning. [*Take with you words,*] whereby

we

SERM. I.

Psal. 106. 43.
44.
Psal. 107. 19.

1 Cor. 4.

Vse.

SERM. I.

2 Cor 5.

God is willing
to be at peace
with us.

we see how gracious God is unto us, in using such helps for our recovery, and pittying us more then wee pitty our selves. Is not this a sufficient warrant and invitation to *returne*, when the party offended who is the superiour, desires, intreats, and sues unto the offending, guilty inferiour to be reconciled.

But this is not all, hee further sheweth his willingnesse in teaching us who are ignorant of the way, in what manner and with what expressions we should returne to the Lord. He giveth us not onely words and tells us what wee shall say, but also giveth his Spirit so effectually therewith, as that they shall not be livelesse and dead wordes, but (as *Rom. 8. 26.*) with unexpressible sighes and groanes unto God; who heareth the requests of his owne Spirit. Christ likewise teacheth us how to pray, we have words dictated, and a spirit of prayer powred upon us. As if a great Person should dictate and frame a Petition for one who were affraid to speake unto him. Such is Gods graciousnesse, and so ready is hee in Jesus Christ to receive sinners unto mercy.

Take unto you wordes. None were to appeare empty before the Lord at *Ierusalem*, but were to bring something. So it is with us, we must not appeare empty before our God, If we can bring nothing else, let us bring *wordes*, yea though broken wordes, yet if out of a broken and contrite heart, it will be a sacrifice acceptable.

This same taking of wordes or petitions in all
our

our troubles and afflictions, must needs be a speciall remedie, it being of Gods owne prescription, who is so infinite in knowledge and skill: whence we observe, That

They who would have helpe and comfort against all sinnes and sorrowes, must come to God with words of prayer.

Observ.

As wee see in *Jonahs* case in a matchlesse distresse, words were inforcive and did him more good then all the world besides could: for after that hee had bin humbled and prayed out of the whales belly; the whale was forced to cast him out againe. So the *Prodigall sonne* beeing undone, having neither credit, nor coyne, but all in a manner against him; yet hee had words left him. *Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee: and am no more worthy to be called thy sonne, make mee as one of thy hired servants.* After which his father had compassion on him. And good *Hezekiah*, being desperately sicke, of a desperate disease, yet when hee set his faith worke, and tooke with him words (which comfort onely now was left unto him) wee know how after hee had turned his face towards the wall and prayed with words, God not only healed him of that dangerous disease, but also wrought a great miracle for his sake, causing the *Sunne* to come backe *ten degrees*. Thus when life seemed impossible: yet words, prayers, and teares prevailed with God. *Iehoshaphat* also, going to warre with *Abab*, against Gods commandement

Luk. 15. 18.

Isa. 38. 2.

2 Chro. 18. 1.

SERM. I.

James. 5.

dement, and in the battell being encompassed with enemies: yet had *words* with him ready and after prayer found deliverance. *Eliab*, likewise after a great drowth and famine, when raine had bin three yeares wanting: and all in a manner out of frame for a long time: *Tooke with him words*: and God sent raine abundantly upon the earth againe.

Hof. 2. 21, 22.

1 King. 18. 45

Object.

Answ.

2 Chro. 15. 2.

2 Chro. 19. 6.
14.2 King. 19. 20
35.

The Reason is, because Prayer sets God on worke, and God who is able and willing to go through with his works, sets all the creatures on worke. As we heard of *Eliab*, when hee prayed for raine, the creatures were set a worke to effect it. Where it may be Objected, O but raine might come too late in that hot Countrie, where all the Rootes and Herbes might bee withered and dried up in three yeares space, Yet all was well againe, the land brought forth her increase as formerly; for faithfull Prayer never comes too late; because God can never come too late, if our prayers come to him, we shall find him come to us. *Iehoshaphat* we read was in great distresse when three Kings came against him, yet when hee went to God by unfained and hearty fasting and prayer, God heard him, fought for him, and destroyed all his enemies. The Scripture sheweth also how after *Hezekiabs* prayer against *Senacheribs* blasphemies and threatnings: the Lord sent forth his Angell and destroyed in one night a hundred fourescore and five thousand of the *Assyrians*.

This

1 King. 18. 14.

2 Chron. 14. 11

2 Chron. 16. 2.

2 Chron. 16. 7.

Vse 2.

This is first for Reproofe of those who in their distresses set their wit, wealth, friends, and all a worke, but never set God a worke, as *Hezekiah* did in *Senacheribs* case. The first time hee turned him off to his cost with enduring a heavie taxation, and yet was never a whit the better for it; for *Senacherib* came shortly after and besieged *Hierusalem*, untill *Hezekiah* had humbled himselfe and prayed: and then God chased all away and destroyed them; he had better have done so at first, and so saved his money and paines too. The like weakenesse we have a prooffe of in *Asa*: who when a greater Armie came against him of ten hundred thousand men, laid about him, Prayed and Trusted in God, and so was delivered, with the destruction of his enemies; yet in a lesser danger, against *Baasha* King of *Israel*, distrusted God; and sent out the Treasures of the house of God, and of his owne house unto *Benhadad* King of *Syria*, to have helpe of him, by a diverting warre against *Baasha* King of *Israel*, which his plot though it prospered, yet was hee reprooved by the Prophet *Hanani*, and warres thenceforth denounced against him. This *Asa* notwithstanding this experiment afterwards sought unto the Physitian, before he sought unto God.

Secondly, This blameth that barrenesse and want of words to goe unto God, which for want of hearts wee often find in our selves. It were a

SER. I.

What makes a bold begger.

strange thing to see a wife have words enough for her maids and servants: and yet not to be able to speake to her husband. Wee all professe to be the Spouse of Christ, what a strange thing then is it, to be full when wee speake to men, yet be so empty and want words to speake to him. A begger we know wants no words, nay, he aboundeth with variety of expressions, and what makes him thus fruitfull in words: his necessity and in part his hope of obtaining.

These two make beggers so earnest. So would it be with us, if we found sufficiently our great need of Christ; and therewith had hope, it would embolden us so to go to God in Christ, that we should not want words: but wee want this hope and the feeling of our necessities, which makes us so barren in prayer.

Prepare thy selfe therefore to prayer by getting unto thee a true sense of thy need: acquaintance with God, and hope to obtaine, and it will make thee fervent in prayer, and copious in thy requests.

Vse 3.

Thirdly, this is for Consolation, though one should want all other meanes, yet whatsoever their misery be, if they can take words, and can pray well, they shall speed well. If the misery be for sin, confesse it, and ask pardon for it, and they shall have it, and be cleansed from all unrighteousnesse. Words fetch the comfort to us, though it be the blood of Christ onely that hath paid the debt.

Isa 38.3.

1 Iohn 1.9.

Isa, 53.5.

The end of the first Sermon.



THE SECOND SERMON.

Hos. 14.2.

*Take with you words, and turne to the Lord,
say unto him take away all iniquity, and re-
ceive us graciously, so will we render the
Calves of our lips.*



AS wee lost our selves in the first *Adam*; so the mercy of God in the Covenant of Grace found out a way to restore us againe by the second *Adam* *Jesus Christ*, in whom all the Promises are yea and *Amen*, yesterday and to day, and the same for ever. And as the wisdome of God

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did freely find out this way at first comforting our first Parents with it in *Paradise* : so this bowells of incomprehensible love of his, hath so gon on from time in all ages of the Church, comforting and raising up the dejected spirits of his Church from time to time, and awakening them out of their drowfinesse and sleepe condition. And many times the greater sinners he dealt with, the greater mercies and tender bowells of compassion were opened unto them, in many sweet and gracious promises tendering forgiveness, and inviting to Repentance, as here in this Chapter and whole Prophecie is shewed: what Tribe so wicked, so full of Idolatry and Rebellion as *Ephraim*, and yet here *Ephraim* and *Israel* are taught a lesson of Repentance: as the tender Nurse feeds her childe and puts meate in its mouth, so here the Lord puts words in the mouth of this Rebellious people.

Take with you words and turne unto the Lord.

Object.

What neede God words, hee knowes our hearts before we speake unto him?

Answ.

Why we must bring words with us though God knowes our minde.

Its true, God neede no words, but we doe, to stirre up our hearts and affections: and because he will have us take shame unto our selves; having given us our tongues as an instrument of glorifying him, he will have our glory used in our Petitions and Thankesgivings: and therefore, in regard of our selves, he will (as was said) have us take words unto our selves; for exciting of the graces of God in us by words, blowing up of the affections, and for manifestation of the hidden

hidden man of the heart: God will be glorified by the outward as well as by the inward man.

And Turne to the Lord.

He repeats the exhortation of Returning, to shew, that words must not be empty, but such as are joyned with a purpose of turning to God: for otherwise to turne to him with a purpose to live in any sin, is the extremity of prophane impudence; to come to aske a pardon of the King, with a resolution to live still in Rebellion against him, what is this but mockery, as if one should come with a dagg to shoote him. Such is our case, when we come to aske forgivenesse with a purpose to offend. It is the extremity of prophanesse to come to aske a pardon, to the intent that we may sin still: therefore he repeats it againe; *Take unto you words, and turne to the Lord.* The *Forme* is,

That words and purposes must concurre in Prayer.

Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; or (Doe good to us) So will we render the Calves of our lips. Wherein we have

1. A *Petition* } 1. To take away all iniquity.
 } 2. To receive them graciously.

2. A *Restipulation*, or promise of thankfullnesse backe againe to the Lord: *So will we render the Calves of our lips.* So that wee may observe hence

What God will grant us, he will have us aske of him: yet for all these things I will be sought unto of the house of Israel, saith God: because he will have us acknowledge our homage and dependance upon him: therefore we must aske what

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he hath purposed to give. *Take away all iniquity, &c.* where there is an implication of a confession of their sins and great iniquities: *Take away iniquity*; and *Take away all iniquity*: that is, our manifold guilt. So *before Petition there must be a free and full Confession*, as was shewed before.

Of Confession, how it is to be done, and unto whom.

Augustin.

Now this Confession here, is made to God, and to God onely (saith *Austin* in this case) Because it is a point in controversie, it is good to heare what the Ancients say. There are a curious sort of men, who are busie to search into other mens lives, and are carelesse in amending their own. Saith he, *What have I to doe with men to heare me confesse, when I have offended God: wee must confesse to God, and to God onely.* But in some cases there may be publique and private Confession to men. Publique, in publique offences for the satisfaction of the Church and the glory of God, for preventing of scandall. Private, to Ministers for the quieting of conscience: but this is onely in some cases; mengoe not to the Chirurgeon (as the Papiests would have it) for every little prick of their finger. No, but yet in some cases it is good to open the matter to a Minister who hath the tongue of the learned: but the sinne is toward God, against him; he onely being able to forgive sinnes, as the *Pharisees* confessed, *None can forgive sinnes but God*; the Papiests therefore herein are worse then the Pharisees.

Simile.

Mark. 2. 7.

The *Petition* is, *Take away iniquity*, and all *iniquity*.

iniquity. Why *all*? because where there is any true goodnesse in the heart, that hatred which carriesthe bent of the soule against one sinne, is alike against all (as I shewed) and the Divell carries thousands to hell by this partiall obedience; because he knowes at any time where to have such. God and a purpose to sinne will not stand together, nor dwell in a heart that allowes it self in any sin, be it never so small. He saith, *Take away all*, because the Spirit of God workes in a man renewed such a disposition of sincerity to hate all alike.

Secondly, he saith, *Take away all iniquity*, because the heart which desires to be at peace with God, desires also to be like God, who hates all sinne: therefore (saith the sanctified soule) forgive all sin, *Take all away*, that I may have nothing in me displeasing unto thee: I desire to joyne with the Lord, to hate what he hateth, and as he hateth, to carrie a perfect hatred to the whole kinde. *Take away all iniquity*, hatred is not satisfied, but with the utter abolishing of the thing hated. Therefore it hath this extent here, *Take away all sin*; both the guilt and the reigne of every sin, that none may rule in mee, nay, by little and little purge out all: *Take away iniquity*, and the traine of all which it drawes after it, *Judgements.* *Take away iniquity*; that is, forgive the sin, and overcome the power of it by sanctifying grace, and remit the judgements attending it.

SER. II.

Why all iniquity is prayed against.

I.

In a sincere soule all are alike hated.

2.

Because a renewed soule desires to be like God.

SER. II.

Sinne hatefull
to a conscience
awaked.

Take it away.

That is, take away the guilt of it utterly by pardon, and the remainders thereof by sanctifying grace, so as the Spirit may rule and be all in all in us. They see sinne is an offensive thing, and therefore they say, *Take it away*, as an offensive odious thing, and as a burden. For howsoever it be sweet as honey in the committing it, afterwards when the conscience is throughly awaked it is most offensive and bitter; so as in this case, a sinner would gladly run from his owne conscience, and from himselfe, run any where from the tormenting and racking thoughts of conscience awaked: and withall hates the place where it was committed, and the company with whom, yea the thoughts of them, as *Absolom* hated *Thamar* after hee had lyen with her, so a sinner awaked from sin, hates what hee formerly loved. As good men love the circumstances of any thing which puts them in mind of any good they have done, loving both place and person. So it is with a sinner when his conscience is awaked, he hates all things which puts him in minde of his sins, therefore, *Take it away*, forgive it, cast it into the botome of the Sea, blot it out of thy remembrance, cover it, impute it not, all which phrases shew a taking away.

Trial of a
souls desire of
forgivenesse.

Therefore, I beseech you; let us examine our selves hereby, whether our desire of forgiveness be found or not, if we desire sin should be taken away, we cannot thinke of it with comfort. For

in that many thinke with delight of their old sins, what doe they else, but repeate them over againe and againe? but where the heart is soundly touched with a saving sense of sinne; O then he cries, Take it away, Take it out of my conscience that it cause not despaire there, and out of thy remembrance, that no advantage be taken against me for it. *Take it away.* But it is no otherwise taken away then by satisfying of divine justice. How much are we beholding to Christ therefore, who hath borne and taken away our sins, (and as the Scape-goate) gon away with the burden of all into the wildernesse of oblivion. Blessed be God, and the Lamb of God that takes away the sinnes of the world. We can never blesse God too much nor sufficiently for Christ. *Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ.* Now wee may thinke of sin without shame and despaire: O blessed state, when a man can thinke of his former odious and filthy loathsome sinnes, and yet not despaire: Because when he beleeves in Christ, the blood of Christ purgeth all away, takes away all sin. He hath taken them away.

You see here in the first place, they pray for the taking away of their iniquity, for take away this, and all other mercies follow after: because this onely is it which stops the current of Gods favours, which remooved, the current of his mercies run amaine. As when the clouds are gone, the Sun shines out: So let our sinnes be remooved, and Gods favour immediately shines

*That a true
Convert first
begs mercy
above all.*

SER. II.

shines upon us. Therefore first, *Take away all iniquity*; and then we shall see nothing but thy Fatherly face in Christ. You see what the care of Gods children is to seeke mercy and favour in the first place: as *David, Psal. 51. 1. Have mercy on me, O Lord*: this he begs first of all, whereas God had threatned other terrible judgements, as that the sword should never depart from his house, &c. yet he neglects all (as it were) and begs onely for mercy, *to take away iniquity*. For, a sinner is never in such a blessed condition as he should be in, untill he prize and desire mercy above all; because though we be in misery, untill then (with sinfull *Ephraim*) *Hos. 7. 14.* wee howle upon our beds for corne and wine, preferring earthly sensuall things before all. But that soule and conscience which is acquainted with God and the odiousnesse of sin, that soule God intends to speake peace unto in the end, desires pardon of sinne and mercy above all, for it knowes that God is goodnesse it selfe, and that when the interposing clouds are vanished, God cannot shew himselfe otherwise, then in goodnesse, grace and mercy. *Take away all iniquity.*

Quest.

Before I goe further, let me answer one Question. *Ought wee not to thinke of our former sinnes, shall God take them away altogether out of the soule?* O no! Take them away out of the conscience O Lord that it doe not accuse for them, but not out of the memory: it is good that sinne be remembered, to humble us, to make us more thankfull, pitifull and tender-hearted

Answ.

unto

unto others, to abase us and keepe us low all the daies of our life, and to make us deale gently and mercifully with others being sensible of our own frailties. As they are naught in the conscience, so they are good to the memory. Therefore let us think often of this, what the chiefe desire of our soules to God should be for *mercy*, to have sin taken away. In all the Articles of our Creed, that of cheefest comfort is, That of *Remission of sins*. Wherefore are all the other Articles of Christ, his Birth, Death, and Crucifying, but that he might get the Church, and that the priviledges thereof might be, *Forgivenesse of sins, Resurrection of the Body, and life everlasting*: but *Forgivenesse of sins* is in the first place.

But may some say, How shall I know whether or no my sins be forgiven?

1. By something that goes before.
2. By something which followes after.

There is somewhat which goes before, *viz.*

1. *An humble and hearty Confession, as 1 Ioh. 1. 9. if wee confesse our sinnes, hee is faithfull and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousnesse*: therefore, whether I feele it or not, if I have heartily, fully, and frely confessed; my sins are forgiven. God in wisdom and mercy may suspend the feeling thereof, for our humiliation, and for being over-bold with Satans baites; yet I ought to beleieve it, for I make God a lier else, if I confesse heartily, and acknowledge my debt, to thinke that he hath not cancel'd the bond.

Quest.

Answ.

1. By an humble confession.

SER. II.

2.

When we finde
strength a-
gainst it.
Mat. 9. 2, 6.

Secondly, sin is certainly pardoned, when a man finds strength against it, for where God forgives, he gives strength withall: as to the man whom he healed of the Palsie, *Thy sinnes are forgiven thee, take up thy bed and walke.* When a man hath strength to returne to God, to run the way of his Commandements, and to go on in a Christian course, his sinnes are forgiven, because he hath a Spirit of faith to go on and leade him forward still. Those who find no strength of grace, may question forgivenesse of sins, for God where he takes away sin, and pardons it (as we see here in this Text, after prayer made to *take away iniquity*) he *doth good to us.*

3.

Some peace of
conscience.

The third evidence is, some peace of Conscience, though not much perhaps, yet so much as supports us from despaire, as *Rom. 5. 1. Therefore being justified by faith, wee have peace with God through our Lord Iesus Christ,* that is, being acquitted from our sins by faith, we have peace with God: so much peace, as makes us goe boldly to him: so that one may know his bonds are cancel'd and his sins forgiven, when with some boldnesse he dare looke God in the face in Iesus Christ. A *Judas*, an *Achitophell*, a *Saul*, because they are in the guilt of their sinnes cannot confesse comfortably and go to God: which when with some boldnesse we can do, it is a signe that peace is made for us.

4.

By love to God.

Again, where sin is pardoned, our hearts will be much enlarged with love to God, as Christ said to the woman, *Luke 7. 47. Her sinnes which*

are

are many, are forgiven her, because shee loved much. Therefore, when wee find our hearts inflamed with love to God, we may know that God hath shined upon our soules in the pardon of sinne; and proportionably to our measure of love, is our assurance of pardon, therefore we should labour for a greater measure thereof, that our hearts may be the more inflamed in the love of God. It is impossible that the soule should at all love God angry, offended, and unappeased, nay, such a soule wisheth that there were no God at all, for the very thoughts thereof terrifie him.

Againe, where sinne is forgiven, it frames the soule suetably to be gentle, mercifull and to pardon others, for usually those who have peaceable consciences themselves, are peaceable unto others, and those who have forgiveness of sins, can also forgive others; those who have found mercy, have mercifull hearts, shewing that they have found mercy with God. And on the contrary, hee that is a cruell mercilesse man, it is a signe that his heart was never warmed nor melted with the sense of Gods mercy in Christ. Therefore, *as the Elect of God* (saith the Apostle) *put on bowels of compassion*: as you will make it good that you are the Elect of God, members of Christ, and Gods children.

Therefore, let us labour for the forgiveness of our sinnes, that God would remoove and subdue the power of them, take them away and the judgements due to them, or else we are but miserable

5.
By mercifullnes
to others.

Their miserable
condition
who have not
forgiveness of
sinnes.

S 2 . II.

miserable men, though we enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, which to a worldly man are but like the liberty of the Tower to a condemned Traitor, who though hee have all wants supplied, with all possible attendance: yet when he thinkes of his estate, it makes his heart cold, dampes his courage, and makes him thinke the poorest Carman or tankerd-bearer (at liberty) happier then hee, who would not change estates with him. So it is with a man that hath not sued out his pardon nor is at peace with God, he hath no comfort so long as he knowes his sins are on the file, that God in heaven is not at peace with him, who can arme all the Creatures against him to be revenged of him; in which case, who shall be Umpire betwixt God and us, if we take not up the controversie betwixt him and our soules. Therefore it being so miserable a case to want assurance of the forgiveness of sinnes; it should make us be never an houre quiet till we have gotten it; seeing the uncertainty of this life, wherein there is but a step betwixt Hell, Damnation and us. Therefore, sue unto God, plic him with broken and humble hearts, that he would pardon all the sins of our youth and after age, knowne and unknowne, that he would pardon all whatsoever: *Take away all iniquity.*

And do good to us.

For so it is in the Originall, but it is all one, *Receive us graciously, and do good to us.* All the goodnesse wee have from God it is out of his grace,

grace, from his free grace and goodnesse, all grace, every little thing from God is grace: as we say of favours received of great persons, this is his grace, his favour; so this is a respect which is put upon all things which we receive from God (when wee are in Covenant) all is gracious. Take we the words as they are (the more plaine) in the Originall. *Take good, and doe good to us*: take good out of thy Treasure of goodnesse, and doe good to us, bestow upon us thy owne good. First, *Take away our iniquities*, and then take good out of thy bounty *and doe good to us*, whence we see,

That Gods mercy to his children is compleate and full.

For he takes away ill, and doth good, men may pardon but withal they think that they have done wondrous bountifully when they have pardoned, but Gods goes further, hee takes away ill and doth good: takes good out of his Fountaine, and doth good to us.

Therefore let us make this use of it, to be encouraged when we have the first blessing of all (Forgivenesse of finnes) to goe to him for more and more, and gather upon God further and further still, for because hee is a Fountaine of goodnesse that can never be drawne drie, hee is wondrously pleased with this. Wee cannot honour him more then by making use of his mercy in the forgivenesse of finnes, and of his goodnesse, in going to him for it, and having interested our selves in his goodnesse, goe to him

Doct.

That Gods favours are compleate to his children.

Use of encouragement.

That good is the load-stone of the soule.

Psal. 25. 10.

That God appears to be good onely to a sanctified soule.

Mat. 7 18.

him for more. Lord, thou hast begun, make an end, thou hast forgiven my sinnes, I want this and that good, together with the pardon of my sinnes doe mee good. *Receive us graciously: or, doe us good.* Now good is the load-stone of the soule, the attractive that drawes it, therefore (after Forgiveness of sinnes) he saith, *doe good.* The Petition is easie, God will soone grant it, for nothing else interposeth betwixt God and us, and makes two, but sinne; which being removed, he is all goodnesse and mercy. *All his waies are mercy and truth.* Yea even his sharpest waies are mercy, all mercy; when sin is forgiven, there is goodnesse in all, in the greatest crosse and affliction. *Doe good to us.*

The soule wee see desires good, and needs good; It is a transcendent word here, and must be understood according to the taste of Gods people, of a sanctified soule. *Doe good,* especially doe spirituall good to us, together with the forgiveness of sinnes, give us the righteousnesse of Jesus Christ; sanctifying grace, such good, as may make us good first; for the desire must be such as the person is who makes it. Wicked men (as it is said of *Balaam*) have good gifts, without the good God: but we must not be so pleased with gifts, unlesse wee be good our selves, and see God making us good. *Can an evill tree bring forth good fruit?* Therefore the Apostle calls the regenerate person *Gods workmanship, &c.* We are Gods good worke, and then wee doe good workes, being made good, good

good comes from us. *Doe good to us.*

It is an acknowledgement of their owne emptinesse, *Doe good to us.* Wee are blinde in our owne understandings, inlighten us; we are perplexed, set us right; we are dull, quicken us; we are empty, fill us; we are darke, shine upon us; we are ready to goe out of the way, establish us; every way doe good to us suitable to our wants. The best that we can bring to thee is emptinesse, therefore doe thou doe good to us, fill us with thy fullnesse. Doe good to us every way whereby thou usest to convey spirituall things to thy servants soules: give us first thy grace, thy Spirit, which is the spring of al good things; for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of direction, of strength, of comfort, and all: therefore he who hath the Spirit of God hath the spring of all: that is beg'd in the first place. And then give us good Magistrates to rule us well; and good Ministers, who are the dispensers of grace, instruments of our salvation, the Conduit-pipes whereby thou derivate and conveyest good to us; when thou hast made us good, continue the meanes of salvation for our good every way. The Church when she saith, *Doe good to us*, hath a large desire; here be seeds of wondrous large things in these two short petitions, *Take away all iniquity, And do good to us. A Bono Deo, &c.* From the good God nothing can come but what is good: therefore do good to us in all spirituall things. The Prophet *David* aimes at this excellent good, *Psal. 4. 6, 7.* saying

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That asking of good, argues the ingenuity of confessing want and emptinesse.

SER. II.

that other men are for corne, wine and oyle, and say; *who will shew us any good? But Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Thy loving kindnesse is better then life, therefore doe good to us. Whenthou hast forgiven our sins, shine graciously upon us in Jesus Christ.

*In the good de
sired outward
prosperity is al-
so included.*

And it extends its limits likewise to outward prosperity (this desire of doing good) let us have happie daies, sweeten our pilgrimage here, let our profession of Religion be comfortable, do not lay more crosses upon us then thou wilt give us strength to beare, doe good to us every way. But marke the wisdome of the Holy Ghost in dictating of this Prayer to them: hee speakes in generall, *do good to us*; not to doe this or that good, but he leaves it to the wisdome of God, as they here frame their hearts unto the will of God. *Doe good to us*, spirituall, that needs no limitation, because we cannot more honour God then to depend upon him for all spirituall good things. Thou art wiser, and knowest what is good for us better then we our selves, beggars ought to be no choosers, therefore *Do good to us*; for the particulars wee leave them to thy wisdome. O Beloved, it is a happy and blessed privilege to be under the conduct of so wise and All-sufficient a God, who is good, and as he is good, knowes best what is good for us. Wee would have riches, liberty and health, I but it may be it is not good for us, *Do good to us*. Thou Lord knowest what is best, doe in thine owne wisdome what is best.

Which

Which should teach us not to limit the Holy one of Israel in our desires of any outward thing whatsoever. Especially desire forgiveness and spirituall good things leaving the rest to his wise disposing. Yet notwithstanding out of the sense of paine and griefe we may pray either for the mitigation or remooving of a crosse, if God be so pleased; because he hath put in us selfe-love; not sinfull, but love of preserving our nature; therefore he permits us (if it may stand with his good pleasure) to desire the good of our outward man, as, Lord give us bodily health, for we cannot else be instruments of serving thee. With reservation of Gods good pleasure, we may desire such and such things; conditionally, that when we see God will have it otherwise, we rest contented, sit downe quietly, knowing that whatsoever health, sicknesse or crosses he sends, it comes from his goodnesse and love, and shall turne to our good at length: if we love God, all shall worke for good.

Take away our iniquity and doe us good, we should make his petition for the Church and our selves, pardon our sins and do good to us, to our persons, to the state, to the times wherein we live, to the Church at home and abroad, doe good to all.

And we may observe this from the order; and know, what good wee have, it comes from God in love, when it comes after forgiveness of finnes. How then may wee take comfort of all the good things we have enjoyed, having seene

How to know when blessings enjoyed come from Gods love

SER. II.

many good daies, enjoyed many good blessings, in health, wealth, good Magistracie, Ministry, Peace, plenty and the like? If all this goodnesse of God leade us to God, and draw us neerer unto him *after forgivenessse of sinnes* (grounded on the former evidences I spake of) then they come in love. But never let us thinke to have true comfort with a blessing, or any good thing we enjoy, till wee have assurance of Gods love and mercy in the forgivenessse of sinnes; least God strip us naked of all the good things wee have, and make us as naked as *Dives* in Hell, who had not (any thing that was good) to refresh his body or soule. So that all good things wee enjoy here without this, will onely aggravate our condemnation. Let us observe therefore, how all our good things are joynd with spirituall good, whether we our selves are made better by them or not, having our sins pardoned. I beseech you let us renew our requests for forgivenessse of sins every day, making our accounts even with God: desiring grace to set our soules in a holy and sanctified frame with God, that our selves may be good, our conversation good: and that then, he would *doe good to us* all other waies, and sanctifie all other things. This is the Method of Gods Spirit in setting us right onwards in our heavenly journey: first to have forgivenessse of sinnes, then sanctification: to be better our selves, and then to looke for peaceable and comfortable daies in this world, if God see it good. What can be more? *Take away*

all iniquity, and do us good: all manner of good.

Therefore since all *good* comes from God, the first and chiefe good, let us labour to have communion with him by all sanctified meanes, that so he may take away our ill, and do us every way good, to our soules, bodies, conditions. O what a blessed thing is it for a Christian to keep a strict and neere communion with the fountaine of goodnesse, who can do more for us then all the world besides. When we are sick on our death-beds, or when conscience is throughly awaked, then to speake peace comfortably to us in this great extremity, is more worth then all this world. Therefore let us labour to keep communion with God, that he may speake peace to our soules when nothing else can.

I beseech you therefore let us take heed, how we breake or walke loosely with God, seeing wee can have no further comfort of any good thing we enjoy, then wee are carefull to keep and maintaine our peace and communion with him at all times; and when we run into arrerages with God, then be sure we lie not in sinne, but say, *Take away all iniquity, and doe good to us*, labouring to be in such an estate, as God may give us his holy Spirit, both to make us good, and to sanctifie unto us all other good. There be good things, which are good of themselves, and which make all other things good. Thus by communion vvith God, vve our selves are made good, and all other things likewise are made good to us; all his vvaies

Simile.

being mercy and truth unto those who feare him. Therefore resigne we our selves and all that we have unto his wisdom and disposing: because oftentimes there is good, where we imagine the worst of evils to be: as it is sometimes good to have a veine opened, to be purged, the Physician thinks so, when yet the Patient, impatient of Reasons issue, thinks not so; But as the Physician is wiser then the Patient to know what is best for him; so God is wiser then man to know what is good for him, who intends us no hurt when he purgeth us by affliction.

All our care therefore should be, to annihilate our selves, to come with empty poore soules to God, *Doe good to us.* In which case, it is no matter what our ill be, if he doe us good; who hath both pardon and rich grace to remoove the evill of sinne, and convey all grace unto us out of his rich Treasury.

So will we render the calves of our lips.

Here is the *Restipulation*, or promise, they Returne back againe to God: for there is no friendship maintained without rendring: when God hath entred into Covenant with us; then there is a kinde of friendship knit up betwixt him and us (he becomming our friend) We must not therefore be like graves to swallow up all and returne nothing; for then the inter-course betwixt God and us is cut off. Therefore the same Spirit which teacheth them to pray, and to *Take to them words*; teacheth them likewise to take unto them *words of Praise*, that there may be a *Rendring*, according

according to *Receiving*; without which we are worse then the poorest creature that is, which rendreth according to its receit. The *Earth* (when it is plowed and sowed) it yeelds us fruit. *Trees* being set, yeeld increase: *Beasts* being fed, render in their kind: yea the fiercest untamed *Beasts*, (as we reade of the *Lyon*) have beene thankfull in their kinde; The *Heavens*, (saith the *Psalmist*) declare the glory of God and the firmament shewes forth his Praise. So there must be a Returne, if we be not worse then beasts. Therefore the *Church* here promiseth a Returne by the same Spirit which stirred her up to pray. *So will wee render the Calves of our lips.*

Psal. 119. 10.

Now this promise which the *Church* makes here of praise is a kind of vow: *So will we render, &c.* To binde ones selfe is a kinde of vow. The *Church* therefore bindes her selfe that she may binde God; for binding her selfe by vow to Thankfullnesse, she thereby bindes God, who is mooved with nothing wee can doe so much as with setting forth of his Praise, which was his end in all the Creation, the setting forth of his glory. The end of the new Creature, is the end of all things both in nature and grace; the end whereof is Gods glory from whence all things come, and wherein all things end: as we say of a circle, all things begin and end in it. All other things are for man, and man for Gods glory; when the soule can say, Lord, this shall be for thy honour, to set forth thy praise, it bindes God. Hence that they might moove God to yeeld to their prayers,

SER. II.

they bind themselves by a kind of vow; Doe thus, O Lord, and thou shalt not loose by it, thou shalt have praise, *So will we render thee the Calves of our lips.*

So Promises and vows of praise are alleadged as an argument to prevaile with God, for the obtaining of that the Church begs for; *So will we render, &c.* Not to enter into the common place of vows, onely this much I say, that there is a good use of them, to vow and promise Thankfullnesse when we would obtaine blessings from God. That which a promise is to men; that a vow is to God; and usually they go together in Scripture, as *Psal. 132. 2.* It is said of *David*, That hee vowed unto God, and sware unto the mighty God of *Laakob*. So we have all in Baptisme vowed a vow, so that it is good to renew our vows often, especially that of new obedience; and in this particular, to vow unto him, that we will praise him; and strive that his glory be no looser by us.

Helpes and use
of vows.

I.
To excite, and
quicken our
dullnesse.

2.
To be a bridle
to our inconstancy.

It is good thus to vow, if it were but to excite, and quicken our dullnesse and forgetfullnesse of our generall vow; to put us in mind of our duty, the more to oblige us to God and refresh our memories. This bond, that having promised, now I must do it, provokes the soule to it, as it helps the memory, so it quickens the affections.

Besides, as by nature, we are forgetfull, so we are inconstant, in which respect, it is a tie to our inconstant and unsteady nature, for there are none who have the Spirit of God at all with any tendernesse of heart, but will thus thinke; I have vowed

vowed to God, if it be a heinous thing to breake with men, what is it wittingly and willingly to break with the great God? a vow is a kinde of oath; this is the sacrifice of fooles, to come to God, and yet neither to make good our vowes, nor indeavour to doe it.

Let us consider therefore, what we have done in this case. By permission of authority there was a Fast lately when we all renewed our vowes (we mocked God else) received the Communion. Will God be mocked think you? No, but howsoever man may forget, God will not, but will come upon us, for *non*-payment of our vowes and Covenants. Lay we it to heart therefore what Covenants we have made with God of late. And then, for the time to come, be not discouraged if you have been faulty in it. There is a generall vow, wherein though we have failed (if we be his children and breake not with God in the maine, cleaving to him in purpose of heart, occasionally renewing our purposes and Covenants) yet let not Satan discourage us for our unfaithfullnesse therein; but be ashamed of it, watch more; looke better to it for the time to come, and make use of the gracious Covenant; and upon recovery, say with the Church. *So will we render the Calves of our lips.*

It was the custome under the Jewish pollicie (you know) to offer sacrifices of all sorts. But the Spirit of God speakes here of the Church of the Jewes under the New Testament, especially what they should be after their Conversion, having

SER. II.

Pfal. 50.

ving reference to the Jewes in Christs time, and to the beleeving Jewes in all times, implying this much, howsoever not Legall sacrifices, of *Calves, Bullocks, Sheepe and Lambes*, yet the *Calves of the lips*, which God likes better, are acceptable to him. And it likewise implies some humiliation of the Church. Lord, whatsoever else we could offer unto thee it is thine owne, though it were the beasts upon a thousand mountaines; but this (by thy grace) we can do, to *Praise thee*. For God must open and circuncise our lips and hearts, before we can offer him *the Calves of our lips*. Thus much the poorest creature in the world may say to God, Lord, *I will render thee the Calves of my lips*, other things I have not, this I have by thy gracious Spirit, a heart somewhat touched by the sense of thy favour: therefore, *I will render thee the Calves of my lips*, that is, *Praise*, as the Apostle hath it, *Heb. 13. 15. By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his Name.* [So will we render thee the *Calves of our lips*] Whence the point is,

Doct.

That Gods children at all times have their Sacrifices.

There is indeed one kinde of Sacrificing determined, and finished by the coming of Christ, who was the last Sacrifice of propitiation for our sins. The more to blame those, who yet maintaine a daily Sacrifice, not of laud and praise, but of cozening and deluding the world, in saying masse for the sins of the quick and the dead, all such Sacrifices being finished and closed up in him,

him (our blessed Saviour) who, *by one Sacrifice* (as the Apostle speaks) *hath perfected them that are sanctified*: and that, *By one Sacrifice when hee offered up himselfe*; when all the Jewish Sacrifices ended, since which, all ours are but a commemoration of Christs last Sacrifice (as the Fathers say) The Lords Supper with the rest: Which remaine still, and the *Sacrifice of praise*, with a few others I desire to name.

First, *The Sacrifice of a broken heart*, whereof David speaks, *Psal. 51. 17.* which Sacrifice of a wounded broken heart (by the knife of Repentance) pleaseth God wondrously well.

And then, *A broken heart that offers Christ to God every day*, who though he were offered once for all: yet our beleeving in him, and daily presenting his Attonement made for us, is a new offering of him. Christ is Crucified and Sacrificed for thee as oft as thou beleevest in Christ Crucified. Now upon all occasions we manifest our Beleefe in Christ, to wash and bathe our selves in his blood, who justifieth the ungodly, so that upon a fresh sight of sin with contrition for it, he continually justifieth us. Thus when we Beleeve we offer him to God daily, a broken heart first, and then Christ with a broken heart.

And then when we beleeve in Christ, *we offer and sacrifice our selves to God*, in which respect we must (as it were) be killed ere we be offered; for wee may not offer our selves as wee are in our lusts, but as mortified and killed by Repentance. Then we offer our selves to God as a

reafo-

SER. II.

Heb. 10. 14.
Heb. 7. 27.

I.

*The Sacrifice of
a broken heart.*

2.

*A broken heart
offering Christ.*

3.

Ourselves.

SER. II.

2 Cor. 8. 5.

reasonable and living sacrifice, when wee offer our selves wholly unto him, wit, understanding, judgement, affections and indeavour, as *Paul* saith of the *Macedonians*, they gave themselves to God first, and then their goods. In summe, it is that Sacrifice *Paul* speakes of, *Rom. 12. 1.* To present our bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, &c. for a Christian who beleeveth in the Lord *Jesus*, is not his owne, but sacrificeth himselfe to him that was Sacrificed for him. As *Christ* is given to us, so hee that beleeveth in *Christ* gives himselfe backe againe to *Christ*. Hereby a man may know if he be a true Christian, and that *Christ* is his; if he yeelds up himselfe to God; for, *Christ* died and rose againe, (saith the Apostle) that he might be Lord both of quick and dead. Therefore (saith he) whether we live or die, we are not our own, what we do or suffer in the world, in all we are Sacrificed, so saith a sanctified soule; my wit, my will, my life, my good, my affections are thine, of thee I received them; and I resigne all to thee as a Sacrifice. Thus the Martyrs to seale the Truth (as a Sacrifice) yeilded up their blood. He that hath not obtained of himselfe so much, as to yeeld himself to God, he knowes not what the Gospell meanes; for Christian Religion is not onely to beleeve in *Christ* for forgivenesse of sin, but the same faith which takes this great benefitt, renders back our selves in lieu of Thankfullnesse.

So that, whatsoever we have (after we Beleeve) we give all back againe. Lord, I have my
life,

life, my will, my wit and all from thee, and to thee I returne all back againe: for when I gave my selfe to beleeve in thy deare Sonne, I yeelded my selfe and all I have to thee: and now having nothing but by thy gift; if thou wilt have all, I will returne all unto thee againe; if thou wilt have my life, my goods, my liberty thou shalt have them. This is the state of a Christian who hath denied himselfe, for wee cannot beleeve as we should, unlesse we denie our selves. Christianity is not altogether in beleeving this and that, but the faith which mooves mee to beleeve Forgivenessse of finnes, carries us also unto God, to yeeld all back againe to him.

More especially, among the Sacrifices of the New Testament, are Almes, as *Hcb. 13. 16.* *To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.*

4.
Almes-deeds.

And (among the rest) *The Sacrifice of Praise*, which is in the same Chapter ver. 15. first, he saith, *by him* (that is, by Christ) *let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually*, that is, *The fruit of our lips*, which is but an exposition of this place, which because it is especially here intended; I will a little enlarge my selfe in.

5.
The Sacrifice
of Praise.

The *Calves of our lips*, implies two things:
Not onely Thankfullnesse to God;

But glorifying of God, in setting out his praise; otherwise to thanke God for his goodnesse to us, or for what we hope to receive, without glorifying of him, is nothing at all worth. For in glorifying there are two things.

SER. I I.

1. *A supposition of Excellencie*, for that cannot be glorified which hath no excellencie in it; glory in sublimity, hath alway excellencie attending it. And

2. *The manifestation of this glory.*

Now when all the excellencies of God as they are, are discovered and set out, his *Wisedome, Mercy, Power, Goodnesse, All-sufficiencie, &c.* then we glorifie him. To praise God for his favours to us, and accordingly to glorifie him, is *The Calves of our lips*, but especially to praise him. Whence the point is,

That the yeelding of praise to God, is a wondrous acceptable Sacrifice.

Which is instead of all the Sacrifices of the Old Testament; then which, the greatest can doe no more; nor the least, lesse, for it is the sacrifice and fruit of the lips. But to open it; it is not meerey the sacrifice of our lips; for the praise we yeeld to God it must be begotten in the heart. Hereupon the word (*λογος*) speech signifieth both *Reason* and *Speech*, there being one word in the learned language for both. Because, speech is nothing but that streame which issues from the spring of reason and understanding; therefore, in Thankesgiving there must not be a lip-labour onely; but a Thankesgiving from the lips, first begotten in the heart, comming from the inward man, as *Psal. 103. 1.* The Prophet saith, *Blesse the Lord, O my soule, and all that is within mee, blesse his holy Name*; Praise must come from a sound judgement of the worth of
the

the thing we praise God for. It must come from an affection which desires that God may have the glory, by the powers of the whole inward man, which is a hard matter to rouze up our selves to praise God with all the powers of our soule, *all that is within me, praise his holy Name.* There goeth Judgement, Retiolution of the will, strength of affections, and all with it.

And then againe, besides this, *The Calves of our lips*, carries us to work. The orall Thankesgiving must be justified by our workes and deeds; or else, our actions will give our tongue the lie, that we praise him with the one, but denie him in the other. This is a Sollocisme, as if one should look to the earth and cry O ye heavens: so when we say, God be praised, when yet our life speaks the contrary, it is a dishonouring of God. So the praise of our lips must be made good and justified by our life, actions, and conversation: this we must suppose for the full understanding of the words. *We will render* (from our hearts) *the Calves of our lips*, which we must make good in our lives and conversations, ever to set forth thy praise in our whole life.

But why doth the Prophet especially mention lips; *The Calves of our lips*, which are our words.

1. Partly, because Christ who is the Word, delights in our words.
2. Because our Tongue is our glory, and that whereby we glorifie God.

3. And

Quest.
Why lips are mentioned for praise onely.
Answe.

SER. I I.

3. And especially, because *our Tongue is that which excites others*

Being a trumpet of praise, ordained of God for this purpose. Therefore, *The Calves of our lips*. Partly, because it stirres up our selves and others; and partly, because God delights in words especially of his owne dictating. To comethen to speake more fully of Praise and Thankesgiving, let us consider, what a sweet, excellent and prevailing duty this is; which the Church (to bind God) promiseth unto him, *The Calves of our lips*. I will not be long in the point, but only come to some helpes how wee may come to do it.

Helpes to praise
God.

I.

It must bee
from an humble
broken heart.

Gen. 32. 10.

First, this Praising of God must be from an humble broken heart, the humble soule that sees it selfe not worthy of any favour, and confesseth sinne before God, is alway a thankfull soule. Take away our iniquity, and then doe good to us, we are empty our selves; Then will we render thee the Calves of our lips. What made *David* so thankfull a man? Hee was an humble man; and so *Jaakob*; what abased him so in his owne eyes? his humility; *Lord I am lesse then the least of thy mercies*. He that thinkes himselfe unworthy of anything, will be thankfull for every thing, and hee who thinkes himselfe unworthy of any blessing, will be contented with the least. Therefore, let us worke our hearts to humility, in consideration of our sinfullnesse, vilenesse, and unworthinesse, which will make us thankfull, especially of the best blessings,

blessings, when wee consider their greatnesse, and our unworthinesse of them. A proud man can never be thankfull. Therefore that Religion which teacheth pride, cannot be a thankfull Religion, Popery is compounded of spirituall pride. *Merit of Congruity* before Conversion, *Merit of Congruity* and desert of heaven after, Free-will and the like, to passe up nature, what a Religion is this? must we light a candle before the divell? is not nature proud enough, but we must light a candle to it? to be spirituall~~ly~~ proud is worst of all.

And with our owne unworthinesse, add this, a *consideration of the greatnesse of the thing we blesse God for*: setting as high a price upon it as wee can, by confideing what and how miserable we were without it. He will blesse God joyfully for pardon of sin who sees how miserable hee were without it, in misery next to divels, ready to drop into hell every moment: and the more excellent we are, so much the more accursed without the forgiveness of finnes. For the soule by reason of the largenesse thereof, is so much the more capable and comprehensible of misery, as the divels are more capable then wee, therefore are most accursed. O this will make us blesse God for the pardon of sinne, and likewise, let us set a price upon all Gods blessings, considering what we were without our senses, speech, meate, drinke, rest, &c. O beloved, we forget to praise God sufficiently for our senses. This little sparke of Reason in us, is an

E

excellent

2.

A due consideration of the greatnesse of the blessings.

SER. II.

excellent thing ; grace is founded upon it, if we were without Reason, what were we? If we wanted sight, hearing, speech, rest, and other daily blessings, how uncomfortable were our lives? This consideration will add and set a price to their worth, and make us thankfull to consider our misery without them. But (such is our corruption) that favours are more knowne by the want then by the enjoying of them, when too late we (many times) finde, how darke and uncomfortable we are without them, then smarting the more soundly, because in time we did not sufficiently prize, and were thankfull for them.

3.
To get assurance that we are in Gods love.

And then, *labour to get further and further assurance, that wee are Gods children, beloved of him* : this will make us thankfull, both for what we have and hope for. It lets out the life blood of Thankfullnesse to teach doubting, or falling from grace. What is the end I beseech you why the glory to come is revealed before the time? that we shall be sonnes and daughters; Kings and Queenes; heires and co-heires with Christ; and all that he hath is ours? Is not this knowledge revealed before hand, that our praise and thanksgiving should before hand be sutable to this Revelation? being set with Christ in heavenly places already. Whence comes those strong phrases, *we are raised with Christ; sit with him in heavenly Places: are translated from death to life: Transformed into his image: Partakers of the divine nature, &c.* If any thing that can come betwixt our beleiving and our sitting there could

Eph. 2. 6.

Col. 1. 13.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

could disappoint us thereof, or unsettle us, it may as well put Christ out of Heaven, for we sit with him. If wee yeeld to the uncomfortable Popish Doctrine of doubting, we cannot be heartily thankfull for blessings; for still there will rise in the soule surmises, I know not whether God favour me or not, it may be I am onely fatted for the day of slaughter, God gives mee outward things to damne me, and make me the more inexcusable; what a cooler of praise is this, to be ever doubting and to have no assurance of Gods favour? But when upon good evidence (which cannot deceive) wee have somewhat wrought in us distinct from the greater number of worldlings, Gods stampe set upon us, having evidences of the state of grace, by conformity to Christ, and walking humbly by the Rule of the Word in all Gods waies, Then we may heartily be thankfull, yea and we shall breake forth in Thankesgiving: this being an estate of *Peace, and joy unspeakeable and glorious*, wherein we take every thing as an evidence of Gods love.

Thus, the assurance of our being in the state of grace, makes us thankfull for every thing: so by the contrary, being not in some measure assured of Gods love in Christ, wee cannot be Thankfull for every thing. For it will alwaies come in our minde, I know not how I have these things, and what account I shall give for them. Therefore, even for the honour of God, and that we may praise him the more cheerefully, let us

*That Popish
Doctrine of
doubting kills
Thankfulness
to God.*

*That assurance
of being in the
state of grace,
is the nurse of
Thankesgiving.*

1 Pet. I. 3.

labour to have further and further evidences of the state of grace, to make us thankfull both for things present and to come, seeing faith takes to trust things to come, as if it had them in possession: Whereby we are assured of this; that wee shall come to heaven, as sure as if we were there already. This makes us praise God before hand for all favours: as blessed *Peter* begins his Epistle, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Iesus Christ; which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us againe unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Iesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, &c.* As soone as we are new borne, we are begotten to a Kingdome, and an Inheritance: therefore assurance that we are Gods children, will make us thankfull for grace present and that to come, as if we were in Heaven already; we begin then the imployment of Heaven in thanksgiving here to praise God before hand with *Cherubims* and *Angels*. Let us then be stirred up, to give God his due before hand, to begin Heaven upon Earth; for wee are so much in heaven already as we abound and are conversant in thanksgiving upon earth.

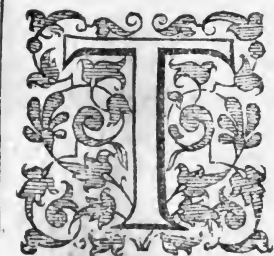
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THE THIRD SERMON.

Hos. 14. 2, 3.

---So will we render the Calves of our lips,
Asbur shall not save us, we will not ride upon
horses, neither will wee say any more to the
works of our hands, ye are our gods, for in
thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.



THE words (as wee heard heretofore) containe a most sweet and excellent forme of Returning unto God for miserable lost and forlorne sinners, wherein, so farre God discovers his willingnesse to have his people returne unto him, that he dictates unto them a forme of prayer, *Take with you words and*

SERM. III. *turne to the Lord, say unto him, Take away iniquity.*

Wherein we see how detestation of sin must be as generall as the desire of pardon: and that none heartily pray to God to *Take away all iniquity*, who have not grace truly to hate all iniquity. *And doe good to us*, or doe graciously to us, for there is no good to us till sinne be remooved, though God be goodnesse it self; there is no provoking or meriting cause of mercy in us; but he findes cause from his owne gracious nature and bowels of mercy, to pitie his poore people and servants. It is his nature to shew mercy; as the fire to burne, a spring to runne, the Sun to shine: Therefore it is easily done (as the Prophet speaks) *Who is a God like unto thee?*

Micah 7. 18.

Where we came to speake of the Restipulation, *So will wee render the Calves of our lips*: where Gods favour shines there will be a reflection, love is not idle, but a working thing: it must render or die; and what doth it render? divers Sacrifices of the New Testament which I spoke of, that of a broken heart, of Christ offered to the Father to stand betwixt Gods wrath and us; our selves as a living Sacrifice: Almes-deeds, and praise, which must be with the whole inward powers of the soule.

Praise is not comely in the mouth of a foole (saith the Wiseman) nor of a wicked man, as *Psal. 50. 16, 17.* saith God to such, *What hast thou to doe to take my words in thy mouth since thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee?* There are a company who are ordinary swearers, and filthy

filthy speakers; for them to praise God, James tellsthem, that these contrary streames cannot flow out of a good heart; O no: God requires not the praise of such fooles.

I gave you also some Directions how to praise God, and to stirre up your selves to this most excellent duty, which I will not insift on now, but add a little unto that I then delivered, which is, *That we must watch all advantages of praising God, from our dispositions. Is any merrie, let him sing* (saith James) O, it is a great point of wisdom, to take advantages with the streame of our temper to praise God. When he doth incourage us by his favours and blessings, and inlarge our spirits, then we are in a right temper to blesse him: let us not loose the occasion. This is one Branch of redeeming of time, to observe what state and temper of soule we are in, and to take advantage from thence. Is any man in *heaviness*? he is fit to mourne for sin: let him take the opportunity of that temper. Is any disposed to *cheerfulness*; let him sacrifice that marrow, oyle, and sweetness of spirit to God. We see the poore birds in the spring-time, when those little spirits they have are cherished with the Sun-beames, how they expresse it in singing; so when God warmes us with his favours, let him have the praise of all.

And here, I cannot but take up a lamentation of the horrible ingratitude of men, who are so farre from taking advantage by Gods blessings to praise him; that they fight, like Rebels)

To take advantages of our disposition
James 5. 13.

A censure of those who take the advantage of Gods blessings to feed their lusts.

SERM. III.

against him with his owne favours. Those tongues which he hath given them for his glory, they abuse to pierce him with blasphemie, and those other benefits of his lent them to honour him with, they turne to his dishonour, like children, who importunately aske for divers things, which when they have, they throw them to the dog. So, favours they will have, which when they have obtained, they give them to the divell, unto whom they sacrifice their strength and cheerefullnesse, and cannot be merrie, unlesse they be mad and sinfull. Are these things to be tolerated in these daies of light? How few shall we finde who in a temper of mirth turne it the right way?

*Incouragement
to Praise God*

I.

*We honour him
by it.*

But to add some encouragements to incite us to praise God, unto the former; I beseech you let this be one, That *we honour God by it*; it is a well-pleasing Sacrifice to him. If we would studie to please him, we cannot do it better then by praising him.

2.

*It is the most
gainfull trading,*

And *it is a gainfull trading with God*: for in bestowing his seed, where he findes there is improovement in a good soyle, with such a sanctified disposition as to blesse him upon all occasions, that there comes not a good thought, a good motion in the minde, but we blesse God who hath injected such a good thought in our heart: there I say God delights to shower downe more and more blessings, making us fruitfull in every good worke to the praise of his Name. Sometimes we shall have holy and
gratious

gracious persons make a law, that no good or holy motion shall come into their hearts which they will not be thankfull for. O, when God seeth a heart so excellently disposed, how doth it enrich the soule? It is a gainfull trade. As we delight to bestow our seed in foyles of great increase, which yeeld sixty and an hundred fold, if possible: so God delights in a disposition inclined to blesse him upon all occasions, on whom he multiplies his favours.

And then, in it selfe; *it is a most noble act of Religion*, it being a more base thing to be alwaies begging of God; but it argueth a more noble, raised and elevated spirit to be disposed to praise God. And it is an argument of lesse selfe-love and respect, being therefore more gainfull to us. Yea, it is a more noble and royall disposition, fit for Spirituall Kings and Priests thusto Sacrifice.

3.
It is a most noble act of Religion.

Againe, indeed *we have more cause to praise God then to pray, having many things to praise him for which wee never praid for*; Who ever prayed for his election, care of Parents in our infancy, their affection to us, care to breed and traine us to yeares of discretion; besides those many favours daily heaped upon us, above all that we are able to think or speake. Therefore *Praise* being a more large Sacrifice then Prayer, wee ought to be abundant in it. For those that begin not Heaven upon earth, of which this praise is a maine function, they shall never come to Heaven, after they are taken from the earth;

4.
Because wee have more cause to give thanks then to pray.

for

SERM. III.

for there is no heavenly action, but it is begun upon earth, especially this maine one, of joyning with Angels, Seraphims, and Cherubims in lauding God? Shall they praise him on our behalfe, and shall not wee for our owne? We see the Quire of Angels when Christ was borne, sang, *Glory be to God on high, on earth Peace, and good will towards men.* What was this for? Because Christ the Saviour of the world was borne, whereby they shew, that we have more benefit by it then they. Therefore if we would ever joyne with them in Heaven, let us joyne with them upon Earth; for this is one of the great priviledges mentioned by the Author to the *Hebrewes*, unto which we be come too, *Communion with the spirits of just men made perfect, and to the company of innumerable Angels:* we cannot better shew that we are come to that blessed estate and Society spoken of then by praising God.

Luke 2.14.

Hab. 1.2.22.

5.
Praising brings
joy.

And lastly, *If we be much in praising God, wee shall be much in joy,* which easeth misery; for a man can never be miserable, that can be joyfull, and a man is alway joyfull when hee is thankfull. When one is joyfull and cheerefull, what misery can lie upon him? Therefore it is a wondrous helpe in misery to stirre up the heart to this spirituall Sacrifice of Thankesgiving by all arguments, meanes and occasions. Our hearts are Temples, and we are Priests, we should alway therefore have this light & Incense burning in our hearts, as the fire did alway burne

on the Altar in *Moses* time, that wee may have these spirituall Sacrifices to offer continually. Where this is not, the heart of that man or woman, is like *the abomination of desolation*, which (when the daily Sacrifice was taken away) was set up in the *Temple*. And certainly where there is not praising of God, the heart is *an abomination of desolation*, having nothing in it, save monsters of base lusts and earthly affections.

But how shall wee know that God accepts these Sacrifices of Praise?

How did hee witness the acceptation of those Sacrifices under the old Law? *by fire from Heaven*; this was ordinary with them. So if we finde our hearts warme, cheared and encouraged with joy, peace, and comfort in praising God; this is as it were a witness by fire from Heaven that our Sacrifices are accepted. Let this now said be effectually, to stirre you up to this excellent and usefull duty of *Thanksgiving*, without multiplying of more Arguments; save to put you in minde of this, that as wee are exhorted to *delight our selves in the Lord*, one way (among the rest) to doe it, is to *serve him with cheerefullnesse*, it is an excellent thing to make us delight in God, who loves a cheerefull giver, and Thanksgiver. *So will we render the Calves of our lips*. But to proceed.

After this their solemne Covenant and promise of yeelding *Praise* to God, that if he would forgive all their sinnes and doe good to them; then he should have the best they could doe to him

Dan. 12. 11.

Quest.

Ans^w.
How to know
when our
Thanksgiving
is accepted.

Psal. 37. 4

SERM. III. him againe, (Praise) Here is *A Promise of new Obedience*, which hath two Branches,

1. *A Renunciation of the ill courses they took before.*

Asbur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon Horses, neither will wee say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.

2. *Then there is a Positive duty implied, in these words;*

For, in thee, the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.

Whereof, the one springs from the other; *Asbur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.* Whence comes all these? *for in thee, the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.* Thou shalt be our *Rock, our Trust, our Confidence* for ever: what will follow upon this? *Asbur shall not save us any longer, we will not ride upon Horses, &c.* for we have pitched and placed our confidence better; on him, in whom, *the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.*

Asbur shall not save us.

The Confidence which this people had placed, partly in *Asbur*, their friends and associates; and partly in their owne strength at home; now (promising Repentance) they renounce all such confidence in *Asbur, Horses, and Idols.* *Asbur shall not save us, &c.*

First for this, *Asbur shall not save us*; that is, the *Assyrians*, whom they had on the one side, and the *Aegyptians* on the other: it being (as we see in the Prophecies of *Isay* and *Jeremy*) ordinary

ordinary with Gods people, in any distresse to have recourse to the *Assyrians*, or *Ægyptians*; as if God had not beene sufficient to be their Rock and their shield. Wee see how often the Lord complains of this manner of dealing, *Isay 30.2. & 31.1. Woe unto them that goe downe into Ægypt for helpe, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, &c.* The Prophets (and so this Prophet) are very full of such complaints. It being one of the cheefe arguments hee preseth, their falseness in this, that in any feare or perill, they ran to the shelter of other Nations, especially thesetwo, *Ægypt*, and *Assyria*, as you have it, *Chap. 12.1. Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the East winde, hee daily increaseth lies and desolation, and they doe make a Covenant with the Assyrians; and oyle is carried into Ægypt,* that is, *Balme*, who had this priviledge above all other nations, to abound in pretious Balmes: which balme and oyle they carried for a present into *Ægypt*, to win their favour against the *Assyrians*. Sometimes they relied on the one, and sometimes on the other, the story and causes whereof were too tedious to relate, wherefore I come to the usefull points arising hence. *Asshur shall not save us.*

1. That man naturally is prone to put confidence in the creature.

2. That the creature is insufficient and unable to yeeld us this prop to uphold our confidence.

3. That Gods people when they are endowed with light supernaturall, to discern and be convinced hereof,

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hereof, are of that minde to say [*Ashur shall not save us.*]

But to make way to these things, wee must first observe two things for a preparative.

Doct.

That reformation must be toyed with prayer and praise.

First, *That Reformation of life must be joynd with Prayer and Praise.* There was Prayer before, and a promise of Praise; but (as here) there must be joynd reformation of their sinne. That it must be so it appeares. First for Prayer: it is said, *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not heare my Prayer:* and for Praise; *The very sacrifice of the wicked (who reformes not his waies) is abominable:* so that without Reformation, Prayer and Praise is to no purpose. Therefore it is brought here after a promise of Praise. Lord as we meane to praise thee, so wee intend a thorough reformation of former sinnes whereof wee were guilty. We will renounce *Ashur*, and confidence in *Horses*, *Idols* and the like. Therefore let us when we come to God with *Prayer and Praise*, thinke also of reforming what is amisse. Out with *Achan*; if there be any *dead flie* or *Achan* uncast out, Prayer and Praise is invaine. Will you steale, lie, commit Adultery, sweare falsely, and come and stand before me (saith the Lord by the Prophet *Jeremiah*): Will you offer to *Pray* to me and *Praise* me living in these and these sinnes? No, God will abhorre both that Prayer and Praise, where there is no reformation. *What hast thou to doe to take my Name in thy mouth, since thou ha-*

PRO. 15. 8.

Iosh. 7. 19.

Ier. 7. 9.

Psal. 50. 16.

test

test to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee? saith God. Where he pleades with the Hypocrite for this audacious boldnesse in severing things conjoynd by God. Therefore as wee would not have our Prayers turned backe from Heaven, which should bring a blessing upon all other things else: As we would not have our sacrifices abhominable to God, labour to reforme what is amisse, amend all, or else never thinke our lip-labour will proove any thing but a lost labour, without this Reformation.

A *Second* thing which I observe in generall, before I come to the particulars, is,

That true Repentance is of the particular sinne which we are most addicted to, and most guilty of.

The particular sinne of this people (whom God so instructs here) was their confidence in *Affyria, Horses and Idols*. Now therefore Repenting, they repent of the particular maine sinnes they were most guilty of, which being stricken downe, all the lesser will be easie to conquer. As when *Goliath* himselfe was stricken downe, all the host of the *Phylishtims* runne away. So when *Goliath* shall be flaine in us, the reigning ruling domineering sinne, the rest will easly be conquered.

Therefore let us make an Use of *Examination* and triall of our Repentance. If it be found, it drawes with it a reformation, as in generall, so especially of our particular sinnes, as those, *1 Sam. 12. 8.* confesse and say, *Above all other things wee have sinned in this, in asking a King.*

We

Doct.

1 Sam. 17. 51.

*Use.
Triall of Re-
pentance.*

SER. III.

Ioh. 4. 18.

We were naught and had offended God many waies before, but herein we have beene exceeding sinnefull, in seeking another Governour, being weary of Gods gracious Governement over us. So a gracious heart will say, I have beene a wretch in all other things, but in this and that sin above all other. Thus it was with the woman of *Samarita*, when shee was put in minde by Christ of her particular grand sinne, that shee had beene a light woman and had had many husbands, he whom she lived with now not being her husband. This discovery (when Christ touched the galled part) did so worke upon her conscience, that it occasioned a generall repentance of all her other sinnes whatsoever. And indeed sound repentance of one maine sin, will draw with it all the rest. And for the most part when God brings any man home to him, he so carries our repentance, that discovering unto us our sinnefullnesse, hee especially shewes us our *Dalilah*, *Isaack*, *Herodias*, our particular sinne, which being cast out, we prevaile easily against the rest. As the charge was given by the King of *Aram* against *Ahab*, *fight neither against great nor small, but onely against the King of Israel*, kill him, and then there will be an end of the battell. So let us not stand striking at this and that sinne which wee are not so much tempted to, if we will indeed proove our repentance to be sound, but at that maine sinne which by nature, calling or custome we are most prone unto. Repentance for this causes Repentance for all the

2 Chron. 18.
30.

the

the rest, as here the Church saith, *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, &c.*

It is a grand imposture, which carries many to Hell, they will cherish themselves in some grosse maine sinne, which pleases corrupt nature, and is advantagious to them: and by way of compensation with God they will doe many other things well, but leave a dead flie to marre all. Whereas they should begin here especially. This much in generall, which things premised, I come to the forenamed particulars: First,

That naturally we are apt and prone to confidence in outward helps and present things.

Doct.

This came to our nature from the first fall; what was our fall at first? A turning from the All-sufficient unchangeable God to the creature, If I should describe sinne, it is nothing but a turning from God to one creature or other, when we find not contentment and sufficiencie in one creature, we run to another, as the bird flies from one tree and bough to another, so we seeke varietie of contentments from one thing to another, such is the pravitie of our nature since the fall. This is a fundamentall conclusion; man naturally will, and must have somewhat to relie on. The soule must have a bottome, a foundation to rest on, either such as the world affords or a better. Weake things must have their supports: as wee see, the Vine being a weake thing, is commonly supported by the Elme or the like supple. So it is with the soule since the fall: because it is weake, and cannot

SERM. III.

uphold nor satisfie it selfe with it selfe, therefore it lookes out of it selfe. Looke to God it cannot till it be in the state of grace, for being his enemy, it loves not to look to him or his waies, or have dealing with him; therefore it lookes unto the creature, that next hand unto it selfe. This being naturally since the fall, that what we had in God before when we stood, we now labour to have in the creature.

Because (as was said) having lost Communion with God, somewhat we must have to stay the soule.

Secondly, because Satan joynes with our sense and fancie, by which wee are naturally prone to live, esteeming of things, not by faith and by deeper grounds, but by fancie. Now fancie having communion with sense, what it discovers and presents for good and great; *fancie* makes it greater, and the Divell above all having communion with that facultie of *fancie*, and so a spirit of error being mixed therewith, to make our fancie thinke the riches of the world to be the onely riches: The greatnesse and goodnesse of the creature, to be the onely greatnesse and goodnesse, and the strength thereof, the onely strength: This spirit of error joyning with our owne spirits, and with the deceit of our natures, makes us set a higher value on the creature, inlargeth and inrageth the fancie, making it spiritually drunk so as to conceive amisse of things.

Briefely for Use hereof, it being but a directing

Reason. I.
Losse of former
communion
with God

2.
Abuse of our
fancie.

How our fan-
cies come to be
so abused, as to
dote on the
creature.

Vse.

cting

ting point to others. Let us take notice of our corruption herein and be humbled for it, taking in good part those afflictions and crosses which God sends us to convince and let us see that there is no such thing in the creature as we imagined. Because naturally, we are desperately given to thinke that there is somewhat more therein then there is. Now affliction helps this sickness of fancie, imbittering unto us all confidence in the creature. Therefore it is a happy and a blessed thing to be crossed in that which we over-value, as these *Israelites* here did, the *Assyrians* and the *Aegyptians*: for being enemies, they trusted in a *broken reed*, as we shall see further in the second point,

How these outward things cannot helpe us.

How prone so ever we are to rely upon them, they are in effect nothing, they cannot helpe us, and so are not to be relied upon. *Asshur shall not save us.* Indeed it will not, it cannot; these things cannot aid us at our most need. So that that which we most pitch upon, failes us when we should especially have helpe; some present vanishing supply they yeeld: but little to purpose. They have not that in them which should support the soule at a strait, or great pinch as wee say.

The Reason is largely given by *Salomon* in the whole booke of *Ecclesiastes*, *All is vanity and vexation of spirit.* There is a vanity in all the creatures, being emptie and not able to support the soule. They are vaine in their continu-

Doct.

That the creature cannot helpe in our speciall need

Reason.

SERM. III.

Prov. 23. 5.

Job. 6. 15.

Ier. 2. 13.

ance, and emptie in regard of their strength, they are gone when wee have need of them. *Riches* (as the Wiseman saith) are gone, and have wings to flie away in our most need. So *Friends*, are fugitive good things, being like to the brookes mentioned in *Job*: which when in Summer there is need of, then they are dried up, and yet run amaine in Winter when there is no need of them. So earthly supports, when there is no need of them, then they are at hand, but when we have most need of them are gone. *They are broken Cisternes*, as the Prophet calles them: *Cisternes*, that is, they have a limited capacity, a Cisterne is not a spring: so all their support (at the best) is but a bounded and a mixed sufficiency, and that also which will quickly faile. Like water in a Cisterne, which if it be not fed with a continuall spring, failes or putrifies presently. Likewise these outward things are not sufficient for the grievance, for being limited and bounded, the grievance will be above the strength of the creature; which though sometime it be present and doe not faile, yet the trouble is such, that it is above the strength of the creature to helpe. So that for these and the like respects, there is no sufficiency nor helpe to be expected from the creature. *Asbur shall not save us*, hee is not a sufficient ground of trust.

Why?

1. He is but a Creature.
2. He is an Enemy.
3. He is an Idolater.

So that, take him in all these three relations, he is not to be trusted.

1. *He is a Creature*, what is a Creature? nothing as it were, saith the Prophet, *all creatures before him are as nothing, and as a very little thing*; and what it is, when he pleaseth he can dissolve it into nothing, turne it into dust. Mans breath is in his nostrills, all flesh is grasse, and all his glory as the flower of grasse. If a man trust the creature, he may outlive his trust, his prop may be taken from him and downe he falls. *Asshur* must not be trusted therefore as a *Creature*; nor as a *Man*, for that brings us within the curse: *Ier. 17. 5.* Thus saith the Lord, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arme, &c.* So trusting in the creature not only deceives us, but brings us within the curse. In that respect, *Asshur* must not be trusted.

But *Asshur* likewise was an *Enemy*, and a secret enemy: for howsoever the ten Tribes unto whom *Hosea* prophecied were great Idolaters, yet they were somewhat better then *Asshur*, who was without the pale of the Church, and a wholly corrupted Church: therefore they were enemies to the ten Tribes, and amongst other reasons, because they were not so bad as they, nor deeply enough dyed with Idolatry.

Many thinke they may complie with Popery in some few things to gaine their love, and that there may be a joyning with them in this and that: but doe we thinke that they will ever trust us for all this? No, they will alway hate

SER. III.

ustill we be as bad as they, and then they will despise us, and secure themselves of us. Therefore there is no trusting of Papists, as Papists: not onely *Creatures*, but as false, and as enemies. For this is the nature of wicked men, they will never trust better then themselves, till they become as bad as they are, after which they despise them; say they, now we may trust such and such a one, he is as bad as we, becom'd one of us. Which is the reason why some of a naughty disposition take away the chastity and virginity of mens consciences, making them take this and that evill course: and then they thinke they have such safe, being as bad as themselves. Wherein they deale as *Achitophels* politike divelish counsell was, that *Absalon* should doe that which was naught, and then he should be sure that *David* and he should never agree after that: and that then by this discovery, the wicked Jewes set on mischief might secure themselves of *Absalon*. So they, now that they joyne with us, God will forsake them, we shall have them our instruments for any thing. First, they would have the ten Tribes as bad as they, and then gave them the slip whensoever they trusted them.

2 Sam. 16:21.

Againe, neither were they to be trusted as *Idolaters*, to have league and society with them. There may be some commerce and traffique with them, but amity and trust none. *Assur* and *Egypt* were horrible *Idolaters*, and therefore not to be trusted in that respect. As wee see
the

the Prophet in this case reprooved good *Iehoshaphat* when he had joyn'd with wicked *Abab*, King of the ten Tribes: *Shouldst thou helpe the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore wrath is upon thee from before the Lord.* So we see it is a dangerous thing to bee in league with Idolaters; even such as the ten Tribes were, who had some Religion amongst them: this good King was chidden for it.

We will not ride upon Horses.

What kinde of creature a Horse is, it is worth the seeing, what a description God gives of him, that we may see what reason the Spirit of God hath to instance in the *Horse*, saith God to *Iob*. *Hast thou given the Horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his Nostrills is terrible: He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength, hee goeth on to meeete the armed men. He mocketh at feare, and is not affrighted: neither turneth he backe from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering speare and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fiercenesse and rage, neither beleeveth hee that it is the sound of the trumpet: Hee saith among the Trumpets, Ha, Ha; and hee smelleth the battell afarre off, the thunder of the Captaines and the shouting.* A notable and excellent description of this warlike creature: and yet for all this excellencie so described by the Spirit of God, in another place, the Psalmist saith, *A Horse is a vaine thing for safety, neither shall hee deliver any by his great strength;*

Iob. 39: 19, 20, 21, &c.

Psal. 33. 17.

Psal. 20 7.

SER. III.

PROV. 21. 31.

strength; Some trust^d in Chariots and some in Horses: but we will remember the name of the Lord our God. So in another place, *The Horse is prepared against the day of battell, but victory is of the Lord.*

Deut. 17. 16.

How oft have you in the *Psalmes*, that proud warlike creature disparaged, because naturally men are more bewitched with that, then with any other creature. If they have store of Horses, then they thinke they are strong. Therefore, *God forbids the King to multiplie Horses to himselfe: nor cause the people to returne to Egypt, to the end hee should multiplie Horses, &c.* Because God is the strength of his Church, when there is no multitude of Horses: You see it is a bewitching creature, and yet a vaine helpe. A place like this we have, *Isa. 2. 7.* complaining there of the naughty people which were among the Jewes, at that time as bad as the Israelites. Saith he, *Their land also is full of silver and gold; neither is there any end of their treasures, their land is also full of Horses, neither is there any end of their Chariots.* What is there a fault in this? No. *Luther* saith, good workes are good, but the confidence in them is damnable. So gold and silver, Horses and Chariots are good creatures of God. But this was their sin, confidence in these things: *there is no end of their treasures; if they had treasure enough, they should doe well enough. Their land also was full of Horses.* Was this a fault? No, but their confidence in them: they thought they were a wise people to have such

Isa. 2. 7.

furniture

furniture and provision of munition for warre: but God was their King, and the chiefe governour of his people, and for them to heape up these things, to trust over much in them, it was a matter of complaint, *Their land also is full of Idols.*

Thus you see there is no confidence to be put neither in the one nor the other: neither in the association of forraine friends, who will proove deceitfull; *reeds of Ægypt*, that not onely deceives, but the splinters thereof flie about, and may run up into the hand, such are Idolaters and false friends, deceitfull and hurtfull. Nor in *Home*, there is no trust in *Horses*, munition or such like. What doth this implice, that to warre and have provision in that kinde is unlawfull, and unnecessary, because hee findes fault here with *Horses* and the like? No, take heed of that, for *Iohn Baptist* if the souldiers profession had beene unlawfull, he would have bid them cast away their weapons, but hee bids them, *Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, &c.* And God would never style himselfe, *The Lord of Hosts*, and a man of warre, and he that teacheth our hands to warre, and our fingers to fight, unlesse it were good in the season: therefore warre is lawfull, seeing in the way to Heaven wee live in the midst of enemies.

Therefore it is but an Anabaptisticall fancie, to judge warre to be unlawfull: No, no, it is cleane another thing which the Holy Ghost aimes at: to beate backe carnall confidence. For it is an equall fault, to multiplie helpe, and

That there is no confidence to be put, either in Home, or forraigne forces.

Luk. 3. 14.

Isa. 42. 13.

Psal 18 34.

That warre is lawfull.

SER. III.

and to neglect them: either of both are fatall many times, to multiplie Horses trusting in them, or to spoile Horses and other helpes vainely, so to weaken a Kingdome. Therefore there is a middle way for all outward things, a fit care to serve Gods providence, and when we have done, trust in God without tempting of him, For to neglect these helpes is to tempt him; and to trust in them (when we have them) is to commit Idolarry with them. Beware of both these extreames, for God will have his providence served in the use of lawfull meanes: when there is this great care in a Christian Common wealth; there is a promise of good successe: because God is with us: otherwise what is all, if he be our enemy? So we see the second point made good, *That these outward things of themselves cannot helpe.* Therefore comes this in the third place,

Observ.

That when God alters and changes and moldeth anew the heart of a man to Repentance, he altereth his confidence in the creature.

Reason.

A Christian state will not trust in *Assur*, nor in *Horses*, it is true both of state and persons. The Reason will follow after in the end of the verse: *For in thee the fatherlesse findeth mercy.* Because, when a man hath once repented, there is a closing betweene God and him, and he seeth an All-sufficiency in God to satisfie all his desires. Therefore he will use all other things as helpes, and as farre as it may stand with his favour. For, he hath *Moses* eye put in him; a

Heb. 11:27.

new

new eye to see him that is invisible, to see God in his greatnesse, and other things in their right estimate as vaine things. What is Repentance, but a change of the minde, when a man comes to be wise and judicious, as indeed repentant men are the onely wise men. Then a man hath an esteeme of God to bee *El-shady*, All-sufficient, and all other things to be as they are uncertaine; that is, they are so to day, as that they may be otherwise to morrow: for that is the nature of the creatures, they are in *Potentia*, in a possibility to be other things then they are. God is alway, *I am*, alway the same, there is not so much as a shadow of changing in him. Wherefore when the soule hath attained unto this spirituall eye-sight and wisdom; if it be a sinfull association with *Aegypt* or *Asshur*, with this Idolater or that, he will not meddle; and as for other helpes, hee will not use them further then as subordinate meanes. When a man is converted, hee hath not a double, not a divided heart; to trust partly to God, and partly to the creature: If God faile him he hath *Asshur* and *Horses* enough, and association with all round about, but a Christian he will use all helpes as they may stand with the favour of God, and are subordinate under him. Now for Trial.

How shall we know whether we exceed in this confidence in the creature or not.

We may know it by adventuring on ill courses and causes, thinking to beare them out with *Asshur* and with *Horses*: but all the mercenary souldiers

Quest.

Sol. I.

SER. III.

souldiers in the world, and all the Horses at home and abroad, what can they doe when God is angry? Now, when there is such confidence in these things, as for to outdare God, then there is too much trust in them; that trust will end in confusion, if it be not repented of; for that lifts up the heart in the creature, and as the Heathen man observes, God delights to make great little, and little great. It is his daily worke to cast downe mountaines, and exalt the valleyes. Those that are great, and boast in their greatnesse, as if they would command Heaven and Earth, God delights to make their greatnesse little, and at length nothing, and to raise up the day of small things. Therefore the Apostle saith, *If I rejoyce, it shall be in my infirmities, in nothing else; for God delights to shew strength in weakenesse.*

1 Cor. 12. 9.

2.

By security and resting of the soule in meaner things; never seeking to divine and religious helpes, when we are supplied with those that are outward. For these people when they trusted to *Assyria* and *Aegypt*, those false supports and sandie foundations, they were carelesse of God, and therefore must trust in somewhat else. Wherefore if we see a man secure and carelesse, certainly he trusts too much to uncertaine riches, to *Asshur*, to *Aegypt*, to friends, or to outward helpes, his security bewraies that. If a man trust God in the use of the meanes, his care will be to keepe God his friend by Repentance and daily exercises of Religion, by making

king conscience of his duty. But if he trust the meanes and not God, he will be carelesse and weake in good duties, dull and slow, and (out of the Atheisme of his heart) cry Tush, if God do not helpe mee, I shall have helpe from friends abroad, and be supported with this and that at home, Horses and the like, all shall be well.

Let us therefore enter into our owne soules, and examine our selves, how farre forth we are guilty of this sinne, and thinke we come so farre short of Repentance: for the ten Tribes here, the people of God when they repented, say, *Assur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon Horses*; he speaks comparatively, as trusted in. Therefore let us take heed of that boasting vaine-glorious disposition arising from the supply of the creature: Saith God, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth this, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindnesse, judgement and righteousnesse in the earth, &c.* Let a man glorie that hee knowes God in Christ to be his God in the Covenant of grace: that hee hath the God of all strength, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords to be his: who hath all other things at his command; who is independant, and all-sufficient. If a man will boast, let him goe out of himselfe to God, and plant himselfe there, and for other things, take heed the heart be not lift up with them.

Vse. I.

Ier 9. 23.

Consider

SERM. III.

1.

*That boasting
is Idolatry.*

2.

*Adultery,
Iam. 4. 4.*

3.

*Drunkennesse.
Habak. 2. 4, 5.*

4.

*Boasting cau-
seth blindnesse.**Iob. 42. 6.**Mat. 16. 24.*

Consider, what kinde of thing boasting is, it is Idolatry, for it sets the creature in the place and roome of God. And it is also spirituall Adulterie, whereby we fixe our affections upon the creature which should be placed on God, as it is in *Iames*. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? &c.* *Habakuk* calls it Drunkennesse, for it makes the soule drunk with sottishnesse and conceitednesse, so as a man (in this case) is never sober, untill God strip him of all. And then againe, it puts forth the eye of the soule, it is a kinde of white that marres the sight: when a man lookes to *Assur*, *Horses*, and to outward strength, where is God all this while? these are as so many clouds that they cannot see God, but altogether pore upon the creature: hee sees so much greatnesse there, that God seemes nothing. But when a man sees God in his greatnesse and almightinesse, then the creature is nothing: but untill this be, there is a mist and blindnesse in the eye of the soule.

And when we have seene our guiltinesse this way (as who of us in this case may not be confounded and ashamed of relying too much on outward helpes?) then let us labour to take off our soules from these outward things, whether it be strength abroad or at home. Which that we may doe, wee must labour for that Obedience which our Saviour Christ exhorts us unto in *selfe-deniall*, not to trust to our owne devises, policie or strength; wit, will, or conceits that
this

this or that may helpe us, nor any thing: make it generall. For when conversion is wrought, and the heart is turned to God, it turnes from the creature, onely using it as subordinate to God. We see usually, men that exalt themselves in confidence either of strength, of wit, or whatsoever, they are successelesse in their issue: for God delights to confound them, and goe beyond their wit: as we have it, *Isa. 30.* They thought to goe beyond God with their policie, they would have helpe out of *Ægypt*, this and that way. O saith the Prophet: but for all this, God is wise to see through all your devices: secretly hereby touching them to the quick, as sottish persons who thought by their shallow braines to goe beyond God; you thinke Religious courses, and the obedience God prescribeth to you, to be idle needlesse courses, but notwithstanding God is wise, he will goe beyond you, and catch you in your owne craft. *Therefore, the strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Ægypt your confusion.* Thus God loves to scatter *Babels* Fabriques and Holds that are erected in confidence of humane strength against him; he delights to catch the wise in their owne craft; to beat all downe, lay all high imaginations and things flat before him; that no flesh may glory in his sight. There is to this purpose a notable place in *Isay.* Behold all yee that kindle a fire, that compasse your selves about with sparkes: (for they kindled a fire and had a light of their owne, and would not borrow

Isa. 30. 3.

Gen. 11. 8.

Isa. 55. 11.

SERM. III.

borrow light from God :) *walke in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled,* but what is the conclusion of all? *This shall ye have of mine hand,* I dare assure you of this, saith the Prophet: *You shall lie downe in sorrow*: those that walke by the light and sparke of their owne fire; this they shall have at Gods hands; they shall lie downe in sorrow.

Danger of carnall confidence.

Let us therefore take heed of carnall confidence. You have a number who love to sleepe in a whole skinne, and will be sure to take the safest courses (as they thinke) not consulting with God, but with flesh and blood. It might be instanced in stories of former times, how God hath crossed Emperours and great men in this kind, were it not too tedious. But for present instance, you have many who will be of no settled Religion, O they cannot tell, there may be a change, therefore they will be sure to offend neither part: this is their policie, and if they be in place, they will reforme nothing; O I shall lay my selfe open to advantages, and stirre up enemies against me: and so they will not trust God, but have carnall devices to turne off all duty whatsoever. It is an ordinary speech, but very true: *Policie overthrowes Policie*. It is true of carnall Policie, when a man goes by carnall rules to be governed by Gods enemy, and his owne; with his owne wit and understanding, which leads him to outward things: this kind of Policie overthrowes all policie and outward government at length. Those that walke religiously

ligiously and by rule, they walke most confidently and securely as the issue will shew; Therefore, consider that (set God aside) all is but vanity, And that

First, in regard they do not yeeld that which we expect they should yeeld: there is a falshood in the things, they promise this and that in shewes, but when we possessethem; they yeeld it not; as they have no strength in deed, so they deceive. Then also, *There is a mutability in them;* for there is nothing in the world but changes, there is a vanity of corruption in them; all things at last come to an end, save God, who is unchangeable. Then againe besides the intrinsicall vanity in all outward things, and whatsoever carnall reason leads unto, *They are snares and baites unto us, to draw us away from God,* by reason of the vanity of our nature, vainer then the things themselves: therefore take heed of confidence in anything, or else this will be the issue, wee shall be worse then the things we trust, *Vanity of vanities, all things are vanity,* and man himselfe is lighter then vanity saith the Psalmist, hee that trusts to vanity is worse then vanity, a man cannot *stare non stante,* stand on a thing that cannot stand it selfe; a man cannot stand on a thing that is mutable and changeable, if hee doth, he is vaine with the thing. Even as a picture drawne upon ice, as the ice dissolves, so the picture vanisheth away. So it is with all confidence in the creature whatsoever, it is like a picture upon ice, which vanisheth

In what respects the creature is so empty.

I.

They deceive our expectation

2.

They are mutable.

3.

They are snares and baites unto us.

Eccles. 1. 1.
Psal. 62. 9.

SER. II.

with the things themselves. He that stands upon a slippery thing, slips with the thing he stands on. If there were no word of God against it, yet this much may be sufficient out of the Principles of Reason, to shew the folly of trusting to *Asses* and *Horses* and the like.

1 Cor. I. 19.

Let this be the end of all then touching this carnall confidence, to beware that we doe not fasten our affections too much upon any earthly thing, at home or abroad; within or without our selves: for, *God will destroy the wisdom of the wise*; let us take heed therefore of all false confidence whatsoever. Let us use all outward helps, yet so

2 Chro. 20. 12

as to relie upon God for his blessing in the use of all. And when they all faile; be of *Iehoshaphats* minde, *Lord, we know not what to doe*, the creature failes us, our helps faile us, *but our eyes are upon thee*. So when all outward *Asses* and *Horses* and helps faile, despaire not; for the lesse helpe there is in the creature, the more there is in God. As

Judg. 7. 2.

Gideon with his Army, when he thought to carrie it away with multitude: God told him there were too many of them to get the victory by, least *Israel* should vaunt themselves of their number: and so lessened the armie to three hundred. So it is not the meanes, but the blessing on the meanes which helps us. If we be never so low, dispaire not, let us make God ours, who is All-sufficient and Almighty, and then if we were brought a hundred times lower then we are, God will helpe and raise us. Those who labour not to have God the Lord of Hosts to goe out with their

their Armies, if they had all the *Assurs* and *Horses* in the world, all were in vaine. It was therefore a good resolution of *Moses*, saith he to God, *If thy presence go not with us, carrie us not hence*, he would not goe one step forward without God: so if we cannot make God our friend to goe out before us, in vaine it is to goe one step forward. Let us therefore double our care in holy duties, renewing our Covenant with God, before the decree come out against us: the more religious, the more secure we shall be. | If wee had all the creatures in the world to help us, what are they but vanity and nothing, if God be our enemy. These things we know well enough for notion, but let us labour to bring them home for use in these dangerous times abroad. Let us begin where we should, that our worke may be especially in Heaven. Let us reforme our lives, being moderately carefull, as Christians should without tempting Gods providence, using rightly all civill supports and helpes, seasonably and to the best advantage: for (as was said) the carelesnesse herein for defence, may proove as dangerous and fatall to a State, as the too much confidence and trust in them.

Exod. 33. 15.

The end of the third Sermon.



THE FOURTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 3.

*Assur shall not save us, we will not ride upon
Horses, neither will we say any more to the
works of our hands, ye are our gods, for in
thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.*



Esheved you heretofore at large, how the Spirit of God by the Prophet, doth here dictate a forme of turning unto these *Israelites*, *Take unto you wordes*, and then teacheth them what they should returne backe againe: Thanks, *So will wee render the Calves of our lips*, wherein they shew two things. 1. That they have no great matters

matters to render, *Oxen or Sheepe, &c.* 2, They shew what is most pleasing unto God, *The Calves of our lips*; that is, thanksgiving from a broken heart, which (as the *Psalmist* speaks) pleaseth God better then *a bullocke that hath hornes and hooves*. But this is not enough, the Holy Ghost therefore doth prescribe them together with Prayer and Thanksgiving, *Reformation*, *Ashur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods, fir in thee the fatherlesse findeth mercy*. So that here you have *Reformation* joyned with *Prayer and Praise*. Whence we observed divers things, That without *Reformation* our Prayers are abominable: That in *Repentance* there must be *Reformation* of our speciall sinne, which here they doe. Take this one thing more in the third place, which shall be added to the former.

In Reformation, we must goe not onely to the outward delinquencies, but to the spring of them, which is some breach of the first Table.

The root of all sinne is the deficiency of obedience to some command of the first Table, when confidence is not pitched aright in God, or when it is misapplied, and misfastened to the creature: when the soule sets up somewhat for a stay and prop unto it, which it should not doe, this is a spirituall and a subtile sinne, and must be repented of, as here, *Ashur shall not save us, &c.* It were good therefore for all those who seriously intend the worke of *Repentance*,

Observe.

The Ronte of all sin whence.

SER. III.

to take this course. If the grosse fault be of the *second Table*; take occasion of sorrow and mourning thence; but when you have begunne there, resolve and bring all to the breeding sinne of all, which is, the fastning of the soule falsely: when it is not well fastened and bottomed in the root. And therefore it was well done by *Luther*, who in a Catechisme of his brings in the First Commandement into all the Commandements of the first and second Table. *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, Therefore thou shalt sanctifie the *Sabbath*; Honour thy *Father* and *Mother*, shalt not take *my name in vaine*: shalt not *Commit Adultery*, shalt not *steale*, &c. Because hee that hath no god but that God in his heart, will be sure to sanctifie the *Sabbath*, Honour his *Father* and *Mother*, not *Commit Adultery*, nor *steale*. And whence come all the breaches of the Second Table? Hence, that there is not the true feare and love of God in our hearts, and it is just with God for their spirituall finnes, to give them up to carnall and grosse finnes. Therefore, though the Israelites here, had many grosse finnes to repent of, yet they goe to the spring head, the breeding sinne of all, *false Confidence*; this is to deale throughly, to goe to the core. *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses*. From whence in the third place, they descend to the next branch of their sinne, *Idolatry*.

Neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.

All false confidence hath two objects, for it is alwaies either,

1. *Out of Religion,* or
2. *In Religion.*

For the first, all *ill confidence and trust* if it be *out of Religion,* it is in the *Creature,* either

1. *Out of us,* or
2. *In our selves.*

Secondly, if it be *in Religion,* it is in a false god, as here, *Neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods.* Observe hence in the first place,

Man naturally is prone to Idolatry.

The story of the Bible and of all Ages sheweth how prone men are to Idolatry and will-worship, and what miseries ensued thereupon. Amongst other instances, we see how presently after that breach in the Kingdome of *David* and *Salomon,* by *Ierobeams* setting up of two *Calves,* how suddenly they fell to Idolatry, so that after that there was not one good King amongst them all, untill the nation was destroyed. And so in the story of their Antiquities, see how prone they were to Idolatry in the wildernesse; *Moses* doth but goe up to the Mount, and they fall to Idolatry; cause *Aaron* to make a *Calfe,* and dance round about it. The thing is so palpable, that it need not be stood upon, That mans nature is prone to Idolatry, which will not raise up it selfe to God, but fetch God to it selfe, and conceive of him according to its false imaginations.

Observe.
That men are naturally prone to Idolatry.

SER. III.

Now Idolatry is two waies committed in the false hollow and deceitfull heart of man: either,

1. By attributing to the creature that which is proper to God onely; investing it with Gods Properties, or

2. By worshipping the true God in a false manner.

What Idolatry is.

So that in the first place, Idolatry is to invest the creature with Gods properties. Go to the highest creature, Christs Humane nature; we have some bitter spirits (*Lutherans* they call them) Protestants; who attribute to the humane nature of Christ, that which onely is proper to God, to be every where, and therefore to be in the Sacrament. You have some come neere them, both in their opinion and in their bitternesse, They will have a *nescio quomodo*, Christ is there though they know not how; but this is to make Christs humane nature a god, to make an Idoll of it. So prayers to Saints and Angels, this makes Idols of them, because it invests them with properties to know our hearts, which he must know unto whom we pray. And then, it gives unto them that which is proper to God, Worship and Prayer. But, we must call upon none, but whom we must beleeve in, and we must beleeve in none but God. Therefore, worshipping of Saints or Angels is Idolatry.

Secondly, Idolatry is to worship the true God in a false manner, to fixe his presence to that we should not fixe it to, to annexe it to Statues, Images,

Images, Crucifixes, the picture of the Virgin *Mary* and the like. Not to run into the common place of Idolatry, but to come home unto our selves. Whether are the Papists Idolaters or not, like unto these Israelites, who say (being converted) *neither will we say unto the workes of our hands, ye are our gods?*

Quest.

I answer, yes, as grosse as ever the *Heathens* were, and worse. The very *Aegyptians*, they worshipped none for gods, but those who were alive, as a *Papist* himselfe saith, (though he were an honest *Papist*) The *Aegyptians* worshipped living creatures, but we are worse then they, for we worship stocks and stones, and a peece of bread in the Sacrament. And to this purpose, one of their Jesuites confesseth this, and yeeldeth the question for granted; That if there be not a Transubstantiation of the bread turned into the body and blood of Christ, we are worse Idolaters then these and these nations: because we worship a peece of bread, which is a dead thing. But we assume (according to the Scriptures, The Judgement of our Church, of Antiquity, and of the Truth it selfe) the bread is not Transubstantiated, at least it is a doubtfull matter; for if it be not the intention of the Priest it is not: see here, upon what hazard they put the soules of people.

Answ.

But they have many snifts for themselves, as among the rest this is one, that they doe not worship the image, but God or Christ before the Image.

Object.

SER. III.

Answ.

Popish shifts
for worshipping
of Images an-
swered.

To which the answer is, That the Fathers who wrote against the Heathens meet with this pretence, The Pagans had this excuse, we worship not this statue of *Iupiter*, but *Iupiter* himselfe. Thus they have no Allegation for themselves, but the Heathen had the same which the Ancient Fathers confuted. They are guilty of Idolatry in both the forenamed kindes: For first, They worship things that they should not, as appears by their invocation of Saints, vows to them, their Temples, Altars and the like, full of their Images, giving them honour due unto God. And then, they worship the true God in a false manner before their Images, there is no kinde of Idolatry, but they are grossely guilty of it. Whereof let this be the Use.

Use. I.

First of all, of *Thankfulnessse*, that God hath brought us into *Goshen*, into a Kingdome of light, that we are borne in a time and place of knowledge of the true God, wherein is the true worship of the true God. It is a matter that we cannot be too thankfull to God for. How shall we shew our selves thankfull? In keeping fast the true worship of God we have, and keeping out Idolatry, in reviving lawes in that kind, if not making new. What if there were liberty given for men to goe about the cuntry to poyson people, would we endure such persons, and not lay hold upon them; so in that wee are freed from Jesuites who goe about to poyson the soules of Gods people, let us shew our thankfullnessse for this, and shun Idolatry of all sorts whatsoever.

Quest.

Answ.

Secondly,

Secondly, see from hence, that there can be no tolleration of that Religion, no more (as was said) then to suffer and tolerate poysoners; as they said of *Colloquintida* in their pottage: so, *there is death in the pot of Romish Religion.* Therefore it were good to compell them to come in and serve the Lord their God: as it is said, good *Iosiah* compelled those in his time to serve the Lord; so it were good such courses weretaken to reforme and reclaime them. As Saint *Augustine* said of himselfe in his time, being a *Donatist*; he altered his judgement by force; in which case, it would be with them as with children, who when they are young, must be forced to schoole; but afterwards, they thanke them who forced them. So it is in Religion, though it cannot be forced, yet such might afterwards blesse God for them who brought them to the meanes, who instead of their blindnesse trained them up in more knowledge, by forcing them to use the meanes; for which (when God should open their eyes) they might blesse God another day. But this point of grosse Idolatry (so largely handled in Bookes) is onely touched by the way, that we may hate Idolatry the more: which could not be left out, the words leading to say somewhat of it, seeing how these Converts heere hate it, and out of that hatred make this profession: *neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods, &c.*

But this is not all, wee must know that there be other Idols then the Idols which we make
with

2 Kings. 4. 40.

2 Chro 34 33.

SER. III.

Prov. 29. 25.

Act. 12. 22.

with our hands: besides these Religious Idols, there be Secular Idols in the world, such as men set up to themselves in their owne hearts. Whatsoever takes up the heart most, which they attribute more to then to God, that is their Idoll, their god. A mans *love*, a mans *feare* is his god. If a man feare greatnesse rather then God, that he had rather displease God then any great person, they are his Idols for the time. *The feare of man brings a snare*, saith the Wiseman, and these who to get the favour of any in place, sacrifice therefore their Credit, Profession, Religion and soules; it is grosse Idolatry, dangerous to the party, and dangerous to themselves. It was the ruine of *Herod* to have that applause given him, and taken by him, *The voice of God and not of man*. So for any to be blowen up with flatterers that lift them up above their due measure, it is an exceeding wrong to them, prejudiceth their comfort, and will proove ill in the conclusion, indeed treason against their soules.

So there is a baser sort of Idolaters, who sacrifice their credit and state, whatsoever is good within them, their whole powers, to their base and filthy pleasures. Thus man is degenerate since his fall, that he makes that his god, which is meaner then himselfe. Man that was ordained for everlasting happinesse and Communion with God, is now brought to place his happinesse and contentment in base pleasures. Whereas it is with the soule of man for *good* or *ill*, as it applies it selfe to that which is greater or meaner

ner then it selfe. If it apply it selfe to confidence and affiance in God, then it is better, for it is the happinesse of the soule to have Communion with the spring of goodnesse, as *David* speaks, *It is good for me to draw neere to God, &c.* when we suffer the soule to cleave in affiance to earthly things, it growes in some measure to the nature of the things adhered too: when we love the world and earthly things, we are earthly. Till the Spirit of God touch the soule (as the loadstone doth the heavy iron drawing it up as it were) it will cleave to the creature, to baser things then it selfe, and so makes the creature an Idoll, which is the common Idolatry of these times. Some make *Favour*, as the ambitious person: some their *Pleasures*, as baser persons of meaner condition: and some *Riches*, every man as their temper and as their temptations are.

Now it is not enough to be found in Religion one way in the maine, but we must bee found every way, without any touch of Idolatry. In a speciall manner, the Apostle calls the *Covetous man* an *Idolater*, because he makes his riches his Castle, thinking to carrie any thing with his wealth, but his riches oftentimes prove his ruine; for whatsoever a man loves more then God, God will make it his baine and ruine: at least be sure to take it away, if God meane to save the party: Therefore, here they say; *Asbur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the works of our hands, ye are our gods.*

Psal. 73. 23.

Ephes. 5.

SER. III.

For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.

Here he shewes the Reason of their rejecting of all false confidence in *Asbur*, in *Horses*, in *Idols*: because they had planted their confidence in the true God. They said so when they had smarted by *Asbur*, and by *Idolstry*: then *Asbur shall not save us, &c.* They knew it by rule before, but till God plagued them, as he did oft by *Asbur* and by *Ægypt*, when he broke the reed that it did not onely not uphold them, but run into their hands; they made no such acknowledgment, hence observe,

Observ.

Vsually it is thus with man, he never repents till sinne be imbittered to him.

That finnes
bitternesse cau-
seth Repen-
tance.

He never alters his confidence, till his trusts be taken away; when God overthrowes the mold of his devises, or brings them upon his owne head, setting him to reape the fruit of his owne wayes; imbittering sinnefull courses to him, then hee returnes. Instruction without correction, doth for the most part little good. When *Asbur* had dealt falsely with them, and *Idolstry* would doe them no good, then they begin to alter their judgement. What makes men after too much confidence in their wit, when they have by their plots and devises gone beyond what they should doe, and wrapped and intangled themselves in a net of their owne weaving (as we say) alter their judgement? They are then become sick of their owne devices, this makes the change. For till then, the braine hath a kinde of net to wrap our devices in. So
many

many have nets in their braines, wherewith they intangle themselves and others with their idle devices: which when they have done, and so woven the webb of their owne misery; then they begin to say, as the Heathen saith when he was deceived. O foole am I, I was never a wise man. Then they begin to say, I was a foole to trust such and such. I have tried such and such policies, and they have deceived me, I will now alter my course. And surely, men of great parts are seldome converted, till God confound their plots, and laies flat all their false confidence. When *Ashur* disappoints them, then *Ashur shall not save us, &c.*

Therefore make this Use of it, not to bee discouraged when God doth confound any carnall plot or policie of ours, as to thinke that God hates either a Nation or a Person, when they have ill successe in plots and projects which are not good. Nay, it is a signe rather that God intends good; if they make a right use of it. God intends conversion, to translate false confidence from the creature to himselfe, and to learne us to make God wise for us. It is a happy thing when in this world God will disappoint a mans courses and counsells, and bring him to shame, rather then he should goe on and thrive in an evill and carnall course, and so to end his daies. There is no evidence at all which can be given of a Reprobate, because there may be finall Repentance, Repentance at the last. But this is one, and as fearefull a signe as may be,

Use.

be,

SER. III.

be, to thrive and goe on in an evill course to the end. When God shall disappoint and bring a man to shame in that he prided in, and built upon, It is a good signe; if thereupon we take advantage to turne to God, and lay a better bottom and foundation, as we see here, *Assur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses, &c.*

For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.

As if he should say, wee have that supply of strength and comfort from thee, that *Assur, Horses* and *Idols* cannot give: Therefore wee will alter our confidence, to fixe and pitch it upon thee, and trust thee, because, *In thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.* We shall not need to say, *in thee will we trust*; for, if God be apprehended thus, as one in whom *the Fatherlesse findeth mercy*, affiance will follow. For, the object is the attractive and load-stone of the soule, so that if a fit object be presented unto it, Affiance, Confidence and Trust will of it selfe follow. Therefore the Spirit of God forbears multiplication of words, and sets downe this: *For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy*: and doth not say, *in thee will we trust*, for that is implied; whosoever conceives that God is so gracious and mercifull to despicable miserable persons: such as are set downe in this one particular, *Fatherlesse*: they cannot but trust in God, therefore, the one is put for the other: *For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.* Whence, from the dependance of the words observe,

Obsero.

*That it is not sufficient to disclaime affiance in
the*

the creature, but we must pitch that affiance aright upon God.

We must not onely take it off where it should not be placed, but set it where it should be. Cease from evil, and learne to doe well. Trust not in the creature. Cease from man (as the Prophet saith) whose breath is in his Nostrills; Commit thy waies to God, trust in him. The Heathen by the light of nature knew this, that for the Negative, there is no trusting in the creature, which is a vaine thing, they could speake wonderfull wittily and to purpose of these things, especially the Stoicks. They could see the vanity of the creature: but for the Positive part, where to place their confidence, that they were ignorant in. And so, for the other part here; Neither will wee say any more to the workes of our hands yee are our gods. Idolaters can see the vanity of false gods well enough. In Italy you have thousands of the wittier and learned sort who see the folly and madnesse of their Religion. And among our selves, how many witty men can disclaime against Popery, who yet in their lives and conversations are not the better for it: because they thinke it enough to see the error that misleads them, though they never pitch their confidence as they should doe. It is not enough therefore to rest in the Negative part. A Negative Christian is no Christian, not to be an Idolater, not to be a Papist, no there must be somewhat else, wee must bring forth good fruit, or else wee are for the fire, and are neere to cursing and burning.

Ila. 1. 16, 17.
Ila. 2. 22.

Psa. 37. 5.

It is much easier to see the vanity of the creature, then to know where to pitch our confidence.

Mat. 3. 10.

Heb. 6. 8.

SER. III.

This is spoken the rather, because many thinke themselves well, when they can disclaime against the errors of Popery, and that they are good Christians, because they can argue well. O, such make Religion nothing but a matter of opinion, of canvassing an argument, &c. But, it is another manner of matter: *A divine Power exercised upon the soule, whereby it is transformed into the obedience of divine truth, and molded into it.* So that there must be a Positive, as well as a Negative Religion, a cleaving to God, as well as a forsaking of Idols.

Religion what?

Againe, in the severing of these Idols from God, we must know and observe hence,

observ.

That there is no Communion betweene God and Idols.

Neither will wee say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods; for in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy. There must be a renouncing of false worship, Religion, and confidence, before we can trust in God. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammen,* saith Christ. We cannot serve Christ and Antichrist together; we may as well bring North and South, East and West together, and mingle light and darkeness, as mixe two opposite Religions. You see here, one of them is disclaimed, ere affiance be placed in the other. Therefore the halters betwixt two Religions are heere condemned. It was excellent well said by *Ioshua*. They had there some mixture of false worship, and thought therewith to serve also *Iehovab*: no (saith he) *you cannot serve Iehovah.*

Mat. 6. 24.

Iosh. 24. 19.

horrah. What is *Ioshuahs* meaning, when he saith they could not? not onely that they had no power of themselves; but you are a naughty false people, you thinke to jumble Gods worship, and that of Heathens together; *you cannot serve God* thus. So a man may say to those who looke *Rome-wards* for worldly ends, and yet will be Protestants, *you cannot serve God*, you cannot be sound Christians, halting thus betwixt both. These are not compatible, they cannot stand together; you must disclaime the one, if you will cleave to the other, we see the ground heere: *Neither will wee say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods; for, in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.*

Againe, whereas upon disclaiming of false confidence in the creatures and Idols, they name this as a ground, *For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy*; observe,

In what measure and degree we apprehend God aright to be the All-sufficient true God, in that measure we cast away all false confidence whatsoever.

The more or lesse we conceive of God as we should doe, so the more or lesse wee disclaime confidence in the creature. Those who in their affections of joy, love, affiance and delight, are taken up too much with the creature (say what they will) professe to all the world by their practise, that they know not God. By the contrary, those who know and apprehend him in his greatnesse and goodnesse, as hee should be apprehended, in that proportion they with-

Observ.

The right apprehending of God shakes off all false trust.

SER. III.

Simile.

Why the world
hates Christi-
ans escaped
from them

draw their affections from the creature and all things else. It is with the soule in this case, as with a ballance, if the one skale be drawne downe by a waight put in it, the other is lifted up. So where God weighs downe in the soule, all other things are light, and where other things prevaile, there God is set light. *Asbur shall not save us*; for hee can doe us no good: nor *Horses*, because they are vaine helps. How attained they to this light esteeme of *Asbur* and *Horses*? For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy. That which is taken from the creature they find in God. And this is the Reason why the world so maligne good and sound Christians, they thinke, when God gets, that they loose a feather (as wee say) some of their strength: surely so it is; for when a Christian turnes to God and becomes sound, he comes to have a meane esteeme of that which formerly was great in his sight; his judgement is otherwise, as we see here, *Asbur*, *Horses*, *Idols*, and all they esteeme nothing of them. *Horses* and the like are good, usefull and necessary to serve Gods providence in the use of meanes, not to trust in or make co-ordinate with God. In the world especially great persons would be gods in the hearts of people; therefore, when they see any make conscience of their waies; they thinke they loose them; because now they will doe nothing but what may stand with the favour of God. Thus farte from the *Connexion*. Now to the words themselves.

For

For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.

Wherein we have set forth unto us for our consideration of Gods rich goodnesse towards poore miserable finners.

1. *The Attribute of God, Mercy.*

2. *The fit Object thereof, The Fatherlesse.*

Mercy is Gods sweetest Attribute, which sweetneth all his other Attributes; for but for *Mercy*, whatsoever else is in God, were matter of terror to us. His Justice would affright us: His Holinesse likewise (considering our impurity) would drive us from him: *Depart from me* (saith *Peter* to our Saviour) *for I am a sinfull man*; and when the Prophet *Isay* saw God in his excellencie a little: *Then he said, woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of uncleane lips, &c.* His Power is terrible, it would confound us, His Majesty astonish us. O, but *Mercy* mitigates all, he that is great in Majesty is abounding in mercy; he that hath beames of Majesty hath bowels of mercy. O, this draweth, especially miserable persons. *In thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.* And now, in the *Covenant of Grace*, this *mercy* sets all a worke. For it is the *mercy* of God by which wee triumph now in the *Covenant of Grace*, in that *mercy* which stirr'd up his wisdom to finde out a way for *mercy* by satisfying his *Justice*: So that the first mooving Attribute of God that set him a worke about that great worke of our salvation, by *Jesus Christ*, in the *Covenant of Grace*, was *mercy*, his tender *mercy*,

Mercy is that sweet Attribute that makes us partake of all the rest.

Luke 5.8.

Isa. 6.5.

SER. III.

his bowels of *mercy*: Therefore of all others, that Attribute is here named; *For in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.*

Mercy in God supposeth misery in the creature, either present or possible: for there is 1. A Preventing. 2. A rescuing mercy.

A *Preventing mercy*, whereby the creature is freed from possible misery, that it might fall into, as it is his mercy that we are not such sinners in that degree as others are; and every man that hath understanding is beholding to God for their Preventing, as well as for their Rescuing mercy. Wee thinke God is mercifull onely to those unto whom he forgives great sins: O, he is mercifull to thee that standeth, thou mightest have fallen fowly else. Mercy supposeth misery either that wee are in or may fall into. So that mercy in God may admit of a threefold consideration.

1. It supposeth *Sinne*; so there is a *Pardoning mercy* for that. Or
2. *Misery*, that is, a *Delivering mercy*. Or
3. *Defect or want in the Creature*, which is, *Supplying mercy*.

Whersoever *mercy* is conversant, it is usually about one of these three, either *Sinne*, or *Misery*, or *Defects and wants*, that is, to Persons in misery: for indeed the word is more generall then *Fatherlesse*; Deserted persons, that are forsaken of others, and have no strength of their owne, they are heere meant by the *Fatherlesse*, who have no meanes, wisdom, power or ability of
their

their owne, but are deserted and forsaken of others, whence the chiefe truth that offers it selfe to be considered of us is this,

That God is especially mercifull to those Persons who stand most in need of mercy.

First, because these doe relish mercy most, and give him the glory of it, applying themselves most to his mercy, being beaten out of the creature: and the more we have communion with God being driven out of the creature and other comforts, the more he discovers himselfe to us: as the neerer we are to the fire, the hotter it is, so the neerer wee are to God, the more good and gracious hee every way shewes himselfe unto us. Now what makes us neere him, but extremity of misery, whereby we are beaten from all other holds whatsoever. It is acknowledged to be his worke, when hee doth it for these that are deserted of all others, then he hath the chiefe glory of it. This is one end why God suffers his children to fall into extremity of great sorrowes and perplexities, to fall very low in depths of miseries (as the Scripture speakes) that hee might discover a depth of his mercy, beyond the depth of their misery, to shew that there is a depth deeper then that depth, for their misery is finite, O but the bowels of his compassions are infinite both in measure and time: *His mercy endureth for ever.*

Againe, GOD is jealous of their affiance and confidence, knowing that naturally, unlesse wee fall into some straites and weaning extremities,

Observe.

Why God is so ready to shew mercy to the Fatherlesse?

Hos. 5. 15.

Psal. 138. 1.

Psal. 136.

SER. III.

wee shall place our affiance upon the creature; therefore hee deales thus with us. He knowes our sicknesse well enough, that we are desperately addicted to present things, therefore to cure this sicknesse in us, he drawes us by extremities from the creature to himselfe, which when it failes wee goe to him. *Helpe Lord, why? for vaine is the helpe of man,* it is time then to helpe. *Helpe Lord, for the godly are perished from the earth.* It is time to helpe Lord, for if thou doe not, none will, whereby they cometo have their confidence upon the rocke, which is worth all. Other men they run from creature to creature, from helpe to helpe, as sicke bodies doe, to this and to that drug, and to this and that potion, they seeke to many things to beg comfort from; but a Christian hath a sure foundation that hee may stay upon, *In thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy.*

To come now to speake of the words as they lie in the whole, they carry another instruction; *That God is very gracious and mercifull to fatherlesse and distressed persons.*

As we have it, *Psal. 10. 18.* *That God will judge the fatherlesse and oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppresse.* So *Psal 146. 9.* It is said, *The Lord preserveth the strangers, hee releeveth the fatherlesse and widdow, &c.* And for the generall wee have it, *The Lord releiveth all that fall, and raiseth up all that be bowed downe.* God hee opens his eare to heare their crie, to judge the fatherlesse and the oppressed, the like

Psal. 60. 11.
Psal. 12. 1.

Observ.

Psal. 145. 14.

SER. III.

Exod. 23. 9.

like we have in *Exodus*. *Also thou shalt not oppresse a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing yee were strangers in the land of Egypt, and Exod. 22. 23. saith he, Thou shalt not afflict any widdow or fatherlesse childe; if thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely heare their crie.* These among many, are direct places to shew the truth of this, that God is mercifull, not only in generall, but to those persons set downe by a *Synechdoche*; a figure where one is set downe for all of the same kinde. God is mercifull to all persons, in any kind of misery or distresse whatsoever, as the Apostle speaks, *God is he who comforteth the abject person*: the forlorne, the castaway persons of the world, and he is a *very present helpe in trouble*. So as when there are none to helpe, then he awaketh and rouseth up himselfe to lay hold for us, *His owne arme brings salvation for his owne sake*. So when there is misery and none to helpe, God will finde cause and ground from his owne bowells to shew mercy, to take pittie and compassion upon his poore Church and Children. Which should teach us,

First of all, *To take notice of this most excellent Attribute of God*, and to make use of it upon all occasions, at our most need, then to present to our soules God thus described and set out by his owne Spirit, to be *Hee that comforteth the Abject*, and sheweth mercy to the fatherlesse and oppressed: this we should make use of for the Church in generall, and for every one of

our

2 Cor. 7. 6.

Psal. 46. 1.

Ira. 41. 17.

Ira. 59. 16.

Ira. 63. 5.

Ira. 48. 9.

Use I.

SER. III.

Luke 18.5.

Hof 12.4.
Isa. 62.7.

Rev. 12.14.

our selves in particular. The Church hath beene a long time like a forlorne widdow as it were; God hath promised that he will have a care of the widdow and the fatherlesse, and so hee will of his poore Church. We see in the Parable, the widdow with her importunity prevailed with an unrighteous Judge: the Church now being like a widdow, what is wanting but a spirit of supplication and Prayer, which spirit if the Church had to wastle with God and lay hold upon him as *Jaakob* did, and not suffer God to rest till he had mercy on his poore Church: Certainly it would be better with it then it is, for God comforteth the widdow, if one, what will hee doe for the whole Spouse which hath so long beene a despicable and forlorne widdow. And for the time to come, It ought to minister matter of comfort for the Church; certainly, God that is mercifull to the *Fatherlesse*, he will be mercifull to the poore Church. We see in the *Revelation*, though the Woman was persecuted by the Dragon, yet there were given two wings of a great Eagle to her that shee might flie unto the wildernesse, where she had a place provided of God. It alludes to the story of the *Israelites* when they came out of *Aegypt*, God provided for them in the wildernesse, they had *Manna* from Heaven, and water out of the rocke, and till they came to *Canaan*, God provided every way for them in a marvellous manner. So God will be sure to provide for his in the wildernesse of

of this world, he will have a harbour ſtill for the Church, and a hiding place from the ſtormy tempeſts of her adverſaries. Therefore let us not deſpaire, but ſtirre up a ſpirit of Prayer for the Church: that he who ſhewes mercy to the *Fatherleſſe*, and commands mercy to be ſhewed to the widdow; that he would ſhew that himſelfe, which he requires of us. And why may not we hope and truſt for it? The Church in this world is as it were a *fatherleſſe perſon*, a *Pupill*, an *Orphan*, a *Sheepe* in the miſt of *wolves*, as *Daniell* in the *lyons den*, as a *ſhip* toſſed in the waves, as a *lillie* among thornes, it is environed with enemies, and of it ſelfe, (like the poore ſheepe) is ſhiftleſſe. What is the Church but a company of weake perſons? not ſo witty for the world as worldly wiſe men are, nor ſo ſtrong in the arme of fleſh, nor ſo defended? but a company of perſons who have a hidden dependance upon God, wee know not how, and hang as it were by a threed: as the Church in this land, and abroad in other places. The true Church is maintained we know not how: God keepeſ up Religion, the Church and all, becauſe he is mercifull to the *Fatherleſſe*, who have no ſhifting wits as the worldly *Achitophels* have. God is wiſe for them that are not wiſe for themſelves, and powerfull for them, that have little ſtrength of their owne. Therefore, let us not be diſcouraged though we be weake creatures, a little flock, like a company of ſheepe, yet notwithstanding wee have a ſtrong Shepheard.

SER. III.

Iſa. 5. 1, 7.

The Church is like a vine, a poore deſpicable withered, crooked, weake plant, which windes about, and muſt be ſupported or elſe it ſinkes to the ground, yet it is a fruitfull plant. So the Church of God; a number of weake Chriſtians profeſſing Religion, they want many helps, yet God ſupports them, and hath ordained this and that haven for them: as this Magiſtrate, and that Perſon, God hath one ſupport or other for them. While they are fruitfull and true Vines, God will have a care of them, though they be never ſo weake and deſpised in the eye of the world.

Iſa. 54. 11.

Iſe. 2.

Againe, this ſhould teach us, to make God our All-ſufficiency in all eſtates whatſoever, and not to goe one haire breadth from a good conſcience for feare of afterclaps. I may be caſt into priſon, I may looſe my goods. What of all this? is not God All-ſufficient? and is not he eſpecially ſeene in comforting of thoſe who ſtand in moſt need of comfort, who want other helps? and will he be indebted to any man who ſtands out in a good quarrell for his cauſe? will he not give needfull ſupply, if not in this world, yet in a better of all comforts whatſoever? It is a good ſupply, when the loſſe is in outward things, and the ſupply in inward peace, grace and ſtrength; it is a happy loſſe that is loſt to the advantage. There was never any man yet from the beginning of the world, who loſt by cleaving to Religion and good cauſes, God ever made it up one way or other. Therefore this is

Iſa. 41. 17.

Iſa. 60. 17.

Iſa. 64. 5.

a ground of courage, to cast our selves upon doing good when God offers the occasion, relying upon God as *Hester* did; *If I perish I perish*, she meant, *If I perish, I shall not perish*; such have a better condition in the love and favour of God then they had before, or should have had, if they had not perished. It is the way not to perish, so to perish: it is as cleare and true as the Sun-shine: but we want faith to believe it.

ER. 4. 16.

And then againe, let us make use of it in another kinde, to resist another temptation, what will become of my poore children, if I doe thus and thus, stand thus and thus, and goe on in my innocency? What will become of thy children? it was well spoken by *Lactantius*, *Because God would have men stand out and die in a good cause willingly; therefore hee hath promised in a speciall manner to be a Father to the Fatherlesse, and a Husband to the Widow.* Are wee the chiefe Fathers of our children? No, wee are but under God to bring those who are his children into the world, we are but instruments, God is the chiefe Father, best and last Father, *The everlasting Father*; who takes upon him to be a Father to the Fatherlesse, whom he chargeth all not to hurt. Experience shewes, how hee blesteth the posterity of the righteous, who have stood in defence of the truth. Therefore, let us make no pretences either for baseness, dejection of spirit, or covetousnesse to keepe us from well-doing, for God will reward all.

Vse 3.

1sa. 96.

SER. III.

Quest.

Answ.

I Cor. 7. 29.

O say some, I could be content not to be so worldly, but it is for my children.

What saith the Apostle, *Let those who are married be as if they were not married*, meaning in regard of this scraping of wealth together by unlawfull meanes of covetousnesse, or in regard of readinesse to doe workes of mercy. What doth God appoint one Ordinance of marriage to take a man off of all good duties? No, notwithstanding this we must doe fitting workes of mercy; God will be the Father of the Fatherlesse. Many use oppression, and goe to Hell themselves, to make their children rich. Who commands us to make our children in shew a while happy here, to make our soules and bodies miserable for ever. There is a moderate care (as the Apostle speaks) so that *he who cares not for his owne is worse then an infidell*; but we must not make this pretence to excuse injurious and extortive courses: But let God alone; he will doe all things well, trust him. Or, if any thing should befall us otherwise then well; what if it doe? God is the God of the Fatherlesse, whatsoever he takes away he supplies it better another way. For whence have the creatures that infusion to helpe? Is it not from God? and when the creature is taken away, is not God where he was?

I Tim. 4. 8.

Vse 4.

Coloff. 3. 12.

And let us also learne hence; that we answer Gods dealing in shewing mercy to the Fatherlesse and such as stand in need, as the Apostle exhorts, *Put on therefore, as the Elect of God*
(holy

(*holy and Beloved*) bowells of mercies, &c. as if hee should say, as you would proove your selves to be Elect, members of Christ and children of God, so shew your likeneffe in this particular, *The bowells of mercy and compassion.* This hath ever beene, and yet is at all times a character of Gods children, and shall be to the end of the world. It is a signe such a one hath found bowels of mercy, that is ready upon all occasions to powre forth those bowels of compassion upon others: as hard-heartednesse this way shewes a disposition which yet hath not rightly tasted of mercy. As we say in another case, those that are appeased in their consciences, in the sense of the forgivenesse of sinnes, they are peaceable to others, because they feele peace. So here, those that feele mercy, will be mercifull; those that have felt love, will be loving to others. *A good man is mercifull to his beast, but the mercies of the wicked are cruell.* Those therefore that are hard-hearted and unmercifull, hardening themselves against the complaints of the miserable: there is (for the present) no comfort for them, that the Spirit of God hath wrought any change in their hearts, for then it would stampe the image of God upon them, they would be mercifull to the fatherlesse, widow, and distressed persons. What shall wee thinke then of a generation of men, who by griping usury and the like courses have made many widowes miserable? Let such professe what they will, whilest they are thus
hard-

PRO. 12. 10.

SER. III.

Exod. 23. 19.

hard-hearted, they have not the bowels of Christ. God is so mercifull, that you see (as the Jewes call them) hee hath hedges of the commandements, that is, he hath some remote commands which are not of the maine, and all to hedge from cruelty: as, *Thou shalt not kill the Dam upon the nest. Thou shalt not seeth a kid in his mothers milke.* What tends this too: nothing but to shew the mercy and bowels of God, and that hee would have us to abstaine from cruelty. He that would not have us *Murther*; would have us keepe aloofe of, and not be merciflesse to the very dumbe creatures, birds and beasts: therefore, let us labour to expresse the image of our heavenly Father in this.

Vse 5.

Againe, we should use this as a plea against dejectednesse at the houre of death, in regard of those we leave behind us; not to be troubled what shall become of them, when wee are to yeeld up our soules to God: but know that hee hath undertaken to be, *the Father of the Fatherlesse and of the Widow.* Therefore, for shame, for shame, learne as to live, so to die by faith: and as to die by faith in other things, so to die in this faith, that God as he will receive thy soule, so he will receive the care of thy posterity. Canst thou with affiance yeeld up thy soule unto God, and wilt thou not with the same confidence yeeld thy posterity. Thou art an Hypocrite if this distract and vexe thee, when yet thou pretendest to die in the faith of Christ. Canst thou yeeld thy soule, and yet art grieved for thy posterity?

Psal. 24. 1.

posterity? no, leave it to God: he is All-sufficient, *The earth is the Lords, and the fullnesse thereof.* Wee need not feare to put our portion in his hands, he is rich enough, *The earth and all is his.* Therefore, when we are in any extremitie whatsoever, relie on this mercy of so rich and powerfull a God, improve it, for it is our portion, especially in a distressed condition. Were it not for Faith wrought by the blessed Spirit of God, he would loose the glory of this Attribute of *Mercy.* Now Faith is a wise power of the soule, that sees in God what is fit for it, singling out in God what is fit for the present occasion of distresse. Is a man in any extremitie of misery, let him looke to mercy. Is a man oppressed, let him looke to mercy to be revenged of his enemies: is a man in any perplexity, let him looke to mercy, joyned with wisdom, which is able to deliver him. Religion is nothing else but an application of the soule to God: and a fetching out of him somewhat (as he hath discovered himselfe in the Covenant) fit for all our exigents; as there is somewhat in God, and in the Promises, for all estates of the soule. Faith therefore is wittie to looke to that in God which is fit for its turne. Let us therefore take heed of Satans policie herein: who in our extremitie useth this as a weapon to shake our Faith. *Tush* (as it is in the Psalme) *God hath forsaken and forgotten him.* Hath he so? nay, because I am in extremitie and deserted above others, rather God now regards me

Satans policie
in our extremitie,
how to retort
it.

SER. III.

Heb. 12. 6.

Rom. 5. 20.

Habak. 3. 17.

more then before, because, *hee scourgeth every Sonne whom he receiveth.* So retort Satans fiery darts backe againe. For indeed that is the time wherein God exalts and shewes himselife most glorious and triumphant in *mercy*, where misery is greatest. *Where sinne abounds there grace abounds much more*, so where misery abounds, mercy superabounds much more. Therefore let us be as wise for our soules, as Satan can be malicious against them, what hee useth for a weapon to wound the soule, use the same as a weapon against him.

To end all, let Faith in Gods mercy answer this his description; and let it be a description ingrafted into us at such a time. Doth God care for the fatherlesse, & meane persons who are cast down & afflicted? why then, I will trust that God who doth so, being in this case my self. If he will help in *Extremity*, trust him in *Extremity*: If hee will helpe in *distresse*, trust him in *distresse*: if he will helpe when all *forsake*, trust him when wee are *forsaken* of all. What if a streame be taken away: yet none can take away God from thee: what if a beame be taken away? thou hast the Sun it selfe: what if a particular comfort be taken away, so long as God, *who comforteth the abject*, and is *mercifull to the distressed*, *Fatherlesse and Widdowes* continues with thee, thou needs not feare. A man cannot want comfort and mercy, so long as the *Father of mercies* is in covenant with him. If he *sinne*, he hath *Pardoning mercy* for him; if *weake*, hee hath

hath *Strengthening mercy*; if in *darkenesse*, hee hath *Quickning mercy*; if we be *dull, dead, and in danger*, there is *Rescuing mercy*, and if *subject to dangers we may fall in*, there is for that, *Preventing mercy*. Therefore there is *mercy* ready to compasse Gods children about in all conditions, when they are invirened with dangers, yet God is neerer to guard their soules, then the danger is to hurt them.

Pfal. 32. 10.

Therefore let us take the counsell of the blessed Apostle, *Be carefull for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your requests be knowne to God*: and what then, will God grant that I pray for? perhaps hee will not. But yet, *The Peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and mindes through Christ Iesus*. As if he should say, in nothing be over-carefull, let your care be when ye have used the meanes, to depend upon God for support in the event and issue of all. If God denie you what you pray for, he will grant you that which is better: he will set up an excellent inward peace there, whereby hee will stablish the soule in assurance of his love, pardon of sinnes and reconciliation: whereby their soules shall be guarded, and their hearts and mindes preserved in Christ: so they become impregnable in all miseries whatsoever, when they have *the Peace of God which passeth all understanding* to guard them within. Therefore, let us not betray and loose our comforts, for want of making use of them; or for feare some

Phil. 4. 6, 7.

SER. III. should call us Hypocrites: and on the other side, let us not flatter our selves in an evill course: but make the conscience good, which will beare us out in all miseries, dangers, and difficulties whatsoever. Nothing makes losses, crosses, banishment, imprisonment, and death so terrible and out of measure dreadfull unto us, but the inward guilt and sting in the inside, the tumults of conscience. Cleere this well once, make all whole within, let conscience be right and straight; let it have its just use and measure of truth and uprightnesse; and goe thy way in peace, I warrant thee, thou shalt hold up thy head, and winde thy selfe out of all dangers well enough: nothing shall daunt or appale thy courage: for faith *Salomon*, *The Righteous is bold as a Lyon*; what can, what should he feare, who is heire of all things, whose all things are, and who is reconciled to God in Christ, having all the Angels and Creatures for his servants: for whose sake, all things must needs work together for good.

Gen. 42. 21.

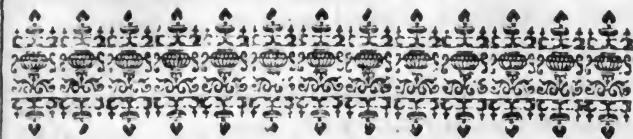
Pro. 18. 1.

Revel. 21. 7.

Heb. 1. 14.

Rom. 8. 28.

The end of the fourth Sermon.



THE FIFTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 4.

*I will heale their backsliding, I will love them
freely, for mine Anger is turned away from
them.*

THE superabounding mercies and marvellous loving kindneses of a gracious and loving God to wretched and miserable sinners (as we have heard) is the substance and sum of this short sweet Chapter, wherein their ignorance is taught, their bashfullnesse is encouraged, their deadnesse is quickened, their untowardnesse is pardoned, their wounds are cured, all their objections and petiti-

SER. V.

ons answered: so as a large and open passage is made unto them and all other miserable penitent sinners for access unto the throne of grace. If they want words, they are taught what to say; if discouraged for sins past, they are encouraged that sinne may be taken away; yea all iniquity may be taken away; *Take away all iniquity*; if their unworthinesse hinder them, they are taught for this, That God is gracious: *Receive us graciously*; if their by-past unthankfullnesse be any barre of hinderance unto them; they are taught to promise thankfullnesse: *So will we render the Calves of our lips*. And that their Repentance may appeare to be sound and unfained, they are brought in, making profession of their detestation of their bosome sins of false confidence and Idolatry: *Asbur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon Horses: neither will we say any more to the workes of our hands, ye are our gods*. And not onely doe they reject their false confidence, to cease from evill, but they doe good, and pitch their affiance where it should be: For, *in thee the Fatherlesse findeth mercy*.

None must therefore be discouraged or run away from God, for what they have beene; for there may be a returning, God may have a time for them, who in his wise dispensation doth bring his children to distresse, that their delivery may be so much the more admired by themselves and others, to his glory and their good. He knowes us better then we our selves how prone we are to leane upon the creature, there-

therefore hee is faine to take from us all our props and supports; whereupon we are forced to relie upon him. If we could doe this of our selves, it were an excellent worke and an undoubted evidence of the child of God, that hath a weaned soule in the midst of outward supports, to enjoy them, as if he possessed them not, not to be puffed up with present greatnesse, not to swell with riches, nor be high minded: to consider of things to be as they are, weake things, (subordinate to God) which can helpe no further, then as he blesteth them. But to come to the words now read.

I will heale their backsliding and love them freely, &c.

After that the Church had shewed her Repentance and truth of returning to God: now in these words and the other verses unto the end of the Chapter, (saving the last verse, which is a kind of acclamation issuing from all the rest of the foregoing verses, *Who is wise and hee shall understand these things, &c.*) is set downe an answer unto that prayer, Repentance and reformation which the Church made, all the branches of which their former suit, the Lord doth punctually answer. For they had formerly prayed, *Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, doe good unto us:* unto which he answers here,

I will heale their backsliding, &c.

Which is thus much, I will pardon their iniquities, I will accept graciously of them, I will

SER. V.

love them freely, and so of the rest, as will appear afterwards, and in summe, God answers all those desires which formerly he had stirred up in his people. Whence ere we come to the particulars, observe in generall,

Observ.

Where God doth give a spirit of prayer he will answer.

It needs no prooffe, the point is so cleere and experimentall, all the Saints can say this much from their experience of Gods gracious dealing with them: and the Scriptures are full of such instances and promises, which we all know. To name a place or two for all the rest. *Call upon mee in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie mee.* So, in another place, *And it shall come to passe that before they call I will answer, and whilst they speake I will heare.* It hath beene made good to Persons, as Daniel, Elias, Salomon, Iaakob and others, and it hath beene, and is made good unto all ages of the Church from time to time, and shall be unto the end of the world: And therefore the Prophet sets downe this as a conclusion undeniable from the premises, *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come,* whence he drawes this excellent consolation. *Iniquities prevaile against mee; as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.*

Psal. 50. 15.

Isa. 65. 24.

Psal. 65. 2.

Reason.

The Reason is strong, because they are the motions of his owne Spirit which he stirs up in us. For, hee dictates this Prayer unto them: *Take with you words, &c. and say unto the Lord,*

Take

The Returning Backslider.

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Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. So that, where God stirs up holy desires by his Spirit, hee will answer exactly, there shall not a sigh be lost. Likewise (saith the Apostle) *the Spirit also helpe our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as wee ought, but the Spirit it selfe makes intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Therefore there cannot a groane be lost, nor a darting of a sigh, whatsoever is spirituall must be effectuall, though it cannot be vented in words. For God hath an eare not onely neere a mans tongue to know what he saith, but also in a mans heart, to know what he desires, or would have. As the observing carefull tender mother many times knowes what the child would have though it cannot speake: so God hee knowes the desires, sighs, and groanes of the heart when we cannot speake. For, some times there may be such a confusion upon the soule, by reason of divers disturbances, that it cannot expresse nor vent it selfe in words, therefore the Spirit vents it selfe then in sighs and groanes which are heard and accepted: because they are the desires of his owne Spirit. This much the Prophet David excellently sheweth. *Lord thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine eare to heare.* God he first prepares the heart to pray, then his eare to heare their prayers and desires. If this will not encourage us to be much in suit to God, and put up our petitions to him, to labour for a spirit
of

Rom. 8. 26.

That God hath
an eare in mans
heart.

Psal. 10. 17.

SER. V.

A strong motive to draw us before God in Prayer.

of prayer; I know not what will prevaile : when we know that no petition shall be turned back againe unanswered. When wee are to deale with Princes upon earth, they oftentimes regard neither the persons nor their petitions, but turne their backs upon both. O ! but a Christian hath the care of God and Heaven open unto him : such credit in Heaven, that his desires and groanes are respected and heard. And undoubtedly a man may know that he shall be heard, when he hath a spirit of prayer, in one kind or other, though not in the particulars, or kindes we aske; heere he will for our good. God will not loose the incense of his owne Spirit, of a spirit of prayer which he stirs up, it is so precious: Therefore let us labour to have a spirit of prayer, which God regards so much: Seeing for a certaine, wheresoever he gives a spirit of prayer hee meanes to give that we pray for, but according to his heavenly wisdom, as here his answer is,

I will heale their Backsliding, I will love them freely, &c.

God answers them exactly unto all they praied for, beginning first with the ground of all our comfort, *forgivenesse of sins*, According to their petition, *Take away all iniquity* : he answers, *I will heale their backsliding*, or their rebellion. *Backsliding* is an aggravation of sin: every sinne is not a rebellion, Apostasie, or backsliding, for their be also sins of infirmities, we usually ranck sins thus, in

1. *Sinnes of Ignorance.*
2. *Sinnes of Infirmity.*
3. *Sinnes against knowledge, with a higher hand.* And
4. *The Sinnes against the Holy Ghost.*

Now this is more then to cure sinnes of Ignorance, and of Infirmity, when he saith, *I will heale their backesliding.*

But why doth he answer the higher pitch of an aggravation, when their petition was in a lower straine onely, (*Take away all iniquity.*)

To shew, that he would answer them fully, that is, that he would heale all sinnes whatsoever: not onely of Ignorance, and of Infirmity; but also sinnes willingly committed, their rebellions and backeslidings. For indeed they were backesliding; from the time of *Ieroboam*, that made the rent, the ten tribes grew worse and worse continually, so that they had beene utterly extinguished, but that God was wondrous gracious to send them Prophets, to preserve many that they should not bow the knee to *Baall*; being mercifull to them, to beare with their backesliding so long: for besides their calves, they had false gods, they did not onely worship the true God in a false manner by the calves, but they had *Baals* also. So that we see God when hee will comfort, will comfort to purpose, and take away all objections that the soule can make; a guilty soule being full of objections; O my sinnes are many, great, rebellions, and Apostacies: But, be they what they

Quest.

Answ.

SER. V.

they will, Gods mercy in Christ is greater and more. *I will heale their backsliding*, or their rebellion, God is above conscience, let Satan terrifie the conscience as he will, and let conscience speake the worst it can against it selfe, yet God is greater. Therefore let the sinne be what it will, God will pardon all manner of finnes; as they pray to pardon all, so he will *take away all iniquity, heale their backsliding*. But to come neerer the words.

I will heale, &c.

The healing meant here, is especially in the pardon of their finnes, answerable to their desires in justification. And there is a healing also in sanctification by the Spirit: when God takes away the venome from the wound, then God cures in sanctification; both are meant; but especially the first. In a wound we know there is,

1. *The malignity and venome of it*, and then,
2. *The wound it selfe so festered and rankled.*

Now pardoning grace in justification, takes away the anguish and malice of the wound, so that it ceaseth to be so malignant and deadly as to kill, or infect. And then sanctification purgeth and cleanseth the wound, and heales it up. Now God through Christ doth both. The blood of Christ doth heale the guilt of sinne, which is the anger and malignity of it. And by the Spirit of Christ he heales the wound it selfe, and purgeth out the sicke and peccant humor by little and little through sanctification: God is a perfect healer, *I will heale their backsliding.*

sliding. See here the state of the Church and Children of God, they are prone to backsliding and turning away: we are naturally prone to decline further and further from God. So the Church of God planted in a family in the beginning of the world, how soone was it prone to backsliding, this is one weaknesse since the fall, it is incident to our nature to be unsetled and unsteady in our holy resolutions. And whilst we live in the midst of temptations, the world, together with the ficklenesse of our owne nature, evill examples, and Satans perpetuall malice against God and the poore Church, are ill Pilots to lead us out of the way. This is spoken to make us carefull how to shunne *Backsliding*, for we see how many opinions are foisted in amongst us, and have got some head, that durst not before once be named amongst us. Popery spreads it selfe amaine; even Churches are prone to backsliding, Therefore *S. Pauls* advice is, *Be not high minded, but feare, for if God spared not the naturall branches, take heed lest bee also spare not thee.* What is become of Rome, so the same will become of us, if wee stop not our backslidings.

Now in that Gods promise is, *I will heale their backslidings*, observe in the first place.

That sinne is a wound, and a disease.

Now as in sicknesse there is, 1. Griefe troubling and vexing the partie who fees it: and 2. Deformity of the place affected, which comes by wounds and weaknesse. So in all sin

SER. V.

That the state of the Church and Gods children is prone to backsliding.

Rom. 11. 20, 21.

Observ.
That sinne is a wound and disease

SER. V.

Gen. 49. 4.

Gen. 4. 6.

Psal. 32. 3, 4.

Psal. 38. 3.

sinne (when we are sensible of it) there is first griefe, vexation, and torment of conscience: and then againe, deformity; for it takes away the beauty and vigour of the soule, and dejects the countenance, it debaseth a man, and takes away his excellencie, as *Jacob saith of Renben, Vnstable as water, thou shalt not excell, because thou wentest up to thy fathers bed.* Saith God to *Cain, why art thou wrath, and why is thy countenance fallen?* and the Prophet *David* he confesseth: *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* So againe, *There is no soundnesse in my flesh, because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sinne.* So that sinne is a wound and a disease, whether wee consider the miseries it brings on soule and body or both. Therefore howsoever a sinfull person thinke himselfe a goodly person, and weare his sins as ornaments about him, Pride, Lust and the like; yet hee is a deformed loathsome person in the eyes and presence of God; and when conscience is awakened, sinne will be loathsome, irksome, and odious unto himselfe, fill him full of griefe and shame, so that he cannot endure the sight of his owne soule.

That all finnes are diseases.

Now all finnes whatsoever are diseases: The first sinne of all finnes, which wee call hereditary Originall sinne, what is it but an hereditarie disease? a leprosie which we drew from our first Parents, spread over all the soule, having the feeds and spawne of all sinne in it.

The

The Church of *Rome* makes it lesse then other finnes, as indeed Popery is ignorant both of the height of grace, and of the depth of corruption; for, if they knew the one, they would be more capable of the other. Why doe they not conceive aright of grace, and of the height of it? because they know not the depth of Originall sinne. And indeed the true knowledge of this disease is proper onely to the child of God in the true Church: none but hee knowes what Originall sinne is, others can dispute and talke of it, but none feesles it but the child of God. Now all other particular actuall finnes, be diseases flowing from hence: so that all diseases in this kinde, arise either 1. *from our selves, as wee have a seminarie of them in our owne hearts:* or else, 2. *from the infection and contagion of others:* or 3. *from Satan,* who hath society with our spirits (as men have with the outward man) comming in by his suggestions and our intertaining of them: so that in that respect, sin is like unto a wound and a disease, in regard of the cause of them.

And, *in regard of the effects,* sinne is like a disease. Diseases if they be neglected, breed death it selfe, and become incurable; so it is with the diseases and finnes of the soule, neglect them, and the best end of them will be despaire in this world, whereupon wee may have advantage to flie unto the mercy of God in Christ. This is the end of sinne, either to end in a good despaire, or in a fruitlesse barren despaire

I.
Sinne like a disease in regard of the cause.

2.
Sinne is like a disease in regard of the effects it breeds

SER. V.

Rom. 6 23.

despaire at the houre of death leading to Hell, when they have no grace to repent. *The wages of sinne is death, &c.* Sinne it selfe is a wound, and that which riseth from sinne, is a wound too, doubting and despaire: for this disease and wound of sinne, breeds that other disease, a despaire of mercy, which is the beginning of Hell, the second death. These things might be further enlarged, but for the present onely in generall, know, That sinne is a *disease and a wound of the soule*, so much worse then the diseases of the body, by how much the soule is more pretious then it, and the death of the soule more terrible then the death of the body. *Sinne is a disease and a wound*: for, what is Pride but a swelling? what is Anger, but an intemperate heate of the soule like an Ague as it were? what is Revenge, but a wild-fire in the soule? what is Lust, but a spreading Cancer in the soule, tending to a consumption? what is Covetousnesse, but as a sword, a perpetuall wounder of the soule, piercing it through with many sorrowes? what is Security, but as it were the Lethargie and Apoplexie of the soule? and so wee might goe on in other resemblances.

Quest.

But it may be demanded, how shall we know that we are sicke of this sicknesse and disease you speake of?

Answ.

How doe wee know that we are sicke in body? If the body be extreame cold, we know there is a distemper, or if it be extreame hot: so
if

if the soule be so extreame cold, that no heavenly Motives or sweet Promises can worke upon it, stirre it up, then certainly there is a disease upon the soule.

If the soule be inflamed with Revenge and Anger, that soule is certainly diseased: the temper of the soule is according to the passions thereof, a man may know by his *Passions*, when he hath a sick soule.

If a man cannot relish good diet, then wee count him a sicke man, so when a man cannot relish holy discourse, nor the Ordinances of God. You have some men, that can relish nothing but profits and pleasures, and such vanities, but no divine thing, such have sicke soules undoubtedly.

So againe, a man may know there is a deadly sicknesse and sorenesse upon the soule, 1 when it is senselesse of its wounds, and 2 is senselesse of that which passeth from it: as men (we say) are ready to die, when excrementall things passe from them without any sense. So a man may know that he is desperately soule-sicke, when oathes, lies, and deceitfull speeches passe from him, and yet he is senselesse of them, they think not of them, they meane no harme: doth that argue a sound state of body, when a man is so desperately ill, that he feeles not his bodily hurts, and is this a good state of soule, when these filthy things come out from it insensibly: it is an argument of extreame deadnesse of spirit, and irreverence, and of a desperat sinne-sicke
K soule,

SER. V.

foule, when there is no dread or awe of the Majesty of God; let such looke about them: it is an aggravation of the danger of the soule, this kind of temper. We usually say, when the stomacke is so weake that it can hold no nourishment without casting it up againe as fast as it receives it; certainly such an one is sick and in a dangerous state of body. So when a man heares and heares, and reads and reads, and digests nothing into nourishment, but all is left where he heard it; it is a signe that they have sicke soules, when their retentive power is so weake. And there is certainly some sicknesse, some dangerous obstruction in that soule, that cannot digest the wholesome Word of God to make use of it; some noysome lust then certainly obstructs the soule which must be purged out.

It is a pittifull thing to see the desperate condition of many now, who though they live under the tyrannie of sinne, yet flatter their owne disease, and account them their greatest enemies, who any way oppose their sicke humour. What doe they most cordially hate? the sound preaching of the Word; the very sight of such an one, whose calling hath beene to put us in minde of our finnes, evill courses, and vanities of the world, is loathsome and offensive to carnall men, in whom corruption is growne up to such a tyranny, that it swayes the whole soule to devise how to satisfie it. Man is so diseased, that those lusts in him (which he should

should labour to subdue and mortifie by the power of the Spirit) doe so over-sway him, that all his life is nothing else, but a *disease and back-sliding* into sin. And as if we were not corrupt enough our selves, how many are there who feed their corruptions, when they frequent ill places and company, whom they cannot be without, and are as fish in the water, feeding the old man in them. So that such are not only sick, but defend, maintaine, and feed their sicknesse, their whole life being spent this way: which they laugh at, and make *Pride their chaine and ornament*, as the Prophet speakes. This is spoken that we may take up a lamentation for the vile-nesse of mans nature, and to teach us how to judge aright of men, when they devise how to have their libery strengthened to goe to Hell (as it were) with an high hand: having their will so fortified that no man is able to deale with them, thwart them, or teach them any thing. If it were offered to most men to have what estate they would in this world: what are their wishes and desires? O, that I might live as I list, that I might have what would content my pleasures, without controule, that I might have no crosses, but goe smoothly on: yet this which is the desire of most men, is the most cursed estate of all, and most to be lamented. Thus it appeareth, *Sinne is a wound and a disease*: what Use may we make of it?

If this be so, then in the first place, let us know and consider, That no man who lives in sinnes

Use 1.

SER. V.

unrepented of and uncured is to be envied, be they never so great. Who will envie a man that hath a rotten body covered over with glorious attire? when every man knowes that he carries a rotten disease about him, either some disease in the vitall parts, or from the rottenesse of sin, which puts a kind of shame and scorne. Can we pittie a man thus in glorious attire having a filthy body under it, thus covering their nakednesse, in whose case we would not for any thing be: and are they not much more to be pittied who have ulcerous soules, galled and pierced through with many finnes? when we see men that are blasphemers, swearers, men guilty of much blood and filthinesse, and of many finnes hanging upon them, to envie such a mans greatnesse, is extreame folly. O, he carries his deaths wound about him (as we say) he is stricken already in his side with a deadly dart; without the healing mercy of God, there is but a step betwixt him and eternall death; wherefore no man is to be envied for his sinfull greatnesse.

Use 2.

Againe, if this be so; that sinne is a disease and wound of the soule, let us therefore labour to cure it presently. It is desperate folly in men to neglect their bodies, when they know that they are prone to such and such diseases which are growing upon them every day: how carefull are men (perceiving this much) to prevent diseases by timely physick? all finnes are diseases, and growing like diseases run from ill to worse.

worse and worse. *Wicked men* (saith the Apostle) *grow worse and worse.* Therefore, if sin be a disease, prevent it presently; for as wee see, Hereticks and other the like are hardly found, but at the first: and then are hardly cured: so, if we neglect the diseases of our soules, they will breed a consumption of grace, or such an ill temper of soule, as that it cannot well desire to repent. Nay when a man lives in wicked rebellious courses long, God will give him up to such terrors of conscience, that it will not be pacified, but upbraid it selfe, I have been a sinfull wretched creature, mercy hath bene offered me againe and againe, but now it is too late, having out-stood all the meanes of grace, and rejected them. When they have considered that their lives have for a long time bene a meere rebellion, and that they have put off the checks of conscience, the admonitions of the Word and Spirit, with the motions thereof: it is long in this case before a man can have peace; for answerable to the continuance in sin, is the hardnesse of the cure, if it be cured at all.

Therefore there is no dallying with sinne, I shall repent at length, but not now; yet a while I will continue these and these courses, I shall doe well enough, &c. as if a man who were sicke or desperately wounded, should say, I shall doe well, and yet neglect to send for the Physician. None are so desperately foolish in case of the body, why should wee for our soules? is not that in much more hazard then the body,

That there is no dallying with sin, to delay repentance.

SER. V.

That want of conviction of the sinfullnesse of sinne, makes us so sinnefull and carelesse.

if wee had spirituall eyes to consider of it? The truth is, people are not convinced of this; but sin is such a sicknesse, which is the reason they are so carelesse of it. But when the conscience is awaked, as it will be one day, heere or in Hell; then they will be of another minde. Nay, in this world, when friends, nor riches, nor any thing can comfort: then they cry out: O that they had not been so foolish, they wou'd give a world (if they had it) for peace of conscience, this will be the best of it, for men that go on in sin. Therefore, before hardnesse of heart grow upon us (that disease following the disease of sinne) let us take heed, and labour to have our soules healed in time. Thus we have found, *That sinne is a sicknesse*: for so much is implied, when he saith: *I will heale their backsliding*. Whence the direct Observation is,

observ.

That God is the great Physitian of the Soule.

For he saith here, *I will heale their backsliding*, so that *healing* implies, the taking away of

1. *The Guilt of sinne*, which is the *venome* of it: by *Iustification*.
2. *The Rage of sin*, which is the *spreading* of it; by *Sanctification*.
3. *The Remooving the judgement upon our estate*.

For (unlesse God be the more mercifull) these things follow, where there is sinne, and breaking of his law, there is a state binding over to damnation and guilt: when there is a sinnefull disposition raging, and bringing us from one degree

degree of sinne to another, then there is Gods judgement and wrath revealed from Heaven against this. Now when God heales, he heales perfectly, but in some regards slowly, as wee shall see hereafter. In regard of *Forgivenessse of sinnes*, he healeth perfectly; but by little and little, in regard of the other of Sanctification, he stops up the issues of our corruption by little and little. For other things, and judgements in this world, he remooves the malice, and takes away the sting of them, which is the venome; as he saith afterwards, *For mine Anger is turned away*, which being remooved and turned from things, then they are no more judgements. What cared *Paul* for imprisonment, when hee knew Gods wrath accompanied not the stocks? let wrath be taken from the suffering; that the soule be sound, then it is no matter what condition a man be in, he carries Heaven and Paradiſe with him. Therefore, so farre God remoovesthose diseases and sicknesſes of condition, as they carrie venome in them: so changing the condition, that whatsoever we suffer, it hath the nature of an exercise, medicine, or correction onely. But that which invenomes all, and makes the least crosse a curse, and sinkes deepe, is the anger of God joyned with things. The least crosse when it carrieth with it the anger and vengeance of God, and reports that to the soule; I have offended God, and it is just with him thus to inflict wrath upon me: this is terrible, and it puts a sting to the crosse. Now

Acts 16.

Psal. 82. 46.

SER. V.

God here promifeth to remoove that, *I will heale their backefliding*; This principally in the first place is meant of healing in regard of *Iu- ftification*; taking away that guilt from the foule, which intralls it, and binds it over to condemnation and judgement. God will fet the foule at a spirituall liberty and fo heale it. Thus you fee the point cleere, *That God is the great Phyfician of the foule.*

Reason 1.

For, God who made the foule, knowes all the difeafes, windings and turnings of it; he is an excellent Anatomift, *all things are naked and open before his eyes*, he knowes the inward part of the foule, the feate of all finne. We know not our felves as he knowes us; there is a miftery of felfe-deceit in the heart which he knowes, who can fearch all the hidden corners of the heart; which is the Reason why he is fo good a Phyfician and fo excellent, becaufe he is a difcerner and fearcher of the heart, who can fee all, and fo can cure all, being above the ftting of confcience, he hath a remedy above the malady, he is greater then our confcience, therefore hee can cure our confcience.

Heb. 4. 13.

Reason 2.

And in the next place, *as hee can heale our foules, fo hee is willing to doe it*: which his willingneffe we may know by the medicine hee doth it by, his owne deare Sonne; hee hath provided a plaifter of his Sonnes blood to heale us. And befides his owne inward willingneffe, being now a gracious Father to us in Chrift Ie- fus; hee fends his Ambaffadors to heale and
cure

2 Cor. 5. 20.

cure us in his Name, to apply his medicines, and to beseech and intreat us to be reconciled, God by them intreats us to intreat him for pardon and mercy, and is so willing to be intreated, that ere we shall set out; hee teacheth us words (as we heard) *Take unto you words, &c.* as he is an able, so hee is a willing Physitian. Christ the great Physitian together with his Father expects not that we should first come to him, but he comes first, and sends to us. The Physitian came to the sick, though for the most part the sicke (if able) goe to the Physitian. But here is the contrary, hee came from Heaven, tooke our nature upon him, and therein died, by which his blood-shedding he satisfied the wrath of God, justly offended with us. So he heales our soules that way, having undergone the anger and wrath of God, that his blood might quench and appease that anger, by a plaister thereof made and applied to our soules.

Doe we doubt of his willingnesse, when hee comes to us and calls us, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavie laden, and I will give you rest.* It is his Office which hee hath assumed to heale our soule. The many cures he hath done, sheweth the ability and willingnesse of the Physitian, cures whereof we are uncapable of, by reason of our meane condition. A King as his place is greater, so sometimes his finnes are greater then others are: yet hee cured *Manasseh* that sinnefull King, together with *Mary Magdalen, Paul, Peter,* and the rest, who were a company

1 Ioh. 4. 9, 10.

Isa. 53. 10.

Isa. 53. 11, 12.

Gods will-
nesse to save us.
Mat. 11. 28.

2 King. 33. 12.

SER. V.

Pfal. 119. 49.

Ezek 16. 6.

pany healed by this Physitian. Therefore all this is for the glory of our Physitian, we may see what he can doe, by what he hath done: as amongst us, Physitians are sought after, according to their skill and cures done. Consider in the Sacrament how ready God is to cure and to heale us, how gracious he is in the Sacrament of Baptisme, wherein he ingageth us to beleeve, admitting us into the Covenant, and preventing us with mercy, before we knew what a Covenant or Seale was. And so to perswade us of his willingnesse to forgive our finnes and heale our Rebellions, hee hath ordained the Sacrament not for his sake, but to strengthen our weake faith, and help us. The point is easie for matter of our understanding, but hard in regard of use and Application: especially when it should be made use of, in time of temptation, then let us lay it up as a comfortable point, this gracious Promise of God, *I will heale their backsliding, I will love them freely, &c.* Lay this up against the houre of temptation, make use of it then, alleadging unto God his owne Promise and nature: as *David* did, *Lord, remember the Promise wherein thou hast caused me to trust.* Thou hast promised *pardoning* and *healing* all our transgressions, &c. Remember thy free Promises made in *Jesus Christ*. God cannot denie himselfe nor his Word, but loves to have his bonds sued: remember this.

And when conscience is surprized with any sinne (though it be never so great) looke not

on the disease so much, as who is the Physitian, and what his plaister and medicine is? God is the Physitian, and the blood of Christ is the Plaister. What if our sinnes be *mountaines*, there is an Ocean and a sea of mercy to swell above and *cover these mountaines* of our sinnes. Our sinnes in this case are like fire, which falling into the sea, is by and by quenched. What if our sinnes be of never so long standing (as these their backslidings heere, had continued hundreds of yeeeres, wherein they were a backsliding generation) yet, it is no matter of what standing or continuance the disease is, so long as God hath promised to be the Physitian, and the blood of Christ is the Plaister that healeth us. The Question is not, what, how many, how great, and of what continuance our sinnes are: but how wee stand affected towards them, hate them, and resolve against them. That sinne cannot hurt us which wee fight against, mourne for, complaine of, resolve to leave, and truly hate. Let us never stand then in comparisons with our sinnes, which beare no proportion to the infinite skill and power of our great Physitian: and to the infinite worke of Christs all-sufficient satisfaction. What canst thou object O man? *It is Christ that justifieth the ungodly, who art thou that condemneth? It is he that died, yea rather who is risen againe, who is also at the right hand of God, and also maketh intercession for us.* Thou canst not satisfie for the least sinne: God hath laid upon him the iniquities

Mic. 7. 18, 19.

Isa. 1. 18, 19.

Rom. 8. 33, 34.

SER. V.

Levit. 16. 21.

Isa. 53. 5.

of us all. *The chastisements of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.*

Let us therefore be wise for afterwards, heare, reade, lay up, and meditate for the time to come, for times will come (if wee belong to God) that nothing will content or pacifie the soule, but the infinite worth and merit of an infinite and free mercy apprehended in the face of Jesus Christ. When our sins are set in order before us, the finnes of our youth, middle, and old age, our finnes against conscience, against the Law and Gospell, against examples, vows, Promises, Resolution, and admonitions of the Spirit and servants of God. When there shall be such a terrible accuser, and God shall perhaps let the wounds of conscience fly open and joyne against us; when wrath shall appear, be in some sort felt, and God presented to the soule, as *a consuming fire*, no comfort in heaven or earth appearing, hell beneath seeming ready to revenge against us the quarrell of Gods Covenant. O then for faith to looke through all these clouds, to see mercy in wrath, love in correction, life in death; the sweetnesse of the promises, the vertue and merit of Christs sufferings, death, resurrection, and intercession at the right hand; The sting of death removed, sinne pardoned and done away, and glory at hand; In summe this promise made good, which leads unto all this happinesse (as wee shall by and by heare) *I will heale their backsliding, I will love them free-*

Heb. 12. 29.

Heb. 12. 6.

1 Cor. 15. 55.

ly,

ly, for mine anger is turned away. O this is a maivellous matter then to be perswaded of. Therefore let us make a right use of these words in due season. For they are, *like apples of gold with pictures of silver*, like balme to a Greene wound, like delivery in a shipwracke : but indeed all comparifons come farre short of this illustration, as the terrour of incensed wrath in the fearefull apprehension of eternall unspeakeable misery is beyond any other feare, apprehension, or joy.

But least this grace be abused by others (for wee must not with-hold the childrens bread, for feare others partake with them unto whom it belongs not) let them know this much, that those who turne this grace into wantonneffe, and will be evill, because God is thus gracious ; that there is no word of comfort in the whole Scripture for them, who stand resolved to goe on in their finnes, presuming of mercy. See what God saith in this case. *Least there should be among you a roote that beareth gall and worme-wood : and it come to passe when hee heareth the words of this curse that hee blesse himselfe in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walke in the imagination of mine heart, to adde drunkenness to thirst; The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousye, shall smooke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this booke shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under Heaven. God will wound the hairy scalpe of such an one,*
 who

Pro. 25. 11.

Deut. 29. 18,
19, 20.

Psal. 63. 21.

SER. V.

Rom. 2. 5.

who goes on in his wickednesse, and meanes to be so. And in the *New Testament*, those who thus make a progresse in sin, what do they? They are said to *treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgement of God*. Therefore Gods Word speakes no comfort to those who purpose to live in any sin. Al the comfort that can be spoken to such is, That yet they are not in hell, that yet they have time to returne to this great Physitian of the soule. But take such an one in his present condition, he can have no comfort in this estate, wherein there is but a step betweene him and hell; So as when the rotten thred of this uncertaine life shall faile, or is cut asunder, downe they fall. We have no comfort heere for them, till they returne; This pretious balme belongs to the wounded conscience. Briefly for us then.

Use.

2 Chro. 16. 12

Isa. 4. 5.

Seeing that our God is a healing God, as wee can admire the wisdom, skill, and excellencie of our Physitian, so let us much more make use of him, upon all occasions; Trust and cleave to him, not like good *Asa* (but not good in this) who forgot himselfe, and sent first to the Physitians. But let us especially rely upon God and looke to him, who can *create helpe*, and must blesse all meanes whatsoever. Hee is a *healing God*, who will heale all rebellions, and the most grievous sicknesses; he is a Physitian that is good for all turnes. There are some diseases which are called the scorne of Physitians,

as the *Goutte*, the *Ague*, and the like, wherein in some cases, they are put to a stand and know not what to doe; but God is never at a losse, his skill cannot be set downe, he is good at all diseases; to pardon all manner of sins. Therefore, let us goeto him for cure. *seeing* there is neither sinne, nor griefe, nor terror of conscience arising thereupon which can be so great, but God can cure both the sin and the terror, (if we take a right course) and speake peace to the soule. God is a healing God, arising when he comes, *with healing in his wings*. As he saith, *I will heale their rebellion, &c.* And as hee is a healing Physitian, so he puts his patients to no charge; for as he saith, *I will heale their backsliding*, so he saith, *I will love them freely*.

Therefore let us the more build upon this truth, which is indeed the summe of all Godlineesse; For what is the Gospel, but the triumph of mercy? doe but consider the scope of God in the new Covenant, whereof the Sacrament is a seale: which is onely to shew forth the exaltation of the Grace and Mercy of God in Jesus Christ, above all urworthinesse whatsoever. For all there, is for the glory of his Mercy. For in the Covenant of grace, mercy doth triumph against judgement and justice, which mercy of God in Christ is said by the Apostle, *to raigne unto life everlasting by Iesus Christ our Lord*. It reignes, and hath a regiment above, and over all. For mercy in God stirred up his Wisedome to devise a way

Mal. 4. 2.

That free mercy
is the scope of
God in the new
covenant.

Rom. 5. 21.

SER. V.

That the greatest sin which is pardonable is to denie God the glory of his mercy.

Plal. 145-9.

That we honour God most of all by giving him the glory of his mercy.

way by shedding of the blood of Christ Jesus God-man, to satisfie divine Justice, and rejoyce against it. But whence comes this that justice should be so satisfied; because a way is ~~run out~~ how none of Gods Attributes are loosers by ~~mercy~~. Wherefore in any temptation when we are prone to doubt of Gods love; say, what shall we wrong God more by calling in question his mercy, and the excellency of his loving kindnesse, which is more then any other sinne we have committed? This is a sin super-added against his Mercy, Power, Goodnesse, Gratiounesse and Love in healing of sinne: which takes away the glory of God in that Attribute, wherein he labours to triumph, raigne, and glorifie himselfe most, and *which is over all his workes*. Therefore hee that offends herein, in denying God the glory of his great, tender unspeakeable mercy, whereby he would glorifie himselfe most in the Covenant of grace, he offends God most.

Therefore, let us at such times as God awakens conscience, be so farre from thinking that God is unwilling to cure and helpe us, as to thinke that hereby we shall Honour God more by beleiving, then we dishonoured him by our sinne. For the faith of an humble contrite sinner it glorifies God more then our better obedience in other things doth: because it gives him the glory of that wherein he delights, and will be most glorified: *the glory of his mercy and truth*, of his rich abundant mercy that hath no bounds.

bounds. There is no comparison between the mercy of God in the Covenant of grace, and that to Adam in the state of nature: for in the first he did good to a good man, first he made him good, and then did him good: but when man did degenerate, and was fallen into such a cursed estate as we are, for God then to be good to a sinner, and freely to doe good, here is goodnesse indeed, triumphant goodnesse. Caine was a cursed person, who said, *my punishment is greater then can be borne,* wee know who spake it; no, God is a Physitian for all diseases, if they be *crimson finnes,* hee can make them *white as wooll.*

Gen. 4.13.

Isa. 1.18.

An encouragement to search our sins deeply.

Who would not be carefull therefore to search his wounds, his finnes to the bottome? let the search be as deepe as we can, considering that there is more *mercy* in God, then there can be *sine* in us. Who would favour his soule, especially considering, if he neglect searching of it, finnes will grow deadly and incurable upon that neglect. Let this therefore encourage us not to spare our selves, in opening the wounds of our soules to God; that he may spare all. Thus we saw formerly, The Church here is brought in dealing plainely with God and confessing all (for she had an excellent Teacher) and God answers all; begining with this, *I will heale their backsliding.* They were Idolaters, and guilty of the finnes of the second Table in a high measure (no pettie finnes) yet God saith, *I will heale their backsliding, &c.*

L

Which

SER. V.

Which being healed, then an open high-way is made for all other mercies whatsoever, which is the next point we Observe hence;

Observ.

That the chiefe mercy of all, which leades unto all the rest, is the pardon and forgiveness of sins.

Healing of the guilt of sinne we see is set in the front of these Petitions formerly shewed: which as it is the first thing in the Churches desire, *Take away all iniquity. &c.* So it is the first thing yeelded to in Gods Promise; *I will heale their backsliding. &c.* Pardon of sin, and cure of sinne, whereby the conscience ceaseth to be bound over to condemnation is the first and chiefe blessing of God, and is that for which the Church falls out in a triumph. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, because hee delighteth in mercy? &c.* And this is that excellent and sweet conclusion of the new Covenant also, whereupon all the rest of those former foregoing mercies there are grounded: *for, I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sinne no more* Yea this is the effect of that grand Promise made to his Church after the returne of their captivity. *In those daies, and at that time saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Iudah, and they shall not be found; for, I will pardon them whom I reserve.* The point is plaine, and cleere enough, it needs no following. The Reason is,

Micah 7.18,
19,20.

Ier. 31-34.

Ier. 50.20.

Because it takes away the interposing cloud: God is gracious in himselfe, pardon of sinne remooves the cloud betwixt Gods gracious face and the soule. Naturally God is a spring of mercy, but our sinnes stop the spring, but when sinne is pardoned, the stop is taken away, and the spring runs amaine. God is not mercifull, as a flint yeelds fire by force, but as a spring whence water naturally issues.

Seeing forgivenesse of sins unstops this spring, why doe we not feele this mercy?

Surely, because some sin or other is upon the file uncancelled, perhaps unconfessed, or because we are stult with Pride that we beleve not, or are so troubled, or trouble our selves, that we apprehend not, or beleve not the pardon of sinnes confessed and hated. But sure it is, *Forgivenessse of sinnes unstops the spring of mercy, and unvailles Gods gracious face in Iesus Christ unto us.* Sinne being not pardoned, this stops, as the Prophet speakes, *our iniquity* is that which keepes good things from us. Therefore the cheefe mercy is that which remooves, that which unstops the current of all mercy: *I will heale their backsliding. &c.* Looke as a condemned Prisoner in the Tower, let him have all contentment, as long as he is in the displeasure of the Prince, stands condemned, and the sentence unreversed, what true contentment can he have? none at all. So it is with a sinner, that hath not his pardon and *quietus est* from heaven: yeeld him all contentment which the world

Quest.

Answe.

Why we want the sense of the forgivenessse of sinnes.

SER. V.

can afford; all the satisfaction that can issue from the creature; yet, what is this to him, as long as he hath not mercy, and that his conscience is not pacified, because it is not cleansed and washed with the blood of Christ?

Jonah 1.4.

Iosh. 7.11, 12

Sinne is like *Jonas*, whilst he was in the ship there was nothing but tempest: like *Achan* in the Army, whilst he was not found out Gods judgement followed the campe. Sinne is that which troubleth all, therefore it must be taken away first, and therewith all evill is taken away: therefore, the first mercy is a forgiving, pardoning and quieting mercy. When the blood of Jesus Christ by the hand of faith is sprinkled upon the soule, God creating a hand of faith to sprinkle and shed it upon the soule; *Christ loved mee, and gave himselfe for mee*, then the soule faith, though my finnes be great, yet the satisfaction of Christ is greater: God hath loved me, and gave his owne Sonne for mee, and I apply this to my selfe, as it is offered to me, and take the offer, this pacifieth the soule, as it is written, *The Blood of CHRIST who through the eternall Spirit offered himselfe without spot to God*; is that which purgeth our conscience from dead workes to serve the living God: To a Repentant sinner, this *Blood of sprinkling* speakes better things then the blood of *Abell*: not as his blood cried for vengeance: but *mercy, mercy*. When the soule is thus pacified, there is the foundation of all other mercy whatsoever. The Order is this, when God is recon-

Heb. 9.14.

Heb. 12.24.

recon-

reconciled all is reconciled, when God is at peace with us in the Forgiveness of sins, then all is peaceable at home and abroad, conscience is in peace within, and all the creatures at peace without, all which with all that befalls us, have a command to doe us no hurt: as *David* gave charge to the people of *Absolom*. When God is reconciled, and at peace, all things are at peace with us; for is not he Lord of Hosts, who hath the command of all the creatures? therefore this grace of forgiveness is the chiefe grace.

To shew it in one instance more; *David* was a King and a Prophet, a comely and a valorous person, but what esteemed he most? did he say, blessed is the man, who is a King or a Prophet, or a valiant Warriour, or hath Dominion, Obedience, or great possessions as I have? O no, *Blessed is the man whose sins are forgiven, and whose iniquities are covered.* You see wherein this holy man *David* sets and pitcheth happiness? in the forgiveness of sinnes: Blessed is such a man. Though he were a great King, he knew well enough, that if his sinnes were not pardoned and covered, he had beene a wretched man.

Therefore, this should teach us to desire of God continually the pardon of our sins, and we should make it the cheefe desire of our soules, that God would shine upon them in *Jesus Christ*, pardon and accept us in his beloved, they goe together.

And blesse him for this above all other blessings, as it is, *Psal. 103. 1, 3. Blesse the Lord O my soule,*

Psal. 32. 1.

Vse. 1.

Vse. 2.

SER. V.

soule, and all that is within mee. blesse his holy Name, &c. Why? Who forgiveth all thy iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases. We should blesse God most of all for this, that he hath devised a way by Christ to receive satisfaction for sin, to pardon it, and say unto our soules, I am thy salvation: this is the greatest favour of all.

Quest.

But you aske, How shall I know, that God hath healed my soule in regard of the forgiveness of finnes?

Answ.

How to know that God hath pardoned our finnes

I.

If with pardoning there be subduing.

The answer is, *if together with pardon of sinne, he heale sinne*: for God when he takes away the venome of a wound that indangers death, the deadly disease, he takes away also the swelling of the wound and glowing of it. When he ceaseth to make it deadly, he heales the soule withall, and *subdues our iniquities*, as his Promise is. So there is together with pardoning mercy, curing mercy in regard of Sanctification. Where God is a Father to make us Sonnes, he is a Father to beget us anew: so where Christ comes by *Blood* to wash away our finnes, hee comes by *Water* also and the *Holy Ghost*: where hee is a *Comforter* in the forgiveness of finnes, he is a *Sanctifier*: And the soule of a distressed sinner lookes to the one as well as the other. Aske the soule of any man who is truly humbled, what doe you chiefly desire? O, that God would pardon my finnes: But is that all? No; That he would also heale my finnes, and subdue my Rebellions: that I may not any longer be under the government and tyranny of my

my lusts; but under Gods gracious governe-
ment, who will guide mee better then before.
This we see to be the Order in the *Lords Prayer*;
after we are taught to say, *Forgive us our trespasses*,
it followes, *And leade us not into tempta-
tion, but deliver us from evill*, which is for the
time to come: So *David*, *Cleanse mee from my
secret sinnes, and keepe me that presumptuous sins
have not dominion over me, &c.* So that this is
the desire of an afflicted conscience truly hum-
bled; curing as well as covering of sinne. This
is a sure evidence that our sins are pardoned.

Then againe when there is peace, when the
soule feelles this, it is a signe that God hath
heal'd the soule: For (saith the Apostle) *being
justified by faith, we have peace with God through
our Lord Iesus Christ*, the Blood of Christ hath
a pacifying power in forgiveness of sinnes.
When *Jonas* was cast out there was a calme: So
when sinne is cast out and pardoned, there is a
calme in the soule; which comes from the for-
giveness of sinnes.

Again, Healing is knowne by this, if wee
have hearts willing to be searched, for then our
will is cured, which in the state of grace is more
then our Obedience: when we would be better
then we are, then certainly our will is not in
league with corruptions. Now where the will
is so much sanctified, I resolve to be better, I
would be better, and I use all meanes, being
glad when any joynes with me against my cor-
ruptions, I am glad of all such advantages,

SER. V.

Hof. 2. 7.

Mat. 6. 12, 13.

Psal. 19. 18, 13

2.

By Peace.
Rom. 5. 1. 1

3.

When we are
willing to be
searched.

SER. V.

here is a good signe. As now, when a man goes to Church, and desires, O that my corruptions might be met withall, O that I might be laid open to my selfe, and know my selfe better then I have formerly done: this is the desire of an ingenuous soule. Where there is no guile of soule, a man is glad to have himselfe and his corruptions discovered, whereas another frets and kicks, and rageth against the Word of God, which is a signe that there is some league betwixt him and his sin. You have some, that above all things in the world, they would not have such and such downe-right Ministers: O take heed this is a signe of a hollow heart, and that a man is in love with his disease: can there be a cure where there is a love of the disease?

4.
By our estimation of heavenly and earthly things.
Coloss. 3. 1.

Phil 3. 13.

Not to name many, the last (which is a high pitch) shall be *by our estimation of things here and above*: What hath this healing wrought in thee? What estimation of things? How is thy heart weaned from the world? How are thy affections set on things which are above? When a sick man is soundly recovered, though his distempered pallate could not relish the best meates in his sicknesse, yet now he relishes and loves the best most of all. Looke then to our selves, how forget we with blessed *S. Paul, the things which are behind, pressing hard to the marke which is before, for the high price of that Calling?* How stand we affected to long for our Countrey, this world being only the place of our pilgrimage? Surely a soule that is soundly healed, is an

undervaluing soule, to use this world and all things therein as though we used them not : and it is also a valuing soule, to covet spirituall things above all. O (saith David) how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day. I love thy Commandements above gold, yea above fine gold. The joy of this estate, is a joy unspeakable and glorious : of which it is said, the stranger shall not meddle with. This much concerning the disease, before we come to the cure, a Question ariseth.

Whence then comes a calme in a carnall person ?

From ignorance and deadnesse of conscience, or from diversion : as a sick man when he talks with another man that is his friend, his minde is diverted that he feeleth not his sicknesse all the while ; so wicked men, either their consciences are seared, and they goe on in sin, or else they have diversions. Great persons are loath to heare, and are usually full of diversions, from the time they rise, till they sleepe againe : all diversions busie conscience about other things, so they keepe themselves that it may not trouble them. But the peace of a true Christian comes from another ground ; from sound knowledge of his disease, and from sound satisfaction, by faith knowing Christ ; the Spirit of God sealing this knowledge to the soule : if peace be thus settled, it is a signe of a sound cure.

But you will say, How shall I know that my sins are pardoned, when I am subject to those sins still ?

SER. V.

1 Cor. 7. 29, 30

Psal. 119. 79.
127.

1 Pet. 1. 8.
110. 14. 10.

Quest.

Answer.

Quest.

SER. V.

*Ans.**How to know
pardon of sin,
when corrupti-
on gives foyle
still.*

Not to speake of transient actuall finnes, that are past and pardoned when wee have repented of them: but of the roote of all sinne, which is weakenesse and corruption in us, fortified and (as it were) intrenched by nature, occasions and custome, of this the Question is; How to discern of pardon, the roote of sinne remaining, and now and then foyleing us? The Answer is Affirmative, we may have that sinne pardoned, which yet occasionally may foyle us still. For a man is in the state of health, though he have the dregs of a disease hanging upon him, whereby a man oftentimes hath some little fit of the disease. When nature and physicke hath prevailed over the disease; yet after that, there may be grudgings. So when God hath cured the soule by pardon, and hath begun to cure in Sanctification, the cure is wrought, though some dregs remaine: because those dregs are carried away with daily physicke, and daily flying to God, *Lord forgive our debts, Lord heale us*: every prayer and renewing of Repentance carries some debt away, till death comes, that excellent Physitian, which once for all perfectly cures both soule and body bringing both there where both shall have Perfection.

Quest.

But you will say, is Gods grace weake, that it cannot carry away all dregs of corruption, as well as pardon? Why is pardon in the forgiveness of sins absolute, when yet God suffers the dregs to remaine, so as we still are subject to the disease of sin?

God

SER. V.

Ansiv.

God is wise, let us not quarrell with our Physician, for he is wiser then we our selves : for he makes these reliques medicinall to us : as thus, Naturally we are prone to security and spirituall pride, therefore he makes a medicine of our infirmities, to cure spirituall pride and security, and to set us a worke. Therefore the *Iebusites* and the residue of that kinde, were left uncast out from among Israel, that thereby he might proove Israel, and least they should be a prey unto wilde beasts to devoure them. So some remainders of the flesh are left still in the best, that these wilde beasts might not prey upon their soules, spirituall pride, which is a detestable sinne, robbing and denying God of his Prerogative, and security, the grave of the soule: to cure these two especially, God makes the reliques and remainders of sinne a medicine unto us.

Iudg. 3. 1.

Why doth God suffer these infirmities and diseases to remaine in us ?

Quest.

Diseases are suffered to put us in minde of infirmities in the roote, which we knew not before; for if these should not sometimes breake forth into a disease, we would thinke our nature were pure: therefore God suffers them to breake forth into diseases. Who would have thought that *Moses* had beene passionate ? certainly himselfe did not know himselfe at the waters of strife: that the seeds of anger should be in the meekest man in the world ? who would have thought that *David* whose heart smote him for cutting off the lap of *Sauls* garment, that so milde

Ansiv.

Why God suffers diseases and infirmities to remaine in us

Num. 20. 12.

1 Sam. 24. 5.

SER. V.

Mat. 26 33,
69, &c.

*That Gods
children are
gainers by their
afflictions and
weakeneses.*

*In what case
we may be com-
forted, though
infirmities
breake out.*

milde a man should have cruelty in him? and yet after that, he committed murder. Who would have thought that *Peter*, who made such protestations of love to Christ, that though all men forsooke him, yet he would not, yet after that should denie his Master, and forswear him? all which was to shew us, that it is usefull for us sometimes to have our corruptions breake out, to put us in minde what inward weakenesses wee have unknowne and unsearched in us, and that wee may know the depth of our corruption. Gods children are gainers by all their infirmities and weakenesses, whereby they learne to stand stronger. Heere is a maine difference betwixt the slips of Gods children, and the ordinarie evill courses of others: they grow worse and worse, the oster they fall into sin, the more they are setled upon their dregs. But Gods child hath the remainders of corruption in him, from whence he hath infirmities, and whence hee breaks into diseases: but notwithstanding, corruption is a looser hereby; for the oster he falls into sinne, it is the weaker and weaker: for the more he sees the roote of it, the more he hates it, resolves and strives against it, till it be consummated by Repentance and Sanctifying grace. Let no man therefore be too much cast downe for infirmities, though oftentimes they breake out, if thereupon we finde a renewed hatred, Repentance and strength against them: for God looks not so much how much corruption there is in us, as how we stand affected to it, and what good there

there is: whether we be in league with it, and resist it. It is not sinne that damnes men, but sin with the ill qualities: sin unconfessed, not grieved for, and unresisted, else God hath holy ends in leaving corruption in us, to exercise, trie us, and keepe us from other sins, Therefore sin is left uncured.

Now the way to have it cured, both in the Pardon, and likewise in *Sanctification*, we have it in the Context; what doth God say? *I will heale their backsliding, &c.* after they had searched their hearts, and thereupon found iniquity; and then prayed, *Take away all iniquity*, after they had desired a divorce from their sinnes, *Asbur shall not save us*: and when they had some faith that God would cure them, and accordingly put confidence in God, *the Father of the Fatherlesse*. Then saith God, *I will heale their backsliding*, so that sense of pardon in the forgivenessse of sins, and sense of grace, comes after fight, sense, wearinesse and confession of sinne. God doth not pardon sinne, when it is not seene, sorrowed for, nor confessed, and where there is not some degree of faith, to come to God *the Father of the Fatherlesse*, and the great Physitian of soules. When we doethis, as it is said in the Context, then wee find the forgivenessse of sinnes, with the gracious power of Gods Spirit healing of our diseases. *I will heale their backsliding.*

Let us therefore remember this, least we deceive our soules; for it is not so easie a thing to attaine

The way to have sinne cured both in heaven and in sense of conscience by Sanctification.

SER. V.

That though
forgivenesse of
sinnes be freely
given: yet the
preparing way
thereunto costs
us deare

attaine unto forgivenesse of sinnes as we thinke.

And then againe, though forgivenesse of sins be free, yet notwithstanding there is a way whereby we come to forgivenesse of sins, that costs us somewhat; God humbles the soule first, brings a man to himselfe, to thinke of his course, to lay open his sinnes and spread them before God in confession, and working upon the soule hearty Repentance: so to cometo God, and waite for forgivenesse of sins, perhaps a good while before there be a report of it. There are none who have sins forgiven, but they know how they come by it: for there is a predisposition wrought in a mans soule by the Spirit which teacheth him, what estate he is in, and what his danger is, whereupon followes confession, and upon that peace. God keepes his children many times a long while upon the racke before he speakes peace unto them in the forgivenesse of sins, because he would not have them thinke sleightly of the riches of his mercy. It is no easie matter to attaine unto the sense of the forgivenesse of sinnes, though indeed we should strive to attaine it, that so we may walke in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. The difficulty of obtaining or recovering the sense of forgivenesse, may be seene in *David*, after his fall did he easly obtaine sense of pardon? O no, God held him on the racke a long time, *He roared all the day long, his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer.* But when he had resolved a thorough and no sleight confession; when hee had resolved to shame himselfe, and glorifie God;

Psal 32.3,4.

God; then saith he, *And thou forgavest my sinne,* but till he dealt thoroughly with his soule without all guile, he felt no comfort. So it is with the children of God, when in the state of grace they fall into sin; it is no sleight, *Lord have mercy upon me,* that will serve the turne; but a thorough shaming of themselves before God, and a thorough confession, resolving and determining to be under another governement; to have Christ to governe them, as well as to pardon them: God will no otherwise do it. Because he would glorifie his rich mercy herein: for who would give mercy its due glory, if forgivenesse were easily attained without shaming of our selves? If it came easily without protestation and waiting upon God, (as the Church heere) we should never be thoroughly humbled for our sinnes, and God would never have the glory of his mercy, nor knowne to be so just in hating of sinne in his deare children, who long ago upon such tearmes have attained sense of forgivenesse of sins. It is worth our trouble to search our soules, and to waite at Christs feete, never to give over untill we have attained the sense of forgivenesse of sin. It is heaven upon earth to have our consciences enlarged with Gods favour in the pardon of sin.

What is the Reason that many professe, that God is mercifull, and Christ hath pardoned their sins, &c. if the ground be right, it is a high conceit of *mercy*: and such have beene soundly humbled for their sins. But dost thou professe so who livest carelesly in thy sins and licentiously still;


Why the soule must waite and be tumbled before the sense of the forgivenesse of sinnes.

That there can be no sense of pardon, wthout Humiliation and Reformation is wanting.

SER. V.

still; surely thy ground is naught, for hadst thou beene upon the racke, in Gods scalding-house and smarted soundly for sin; wouldest thou take pleasure stil to live in sinne? O no. Those that goe on carelessly in their actions and speeches not caring what they are, did they ever smart for sin who carrie themselves thus? Surely these were never soundly humbled for sinne, nor confessed them with loathing and detestation. Therefore let us marke the Context heere inferred, after they had confessed, praied and waited, resolving Reformation in their false confidence: then God promiseth, *I will heale their backsliding.* It is a fundamentall error in a Christian course, the sleighting of true humiliation, which goes along in all the Fabrick and frame of a Christian course. Let a man not be soundly humbled with the sight of his sinnes, his faith is weaker, and his Sanctification and comfort the sleighter. Whereas if a man would deale truly with his owne heart, set up a Court there, and arraigne, judge, and condemne himselfe (which is Gods end in all his dealings, afflictions, and judgements inflicted upon us) the deeper wee went in this course, the more would our comfort be and the report of Gods mercy, in the sense of that which followes: *I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away.*

The end of the fifth Sermon.



THE SIXTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 4,5.

--- I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away.

I will be as the Dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the Lillie, and cast forth his Roote as Lebanon.

IT was a good speech of S. *Austin*, those that are to petition great persons, they will obtaine some who are skilfull to frame their Petitions, least by their unskillfullnesse they provoke Anger instead of carrying away the benefit desired. So it is here with Gods people being to deal with the great God, and not be-

M ing

SER. VI.

ing able to frame their owne petitions, God (as we heard before) doth it for them: and answers them gratiouſly with the ſame mercies which he had ſuggeſted them to aſke; his anſwer being exact to their petitions, *I will heale their backſliding, I will love them freely, &c.* where-in God exceeds all Phyſitians in the world whatſoever, for they have nature to helpe them. *Phyſick is the mid-wife of Nature*, helping it to do that which it cannot doe of it ſelfe: Phyſick can do nothing to a dead man; but God is ſo great a Phyſitian, that he firſt gives life, and after that ſpirituall Life is in ſome degrees begun, by little and little he heales more and more. *I will heale their backſlidings.*

We have an error crept in amongſt ſome of the meaner ignorant ſort of people, who thinke that God ſees no ſinne, when he hath once pardoned men in Juſtification, who falſely ſmooth themſelves in this wicked ſenſuall conceit, thinke they can commit no ſinne offenſive to God; as though God ſhould frame ſuch a Juſtification for men, to blindfold him and caſt duſt (as it were) in his eyes: or juſtifie men to make them looſe and idle. No, it is falſe, as appeareth by this place; for how can God heale that he ſees not? He ſees it not to be revenged on them for it, but hee ſees ſinne, to correct it and to heale it. He ſees it not after a revengefull wrathfull juſtice to caſt us into Hell and damne us for it; but he ſees it after a ſort to make us ſmart and lament for it, and to have many times

a bitter sense of his wrath and forsaking, as men undone without a new supply of comfort and peace from Heaven. Let a man neglect Sanctification, daily sorrow and confession of sinne, and now and then even craving new pardon for sinnes past, casting all upon a fantastick conceit of faith in their justification: what follows, but Pride, Hardnesse of heart, Contempt of others and neglect of better then themselves, and pronenesse, out of Gods judgement, to fall from ill to worse, from one error to another? In this case the heart is false and deceitfull, for whilst it pretends a glorious faith to looke back to Christ, to live by faith, and lay all on him by justification; it windes it selfe out of all taskes of Religion, sets the heart at liberty, neglects Sanctification and Mortification of lusts, and beautifying the image of God in them, giving too much way to the flesh. Therefore away with this false and selfe-conceited opinion: which drawes poyson out of that which God speakes to confirme and stablish us, *That he sees no iniquity in Iacob, &c.* Whence from these Hyperbolicall speeches, they thinke that God seeth not that which we our selves see, But, *hee heales our backslidings*, therefore hee sees them, for how can he heale a wound, if he see it not? He sees it, but not to their destruction who are freely justified by his grace. But we will leave this point, it being too much honour to them to spend time in confutation of it and will rather say unto it, as *Isaiab* speakes of a menstruous cloth, *get thee hence.*

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Now as God is a most gracious God, never weary of well doing and comforting his people, because it is his nature to be mercifull: So hee hath suteable expressions of it, hee goes on with mercy upon mercy, loving kindnesse upon loving kindnesse. Hee had promised before: *I will heale their Backeslidings*, take in summe all their Apostacie, all shall be healed. But this is not all, hee answers all the accusations and doubts of Satan: who is still objecting against us our unworthinesse, misery, wretchednesse to have such favours conferred on such filthy creatures: Therefore, hee takes of all with this which followeth, as they had prayed, *Receive us grationally*; So the answer is full, and suitable to their request.

I will love them freely.

Put case, they out of conscience of their owne guilt should see no worth in themselves or cause why they should be respected: yet I see reason in mine owne love.

I will love them freely.

Quest.
Answ.

But may some say, How can God love freely? Aske thy selfe, doth not a father and a mother love their child freely? what doth the child deserve of the father and mother a great while? Nothing, but the mother hath many a weary night, and foule hand with it. Hath God planted an affection in us to love our children freely, and shall not God much more who gives this love and plants it in us, be admitted to love freely. But indeed there is absurdity

furdity and infidelity in distrust. For it is against reason to deny the mighty God that which we have in our selves. It hee did not love freely, how could hee love us at all? what could he fore-see in us to love for before hand? the very manhood of Christ deserved not the grace of union, it was freely given.

I will love them freely.

That which first of al we observe hence is this much, *That God loves his people freely.* So Rom. 5. 8, 9, saith the Apostle, *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us: much more being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath thorough him.* The like we have in *Ezekiell*, saith God, Therefore, say unto the house of *Israel*, thus saith the Lord God, *I doe not this for your sakes O house of Israel, but for mine holy Names sake, which yee have profaned among the heathen whether yee went.* *Adam* when he had sinned that maine great sinne, what did hee? flie from God, run away, and when God called to him and debated the matter with him, he accused God, and excused himselfe. Yet for all this God pittied him, and cloathed him, and made him that promise of the blessed seed. What desert was there here in *Adam*? nay, rather the quite contrary: yet God loved him freely. The same may be said of *S. Paul* for the time past a persecuter, what deserving was there in him? none at all, yet hee found Gods free love in his conversion: for saith God to

observ.

Ezek. 36. 22.

Gen. 3. 12, 13.

SER. VI.

Acts 9.15.

Acts 9.5.

Luke 15.20.

Reason 1.

Exod. 34.6.

Reason 2.

Iam. 1.17.

Rom. 11.36.

Vse 1.

Luke 17.10.

Ananias, He is a chosen vessell unto mee, to beare my name before the Gentiles. Here was no deserving in *S. Paul*, but Gods free election which in time tooke place, and so we may say of the *Prodigall* having spent all, his Father pardoned all and loved him freely.

The Reason hereof is. 1. *Because it is his name and nature to be gracious, and to love freely, and whatsoever is Gods nature, that hath a freedome in the working.*

2. *Because no creature can deserve any thing at Gods hands.* 1. *Because by nature we are all Gods enemies and therefore what can enemies deserve? nothing but wrath and vengeance.* 2. *If we have any graces, they are the gift of God, and therefore we deserve nothing by them, they being of his owne gift.* So *S. Iames* speaks, *Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above and cometh downe from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.* And *S. Paul* saith: *That of him, and through him, and to him are all things: what should follow hereupon? To whom be glory for ever.*

This in the first place serves for reproofe of our adversaries of the Romish Church: who say, that God loves us for something foreseene in us which is good: or for somewhat which in time wee would doe to deserve favour at his hands: but both are false, the cause of love is free from himselfe: for, *when we have done our best, yet (saith the Holy Ghost) we are unprofitable servants.*

Se-

Secondly, it is for reproofe of Gods owne deare children, who because they finde no deserving in themselves, are therefore discouraged at the sight of their own unworthinesse, whereas quite contrary, the sight of our owne unworthinesse, should make us the more fit subjects for Christs free love: which hath nothing to doe with them that stand upon deserving. Many of Gods deare children are troubled with temptations, doubts, and feares of Gods love and favour towards them, because they expect to finde it in the fruits of *Grace*, and not in *free Grace* it selfe. If we would have any sound peace, let us looke for it in *free Grace*. Therefore the blessed Apostle, in the entrance of his salutations in his Epistles, still joyneth *Grace*, and then *Peace*, to shew us that if we looke for sound *Peace*; we can no where finde it but in *Grace*. We would finde *Peace*, in the *Grace* that is in us; but it is labour in vaine, for we shall never finde it but in *free Grace*.

Hence wee may also be comforted in the certainty of our salvation; for that grace and love and favour whereby wee are saved is in God, not in us. Now whatsoever is in him is immutable and sure. So saith the Apostle, *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seale, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.* Where speaking of election which comes from the free love of God, hee makes that a sure foundation to

Vse 3.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

SER. VI.

build on; if there be a reformation *to depart from iniquity*, wee may be comfortably assured of our salvation. And as it is with *Election*, so is it with all the other fruits of Gods love: *Vocation, Adoption, Iustification, and Perseverance*: the foundation of God fastly sealed in the way of holinesse stands good and sure in all.

Rom. 3. 24.
Ioh. 13. 1.

Vse. 4.

This further teacheth us, Thankfullnesse unto God, who hath so freely loved us, for if there were deserving on our part, what place were left for thankfullnesse? We know one who deserves nothing and hath small matters bestowed upon him, at least will be thankfull for such favours. But when one is so farre from deserving any thing, that by the contrary hee deserveth all plagues and punishments: hath yet many and abundant mercies bestowed freely upon him, this doth exceedingly provoke (especially a generous spirit) to a suitable thankfullnesse, as much as may be.

Vse 5.

And let it likewise breed Confidence in us to God in all our miseries, both for pardon of sinne, helpe in distresse, and comfort in sorrowes, because he *loves us freely*, and did love us whilst wee were enemies: make therefore upon all occasions the Apostles use of it. *For if when we were enemies wee were reconciled to God by the death of his sonne; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life?*

Rom. 5. 10.

I will love them freely.

In the next place, from hence we observe another

Observ.

nother point which necessarily followeth upon the former: *That God did not then begin to love them, when he said I will love them freely: but to discover that love unto them, which hee carried unto them from all eternity.* For instance hereof *S. Paul* was beloved of God, ere God manifested his love unto him: as hee testifieth of himselfe, that the discovery of this free love was, *when it pleased God who separated me from my mothers wombe, and called mee by his Grace, to reveale his sonne in mee, &c.* So *Ephes. 1. 3, 4.* The Apostle blesteth God in his salutation unto them, *who had blessed them with all spirituall blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* But whence fetcheth hee the ground hereof? *According as hee hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unblameable before him in love.* Wee need not multiply places more to prove it, our adversaries would faine seeme to cleere God onely in all, and so shrowd their arguments under such needlesse pretences, shift of all places, name wee never so many with their strong heads, distinctions, and sophismes. But God will one day give them no thanks for their labour: the will of God (how unequal soever in our eyes, who cannot with our shallow conceits sound the depth of such misteries) being ground enough to justifie all his actions whatsoever. We will therefore come to some Reasons of the point.

Gal. 1. 15, 16.

Ephes. 1. 4.

Because, *Whatsoever is in God (manifested in time)* Reason 1.

SER. VI.I Iohn 4.8.
Iohn 14.6.

(time) is eternall and everlasting in him, without beginning and ending, for whatsoever is in God, is God. God is not loving, but Love: and hee is not onely true, but Truth it selfe: hee is not wise onely, but *Wisedome* it selfe. And therefore his love discovered in time, must needs be from all eternity.

2.

Secondly, if God did then first begin to love us, when he manifested his love unto us, then there should be a change in God; because hee should *love* them now, that he did not formerly *love*. As wee see, those who loved *Paul* after his Conversion, loved him not before, there was then a change in the Church: in which case, if God should so love, he should be changeable, and so be like unto man.

3.

And then againe Christs Prayer, *Iohn 17.* makes it cleere, that the love of God beginneth not with the manifestation thereof: for Christ there, knowing all the Fathers secrets (as coming out of the bosome of the Father) intimates the contrary: where he makes one end of his prayer for them to be, *That the world may know, that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* Now how hee loved Christ is also shewed a little after; *For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world:* Therefore the Saints and Children of God are loved with an everlasting former love, not beginning at that instant discovery thereof.

Iohn 17.23.

Iohn 17.24.

vse. I.

The Use hereof, is, first of all, against those who measure Gods love and favour by their owne

owne feeling, because as God loved them before, so he loves them as well and as dearly still, when he hideth his face from them, as when he suffered his loving kindnesse to shine most comfortably upon them. He loved Christ as dearly when he hanged on the tree, in torment of soule and body, as he did, when he said, *This is my beloved sonne, in whom I am well pleased;* yea and when hee received him up into glory. The Sunne shineth as cleerely in the darkest day, as it doth in the brightest. The difference is not in the Sunne, but in some clouds which hinder the manifestation of the light thereof. So God loveth us as well, when he shineth not in the brightnesse of his countenance upon us, as when he doth. *Iob* was as much beloved of God in the midst of his miseries, as he was afterwards when he came to enjoy the abundance of his mercies.

Mat. 3. 17.

Iob 42. 7.

I will love them freely, &c.

The last Point which we gather from hence, as a speciall ground of comfort, is this:

That this free love and favour of God, is the cause of all other mercies and free favours, whereby hee discovereth his love unto us.

Observ.

1. It is the cause of election, even so then at this present time also there is a remnant, according to the election of grace. So 2. For Vocation: when the Apostle had shewed that the *Ephesians* were saved by Grace; hee adds, that in the ages to come, hee might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindnesse towards us through Christ

Rom. 5. 11.

Ephes. 5. 7.

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Ephes. 2. 10.

Ephes. 1. 7.

1 Ioh. 4. 19.

Rev. 1. 5.

Hof 5. 14.
Phil. 1. 13.

Ephes. 2. 8, 10.

Rom. 6. 23.

Christ Iesus : hee afterwards sheweth, when this grace began first to have being, *For wee are his workemanship created unto good workes, which God hath before ordained that we should walke therein.*

3. Forgiveness of finnes, *In whom we have a redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of finnes, according to the riches of his grace.*

So 4. For the grace of Love: *Wee love him, because he loved us first.* 5. For Justification, and Sanctification. It is said, *that Christ hath loved us, why? For hee hath washed us from our finnes in his owne blood;* and S. Iohn saith, *Hee hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father.* 1. Kings to fight against the world, the flesh, and the divell. 2. Priests, to teach, instruct, reprove, and comfort our selves and others by the Word of God: and then to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, in prayers and praises. All comes from freedome of love. 6. So every good Inclination comes hence. *For it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to doe of his good pleasure.* So 7. Every good Worke: *For we are his workemanship created in Christ Iesus unto good workes, which he had before ordained that we should walke therein: For by grace ye are saved (saith he) through faith.* So 8. For Eternall life: the Apostle sheweth: *It is the gift of God, through Iesus Christ our Lord.*

This should teach us in the first place to be humbled, in that we are so miserable naughty servants, doing so little worke, nay nothing as we should, yet should have so good wages: *but*

God

God loves us freely, &c. It should rather humble us the more, then puffe us up in pride, in regard that there was nothing in us which might deserve anything at Gods hand.

And hence also it followeth infallibly ; that if he loved us from everlasting with a free love, in a sort, as he loved Christ, that therefore the effects of his love towards us shall never faile; as the Apostle sheweth, *The gifts and calling of God; are without Repentance.* Faith and Repentance being fruits of his love wrought in us, shall hold out: therefore the weakenesse of these graces as they shall not hinder our salvation; no more should they discourage us, or hinder the comfort of our profession. Because that Faith and Repentance which wee have, is not any worke of ours, but the worke of Gods free love in us: therefore they shall be continued, and accepted. For our *Perseverance* doth not stand in this, that wee have strength in our selves to continue faithfull to God, but because he out of his free love, continueth faithfull to us; and will never faile, nor forsake them whom he hath once taken into his everlasting favour, on whom hee hath set his everlasting free love, as the Apostle speakes of Christ. *Who also shall confirme you unto the end, that yce may be blamelesse in the day of our Lord Iesus Christ: but upon what ground? God is faithfull by whom wee were called unto the fellowship of his Sonne Iesus Christ our Lord.* So that if any of the Elect should fall away,

God

SER. VI.

1 Cor 4 7.
Ephes 2.9.

Vse 2.
Ioh. 17. 23, 24

Rom. 11. 29.

1 Cor. 1. 8, 9.

SER. VI.

Psal. 73. 24.

1 Thess. 5. 23,
24.

Vse. 3.

Quest.

Ans^w.
How to mani-
fest our love to
God.

God should be unfaithfull. The case in *Perseverance* is not how faithfull we are, but how faithfull God is, who *guides us heere with his Counsell in all things, and afterwards receiveth us into glory.* So in another place, after the Apostle had prayed, *Now the very God of Peace Sanctifie you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soule and body be preserved blamelesse unto the comming of our Lord Iesus Christ.* What maketh he the ground of this his Prayer? *Faithfull is hee that calleth you, who also will doe it.*

If then we would have God to manifest his free love to us, let us strive to be obedient to his Commandements, and stirre up our hearts by all meanes to love him, who hath so freely loved us.

Now how should wee manifest our love to God?

First, in loving his Word: as *Psal. 19.* & *Psal. 119.* Secondly, in loving his people, *1 Ioh. 5. 1,* 2. Thirdly, in longing for, and loving his second comming, *Revel. 22. 20.*

Now followeth the Reason of the discovery of this free love shewed now in time to them.

For mine Anger is turned away from him.

Here is the third Branch of Gods answer to their Petition, *Mine Anger is turned away from him:* which is included and implied in the former; *I will heale their backsliding:* how could hee doe this if he were Angry? No, he saith, *I will love them freely:* which argues that

his anger was appeased. God knoweth that variety of words and expressions are all little enough to raise up and comfort a doubting, wounded, galled soule: which when it is touched with a sense of sin and of his displeasure, cannot heare words enough of comfort. This God knowes well enough, and therefore he adds expression upon expression: *I will heale their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away from him.* The soule which is touched with the sense of wrath and defiled with the stains of sinnes dreadfull impressions, receives all this cheerefully, and more too: therefore in such cases, we must take in good part the largesse of Gods expressions. *For mine Anger is turned away from him.* To unfold the words therefore.

Anger is the inward displeasure which God hath against sin, and his purpose to punish it, accompanied with threatnings upon his purpose, and execution upon his threatnings. The point to be observed in the first place is,

That there is Anger in God against sin.

We need not stand to prove the point it is so manifest to every man, the Scripture is copious in it; if wee consider either judgements executed upon sinners, threatnings against sin, or the Saints complaining of it, as *Psal. 72. 1. Job 42. 7. Psal. 6. 1. Psal. 90. 11. Psal. 38. 1, 3. Isa. 63. 6.* with many the like places prove, *That there is Anger in God against sinne*; we will rather see the Reason of it.

Anger of God what?

observ.

Because

SER. VI.

Reason

Because there is an Antipathie betwixt him and sinne, which is contrary to his pure nature. Sinne as it opposeth God, so it is contrary unto him; and indeed, sin would turne him out of his sovereignty. For what doth a man when he sins wittingly and willingly, but turne God out of his government, and causes the divell to take up Gods roome in the heart? when a man gives way to sinne, then the divell rules, and he thinkes his owne lusts better then Gods will, and his owne carnall reason in contriving of sinne above Gods wisdom in his Word: therefore he is a proud Rebel. Sinne is such a kinde of thing that it labours to take away God, for it not onely puts him out of that part of his throne, mans heart, but for the time a man sinnes, hee could wish there were no God to take vengeance of him. Can you wonder therefore that God is so opposite to that, which is so opposite to his Prerogative royall as sinne is?

The truth is, God is Angry with nothing else but with sinne, which is the onely object of his Anger. That which foolish persons make a trifle and sport of, Swearing, filthie speaking and lying, is the object of Gods Anger. For this offence of sinne, he did not spare the *Angels of Heaven*, but tumbled them thence, never to returne againe. Sin also thrust *Adam* out of *Paradise*, and made God angry with him and the whole world, so as to destroy it with a flood of water; and will at last make him
burne

The effects of
Gods Anger
against sin.

Plal. 14. 1.

1 Pet. 2. 4.

Gen. 3. 23.

Gen. 6. 13.

2 Pet. 3. 12.

burne and consume up all with a deluge of fire. Yea, it made him in a sort angry with his owne deare Sonne, when he under-went the punishment of sinne, as our Surety: so that he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* If God thus shewed his anger against sinne, in punishing it in Christ our Surety, who was made sinne for us, and yet had no sinne in himselfe: how will he punish it much more in those who are not in Christ: those who stand in their owne sinne and guilt, what will become of them? So that God is angry with sin and with nothing else.

Mat. 27. 46.

The second thing we gather from this, where hee saith, *My anger is turned away from him,* Gods anger being taken especially for judgements, is,

That Gods anger is the speciall thing in Afflictions.

Observ.

They come from his anger, (as hath beene shewed) therefore he saith, I will take mine anger from you, whereby hee meanes judgements, the effect of his anger. For in the Scriptures, anger is ordinarily taken for the fruits and effects of Gods anger, which are terrible judgements, as we may see, *Deut. 29. 20.* and so in many other places.

Judgements then are called Gods anger.

Because they issue from his anger and displeasure: for it is not the judgements, but the anger in them, which lies heavy upon the soule; when they come from Gods anger,

Quest.

Ans.

That the least crosse, if set on by anger proves as the most terrible.

SER. VI.

they are intollerable to the conscience, else when we suffer ill, knowing that it is not from Gods anger, but for triall of our graces, or for exercise we beare it patiently. Therefore God saith, *mine anger is turned away from him*, for this unremoved imbittereth every crosse though it be never so small. Let Gods anger be upon a man, and he will make a conceit, a very light thing, to be as a heavy crosse unto him, and vexehim both in body and state, morethen mightier crosses at some other time shall. Will you see this in one instance, where God threatneth his owne deare people thus : *And the Lord will smite thee with the botch of Ægypt, and with the Emrods, and with the scab, and with the itch whereof thou canst not be healed.* What is a scab, and an itch and the like such a terrible judgement, which in these daies is set so light by ? O yes, when it comes with Gods displeasure; when the least scratch is set on fire by Gods anger, it shall consume us, it prooves incurable, as there it is threatned: *whereof thou canst not bee healed.* When the vermine came in Gods anger upon that hard-hearted King; all *Pharaohs* skill, and his *Magitians* skill, could not beate them out, because (as they confessed) *this was the finger of God.* Let any thing come as a messenger of Gods anger, it comes with vengeance and sticks to the soule, like a *fretting leprosie*, which when it entred into a house, many times could not be gotten out againe with pulling out stones, or scraping them, till the house were demolished.

Deut. 28, 27.

Exod. 8. 9.

Lev. 14. 45, 46.

demolished. So when Gods *anger* is raised and kindled against a person, you may remoove this and that, change place and company, and use of helpes, yet it will never leave fretting till it have consumed him, unlesse it be removed by Repentauce, if it be never so small a scratch or itch, althe Physick in the world shall not cure it. For as the Love of God makes all other things in God comfortable unto us, so it is his anger which makes all his attributes terrible: as for his Power, the more he loves me, the more he is able to doe me good. But otherwise, the more he is angry and displeas'd, the more his other Attributes are terrible. If he be Wise, the more hee will finde out my sinnes; if hee be Powerfull and angry, the more he can revenge himselfe on me: is he Angry and Just; the more woe to me. So there is nothing in God when he is angry, but it is so much the more terrible, for this puts a sting in every thing: which when it is remooved out of malignant creatures armed with a sting, then they are no more hurtfull. The sting of every evill and crosse, is Gods anger and wrath: this being remooved, nothing hurts, all crosses then are gentle, milde, tractable and medicinall; when God hath once said, *For mine anger is turned away from him.* After that's gone, whatsoever remaineth is good for us, when we feele no anger in it. What is that which blowes the coles of Hell, and makes Hell, Hell, but the anger of God seazing upon the conscience, this kindles *Tophet*, and sets it a

Isa. 30. 33.

SER. VI.

fire like a river of Brimstone. Therefore this is a wondrous sweet comfort and encouragement when he saith, *For mine anger is turned away from him.* Whence in the next place we may observe,

Observ.

That God will turne away his anger upon Repentance.

When there is this course taken (formerly mentioned) to turne unto the Lord and to sue for pardon: to vow Reformation, *Asbur shall not save us,* and a through reformation of the particular sinne; and when there is wrought in the heart faith to rely on Gods mercy, as the *Father of the Fatherlesse,* in whom *they finde mercy:* then Gods anger is turned away. *God upon Repentance will turne away his anger.* The point is cleere, wee see when the Lord hath threatned many grievous judgements and plagues for sinne, one upon the neck of another, denounced with all variety of expressions in the most terrible manner: yet after all that thundering, *Deut. 28. & 29.* It followes, *And it shall come to passe when all these things are come upon thee; the Blessings; and the Curses which I have set before thee: and thou shalt call them to minde among all the nations whether the Lord thy God hath driven thee: and shalt returne unto the Lord thy God, &c. That then the Lord thy God will turne thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, &c.* After Repentance, you see the promise comes presently after: not that the one is the meritorious cause of the other; but there

Deut. 30. 1, 2, 3

there is an order of things, God will have the one come with the other: where there is not sence of sin and humiliation, and thence prayer to God for pardon, with reformation and trusting in his Mercy; there the anger of God abides still. But where these are, *His anger is turned away.* God hath established his order, that the one of these must still follow the other.

Another excellent place to the fore-named, we have in the Chronicles. *If my people that are called by my Name, shall humble themselves and pray: (as they did here in this Chapter, Take words unto your selves) and seeke my face, and turne from their wicked wayes: As they did here, Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses, &c. We will no more rely on the barren false helps of forraine strength, what then? I will heare from Heaven, and will forgive their sinne, and will heale their land.* Here is the promise, whereof this text is a prooffe, so in all the Prophets there is a multiplication of the like instances and promises; which we will not stand upon now, as not being controversiall. It is Gods name so to doe, as we may see in that well knowne place of *Exodus. Iehovah, Iehovah, God, Mercifull and Gracious, Long suffering, and abundant in goodnesse and Truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and sinne, &c.* And so it is said, At what time so ever a sinner repents himselfe of his sinnes from the bottome of his heart, I will put all his sinnes out of my remembrance,

2 Chr. 7. 14.

Exod. 34. 6, 7.

SER. VI.

aith the Lord God. The Scripture is plentiful in nothing more, especially, it is the burthen of *Eze. 18*, and *33*. forgiveness of sins and removal of wrath upon repentance.

And for *Example*: see one for all the rest, let the greater include the lesser. *Manasseh* was a greater sinner then any of us all can be, because he was inabled with a greater authority to doe mischief, all which no private man, nor ordinary great man is capeable of, not having the like power, which he exercised to the full in all manner of cruelty, joynd with other grosse and deadly sins, and yet the Scripture shewes, that upon his humiliation and praying, he found mercy: God turned away his anger.

That of the *Prodigall*, is a parable also fitted for this purpose; who had no sooner a Resolution to returne to his Father. *Filius timet convictum*, &c. The sonne feares chiding; the father provides a banquet. So God doth transcend our thoughts in that kinde: we can no sooner humble our selves to pray to him heartily, resolving to amend our wayes and come to him, but he layes his anger aside to entertaine tearmes of love and friendship with us. As wee see in *David*, who was a good man, though he slubbered over the matter of Repentance, all which while Gods hand was so hea-
vie upon him, that *his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer, hee roaring all the day long*. But when once hee dealt throughly in the businesse, and resolved, *I will confesse my trans.*

2 Chro. 33. 12.
13.

Luk. 15.

Psal. 32. 3. 4.

transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sinne. Let our humiliation be reall and through, with prayer for pardon, and purpose to reforme, and presently God will shew mercy.

The Reason is cleere, *Because it is his nature so to doe*: his nature is more inclined to mercy then anger: For him to be angrie, it is still upon supposition of our sinnes. But to be mercifull and gracious, it alwayes proceedes from his owne bowels, whether wee be sinners or not; without all supposition God is still mercifull unto whom he will shew mercy. *Who is a God like unto thee* (saith the Prophet) *that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage, he retaineth not his anger for ever; because he delighteth in mercy.* Things naturally come easily, without paine, as beames from the Sunne, water from the Spring, and as heate from fire: all which come easily, because they are naturall. So mercy and love from God, come easily and willingly: it is his nature to be gracious and mercifull. Though we be sinners, If we take this course here (as the Church doth) to pray and be humbled; then it will follow, *Mine anger is turned away from him.* The Use is,

First, to oblerve Gods Truth in the performance of his gracious prouises, who as he makes gracious promises to us, so he makes them good. His Promise is, if we confesse our sinnes hee will forgive them and be mercifull: so here

Reason.

Micah. 7. 18.

Use.

Pro. 28. 13.

SER. VI.

Prov. 30. 5.

Psal. 9. 10.

Pro. 18. 10.

he sayes, *mine anger is turned away*. As they confesse, so he is mercifull to forgive them. It is good to observe the experiments of Gods truth. Every word of God is a shield, that is, we may take it as a shield. It is an experimentall truth whereby we may arme our soules. This is an experimentall truth, that when we are humbled for our sins, God he will be mercifull unto our sins, and allay his anger; as it is in this text. Therefore it is said, *Those that know thy name will trust in thee, for thou never failest those who put their trust in thee*. Let us then open our hearts unto God, and confesse our sinnes unto him, and if we resolve amendment, we shall finde the truth of his gracious promises, hee will turne aside his anger, and will never faile us if wee put our trust in him. *The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous flye to it and are safe*. This name of mercy, grace, and favour, is a strong tower to distressed consciences; let us therefore remember to fly unto it when our consciences are awaked and distressed with sinne, and sence of Gods displeasure. Seeing these kinds of promises are as a citie of refuge, let us runne unto them, and we shall not be puld from the hornes of this altar, as *Ioab* once was from his: but shall at all times find grace and mercy to help us at the time of need: it is a comfortable Point. *Mine anger is turned away from him*.

Quest.

But it may be said, How is Gods anger turned away from his children, when they feele it oftentimes after in the course of their lives.

The Answer is, that there is a double Anger of God, whereby we must judge of things, for either it is

- 1. *Vindicative*, or } Anger.
- 2. *Fatherly*----- }

God after our first conversion, he remooveth his *Vindicative anger*; after which though sometimes he threaten and frowne upon us, yet it is with a *Fatherly anger*: which God also removes with the shame and correction attending it, when wee reforme and amend our wicked wayes. There is

- 1. *A Child of Anger.*
- 2. *A Child under Anger.*

Gods Children are never children of wrath and anger, after their first conversion; but sometimes children under wrath, if they make bold with sinne, so as they cannot use their right of sonship, to go boldly to the throne of grace; because then, (though they have the right of sons) they conceive of God, as angry with them; and cannot use it so long as they live in any sinne against conscience, and so continue, untill they reforme and humble themselves (as the Church doth here) after which they can and doe rejoyce againe, claime their right, and are not either children of wrath, or under wrath. *David* after he had sinned that foule sinne, was a child under wrath, not a child of wrath. So if we make bold to sinne, we are children under wrath: for oft-times God begins correction at his owne house, if there be any disorder there.

You

How anger felt may yet be said to be removed.

SER. VI.

1 Pet. 4. 17.
 Num. 20. 12.
 2 Sam. 24. 1.
 1 Cor. 11. 30.

You know God was so angry with *Moses*, that he was not suffered to enter into the land of *Canaan*. And *David* when he had numbred the people, God was angry with him, and with the *Corinthians* also, for unreverent receiving of the Lords-supper. But here is a course prescribed to remove his fatherly anger, and to enjoy the beames of his countenance, and Sun-shine of his favour in Christ: if we humble our selves, confesse our sinnes, and fly unto him as the Church here doth: then we shall finde this made good: *For mine anger is turned away from him.* But it may be asked,

Quest.

In times of affliction how may we know Gods anger to be removed; when yet we endure the affliction?

Answe.

The Answer is, that God is infinitely wise, and in one affliction hath many ends, as

1. When he afflicts them, it is to correct them for their sinnes: after which when they have puld out the sting of sinne by confession and humiliation, if afflictions continue, his anger doth not continue.

2. Affliction sometimes is for an exercise of Patience and Faith, and tryall of their graces; and for the exemplarie manifestation to others of Gods Goodnesse to them.

But even then they may know that things come not in anger unto them, by this, that after Repentance God speaks peace unto their conscience; so that, though the grievance continue, it is with much joy in the Holy Ghost, and peace of

*How to know
 afflictions are
 not in wrath
 though they
 continue.*

of conscience, in which case, the soule knowes that it is for other ends that God continues it. Therefore the first thing in any affliction is to remoove away the coare and sting thereof by humbling our selves, as the Church here doth. After which our consciences will be at peace for other things. God hath many ends in correcting us: he will humble us, improve our afflictions to the good of others; and will gaine himselfe honour by our afflictions, sufferings and crosses. When God hath shed abroad his love in our hearts by his Spirit, then we can rejoyce in tribulation, and rejoyce under hope, though the afflictions continue, because the sting is gone, anger is remooved.

Rom. 5. 5.

For mine anger is turned away from him.

The last Point we observe from hence, and gather from all these generall truths is this,

Where there is not humiliation for sinne, and hearty prayer to God, with reformation of our wayes, flying unto God for mercy (who is mercifull to the Fatherlesse) there Gods wrath continues.

Obser^v.

For as where they are performed, his anger is turned away: so must it needs follow; that where they are not performed, his anger continueth. Therefore, let us examine our selves; The Spirit of God here speakes of *healing back slidings*, and of *turning away iniquity*; let us looke well to our selves, and to the present state of things, that our diseases be soundly cured, our personall diseases, and then let us be sensible of the diseases of the land, and pray for them; for there

SER. VI.

1 Cor. 5. 2.

there are universall diseases and finnes of a kingdom as well as personall. And we are guilty of the finnes of the times, as farre as we are not humbled for them. *Paul* tels those who did not punish the incestuous person, *Why are yee not humbled rather for this deed?* Where there is a publike disease, there is a publike anger hanging over upon that disease, the cure whereof is here prescribed: to be humbled as for our selves so for others. Therefore let us beware of sinne, if we would shun wrath, especially of Idolatry, or els we shall be sure to smart for it, as *Ephraim* did, of whom the Spirit of God saith: *When Ephraim spake trembling; he exalted himselfe in Israel: but when he offended in Baal he dyed.* *Ephraim* had got such authority, what with his former victories, and by the signes of Gods favour among them, that when he spake, *there was trembling*, and he *exalted himselfe in Israel*. But when he *offended once in Baal*, that is, when he became an Idolater, *he dyed*. It is meant of the *ciwill death* especially; that he lost his former credit and reputation. We see then the dangerous effects of sinne, especially of Idolatry, wherefore let us fortifie our selves against it: and blesse God that we live under such a gracious, just, and milde King, and good governement, where there are such lawes against this great sin especially; and beseech God long to continue his life and prosperity for our good amongst us. For Use then.

Use.

Remember when we are to deale with God,
that

that he is the great moover of all things, who if he be angry, can overturne all things, and crosse us in all things: and can also heale us of all our diseases. But what must we doe if we would be healed? Wee must take the course prescribed here. *Take unto us words, humble our selves, and have no confidence in Ashur, munitiō, people; or in the worke of our hands: but trust in God, so shall we be happy and blessed. Whatsoever our enemies be; yet if we can make God our rock, fortresse and shield, then it is no matter who be our enemies. If hee be on our side, who can be against us?* Let us all (Ministers and all) reforme our selves, and stand in the gap, after the course here prescribed: and goe to God in a right manner, so we may dissipate all the clouds of anger which may seeme to hang over our heads, and finde God experimentally making this promise good to us, which he made then to his people: *I will heale their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.*

Therefore let us doe as *Iacob* did with *Eſau*, when he came incensed with mighty displeasure against his brother. *Iacob* comes before him humbly, prostrates himselfe before him, and so turnes away his anger. So when God is angry with us, and comes against us, let us humble our selves before him, to appease him: as *Abigail* quieted *David* by humbling her selfe before him, when he had a purpose to destroy her family. So let us come before God in humility

Rom. 8 31.

A certaine way
to shun anger.

Gen 23 3, 4.

1 Sam. 25 23

SER. VI.

Num. 16, 48.

Rev. 8. 4.

mility of soule, and God will turne away his anger. As when there was a great plague begun in the armie, *Aaron* stood with his *cenſer* betwixt the living and the dead, offering incense and making attonement for them, wherby the plague was stayed. So in any wrath felt or feared, for our selves, or the state we live in: let every one hold his censure, and offer the incense of prayer; *Take with you words.* God is wondrously mooved to pittie, by the incense of these sweet odours offered up by Christ unto the Father, beleve it, it is the onely safe course to begin in Heaven, such a beginning will have a blessed ending, other courses, politique and subordinate helps must also be taken, but all is to no purpose unlesse we begin in Heaven: because all things under God are ruled and mooved by him; who when hee is favourable, makes all the creatures pliable unto us; but especially makes this good; *I will heale their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from them.*

* *
**The end of the sixth Sermon.*

THE



THE SEVENTH SERMON.

Hos, 14. 5.

*I will be as the Dew unto Israel: he shall grow
as the Lillie, and cast forth his Roote as
Lebanon:*

*His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be
as the Olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.*

THE Church (as we heard) had beene humbled, and therefore is comforted: it is usuall in the Scriptures, especially in the Prophetical parts thereof, after terrible threatnings to come with sweet promises: because God in all ages hath a Church. Therefore God in this Chapter takes

Joel. 2. 27, 18
Hos. 3. 14, 15
Isa. 1. 18, 19.
Deut. 3. 1.
Ier. 3. 12.
Ier. 30. 1.

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takes this course, he makes gracious promises to this people, grounded upon the former part of the Chapter, wherein God had dictated unto them a forme of Prayer, Repentance and Reformation. *Take with you words and turne to the Lord, say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.* &c. Whereupon a Reformation is promised, *Assur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon horses,* &c. Which was a reformation of that nationall sinne which they were guilty of, *false Confidence.* Now (as we have heard) God answers them to every particular. He makes a gracious promise, *that he will heale their backsliding,* according to their prayer, *Take away all iniquity,* and to that, *Receive us graciously,* he answers, *I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.*

Now it cannot bee but that God should regard the desires of his owne Spirit, when both the words and Spirit proceed from him, therefore he goes on more fully to answer their desire of *doing good to them*: saying,

I will be as the Dew to Israell, &c.

In which words the holy Prophet doth first by a *Metaphor* and borrowed speech set downe the ground of all happinesse. So that there is here given a more full satisfaction to the desires of the Church.

1. *The cause of all, (I will be as the Dew) &c.*
2. *The particular Persons to whom: (to Israell.)*
3. *The fruit of this followes: (he shall grow as the Lillie, and cast forth his roote as Lebanon)*

Now

Now the words read are a fuller satisfaction to the desires of Gods people, which were stirred up by his owne Spirit. *I will be as the Dew unto Israel*, where,

1. You have set downe, *The cause of all*, which followes: *God by his gracious Spirit will be as the Dew unto Israel.*

2. And then upon that, the prosperous successe this *Dew* of Gods Spirit hath in them, *They shall grow as the Lillie.*

I but the *Lilly* growes, but hath no stability: every thing that growes is not well rooted. Therefore, hee adds in the second place, *They shall cast out their rootes as Lebanon*, that is, with growth they shall have stability: not only grow in height speedily, but also grow fast in the roote with firmenesse.

And likewise, as every thing that growes in roote and firmenesse doth not spread it selfe, he sayes he shall not only grow upward, and take roote downe-wards, *But his branches shall spread*; whereby he shall be more fruitfull and comfortable to others.

O! but every thing that growes, is rooted and spreads, is not for all that fruitfull: therefore he saith, they shall be as the *Olive tree*, *his beauty shall be as the Olive tree for fruitfullnesse.*

Yet, though the *Olive* be fruitfull, it hath no pleasant smell, nor good taste, therefore he adds another blessing to that: they shall in regard of their pleasantnesse to God and man, that

Object. 1.

Object. 2.

Object. 3.

Object. 4.

SER. VII.

shall delight in them, be *as the smell of Lebanon*. Which was a wondrous pleasant delightfull place, which yeelded a pleasant savour round about. So we see what a compleate kinde of growth this is : wherein blessing upon blessing is promised, the Holy Ghost cannot enough satisfie himselfe in variety of comfortable expressions. Nothing is left unsatisfied that the heart can propound. He will make them *grow*, be *stedfast, fruitfull, delightfull, and pleasant*. So that we have here to consider :

1. *The favour and blessing that he promiseth, to be as the dew to Israel.*
2. *The excellency of it, in divers particulars.*
3. *The order wherein it is promised.*

Before we come to the words themselves, if we remember and read over the former part of the Prophecie, we shall find it full of terrible curses; all opposite unto that heere promised, to shew,

Observ.

We can never be in so disconsolate a state, but God can alter all.

That God hath a salve for all sores.

He hath a right hand as well as a left; *Blessings* as well as *Curses* : *Mercy* as well as *Justice*, which is more proper to his nature then that. Therefore, let Christian soules never be discouraged with their condition and state whatsoever it is.

Reason.
Eccles. 7. 14.

For, as there are many maladies, so there are many remedies opposite to them; as *Salomon* saith, *This is set over against that, &c.* If there be a thousand kinds of ils, there are many thousand kinds

kindes of remedies. For, God is larger in his helpes, then we can be in our diseases and distresses, whatsoever they are: Therefore it is good to make this Use of it. To be so conceited of God as may draw us nearer unto him upon all occasions.

Againe, We see here; how large the Spirit of God is in expressions of the particulars: *I will be as the Dew unto Israel, and he shall grow as the Lilly: and cast forth his rootes as Lebanon: his branches shall spread, and his beauty be large,* &c. Whereunto tends all this largeness of expression? God doth it in mercy unto us, who especially need it, being in a distressed, disconsolate estate. Therefore they are not words wastfully spent; we may marvell sometimes in *Isaiab*, and so in some other Prophets, to see the same things in substance so often repeated, though with variety of lively expressions, as it is (for the most part) the manner of every Prophet. Surely, because it is usefull and profitable, the people of God need it. There is nor never was any man in a drouping sinking condition, but hee desires line upon line, word upon word, promise upon promise, expression upon expression.

One would thinke, is not a word of God sufficient?

Yes, for him, but not for us; we have doubting and drouping hearts, and therefore God adds Sacraments and Seales, not onely one Sacrament, but two; And in the Sacrament, not onely Bread, but Wine also: to shew that

SER. VII.

Zach. I. 19, 20
21.

Vse.

I.

Object.
Answ.

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Christ is all in all. What large expressions are here thinks a prophane heart, what needs this. As if God knew us not better then we know our selves. Whensoever thou art touched in conscience with the sence of thy sinnes, and knowest how great, how powerfull, how Holy a God thou hast to deale with, who can indure no impure thing, thou wilt never find fault with his large expressions in his Word and Sacraments; and with the variety of his promises, when hee translates out of the booke of nature into his own booke, all expressions of excellent things to spread forth his mercy and love. Is this needlesse? No, we need all, he that made us, redeemed us, preserves us, knowes us better then we our selves, he who is infinite in wisdom and love, takes this course.

And marke againe in the next place, how the Holy Ghost fetcheth here this comfort from things that are most excellent in their kinde. *They shall grow as the Lillie*, that growes fairely and speedily: *And they shall take roote as Lebanon*; to shew that a Christian should be the excellentest in his kinde, he compares him in his right temper and state, to the most excellent things in nature. To the *Sunne*, to *Lions*, *Trees of Lebanon*, *Cedars*, and *Olive Trees* for fruitfullnesse: and all to shew, that a Christian should not be an ordinary man. All the excellencies of nature are little enough to set out the excellency of a Christian; he must be an extraordinary singular man. Saith Christ, *What singular thing*

thing do yee? He must not be a common man. Therefore, when God would raise his people, hee tels them, they should not bee common men, but grow as *Lillies*, be rooted as *Trees*, fruitfull as *Olives*, and pleasant beautifull, as the goodly sweet-smelling trees of *Libanus*. How graciously doth God condescend unto us, to teach us by outward things, how to helpe our soules by our senses; that when we see the growth, fruitfullnesse, and sweetnesse of other things we should call to mind what we should be, and what God hath promised we shall be, if we take this course and order formerly prescribed. Indeed a wise Christian indowed with the Spirit of God, extracts a quintessence out of every thing, especially from those that God singles out to teach him his duty by, when he looks upon any plant, fruite, or tree that is pleasant, delightfull and fruitfull, it should put him in mind of his duty.

I will be as the dew to Israel, &c.

These sweet promises in their order follow immediately upon this, that God would freely love them, and cease to be angry with them: then he adds the fruits of his love to their soules, and the effects of those fruits in many particulars, whence first of all we observe,

Gods love is a fruitfull love.

Wheresoever he loves, he makes the things lovely: We see things lovely, and then we love them: but God so loves us, that in loving us he makes us lovely. So saith God by the Prophet.

observ.

SER. VII.

Ezek 16. 3, 3.
Jsa 57. 18.

Isa 61. 10.

I have seene his wayes and will heale him: I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners. And from this experience of the fruitfullnesse of Gods love, the Church is brought in rejoycing. I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord; my soule shall be joyfull in my God: for he hath cloathed me with the garments of salvation; hee hath covered me with the robe of righteousness: as a bridegroom decketh himselfe with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth her selfe with her jewels. Thus he makes us such as may be aimeable objects of his love, that he may delight in.

Reason

For his love is the love, as of a gracious so of a powerfull God, that can alter all things to us, and us to all things; he can bring us good out of every thing, and doe us good at all times, according to the Churches Prayer: *Doe good unto us.*

Use.

Wherefore seeing God can doe us good, and since his love is not onely a pardoning love, to take away his anger; but also so compleat and fruitfull a love, so full of spirituall favours: *I will be as the dew unto Israel: and he shall grow up as the Lilly, &c.* Let us stand more upon Gods love then we have formerly done, and strive to have our hearts inflamed with love towards God againe. As the Prophet David doth: *I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voyce and my supplications.* It may be for outward condition, that even where God loves they may goe backwards so and so: but for their best part their soules, God will be as the dew

Psa. 116. 1.

dew to them; and they shall grow as Lebanon. God will be good to them in the best things. And a Christian when he begins to know what the best things are concerning a better life: he then learneth to value spirituall blessings and favours above all other whatsoever. Therefore God suits his promises to the desires of his children; that he would water their dry soules, that he would be as the dew unto them. Gods love is a fruitfull love, and fruitfull in the best things. As we know what David saith: *There be many who say, who will shew us any good, Lord lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladnesse in my heart, more then in the time that their corne, and their wine increased.* So God fits his gracious promise answerable to the desires of a gracious heart.

I will be as the Dew to Israel.

To come to the words in particular, for this is the ground of all that followes, *I will be as the dew unto Israel.*

How will God be as the Dew to Israel?

This is especially meant of and performed to the Church under the New Testament, especially next unto Christs time; when the Dew of grace fell in greatest abundance upon the Church. The Comfortable, Sanctifying, Fruitfull Grace of God is compared to Dew in many respects.

First, *The Dew doth come from above.* God sends it, it drops from above and cannot be

Psa. 4. 6, 7.

2.

The excellencies of Dew in divers particulars.

Quest.

Answ.

Why the Grace of God is compared to Dew.

1.

Beau'e it comes freely from God.

SER. VII.

commanded by the creature. So all other gifts, and especially this perfect gift, the Grace of God, comes from above, from the Father of lights: there is no principle of grace naturally within a man. It is as childish to thinke that grace comes from any principle within us, as to thinke that the dew which falls upon a stone is the sweat of the stone: As children thinke that the stone sweats, when it is the dew that's fallen upon it. Certainly our hearts in regard of themselves are barren and dry: wherefore Gods Grace, in regard of the Originall, is compared to *Dew*, which should teach us to go to God, as the Church doth here, and pray him to deale graciously with us, to do good to us, for this cause laying open our soules unto him, to shed his Grace into them.

Grace comes
insensibly and
invisibly.

Thirdly, *The Dew doth fall Insensibly and Invisibly*. So the grace of God, wee feele the comfort, sweetnesse and operation of it, but it falls insensibly without observation. Inferiour things heere feele the sweet and comfortable influence of the Heavens, but who sees the active influence upon them, which how it is derived from superiour bodies to the inferiour is not observable? As our Saviour speaks of the beginnings of grace and workings of it. *The winde bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whether it goeth: so is every one that is borne of the Spirit*. It workes we know not how: we feele the worke; but the manner of working is unknowne to us. Grace therefore is wrought undiscer-

John. 3. 1.

undiscernably. No man can see the conversion of another, nay, no man almost can discern his owne conversion at first; Therefore this Question should not much trouble you; shew us the first houre, the first time of your conversion and entrance into the state of grace. Grace (to many) *fals like the dew*, by little and little, drop and drop, line upon line, it fals sweetly and undiscernably upon them at the first. Therefore, it is hard to set downe the first time, seeing as our blessed Saviour speakes, grace at the first is wondrous little, likened to a graine of Mustard-seed. But though it be small at first; yet nothing is more glorious and beautiful afterwards, for from a small seed, it grows to over-spread and bee great, shooting out branches. And as the root of *Iesse* was a despised stock and in shew a dead root, yet thence Christ rose, a branch as high as Heaven. So the beginning of a Christian, is despised and little, like a dead stocke as it were, but they grow upward and upward still, till they come to Heaven it selfe. Thus we see there is nothing in the world more undiscernable in the beginning then the worke of grace, which must make us not over-curious to examine exactly the first beginnings thereof, because it is as the falling of the *Dew* or the *blowing of the winde*.

Again, as it fals undiscernably and invisibly, so *very sweetly and mildly*, not violating the nature or course of any thing, but rather helping and cherishing the same, or if it make any change

Mark. 4. 31, 32.

Pro. 4. 18.

Grace workes sweetly and mildly upon the soue.

SER. VII.

in any thing, it doth it mildly and gently. So usually (unlesse it be in some extraordinary case) God workes upon the soule by his grace mildly and sweetly: Grace works sweetly upon the soule, preserving its freedome, so as man when he begins to be good shall be freely good from inward principles wrought in him. His judgement shall like the course he takes, and be cleane opposite to others that are contrary, from an inward principle, as free now in altering his course as formerly he was in following the other. There is no violence but in regard of corruption. God works strongly and mildly; strongly for he changeth a stone into a fleshy heart, and yet sweetly, he breakes not any power of nature, but advanceth it: for grace doth not take away or imprison nature, but lift it up and set it at liberty: for it makes the will stronger and freer, the judgement sounder, the understanding cleerer, the affections more orderly, it makes all things better, so that no violence is offered to nature.

2.

Again, Grace is compared to *Dew*, In regard of the operations of *Dew*. For what effects hath *Dew* upon the earth? First, it cooles the ayre when it falls, and then with coolenesse it hath a fructifying vertue: for falling especially on tender hearbs and plants, it soakes into the root of them, and makes them fruitfull. So it is with the grace of Gods Spirit, it cooles the soule scorched with the sence of Gods Anger, as indeed all our soules will be (when we have to
deale

deale with God who is a *consuming fire*) till we take that course to looke upon him in Christ for the pardon of sinne: after which his Grace and the sense of it cooleth, asswageth and speakes peace to an uncomforable, disconsolare heart. This voice, *Sonne be of good comfort thy sins are forgiven thee*, O! this hath a cooling in it: and this also, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, O! how it cooled and cheered the good theefe, and comforted him. And so when God sayes unto the soule, *I am thy salvation*, O! when the soule feeles this, how is it cooled and refreshed?

And the soule is not onely cooled and refreshed, but, *It is also sweetned and made fruitfull with comfort to the soule*. If we were to see a man in the pangs of conscience, stung with fiery temptations, as with so many fiery serpens and poysoned darts, which drinke up the spirits, and presents God a consuming fire, and hell beneath full of insupportable torments set on by the insupportable wrath of God: then we should know what it were to have grace in this efficacious manner, cooling and refreshing the soul that hath these fiery darts stucke into it of violent strong temptations, which to the present sense, are the flashes and beginnings of Hell. O! It is an excellent thing to have the Grace of God in such a case to asswage and coole the maladies of a distressed soule, which for the present seemes to burn in a flame of wrath. As it cooles, so also it makes the heart fruitfull, our hearts of themselves being

I.

Grace like dew
is a cooler.

2.

Grace fruitifi-
eth as dew doth.

SER. VII.

Plal. 107. 33,
34.Iſa 44. 3.
Iſa 45. 8.

Philem. 16.

Mat. 3. 8.

6.

Grace is unre-
ſiſtable.

Iob 38. 37:

being as the barren wildernes and wild deſert. Now God by his grace turnes the wildernes into water ſprings, as it appeareth in many places of the Prophets. Saith God: *For I will powre water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground, I will powre my Spirit upon thy ſeed, &c.* So Grace it turnes the barren wilderneſſe, the heart dry of it ſelfe, and makes it fruitfull. We know what *Paul* ſaid of *Onesimus*, a fruitleſſe ſervant, nay a fugitive theefe; he is unfruitfull no longer (ſaith he) now that he is become a convert, another, a new man, now he will do good ſervice. A man is no ſooner altered by the dew of grace, but howſoever formerly hee were a naughty hurtfull perſon, of whom every man was affraid, becauſe of his wickedneſſe, yet now he is a fruitfull perſon, and ſtrives to bring forth fruits worthy of amendment of life.

And we may add one more in the next place, *in regard of the unreſiſtableneſſe thereof*; for as nothing can hinder the dew from falling from the ſweet influence of Heaven unto us, or hinder the working of thoſe ſuperiour bodies upon the inferiour, or hinder the wind from blowing: ſo, who can hinder Gods Grace? they may out of malice hinder the meanes of it, and hinder the gracious working of the Spirit, by diſcouragements in others: which is a ſigne of a devilish ſpirit, when yet God hath a hand in that too after a ſort. For it raineth in one city and not in another by Gods appointment, but nothing can

can hinder where God will have the dew and water and shine of the influence of grace worke, nothing in the world can stop it. So it is said in that excellent Prophecie of Christ, and his Kingdome. *He shall come downe like raine upon the mowen grasse: as showers that water the Earth, which as they coole and fructifie, so come they unresistibly.*

Psal. 72. 6.

Let none therefore be discouraged with the deadnesse, drinesse, and barrennesse of their owne hearts: but let them know that God doth graciously promise (if they will take the course formerly set downe) to be, *as the dew unto them.* Therefore let them come unto the Ordinances of God with wondrous hope, confidence and faith that he will be *as dew* unto them, that seeing he hath appointed variety of Ordinances; the Word and Sacraments, he will blesse those meanes of his owne ordaining and appointing, for his owne ends. He that hath graciously appointed such meanes of grace, will he not blesse them? especially having promised; *I will be as the dew unto Israel.* Therefore let us attend upon the Ordinances, and not keepe away though our hearts be barren, drie and unfruitfull: God is above the heart, and able to turne the wilde-nesse into a fruitfull place: he can make the heart a fit habitation for himselfe to dwell in. Let us by faith attend upon the Ordinances, if we find not comfort in one Ordinance, let us go unto another, and another, comfort and helpe shall come, especially, if with the Church, we

Vse.

Against discouragement in regard of our barrennes in goodnesse.

Cant. 3. 4.

goe

The Returning Backslider.

3.
The order of
Gods promise.

go a little further. For the promise is, *I will be as the dew unto Israel.*

But marke the order wherein hee makes this promise; First, he gives grace to pray to him. *Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously,* doe good to us. Then hee gives a spirit of reformation, promising amendment, whereupon this followeth, *that he will forgive their sinnes, love them freely, &c.* And bee, *as the dew unto Israel.* He will be as the dew unto Israel, but he will give them grace first to be humbled, confesse sinne and pray to God for grace and forgivenesse. There is an order of working in the soule: God giveth Justification before Sanctification, and before he freeth from the guilt of sinne, he gives grace to confesse sinne. *If we confesse our sinnes he is faithfull and just to forgive us our sinnes, and to cleanse us from them,* saith S. Iohn. Where these goe before, grace will follow: and where they doe not, there will be no Sanctification. Therefore let us consider the order, for wheresoever God *takes away iniquity* and heales their soules in regard of the guilt of their sinnes: unto those he will be as dew. Therefore if we have still barren soules, without desires or strength to goodnesse; certainly our sinnes are still upon the file, for Justification is never without holinesse of life: *Whosoever is in Christ, he is a new creature.* When this is done, God will be *as the dew*: because he doth pardon our sinnes for this cause, that hee may thereby fit us to be entertained in the covenant, and are

I Ioh. 1. 9.

2 Cor. 5 17.

we fit to bee in covenant with him untill our natures be altered? Therefore whensoever he enters into covenant with any, hee changeth their natures, that they may bee friends, and have communion with him. Then the same soule which cryeth, *take away all iniquity*: desireth also the *Dew of grace* to make it better; this order is not onely necessary on Gods part, but in regard of the soule also. For was there ever any soule from the beginning of the world that truly desired forgiveness of sinnes, which did not also therewith desire grace? such a soule were but an hypocriticall soule. For if it bee rightly touched with sorrow, it desires as well ability to subdue sinne, as forgiveness of sinne: Holinesse and Righteousnesse with forgiveness.

Luk. 1. 75.

vs 1.

Therefore least wee deceive our selves, let this be an use of tryall from the order, that if we finde not grace wrought in our natures to restraine sinne, and alter our former lewd courses, our sinnes are not yet forgiven. For, wheresoever God takes away sinne, and *loves freely*: there also he gives the best fruits of his love, bestowes the *dew* of his grace to worke upon and alter our natures. Christ came not by *blood* alone to die for us, but by *water* also to sanctifie us. He will not onely *love freely*; but he will be *as the dew* where he loves freely: therefore if we have not sanctifying grace, wee have not as yet pardoning grace. For, we know the Prophet joynes them both together: *Blessed is*

Psal 52. 1, 2.

the

SER. VII.

the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. If we retaine a guilefull false spirit, our sins are not forgiven, we see both these are put together.

Vse 2.

And seeing all these good things come from God, it is necessary to take notice of what hath beene said of Gods goodnesse, that we doe not rob God of his due glory, nor our selves of the due comfort that we may draw thence. The *Egyptians* had the river *Nylus* that overflowed the land every yeere, caused by anniversary winds, which so blew into the mouth of the river, that it could not discharge it selfe into the sea: whereupon it overflowed the bankes, and left a fruitfull slime upon the ground, so that they needed not raine as other Countries, because it was watered with *Nylus*. Hereupon they did not depend upon Gods blessing, nor were so holy as they should: but were proud of their river, as is intimated by *Moses* unto the people. *But the land whether thou goest in to possesse it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence yee came out, where thou sowest thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbes: But the land whether yee goe to possesse it, is a land of hills and vallies, and drinketh water of the raine of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for, &c.* They having more immediately raine from Heaven, saw Gods hand in watering it, whereas the *Egyptians* did not. And what makes a *Papist* to be so unthankfull? He thinkes he can with his owne industry water his owne ground with

some-

Deut. II, 10,
11.

somewhat in himselfe. What makes another man thankfull on the other side? Because he knoweth hee hath all things by dependance from the first cause: for as in nature, *In God we live, move and have our being*: much more in grace; we have all our nourishment, spirituall being, mooving and life from the *dew* of Heaven: all our heat is from the *Sonne of Righteousnesse*, which makes a Christian life, to be nothing else but a gracious dependance. *I can doe all things* (saith Saint Paul) big and great words. O! but it is, *through Christ that strengthens me*. These things must not be forgotten, for a child of the Church, is a child of grace, by grace he is what he is, he hath all from Heaven. Suitable to the former place is that in *Ezekiel*. *And the land of Ægypt shall be desolate and waste, and they shall know that I am the Lord, because hee hath said, the river is mine, and I have made it*. He shall be desolate, because he boasts and brags of his river, and depends not upon God for the sweet showers of the former and the latter raine: they boasted because it was a fat fruitfull countrie, which the *Romans* called their granary. But we must looke for all from Heaven; God by his Spirit will be as the dew.

You know in Paradise there were foure rivers that watred the garden of God, that sweet place, and made it fruitfull; but the heads of all these rivers were out of Paradiſe. So it is with the Church of God, *There is a River, the streames whereof makes glad the Citie of God* (as the Psal-

Act. 17. 28.

Mal. 4. 2i

Phil. 4. 13.

Ezc. 29. 9.

*That the head
thence all blis-
sings come in
Heaven.*

Psal. 46. 4.

SER. VII.

mist speake) many pretious comfortable graces (the particulars whereof follow) but where is the head-spring of that river? it is in Heaven. We have all from God, through Christ the *Mediator*: So though we have of the *Water* and *Dew*, yet notwithstanding the head and spring of all is from without the Church, in *Heaven*, in *Christ*, in the *Mediator*. And therefore in all the excellent things we enjoy in the Church, let us looke to the Originall first cause; Christ by his Spirit, *He is as the Dew* to his *Church*.

Vse 3.

Quest.

Answ.

How to have
grace to sanctifie
our natures.

This affords likewise an *Vse of Direction*, How to come to have grace to sanctifie and alter our natures? Doe as the Church doth heere, desire it of God. Lord teach me to see and know my finnes: Lord, *Take away all iniquity, and receive me graciously*: Heale my soule for I have sinned against thee. O love mee freely, Turne away thy angry face from my finnes, and be as the dew unto my barren soule; my dead soule, O quicken it, make good thy promise, come swiftly, come speedily, come unresistably, *like raine upon the mowen grasse*; as showers, to water with the dew of grace, and fructifie my drie parched soule. Thus we should be earnest with God for grace for our selves, and for the Churches abroad, for our Church and State at home. Therefore let such an use be made of it generally, as God and not other forraigne helps may especially bee trusted in: for it is the onely way to destruction, to let God

alone,

Psal. 72. 6.

alone, and to trust to this body, and that body, for in this case (many times) God makes those we thus trust in our destruction, as the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians* were the ruine of the ten Tribes. But begin alwayes first in Heaven, let that great wheele a working, and he will make all things comfortable, especially for our soules: then we shall not only find him to make good this promise, *I will be as the Dew unto Israell*: but the residue which follow after.

He shall grow as the Lillie, &c

Those unto whom God is *Dew*, a double blessing, he will make them grow, and so grow as they shall grow up as the *Lillie*: Thistles and nettles, and ill weeds grow apace also, but not as *Lillies*; but Gods children are *Lillies*, and then they grow as *Lillies*.

How doe Christians grow like *Lillies*?

First, for beauty and glory. There is such a kind of glory and beauty in that plant, that it is said by our Saviour, That *Salomon in all his royalty was not arrayed like one of these*, because his was a borrowed glory from the creature, but the *Lillie* hath a native beauty of its owne.

Againe, the *Lillie* hath a sweet and fragrant smell, so have Christians, a sweetnesse and shining exprest in their conversation; as we have it a little after: *His smell shall be as Lebanon, &c.*

And then againe, in regard of purity and whitenesse: So Christians are pure and unspotted in their conversation, and their aime is purity and unspottednesse: whitenesse betokens

Quest.

Ans.

Christians grow like *Lillies*.

I.

In regard of beauty and glory.

Mat. 5. 29.

2.

In regard of sweet fragrant smell.

3.

In regard of purity.

SER. VII.

an unstained conversation. So the people and children of God, they are *Lillies*, beautifull and glorious in the eyes of God, and of all those who have spirituall eyes, to discerne what spirituall excellency is: howsoever in regard of the world their life be hidden. Their excellency is veiled with infirmities, afflictions and disgraces by the malignant Church: yet in Gods esteeme, and in the esteeme of his children they are *Lillies*; all the dirt in the world cast upon a pearle, cannot alter the nature of it: So, though the world goe about to besmeere these *Lillies* with false imputations, yet they are *Lillies* still, and have a glory upon them; for they have a better spirit and nature then the world hath. And they are sweeter in their conversation then the world; for when they have begun to be Christians, they sweeten their speeches and discourses. There is no Christian who is not of a sweet conversation, so faire as grace hath altered him, he is beautifull, lovely and sweet, and hath the whiteneffe of sincerity.

4.

In regard of
suddaine
growth.

Now as Gods children are *Lillies*, and then grow as *Lillies* for sweetnesse, glory and beauty: so they are like *Lillies* especially, in regard of suddaine growth. When God gives a blessing, there is a strange growth on a suddaine, as it is observed of this plant, that it growes very much in a night; So Gods children, when his blessing is upon them, they thrive marvellously in a short space. To make this cleere, when the dew of grace fell in our Saviours time upon
the

The first Spring
of the Gospell
was speedie in
growth.

the Christian world, what a world of Lillies grew suddenly. Threethousand in one day, at one Sermon, converted by *Peter*: The Kingdome of Heaven suffered violence in *Iohn Baptists* time, that is, the people thronged after the meanes of grace, and offered a holy violence to the things of God. So when this dew of grace fell, it was prophecied of it, *The youth of thy wombe* (saith he) *shall be as the morning dew*. The Dew comes out of the wombe of the morning, for the morning begets it. *Thy youth shall be as the dew of the morning*; that is, they shall come in great abundance, as we see it fell out in the first spring of the Gospell. In the space of forty yeares by the preaching of the Apostles, what a deale of good was done through a great part of the world: How did the Gospell then breake out like lightning by meanes of that blessed Apostle *Paul*, who himselfe carried it through a great part of the world.

Psal. 110.3.

And now in the second spring of the Gospell, when *Luther* began to preach: in the period of a few yeares, how many Countries were converted and turned to the Gospell? *England, Scotland, Swethland, Denmarke, the Palatinate, a great part of France, Bohemia* and of the *Netherlands*. How many Lillies grew up here on a suddaine? Sudden growths are suspected, and well they may be, but when God will blesse, in a short space a great deale of worke shall be done. For God is not tied to length of time. Hee makes water to be wine

The second
spring of the
Gospell was
also speedie.

Water every
yeere turned
into wine.

SER. VII.

very yeare in tract of time, for he turnes the water of Heaven into the juyce of the grape, so there is water turned into wine, that done in tract of time, which he can doe in a shorter time, as he did in the Gospell, *John 2. 1, &c.* Where is the difference? that he did that miraculously in a short time, which he usually effects in continuance of time. So now many times he doth great matters in a short time, that his power may be knowne and seene the more: as wee see now in these warres of *Germany*, how quickly God hath turned his hand to helpe his Church, and hisse for a despised forgotten nation to trample down the insulting, affliction, menacing power of the proud enemy: and hee can doe so still if our sins hinder him not. Surely if we stand still and behold the salvation of the Lord, we shall see great matters effected in a little time. *They shall grow as the Lillie*, the accomplishment of this promise is not wholly yet come, for there be blessed times approaching, wherein when the *Iewes* are converted, *They shall grow as the Lillie*, in those glorious times there spoken of, at the conversion of the *Iewes*, and *fulnesse of the gentiles* comming in: the accomplishment whereof we expect, to the rejoycing of our hearts; that they should at length prove indeed with us the true children of *Abraham*.

Rom. 11,

Use.

Therefore, we should make this *Use* of all labour that the *Dew* of God, may prove the *Dew* of Grace, that God would make us *Lillies*: If we would be beautifull and glorious, have

a lustre upon us, and be as much beyond others as pearles are beyond common stones, and as *Lillies* are better then *Thornes* and *Briers*, let us labour to have the Grace of God, so to be accounted *Lillies*, whatsoever the world accounts of us.

Againe, if the worke be wrought upon us, though the imputations of the world be otherwise, let us comfort our selves: God accounts me a *Lillie*: set this against the base esteeme of the world, considering how God judgeth, and those who are led by his Spirit, who judge better of us. And in all association, combination, and linking in acquaintance, labour to joyne with those that are *Lillies*, who cast a good and a sweet savour. For we shall gaine by their acquaintance, whom *Salomon* affirmeth to be better, and more excellent then their brethren. What are other people then? they are but *Thornes*; therefore let not those which are *Lillies* have too much, or neere acquaintance with *Thornes*, lest they prick us, and (as our blessed Saviour saith) turning againe all to berent us. It is said of our Blessed Saviour in the *Canonicles*. *He feedeth among the Lillies*. And indeed where is there any true delight to be had under Heaven, but in their company who are gracious. What can a man receive from prophane spirits, in regard of comfort of soule? nothing, they are as the barren wildernesse that can yeeld nothing, their hearts are empty, therefore their tongues are worth nothing. But let our delight

2.

PRO. 12. 26.

MAT. 7. 6.

SER. VII.

Psal. 101. 6.

Necessity of
growth in di-
vers respects.

be with *David* toward the most excellent of the land, and then we shall not onely grow as the *Lillie*, but (as it followeth) we shall cast forth our rootes as *Lebanon*.

And cast forth his rootes as Lebanon.

Because we have spoken of growth, and shall have occasion to touch it hereafter, we will not be large in the Point. God here promiseth a growth not onely to the Church, but to every particular Christian: and it is very necessary it should be so; for without growth, neither can we give God his due honour, nor he receive the smell of a sweet Sacrifice from us, as is fit. Nor can we without it with-stand our enemies, or beare our crosses that God may call us too. Againe, without growth and strength we cannot performe those great duties that God requires at our hands of Thankfulnessse: nor doe things so cheerefully and sweetly as may be comfortable to us. In summe, without growth we can doe nothing acceptably, either to God or his people: the more Grace, the more acceptance, Which is spoken, that we may value the Promises, this especially, that we shall grow up in Grace and Knowledge, as the *Lillie*, and cast forth our rootes as *Lebanon*.

But how shall we come to grow?

Goe to God that we may continually have from him the sanctifying dew of his grace: goe first for pardon of sinne, then for a heart to reforme our wayes, to enter in a new covenant for the time to come, that wee will not trust in

Asbur,

Answe.

I.

We must goe to
God claiming
the promises in
a right order.

Ashur, but will renounce our particular personall sinnes, after which we shall find sanctifying grace, so as the *dew* of Gods Spirit will make us grow: therefore, take this order to improve the promises. Goe to God for his love in Christ, for the pardoning of sinne, and accepting of us in him, that we may find a sence of his love in accepting of our persons, in the pardoning of our sinne, which is the ground of love: for then this sence of his love will kindle our love towards him againe, feeling that we are in the state of grace. Then goe to God for his promise in this order: Lord, thou hast promised that thou wilt be as the *dew*, and that we shall grow as *Lillies*: make good thy promise then, that I may finde the effectuall power of it transforming my soule into the blessed Image of thy deare Sonne.

And know, that we must use all the meanes of growth together with the promise: for in the things of this life, if a man were assured that the next yeare would be a very plentifull yeare; would men therefore because they were thus forewarned, hang up their plowes, and not prepare their ground, no, but they would the rather be encouraged to take paines, because they know that howsoever God be pleased to vouchsafe plenty, yet he will doe it in the use of meanes, observing and depending on his Providence. So when he hath made gracious promises of the *Dew* of his Grace, and of growth as *Lillies*, &c. This implyeth a subordinate

2.

We must use
all meanes of
growth.

SER. VII.

Gen. 17. 8.

ordinate serving of his gracious Providence, therefore it is a way to stirre us up unto the use of all meanes rather, and not to take us off from them. Even as God when hee told the Israelites: *I will give you the land of Canaan*, did onely promise it, leaving the remainder to their conquest in the use of meanes. Should this have made them cast away their swords? No, but it was that they might fight, and fight the more couragiously. So when God hath promised growth in Grace, should this make us carelesse? O no, it should make us more diligent and carefull, and comforts us in the use of meanes, knowing that our labour shall not be in vaine in the Lord. Now Lord I know I shall not loose my labour in hearing, in receiving of the Sacrament, in the communion of Saints, and use of sanctified meanes; for thou hast made a gracious promise, that *I shall grow as the Lillie*, and that thou wilt be *as the dew unto mee*; therefore make thy good worke begun, effectually unto my poore soule, that it may flourish and be refreshed as a watered garden. But there are severall sorts of growth formerly touched, either

1. *A growing upward, or*
2. *A growing in the roote, or*
3. *A Spreading and growing in the Fruit, and Sweetnesse.*

Therefore Christians must not alwayes looke to have their growth in one and the same place, but must wisely consider of Gods prudent dealing

dealing with his children in this kind, as will be further seene hereafter in the particulars.

He shall cast forth his rootes as Lebanon.

That is, He shall cast and spread, and so put forth his rootes as *Lebanon*: he shall grow upward and downward; in regard of firmenesse he shall be more rooted. In what proportion Trees grow upwards, in that proportion they take roote downward: because otherwise, they may be top heavy and overturne, a blast of winde taking advantage of their talnesse and weakenesse to roote them out the sooner: therefore proportionable to their spreading above, there must be a rooting in the ground. As the Prophet speakes to *Hezekiah* of Gods people, *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Iudah, shall yet againe take roote downward and beare fruit upward.* There must be firmenesse in the roote, as well as growth in the branches, for which cause, God here promiseth to the Church and every Christian, stability and fixednesse, that as hee groweth upward like the *Lillie*, so he should grow downward, firme and strong.

2 King. 19. 30.

Now whence comes this rootednesse and firme stability of Gods Children?

Quest.

Especially from this, that they are now in the Covenant of grace, rooted in Christ who is God-man, in whom they are firmly rooted. In *Adam* wee had a roote of our owne, but now our roote is in Christ. All grace is first powred into Christs blessed Nature, and then

Ans.

The cause of
the Saints stability.

Joh. 1. 16.

SER. VII.

Rom. 11. 18.

Lev. 18. 5.

Rom. 10. 9.

at a second hand, *out of his fullnesse we all receive grace for grace.* Being rooted in Christ we become firme, for there is in him an everlasting marriage and union. *The Roote beareth us, wee beare not the roote :* Christ beareth us, wee beare not him. So now in the covenant of grace, all the firmenesse is out of us. Even as salvation it selfe was wrought out of us by a Mediatour; so it is kept by a Mediatour out of us: all goodnesse, grace and favour of God to us is not in us but in Christ, but it is so out of us as Christ and we are one. But now we onely speake of the cause of our firmenesse and stability, that because we are in the state of grace, we have an everlasting firmenesse as we are in Christ Jesus. God now making a second covenant, he will not have it disanulled as the first was, for his second workes are better then his first. His first Covenant was, *Doe this and live,* but his second is, *Beleeve this and live :* So as howsoever our state in grace be but little, yet it is of a blessed, growing, spreading, firme nature, so sure, as what is begun in grace, will end in glory, where God gives the first fruits, he will give tenths, yea the full harvest and all. Because by the covenant of grace, we are one with Christ, who is an everlasting Head that never dyes. Sub-servant to this now wee have promised in the covenant of grace, That we shall never depart from him, and that he will never depart from us to doe us good, he puts an awband into our hearts, that we shall never

never depart from him: but this Point being often touched, leaving it, we will come to answer some objections.

It may seeme that these things are not so, Gods Children doe not alwayes grow and spread themselves: but they are often overturned and fall.

This is nothing, they are mooved, but not removed: they are as Mount Zion which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever: which though it may be shaken with earthquakes, yet it is not removed thereby. The gates of Hell, and sorrowes of death may set fore upon them, but not prevaile against them, they may fall, but not fall away, they may be as a wether-beaten tree, but not as a tree puld up by the rootes: therefore they are compared here to a tree whose roote stands fast still. This much the Church after a fore tryall and endurance of much affliction confesseth. *All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee: neither have we dealt falsly in thy covenant: our heart is not turned backe, neither have our steps declin'd from thy way, though thou hast broken us in the place of Dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, &c.*

And againe, though they fall; yet they learne to stand fast by their falls, are gainers by their losses, and become stronger by their weaknesses: as tall Cedars, the more they are shaken by the winds, the more deeply they take rooting: So Christians, the more stormes and blasts

Object. I.

Ansiv.

I.

Psal. 135. 1.

Mat. 16. 18.

Psal. 44. 17, 18
19.

SER. VII.

blasts they have, the more they are fastly rooted: that which we think to be the overthrow of Gods children, doth but roote them deeper. As *Peter* after his fall tooke deeper rooting, and *David*, &c. so after all outward stormes and declinings, here is the fruit of all; they take deeper rooting, whilst their finnes are purged away by their fiery afflictions.

Ica. 30.

Object. 2.

But why then are they not more comfortable in their lives, in feeling and seeing of Gods wise ordering of things?

Answ. I.

Eccle. 3. 11.

First, because though God worke strongly and surely in them, yet he doth it for the most part slowly (as the Wiseman speakes) *all his workes being beautifull in time*: therefore they apprehend not their comforts as they ought, and so goe mourning the longer; the time of knitting divine experiences together not being yet come.

2.

Exod. 6. 9.

Heb. 12. 11.

Secondly, because the anguish of the crosse (if it bee quicke and sharpe) many times takes away the apprehensions of Gods excellent ends in the same: as the children of Israell could not hearken unto *Moses* for anguish and vexation of spirit: *No affliction* (saith the Apostle) *for the present is joyous*, though afterwards it brings forth the quiet fruit of Righteousnesse.

3.

Then againe *Satans malice*, who casts in floods of temptations, is great: so that the soule cannot enjoy that sweet tranquillity and peace it otherwise might, casting in doubts and numbers of what-ifs into the soule: so that
for

for a time, he causes a strong diversion in them, whence after that, there followeth peace againe, when those temptations are seene and overcome.

It is long also of our selves, who are not armed for crosses and afflictions, untill we are suddenly surprized by them; and then leaving our watchfullnesse, and forgetting our consolation, we are struck downe for the present by them, and cannot support our selves against them.

And lastly, *It comes also from Gods wise ordering and disposing Providence,* who will not do all at once: our comforts must come by degrees, now a litile and then a little: our experience, and so our comforts come together, after we have honoured God in dependance upon his will and pleasure; and yet this hinders not, but a Christian growes still though hee be for the present insensible of it: as a man is alive and growes whilst he sleepe, though he be not sensible of it. Other objections have beene formerly touched.

He shall cast forth his rootes as Lebanon.

We see then that the state of Gods children is a firme and a stable condition, whence we may observe the difference betwixt Gods people and others. Gods people are rooted and spread their roote. But the other have rottennesse in their roote, being cursed without any foundation. For take a man who is not a good Christian, where is his foundation? onely in the things of this world. Now all heere is vanity,
and

4.

5.

The difference of the godly and wicked, the one having a foundation, the other none.

SER. VII.

Psal. 61. 9.

Psal. 129. 6.

Heb 12. 28.

That a Christian is firme and stable, because his roote is in Heaven.

and we our selves by trusting vanity become vaine; *Every man in his best estate, is altogether vanity*; vanity in himselfe, and trusts in vanity. What stableness can there be in vanity? Can a man *stare non stante*? stand in a thing that stands not in it selfe? Will a picture continue that is drawne upon the Ice? will it not faile and melt away when the Ice upon which it is drawne thawes? So all these who have not the dew of Gods grace, they are as a picture upon the water, have no foundation, and stand upon that which cannot stand it selfe. Therefore the Scripture compareth them to the worst of grasse, which hath no good roote, grasse upon the house top, which hath no blessing of those that come by, but there stands perking up above others. So it is with men that have no grace, they can perke up above others: but as they have no stable roote, nor the blessing of Gods people, stability with the Spirit of God inwardly, and the prayers of Gods people to water and blesse them: so they perish and wither quickly. Nay whole nations (if wicked) have no foundation. What is become of the great Monarchies of the world? The *Assyrian, Persian, Grecian* and *Romane* Monarchies? and for *Cities* themselves, they have died like men, and had their periods. Onely a Christian hath a Kingdome, a stable condition which cannot be shaken: he takes his roote strongly, and growes stronger and stronger till he growes to Heaven, nay indeed while he lives hee is rooted in Heaven before his time, for though

though we be in Earth we are rooted in Heaven. Christ our roote is in Heaven, and his Faith which is wrought from Heaven, carrieth us to Christ in Heaven, and love that grace of union following the union of Faith, carrieth us to Christ also: even before our time, we are there in Faith, Love and Ioy. Therefore a poore Christian is firme and stable even in this life, having union with Christ, though he creepe upon the earth and seeme a despised person, yet his roote is in Heaven, where he hath union with Christ; *His life is hid with God in Christ:* who *when he shall appeare,* hee shall appeare with him likewise in glory. Therefore, if Christ be firme, the estate of a Christian must needs be firme: For he is a Cedar, another man is as grasse or corne upon the house top, *All flesh is grasse,* saith the Prophet. *Object.* I but they have wit and memory, and parts, &c. yet they are but as the flower of the grasse, perhaps better then ordinary grasse, but the grasse withereth, and the flower fadeth: what continueth then? *O the word of the Lord,* and comfort and grace by that word, *endures for ever,* and makes us endure for ever. This is excellently set downe by the Prophet *David,* we see there the righteous man is compared to a tree planted by the water side, his leafe failes not. So a Christian is planted in Christ, he is still on the growing hand, and his leafe shall not wither, *Those who are planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God, They shall still bring*

Colos. 3. 3, 4.

Isa 40. 6.

Psal. 1. 3.

Psal 92. 13.

SER. VII.

Use. I.

A comfort from
the firmnesse of
our condition.

fruit in their old age, they shall be fat and flourishing, they shall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon.

This cleare difference, should stirre us up to be comforted in our condition, which is firme and stable. Why doe we value christall above glasse? Because it is brighter, and of more continuance. Why doe we value continuing things, inheritances above annuities? Because they continue. If by the strength of our discourse we value things answerable to their lasting; why should we not value the best things? our estate in grace, this is a lasting condition, for a Christian is like a Cedar, that is rooted, and takes deeper and deeper root, and never leaves growing till he grow to Heaven: *He shall cast forth his rootes as Lebanon.*

Use 2.

Againe, let all them make Use of it, that find not the worke of grace upon their hearts: O! let them consider what a fading condition they are in, they thinke they can doe great matters, perhaps they have a destructive power, they labour to doe mischief, to crush whom they will in this world. But what is all this, we see what the Psalmist saith of a *Doeg*, a cursed man, who had a destroying power. *Why boastest thou thy selfe in mischief O mighty man? the goodnesse of God endureth continually.* Why boastest thou thy selfe that thou canst doe mischief and overturne Gods people? &c. Know this that the good will of God continues. Boast not thy selfe, thy tongue devisest mischief, as a sharp razor, God shall destroy thee forever.

Psal. 52.1.

Hee

He shall cast thee away and pull thee out of thy dwelling, and root thee out of the Land of the living. Those men that rejoyce in a destructive power, in their ability to doe mischief, and exercising of that ability all they can, they shall be pluckt out of their place, and rooted out of the land of the living. And as it is in *Iob*, they shall be hurled away as a man hurles a stone out of a sling, Then what shall the righteous say? they shall see and feare, and say: *Loethis is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himselfe in wickednesse.* He thought to roote himselfe so fast that he should never bee remooved, but at the last it shall come to passe, that all that see him shall say: loe, see, what is become of him? this is the man, that trusted in his riches and made not God his strength, what is become of him? saith *David* of himself, *I am like a greene Olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* Let them trust if they will in Riches, Power, Strength, and Favour with *Saul* and great men, yet notwithstanding be *Doeg* what he will, *I shall be a green Olive planted in the house of God, &c.*

Iob 27. 21.

Psal. 52 7.

Psal. 52. 8.

So heere is a double use the Scripture makes of these things. 1. The godly man rejoyceth in his condition, and 2. Other men feare and grow wise not to trust to their fading condirion. They are (as the Prophet speakes) *as a bay tree* that flourishes for a time, and then after come to nothing. *their place is no where found.* They

Psal. 37. 35.

SER. VII.

Mat. 15. 13.

keepe a great deale of doe in the world for a time, but afterwards, where is such an one: their place is no where found, no where comfortably, they have a place in Hell, but comfortably a place no where. This is the estate of all those who have not a good roote, for faith Christ, *Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.* It is true of every condition and of every man, if God have not planted him in that excellent state, or doe not in time, he shall be rooted up: for the time will come that the Earth will hold him no longer, he rootes himselfe now in the earth, which then shall cast him out. He cannot stay here long, Heaven will not receive him, then Hell must. What a miserable thing is this, when wee place and bottome our selves upon things that will not last? when our selves shall out-last our foundation? when a man shall live for ever and that which he builds on is fading, what extremity of folly is this? to build on Riches, Favour, Greatnesse, Power, Inheritance, which either must bee taken from him, or hee from them, he knoweth not how soone.

What makes a man miserable, but the disappointing of his hopes, and crossing of his affections? Now when a man pitcheth his soule too much upon his worldly things, from which there must be a parting, this is as if it were the rending of the skinne from the flesh, and the flesh from the bones, when a mans soule is rent from that he pitcheth his happinesse on, this
maketh

maketh a man miserable: for misery is in disappointing the hopes and crossing the affections. Now onely a Christian plants his heart and affections on that which is everlasting, of equall continuance with his soule: As hee shall live for ever, so hee is rooted for ever in that which must make him everlastingly happy. These things wee heare, and they are undeniable true, but how few make use of them to desist from going on in a plodding swelling desire of an earthly condition to over-top other men: such labour to grow in taulenesse and height, but strive not to be rooted. Now that which grows perking up in height, over-topping other things, yet without root, what will become of it? It will be turned up by the Roots.

Now, How shall we grow to be rooted? For to attain hereunto, it is not onely necessary to apply the promises and challeng God with them, but to consider also what wayes hee will make them good.

First, Labour to know God and his free Grace in Jesus Christ: *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Iesus Christ*: they goe both together: the more we grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Grace of God in him, the more grace and rootednesse we shall have. For that which the soule doth cleerely apprehend, it fastens upon in that measure it apprehendeth it. Cleerenesse in the understanding breeds earnestnesse in the affections, and fastnesse too. So the more wee grow

How to be rooted in Grace.

*1. To know Gods free grace.
2 Pet. 3. 18.*

SER. VII.

in knowledge, the more wee roote our selves in that we know. And therefore the Apostle prayes for the *Ephesians*, that they might have the Spirit of Revelation, &c. That they might know the height, breadth, depth and length of Gods love, that passeth knowledge, *Ephes. 3.14.* *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Iesus Christ, of whom the whole family of Heaven and Earth is named: that he would grant you according to the riches of his Glory, to be strengthened by his Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, in the sense of Gods love to us, and so of our love to him againe (for we are not rooted in love to God, till wee be rooted in the sense of Gods love to us) that you may be able to comprehend with all Saints, the height and breadth, &c.*

2.

Labour to know
the Promises.

2 Cor. 1.20.

And withall, labour to know the gracious Promises of Christ, for we are knit to him by virtue of his vword and Promises: which like himselfe are *Yea and Amen.* J E H O V A H yesterday, to day, and the same for ever. So all his Promises made in him, they are *Yea and Amen*, in themselves firme, and firme to us in him. They are *Yea and Amen*: that is, they are made and performed in Christ, in whom they are sure to be performed, and thereupon they are firme too. God made them, who is J E H O V A H, and they are made in Christ that is J E H O V A H. So God the Father J E H O V A H, he promiseth, and he makes them good in Christ J E H O V A H, who is unchangeable.

But

But this is not enough, wee must labour to have our hearts stablished, that they may rely firmly on that which is firme. For if a thing be never so firme, except we rely firmly on it, there is no stability or strength from it. Now vwhen there is strength in the thing, and strength in the soule, that strength is impregnable and unconquerable strength. In Christ they are Yea and Amen, in whom he stablisheth us, annoints us, seales us, and gives us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

How doth God stablish us upon the Promises? The rest which followeth is an explication of this; vwhen he gives us the earnest of the Spirit, and seales us to be his, in token he meanes to make good the bargaine, then we are established. But we are never firmly established, till we get the assurance of salvation. Then as the Promises are Yea and Amen in themselves, so we are stablished upon them, when wee are sealed and have the earnest of the Spirit. Let us labour therefore to grow in the knowledge of Gods love in Christ, to know the height, breadth, depth, and length of it, and to grow in all the gracious promises which are made in Christ, who is Amen himselfe, as his promises are, and then when wee are sealed and annointed by the Spirit, we shall be so stablished that nothing shall moove us. Therefore let us use all meanes for the establishing of growth in us, the Word and Sacraments especially. For as Baptisme admits us into the house

3.
*Our hearts
must be stablished on that
which is firme.*

*How God doth
stablish us.*

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of God, so by the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, the blessed food of the soule, we are strengthened. In the use of these meanes, let us make suit unto God to make good his gracious Promise unto us, that we shall grow as *Lillies*, and take root, as *the Cedars in Lebanon*.

Let us know that wee ought every day to labour to be more and more rooted: do we know what times may befall us? Wee have need to grow every day, to grow upward, and in breadth and in depth. If we considered vvhhat times vvee may liue to, it should force us to grow every way, especially in humility, that root and mother of graces, to grow downward in that, to grow in knowledge and faith untill we be filled with the fulnesse of God.

Object.

A poore Christian oft times makes this Objection, O, I doe not grow, therefore I feare my state, I am oft shaken, therefore this Promise is not fulfilled to me.

Answ.

To this I answer, Christians may bee deceived, for they do grow oft times in firmenesse, strength and stability, though they doe not spread out; they may grow in refinednesse, that that which comes from them may bee more pure, and lesse mixed with naturall corruption, Pride, Selfe-love and the like. This is a temptation that old men are subject too especially, in vvhom the heat of nature decays, who thinke withall that grace decays. But it is not so, for oft times when grace is carried vvith the heate of nature, it makes a greater shew

shew being helpt by nature. The demonstration, but not the truth of grace is thus helpt. Therefore this clause of the Promise is made good in old Christians, they are every day more and more rooted, firme, stable and judicious, and more able in those graces which belong to their place and condition. Therefore, they should not be discouraged, though they be not carried vvith the streame and tide of nature, help'd vvith that vigour that sometime vvas in them. They grow in judiciousnesse, mortifiednesse, in heavenly-mindednesse, and in ability to give good counsell to others. This is vvell, for we grow not in grace one vway, but divers vvayes; not onely when we grow in outward demonstration, and in many fruits and actions; but when we grow in refinednesse and judiciousnesse (as vvas said) then vve are said to grow likewise.

Yet notwithstanding, it should be the indeavour of all to grow vvhat they can in grace, vvhen if they grow not so fast as others, let them know that there are severall ages in Christ. A young Christian cannot be so planted and so deeply rooted as another that is of a greater standing. This should not discourage any, seeing there are babes in Christ, as well as strong men. Therefore where there is truth of heart, vvith indeavour to grow better and better, and to use all meanes, let no man bee discouraged. Remember alway this for a truth, that vve may grow, and we ought to grow, and the children of God ordinarily have growne
more

more and more, both in fruitfulness and steadfastness every way, but not with a like growth in measure or time. Therefore labour to make use of these promises, and not to favour our selves in an un-growing estate, for grace is of a growing nature. If it grow not in fruitfulness, yet it grows in the Roote; as a plant sometimes grows in fruitfulness, sometimes in the Roote. There is more vertue in Winter time in the Roote, then in the fruit which is gone. So a Christian groweth one way if not another: though not in outward demonstration, yet in Humiliation. God sometimes sees it necessary, that our branches should not spread for a while; but that we should grow in Humility, by some faults and sins we fall and slip into, that we may see our own weakness and looke up.

Let us labour therefore who have so long enjoyed such store of blessed means, under the dew of Gods grace and the influence of his Spirit, in the Paradiſe of God, his House and Church, having so long lived in this *Eden*, let us labour now to spread, and grow in fruitfulness, that so we may be filled with the fulness of God. It is the chiefe thing of all to be rooted and grow in grace. You see, God when he would single out a blessing, he tels them not that they shall grow rich, that they shall spread out and grow rich in the world. No, but you whom I love freely, take this as a fruit of it, *You shall grow as the Lilly*, you shall grow fruitfull *as the Olive*, &c. This is the comfort of a Christian

stian, though he growes downward oft in the world, and things of this naturall life, yet hee growes upward in another condition, as *Lillies* and *Cedars*, they grow downwards one vway, but they grow upwards another. Perhaps they may decay in their state and favour, and in their practise and cunning in this life: but a Christian, if he be in the use of right meanes, and put in sute the gracious Promises, he is sure still to grow in *Grace*, in *Faith* and *Love*, and in the inner man.

Is not this a comfort, that a Christian hath a comfortable meditation of the time to come in all his crosses? That it is for better and better still: that as in time he is neerer Heaven, so he shall be fitter and fitter, and neerer and neerer still with a disposition suitable to the place. That the time to come is the best time, and that he shall grow every way, in heighr, in bredth, in depth and length, and apprehension of Gods love: and that the more hee growes in knowledge of these things, the more he shall grow in all dimensions, being as sure of things to come, as of things past: And that neither things present nor to come, shall ever seperate him from the love of God in Christ. What a comfortable state is a Christian in, who is alwayes on the mending hand, that is such a childe of hope, when the hope of the wicked shall perish? Let us labour therefore, that we may be in such a case and state of soule, as that thoughts of the time to come may be comfortable: that when we thinke we must be transplanted hence out of
the

the Paradice and Eden of Gods Church, into a heavenly Paradice, that all our changes shall be for the better. What a fearfull thing is it to be in the state of nature? What foundation hath a man in that estate, who hath no roote here, and that roote he hath will faile him ere long? How fearefull is it for such a man to think of a change, when it is not a change for the better?

Here is wisdom, if we will be wise to purpose, let us be wise this way, labour in the first place, to prize Gods favours, and to know how to come by them in the use of all means. Look to God for the performance of these gracious promises: for they are not of what we shall doe in our selves; but what God will do in the Covenant of grace. And if a Christian should not bee rooted and grow stronger and stronger, we should not faile, but God and Christ should faile, who is our roote and beares us up. Therefore God hath taken upon him the performance of all these things; what remaineth from us, but a carefull using of all means; and in the use of all, a going out of our selves to God, that he would be *as the dew to us*, and cause us by the dew of his Spirit to grow more and more rooted in grace as long as wee live in this world; and then our rooting and stability lies upon God, not upon us: he fails if we faile; who hath undertaken, that *we shall grow as the Lilly, and cast forth our Rootes as Lebanon.*

The end of the seventh Sermon.



THE EIGHTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 6,7.

*His branches shall spread, his beauty shall be as
the Olive tree and his smell as Lebanon.*

*They that dwell under his shadow shall return,
they shall revive as the Corne, and grow as
the Vine, the sent therof shall be as the Vine
of Lebanon.*



WE have heard at large here-
tofore what petitions God
put into the heart and
mouth of his Church: as
also what gracious answer
GOD gives his owne
Petitions: Hee cannot de-
ny the prayers made by his owne Spirit.
And

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Ephes. 3. 19.

And as hee is goodnesse it selfe, so he shewes it in this, that hee goes beyond all that wee can desire, thinke or speake: his answer is more transcendent, as the Apostle speakes: *hee does exceeding abundantly above all that we aske or thinke, &c.* For whereas they in particular and in brieve say, *Doe good to us, and receive us graciously*: He tels them, *He will bee as the Dew unto them*: and from thence, being *Dew* to them, is their spreading and growing as a *Lilly*, and casting of their rootes as *Lebanon*: and *their branches shall spread, &c.* and all this to encourage us to come to so powerfull and large-hearted a God; who, as he is able to doe more then we desire of him, so he will also doe it. *He will be as the Dew unto us.* This is the generall of all, for all other fruitfulness comes from this: 1. *God will bee as the Dew,* and then 2. *They shall grow as the Lilly, and cast their Roots as the Cedars in Lebanon,* they shall not onely grow upward but downward, for the *Lillie* quickly spreads it selfe forth: but they shall be like the trees of *Lebanon* for stedfastnesse; and then spread in breadth, grow in all dimensions. Which is fulfilled of the Church in generall, and of every particular Christian when once he is in Christ, using sanctified means: they grow then in the root, and upright, and in every dimension: *His branches shall spread,* and then

His beauty shall be as the Olive tree.

Which though fruitfull and excellent, yet
because

because it hath no sweet smell, it is added :

His smell shall be as Lebanon.

These excellencies promised to the Church of God, are not all in one tree, but yet they are in some sort in every Christian, what agrees not all to one plant, agrees to the plants of Righteousnesse; they grow upwards and downwards, spread and are savoury and fruitfull: all agrees to a tree of Righteousnesse. We say of man he is a little world, a compendium of this great world, as indeed there is a comprising of all the excellencies of the world in man; for he hath a being with those creatures who have onely that, and therewith he hath growing, sense and reason, whereby he hath communion with God and those understanding Spirits the Angels: so that hee is as it were a summe of all the excellencies of the creatures, a little world indeed. The great world hath nothing, but the little world hath the same in some proportion. So it is in Grace, a Christian hath all excellencies in him that are in the world: There is not an excellency in any thing, but it is in an higher kinde in a Christian. He hath the beauty of the *Lillie*, and he growes up in spreading, smell and fruitfulness; his wisdom exceeds that of all the creatures: there is not an excellency in nature, but wee have some proportionable excellency in grace which is above it. God useth these outward things to helpe us, that we should doe both body and soule good by the creatures. Whatsoever doth

our bodies good, either by necessity or delight they help our souls: as plants and trees, not only refresh the outward man, and the senses, but also they teach our souls, as here the Holy Ghost teacheth them by outward things. First it is said,

His Branches shall spread.

When God enriches the soule with saving grace, one shall grow every way and flourish abundantly, extending forth their goodnesse on every side largely to the knowledge and open view of others, and then further,

His beauty shall be as the Olive tree.

What is the beauty of the Olive tree? to be usefull, fruitfull, and to bring forth good fruit. Indeed the glory of a tree is to be loaden with fruit, and usefull fruit, which is the best property of fruite to be usefull and delightfull. So the glory of a Christian, who is a plant of righteousness, of Gods own planting, is to abound in fruits of Righteousnesse. Indeed the Olive is a very fruitfull tree, and the oyle which comes and distils from it hath many excellent properties agreeing to graces.

Amongst the rest, it is a Royall kinde of liquor, that will be above the rest: so grace it commands all other things, it gives a sanctified use of the creature and subdues all corruption.

And then it is unmixed, it will mingle with nothing; light and darkenesse will not mingle, no more will grace and corruption, for the one is hostile to the other, as *Salomon* speaks, *The Iust is abomination to the wicked.*

I.
How the fruitfulness of the Olive is compared to divers graces.

2.

Further,

Further, It is sweet, strengthening and feeding the life: as in *Zacharie*, there is mention made of two Olives before the Lord, which feede the two candlesticks. And Olives of Grace, have alwayes fatnesse distilling from Christ to feed his lamp with oyle, Gods Church hath alwayes oyle: and those that are Olives, they keepe the Church by their particular calling.

Zach. 4 3.

1. *He shall be fruitfull as the Olive, and*
2. *Abundant in fruit as the Olive.*
3. *Constant in fruit, like the Olive.*

For it beares fruit much, and never failes, no not in winter: and hath a perpetuall greenesse. Indeed the child of God hath a perpetuall verdor: as it is, *Pfal. I. his lease never failes*: Because that which is the cause of flourishing never failes him. Which causes are two,

Pfal. I. 3.

1. *Moysture.*
2. *Heate.*

For we know *Moysture* and *Heate*, these two are the causes of all kindly growth. If a tree have more moysture then heate, then it is waterish; if it have more heate then moysture, then there is no bignesse in the fruit. So true it is, that *moysture* and *heate* are the causes of fruitfullnesse, in a good proportion. So Gods children, having the Sonne of Righteousnesse alwayes shining upon them, and being alwayes under the Dew of grace (the promise being, *to be as the Dew to Israel*) having all Dew to fall upon them for *moysture*: and having the Sonne of Righteousnesse to shine upon them to make

Causes of the perpetuall flourishing of the Saints.

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them fruitfull, their lease never failes, they never give over bringing forth fruit: because they have in them causes perpetuating fruitfulness, though not alike. Because Christ by his Spirit is a voluntary, and not a naturall cause of their fruitfulness. That is, he is such a cause as workes sometimes more and sometimes lesse, to shew that grace springs not from our selves, and to acquaint us with our own weaknes and insufficiency. Heaven is the perfection of all both Graces and Comforts. Wherefore *Peter* calls the state of Heaven, *an inheritance, immortall and undefiled, that fades not away*: Why is that an estate of grace and comfort more then this of this world? Because it is a never fading estate, there they are alway in one tenure, and because Christ shewes himself alway there, there is abundance of water to moysten them, and heat to cherish them. There is no intermingling or stopping in growth as is here; therefore it is an inheritance that fadeth not away, having the supply of a perpetuall cause of flourishing.

This in some degree is true of the Church on earth, it is the inheritance of God that fades not, and Christians therein are Olives that bring forth fruit constantly, having a perpetuall freshnesse and greenesse. So the Righteous man is compared to the *Cedars of Lebanon*, which bring forth much fruit in their age: he shall be fruitfull as the Olive, from all which this point formerly touched followeth.

That it is the excellency and glory of a Christian, to be fruitfull in his place.

I Pet. 1. 4.

Ipsal. 92. 12.

Observ.

Both.

Both to be fruitfull in his place as a Christian, and in his particular calling. To be fruitfull as a Magistrate, as a Minister, as a governour of a family, as a neighbour, as a friend, to be fruitfull in all. Because in Religion every neere relation is as it were a joyning together of the body of Christ one to another, by which some good is derived from one to another. God uses these relations as conduits to convey graces. A good Christian, the meanest of them is a good neighbour, and doth a great deal of good, being fruitfull as a neighbour, fruitfull as a friend, much more as a husband, as a Magistrate, as a Minister. These relations are a knitting to Christ, by which fatnesse and sap is derived from the head for the good of the whole body. Therefore a Christian in all relations is fruitfull. When he comesto be a Christian, he considers like good *Mordecai*, what good he may doe: as he told *Hester*, *What if thou be called to the kingdome for this purpose*: So a Christian will reason with himselfe, what if I be called to be a Magistrate or a Minister for this purpose? what if I be called to be a friend for such or such a purpose: to doe this or this good? indeed such are gracious Quæres made to a mans soule, to enquire for what purpose hath God raised me? to doe this or that. To be idle, or barren, or noysome, Or no, to be a plant of Gods planting: my glory shall be my fruitfullnesse in my place.

Hest. 4. 14.

Therefore let us every one consider with our selves, wherefore God hath set us in the Church

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in our particular standings. Wherein let us remember this, that howsoever God may endure barrenesse out of the Church in want of means, yet he will never indure it under meanes. It is better for a bramble to be in the Wildernesse then in an Orchard; for a weed to bee abroad, then in a garden where it is sure to bee weeded out, as the other to be cut downe. If a man will be unprofitable, let him bee unprofitable out of the Church: but to be so where he hath the dew of grace falling on him, in the meanes of salvation, where are all Gods sweet favours; to bee a bramble in the Orchard, to bee a weed in the Garden, to be noysome in a place where wee should be fruitfull, will God the great Husbandman indure this? Hee will not long put it up; but that he exerciseth his children with such noysome trees to trie them, as hee hath some service for these thornes to doe, to scratch them: so were it not for such like services for a time, he would weed them out and burne them, for whatsoever is not for fruit, is for the fire: *Yea, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewen downe and cast into the fire.*

Mat. 3. 10.

And the more to stirre us up hereunto, let us know that wheresoever the *dew* of grace falls, and where there is the meanes of salvation, that at that very time, there is an axe, an instrument of vengeance laid to the roote of the tree, which is not struck downe presently, but it is *laid to the roote*, that is, vengeance is threatned to

the tree, to that plant which hath the meanes, and brings not forth good fruit in time and season. What is the end thereof? to be hewen down and cast into the fier. As we see the Church of the *Iewes*, when Christ came, the *Messias*, the great Prophet of the Church, never was there more meanes of salvation: yet even then, what saith *Iohn Baptist*, *Now, even now, is the axe laid unto the roote of the tree*; and indeed in a few yeares after, the whole tree, the Church of the *Iewes* was cut downe. And *Rev 6.* we see, after the Rider on the *white Horse*, which is the preaching of the *Gospell*, there comes a *red bloodie Horse*, and a *pale Horse*: *Warre and Famine*. After the *white Horse*, his triumphant Chariot, the preaching of the *Gospell*: if this take not place, that it winne and gaine not: what followes after? the red and the pale Horse, *Warre, Famine, and Destruction*. It will not be alway with us as it is; for the *Gospell* having beene so long preached, we having beene so long planted in Gods *Paradise*, the Church: if we beare not fruit, *The axe is laid to the roote of the tree*: God will strike at the roote, and roote up all, therefore let every one in their place be fruitfull.

Every one that is fruitfull, God hath a speciall care of. If any tree were fruitfull, the *Israelites* in their conquest were to spare that, because it was usefull, and they might have use of it. So God will alwayes spare fruitfull trees, and have a speciall care of such in common calamities. Let us therefore be exhorted not on-

*The Benefit of
fruitfullnesse.
Deu. 20. 19, 20*

SER. VIII.

Titus 3.8.

Ioh. 15.2.

Pro. 30.30.

ly to bring forth fruit, but to bring forth fruit in abundance, to studie to excell in good works, the word in the Originall is, *A Standerd-bearer*: to stand before others in good workes. As it is in *Titus*, labour to be as *Standerd-bearers*, to goe before others in good works: strive to outgoe others in fruitfulness; for therein is the excellency. For those both in the sight of God and men are in most esteeme, who are most fruitfull in their callings and places. The more we excell in fruitfullnesse, the more we excell in comfort: and the more we excell this way, the more we may excell: for God will tend and prune good trees, that they may bring forth more and better fruit. And the more majesty we walke with, the more we dampe the enemies, seeing them all under our secte; a growing Christian never wants abundance of encouragements, for he sees such grounds of comfort, as that he walkes impregnable and invincible in all the discouragements of this world, breaking through all; as *Salomon* saith, it is a comely thing to see a Lyon walke: so much more it is to see a valiant, strong, well-grown Christian (who is bold as a Lyon) abound in good workes.

It is said, *His beauty shall bee as the Olive and his smell as Lebanon*; the Olive of it selfe hath no sweet smell, therefore it is made up by another resemblance.

His smell shall be as Lebanon.

Lebanon stood on the North side of *Iudea*, and was a place abounding with goodly trees, and

and all sweet plants whatsoever, which cast a wondrous sweet sent and smell a farre off: as some Countries abound so in sweet fruits and simples, as Oranges, Lemmans and the like, that the fragrancie of the smell is smelt of passengers as they saile along the Coast. So was this *Lebanon* a place full of rare fruits and fragrant flowers, which cast a sent a farre of. Now, hence the Holy Ghost fetcheth the comparison; *They shall smell as Lebanon*: that is, as those plants in *Lebanon* which cast a sweet and delightfull smell a farre off, whence wee will onely observe this,

That a Christian by his fruitfulness doth delight others.

He is sweet to God and man, as the *Olive* and the *Vine* speake of their fruitfullnes, *They delight God and man*. So a Christian, both alive and dead, hee is pleasing and delightfull to the spirits of others, to God, and all that have the Spirit of God. As for God himselfe, wee know that workes of mercy are as it were a sweet odour; he is delighted with good works, as with Sacrifice, smelling a sweet savour from them, and their prayers ascend as sweet incense before him. Every good work is pleasing and delightfull to God, who dwels in an humble heart, and broken spirit: The upright are his delight. We see likewise how Christ commends the graces of his Church, which whole booke is full of praises in this kinde one of another. The Church sets out the praises of Christ, and Christ the praises of

Observ.

Iud 9.9, 13.

Phil. 4.18.

Psal. 141.2.

Pro. 11.30.

SER. VIII.

Caut. 2. 14.

the Church. The Church is sweet, O let mee heare thy voice for it is sweet and lovely; The Churches voice is sweet, praying to God or praising him. So whatsoever comes from the Spirit of God, in the hearts of his children is sweet, God laies to heart the voice of his children.

And as it is true of God, so is it of Gods people, they are delighted with the savour of those things that come from other of Gods people. For they have graces in them, and therewith the Spirit of God which is as fire to set a worke all those graces in them. For it is the nature of fire where it incounters with sweet things, to kindle them and make them smell more fragrant and sweet. So a spirit of love makes all sweet and pleasing whatsoever in the children of God: it puts a gracefullnesse upon their words; making their reproofes, admonitions, comforts, and whatsoever comes from them, to have a delightfullnesse in them: because all is done in love, and comes from the Spirit of God, which carrieth a sweetnesse in it, to all those endowed with the same spirit.

Vse 1.

Let this be an encouragement to be in love with the state of Gods children, that so our workes and whatsoever comes from us as farre as it is spirituall, may bee acceptable unto God, and to the Church while we are living, nay when we are dead. The very workes of holy men when they are dead, are as a box of oyntment, as the oyntment of the Apothecary, as the wise-man sayes of *Iosiah*, whose very

name

name was like the oyntment of the Apothecarie. So the name of those who have stood out for good, and have beene good in their times, it carries a sweetnesse with it when they are gone. The Church of God riseth out of the ashes of the Martyrs, which hitherto smels sweet and puts life in those who come after: so precious are they both dead and alive.

And then, let it be an incouragement to be led by Gods Spirit, and planted in Gods house and to be fruitfull in our places, that so we may delight God and man, and when we are gone leave a good sent behind us. Good men, as it were with their good sent they leave behinde them, perfume the times, which are the better for them dead and alive. What a sweet favour hath *Paul* left behind him, by his writings to the Church, even to the end of the world? what fragrancie of delightfull sinels have the holy antient Fathers and Martyrs left behinde them? a good man should be like the box of oyntment spoken of in the Gospell; which when it was opened, the whole house was filled with the sweetnesse thereof, so a good man should labour to bee full of sweetnesse; willingnesse and abilities to doe good, all kindled by a spirit of love in him, that when he is opened, all should be pleasing and delightfull that cometh from him. Christ never opened his mouth, but good came from him, and the Heavens never opened in vaine: therefore in opening of our mouthes, we should labour to

Vse 2.

Mat. 26.

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fill the places where we are with a good favour. O how contrary is this to the condition of many, what comes from them? filthy speeches and oaths, nay that which should be their shame they glory in. We see it is the glory of a tree to be fruitfull, and to cast forth a good favour, like the trees of *Lebanon*. What vile spirits then are such menled withall, who delight to offend God and man by their impious speeches? who yet are so bold as to shew their faces, to outdare others that are better then themselves: such are contrary to all Gods senses. The Scripture condescends so farre to our capacitie, as to attribute senses unto God, of feeling, smelling and touching, &c. So God is said to looke upon his children with delight, and to heare their prayers. *Let me heare thy voice, &c.* And he tastes the fruit that comes from them. So on the contrary, all his senses are annoyed with wicked men and vile persons, who are abhominable to God, as the Scripture speakes. As a man that goes by a stinking dung-hill stops his nose and cannot endure the sent. So the blasphemous breath of gracelesse persons, it is abhominable to God, as it were, God cannot endure such an odious smell, and for his eyes he cannot endure iniquity, to looke upon the wicked, and for his eares, their prayers are abhominable, how abhominable then are their persons whence those prayers proceed? they have proud hearts hating God and man, wherefore praying out of necessity, not love to him, they are

Cant. 2. 14.

Heb. 1. 13.

are abominable. And so for *feeling*, your sacrifices are a burthen unto me, I cannot beare them; and the Prophet complaineth that God was burthened and loaded under their sins, as a cart pressed till it be ready to breake under the sheaves. All his senses are offended with wicked men. This hardned wretches thinke not off, that whilst God fills their bellies with good things, goe on in sincerity, but the time will come, when they shall know the truth of these things, what it is to lead an odious abominable life, contrary to God and all good men. Hence we see what we should be, that we may give a sweet sent: *His smell shall be as Lebanon.*

Wicked men know this very well, that the lives, speeches and courses of good men for the most part are fruitfull beyond theirs, therefore what they can, they labour to cast aspersions upon them that they may not smell so sweet, so crying downe those who are better then themselves, that they may be the lesse ill thought of: and setting a price upon all things in themselves and their companions. Take me a knot of cursed companions, and they are the onely stout, the onely wise and learned men, all learning it must live and die with them: and all other men, though incomparable beyond them in abilities, in grace, in fruitfullnesse to doe good, they are no body, and this policie the Divell teacheth them. But this will not serve the turne, for God both in life, and after death will raise up the esteeme of such
who

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PRO. 10. 7.

who have beene fruitfull, when *the memorie of the wicked shall rot*, and not be mentioned without a kind of loathing. Therefore let no man trust to this foolish policie, to cry downe all others that are better then themselves, thinking thereby themselves shall be better esteemed. This will not doe, for as all other things, so our good name is at Gods disposing. It is not in the world to take away the good name or acceptance of good people; for they shall have in spight of the world, a place in the hearts of Gods people, who are best able to judge. The next thing promised is,

They that dwell under his shadow shall returne.

The Holy Ghost it seemes cannot expresse in words and comparifons enough, the excellent condition of the Church and of the Children of God, when they are once brought into the state of Grace. The former words concerne the excellencie of the Children of God in themselves: and these the fruitfullnesse and goodnesse of them that are under them, who shall be brought into the families and places where they live. *They that dwell under his shadow, under the shadow of Israell, shall returne and revive as the corne: and grow as the Vine, &c.* For so it is most fitly meant of Israell. For formerly it is said, *I will be as the Dew unto Israell.* Originally it is meant of Christs shadow; but because whosoever dwells under the Churches shadow, dwells under Christs, therefore it is fitly applied

applied to Israell: *They that dwell under Israells shadow shall returne.* What returning? Returne to God by Repentance, this is supposed: for those that dwell in the Church of God, if they belong to God, by the helpe of good meanes they shall attaine to reformation and Repentance. But it is especially meant of that which followes upon it, *They shall returne*; that is, they shall revive, as a mans spirits after a swoound are said to returne, and things after a seeming decay and deadnesse are said to be quickned and returne againe. So all that dwell under the shadow of Israell, they shall returne to God by Repentance: *They shall returne*, having a greater vigor and livenessse, recovering that which they seem'd to have lost before.

They that dwell under his shadow shall Returne.

When God will blesse any people hee will blesse all that belong to them, and are under them, because they are blessed in blessing them, even as we are touched when our children are stricken: God strikes the father in the child, the husband in the wife, the master in the servant, because there is some relation and dependance betwixt them. As it is in ill, so it is in good, God blesseth the father in the child, the King in the subject, and the subject in the King, God blesseth one in another. And in blessing because God loves the Church, all the friends of the Church are the better for it. They prosper that love the Church, though they be

SER. VIII.

not members of it, all that blesse *Abraham* shall be blessed, though they be not actually good, yet if they wish him well, a blessing is promised. So when God blesseth a man to purpose, he blesseth all that belong to him, all that be under his shadow fare the better. The point to be handled is this,

Observ.

That the Church it selfe yeelds a shadow, being shadowed it selfe by Christ, who spreads his wing over it. Now what is the use of a shadow.

1. *It is for a retiring place to rest in.*
2. *It is for Defence against the extremitie of heate.*
3. *It is for Delight*, If the shades be good and wholesome.

For as Philosophers expresse the nature of trees, there be some trees which yeeld noysome shadowes, some trees have a heavie noxious dangerous shadow, because there comes a sent from the tree (as Naturalists observe) which annoyes the braines. But he speakes here of good trees. *Israell* is a tree that yeelds a shadow unto all, that is, all that are under *Israell* shall rest quietly, and not be annoyed with the heate of Gods wrath and the like, they shall be delighted, having a sweet refreshing under the Church.

God in Scripture is often said to be a shadow, and his people to be under *the shadow of his wings*. But God and the Church are all one in this, for they that are under the Churches shadow, are under Gods shadow, for the Church

Psal. 36. 7.

Church is Christs, and Christ Gods. Therefore to be under the Church, is to be under God, and to be in the Church, is to be under Gods protection. They both agree, as we see *Micah 5.7.* The Church is said to be *Dew*, because God be-dewes the Church, and the Church be-dewes others, and here the promise is, *I will be as the dew unto Israell,* Where the same name is attributed unto God. Christ is a *vine*, and the Church is a *vine*; Christ is a *Dew* and a shadow, so is the Church; because Christ communicates his excellencies to her, and she hers unto others. Therefore there can be no offence in applying this to the Church: which is the proper meaning of the place, for the Church is a shadow for rest and freedome from annoyance, unto all that come under her.

Ioh. 15. 1.

To cleere this a little: what solace and rest doe men finde under the shadow of the Church.

Quest.

There is a rest and a peace in the Church, for all things are at peace with the Church, even the very stones in the field, nothing can hurt the Children of the Church, *God will be and is a Sunne and shield unto them*; a shield to keepe off all ill, and a Sunne to conferre all good unto them. So his promise is to *Abraham*; *I will be thy Buckler and thine exceeding great reward* A *Buckler* to keepe ill from him, and an *exceeding great reward* for good. Therefore it is a sweet shadow to bee under the Church, where God is all in all to them, who makes all things worke for good unto them, even the greatest

Answe.

Ioh. 5. 23.

Psal 84. 11.

Gcu. 15. 1.

SER. VIII.

greatest evill. Now what a delightfull thing is it to have a resting place with them, which either suffer no ill, or God turnes all ill to their great good? where God is a *Sun* and a *shield*, a *Buckler*, and an *exceeding great reward*, as he is to his Church and Children?

Zach. 2. 5.

And then againe, God is about his Church, as a wall of fire to protect it, not only as a shadow to keepe of stormes, but as a wall of fire to keepe off and consume enemies. God in regard of protection of his Church, is a compassing unto them: as it is in *Iob*, saith Satan, *Hast thou not made a hedge about him and all that he hath?* There was a hedge about *Iob*, his wife, children and goods, which the Divell durst not enter, nor make a gap in, untill God gave him leave. Therefore, those that are under the shadow of the Church, they are safe, and may rest quietly.

Job. 1. 10.

But this is especially understood spiritually, the Church is a shadow, and her selfe under a shadow spiritually: that is, in regard of spirituall evils, from the worst enemies. For out of the Church, where is any fence for the greatest ill of all, *The wrath of God?* In the Church of God, there is set downe away of pacification, how the wrath of God is taken of and appeased in reconciliation, by the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ; whereby the beleeving soule attaineth peace and joy unspeakable and glorious, out of the Church there is no meanes at all to pacifie the greatest ill, therefore there is no true rest out of the Church, nothing but stings
and

and torments of conscience. and as there is a shelter against the wrath of God, which burnes to the bottome of Hell : so here is a remedie against death and damnation : for now death is made a friend to the Church, and the children of the Church, for the sting of it is taken away, so that it doth them more good then any thing in the world: ending all their misery and sinning, and opening a passage unto eternall happinesse. All other petty ills that attend upon death are nothing: there is a rest from all these whatsoever: for all afflictions have a sanctified use to Gods people for their good. There is therefore a rest and refreshing in the Church, for all those that come under it.

And as this is true of the Church in generall, so it is true of particular families that are little Churches, there is rest and happinesse in them: God blesteth all under the rooffe of a godly man, whosoever comes under that shadow comes for a blessing, or for further hardning; we see in the current of Scripture ordinarily, that when God converted any one man, he converted his whole family, *Salvation is this day come to thy house,* (saith Christ) to *Zaccheus*; when salvation came to his heart, it came to his house, all was the better for it. So the *Taylor*, when he beleevd, he and his whole house were baptised: when God blesteth the governour once, then it is supposed all the house comes under the covenant of grace. *Abraham* and his house were blessed. But this holds not

Luk. 19. 9.

Act. 16. 33.

SER. VIII.

Ier. 24. 3.

Heb. 6. 7, 8.

always, for there was a *Cham* in good *Noahs* family, still there will be Ravens and wilde beasts, among the raine beasts: there will be an *Ishmael* in *Abrahams* family, a *Doeg* in the Church of *Iuda*, a *Iudas* in *Christs* family, and a *Demas* among *Gods* people. That is, let the family be never so good, you shall have some by *Gods* judgement naught in the same. As it is said of *Ieremiabs* figs, the good figs were exceeding good, and the bad exceeding bad. There is none so good as those that are in a gracious family, and none so nought, as such who are nought there. Because they are cursed and under a curse, being bad under such gracious meanes: being like the ground which receives the raine and showers from Heaven, and yet is not the better for it, and so is accursed. If a man who is untoward were in a gracious family, it is supposed he would be better, but those who are naught where they should be good, under abundance of meanes, such are in danger to be sealed to eternall destruction. Such being bad, are very bad, who though they breake not out to dangerous enormities, because of the place; yet to have a barren untractable heart under abundance of meanes, is to be hardened to destruction, without a speciall mercie to make it worke afterwards. For some who have lived in gracious families, though for the present the seed fructified not; yet have afterwards found that seed fructifie after a long time, and have blessed God that ever they came under such

a shadow: therefore though such barrenesse be a dangerous signe, yet must we not suddenly either condemne our selves or others in this case. Because in the things of God in the Church, it is as in nature, the seed springs not as soone as it is sowed: so that grace at length which hath seem'd to lie dead, after many yeares may sprout out. *Monica* Saint *Austins* mother, was a gracious woman whilst he was an unto-ward young man, as appeareth by his owne confessions: yet his mother having prayed much for him, he was converted after her death, and became a glorious Father and instrument of the Churches good. It is ordinary amongst us, many when they have gone astray, reflect home upon themselves, consider under what meanes they have beene, calling to minde the gracious instructions they have had, and so by Gods assistance are new men. Therefore let none despaire, in regard of time or place; because God may have further aimes then we can reach too; but unlesse God give a speciall blessing after such watering, it is for the increase of condemnation, not to profit under such abounding meanes, but still to be like *Pharaohs* leane kine, full fed and leane still. For the Promise is: *Those that are under his shadow shall returne.*

Gen. 41.

There is here a fit occasion offered to spend much time in pressing care upon those that are Governours, that even out of love unto those that are under them, they would labour to bee gracious: because if they be gracious, God will

SER. VIII.

Gen. 34. 24.

2 King. 5. 3.

Quest.

Answ.

give them those that are in their family. The whole family was baptised when the Master was baptised, and when any man was called, the whole family came within the covenant. When *Shechem* and *Hamor* were circumcised, all the cittie was circumcised also. It is true especially of Governours, there is no man that hath grace for himselfe alone: God gives speciall graces to speciall persons to be a meanes to draw on many others. Whersoever grace is, it is of a spreading nature: it is said here of such, *their branches shall spread*: It is communicative, and of a piercing nature, a little whereof will worke strangely. As we know a little short speech of a poore maid to *Naaman* the *Assyrian* how it wrought, and was the occasion of his conversion. So a little favoury speech will often minister occasion of many heavenly thoughts: God so affits it with his Spirit, that it often doth a great deale of good.

But why are all in the family the better for the Governour that is good?

Because God gives them grace and wisdom to walke holy before them, and to shine as lights, expressing and shewing forth the vertues of God which they have felt: as we see *David* professeth, *Psal. 101.* to walke singularly and exactly in all things in the perfect way: that so he might please God and men, shining out before them in an holy glorious conversation in the midst of his family. And as by their *example*, so by their authority they use to bring all under them to outward obedience at the least,

least which bringeth a blessing to the family. Because when grace is once kindled in the Master, he will see all at least come to outward conformity. They cannot worke grace in them, but as the Prophet speakes, they may compell them to use the meanes; or else not to suffer a wicked and untoward person to dwell under their shadow. We know why God said that he would not conceale his secrets from *Abraham*, because he knew he would instruct and teach his family in the feare of God: so this may be said of every one that is an *Abraham*, a governour of a family; they labour to tell them all things that have done good to themselves, therefore they are the better for living under their shadow. Nay further, not only the Governour of the family, but if there be any graciously good in the family, they doe much good. *Labans* family was the better for *Jacob*: and *Potiphar*, he and the *Taylor* both, prospered the better for *Iosephs* sake; so *Naaman* that great Captaine, fared the better for his poore maid. It is a true position, God stablisheth grace in none who are gracious for themselves meereley, but for the good of others also that converse with them: whether it bee Governour or servants: no man liveth to himselfe, and for himselfe onely; but for the good of all within their reach.

For Use therefore, first this shall be for encouragement to all Governours of families to bee good, if not for themselves, yet in love to those that are theirs. It may be some have no care of

Gen. 18. 19.

Gen. 30. 27.

Gen. 39. 5, 23.

Vse. 1.

SER. VIII.

their owne soules, or good. But hast thou no care of thy children, of thy wife that lieth in thy bosome, or of thy servants? if thou hast not a heart of stone or marble, surely thou wouldest desire that for them, that thou dost not for thy selfe: thinke of this, at least thou wouldest have thy children good and prosper. Labour then if we would have all prosper who come under our roose, that our families may be little Churches of God, that all who come under our shadow may revive and returne. Therefore out of love to those that belong to us, let us labour to be good. Is it not a pittifull thing, that some who are Governours of others, they looke to them as to beasts, and use their service, as a man would use the service of his beast, they feed their bodies, and thinke they have no charge of their soules. Now this is one reason why all that come under the shadow of a good Governour are the better, because they take care for their instruction and best good, that they live in obedience to Gods Ordinances, and not like wilde creatures, ruffians, vagabonds, Cains and the like. What a strange thing is this to have a care of the body the worser part, and neglect the more excellent part, their soules?

Use 2.

Make we also this Use of Tryall, art thou a good and a gracious Governour indeed, then grace in thy heart is communicative, it will spread over thy family, thou wilt labour to make thy children and thy servants good, to
make

make all good that come under thy rooffe. Other things are not alwayes communicative, gold is a dead thing, and other goods thou mayest keepe by thee, which doe not spread. But if thou hast the best good, Faith and Love, with a gracious heart; this is like oyle, or like fire which will not bee held in, but out and shew themselves they will, and shine in their kinde. So grace is a spreading communicative thing: all that comes therefore under the shadow of a gracious family, are said to returne and be the better for it. Make this therefore an use of Tryall, whether thou be a gracious Governour or not, if thou canst say with *Ioshua*, when he called the people together, saith he, do what you will, I know what I will doe, *I and my house will serve the Lord*. If you will be Idolaters or so and so: *but I and my house will serve the Lord*; so certainly there is no man who in truth of heart feares the Lord, but he is able to say, *I and my house will serve the Lord*.

Iosh. 24. 15.

Lastly, for Terrour, let us behold the dangerous and cursed estate of those that dwell out of Christs shadow, the Church and good meanes, who lie open to the indignation of God and storme of his wrath. Who howsoever they may blesse themselves in a thing of naught: yet it is a fearefull thing to lie under a curse: and that soule must needs be barren, where the dew of grace falls not; for God usually derives spirituall and heavenly things by outward meanes. *They that dwell under his shadow shall returne.*

Vse 3.

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They shall returne to God, and by returning to him, returne as it were and revive. As when in a swoond, a mans spirits returne againe, he is said to revive. But the ground of *Returning* is, that they shall returne to God and come under his rooffe in the Church. But more immediately this is true, *they shall returne*, and shall quicken and revive in returning. Which we spake of in the beginning of the Chapter. Only this shall be added to that; that a wicked man out of judgement of the danger of his estate may make a stop: but turning is more then so: in this case a man turnes his face to God and Heaven-wards, to good things formerly neglected, on which he turned his back formerly. What is *turning*, but a change of posture, when the face is turned towards that the backe was to before? So it is in this spirituall turning to God: when heavenly things are in our face, when God and *Hierusalem*, the Church are in our eyes still, minding heavenly things and not earthly, then we are said to returne. And therefore these converts mentioned in *Jeremie*, are thus described in their conversion, *asking the way to Zion, with their faces thither-ward*: whereas before in the dayes of our corruption, we turned our backs to God, now when we returne, *we set the Lord alwayes before us* in every thing: this is properly to returne, to revive and flourish also in returning. Thus we have heard how all who live under the shadow of Christ doe returne, and what use we should make of it.

The end of the eighth Sermon.

THE

Jer. 50. 5.

Psal. 16. 8.



THE NINTH SERMON.

Hos, 14. 6,

*They that dwell under his shadow shall return,
they shall revive as the Corne, and grow as
the Vine, the sent therof shall be as the Vine
of Lebanon.*



OUR desire of good things is not so large as God is bountifull in satisfying our desires, and going beyond them, as wee see in this Chapter, their hearts were too narrow to receive all that good which God intended them. *Receive us graciously, this was their petition: wherunto God answers, that he would be as the dew unto them, that they should grow as the Lillie, and cast forth their roote as Lebanon: and their branches shall spread: that they*

SER. IX.

they should grow in all dimensions, upwards and downwards, and spread in beauty and smell, *Their beauty shall be like the Olive, and their smell like Lebanon.* And because he would be God-like, like himselfe, that is, throughly and abundantly gracious and mercifull, he doth not only (as we have heard) promise a blessing to Israell himselfe, but unto all neere unto him, and belonging to him: *Those that dwell under his shadow shall returne, they shall revive as the corne.*

We are all too shallow to conceive either the infinite vastnesse of Gods justice to impenitent sinners, or his boundlesse mercy and goodnes to his poore Church and children. Therefore God to help our weake conceit in this kind borroweth all the excellencies of nature, and makes use of them in grace. He takes out of the booke of nature into his booke what may instruct our soules: and therefore sets down the growing estate of a Christian by all excellent comparisons that nature will afford, many whereof we have gone over, the last we spake of was, that mercy which God superabundantly shewes unto the friends and servants of the Church, *Those that dwell under his shadow shall returne.* Now those that shall thus returne, they revive in returning: for they turne to the fountaine of life, to the Sonne of Righteousnesse: they come under Gods grace, therefore they must needs returne and revive in vigor, as they returne to God: which vigor is especially meant here, when he saith, *Those that dwell under his shadow shall returne.*

They

They shall revive as the Corne.

Now how doth the corne revive? not to speake of that comparison, that the godly are corne and not chaffe; as the wicked are, who are driven too and fro without any solidity, which though true, is not here especially aimed at. For it is supposed that they who are good and gracious have substance, soliditie, usefulness and goodnesse in them like the corne; not being emptie chaffe, which the wind blowes away. This is usefull to mention: but to come to the scope intended by the Prophet.

They shall revive as the Corne, In this first, that as the corne when unsowen it lies dead in the granarie, fructifieth not, but when it is sown springs up to an hundred fold, as we read of in *Isaacks* time, who received so much increase. So it is with converted Christians before they were under any gracious meanes, or in a good place, they lay as it were dead and did not spring forth. But afterwards being planted and sown under gracious meanes, in good company, in a good family, then they increase and grow up and multiply: *They revive like the Corne.*

And then againe as it is with the Corne, though it seeme to die, and doth indeed die in some sort, covered with winter stormes ere it spring out from the oppressions of frost and snow, and hard weather, as if it were altogether perished: yet notwithstanding it is all the while preparing for springing up againe more gloriously. So it is with the Church, which
seemes

Psal. 1.

I.

Gen. 26. 12.

2.

SER. IX.

seemes to die often in regard of spirituall mortification by afflictions, whereby it is dead to the world: yet all this while, there is a blessed life in the spirit, preparing the soule under the hard pressures of all weathers, to a glorious springing up againe. Therefore the Church hath no hurt by afflictions, no more then the corne hath by the winter, which is as necessary for it, as the spring-time, or summer. For else, how should the earth be ripened and prepared: how should the wormes and weeds be killed, if it were not for hard weather: So it is with a Christian, those afflictions that he suffers, and under which he seemes to be buried, they are as usefull to him as all his comforts. Nay, a Christian is more beholding to afflictions for his graces and comforts, then he is to outward blessings. One would thinke that the goldsmith were a spoyling his plate when he is a burning of it, when all that while the drosse is but a consuming out of it; and the vessell so hammered and beaten out, is but a preparing to be a vessell of honour to stand before some great man. So it is with a Christian: an ignorant person looking but one way, thinks God neglects such a one, and that if God cared for such a one, or such a one, would or could such and such things befall them: they conclude hence (as the Psalmist saith) *God hath forsaken him*, and forgotten him. And as Christ the head of the Church was thought to be forgotten and neglected, even when he was most deare

Psal. 71. 11.

deare and pretious unto God : so even they all this while, the Spirit of God is working an excellent worke in them, preparing and fitting them for grace and glory. Therefore in that respect also: *They shall revive as the Corne.*

Thirdly, *They shall revive as the Corne in regard of fructification*; It is true both of the Church and of particular graces. We see one graine of corne when it is almost perished and turn'd to froth, nothing in a manner, presently out of it springs a stalke, and thence an eare and in that many eares, God giving it a body, sixtie or a hundred fold as he pleaseth. So it is with a Christian, when he is planted he will leaven others, and those others and others. A few Apostles leavened the whole world, scattering the Gospell like lightning all over the same. So it is true of grace in Gods Children, it is like a graine of mustard-seed at the first, yet it growes up and fructifies, from knowledge to knowledge, faith to faith, and grace to grace, from vertue to vertue, from strength to strength, from one degree to another : nothing lesse at first, and nothing more great or glorious in this world in progresse of time, nothing so admired of God, and pleasing unto man : as this which makes one all glorious and without spot.

O ! what can be said more to encourage us to come under gracious meanes, to love God and his Ordinances, good company and the communion of Saints, considering they are such happy people ? *Those that are under their shadow*

3.

Mat. 13. 31.

SER. IX.

shadow shall returne, revive and bee vigorous; They shall revive as the corne, which doth (when it seemeth to bee dead) notwithstanding all weathers grow up and multiply. And whereas it seem'd dead before and lay hid, being sowed it growes: So being planted in the Church we shall grow: for there is a hidden vertue in the least grace, in the least of Gods Ordinances, more then wee are aware off (saith Christ) *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Much more is this made good in great Congregations and families. But this is not all, he saith;

They shall grow as the Vine.

Howsoever the Church which is the mother Church growes before in the former words: the new Church that comes under her shadow, shall grow in the same manner; *They shall grow as the Lillie: their Branches shall spread:* and more it is said here, *They shall grow as the Vine.* It is a comparison delightfull to the Holy Ghost, to compare Christ to a Vine, the Church to a Vineyard: and Christians unto Vines: but such as draw all their moysture and fatnesse in them from Christ the true Vine, their sweetnesse being a derivative sweetnesse.

They shall grow as the Vine.

The Vine we know is a fruitfull plant: as we reade in the Judges: The *Olive* and the *Vine* would not forsake their sweetnesse to be a King: for it is said by them, that they revive God and man, being pleasing to them. So every true
Christian

Mat. 18. 20.

I.

*The Vine is
fruitfull so
Christians.
Iud 9. 9, 13.*

Christian is like a vine for fruitfulness, he is a tree of Righteousness, a plant of Gods own planting, a vine that spends himselfe in bearing fruit.

Againe, as it is fruitfull, so it is exceeding fruitfull, abounding in fruit, so Christians are vines, not only for a little fruit that they beare: but because they are abundantly fruitfull, which is premised: that if they doe as they should do; they shall be vines abundant in the worke of the Lord:

And further, the Vine as we know is never a whit the worse for pruning, but is pruned and cut (as our Saviour speakes) *that it may bring forth the more fruit.* So the Church and people of God are never a whit the worse for afflictions: for as the best vines need dressing and pruning, the best ground plowing, the best linnen washing, the best mettall the fire to consume away the drosse, the best things we use having something amisse. So the best Christians need dressing and purging from the great husbandman, whereby they are not the worse but the better, having thereby much corruption purged away from them: as the pruning of the vine, makes it not the worse, but drawes wild things from it, which would draw away the strength of the vine. A Christian is the better for his afflictions. wherein the glory of the Church especially consists. For the Church never thrived better then in *Ægypt*, where they laboured to crush and to cut the vine. God brought his vine out of *Ægypt* for all this, maugre all the malice

2.

3.

Ioh. 19. 2.

of

SER. IX.

4.

The Vine is
rugged and
unseemely.

Col. 3. 3.

How God go-
vernes his
Church by con-
traries.

of the enemies. The Church was never more glorious in its owne seate, then it was in *Babylon* under the *Captivity*, how glorious then was the Church in *Daniel* and others.

Againe, to the outward appearance, the Vine is a rugged unseemely plant, being not sightly and beautifull to look on: yet is it abundantly fruitfull under that unsightlines. So if we look to the outward state and face of the Church, it is nothing else to looke to, but a deformed company, defaced by affliction, live-lesse here (as it were) *having their life hid up with God in Christ*, (as the Apostle speaks) their life here is covered over with many afflictions, crosses, infirmities and disgraces, whereunto they are subject, like unto other men. Therefore as it was the state of the head, to have no outward forme or beauty, though inwardly he was all glorious. So the beauty of the Church is inward: for outward shew, it being unsightly like the vine, crooked and uneven, there being nothing delightfull in it, unlesse it be in regard of the fruit that comes from it. So it is with the Church of God and particular Christians: who though in outward government they have not that pollicy and outward glory other governments have, yet there is an inward secret worke of Gods government of the Church by contraries, which exceeds all other pollicies, wherein he brings glory from shame, life by death, hee brings downe and lifts up; when he is about his excellent worke, he humbleth first. This is

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an ordinary way, therefore we must not take offence at any outward deformitie that we see in the Church, and in Gods Children, when they seeme to be trampled upon, they are but as vines, unsightly to the eye, they have a life, though it be a hidden one.

It is excellently set downe by *Ezekiel*, what the Vine is of it selfe, it is serviceable for nothing: we cannot make a pinne of it; It is such a brittle wood as is good for nothing but to beare fruit. So take a Christian that professeth Religion, if he be not fruitfull in his place, of all men he is the worst: of all men he is either the best, or the worst: as the vine, if it beare fruit it is the best, though it be an unsightly tree: but otherwise it is fit for nothing but the fire. Therefore let no man glory in his profession, that he is baptised, heares Sermons, and reads: but where is thy fruit? wherefore serves the dressing and pruning of the vine, but for fruit? if there be no fruit, a Christian is the worst man that lives: worst, in regard that he is bad under good meanes, and in condition he is the worst of all men, his torment is the greater. Those that are barren and unfruitfull under meanes, the time will come, that they will wish they had never enjoyed such a testimony against themselves.

And further, a Vine is so weake that it must be prop'd and supported along, or else it will lie on the ground; such is the estate of the Church, which must have something to fence it and under-prop it. God is the strength of the

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Church,

Ezek. 15.

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SER. IX.

Prov. 30. 26.

Church, it is a wondrous weake plant. The Children of God are wondrous weake, and exposed to a wonderfull deale of misery: in regard whereof, and of the injuries and weaknesse they are exposed too, they must have support. A Christian is compared to the shiflesse things, Sheep, Lambes and Doves, and in the plants they are compared to the Vine, which needs a strong support, And (as *Salomon* saith of the Co-nies) though they are a weake people of themselves, yet notwithstanding they have a strong rocke over their heads, where they are safe, though they be as weake as the vine. So Gods people though they be weake of themselves; yet they have a strong support to uphold them; God by the Ordinances of Magistracy and Ministry (especially by his Spirit) keeps them up and supports them, that they spread in largenesse and in fruitfulnessse.

Use. I.

Is this so, then let us examine our selves what our fruit is: if we be vines what is our fruit? what comes from us? Certainly if we doe not shew foorth that fruit we should in our lives and conversations, in our speech, carriage and actions, when we are called to it, it is an argument that as yet the dew of Gods grace hath never fallen upon us so as it must before we come to Heaven. As was said before, a man may endure a dead plant in his ground; but in his Orchard he will not. He may endure weeds in pastures, in neglected grounds, but not in his garden. If we be Lillies in Gods Garden, and Vines in his Orchard,

chard, we must be fruitfull and grow, or else God will not endure us. Of all woes, the greatest woe lies upon them, who enjoy plentifull and abundant meanes and yet are not fruitfull.

That we are Vines, and Gods Vines, it is in the next place an Use of Comfort; that God therefore will have a care of us, if we be fruitfull, he will have a speciall care of that place where his vines are planted, if wee see many gracious persons and families who are conscionable in their practice and conversation, we may rest assured that God the great husbandman will have a speciall care of those choice vines, and the places they live in, they carry the blessing of God with them wheresoever they goe, with a shadow and protection, making every place the better for them. For God will care for those vines which bring foorth much fruit; As it is in *Esay*; *spoil it not, for there is a blessing in it.* If a Christian be fruitfull, and labour to be more fruitfull, God gives a prohibition, he is my vine, do him no harme: *Touch not mine annoynted, nor doe my Prophets no harme.* Satan himself and all creatures in Heaven and in Earth, have a prohibition to touch his vines no further then shall be for their good. Will a man suffer men to come into his Orchard to break downe his vines? he will not. Surely though the finnes of this nation be very great: yet one thing ministereth hope, God hath a great many vines under his shadow and protection, many conscionable Magistrates, Ministers and people

Mat 11. 21.

Use 2.

Isa. 65. 8.

Psal. 105. 15.

SER. IX.

of other professions; Governours of families and the like, which walke holily, God will spare the vineyard, even for the vines that beare fruit. A notable place amongst others we have, *Cant. 2. 15. Take us the Foxes and the little Foxes that spoile the vine: for our vines have tender grapes.* There is in every Church not onely grosse Papists, and forraigne enemies, that would roote out all if it were in their power: but subtile foxes also, men that pride themselves in diuinish policie, to undermine the Church and Children of God: who wher-soever they see vine or grapes, they malice that: both the meanes, and grace wrought by the meanes, is the object of their cruelty. Subtile foxes they are, who account it a great deale of glory to be accounted pollicicke men, to do mischief secretly and closely in the Church: will God suffer these foxes? No, he will not, *Take us the foxes, the little foxes that destroy the vines.* God hath young growing vines, so as he will not onely care for the great vines, but for the tender vines also. Christ hath a care of his Lambes, as he said to *Peter, lovest thou mee, &c. Then feed my Lambes, my little ones.* So Christ speakes in the Gospell of these little ones, *I tell you (of a truth) that the Angels of these little ones, behold the face of my Father, &c.* And so he speakes in another place; *A bruised reed will hee not breake, and smoaking flaxe will hee not quench, untill hee bring forth judgment unto victorie.* So likewise hee promiseth, that he

Cant. 2. 5.

Ioh. 21. 15.

Mat. 18. 10.

Iſa. 42. 1, 2.

he will carry the lambes in his bosome, and gently lead them that are with young.

The next Use shall be for encouragement unto weake ones : should tender and weake Christians then be discouraged for whom God is so carefull? surely no. Put case they bring forth but little fruite, yet, O destroy it not, for a blessing is in it. Therefore let us not be discouraged if wee be Gods vines: which is knowne and discovered, not by the abundance of fruit only, but by the kind of our fruit also; if it come from the Spirit of God, and rellish of the Spirit, though it be not in such plenty: yet a vine is not a thorne, a Christian is not to be discouraged though he bring not forth abundance of fruit at the first. There are different degrees and tempers of soyle, and of ages in Christianity, which is spoken to incourage those that are good, and yet are discouraged, because it is not with them as with some other Christians of their acquaintance. Know that there is no set measure of grace necessary to salvation but truth. God doth assigne us a measure of grace according to his good pleasure, and according as he hath purposed to make us profitable to others in the use of meanes. Those whom he meanes to use for suffering or doing of great matters in the Church, those hee fits suitably for that he meanes to call them to: others have not that abundance of grace, out of Gods wisdom, who knowes best how to dispense his owne graces to his owne glory. If wee allow

Vse 3.

SER. IX.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

not our selves in our weaknesse, but groane under them, hate them, and strive against them, reaching towards perfection: in this case our weaknesse shall not hurt our salvation; but God will perfect his power in our weaknesse.

So we see it is not the multitude of fruit, but the sincerity of it, if it be true, that makes a Christian; if there be truth of grace, it will out and spread the branches, it shall not alwayes be so with us. Sincerity and indeavour to grow, with a desire and thirst after growth, makes a man a Christian. Therefore as was said, we must not be discouraged, though our growth and spreading be not like others. Every Christian hath his measure, though every one be bound to goe further and further, from faith to faith, and grace to grace: yet there is a blessing in a little, and a promise also to him that useth it well: *To him that hath it shall be given.* Christ hath a care that the foxes do not hurt the little tender grapes: let none therefore be discouraged for their non-proficiency in the wayes of God, so as to goe back and leave off, he knowes best when and how to take away the bates, snares and temptations that are set to catch them, and discourage them. Let God alone with his owne worke, who is the great vinedresser: doe thou thine owne worke, attend upon good meanes, waite upon God, and then let the malice of the world and the Divell be what they will, he will have a care of his vines, and the more care, the more young and tender they are, &c.

Mat. 13. 12.

These considerations may affect us, not only to take good by the vine for our bodies, but for our soules also, and so the same thing may cherish both body and soule. A Christian by grace hath an extracting vertue, to draw holy uses out of every thing, as the Holy Ghost here compares us to a vine, to teach us these and the like things now unfolded. The last thing promised is,

The sent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon.

This *Lebanon* was a mountainous place, on the north side of *Judea*, wondrous fruitfull in all kind of trees, in *Cedars* and goodly *Vines*, so it did abound in spice, and all goodly things. Therefore to shew that a Christian should be the best of his ranke, he fetches comparisons from the best things in nature.

The sent thereof shall be as the vine of Lebanon.

Now the *Vine of Lebanon* had a sweet sent in it, both to draw to the liking, and then to delight in the tast and taking thereof. So it is with the graces of God in his children, they carry as it were a sweet sent with them, both to draw others to delight in, and tast of the same things.

But how comes it to passe that Christians send forth so sweet a sent?

Because they are in Christ, in whom the ointment and all sweetnesse is in fulnesse. From him the *Head* first, and from thence it is derived unto the members, all who must partake of this ointment. As it is said of the head of *Aaron*, that that ointment which was powred on his

T 4 head,

Quest.

Ans.

Psal. 133. 2.

SER. IX.

Joh. 1. 16.

Can. 1. 3.

Pfal. 45. 8.

Cant. 1. 3.

Rev. 1. 6.

Exo. 39. 26.

head, ran downe to his skirts, and all his rich attire about. So that sweetnesse in Christ is powred on the skirts, all along upon his members, even the meanest Christian receiveth *Grace for Grace*, sweetnesse from Christ, *The Virgins*: that is, such as defile not themselves with Idolatry and such other lewd courses: they follow after Christ in the smell of his sweet oyntments. It is spoken of Christ who carrieth such a sweet smell with him, as *all his garments smell of Myrrh, Aloes and Cassia, &c.* So sweet is the smell of Christ when he is unfolded in his Benefits and Offices, that the pure and holy virgin soules of the Saints follow after it. *His name is as an oyntment powred out*; that is, himselve is his Name, and his Name is himselve (as the Hebrew Proverbe is) Christ made knowne in the unfolding of the Word, that is his Name. When the box is opened, all in Christ is like oyntment, in the preaching of the Word all is sweet, and nothing but sweet in Jesus. Now a Christian being a member of Christ, and a virgin soule following Christ, must needs draw sweetnesse from him, casting out that sent unto others drawn from him, because they partake of Christs annoynting. What is the name of a Christian, but a man annoynted with Christs oyntment, one annoynted to be a King and a Priest in some sort: therefore, they carry the favour of him wheresoever they goe. *Aaron* the high Priest, had sweet garments, which made a favour where

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he went, having Bels and sweet Pomegranates at the bottome of his garment. He had not only Bels to discover him; but sweet pomegranates also. So it is with every Christian; not only the Minister, but every Christian is a Priest under the New Testament, and carrieth a favour with him, graces that spread and cast a sweet sent in all places wheresoever, which they exercise upon all good occasions: as Saint Paul expresseth it, *They favour the things of the spirit.* Those who are in Christ, they have the Spirit of Christ, or they are none of his. And having the Spirit of Christ, they favour of the things of the Spirit, that is, their thoughts, speeches, actions, and conversation are favoury. Those *that are in the flesh* (saith the Apostle) *cannot please God*, they are unfavoury. A carnall man hath no favour in his speeches, they are either worldly or civill, without spirituall favour: because he hath nothing of the Spirit of Christ to favour off. His heart (saith *Salomon*) is little worth, the like we may say of his thoughts, actions and affections, they are unfavoury and little worth. He hath a dead heart to goodnesse, and thence whatsoever goodnesse commeth from him is forced and against the haire (as we say) But a Christian having the Spirit of Christ, and therewith communion with Christ, all his discourfes and actions are for the most part favoury, those hee acteth as a Christian; therefore from his communion with Christ it is said here, *His smell shall be as Lebanon.*

Rom. 8. 5.

Rom. 8. 8.

Pro. 10 20.

SER. IX.

The sent thereof shall be as the Vine of Lebanon.

Delightfull both to God and holy blessed spirits, likewise to the Church, and to the Angels which are about us, and pleasing to our owne spirits; for there issueth a wondrous contentment, even to the conscience of a person which is fruitfull and abundant in goodnesse, that soule receiveth an answerable proportion of comfort. As it is with heate that accompanieth fire alway; so there is a kinde of heate of comfort, which naturally accompanieth the heate of any good action: there remaineth a sweet relish to the conscience of the performer, reflecting with humility upon himself, with thankfullnesse to God, from whose *Dew* (as we have heard before) commeth whatsoever is good: reflecting on this with an eye to the principall cause it breeds a great deale of comfort to the soule. As it was said of *Iosiah*, the memory of *Iosiah* was like the oyntment of the Apothecary, whereas on the contrary, it is said, *The remembrance of the wicked shall rot.* God threatneth the Jewes, that they should be a hissing to all nations, and that they should bee abhominable to all kinde of people (for what is so odious now as the name of a *Jew*?) yet certainly this whole promise shall be verified even of them: this whole Chapter having an eye unto the calling of the Jewes. The time will come that the sent of these odious people (who are now the object of hatred unto all people) shall bee as *the Vine of Lebanon.*

Prov. 10. 7.

Deut. 28. 37.

SER. IX.

If this be so, it cuts off a carnall exception of senselesse persons, that thinke they can stop mens mouthes with this. I cannot make so much shew as you, but I hope I have as good a heart to God as you, or as the best. But a Christian is a *Vine*, that brings forth grapes, and much fruit, and casts a sent from him (as *the sent of Lebanon*) upon all fit occasions. For his words should be, as *the Apples of Gold set with pictures of silver*. He is seasonable in his actions of Consolation, and bringeth forth his fruit in due season, as the promise is. For *Solomon* sheweth, that every thing is made beautiful in his season. Those therefore that have not a good word to speake, but rather expresse the contrarie, rotten unfavoury discourse, vaine in their conversation, favouring nothing that is good: how have they as good a heart to God as the best? No, this is not to be a Christian, who should favour like *Aarons* garments, or like these graces comming from his head to him: who should spread abroad his sweetnesse unto others, *shining out as a light* amongst others? Therefore away with this base plea: a rotten speech, argueth a rotten heart. What can come out of a vessell but such as is within it, if the issues be naught, what is the vessell but naught? if all be unfavoury outward, what is there but a rotten heart within.

Vse. I.

Prov. 25. 11.

Psal. 1. 3.
Eccl. 3. 11.

Mat. 12. 35.

Vse 2.

Againe, if Christians should cast a sent and favour, this should moove and stirre them up, if they will answer their title to be Christians, sweet,

SER. IX.

1 Pet. 2. 9.

sweet, annoynted persons, Priests to God, to labour more and more to be spirituall and favour the things of the Spirit: and to labour for more and more communion with Christ in the use of all sanctified meanes, that they may have the Spirit of Christ in their conversation, shewing foorth the Humility, Patience, Love and Obedience of Christ. As *Peter* speakes and exhorteth us, to shew foorth the vertues of him who hath called us from darkenesse into his marvellous light. Then we answer our title, and cast foorth a sent like *Lebanon*, when inwardly and outwardly, all things joyne to make us fruitfull and savoury before God and man.

Quest.

What will come of it if we be fruitfull and savourie?

Answ. I.

The excellency
of a savoury
and fruitfull
conversation.

God will be more pleased in all our actions, and will smell a sweet savour of rest, as it is said of *Noah* after his coming out of the *Arke*; for God delights in his owne graces, which he admireth in us. As hee said to the woeman of *Canaan*, *O woeman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt.* God as it were stands admiring his owne graces, he is so delighted with the Faith, Love, Prayers and Patience of his children, which is further excellently expressed in the *Canticles*. *Who is this that commeth up out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with mirrh and frankincense, and all the spices of the merchant?* Christ there is brought in admiring at his Church and Children, conflicting through all the miseries and incumbrances of
this

Mat. 15. 28.

Cant. 3. 6.

this world, which hinder and oppose their journey to Heaven-wards, wherein they thrust forth all the practise of their holy graces, which smell like spices. Then let us not envy God, the Saints, and holy people, the sweetnesse of our graces, but let our sent smell abroad to the content and comfort of all, that they may delight in these graces that come from us, in our Humility, Patience, Faith, Love, Sincerity, and all these graces wherein we resemble Christ, and shew forth his holy vertues: therefore for our owne comfort, and the delight of all, and to assure our selves of Heaven, and of the love of God whilst we live here, let us labour to be fruitfull in our conversation, and to cast forth a sent in regard of others, which hath an attractive drawing force. For when they see a holy, fruitfull and gracious conversation, it casts forth a sent and makes others like Religion: So God is glorified, and Religion is adorned. What greater ornament to Religion, then to see a fruitfull gracious Christian, who hath ability and a heart to doe good upon all occasions, with an humble, meeke, peaceable spirit, taught of God to be so for the good and love of others?

There must be Pomegranates with bells, a sweet conversation with words, a little whereof will doe more good to others then a great many words. A good conversation is sweet, and hath a kind of oratorie joyned with it. Therefore if neither for God, or Christ, or others, yet for our owne sakes and the reflection of that good

Cant. 5.

*That a little
gracious con-
versation is
more winning
then many
words.*

SER. IX.

good sent upon our selves, let us be fruitfull. A man cannot grow in fruitfulness, but hee must needs grow in comfort, Peace and Joy. Nothing cheereth and solaceth the heart of a Christian more then this, the conscience that God honoureth him to be fruitfull, to doe good, and cast a sweet favor, to draw others to good things. This will comfort us upon our death-beds, more then all other things. Therefore in all these respects, for love of God, others and our selves, which are delighted with the expressions of our graces, let us labour to be fruitfull trees in Gods garden, and to bring forth much fruit, that we may send forth *a sent like Lebanon.*

Now who would not be in such an estate and condition as this; as to have title to all these gracious promises, for the *dew of Grace* to fall upon him, *To grow as Lillies* in height, and to spread as other plants doe, to grow upwards, and downwards, to be *rooted as Cedars*, and *fruitfull as Vines*. The Spirit of God sets himselfe here to shew Spirituall things by Earthly comparisons, to make us the more capable of them. The misery of the contrary condition may well stirre us up to seeke after the forementioned. For what a misery is it, to have the curse of God upon ones soule, to have it like the barren wilderness, void of all grace and comfort that may delight others, or is spirituall, savoury, or savingly good? So all these promises tend to incourage us to be in the condition of Gods Children, that when we are in that estate,

estate, we may comfort our selves, and be able to claime our part, portion and interest in these excellent promises

Thus by Gods blessing we have passed over the particulars of Gods gracious promises to his Church, and all that shall come under the Church; all which should encourage us to goe to God, and doe as the Church doth here, *take words to our selves, and desire God, to take away all iniquity, and heale all our backslidings,* and that we may renounce all vaine confidence, as the Church doth here: who is taught to trust in horses no longer; *Assur shall not save us.* And then let us (as was said) cleave unto the blessed promises, that we may improve them, and make them our own every day more and more. Therefore let us have in the eye of our soule the excellency of growth; or else we shall not value these promises. Let us consider what an excellent condition it is to grow, flourish and be fruitfull, having a due esteeme of all these promises before hand. Doe but consider how excellent a Christian is that groweth above others, what a majesty he hath in his carriage? how undauntedly he wa'ks in all oppositions whatsoever, as a *Lyon* in his courses. How he overlookes Hell, wrath, death, damnation and all. What a sweet communion he enjoyeth with God in all the disconsolations that the world puts upon him. He carrieth his Heaven in his heart, and a Paradise within him, which is planted with all graces, whereas another man carrieth his Hell about him.

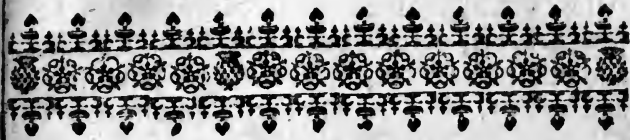
The excellency
of a growing
Christian.
Prov. 28.1.

Where-

Wherefore let us take such courses to helpe our selves as the Church doth here: trust in God and not in man, or in the arme of flesh; and be encouraged from all that hath beene said, to have a good conceit of God, to be fruitfull and draw on others to goodnesse, that God, his Saints and Angels may be delighted with the sent of our graces, and our selves comforted; that we may rejoyce in our portion and lot that God hath dealt so gratioously to us, and glory more that he hath made us members of Christ, and heires of Heaven, then in any condition of this world. O the incomparable excellent state of a Christian, above all the glory of this world: who not onely groweth, but shall grow to Heaven-wards still; and as hee hath begun to hate sinne, shall hate it more and more: God hath undertaken it shall be so: *Ephraim* after all these sweete promises and *dew of Grace*, shall say; *What have I any more to doe with Idols, &c.* The prosecution whereof must be referred untill the next time.

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The end of the ninth Sermon.



THE TENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14. 8.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to doe with Idols? I have heard him and observed him: I am like a greene firre Tree, from me is thy fruit sound.



WE have heard at severall times heretofore, how God out of the largeness of his goodnesse, goeth beyond those desires which he putteth into his peoples hearts. They briefly intreat him to doe good to them, and to deale graciously with them. And he answereth them largely: that he will be as the Dew to them, that they shall grow as
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SER. X.

the Lilly, and cast forth their rootes as Lebanon, All set out by most excellent comparisons, helping grace by nature, our soules by our bodies, and our spirits by our senses. As we have soules and bodies, so God applieth himselfe to both. His Branches shall spread; his Beauty shall be as the Olive, and his smell as Lebanon.

Then in the 7. Verse, his gracious promise reacheth unto those who dwel under the Church: *Those that dwell under his shadow shall returne, they shall revive as the corne, and grow as the Vine, &c.* The new Church that shall come under the shadow of the old, shall flourish as the ancient did. *They that dwell under his shadow, that is under Ephraims and Israels shadow shall return, and be partakers of the same dew of grace.*

Now this eighth verse containeth a further gracious promise to *Ephraim* upon his repenting and former resolutions: *Ephraim* said, *Assur shall not save us, wee will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the worke of our hands. ye are our gods.* Now what saith God here? (repeating the words of *Ephraim*) *Ephraim* (shall say) is not in the Originall, but onely set downe to expresse what the meaning is, whereas *Ephraim* said, *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* *Ephraim* shall have this answer, *I have heard him, and observed him, I am like a greene fir-tree: from me is thy fruit found.*

As though the Lord had said, let not *Ephraim* thinke that when hee hath forsooke Idols, hee hath forsaken his comfort, (as though there were

no comfort in walking according to the rule of my Word and Laws.) Let him know that in steed of these poore and base comforts, either in grosse Idolatry, or other more cunning Idolatries whatsoever which formerly tooke him up, that now he shall exchange them for more solid and substantiall comforts. For, *I have heard him and observed him*: so that let him see what he loo-
 seth in parting with base corruptions, worldly lusts, pleasures and the like, he shall find it more abundantly supplied in a farre more excellent manner in me, and in the fruits and effects of my love unto him; so as he shall find that there is nothing lost by entering strictly into my servicc. And whereas formerly hee walked in a vaine shadow, in relying on *Egypt, Ashur, and the workes of his owne hands*: Now he shall have a farre more excellent shadow, which no storme, nor raine, nor injury of weather can pierce through: *I am like a greene firre-tree unto him*. Not such a shadow as those his Idols were, who could not keepe off the storme of Gods wrath from him, nor such a shadow as *Jonahs gourd* was, which flourished for one day, and was nipt the next. No, J will be constant and permanent as my selfe, *I will be as the greene firre tree*; a constant shadow to keepe backe all annoyance whatsoever; not like the cursed noysome shadow of Idols, under which *Ephraim* rested before. But, *I will observe and regard him. and be like a greene firre-tree unto him*. J will not onely be a shadow and shelter of defence

Jonah 4. 5, 6.

SER. X.

unto him from injury and molestation, that hee may rest quietly; but hee shall be also *fruitfull*: though the *firre tree* be not so fruitfull: yet *from me is thy fruit found*, whatsoever he is in himselfe; yet this shall not be matter of discouragement unto him: I am all-sufficient, there is enough in me to supply him with: *from me is thy fruit found*. But to take them in order.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to doe with Idols, &c.

Somethinke the words come upon *Ephraims* observing and hearing of him: so as when God is seene in his most excellent Majesty and glory, and observed as he is just, mercifull and wonderfull terrible in himselfe, that this manner of hearing and observation causeth flesh and blood so to stoope and reforme, as they yeeld themselves, and resigne up all unto God, seeing that miserable condition they are in, and what an infinite distance there is betwixt their impurity, and Gods most excellent holinesse. As we read of *Isaiab* when hee had seene God in his throne of Majesty; *Woe is me* (saith he) *for I am undone, because I am a man of uncleane lips: and I dwell in the midst of a people of uncleane lips: for mine eyes have seene the King, the Lord of Hosts.* And so of *Iob*, *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the eare, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhorre my selfe, and repent in dust and ashes.* Which indeed is true in the generall, that a man then truely repenteth and turneth unto God, when hee knoweth God and himselfe to purpose;

Ila. 6. 5.

Iob 42. 5, 6.

pose; and never effectually untill then: for Christ who cannot lie, and is truth it selfe, calleth this kind of knowledge eternall life. *This is life eternall, to know thee to be the onely very God, and whom thou hast sent Iesus Christ.* But though this be a generall truth: yet we take it here rather for an encouragement unto *Ephraim*, as before, that nothing is lost by cleaving unto Gods waies, and forsaking of sin. Now wheras *Ephraim* (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols*: In the words we may consider.

Ioh. 17. 3.

1. The manner of expression, with a great indignation of soule, *What have I any more to doe*, &c.

2. The matter so hated with indignation, is *Idolatry*, their former *Idols*. *Ephraim* (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols*.

Ephraim we see renounceth *Idolatry*, but in what manner is this done? with an high indignation of zeale and hatred: *What have I any more to doe with Idols*: Hee doth not say now that *Ephraim* hath left *Idolatry*, I will supply all these comforts that they had by *Idols*. But *Ephraim* loathes *Idolatry*, therefore he saith *What have I any more to doe with Idols*? It is a figurative Question, implying a strong deniall with a strong indignation. *What have I any more to doe with Idols*? I have had too much to doe with them: I have now nothing to doe with *Idols*. It is a negation and deniall vvith as great averstation, and abominttion as can be possibly exprest: for in such questions, the deni-

The true renouncing of sin must be vvith indignation.

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all is set forth more strongly by a negotiation, and with a greater emphasis, then by any affirmation is possible to expresse. So elegant is the Spirit of God in setting forth spirituall things in a heavenly and transcendent manner.

Ephraim (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols, &c.*

Hence in that *Ephraim* shall say thus, and say it with such vehemency of spirit and indignation, we may observe in generall.

Observ.

There is excellent use of the affections.

God hath planted the affections in us to be as the winde, to carry the soule too and fro, forward or backward: for affections are planted in the soule answerable to things aimed at by it. For, as in the nature of things, there be good and bad, delightfull and hatefull, hurting or pleasing: so answerably God hath framed the soule to the nature of things. For good things, God hath planted affections in us to joyne, claipe, imbrace them and welcome them, as Love, Joy, Delight, and such like. And for evill things, he hath planted affections to avoid them, as indignation, hatred and the like. Indeed Religion is mainly in the affections, whereof there is excellent use, take away them, and take away all Religion whatsoever. A man, were it not for his affections, is like *Mare mortuum*, the dead Sea that never stirreth. Therefore it is but a dotting idle conceit of these rigid men, that take away affections: much like the folly of them, who because they have

That the soule hath affections suitable to the things it aimeth at.

That Religion is especially in the affections.

have bin drunke with wine, do therefore cut up all the vines. But the way vvere to moderate the accessse, not to cut up the vines. So for the affecti- ons, we must not root them up, or cut them down, but order them aright. For what doth the first Commandement require? [*Thou shalt have no o- ther gods but me.*] But a right ordering of all the affecti- ons of the soule, *loy, delight, trust and feare,* and the whole frame of them to be carried to God. For the inward worship of God is nothing els, but the excellent working of these affecti- ons sutably to the Law, with the detestation of the contrary. It is not knowledge that makes a man a good man, but the affecti- ons: the Divell and wicked spirits know much; but they have no love, joy, or delight in them. Therefore we must value our selves and things, as we are in our will and affecti- ons: for so God valueth us, and we should value others thereby. This well done would bring us a wondrous deale of comfort, and stop our too much and rigid judging and censuring of others.

Ephraim (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

Now in particular we see here, that *Ephraim* not only leaveth *Idols*, but there is planted in him a sound indignation against them: Whence we may learne,

That it is not enough to leave sin; but we must loath sin also.

Observ.

A notable place to this purpose wee have in the Prophecy of *Isaiab*, what they should doe

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IIa 30. 22.

after their conversion, in the case of hatred to Idolatry. *Ye shall defile also the covering of thy graven Images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten Images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, thou shalt say unto it get thee hence.*

There is a hatred and a strong loathing indignation against sin, when it is discovered in the pollution and vilenesse thereof: which affection of hatred God hath planted to draw the soule away from any thing that is truly hurtfull to it. It is not enough to leave sin for some by ends, as feare of punishment, shame and the like: but we must loath it also. The Prophet *David* when he professeth his love to the law: how proveth he it? *I hate and abhorre lying.* And so againe, *Do not I hate them (O Lord) that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I account them mine enemies.* Here is hatred and perfect hatred with abomination.

Psal. 119. 163.

Psal. 139. 21.

Reason 1.

Ioh. 4. 24.

The Reason is, because God is a Spirit, and lookes to the bent of our spirits, seeing what we love and what we hate: therefore the strength of this consideration draweth the soule to hate and love with God, as he hates and loves: and as much as may be to hate sin as he doth.

Reason 2.

And then againe, he requireth our heart especially, *My sonne give me thy heart.* Give me thy love in that which is good, and hate that which is ill. What ill we leave, we must hate first; and what good wee doe, wee must first love, or else we shall never doe either of them

them acceptably to purpose. What the heart doth not, is not done in Religion, if it hath no hand in the avoiding of ill, it is not avoided: if it have no hand in the doing of good, it is not done before God. Therefore in true conversion, there must be a loathing of sin.

Thirdly, Because in all true conversion there is a new nature put in us; now the New Creature, which partaketh of the Divine Nature whereby we resemble God, it hath an Antipathy to the greatest ill, which is sin, the cause of all other evils whatsoever, which maketh us opposite to God, defileth the soule, and hindreth our sweet communion with him. A new Creature we know hath a new disposition, and is opposite to the works of the flesh, they are contrary to one another: so that we see it cleare, that we *must not only leave, but loath sin.*

But how may we know, discern, and try this true hatred of sin.

First, true hatred is universall, he who hates ill truly, hates it universally in the whole kinde. As we see in wicked men and divels who hate God and all goodnesse: so on the contrary, those that are good, hate all ill whatsoever, whether it pleasure, or displeasure them, they stand not upon it, they hate the very nature of all ill. Those whose obedience and affections are partiall, they hate some evils, but not others, which is not true hatred wrought by the Spirit of God, for that is universall to the whole kind.

Then also, wheresoever true hatred is, it is unpla-

Reason 3.

Quest.

Answer.
Our hatred of
sinne is, when
it is universall

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unplacable and unappeasable there's no true end of sound hatred, but by the abolishing altogether of that thing it hates; as wee see the hatred of Satan to the Church and people of God, is unappeasable and unquenchable; nothing in the world can stay Satans hatred, nor the hatred of his instruments, who hate the remembrance of Gods people. Therefore the very name of *Calvin* and *Luther* must be put out of their booke to satisfie their hatred. Not only when they are dead, burne their bones, but abolish their memory if they can. So there is the like disposition in Gods people to that which is ill. A godly disposition it hateth sin even to the death, and is not quiet untill all sin be abolished. Whereupon it is never quiet in this life, but desires Heaven, not enduring patiently the least reliques and rags of sin: desiring that that which it so hateth, might have no being at all. Those who mince and cull things, who are so gentle and tender towards their sins and corruptions in themselves and others: is this that hatred which is unappeasable, and never rests, till it see either a through Reformation or abolishing of what it so hateth. Wherein it is a more rooted affection then anger, for hatred is a rooted offensive displeasure against persons and things; and so rooted as that nothing in the world can root it out. Anger may be appeased, it is appeased in God, and it may and must be in men. But hatred is implacable, aiming at the annihilation of the thing so hated.

Again,

Again, where true hatred and indignation is there the neerer the ill is to us, the more we hate it, &c. As we hate it in it selfe, so we hate it the more the nearer it is to us, as a *Toade* or any venomous thing, the neerer it is to us, wee loath and abhorre it the more. So certainly whosoever hates and abhorreth sin as sin (as it is a hateful thing to a renewed soule) so he hateth sin more in himselfe then in others: because it is neere in his owne bosome. Every man hates a snake more in his bosome then a farre off, because it is more likely to do him harme there. Therefore those that flatter their owne corruptions, and are violent against others, as *Judah* against *Thamar*, she shall be burned, bring her forth and burn her, when himselfe had gotten her with child. So many are severe in punishing of others, as if they were wondrous zealous: but what are they in their owne breast? do they reforme sin in their owne hearts and lives? he that truly hates sin, he hateth his own sins more then others, because it is neere him.

And so (in proportion) he that hates sin truly will hate it in his owne family, children and servants, more then in others abroad. It was a great fault in *David*, that he cockered up *Adoniah* and others in his owne house, whilst he was more strict abroad. Can men thinke to redresse and hate sin in the common-wealth, and yet suffer it in their families? true hatred is most conversant in its strength neere hand. Those who suffer deboystnesse and prophane-nesse

SER. X.

3.

When we hate sinne chiefly in our selves.

Gen 3^s. 24.

4.

When we hate sin most in our families, &c.

SER. X.

ness in their families, and never check it in their children and servants, they hate not sin, vvhatsouer countenance they may take upon them of reformation abroad, it commeth out of by-respects, and not out of true hatred.

5.
When we hate
the greatest sin
in the greatest
measure.

Againe, he that hateth sin truly as sin vwill hate the greatest sin in the greatest measure, because he hates it, as it is hatefull. Now in the nature of things, the greatest sin deserveth the greatest abomination, and averfation from it. Therefore, he vvhoe truly hateth sin, he hates the greatest sin most of all. Those therefore that are very nice in lesse matters, and loose in greater things, it is but hypocrisie: for he vvhoe truly hates sin as sin, vvhoe the greatest sin is, thither he directs the edge of his hatred, vvhich is the strongest carried against the strongest ill. And such a one will not respect persons in evill; but wheresoever he findeth it, if he have a calling, there will be an answerable hatred of it. Therefore if one be a Minister of the Word of God, he vwill do as good *Micaiab* did, and vwill not balke *Ahab* for his greatnesse. And like good *John Baptist*, he will tell *Herod* of his faults, because he hates sinne as sinne; therefore (vvhoe he hath a calling to it) he will hate it proportionably in the greatest measure. Good *Ely* in this case, was too indulgent over his sons: but we must love no man so nearely, as to love the ill in them.

1 King. 22.

1 Sam. 2:

6.

If we can en-
dure Reproofes
for sin.

Again, a man may know that he truly hates sin, if he can endure admonition and reproofe for sin.

He

He that hates a venemous plant which troubleth the ground, will not be displeas'd if a man come and tell him that hee hath such a plant in his ground, and will helpe him to dig it up: surely he cannot be displeas'd with the party. So here if a man doe truly hate sin, will he be angry with him that shall tell him that hee is obnoxious to such an evill which will hurt him dangerously and damne his soule if it be not helpt: surely no: therefore let men pretend what they will, those who swell against private reproofe, they doe not hate sin as sin. Onely adde wethis Caution: A Reproofe may be administred with such indiscretion, out of selfe-love, and with a high hand, as that a man may dislike the carnall manner of reprovng. But if it be done in a good manner, he that hates reproofe, because hee loveth himselfe and his sin (pretend what he will) he hates not sinne.

So if a man love to be flattered in his sin, it is a signe he hates not sin truly. For there is naturally a great deale of selfe-love in man, which makes him that he loves to bee flattered in his sins: whereupon hee comes to be abused to his owne destruction, especially great men. Now it is a signe of an ill state of soule, to be subject to be abused by flattery, and to hate instruction: (saith Paul) *Am I your enemy, because I have told you the Truth.*

Againe, we may know what our hatred to sinne is, by our willingnesse or unwillingnesse to talke of it, or mention it, or to venture upon

we

7.

Such will not be flattered, in their sins.

Gal. 4. 16.

8.

If we hate to talke of, or mention it and shew occasions.

SER. X.

the occasions thereof. Where hatred is, there is outward averfation; we fly from what we hate, and shun to frequent places where wee may receive offence. Whatsoever hath an Antipathy to nature, that we hate and run away from. Therefore those that present themselves to the occasions of sin, upon no calling: say what they will) they feed sin and live according to the flesh: those that hate a thing, will never come neare it if they can choose. Therefore, those that present themselves willingly to places infected, where there is nothiug religious, but scorning of Religion, your common representations of abomination, pretend what they will, their intent is to strengthen their owne corruption, against the good of their soules; this is the issue. Those that hate sin, will hate all that which may leade to it the representations of sin also. Can a man hate sin and see it acted? wickednesse is learned, when one seeth it acted, as one of the Ancients saith well: therefore let us by these and the like tryalstake notice what our hatred to sin is.

*A limitation
for expressing
of our hatred to
sinne.*

I.

We must consider our calling to reprove others.

Onely this our zèale, and indignation to sin must have a mitigation and be regulated, least like an exorbitant river it exceed the bounds: therefore not to follow the Schoole niceties in the exactnesse of differences, we will touch the marke a little, how this zeale and hatred to sin in reproofe (especially) must be qualified: wherein we must consider divers things.

First, Our calling must be respected, for howsoever

soever we must carry an universall hatred to sin, thus far, that we must not do it. Yet in the discovery of hatred and dislike to others, we must consider what calling we have and how farre we go.

And it must bee done with a sweet temper, keeping our distance, and reserving the due respect unto those in whom we shew our dislike.

As we see, *Nathan* when he came to tell *David* of his fault, how he doth it, what art he useth, It must so be done, as that it may appeare to be done out of pure zeale, that it is no wilde-fire, nor no heate of nature, but that it commeth meereley from the spirit, and in much love with mildnesse and pittie: in which case it carrieth a wondrous authority. The discovery of hatred to the faults either in a Minister, or in a Magistrate, though they must be truly dealt with, and have their faults told them: yet there must be respect had to their place, by reason of the weakenesse of men. As it is with the body, great men have their Physitians as well as meener: onely their physicke must be more costly, because (perhaps) of their tendernesse of their constitutions: but as for their bodies, they must not be suffered to perish, nor will not. So for their soules, they must have that which other men have to helpe them: but it must be done with reservation and respect, as *Paul* speaking to *Festus* the Governour, calleth him most Noble *Festus*. &c. Praising also goodnesse (in some sort) upon *King Agrippa*: O King *Agrippa*, believest thou the Prophets, I know thou dost

So

2.

It must be with a due respect & keeping of distance to the party reprooved.

Act. 26.25.

Act. 26.27.

So we see how wee may examine whether our hatred to sin be true or not.

Let every one therefore make Use of it in their calling; Those that are intrusted with Gods message, let them know that Gods Ambassadors are to be faithfull in their Message; for they serve a greater Lord then is upon the Earth. And let them shew their true hatred of ill, and the danger of sinne wheresoever they finde it. And for those that are Governours of others, let them not thinke that they hate sin in themselves, except they hate sin also in all that belong to them and reforme it. For we see here an evidence of conversion: when *Ephraim* was converted. *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* and *2 Cor. 7. 11.* There is an excellent description of the nature of Repentance by many parcels. The *Corinthians* had repented: how is this evidenced? O! Behold (saith he) *this selfe same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort; what carefulnesse it wrought in you? yea what clearing of your selves, yea what indignation? yea what feare? yea what vehement desire? yea what zeale? yea what revenge? what Revenge and Indignation against sin, a kinde of extremity of hatred: a hatred quickned and kindled, the height of hatred. What Indignation? Insinuating, that wheresoever there is the truth of conversion there will bee indignation against sin in our selves. As David confesseth of himselfe having sinned. So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee. When he suffered*

suffered such a thought to lodge in his breast, that it was better with the children of the world, then with the Church of God, he was troubled for it. But when hee went into the Church of God, and saw the end of wicked men, then he saw his owne foolishnesse in being so deceived, and speaks against himself with indignation. So whersoever there is true conversion, there is hatred with indignation against our selves. As in that place before alleadged, they shall say unto their Idols, *get thee hence*: What have I any more to doe with you? which is a phrase of speech shewing a disposition of hatred to the utmost extention. *Get you hence*; So Christ to the Divell: *Get thee behinde me Satan*. This is the right temper of a truly converted Christian, exprest by divers phrases in Scripture; By a deniall of our lusts, by killing and crucifying, by pulling out the eye, and cutting of the right hand; which phrases, doe they not imply a great strength of hatred and indignation? when wee must as it were pull out our owne eyes: that is our beloved sinnes, which are as deare to us as our eyes, and as usefull as our right hands unto us. Yet these must be cut off, mortified, crucified and denyed. Therefore let us not deceive our selves: but let us judge of the truth of our conversion, by our true hatred to sin in our selves and others, and in all who are committed to our charge.

If this be so, what shall we judge of a cold luke-warme temper? It is the nature of cold

Ira. 30. 22.

Col. 3. 2.

SER. X.

to gather Heterogeniall bodies together. As we see in Ice there are straws, and stones, and all Heterogeniall things incorporated, because the cold congeales them together. But where there is fire, there is a seperating of the drosse from the good mettall. So where the Spirit of God is, it is not so cold as to jumble sin and sin, this and that together: but it purgeth away that which is ill, and that which is good it makes better. For in what proportion the fire of Gods Spirit stirs up that which is good, in that proportion there is a hatred of that which is ill. They are unparaleld affections. Those that love God they hate evil. Those that are alike to all things, doe shew that they have not this active true hatred against sin. No, *Ephr. iim* (shall say) *what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

Quest.

But now how shall we come to get this hatred against sin, and holy Revenge and Indignation against our selves for that which is amisse in us.

Answ.

How wee may come to hate our finnes. We must get neare communion with God, and a cleare sight of his excellency.
Exod. 32. 19

First, we must every day labour to get a cleerer sight of the excellency of that which is good, and a neerer communion with God by Prayer and Meditation: and then when we have beene with God, it will worke an abomination of whatsoever is contrary unto him. Thus *Moses*, when he had talked with God in the mountaine, at his returne seeing them dancing and sacrificing to the Calfe of gold, what did *Moses*? he brake the Tables a sunder. So it is with those that have communion

munion with God, who is light it selfe, and in whom is no darknesse, who is Holinesse and purity it selfe: those who have effectually conversed with God in his Ordinances, Meditation, Prayer and the like; when they looke upon sinne which is contrary to God, they looke upon it with a more perfect hatred. So *Esay 6.* When God appeared to the Prophet, and touched his tongue with a coale from the Altar (saith he) *Woe is me for I am undone, because I am a man of uncleane lips, &c. for mine eyes have seene the King the Lord of Hostes.* Thus when once he had communion with God, he began to loath himselfe. So if we would hate evill, let us labour more and more to be holy and to increase in that divine affection of love. For in what measure wee love that which is good, in that measure we hate the evill. As it is, *Pf. 97. 10. Yee that love the Lord, hate evill.* Insinuating that all that love the Lord hate evill. All those that are neere unto God, they hate all sin: the more they grow into communion with God, the more they grow in the hatred of all that is contrary. Let us therefore never talke of love to God, and of Piety and such like; for if there be any grace or communion with God, we hate all sin in that measure as God hateth; he who hath no zeale to reform that which God hateth, he hath no love at all.

Again, the way to stir us up to hate sin in our selves and others, & out of that hatred to reforme it, is to set before us, what it is in it selfe: that

2.

Wee must set before us what sin is in it selfe.

SER. X.

it is the loathsomest thing in the world, worse then the Divell himself: for it is sin which makes him a Divell. That Corruption, Pride, Worldlines, and Profanesse which we cherish, is worse then the Divell himself, because this made him a Divel. Let us make sintherfore as loathsome as we can, and then wee shall hate it. And let us present it to our soules, as the most dangerous thing of all, the ill of ill, which bringeth all other evils upon us. This may appeare more ugly in our sight, in that the foulness thereof could not be expiated, but by the death of the Sonne of God. And consider what great torments he hath prepared for that which we so cherish: this proud sinfull and carnall disposition of ours so opposite to all goodnesse, God hath appointed to punish it with eternall seperation from his presence. It maketh God hate his owne creatures: *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Divell and his Angels.*

Mat. 25.41.

3.

We must consider the dangerous condition of unrepenting sinners.

And to stir us up to reforme sin in all that belong unto us, we must consider the dangerous condition that they live and die in, in whom this is not reformed, Eternal torments and seperation from God. These things may help to work in our hearts a hatred of sin: and from this hatred, a Reformation of it, with zeale and indignation. Therefore let us labour more and more for this temper of soule, that we may be like God and carry the Characters of the Children of God in us. There is no affection will distinguish

guish us from hypocrits more then hatred, which commeth of love, which is the first borne and breeding affection of all others. For why do we hate any thing, but because it is opposite to that we love? why do we hate ill, but because it is opposite to God and to Christ whom we love? amongst others, take we along this consideration with us, that it is the Speare which wounded our blessed Saviour, and that it is that he hates most, which we love most. Consider the Holinesse of God that he would punish it in his owne son, ere it should not be punished.

And consider that it is the bane of all our comfort, this which we so cherish, and that it imbitters all things to us. We cannot rejoyce (no not in the good blessings of God) whilst we are guilty of sin: Neither can wee pray comfortably, whilst our hearts regard it. In this case that which should rejoyce the heart, communion with God is terrible to us. What have I to doe to take his name in my mouth, when I embrace such finnes. The day of judgement is terrible also, for how can a man thinke comfortably thereof, if therewith he expect a heavy doome for his finnes he liveth in? So we may say of the day of death, none of these can be thought upon without terror, when therewithall it commeth to ones minde the cutting off from their sins, and the *terror of the Lord* against all sinne whatsoever. It should be the joy of our hearts to thinke of these happy times: therefore there must needs be a

4.

We must consider it is the bane of all our comforts.
Psal. 66. 18.

Psal. 50. 16.

2 Cor. 5. 11.

SER. X.

great deale of sinne and atheisme in our hearts, when we cannot thinke comfortably of them. For either we beleeve not these things, and so are plaine Atheists: or else, if we beleeve them, we are exceeding foolish to loose future joyes, for the poore pleasures of sinne for a season.

5.
We must grow
in the love of
grace & good-
nesse.

Let us labour to grow in grace more & more, for the more we grow in the love of God and of good things, the more we shall hate sin: for whatsoever may be said for the growth in love & cherishing of it to good things, the same may be said for the hatred of ill in a contrary sense.

6.
Change the ob-
ject to its right
opposite.

The last helpe shall be, to place and drive our affections a contrary way, to translate and place them on a contrary object, when they are stirred up to evill attempts. As when *Hatred* is stirred up, direct it to its proper object, sinne: when *Love* is irregular; thinke with our selves, that God hath not planted this affection for this object, but to carry me another way: I must love God above all, and all that hee loveth for his sake. Hath God put Love and Hatred into my heart to hate my brother whom I should love, and to love the Divell, and hate God? O no! I should love God above all, and my brother as my selfe; and hate the Divell and all his workes, whom I have renounced in my Baptisme; therefore in distempers of the affections, make a diversion, and turne them the right way. As Physitians use to doe, when the distempred blood runs dangerously one way, If they cannot stop that, they

they open a veine to drive the course of the blood another way. So it is Christian policie, when the affections run dangerously one way, then to reflect thus upon our selves. I but is this the end why God hath placed this affection in me, Certainly no, he hath planted this affection in me for another purpose. Therefore I will hate that which I should hate, sin in generall: and my owne sinne most of all, which makes me hate my brother. This should be our daily taske and study, to take off the affections where they should not be placed: and to fix them where they should be placed: and there to let them go amaine, the faster the better; restraining them where they should not run out.

Thus we ought to temper our selves, and to worke in our selves as much as may be a sound hatred to all sin, not only of the second table, but of the first also. The Church here saith, *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* Now I hate all vaine inventions. And thinke not with *Gallio*, that this belongeth not to us, if we be Magistrates and called to it, to stand for the cause of the Church and true Religion.

What have I any more to doe with Idols?

The last thing to be observed from *Ephraims* manner of expressing his indignation is,

That where love is not well contracted and begunne, it will not hold to the end, but will end in eternall hatred.

The *Serpent* and *Hevab* had some poore acquaintance together (as the issue proved.) What

observ.

That all wicked leagues must end in everlasting hatred.

SER. X.

Gen. 3. 15.

did it end in? *The seed of the woman shall breake the Serpents head.* This association and acquaintance ended in everlasting warre and breach. So all covenants, leagues and associations with those wee should not joyne with, can never soder handfomely together but will end in everlasting hatred. What a strict league was in former times betwixt *Ephraim* and *Idols*? But when *Ephraims* eyes are opened to see his *Idols*, *Divels*, he detests and loaths all abominations; and is of another mind; *what have I any more to do with Idols?* he abominates thē, as the word importeth.

That naughty
association and
leagues causes a
miserable rent
in the affecti-
ons.

Let us therefore beware with whom wee joyne in intimate league. For what makes miserable so much, as the renting of the affections from that they were strongly placed on; when love is rent from the thing beloved. If we place our affections (for some bie respects) upon wicked persons, this will cause so much the more torment and indignation against our selves, that we were so foolish to suffer our affections to enter so deeply where they should not. Those that glory in their league with Antichrist, and wonder at the Beast, thinking him a Demy-god: will this be alway so? O no, when GOD opens the eyes of any of his people, they shall hate them for ever. So wicked persons that now are led on to this and that wicked course, shall this bee alwayes so? Woe to thee if it bee: but the time may come that thou shalt say, *What have I any more to doe with Idols*, or
with

Rev. 17. 12, 16

with such anones acquaintance? I cannot indure to looke on him, he tainted me, and misled me, and tempted me: now we must be two, part we must, and I would we had never met together. Therefore before we place our affections on any, consider who they be; whether we be likely to live with them for ever or not? whether there be any evidence of grace in them. If not, let them be two to us; for whatsoever vanity is in the things or Persons we love, if we belong to God wee must bee seperate from them, unlesse we will be damned. Therefore we must be wise to prevent the danger betimes. *Ephraim* might have knowne before the danger of Idolatry had he bin wise, and prudent; but it is well he knows it now at length, which causeth him so to abhominat *Idols*: *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* This much is spoken because of the luke-warmenes and cold temper, neutrality and halting of a great many in the world: having so many sinfull combinations, and associations one with another, as if these things were not materiall.

Now let men consider what a disposition this is, and how it stands with that disposition which must bee in those that are members of Christ, and looke for Heaven. Let a Christian alwayes remember what he is, and what he hopes for, and this will put him in a right temper. 1. What he is, a King, and an heire of Heaven, &c. After which hee should reason with good *Nehemiah*, *Shall such a man as I flie?* shall

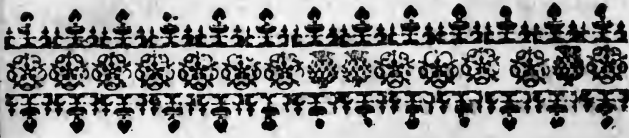
*A consideration
in choice of
company.*

*That a reflection
on of what we
are and hope for
is a means to
preserve a right
temper.*

shall such a man as I doe this? I am redeemed from my sins and advanced to be a King, to rule over my lusts, to be an heire of heaven and eternall happinesse in the world to come, to raigne with Christ, and shall I do thus and thus? Doth this stand with my new temper, this sin, this filthinesse, this base action and thoughts, that I am tempted to and incumbered with. Shall such a man as I follow these base actions, wayes and companions? consider we this well, and then it will breed *Ephraims* Resolution, *What have I any more to doe with this base lust?* what hath it to doe with me? or I with it? Is this and this action befitting a King and an heire of heaven, and a new creature? and if a man be in Authority, then let him consider what *Mordecai* said to *Hester*; *What if thou be called to the Kingdome for such a purpose.* What if thou be called to this place or dignity for this purpose? to reforme such and such abuses. Think with thy selfe, not only in particular what thou art; but in thy place, what if thou be called to reforme such abuses? such unsound doctrines? to stand for God and for the truth. This will breed this resolute indignation of *Ephraim* in us; *What have I any more to doe with Idols?* All which is for the manner of *Ephraims* indignation: A strong negation of an abominated thing; *What have I any more to doe, &c.* The next, which is the *Substance* and *Matter* abominated [*Idolatry*] must be reserved for some other time.

Hest. 4. 14.

The end of the tenth Sermon.



THE ELEVENTH SERMON.

Hos, 14. 8,

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols? I have heard him and observed him: I am like a greene firre-tree, from me is thy fruit found.



WE have heard at severall times heeretofore, how gratiofly G O D deales with his people, alluring them by many free and gracious Promises to his service, the particulars wherof, we heard hereofore at large. This 9. ver, hath reference unto that which went before

before, *Ver. 3.* There *Ephraim* renounceth his former Idols. *Ashur shall not save us, &c.* and here *Ephraim* shall say, *what have I any more to doe with Idols?* unto which the answer is, *I have heard him, and observed him; I am like a greene firre-tree unto him: from me is thy fruit found.* Now in that *Ephraim* shall say, *what have I any more to dee with Idols?* This in summe is onely the first part of the third Verse repeated in another manner: that *Ephraim* shall and will goe on in abhominating Idols, be constant in his former resolution. Therefore in that *Ephraim* shall by the Spirit of grace, go on in renouncing all false confidence, God sheweth herethat *Ephraim* shall loose nothing by it (for he intends here the continuance of time) *I have heard him, and I doe hear him, and I will hear him and respect him, and be like a shady greene firre-tree to shade him, causing him him also to be aboundant in fruit, From me is thy fruit found.*

Ephraim shall say, *what have I any more to doe with Idols:* here we considered the manner of expression, and then the Matter it selfe.

Ephraim shall say, *what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

To come therefore to the Matter it selfe specified (*Idolatry*) against which *Ephraims* indignation is directed:

What have I to doe with Idols?

In handling whereof we must take in all these foure together, that is,

1. *False Doctrine*, which is the foundation of *Idolatry*.

2. *Idols themselves*: or,

3. *Idolatry*, which they tend to (for hee which hates *Idols*, hates them, because he hates *Idolatry*) or,

4. *Idolaters*, as if he had said,

What have I any more to doe with *Idolatrous Doctrines*, opinions or conceits: or with *Idols* framed according to these conceits: or with *Idolatry* or *Idolaters*? For these goe together, no man worships *Idols*, but because hee is poisoned in his conceits: and *Idols* are forbidden, because *Idolatry* is dangerous, and communion with *Idolaters* is forbidden, because of *Idolatry*. So that the *Doctrine*, *Idols*, *Idolatry* and *Communion with them*, all these are objects of *Ephraims* abomination and indignation.

Ephraim (shall say) what have I any more to do with *Idols*?

It were to mis-spēd pretious time (appointed for better uses) to tell you of the abominable distinctions of the Papists of *Latria* and *Dulia*, or to insit upon a discourse of Heathenish *Idolatry*: Truthes, but not so profitable for us to spend time in. Therefore we will rather come to shew the Reasons, why *Ephraim* so abhorreth *Idolatry*, *Idols*, and conceits of all.

To begin in the first place with *Idols*; when *Ephraim* is truly converted, he hates them, because *Idols* are abominable to God, unto whom *Ephraim* is now converted. *Ephraim*

hates

I.
Reasons of *Ephraims* hatred unto *Idols*.

I.
Because they are abominable unto God

SER. XI.

hates *Idols* for *Idolatry* is spirituall Adultery, Religion is as it were a conjugall act of marriage, so that a breach in religious worship, is a breach of spirituall marriage. Now the worshipping of *Idols* being a breach of the conjugall act of marriage betwixt God and the soule, spirituall Adultery, it must needs be abominable. For Adultery is an abominable filthy thing; much more spirituall adultery: therefore (saith *Ephraim*) *What have I now any more to doe with Idols.*

2.

Because Idolatry frames base conceits of God

And then againe, Idolatry frameth base conceits of God: whereas on the contrary we should elevate and raise up our hearts unto him, Idolatry puls him downe and conformes him to our base conceits. Were it not a wrong to man, to make him like a Swine, or an Ape or some such ridiculous creature? who in this case would thinke himselfe well used? there is not such disproportion betwixt any creature and man, as there is betwixt the great God of Heaven and Earth and the best creature that can be made to resemble him. Therefore it is an abominable abuse and dishonour to the great Majesty of God to be represented any kinde of way.

3.

Because they are opposite to God.

Againc, Consider the opposition betweene any representation of God, and God: they are corruptible things, God is incorruptible; they are visible, God is invisible: they are vaine and nothing; God a being of himselfe, who giveth being unto all things. God is the living God, and the cause of all life. To be
brief,

brief, the Scripture to shew Gods hatred of them, calleth them dung-hill gods, and (*Abell*) as it is in this booke, *vanity, nothing*, a name to alienate the affections from them.

Yea further, because God is a Jealous God, and will not give his glory to another. *Ephraim* therefore as soone as he commeth to know God, he hateth Idols, because he knows God being a Jealous God could not endure them.

Now Idolatry is committed, when either we set up false gods in place of the true God, or when we worship the true God in a false manner.

But now another Question may be mooved, whether the Papists be Idolaters or not? For we live amongst many of them; therefore we cannot be to wary of them.

The Answer is affirmative; they are Idolaters, and worse in some sort then the Heathen Idolaters were: Onely change the names of the Popish Saints which they in *Popery* worship, and the names that the Heathen worship, and they will be all one. Now names be no Realities.

How may this be cleared?

First, they give the honour due to God to others, which is Idolatry, the religious worship only due unto God they give unto other things. Christ when he said, *him onely shalt thou serve*: excepted the least divine worship from the creature. The Divell we know would have had him fall downe before him: but Christs answer

4.

Exod. 34.
Because God is
a Jealous God.
1sa 48.8.

How Idolatry
is committed.

Quest.

Answer.

Papists proved
to be Idolaters.

I.

Because they
give the honour
due unto God
unto others.
Mat 4.

SER. XI.

answer is, *Him only shalt thou serve*; that is him only shalt thou religiously prostrate thy selfe unto; so that religious worship is proper to God only. Now this they give to Saints, for they pray to them, which is a religious worship.

Object.

But they object, that they pray not directly to them: but to them as Mediators, that they may pray to Christ for them.

Answ. I.

First, they raise them above their degree to make them mediators, and so dethrone Christ of his office of Mediator, at least joyne copartners with him.

But this is not all, they pray directly to Saints, to help them against severall ills (as they have severall Saints, for severall evils) whatsoever they say who are not ashamed of lying to further their designes, yet their books and writings doe testifye the contrary.

Then againe they vow to Saints, as in the forme of their vowes is seene: *I vow to the Virgin Mary, &c.* Now a vow is a religious act. They vow to Saints, and burne incense unto them, erect Temples, and set a part daies for their worship, and so breake all the foure Commandements of the first Table. In a good fashion it is not unfit to remember them, that their memoriall may be kept: but we are not to worship them.

And besides Saints, they have other false gods: for their head of the Church is an abominable Idoll, unto whom they ascribe that which is proper unto Christ, to be the head

of

of the Church, which hath no influence from him, but all from Christ the spirituall head thereof. Therefore the Apostle complaineth of such: *who hold not the head, &c.* Those of the Romish Church, *hold not the head*, hold not Christ, because they attribute that to Saints and men, which is proper to Christ onely. They make the Pope the judge of all controversies, who must give authority to the word, and determine Scripture to be Scripture, what a shamefull thing is this to make him judge of the Scriptures which must judge him at the last day? A pitifull thing it is, to see *a man of sinne* goe about to judge the righteous law of God, and to determine of that which must ere long determine him unto eternall torments, without particular repentance. Yet being spirituallly drunke, this folly they are given too, that they will be judge of that which must be judge of them. Many waies they make him an Idoll, ascribing that to him which is proper to Christ.

So likewise, they make their Sacraments to be Idols; for they ascribe to the water in Baptisme power of conferring grace. Now grace is Gods creature onely, for all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot conferre the least dram of grace; it is a thing of Gods making. Now to raise an element to conferre grace, and then to trust in it, *ex opere operato*, for the conferring of it, is to make an Idoll of it. And for the Bread; none of all the *Heathens* ever had such an abhominable Idoll as the

Y

Masse,

Col. 2. 19.

5.

I.

Baptisme.

2.

The Bread in
the Lords Sup-
per

Pf. 16. 4.

Masse, a breadengod: for they worshipped living creatures, and there is not the worst living creature, but it is better then a peece of bread; and yet they worship that, for (by their owne confession) if the intention of the Priest be not to the action, there is nothing but bread. How may the minds then of men be tormented, when they may or shall think, perhaps the Priest hath no such intention: and so are in danger of Idolatry. For, saith the *Psalmist*, *Their sorrowes shall be multiplied that hasten after another god, &c.* So certainly the sorrowes, and scruples of those that are Idolaters shall be multiplied, they cannot but bee much tormented in soule sometimes. *Coster* himselfe a forward Jesuite acknowledgeth, *That if (upon the words of Consecration) the Bread bee not turned and transubstantiated into the body of Christ, we are the most abhominable Idolaters of the world.* But we make the *Minor* and *Assumption* (long since proved by the late worthies of our Church) but there is no such transubstantiating of the Bread into the Body of Christ: therefore by their owne consent they are the most abhominable Idolaters of the world, worse then the Heathen.

And in their equalizing traditions (which are but the inventions of mans braine) with the Scriptures: They commit Idolatry, in that they make their very Church an Idoll. But what should we speake of their Church, when they have the Pope who is their Church veruallly: for what is said of the one may be said of

B. Jewell.
D. Rainolds.
D. Fulke.
D. Whitaker.
D. Willet
Perkins, &c.

of the other. When they come to the issue, the Church is nothing but the Pope; whatsoever their Church or Counsels say, hee is the whole Church. Many wayes they are grosse Idolaters, especially the common-people: for though they say they give not *Latria*, worship to the Image, but *Dulia*, service. But can the common-people distinguish, who give worship to all alike? To say we worship not the Image, but God before the Image, was the Heathens excuse, as we may see in *Arnobius*. Can the common-people distinguish? no, for they are ignorant Images themselves, in this they are worse then the Heathens, because they have more light, and still the more light, the more sin. For they have bin fore-told, that the whore of *Rome* should be the mother of all fornications, the spirituall *Babylon, Sodom* and *Egypt*, in regard of Idolatry, the mother of all these abominations. Now for them who have bin forewarned hereof, and in so much light still to continue Idolaters, and persist in false worship, is to be worse then the Heathens, who had not the like light and warning.

But what is the reason that they are so impudent and audacious?

First (to answer with the Scriptures) they are drunke with the whores cup, and we know a drunken man dares doe any thing.

And then againe, (as the *Psalmist* speakes) because those who worship Idols become blockish and stupid like unto them, for an I-

Revel. 17.5.

Quest.

Answer. I.

Revel. 17.2.

Answer. 2.

SER. XI.

Pfal. 115. 8.

Vse. I.

Gen. 19.

Rom. 10 9.

1 King. 19. 18

doll is a blockish dead thing. So Idolaters are stupid dead things in a sort, who are seldome converted; partly because they are drunke, and partly because they are stupid, like the Idols they worship.

If this be so, as it is too true to the eye of the whole world, then how ought we to blesse God, who hath brought us out of this palpable *Ægyptian* darkenesse, out of spirituall *Sodome*, as *Lot* was out of that *Sodome*: O we cannot be thankfull enough, nor ought we to desire to returne to *Sodome* againe, or unto *Ægypt*. Where then is place left for neutrality? those neuters that will be of neither Religion? Is such a disposition from the Spirit of God, which maketh *Ephraim* say here, *what have I any more to doe with Idols?* *Ephraim* would not be a neuter, therefore what shall we say unto them that present themselves to *Masses* in their travels especially; is this to say with *Ephraim*, *what have I any more to do with Idols?* we must believe with the heart, and confesse with the mouth to salvation: if a man might escape with having his heart to Godwards and his body prostrate, where were confession? In *Elyas* time, God told him, that there were left seven thousand in *Israel*, who had not bowed the knee to *Baal*, that is, who made no bodily prostration. Therefore as the Papists doe not joyn with us, so neither ought we with them, if we hold the contrary Religion false: in this case we should not present our selves with them in any service.

Againe,

Againe, if this be true, what do we think of reconcilers of Religion? a thing impossible, as the Apostle sheweth, *For what communion hath God with Belial? Christ with Antichrist? what communion? The Question is a strong negation, as that of Ephraim here: What have I now any more to do with Idols?*

But some may say we differ from them onely in circumstance.

We may aske any man who hath brains in his head, whether Idolatry be a circumstance or not? it being cleare that they are as great Idolaters as the Heathens in many instances. If any affirme that Idolatry is a circumstance, there is no disputing with such a one. That which is the sin which makes God abhorre and desert his own people, is that a circumstance? is that a circumstance which is the chiefe sin against the first Table? Granting that they are Idolaters, that the *Pope is Antichrist*, and *Rome to be Babylon*, and *Babylon to be the mother of all fornication*. This must needs follow, that there can be no reconciling of these two Religions: we may come neare them, and become Papists, but they will never come neere us to be good Christians.

Againe, if this be so that Popery be Idolatry, and that we must beware of all Idolatry, let us take heed therefore that we have nothing to doe with them more then we must needs. Converse with them in our callings wee may, because (as an ancient Father saith) we be possessors of the world, and not of Religion:

SER. XI.

Vse 2.

2 Cor. 6. 14, 15

Object.

Answer.

Vse 3.

SER. XI.

we must go out of the world if we vwill not have to do vvith them sometimes in the places where vve live, but amity is very dangerous vvith such; the Scripture runs much upon it, should we love them vvhom God hates. It was *Eves* fault, that without a calling she ventured to talke with the Serpent, we should therefore shun conversing and parly vvith them as much as may be. As there were railes set about Mount *Synai*, to keep off the people from touching the Mountaine; so God hath set hedges about the second Commandement, to keepe us off from offending in it: as it was usuall with God in this kind. As when he would keepe them farre from *murder*, he forbade them to kill the damme vvith the young, and not to seeth a kid in his mothers milke, onely to restrain them from murder that abominable sin; such precepts the *Iewes* call *the hedges of the Commandements*. So for *Idolatry*, the Scripture would have us *bate the garment spotted with the flesh*, to defile the Coverings of the Images; to account them as a *menstruous cloath*, &c: and to have nothing to doe with the *unfruitfull workes of darkenesse*. To hate all monuments of *Idolatry*. As *Augustine* saith of monuments; *any monument moves and stirs up the mind*. So any thing that may move or stirre us to *Idolatry*, we should abhorre and keepe a farre off from it.

And therefore the Commandements are set downe in the highest pitch of the sinne, to shew that we should avoid all the degrees under that which

Deut. 22. 6.
Exod. 23. 19.

Jude ver. 23.
Ica 30. 22.
Eph. 5. 11.

which leadsto so great a breach, and that we should hate all those steps and leadings to the sinne it selfe. We should therefore beware of Popish writers, and do with them as was done with the Magick books in the *Acts*; burne them all least they corrupt our selves and others. Learne we this of the Papists, who hate our books, burn them, or locke them up safe: yea hate the very Names of *Luther* and *Calvin*, much more their books.

Act. 19. 19.

In this case it is with the soule of man, as with water that reliseth of that soyle through which it runs: if it run through a hot soyle, as bathes through a sulphury soyle, it tasteth of that. So the spirit of a man tasteth of those authors hee runnes through. Therefore such who converse much in Popish writings (unlesse Ministers who have a calling that way to confute them) are in danger to be ensnared by them.

That a mans spirit tasteth of the Authors he is most conversant in.

And then againe, if we must hate all Idolatry, we must take heed of occasions. Not like some looser Christians, which make no matter of crucifixes: how doth the Spirit of *Ephraim* here agree with such? a crucifix is but a teacher of lies, representing onely the outside and that falsly: for there is no expression in Scripture what kind of man Christ was. And if there were, yet the Apostle sheweth, *That we must now no more know him any more after the flesh*: Not as such a man, as tall and faire, &c. But know him as the Mediator, as King of Heaven and Earth, avoiding all lewd base conceits

Vse 4.

2 Cor. 5. 16.

SER. XI.

1 Cor. 10. 14.

The more close
Idolatries of
many Christians

I.

To have false
conceptions of
God.

Quest.

Answ. I.

We must not
conceive of God
as of a finite
essence.

2.

We must con-
ceive of God
distinguished in
three Persons.

3.

Wee must not
conceive of God
without Christi

of him: people in this kind are too bold, and run too neere Popery. A Father saith well, *No man is safe that is neare to danger.* We are commanded to fly from *Idolatrie*, we must not come neare the pits brinke, least we fall in; runne and flie from it as from a Serpent, dally not with the occasions.

But to leave this grosse *Idolatrie*, to speake of something which more neerely concerneth us, and which we are prone to: though we hate these grosse *Idolatries*, yet there be some we are more neerely addicted to: as,

First of all, there is a pronenesse in us in our worship to conceive false conceptions and *Ideas* of God, and so in place of worshipping God, we worship an *Idoll* of our own brain.

It may be said, How shall we conceive of God when we worship him?

First of all, *Negatively*, do not dishonour God in imagining any character of an infinite incomprehensible God, but conceive of him, as an infinite essence.

And then conceive not absolutely of God, but of God distinguished in three Persons, The Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost, or else wee conceive an *Idoll*. For there are three Persons in one common nature, and in our Prayers we must not conceive the Nature without the Persons.

In the third place, we must not in our Prayers conceive of God without Christ the Mediatour. For even as God was onely to be knowne and spoken

spoken to towards the Tabernacle: so Christ is the Tabernacle, now where God manifests his gracious presence, and will be worshipped in him the Mediator. For God considered out of Christ is a consuming fire: without Christ no converse with God. Let us therefore take Christ along with us, when we go to God, go to him by God in our Nature, our *Immanuell*, and so we shall conceive of God aright, and not worship an *Idoll* of our own brain.

Againe, there is another thing which is a common abuse among Christians, wherein they come neere to *Idolatry*, when they transforme God to be like themselves in their affections, as it is the property of all unregenerate men to doe so. *Idolatry* is so naturall it cannot but transforme God to be like it selfe, as for instance, A man that is not a gracious man, in the pride of his sinnefull course, thinks that God is like unto him: *Thou thoughtest that I was like unto thee: therefore I will come against thee, &c.* As oppressors and such who grow great by ill courses, they justifie this much: would God let me alone if he did not approove of my courses? so they make God like themselves. And so the good-fellowes of the world, they make God to allow all their dissolutenesse, because he lets them alone. So those that are fierce and cruell by nature, who delight in cruelty, vexation and blood, they transforme God as though he delighted in such things, and make him a God of blood. So others transforme

4.

It is Idolatry to transforme God like to us in affections.

Psal. 50. 21.

SER. XI.

forme God to be all mercy: this is to make God an Idoll, and as ill as if they transformed him into this and that creature, worse then the *Heathens*, in regard of their light under the Gospel, yet this is the disposition of many Christians now a dayes.

Quest.

What was the reason why the Heathens worshipped *Bacchus* and *Venus*, such abominable gods?

Answ.

They to countenance their lusts and drunkenesse deifie them; an abominable sin of the Heathen, for which God gave them up to other sins. Doth not our sin come neare theirs, when we make God to countenance our sin, and cite Scripture for it, as if God did countenance sin in his word, this is to transforme God into our own abominable conceits. Those therefore who blesse themselves in any sinfull course, they are guilty of Idolatry in the worst kind that may be; for it is as ill to transforme God to allow of such courses, as to transforme Christ to die for such who goe on in their sins without remorse, or to transform him into the likenesse of such and such vile creatures.

3.

It is Idolatry
to set somewhat
up above God
in our soules.

Further there is another sort of Idolatry Christians are subject unto, to set up something in their hearts higher then God, there is no man without grace, but he doth so untill his conversion. Nay, when a man is converted, he is prone to this, to Idolize and set up something above that which should be in the heart. Hercupon *Paul* calleth *Coverousnesse*

Idola.

Col. 3. 5.

Job 31. 24.

Idolatri : because a covetous man placeth those affections upon his owne wealth; which should dwell in God: for, *he saith to the wedge of gold, thou art my confidence*; thinking his wealth shall beare him out in any ill cause whatsoever. And then againe; that time which he should spend in thinking of God and of a better life, he burieth those thoughts in his muck and wealth, toyling and moyling in the world, when hee should serve God. Thus the covetous man is an Idolater.

And there are some guilty of Idolatri likewise in another kind, such as have mens persons too much in admiration; that deifie them; especially if they be in great place, such who will offend God before they will offend them; and whereas for Gods glory they should deny themselves: they deny themselves and make themselves fooles for men; and to please them by whom they hope to rise, deny both wit and honesty. This is abhominable Idolatri, and such are as farre from Heaven and salvation, as those that fall before an Idoll, if they repent not. O! if these men that study to please men and deny themselves for them, would be as carefull to please God as they have beene to please men, how happy, and what excellent Christians would they be. As a great man pleaser in his time said; *if he had served God as well as he had served his master the King in that time; God had not left him so in his old yeares.* To set up any man so high in our affections,

4.

Such commit Idolatri who have mens persons too much in admiration.

A Scottish Regent before his execution.

SER. XI.

Gal. 1. 10.

as for him to deny our selves, cracke our consciences; and doe things unlawfull, will bee misery in the end. *If I please men* (saith Paul) *I am not the servant of Christ.* He meaneth sinfull pleasing, for there ought to be service and respect, due honour must be given unto those who carry Gods Image, our Governours; yea great respect and honour, and nothing in this kind can be too much; but to goe beyond our bounds herein, is to commit *Idolatry*. As the *Heathen* did, when the government of *Rome* was turned into an Empire, some of their Emperors were made gods by them after *Augustus* time, wherin they could not have devised to have done them greater wrong, for they all came most of them to fearefull ends. it is ill for any man to have God his corrivall, for no greater misery can befall a man then to be set up in Gods roome, so to rule a mans honesty, will, and conscience at his pleasure; for God is a jealous God, and will not endure such *Idolatry*.

5.

Such Idolize
who professing
Christ will not
suffer any thing
for his sake.

And so in the next place, they frame Christ an *Idoll*, in taking him without his crosse; they will be of the true Religion, but when they come to suffer any thing, if it be but a frowne, a reproach or disgrace, they give out and fall backe. Such they frame to themselves an *Idoll*; a false Christ: for the knowledge of Christ is never without the Crosse, some crosse or other, some persecution or other in some kinde. *All who will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution.* A man may live godly, and

2 Tim. 3. 12.

not

not suffer persecution, but he that will live godly in Christ, so as he sheweth his nature to be altered, carrying an Antipathy against all false courses, and so as the world may conceive that hee is such an one, it is impossible that he should live in the world without persecution: because hee shall meete with those that are of an opposite disposition. Therefore to frame a smooth Christ, all comfort, is to frame a false Christ and a false Religion, to frame an Idoll that hath no truth in it, that never was, nor never will be to the end of the world.

Againe, unconverted persons (especially) are prone to another Idolatry, to set up their owne wits and wils instead of Gods. So as there is not a greater enemy to Religion then our owne conceits and wills, which will have a modell of Religion of our owne braine, which must stand, let what will come of it. This is the fault especially of great learned persons, who take upon them conceits and apprehensions of things; and then dote upon these brats of their owne braine. And so for will, to have our owne will in all things, as the speech is, *My mind to me a kingdome is*: J will have my will whatsoever come of it. This is Idolatry, for whosoever will come to Heaven, must deny his will: The first lesson in Christs Schoole is selfe denyall, Deniall of wit and will, to have no more wit and wisdome, especially in divine things then God will teach us: and no more will, which is distinct and opposite to
Christ

6.

Idolatry is committed when we set up our owne wits and wils instead of Gods.

Mat. 16. 24.

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Christ's will, but to bring our wils to his in all things. When men will goe about great affaires, and set upon things in their owne wit and strength, never praying nor depending upon God for a blessing, this is a kind of Jdolizing of parts, to worke out things by pollicy, strength, wits and parts. As that Heathen Atheist could say, *Let cowards pray if they will*: but his successe was answerable. So is it not the common Atheisme of the world, they goe about things in confidence of their wit and parts, and so hope to attain a glorious issue: whereas God who overthrowes *Babels*, takes delight to confound all their devices, it is his daily practice, *To send the rich empty away, and exalt the humble and meeke*.

Luk. 1. 52.

Those who set upon things rashly without prayer, as though they were Lords of all, and without dependance upon God, promising themselves good successe, they make Jdols of themselves: as a proud man is an Jdoll, *hee worships himselfe*, whilest hee leanes to his owne wit, plots and parts: carnall men thus Idolize themselves.

7.

Idolatri is committed by trusting to the performances and tasks of Religion.

Againe, you have some who are none of the worst, who commit this great sinne of Idolatri by trusting to the outward performances and taskes of Religion, thinking that God must needs be bound unto them when they have done so many taskes, read and praid, or heard so many Sermons, or done a good deed. But here lyeth the spirituall subtilty, in that they set up these things too high, when if they find

not

not that successe they looke for, then they inwardly murmur against God: when rather all these things should be done with a spirit of Humilitie and subjection, using them only as means whereupon we expect Gods blessing, craving his assistance and strength to doe them in a holy and a self-denying manner: when we doe otherwise, and trust to the outward taskes and performances wee doe, wee make them Idols. And you have many that go along with outward performances, who never come to a dram of grace, because they trust to the outward performances, and looke not to the life and soule of them, which is the Spirit of God assisting, quickning, strengthening, blessing them. The life of a Christian is a perpetuall dependance upon God in the use of meanes; and not an Idolizing of them, to be carelesse when he hath done his taske.

But a more subtile Idolatri then this is of another kind, when we trust too much to the worke of grace, and rely not upon God in Christ in the matter of justification and acceptation to life everlasting, which is a fault both,

1. Before,
2. After Conversion.

First, before Conversion. When wee thinke we have not done so much good, and beene sufficiently humbled, and therefore that God will not be mercifull to us: As if Christ must take us with dowry of good deeds, or else hee cannot, whereas all grace is promised, upon
cur

8.

*It is Idolatri
so to trust to
the worke of
grace as to neg
lect justificati
and acceptation
to life everlast
ing.*

1.

SER. XI.

Mat. 11. 5.

Mat. 9. 13.

Mat. 11. 28.

our entry and coming into the Covenant of grace, upon our believing, when we come with empty hearts and hands: *The poore (saith Christ) receive the Gospell, and those that are lost, Christ is sent to save them, and to call in the weary and heavy laden.*

2.

And after Conversion; those that are in the state of grace oftentimes want that comfort in the maine point of justification and acceptation to life everlasting which they should have: because they looke into their imperfections, seeing this and that want, and so are swallowed up of discomfort; whereas if we had all the graces in the world, yet we must live by Faith, relying upon the merits of Christ. For our good workes bring us not to Heaven as a cause, but onely are helps and comforts to us in our walking to Heaven. For if wee had all the finnes of all men, yet Christs all-sufficient Righteousnesse is sufficient for to do them all away, if wee can goe out of our selves, and cleave to that. Therefore in trouble of conscience, we must not looke either to our good or our ill, but to Gods infinite Mercy, and to the infinite satisfaction of our blessed Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, there as it were loosing our selves, seeing our finnes as mountaines drowned in the infinite Sea of his Mercy. The blood of Christ, that will pacifie and stay the conscience, nothing els can give rest to our soules. If we looke to our workes and to the measure of our sanctification, what saith holy

Paul

Paul in the like case? Yea doubtlesse, and I count all things but losse, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Iesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the losse of all things, and doe count them but dung that I may winne Christ, even his Righteousnesse and best works; therefore there is no regard to be had of them in that case. Wherefore when wee would speake comfort to a distressed conscience, wee must not looke to his ill or good, but to the command. *This is his command that we believe*: and looke to the allsufficiencie of God in Christ, and the promises, whereby we honour God in giving him the glory of his truth, and depart with comfort. Therefore though wee hate grosse Idolatry, yet we see there are many ways wherein the soule may bee seduced, whereby we may come very neere that sinne which our soule hateth; by trusting too much to something out of God.

I Joh. 3. 23.

If then the case be thus, how shall we come to reforme it (for a Use of *Direction*) so as to flie from all Idolatry, and to say with *Ephraim*, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

V^{se} 5.
How to reforme our selves so as to flie from Idolatry.

First of all doe but consider Gods hatred unto all sorts of Idolaters: for he accounts such to hate him, and so accordingly punisheth them. In the second Commandement those that are given to Idolatry in any kinde, are such as hate God, which is a horrible thing, and yet notwithstanding this is the disposition of all such as are Idolaters; so farre forth as

I.

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they are Idolaters they hate God : for the more we know God, the more we shall hate all Idols, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols ?*

2.

Labour to grow in the sound knowledge of God and of Christ, and of their all-sufficiency. Marke *S. Pauls* method, *Coloss. 2.* and in other places, when hee would draw us from all outward things, he speaks gloriously of the fullnesse of Christ. *In him dwelleth all the fullnesse of the God head bodily :* and, *In him you are compleat.* When he would draw them from, *touch not, taste not, handle not, worshipping of Angels, and from counterfeit humility,* hee labours to dispossesse them of these Idolatrous conceits, and to possesse them of the fullnesse of Christ. If in him we have fullnesse, why should we looke for any thing out of him ? If we be compleat in him, If all fullnesse be in him, why doe wee seeke any thing out of that fullnesse ? Thus the holy Apostle shurreth up his first Epistle, *Babes keepe you from Idols.* What is promised there ? Christ is eternall life, all is in him, whereupon presently comes this ; *Babes keepe you from Idols.* If life and happinesse and all be in Christ, if we be compleate in him, and the fullnesse of all be in him, why should we goe out of him for any thing ? When God would perswade *Abraham* to leave all Idolatrie, and all things else, to depend wholly upon him, what doth he first possesse him with ? *I am God all sufficient, &c.* know God in covenant all-sufficient, and Christ in the fullnesse of his high perfections as media-

Col. 2. 9.

1 Joh. 5. 21.

Gen. 17. 1.

tor,

tor, in whom is all fullnesse and life eternall, in whom we are compleat: we shall then be so farre from going out of him for any thing, as we shall be of the same mind with *Ephraim*, what have I now any more to doe with other Intercessors and Mediators? what have I to doe with will-worship? what need I goe to other cursed meanes, when God is all-sufficient? It is the scope of the new covenant of grace that wee should glory in God onely, who hath made Christ unto us, *Wisdom, Righteousnesse, Sanctification and Redemption*. And all this, because that whosoever glorieth in him should not goe out of him for any thing. The more we know therefore the fullnesse of Christ, and Gods mercy in him, the more wee shall abhorre all Idolatry, with the kindes and degrees of it.

Another helpe and meanes to cure this disposition in us is, to know that we are naturally wondrous prone to it in one degree or another. It is reckoned up, *Gal. 5.* as a worke of the flesh, and naturally man hath a working fancy, to set up somewhat in his heart and understanding above, and besides God; Imaginations to adulterate things. Men live by sense, and Imagination is next to sense, so that naturally all men are Idolaters before conversion in one kinde or other: and dote so upon their owne, that they will not be driven out of themselves unto God in Christ, without a great deale of grace. As men naturally love the childe of their owne body, so men love the children of

The scope of the new covenant.

1 Cor. 1. 30

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Quest.

Answ.

their owne braine. What is the reason that it is so hard to convert a Papist? Because it is will-worship, a device of their owne braine, suiting their naturall will and appetite. And what makes them so furious (as all Idolaters are cruell) though they be mild of their owne nature, yet as Idolaters they are cruell? It is because it is a device of their owne braine, a brat, a childe of their owne begetting; wherefore they strive to maintaine it, because it is their owne. Let us therefore conceive this much, that it is no easie matter to free the soule from Idolatry, and all the degrees of this cursed disposition, this will make us beg earnestly the Spirit of God, by which onely we shall subdue this Idolatrous proud conceit, and lay our selves open to Christ, to be disposed of as hee pleaseth. Beg the Spirit onely, whereby we shall mortifie the cursed deeds of the flesh: for nature will never subdue nature; the Spirit of God therefore is that which can, and must free us from all dregs and tainture of this cursed disposition, which the Jewes were so scourged for, and hardly driven from.

Rom. 8. 3.

4.

Againe, consider Gods punishments in this kinde, as we see, *Rev. 9. 20.* Where the *Turke* is said to be raised up against all these Idolaters, that would not be kept from worshipping the Divell, and the Image of the beast. Yet for all this, it is said *they did not repent.* And so the Jewish Church was still punished with enemies raised up against them for their Idolatry. And

it is to be expected that the Idolatry of these westerne Churches will at length pull downe Antichrist himselfe, which must be before the conversion of the *Iewes*. For what hinders their conversion now? The world is full of Idolaters, even Christians; and therefore there must be a confusion of Antichrists Idolatrous worship before the conversion of the *Iewes*, who will not returne whilst that scandall is in their eye. Therefore that we may helpe forward that glorious worke, let us labour as much as we can to purge the Church of this, in drawing others from Idolatry, that we may helpe to make way for those glorious times a comming: for this Scripture specially hath relation unto the calling of the *Iewes*, not to be fullfilled till then, when *Ephraim* shall say, *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* with that for which we have been so plagued for in formertimes.

And withall let us consider this, that the end of all false worship (when it is left) is grieffe and shame, befooling and shaming of our selves for it. *Ephraim* (at length) shall say, *what have I any more to doe with Idols?* to cherish pride and selfe conceit? which if ever I come to Heaven I must renounce, hating my selfe for my owne pride and folly.

And so for Idolaters themselves, why should we consort our selves with these, of whom we shall say one day, *what have we now any more to doe with them?* wee must be seperated from them here, or in Hell live with

5.

6.

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them for ever. What will then be the hell of hell? Mutuall cursing of one another; thy familiarity and acquaintance, thy provocations and allurements brought mee into these torments. If we belong to God, late or soone, there must be these speeches, what have I now any more to doe with such and such lying vanities?

Exhortation.

Popery What?

Mat. 16. 16.

Col. 2. 18.

Corporall and
spirituall A-
dulterers are
hardly reclai-
med.

Therefore let us not thinke will-worship a slight matter; for we see Popery is nothing else but a bundle of mans devices? we see in Scripture, when the dearest friends of Christ came unto him with devices of their owne and good intentions, Christ notwithstanding saw the Diuell in them. Peter made a great confession, *Thou art the Sonne of the living God*, and then he came, *Master spare thy selfe*: whereunto Christ replied, *Get thee behind me Satan*. God is never more provoked then when men thinke to honour him with their owne devices, stablishing a false, and neglecting his owne true worship. And there is usually little amendment of these kind of persons, because they carry with them a shew of wisdom, as *Paul* saith, and great humility: which things being so carried with a shew of some grace and wisdom (though they be desperate folly in the conclusion) men hardly will part withall. As we see of corporall Adultery, few of them are reclaimed; because it hath a bewitching alluring power: which is most true of the spirituall Adulterers, there are few of them reclaimed, untill God by some severe judgement alter and bring downe the proud imagination.

imagination to serve him as he will be served; so as to say with *Ephraim* here, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

Well that wee may abhorre Idolatry the more, consider two or three direct places. *Who required these things at your hands*, saith God, when they thinke to please him with voluntary devised things, this will strike them dumbe then, the things that God requires being so easie and so few, yet we to omit them all and to devise new things of our owne: our reward shall be, *Who required these things at your hands?* And then againe saith God, *In vaine they worship mee, teaching for my precepts the devices of men.* See then the vanity of Idolaters, who though they would doe nothing in vaine, yet doe all their will-worship in vaine. It is not onely Idolatry, but obstinate Idolatry, the Romish doctrine: *Wee would have cured Babel, but she would not be cured.* Is this a light cause of our comming out of *Babylon*? doe we leave them for trifles, when they stand guilty of abhominable Idolatry? you may see here, if so be *Ephraim* out of holy affection say, *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* What to thinke and judge of those that would bring God and Idols together; if *Ephraim* had beene of the temper that many men now are, he might have said, tush what need we care for Idols, Crucifixes and the like? there is not such a distance betwixt them and us, why may not both Religions stand together? This new fangled nice-

Isa. i. 12.

Mat. 15 9.

Jer. 51. 9.

How some men
sight Idolatry.

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Mat. 6. 24.

ness is but the distempered devices of some few giddy headed men who know not what they would have. This is the wisdom of many men in our times, who reckon that there is not an eternall irreconcilable distance betweene light and darkeness, the service of God and that of Idols. *Wee cannot serve two masters, saith Christ.* Yes say they we may serve two masters, Anti-christ and Christ, God and Be-
 liall. O but what saith *Ephraim? what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* There can be no mixture you know where there is abhomi-
 nation. That Church *Rev. 3.* which was nei-
 ther hot nor cold, may paralell many now in our times, who are neither hot nor cold, Papists nor Protestantes, but politicke Atheists, who will be both or neither, whatsoever may best serve and advance their worldly ends. How doth God looke upon such? (saith he) *I will spew them out of my mouth: God hates such most of all, now I would thou wert either hot or cold.* If this be the affection of Gods people towards Idols and Idolaters, an utter aver-
 sation, and shall we thinke to jumble and mingle contrary things together, to serve God and the Divell, Christ and Anti-Christ.

That in some
 lesser matters
 we may use our
 owne opinions.
 Phil. 3. 15.

Thus we see what to thinke of the temper of these men; in lighter matters indeed wee may enjoy our owne private opinions in some things, As Saint Paul saith in lesser things, *If any man be otherwise minded, God shall reveale it unto him.* But when hee comes to the point of
 just. ficatio.

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justification by Christ in Gods worship: what saith he? *If any man be otherwise minded, God shall reveale it? No, but if I or an Angell from Heaven teach otherwise, let him bee accursed.* Now when men teach another doctrine and worship, joyning with grosse Idolaters in that worship, there we must be of Pauls spirit, *If I or an Angell from Heaven teach otherwise, let him be accursed.* The Holy Ghost at first appeared in the forme and shape of a Dove, which is a meeke and milde creature, that hath no tallons to hurt with. Yet notwithstanding at another time, hee appeared in *fiery tongues*, to shew that the same Spirit that in lesser things maintaineth peace and love, when it is set against any sinne, especially against that sinne of sinnes Idolatry, which brings Gods vengeance upon Kingdomes and states, and rootes them out; there the Holy Ghost must appeare in fire, that element must be in the hearts of people against that sin: that though to persons that have their slips, and in lesser matters there must be the spirit of a dove: yet there must be in men the spirit of courage, indignation, abomination and hatred unto the Idolatry of the times. That we may say from our hearts with *Ephraim, What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

Gal. 1. 8.

Mat. 3. 16.

Act. 2. 3.

Therefore let us joyne with those that wee shall live for ever with in Heaven, and goe in the best courses, and we shall never need to feare separation, nor want encouragements to well doing. Thus shall we neither grieve nor

Conclusion.

be

SER. XI.

REV. 17. 16.

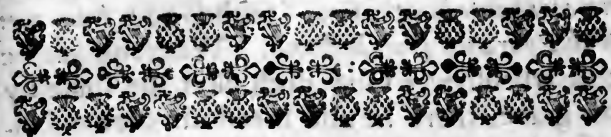
be ashamed to say with *Ephraim*, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?* At the length the Kings of the earth who adore the whore, they shall come and eate her very flesh. So it will be the end of those that raigne in other mens consciences, and in a manner will be accounted gods, that all which is gotten with wrong to God, shall be renounced with grieffe, shame and detestation of the persons of those that make Idols of others, and will be made Idols in the hearts of others, thinking themselves not enough respected, unlesse they command the conscience; the end of such cannot be good, all this must end in loathing, shame and detestation. *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?* said *Ephraim*; and what have I now any more to doe with such and such prophanenesse, hypocrisie, double-dealing and the like, shall such persons (thus sinnefull) say one day, with shame and horror of conscience. Wherefore let us meet God betimes, and renounce our Idols of all sorts, that God may come to heare us, observe us: and bee as a greene firre tree unto us, &c.

Whereof if God please we shall heare more the next time.

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The end of the eleventh Sermon.

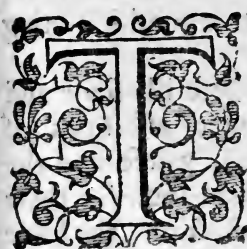
THE



THE TWELFTH SERMON.

Hos, 14. 8.

Ephraim shall say, what have I any more to do with Idols? I have heard him and observed him: I am like a greene firre-tree, from me is thy fruit found.



THE words (as wee heard heretofore) are a gracious answer unto the prayer which God himselfe by his Spittle had dictated to *Ephraim*: as likewise a reward of *Ephraims* Reformation. Ayded by grace, *Ephraim* shall say, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols? God will*

SER. XII.

will heare him and observe him, and be like a greene firre tree unto him: For, (saith God) *from mee shall Ephraims fruit be found.* Whereby we see that whensoever God doth alter the soule by his grace, there he also breeds divorce and division betweene it and all Idolatry, a disposition in some sort like himselfe, having those Sympathies and antipathies hee hath towards sinne and goodnesse. Now because God is a jealous God, and cannot abide Idols; therefore *Ephraim* being sanctified by the Spirit of God, is minded as God is, *What have I any more to doe with Idols?*

1.

God hath framed the soule that it may enjoy the chiefe good, and avoid the chiefe ill especially, for pettie goods and pettie ills are not so behoovefull: Yet notwithstanding God will have us avoid all ill, and imbrace all good, and he hath made the soule into an answerable condition. Therefore hath he planted affections therein tending to good; as Love, and Joy and delight, especially made for the imbracing of the maine good, thereby to goe out of it selfe, and close with that maine cheefe good, in closing wherewith it may be happy.

2.

And then to avoid the cheefe ill, sinne and damnation, hee hath planted affections of averfation, abhorring, hatred, griefe and the like. Thus hath he framed the soule for these maine ends, without which affections, the soule were as *Mare mortuum*, that dead sea. The affections are the wings and the winde of the soule,

soule, that carrie it unto all which it is carried unto : especially when the winde of Gods Spirit blowes upon it, then it is carried out of it selfe, for of it selfe it cannot love or hate as it should, but God must raise the affections, and lay them downe againe. Wee have not the managing of our owne hearts; grace teacheth us to doe all.

The particular then here, is indignation and hatred, *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?* So that the proper affection in Gods children, which should be conversant about that which is ill, and sinnefully ill, is hatred and indignation, here is hatred with indignation, the extent of the affection.

The reason whereof is, when Gods children are once converted, they have a new nature put into them, like unto Christ whose Spirit they have, what he hates they hate. He hates all sinne, and nothing but sinne, he hates the Divell himselfe for sin, and no further.

Then againe, when once they are Gods children, they have a new life put into them, which hath antipathie to all that is contrary to it. Every life in any creature hath antipathie to every enemy thereof. There is antipathie in Doves to Birds of prey, and in the Lambe to the Wolfe, because they are enemies to the life and being of them. So in the soule of a Christian so farre as grace is renewed, there is an antipathie, avervation and abhorring of that which is contrary. What have I to doe with sinne in any kinde?

Reason I.

2.

SER. XII.

kind? when grace hath altered the disposition of a mans heart, then sin and he are two: two indeed in the most opposite tearmes that may be, what have I any more to doe with my former delightfull sins? we are two now, for we were before nothing but sin. And indeed where this hatred is not, there men may leave sin, because sin leaves them: but this is not enough, God would have us to hate it with indignation, what have I now any more to doe with it?

Quest.

But how should we come to have this true hatred of sin, as *Ephraim* should have?

Answ. I.

Helps to hate sinne.

Amongst those helpes formerly named, this is a maine one: to represent to the soule, (as the soule is quicke and nimble in such apprehensions) the odiousnesse of sinne, that it is a truly hatefull thing; and therefore that our affection of hatred cannot be better set nor employed upon any object then that of sinne. For let us consider that it is not onely ill in it selfe, defiling the soule, and hindering communion with God, but it is also the cause of all ills, being the ill of ills, as God is the good of goods. For our troubles and terrors of conscience, wee may thanke sinne, and for all that we suffer every day in our conditions of life; what is all but the fruite of our owne wayes? *Wherefore suffereth living man,* (saith the Prophet,) *man suffereth for his sinne. Thine owne inventions have brought these things upon thee; therefore they are bitter unto thee, they shall pierce thy bowels.* Shall wee not therefore hate that which is the cause of all mischief

Lam. 3. 39.

Ier. 4. 18.

mischiefe to us? If we had an enemy, especially if he were a soothing false enemy, that under pretence of love should seeke our baine and ruine, and joyne with our worst enemies, would we not hate such an enemy? Sinne is the greatest enemy which we have in the world, and doth us more harme then the Divell himselfe, for it betrayes us to the Divell, and under pretence of favouring and pleasing our nature, betrayes us. It is a false deceitfull enemy, which commeth not in an ugly shape, but closes with the soule in a kind of conjugall love, *Dalilah* like inticing and alluring us, whereby it hath the more advantage and strength, in that it appeares in a lovely, pleasing, and not in an imperious commanding manner: therefore it should be the more hatefull to us. Shall we not hate such an enemy as alwayes dogs us, and hinders us, hinders us from doing any thing well, and puts us on to all that is ill. It is such an enemy that we cannot goe about to pray or doe any good thing, but it hangs upon us and clogs us in all our performances. If a man knew that such anone as made love to him and all his, were his great grand enemy, ayming at his destruction, would a man ever love such a man? thy base, false, revengfull, covetous, worldly heart, it joynes with Sathan, without which he could not hurt thee. Shall a man cherish that which betrayes him to his worst enemy the Divell? and then should he cherish that which makes a breach betwixt him and his best friend? If

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a man saw one so maliciously evill towards him, as to sow dissention by all meanes hee could betwixt him and his best honourable friend by whom hee was maintained in all things, would not a man hate such a one? what doth sinne else but breed division and enmity betwixt God and us? and further, when it hath mooved us to doe ill, it cryeth for vengeance against us at Gods hands. Conscience soundly awakened, is' alwayes clamarous to pull somewhat from God against us- Are not sinners justly called fooles? either men must be Atheists to deny all, or else if they cherish sinne, they must needs be fooles and starke mad if they confesse this, that they joyne with that which is their chiefe enemy. Therefore learne to be wise to salvation, make not with *Salomons* foole a sport of sinne, of swearing, of defiling our selves and others, seeing God threatneth damnation unto such.

Prov. 10. 23.

And then againe, avoid all parly and intercourse with sinne in the first suggestions; or with wicked persons that may draw us away. Use sinne ruggedly and harshly as they doe here, *what have I to doe with Idols?* doe but intertaine parly with it, and it is of such an insinuating nature, that it will incroach daily, and spread over the soule suddenly, betraying ir to the Divell. Therefore use it hardly in the first beginnings, and avoid Satan in the first suggestions, if we love the peace of our soules, as *Ephraim* here, *what have I any more to doe*
with

with Idols? for as we say in the case of honesty. They come too neare that come to have the refusall. They should not have so much hope from a chast person, there should be such a modest carriage, as should not give any one the boldnesse to adventure in that kind. So if a man carry himself remotely from sinnefull courses, he shall have a great deale of peace from wicked men, who dare not so much as adventure to draw away such a one, they know he is resolved. Therefore constant resolution against all sinne and wicked men will breed a great deale of peace, so as to say with *Ephraim, what have I any more to doe with Idols?*

And we must know, that this hatred comes from the life of God in us, therefore we must by all meanes maintaine spirituall life, and then as we grow spirituall, we shall grow in the detestation of sin, a sense of joy in good things, with a hatred of all that is contrary. A man can never hate sinne till he hath the Spirit of Christ in him, for there be 3. Quæres, whereof this is the last.

The first is set downe *Ieremy. 8. 6. No man said what have I done?* When conscience in a man is awakened once, he saith, O! what have I done? what case am I in?

The second Quære of a wakened conscience is, *what shall I doe?* as that *Act. 2. Men and Bretheren, what shall we doe to be saved?* he that truly saith, *what have I done?* if conscience be awakened, will also say, *what shall I doe?* you shall not need to drive him, when the Question is answered, *what shall I doe to be saved?* that is by

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casting

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3.

Quæres.

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3.

casting my selfe upon God in Christ. We need not put the question, he will say of himselfe, what have I any more to doe with that which is contrary to that which saves me? *What have I to doe with Idols?* this comes in in the last place. 1. A man is awakened out of his naturall condition. 2. Then he goes to God in Christ. And then 3. There is a spirituall life wrought in him, which stirs him up to hate all that is contrary unto it: *What have I now any more to doe with Idols?*

For I have heard him and observed him.

I have seene and observed him, some reade the words, but very few, which is thus a very good and pious construction of them: *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* As if *Ephraim* should say these words, *I have seene him and observed him*, that is, because I have seene him and observed, therefore *what have I now any more to doe with Idols?* As soone as a man comes to heare God speake, and to observe God, downe goes all Idols, for indeed the respect to Idolatry, and any thing that is naught, it fals down in the soule, as the knowledge of the true God is lifted up, and as affection to good things are raised up in the soule. *What have I to doe with Idols any more; I have seene and observed him* · as *Iob* said of himselfe when he had seene God: *I abhorre my selfe and repent in dust and ashes*. Much more all false courses. I abhorie them all, now that *I have seene and observed him*.

Job. 42. 2.

This is a safe, pious, and good sense, but the words under correction are fitliest applied unto

God

God himselfe, as if God rather then *Ephraim* said thus, *I will heare him and observe him*, I will do thus and thus, *I will be as a greene firre-tree to shade him* from danger, and to make him fruitfull. But you will say *Ephraim* cannot cast away Idols till God respect him first. Therefore this is promised in the second place, *Ephraim* shall say, *what have I to doe with Idols?* And God shall say, I have seene him, heard him, and observed him, when he hath cast away Idols.

Object.

To this the Answer is, indeed in the order of nature God doth first stirre us up to pray to him, and promiseth us respect and hearing of our prayers, after which we cast away Idols, but the experience of it is after we have done the deed. After that we have found God experimentally gracious, protecting and hearing of us, then we cast away Idols. So this experience a Christian finds, when he abominates and rejects ill waies, then he finds God allsufficient, as indeed God is never fully felt and knowne till we renounce all other helps. So the generall point is,

Answer.

That nothing is lost by renouncing Idolatry, and carnall confidence in any worldly thing.

Observ.

For God makes a supply in himselfe, *I will heare him and observe him*. Nothing is lost, for God will be true of his promise, *Seeke ye first the kingdome of God and his Righteousnes, and all other things shall be ministred unto you*. The Truth of God and then his Mercy makes this good. Is not God mercifull to his children when they renounce all false confidence? In re-

Mat. 6. 33.

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gard of the truth of his promise and mercy, he will make good this, that nothing is lost by cleaving to him. We read in the story of our owne times, in King *Edward* the sixts raigne, the same day that there was reformation of Idolatry in *London*, purging of Chürches from roodes and Idols. The same day was that noble victorie and conquest in the North parts over the enemies. So God answered their care, in reforming things amisse with good successe.

On the contrary, when we goe on with favouring abuses and corruptions, yet expecting good successe, it is in vaine. Let *Ephraim* come to say, *what have I to doe with Idols?* and see then whether God will respect him or not. Doe Nations or persons thinke that God will respect them or blesse them, whilst they do that which is abhominable to him. No; when *Ephraim* saith, *what have I to doe with Idols?* then presently comes, God will *heare* and *observe* him, and looke to him, as you have it in that gracious promise, *The eyes of the Lord are open unto all them that feare him, and his eares are open to their prayers*, his eyes and his eares. Indeed God is all eye and all eare, the best friend in the world, cannot have his eye alwayes upon us, the mothers eye cannot be alwayes upon her child, she must have a time to sleepe, when neither her eyes nor eares are open to her childs prayers, it may cry and die in crying sometimes before shee can helpe it. But if wee renounce sinne, we have a gracious Father, *who will heare us, observe us, and see us,*
and

Plal. 34. 15.

and not onely heare and see, but as the Scripture phrase is, doe that that followes all this, where he sees, he will pittie and relieve, and where he heares, he will pittie and protect.

I have heard him, I have observed him.

God will heare when once we renounce sin. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare my prayers,* saith David. But when I doe not regard iniquity God will heare my prayers. Then a man may know that God will heare him, when once he hath renounced sinne and comes with cleane hands and heart to God. As it is in *Isai. 1.*, they were corrupted in their course, and yet came to God, but hee rejects all, so in the last of that Prophecie, he accounts of their Sacrifices, as of the cutting off of a dogs necke, because their hands were full of blood, and they were full of sinne. Reforme abuses, let there bee personall and nationall Reformation, and then come and reason the matter with God, and see whether he will regard us or not. The Spirit it is said, makes requests for the Saints, and *God knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, because it makes request according to the will of God.* The same Spirit that stirs us up to amend our lives and fly Idolatrous courses, the same Spirit stirs us up to pray to God according to the will of God, and then God heares the desires of his owne Spirit. Of all judgements in the world this is the greatest to pray and not to be heard, for when wee are in misery, our remedy is prayer: now when

Psal. 66. 18.

Isa. 1.

Rom. 8. 27.

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that which should be our remedy is not regarded, what a pittifull thing is that? Now here is an excellent blessing set downe to pray, and for God to heare, *I will heare him and observe him*. Because then God and *Ephraim* were of one minde and joyne in one, therefore God cannot but heare and regard *Ephraim*, being of his minde to love and to hate what he loves and hates. As soone as ever the *Prodigall* began to hate his former courses, the Father came out to meeete him, and so of *David*, *I said I will confesse my sins to God, (I said)* that is, in my heart I resolved to confesse to God, *and thou forgavest mine iniquity*, God heard his resolution. We cannot else entertaine a full purpose to goe to God, unlesse there be a cessation from sinne: the *Prodigall* for all his contrition, was afraid to be shaken off his Father for his dissolute life: O! but the Father provides a banquet: so it is when we turne to God and resolve a new life, to cast away our Idolatries, and former abominations, presently *God heares us and observes us*, and is ready to meet us.

Luk. 16.

Psal. 32. 3.

Ier. 31. 18.

There is an excellent place even touching *Ephraim* himseife, *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himseife, thou hast chastised mee, and I was chastised as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoaque, turne mee to thee and I shall bee turned, thou art the Lord my God, &c.* Is *Ephraim* a deare sonne, is hee a pleasant child, for since I spake against him I doe earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will have mercy upon him. If *Ephraim* beginne to be-

moane

moane himselfe for his folly, presently followes, that Gods bowels are turned to him, so it is said of *Ephraim* here, after he had renounced Idols, Gods bowels are turned towards him, *I have heard him and observed him*. Which yeelds us a sweet and comfortable consideration, to turne to God from all our sinfull courses, because God is so ready to forgive, and to forgive great finnes. What if our sinne be Idolatry, the grand sinne of the first Table: yet if *Ephraim* say, *What have I to doe with Idols?* (though it be spirituall adultery) yet if *Ephraim* begin to renounce Idolatry, God will say, *I have heard him and observed him*. If your finnes were as red as crimson (saith God) *I will make them white as wool*, &c. Crimson sins, double dyed finnes, it is no matter what they are, if we come to God, there is more mercy in him then sinne in us. If *Ephraim* say, what have I to doe with my former evill courses, *God will beare him and observe him*.

Isa. 1. 18.

It is never better with a Christian, then when he hath renounced all wicked courses, though he thinkes himselfe undone if he leave his former *Dalilah* delights, but there is no such matter, for we shall finde an hundred fold more in God, as Christ speakes, *Whosoever leaves father or mother, brother or sister, house or kindred for me, shall have a hundred fold in this world*, that is, they shall have it in contentment and grace, in peace of conscience, and perhaps in the things of this life in another kinde. What lost *Abraham*, when he obeyed God, and forsooke his

Mar. 19. 29.

SER. XII.

fathers house: God was all-sufficient for him, he grew a rich man. And what lost he by giving *Isaack* to God? he received his sonne againe, of whom there came an innumerable seed. And what lost holy *David* in waiting for the time that he should come unto the Kingdome without making haste, he came quietly to the possession of the crowne: whereas *Ieroboam* who made more haste, after God had told him he should raigne, he was cursed in his government, and none of his posterity came to good. There is nothing lost by depending and waiting upon God, and renouncing of carnall confidence. We think naturally we are undone, O! there is no such matter, as *David* speaks, *When my father and mother forsaketh me, yet the Lord taketh me up.* As we know in the Gospell, when the blind poore man was excommunicated and cast out, after he had spoke somewhat stoutely to the *Pharisees*, will yee also be his *Disciples*? yet then Christ takes him presently into his company, being expelled by them, what lost he by this? So when *Israell* had lost all their flesh-pots in *Ægypt*, they had no losse, for God provided them *Manna* from Heaven, and what lost they by that? they had *Angels food* instead of their garlicke and onyons.

I have observed him.

That is, I will have a speciall eye to him, I will looke to him in all conditions and states whatsoever: God never slumbers nor sleepes, like the Master of the house in the Parable, who when the poore man came for bread, all the rest

Psal. 27. 10.

Ioh. 9.

Luk. 11. 5.

rest being asleepe is awaked, and raised up by the importunity of the poore man. So the great Master of the family of Heaven and Earth that governes all, he wakes day and night and never sleepest; herein going beyond the care of the dearest friends we have in the world, for they must have a time to sleepe, the mother though she love the childe as her owne bowels, yet notwithstanding she must have a resting time, and perhaps in that time the childe may miscarry: but God alwayes observes, his eye is alwayes upon his children, they are before him, written in the palmes of his hands; he hath them in his eye: as in *Exodus*, you have there God brought in observing the children of *Israel*: *I have seene, I have seene the affliction of my people Israel*; they thought themselves neglected of God, but he tells *Moses*, *I have seene, I have seene, I know it very well*, he adds knowledge to sight. So there is no affliction in this world to Gods children, but God in seeing sees, as before he heares the groanes and sighs, so he sees the most intimate inward affliction whatsoever that afflicts the soule, as they were grieved in very soule at the tyranny of *Pharoah*, Oh but God in seeing hee sees, whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter then the Sunne. This is a consolation, when one thinkes that no man sees and regards: alas, what shall become of me? Why should any man say so that hath God to go too, who is all eye, and all eare. God heares and sees, his eares are alwayes open, as it is often shewed, especially, *Psal. 34. 15.*

Isa. 49. 16.

Exod. 3. 7.

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It is said, *His eares are open to their prayers, and his eyes to see their afflictions.*

Quest.

But with what kinde of eye doth God see the afflictions of his children?

Sol.

Hee sees them with a tender compassionate eye, for he aboundeth in those affections which he hath put into a Father and Mother: there is no Mother would suffer her childe to miscarry if shee could helpe it, God sees surely some afflictions are for our good, or he would releev us, for as he hath a compassionate eye, so he hath a tender heart, and a powerfull hand. He sees wicked men also, but his eyes in regard of them are like a flame of fier, not onely because he is quicksighted, but because he sees with a revengfull eye, and as his eyes are like a flame of fire, so likewise he hath feete of brasse to tread them to powder.

Rev. I. 14. 15.

Vse. I.

And this likewise is no little part of our comfort, for when we suffer any thing in this world, it is from ill men for the most part, except it be in those afflictions wherein we more immediately deale with God, as in sicknesse, &c. But in perfection in the world, our trouble lies with men: therefore it is our comfort, God sees our trouble and their malice, and as he is ready to helpe the one, so he is to revenge the other.

Vse 2.

And as it is a point of comfort, so of great encouragement to be bold in Gods cause, what shall we be baser then the base creatures? take but a dog in his masters fight, you see how he will fight. Take the meanest and basest creature,

ture, when it hath a superiour nature to it selfe, that is wiser and greater, that encourageth and sets it on, that it knowes will see it take no harme, these base creatures will be couragious, which otherwise if it had none to set it on, had no courage at all, at least not so much. And shall we in the sight of God, and when we are set in his quarrell, and have his encouragement and his command, with promise of his presence and assistance flinch and flie of then? It argues a great deale of atheisme and infidelity of heart. God sees me and lookes on me while I fight, and while I stand for his cause: Gods cause is true and just, God sees me, and he sees who opposeth me. In regard of the eye of God therefore, let us be couragious in these things that are agreeable to the mind of God, whatsoever they be, whether matters of justice or plery.

Againe if God have such an eare to heare us, let us have an eare to heare him, and an eye to looke to him; let us have *Moses* eye, to looke on him who is invisible, his eye is upon us, and let our eye be to him, both may be together. When these two eyes meet, when my heart tells me that God seeth me, and that I see God looking upon me, this makes couragious. Therefore as God heares and sees us, so we must have an eye to see him that is invisible. And so we passe from these words: *I have heard him and observed him*, and what the Prophets meaning is; *I have heard him and will heare him: I have observed him and will observe him:*

Vse. 3.

For

SER. XII.

For they containe a perpetuall action in God, not that he hath, and will not doe it now : but what he hath done and will doe, that he sets downe here in borrowed speeches, for he saith also,

I will be like a greene firre-tree to him, from me is thy fruit found.

God will be like a greene firre-tree in regard of shadow, a *Firre-tree* is a high tree, a goodly smooth tree, barren in regard of fruit, but it hath thicke leaves, which hinders raine from falling upon those who rest under the shadow thereof, and likewise keeps the Sunne from annoying them, so it is a fit tree for shadow, and the fitter because it hath no fruit, for usually those trees which spend not themselves this way, they spend themselves in leaves, and have a perpetuall greenenesse, vvhich is supplied vvith that which should be fruit in fruitfull trees. Therefore he sets it down by this comparison of a *firre-tree*, that so God vvill keepe backe all showvers, tempests and stormes, and all annoying heate, and he vvill doe it perpetually, as the firre-tree hath a perpetuall greenenesse, and he vvill doe it vvith pleasure and delight, as it is a delightfull shadow. But because the *Firre-tree* hath no fruit on it, God vvill not onely be a shadow to his children to keepe ill from them, but he vvill be a fruitfull tree to them. *From mee* (saith God) *shall thy fruit be found*, that is, vvhatsoever good thou doest, thou shalt have it from me, all fruitfull comfort comes from mee, and all grace; vvhatsoever is good for thee for prosperity of soule

soule or body, all is from me. So we see how God conveyeth himselfe and his mercy here by sweet comparisons, dealing very familiarly with us, and speaking to us in our own language, we will take both in order as they lye.

God will be as a *firre tree* in regard of shadow to the passenger, and keeping off of stormes, the great God, and the good God who is goodnesse it selfe, hath provided in this world, not onely good for us, but hath also promised defences against all annoyances. In the comparison it selfe we will observe somewhat concerning the goodnesse of God, for as in this life we are subject to many inconveniences, wants and necessities, so God hath supply for all, even outward necessities; wee are subject to cold, for that we have the element of fire: wee are subject to stormes, he hath provided garments and skill to make them: so in our travells he hath provided some trees especially to shelter us. Wee cannot name any inconvenience of this life, but the rich God in his goodnesse hath provided a suitable supply. Doth God take care for this fading perishing life, which is but as a vapor, and hath he good things for it, and fences from the ill and annoyances of it, till we have fulfilled our pilgrimage upon earth? and will not that God have a care of our best life of grace that shall end in glory, that we shall have all things necessary for life and godlinesse, which hath the promise not of this life onely, but of a better: he that is so good to this naturall

SER. XII.

turall life, will be much more in things concerning a better life, which he would have us mind more, *I will be as a greene firre-tree unto him.*

God will be as a *firre-tree* especially in regard of shadow, to keepe from all annoyance both of storme and of the Sunne, for the Sunne in those hot countries annoyes them very much, as the Spouse complaines of her blacknesse, *because the Sunne had shined upon her, to be blaske as the tents of Kedar, &c.* Whence we may obiectve by the way.

Cant. 1. 5.

Observ.

There is not the most comfortable refreshing creature in the world, but take it in the excesse, it harmes and annoyes.

What more comfortable then water, yet if it prevaile and abound, it is a destroying creature, as we see in the deluge and divers inundations? what more comfortable then fire? and what more terrible if it exceed? what more cherishing, refreshing and quickning then the Sunne, yet in the excessive heate thereof it scorcheth and parcheth things. So in the Sunne of prosperity and all other good things in the world, it is best to have and enjoy all things with moderation: for if we have grace to qualifie them, all things are good? otherwise the excesse hurts us. Therefore beg of God wisdom to temper and moderate the best good in this world, which otherwise hurts us. For even the excessive heate of the Sunne in those countries, makes them glad of the shadow of the *firre-tree*.

Thus God doth not onely give a shadow,

but

but a comfortable shadow and defence to his people, which is therefore called *the shadow of his wings*. How oft (saith Christ to Hierusalem) would I have gathered thee as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. It is not onely a shielding from hurts and dangers, and stormes, but a sweet defence with rest and quiet: as those that are weary compose themselves to rest under a shadow, so in God is our rest: *Come unto me* (saith Christ) *all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and ye shall find rest to your soules*. All rest is in Christ and in Gods mercy in Christ. We see then after we have forsooke Idolatry God is to us instead of all the good we had by Idols, we loose nothing by it, *God will be as a greene fir tree*: whencethe point is;

There is a protection, rest, and defence provided for Gods people, when once they have renounced their Idolatry and sinnesfull courses.

Those who refuse the shelter of Idols, God will be a shelter unto them, *a greene firre-tree unto them*, another manner of shelter, then that which Idols or any other creature can give them. Every man will have some shelter, shield or other to cover him, this or that great man to shield or shelter himsef under. A rich man he hath riches, another this or that defence, every man that hath any wit about him, will have some shelter, and not lye open to all stormes when they come. But the onely true shelter is God himsef to a Christian: all other refuges are but shadowes, that is they are nothing but like *Ionas gourd*, which may shelter for

Mat. 23. 37.

Mat. 11. 28.

Observ.

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Psal. 90. 1.

for a time, but there is a worme of vanity that will eat them out. Riches and the favour of men may shelter for a time, but there is a worme at the bottome which will roote them out, death will consume them, and those they depend upon: but God is a true shelter to his people, an everlasting habitation, as it is written: *Thou art our habitation from generation to generation*; we dwell in him as in our *Rocke and Castle*, he is an everlasting habitation, not only a shadow, but a tower and a castle to dwell in. Therefore the only wise man is the Christian: For as *Noah* when the flood came upon the old world and swept them away, had an Arke to save himselfe in, so have all Gods children a house to get over their heads in the worst times, which is Gods blessed protection, in whom they are safe. Let us thinke often of these things, what a blessed thing it is to be in the state of a Christian, that hath alway a certaine and sure protection, quiet and rest in God. And what a fearefull thing is it to be as the *Achitophels* of this world, to be as *Caine*, *Judas* or *Saul*? who are shrewed in counsell and pollicy, and yet when conscience is awakened by the storme of Gods wrath, want a shelter, whilst he who is above conscience, and should be a shelter to them frownes upon them: what a pittifull state is this? the wickedest man in the world, though he have never so great dependance, parts and strength from humane helps, yet when the storme of Gods wrath comes, he is as a naked man in the midst of a storme,

storme, and knows not whether to go: therefore let us be wise to have God for our shelter, if we would not be like these miserable politicians and worldlings.

Now from this that the shadow is comfortable in those hot countries, where the Sun is directly over their heads, comes these sweet phrases in the *Psalmes*, and other Scriptures. *Thou shalt keepe me under the shadow of thy wings: as the apple tree amongst the trees of the Forrest, so is my beloved amongst the sons: I sate downe under his shadow with great delight, &c.* The Church speaks of Christ, *I sate under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.* The like you have in many places in the *Psalmes*, I will name one or two more pregnant then the rest, to helpe our memories, and to breed a deeper impression of so comfortable a point, *Psal. 63.* There the *Psalmist* speaks of resting under the shadow of Gods wings. And so in that other sweet and excellent *Psalme*, in the greatest extremities of Gods people, *Hethat dwelleth in the secret place of the most High, that is God, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* He sayes after, *I will say of the Lord he is my refuge and fortresse,* for where God tels a man that he is a hiding place and a shadow, there Faith adds the application presently, and then he goes on speaking of himselfe, *He shall cover me with his feathers, under his wings will I rest, his truth shall be my buckler, thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow by day, nor of the pestilence that walketh in the darke, a thousand*

Cant. 2. 3.

Psal 91. 1.

shall fall, &c. So that we see how God doth that to our soules and conditions, that the fire tree which is Gods good creature, doth to the body in the time of storme and heat; that is he doth refresh us under the shadow of his wings, he is a sweet, comfortable and gracious God unto us. This you see is a cleere truth, yet because it is so comfortable we will enlarge it further: looke what God speaks, *Isa 4. 45. The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assembly a cloud and smoake by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night for upon all the glory shall be a defence.* See what a comfortable shadow God is, he saith, *he will create*, if they want the comfort of the *firre-tree* and such like shadowes, he sayes *God will create*, that is make them of nothing, he will *create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion*, where his children dwell, and upon their assemblies, *a cloud and a smoake by day*, that is, when they are annoyed by the Sun, God will create a cloud to keepe the rage and the scorching heat of the Sun from them, and then a *shining flame of fire by night*, because in the night we need light, for *upon all the glory shall be a defence*, that is upon all the glorious Saints of God, they are *Glory*, for there is a Spirit of glory put into them. The people of God in whom God will glorifie himself, are glorious, and shall bee further glorified, and they shall in the meantime, have a defence by day and by night from all dangers whatsoever.

1 Pet. 4. 14.

Thus it is cleare that God will be a *shadow* to his

his people, as the *fir-tree*: which is an allusion to that grand passage of his providence in conducting the children of *Israel* out of *Aegypt* where (God to guide them) provided a *cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night*, the same *pillar* which was light some to the *Israclites* was darke to the *Aegyptians*, which cloud and pillar of fire continued, (God conducting them) till they came into the land of *Canaan*. He shadowed them by day with a cloud and lightned and heated them by a pillar of fire at night, thus conducting them till they came to *Canaan*. So we passing through the wilder nesse of this world till wee come unto our celestiall *Canaan* Heaven, God will be a *cloude* by his gracious speciall providence, to keepe all ill whatsoever from us, and a *pillar of fire* to lighten and direct us till we come to our heavenly *Canaan*, where he will be all in all, when we shall need neither Sunne nor Moon, nor have any thing to annoy us. There the noon-day shall not burne us with heat of the Sunne, nor the fire by night, when we are in Heaven, there shall be no annoyance of the creature: there shall be no more want of light, because we shall have all light and refreshing there for ever and ever. For as it is written, then *all teares*, all sorrow and cause of sorrow shall be for ever wiped away, an allusion wherunto we have comfortably set downe, *Psal. 121*. The more we shall enrich and refresh our memories with thinking of these things, the more comfort will sink into our hearts. The *121. Psal.* is all spent on com-

EXO. 14. 20.

Rev. 7. 16.

Psal. 121.

SER. XII.

fort in this kind. *I will lift up mine eyes to the hills whence commeth my salvation: my helpe commeth from the Lord who made Heaven and Earth, all my helpe is from him. he will not suffer my foot to be moved, he that keepes Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. He will not slumber, that is, his eyes are alwaies open to see, as his eares to heare. Behold hee that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleepe, the Lord is thy keeper, thy shadow. so that the Sunne shall not smite thee by day, nor the moone by night, the Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy comming in, from this time for ever.* Thus we see this Scripture is a large glosse and commentary upon this truth, that God with a speciall providence and protection cares for his children to keepe them from all ill: he will be as the *fir-tree to them* in regard of shadow; Whence we observe in speciall,

Observ.

That this life of ours whilst we come to Heaven is subject to scorchings and many annoyances, and those both outwardly and inwardly, from our selves and from others.

First, for *outward annoyances*, how many of them is our poore life subject unto? and for inward terror and boyling heare of conscience, when God in anger discovers himselfe unto us, and sets our sins in order before us: O then, if we have not a shadow; if God in mercy through Jesus Christ be not a shadow to keepe that boyling heat from us, what will become of the poore conscience? especially if Satan adds his poisoned fiery darts, poysoning, inflaming the conscience with temptations to despaire, as if God had forsaken

faken and were angry, or when God seemes angry, then he seems like a consuming fire. O! who can abide it, when all these fiery temptations are joyned with Gods anger? yet the dearest of Gods Saints are subject to these inward boyling heats of Gods anger. *My God my God why hast thou forsaken me*, said the head of the Church himselfe, and see how *Job* complaines, *thou hast set me as a But to shoot at*. And in regard of this spirituall desertion *David* complains much throughout the *Psalms*. So this our life is subject to outward and spirituall annoyances, from God, from Satan, and from our selves and the world, every way annoyed with scorchings & heat, what need a shadow, a protection, a defence else. That supposeth this.

If this be so, then consider how fearefull the condition of those people is that are not under the shadow of the Almighty, who have not God as a *fir tree* to shadow and cover them, that he is not a cloud by day too, and a pillar of fire by night, that have not him for a hiding place to spread the wings of his mercy over them. What is the state of such people? surely howsoever God feed them, and fill their belly with good things in this world for a time, yet their case will be fearefull, when God lets loose conscience and Satans fiery darts against them. Judge then hereby vvhath our state is by nature without God. The same sunne which cherisheth and comforteth, also tortures and scorcheth us: so God is a sunne, a quickning sunne to his children, yea a vigorous sunne, who hath healing under his wings; but

Mat. 27. 46.

Job 16. 12.

Their misery who have not God for a shadow is shewed.

Mal. 4. 2.
Heb. 12. 29.

SER. XII.

to the wicked he is a scorching and a consuming fire, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God who is so dreadful, he will not be a shadow to the wicked in an excellent manner, he indeed permits them to have many shadows in this world, many sweet comforts, and keeps them also from many dangers, but they have not that worthy portion which *Hannah* had from her husband, Love at the hour of death, and in time of temptation, when these comforts leave them, what shadow have they then? none at all; but are as naked men in a storme, subject to the fury of Gods eternall wrath. The things which are most comfortable to Gods people are most terrible to them, as it is said in one of those plagues powred out upon *Antichrist* (for all the viols there spoken of tend to the punishing of *Antichrist*;) there is a violl powred forth upon the Sunne, which reflecting and lighting upon them, causeth them to blaspheme, they were so scorched with it. The *Sun* by probable interpreters, is said to be the word of God, which when it is opened is sweet and comfortable to Gods people, but shining upon men that are naught, especially at the hour of death, in affliction and in distresse it speakes no comfort to them, but causeth them to despaire, rage and storme. Nay, prophane men when they are at the best, they rage and storme at the direction of the sun, because it discovers to them that which they would not have known.

Revel. 6.

Vse I.

Now what Vse should we make of this? will
God

God be a shadow to his people to keepe them from all evill, as his promise was to *Abraham* in the covenant of grace: *I will be thy buckler* to keep ill from thee, and *thy exceeding great reward*. And in the *Psalmes*, God promiseth to be a *Sunne* for good, and a *shield* to keep of all ill. Will God bestow good & keep off ill from us? then labour to come willingly under the shadow of the *Almighty* to serve him, and to make God in covenant our God, that he may be a *shield and abiding place* unto us, and a *shadow* in all extremities whatsoever. Those that attend upon great persons, they do it upon this hope: O! if I belong to such a great person, he will shelter me, that every base person shall not wrong me; I shall now have some prerogatives. Doth carnall policy teach poore creatures who are subject to abuse it, to get some shelter of great noble men to be privileged, and shall not spirituall wisdom teach us to get under the great God, under the shadow of his wings? none can come neere to annoy us without his speciall will and leave, as in the story of *Iob*, The Diuel durst not annoy him, nor enter into the Swine, much lesse hurt Gods children, shall we not therefore get under the service of our God, can any man shelter us better? there is no service to that of a King, but is there any service to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? will he suffer his children to be abused in his own sight, or his followers disgraced? surely no, therefore make this use of it, to get into the service of the great God, which is a rich, secure, and safe service.

Gen. 15. 1.
Psal. 84. 11.

Job 1.
Mat. 8. 31.

SER. XII.

Vse 2.

Again, it yeelds us an use of Resolution, for to obey God, and to go boldly on in a good course; what should we feare when God is our master? he will shield us and keepe us safe, and give his Angels charge over us, to shew that he hath a care over us, indeed he hath many keepers under him, but he is the grand keeper, who sets all a worke: for Angels, Magistrates, Ministers and our friends keepe us: but Gods Spirit vwithin us, and his gracious good providence without us are our chiefe keepers. Therefore let all our care be to serve God, and to be in his vvayes, he will keep us in his wayes, what an encouragement is this to be in good courses, where we may looke for the shadow of the Almighty God without tempting of him. If a man be in an ill way and course, he cannot look that the Almighty should shadow him: his heart will tell him, now God may withdraw his shelter and vving from me, he may leave me naked to the Divell and to the malice of men, he may strip me of all comfort in my soule and conscience, and give me up to terrours of heart out of his way. If I trust him now I tempt him, because he vvill be a defence onely in his owne vvayes. Therefore let us labour alwayes to bee in those wayes; and then God will bee as a *greene firre-tree* unto us.

Vse 3.

And last of all, let it be an use of Comfort unto us, for all the time of our life to come: whatsoever may come, vve yet passe under a buckler, let a whole showre and shot of arrows fall

fall upon us, we have a buckler, *Thou Lord art my Buckler, thou Lord art my defence, my hiding place, my castle*: we are subject to a vworld of dangers vvhilst we live here. But we have God instead of all, to keepe of all, he is a buckler, a shield, a shadow and a hiding place, let vvhat ill so ever bee presented to our thoughts, there is in God some Fence against it. For this purpose vve have many excellent passages in *Psal. 18.* vvwhich vvvas made after a great deliverance. *I love the Lord my buckler, my shield, my defence,* as if he should say, I have in my life time bin annoyed with many troubles, but J have found experience of God in all. *He is my buckler, my shield, my fence,* every thing to me. So let us comfort our selves in this, let come what will come, all shall come wel to Gods children; he will keepe them, if not outwardly, yet in that they most desire to be kept in, he vvill *preserve their spirits from every evill worke,* from doing ill, and from desperate falling from God; and he vvill guard them inwardly *by the peace of God which passeth understanding*; it shall guard their hearts, they shall have inward peace in the midst of all the troubles of this world: a great comfort. What a rejoycing is it to a poore passenger, vvhen he passeth by the high vway side in a hot burning day, or in a storme, to see a goodly high tree with spreading boughes, that he may hide and repose himselfe under it from the storme or heate, this pleaseth him marvellously, as *Jonas* gourd did him. Doe these outward poore contentments so refresh

Rom. 8. 38, 39.

us in this world, and shall we not think that God which provides such poore contentments for this sorry life in this world, will he not provide a shadow in regard of the maine dangers, surely he will if we trust him, and shew our trust by casting our selves upon him in obedience sutable to our calling (saith the Apostle) *I am perswaded that neither things present, nor to come, nor life nor death, nor any thing shall be able to seperate us from the love of Christ Iesus our Lord.* Therefore let us be afraid of nothing that can befall us, God will be a shield and a buckler, and all in all to us in a good way. We have abundance of comfort every where in Scripture, and want nothing but Faith to apply it home in practise. Therefore we ought to beg of God so to enlarge our Faith, that as his promises and comforts are very large, so may our vessels be to retaine all these excellent comforts and sweet promises.

All other comforts in the world, are but like *Ionas* gourd, for all other shadowes yeeld onely a shadow for a while, and then the Sun-shine or East-winde is like a worme to nip them a sunder. Never trust then, or leane to such shadowes as these be, of Friends, Riches, &c. Which are shadowes men ordinarily relie upon. I have such and such a friend, a place, and the like, my mountaine is thus and thus strong: all these are *Ionas* gourds, there is a worme of vanity will be at the roote of all and consume all, all other shadowes are but meere shadowes. What is more transient then a shadow,

dow, but Gods shadow is like a *greene firre-tree*, it never failes nor forsakes us, as all other shadowes and contentments doe whatsoever: but God saith, *He will be like a greene firre-tree unto thee*, yet this is not all, nor enough, for after this he adds.

From me is thy fruit found.

God is not only to his children a *firre-tree* in regard of shadow, that tree abounding in leaves very thicke, whereby we are kept from annoyance of scorching heats of troubles and terrors of conscience and persecution, &c. This is not all, but he saith also,

From me is thy fruit found.

A *Firre tree* though it be for thicknesse of the leaves a very good shade, yet it is a barren fruitles tree, but God is such a tree as hath both shadow and fruit, in God there is a supply of all wants whatsoever. All the scattered excellencies of all creatures being united in God, and eminent in him, it is in him, and in him in a divine gracious, eminent and comfortable manner. All the creatures as they come from God, are his creatures, neither is there any creature, but hath somewhat of God in it. Therefore God vouchsafes to take names from the creatures, to be a rock of salvation, he is as a rock to build on, to be a shadowing tree, because he is a defence from ill, and to be a fruitfull tree, because he yeelds good and comfort, and grace as he doth fruit. When we see any thing that is usefull, we may say this we have from God in an eminent manner, this preservation

vation and comfort. Doe I in my passage to Heaven find such comfort in the creature? when I am passing through a wild place, have I such comfort in the shadow of a tree? or when I am hungry am I so refreshed by a fruitfull tree? what comfort then is there in God, in Heaven, in glory, when there are such comforts in the way of my pilgrimage in this world, therefore God is said here, both to be a *fir tree*, and a fruitfull tree. For then the passenger travelling through a wild barren place thinks himselfe made, when he can retire from the scorching of the heat, and also therewithall finde fruitfulness; shade and fruit concurring he thinks himselfe marvellously happy. This is the state of a Christian that hath God for his God, being in covenant with him, he is not only a strong protection and defence from all annoyance (as God shadowes us and is a buckler from all evils both inward and outward, from Sathan and all kinde of evils and wrath) but hee is also a fruitfull tree too,

*From mee is thy
fruit found.*

* *
*

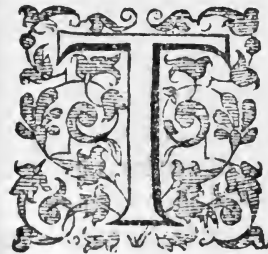
The end of the twelfth Sermon.



THE
THIRTEENTH
SERMON.

Hos, 14. 8.

— *I am like a greene firre-tree, from me
is thy fruit found.*



HIS holy Prophet, as we heard heretofore, did prophecy more then sixty yeares among the tenne Tribes, even un'till the time immediately preceding their captivity and misery, in like manner as *Jeremy* and *Ezekiell* did to the other *Iewes*. Now because in the worst times God alwayes had a remnant, and yet hath: Therefore it is the Prophets care in this

this Chapter which we have gon over, to instruct them in divers particulars of Reformation, as we have heard at large: *To retorne to the Lord, & to take words to themselves*: which words (as we have heard) are also taught them: backt with many sweet promises and encouragements, in Gods answer to their petitions. The last wherof insisted and stood upon was this, that God promiseth to be like a *greene firre-tree* unto *Ephraim* (who personated all the ten Tribes) *Ephraim* thought before to shadow and fence himselfe by Idols, and league with other Idolatrous Nations, which were like *Ionas* rotten gourd unto them, poore shadows and defences (but saith God) *I will be a fir-tree* for shadow to *Ephraim*, to defend him from all dangers whatsoever, and then in the next place he ads,

From me is thy fruit found.

A *firre-tree*, is a greene tree, but it hath no fruit, the excellencies of the creatures are applyed to God but not the defects. Therefore when comparisons are taken from the creatures and given to God, we must alway except the defects, supplying the same by some other clearing comparison. So God is not onely a *firre-tree* for shelter and defence, but he is a fruitfull tree, so a *firre-tree* is not, and therefore without comparison God hath more in him then any creature hath. For all that excellency which is in all the creatures is in him, and that in a farre more eminent manner: therefore he is both a shelter and fruit. If a passenger in distresse have

not only a *fir-tree* to shelter him and shadow him, but a fruit tree also to feed him, he thinks hee is made, when God thus comforts him: So a Christian he hath not only shelter from the wrath of God; but he hath also a place of rest and quiet, the mercy of God to keepe him, and the Word and Sacraments to feed him. God is a fruit tree, as well as a *firre-tree*.

From me is thy fruit found.

That is, whatsoever is graciously or comfortably good to us, in us, or issues from us, is all from God; hence first of all we observe for our instruction,

From a mans selfe comes nothing that is graciously good.

Observ.

Whatsoever is savingly good is altogether from God, *without me* (saith Christ) *you can doe nothing*: S. Paul was wondrous chary of this point, 1 Cor. 15. 10. he saith, *he laboured more abundantly then they all: yet not I, he recals himselfe, but the grace of God in him that did all*: and of my selfe, as of my selfe, I cannot so much *as thinke a good thought*. It is from God that we have meanes to make us fruitfull, and from the gracious working of his Spirit comes it that they are effectuell; that we thinke a good thought, or open our mouthes to speake a good word, it is from Gods Spirit inabling us thereto. *Open thou my mouth,* (saith the Psalmist) *and my lips shall shew forth thy praise*. We are teung-tied, and our lips sealed unlesse God open them, we cannot speake one savoury seasonable

Joh. 15. 5.

SER. XIII.

Isa 26. 12.
Phil. 1. 6.

sonable word to further our accompt; we may speake empty words, but never a word comes from the heart that is gracious and good, but it must be by the Spirit of God. It is he who works all our works in us and for us. *He begins the good worke in us, and perfects it to the day of the Lord,* the truth of this is wondrous cleare.

Phil. 2. 13.

If this be so, then undoubtedly the differences in the graces of men it is from another; meerly from God and Gods Spirit. There is indeed difference in men, but this is originally fetched from the grace of Gods Spirit. The good use of freedom that we talke so much of, it is from God, as well as the indowments of it. We have free will, but the use of it is not in our power, to use this or that at our pleasure: for, *It is God which gives the will and the deed,* of his good pleasure. Not only the deed, but the will too, we should make the will an Idoll else. For so many wils, so many Idols, if we thinke one man in himselfe can difference himselfe by his will.

Again, in that God saith, *from me is thy fruit found:* we may learne hence,

Observ.

That fruit that is gracious comes from us and from God too.

It is our fruit and Gods: so that there is a subordination of gracious workes under God: the fruit we have is from God, yet it is our fruit, too. How can this be? Yes easily, we speake the words, but it is God that opens our lips. We beleeve, but it is God that gives us grace to beleeve. We doe the action, but God gives

Quest.
Sol.

us grace to do it. God opened the heart of *Lydia* to beleeve, so that God and we meete together in the same action. We have parts, understanding, will, affections, bodies and soules, therefore the actions are said to be ours, because God workes in us as understanding creatures, but God sets the wheele agoing, so that the actions are originally his, and ours subordinately under him. *From me is thy fruit found.*

If so be that God and man joyne in one action, *From me is thy fruit found*, as though he should say, whatsoever thou hast or sayest that is good, it is from me; here we see how and why good workes cannot merit, though they come from God, as all goodnesse doth; yet in regard they come from us too, we add some tainture thereunto from our corrupt nature. What God and Christ himselfe doth is absolute and perfect, as Justification: but what fruit he works in us, there is somewhat of the old *Adam* in us, which taints the beauty of the work: it is Gods fruit comming from him, and yet our fruit also comming from us: which being so much tainted should humble us, in that we add nothing to the truth of Gods work in us, but abasement and defilement by our corruptions: *From me* (saith God) *is thy fruit found*, so much as is supernaturally good: but because our nature is not altered on the suddaine, but still tastes of the *old leaven*, therefore there can be no meriting of salvation by any workes we doe, because they are not perfectly good.

The cleering of these points in our judgement,

Why good
workes can-
not merit.

1 Cor. 5 7.

Vse. I.
For Humilia-
tion.

SER. XIII.

ment, they serve to worke in us a deepe Humiliation, seeing that we have nothing in our selves but staines and defilements; all that is good in us comming from God. *From me is thy fruit sound.* What is from our selves then, if all good in us comes from God? we are a barren and a cursed soyle, nothing that is good can come from us, even as the Earth was cursed after *Adams* fall, and brought forth nothing but briers and thornes, so our soule naturally is a cursed soyle in it selfe, and brings forth nothing but weeds and thornes. Our hearts are like the barren wilder nesse, full of evill noysome lusts and affections. Therefore this serves to abase us, that we be not lifted up with any good in us, for as that is altogether from Gods Spirit, so likewise we of our selves add nothing to it but somewhat which may diminish the value thereof.

Use 2.
For information of
judgement.

I.

Heere againe for matter of judgement, you have a difference between the state of nature, and the state of grace, I meane of innocent nature, for in *Adam* we had a standing in our selves, being trusted with our owne good, but now under the second Covenant, under the second *Adam*, Christ Jesus, we have many graces to fit us for Heaven, and many good works we doe, but all the fruit we have and yeeld is from God. So that now this is a grand difference, *Adam* as it were had the keeping of his own happines locked up in himselfe, but we have our happinesse, graces, and whatsoever is good for us shut up in Christ, as the spring and fountaine, which is the reason

of

of the perpetuall stability and permanent condition of Gods children, once his and ever his. And put the case we want this or that helpe, yet this prejudiceth not the perpetuity of the condition of Gods children, because those graces which come immediately from Gods Spirit, may be conveyed sometimes without meanes, as well as with them. Therefore whatsoever decay is in the branches that are grafed into this noble Vine Christ Jesus, in whom wee bare all the fruit we beare; yet notwithstanding there is life everlasting for us in the roote, which is by little and little distilled into us. The leaves may fall, outward things may decay, but there is life alway in the roote of a Christian, because he is in Christ, and hath his fruit from him: he cannot want fruit, no more then Christ can want influence and vigor. Which shewes us the excellent state of a Christian under the new Covenant of grace, that now we fetch all out of our selves, and it is happy for us that we doe so. For without Christ we can doe nothing, as without the soule the body can doe nothing, so without the Spirit of Christ we can doe nothing, from him is all. This is the reason why we must not trust to any grace in our selves that comes from us, because grace comes from God in Christ, trust God the Spring whence it comes, whose the fruit is, God the Father in Christ, from whom all fulnesse comes, and is derived unto us: or else we make but an Idoll of grace, if we trust too much to grace, looke to the Spring whence all comes

Joh. 15. 5.

SER. XIII.

comes to us: *From mee is thy fruit found.*

Quest.

Againe, for further instruction; What is the Reason that some have more grace then others, and more comfort, some having grace and comfort in one degree, and some in another.

Sol.

Hence it is, *from mee is thy fruit found*: it comes from the freedome of God in Christ, who according to his good pleasure gives the will and the deed, whence wee have grace sometimes in the vigour, sometimes in a weaker and lesser degree, the fault being in our selves too: yet notwithstanding there is a liberty in the Spirit of Christ, to give a more or lesse measure of grace, to shew that our good we doe springs not from our selves. Which also is the reason of the difference betwixt Christians, because God will shew that he is the disposer and the dispencer of his owne graces and comforts. And that is the reason also why wee must performe this duty of waiting upon God in the use of meanes, though we finde no sense of grace, and comfort from him for the present, *From him our fruit is found*. Waite his leaseure, he suspends grace and comfort untill a fit time, in regard of the degree: but yet there is alway some grace left, though hee suspends the increase thereof untill a fit time, because hee would have us know that it is of his giving. Christians who are acquainted herewith, they will not tie God to their time, but humbly goe on in the use of meanes, who though they finde not their spirits and their comforts enlarged so

as at other times, nor so great, nor as other folkes are, yet can say, Lord thou givest the will and the deed according to thy good pleasure, all comes from thee, therefore I will use the meanes and depend upon thee, because I have all from thee freely. God gives a spirit of Prayer, and then the thing we pray for, all is from him, *From me is thy fruit found.* Doe we find the Ordinances fruitfull, the preaching of the Word to open our understandings, to kindle our affections, to inlighten our judgements, it is the Spirit of God that joynes with the meanes, that are dead of themselves, to make them fruitfull: what are the Ordinances without God, but empty conduit pipes of themselves? therefore, *From mee is thy fruit found.*

This should teach and direct us also in all things to looke up to God; in all use of meanes, Lord I may reade, heare, and use helps and meanes long enough to little or no purpose, unlesse thou give a blessing, *Paul* may plant and *Apollo* may water, but if thou give not fruite from Heaven, all is to no purpose. We forget this, and therefore prosper accordingly. We thinke we can worke fruit out of the meanes by our owne wit, Oh! It is not so, whatsoever is comfortable or gracious in the use of meanes, it is meerely by Gods blessing. And therefore seeing all our fruit whatsoever that is good comes from God, let it stirre us up to practse the spirituall worship of God, to adore God, to beg of his fulnesse in Christ Jesus: and

Vse. 3.

1 Cor. 3. 6.

SER. XIII.

likewise to resigne our selves in all conditions unto him, Lord I put my selfe upon thee, all my fruit is from thee, thou canst sanctifie any condition unto me. This adoration and resignation, are parts of the spirituall worship of God. And likewise the service of the Lord in feare and reverence, that inward service of the Spirit, all depends upon this, that all our fruit is from God: therefore I must serve him, and serve him as hee must be served in spirit and truth. What makes a man reverence another? I depend upon him, without him I sinke, will this make a man serve man? and will it not make us serve God, and serve him with feare? what breeds an awfull feare? this that if he withdraw his influence I fall into sinne, despaire and discomfort: so that the ground of all feare of God, and service springing from this feare, it is from hence, that from him all my fruit, all my grace and comfort is found, therefore I must have grace to serve him, as a God in feare. For if the soule be not possessest and seasoned with this heavenly doctrine, that all comes from him, then surely where is Gods service? what becomes of it? where is that adoration, and magnifying of God in our hearts? where's that putting off our selves upon him in all conditions?

Ioh. 4. 24.

Use 4.

Againe this inforceth another part of Gods spirituall and heavenly worship, cleaving to God in our affections, especially these two, in our Faith and Love, that as all comes from and by Christ Iesus, so thereby we may draw from him

the

the fruit of grace and comfort. So that this spirituall cleaving and uniting of our soules to Christ, it comes from this, that I have all from him, therefore I must cleave to him, seeing whatsoever is spirituall, holy and comfortable, I must have from him. Therefore if we would worship God in spirit and truth as we should doe, and set him up in his due place in the soule, let us labour to have our judgements sanctified in this, that all comes from God. If we were surely grounded in the goodnesse, mercy and riches of Gods grace, and knew that all our fruit comes and is from him, this would make us to conclude, that therefore it is reason that we should worship him and depend upon him strictly. As the Prophet speakes of Idols, that they can neither doe us good nor harme, inforcing that they should not feare them, so we may say of all other things distinct from God, they can neither doe good nor harme, except God inable them. Will you be slaves to men, they cannot doe good nor harme, but as God uses them whose creatures they are. Therefore the worship of God is also founded hence; that God does all good or harme; if men doe it, they doe it from him, he gives them leave, as it is said of *Semei*, God bid him raile on *David*. If they doe us good, they are his conduits, whereby he deriveth good to us: therefore all is from him? we see then how all the true and hearty worship of God comes from this; *From me is thy fruit found.*

1cr. 10. 5.

2 Sam. 16. 10.

This should make us likewise as to worship

1 Pe. 5.

SER. XIII. God in spirit and in truth; so to be resolute in good causes whatsoever come of it, looke for a ground and then be resolute: because all comes from God, who will stand by us in his owne cause and quarrell.

But if I forsake this and that support, I shall lay open my selfe to injuries and wrongs.

Psal. 79. 10. Marke what the Spirit of God saith: *Yee that love the Lord hate that which is evill.* But if I hate that which is evill, Idols, &c. As *Ephraim* here doth, I shall be despised and trampled upon. No, (saith he) *God preserves the soules of his, he will be a shield and a buckler: a Sun and a shield, and no good thing shall be wanting to them that lead a godly life.* God will be a *Sun* for all good, and a *shield* to keep off all ill, therefore let us be resolute in good causes; Whence comes all shifting, halting, imperfect walking, and inconstancie in the wayes of God, but from this, that men know not where to have men: they are not grounded on this, that whatsoever is fruitfull and good comes from God, who will give whatsoever is fruitfull and good in depending upon him. This made the three children in *Daniell* couragious, they knew they should have fruit from God; that is, grace, comfort and peace, the best fruit of all. And therefore *know O King, that we will not worship thine Idoll, nor fall downe before it.* So holy *Hester* being well grounded could say, *If I perish I perish:* I know the cause is good and if all helpe in the creature be remooved and taken away, yet I shall have fruit in God.

Dan. 3. 18.

Hest 4. 16.

Let us therefore carry this about us as a principle of holy life, to know that our good is hid up in God, and not in the creature; so that if all helpe were taken away, yet we have it immediately, purer and better in the fountaine. What if there were not a creature in the world to helpe me? what if all were against me? yet God may make all their powers and indeavours fruitfull. There is such fruit from God, that he can make the worst things which befall us fruitfull, when he pleaseth; there is a blessing in curses and crosses, a good fruit in them: who can doe him harme that God turneth the bitterest things he suffers to his good. Let none be daunted in a good cause, but goe on resolutely, seeing God hath all in himselfe. Was not *Moses* forty dayes without any earthly comfort on the mount? and *Christ* also without naturall sustentation so long? did not God give light without a Sunne in the first creation? wee are tyed to meanes but he is not. We thinke if such friends and helpe be taken away, that then all is gone, but what were they? were not they meanes which God used at his good pleasure, and cannot he give comfort without them? yes certainly, the greatest comfort and grace is oft-times given immediately from God, when he salutes the soule by his owne Spirit, as he did *Paul* and *Sylas* in the dungeon, who in the midst of discomfort, had their spirits enlarged to sing hymns at midnight: God reserving that comfort for that time. Therefore seeing all comfort is
from

Exod. 34. 28.

Mat. 4. 2.

Act. 16. 25.

SER. XIII.

Use 6.
Of comfort.

from God, and hee is not tyed to this or that meanes, nay can blesse all contrary meanes, is not this a ground of resolution?

Therefore now make a Use of Comfort of it, seeing all fruit is from God, who is in covenant with his children in Jesus Christ, and who will improve all his attributes for their good, his Wisdome, Goodnesse, Power and Mercy, let them therefore take comfort to themselves, that howsoever the world may take their friends from them, riches, liberty and what you will: can they take God and fruit from them? No, *From me is thy fruit found.* If they could take away the Spirit of God, grace and comfort from us it were something, but can they doe that? no, the worst they can doe, is to send us to Heaven, to the Fountaine of all grace and comfort: so that in this world they cannot cast us into any condition wherein wee cannot have communion with God, in whom all the scattered excellencies of the creature are gathered together meeting as it were in a center. It is hee that comforts us in our friends, that shewes bowels to us in our mothers, wisdom and care towards us in our parents. The bowels of a mother, the care of a friend, the strength of wise assistance, hath he not all in himselfe, if all be taken away? he hath all. Therefore let Christians comfort themselves, that they can never be in a condition wherein fruit shall be taken from them. The poore worldling labours all his life for fruit, riches

riches and friends, and when he dyes then his fruit faileth him and fals, his lease withereth. What becommeth of his fruit then? he laboured for that which yeelds him nothing but vexation and death. But a Christian doth otherwise, he labours for grace and comfort, to keepe his communion and peace with God, and when all is taken away, either by the injury and wrongs of men, or by the extremity of the times, or as all will in the houre of death: his fruit is most after, in death and after death, more then can be by our narrow hearts conceived in the excellency thereof. O the excellent estate of a Christian! imagine such a one to have a tree that growes in Heaven, and sends forth fruit and branches to him in whatsoever state he is in. And so indeed God reacheth fruit from Heaven to the soule being in prison and misery. He reacheth from thence the fruit of grace, of spirituall strength and comfort, a blessed estate. Therefore let Christians comfort themselves in their condition, *that all their fruit is from him*: and that God especially will then shew himselfe abundant, when they stand most in need of him. Other trees beare no fruit in winter and in stormes, but God giveth fruit most in the worst times. He is a God that comforteth the abject. As it is 2 Cor. 7. and here it is said, *that in him the fatherlesse findeth Mercy* - we have most fruit from him in the worst times, then especially he delighteth to shew himselfe a God, when no comfort can be had from the creature.

There.

SER. XIII.

Against future feares.

Pfal. 46. 2.

Therefore doe not despaire, but lay up this against evill times, never feare for the time to come. Let the mountaines be cast into the midst of the Sea, and let the Earth and all rage, as the Psalmist sayes, and let things runne upon a head, come what can come, God is where he was, and Gods children are where they were, in regard of the maine comfort. They cannot be in such a condition, as that they can be deprived of their God, and of his assistance, *From me is thy fruit found.* Therefore care not for any condition that thou art in, this or that, thou shalt have that condition which shall be comfortable to thee: though many like beasts goe on, and looke for no fruit from God.

Vse 7.

And let this also be an Incouragement to walke with God sincerely and uprightly in all times, not fearing any creature, or danger from the creature, because our fruit is from God. What if we loose this or that, wee know what was said to *Amaziah* by the Prophet: but what shall become of the hundred talents, saith he, God is able to give thee much more, so in the losse of friends, having this and that tooke from us, let us comfort our selves, I but God is not taken from us. Hee who derives comfort by this or that friend, can supply it better by his owne Spirit. And whatsoever we part with in a good cause, let us remember what Christ saith: *Hee that parts with father or mother, with house or land for my sake, shall have a hundred fold in this world, and afterwards life everlasting.*

Mat. 19. 29.

He

Hee shall have all made up in grace, which is a hundred times better then any thing that is here, he shall have contentment which is better then the things themselves : sometimes he shall missing one worldly comfort, have more friends stirred up, but howsoever in want of one, he shall be supplied in an other comfort that he never dreamt of in this world. So that God is abundant to them that sticke close to him in sincerity, he shall find him abundant in the things of this life, in one comfort or other.

Therefore by these mercies of God here mentioned, let us be intreated to be in love with the condition of a Christian life; and say as *Ephraim* here, what have I any more to doe with my former corrupt courses, or Idols? give a peremptory answer to all sinnefull courses and suggestions, either from others, or from our owne corrupt nature. *What have I any more to doe with you?* No, God shall be my God, for if I can resigne my selfe wholly to God, and renounce the creature and all things else, God will be as a *greene firre-tree*, and heare me; I shall loole nothing by it. Be then in love with a Christian course, for it is the sweetest and the safest course, and never wants comfort from Heaven, and it is the most honourable course that can be, for it will hold our communion and peace with the great God of Heaven and Earth: for though we breake with others, we shall be sure of him. In which case take heed of that base suggestion which the Divell himselfe,

Exhortation.

SER. XIII.

Job, 1.9:

Iſa. 58.3.

Pſal. 56.8.

ſelfe was aſhamed to owne, *That we ſerve God for naught.* What ſhall we renounce Idolatry and wicked courſes, and thinke that God will not have fruit for us? ſhall I thinke if I leave my ſinnefull gaine, that I or my poſterity ſhall beg or ſtarve for it? doe we ſerve a God that hath no fruit? that is as a dead tree, or a barren wildernes: No, we ſerve a God that had all in himſelfe before he made the world, and hath all the excellency in himſelfe contained in the creatures, it is not in vaine to ſerve him: *Doth Iob ſerve God for nothing?* ſaid the Divell. Therefore it is a ſuggeſtion worſe then ſatanicall, to thinke we ſerve God for nothing: or to thinke like thoſe *Hypocrites* mentioned by the Prophet; that God regards not our faſting, or our devotion. No, we ſhall not looſe a good word for God, not a teare but he hath a bottle for it, not a ſigh or a groane, or a farthing, not a minutes time well ſpent ſhall be loſt, he will pay us for every ill word we indure for his ſake, for every diſgrace, loſſe or croſſe, doe we ſerve that God there is no fruit in? *From me is thy fruit found?*

Whatſoever our condition be in the world, let us comfort our ſelves with theſe things, and thinke that it is not in vaine to ſerve the Lord: for we cannot ſerve a richer nor a more kind maſter and Lord: Firſt of all he gives us opportunity and meanes whereby fruit may be wrought in us, and then he works the fruit of grace and comfort in us, and afterwards rewards and crownes his own fruit; but we add imperfections and inventions

ventions of our owne and so marre or staine all, but we deale with a gracious God in covenant, who pitties us as a Father doth his children, accepts and rewards what is his, and pardons what is our own. Therefore let this much be effectuell for the guiding of our lives, and comforting of us in a good course. If we take ill courses we must looke for no fruit from God, but fruits of his displeasure; if we eate of the forbidden tree, we shall eate and reape *the fruits of our own waies*, bitter fruits, for in this case Jesus Christ who is a sweet Saviour, will be a Judge to us; and he who is *the Lambe of God* will be angry, so as we shall reape the fruit of his indignation: In the *Revelation*, divers are brought in *desiring the hills and mountaines to fall upon them, to cover them from the presence of the Lamb*. Let us not therefore turne a sweet Saviour to a rigorous Judge, by adventuring upon courses wherein we cannot looke for fruit: but let us commend *our selves in well doing unto him, as unto a faithfull Creator and Redeemer*. And as it is, *Prov. 3. Let us acknowledge him in all our wayes*, for it is good to acknowledge and looke to him: that is, looke to him for strength, quickning, successe, grace and light to direct us: acknowledge him in all our wayes, and treasure up this comfort, that *all fruit is found from God*. If we take good courses, we shall ever be fruitfull, and have fruit from him, *out of his ful-*

nesse, for (saith he:) From me is thy fruit found.

The end of the thirteenth Sermon.

Rev 6.16.

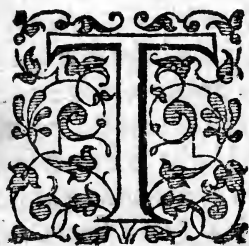
1 Pet. 4.19.



THE FOURTEENTH SERMON.

Hos, 14. 9.

Who is wise and hee shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? for the wayes of the Lord are equall, the just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.



Hese wordes seale up the whole Prophecy, for the Prophet immediately before prophecying of the captivity, discovers to them at length their sinnes as we heard, their Idolatry, adding new Idolsto their former Idols, *Baall* to the *Calves*, the Princes remooved the bounds, (old orders and lawes) the Prophets they were fooles and did not see the judgements of God hanging over their heads; and none of them all could see their

their

their *gray-haires*; that is, the signes of their owne ruine. After which out of a Christian love, care, and conscience of his duty, by direction of the Spirit of God, he prescribes an excellent way how they should carry themselves, by returning to the Lord, *take words unto your selves*, renounce all false confidence in *Assur*, and all domestick helps at home, horses and the like, and fly to God as your best Sanctuary. Then he shews what God will do to them, answer all the desires hee had put into their hearts: *I will heale their Back slidings and love them freely, &c.*

Now because these were great matters of great consequence, to make them either happy in the observing them, or miserable in neglecting them, you see how he shuts up all in a most weighty close: *who is wise and he shall understand these things prudent and he shall know them, for the wayes of the Lord are equall, &c.*

Wherin the scope of the Prophet, is to stir up a holy regard of what hath bin spoken, he would not have all lost for want of attention or application, and therefore he here stirs them up to a holy use of all: which stirring up is excellently and figuratively cloathed with an *Epiphonemy*. or acclamation, *who is wise and he shall understand these things, &c.* He doth not say, let men understand these things, but *who is wise and who is prudent?* Let them consider of these things, and then the *Exhortation* is back't with many Reasons.

1. It is wisdom and prudence to regard these things that I have spoken (*who is wise and who is prudent?*)

2. And then again they are the waies of God that are spoken off, and they are straight and equall in themselves.
3. And they lead to happinesse directly, without winding and turning, a man is sure to attaine his journeyes end in them, and if they will take example of those who onely are exemplary to them, he tels them *the Iust shall walk in them*, they shall not walk alone, they shall have the company of *a cloude of witnesses*, who prosper and walke on cheerfully in this way, and attaine happinesse in the end.
4. Then the last argument is taken from the contrary end of all them who cavill and snarle at Gods wayes and truth, that thinke themselves witty to pick quarrels with somewhat in Gods book, as it is a common fashion now a dayes to have a divinity of mens owne: *Transgressors*, such as are opposite to Gods wayes, *they shall fall in these wayes*, that is, they take offence at these waies and so fall into sin, and by falling into sin, fall into misery, till at last they fall into Hell, which is the end of all quarrellers with divine truth, they fall and dash themselves upon them, and so eternally perish.

Now these are strong and forcible reasons to inforce care and attention of what hath bin spoken, it is *wisdom* and *Prudence*, and *the wayes of the Lord here are streight*, and then *all godly people walke in them*, and those that *stumble at them are*
sure

sure to perish, and doe perish in them; not that they are a cause of their perishing, but by reason of the malice of men, finding fault and picking quarrels with them, they fall first into sin, and then into misery, thus we have the scope of the words.

Who is wise and he shall underst and these things.

First of all, we must know that the Prophet here in this figurative speech makes a kind of exclamation, *who is wise?* he doth, as it were secretly mourne at the Apostacy and fewnesse of those that be truly wise, as if he had said, I have given you many directions, and shewed you what sins lead to destruction, I have shewed what course ye are to take, and the bounty of God to those that Return: but, *Who is wise and prudent to regard these things?*

In the words therefore (in regard of the speaker, the Prophet) we may observe this ere we come particularly to them: the character of a holy, mercifull, gracious, and wise man, that when he hath spoken things to excellent purpose, he would not have those things lost, but out of mercy and compassion mingled with a great deal of heavenly wisdom, would have the best fruit of all he hath spoken. Which was the custome of the men of God in the Scriptures, the Spirit of God leading them to strike the naile home, when they taught truths to lay the word close upon the conscience, as much as they could. What is the whole book of *Deuteronomy*, as the word signifieth, but a repeating of the former lawes? *Moses* thought

SER. XIV.

Mat. 11. 15.
Jcr. 9. 12.

all to no purpose, unles he repeated laws, and fastned them upon the soule: so our Saviour Christ still when he had spoken excellent things, saith, *Let him that hath eares to heare, heare,* So saith *Ieremy, who is wise to consider these things?* and the conclusion of that excellent 107. Ps is just thus, *who is wise to consider these things?* and *Deut. 32.* saith *Moses, O that they were wise, that they would think of these things, &c.* So every where in Scripture you have such fastning of things where trutthes have bin spoken in application of them: which doth justifie the course of Gods Messengers in bringing the Word home unto mens consciences, because that which is spoken loosely in general, no man applyeth in particular to himselfe, wee who are Messengers of God, must therefore bring things home to the conscience: *who is wise and he shall understand these things, &c.*

But that which more neerly concerneth us, is wheras first of all he propounds this exhortation to regard these things under this holy acclamation: *who is wise and who is prudent?* we see first of al,
That there are but few who are truly wise and prudent.

Few that enter the right way: for our Saviour sheweth that *narrow is this way, and few there bee that find it.* The point needs not much prooffe it is so plain, and well known, wherfore it is now touched only making way to other things. The Reason hereof is cleere.

Most men we see live by sense, will and passion, and not by faith, wherby they intrall the
wisdome

Observ.

Mat 7. 14.

Reason

the wisdom they have, and make it prisoner to sinfull passions and affections, rejecting thoughts of their owne future happinesse: and though it behove them in this world to be broken of their will: yet they will have it here, though they perish and be damned for it hereafter. This is the state of the unbroken heart of man till he have grace in him. Yea it is the state of all men, especially those that are puffed up, either by their own place, humour, or the flattery of others, they will have their will: *Mens mihi pro Regno*, as one said. Now this being the proud poysonfull nature of man, we must not thinke it a strange thing, that there are so few wise and prudent: for a man cannot be wise and passionate, for his passion transformes him to be a beast, a Divell. Now because most men live by sense and by humour, which is a life they are nuzled in (especially those that are subject to flatterers) therefore few come to be truly wise and prudent, to have so much stedinesse and sobriety of spirit, as to deliberate what is to be done. They will not in cold blood give leisure to their humors (but feed them) to consider what is best. This being the humour of the world, no wonder that there be so few prudent and wise.

Since things are thus, learne this of it, if there be so few prudent and wise, as the Prophets complaine in all times. *To whom is the arme of the Lord revealed; and, who hath beleevved our report, &c.* Then take heed of living by example, that we be not led away with the sway

Use. I.

Isa 53.1.

SER. XIV.

and error of the rimes : for seeing there are few *wise and prudent*, it is better and safer to follow one man reformed by judgement, then a thousand others, one man is worth a thousand who is led with judgement and by the Spirit of God.

Vse. 2.

And likewise take no scandall, if you see men run upon heaps in the broad and worst way, for that men have alwayes done, it is the complaint of all the Prophets in all times, calling the better sort few: *as the grapes after the vintage, like a few scattered ears of corne after harvest: one of a citty, and two of a Tribe*, a few of all. Therefore now let us seale this truth with this exhortation.

Isa 17.5,6.
Ier.3.14.

Vse 3.

That we labour to be of that few that are truly wise and prudent, examine, are wee of those few or not? and what have vve in us that may secure us to be of this small number; for if vve be not, vve shall never be saved. For Christs flocke is a little flocke; and few there be that shall enter in at that strait gate: what hast thou then which may discover unto thine owne soule that thou art of that number, and not of the common multitude that shall be damned? it is a thing worth the inquiring of our soules, vvhathave vve in us that may characterise us to be Gods true servants, Christs true children, and members of the Church? and never rest in a common perswasion of common grace, which cast-awayes may have as well as we. We must strive for some distinct grace that reprobates can not attain unto.

Luk. 12 32.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things, prudent, &c.

But

But to come more particularly to the words, *Who is wise and hee shall understand these things*, The holy man of God heere in his Exhortation, naming *Wisedome*, singling out *wise and prudent men; who is wise, and who is prudent?* hee toucheth men upon the quicke right veine, for who is there that would not bee thought wise and prudent? A corrupt man naturally rather desires to be thought sinfull then weake, judge him as you vwill, so you judge him not to be an unwise, an unprudent man. A proud man till he be subdued and humbled, had rather be thought dishonest then simple, because if hee be dishonest, hee thinkes it is out of choice: but to be simple, this argueth imperfection, and not freedome and bravery of spirit: therefore it being the naturall desire and instinct of all men to be thought wise and to be so, hee endeavours to worke upon that affection in them, *Who is wise, &c.* Well, saith he, I know you all desire to be thought *wise and prudent* men, would you make it good that you are so indeed? beleeve my sayings, this is the way, whosoever is wise let him understand these things, and hee that is prudent let him hearken to these things that I have spoken.

Man at first when he had communion with wisedome it selfe was a wise creature, till he hearkened to Sathan and so lost all, *becomming as the beasts which perish.* Yet in that glorious building, since the corruption of nature this

Gal. 49. 12.

SER. XIV.

amongst that rubbish is reserved, that above all things there is a desire to be happy and wise, which two desires are naturally the leading desires in men, *To desire to doe well, and to be wise.* Therefore the Prophet here upon that which is left in mans nature takes advantage to build true wisdom and knowledge indeed.

Definition of
heavenly wis-
dome.

To come then in briefe to shew what this *wisdom and prudence* is, for there is some distinction between *Wisdom and Prudence.* *Wisdom* is a heavenly light set up in the soul by the Spirit of God, whereby it discerneth the generall truths concerning God, our selves, the state of the Church, the priviledges of Christianity, and such like: in sum it is a right divine apprehension of spirituall truths.

Definition of
heavenly pru-
dence.

And *Prudence*, this is a kinde of sharpenesse of spirit, whereby the Spirit of God directs the soule, knowing the right generall principles to particular cases. *Prudence* is an application of the generall knowledge of generall things to particulars, and is an ordering of the life in particular exigences and cases in a right order, according to the direction of the Spirit, as we have it, *Prov. 8. I wisdom dwell with prudence.* Divine *Wisdom* wheresoever it is dwels with *Prudence*; that is, where God doth enlighten the understanding to conceive aright of the mysteries of salvation, there it dwels with *prudence*, that is, it directs the soule to an orderly carriage of life towards God and man, and in regard of it selfe, every way as it should doe, in all estates,

times

times and conditions, that is meant here by *prudence*, a particular gift wherby a man is fit to consult and deliberate of things in particular to be done, in particular cases of consciences, and the like. Now *wisdom and prudence* they are both together in Gods people, howsoever perhaps one is more excellent then another. Some are wiser who have a deeper search of truths in generall: and some are more prudent in their waies, that are weaker Christians for the maine generall truths. Yet there is not a good Christian, but he hath so much *prudence* as will bring him to Heaven. But God giveth extraordinary wisdom to some, because they are leaders of others. Yet though in Gods dispensation there be a difference, yet in every Christian they are joyned together, there is no Christian but he is wise for himselfe, which is *Prudence*. This is as it werethe salt which seasoneth all other graces, and knowledge whatsoever: for what is knowledge without discretion, but a foolish humour? what is patience but blockishnesse, if a man doe not discern how, why and upon what ground to be patient? what is Religiousnesse without this, but superstition, and what is Zeale but an indiscreet heate, if it bee not seasoned with this *Prudence*? yea, and what is Constancy it selfe, but an indiscreet rigour and stifnesse without wit. So that it is the seasoning of all other graces whatsoever, that which puts bounds and measure unto all: Therefore hee joynes it with Wisdom, *who is wise and who is prudent?*

SER. XIV.

prudent? good as we say consists of a whole entire cause, unto which must be occurrence of all circumstances together, one defect may make it to be sinfull. So this is *Prudence* to observe a due order cloathed with circumstances of the manner and season of every good action and duty, therefore he joynes here *Prudence*. *Who is wise and hee shall understand these things, prudent and he shall know them?*

Now these be the two graces that leade and guide a mans life: there must be first a generall understanding and light of the soule, and then there must be a particular light to apply this generall to particulars. *Prudence* is, as it were, the steward of the soule, which dispenceth the light therof according to particular occasions.

Now for *Wisdom* and *Prudence*, we will not insist long on them, only we will draw towards a right discerning of them squared and proportioned to our understandings by resemblances of other things: for a man may know what they are in divine things, by some proportion to humane things, what they are there, as to give a little light to it.

Signes of worldly
wisdom.

1.

He is a *wise, prudent man* in the world that will be sure to make the greatest his friend. So God being the greatest of all and most able to do us good, he is a wise and prudent man that makes him his friend, and cares not who he break with, so he break not with God.

2.

And we account him also a *wise and prudent man* in the world, that like the wise steward in the

the Gospell provides for the worst times: what course did he take for himself herein, he provides for, as he fore-sees danger. So spirituall wisdom and prudence will direct a man what is best for his latter end, his eternall rest and happines in another world. Heavenly wisdom prefixeth to a man a full view of his latter end, and that which followeth thereupon in another world, and so makes him provide before hand, and direct all things to that end. A wise man will not have things to seek, when he comes to make use of them, like the foolish Virgins who had their oyle to seek when they should have had it ready. He is truly spiritually wise towards his latter end, that as he knows there is a state to come, so is truly prudent to have all things ready against that time, that considering the uncertainty of this life, he may not be surpris'd unawares, like those glorious virgins who had a lamp without oyle.

And amongst men he is also counted a *wise* and *prudent* man, that makes a right choice, for this is *wisdom*, when a man discerneth a difference, and answerably makes his choice. *Simile mater erroris*, saith one, Likeness is the mother of error. There is a likeness between good and bad in the world, and betweene truth and error, now he is a wise man, who is not caught with these resemblances, but discerneth a difference between temporall and eternall things, shadows and substances, realities and appearances of things, and suitably chooseth eternals before temporals, the favour of God before the fa-

3.

vour of men, and in a word those things which concerne everlasting happines, before those that are perishing, *Wisdom* is seen in choyce. By these few instances named, we may see what heavenly *wisdom* and *prudence* is, by proportion of *wisdom* and *prudence* in earthly things. Now considering that there is a better state in another world then in this, he must needs be a wise man that orders things so, as that he may not loose eternity. Most men in the world are penny wise and pound foolish, as we say: wise to a particular end, to get particular favors and riches, so to sacrifice their intentions: but for the main which is *wisdom* indeed, to look to their last estate and happines, and to fit their actions and courses that way, how few are wise to purpose? how few provide for eternity? therefore no marvell the Prophet saith, *who is wise and who is prudent?* because men live by sense and not by Faith.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them?

Now the next thing to be observed hence is this, *That the wise & prudent only know these things.* There must be *wisdom* and *prudence* before we can know divine Truths and make use of them: and then observe further, *That true wisdom and prudence carries men to Gods Word.* *Who is wise to understand these things?* by divine truth we grow *wise & prudent*, the Spirit joyning with the same, & then we come to make a right use of thē: there must be first a spiritual *wisdom & prudence* inlightened by the Spirit, ere we can make use of the word

aright

Deut. 32. 29.

Observ.

Observ.

aright to taste and relish it. Because though the word be light, yet light alone is not sufficient to cause sight, but there must concur unto the outward light an inward sight: grace must illuminate the understanding and put a heavenly light into the soule. As by the light within meeting with the light without, the eye being the instrument of sight, applying it selfe to the thing, thence comes sight. So there be divine truthes out of us, wherwith when the Holy Ghost puts an inward light into the soul, sanctified *wisdom and prudence*, then the inward light meeting with the light without, we see and apprehend. The Spirit therefore must joyne to work *Wisdom and Prudence*. Naturally we are all dead and have lost our spirituall senses, therefore the Spirit of God must work in us spirituall senses, sight and tast, that we may see, discern & relish heavenly things; which ere we can do, there must be an harmony betwixt the soule and the things, that is the soule must be made spiritual, answerable to the heavenly things pitched upon, or els if the soul be not set in a futable frame, it can never make a right use of them.

Now when the understanding of a man is made wise by the Spirit of God, it will relish *Wisdom and Prudence*. For the Spirit of God together with the Scripture takes the scales off the eyes of the soule, subdues rebellious passions in the affections, especially that rebellion of the will, putting a new relish in all, so as they come to love, affect and joy in heavenly things. Now when these scales of spirituall blindness are fallen

SER. XIV.

len off the eyes of the soule, and when rebellion is removed from the will and affections, then it is fit to joyne and approve of heavenly things, else there is a contrariety and Antipathy betwixt the soule and these things: as the body when the tounge is affected with some aguish humor, cannot relish things, though they be never so good, but affects and relisbeth all things suring that distemper. So it is with the soule when it is not inlightned, it judgeth all things carnally, there being an Antipathy between the soule and divine truths brought home unto it, perhaps a soule not inlightned or sanctified will apprehend the generalities of truth very well: but when they are pressed home to practise, then unles the soule be changed, it will rise up and swell against divine truths, and reject the practise of them. Without subduing grace to alter and change the soule, the affections therof are like the March Suns, which stir up a great many humors, but not spending them, they breed aguish humors and distempers. So the light of the word in a carnall heart, it meets with the humors of the soul and stirs them; but if there be not grace in the soule to subdue these affections, it stirs them up to be the more malicious, especially if they be prest to particular duties in leaving of sinfull courses: so that the Spirit of God must alter the understanding, and subdue the will and affections, ere there can be a conceiving of divine truths savingly. Therefore before these acts, he joynes these graces: *Who is wise, and who is prudent, &c.*

The

The use hereof is this much, not to come to the divine truth of God with humane affections and spirits, but to lift up our hearts to God. Why Lord as things themselves are spirituall, so make me spirituall, that there may be a harmony between my soule and the things, that as there is a sweet relish in divine truths, so there may be a sweet tast in me, to answer that relish which is in divine truths, that the wisdom of thy word and my wisdom may be one, then a man is wise. There is not the commonest truth, or practicall point in Divinity, but it is a mystery and must be divinely understood, and must have *prudence* to go about it as we should do. Repentance and the knowledge of sin, it is a mystery, till a man be sanctified in his understanding, he can never know what spirituall misery is, till the inward man be inlightned and sanctified to know what a contrariety there is between sin, and the Spirit of God. As no man can know throughly what sicknes is, but he that hath bin sick, for the Phisitian doth not know sicknes so well as the patient who feels it. So it is with a holy man sanctified by the Holy Ghost, tell him of sin, he feels it, and the noisomenes of it, the opposition of it to his comfort and communion with God. Only the spirituall inlightned man can tell what Repentance, sin, sorrow for sin, and the spirituall health of the soul is. Therefore it is said here, *Who is wise, and who is prudent? and he shall understand these things.*

The end of the fourteenth Sermon.



THE FIFTEENTH SERMON.

Hos. 14.9.

Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? for the wayes of the Lord are right, the just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.



A length by divine assistance, we are come unto the conclusion of this short Chapter, wherein the Holy Ghost from God hath shewed such bowels of mercy and tender compassion unto miserable sinners, encouraging them to returne unto the Lord, by many and severall arguments, being formerly insisted upon: our last

last worke was to shew you what *wisdom* and *prudence* was, the difference of them, and how that none without these endowments are able to know and make use of divine truthes and mysteries of Religion. *Who is wise and he shall understand these things? prudent and he shall know them? &c.*

We came then to shew that there must be *Prudence* and *Wisdom*, before we can understand divine Truths, there must be an illumination within: it is not sufficient to have the light of the Scripture outwardly, but there must be a light of the eye to see: there must be *wisdom* and *Prudence* gathered from the Scriptures. Now *Wisdom* and *Prudence*, if they be divine (as here is meant) it is not a discreet managing of outward affaires of our personall condition, but an ordering of our course to Heaven-ward. Wherefore a man may know whether he be *wise* and *prudent* by his relishing of divine Truthes, for otherwise hee is not *wise* and *prudent* in these things which are the maine.

Now having shewed, that onely the *wise* and *prudent* can conceive and make a right use of these great things delivered, he comes to shew and defend the equity of Gods wayes, how crooked soever they seeme to flesh and blood: these things ought to be hearkned unto, because they are the wayes of God.

The wayes of the Lord are right.

By *wayes* here hee understandeth the whole Law and Gospell, the whole word of God, which he calleth *right*, not onely because

SER. XV.

1. *They are Righteous in themselves, but*
2. *Because they reforme whatsoever is amisse in us and rectifie us, and*
3. *Worke whatsoever is needfull for our good and salvation.*

Now more particularly, Gods wayes are

1. *Those wayes wherein he walks to us : or*
2. *The wayes that he prescribes us to walk in, and*
3. *Our wayes as they are conformable to his.*

Any of these are the wayes of God, of all which more hereafter.

I.
Gods wayes to
us.

The wayes wherein he walkes to us, because many of them are untraceable as unsearchable to us, are not here meant. As those of *Election, Predestination* and *Reprobation*: the reasons whereof, if we take them comparatively, cannot be searched out, why God should take one and not another, it is an unsearchable way. But take a man single (out of comparison) the wayes of God will appear to be right, even in that harsh decree which many men stumble so much at, for none are ever brought in the execution of that decree to be damned, but you shall see *the wayes of the Lord right*, who a long time together offers them a great deale of mercy, which they refusing, and resisting the Holy Ghost, taking wilfully contrary courses, work out their own damnation. So that at length the issue of those unsearchable wayes will appear to be right in every particular, howsoever the comparative reason at the first, why God singles out one man and not another will not appear.

As

As for the *wayes of his Providence*, in governing the world and ruling of his Church, this is the way of God which is right: all which wayes though we cannot in all particulars see in this world; yet in Heaven in the light of glory we shall see what cannot now be seene in the light of grace and nature. For there be misteries in *Providence*, who can tell the reason why of men equally good one should be sorely afflicted, and the other should goe to Heaven without any affliction in a smooth way? none can give a reason of it, but we must subscribe to the hidden wisdom of God, whose wayes are unsearchable in his *Providence*, yet are they most right, though they be above our conceit. If we could conceive all Gods wayes, then they were not Gods wayes: for in his waies to us, he will so carry them as he will shew himselfe to be above and beyond our shallow conceits.

But the wayes especially here meant, are the wayes which he prescribes us to walke in, and they are,

1. *What we must beleevc,* and then,
2. *What we must doe,* there is,
First, Obedience of Faith, and then
Obedience of Life.

These are Gods wayes prescribed in the word and only in the word.

Now *our wayes*, when they joyne with *Gods wayes*, that is, when our life, purposes and desires of the inner-man, in our speeches, carriage and conversation agree with Gods wayes, then

2.

The wayes of his Providence, &c.

3.

Our wayes joyning with Gods wayes.

SER. XV.

Pfal. 25. 16.

in some sort they are Gods wayes, *the just shall walk in them.* They shall walk in these waies, that is, in those waies which God prescribeth. As for those waies wherein God walkes to us, we have not so much to do here to consider them. But by walking in the wayes which he prescribes, we shall feele that his wayes to us will be nothing but mercy and truth. *The wayes of the Lord are right,* those wayes that he prescribes to men to be beleevd and done, they are right & streight, that is, they are agreeable to the first rule of all. Right is the judgement and will of God: He is the first truth and the first good, the prime truth and good, which must rule all others, *Mensura mensurans,* as they use to speake in Schooles, the measure that measures all other things: for all other things are only so farre right, as they agree to the highest measure of all, which is Gods appointment and will. So *the wayes of God* are said to be *right,* because they agree to his word and will: they are holy and pure, as himselfe is just, pure and holy.

The wayes of the Lord are right.

Right, as they agree to that which is *right* and streight, and right likewise, because they lead directly to a right end. We know a right line is that which is the shortest betweene two tearmes, that which leads from point to point is the shortest of all other lines. So *God's wayes are right and streight,* there are no other wayes which tend directly to happinesse, without error, but Gods wayes, all other wayes are crooked

crooked wayes. So Gods wayes are right, as they looketo God, and as they looke unto all other inferiour courses : they are *right* to examine all our wayes by, being the rule of them. And they are *right*, as they looke to Gods will and are ruled by him.

The wayes of the Lord are right.

Hence observe we in the first place, that the first thing we should looke too in our conversation, must be to know this for a ground,

That man is not a prescriber of his owne way, and that no creatures will is a rule.

observ.

We must imbrace therefore no opinion of any man, or any course injoynd or prescribed by any man, further then it agrees with the first truth and the first *right*, *Gods wayes are right* : *right*, as a standard that is a measure to measure all other measures by. So Gods *will* and *truth* revealed is a right rule, and the measure of all other rules whatsoever. Directions therefore which we have of things to be beleaved and done from men, must be no further regarded then as they agree with the first standard. Therefore they are mistaken, and desperately mistaken, that make any mans will a rule, unlesse it be subordinate to that which is higher, at which time it becommeth all one with the higher rule. When a man subordinates his directions to Gods, then Gods and his are all one. Otherwise without this subordination, wee make men gods, when wee make their will a rule of our Obedience. *The wayes of the Lord are right.*

SER. XV. But of this onely a touch by the way: the maine point hence is,

Observ.

The Word of the Lord is every way perfect and brings us to perfection.

Prov. 30 5.

As we may see at large proved. *Ps. 19. 7, &c.* Where whatsoever is good, comfortable, profitable or delightfull, either for this life or the life to come, is all to be had from thence. And the Wiseman saith, *Every word of God is pure, &c.*

Psal. 12. 6.

A similitude taken from gold which is fined till it be pure, as it is expressed in another place, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tryed in a fornace of earth, and purified seven times.* And so the Apostle to Timothy.

2 Tim. 3. 16.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Correction, for Reproofe, for Instruction in Righteousnesse, that the man of God may be perfect throughly furnished unto all good workes.

Use I.

Since then the wayes of God are so right, just, pure and perfect, this is first for Reproofe of them that add hereunto: as our Romish adversaries, who do herein by their traditions and additions, condemne God either of want of Wisdome, Love and Goodnesse, or of all. So as all defects charged upon the Word, are charged upon God himselfe, who did not better provide and fore-see for his Church what was good for it. But the Wise man condemneth this their audacious boldnes, where he saith, *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* They barre reading of the Scriptures, or to read them in english especially, lest the

Prov. 30. 6.

people become Hereticks. They thinke it safe to reade their owne bookes and idle dreames, but reject the Word of God, and then (as *Ieremy* speaks) *What wisdome is in them ?* Surely none at all, for the only wisdome is to be governed by Gods most holy Word.

Jer. 8 9.

Againe, it is for Instruction unto us, to rest and rely upon this so holy, right, pure and perfect word. Since it is so sure and firme, we are to rest upon the Promises, and tremble at the threatnings, though we see not present performance of them, because not one of them shall faile. For (saith Christ) *Heaven and Earth shall passe away, but one jot and tittle of the Law shall not faile.* What maketh so many judgments to overtake men, but their unbelieve ? what made their carcases to fall in the wilderness, so as they could not enter into the land of *Canaan*, but their unbelieve ? for (saith the text of them) *They could not enter, because of unbelieve.* Infidelity and not beleiving God, is the roote and cause of all our woe. It beganne with our first Parents, and it cleaveth too close unto us, even unto this day. This commeth from our Atheisme and selfe-love, that if a mortall man promise or sweare unto us, we beleive him and rest upon his word : but all that the great God can doe unto us by Promises, Commandements, Threatnings, Allurements, and gracious Examples, will not make us give credit to his word, but rather believe Satan, and our owne false and deceitfull hearts. As for in-

Pse. 2.

Mat. 5. 18.

Heb. 3. 19.

SER. XV.

Isa. 1. 18.

Isa. 50. 10.

Heb. 11. 5.

stance, God hath promised, that *if our sins were as red as scarlet, yet he will make them whiter then the snow*, though they be never so strong for us, yet *he hath promised to subdue them*. If our wants be never so great, yet if we will trust in God, he hath promised to relieve us, and hath said, *that he will not faile us nor forsake us*, if we cast our care upon him. So for the threatnings, we must beleeve that there is never a one of them, but they shall come to passe, as sure as the promises shall be made good. If these thoughts were firmly settled in us, that *the wayes of the Lord are right*, and therefore must be all accomplished in their time, it would make us restlesse to flie from sin, and the punishments threatned, which all *lye at the doore*, and will quickly be upon us, if they be not avoyded by sound and hearty Repentance.

Gen. 4. 7.

Vse. 3.

Lastly, if every commandement be right sure and just, then when God commandeth doe it, though the apparent danger be never so great and though it be never so contrary to flesh and blood, pleasure, profit or preferment, yet know it is firme and sure, and that our happinesse stands in doing it, our misery in disobeying it. As we know it was with *Adam*: what a suddaine change did his disobedience worke in himselfe, all the world since being leavened with that miserable contagious fall of his. And for the whole word, this is a generall, we never want any good, but for want of love and obedience unto it. *Great prosperity shall they have* (saith *David*) *who love thy law, and no evill shall come unto them.*

Psal. 119. 165.

them. And we never had nor shall have any hurt, but from our unbelieve and disobedience to the holy, pure and perfect word of God, which is attended with comfort and prosperity here, and endlesse glory hereafter.

The wayes of the Lord are right.

In the next place, *If the wayes of the Lord be right and streight*, so streight that they leade directly to the right end, then it is cleere,

That the best way to come to a good and right end is to take Gods wayes. For it is a right way, and the right way is alwayes the shortest way. Therefore when men take not Gods wayes, prescriptions and courses, they go wide about, and seldome or never come to their intended end. Gods way is the *right way*, and therefore brings a man to his right end. Sometimes men will have their turnings, their *diverticula* and vagaries, but they find by experience that *Gods wayes* they are the *right wayes*, so as they never attaine to comfort and peace untill they come againe into those wayes. God untill then suffereth them to be snared and hampered, and to eat the fruit of their owne waies, and then they see the difference of Gods waies and theirs, and that Gods waies are the best, and the streightest waies unto true happines.

Observ.

Indeed God suffers sometimes men that will have their owne wayes, to come quickly to them, as some men hasten to be rich, and God suffers them to be rich hastily: yet they are none of Gods wayes which they take, but climbe up by fraud and deceit. I but that is only

SER. XV.

only a particular end, which God suffereth them to attaine by bie wayes : but what will be the upshot ? Where will all these wayes end at length ? surely in Hell. For when a man goes out of the right, and streight, and direct way, to be great in the world, he is like a man who goes out of his way, which is further about, who yet when he is in that way goes on through thicke and thinne, because he will gaine some way. Hee goes on through thickets and hedges, faire and foule, where hee gets many scratches, brushes and knocks. Do any think in the world to attaine his particular ends, without the direct wayes of God, God may suffer him to attaine his particular end, but with many flaws, knocks and brushes upon his conscience, which many times he carrieth with him unto his grave, and findes it a great deale better, both to attaine unto his particular ends by *Gods wayes*, and to have no more of any thing in the world then he can have with a good conscience. For though they be good men, oft-times God suffers such men to have bruises in their conscience all their dayes ; that they and others may know, that the best way, is the streight and right way, which at last will bring us best to our end.

Having thus made it good, *That the wayes of the Lord are right* ; now for conclusion of all, the Prophet begins to shew the divers effects these *right wayes of God* have in two sorts of people, *the godly and wicked.*

1. *That the just shall walke in them :*

2. *That*

2. That the transgressors shall fall therein.

The just shall walke in them; who be the just men here spoken off? Such are just men who give to every one their due, that gives God his due in the first place, and man in the second place, whereby it is framed. *The just shall walke in them*; that is, they shall proceed and goe on in them till they be come to the end of their race, the Salvation of their soules. And more particularly.

Just men, first are such, who have a respect unto all Gods commandements. *Ps. 119. 6.* Though in their disposition they find some more hard to them then others, yet they doe not allow themselves to breake any, but strive so much the more earnestly and constantly to observe them, as they find their natures opposite to them. Now Hypocrites howsoever they doe many things in shew, yet like *Herod and Judas*, their hearts run in a wrong channell, they allow themselves to live in, and like of some sinne. The young man in the Gospel, had not a respect unto all Gods Commandements, though Christ loved his aimiable parts; to this purpose *James* saith, *Whosoever shall keepe the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, hee is guilty of all.* That is, he who alloweth himselfe in any one sinne, he is guilty of all. Aske *Judas*, is murder good? he would have said no: but hee was covetous and allowed himselfe in it, and so drew upon him the guilt of all the rest. God is hee who forbids sinning against them all: hee who forbids one, forbids

Who be just men?

I.

They respect Gods commandements.

Mat. 19.

1 Tim. 2 10.

SER. XV.

forbids all: and being rightly turned to God, the same authority makes us leave all: it is not sin, but the allowance of it that makes an Hypocrite.

2.
They doe things
to a good end.

Mat 7. 22.

Againe, they doe things to a good end, the glory of God, and the good of man. For want hereof, the almes, prayers and fasting of the *Scribes and Pharisees* (because they did nothing out of love to God or man, but for vaine glory and carnall respects) are condemned of Christ. So some are brought in at the last day saying, *Lord, Lord, have we not in thy name prophesied, and in thy name cast out Divels, and in thy name done many wonderfull works:* and yet Christ professeth not to know them, but calleth them *workers of iniquity*. They had *Gifts and Calling* and delivered true doctrine, &c. But here was their failing, *They prophesied in his Name, but not for his Name*. Their actions were good in themselves, and for others, but the end of them was naught, and therefore both they and their workes are condemned. Yet this is not so to be understood, but that Gods children have some thoughts of vaine glory which accompanieth and creepeth into their best actions, but they doe acknowledge this for a sin, confesse it, and desire the Lord to pardon and subdue it, and then it shall never be laid to their charge. Because having of infirmities is not contrary to sincerity, but allowing of them, and living in them, in which case the Lord is more pleased with our humiliation for our sinne, then the motions to vaine-glory did offend him

Thirdly

Thirdly, a desire to grow in grace and to become better and better is a signe of uprightnesse: Christian Righteousnesse, as it sees still need, so it still desires more grace and lesse sin, because he who hath a true heart, seeth both the want and worth of grace, & feeleth his want. A man feeles not the want of Faith, Humility and Love, till he have it in some sort, as it is said, *Phil. 3. 15. As many as are perfect are thus minded, to wit, so many as are upright, all is one.*

Lastly, this just uprightnesse is knowne by love of the Brethren: *By this we know we are translated from death to life, because we love the bretheren.* Contrary to which is that disposition which envieth at all things which suites not with their humours, as *James* speaketh of those who preferre men, and have their persons in admiration in regard of outward things despising inferiours.

If therefore we will ever be counted righteous persons, let us keepe these rules set downe here, have a respect to all Gods Commandements, do all things to the glory of God, desire to grow in grace, and love the brethren.

And so it is also for Consolation unto such who are thus qualified: for unto them belongeth all the promises of this life and of that to come, they are in a blessed estate, for *all things are theirs*, because they are Christs, therefore it is their bounden duty having an upright heart to rejoyce in God, as the Prophet speakes: *Rejoyce in the Lord ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright.* None have cause to rejoyce but upright men.

I. Be.

3.

A desire to grow in grace.

4.

By love of the brethren.

1 Joh. 3. 14.

1 Tim. 2. 2.

Vse 1.

2.

1 Cor 3. 22.

Psal. 73. 1.

Psal. 52. ult.

SER. XV. 1. Because they of all others have title and right to joy: 2. Because they have command to doe it, seeing Heaven is theirs, all the promises are theirs, and they are heires of all things: it is a comely service and the work of Heaven.

Object.

Against this some object. O but I find many finnes, passions and infirmities in my selfe, how then can I joy in God.

Answer.

To this we answer briefly, that the passions and infirmities of Gods servants, are not contrary to Christian uprightnes and righteousnesse: for Saint James saith, that *Elias was a man subject to like passions and infirmities as we are*, yet he was a righteous man, though a man subject to the like passions as we are. Therefore the passions of Christians are not contrary to Christian, but to legall righteousnes. But *we are not under the Law but under Grace*. The first Covenant of works bids us have no sin. The other Covenant bids us allow no sin, this much is for that Question, what is meant by *just men*. It remaines now that we should further enquire into that mysterie, how it is that *just men walke in the wayes of God*, and prosper therein: when yet wicked men called *transgressors* fall therein. But this being a mystery, by your patience we will take time to unfold what we have to speake hereof the next time if God be so pleased.

Jam. 5. 17i

Rom. 6. 15.

The end of the fiftcenth Sermon.



THE SIXTEENTH SERMON.

Hos, 14. 10.

— *The wayes of the Lord are right, the just
shall walke in them, but the transgressors
shall fall therein.*

GODS Children have their times of deadnesse and desertion, and againe their times of quickning and rejoycing: weeping doth not alwayes remaine unto them for their portion, *but joy cometh in the morning*: in the worst times the Saints have alwayes some comforts afforded them which supporteth them against all the stormes and tempests they indure: they have alwayes a *Goshen* to fly too, others shall perish in that way wherein they shall walke and escape.

Psal. 30. 5.

The just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.

Thus

SER. XVI.

Thus farre we are now come in the unfolding of this Chapter, having shewed Gods rich and incomparable mercies to miserable and penitent sinners, how ready God is to embrace such, as this rebellious people named were, with all the arguments used to make them returne unto the Lord: we are now come at last unto the upshot of all, a discovery of the severall effect and work Gods word hath upon both sorts of people here named and aymed at.

The just shall walke in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein.

These were very bad times: yet there were just men, who walked in the wayes of God, so that we see.

In the worst times God will have alwayes a people that shall justifie wisdom.

God will have it thus, even in the worst times, that *the just shall walke in them*: though before he saith, *Who is wise and who is prudent?* yet here he shewes that there shall be a number who shall *walk in Gods wayes*. Who though they go to Heaven alone, yet to Heaven they will though they have but a few that walk in Gods wayes with them, they will rather goe with a few that way, then with the wicked in the broad way to Hell: alway God hath some who shall walk in his way: for if there were not some alway who were good, the Earth would not stand, for good men they are the Pillars of the world who uphold it. It is not for wicked mens sake that God upholds the frame of the creatures, and that orderly government,

ment, we see all is to gather together the number of his elect, of whom in some ages ther are more and in some lesse of them borne, therafter as God breaths and blows with his Spirit. For according to the abundant working of the Spirit, is the number of the elect. Yet in all ages there are some, because it is an Article of our Faith, to believe *a holy Catholike Church*. Now it cannot be an article of Faith unles there were alway some that made this Catholike Church: for els there should be an act of faith without an object. Therefore we may alwayes say; I believe that there are a number of elect people that walke in the wayes of God to Heaven-wards.

And what is the disposition of these some? to have a counter motion to those of the times and places they live in. Some are foolish, not caring for the wayes of God, cavilling at them. But the *just shall walke in them*; that is, they take a contrary course to the world that sleights wisdom. Thus in all times it is the disposition of Gods children to goe contrary to the world in the greatest matters of all. They indeed hold correspondency in outward things, but for the maine, they have a contrary motion. As we say of the Planets, that they have a motion contrary to the wrapt motion, being carried and hurried about every twenty foure houres with the motion of the Heavens: they have another motion and circuit of their owne which they passe also. So it is with Gods people, though in their common carriage they be carried with

*The disposition
of just men in
their places.*

SER. XVI.

the common customes and fashions of the times: yet they have a contrary motion of their owne, wherby being carried by the help of Gods Spirit they goe on in a way to Heaven though the world discern it not, they have a secret contrary motion opposite to the sins and corruptions of the age and times they live in. Therefore in all ages it is observed for a commendation to goe on in a contrary course to the present times. *Noah* in his time, *Lot* in his time, and *Paul* in his time, who complains, *All men seeke their owne*: It is a strange thing that *Paul* should complain of all men seeking their owne, even then when the blood of *Christ* was so warme, being so lately shed, and the Gospell so spread: yet *all men seeke their owne*. And he speakes it with teares, but what became of *Paul* and *Timothy* and the rest? *But our conversation is in Heaven from whence we looke for the Saviour, the Lord Iesus Christ, &c.* Let all men seeke their owne here below as they will, we have our conversation contrary to the world. *Our conversation is in Heaven, &c.* So that they hold out Gods Truth in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, that is when every man takes crooked wayes and courses in carnall policy, yet there are a company that notwithstanding, walk in the right wayes of God cleane contrary to others. The just will walke in the right wayes of God. As holy *Ioshua* said, *Choose you what you will doe, but howsoever I and my fathers house will serve the Lord.* So when many fell from *Christ* for a fit, because his

Gen. 6.
Gen. 18.

Phil. 2, 21.

Phil. 3, 10.

Iosh. 24. 15.

Doctrine seemed harsh, *Peter* justified that way, when *Christ* asked him, will yee also leave me with the rest who are offended? *Lord* (saith he) *whether shall we goe?* we have tasted the sweetnes of the word, and felt the power therof: *whether shall we go Lord, thou hast the words of eternall life.* So Gods people have an affection, carriage and course contrary to the world.

Ioh. 6. 68.

The Reason is taken from their own disposition, they are partaker of the divine nature, which carrieth them up to God-wards against the stream and currant of the time.

Reason

1 Pet. 1. 3.

The Use hereof shall be onely a Tryall of our selves in evill times, whether or not then we justifie Gods wayes and the best things. If we do it is a signe we are of the number of Gods elect: to defend and maintaine good causes and right opinions, especially in divine truths, which is the best character of a Christian: others in their own spheare have their degree of goodnesse, but we speake of supernaturall divine goodnesse, a man may know he belongs to God, if hee justifie wisdom in the worst times: if he stand for the truth to the utmost, thinking it of more price than his life. It is the first degree to Religion, *to hate father and mother, wife and children, and all for the Gospell.* Now when a man will justifie the Truth with the losse of any thing in the world, it is a signe that man is a good man in ill times.

Use.

Luk. 14. 26.

Therefore in ill times let us labour to justifie truth, both the truth of things to be beleaved,

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Heb. 11. 7.

and all just religious courses, not only in case of opposition being opposed, but in example, though we say nothing. *Noah* condemned the world, though he spake not a word, by making an *Arke*; so *Lot*, *Sodome*, though he told not all *Sodome* of their faults. So a man may justifie good things though he speak not a word to any man: for such a ones life is a confutation and sufficient witnessse for God against the world. Therefore it is good, though a man do not confront the world in his speeches: yet notwithstanding at least to hold a course contrary to the world in his conversation: we have need of a great deal of courage to do this: but there is no heavenly wiseman, but he is a couragious man; though in his owne spirit, he may be a weake man, yet in case of opposition, Grace will be above Nature, hee will shew then his heavenly Wisedome and Prudence and of what mettall he is made by justifying wisdom in all times: *The just shall walke therein.* But to come more direct.y to the words.

The Iust shall walke in them.

A just and righteous man that is made just by them shall walk in them. Hence we may observe, *That first men must have spirituall life, and bee just, before they can walke,* Walking is an action of life, there must be life before there can be walking; a man must first have a spirituall life, whereby he may be just, and then hee will walke as a just man. For, as wee say of a Bowle (it is *Austins* comparison) it is first made round and then

Observ.

then it runs round, so a man is first just and then he doth justly. It is a conceit of the Papists that good works do justify a man: *Luther* sayes well, that a good man doth good works. Good workes make not the man, fruit makes not the tree, but the tree the fruit. So we are just first, and then we walk as just men. We must labour to be changed and to have a principle of spirituall life, then we shall walk and have new feet, eyes, taft, eares, and senses: all shall then be new.

Againe, in the second place, the necessity of it appears hence that there must be first spirituall life in the inward man, ere a man can walke. Because there will not els be a harmony and correspondency betwixt a man and his wayes. A man will not hold in those wayes that he hath an Antipathy too: therefore his nature must be altered by a higher principle, before he can like and delight in the wayes of God. This is that which Gods children desire first of God, that he would alter their natures, inlighten, change and quicken them, worke strongly and powerfully in them, that they may have a Sympathy and liking unto all that is good, first they are just and then they walke in Gods wayes.

The Just shall walke in them.

In the next place, we may observe hence, *That a just man, he being the prudent and wise man he walks in Gods wayes.* That is spirituall wisdom and prudence, together with Grace, Righteousnesse and Iustice, they leade to walking in Obedience. Let no man therefore talke

observ.

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of grace and wisdom or prudence altering him, further then he makes it good by his walking. He that is just walks as a just man; he that is wise walks wisely, he that is prudent, walks prudently. Which is spoken to discover Hypocrisie in men, that would be thought to be good Christians and wisemen, because they have a great deal of speculative knowledge. I but looke we to our waies, let them show whether vvee be vwise or foolish, just or unjust: *If a man be wise, he is wise for himself* (as *Salomon* saith) to direct his own waies. *The wisdom of the wise is to understand his own way that he is to walke in.* If a man have not wisdom to direct his way in particular to walke to heaven-ward, he is but a foole. For a man to know so much as shall condemn him and be a witness against him and yet not know so much as to save him, what a miserable thing is this? Now all other men that know much and vwalk not answerable, they know so much as to condemne them and not to save them. Our Saviour *Christ* he calleth such, *foolish builders*, that know and vwill not do: so unless there be a walking answerable to the *Wisdom* and *Prudence* prescribed, a man is but a foolish man.

Therefore let it be a rule of tryall, would we be thought to be *wise and prudent, Just and good*? Let us looke to our vvayes, are they Gods vvayes? doe vve delight in these vvayes? and make them our vvayes, then we are *wise, prudent and just.*

The Just shall walke in them.

Pro. 9. 12.
Pro. 14. 8.

Mat 7.

As the Just shall walke in them; so vvhofoever walks in them, are just, wise and prudent: for is not he prudent who vvalks in those waies that leade directly to eternall happinesse? is not he a wise-man that walks by rule in those vvayes where he hath God over him to bee his Protector, Ruler, and Defender? is not he a wise man who walks in those ways that fits him for all conditions whatsoever, prosperity or adversity, life or death, for all estates? he that walks therefore in Gods vvayes must be the only vvise man.

Now vvhat things doth this vvalking in the ways of God imply?

First, Perspicuity, those who walk in the waies of God, they discern those waies to bee Gods vvayes, and discern them aright.

Then vvhen they discern them to be Gods good waies, answerably they proceed in them from step to step, for every action is a step to heaven or to hell: so a just man when he hath discovered a good vvay, he goes on still.

And then he keeps an uniform course, for so he doth who walks on in a way, he makes not indentures as he vvalks, but goes on steady in an uniform course, to a right end. So a just man when he hath singled out the right way, he goes on in that steadily and uniformly.

And likewise vvhere it is said the just vvalkes in them, it implies Resolution to go on in those vvayes till he come to the end, though there bee never so much opposition.

But hovv shall vve know vvhither vve go on in this vvay or not?

What walking in Gods waies implies.

1.

Perspicuity to discern them.

2.

To proceed in them.

3.

An uniforme course.

4.

Resolution.

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First, he that goes on in a way the further hee hath proceeded therein, looking backe, that which he leaves behind seemes lesser and lesser in his eye, and that which he goes too greater and greater: so a man may know his progresse in the wayes of God, when earthly profits and pleasures seeme little, his former courses and pleasures seeming now base unto him, when Heaven and heavenly things seeme neere unto him, it is a signe he is neere Heaven: neere in time, and neerer in disposition and in wisdom to discern, because the best things are greatest in his eye and esteem. In this case, it is a signe that such a one is removed from the world, and is neere unto heaven, having made a good progresse in the wayes of God.

It implies likewise in the second place, an uniforme course of life. Such a one doth not duties by starts now and then, but constantly, therefore we must judge of men by a tenure of life, what their constant wayes are: sometimes though they be good men, they may step awry into an ill way, and yet come in againe. Sometimes an ill man may crosse a good way, as a theife when hee crosseth the high-way, or a good man steps out of the way, but this is not their way, they are both out and to seeke of their way. A wicked man when hee speakes of good things he is out of his way; he acts a part and assumes a person he is unskillfull to act, therefore he doth it untowardly. But a mans way is his course, a good mans way is good though his startings

startings be ill, and an ill mans way is naught, though for passion or for bie ends, he may now and then do good things. Therefore considering that the walking in the wayes of God is uniform and orderly: let us judge of our selves by the teneur of our life, and course thereof. And let those poore soules who thinke they are out of the way, because they run into some infirmities now and then, comfort themselves in this, that God judgeth not by single actions, but according to the teneur of a mans life, what he is. For often-times Gods children gaine by their slips, which makes them looke the more warily to their wayes for ever after that. He that walkes in the way to Heaven, if he be a good man, hee lookes to make surer footing in the wayes of God after his slips and fals. He labours also to make so much the more haste home being a gainer by all his slips and fals. Let none therefore be discouraged, but let them labour that their wayes and courses may be good, and not only so, but to be uniforme, orderly and constant, and then they may speake peace to their owne soules, being such as are here described, *The Iust shall walk in them.*

Againe, he that will walke aright in Gods wayes, he must be resolute against all opposition whatsoever: for wee meete with many lets, hinderances and scandals, to drive us out of the way, Sometimes the ill lives of those who walke in these wayes, sometimes their slips and fals, sometimes persecution, and our owne
natures

SER. XVI.

natures are full of scandals, subject to take this and that offence, and then we are ready to be snared on the right hand, or feared and scared on the left. And our nature so farre as it is unsanctified, is prone to catch, and ready to joyn with the world: therefore wee have need of resolution of spirit and determination: As *David, I have determined, O Lord: and I will keepe thy lawes, I have sworne that I will keepe thy righteous judgements*: this is a resolute determination.

Psa. 119. 106.

And then againe, pray to God with *David* that he would direct our vvaies. *Oh that my wayes were so directed to keepe thy Lawes!* I see that my nature is ready to draw me away to evill, and perverse crooked courses: I see though I determine to take a good course that there is much opposition: therefore good Lord direct me in my course, direct thou my thoughts, words and carriage. Therefore that we may vvalke stedfastly, let us resolve with setled determination, praying to God for strength: otherwise resolution vvith dependance on our owne power may be a worke of the flesh: but resolve thus, these are right vvayes and streight, they leade to Heaven, Happinesse and Glory, therefore I will vvalke in them, vvhatsoever come of it. We have all the discouragements vvhich may hinder us in the vvayes of God. For as we are travellers, so vvee are souldiers, vvayfaring men that meeete with many rubbs, thornes, therefore to vvalke amidst such dangerous vvayes vvee must be well shod vvith the
prepa-

preparation of the Gospell of peace, that is Patience, and reason taken from thence. God hath provided spirituall armour in the Word against all oppositions that meet vwith us: so that by Resolution and Prayer to him, using his meanes vve may go through all.

Now for a further helpe for us to walke constantly and resolutely in the vvayes of God.

Take first the helpe of good company, if vve see any man to walke in a good way, let him not walke alone, but let us joyne our selves vwith those that vvalke in Gods vvaies, for vvhy doth God leave us not onely his Word to direct us vvchich vvay to goe, but likewise examples in all times, but that vve should follow those examples? Which are like the *Pillar of fire* vvchich vvent before *Israel* unto *Canaan*. We have a Cloude and a Pillar of examples before us (unto vvchich hee alludes, *Hebr. 12. 1.*) to leade us unto Heaven, not onely the Word, but examples in all times. *Walke as you have us for an example* (saith *Paul*) therefore it is a character of a gracious disposition to joyne vvith the just, and those vvho vvalke in the waies of God. We see there is in all the creatures an instinct to keepe company vvith their owne kinde: As vvee see in Doves, Sheep, Geese and the like. So it comes from a supernaturall gracious instirct of grace, for the good to walke and company vvith the good, helping them on in the way to Heaven. It is therefore a point of speciall vvisdome to single out those for our company vvho

I.

Phil 3. 17.

SER. XVI.

2.

who are able to help us thither: as it is for travellers to choose their company to travel with.

Again, if we would walke aright in the wayes of God, let us have our end in our eye, like unto the traveller: look on Heaven, the day of judgement, those times either of eternall happinesse or misery which we must all come too. The having of these in our eye will sterne the whole course of our life, for the end infuseth vigor in our carriages, and puts a great deal of life in the use of the means, breeding a love of them, though they be harsh. Therefore we must pray and labour for Patience to conflict with our owne corruptions and those of the times we live in. This is unpleasant to doe, but when a man hath his aime and end in his eye this inspires such vigour and strength in a man, that it makes him use meanes and courses contrary to his owne naturall disposition, offering a holy violence unto himselfe: as thus, it is not absolutely necessary that I should have this or that, or have them all, or in such and such a measure, but it is absolutely necessary that I should be saved and not damned: therefore this course I will take, in these wayes I will and must walke, which leade to Salvation. Let us therefore with *Moses* have in our eye, *the recompence of the reward*, and with our blessed Saviour the head of the faithfull, have before our eyes, *the joy that was set before him*, which will make us passe by all those heavy things that hee passed through. Let us with the holy men of ancient time have *the price of that high calling*
in

Hebr. 11. 26.

in our eye, to make us, notwithstanding all opposition, presse forward towards the marke.

And then againe, because it is said indefinitely here: *They shall walke in these wayes*: remember alwayes to take Wisdome and Prudence along with you in all your walkings. It is put indefinitely, because we should leave out none. For as we say in things that are to be beleevd, Faith chooseth not this object, and not another, so Obedience chooseth not this object, I will obey God in this and not in this, but it goes on in all Gods wayes. Therefore if we would walke on aright in Gods wayes, there must be consideration of all the relations as we stand to God: First, what duties we owe to God in heavenly things, to please him above all, whomsoever we displease and to seeke the Kingdome of Heaven and his Righteousnesse before all, that all things may follow which are needfull for us.

So in the next place, when we looke to our selves, to know those wayes which are required of us in regard of our selves: for every Christian is a Temple wherein God dwels, therefore we are to carry our selves holily, to be much in Prayer, and communion with God in secret; A man is best distinguished to be a good walker by those secret wayes betwixt God and his soule; those walks of Meditation and Prayer, wherein there is much sweet intercourse betwixt God and the soule. Therefore in this case a man makes conscience of his communion with God in his thoughts, desires, affections, using all good means appointed

3.

I.
Mat. 6. 33.

2.

ted of God to maintaine this Communion.

3.

Then we should looke to our own carriage in the use of the creatures : to carry our selves in all things indifferently, because *Wisdom and Prudence* is seen in those things especially, to use things indifferent, indifferently, not to be much in the use of the world, in joy or sorrow: but in moderation to use these things, being sure to set our affections upon the maine.

4.

And so in things indifferent, not to doe them with offence and excesse, but to see and observe the rule in all things of indifferency.

5.

And for our carriage to others in those wayes, let us consider, what we owe to those above us, what respect is due to Governours, and what to others, what to those who are without, what to those who are weak, we owe an example of holy life unto them, that we give no occasion of scandall: and also to walke wisely towards them that are without, that wee give no occasion for the wayes of God to be ill spoken off.

6.

And for all conditions which God shall cast us into, remember that those be wayes which wee should walk seemly in. If prosperity, let us take heed of the sins of prosperity, pride, insolency, security, hardnes of heart and the like. If adversity, then let us practise the graces therof, take heed of murmuring and repining, dejection of spirit, dispaire and the like. This is to walk like a wise man in all conditions, in those relations he stands in.

7.

For our words likewise and expressions to others in that kind of our walking, that they may
be

be savoury and to purpose, that we labour to speak by rule, seeing we must give an account of every idle word at the day of judgement. So that in all our labours, carriage and speech we must labour to doe ail wisely and justly. These are the wayes of God, and *the just walke in them.*

Mat. 12. 36.

Negatively what we must avoid in all our walking.

Remember in generall, we must never doe any thing against Religion, against Conscience, against a mans particular Place and Calling, or against Justice. Let us not touch upon the breach of any good thing, especially of Religion and Conscience. Thus a man shall walk in the wayes of God, if with *Wisdom and Prudence* he consider what wayes are before him, to God, to himselfe, to others: in all conditions and states of life, to see what he must, and what he must not do and then to walk in them answerably.

Wee must not do anything against religion, conscience or justice.

For our encouragement to walk in Gods wayes in our generall and particular callings.

Know first they are the most safe wayes of all, whatsoever trouble or affliction we meet withall, it is no matter, it will prove the safest way in the end. For as it was with the cloud which went before Gods people, it was both for Direction and Protection: so the Spirit of God, and the wayes of God as they serve for Direction, so they serve for Protection, God will direct and protect us if we walke in his wayes: let him be our Director, and he will be our preserver and protector in all times.

I.

The wayes of God are the most safe wayes.

Againe, they are the most pleasant wayes of all,

2.

They are the

SER. XVI.

*most pleasant
wayes.*

all, all wisdomes wayes are paved with Prosperity and Pleasure, for when God doth enlarge and sanctifie the soule to walke in them, he giveth withall a royall gift, inward peace of conscience and joy unspeakable and glorious with an enlarged Spirit. God meets his children in his owne wayes, they are therefore to walke there. Let a man start out of Gods wayes, hee meets with the Divell, with the Divels instruments, and many snares. But in Godswayes, hee shall be sure to meeete with God, if he walke in them with humility and respect to God, looking up for direction and strength, and denying his own wisdome: in this case a man shall bee sure to have God goe along with him in all his wayes. In Gods wayes expect Gods company: therefore they are the safest and the most pleasant wayes.

3.

*They are the
most cleave and
holy wayes.
Plal. 119. 9.*

And they are the cleanest and holiest wayes of all: having this excellent property in them, that as they leade to comfort, so they end in comfort, they all end in Heaven. Therefore let us not be weary of Gods wayes, of Christianity and our particular Callings: wherein what we doe let us doe as Gods wayes, having sanctified them by Prayer, and doe it in obedience to God. They are Gods wayes when they are sanctified; God hath set me in this standing, I expect his blessing therein, and what blessing I find, I will give him the praise: God hath appointed that in serving man I serve him: therefore wee must goe on in our particular wayes

wayes, as the wayes of God, doing every thing as the work of God, and we shall find them the comfortablest and pleasantest wayes which end in joy, happinesse and glory.

The use hereof may be first Reprehension unto those who can talke but not walke, that have tongues but not feet, to wit affections, that come by starts into the narrow vway: but yet be never well till they turn back again into the world, that broad way which leads unto destruction.

Secondly, it is for Instruction, to stirre us up to walke in Gods wayes: as *Psalm 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsell of the ungodly, &c. But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in that Law doth he meditate day and night.*

Thirdly, this is for Consolation, if this be our walke, then God will walk with us and the Angels of God shall have charge of us to keepe us in all our vwayes: and though like *David* we slip out of the vway, yet this not being our walk we come to the way againe. Though Gods children misse of their way, yet their resolution, choice and indeavour, was to walke in the way, therefore such are still in a blessed estate, and keepe their communion with God. A man is not said to alter his way, till he alter his choyce and resolution. The best man may have an ill passion and misse the way, but he will not turn from it willingly. And the worst man may have a good passion, and come into the vway, but never continue in it, to make his vwalk. From all which it appeareth, that they are onely righteous persons,

Vse 1.

Vse 2.

Vse 3.

Psal. 34 7.

SER. XVI.

who continue to vwalk in the vvayes of God. It is therefore Consolation unto them vyho take that course, though all the vworld go another vvay, yet they must imitate just men. And for us vve must imitate these just men, though they be never so few in the world and despised. If we would be counted the servants of God, we must imitate them that vwalk in those paths.

Now it is said that the other sort, *wicked men*, the vvayes of God shall have a quite contrary course in them.

But the Transgressors shall fall therein.

As one and the self-same *cloud* was both light to the *Israelites* and darknesse unto the *Egyptians*: So the same vvayes of God prove both light and darknesse, life and death to the godly and vvicked: as the Apostle speaks, unto *the one they are the savour of life unto life, and unto the other the savour of death unto death*. Therefore now here is the conclusion of all: if no vvarning vvill serve the turne of all what hath bin given and said: yet the word of God shall not returne empty, it shall effect that for vvhich it vvas sent: one work or other it will doe: even upon the most perverse,

The Transgressors shall fall therein.

Whence we see and may observe, *That the same word which is a word of life and salvation to the godly is an occasion of sinne and perdition unto the wicked*. The same Sun vvhich makes flowers and herbs to smel sweet, makes carrions to smell worse. The same vvord vvhich made the Apostles believe and confesse Christ, did also

make

Exod. 14.20.

2 Cor. 2.16.

Isa 55.11.

Observ.

make many others of his Disciples goe backe from him, saying: *This is a hard saying who can beare it?* So *Act. 13.* The same vword vvhich made the unbelieving Iewes blaspheme, did make as many as did belong unto eternall life beleeve. And when Christ preached, many blasphemed, and said he had a Divell: others trusted and defended him. So saith *Paul*, the same word to some is, *the savour of death unto death, and to some the savour of life unto life:* and so in another place he speakes of the same vword, *but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Iews a stumbling blocke, and unto the Greekes foolishnesse, but unto them which are called both Iews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* To this purpose *Peter* speaks of Christ, *unto you therefore who beleeve he is pretious, but unto them which are disobedient, &c. A stone of stumbling and a rocke of offence, even unto them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, wherunto also they were appointed.* The Reasons are.

Because, *The naturall man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishnesse unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; but he that is spirituall judgeth all things, &c.*

Secondly, *Because they who do evill hate the light and therefore cannot love what they hate. This (Christ saith) is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darknesse better then light, because their deeds were evill.*

Thirdly, *Because they are blinded, therefore they*

Ioh. 6. 60.

Act. 13. 48.

2 Cor. 2. 16.

1 Cor. 1. 23, 24

1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

Reason. I.

1 Cor. 2. 14.

2.

I. h. 2. 19.

3.

1 Cor. 4. 4.

SER. XVI.

Deut. 29. 4.

they are led away by the god of this world Satan, so that they cannot perceive any thing that is spirituall, for God hath not given them a heart to perceive, &c.

4.

Tit 1. 1.
Heb. 1. 1. 6.
Hebr. 4. 2.

Fourthly, because they want faith, which is called *the Faith of Gods elect*; and we know *without Faith it is impossible to please God*: for it is said that *the word profited not those unbelieving Jews, because it was not mingled with Faith in those who heard it.*

5.

Fifthly, Because the Word is like the Sunne, which causeth plants to smell sweet, and a dung-hill to smell stinking. So it works grace in some, and extracts the sinne and foule vapours out of others.

Vse 1.

The Vse is, First, Reproofe unto them who stumble at the wholesome Doctrines of the word, of Election, Reprobation, Predestination, and the like, such indeed stumble at Christ himself, he is a stumbling block unto them, as *Peter* speaketh. They stumble at Christ who stumble at his Word.

1 Pet. 2. 8.

Vse 2.

Secondly, not to love the word the worse, because evill men be made the worse by it, which shewes rather the mighty power of the Word; which discovereth them, and will not let them be hid, unmasking Hypocrits to themselves and others. As we must not like the Sun the worse, because it makes carrion smell; nor the fan, because it winnoweth away the chaffe; so must we not fall out with the Word, because it hath these effects upon vicked men.

Vse 3.

Lastly, It is for Consolation unto them that

when

when their sin is reprov'd, fall not out with the Word, but with their sin. When they are excited to duty they hate their corruption and doe endeavour to walke honestly without reproofe. This shewes the word is not the favour of death unto death to them, but the favour of life unto life: which *S. Paul* makes a signe of election, *When they receive the word of God, as the word of God with Thanksgiving.* This indeed is a matter of praise to give God thanks for his good word, which saves our soules, and comforts us here in the way of all our Pilgrimage, till we arive at heavenly glory.

1 Thes. 2. 13.

For Conclusion of all, what then remaineth on our part to be done? Surely to hearken no more to flesh and blood, to the world or the Divell: but to heare what God saith in his most holy word, and to frame our hearts with a strong Resolution to this *Returning* here exhorted to. O if we knew the many miseries and sorrows which attendeth wretched and miserable sinners, and sinfull courses here and hereafter, it would be our first work to follow Gods counsell to his people, to *Returne* from our sinfull wayes, to meet so gracious and mercifull a God: that he may (as his promise is) heale our *Backslidings*; and be, *as the Dew unto us*, to make us fruitfull and abundant in every good and perfect work.

Psal. 32. 10.

What can be said more for our encouragement then that which hath bin delivered in this Chapter. God the party offended, who is J E H O V A H, God al-sufficient exhorts us to return unto him,

SER. XVI.

who is able and willing to help. And he also (out of his rich goodnesse) forewarneth us of the dangerous estate a sinner is in: who being *fallen by his iniquity*, ought therefore to pittie himselfe; *Returne* and not run on in a further course of disobedience, and backsliding. And words are put in our mouths, dictated by God himselfe, which needs must be very prevailing with him: what an encouragement is this? yea further (as we have heard) these petitions are all answered graciously and abundantly above all they did aske: wherein God surmounteth our desires and thoughts, as we heard at large. Wherby we also may be confident to have our petitions and suites in like sort granted, if we goe unto God with his owne words, and forme prescribed. If we *take with us words* of Prayer we shall be sure to vanquish all our spirituall enemies: for faithfull Prayer workes wonders in Heaven and Earth. And that God doth not bid us be religious to our losse; he sheweth that we shall loose nothing by following his counsell, and walking in a religious course of life: having abominated our Idols, *He will observe us, and see us*, and be a shelter unto us, having a derivation of fruitfulness from his fulnes: *In me is thy fruit found.*

Lastly, we have heard who can make right use of these things delivered: only *the wise and prudent*: such only can understand heavenly things to purpose: *His secret is with them that feare him: and Wisedome is (onely) justified of her children.* When others have no heart given them to perceive

Iam. 5. 16.

Psal. 25. 14.
Mat. 11. 19.

ceive Gods waies aright (as *Moses* speaketh) *Transgressors* fall in Gods *right wayes*, whilst the just walks comfortably in them. O then let us hate sin every day more and more, and be in love with Religion and the wayes of God: for that's the true good, which is the everlasting good, that better *Maries part*, which shall never be taken away: *Whosoever drinks of this living water shall never thirst againe.* The best things of this world, have but the shadow, not the substance of goodnesse. Let us then be wise for our selves, and pity our selves in time, *whilst it is called to day*, because (as our Saviour speaks) *The night approacheth, wherein no man can worke.* O then, let us often examin our hearts and covenant with them, let us see our sins as they are, and Gods goodnesse as it is; that our scarlet sins may be done away as a mist from before him. O banish away our *Atheisme*, which by our sinfull conversation proclaimeth us to be of the number of those fooles, who have said in their heart, that there is no God. This serious consideration, alwayes makes first a *stop*, and then a *Returning*: to beleve indeed that there is a God, who made the world, and a judgement to come. This God (by *Moses*) calleth true *Wisdom*e indeed, *To remember our latter end*: O (saith he) *that they were wise that they would think of these things*: of which things? the miseries which attend sin heere and hereafter, and the blessings and comforts which follow a godly life both heere and hereafter, *That they would remember their latter end,*

Luk. 10. 42.

Ioh. 4. 14.

Iohn 9. 4.

Isa 1. 18.

Psal. 14. 1.

Deut. 32. 29.

Lamen. 1. 9.

SER. XVI.

the neglect wherof *Jeremy* sheweth was the cause: that they came down wonderfully and had no comforter: because they remembred not their latter end.

Therefore let us study this point well; that there is a God and a judgement to come, and this will compell us even out of self-love to returne from our sinfull courses, and make a stop. By this means we shall not need a *Philips* boy to cry to us every day, we are mortall and must die, if our meditations once a day be both in *Heaven* and *Hell*. These strong considerations (aided with strong rationally reflectings on our selves) will keep us within compasse, overaw us and make us quake and tremble to go on in sin, which is worse then the Divil in this, that therby he became a Divil. This will drive us to fly unto God, that he may heale our Backslidings, who is described with healing under his wings, who in the dayes of his flesh healed all miserable and Returning Backsliders who ever came unto him. Therefore let us lay to heart these things, that so we may be kept in soul and body pure and unspotted, holy and without blame in his sight, untill the day of Redemption, when our mortality shall put on immortality, and our corruptible incorruption, to reigne with God for ever and ever.

Mal. 4. 2.

1 Cor. 15 54.

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FINIS.

THE
S A I N T S
P R I V I L E D G E,
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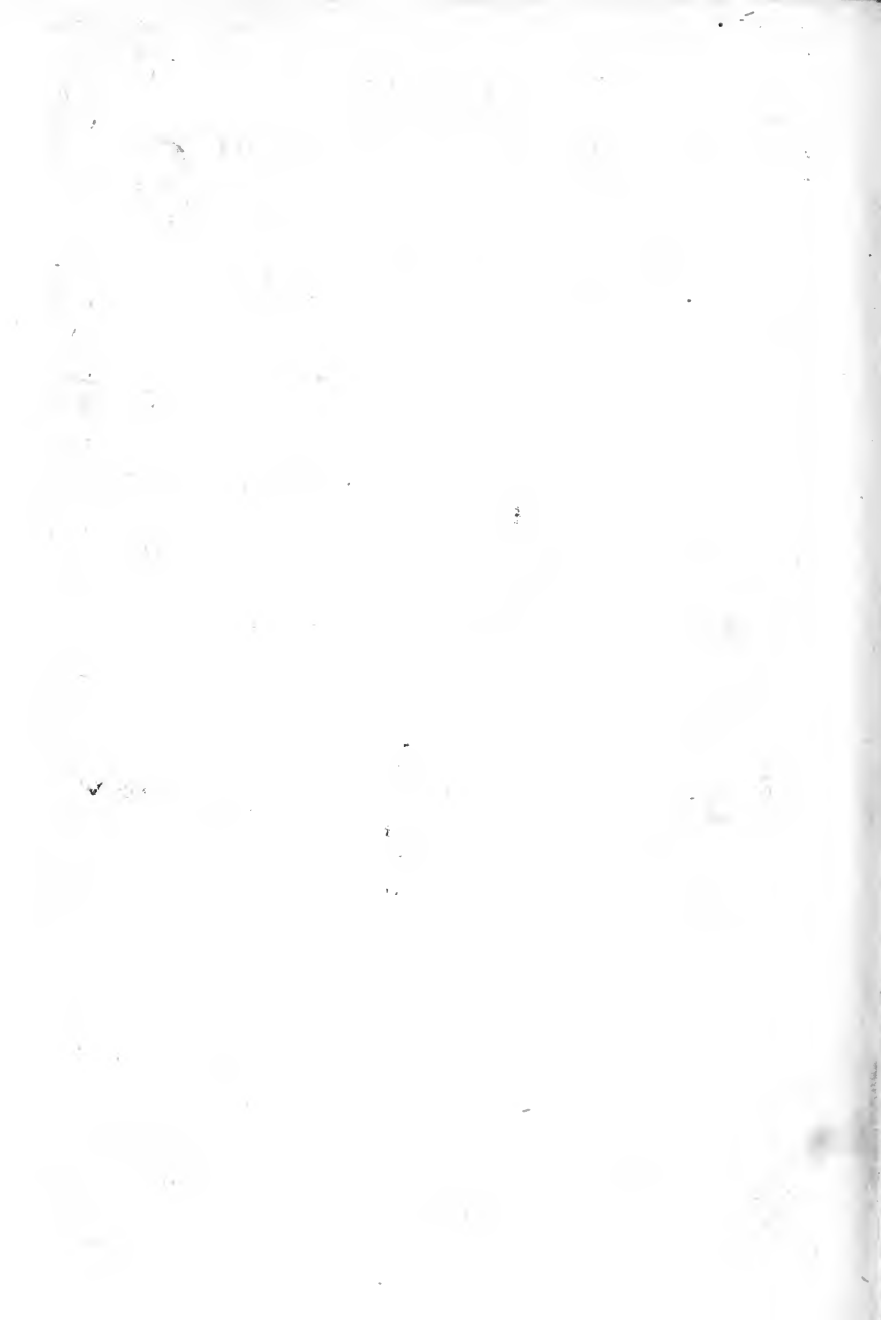
A Christians constant Advocate:

Containing a short, but most
sweet direction for every true Christian
to walke comfortably through this
valley of teares.


By the Faithfull and Reverend
Divine, R. SIBS, D. D. and sometime
Preacher to the Honourable Society
of *Graves-Inne.*



L O N D O N,
Printed by *G. M.* for *George Edwards* dwelling in
Greene-Arbour at the signe of the *Angell,*
M D C X L I.



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THE SAINTS PRIVILEGE.

JOHN 16. 8,9,10.

When he is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgement. Of sinne, because they beleeve not in me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father; Of judgement, because the Prince of this world is judged.

Especially the 10. verse. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father and you shall see me no more.



OUR blessed Saviour descending from Heaven to Earth for the Redemption of man: after he had accomplished that great work, he ascended thither againe. And knowing his Disciples would take his departure very heavily, he

hee labours to arme them against the assaults of all grieffe and sorrow that might otherwise oppresse them, and that by many arguments. Among the rest, this is not the least, that when he is gone away, he will send the Comforter unto them. God never takes away any thing from his children but he sends them a better. And this Comforter whom he promised to send shall beare them through in all their Ministry, all functions, and in effect hee thus bespeakes them. You my Disciples are to encounter with the world, Be of good comfort, my Spirit shall go along with you, and he shall reprove the world of sinne, righteousness and judgement. Of your selves you are too weake, but the Spirit shall strengthen you, and make way into the hearts of those that shall be saved, by convincing them of sin, righteousness and judgement; So that be not discouraged, the Spirit shall breath courage into you and make way for your doctrine. *When the Comforter is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and judgement: Of sin, because they beleewe not in me, Of righteousness, because I goe to the Father; Of judgement, because the Prince of this world is judged.*

There are three main parts of salvation.

Knowledge of our misery, knowledge of our deliverance, and a life answerable. The Holy Ghost shall worke all these, he shall Convince the world of their owne sinne, of righteousness by a Mediator, and of a reformation of life: So that the Holy Ghost shall goe along with you
in

in the carriage of the whole businesse of mans salvation. Where he begins, he makes an end. Where he Convines of sin, he Convines of righteousness, and then of a necessity of a reformation, he beares all before him, and he doth it in a spirituall order.

First, he convinces the world of sin, then of righteousness, then of judgement, because it were in vain to convince of the righteousness of Christ, unles he hath before convinced of sin; For who cares for balme that is not wounded? Who cares for a pardon that is not condemned? therefore he convinces of sin first. I have spoken heretofore of convincing of sin.

I.
Convincing of
sin.

Here is a threefold convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement, and every one of these hath a reason added therro. *Of sin, because they beleve not in me; Of righteousness, because I goe to my Father; Of judgement, because the Prince of this world is judged.*

The Holy Ghost begins with convincing of sin; what is this convincing? It is a cleare and infallible demonstration of our condition, It brings a commanding light into the soule, it sets downe the soule and takes away all cavils, all turnings and windings. To convince is to make a man as the Psalmists phrased is, lay his hand upon his mouth. Light is a convincing thing, now we see the Sun, we see it is day, though ten thousand men should say it is not day, wee would not beleve them, because the convincing hereof is undeniable, that he must be an unreasonable man that gainesayes it.

What is this
convincing.

So

So then, the Spirit of God brings a commanding light into the soule undeniable, thou art thus and thus, here no shifting, no winding and turning will serve the turne, when the Holy Ghost comes with this light. I do but plainly unfold this.

This Conviction of the Holy Ghost is not in generall onely, that all men are sinners, but particular and strong, thou art a sinner, and thou art in danger of damnation; And it is univerrall, taking in sins of nature, sins of life, sins of the understanding, will, and affections, and it is not of sinne onely, but of the misery by sin, of the danger, folly, and madnesse of sin, and of the aggravations that greaten sin: as of stifling so many good motions, withstanding so many meanes, abusing so many mercies. The Holy Ghost Convincus us throughly, that wee can have nothing to reply. Because I have spoken of this before, I am short. Beloved, unlesse the Holy Ghost Convince, there will be no Convincing, our deceitfull hearts have so many vwindings and turnings; proud nature armes it selfe with defences, as a hedge-hogg winds himselfe round and defends himself by his pricks. So you have many cloath themselves vvith strong words, ill translations upon others, frivolous mitigations, the way of the multitude, as vvith a coate of male to keep out this Conviction, that did not the Holy Ghost strike in hard vvith their consciences, Thou art the man; this vvork vvould never be done.

Quest.

But you will aske me this Question, how shall

wee know common Conviction of conscience from this of the Spirit? for carnall men that goe to Hell are Convinced by a Common Conviction. What is this saving Conviction?

Answer, Common Conviction by the light of Nature is a weake Conviction; a little sparke will shew a little light, but it will not inlighten a roome, it must be the worke of some greater light, as the Sun; the Spirit is a strong light, stronger then naturall conscience. Naturall conscience and common light is of some breaches of the second Table. Naturall conscience never convinces of corrupt nature, but the Spirit doth most of all, as you may see in *David Psal. 51*. He resolves all into this, as if he should say, what should I tell you of my murther and adultery, in sin did my mother conceive me, so a true Christian doth not look to the branches so much as to the root.

Then againe, a naturall conscience when it convinceth a man, it is against his will, it makes him not the better man, he mends not upon it, but he is tortured and tormented; But a man that is convinced by the Holy Ghost, he takes Gods part against himselfe, he is willing to be laid open that he may find the greater mercy; So that there is a grand difference betweene common conviction of nature, and the conviction of the Spirit. The Conviction of the Spirit is the light of the Spirit, which is of a higher nature then that of naturall conscience, I will send the Comforter when hee comes he will greatly inlighten and over-power the soule.

Answ.
1. *Difference.*

Psal. 51.

2. *Difference.*

3. *Difference.**Vse.*

Againe, the Conviction of the Spirit sticks by a man, it never leavesthe soule: But that of an ordinary conscience it is but for a flash, and after they are worse then they were before. I must cut off these things, because the time is alwaies past upon these occasions before we begin.

Come we therefore to make some Vse. The Spirit doth convince of sin. But how? by the Ministry ordinarily, though not alone by the Ministry. Therefore we must labour willingly to submit to the Ministry convincing of sin. Conscience will convince first or last. Is it not better to have a saving Conviction now to purpose, then to have a bare desperate Conviction in Hell. O beloved all the admonitions wee heare, if we regard them not now, we shall hereafter, therefore labour to make good use of this Sword of the Spirit of God, and it is an argument of a good heart to wish, O that the Ministry might meet with my corruption, that it may be discovered to me to the full. A true heart thinkes sin the greatest enemy, and of all other miseries it desires to be freed from the thraldome therof; For that defiles Heaven and Earth and seperates God from his creature. Its that that threw Angels out of Heaven, *Adam* out of Paradise. What imbitters blessings and puts a sting into all afflictions but sin? if it were not for sin we would take up any crosse, and beare any affliction more quietly then we doe.

Therefore as we desire to be saved, and to stand with comfort before God at the day of
judge-

judgement, let us desire and endeavour to bee thoroughly convinced of sin. Take heede of resisting the Spirit of God in the Ministry: why are so many led captives of their lusts, but because they hate the Ministry of the Word, they looke upon it as *Ahab* did upon *Elias*, Hast thou found me, O my Enemy. They naturally are in love with their sins, and there is none so much hated as those that present themselves to themselves. A man take him in his pure naturals is a foolish creature, his heart rises against Conviction. You see the Pharisees, Wise men, Learned men, being convinced they hated Christ to the death; why? because he did untombe them and discover the dead mens bones within. So many now a dayes that are convinced, have any that by life or speech discover their sin unto them, if it were possible and in their power to the death. Thus the Holy Ghost convinces of sin. But before I leave this point, let me adde this from the reason or ground of this Conviction [*Because they beleeve not in me*] That unbeliefe makes all other sins damnable, no sin is damnable if we could beleeve and repent. Therefore we are convinced of sin, because we do not beleeve: as we say of a man that is condemned, because hee cannot reade, therefore he is condemned, he should escape if he could read being for no great fault; So it is here, it is not beleeving in Christ and repenting makes all other sins deadly.

The differing of one man from another is

H h 2

their

Mat. 23. 27.

their faith and repentance, some there be vvhose sins are greater then others, yet by the Spirit of God and Faith, they vvorke them out every day. It is Faith in the brazen Serpent that takes away the sting of the fiery Serpents.

I have done with the conviction of sin. Let us now come to speake of the conviction of Righteousnesse.

2.
Conviction of
Righteousnes.

Of righteousnesse, because I goe to my Father and you shall see me no more; It is a fit time for the Holy Ghost to convince Gods people of Righteousnesse when they are convinced of sin before, then they can relish Christ: Balme is balme indeed when the wound is discovered and felt, O then a pardon is welcome vvhhen the partie is condemned. The reason of this conviction of righteousnesse is, *because I goe to my Father, and you shall see me no more.* The Holy Ghost as hee sets on sin upon the conscience, so hee takes off sin by applying to the conscience the Righteousnesse of Christ, this is his office; first, to convince the world of sin; and then to convince of Righteousnesse, wherby we stand righteous before God.

And this Righteousnesse heere is not our owne inherent, but the Righteousnesse of Christ a Mediatour, God and Man.

The Holy Ghost convinces of Righteousnesse in this order of a fourefold gradation.

First, that there must bee a Righteousnesse, and a full Righteousnesse.

The second is this, that there is no such Righteousnesse in the creature.

Third.

A fourefold
gradation of
conviction of
righteousnesse.

Thirdly, that this is to be had in Christ the Mediator.

Fourthly, that this righteousnesse is our righteousnesse.

First there must be a righteousnesse, for wee have to deale with a God who is righteousnesse it selfe; and no uncleane thing shall come into Heaven, unlesse we have a righteousnesse, how shall we looke God in the face, or how can we escape hell.

Now for the second, that it is not in any creature, men or Angels; we have not a righteousnesse of our owne; for there are divers things to be satisfied, God himselfe, and the Law, and our owne consciences, and the world. Perhaps wee may have a righteousnesse to satisfie the world, because we live civilly; O but that will not satisfie conscience; And then there must be a satisfaction to the Law, which is a large thing that condemnes our thoughts, desires, but God is the most perfect of all. Put case we have a righteousnesse of a good carriage among men, this will not satisfie God, and the Law, it will not satisfie conscience; men they are our fellow-prisoners, conscience will not be contented but with that which will content God, when conscience sees there is such a righteousnesse found out by the wisdom of God that contents him, else conscience will be alwayes in doubts and feares.

Thirdly, this righteousnesse is to be had in Christ. What is the righteousnesse of Christ?

1.
Gradation.

2.
Gradation.

3.
Gradation.

The righteousnesse of Christ is that righteousnesse that is founded upon his obedience, active fulfilling the Law, and passive discharging all our debts, satisfying Gods Justice; the meritoriousnesse of both of them is founded upon the purity of his Nature, all his sufferings and doings had their excellency from the personall Union of God and Man, in reference to which Union we may without blasphemy averre that God performed the Law, God died for us.

4.
Gradation.

Fourthly and lastly, this righteousnesse is our righteousnesse, the Spirit convinceth that this belongs to all beleivers, for it is better then *Adam* had, his righteousnesse was the righteousnesse of a man; This righteousnesse is the righteousnesse of a mediator; And it is such a righteousnesse, that when wee are cloathed with it, we may goe through the Justice of God, wee may have accessse with boldnesse to the throne of grace, and say, Lord I come in the righteousnesse of Christ that hath appeased thy wrath and satisfied thy justice: this the Holy Ghost convinces of.

Quest.

But you will aske mee, how doth the Holy Ghost convince me of the righteousnesse of Christ?

Answ.

I answer, First the Holy Ghost presents to the soule the knowledge of this excellent righteousnesse, and then creates a hand of faith to embrace it being proposed; you that are humble and broken hearted sinners, here is Christ for you. The Spirit of God doth not onely reveale the

excellency of Christ, but that this belongs to me, that Christ is given for me, and that revelation of the Spirit doth sway the soule, when the Spirit doth not tell in generall onely, that Christ is an excellent Saviour, but shall relate to a Christian soule, God gave Christ for thee: this swayes the heart to rest upon Christ, whereupon the marriage is made up betweene the soule and Christ, the soule saies I am Christs, and I give my selfe to Christ, and to whatsoever accompanies Christ: and then as it is in marriage, the persons by vertue of that relation have interest into each others substance and estate. So when this mysticall marriage is made up betweene Christ and us, wee have a right unto Christ by all rights, by titles of purchase and redemption; Hee hath purchased Heaven for us, and us for Heaven; all that Christ hath is ours, all his good is ours, our sinnes his, and his righteousnesse ours; So when the Holy Ghost convinces mee of Christs righteousnesse, and gives me faith to imbrace it, then Christ is mine with all he hath. By this I have spoken you may see how the Spirit convinces, doe but imagine what a blessed condition the soule is in when this match is made.

Bu: you will aske me, why is the sending of the Spirit necessary for the convincing of this righteousnesse?

I answer for divers reasons,

First, because it is above the conceit of man, that there should be such a righteousnesse of

Reason 1.

God-man; therefore it is discovered by the Spirit, and when it is discovered, the Spirit must open the eyes of the soule to see, els wee shall have a naturall knowledge of supernaturall things; for a man by a naturall knowledge may understand them, so as to be able to discourse of them, therefore to change the soule, there must be a supernaturall sight to see supernaturall things. A divell incarnate may know all things and yet want to see, onely the Holy Ghost gives inward sight, inward eyes, and works faith to see Christ as mine.

Reason 2.

Againe, the sending of the Holy Ghost is necessary for this conviction, because hee alone must set downe the soule and make the conscience quiet, who is greater then the conscience. Conscience will clamour thou art a sinner, the Holy Ghost convinces, in Christ thou art righteous. The Holy Ghost onely knowes what is in the heart of God the Father, and in the heart of every man: He onely knowes the intent of the Father to every Christian, and can answer all inward Objections and Cavils of flesh and blood raised up against the soule; therefore the convincing of the Holy Ghost is necessary. Howsoever Christ hath purchased our peace, yet the Holy Ghost must apply it: For the conscience is so full of clamours, that unlesse the Holy Ghost apply what Christ hath done, conscience will not bee satisfied: God the Father hath appointed Christ, and Christ hath wrought it, but the third person must apply

ply it to the soule, to assure us, that this belongs to us. The application of all good things to the soule that Christ the Sonne hath wrought, is the proper office of the third person. In civill Contracts here there must not onely be a purchase but a Seale, though Christ hath wrought righteousnesse for us, the Spirit must seale it to every soule, this righteousnesse belongs to you, Christ is yours with all that is his.

Againe, it must needes bee a worke of the Spirit, because flesh and blood is full of pride and would faine have some righteousnesse of their owne, the Jewes were of this temper, and it hath beene the greatest question from the beginning of the world till this day, what is that righteousnesse whereby wee must stand before God, but Gods Spirit answers all objections. Beloved, the best of us though in an estate of grace, if the Holy Ghost doe not convince us, wee shall bee in darkenesse and call all into question, therefore wee must not bee convirced onely at the first, but in a continued course of Christianity: unlesse the Holy Ghost doth this, wee shall fall into a dungeon of darkenesse, therefore the convincing of the Holy Ghost is necessary.

Beloved this should make us take heed how we heare, and how we reade, even to beg this convincing of the Spirit in every Ordinance. O Lord vouchsafe the Spirit of revelation, and take the scales off mine eyes, that as these are truths of themselves, so they may be truths to
me,

Reason 3.

me. Sway my soule that I may cast my selfe upon thy mercy in Christ. &c.

Object.

I must answer some Cases that many a poore soule is troubled withall. Alas I am not convinced by the Spirit that Christ is my righteousness, therefore what case am I in?

Answer.

I answer, some are more strongly convinced and some lesse. Let a man be carelesse of holy duties, and he is lesse convinced, but let him be constant therein and he shall finde the Holy Ghost convincing him more strongly, that the righteousness of Christ is his; there are many presumptuous persons that turne the grace of God into wantonnesse, who because through the Enthusiastes of Satan they never question their estate, but conceit themselves to be good men and in the estate of grace, thinke this to be the convincing of the Holy Ghost: whereas this is a generall rule, Spirituall convincing is not totall, but alwayes leaves in the heart some drugs of doubting, as a ship that rides at anchor, though it may reele too and fro, yet is it safe for the maine. So it is with the soule that is truly convinced, it is safe for the maine, yet it is tumbled and tossed with many doubts and feares, but their Anchor is in Heaven.

Take this for a ground of comfort subscribed unto in the experience of all beleivers, that the spirit of God so farre convinces them of Christs righteousness, as preserves in them such a power of grace as to cast themselves upon the

the mercy of God in Christ; and God will not quench that sparke, though there be little or no light, yet there will be heate; God will send his Spirit into the heart, so far as it shall not betray it selfe to despaire, and let such a beame into the soule, as all the power in hell shall not be able to keepe out; but it is our owne neglect that we are not more strongly convinced so as to breake through all. This is the priviledge of a constant carefull Christian, to be strongly convinced of the righteousnesse of Christ.

Thus we see how the Holy Ghost convinceth us of righteousnesse, other things I must omit. If this be so, I beseech you let us not loose our priviledges and prerogatives, doth God give grace, and give Christ with all his righteousnesse, and shall not we improove them? Let us use this righteousnesse in all temptations. Let us pleade it to God himselfe, when hee seemes to be our enemy. Lord thou hast ordained a righteousnesse, the righteousnesse of Christ, that hath given full satisfaction to thy justice, and he hath given me a title to Heaven: howsoever my soule be in darknesse, yet Lord I come unto thee in the name of my Saviour, that thou wouldest perswade my soule of that righteousnesse. I would glorifie thy Name. Wherein wilt thou be glorified? In mercy or justice? O in mercy above all. I cannot glorifie thee in thy mercy, unlesse thou perswade me of the righteousnesse of Christ. Can I love thee except thou love mee first? Canst thou have

vse.

have any free and voluntary obedience from me, unlesse I be convinced that Christ is mine? Now Lord I beseech thee, let me be such as thou maist take delight in. Beloved, since we have meanes of such a gift, let us never rest till wee have it. If Satan set upon us, hold this out, if hee tell thee thou art a sinner, tell him I have a greater righteousnesse then my owne, even the righteousnesse of God-Man, I have a righteousnesse above all my unrighteousnesse. Satan saith God is displeas'd with me, I but he is more pleas'd with me in Christ then displeas'd with mee in my selfe. Satan saith I have sinned against God, I but not against the remedy, send Satan to Christ. O but thou hast a corrupt nature that makes thee runne into this sinne and that sinne; but there is a spring of mercy in God, and an overrunning fountaine of righteousnesse in Christ, an over-flowing sea of the blood of Christ. Therefore let us labour to improve this righteousnesse of Christ to God and Satan, and against all temptations, yea against our owne consciences; I am thus and thus; yet God is thus and thus, all his Attributes are conveyed to me in Christ. Let us exalt God and Christ, and set up Christ above our sins, above any thing in the world, as *S. Paul*, who counted all things dung and drosse for the excellent knowledge of Christ. You will aske mee, How shall wee know whether we be convinced of this righteousnesse or no? I answer, we may know by the Method Christ uses in convincing; First, hee convinces

Quest.

Answ.

convinces of sin and then of righteousnesse; for a man to catch at righteousnesse before hee be convinced of sinne, it is but an usurpation; for the Holy Ghost first convinces of sin.

Therefore you have many perish, because they never were abased enough. Beloved, people are not lost enough, and not miserable enough for Christ, and not broken enough for him, and therefore they goe without him. But how shall I know that the Holy Ghost hath convinced me enough of sin, so that I may without presumption apply the righteousnesse of Christ unto my selfe? Onely thus, if the Holy Ghost have discovered my sinfull condition of nature and life, so as to worke in me an hatred of sin, and to alter my bent another way, and so make Christ sweet unto me, then I am sufficiently convinced of sin.

Quest.

Ansiv.

This in answer to that Question by the way. To returne in the next place, J may know I am convinced throughly of the righteousnesse of Christ by the witnesse and worke of the Spirit. The Spirit brings light and faith, the work of the Spirit hath a light of its owne, as I know I beleeve, when I beleeve, but sometimes we have not the reflect act of faith whereby to evidence our owne graces to our selves, but ever he that is convinced of the Spirit of God, his heart will be wrought to beare marvellous love to God; upon this apprehension, that God is mine, and Christ is mine, the soule is constrained to love, wherupon ensues an enlargement of heart and a prevalency of comfort above all discomfort, for
love

love casteth out feare. This one comfort that our sins are forgiven and that we have right and title to Heaven, when the soule is convinced of this it is in a blessed condition, then what is poverty and what is imprisonment? not worthy to bee reckoned in respect of the glory that shall bee revealed.

Againe, where the Holy Ghost convinces enough, there is inward peace and great joy suitable to the righteousnesse. As the righteousnesse is an excellent righteousnesse of God-Man, so that peace and joy that comes from it is unspeakable peace and joy: So that when the heart sees it selfe instated in peace and joy, as you have it, *Rom. 5. Being justified by faith we have peace towards God*, not only inward peace and joy, but a peace that will shew it selfe abroad, a glorious peace, a peace that will make us glory, *vers. 3. We glory in tribulation.* A hard matter to glory in abasement: not onely so, but we glory in God, God is ours, and Christs righteousnesse ours; when Christ hath satisfied Gods wrath, then wee may make our boast of God.

Againe, where this conviction of righteousnes is, it answers all objections, the doubting heart will object this and that, but the Spirit of God shewes an All-sufficiency in Christs obedience, and that sets the soule downe quietly in all crosses, and calmes it in all stormes in some degree. Where the soule is convinced of the righteousnesse of Christ, there the conscience demands boldly: *It is God that justifies, who shall condemn? It*

is Christ that is dead and risen againe, and sits at the right hand of God; Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods chosen. So that a convinced conscience dares all creatures in Heaven and Earth, it works strongly and boldly. I shall not need to inlarge this, you know whether you are convinced. To end the Point, I beseech you labour to live by this Faith, here is an evidence if we can live by it? How is that? Every day to make use of the righteousnesse of Christ, as every day we run into sin. Be sure wee have our consciences sprinkled with the blood of Christ, that as we increase new guilt, so we may have a new pardon; therefore every day labour to see God as reconciled and Christ as our Advocate with the Father. Christ is now in Heaven, if wee sin, make use of him, this should be the life of a Christian, to make use of Christs righteousnesse; when you finde nature polluted, goe to God, and say, Lord my nature though foule in it selfe, yet is holy and pure in Christ, He tooke the weakenesse of the humane nature unto him that hee might communicate the worth and efficacy of his divine nature unto me, and for my actions I am a sinner, but Christ hath fully discharged all my debts, and is now in Heaven, he hath performed all righteousnesse for me. Looke not upon me as in my selfe, but looke upon me in Christ, He and I am one. This should be every daies exercise to see our selves in Christ, and so see him and our selves one. I should inlarge the point further, but I will speak a word of the reason.

Vse.

What

What is the reason why the Comforter may and shall convince of righteousness? *Because I go to the Father*; what strength is there in that reason? why this, Christ took upon him to be our surety, and he must acquit us of all our sins ere he can go to his Father? If one sin had beene unsatisfied for he could not have gone to his Father, but now he is gone to his Father, therefore all our sins are satisfied for, so that now the Ascension of Christ is a sufficient pledge to me that my person is accepted, and my sins pardoned, because he is gone to his Father to appeare before the Father for us, which he could not have done, had he not fulfilled all righteousness.

But wherefore did he go to the Father? why to make application of what he had wrought. If Christ should not have gone to the Father, hee could not have sent the Holy Ghost to us. Therefore there is great use of this going to his Father. Satan pleads before God we are such and such, I but saith Christ I have shed my blood for them, and there he perfumes all our weake prayers; if we were not imperfect what need we a Mediator in Heaven. Therefore he is gone to Heaven to disanull all Satans accusations, and to provide a place for us; die when wee will, our place is ready.

Then again, he is gone to the Father to cloath us with a sweet relation, to make the Father our Father. For he saith, *Job. 12. 17. I goe to my Father and to your Father*; so that he is not ashamed to call us Brethren, by vertue of this we may go to God
and

and call him Father, and when we dye we may without presumption say, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit, for the Father loves us as he loved Christ, with one and the same love, though in a farre different degree. What a comfort is this, that when we die, we goe to our Father that is better then any earthly Father; Therefore it should joy us when the time of our departure comes: We see old *Iacob* when hee saw the Chariots come out of *Ægypt*, how his heart leaped, because he should go to see his Son *Ioseph*: So when death is sent to transport us to Christ, to Heaven, had we a strong faith wee should bee exceeding glad.

And let us learne here the art of Faith from Christ, *I goe to the Father*, saith hee, there was a great deal of time yet to passe, no lesse then forty dayes after his Resurrection before hee went to the Father, yet he saith, *I goe to the Father*, to shew that faith presents things future as present; Faith sees Heaven as present, and the day of judgement as present, and doth affect the soule as if they were now existent. If we had a Spirit of faith it would thus present things farre off as nigh at hand. Therefore when we meet with any thing that may make our way to Heaven seeme long or troublesome, exercise your Faith, and make your terme present to your spirit though remote from sence, say *I goe to the Father*, what though I goe through blood and a shamefull death, yea perhaps a tormentfull death: yet I goe to the Father; when a man is once perswa-

Vse.

ded that God is his Father in Christ, it will make him walk to Heaven before his time.

Let us make Vse of this point of Christs going to the Father. Beloved, there is not a point of Religion but hath a wonderfull spring of comfort, and it is want of faith that wee doe not draw more comfort from them. When therefore we part with our friends by death, thinke they are gone to the Father. If yee loved mee, saith Christ, ye would rejoyce, because I said, *I goe to the Father.* If we love our friends, we should rejoyce when they die; Beloved, this should comfort us, Christ is gone to his Father, O what welcome was there of Christ when hee came into Heaven, the same welcome will there be when we go to the Father? How joyfull entertainment shall vve have of the Father and the Son? Therefore death should not be troublesome to us, say Christs righteousnesse is mine, therefore I know I shall goe to the father, what care I then what kind of pains I go through. If a man be going to a desired place, howsoever the way be troublesome, the sweetnes of the end will make him forget the discouragements of his passage. Perhaps we must vvade to Heaven through a Sea of bloud, it matters not, the end vvill recompence all, though vve loose our limbes by the way: It is better to limpe to Heaven, then dance to Hell.

FINIS.



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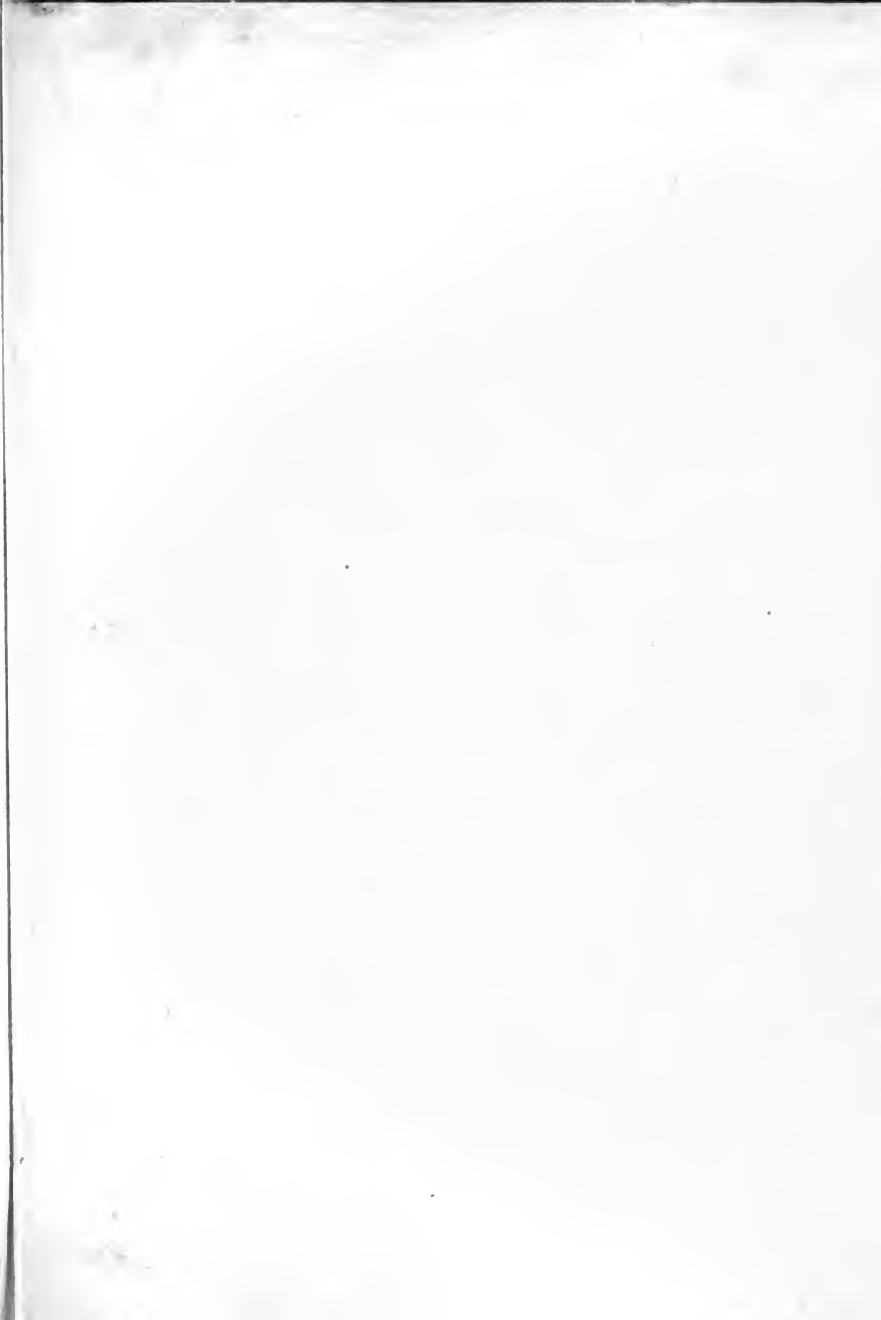
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