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BURROUGHS ON THE BEATITUDES,

AND

ROGERS ON ISAIAH V. 1-7.

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THE
S A I N T S' H A P P I N E S S,

TOGETHER WITH THE SEVERAL STEPS LEADING THEREUNTO.

DELIVERED IN DIVERS LECTURES ON THE BEATITUDES;

BEING PART OF CHRIST'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT, CONTAINED IN THE FIFTH OF MATTHEW.

BY
✓
JEREMIAH BURROUGHS,

LATE PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL AT STEPNEY AND CRIPPLEGATE, LONDON.

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JEREMIAH BURROUGHS, A.M.

IT will probably by most readers be deemed sufficient, by way of introduction to one of the numerous works of this author, to reproduce the 'brief notice' of him which was prefixed by the late Rev. James Sherman to his edition of his Exposition of Hosea.—T. S.

It is deeply to be lamented that no life was given to the church of this excellent minister of Christ; concerning whom Mr Baxter says, 'If all the Episcopalians had been like Archbishop Usher, all the Presbyterians like Mr Stephen Marshall, and all the Independents like Mr Jeremiah Burroughs, the breaches of the church would soon have been healed.' From the few scattered notices of him in different authors, and chiefly from those of his enemies, we learn that he was born in 1599. He studied and took his degree at Emmanuel College, Cambridge; after which he became colleague with the Rev. Edmund Calamy, at Bury St Edmund's. In the year 1631 he became rector of Tivetshall, in the county of Norfolk; but upon the publication of Bishop Wren's Articles and Injunctions, in 1636, he was suspended and deprived of his living.

The Earl of Warwick, who was the friend and patron of the persecuted ministers, and one of their constant hearers, gave him an asylum in his house, till the fire of persecution, which raged so strongly against him, obliged him to fly to Holland. He was chosen assistant minister to the church at Rotterdam, of which the Rev. William Bridge was pastor. The violence of party strife at that period raised against him many accusations for leaving his country, but his vindication of himself and his conduct in retiring to Rotterdam is so ample and circumstantial, and withal written in so meek and humble a spirit, as to raise in the reader a high estimation of his veracity and piety.

The church at Rotterdam gave him a most hearty welcome, and he laboured among them, in conjunction with Mr Bridge, with great acceptance and usefulness for several years. After the commencement of the civil war he returned to England: 'Not,' says Granger, 'to preach sedition, but peace; for which he earnestly prayed and laboured.' The renown which he had acquired at Rotterdam accompanied him to his native land. His popular talents as a preacher, his peaceable spirit, and his exemplary character, soon excited great attention; and as a proof of it, he was chosen lecturer to the congregations of Stepney and Cripplegate, then accounted the largest and wealthiest

in England. At Stepney he preached at seven o'clock in the morning, and Mr Greenhill at three in the afternoon: one was called *the morning star*, and the other *the evening star, of Stepney*. He was chosen one of the Assembly of Divines, and united with his brethren, the Revs. Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, William Bridge, and Sydrach Simpson, in publishing their 'Apologetic Narration' in defence of their own distinguishing sentiments, which contain the general principles by which congregational churches are governed in the present day. In the year 1645 he was elected one of the Committee of Accommodation, and was of great service in all their important deliberations.

Though, after his exile, he never accepted a parochial benefice, or became pastor of a separate church, he laboured extensively in preaching at various and distant places, and in rendering other important services to the church of Christ. But his incessant labours, and grief for the distractions of the times, brought on consumption, of which he died in the forty-seventh year of his age.

In the spirit of union among all Christians, which he so powerfully advocated, he was far before the opinions of his day. The following sentiment, in reply to one of his bitterest enemies, does equal credit to his piety and discernment: 'I profess, as in the presence of God, that upon the most serious examination of my heart, I find in it, that were my judgment presbyterial, yet I should plead and preach as much for the forbearance of brethren differing from me, not only in their judgment, but in their practice, as I have ever done. Therefore, if I should turn Presbyterian, I fear I should trouble Mr Edwards, and some others, more than I do now; perhaps my preaching and pleading for forbearance of dissenting brethren would be of more force than it is now.' The last subject on which he preached, and the last treatise he published, was his 'Irenicum,' or an attempt to heal the divisions among Christians. Oh that we had more of his spirit among all who take the lead in the Christian church! The estimation in which he was held by unprejudiced persons who were capable of forming a judgment of his spirit and character, was very high. Granger says, 'He was a man of learning, candour, and modesty, and of an exemplary and irreproachable life.' And Fuller has classed him among the learned writers of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

READER,—although all men desire happiness, and nothing be more needful to be known, yet great are the mistakes of men thereabout. It is not in sensual pleasures—if so, Dives had been happy, Luke xvi., and those [who] made their bellies their gods, Phil. iii.; it is not in honours—for then the dragon and the beast should have been happy, Rev. xiii. 4; it is not in riches, James v. 1; it is not in habits or acts of moral virtues—then heathens had been happy, and Paul in his pharisaism, Phil. iii. 6; it is not in knowledge, Eccles. i. 18, nor in contemplation of divine things—for then Balaam had been so, Num. xxiv. 3, 4, and Plato whose contemplations were such; it is in none of these, but in what is laid down by the Lord Christ, and held forth in this ensuing work. Some deny saintship and happiness to be in this life, but David confutes the one, Ps. xvi. 3, and Christ the other. It is true, perfect happiness is not attainable in this life, because there is a mixture of sin, vanity, and misery with every condition and thing we enjoy; the best of men having more wormwood than wine. Yet there is a true blessedness in this life, which consists in those qualifications, actions, and sufferings, which have a clear, certain, and strong tendency unto perfect happiness, and may be called *seminalis* or *radicalis beatitudo*. Such are the beatitudes here mentioned, and many elsewhere in holy writ, as delighting in the law of God, Ps. i. 2; fearing the Lord, Ps. cxii. 1; being undefiled in the way, Ps. cxix. 1; and such men are blessed, but not simply blessed for the qualities had, things done or suffered, but because they lead up and issue into perfect blessedness at last.

Reader, the times are perilous; a sentence of death is over most, if not all thy comforts; how soon thou

mayest be stripped of thy seeming happiness, thou knowest not. If thou hast not a part in these Christian beatitudes, thou art a miserable man, thy life is a dream, and thy death will be dreadful. Here is propounded unto thee not that the world calls blessedness, or what thou thinkest so, but what the blessed Son of the blessed God hath pronounced so, and will be found in life and death to be so; reckon and make that therefore thy blessedness which the Lord Christ himself accounts and calls blessedness; and then let times, troubles, and changes be what they will, thou art a blessed man, shalt so abide, and have a blessed end. The reverend author of these sermons, Mr Jeremiah Burroughs, did so, being the subject he preached on before his death.

These sermons of his have lain thirteen years complete this very day in the dark, for he died the 14th day of the 9th month, 1646; but by the help of that hand which took most of those sermons [that] are already in print, are now brought to light, discovering themselves to be the genuine issue of such a parent, the face of whose spirit is lively represented in them. Reader, the aim of those [who] do publish them is that thou mayest know, desire, and attain true blessedness in these unhappy times, and have thy thoughts, affections, and actions suitable unto such a happiness, which that thou mayest have, and they may be, is the earnest desire of

WILLIAM GREENHILL.

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

PHILIP NYE.

JOHN YATES.

WILLIAM ADERLY.

MATHEW MEAD.

SERMONS

UPON

CHRIST'S SERMON IN THE MOUNT.

'And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain : and when he was set, his disciples came unto him : and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' &c.—MAT. v. 1.

THIS chapter, with the sixth and seventh chapters, are a sermon that Jesus Christ preached upon the mount, the largest and fullest sermon that we have recorded in the Scripture : the sermon of Christ himself.

I being solicitous what to pitch upon that might be most for your edification, this took my thoughts. What can be more suitable for a minister of Christ to preach of, than the sermon of Christ ? And therefore I intend, God willing, if life, and strength, and liberty continues, to go through this whole sermon of Christ unto you. For a minister to preach other men's sermons it is negligence, but for him to preach Christ's sermon it is faithfulness. In the 2d Cor. v. 20, the ministers of God are the ambassadors of Christ, and are to speak unto people as if Jesus Christ spake unto them, 'in his stead ;' and so they are to look upon them as coming to them in Christ's stead, as if Christ were speaking. And if we must preach as if Christ were preaching, what more suitable than to preach what Christ hath preached ? This sermon, in these three whole chapters, is a sermon preached by the mouth of the Son of God himself, of him that is the wisdom of the Father, that hath all the treasures of wisdom in him, of him that hath been in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, and knows all his mind, his whole heart, the counsels of his will concerning man's eternal estate. And it is he that is sent by the Father into the world, designed to this office, to preach his mind and his will unto the children of men.

Oh, what attention is called for, while you are hearing this sermon of Christ repeated to you, and opened and applied unto you !

Oh, we have infinite cause to bless God for the way of knowing his mind by Jesus Christ his Son ! The Lord in former times did reveal his mind to men several ways ; but now saith the apostle in Heb. i., he 'hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person,' &c. Oh, this is the happiness of those that live in the times of the gospel, that God speaks unto them by his Son, that Christ is come from the Father to make him known unto us : for 'no man knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.' Surely there are great things to be known of the mind of God, seeing the second person in Trinity is designed by the Father to come to preach his mind to the children of men. If we hear but of a friend that is come out of a far country to tell us news there ; if the news be of moment, and nearly concerning us, and we know that this friend is wise and faithful, and will tell us nothing but that that is truth, we flock about him. Sometimes if one come but from the army after some notable war hath been done, and we know that he doth understand things, and is faithful, how greedy are we to be with him, and to know what news from thence ! But here, my brethren, we have Jesus Christ coming from God the Father, that knows fully all the mind

of his Father, and is sent by the Father into the world to make known to us all those counsels of God that were kept hid from the beginning of the world; news about our eternal estates, for that is the gospel—the gospel signifies nothing else but *good news* that Christ is come to bring,—and therefore I beseech you hearken: saith God, ‘This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him!’

I am now beginning, and intend, God willing, to go on preaching what Christ saith; and therefore so long as I keep to what he saith, you are to hear him in it; and that will be a very great aggravation to your sin if you mind not what shall be preached now, because it is the sermon of Jesus Christ that is to be opened, and the fullest sermon that we know of that ever he preached, that is recorded to us. In Heb. xii. see what weight the Holy Ghost lays upon this, that God hath made known himself to us by his Son: ver. 25, ‘See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.’ Here, in this chapter, Christ speaks from heaven; though he were himself upon earth at that time, yet we are to look upon him as speaking from heaven. For so the words that are before shews it is meant of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, that came to preach. It is the sermon of Christ that is our subject, and therefore calls for serious attention, and fear, and reverence. And oh that we would carry this thought with us all the while we hear him preaching out of these chapters!

All that I shall do at this time shall be but to prepare this sermon. There are these six things considerable in this sermon:—

I. First, Because we find this sermon recorded not only in Matthew, but also in Luke, to inquire whether they be the same; yea or no: for we shall find it of use; one will much enlighten the other if they be the same.

II. Secondly, We shall inquire at what time Christ preached this sermon, and upon what occasion.

III. Thirdly, In what place he preached it.

IV. Fourthly, To whom he preached it.

V. Fifthly, The manner of his preaching; and

VI. Sixthly, The scope of his sermon, what it did principally aim at. These six things will be useful for the making way to what shall follow.

I. For the first, Whether it be the same sermon that Luke records. I find interpreters are very much troubled about it: and yet if you read the sermon itself, you shall find, though not recorded so largely as Matthew doth it, yet the substance of it is the same, and almost the same words. In Luke vi. 20, ‘He lift up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed are the poor,’ and so he goes on, just as here. And

the reason of the doubt is, because we find in Matthew that Christ chose his disciples in the tenth chapter and sent them out, but we find in Luke that Christ did choose his disciples before this sermon was preached. In this sixth chapter, ver. 13, you shall find that the twelve were sent out first, and then the sermon was preached. There is the difference. And then, secondly, Matthew saith that Jesus Christ went up to the mountain, and there taught his disciples, ver. 1. But Luke saith, he ‘came down with them and stood in the plain, and he lift up his eyes on his disciples, and said,’ &c. Matthew saith he *sat*, and Luke saith he *stood* in the plain; so that divers interpreters say it was a different sermon. But yet these may easily be answered.

For the first: Though Luke makes it to be after the sending out of the twelve, and Matthew seems to make it to be afore, yet it may be reconciled thus: that though indeed it be recorded in Matthew after, as in the tenth chapter, yet we know that many times the Scripture doth not set down things that are before in time, always before in place, as I might easily shew you. There be many things that are after in a book that yet were done before those things that are set down first; it is ordinary. Here Matthew had occasion to speak of Christ’s doctrine; afterwards, in the tenth chapter, to speak of sending out his disciples. That is no argument, because it is in the tenth chapter, therefore it was not before this that is in the fifth chapter.

And then for the other: That it is said in Matthew that he was upon the mountain, and in Luke that he came down to the plain. To that the answer is: that here it is not said that he came down to the plain, and preached upon the plain; but it is said that after he had sent forth his disciples he came down to the plain, and then the company came to him. So, then, after he had done the work of giving his disciples the commission to go and preach, then comes abundance of people to him. He had been upon the mount, as we shall see by and by, all night, and then did the work of sending out his disciples, and then comes down and sees a great multitude of people, and did some work about them in healing of them, and then returns up into the mountain again, withdrawing himself from the tumult of the people to preach to his disciples, and those that came together with him. So that, though it be said he was in the plain, and he stood—that is, he stood while the multitude was with him, but after he had done some work about them, then, according to Matthew, he retires into the mountain again, and there falls a preaching. So that there is no objection of any moment, that I know, why it should not be the same sermon, but these two, and these two may easily be reconciled. Therefore, seeing that the very substance of

the sermon is the same, we will take it that it was all one. Now being all one sermon, you shall find much help by this. The one evangelist will give light into another.

II. And then the second thing that is to be inquired into is, The time when Christ preached it, and that help you must have from Luke,—for so I intend, that what light one evangelist will give, I will make use of that,—though it be not mentioned here in Matthew, and you will find it of very great use to inquire after this. You shall find that the very night before he preached this sermon, that he was at prayer all night. Luke vi. 12, ‘And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.’ It was the night before this sermon was preached.

And this scripture will justify long prayers upon extraordinary occasions, though, I confess, in an ordinary way in family prayer, ordinarily it is more convenient to have them short than long. But this scripture justifies long prayer—speaking many hours in prayer—upon extraordinary occasions. Jesus Christ speaks a whole night in prayer unto God, and you see how the things of the glory of God, and the good of his church, did take up his heart, so that he speaks a whole night in prayer about them. Oh consider this, you that spend so many nights in chattering and wantonness; you that can sit up nights in drinking and playing, remember Jesus Christ sat up a whole night together in praying. He prays all night; hereby giving an example to his ministers upon occasions to be praying for people when they are sleeping—to be seeking to God in prayer, and when they are about other things. Christ he was a whole night here in prayer.

But you will say, What was the occasion? why was he a whole night in prayer before he preached this sermon? Why, the occasion seems to be the work that he had to do the next morning, which was to send forth his disciples, for so the text saith in ver. 13: ‘When it was day, he called unto him his disciples, and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.’ He had a great work to do—to choose twelve apostles to go up and down in the world to preach the gospel of God, the greatest work that ever men were to do since the beginning of the world. To go and preach the gospel, Christ looked upon this as a great and a weighty work. And, therefore, by way of preparation before he chooses them, he spends a whole night in prayer to God to prepare for that great work.

You may see by this, that the work of the ministry it is a great work. You may think it indeed a light matter, but Christ accounted it a great matter: he makes solemn preparation for the choosing his apostles, and prays to God all night before. Oh let

those, then, who are in the ministry, consider of this as a mighty and great work, as a solemn business. That that Christ shall spend so much time in prayer about, must needs be a solemn thing. They should so look upon the work that they are called unto. And for people that are at any time to choose or to call a minister, oh, they should look upon it as a solemn work, and not think it a light matter. Some when they hear of such a man, say, Come let us have him presently; when Christ was to choose his apostles and send them forth, he makes a preparation by sitting up all night in prayer. And it is a very seemly thing for people that are at any time to choose a minister, that they should spend much time in prayer and seeking to God. Indeed, for the choice of civil officers, or of any that shall be but by way of assistance to the civil magistrate, there is not need of so much solemnity; but if it be for the choice of those that shall exercise the power of Christ in the administering of ordinances, they are to be chosen and brought into their place with a very great solemnity: here it was so at first; and so I find it continued, that if but a deacon was brought in, Acts vi., it was with prayer and imposition of hands; and so elders much more, if they be for to exercise the power of Christ, then, as in Acts xiv., they are with prayer and fasting and imposition of hands brought unto their places. It is a solemn and great business, and all ministers of God should consider of this prayer of Christ in way of preparation for the ministry; consider of it, and exercise their faith in believing the blessing of it upon them. Now whereas Christ himself saith in John xvii. 20, that he prayed not only for them that were present, but for all others after that should believe: so certainly Christ, when he spent this whole night in prayer, did not pray only for the twelve apostles, but for all those that should be in the ministry, to preach the gospel of Christ, to the end of the world. But now having spent all the night in prayer, then in the morning the first thing he doth is to choose his twelve apostles, and when he hath done, he seeing the multitude come to him, doth a little retire himself from them and falls a-preaching, and preaches this excellent and notable sermon that we are now beginning to speak of. After Christ had been all night up, yet next day he falls a-preaching. You see Christ is not so tender of his body; those that had been tender over him, would have been ready to say that he should go and sleep. What! shall he tire and wear out his body, having sat up all night, and spent himself in prayer?—as there is no exercise that is more spending to the body than prayer—yet after all this, the next morning, Christ he takes this opportunity, and falls a-preaching.

Teaching thus much, that the ministers of the gospel should not be too nice and dainty of their bodies;

not to be always whining and complaining of the weakness of body, and spending of themselves, and such things; but if there be opportunity given for service, they should be ready to take it, although it should be a weariness and spending. What if it should shorten their days a little while? is it not all one, to do a great deal of good in a little time, or to do a little good in a great deal of time? To do a great deal in a little time is the more comfortable. A man's life is to be reckoned according to his service, not according to how many years he lives. Christ he preaches this long sermon, the longest that ever he did preach, for aught we know, and it was the morning after he had been up all the night a-praying.

Further observe from this time of the sermon of Christ: what a notable sermon doth Jesus Christ preach, after he had been thus praying. It is a most heavenly sermon. And that prayer that he had a little before he died, from John xiv. on for two or three chapters, they have the most of Christ in them that the Scripture doth record of anything that Christ hath done. Then let ministers pray more, and they will preach better. The way to be a good preacher it is to be a fervent prayer. Do as Christ did: ministers should come reeking from prayer into the pulpit; and those will be the best sermons that are warmed in their own hearts by prayer. They come to give the milk of the word; and you know nurses, when they give milk to the child, will not give it raw, nor cold, but they will warm the milk before they give it to the child. Oh, the milk of the word, that is warmed by the prayer of a minister in his own heart before he comes, that is that that is like to be most nourishable unto people.

And hence likewise we may note, that the way to be filled with the Holy Ghost, to be filled with heavenly truths, with a most spiritual frame, it is to be much in prayer, the spending time in prayer; and doing of it to purpose indeed, will help not only ministers but Christians to rise up full of the Holy Ghost, full of heavenly and divine truths. Consider that this sermon was preached the next morning after Christ had spent a whole night in prayer, and it will add much to the excellency of the sermon, and will be a special motive to your attention, and for the receiving of what shall be said out of this sermon. Certainly there must be some notable matter in this sermon, that was preached presently after such a prayer; and that is the second consideration by way of preface. The time when this sermon was preached.

III. The third thing by way of preface to this sermon is, The place where it was preached; for there is nothing in Scripture without use. My text saith that he went up to the mountain. He had been in the mountain in prayer, and came down and did

some work among the people, and then goes up thither again to preach.

Why upon the mountain?

Something it was to fulfil those prophecies that we have in divers scriptures about preaching of the gospel upon the mountain, in Isa. xl. 9, and Joel iii. 18, but these are only guessings. Others I find do allegorise very much, how a minister should be as upon the mountain, and how heavenly he should be when he is a-preaching: but I like it not to strain Scripture any further than I think to be the meaning of the Holy Ghost; therefore I think there is nothing else to be considered than this, the conveniency of the mountain, because it was a retired place, and there being a clutter of people, he could not be so composed among them to speak so freely to edification, therefore he retires unto a mountain again, where he had spent so much time in prayer.

Christ doth not stay till he comes to the synagogue to preach, or the temple; no, but takes any place that was a fitting place to preach unto the people. It is not necessary that there should be a consecrated place for the preaching of the word.

What mountain was this? you will say.

Some have thought it to be the mountain of Olivet, but that cannot possibly be, for Christ was in the upper Galilee at this time, and mount Olivet was near to Jerusalem, as near to Jerusalem as Islington is near the city; but Christ was about forty miles from Jerusalem at this time, therefore Jerome and others think it to be mount Tabor.

And certainly, this will further justify that preaching may be in any place where ministers have opportunity, and may be with peace and edification. There is a double vanity of conceit in people. Some men think that some places are so profane by profane uses, that there must not be no preaching there; and others think that some places are too superstitiously used, and because of the superstition that hath been there, there must be no preaching there; they will not go to hear a sermon because of the superstition of the place. Truly this may help us against both these.

For profane; Certainly there is nothing done in any place that doth so defile the place but that if occasion serve there might be preaching in that place, and would be acceptable to God; though it were in a place that had been a playhouse, it would not defile the work at all, if there can be no more convenient place had. Shall so many thousand souls perish for want of knowing God and Christ, because they have not a consecrated place? It is a very sad thing to consider of. This mountain—if it be mount Tabor, as I find both Jerome and others think it was—as ill a place as a playhouse could be, where Christ

preached this sermon; and a place that was like to be abused to much superstition and idolatry. I find in the prophecy of Hosea mention of this place, chap. v. 1, 'Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is towards you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.' The meaning of it is this, that when the ten tribes had fallen off from the true worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem, and set up their calves in Dan and Bethel, there were some that were more godly and strict than others, and they could not be content to worship there, but they must needs go to worship at Jerusalem. But now the laws of the king and the priests were against it, and no man could be suffered to worship at Jerusalem but it was upon his peril; but yet there would many go, therefore the priests and others set watchers to watch those that did go up into Jerusalem to worship. As heretofore there have been men set to watch when men went from their parish churches, though they had no preaching at home; so there were watches set upon mount Tabor to watch those that went to Jerusalem, for they were to go by that place, and therefore it is said that there was a net spread upon Tabor. Surely this place was profaned as much as any place could be; and yet for all that, Christ he goes and preaches this sermon upon mount Tabor. It was as wicked a work to set watchmen to spy out those that went to the true worship of God to Jerusalem, as it was to make a play; and yet, I say, Christ comes and preaches here upon the mountain.

And so for any superstition in places, the synagogues of the ten tribes, and the places that they set up for their service, and for teaching, they were abused exceedingly, for they set them up in opposition to the true worship of God in Jerusalem: and yet Christ would preach in every place according as he came into it, and we do not find that Christ refused preaching in any such place where he came, though it had been abused this way or that way; Christ stood not upon that, but took the present opportunity to do his work, for to preach the word. That is the first; and,

Secondly, That all ministers of God should take what opportunities they can for doing good; and that is the third consideration by way of preface.

IV. The fourth is, Who are these auditors that the text speaks of? 'And seeing the multitude, he went up into the mountain.' Now I confess some they make this sermon of Christ to be to the multitude that was there, that did come and clutter about him, and therefore think that Christ was moved with compassion to preach unto them, because he saw such abundance of people. It is very true, it is a very moving object to any gracious heart, to any godly

ministers, when they see abundance of people coming to hear, and especially manifesting a willingness to attend, it is a very moving object to draw forth any minister's heart in the world: and so we find at some other time that Christ's heart was much drawn forth upon the sight of a multitude of people, in Mat. ix. 36, 'But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd: then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.' When Jesus Christ looked upon abundance of people that were there, the text saith that he was moved with compassion, thinking with himself, Lord, what shall become of these many thousand souls, that know so little of God and the things of heaven? And therefore, Oh pray, saith he to his disciples, pray ye that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. These people are willing to hear, the regions are white unto harvest; oh pray that there might be labourers sent into the harvest. The very sight of a multitude is a moving sight, to preach and to pray that God would send faithful ministers to preach unto them. Indeed, the sight of a multitude is an object of envy to many; as heretofore we know it was enough for a faithful minister to be silenced, such was their envy, and so contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ. But I cannot tell how to build any point of doctrine upon this, because I think that at this time Christ did go up into the mountain, and withdrew himself from the most of the people, for so I find the text saith, 'And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:' and it may be some of the rest, but not the generality of them. And so in Luke vi., there having the same sermon recorded, the text saith, 'That he lift up his eyes upon his disciples, and said, Blessed are the poor,' &c. So that it is probable that rather than he would spend his time at this present among the multitude, he retires himself to speak to his disciples. Why? for his chief work was about his disciples, about the sending out the twelve, and making them to be apostles; and therefore, though the preaching to all the multitude be a very good thing, and that the heart of Christ was much in upon all occasions, yet now Christ would mind his work that he was about, to speak to his apostles that he was to send abroad.

From whence we may note, That men must tend their present work, and not be upon thinking that they may do more good some other way, and so leave the present work that God calls them to. Let us look to the work that we are about for the present, and not be taken off to think, Ay, but another work may be more useful; but, Is this my work for the

present? Then let me go upon it, and commit my work to the blessing of God.

And then, secondly; Hence we may see that Christ hath a special regard unto his ministers; he withdraws from the multitude to speak to them; he did not forbid any of the people to come, but the thing that Christ intended, was to speak to them. Christ hath a special regard to his ministers; he knows that great things doth depend upon them, as afterwards in this chapter he calls them the salt of the earth, as if all the world would rot and putrefy if it were not for them. And so he calls them the light of the world, as if all the world would be in darkness were it not for the light of the word; they should be full of light, and so should enlighten others. Ministers they should be filled with the will of God, as it is said of Epaphras in Col. iv., he prayed for the people that they might be 'filled in all the will of God,' ver. 12. Oh! it is an excellent thing for a minister to be filled with the will of God, as a sail is filled with the wind.

Those who are most instructed by Christ, they are fittest to instruct people. Christ he falls preaching to them, that they may preach to the people. Those cannot preach to the hearts of people that have not had Jesus Christ preaching to their hearts before.

And besides, Christ saw that the work was very difficult. The work of the ministry is a hard work; therefore Christ spends a great deal of time, as in praying for them before, so after he had chosen them, in instructing of them. They were to be set as a light upon an hill; and the eyes and observations of men would be upon them to watch them in all their ways. They must bear the brunt of all, and if there be any hazardous work they must approach. This work of God is very difficult. It is a speech of Luther, 'What is it to preach, but for a man to drive the envy of people that are evil upon himself?' And therefore it was that Christ made such a preparation of his apostles before they were to go abroad. And that is the fourth consideration about the preface to Christ's sermon, his auditors whom he had.

V. And then the fifth consideration by way of preface is, The manner of Christ's preaching. And there are three things observable. I would gladly take up all things in Scripture, for the Scripture is not like a carpenter's yard, that a great deal of chips lies about and are of no use; but it is like a goldsmith's shop, that every dust is precious. So, when we have to deal in Scripture, we should not neglect the least particle, for we shall find it of much use.

There are three things that are recorded about the manner of Christ's preaching.

First, That Christ did sit and preach.

Secondly, That he opened his mouth and spake.

And then the third is, That Christ fastened his eyes upon his disciples;—that you have in Luke vi.

But we have two of these in Matthew: That he sat and opened his mouth and spake. For the sitting: Christ when he preached he sat down; he did not stand as preachers do now. And we find it was the ordinary way of preaching among the Jews, for the preacher to sit down. In Mat. xxiii. 2, the scribes and pharisees sit in Moses' chair: hear them, and do what they say, saith Christ, though do not what they do. And so you shall find it in Mat. xxiv. 3, and xxvi. 55; you shall see in both these places that Christ when he came to preach sat down; he stood up when he read the law, but when he preached he sat down. And so in Luke iv. 20. In all these scriptures you may see it was the manner in preaching to sit down. Now some would make a significance in it; but I take it, it was only a civil gesture, that Christ observing what the way was at that time, he would conform himself to the order and way of sitting, not that it had any spiritual signification. As now, the French ministers they preach with their hats on, it is the custom there; and no question, if any one were to go among them it were fit they should observe the customs that they have: and so here, to sit down, and in other churches to stand.

You will say, Doth not this justify the conforming to ceremonies in churches? Christ you see conformed to this ceremony of sitting, and why had we such a stir about kneeling at sacrament? And,

Now to answer that clearly, thus: You must know the difference of ceremonies. Whatsoever ceremony is but merely natural or civil, and is but helpful to the worship of God in a natural and civil way, certainly we should conform to the customs of churches where-soever we come. But now when a ceremony comes to have a spiritual use, and to have by the institution of man some spiritual thing put upon it, as our ceremonies had, then, though they be but ceremonies, we must not, except we would sin against Jesus Christ and our consciences, we must not conform to them; for then they come to have some worship in them, when they come to have spiritual significations, and there is that put upon them by way of institution. But if there be no more in a ceremony than what the nature of the thing carries with it to be helpful in God's worship, there is no question but the prudence of men is enough for the ordering of that in it; as it is a natural help for people when they come to hear the word, to have convenient seats. It is a natural help so when it is but used in a natural way; but now kneeling at sacrament, and such ceremonies, they had a spiritual efficacy put into them, and an institution from them.

And so for garments: for a minister to have a con-

venient garment it is a natural thing; but now, if they will make an institution, that a garment must be therefore decent because it is appointed and not else, for what decency is there in the nature of the thing, but all is in the institution that is put upon it by man. Therefore observe here, whatsoever ceremony is but natural and helpful in a natural way, there should be no contention; we have no such custom, nor the churches of God, to contend about these; but if they come to have a religious use put upon them, for so it is said in the Common Prayer Book, to stir up the dull minds of men, now they come to be sinful, and therefore Christ he observed the ceremony of the Jews as a natural help.

And secondly, Christ opened his mouth and spake. Opened his mouth, you will say; why is this mentioned? How could he speak else to them?

I answer, first, There is a speaking though there is not an opening of one's mouth. In Heb. xi. 4, there the Holy Ghost speaks of a speaking without opening of the mouth. 'By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he, being dead, yet speaketh.' So there is a real speaking as well a verbal one, and so some think that this was a similitude, whereas Christ did preach in his life; as a minister of God should preach in his holy life continually before them, so Christ preached.

But secondly, By opening the mouth, according to the Jewish expression, is to signify; not only that he did speak, but that he had some weighty matter to speak, as in Job xxxii. 20. There Elihu, when he saith that he is full of matter, and hath excellent things to say, he saith, 'He will open his mouth to speak.' And so our English phrase will bear it; when we see an object wishly, we will say, I saw it with mine eyes—that is, I did mind it, and regard it; and so if a man will express a serious intentness to hear, he will say, I heard it with mine ears—that is, he did diligently hear it, and mark it. And so he opened his mouth and spake: he did not only speak, but he had some great and weighty matter to deliver.

Thirdly, This was to shew that the mouth of Christ was as a door of a rich treasury. Jesus Christ had in his heart a rich treasury, and his mouth was the door of that rich treasury; and now Christ opens the door and fetches out these precious things that you shall hear in this sermon. And thus, then, opening the mouth, and setting these things before us, you see is of great use unto us. There are some that have so much evil in their hearts, that it doth burst out of the door of their mouths, and they speak without any consideration. As a man that hath an unclean heart, it breaks forth in his mouth.

As a vessel that is full of filthy liquor, it will break forth when it hath no vent. And so that is the reason men speak so wickedly, in bawdry, or swearing; their hearts are full of wickedness, and it breaks the door open. And so the heart of Jesus Christ was full of heavenly and spiritual things, and Christ he opens the door of his mouth and speaks. It should be so with us. It should be so with the ministers of God especially; they should have their hearts full of heavenly treasure, and when they come to preach, it is but to open the door of this treasury; their mouths should be but as the door to vent those treasures of heavenly truths that they have been trading for in heaven. And so all people, they should have their hearts as a treasure of excellent things, and so have command of their mouths, that when they see an occasion of doing good where they come, they should open the door of this treasury to vent what good things they have got in this treasury. Oh that all our mouths were so! This is the meaning of this expression, Christ opened his mouth. It was a mercy, my brethren, that Christ had his mouth open to speak to this people. Had the scribes and pharisees had their wills upon Christ, his mouth had been shut long before this time, for they envied him, but through God's mercy the mouth of Christ was open to speak to the people the great things of God. And it is a mercy that ministers' mouths are open, that they may open their mouths to speak to people, and shew them what the mind of God is. We had not such a mercy long since. Though there were many ministers that had their hearts full of rich truths, yet the door was locked and bolted against them; they could not open the door, so as the people could not have them. And I believe there was never any reformed church that contracted so much guilt, in all the world, in stopping the mouths of faithful ministers, as England hath done in former time. But blessed be God, that God hath stopped the mouths of the stoppers of mouths. I remember in Chrysostom's time, I find that the godly people then did profess that they had rather have the sun withdraw her beams than the mouth of Chrysostom should be stopped; there was so much excellency in Chrysostom's preaching: say they, Shall the door of the treasury of John Chrysostom's heart be shut, shall that be bolted, and shall we have no benefit by it? It were better we had no benefit by the sun itself. Oh account it a great mercy that the mouths of faithful ministers may be opened to speak unto you. And that is the second consideration in the manner of his preaching, He opened his mouth.

And then the third is, He set his eyes upon those he spake unto. So the Holy Ghost doth note in Luke vi. 20, 'He lifted up his eyes upon his disciples.' Certainly, my beloved, the eyes of Christ did sparkle

with very much wisdom, and there was much of the glory of God sparkling in the very eyes of Jesus Christ. In Rev. i. 14, we find that 'the eyes of Christ were as a flaming fire.' Wisdom makes a man's face to shine. And many times there appears a great majesty in the very countenance of a minister; and a great deal of use is made by the minister's looking upon the people, and the people's looking upon the minister. Therefore because Christ would have his word effect the more, the text saith, he lifted up his eyes upon his disciples, and looked upon them. And it hath a great deal of power in way of reprehension and threatening; and many times a guilty conscience is not able to bear the fastening of the eyes of a minister upon them. Therefore in Acts xiii. 9, we read of Paul, whenas Elymas the sorcerer would have taken off Sergius Paulus, that was the deputy of the place, and would have hindered the work of the ministry upon his heart, Paul was preaching, and the deputy began to be stirred up, and to hearken to what Paul should say, and there comes one Elymas and would have taken off the deputy; now when Paul, having hopes to have gained such a man that might be a public instrument in the place where God had set him, the text saith that Paul set his eyes upon Elymas, and spake to him in a terrible manner, as if he should say, O wretch; for so he saith, O child of the devil, and full of all subtlety! What! wilt thou seek to hinder the word upon such an eminent man, O thou child of the devil? There is a great deal of power sometimes in the eyes of a minister of the word. And we find that when Peter had denied Christ, the text saith that Christ looked upon him, and then Peter went forth and wept bitterly. There was much darted through the eyes of Jesus Christ; and there is much many times darted through the eyes of a minister of God.

Now then, my brethren, this is the close of this sermon for the present. I beseech you, while we are preaching over this large sermon of Jesus Christ, do you apprehend that the eyes of Jesus Christ are upon you all. Why should we not apprehend it so now as well as then, when Christ saith, He that heareth you hears me? It is the sermon that Christ preached himself; and as he lift up his eyes upon his auditors at that time, so do you know that Jesus Christ lifts up his eyes upon you all, and his eyes will be upon every heart all the while his sermon shall be preached. Oh, Christ comes into the congregation to look upon this man and the other man, to see how they will entertain his word; and if you will but remember this one note all along as we go, it will be of very great use to you—remember the eyes of Jesus Christ will be upon you, and looks upon your behaviour all the while. And that is the fifth thing by way of preface.

SERMON II. Ver. 2.

VI. The sixth thing is to shew what the scope of this sermon was; and that consists especially in these three things:—

First, To discover wherein true blessedness doth consist; who they are that are truly blessed.

Secondly, To open the spiritualness of the law, or that spiritual light that by the light of the gospel we come to understand. Christ undertakes to shew the duties of the law, how they were by the gospel raised to a higher height. The gospel doth not abolish them, but shews us a more spiritual life to live than those generally under the law did understand. Our Saviour aims at taking of men off from satisfying of themselves in external duties of righteousness, of prayers, or any other way, or keeping from external sins.

And then thirdly, A forewarning of false teachers. These are the three principal heads of the sermon. There are many other things interwoven in. But for the first thing, It is to shew wherein true blessedness consists. He begins with blessedness in his mouth,—Blessed are the poor, Blessed, Blessed, again and again. From this we have these notes briefly—

First, That it is Jesus Christ that teaches wherein true blessedness doth consist. If we would know how to be happy and blessed, it must be by Christ; the natural wisdom of man can never reach it. There were among philosophers a hundred and four-score opinions of man's happiness, and some reckon more. They did but beat the bush; it is the Christian that catches the bird. It is only by Christ that we may know how to be happy; Christ is come from the bosom of the Father to reveal unto mankind those eternal counsels of the Father about man's last end. Man since the fall would never have come to have known wherein his last end consists, and what good it is that he is capable of and God intends towards him, had not Christ come from the bosom of the Father to declare it. Oh the poor and low things wherein the children of men place their happiness in, that know not Jesus Christ, but are strangers to Jesus Christ! When Christ comes to be revealed, the thoughts and hearts of men are raised and enlarged; they look after happiness in another manner than than formerly they did. Oh let us bless God for Jesus Christ, by whom we come to know how we may be happy—that is, wherein our last end consists, that high good that man's nature is made capable of by God.

Secondly, It is the end and scope of the ministry to shew to people how they may come to be blessed. For this sermon was preached especially to the apostles when they had their commission, as I opened the

last day. Now in that Christ speaks so much of blessedness to them, it was to prepare them to go and preach it to the world. Oh, it is the ministry of the word that shews to men how they may come to be happy! This is all the hurt it will do you, to shew you how you may be blessed for ever. How poor and miserable are those people that live without the ministry of the word! What poor things do they plant their happiness in! When you come to attend the ministry of the gospel, you must come to attend it as a message from God, to shew you how you may be happy for ever. It is called the gospel that they preach; good tidings. It brings tidings to you from heaven, how those souls and bodies of yours may come to be eternally happy. Come with such a disposition to the ministry of the word. Those, therefore, who forsake the ministry of the word, forsake their own mercy—the way that might shew them to be happy. Oh how vile are men's hearts, to prize it at no higher a rate than most do, so as ye cannot think it worth the enduring a little cold in a morning to come to attend upon the ministry that is appointed by God to shew happiness to those that God intends eternal good to!

Oh, the convictions that many have had in the ministry of the gospel! what a turn sometimes hath the word given to their hearts in one half-quarter of an hour! Their hearts have been seeking after vain and drossy things for their happiness, and would rest in them as the only good that they would think themselves happy in. And the ministry of the gospel hath darted in those truths unto them that have given a turn to their hearts; and they would not have lost what they have found in the ministry of the word, sometimes in one sermon, for ten thousand worlds—that that you prize at so low a rate, they find such good in, as, I say, they would not have lost for ten thousand worlds. They have come sometimes to hear the word with carnal, drossy, vain, sensual hearts, looking only to things that are here, base and vile; but in attending upon the word, there hath been those flashes of light let out unto them that hath made them to see wherein the true good of a rational creature consists—to see what was the end God made man for, and the infinite good that man's soul is capable of; and upon this they have gone away with their hearts scorning and contemning all those sensual delights and vanities that they placed their happiness in before. Therefore, learn to know what the scope of the ministry of the gospel is; that is the second general note.

The third note from the design of Christ in general is this, By what we hear Christ telling us blessedness doth consist in, we may learn that there is a great deal of difference between the thoughts and judgment of God about true happiness, and the thoughts and judgment of the world. For if so be that you look

into all those eight beatitudes that we have here, you will see them in such a quite cross way to the judgment of the world as nothing can be more.

For, in the first place, Suppose the judgment of the world should be asked, who are those that are blessed; certainly they would never have said the poor was blessed. They would think them to be miserable men that are poor. Ay, but Christ is of another judgment, 'Blessed are the poor, poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Blessed are the rich, would the world say; they are happy indeed. We call the proud happy in Mal. iii.; but here it is 'Blessed are the poor.'

Then, secondly, Ask the world again, who are blessed men; they would never tell you that those that mourn are blessed. Certainly, if there be any blest in this world, they must be those that live brave, jolly lives; there is a happy man that lives a brave, merry life. No, saith Christ; it is quite contrary. Blessed are they that mourn. Quite cross the judgment of Christ goes to the judgment of the world.

Then, thirdly, If you would ask, who are the happy men; why, those that will take no wrong, and those that are able to right themselves; and if any man wrong them, they shall know it; the world would think them to be happy men. No, saith Christ; 'Blessed are the meek'—those that are willing to put up wrongs, and carry themselves meekly towards those that do abuse them. The world thinks he is a fool that puts up wrongs, but in the judgment of Christ he is a blessed man.

And then, fourthly, If you would ask the world, who are the blessed; surely they would say, Those that are full of all kind of delicacies—that can fill themselves. No, saith Christ; 'Blessed are those that hunger, and those that thirst;' hungry and thirsty souls are the blessed souls.

And then, fifthly, If you would ask the world, who are the blessed men; why, they are those that keep their estates to themselves. They think it is wisdom for a man to keep what he hath, and not let it go. No, saith Christ; 'Blessed are the merciful.' If a man hath an estate and great means, and lets it go for good uses, blessed is he.

Again, sixthly, Ask the world, who are blessed; they would never have pitched upon the pure in heart. Blessed are they that follow their lusts, and satisfy them to the full. No, saith Christ; 'Blessed are the Puritans—those that are pure in heart.'

And then, 'Blessed are the peace-makers.' The men of the world think it a happiness for those that stand out and defend their right. No; 'Blessed are the peace-makers'—that will rather part with that which is their right than that there should not be peace.

But, above all, the world would never have thought that those were blessed that are persecuted. No; saith Christ; now I appeal to your consciences whether ever you would have thought that blessedness had consisted in these things, had not we had it from Christ. Thus have we seen that there is a great deal of difference between the judgment of Christ and the judgment of the world about true happiness.

It is of great concernment for the ministers and the young disciples of Christ to have their hearts taken off from all earthly blessedness, and to consider wherein true heavenly blessedness doth consist; for this is the sermon, as I told you, that Christ preaches to ministers when he sends them to preach to others, and likewise to other disciples that were newly converted, for Christ had been in his public ministry for two years before this sermon, and many were turned to the profession of Christ. But now, though they were turned to be the disciples of Christ, yet nothing but troubles and afflictions did befall them in this world. Upon that, Christ saw that it was like they might be offended through their weakness; therefore Christ takes care fully to inform and instruct them, that, though they did continue in a poor and mean and low condition for the world, and persecuted and reviled, yet there was a blessedness that was beyond all these; yea, in the suffering of all these they might be most happy. Why, this is that that Christ would have ministers and young disciples to know, because that their hearts may be taken off from outward things. They are like to meet with afflictions and troubles, and therefore Christ would have them to be spiritual; and if they be not so, they are not like to do much good to those they preach to. If their hearts be entangled with the world and with sensual things and the pleasures of the flesh, they are never like to do good; but they that see a happiness higher than these things, they are like to do the greatest good in their way. And then for you that are young ones, if you are not fully informed in this when you first give up your names to Christ, that whatsoever afflictions and miseries you endure in the world, yet there is a happiness wherein you may be blessed, you will never hold on in the profession of Christian religion, but you will be offended, and in a small time cast it all off.

Christ doth not say, you ought to be poor in spirit; it is your duty to hunger and thirst, and to be meek. No, he doth not come that way, but 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, and Blessed are they that hunger and thirst;' he goes by way of commendations of what should be in them, rather than by way of exhortation, or threatening the contrary. From whence we may learn this note: that it is a very useful and profitable way for the ministers of the

gospel to seek to gain people to the love of what is their duty, by shewing them what is the excellency and glory of it, and what good and happiness they shall come to enjoy by it; that is the way, not altogether to be merely in laying the burden of a duty, in exhorting or threatening for want of the duty, though these things are reasonable in their times, but a main thing that ministers of the gospel should aim at, should be to convince people that in what is required of them there is a blessedness; for if we should get people to set upon duty merely upon necessity, because they must be done, this would do but little good, and they would be ready to fall off from what they do. But now if we can gain people not only to do what God requires, but to be in love with what God requires, that they may see there is an excellency in it, that they may see they are blessed by it, we then gain their hearts to the duty and to Christ for ever.

And yet there is one note more from this scope of Christ in his blessedness: that Christ doth not here begin his sermon thus, Blessed are those that do believe in me, and that are godly and righteous. Why doth not Christ speak of blessedness that way in general of righteous men, of believers, of saints; but those that are poor, those that hunger and thirst, those that mourn, they are the blessed ones? Why, this is because Christ would suit himself to his present auditory, to those that he was now preaching to; this was a doctrine that was more suitable to his disciples, because they were like to be most offended with poverty and with their afflicted conditions, in which they were like to be put into, and therefore Christ he labours to help them in that thing wherein their chief temptation was like to lie, and pitches rather upon this, 'Blessed are the poor, and those that mourn,' than blessed are those that believe, and that are righteous. It is a great part of the skill of a minister of the gospel not only to preach things that are truths, but to labour to suit himself what possibly he can to those that he speaks unto—that he may speak a word in due season to their hearts, fitted for their condition; and therefore not so much to labour to preach what he might, perhaps, wherein he might shew more depth and excellency of his own parts, but what it is that may be most suitable for the condition of the people that he is speaking to. These are the notes briefly from the general, that Christ begins here with this kind of blessedness, 'Blessed are the poor.' It is good to take Christ's judgment rather than our own about blessedness. Rather follow what the blessed God saith blessedness consists in, than what a wretched, miserable man saith.

'The poor, they are the blessed.'

That is, if you would know what is meant by

blessedness here, it is this : they are such as are partakers of the chief good that it was made for, and shall certainly be filled with all good that their natures are capable of, for in this blessedness consists.

Now the poor in spirit, whatever they may want for the present in the creature, yet they are now made partakers of that wherein the highest good of man doth consist, and shall certainly be filled with all good whatsoever, that their souls and bodies are capable of, these are blessed.

The poor; 'Blessed are the poor.' The Greeks had two words to signify a poor man; first, *πτωχός*, such a poor man as is destitute of necessities such as he cannot live without; the other *σινης*, which signifies a man that indeed hath nothing but bare necessities, that can maintain life and soul, as we say, and keep them together.

The word that we have here in the text, it is not a poor man that hath but just enough to maintain him, but it is the poor that are destitute of that that is necessary. They want that without which they are like to perish, they apprehend such a want to themselves; that is the property of the word, 'Blessed are the poor.'

The poor, but not all poor. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' There are some poor that are cursed, that are miserable poor, that are every way poor; that bring poverty upon themselves by their idleness, by their wickedness, by their prodigality, by mispending what they have when they are young and have time to lay up something against charge come upon them, spend it all presently, and so they and their families are like to perish through poverty. Christ doth not pronounce them blessed that bring poverty upon themselves by abuse of the creatures, or by idleness, or by committing such wickedness as they should by the stroke of justice be deprived of the comforts of this world, and so be made poor; nor those that are through bare necessity poor, outwardly poor, or through any secret curse of God upon their estates, as sometimes it is, he doth not pronounce such to be blessed, as these are. Oh no, there are many poor people that are outwardly poor, yet are far enough from being poor in spirit; they are outwardly poor, and yet proud, stubborn, profane, and ungodly, scorning at godliness and religion; certainly these are cursed poor. Therefore in Luke vi., about the 20th verse, saith Christ, 'Blessed are the poor;' when he looked upon his disciples, 'Blessed are the poor.' A man may be poor in this world, and yet be a very cursed man, be miserable in reference to God, as he is in reference to men, yea, more miserable a thousand times in reference to God than he is unto men. Oh what a multitude of the poorest of people do we find living without God in the world—swearing poor, un-

clean poor, most profane and ungodly as any kind of people that lives upon the earth. Oh, these are dreadful objects to look upon, like to be miserable here, and to be miserable to all eternity hereafter; such poor as these, you must not think that because you are miserable here, therefore you have your hell here, and shall not be miserable hereafter; oh no. If you can read, you may read in the Epistle of Jude, where the apostle speaks of some that were consumed with fire from heaven, and yet were sent down to eternal fire afterwards; so there are some that the Lord hath forsaken in this world, and are like to be forsaken to all eternity in the world to come.

But, you will say, this is little comfort to the poor. Little comfort! are there any here that would have comfort? Is it the word that you do expect comfort from? If there be any poor that doth but desire to have comfort from the word, I would be loath to let this pass without adding something; therefore, that you may not be discouraged in your poverty,

You may have this comfort from the word, 'Blessed are the poor;' for, first, You poor ones have as precious souls as the greatest monarchs of the earth. Your souls are as much worth, and capable of as much glory, as the great emperors', kings', and queens' of the world; and that is somewhat.

Secondly, You poor may have as free access to God, and heaven is as open to you as to any of the greatest potentates of the world. There is as great a possibility, if you have hearts to look after it, for you to have a crown of glory in the highest heavens, as for the greatest monarch that lives upon the earth; and that is somewhat to you.

Thirdly, Let me say, that not only you are as near, but in some respects nearer, to eternal blessedness—if you be not wicked and ungodly, and have but hearts to look after blessedness, you may more likely attain to blessedness—than the great ones of the world; for your temptations are not so great as theirs. Indeed, the temptations of poverty are great, but the evils that other temptations would draw the heart to, are things more pleasing to nature than the temptations of poverty. Poverty tempts to despair and to shifting courses, but there is a more hardness in these temptations to a man's nature than the sins that riches tempts to, which is to satisfy our lusts, and be proud and haughty and scornful, and there is more danger in that.

Fourthly, You that are poor, you have not so great an account to give as the rich men of the world have.

Fifthly, The Lord hath revealed in the Scriptures that he hath chosen the poor of the world; though he hath chosen some rich, yet of both the Lord hath pitched his thoughts to all eternity upon the poor of

the world to choose them. In James ii. 6, 'Hearken, my brethren,'—it is a matter to be hearkened after,—'the Lord hath chosen the poor of the world to be rich in faith.' Oh hearken to this, you poor ones, that you may be encouraged to hearken after true blessedness!

Sixthly, As God hath put his choice upon the poor of the world, so he hath appointed his gospel especially to be preached to them. In Luke xiv. 21, Christ sends forth his servants to call in the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind; Christ invites them: and in Mat. xi. 5, 'To the poor is the gospel preached.' Now if the gospel be appointed to be preached to the poor, then surely it is appointed to be preached to this congregation; and oh that God would but give those that are such miserable poor people in regard of outwards, but hearts to come to hear the preaching of the gospel, and not to make any excuses for want of clothes, or this or the other thing, but to come to hear the preaching of the gospel! For you are invited, you alms-people, and poor people that have not bread to satisfy your hunger withal, you are invited to come to partake of the bread of life: you that are not invited to rich men's tables, yet God hath invited you to his table, to the supper of the Lamb, he hath invited even you poor to come.

Seventhly, We find in Scripture, for an inward call, there are very few but poor people have it, 1 Cor. i. 26, 'You see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' And the poor, they have the gospel preached to them.

Eighthly, If so be that you do come in upon the call of the gospel, the Lord will not disregard you ever a whit the less because you are poor, but the Lord will have as high thoughts of you, and tender you as much as his soul shall cleave to you, and you shall enjoy communion with him, and as much as the greatest emperors shall do, though they be godly. You will say, As much as great emperors and kings that are wicked; that is true: pray, although they be godly? Suppose there be a godly king, and a poor godly alms-body: this poor alms-body may have as much communion with God, and God may accept as much of the services of this poor creature as of a prince, though he be godly; for God doth not so much regard the greatness of the work that is done, as the faithfulness and the uprightness of our hearts in doing of our work. Oh that God now

would sanctify your poverty to you, so as to bethink yourselves after this manner—Why, I am in this world, a poor miserable creature, and there is little hopes that ever I should come to any great matters in this world; oh let me look after spiritual riches then! I am like ever to be miserable here, as to outwards; oh but why may not my soul, yea, and body too, be blessed at the last? why may not I be blessed with God and his Christ for ever? If I could be able to preach to this congregation, and to all the poor in this congregation; if it might be but proclaimed, that such a day there should be a sermon to shew how all the poor in this parish should come to be made rich men and women, and so as to live richly all their days, I make no question there would be an auditory full enough then of poor people. But we can say, as in the name of God, and we can pawn our souls upon it, that if you would come and hear, or get those that you know to come and hear, we can shew you ways how it is possible for you to be blessed to all eternity, for you to have greater riches than if God should make you kings and queens—so that it might be said, not only for the general, 'Blessed are the poor,' but blessed is this poor man that dwells in this street, or in such a poor smoky hole. The very angels of God may look upon you as a blessed creature, if you have but a heart to attend upon the gospel, that reveals the way of blessedness to you. 'Blessed are the poor.'

Ay, but blessed are the poor in spirit. What! every poor; no, nor every poverty of spirit is not blessed neither. There is a poverty of spirit that is an evil, and an accursed poverty of spirit. A man may be a man of a poor spirit, and of a cursed spirit, because, indeed, he is a poor spirit. By that, therefore, I mean this, such a man as is of a low, base, sordid spirit, that hath his spirit sunk down to low, earthly, sensual things as his highest and chiefest good; he minds no higher good than to eat and drink, and satisfy his flesh. Here is a man of a poor spirit; he is of a low spirit indeed. But this poor, low spirit is sordid, is base and accursed. You see many times poor people; they mind those mean things that they are exercised in, as their adequate object. You shall see sometimes a poor woman be scraping in a dust-heap or dunghill for an hour together. Now she is not miserable because of that; but when that is her adequate object, that if she can but get sixpence or a shilling a day she thinks herself blessed, and minds no higher things than this, you will say, this is a poor spirit indeed. Why, truly, such kind of poor spirits have the men of this world, yea, the princes and great ones of the world. For many of them they mind only the satisfying of their flesh, to eat and drink and be unclean, as that that is the most

suitable thing to their spirits. Why, these are men of poor, low, base spirits. The Lord would have his saints to be of low spirits in a godly sense—that is, to be humble. But the Lord would have his servants again, in another sense, to be of high and lofty spirits—that is, that nothing in the world should satisfy their spirits for their portion but God himself. Here is a man of a high spirit indeed, that though indeed he knows he is unworthy of the least crumb of bread, yet, saith such an one, though I be unworthy, yet if God should give me all the world, it would not satisfy me for my portion. I must have himself; I must have heaven, and eternity, and glory. This is a man of a true raised spirit; and all men in the world are of poor, base, low spirits in comparison of this man, whose spirit godliness hath thus elevated in this gracious way. Therefore it is not every one that is poor in spirit which is thus blessed.

Well, but who then? what poverty of spirit is that that makes a man blessed?

For that you must know, first, thus, Blessed are those that are poor in spirit notes thus much, when a man or woman—so I find some carry it—is willing in their spirits to be in a low and poor condition, if God shall so please; so as to be willing, though he hath never so much of the world, yet if God shall please to call for all his estate, he is willing in his spirit to give it up to God and to live poorly. Now God doth give a man a comfortable estate; he hath comings in, he hath all things well about him in his family. Ay, but now saith this soul, It is true, I have received these good mercies from God; but yet God knows this is in my spirit, that God that searches the hearts of all, and converses with men's spirits, knows that this is in my spirit, that if the Lord will call for all these to give witness to his truth, I am here ready to part with all these outward accommodations, and to live upon bread and water all my days; to live in as poor a condition as ever poor creature lived in in this world; to lay aside all my pomp and riches and glory that I have in this world, and willing to be in the lowest condition that any poor alms-body is, so be it that the Lord may have any glory by me, and I may further witness to himself. Here is one that is truly poor in spirit; it may be he is not poor in his estate. I confess the papists make a great deal of do about this poor in spirit—that is, say they, one that is willing to vow poverty; but God doth not call for this, but whenever he calls for your estates, or any comforts you have, that you should be willing to lay them down at his feet. So much God requires of every man. And now examine as I go along, you that have estates, and do enjoy them, do you find such a disposition in your hearts—indeed if it were put to it,

that rather than you would deny the least truth of God, all your estate should go? Rather than you would commit the least sin any way against your consciences, your estates should all go; and you will prize rather the witnessing to any truth, than to live in all the jollity in this world? Could you bring your hearts to this? Why, this is to be poor in spirit, in the midst of all your abundance. It is not grace to cast away our estates and riches willingly; but grace consists in the well-managing of our estates while we have them, and in the willingness to part with them when God calls for them.

But secondly, Blessed are the poor in spirit—that is, a spirit willing to lie down under God in a low condition, when I am put into such a one. First, Such as are willing to be poor if God will; and secondly, Such as are already poor for their outward estate: and suitable to that poverty of their outward estate, they find a poverty in spirit—that is, their spirits do lie down under God's hand, and are willing to glorify God in this way that God hath set them. They do not envy at others that are in a higher condition, they do not murmur and repine against God. Why doth God dispense his gifts so diversely, that such and such men shall have so much, and other men shall have so little? No, God hath by his providence brought me to this condition; and, Lord, here I am, and submit to thy hand. I am content to glorify thee in this mean condition that thou hast set me; I am content to apply myself to those duties that thou requirest of me in such a poor and low estate. Many poor people think, Oh if I were rich as others are, then indeed I could glorify God; but in the way that they are in, they vex and fret, and seek after shifting ways to provide for themselves, and cannot bring their souls to glorify God in such a low way wherein they are. But now if you can find your hearts submissive to God in that low way wherein you are, blessed are the poor in spirit. And this disposition of your spirits to be willing thus to glorify God, it is a greater excellency than if God made you the chief of a parish or the chief of a kingdom.

Thirdly, 'Blessed are they that are poor in spirit'—not those that seem to be poor in their words, in their expressions, in their carriages. You shall have many that will be complaining of themselves, and say that they are thus weak, and poor, and vile, and have nothing in them; and yet God knows their hearts are haughty enough, and proud enough, that if other men should but think of them, and say of them as they speak of themselves, they would not bear it. Therefore though they be poor in words, yet not in spirit. There be some that will carry themselves in a very poor way, and live very meanly in the world. Ay, but in spirit they are not so; they go

very poorly, and seem to be very humble, as if there were no other pride but in clothes and gay things. But the main pride is the pride of men's spirits. Therefore blessed are those that are poor in spirit—that is, those that have their wills and affections and understandings bowed down to God; blessed are those that are so sincerely poor.

In the fourth place, and more especially and principally, 'Blessed are those that are poor in spirit'—that is, such as are truly apprehensive and sensible of their spiritual poverty. Now this is a great point, I am now indeed come unto the point itself, that Christ promises blessedness too.

Now for this, there are these three things that I shall do about it:—

First, To shew you what is that spiritual poverty, that these that are poor in spirit do see and are sensible of.

Secondly, What the behaviour of the heart is that is thus poor in spirit; how it doth behave itself, or what are the several workings of such a heart that is thus poor in spirit.

Thirdly, Why it is that such a heart is so blessed in the esteem of Jesus Christ.

But now wherein the blessedness consists, that especially will appear in the promise, 'For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

I will but briefly open a little the first unto you, What the spiritual poverty is that such a soul doth see and is sensible of.

In respect of its spiritual estate, such a soul apprehends itself as a very poor creature.

First, It sees that it is deprived, as it is in itself, of all true spiritual good that should do it good in reference to God, and in reference to its own happiness; this it is that it sees clearly. As a poor man sees himself poor; what is that?—that is, I want all those outward comforts that others have, I am destitute of such and such comfortable things, the necessary things that others have; so one that is poor in spirit sees his condition to be thus, O Lord, though indeed at first when thou didst make man, thou didst make him rich, thou puttest him into paradise, and madest him according to thine own image, by which he was the king and the great heir of all the world; but, Lord, now I am deprived of all good whatsoever, of all spiritual good, deprived of thine image—I have nothing of thine image now in me that is spiritual, not any part of spiritual life whereby I should come to have union with thee, or communion with thee, that in any way may work in order to eternal life—I am wholly destitute of every good thing that may make me any way acceptable to God. Now here is a poor man: when I can see it, and be convinced of this, that whatever good thing that should make me acceptable to God, that am I wholly deprived of, I

have not one whit of it. I have, it may be, an estate in the world, and outward comforts in my family; ay, but what have I in reference to God? How are things with me in reference to the infinite glorious first being of all things? Why, as I am in myself naturally, I am deprived of all; never was there a man so poor, that had not a rag to cover him, as I am poor in regard of my spiritual condition. Oh, for a man that hath the riches of the world, yet to see himself a miserable, poor, undone man! This is not ordinary, and therefore, indeed, you shall find that Christ in Luke vi. doth oppose that poor here to the rich of the world; that is, because there are so few of the rich of the world that can be brought to be convinced of this, their spiritual poverty.

A poor man, you know, is put upon many straits that others are not put upon, and many miseries a poor man doth endure that others do not; and so a second thing in this spiritual poverty is, for the soul to apprehend and be sensible of those spiritual evils that are upon it. As I do not only want the image of God and spiritual life, but I have that that is contrary, oh the misery that is upon me in my mind, the darkness of that! the crossness of my will and heart to God, those many corruptions that are in my soul! Oh the vermin that creeps about me continually! There is no misery that poor people do endure, but those that are spiritually poor do see that misery upon themselves, as they are in themselves.

And then a third thing that makes one poor is this: suppose I have many miseries upon me, yet if I am able to work for myself, I cannot be extremely poor; but when the man hath many miseries upon him, and is not able to work for his livelihood, then is he poor indeed. So it is, though we have lost the image of God, yet if we were able to do anything to help ourselves we were not so poor; but now, when a man sees himself thus miserable, and can do nothing for himself to get any good for the enriching of his soul, he is poor. A man or woman that hath lost all, and then falls lame, so that they cannot work nor do anything for their maintenance, this now is a poor man or woman, when their labour is lost as well as their estate; so now when we have lost all and are lame, and can do nothing that may help us in any spiritual good, then must we needs be poor indeed.

Fourthly, But if I be not able to labour, yet if I have friends that may help me, I am not miserably poor; thus it is in regard of our spiritual estate. What friend hast thou to relieve or help thee? is it God or Christ that should help thee? Why, God he is a stranger, Christ thou hast no interest in; as thou art in thyself, thou must not look upon God as he is in himself—thou art an enemy to God; for so the Scripture saith, 'We are enemies to God, and strangers to the covenant of grace;' and thou art a poor crea-

ture indeed that hast no whither to go for thy help. All the angels in heaven cannot help thee, all the men in the world cannot help thee in this thy poor condition in which thou art.

Fifthly, But suppose a man hath no friend to help him, and he is not able to work, yet if he hath any excellency at all in him, there is some hope that some will regard him for the worth that is in him; perhaps he is a man of excellent parts, though through weakness he is able to do little now. This is our spiritual poverty; we are thus miserable, we have no friends, we can do nothing, and then we have no worth at all in us whereby God should have any respect to us—whereby his angels should have respect to us, if they could do us good; we are naturally worthless creatures, we still aggravate our poverty.

Sixthly, If a man were so poor as that he should not be able to do something now, yet if it can be conceived that hereafter he might do something, there were hope; but I am so in debt, that as soon as I can get anything my creditors may come upon me and take away all. This is our spiritual poverty; suppose God should put abilities in us to enable us to do something that is good, why, all that we are able to do cannot satisfy for what is past. If we were able to obey now the law of God perfectly, what becomes of all the old arrears? The justice of God will have satisfaction; God is resolved that no soul shall ever be accepted but his infinite justice shall be satisfied. Now the soul sees itself poor indeed, as it is in itself, when it sees that the debt must be paid to every farthing. If a man now hath broke, and lost his estate, yet he thinks he may agree with his creditors and get up again, and so is not so miserably poor;

but if he knows this, that certainly the debt must be paid now, and there will be no compounding with his creditors, he will conclude his life is like to be poor indeed. This doth those that are spiritually poor see in themselves; they are in debt, and all that they can do can never be able to satisfy for what is past.

Seventhly, Suppose a man or woman should receive something to help them for the present, yet they must live upon continual alms; this is poverty. So a soul that is spiritually poor, it sees it must live in a continual dependence—that though God doth give me some power to act, yet there must be a new influence of his grace to help me to make use of what I have. That is a poor creature indeed that hath nothing of itself, and if anything be given him, knows not how to make use of it without help of another; so doth the soul see itself in such a condition, that whatsoever God should bestow upon me, I know not how to make use of it, without new supply of grace, and that continued to me every moment. Now if we put these seven particulars together, we shall see that here is a poor man indeed: first, I am destitute of all spiritual good; I have woeful spiritual miseries upon me, and I am not able to work at all; I have no friend, and I have no worth to commend me to another; and I am in debt, and if anything be given me, I must have new supplies for using it and for continuing of it. Oh, what a poor creature am I then! Now for a man to see this, and to be made sensible of it, here is a man or woman that is poor in spirit; but now this is not all.

But in the next place, there must be that behaviour in a man that is suitable to this to make him poor in spirit; but of that we shall speak further afterwards.

SERMON III.

OR,

A DESCRIPTION OF A POOR-SPIRITED MAN.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' &c.—MAT. v. 3.

DIVERS things have been spoken by way of preface to this excellent sermon of Christ: you have heard the scope of it. First, to shew unto the world wherein true blessedness doth consist. That that men are so much deceived in, that there is so great a mistake about. And there is nothing more contrary unto blessedness in the world's esteem, than what Christ pronounces to be blessed. Blessedness is the enjoyment of the last end, and so of the chief good that the rational creature is capable of; for it is proper to the rational creature. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'

There are men of poor base spirits that are far from blessedness; as,

First, Such men as have their designs, ends, and aims only in money, and base and unworthy things; that mind no higher things but to eat and drink, and to have pleasure to the flesh. But as for God, and Christ, and heaven, and eternity, the gospel and the word, they are notions to them; but give them money, and meat, and drink, and in that they account themselves happy. Why, here is a poor, sordid, base-spirited man; when such things are adequate to a man's spirit, then he hath a base and poor spirit. The spirits of the saints are all raised spirits high; though they look upon themselves as unworthy of any crumb of bread, yet they account heaven and earth not sufficient to be their portion.

But secondly,—to add two or three particulars, to shew you a base, poor-spirited man,—A man that when he sets about any excellent work, he is presently discouraged with every little difficulty; here is a poor-spirited man.

The first was so base as they mind no excellent work at all; they have no excellent thing in their aims, in their thoughts. But suppose by seeing of others they do begin to set upon some work that hath an excellency in it, but as soon as ever they meet with any difficulty in it, they are dead in the nest presently—they are quite discouraged, and fall down and leave all; he is a poor, base-spirited man that, that is hindered either from a work by foreseeing

of difficulty, or when he meets with a difficulty he is discouraged, when he meets with any opposition, yea, if it be but a mere fancy that he meets with, he is discouraged. Some that have begun to set upon religion, a mock, a scorn, every little opposition presently discourages them, and they turn off. And others in any public business that concerns church or commonwealth, though being put upon by others, they set upon it a little, but if they be opposed, or find it difficult and hard, their hearts are down; oh, these are poor-spirited men!

And then, further, Men that are selfish, that are narrow-spirited men, that are only for themselves, and let the public go which way it will, they regard not that; but if they can provide for themselves, there is all they look at. Oh, these are poor, base-spirited men likewise, and come not to the height and excellency of spirit that many heathens have come.

And then, lastly, Such as are led aside like fools by every temptation, every little temptation can lead them aside like fools to their own slaughter. For a man though he is convinced in his conscience that such and such things he should not do, yet he is not able to resist the temptation; let but his companions come and call him to an alehouse or tavern, he cannot resist it. For a man not to be able to stand against a temptation, but to be led by every poor temptation like a fool to his own destruction, here is a base, poor-spirited man—a man that hath no excellency, no natural excellency of spirit in him. And yet how ordinary is this in those that look full highly; they are men of poor and mean spirits. This poverty of spirit that is in many, it is a curse of God that is upon them; and it is a heavy curse when such men are in public place—they are causes of hindering a great deal of good, and doing a great deal of mischief. It is a miserable curse, either upon kingdoms or countries, when the Lord by his providence shall so order things that men that have no excellency of spirit in them, but are poor, base-spirited men, should sit at the stern and have no

power to manage things. Oh this, wherever it is, is a grievous affliction ! and therefore we have cause to pray, that those that are in place of power that they should have spirits suitable to the places wherein they are, not men of sordid and low spirits. Well, these are not the poor spirits that are here blessed.

Who then ? I the last day shewed you three or four several poor-spirited men that are blessed ; but to let that pass, and to proceed to that that further remains—and that, indeed, is of great concernment, and is more close to the words. The poverty of the saints, even godly men, though they have grace in them, yet still they are spiritually poor. Now this poor in spirit is one that doth apprehend and is sensible of his spiritual poverty, together with several other things that were mentioned before. But now, I say, suppose God hath given grace, yet still there is a great deal of poverty.

As, in the first place, That grace thou hast, it hath need of continual supply. There is no Christian can live upon the grace he hath without new supply. It is not with a Christian now as it was with Adam—to live upon the stock that was given him, and so able to act by it now. God will not trust thee with the stock of grace ; it is not in thy hand, but in the hand of Christ : and this is the condition of the strongest godly man in the world ; he must go daily and continually to Christ to fetch new supply, or he cannot subsist. The poor condition that we are now in, in respect of what Adam was in, may be set out in this similitude : a man that is set up to trade with a stock, and so is able to go on in his trade, and hath skill in it, his father lets him go on till such time as he proves an ill husband, and breaks and loses all, and runs into debt. Yet his father afterwards takes pity on him, will set him up again, but so as he will not trust him with the stock any more ; he will give the stock into some trusty friend's hand, and his son shall go every day to give an account to his friend, and to fetch money from him, and to return to him every day, because his father will not trust him any more. This is just our condition. In Adam we did receive a stock of grace, and God enabled us to go on and trade with it for himself ; but all mankind fell in him ; we turned bankrupts—we lost that stock. Now the Lord is pleased to set up again those that he hath chosen for himself, to trade again in a way of godliness, but so as God will not trust his stock in their hands. The stock, therefore, of God's grace, it is now in Christ, in our head, and we must have supply daily from him. And this is the poor condition that we are in—this spiritual poverty even of the saints.

Secondly, The poverty of the saints consists in this : the graces that they have are but small. Godly men and women, though they have grace bestowed

upon them, yet for the most part it is so small as they can scarce know whether they have grace or not—I say, for the most part it is so. Now that is a poor condition ; thou art a very poor creature, for though thou hast grace, yet it is so little as you cannot tell whether you have any or no. Though God hath given thee grace, yet how often art thou at a stand in thy thoughts about thy grace, whether there be any or no in thy heart. Thy grace is like a little spark wrapped up in a heap of embers, so that the maid is raking a good while before she can see it. Oh, how long art thou a-raking many times in thy heart, in the examination of thy heart, before thou canst see one spark of grace, so as thou canst say, This is a spark of true grace ! Surely thou art but poor, then.

Thirdly, Even those that are godly they are very poor, for they are always needy. We use to say of a man or woman that is always in want, and always complaining, surely they are poor people. Why now, all godly people they are always needy people, always in want, always complaining ; though indeed they have cause to be thankful too, yet they have cause of complaint in themselves, and therefore poor.

Fourthly, Their services are very poor services that they do perform. All their duties and services that they do, when they do but look over them, what poor things do they see they are ! how unworthy to be tendered up unto such an infinite great and glorious God as the Lord is ! They are ashamed of the best of their services, they are so poor, when they consider how unbecoming they are for such a God as they are to tender them up unto : they are poor in their duties, in their services.

Fifthly, Take them at the best, and they are very poor and weak ; but ordinarily, yea, always, there is such mixture in what they do, as it doth deserve to be rejected. Considering how mingled both graces and duties are with corruption and evil, their services are a poor thing indeed—so poor, as were it not for the covenant of grace, the righteousness of Christ and his merits, it were impossible but that the Lord should cast all that comes, from the best man in the world, as filth and dung back again in his face.

Sixthly, Again, poor are the very saints, the godly, for little temptations doth overcome them, at least unsettle them and put them out of frame. Though they have not such poor spirits as we spake of before, to be led like fools by every evil temptation to that which would ruin them, yet thus far they are poor in spirit, that little temptations do unsettle them and put them out of frame. Oh how often hath it been so ! You cannot but be conscious of this, that when God through his grace hath put you into frame, yet a little temptation hath put you out of temper again. It may be thou hast been with God,

and hast had some comfortable communion with him, and thou comest out of thy closet, or chamber, and seest but something amiss in the family, and it puts thee quite out of frame again. Oh, what! is this the soul that was with God, and enjoyed such communion with God, but it may be an hour ago, and yet at every little thing in the family is presently out of frame? What a poor spirit is this! Even the saints are very poor, for they are quickly put out of frame, and unsettled by small temptations.

Seventhly, Poor they are, further, for they have but little ability to help others. There are very few godly people have ability to do any more but even to keep life and soul together, as we use to say. It is even as much as ever they can do to live and to hold their own, to maintain their peace with God; but to be able to be useful to others among whom they live, that very few are. What a deal of do have many godly people to live themselves, to maintain what once they have had; they are ever and anon afraid that they shall one day even perish. As poor people that have even but from hand to mouth they think, Why, though I can get bread now, yet I know not where I shall have it to-morrow, or next week: surely we shall come to beggary one day. Godly people live at such a poor rate for the most part, as they are little useful unto others, and have much ado to provide for themselves. Now here you see the poverty of spirit: first, what our spiritual poverty is naturally—that hath been opened the last time; and now even what the spiritual poverty of the saints is.

But you will say, This doth not make them blessed that they are thus poor; this is part of their misery.

That is true; it is part of their misery that they are poor: but yet blessed are they that are thoroughly apprehensive and sensible of this spiritual poverty of theirs—that come to know this their poverty, and come to be thoroughly affected with this their poverty, they are blessed. There be few in the world who come to understand what their poverty is. Where is the man or woman that knows the poverty that we are in by nature? And then for poverty in respect of weakness of grace, or otherwise, this is taken little notice of; but now blessed are they that do apprehend this, and are sensible of it. Therefore, that you may understand who the blessed one is that Christ speaks of, we must now turn our thoughts to consider of the behaviour of the soul, or the workings of the heart in the sight and in the sense of this spiritual poverty, which makes him to be thus blessed. Now for that there are many particulars, which I shall go over briefly.

As, in the first place, A man that is poor in spirit truly, so as to be blessed, is such a one as looks upon himself as vile and mean; whatsoever outward excel-

lency he hath, yet I am a vile and mean, wretched creature in myself, in respect of this poverty of mine. God hath given me indeed an estate above my brethren, to live comfortably in the world; oh, but what am I in respect of my spiritual state! I that am richer, and have more comings in than others, how many poor servants of God that live in a mean condition outwardly, yet do honour God more in one day than I do in a month, it may be in a year! God hath more service from them in a month perhaps, than he hath from me in a year, or seven years! He looks upon himself as mean and vile, notwithstanding any outward excellency; whatsoever parts of nature that he hath, why, yet he looks upon himself as mean in comparison of others. Oh, this is an excellent thing indeed for a man that hath excellent parts, and yet sees another to have more grace! Perhaps there is some poor man or woman that hath more humility, and more faith, and more sweetness, and more savouriness in their conversation, and more holiness, and more heavenly-mindedness, now he looks upon himself as mean in comparison of that other; though perhaps he is learned, and of esteem in the world, yet because he sees others to excel in grace, he looks upon himself meaner and lower than they. Why, here is a man poor in spirit that is pronounced blessed. Some men are proud of their vices, but the poor in spirit is humble at the sight of his graces. Carnal hearts are puffed up with that that should make them ashamed; but a gracious heart sees enough in his graces to make him humble—in his love, knowledge, faith. In that that is his best parts, he sees enough to make him humble: and blessed are such poor.

Secondly, Hence he thinks it not much if he receive not such respect and honour as others do. Why, though God by his providence order things so that others have respect and honour, and many encouragements in the world, I have no cause to envy, nor to be troubled; I have rather cause to wonder at what I have; it is not for me to expect such encouragements as others have, for I am a poor creature. Thus, you know, poor people whose hearts are subdued by their poverty, when they see others that are brave in the world, Ay, they may do thus, but it is not so for us; so those that are poor in spirit, when they see others that God blesses, and have respect and honour, he then thinks thus with himself, But it is not for me to expect this, I am a poor vile creature.

Thirdly, One that is poor in spirit, is one that doth admire at every little good that he doth receive, that it is so much; he wonders at every affliction that it is no more; every mercy he thinks it very great, and is very thankful; and every affliction he wonders it is so little. Quite contrary to the world: they are troubled their afflictions are so much, and that their mercies are so little; but a poor-spirited man, he

wonders that his mercies are so much, and that his afflictions are so little ; and therefore is thankful for every little. Poor people whose spirits are subdued with their poverty, give them but a halfpenny, they are thankful ; so a poor-spirited man or woman, he admires at mercy, and is thankful at everything that God affords to him ; and if there be an affliction, he doth not murmur and repine, but wonders that God doth lay his hand so tenderly upon him as he doth.

Fourthly, A poor-spirited man is one that is often craving ; he is a praying man, a beggar, that is often begging for an alms. There is none that are truly poor in spirit, but are great praying Christians ; God always hears from them, and God is not weary of such beggars. In Prov. xviii. 23, 'The poor useth entreaties ;' and so in Prov. x. 14. Now such kind of men as can live without prayer, and can go day after day without seeking of God in prayer, God hears but little of them ; they are grown high and rich—as a company of the wantons of our age, that scorn and condemn duty, and think that they are grown so rich, and have so much comfort, and so much assurance and grace, that they have no such need as others have. Well, but when they are so flush and high, blessed are the poor. Those that are needy, and see themselves thus, so as to be begging at the throne of grace ; those that God hears much from at his throne of grace, these are the blessed ones.

Fifthly, The poor, they are the admirers of free grace, and the great extollers of free grace ; whatever they have they look upon it as free grace, and overlook themselves, overlook their duties when they have done ; they are as much in duties as any, but when they have done they overlook all ; they stand not upon anything, but it is free grace only that is admired by them. Certainly these are the honours of free grace.

And from hence, in the sixth place, The poor in spirit, this is his behaviour—he is emptied of himself ; whatsoever he hath in himself, or whatsoever he doth, he dares not rest upon it, not for his spiritual and eternal good, but is delivered as it were from himself, looking upon himself as undone, utterly undone in respect of what he is, of what he hath, or of what he can do. One that is emptied, I say, of himself, and of every creature, and is in a preparation now for to trust only in the grace that is without him, in the grace of God that is tendered in the gospel, he dares not lay the weight of his eternal estate upon anything that is in himself, or what comes from himself, but merely upon the grace of God revealed in Christ in the gospel. This is the poor-spirited man that is thus blessed. One that commits himself to God, and trusts in God ; so do the poor. Thus you have it in Ps. x. 14, 'The poor committeth himself unto thee ;'

he is emptied of himself, and commits himself to God ; commits his soul to him, and all his ways ; he dares not trust to his own wisdom for the guiding of him, not in any of his affairs, but especially for the guiding of him in the great affairs that concern his eternal good. And in Zeph. iii. 12, the Scripture saith that the Lord would leave in the midst of them an afflicted and a poor people, and they should trust in the name of the Lord. It is the poor that commit themselves to God, and that trust in the name of the Lord. Now blessed are these poor, that is, such poor as from a sight of their own emptiness, vileness, wickedness, and inability to help themselves, shall give up themselves to the grace of God revealed in the gospel, and commit themselves and all their ways to be guided by God, and are willing to live upon alms for his present and for his eternal estate. It is in the nature of man ever to be seeking to have some righteousness of his own ; and that is the reason that men can have no comfort. Those that have their consciences awakened, can have no comfort till they be able to do thus and thus, and be able to perform duties after such a manner, and overcome corruptions thus and thus. Thou wilt not come, as it were, a mere beggar to God, as one that hath nothing, but thou wouldst fain bring something to God. But the Lord will have thee come as a mere beggar, as one that hath nothing at all, and to lie down flat before him, stripped of all, even of thy rags ; for, you know, many poor people they are proud of their very rags. And so it is with the hearts of men ; though they have nothing but their civil righteousness, yet that they will be proud of. Now the Lord will strip thee of all, and make thee come naked before him, and be willing to live upon alms for eternity. Now it is hard for a man to live upon alms for a little time, but to live upon alms all the days of one's life is harder ; but now to live upon alms for eternity ! And yet this poor spirit is such an one, as is so sensible of his own poverty, as can commit itself to God in such a way as to be content to live upon alms, even for eternity ; and blessed are these poor.

Seventhly, A poor-spirited man is one that is willing that God should choose his condition. We use to say that beggars must be no choosers, but now I am speaking of one whose spirit is suitable to his spiritual poverty. Now if thou be so spiritually poor, then do not think that thou must be a chooser ; no, thou must not choose what thy comforts shall be, or thy ability shall be, or what thy worth shall be, or any wages shall be, or at what time or means God shall come in unto thee, thus or thus. No, thou must leave that wholly to God ; only this, thou must look up to God for mercy. O Lord, let me have mercy. But how, and when, or at what time, and what degree and measure, that I leave wholly to God ;

only my soul's desire is, that the Lord would have mercy upon me. Many do discover that there is not poverty of spirit in them by this thing, for when they seek to God for mercy, if they have not comfort coming in as they would, their spirits are froward, even with God himself: such a spirit is not down. But blessed is the poor in spirit, that is, those that shall lie down flat before the Lord, and be willing to be at God's finding. Here I am, and let God do with me whatsoever he will; I lie absolutely at his mercy, and I do not expect to have myself to be chooser of anything that I do desire.

Eighthly, Those that are truly poor in spirit, they look upon others that God hath blessed with eminency of grace, and bless them in their souls; they think their condition high. Oh, such and such do I see excellency of grace in; oh how happy is their condition, saith a poor-spirited man or woman. As those people that are poor, when they come by those that have great houses and great comings in, say they are happy men indeed. So those that are poor in spirit, when they see others that have eminency of grace, they look upon those as such as have obtained excellency indeed; they look not upon the rich and honourable in the world as the most excellent, but those that have the greatest eminency of grace, they look upon them and bless them. Oh how happy were it if I could walk so with God as such do, if I could overcome my corruptions as such, if I could prize and profit by the word as such! oh how happy should I think myself to be! This is a good poverty of spirit indeed.

Ninthly, And further, blessed are the poor. The poor in spirit are such as are willing to wait. Though God doth not come according to their desires, yet still they are content to wait upon God. God shall choose what the thing is that shall be given them, and they are willing to wait. So you have it in Zech. xi. 11. Those two are put together: 'And it was broken in that day'—that is, the staff of beauty and of bands was broken—'and the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord.' Men that are men of estates, and rich men, when they come to a door for business, if so be that they cannot have presently what they desire, away they will go; they will not stand waiting. Why? because they are rich, and so proud in a snitable way to their riches. But now, one that is poor and comes for an alms is content to wait, especially if he knows that there is no other door for him to go to at that time; if, indeed, he thinks he may have it at some other door, he will not wait, but if he comes for an alms, and he must have it here or nowhere, he is content then to wait. So those that are truly poor in spirit, they are content to wait at God's gates, knowing that there is no other door that they can have

their alms at but only at the gates of God. Thou hast been seeking God, it may be a month or longer, half-a-year or a year, and yet canst find nothing; oh, but if thou canst have mercy at last, thy condition is happy. Thus a poor-spirited creature will say, and so will be content to be waiting all the days of his life.

Tenthly, One that is poor hath an awful respect to God and his word; he is one that is struck with an awful reverence of the greatness of God and the authority of his word. This you have in Isa. lxvi. 2, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.' You have those put together, the contrite and poor, and that trembles at God's word; when he comes to the word and hears it opened, he looks upon it as having a dreadful authority in it; he looks upon the word as a thing to be above him, and his heart trembles lest he should not give that due respect to the word that he ought to do; and when a promise is revealed, he trembles for fear that it should not belong to him, and the divine lustre that he sees in the word to be so much above him, causes his heart to fear and tremble before the Lord; this is a poor-spirited man. It is opposite to that boldness of spirit that is in man, which is from hence, that he thinks he hath something to bear him out. But now one that is poor in spirit looks upon nothing in himself that can bear him out against anything that is in the word; no, it is the word that must prevail, whatsoever becomes of me either for my present or eternal estate. It is the word that must prevail, and therefore he gives an awful reverential respect to the word when he hears it.

Eleventhly, One that is poor in spirit is such a one that hath a melting heart likewise at the word. A little thing in God's word strikes him presently, and will cause his heart to melt; as you shall see men and women that are truly poor indeed—not your ordinary vagrants and rogues, that will make themselves so in illness, but those that are truly poor—you shall find if you do but speak to them, a melting spirit presently in them; anything you say almost will make their hearts to melt within them. So one that is poor in spirit hath a melting spirit at the word; a little thing from God works upon him, and he doth not stand out against the word so as others do; he hath not a heart to give the word a rebound so as others have, but when the word comes, there is a yielding of spirit unto the word. Now all these put together that have been named, will plainly demonstrate who that man or woman is that is pronounced thus blessed here by our Saviour Christ.

Now if you would ask and demand why it is that God hath such a respect and regard to such as are thus poor in spirit, only a word or two.

The great reason why the Lord hath such regard unto such, it is because this disposition doth best serve the great design that God hath of glorifying himself in the world, namely, the lifting up of his free grace. God would have his glory from the children of men. But what glory? The lifting up of free grace, that is the glory that God would have above all other. God would have the glory of his power, the glory of his wisdom, the glory of his bounty, of his patience; ay, but that is not the glory that God doth look at most; but that he might magnify his free grace in his Son, that is the glory that God doth most delight in. Now of all dispositions in the world, this disposition of poverty of spirit is that that serves God's end and God's design best; and therefore no marvel though God doth so much accept of it.

Secondly, Such a disposition makes the soul to be conformable even unto Jesus Christ. We know that Christ was willing to be poor, and the Scripture tells us that Christ did empty himself; he was willing to lay aside that glory that he had, and to come and empty himself and be in the form of a servant. Now when Christ shall see a spirit that hath a conformity to his, Christ looks upon it and saith, Here is one that is conformable to my spirit. I was willing to be poor; and so is such a one. I was willing to empty myself, and to be anything for the furtherance of the glory of my Father; and so do I see here such a poor creature that is willing to empty itself of anything that it hath, and is willing to give up itself for the glory of my Father and me. Oh, blessed are these poor! But how few of such as these shall we find in the world! We tell you who they are if we could find them; that they are such as are thus and thus qualified, and whose hearts do work after such a manner as this is; but, O Lord, where are they? Ordinarily we find that men's spirits are jolly, high, proud, stately, surly, stiff, stubborn, rebellious, and bold in the ways of wickedness, this is the juice of men's spirits; they scorn this kind of poverty of spirit; their hearts are up, and they stand upon themselves, and stiff they are in their own way. It is true in Isa. lxvi., 'That the Lord that dwells on high, in heaven, he doth look upon the poor and the contrite;' he looks upon them. Oh, but where shall God have objects, such objects to behold? How few such objects are there in the world! Now cursed are the proud, cursed are the haughty in spirit, the stubborn and the stout-hearted: the Scripture speaks most dreadful things against them; but we are not now to speak to them, neither am I willing to defer what comfort Christ hath for those that are poor in spirit, by turning aside to speak to those of haughty and proud spirits. Therefore I am to address myself to the opening of that that Christ means when he saith that they are blessed. Many

things might be said for the opening of their blessedness, but for the present there is only one scripture that I will apply to those that are poor in spirit. Those that are such, whosoever they are that are in the presence of God this day, whose consciences can tell them that, though in much weakness, yet they can find such workings of spirit, I will give you but one text to uphold your spirits till the next day, and then we shall come to open what Christ saith of you, that yours is the kingdom of heaven. The text is in Luke iv. 18: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book.' Christ comes to the synagogue, and, a book being opened, he doth find this place of Scripture out of Isaiah, which was a prophecy concerning himself. The meaning of it is this—that God the Father hath anointed Jesus Christ his Son, appointed him solemnly to that office, to come himself into the world, and to preach good tidings to the poor in spirit. As if God should say to his Son, Son, I have many of my poor servants in the world who are poor in spirit, who are sensible of their own wretchedness and poverty; now I appoint thee and anoint thee to go and preach unto them the glad tidings of salvation; and be you sure to comfort them, be you sure to speak peace to them; pour oil into their wounds, and relieve and refresh them. I see that they are ready to be discouraged, but do you encourage them. I appoint you to this. You will say then presently these are blessed, whereas God the Father from all eternity hath set Jesus Christ, as it were, apart, appointed him to this office to preach comfort to thy soul. This one scripture to one that is truly poor in spirit is worth a thousand worlds. For, what! saith such a one, doth God regard me? Yes, such a regard he hath, as he hath appointed his Son to that office to take care of thee, to comfort thee and to help thee; and Christ must be unfaithful in his work if he doth not preach comfort to thee. This care hath God of the poor; whereas he doth, as it were, slight, neglect, contemn, and scorn the rich ones of the world. Then he sends empty away; but for these that are poor in spirit he hath given Christ a charge over them. Now were there nothing else said but this, that thou hast such a promise as this is, that Christ, when he comes into the world, must come and preach glad tidings to thee, it were abundant mercy; and so in effect the very scope of the gospel is to preach glad tidings to the poor. And indeed we shall shew that that is a special thing that is meant by 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven;' not only that they shall go to heaven when they die,

but by 'kingdom of heaven' is often meant the ministry of the gospel, and that is one especial thing intended here, that the riches of the gospel, the state of

the gospel, the doctrine of the gospel, all the good of the gospel, doth belong to those that are poor in spirit.

SERMON IV.

OR,

PROMISES TO THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' &c.—MAT. v. 3.

I SHALL now briefly give you a few promises that are made in Scripture to such as are God's poor, and then proceed to the blessedness that Christ pronounces of them—namely, that 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Now for the promises to those that are poor.

First, God thinks upon these. It may be thy friends think not of thee. Thou art a poor man or woman, and yet godly; thou hast rich friends that perhaps have their full dishes and want nothing, but have all coming in according to their hearts' desires, and they think not of thee; ay, but if you be one of God's poor, as hath been described, God thinks of you, Ps. xl. 17.

Secondly, The Lord looks towards the poor as an object that he takes content in; he doth not only think of you, but 'his eye is upon you.' Poor men when they pass by others, they scarce have a look from them, but God's eye is continually upon them for good; so you have it in Isa. lxvi. 2, 'He looks to the contrite and poor.'

Thirdly, He so looks as he would not have his dreadfulness to daunt thy heart; so in Isa. xlv. he begins it thus: 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; he raises up his glory to shew what a God he is. Alas! now may a poor soul say, oh, how glorious is God! his glory will daunt my heart. How shall I be able to stand before him! Nay, though heaven be his throne, and earth be his footstool, yet 'he will look to him that is of a poor spirit, and that trembles at his word.' As if he should say, Let no poor soul be daunted with my glory, for it is for their good, and no hurt at all to them.

The fourth is this: The Lord he prepares his good-

ness for the poor, Ps. lxxviii. 10. Perhaps thou hast not mercy for the present as thou desirest; but God is preparing all this while mercy for thee, and preparing thee for mercy.

Fifthly, The Lord hears the poor. It may be poor people may petition to others and they cannot be heard, but if the rich petition they can be heard; but the Lord he hears the poor. You have many scriptures for that, Ps. lxix. 33; and we find the psalmist makes it a rise of his prayer, because he is so poor and needy, Ps. cix. 22—'For I am poor and needy'—that God should hear him the rather; and so Ps. lxxxvii. the rise of his petition is, that God should hear him because he is so poor.

Sixthly, The Lord will not have the expectations of the poor to be frustrated. Poor men may wait and wait long enough, and yet may fail at the last. But now if thou beest one of this poor spirit, the Lord will not have thy expectation to be frustrated, but there shall come good of it at last, Ps. ix. 18.

Seventhly, The Lord will not forget the poor, Ps. ix. 12. Others may forget them, it may be, even when they have granted their petitions; but the Lord will not forget the poor. Many such kind of promises doth the Lord make to those that are of poor spirits. But what do we speak to particular promises? we have one in the text instead of all, 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' This hath all promises joined together in one. Now from the words before, we come to search into the bowels of them; from that that doth appear at present view, you have these three or four notes: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

Observ. 1. The first is this, That God loves to honour those that are willing to debase themselves.

God doth not say here, Blessed are the poor, for their sins are pardoned; Blessed are the poor, for the promises of the gospel belong to them; but 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' It is a kingdom that is theirs. God puts an honour upon the poor. That which seems to be the most contrary, that Christ doth assume. If one that is poor should come to have such a promise made him, Well, you are poor, you shall be provided for, you shall never want as long as you live; that were well. But that is not all, they shall have a kingdom: so Christ saith himself to poor broken hearts that think themselves not worthy of the least crumb of bread, 'theirs is the kingdom.' It is no less than a kingdom that is prepared for them; and therefore do not have such a poor spirit as to have low designs; though thou beest poor in respect of thyself, yet lift up thy heart, and aim at no less than a kingdom. Many poor people would think they should be happy men and women if they might have a hundred pound a year land given them. But those that are poor in spirit, as here is spoken of, it is not a hundred pound land a year, nor the possession of the world, but it is no less than the kingdom, and the kingdom of heaven, that will satisfy their souls. That is the first note; the Lord loves to put honour upon those that are willing to debase themselves. I find likewise other scriptures that are suitable: Luke xxii. 28, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom; ye are content to endure in my cause, and to suffer the loss of all, and therefore have I appointed a kingdom unto you. But I intend not to stand upon these notes; that we only observe by way of connexion.

Observ. 2. That blessedness doth not consist in any worldly thing: 'Blessed are the poor.' Why? because they shall have the riches of the world, they shall be brought into honour, they shall be brought to have preferment in the world? no, but 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' There is nothing in this world can make them blessed; it is the kingdom of heaven that must make them blessed. If you would be happy, you must look beyond the world. Thou dost not know what the true happiness of an immortal soul is capable of, if thou dost expect it here in this world.

Observ. 3. In that it is said in the present tense, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. From whence the note is this, that the saints of God live not only upon comforts that they shall have hereafter, upon the assurance of what they shall have, but upon present comforts. They have enough for the present to uphold their hearts, in all their poor and mean condition in which they are in respect of the world. You will say, Indeed for good people that are mean in the world, whatsoever they suffer, God will reward

them hereafter. Ay, but, poor souls, what have they to comfort themselves withal for the present? Yea, saith Christ, theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven. Take all together now, and thou hast enough not only to uphold thy soul in this thy poor condition, but to comfort it, and to make the angels in heaven to look upon thee as a blessed creature. It is said of the pure in heart that they *shall* see God; but the poor in spirit, theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven. And the reason why Christ puts it in the present tense is, because he saw that those that were poor in spirit had need of present comfort.

Observ. 4. That heaven is now to the saints. There is comfort indeed! Ay, but heaven they must look for afterwards. No, they shall have it now; heaven shall come down to them before they go up to heaven. In Luke xvii. 21 you have a notable scripture for that: 'The kingdom of heaven is within you.' It is within the saints now for the present. This that I now say may seem to be a paradox, yet it is a certain truth; no soul shall ever go to heaven that hath not heaven first come down to it. There is certainly no man or woman upon the earth shall ever go to heaven, but such as hath heaven come down to them. There is none shall ever be glorified among saints and angels in heaven, but such as it may be said of them, that the kingdom of heaven is within them.

You will say, What is that? Why, that I shall further open in coming to the main promise, 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Now the great thing that we are to do, it is in these two particulars:—

First, To open to you what is the meaning of this; what doth Christ mean by the kingdom of heaven.

And then, secondly, To apply the kingdom of heaven to such as are poor in spirit. I shall not speak of it, perhaps, as some of you may think, to open the glory of God in the general, but only so far as it is applicable to the poor in spirit. Christ means some special thing here, that is more peculiarly applicable to the poor in spirit—viz., three sorts of poor who are to have the treasury of comfort in the kingdom of heaven, which will appear further, both in the opening of the kingdom of heaven, what it is, and then the application of it unto these three sorts of poor people.

For the first then, The kingdom of heaven.

By the kingdom of heaven is understood not, firstly, the glory of the saints that they shall have to all eternity, but the state of the Messias, that is, the king of heaven; the state, I say, of the Messias after his coming into the world, and all the good things that he brings with him. That is the kingdom of heaven which is here meant. There is the kingdom of God's power whereby he rules over the world; and then there is the kingdom that he hath given to his Son the Mediator. It is the second kingdom that is

here meant. When God had made this world, he himself reigned over it, and was the king of it. But the world that he made was spoiled with sin, and so God could not have that glory from the world that he made it for. Therefore, the Lord he was pleased to erect a new world, another spiritual, heavenly world, to glorify himself in in another manner, more spiritual and heavenly than in the former world; and he makes his Son to be the king of that spiritual world—that new world which the Scripture speaks of when it saith, ‘All old things are done away, and all things are become new’—which new world is begun in the work of grace in the hearts of the saints, and so carried on till it comes to eternal glory. Jesus Christ he is the king of that world. As for the other, it is spoiled, and must come to confusion. Now before Christ’s coming, actually in taking flesh upon him, there were some rays of his glory that did shine unto the forefathers; but in comparison of what was to be done after the Messiah came, this kingdom was not set up. For the administration of things in the times of the law, it is not called the kingdom of heaven. The Jews they waited for the kingdom of the Messiah; and the kingdom of the Messiah that they waited for, it is this kingdom of heaven that is here spoken of in this text. When Christ was near coming into the world, this great king he sends his harbinger before—John the Baptist—to proclaim that he was coming, and that there was a new kingdom to come into the world. Therefore, saith John, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ He did not mean thereby, Repent, repent because you must go to heaven, go and be glorified with God in heaven; but as if he should say, Oh, now is the kingdom of the Messiah at hand. Within a few months Jesus Christ is coming, and will appear to be king, and the gospel will be made more clear to you; within a small time the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up. Repent, therefore, and turn from your wickedness, that you may have the benefit of the kingdom of the Messiah when it comes to be set up. And it is said, therefore, that ‘from the time of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence.’ It may appear then that the kingdom of heaven was in the time of John the Baptist. The meaning of it was this, that John Baptist being the harbinger of this kingdom, when people did but hear that the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand, their hearts were set on fire after it, and there was a kind of holy violence to bear down all kind of difficulty and opposition. They were resolved with themselves, whatsoever becomes of us, we will endeavour to the uttermost, at least that we will have our part in the good things of the kingdom of the Messiah; it suffered violence for that time. John Baptist did but speak a little of that kingdom though not set up, yet the

hearts of the people were set on fire after it. O Lord, where are our hearts then, when a minister of the gospel shall not only say that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, but it is come, and this king hath come and ascended and triumphed in heaven, and set at the right hand of the Father, and governs and rules his church! Now, when we call upon men, ‘Repent, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is come,’ it doth not suffer violence. But it is a blessed thing when it can be said, that since the time of such a minister, even heaven hath suffered violence. Whereas the hearts of people were loose before, and they minded nothing but the world, and gathering a little together, and that they might eat and drink and sport, that is all they minded; but since they came to hear of the preaching of the kingdom of heaven, this kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. This kingdom of heaven it is therefore the state of the gospel. And in this sense I take it that that is meant, when they brought little children to Christ: saith Christ, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me, for to them belongs the kingdom of heaven.’ He doth not mean that some of them shall go to heaven; but thus, as if Christ should say, In the times of the law, I there did not only take believers, but their seed, to have the privileges of that state under that administration, of the good things that were in the law. Therefore do not now think that when I am come to set up another kingdom, that I will take believers now and reject their seed. No! ‘Suffer them to come unto me, for unto them belongs the kingdom of heaven;’ and they are members of this kingdom that I am now setting up, as well as they were members of the Jewish church, and had the benefit of that administration; so shall they be members and partakers of the state that now I am setting up, together with the privileges of it; and therefore suffer them to come to me; I will own them to be such to whom belongs the kingdom of heaven; and therefore let them not be excluded any more from this state of the gospel than they were before excluded from the state of the law, and the good things therein. That is the meaning of that text, and a special scripture for the encouraging of believing parents in respect of their children, and the bringing of them to that ordinance of baptism.

Sometimes this kingdom of heaven is taken for some particular thing in the state of the gospel, as for the preaching of the gospel it is called the kingdom of heaven: as the kingdom of heaven is like a man going out to sow his seed, that is, this administration of the gospel in the preaching of it is like a man that sows his seed, and some fell upon the highway, &c. The preaching of the gospel, that is one thing in the kingdom of heaven that hath the name of the whole. And sometimes it is taken for the

work and efficacy of the gospel in the heart of a man: as 'the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed;' what is that? That is the work of the gospel that is now preached in the state of the Messiah; it hath that effect upon the heart, as a grain of mustard-seed. Though it be little at the first, yet it grows up to a mighty tree; this is the substance of this kingdom of heaven, it is the state of the Messiah. So, then, the meaning of Christ is this: Blessed are the poor in spirit; you that are thus poor, oh, blessed are you; for look, what good or benefits are come by the Messiah's coming into the world—look, what blessedness there is in the state of the Messiah, that belongs to you, you shall certainly have that blessedness.

Again, Sometimes the kingdom of heaven is taken for the church, and the privileges thereof, as, I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and that is one great part indeed of the kingdom of heaven, the privileges of the Christian church. The privileges and administrations and ordinances that there are in the Christian church are a great blessing of the kingdom of heaven, and you shall have all these, you that are poor in spirit.

Why is it called the kingdom of heaven?

First, It is called the kingdom of heaven because Christ is from heaven, who is the king thereof.

Secondly, In distinction and opposition from or unto the kingdoms of the world. It is not of this world, saith Christ.

Thirdly, Because that Christ his seat is now at the present in heaven.

Fourthly, Because that the way of his government is spiritual and heavenly, not in an outward way. And then,

Fifthly, Because it will certainly bring both soul and body to heaven at last. Therefore the whole administration of the Messiah in his way and government is called the kingdom of heaven.

Christ is the king, and the blessing of this it would be very large to open in the particulars; there is infinite blessedness in this kingdom of heaven.

For, first, It is Christ the Mediator that gives the laws. If thou beest brought under the state of the gospel to be a subject of Christ by being a believer, I say, Christ he gives thee thy laws; now thou hast them from the hand of a mediator. The Jews had their laws—the ten commandments—from the hand of a mediator, from Moses. But thou hast the law for the guiding and ordering of thee from the hand of Jesus Christ. It is true, the same thing that Moses did require men then, was that that Jesus Christ gave to them, and Moses likewise he was a kind of type of Christ even in that; but thou hast them more fully from the hand of a mediator, from the hand of Christ,—the law,—for the guiding and ordering of thy

life. And that is a great dispute about the law now, which truly hath little in it to edification,—viz., whether we have our law now from Moses or from Christ; and so many that speak against the law, when it comes to a dispute, the uttermost that they can give is this, that we are delivered from the law as it was given by Moses. Why, what is that to purpose, if we be bound to the same thing that Moses did command, and by as strong bonds as those were that lived in the time of the law? What great matter whether we have it from Moses or no? We have it, and are bound to it by as strong bonds if it comes from the hands of Christ. And we may satisfy ourselves enough in this, for we have the laws that are the rules of justice and equity, that are moral, we have them in this kingdom of heaven. Indeed, we have them given in another way in the hand of this mediator, with more strictness, with more spiritualness and enlargement rather. For this our king tells us afterwards in this chapter, that he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; he comes to open it; saith he, 'Ye have heard it said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Christ expounds the law, and seems to put it in a higher pitch than the Jews had. There is a great deal of comfort now I confess in that, that thou hast thy law now from Jesus Christ. And in this, indeed, thou mayst have this comfort, having thy law from him, that he will not be so exact as to require all forfeitures from the breach of the law, as was required of the Jews. In the administration of Moses there was such and such forfeitures upon breach of the law; but God is pleased to manifest more grace now, so that he doth not now stand so exactly upon breaches as to pronounce a curse upon every one that doth offend in that way. Moses delivered his law that the people should look upon themselves as accursed if so be that they did offend in any part of it. It is true, there was something of Christ revealed to help believers indeed, but for the most part it was little known, so as for the generality of the people they looked upon themselves, or should do so, as accursed, if they did break any part of the law.

But in this kingdom of heaven, that is a blessedness that thou hast a law from him that loves thee more than his life; he was willing to lay down his life for thee that gives thee thy law. Now when one hath a law from one that we know loves him dearly, it is comfortable. And he is the judge of the law, and he is to take all the forfeitures of the law that loves me dearly, even more than his own life; why, this is a great comfort.

The second thing in the blessedness of this king-

dom of heaven is this, That Jesus Christ he now rules in the hearts of his saints, by his word and Spirit, a great deal more fully than he did in the times of the law, or in any way can be conceived. It is true, there was a general work of God upon the hearts of heathens, in those moral virtues of theirs, but there was not a ruling in their hearts by the sceptre and Spirit of Jesus Christ the Mediator; and though believers in the time of the law had the sanctifying spirit—some of them—in some high degree, yet generally it was very poor and low in the hearts of believers in the times of the Messiah. The Spirit of God is shed abroad in this his kingdom with more fulness, with more clearness, with more power, with more excellency abundantly, and it was reserved for the coming of this king the Messiah to set up that spiritual government of his in the hearts of his people, which is a thing that we little understand. We think there is such a duty required of us, and we fall upon it; ay, but we do not look upon Jesus Christ swaying his sceptre in our hearts for the enabling of us to do what he requires of us in his word. And then,

Thirdly, All transactions between God and them are in this kingdom, and not to go out of this kingdom. By that I mean this: when thou hast offended God at any time, and God hath anything to say to thee for thine offence, thou shalt not come to have this business of thine tried in the court of exact justice. No; it must not go out of this kingdom, but it must all be within the kingdom of the Messiah. As this is the privilege of one that lives in one kingdom, he cannot be called to another kingdom to answer for his fault. If he were in another kingdom he might die for it; but here the laws do help him more, and that is a comfort to him. So now, wert thou in the kingdom of God's power, as he is Creator of heaven and earth, and so rules the world, certainly any offence of thine would be eternal death to thee; and it is so with all those men and women that are, I say, only under the kingdom of God's power—that is, they are God's creatures, and God is their Creator, and so they have to deal with God as under the kingdom of his power; if they offend as creatures, God in that kingdom deals in a way of exact justice, so as to punish with death upon every offence. But now a believer brought into another kingdom, the kingdom of the Messiah, there he comes to have other privileges; so that when a believer offends he doth not go to answer in that court of his—to wit, the kingdom of his power—but he is to answer before the court of Jesus Christ, and Christ is to be the judge, and Christ he is to deal with them in that administration of his that he hath received from the Father, and so comes a believer to stand with comfort before God, notwithstanding all his offences

and weaknesses, for the transaction is between God and him within this kingdom, and not without it. Oh, this is a great comfort for one that is poor in spirit: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The kingdom of heaven, of the gospel, it is theirs, and this is the blessedness that they have by this kingdom of the gospel, that, I say, all the transactions between God and them are in this kingdom. So likewise all God's dealings with them every way it is through a Messiah, and all that they tender up to God it is through the Messiah, so as indeed they have nothing, as I may so speak, to do in their reference to God, but only through this their king; their king doth undertake all business between God and them. Thou that art brought to this kingdom, he that is thy king, the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, hath undertaken all things that concern thee in thy reference to God. Therefore, 'Blessed art thou, for thine is the kingdom of heaven.'

So that all the mercies that come from God, they came from God through Christ to thee; by the means of this king he brings them, and it is through his right that thou hast them. As now, when there is anything to do between two kingdoms, why, the transactions are between the two kings; every private man doth not meddle in transacting of business between kingdoms. So I may say there are, as it were, two kingdoms—the kingdom of God as he is a Creator, and then the kingdom of the Messiah. Now all those things that we are to receive from the kingdom of God's power as Creator, Jesus Christ he deals with God for them, and we come to receive them all through the right of this our king's all-mercy. And if there be any afflictions comes, if we have offended the Father, and sin against the work of creation, and so have deserved evil, God as Creator doth not take believers so as to bring afflictions upon them, but he gives them up to Christ; it is Christ thy king that doth correct him; and the afflictions being within this kingdom, they are of another nature than the evils that are inflicted upon those that are under the kingdom of God's power. Now the evils that are inflicted upon such for their sin, they come from revenging wrath; but the evils that are inflicted upon those that are brought into this kingdom, they are inflicted upon them by Christ the mediator, and so come to them in another way, so that there is abundance of blessedness in being within this kingdom.

Thirdly, and then further, From hence thou hast protection. Though thou beest poor and mean in thyself, thou hast Jesus Christ the Son of God that undertakes to protect thee, to deliver thee from evil, and to supply thee in all thy wants; that is the work of a king. And those that are subjects in a kingdom,

they have a great deal of benefit in the protection of the governor of that kingdom; and for any man to be in a kingdom and to be denied the protection, is a great misery. Now there are none in the kingdom of Christ that Christ will deny the benefit of protection, but protects them all, and provides for all within his kingdom. Indeed, kings of the earth may leave the protection of their subjects, and if they should deny protection to their subjects, there is some other help for them to protect themselves some other way; but there is no protection to the saints but only by this their king.

Fourthly, And all provisions necessary. A king doth not take cognisance of every family; but Christ doth take cognisance to provide for every particular soul.

Fifthly, In this kingdom Christ undertakes to subdue all the enemies that are against thy spiritual and eternal good. Christ is thy king, and either he must lose his power or faithfulness, either of which he will not do; therefore he must subdue thy enemies: he will subdue sin, and death, and the devil, yea, and all the enemies of the church shall at length be subdued.

Sixthly, He, as a king, gives ordinances and gifts and administrations. All the ordinances, gifts, and administrations of the church they are given by Jesus Christ as the king of it, and thou that art poor in spirit thou hast right to them. It is not such a one as hath such a high degree of grace that hath right to the ordinances, but where there is any that are but sensible of their poverty, thou hast right to all ordinances upon that. But though there be right to them, yet you must be exercised in them, in a way suitable to the ordinances. All the gifts of the saints are thine, and all administrations are thine; thou hast the benefit of them all in this kingdom.

Seventhly, further, All the world is brought into subjection to this kingdom. The kingdom of the Father, the kingdom of power, whereby the Lord doth rule the created world, and so by providence is continued, all this is in order to this kingdom of the Messiah. Certainly there is a great deal in this, for one to know that all the administrations of God in the ordering of heaven and earth, it is for the furtherance of the kingdom of the Messiah, and of the spiritual good of all those that are within this kingdom. 'Blessed therefore art thou, for thine is the kingdom of heaven.'

Eighthly and lastly, For this will bring thee at length to reign with Christ. Thou dost in some degree reign with Christ already; all the subjects of Christ's kingdom are made kings and priests to God, and they must be in a further glorious manner made to reign with Christ: so you have it in Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my

throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne.' It is a text that hath a great deal of difficulty in it; but here clearly you see there are two thrones that Christ mentions—his Father's and his own. Now, saith Christ, 'I overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne,' so that Christ doth sit with the Father, and rules altogether with his Father. But, saith Christ, 'I will give you to sit down upon my throne, as I sit upon my Father's.' There is a throne that is more particularly the throne of Jesus Christ, and all the saints shall sit with Jesus Christ thereupon. Now for this throne: It is that that we have mentioned in divers other scriptures. In Mat. xiv. and Luke xxii. Christ tells his disciples that had endured with him in his temptations, 'That they should sit with him and judge the twelve tribes of Israel, and they should eat and drink with him in his kingdom when he did come.' Now these scriptures seem to hold out some special and glorious condition that the saints must have at length before they come to that full possession of that glory that shall be in the highest heavens. They shall sit upon the Lord Christ's throne, judging. Surely in the highest heavens there is no judging throne. But there is a time of judging the wicked and the ungodly; and the saints shall reign with Christ in a glorious manner, and at length they shall be brought to heaven itself, to the possession of all that glory that Christ hath purchased by his blood. And therefore, though now for the present you deny yourselves so much, as to be willing to suffer poverty, to suffer the hardship of poverty, the contempt of poverty, the trouble that there is in a poor estate, it is in my cause that you are willing to be poor. It may be you could get riches in the world as much as other men, but be content to be in a low condition for the things of this world; be content to be mean, to trust me; for there is a kingdom for you—the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom seems to be poor now. As you are poor in spirit, so this kingdom seems to be a poor contemptible thing; the glory of it, it is spiritual, and only can be seen with a spiritual eye. It cannot be seen with a carnal eye, but yet you who are mine, and have received my Spirit, you can understand the excellency of this kingdom, and the many privileges that are in this kingdom; and therefore do you labour quietly to bear your low condition, and though you be low in parts, yet go on; though you have many weaknesses in you, yet still comfort yourselves in this, for you are those that sit with the Messiah, and the good of the gospel is yours, and the glorious kingdom that both Father, Son, and Spirit doth intend to raise up to a mighty height. It is begun for the present in your souls, and you shall certainly come to the accomplishment of it in the fulness of all the glory of it. This kingdom Christ

speaks of in Dan. vii. 24, and there calls it the kingdom of the saints that shall prevail in the world. Certainly there is such a kingdom of Christ as will prevail in the world, let men oppose it what they can. The kings of the earth they rage, and the heathens they imagine but vain things, for the Lord will set his king upon his holy hill, and the saints that are in this kingdom of Christ they shall prevail in the world at last. This kingdom must certainly go on. My brethren, we read in Scripture of the good tidings of the kingdom. These few things that I have spoken of are some of the good tidings of the kingdom; and in Acts i. 30, when Christ was risen again, we find that the great things that Christ did, it was to tell his disciples of the good things of this kingdom of heaven. You know Christ after his resurrection did continue with his disciples forty days. Now you will say, What did Christ do in those forty days? We read of many things that Christ did before his death, but what have we of what he did in those forty days? The Scripture tells you that he did speak to them about the kingdom of heaven. Christ then did discourse about this point that I am now speaking of, telling of them what a blessed and glorious kingdom of the Messias they were to come to; and though they were like to be poor in the world and despised, and be as nobody, yet they were members of that kingdom, and had the privileges of it, and Christ would make them instrumental for the furtherance of that glorious kingdom, and so told them what belongs to the kingdom, the ordinances of the kingdom, the laws of it, and the privileges of it; and therefore we find it that the disciples before the

resurrection of Christ, and the shedding abroad of the Spirit, they dreamed of a mere earthly kingdom—When wilt thou restore the kingdom to Israel?—but when Christ had told them of this kingdom, and the Spirit was shed abroad in their hearts, they never minded an earthly kingdom more. No; they had done with that, now they came to understand what was the meaning of the kingdom of the Messiah that Christ did preach unto them in the forty days that he was with them before his ascension. Now these are some brief things that I have endeavoured to present unto you about this kingdom of heaven that here is said to be the portion of those that are poor in spirit. You will say, Oh, these are blessed things indeed! But for the applying of them, that is the thing we have now to do; only at present remember what hath been said. And now know what the meaning of that scripture is, 'First seek the kingdom of heaven, and the righteousness thereof, and all these things shall be added to you.' I have here briefly set out a little of the glory of the kingdom of heaven, though all this while I have not spoken of the felicity of the saints after the day of judgment, but what shall be between this and their going up to heaven. You see enough to set your hearts on work, in the first place to seek the kingdom of heaven. Oh, you that have sought after the world, and have thought yourselves blessed if you might live bravely and have a little coming in, now know that there is a kingdom concerns you, and, for aught we know, every soul in this place, and therefore above all things seek after that kingdom, that you may have your portion in it.

SERMON V.

OR,

COMFORT TO THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

'Blessed are the poor in spirit,' &c.—MAT. v. 3.

We are, as you may remember, upon the first blessedness here that is attributed to the poor in spirit. The subject of this blessedness we have spoken to at large; who those poor in Scripture are, and, in general, that they are blessed.

But we came the last day to make entrance into the blessedness that Christ pronounces upon them: 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' There were divers observations taken notice of from the connexion: 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' He doth not say, Blessed are the poor, for God will be merciful unto them, but 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven'—a suitable blessing unto that grace that is most eminent in them—that poverty of spirit. Therefore Christ would raise them up with the glory of a kingdom: 'theirs is the kingdom.' But it is no kingdom but the kingdom of heaven. There he shewed that it is not anything of the world that can make us blessed, but it must be somewhat of the kingdom of heaven. And that is observable, he doth not say, theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven, as he saith of others: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' He doth not say, Blessed are the poor, for they shall have the kingdom of heaven, but 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

Poor people cannot stay, they have present need; saith Christ, I will not only promise you what you shall have when you die, but you shall have a kingdom now, for the present. 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

We came to the opening of this kingdom of heaven—what it is—and shewed you the several acceptations of the words, 'the kingdom,'—what it is taken for in Scripture. But this is that that was conceived to be the scope of Christ here, the kingdom of heaven—that is, the estate of the Messiah, the good things that the Messiah was to bring into the world in his administration; that is the kingdom of heaven that is here meant. I do not think that Christ did aim at this, that they should go to heaven when they die and be in glory there, as the only thing; that is indeed among other things that will follow. But

that which Christ aims at here, those that are poor in spirit they are blessed, for they are partakers for the present of the blessed estate of the people of God, that is, in the time of the Messiah's coming into the world. And therefore I do not intend here to speak about the glory of heaven; for anything that may be spoken about that will rather fall into the tenth verse, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' But all that I shall speak of here is, the blessed estate of those that are poor in spirit—viz., the enjoyment of the good things in the state of the Messiah; and that is the meaning of that scripture, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;' that is, repent and turn from your evil ways, and follow not your lusts as you were wont, but repent, for Jesus Christ is come into the world, that brings a great deal of glory with him. Because I would gladly finish at this time, I will pass by what we spake to, and come to what remains, and the rather because in that that doth remain we shall make use of somewhat that we spake to the last time, about the opening of the point of the kingdom of heaven. And that is this:—

What comfort there is in the consideration of the estate of the Messiah's coming into the world; what encouragement there is in this to those that are poor in spirit; and how they in particular come to be made happy—that is the scope of this sermon, and the scope of Christ. Now, then, for the opening of this I shall cast it into these three heads:—

First, What comfort those that are outwardly poor, poor people that have spirits suitable to their outward conditions, that are godly poor, whose spirits are willing to submit to God in that poor condition that they are in, what encouragement they can have from the state of the Messiah, from this kingdom of heaven. And I rather think that Christ intended this, because I find in Luke vi. that Christ doth oppose the rich in this world to poor in spirit. Therefore Christ intended certainly in this scripture to speak comfortable words to godly poor people.

And then, secondly, To those that are poor in parts, poor men and women that have mean gifts and abilities, and yet are godly, and their spirits are low in consideration of the poor parts that they have, that they cannot be useful for God as others are; to shew what good they have, or what comfort they may have from this kingdom of heaven.

Thirdly, Those that are poor in grace, that are sensible of their spiritual poverty, what blessedness they have from this kingdom of heaven.

First, then, Those that are outwardly poor, all godly poor people, I am speaking to them; and I verily think Christ speaks to them, and so would have his ministers to speak to them, such as are for the outward estate kept low and mean; and yet God gives them spirits to submit to his hand in that, and are willing to honour God as they are able in that poor condition without murmuring. Christ Jesus doth pronounce you blessed this day, and tells you that yours is the kingdom of heaven. As if he should say, Be not you discouraged because you are mean in this world, for your spirits being suitable to that condition God hath put you in, the Lord hath appointed a kingdom for you, even the kingdom of heaven. You cannot be great in this world, but you have very much in the kingdom of heaven.

Now for that there are these several things to be considered of in poor people, that are poor in this world, yet godly, Luke xii. 29-31. See what Christ saith to them that are so outwardly poor, in reference to this kingdom: 'And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; neither be ye of doubtful minds.' What are the thoughts of poor people, even of poor godly people many times? 'What shall we eat, what shall we drink?' How shall I provide for my family? But be not of doubtful minds. Those that Christ spake to were in as hard a condition I believe as almost any godly poor are that hear me this day; yet be not troubled. Why should we not seek for what we should eat and drink, &c.? 'For all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' Look after the kingdom of Jesus Christ; if you have that, you have enough, and though you be a little little flock, yet it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom. As if Christ should say, The consideration of this, that your Father hath appointed a kingdom for you, and doth give you a kingdom, should quiet your hearts in all those straits that you are in, in respect of your poor condition. But now for the particulars—that for the general, that the consideration of the kingdom of heaven should support

all godly people who are in a poor estate, and whose spirits are humbled in respect of their poverty; but particularly—

First, Consider he that is the king of this kingdom of heaven, he was poor himself; your king was poor. You tell us of a kingdom of heaven, but we suffer hard things in the meantime in this world. But you suffer not harder things in this world than the king of this kingdom did, even Jesus Christ himself, that was the great prince. The king of this kingdom that you are translated into, he was poor in this world. Now the consideration that the king himself is in a poor condition, and hath no better supplies and comfort than we have, it is a very great supportment. As now in an army, if the general should say to his soldiers to encourage them, Go on, you have nothing to drink but water; ay, but you have as good to drink as your general. So Christ may well say, You that are poor in spirit, what! are you dejected because of your poverty? Why, are you poorer than I was? It may be you have a poor house; you know what is said of Christ: 'The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but the Son of man hath not whereon to hide his head.' Christ had no house at all; Christ had not so good a house as you have, that was the great king of heaven and earth. For your diet, that seems to be poor and mean; you have not those full dishes that others have. In John xxi. 5, Christ comes to his disciples and saith, 'Children, have ye any meat?' He doth not say, have you such and such kind of dishes, but have you anything: yea, and this was after his resurrection, after he had made an end of suffering for sin. Oh remember that scripture! Christ was content with anything; 'Have you any meat,' saith Christ. 2 Cor. viii. 9, 'He was made poor,' saith the text, 'that he might make us rich.' There was never a godly man that we read of was in a poorer condition than Christ was, in many respects. Now he that was your king, and is your king, he subjected himself into such a poor condition. Be comforted in this, 'yours is the kingdom of heaven.' If you understood what the kingdom of heaven means, who is the king of this kingdom, and considered that his estate was so poor, it should take away your murmuring thoughts against a poor estate. 'My kingdom is not of this world,' saith Christ; therefore, what though you have not the riches of this world; Christ himself had them not.

But, secondly, Consider this, Christ's poverty it was to sanctify your poverty. Merely to consider that our captain or king suffers as well as we, that is somewhat; but no poverty or suffering of a king or captain can take away the curse of the sufferings of his subjects. Ay, but the poverty of Jesus Christ, the heir of this kingdom, it was to take away the curse of thy poverty, and to sanctify thy poverty. When thou

hearest that he was poor in this world, why, thou mayest exercise thy faith : Lord, this was to sanctify my poverty. Whenas indeed, otherwise, poverty in itself is a curse, but those that are godly have the curse taken away in the poverty of Jesus Christ. As the death of Jesus Christ did sanctify the death of the godly. The sting of death is taken away by his death ; so their poverty and all their afflictions are sanctified by what poverty and afflictions that Christ himself did endure ; and therefore in this kingdom you see what comfort and good there is to you.

Thirdly, This kingdom of heaven it is so ordered out for the most part, that the poor in the world are the subjects of this kingdom. The very consideration of this is a mighty help to those that are outwardly poor. I confess sometimes there are some rich men that are subjects : as in Mark xv. 43 ; ‘ An honourable counsellor,’ there it is said, ‘ waited for the kingdom of God.’ Great men sometimes are, but ordinarily it is the poor that are the subjects of this kingdom.

Then, fourthly, The Lord hath so ordered things that the great transactions of this kingdom of heaven—that hath been opened unto you—hath been carried on by those that are mean and poor, not by the great ones of the world. The Lord Christ hath been very little beholden to the great ones of the world for the furthering of his kingdom.

Hence follows therefore, in the fifth place, That poverty it is no hindrance to the highest degree in this kingdom of heaven. Indeed, poverty it is a hindrance to degrees in the honours of a worldly kingdom. A poor man cannot expect to bear great offices in the kingdoms of the world ; but for the kingdom of heaven the poor may, the poorest that is may, come to as high degree as the richest that is. So that the truth is, when you come to choose any officers that concern the church, there should be no consideration of men’s estates. I confess when you come to choose officers for the state, though perhaps a poor man may be a wiser man than a man of estate, yet a man of estate should be chosen rather than another that is poor, because it is not so fit for a man that hath no estate to have the dispose of all other men’s estates. But now when you come to the kingdom of heaven, where there is nothing but spiritual power, nothing but in a spiritual way wherein men are to deal with consciences, and no way to deal with men’s estates nor outward liberty—the kingdom of heaven concerns not the business of outward liberty or estate, but merely to deal with men’s consciences in regard of their spiritual estates in reference unto heaven—I say now, whatever offices there are in the church, there should be no consideration of the estates of men so as to downweigh the least grain ; but if the poorest man have more godliness and understanding in the things of the kingdom of heaven,

he should rather be an officer there than any man whatsoever that hath less understanding in the things of the kingdom of heaven ; and therefore it is a carnal way to go after that manner when they come to choose church-officers, then to think of the chief of the parish whether he be godly or no. It is true, if he were as godly and understanding as any other, then for him as well as another ; but to make that to be the sway of business, though there be not that godliness nor understanding, I say this is to suit the state of the kingdom of heaven to the world, whereas those that are poor in that kingdom, they are capable of as high dignity there as any whatsoever. And that is a great help and comfort to godly poor people that are partakers of the kingdom of heaven, they have all the privileges of this kingdom ; they cannot enjoy the privileges of a worldly kingdom so as others do, but they may enjoy to the full the privileges of this kingdom.

Sixthly, Even those that are outwardly poor, if godly, they have right to all things in this world so far as may be good for them. It is said of Abraham, Rom. iv. 13, that he was ‘ the heir of the world.’ It is spoken of Abraham as he was a believer. Now every believer is a child of Abraham, and every child of Abraham doth inherit Abraham’s blessing, and therefore every believer is heir of the world : ‘ All is yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.’ You will say, Why have they not the world then in possession ? There may be right to all things, and yet not possession, because they are not in a fit condition for them ; all things are to work for their good, one way or other. As all the kingdoms of the world are subject to Jesus Christ,—they are given up to him for the furtherance of his kingdom,—so all the things in the world are given up to the saints for the furthering of their good, whose is the kingdom of heaven.

Seventhly, In this kingdom are spiritual riches that may countervail to the full, and are infinitely good beyond all outward riches. Thou thinkest if the state would give thee so much, thou wouldest be a happy man. Oh, that were a carnal heart, to prize more the riches of the world than the things of the kingdom of heaven ! The things of the kingdom of heaven make thee rich in faith, rich in holiness, rich in the promises, rich in thy reference to God and Christ, and rich in the enjoyments of the Holy Ghost and his gifts and graces. Now these things are in an abundant manner communicated in the kingdom of the Messias, more than they were in the times of the law. Indeed it was a greater evil to be a poor man then than now. Why ? Because then there was not such a plentiful measure of spiritual riches communicated from God ; but it was reserved to the coming of the Messias that there should be such

spiritual riches let forth and communicated. God indeed to some few did communicate his spiritual riches then, and there were some eminent godly people in the times of the law, such as Abraham and David; but ordinarily they were very scanty in regard of the communications of spiritual things now; and the reason was, the Lord reserved those spiritual riches to the Messias' coming into the world, and hence it was that God was more indulgent in the times of the law for their outward estates. We read there, that if they did but walk in ways of obedience to God, they were for the most part abundantly blessed in outward things more than he doth now, because that now is the time of communication of spiritual riches. If thou hadst lived in the times of the law, it is very like that thou wouldst not have been so poor; but then, on the other side, it is not like that thou wouldst have had such grace as now thou hast, such manifestations of God to thy soul as now thou hast; and therefore it is well with thee that thou art in the kingdom of heaven, where there is such communications of such spiritual riches.

And then from all these, in the eighth place, follows, That hence the great temptations that those that are poor people are troubled withal, may from the consideration of the blessing of the kingdom be taken away. What are they? you will say. There are three great temptations which those that are poor people and are godly have; the devil comes against them with very sore temptations, that such as have estates are not so much troubled withal.

As, first, I am afraid that God goes out against me, and doth not bless me in anything that I go about; and so they are afraid, and under great bondage. But that hath been answered already.

The second is, I am in a poor condition, and therefore despised. No; thou art a king, thou art translated into the kingdom of his dear Son; thou hast part in his kingdom, and art a king together with himself. And therefore listen not to that temptation that rises from contempt and being despised. Doth not the world regard thee? the Lord God hath a high respect to thee, for he hath given thee a kingdom.

And then a third temptation is, They are useless in the world. Nay, this text will answer this temptation, Thine is the kingdom. And as you heard, the Lord Christ doth carry on the great design of his kingdom by those that are poor; and therefore be not troubled because of thy uselessness in the world. And that is the eighth support of those that are outwardly poor, and poor in spirit suitable to their outward poverty.

The ninth is this, That at last those that are poor and godly, yet they shall possess all things; and I find scripture for it, Rev. xxi. 7. Let men think what they will of such an assertion as this, yet by

comparing one thing with another, it cannot speak of the glory that there shall be in the highest heaven, but of another glory: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.' There is a time that he shall have all, and honour certainly he shall have enough. In Zech. ix. 16, he speaks there of the kingdom of Christ; and we have there an excellent expression of the honour that God will put upon his saints—'And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon his land.' It is a promise that respects all the saints. That there is a time a-coming that they shall be as the precious stones in a king's crown, that are lifted up—that is, that they shall be honoured among all people howsoever they are despised now. And in Mat. xiii. 43, there Christ tells what his saints shall be in his kingdom: 'Then shall the righteous,' speaking of the time of his kingdom, 'shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.' There is a time coming when poor people that are clothed with rags, and are very despicable in the eyes of the world, shall shine then as bright as the sun. Dost thou see the sun in the firmament? That poor body of thine that wants food and raiment shall within a while shine as bright as the sun in the firmament. And for possession of the things that are in the world, compare those two scriptures together: in Mat. xix. 29, 'And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.' So that he doth not speak of being rewarded in heaven for it; for that is beside, besides his everlasting life he shall receive an hundredfold. But, you will say, I find in another gospel that the hundredfold it is spoken of with the addition of persecution—in Mark x. 30. Though there be the addition of persecution, you shall find the promise more large, for 'He shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands.' You will say, He shall receive an hundredfold—that is, he shall have grace, that is as much worth as a hundred times his lands. Nay, you see the Holy Ghost doth mention the particulars, of houses, and lands, &c. But, you will say, there is one passage that seems to spoil all—he shall in this time receive houses and lands, and the like, but with persecution, and in the world to come eternal life. It shall be with persecution, so that this speaks of a time when they shall be persecuted. Now how can these two stand together? Therefore, for the answer to that, I do verily think that this is a true answer to it, that this that is translated in your book *with*

persecution, those that understand the original know that it is *μῆρα*, it doth not always signify *with*, but *after*. I could give you divers places where the word *μῆρα* signifies *after* as well as *with*; as in Mark viii. 31, 'And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.' There it is *μῆρα*, the very same word, and it must of necessity be translated *after*. So that you may by the same warrant that here it is translated *after* three days he shall rise again, so translate the other, that he shall receive houses and lands, &c., a hundredfold *after* he hath endured persecution. Now to determine in what way, or how, or when the Lord will fulfil this, it is very hard to do. You know the fulfilling of prophecies is the best interpretation of them; but to me it seems to be very clear that the Scripture doth hold forth this, that it is part of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, that he will bring his people in time to enjoy whatsoever good things there are to be enjoyed here; for the reward of God stands in a spiritual way—not in a sensual way, as some have dreamed of, but in a spiritual and holy way. And this is the blessing of those that are poor in respect of their outward estates, and have spirits suitable.

Now there are many that are troubled in respect of the mean parts that they have; yet they having spirits suitable to their mean parts, and willing to honour God in them, theirs is the kingdom of heaven also. But now I will for the present leave them, and speak to the third, and that is those that are poor in grace.

As, first, Thou hast but a little grace, and art very poor and mean, and this troubles thee, yet blessed art thou. For,

First, Thou art translated from the power of darkness by that little grace thou hast, and so art translated into the kingdom of heaven: Col. i. 13, 'Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Though there be a great deal of darkness in thy mind, yet the power of darkness is taken away, and so thou art brought into the kingdom of his dear Son. And in Mat. xii. 28, where Christ makes that a fruit of casting out the devil. The devils were cast out. Why? Because the kingdom of God is come: 'But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.' When the kingdom of the Messias came, then the devils were cast out of possession. You never read concerning the casting out of devils till the Messias came into the world; which was to shew us that it was reserved to Jesus Christ for to manifest his power over the kingdom of Satan; and it was a sign that the kingdom of God was come, because the devils were cast out.

So then the kingdom of heaven is come to thy soul, if the devil can reign no more. Certainly the devils had their reign in thy soul before thou wert translated into the kingdom of his dear Son; and thou mayest be sure now that thou shalt never be under the power of darkness—that the devil shall never reign in thee—because the kingdom of God is come to thee. Thou art one under the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The devil is the king of this world. The devil rules in the air, and in the children of disobedience, but the devils have nothing to do to rule in the children of the kingdom; those that have got out of the kingdom of the world into the kingdom of Jesus Christ the devils have no further power. It may be, when thou art melancholy or in the dark, thou mayest have apprehension of devils; but certainly all those that have in them but the least drachm of grace, though they are never so poor, yet theirs is the kingdom of heaven—that is, the kingdom of God is come to them that hath cast out all the power of the devil. Thou wert a captive slave to the devil before thou camest into this kingdom, but now thou art delivered from all the power of the devil.

Secondly, The meanness of any one's parts cannot hinder them from understanding the highest things in the kingdom of heaven, for it doth not depend upon parts at all. Nay, we know that usually those are chosen that have mean parts, to confound the wisdom of the world; and such as have very mean parts may have more understanding in the things of the kingdom of heaven than the greatest Rabbis in the world.

And then, thirdly, which is an admirable help to them that are sensible of their little grace, Why, thou art not now to answer for any of thy miscarriages in the court of divine justice, for thou art got into the kingdom of heaven. If thou wert in the kingdom of God's power only as he is Creator, there thou art to answer for all thy offences in the court of God's justice. But now being translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, thou art to answer for all thy miscarriages there, and not to be hauled before the court of divine justice; and that is a mighty help to those that are poor in grace, to consider of this thing; and this is the privilege of one in this kingdom.

Fourthly, Christ himself, thy king, he is thy judge and thy advocate. Oh, it is a blessed thing to be in such a kingdom, especially if a man knows that he is obnoxious many ways. O thou that art poor in grace, and yet art in the kingdom of heaven, know that Jesus Christ, thy king, is to be thy judge, to cast thee for thy eternal estate. He is likewise to be thine advocate, to plead for thee; and therefore it is not the poverty of thy grace that should daunt thy heart, or cause thee to sink.

Fifthly, The righteousness of this thy king is thy righteousness, if thou comest into this kingdom. In 1 Cor. i. 30, 'He is made of God to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.' When thou comest into the kingdom of the Messiah, here thou hast a privilege that no subject can have in any kingdom in the world. There may be subjects in other kingdoms that may have good kings, but the goodness of their king is not their goodness. But thou art in that kingdom that hath a perfect righteous king, and the righteousness of that king is thy righteousness. Thou art poor, and thy corruptions doth overcome thee. Oh, but blessed art thou for all that, being poor in spirit, for thou art come into that kingdom wherein thou hast the righteousness of the king to be thy righteousness. That is the fifth comfort of being in this kingdom.

Sixthly, The wisdom likewise of thy king it is thine. Jesus Christ thy king he hath all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him. He is made unto us wisdom; therefore let not the meanness of thy parts discourage thee.

The seventh is this, If thou beest come into this kingdom, then that little grace that thou hast, be it never so little, yet thou shalt be sure that that grace shall be upheld to eternity. For it is a special part of the glory of the kingly power of Jesus Christ to uphold the graces that are in the hearts of his people; and this doth make them to be of more certain durance than all the grace that Adam had in innocency. Adam had perfection in his state of innocency. Now thou art weak and poor, and art ready to think, if he fell, thou shalt fall much more. It is true, if thou wert left to that kingdom that Adam was in, it might be so; but thou being brought into this kingdom of heaven, the power of Christ, thy king, it is to be exercised in upholding that little little grace thou hast. In 2 Tim. you have a place that is very sweet that way: chap. iv. 18, 'And the Lord,' saith the text, 'shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever.' As if he should say, The Lord hath already brought me into the possession of the kingdom of heaven, and certainly he must preserve me till I come to the full enjoyment of it. Thou art afraid of such and such temptations, that they will prevail over thee; but be of good comfort, it concerns the kingly power of Christ to preserve that little grace thou hast to his heavenly kingdom. It is in thy case here just as it was with David; you know after David was anointed, oh how he was persecuted by Saul! insomuch as he saith, I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. But if he had had faith to have believed the promise that was made him, he would never have so reasoned. Just thus do many poor souls say which are anointed to this

heavenly kingdom—they say, Certainly I shall perish by the hand of this corruption. Know thou art an anointed one, and it concerns the power of Jesus Christ to uphold that little grace thou hast. And this is another benefit and fruit of this kingdom.

And then, in the eighth place, Know that being brought under this kingdom, though thy grace be poor, yet thou art as perfectly justified before God as ever was Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob; as ever was David, Paul, or Peter, or the strongest saints in the world. Thy grace in respect of thy sanctification is poor, but thy grace in thy justification it is as rich and glorious in this kingdom, as the grace in the justification of any saint that ever lived upon the face of the earth. And indeed this may be said to be the fruit of this kingdom of heaven. In the times of the law this was very little manifested; it being such a great treasury of the goodness of God, it was reserved to be opened when the Messiah was to come into the world. There was this treasury before; but this treasury of justification that now I am speaking of, I say, the opening of it, it was reserved to the coming of the Messiah. And the Messiah he is come to open this rich treasury of justification, and to tell all poor in spirit, that are troubled for the poverty of grace that they have, that howsoever they are poor in respect of their sanctification, yet they are as perfectly justified as ever any godly man was. Now is not here a blessedness, to be a member of the kingdom of heaven? Oh, methinks this should mightily set the hearts of men and women a-work in seeking after the kingdom of heaven!

Ninthly, Know that the right of thine inheritance in this kingdom, yea, the very peace and joy of this kingdom, it is not forfeited by thy failings. In Rom. xiv. 17, 'The kingdom of God it is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' So long as thou art in this kingdom, thou hast righteousness and peace, and thou hast matter of joy.

And then, in the tenth place, Certainly thou shalt be perfect ere long. Judgment shall return unto victory. There will be a treading down Satan under thy feet shortly, and all imperfections shall be swallowed up with perfection; thou hast the seeds in thee now which shall come to perfection. Thou art weak now, and dost not love God as thou wouldst. Why, thou shalt love, and delight in, and glorify and fear God ere long as much as thou wilt.

Yet further, in the eleventh place, There is this for the support of such as are poor in grace, that all the ordinances in this kingdom do belong to them, and whatever good is in them, and they ought not to be deprived of them, if there be anything of the grace of Christ in them. Indeed, let men take heed how they come into this kingdom. If I had time I should have spoken a word or two to that, for any man to

challenge the benefit of this kingdom that hath no grace at all; but one that is poor in grace must not say, 'Because I am poor in grace I am afraid to come to the ordinances, or afraid to pray.' Oh no; thou shouldst the rather come, for all the ordinances are thine, thine is the kingdom of heaven. And therefore, whensoever thou lookest upon any ordinance of the word and sacrament, thou mayest think, 'Well, this is that ordinance that Jesus Christ hath appointed for the building up of my soul, and for the strengthening of my grace. And therefore come to it in such a way as that that is appointed for the strengthening of thy grace.'

Twelfthly, By coming into this kingdom thou comest to have free-trading to heaven. Men now that live in the city, they have free-trading to divers parts of the world that others have not: so those that remain in the world, and are yet in their natural estates, they are such as are banished from the presence of the Lord; they have not the free-trading to heaven for grace, comfort, happiness, and glory, as the saints now when they are come into this kingdom. Thou through Jesus Christ mayest trade to heaven every day, and hast a privilege and right unto it, and so to enrich thyself in heaven. What though thou beest poor; when the trade is open for heaven, why shouldst thou be discouraged with the little grace that thou hast? Oh blessed art thou, thou hast that privilege of this kingdom.

The last thing that I shall speak of now is, That in this kingdom the Spirit is shed abroad in a great deal more abundance than it was heretofore. Be not discouraged, thou dost not find yet such a work of grace in thy heart but thou art in such a condition wherein the Spirit of God is to be communicated in a far more abundant manner than in the time of the law. Indeed, in the time of the law David and such as were to be employed in public work might expect it; but though thou beest not employed in any public work, yet thou mayest expect to come to be glorious in grace here in this world. So we have the promise, 'That the feeble shall be as David, and those of the house of David should be as the angel of the Lord.' There is a time when the gifts of the saints shall be raised, and they shall have clearer and further understanding in the mysteries of godliness than ever formerly. And one great thing that doth hinder the growth of grace in those that are thus poor in spirit, it is because they have not faith to act upon the promises that are made for the shedding abroad of the Spirit in the times of the Messiah: 'If

evil men know how to give good things to them that ask them, much more will the Lord give his Spirit to those that ask him.' And the consideration of these things is a mighty help to such as are poor in spirit, to shew their blessedness. And that that will bind up all these is this, that in this kingdom of heaven the Lord would have his people delivered from the spirit of bondage. As there is a spirit of bondage, so there is a spirit of adoption, a free spirit to come into God's presence. The Lord would not have his people to be afraid of his presence, but would have them all to look upon themselves—I mean all such as are apprehensive of their spiritual poverty—yet to look upon themselves as 'the children of this kingdom, and to come with freedom of spirit before their Father. And now, my brethren, I have been shewing you the blessedness of those that are poor in spirit. I would to God I had spoken to none but such as are poor in spirit. I confess such points as these would make one fear and tremble to treat of, especially in these wanton times; howsoever, children must not lose their bread. But now if there be but one poor in spirit that should have benefit by it, though there should be a thousand hardened, yet God will accept of that; and in the meantime, therefore, you that are of poor spirits and truly humbled before God, do but consider what your comfort cost. It may be they cost the hardening of many hundreds in this congregation to speak of such a thing: saith God, let it cost the hardening of them, yet your comfort is so dear to me that I would have it notwithstanding. Oh, therefore take these things and make use of them for the furtherance of your sanctification. We have a very notable scripture for that, to make men to take heed of the abuse of these things, in Heb. xii., 'We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved.' What then? Shall we take liberty and live loosely? No, saith he, 'Therefore let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.' He makes this use of it, therefore what?—therefore let us be wanton? No; but let us 'serve him with reverence and godly fear, for even our God is a consuming fire.' And in 1 Thes. ii. 12, 'That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.' Walk as those that are partakers of the kingdom of heaven, walk above the world; let there not appear to be such base and low spirits in you as there are in the men of the world, but walk worthy of that kingdom which the Lord hath called you to.

SERMON VI.

OR,

GODLY MOURNERS SHALL BE COMFORTED.

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'—MAT. v. 4.

THE last day, you may remember, we spake of the first beatitude, the blessedness of the poor in spirit; and that wherein Christ saith their blessedness consists, 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' We have opened what the meaning of the kingdom of heaven is, not understanding it to be meant only that when they die they shall go to heaven, though it is true that they shall do so, yet the main scope of Christ here is to shew that even the poor in spirit shall have the good things of the state of the Messias. The Messias being come into the world, and erecting a new kingdom here in the world different from what was before, the poor in spirit shall be made partakers of that kingdom with all the privileges of it. I shall not look back to open further the privileges of that kingdom, only the main scope of the last sermon was to apply this to the poor in spirit, and to shew what blessedness those that are poor in spirit have from this kingdom. The Lord hath chosen the poor in this world that they might be partakers of the kingdom of heaven. And therefore it is a great encouragement to the ministers of the gospel to preach the kingdom of heaven to congregations that have many poor; and I would to God that the poor of this congregation might be got to hear of the blessings of the kingdom of heaven. I should have as great hopes to do good to this place as in any place in the kingdom, if the poor in this place might be brought to hear the gospel; for the very gospel itself is called the kingdom of heaven, because it doth reveal the great things of the kingdom of the Messias. Therefore, you that are poor and do come, be encouraged to come, and do you encourage all your poor neighbours and friends, and tell them that though they be never so poor, yet if their spirits be poor and humble according to their poverty, the kingdom of heaven is open for them likewise; and tell them what you have heard of the kingdom of heaven out of the gospel, what blessed things there are there; and then there may be a great deal of hope that God intends to bring many in this congregation to this his blessed kingdom.

The preaching of the gospel is compared to the casting of a net, and it is compared to it under this title, the kingdom of heaven. We have a great sea here to cast in, but those people that I would most gladly cast the net upon, I am afraid seldom do come within the compass of the net—I mean the poorest and meanest. Oh you that are rich, and are men in place, take some course to bring in the poor that they may come into this net, that when we come to cast the net—that is, the preaching of the gospel—that that may be as the kingdom of heaven to them.

And you that are young ones, do you hearken after the things of the kingdom of heaven, and ask questions about it; when you come home, ask your parents and governors what is the meaning of that of the kingdom of heaven, that poor people may come to be made kings and priests unto God. And the rather have we encouragement to speak to young ones that they should be inquiring, because we find that as soon as ever the kingdom of heaven began to be known, young ones were very earnest about it, and were very much affected with this kingdom of heaven. Compare those two places of Scripture, Mark xi. 9, 10 with Mat. xxi. 15, and there you shall find that the children and young ones were crying 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' 'And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased.' Compare this now with Mark xi. 9, 10, 'And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna to the highest.' They cried Hosanna to the highest, because of the kingdom of the Messias that was coming. Now it is said that the chief priests and scribes were troubled at it. Carnal hearts may be troubled to see young ones so forward in the way of the kingdom; but the Lord stirred up these to be affected with the kingdom of the Messias, and Christ doth justify them.

And Jesus said unto them, 'Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?' This is for the honour of Jesus Christ that young ones shall cry Hosanna, &c. And all that hath been said about the blessedness of the poor should teach us to have high esteem of those that are poor in spirit; though they are condemned by the world, yet do not you condemn them. Blessed is he that considereth of these poor. And in James ii. 5 it is said, 'That God hath chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith. Hearken, my beloved brethren,' as a thing of admiration, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him. But ye have despised the poor.' Take heed that this charge be not upon you to despise any of Christ's little ones. Those that are poor in spirit, they are highly esteemed by Jesus Christ, therefore let them not be slighted by you. There are many things further about this, but we will leave what further may be said about that that is promised to the poor, namely, the kingdom of heaven.

We come now to the second beatitude.

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

We find that Luke cites it in another way, and divers copies have it different. You shall find two or three blessednesses set in a different order there. But for the thing itself, it is one of the strangest paradoxes in the world; 'Blessed are those that mourn.' Of all affections, the affection of sorrow nature is least beholding to; it doth the least good to nature. Nature gets something by the affection of love, and the affection of joy, and the affection of desire, and of hope, and somewhat by fear; but sorrow is that that weakens nature, and yet Christ doth fall upon this; saith he, 'Blessed are they that mourn.' It is more than blessed are they that are sorrowful; so Chrysostom upon this place. He doth not say, Blessed are those that grieve, but 'Blessed are those that mourn.' For the word that is here translated mourn, signifies an exceeding great mourning. The mourning that there is at the death of friends, when any buries an intimate friend, a dear child, or a dear kinsman, what mourning is there in the view of the world! But, saith Christ, Blessed are you then; if you be godly and my disciples, you are blessed in that mourning, though your mourning be the greatest mourning in the world. And it is in the present tense, 'you that mourn,' noting the continuance of it. Though you mourn constantly, though you be brought into a mournful condition, and so do live in it all the days of your lives, yet blessed are you that mourn. The world is altogether for jollity and bravery. Oh, blessed are they that are merry, that can drink wine in bowls, and crown themselves with rosebuds, and

chant to the viol, and invent instruments of music like David! They are accounted the blessed men in the world. But we see the judgment of Christ is quite contrary, 'Blessed are they that mourn.' They that mourn; surely not all they that mourn are blessed.

First, There is a foolish mourning, in which men and women are not blessed—that is, they mourn they know not for what. This is no blessedness, but folly.

Secondly, A natural mourning; when there is a mourning merely because nature is pinched, and some evil hath befallen it, and you go no further. This hath not a blessedness in it.

Thirdly, A worldly mourning; worldly sorrow causes death; to mourn for the loss of worldly things, as the great and the chief loss of all. This is not blessed, it causeth death; and,

Fourthly, An envious mourning; when men mourn and are grieved for the good of others. Surely this is not blessed, but cursed.

And there is, further, a devilish mourning; when men and women mourn that they cannot have opportunity to satisfy their lusts.

And lastly, There is a hellish, desperate mourning; when men and women mourn in despair. This is hellish, and not blessed. These mourners are not blessed.

But who then? Those that mourn—that is, such as being by the providence of God brought into a mournful condition, either by way of testimony to any truth of God, that they are deprived of many comforts in this world that others have, or by any afflicting hand of God are brought into a sad condition, and their hearts are brought under to yield to God's hand, and to sanctify his name in those his dealings with them; these are blessed. For so you must clear that expression that we have in the verse before, 'Blessed are the poor;' not all poor, but the poor in spirit. So, 'Blessed are they that mourn'—that is, they that mourn in spirit likewise; whose spirits are brought in subjection to God, to honour God in that mournful condition in which they are; whose condition cannot be so low, but their hearts are lower than their condition. These are blessed, but especially these who set the object of their mourning right; who mourn for sin as the greatest evil; who mourn not only for their own sins, but for the sins of others, that God is so little honoured in the world; yea, who take to heart the afflictions of the church, mourning not only for their own afflictions, but for the afflictions of the church. Blessed are these that mourn.

And then all those that mourn in a gracious way.

You will say, When doth one mourn in a gracious way and manner?

First, When any evil is upon one the heart doth freely yield itself up to God, to honour God in such a condition as God hath put it into; not to do it by force, but freely.

And then, secondly, Those whose mourning hath the exercise of grace, in order to regulate their mourning; when the mournings of men and women are under the command of grace, of faith, of love, and of hope, not mourning as those without hope; when grace can command mourning, and can say to those waves of sorrow, hitherto shall ye go, and no further.

Thirdly, When in mourning the heart mourns after God; there is such a comfort that is taken away from me, either in way of testimony to God's truth, or in way of providential afflicting of me; but the thing that I mourn for, it is not so much because the comfort is gone, but because I am deprived of some good that might help me forward towards God, wherein I might be some way furthered in the way of God. And so the soul mourns after God, in the mourning for any affliction that is upon it.

Fourthly, When those that mourn have great care to do the work of their mourning condition; that is a special thing to be considered of in the blessedness of mourning. One that mourns so as he hath care to do the work of that mourning condition; to consider, God hath put me into this mourning condition, and what is the duty that God requires of me in this mourning condition in which God hath set me? Men and women ordinarily are solicitous about their afflictions, and their thoughts are altogether poring upon their afflictions. But now a gracious mourning causes the soul to be solicitous about the work. What is the work of this condition that God hath put me now to? It is not a sullen mourning, but a mourning that hath much activeness in it and stirring. The heart is travelling; for so in John xvi., about the middle, it is compared to a woman in travail. 'You shall mourn,' saith Christ; but there is promise of comfort: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, then she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world:' hereby intimating that the mourning of the saints should be like the sorrow of a woman in travail; but some good should come of it. And this is a very useful meditation for us, when at any time we find our hearts much pressed with sorrow, we should consider, But what am I travelling about; I can never have comfort in my mourning, except I bring forth something in my sorrow. And though the Lord should keep them mourning thus all days of their lives, yet they are blessed.

For they shall be comforted; comfort will come. Now the ground of the blessedness ariseth, first, from the mourning itself; secondly, from the promise. Surely it is a blessed thing to be such a mourner.

First, Because that the lower our hearts are in our subjection to God in this mournful condition, the higher are our respects to God that brings us into this condition. The Lord brings his people into a mournful condition. Now the lower their hearts are in their subjection to God, the higher are their respects that they do shew unto God. There is a great deal of grace exercised in a gracious mourning.

Secondly, A mourning condition, when it is ordered by grace, it is a means of much good in the soul; it is that that takes away the rankness in the hearts of men. There is a rankness in all men's hearts naturally; especially if they enjoy contentment to the flesh, their lusts will grow very rank. As weeds grow very rank in summer time, now in the winter the frost nips the weeds and keeps them under; but if it be a long frost it kills them. And so doth a mournful condition; if it be sanctified, it kills the vermin, it kills our lusts, and is a special means of mortification in the soul; and therefore blessed are they that do mourn, and carry themselves graciously in a mourning condition.

Thirdly, It is that that delivers from many temptations. You think that jollity and bravery is the only happy life, but know there are a great many more temptations in that life than in a mournful condition. It is true, there are temptations in a mournful condition: there are temptations to despair, —but that is grievous to nature,—or to shift for themselves in some unlawful way. But now the temptations in a jolly condition: it is very suitable to a man's nature, and therefore more dangerous; and therefore blessed are they that are kept in a mournful condition, if God gives them hearts to sanctify his name in it.

Fourthly, They are blessed that are in a mournful condition, because God hath chosen for them that mourning condition in the most seasonable time. You know when a man is sick, then bitter things are more seasonable than sweet. Now we are all sickly poor creatures, and it is a great mercy of God in this time of our lives to choose for us a mournful condition — bitter things rather than sweet and luscious things. And if God doth subdue thy heart, so that thou canst be willing to take this, blessed art thou; for thou dost now mourn when it is most seasonable to mourn. A mournful state it is a seasonable state for men, considering what conditions we are here in, in this world. Then wouldst be choosing of jollity, just like a poor sick man that would be choosing of sweetmeats; but blessed art thou that art willing to be under the choice of God.

Fifthly, And then especially here in this text, because they shall be comforted; it is but to make the comforts sweeter unto thee when they do come. The Lord is but working of thy soul to his own will, and working thee to a greater comfort. You know that when a man would build a structure, a stately building, the stones that he intends principally to build withal are hacked and hewn, that so they may be comely and fit for his building; but as for other stones, they are not regarded as those that are thus polished which he intends to lay. So it is an argument that the Lord hath great things for thee, great comforts for thee; he is now preparing thee in this thy mournful condition for great comforts. Thou shalt be comforted.

For, first, There is a time coming when all tears shall be wiped from thine eyes. Do but read Rev. vii., from the 14th verse to the end, and there you shall find what is said to the people of God that are brought up in a mournful condition in this world.

And as all tears shall be wiped from thine eyes, so thou shalt have the fruit of all the promises. It is hard to look over the many promises, Isa. xxxv. 10, and li. 3, with many others which we must not stand to read unto you, but these, and as you read along the book of God you shall find many the like: and among many other promises that promise of Christ's coming again, in John xvi. 20, that is made as the great comfort, when Christ tells them that though they did weep and lament now, yet they should be comforted. Why, I will come again saith Christ. They should have the enjoyment of Jesus Christ, and all the good things that Christ hath purchased by his blood shall be theirs; surely thou shalt then be comforted. Jesus Christ pleads, Lord, whatsoever good all my sufferings hath purchased, let this soul be made partaker of. Surely if thou comest ever to be made partaker of all that good that Jesus Christ hath purchased by his blood thou shalt want no comfort.

And all thy comfort shall be proportionable to thy sorrow; as it is said of the whore of Babylon, so much as her pleasure hath been, so much torment give her. So, on the contrary, so much sorrow as thou hast had for my name's sake, so much joy and comfort shalt thou have, and that in a proportionable way. Christ hath many mansions in his Father's house. And he hath comforts in a proportionable way to all thy sorrow and mourning. It may be if thou hadst a more comfortable life in this world thou mightst have less comfort reserved for thee hereafter.

They shall be comforted.

But when, when shall they be comforted?

When? Why, they shall be comforted when the wicked shall be sorrowful. In Isa. lxx. 13, where there is set forth the different condition of the saints, and

the wicked and ungodly, 'Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.' Then shall you have comfort when the ungodly shall be ashamed.

And then, secondly, You shall be comforted; there is a time when the Lord will communicate unto you the choicest of his mercies. Now the Lord communicates himself, but in a very small and little way in comparison to what he doth intend. This time of a man's life is not the time of comfort. You know what Abraham said to Dives: Son, remember that in thy lifetime thou hadst thy good things, thy joys, thy comforts, and Lazarus had his evil things, he had sorrow and grief. It is not best, my brethren, for us to seek to have our comforts and portions in this lifetime, because this is not the time for God to communicate the choice of his mercy, but it is a great deal better that our comforts should be reserved to that time when God shall open the rich treasury of his mercy. All the things of this world are but the giving a few crumbs. I remember Luther saith to the whole Turkish empire, 'It is only a crumb of bread that the great Master of the house doth cast unto dogs.' They have but their crumbs here; but there is a time when God will deal out the choice of his mercies; he will open all the treasures of his grace, and communicate them unto his saints. 'They shall be comforted.'

And then we shall be comforted when we shall be more capable of comfort than now we are, and then to be comforted it is the best. 'Blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted.' And this comfort that the mourners shall have,

Shall be, first, a pure comfort. We have something that is sweet, but there is a great deal of mixture with our sweet. There is little sweet that we have but there is some poison or other; but this will be a pure comfort, free from danger, free from the mixture of trouble or danger.

And then they are spiritual comforts. Spiritual—by that I mean, not only that it shall be a soul comfort and not a carnal sensual comfort, as the comforts of most men in the world are; but that is not that I mean, especially when I say spiritual comforts, but by that I mean this: that their comforts shall come more firstly in their souls, and so they shall have comfort to their bodies by way of the radiation, as I may so say, of the comfort that they shall have to their souls. The comforts that we now have comes first to the outward man, and so our hearts are comforted by the sympathy with the body; but now the

comforts of the saints shall be firstly in their souls, and come from the soul to the body.

Secondly, Divine comforts they are that they shall have—that is, all comfort is from God one way or other, but from God more immediately. Here we have our comforts at second or third or fourth hand, but now there shall be comfort that shall be from God more immediately. And such comforts as are from the very nature of God himself—that is, such comfort as God is comforted in, such joy as God joys in, and God joys with them in it. It may be thou hast money, and canst go into a tavern, and drink and play, and thou rejoicest in it; but doth God rejoice in this? Is it any joy to God to have wine, good cheer, laughing and playing? But now the consolations that Christ promises here are the consolations of the Almighty. None of the saints that have true comfort even now in this world in some degree, but if their comfort be holy and gracious, the Lord rejoices in their rejoicing; there is joy in heaven, even in the heart of God, that joins with the joy that is in thy heart. And there is no comfort should satisfy a heart that hath communion with God, but such comfort wherein I may have some evidence that when my heart rejoices I know the heart of God rejoices in this my joy. Ask this question of your souls in the midst of your joy: I have a great deal of joy, but doth the heart of God rejoice in this my joy? Such are the comforts of the saints.

Thirdly, It is a full comfort, 'Ask and you shall have, that your joy may be full.' What a low kind of expression would this be, Blessed is a man that is sick, for he shall have health: this were a poor kind of expression, because health is but by taking away the evil of the sickness. But now Christ when he saith, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,' he means they shall have that fulness of comfort that would be abundantly more good unto them than all their sorrow could be evil unto them; they shall enter into their master's joy, the joy not enter into them.

Fourthly, And then it shall be a strong comfort, Heb. vi. 18; such comfort as shall bear down any afflictions or oppositions.

Fifthly, An eternal consolation; so you have it in 2 Thes. ii. 16; in 2 Tim. ii. 11, 'It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.' Mark with what an emphasis the Holy Ghost speaks when he speaks of the certainty of the comfort of the saints—'It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.' Mourning, it is as the seed that shall certainly have a harvest. In Ps. xevii. 11, there it is called a seed, 'Those that sow in tears shall reap in joy;' and so in Ps. cxxvi.

you have the same expression. The mourning of the saints it is their seed-time, and therefore there will come a harvest.

And then, further, The Lord doth delight to communicate himself unto his saints, and therefore they must be comforted. God rejoices in that title, The God of all comfort, and that God that comforts us in all our tribulations.

They must needs be comforted, because God hath so engaged himself in his promises.

And because God the Father hath anointed Jesus Christ to be a comforter to you, as in Isa. lxi. As I told you of those that were poor in spirit, Jesus Christ was designed by God the Father to preach glad tidings to the poor; so in the same place we have Jesus Christ anointed to comfort those that mourn. As if God should say, I appoint thee, O Son, to this work; and certainly Christ will be faithful in his office.

Lastly, They shall be comforted, because the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, hath his denomination from hence—the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, that is equal with the Father and with the Son; and very glorious in his work. Now the work that he hath to do, it is to comfort the poor mourning saints of God, to be a comfort unto them. If the Holy Ghost be equal with the Father and the Son, his work must be glorious as well as the work of the Father and the Son. How glorious is the work of the Father in creating all things by his own word! How glorious is the work of the Son in the work of man's redemption! Now the work of the Holy Ghost must have some kind of proportionable glory. It is impossible therefore but that thou must be comforted; so long as there is a Holy Ghost, so long thou must needs have comfort.

Oh the difference from hence between the comforts of carnal hearts and the saints! Thou hast comfort. How? By pouring forth drink into thy throat, or by thy cards or dice, here is thy comfort. What difference is there between a man's having comfort by a little beer or wine or play, and a man that hath comfort by the Holy Ghost, designed by God the Father and the Son to be the comforter of him to all eternity! And thou that dost slight the comforts of the saints, and rather hast thy carnal heart to choose unto thee comfort and joy by eating and drinking and playing, what is the language of thy soul in this, but thus: O Lord, let me rather have comfort from meat and drink than from any work of the Holy Ghost. We hear in thy word that the Holy Ghost is designed by thyself and thy Son to be the comforter of the saints, but those are the comforts I have no skill in; I had rather have meat and drink and satisfy my lusts, and for the comforts of the Holy Ghost I will venture them whether I have any part in them;

yea, or no. Well, but whatever they do, ye that are of mournful spirits, and God keeps you under, and you go on mourning, and through the grace of God you can deny yourselves those sensual comforts that others let out their hearts unto, be not discouraged, but go on and bless thyself in thy God, bless thyself in this that Christ hath said concerning thee, that certainly thou shalt be comforted. Thus I have but run through the very heads of those things that may give a little light to the opening of these words.

But that which I had thought to have settled on all should have been the application of it, for to have spoken to the people of God, and to be some help to their comfort that Jesus Christ would have comforted; for if Jesus Christ hath said that they shall be comforted, it doth concern all men to comfort them, and especially the ministers of Christ. I shall only speak a word or two for the present to that which concerns us all from what hath been delivered.

First, You may see that there is a great deal of excellency in religion and godliness. Why, it is that that will make the mournfullest condition in the world to be comfortable. Suppose a man or woman had lost all that ever they had, if they be godly, religion will shew how they shall be blessed in this condition, for they are blessed before their comfort comes, so that those that are godly, their saddest condition cannot hinder their blessedness. When others in the world shall wring their hands for their losses, and be very sad, thou mayest be satisfied in this: I have not lost my happiness. Thou mayest say, I have lost my estate, and lost all outward comforts wherein I took so much delight; yet thou canst not say that thou hast lost thy blessedness. Thy blessedness is not in any creature comfort, but it is in thy God. Be not

shy, therefore, and afraid of godly sorrow because it brings trouble and affliction unto thee. Be not deluded with this temptation—for it is a temptation of Satan, whereby many souls are kept in bondage, and kept off from the ways of God—that therefore when once they come into the ways of God, they think they shall never have a merry day after it; but yet we see that there is comfort, abundance of comfort pronounced by Christ himself even unto that duty which seems to be the most contrary to mirth. ‘Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted.’ If the enemies should prevail against you, and you were under their power, yet, being godly, that doth not take away your blessedness. If your bodies be sick and in grievous pains, yet still you may be blessed, being godly. If you have lost your friends, yet blessed still. Be not shy, therefore, and afraid of godliness, because it perhaps brings some trouble to you, and sorrow to you. Many men and women they are afraid to be godly. Why? Because they fear it will take away their joy. But be not galled with this temptation. It is true, religion may bring some other sorrows than thou hadst before; it may be thou mayest suffer more in the cause of God than before, and thou comest to be more afflicted for thy sin than before. It is true, religion may bring some outward sorrows and afflictions more, but there is abundantly more comforts than sorrows; therefore be not afraid to be one of Christ’s mourners, for Christ hath engaged himself unto thee, that thou shalt be comforted. As we read concerning Egypt, as there were more venomous creatures there than in other countries, so there was in no country more antidotes to cure them than in theirs. So, though religion may bring sorrow and trouble, yet there is nothing brings more cure and more help.

SERMON VII.

OR,

THE FOLLY OF MEN REBUKED WHO ARE ALL FOR MIRTH.

'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'—MAT. v. 4.

2.* HERE is rebuked the vanity and the folly of the spirits of most men and women among us who are altogether for mirth and jollity. They are, as it were, a fish out of the water if they are not in worldly joy and mirth, who place their happiness in this. How contrary is thy judgment unto Jesus Christ! Christ saith here, 'Blessed are those that mourn.' Why so? 'For they shall be comforted.' Thou sayest, Blessed are those that are merry, that have abundance of the creature; but the Spirit of God saith in Eccles. vii. 2, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of laughter.' Now which of these two shall be believed? Shall thy base, carnal heart be believed who placeth all thy happiness in joviality; or the wisdom of God, who saith, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of laughter'? If man had said this, you would have thought him a fool for his pains. Which of you would have made such a choice had it been put to you—Whether you would take delight in the abundance of the creature, company, and the like? Whether you would take content in that or in the house of mourning? Now the Holy Ghost he decides the case: he saith, 'The house of mourning is better than the house of laughter,' for the heart is made better by sadness. There is much good comes unto the soul out of the house of mourning which doth not come from the house of laughter. The heart for the most part is made worse by laughter, but often better by sorrow. What if this dreadful woe should prove to be thy portion pronounced by Christ himself? Luke vi. 25, 'Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.' The time of your sorrow is to come. When you see men live bravely and merrily in the world, and do no service for Jesus Christ, are not useful in their places, you may thus say of them, Alas! here are men that now rejoice, but they shall mourn and weep; their time of mourning is a-hastening. How much better were it to mourn now, than to have an eternity to mourn in! If thou givest thyself to pleasure, and to let thy heart run out after vanity now in thy youth,

then all thy sorrow it shall come together and sink thee to despair. Thou in thy youth, and in the strength of thy days, lettest out thy strength to vanity, and know that thy sorrow is but a heaping up, to come upon thee all at once, and to sink thee into everlasting despair. How canst thou think but that God should look upon thee with indignation, who art so full of sin and wickedness as thou art? Can it be well with thee in the end, when there are so many precious saints in the world that would not for a world sin against God knowingly; who make it their great care and their study how to honour God in their generation? 'And if at any time they are overcome through weakness, they go mourning all the day long.' And are such as these kept down? Have they their time now to mourn and weep, and dost thou rejoice? Dost thou take pleasure, and give up thy heart to take its full satisfaction in the creature? Know thou must mourn sadly. The mirth that these men have, it is from ignorance; the mirth thou hast, it is because thou art ignorant of thy condition, because thou art in darkness. Thou art in darkness; and woe to that mirth that hath no other foundation but ignorance! Nay, these men they must take the advantage of conscience when that is asleep and benumbed; it were impossible for such as these are to be so merry and frolic, did they not take the advantage of their consciences when they are deadened and benumbed; for were conscience awake it would fly in their faces, and would say, Thou art a-doing that thou hast no right unto. Now cursed be that comfort that cannot stand with a sound conscience, and that joy of yours which cannot stand with the thoughts of death and judgment—that mirth cannot be good. Oh that you would consider of this! when at any time you have serious thoughts of God, of death and eternity, this damps your joy, when you are in the full career of your pleasures, yet if conscience then hint into you the thoughts of an eternal condition, you have secret qualms come over you. Now thou hast cause, whosoever thou art, to suspect that joy and mirth to be sinful that cannot stand with the

* Continued from preceding sermon.—Ed.

thoughts of God and eternity; therefore take heed lest thou be in the number with him who took his pleasure, and satisfied his soul to the full in the creature, and when he came to die had nothing to satisfy himself withal; oh have a care, lest that be thy portion! Son, remember that in thy lifetime thou hadst thy good things, but now thou art gone; so God may say to thee, who art such a one as makest thy heaven to be here, Thou hadst thy pleasures, thou hadst thy comforts in the world, and there is all that thou art like to have, but now thou art tormented.

The main thing here in this text that I am to insist upon is the third use, which is for comfort and consolation, that I may come up fully to the mind of Christ in this thing, and to do as he did, who made it his work here to comfort those that mourn; and that shall be my work now for the rest of the time. Blessed are ye of the Lord that do thus truly mourn! And here I shall speak,

First, Comfort to those that do truly mourn.

Secondly, Answer an objection that may be made.

Thirdly, Give some directions how mourners should carry themselves in their mourning estate, that they may be comforted.

It is an excellent thing to comfort mourners; and in Job xxxiii. he is made there to be one of a thousand that can speak a word in season to the heavy laden. This is part of the office of Jesus Christ and of the Spirit of Christ, and it is the glory of men. Now certainly that must needs be a great work, and full of glory, that is part of the office of Jesus Christ and the Spirit—for the Spirit he is a comforter as well as a convincer, John xvi. 7—and it is the glory of men. Many men rejoice in bringing others into sorrow; this is a cursed thing to bring any into sorrow, and by so much the more wicked it is, by how much harder it is to comfort those that do mourn. To rejoice in the exercises of the saints' graces in sorrow is no cursed thing; we may rejoice in the exercise of a saint's grace in humiliation; but to bring them into sorrow and mourning, and then to rejoice in it, this is a cursed thing. Perides being upon his death-bed, his friends came about him, and began to speak of his virtues, and of the great authority he had borne, and accounting the number of his victories he had won: he hearing of them, said, That all this while they had forgotten to speak of the best and most noble thing that was in him, which was, that no Athenian had ever worn a black gown through his occasion.² This he accounted his glory; and we should take heed of bringing men into a mourning condition, that we may be able to say there is not any that were ever made sad or heavy by anything that I did to them.

* Plut. vita Perides.

We should be humbled for it if we have done it; and it should be that which we should confess to God, desiring him to pardon it. God glories to comfort men, and not to grieve them that mourn; and if God will not grieve them, certainly we should not. They cannot so much wrong us, whereby we should be incensed against them to grieve them, as we daily wrong God; but yet God saith, Lam. iii. 33, 'He doth not delight to grieve the children of men.' Now that I may come more close to speak to you that are spiritual mourners, take your comfort in these particulars:

First, If thy mourning be gracious, thy very tears and sorrows is a great deal better than the wine of the men of the world; thy tears are more sweet and pleasing to God than the mirth of wicked men can be to them. It is better to be in thy condition than in other men's; thy tears are precious unto God, if they come from a principle of godly sorrow; there is nothing more precious unto him, next unto the blood of Jesus Christ, if they come from a right principle of godly sorrow.

Secondly, Consider this for thy comfort, it may be, if thou hadst not been a-mourning thou wouldst have been a-sinning, thou wouldst have been a-doing that whereby thou wouldst have darkened the glory of God. Now which is the best of these?—judge you. The curse of all thy afflictions is now taken away; that which is the bitterness of sorrow it is taken away from thee by Jesus Christ, and thy mourning is rather upon mistake than otherwise. Thou hast a right to comfort, though thou dost not see it, and thou mournest because thou dost not apprehend thy right to it; for what is there, or what can there be, to discourage thee or to keep thee off from comfort, seeing the curse of every affliction and the evil of sin is done away?

Thirdly, Consider that all thy sorrows are measured out by God, who is thy Father; thou dost not lie at the dispose of wicked men to mourn how much they will, or when they will, but thou art at the dispose of God, who is thy Father. Now do you think that you who are parents, if it were in your power to deliver your children from anything that did tend to hurt them, would you not do it if it were for your children's good? Now you are at God's dispose, and you shall not sorrow nor weep one tear more than your Father sees is for your good. God he takes notice of all thy sorrows, he bottles up all thy tears, and himself is afflicted in all thy afflictions: Isa. lxiii. 9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted.' God is sensible of all our miseries though other men should not mind them: as it is too, too often seen when any of the saints are under the clouds, that they are in an afflicted condition, though they were in favour before, they are frowned upon then. But now God he

doth not do so; thou canst not be so sensible, but God is more—God is more sensible of thy sufferings and takes care of thee.

Fourthly, Consider for thy comfort that Christ was a man of sorrows, and in thy sorrowing thou art but conformable unto him; and why shouldst thou think that to be a burden wherein thou art made like to Jesus Christ? Nay, Christ's sorrows were to sanctify thine, therefore did Christ sorrow that thy sorrows might be sanctified. Now if God order Christ, who was the Son of his dearest love, to be a man of sorrows, thy condition is not so sad as thou takest it to be, seeing Christ was so, and thou art conformable unto him in this. Now why should we think much to be like unto Christ? Did God not think it too much to make Christ to be a man of sorrows for thee, and wilt thou think it much to be a man of sorrows that thou mayest be conformable unto him?

Fifthly, Let this be for thy comfort, to consider thou hast an interest in him that is the God of all consolation; the darkness of thy condition it cannot hinder thine interest in God. Thou hast comfort in the promise now as certain and as sure as if thou hadst it in real possession; and thou shalt have it most certainly hereafter, and the time is coming that thou shalt have full consolation, and God will reckon with the wicked for all their mirth. He will both reckon with them for causing them to be sad, and they must give an account for all their merry hours. Their mirth will be a bitter portion unto them, when God shall come to charge the guilt of all upon their spirits. Oh what a difference will there then be between thee and them at that day! when thou for a few days hast mourned and shalt be comforted in the end, and they for a few days have rejoiced, and in the end shall have an eternity of sorrow.

Sixthly, But it may be poor souls may here say, It is true, here is great comfort, here are precious consolations indeed, but my afflictions are great; they are greater than others. Were I so and so afflicted I could bear them; had I the burden that such a one bears I could be contented, and submit under it.

Now for thy comfort here, know that perhaps this comes from the distemper of thy spirit, rather than from the burden of the affliction; the distemper of thy spirit may be great, and that causes the burden to be heavy. The affliction is not so great, but thy heart is not willing to yield to the affliction; were thy heart willing to submit to the hand of God the affliction would be easy.

And then thou hast many mercies mingled with thy afflictions; there is none of you can say that your afflictions are pure, but they are mingled. God might have brought upon thee pure afflictions, pure miseries upon you, and you might have been deprived of all the very glimpses of mercies; but in your

saddest hours you have some cordials—more mercy than affliction. I am confident that there is none here in this assembly whose afflictions are the greatest, but his mercies are greater.

And then consider that God suffers more by thy sins, than thou canst suffer from God's hand in thy afflictions. The darkening of his glory in the least degree is a greater evil than any affliction that thou canst endure; and this should support thy spirit, to consider that God suffers more; and therefore thou shouldst not be unwilling to suffer something, seeing God suffers more than thou canst.

Seventhly, If thou wouldst be comforted, consider this: the way that God takes to comfort his saints, though thou hast it not in sense, thou mayest have it in faith; and therefore exercise faith, and fetch it in that way. Set faith on work in the promise, and let that bring out the comfort of the promise. Sense is not the way by which God comforts his people, and if we look for comfort in a sensual way we mistake ourselves; therefore let us labour to fetch in comfort from the exercise of faith. And indeed we should more prize those comforts that come from the exercise of our graces than from any sensible apprehensions. When thou canst not see comfort in the creature, know it is God that thou hast to deal withal, and that is thy comfort. God hath not placed the creature to be the object of thy comfort, but himself; and therefore when thou seekest that in the creature, when he hath appointed himself to be thy comfort, thou dost undervalue God, and goest the wrong way to find comfort. In Isa. li., 'I, even I, am he that comforteth thee: who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man?' Consider that God saith to thee after this manner, I am he that comforteth thee. Art thou disquieted? Look upon God thus saying to thee, Why art thou cast down, O poor soul? Is there not more comfort in my word, in my power, than in anything which thou makest the object of thy disquiet? In Isa. lviii., 'I create the fruit of the lips, peace,' &c. Thou canst not see which way thou shouldst be comforted, and therefore because thou canst not thou thinkest it is impossible; but when thou canst not see comfort thou shouldst consider that God can create comfort for thee; thou shouldst look upon God as a creator of comfort, and not lie down in discouragement. God will rather go about his first work again of creation than that thou who art a true mourner shalt want comfort; he will fall a-creating comfort for thee. And this should strengthen your faith, and stay up your souls in the saddest times of darkness. Why, there is nothing too hard for God; as he made all things of nothing, by the bare word of his power, at the first, dost thou think that he is not able to create comfort for thee now? If God go to work do not fear thy comfort.

Eighthly and lastly, Suppose thy condition were such as there was never any in the world in the like case, yet thou mayest be comforted notwithstanding. I suppose there is not any here in this congregation that are in that trouble of spirit or body, but that there hath some of the saints been in the same, if not worse. But grant that there were never any that ever were in the condition that thou art in, yet there is comfort for thee from this scripture: in Isa. lxiv. 4, 'Since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.' Hast thou but a heart to wait upon God in thy mourning condition, God hath mercy and comfort for thee that none knows of. Oh, this should be an encouragement for thee to wait upon God. What though we know not the comfort; God doth. And thus I have endeavoured to open this box of consolation under this head, which is the first particular in this use.

The second is to answer a question that may here be propounded. But you will say, the promise here saith, 'They shall be comforted;' but I fear this don't belong to me. I have mourned a long time, and yet cannot be comforted; I have been in sadness of spirit, and I cannot find the promise made good to me; how should I support myself in this case?

First of all, Hast thou mourned? Perhaps thou hast sinned more than sorrowed. Examine therefore thy heart well; hath not thy sins been more than thy sorrows? Therefore be not discouraged. And what is this sorrow to eternal sorrow? what is this inch of sorrow and mourning to an eternity of misery? But thou art delivered from the hazard of miscarrying to all eternity, and therefore this consideration should sweeten all thy sorrows; though thy condition be sad, yet thou art delivered from eternal perishing.

Secondly, Consider, that faith makes comforts future as present to thee; and it is the glory of faith, and that wherein the excellency of it doth consist, to make a mercy in a promise that seems a great way off to be present. As Abraham by faith saw the day of Christ afar off, so faith will represent a mercy to the soul in the promise that seems to be at a great distance as present. As despair makes hell and the wrath to come present unto the wicked who have enlightened consciences, who have the sense of their sin set home upon their consciences, it makes the wrath to come as present that they cry out many times they are in hell while they are upon the earth; so faith it makes a mercy to be certain though not in possession. Hast thou no comfort, no glimpse of love in thy holy converse with God? Look into thy spirit and see whether thou hast no bunches of Canaan's grapes in thy soul; this is a sign thou shalt have more if thou

hast any. If thou hast but a spark of divine love, gather from thence thou shalt have more; but if thou canst not discern any glimpse of God, yet we have the word and ordinances now. Why have we these, but that we may support our spirits with them? This was that which David did support his heart withal, in Ps. cxix. 49, 50, 'I had fainted in mine affliction, had not thy word comforted me.' The word of God is sufficient to support the soul in the darkest of times of sorrow, and when thou findest the least comfort in thy soul in sense, then fly to the word and fetch it out by faith.

Thirdly, Consider, though it be long before comfort come, yet this is no strange thing that thou art kept without comfort for a while. The most precious saints that ever God had have been kept a long time without comfort; though they have done God much service, and have been very faithful with him, yet they have walked in darkness for all this, and their hearts have been at a distance from God in point of comfort, as we may see in Heman: Ps. lxxxviii. 7, 14, 15. See how he speaks there, 'Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, I am pressed down even unto hell, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves; the terrors of the Almighty they stick fast upon my spirits; Lord, why castest thou off my soul, why hidest thou thy face from me? Shall I never be remembered any more? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.' He was even a man of sorrows; here is the condition of a godly and wise man: so David in Ps. cxix. 81, 82, 'My soul fainteth for thy salvation; mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?' When I read thy word I read that which may comfort me; but I cannot be comforted. I read those scriptures that have comforted others, but, alas! I cannot find any comfort for me; they speak no peace to me. Lord, when wilt thou comfort me? So that this is no strange thing; thou hast companions in this thy sorrow, in this heavy affliction of thine, do not say God never did the like to any. No; there are records in Scripture you see of other-guess men than you are who have been in the clouds.

Fourthly, Consider, all this while though comfort play, yet thy sorrow is a working comfort for thee; thine afflictions are but working greater consolations, and when comfort comes thou wilt see cause to bless God that comfort came no sooner. Thou wilt not have any cause to repine, but to bless God that comfort was so long delayed; thou wilt say then, I had been undone had I been delivered sooner. It was the speech of Mr Bates in prison, I bless God I am not in my own or in my enemies' hands in point of sorrow or affliction; for were I in mine own hands, I should come out of trouble too soon, were I in mine enemies' hands, they would keep me too long;

but I am in the hand of God, who knows when it is best for to deliver me. So then wait on God patiently; though comfort may stay, yet when it doth come, thou shalt see that it was worth the waiting for. What though it be till death, what though thou hast not comfort till the last hour, yet eternity will make amends for thy staying.

Fifthly and lastly, Consider, that this is the time of mourning, and we know things are seasonable and best in their time. This is a Christian's seed-time. In the world we must have trouble, and through many tribulations we must enter into heaven. We know the husbandman; he is contented to endure storms and hardships in seed-time, with this consideration—the harvest is a-coming. So, though thou now sowest in tears, there is a time of reaping in joy.

But here is that which troubles me, saith many a soul: I would be contented to wait till God come, were I assured that this promise did belong to me—this were that would stay up my heart indeed. I would be contented to do God service to the uttermost of my power, and to endure any affliction, and account myself happy, if he would employ me in any thing. Were I but assured of this, that the promise were mine, then it would support me. But I fear that this promise belongs to others, and that I have nothing to do with it.

For answer to this: we should labour to get our mourning into a gracious frame, and then we may be sure we shall have comfort; which brings me into the third thing which I propounded to you concerning the rules.

The third thing propounded in this use is this: how we may so order our mourning that it may comfort us. How may I so order my sorrow that I may comfort myself with this—that the promise belongs to me, and that our consciences may tell us we are blessed from this word of promise? Though others see us sad and heavy, yet how may we so carry ourselves that they may say, these are blessed, though in a sad condition? Now for this I would entreat you to take notice of these rules.

First of all, (which I desire you would principally mind.) In your mourning be sure that you keep good thoughts of God. Whatsoever your troubles be, let them not raise tumults and hard thoughts of God. Let not the devil prevail so far over you as to cause your hearts to rise against God. This hath been the great care of the saints, to keep down their hearts from this distemper. In Ps. xliii. 5, see how David there chides his own heart, and rebukes it; he gives it a secret check and a curb. 'Why art thou cast down?' My soul, thou wouldst be a-rising against God now, but come down. Why art thou cast down? I will go unto God, my exceeding joy. It is a good

thing when we have any reasonings in our hearts about the sadness of our states to lay this conclusion in the bottom. 'Yet God is good to Israel;' yet God is good, though I am under misery and sorrow; yet God is good to the saints—those that are in a sad condition. Those that are in a sad condition love to be musing and meditating on their sorrows and afflictions in their thoughts. But when thou doest thus, be sure you lay this foundation first before ever you think of your sorrows. 'Yet the Lord is good;' whatsoever becomes of me, the Lord is good, and his counsels are sure and steadfast. David was much cast down in his spirit in Ps. lxxiii. 1, yet see how he lays this for a conclusion: 'Yet God is good to Israel.' So say thou thus: Yet the Lord is good to my soul; whatsoever sense saith, and whatsoever temptations say, or Satan would make me believe, 'yet God is good to Israel,' yet God is good to my soul. So in Jer. xii. 1, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments.' Mark how he lays this before he would go to reason the case. He justifies God. 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, yet let me reason with thee.' So when thoughts arise in our hearts about our sad conditions—when we ponder and muse upon them in our hearts, yet let us be sure to say, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord,' and then we may consider of our afflictions, and weigh them in the balance when this principle is laid at the bottom. So that good man in Ps. lxxxix. 38–52—there we have a sad story, yet he begins with the mercy of God, and exalts the mercy of God in the first place. And having raised faith to the very heavens in the exaltation of God, then he expatiates himself in his sorrows and in the sorrows of the church. When the heart is established in God's love, in the covenant, and in the mercy of God, then we may expatiate our sorrows; but before ever thou lettest out thy heart into sorrow, be sure thou viewest the love of God in the first place. And in the close of the psalm, after that sad story there reckoned up, he concludes, 'Blessed be God for evermore,' and he puts two asseverations to it, 'Amen, and amen.' As if so be he would have it taken notice of, God is good in the beginning; and though there be a bitter piece in the middle, yet he concludes, 'Blessed be the Lord,' and would have it taken notice of by this asseveration, 'Amen, and amen.' So let us reason thus: My condition is very sad, and I know not almost what to think of myself, but God forbid that I should think hard thoughts of God. No; I will say, 'yet the Lord is righteous.' Perhaps you have seen the saints suffer hard things for God and his cause, and your spirits begin to rise perhaps, and you begin to question the faithfulness of God, and the love of God towards his people. Oh, God forbid that this should be in any of you! Remember these scrip-

tures, and let it be the conclusion of your hearts in the saddest state you can be in, 'Blessed be the Lord for ever, Amen, and amen.'

Secondly, Be sure to take notice of all the mercy thou hast from God in the afflictions thou art in. Let not any affliction drown the mercy thou hast. It is very sad many times to see how one or two afflictions hinders the sight of many mercies that the saints do enjoy. A little thing will hinder the sight of the eye; a penny laid upon the eye will keep it from beholding the sun or the element above; so a little affliction, it darkens and hinders the soul from seeing a multitude of mercies; every little trouble darkens God's mercies. We should take heed of this; be sure to bring in our mercies with our afflictions; whenever we reckon up our sorrows, number our mercies with them. In Ps. ciii. 2, David was there flying for his life, and yet we see what a wonderful sweet frame his spirit was in, how full of praises was he: 'Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' Praising of God in a sad condition is sweet melody in the ears of the most High.

Thirdly, Take heed of a sullen, dogged disposition, either towards God or man in thy sorrows. It is very usual for men in a troubled condition, when they are in sorrow, to add frowardness to mourning; but we should labour to take heed of this as a great evil. Labour for a quiet and meek spirit. Men when they are pleased then they are merry and cheerful, and of a very good disposition; but when they are in affliction, when they are in pain or sorrow, then they

are rugged and dogged, so that no man knows how to speak to them almost, they are so froward and touchy. This is a very ill disposition, and God doth not allow of it in trouble of sin.

Fourthly, Take heed of determining against a comfortable condition in sorrow, that it will never come. Say not that comfort will never come, because thou hast it not for the present. And therefore when comfort doth come, many are so untoward that they will not receive it, because they will make their determination good. God saith to such a soul, 'Peace be to thee;' but saith the soul, This is too good news to be true, I will not receive it because I will make my determination good. As Rachel, who refused to be comforted, so many in their trouble of spirit refuse comfort from the word—this is unkind dealing with God. In Job xv. 11, 'Seemeth the consolations of the Almighty a small thing to thee?' know that the Lord expects that thou shouldst thankfully fall down and accept of a crumb of mercy that he tenders to thee. Look upon thy unworthiness, that thou art unworthy that God should speak a word of comfort to thee; but if the Lord shall come in with his consolations of free grace, welcome them. Bless God thou mayest have mercy upon any terms. As the woman of Canaan said, 'The dogs have crumbs,' so say thou, I am but a dog, yet, Lord, let me have a dog's portion. I will thankfully accept of it at thy hands. Oh be thankful for the least mercy, and it is the ready way to have more, and the Lord in his time will give out more mercy to thee.

SERMON VIII.

OR,

HOW MOURNERS SHOULD ORDER THEIR MOURNING.

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'—MAT. v. 4.

5.* WHEN thou art in a mourning condition thyself, take heed of envying at others that are not in such a sad condition as thou art in. Though thou wantest many comforts that thou dost desire, yet bless God that others have them. That heart is in a very good temper, and a good way of preparation for comfort that can heartily bless God for the comforts that others have. But this is usual when the heart is distempered with sorrow, if so be that they are in an under condition and affliction, they are ready to envy at others that are more prosperous; but take heed of such a distemper, for it will keep thee under sorrow more, and make it more bitter to thee.

Lastly, According to thy mourning condition, let there be much praying. Be sure to add much prayer to much sorrow. Never give way to thy heart to much sorrow that cannot stand with much prayer; for let thy state be what it will, thou wilt say thou art brought into such a state as thou canst not but mourn. I will grant it; but know this is an everlasting rule to be observed in such as will mourn in a Christian way—there must be a proportion of prayer to their sorrow. If there be but little prayer, let there be but little sorrow; if much sorrow much prayer. I find in Scripture that mourning and prayer are joined much together. 'If any man be afflicted, let him pray,' saith the apostle James; and in that of Hosea xii., about the third or fourth verse, the text saith concerning Jacob, that 'he wept and made supplication.' Weeping and supplication are joined together, and afflicted and praying are joined together; and so you read in Judges ii. that the people of God did so mourn and weep that the very place had its denomination from their weeping. 'It was called Bochim, and they sacrificed there unto the Lord;' but that is added to it, and they sacrificed there unto the Lord. For one to be in such a mourning estate as makes them unfit for sacrifice, makes them unfit for prayer—certainly that mourning it is not a godly sorrow. Thon hast gone beyond the mourning of true gracious sorrow if so be that

it doth hinder thee from prayer. That thou canst not pour forth thy soul with that freedom before God as at other times, take heed of any such mourning. There is a notable scripture in Ezra ix., where you shall find that holy man Ezra in much affliction, with much sorrow and trouble, so that he sat astonished, ver. 4; but in ver. 5, 'At the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness.' At the evening sacrifice, when the time came for him to offer sacrifice, then he did arise from his heaviness, his mourning did not hinder him in duty. When thy heart is so straitened in thy mourning, pretend what thou wilt for thy mourning, thy unworthiness, or sinfulness, or anything else, yet if it straitens thy heart in prayer it is no godly sorrow. Add much prayer to much mourning; when any comes unto you, you are always complaining of your afflictions, and you mourn more than your neighbours; but do you pray more than your neighbours do? do you pray as much as you do complain? is there a proportion between your praying and complaining?—certainly if there be not a proportion between praying and complaining, hold your peace, complain no further, but pray more. Many other rules might be given, but we leave them and proceed unto that which yet raises the text in a more spiritual sense.

'Blessed are those that mourn.'

I have spoken now hitherto about those that have been in a mourning condition, and behaved themselves graciously in that mourning condition, and have shewn how they were blessed, and how they shall be comforted; but now that that is yet more spiritual in the text is,

That if those that are in any mourning condition behaving themselves graciously are blessed, and shall be comforted, then certainly those that mourn for sin, that make that to be the object of their mourning, their own sins, and the sins of others, and the afflictions of the church, those that make these to be the objects of their mourning, they are blessed indeed, and they shall be comforted.

In speaking of these I do not intend to launch out

* Continued from previous sermon.—Ed.

into that argument or commonplace of godly sorrow, to handle it at large, but I shall only open to you something about spiritual mourners that mourn for their sins and the sins of others. Therefore I shall first shew you what true mourning for sin is: when a man or woman may be said to mourn for sin in a gracious manner.

Secondly, Wherein they may be accounted to be blessed.

Thirdly, What are comforts that belong to such mourners for sin? For the first, then, the true mourning for sin is in this manner:

Firstly, When a soul mourns for sin because it is against God. In Ps. li. 4, 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,' saith David. David had sinned against Uriah and his kingdom, and against his own soul; but, above all, he had sinned against God, and this went nearest to his heart, that it was against thee, and he repeats it again, 'Thee, thee only, have I sinned.' As if he should say, O Lord, as for any evil fruits that may come of my sin, I stand not so much upon that, but this goes most to my heart, that I have sinned against such a blessed God as thou art. I have gone cross to that blessed will of thine in that which I have done. This is godly sorrow; not so much to mourn because that sin is against thyself, as because it is against the blessed God whom thy soul doth love.

Secondly, The right mourning for sin, it is to mourn for sin as the greatest evil. 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' Rom. vii. 24. You never find Paul crying out of himself, 'O wretched man that I am! that I suffer so much affliction in the world; that I am so despised; that I have such losses in the world; or have not ways of outward subsistence.' He never cries out for his suffering, but for his sin. 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?' His greatest sorrow it was for sin.

Thirdly, Yet so as approving of the law that forbids that sin: I find my heart afflicted for my sin, and in the midst of the affliction of my spirit for sin, I approve the law of God to be holy, to be just and good, though I be wretched and vile, Rom. vii. 12; where Paul had a great conflict in his own spirit, much troubled for the corruption that was in him, and yet then did he approve the law to be holy and righteous. Many men are afflicted for sin, and their spirits are against the holiness of the law that forbids the sin. They could wish that there were no such law. Indeed, they cannot but be troubled for their sin. But in the meantime they could wish that there were no such law that did forbid their sin, or did reveal any threatenings of God against their sin. But a gracious mourning heart that mourns for sin is apprehensive and sensible of all the evil that comes

by sin, and that through the law; and, saith the soul, 'I would not but that there were such a law! I bless God that ever I knew the law; and I approve of the law, not only to be a righteous law, but to be a good law!' and that is the third thing in true mourning for sin.

The fourth thing is this, That it carries the heart to Jesus Christ. If so be that you are troubled for sin, and mourn, and think thereby to satisfy God by your mourning, this mourning it is but carnal and natural. Many men and women, when they are troubled for their sin, they think God will be satisfied; no, all the mourning that possibly can be, if thou shouldst mourn thine heart out, and be mourning thousands of years for thy sin, it could never satisfy the justice of God; all thy mourning will come to nothing except it drives thee to Jesus Christ for satisfaction unto God's justice. The mourning for sin that drives the soul to Christ, that is the blessed mourning; but when any man or woman satisfies themselves in their mourning, and thinks that because they mourn for sin God will accept of them without having their hearts carried unto Christ, this mourning will vanish and come to nothing.

Fifthly, It must be such a mourning as whereby the heart comes to be set against sin, not mourn for sin and live in sin, not mourn for sin and yet continue in the practice of it, but true gracious mourning for sin makes an everlasting separation between that league that there was in the soul and sin before. Every man and woman naturally hath a league between sin and their souls, but when God comes to afflict the soul for sin that it mourns in a gracious way, the soul is made so sensible of the evil of sin, as that it breaks the league between sin and the soul for ever. If God hath made sin to be thus bitter to me, then for ever adieu; through the grace of God, though I may be overcome through weakness, yet I will renounce it; it sets the soul for ever against it.

Sixthly, The true gracious mourning for sin; it is a free work in the soul; the soul is active—that is, it is not forced upon the soul whether it will or no, but such a soul as doth in a gracious way mourn for sin, it doth willingly and freely apply unto itself those scriptures that may make sin to be burdensome to it; it doth not turn away from those scriptures and those truths, but if so be it hear of any truths, or read any scripture that may make sin to be heavy to it, it applies those freely and willingly; it is glad that it comes to hear any truth of God that shall discover the evil of its own sin unto it; so it is a free mourning. Such as mourn desperately, they are forced to it whether they will or no, but when the heart can apply itself to the word freely, and can bless God that God did ever open the eyes of it to understand the evil of sin, and that ever the Lord did apply those truths

to it that hath made sin to be burdensome, here is a gracious mourning. Many men are troubled for sin in spite of their hearts, and they wriggle and keep a stir, and do what they can to get the truths of God out of their hearts, and therefore they go into carnal company, and fall a-playing or drinking, that so thereby they may get truths out of their hearts; but now a gracious man or woman, when any truth comes into its heart that troubles it for the sin it hath been guilty of, it goes alone and bleseth God for this truth. Blessed be the time that the Lord hath discovered the evil of sin to my soul, and the Lord sent home these truths upon my soul more and more; he accounts it to be a great mercy, that is the sixth.

Then seventhly and lastly, A gracious mourner for sin can be satisfied with nothing else but in the removing of the guilt and uncleanness of sin. Another that mourns for sin, but in a natural way, or forced way, if so be that God would but give unto him any peace, or take away the anguish that is in his conscience, take away the fears that are upon him, that will satisfy him; but now a gracious mourner for sin is such a one as can be satisfied with nothing else but the blood of Christ cleansing it from the guilt of sin, and the spirit of sin, and the spirit of Jesus Christ coming in to sanctify the soul, and this is that that will comfort the heart only; and thus briefly I have shewn you what a gracious mourning is. If I would handle this point at large, these seven things might very well have taken up our time, but I only give you a hint of them. Now, then, such as mourn thus for sin are blessed; for,

First, By this they do much honour God. The sovereignty of God is honoured, and the holiness of God is honoured, and the justice of God is honoured. Whenas a poor creature that hath offended the sovereign, holy, and righteous God comes to be afflicted for that sin that it hath committed, God looks upon himself as honoured; whenas a sinner goes on in a proud, stubborn, stiff way in his sin, he goes in a way of defiance against the great God, and doth deny the honour that is due to the great God; but now when the word of God comes and beats down this sinner, and afflicts it for the sin it hath committed, and it lies down flat before the Lord, mourning and lamenting that ever it hath sinned against the Lord, here the name of the great, holy, and just God is advanced, and blessed are they that shall advance the name of God thus; thou shouldst have advanced the name of God by thine obedience, but thou hast not done so, but hast dishonoured it by thy disobedience; now if thy heart be willing to advance it by thy mourning, there is a blessedness.

Secondly, It is a blessed thing to mourn for sin, because it is an evangelical grace. It is that that is promised in the gospel, when Christ saith, 'I will

send the Comforter.' What shall the Comforter do? The first work that the Comforter shall do, it shall be to convince the world of sin. You will say, here is a comforter indeed. What! to come and comfort us by convincing us of sin! It is the way of the Comforter, and therefore it is a blessed thing. There is nothing more evangelical than faith and repentance; mourning for sin in this way that I have spoken it is no legal thing, it is not a work of the law—the law takes no notice of mourning for sin—but it is a work of the Spirit of God, of the comforting Spirit, to convince the world of sin. And therefore, by the way, whenas you come to hear such preaching of the word as gets into your bosoms and convinces you of sin, be not vexed and troubled at it, for now comes the Holy Ghost that is the Comforter. It is the first work of the Holy Ghost, that is the Comforter of those souls that shall be saved, to convince the world of their sin; and therefore embrace it, and bless God for it. Now comes the Holy Ghost, and comes to make way for comfort unto my soul. In Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication;—and what then?—'and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced,'—with their sins,—and mourn and lament as one that laments for his only son.' It is a fruit of the spirit of grace and supplication that was promised to be poured forth in the times of the gospel. The first sermon that we hear of Christ preaching, it is, 'Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; and he appoints his disciples to preach in that manner: 'Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Preaching mourning for sin is an evangelical preaching—a fruit of the spirit of grace that is promised in the times of the gospel. And where there is a congregation upon whom the Lord pours this spirit of grace, to look up to Christ whom they have pierced by sin, and to mourn over him, such a congregation is blessed, for the fruit of the gospel is mightily upon them.

Thirdly, Surely they are in a blessed condition, for it appears that they come now to have a right judgment. Their judgment is enlightened to understand what is truly good and truly evil, and to have a right temper of spirit. Before, they went on in blindness, they knew not God, nor themselves, nor those things that concerned their eternal good; but now they come to understand wherein good and evil doth consist. Before, their hearts were hardened, so that whatsoever was spoken to them did not take with their hearts; but now their hearts are in a gracious softness, and so in a right temper, and therefore they are blessed.

Fourthly, in the fourth place, This mourning for sin, it helps against all other mourning, it helps against other sorrows. Certainly while we are here

in this world there will be many sorrows; we must sorrow for something. Now the sorrowing for sin will help against other sorrows; those that are affected with the evil of their sins will not be much affected with any other evil, it will eat out the evil of other sorrows.

Fifthly, further, It is a means to prevent eternal sorrows. Certainly God will have every soul to know what sin means at one time or other. There is no sinner upon the face of the earth but at some time or other must come to understand what sin means. You must have sorrow for sin, that is a certain rule; as it is determined in heaven that all men must once die, so it is determined in heaven that all men must once sorrow. If they must repent they must needs sorrow; now how much better is it to sorrow for sin while it may be pardoned, than to sorrow for sin when there can be no help, if so be that thou shalt pass thy days away in mirth and jollity here, and never come to feel the weight of sin upon thy spirit, thou art reserved to have eternal sorrows to be thy portion, and to have the load of thy sin to lie upon thee to all eternity. 'But blessed are they that mourn now,' that feel what the burden of their sin means; for by feeling the burden of it, they feel it in such a time wherein they may have hope of being delivered from that evil of sin to all eternity, and therefore certainly they are blessed. Surely blessed they are, for how many thousands of creatures, of men and women, that have lived securely, and have gone on all their lives in the hardness of their hearts, and never have been made sensible of their sin, yet upon their sick and death-beds, then they have cried out of their sin, and the Lord hath withdrawn himself from them. Now, I would appeal to such an one. Would you have thought it a blessed thing if you had had the weight of sin upon your souls before, in the time of your health and strength? You shall hear them upon their sick and death-beds cry, Oh happy had it been for me that I had known the evil of sin before! How happy had it been for me that those times that I spent in jollity, in mirth, in taverns, with such and such company, had I but spent those times in mourning for my sin; had I been but alone, and only God and my soul together, and there lamenting for my sin, how happy had it been for me. I should now have had comfort and peace, now I am laid upon my sick-bed; but I was led by sense, and by the flesh, and so sought to satisfy the lusts of the flesh; and I must live merrily and bravely here for a while; and now the weight of sin comes upon me. Now I feel it a load. The Lord be merciful to me! Now comes into my mind all the sins of my merry meetings; all my oaths and Sabbath-breakings; all my drunkenness and whoring; all my lying; all my neglect of God and his worship. It

had been better for me that I had been a mourner before. Therefore, 'Blessed are they that mourn.'

Sixthly, and then lastly, It is that that fits for the grace of God. There is none that taste the sweetness of the grace of God in Christ more than those that are mourners for sin. Now one drop of mercy, how sweet is it; now it is worth more than ten thousand thousand worlds! Any one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ now applied to the soul, how sweet is it. Well, blessed is that disposition that shall make that blood of Christ to be sweet! We preach Jesus Christ and the glorious mysteries of grace and salvation to you from time to time; and how lightly are those precious truths regarded by many thousands. You can come and hear them and go away, and your hearts not at all taken with them. But now were you among those mourners you would prize the crumbs that fall from the table. A few of those truths that are disregarded now would be highly esteemed then, and more worth than thousand of thousands of worlds unto you. And therefore, 'Blessed are those that mourn,' for they are in a disposition to set a high price upon Jesus Christ, upon the great work that Jesus Christ hath done in the world, and upon the great work of God the Father; that is the chief work of his, and the great design that he hath had from all eternity to magnify himself in. Blessed are they that are in such a disposition to prize the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Seventhly, There is one more, and that is, They are blessed; why? because there are many promises that are made to those that mourn—this is one, and this is a comprehensive promise. I might mention you abundance of others, and we might spend all the remainder of the time in the very naming of the promises that are made in Scripture to those that mourn. Let but the mourners read Ps. xxxiv. 18, and Isa. lvii. 15, and it will be enough to speak comfort to those that mourn. They are in a blessed condition! why blessed? 'Because they shall be comforted'—that is,

First, They shall be discharged of all those sins for which they mourn; yea, thou art discharged, and thou shalt one day come to know that thou art discharged of all those sins. Those sins that thy heart mourns for shall never be charged upon thy soul: thou art blessed in this thing, be assured of it. It may be yet the Holy Ghost hath not come upon thee to seal this to thy soul, but thou art one that the Holy Ghost will come upon, and will make it clear and sure to thy soul. Thy pardon is sealed in heaven already; and it shall be sealed in thy own conscience. Though there be a man which is a malefactor and condemned to die, yet if I know that his pardon is sealed, I can look upon him as a blessed man. So, though thou thyself dost not yet understand this thy

blessedness, yet those who do understand the word of God, and understand the mind of God as it is revealed in the word, such know that thou art a blessed man, and thou shalt know it one day.

Secondly, Further, not only thou shalt be assured of thy discharge; but, in the second place, this mourning of thine for thy sin will cause God to pity thee in any mourning for thy affliction, and the Lord will sweeten the afflictions of such unto them. The reason why our afflictions are so bitter unto us, it is because sin is not bitter enough; but those that take their sin as a burden, they feel that the Lord will pity them in all their afflictions.

Thirdly, They shall be comforted in this, that thy very mourning for sin shall be blessed unto thee to help thee against that very sin that thou mournest for. That is certain—either a man's sin will make an end of his mourning, or a man's mourning will make an end of his sin, one of the two. If so be a man goes on in sin, he will leave off mourning, but if he doth not leave off mourning, he will leave off sinning; for certainly mourning for sin hath a special efficacy in it, it helps against the sin that thou dost mourn for. This bitter aloe that now thou hast is a special means for the helping against those crawling worms that are in thy soul.

Fourthly, But above all, thou art blessed that mournest for sin, for thou shalt be one day wholly delivered from thy sin, when thou shalt never sin more against God; and will not that be a blessed time, will not that comfort thee? certainly, there is such a time. Now to open these particulars with scriptures, and to enlarge them, would ask a great deal of time, which I am not willing to do here, but shall go on in the opening of this sermon of Christ.

Use. Now then by way of application for this.

Hence, in the first place, the use might be very large, what shall become of those that rejoice in sin? those that can be merry in sin? those that can sin and laugh in their sin? those that are frolic in their wickedness, that make their sin to be their May-game, and the chiefest delight that they have in the world? There are many men that have no greater delight here in this world than the satisfying themselves in their sinful ways and in their lusts. Oh, dreadful, dreadful condition that thou art in, and dreadful is the wickedness of thy soul! hast thou nothing else to make the joy of thy soul, but only that that strikes at the blessed God himself, only that that caused Jesus Christ to be heavy to the death, and to sweat clodders of blood, and to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Is there nothing else to make thee merry? Here is a black brand of a man that is reserved to eternal sorrows, that shall in this world make his chief joy to be in sinning against the blessed and

eternal God in the satisfying of his lusts, those lusts of thine, that thou findest so much pleasure in now, they will be bitter one day: remember this in all thy jollity; and if thou dost go on in a way of jollity through thy sin, remember what is said against thee this day, let it come into thy mind upon thy sick-bed and death-bed, thy sin will be a burden. Certainly this is a truth; every man must know and feel sin to be a burden one day. I remember it was a speech once that I have heard of a very jovial man, that being in company, and his very life lay in joviality, drinking and playing; and having some enlightenings in his conscience, on a sudden, in the midst of his company, he claps his hand on his breast, and saith, 'Well, one day I must know what a wounded conscience means.' And I fear many many have cause to say so. Well, one day this breast of mine must know what a wounded conscience means. Oh, take heed of rejoicing in sin! Surely if Jesus Christ doth pronounce him blessed that mourns for sin, then that man, that woman, is cursed that can rejoice in sin.

And then surely mourning for sin is not melancholy; for one to mourn and be troubled for their sin is not to grow heavy and melancholy. It is the work of the Spirit of God that lays that weight of sin now upon the soul, because the Lord intends that this soul shall be blessed to all eternity. And do not think it a foolish thing for people to be troubled for their sin. I will give you but two instances: first, against melancholy; and then, against folly. For melancholy: Who do we read had more sorrow for sin than David had? Read his penitential psalms, Ps. xxxviii., li., and vi. What a grievous burden he found sin! and how he mourned for it! And yet the text saith concerning David, 'That he was of a ruddy complexion, and of an active spirit.' And then, for folly. There is Ps. lxxxviii. I do not find any psalm wherein we may see an example of a godly man more under sorrow and affliction than the penman of that psalm was—namely, Heman. Read but 1 Kings iv. 31, and you shall find that the Holy Ghost doth set out Heman as one of the wisest men upon earth; and yet in Ps. lxxxviii., which this Heman did pen, we find him a man under as much sorrow and affliction as any, and especially for sin: therefore it is not folly but blessedness; it is a work of the Spirit of Christ. But the main thing is that that I have to speak to such as are mourners. And,

First, To tell them what their comforts are, that are in Scripture, which we find in the word of God.

And then, secondly, To give unto them some directions and rules how to seek for the applying of those comforts to their own souls.

And then, thirdly, To shew whether our comforts that we have are right comforts or no. But for the

first, not letting such mourners go away without some portion ;—

Is there any here whose hearts are down and low before God in a mourning condition ? certainly there is comfort for thy soul, there is comfort many ways.

First, Know for thy comfort thou hast to deal with a God of infinite grace and mercy, thou lookest upon God as a God full of wrath and justice ; but thou hast to deal with a God of infinite mercy, that delights in mercy, with a God whose mercy is his chief glory, and the greatest design that ever God had was to magnify his free grace, and therefore thou mayest be upheld in thy mourning for thy sin. If a child have a loving and merciful father and mother, and the child should get alone in a room and fall a wringing of its hands, mourning and lamenting, Oh that I could do more to please my father and mother, oh that I could do more to give them content, oh that I should do anything that should be a grief to my father and mother—this is that that goes to my heart. Suppose thou shouldst look through a key-hole and see thy child thus mourning and lamenting, and wringing of its hands for this, that there should be any grief to your hearts ; and you should know that they did it in truth ; that it were not a mere hypocritical thing, but in the very truth of the heart of the child there was this sorrow and mourning, would you, that have but any compassions in you—would you not have your hearts yearn towards this child ? Now from whence is it that you have any yearning in your hearts towards it ? Is it not from a drop of that compassion that the Lord, who is an infinite ocean of mercy, hath let out unto you ? Take all the compassions of all the parents that ever were in the world, and they are unto God but as a drop to the infinite ocean ; and therefore the Lord looks upon the bewailing of thy sin, and that thou canst do no more to please him, but dost that which is a grief to him, he looks upon thee in thy mourning, and he holds his bottle, and every tear in thy mourning thus for sin drops into the bottle of God.

Secondly, Know thou hast to deal with God in a covenant of grace. Hadst thou to deal with God, as he is Creator now, and thou a creature, in the way of the covenant of works, thou wert undone, and all thy mourning would be to little purpose ; if thou shouldst howl out all thy days for thy sin, God

would never regard it. Thou mightest mourn to eternity, and yet be tormented to eternity, but thou hast to deal with God in the way of the covenant of grace that he hath made with poor sinners in Jesus Christ, and their mourning for sin is accepted. If thou goest into the presence of God with the guilt of thy sin upon thee, considering how holy and righteous the Lord is, little comfort there can be to thee ; but now when thou goest to God in the mediation of his Son, and in the way of the covenant of grace, didst thou but understand what the covenant of grace means, that the Lord now hath set apart some people, not to deal with them as in themselves, but hath sent his Son to come and make satisfaction, and all the ways of God towards them shall be through his Son, and all their ways towards God shall be accepted through his Son ; this would be a great help and comfort to them. Upon the fall of Adam our condition was such as God might have for ever rejected us, so as not to have had any regard to any mourning for sin ; but it is through the purchase of the blood of Christ that mourning for sin is regarded by God. Thou hast not to deal with God as thou art in thyself, but as through his Son, who hath tendered up to the Father his sorrows for thy soul.

Thirdly, Know that Jesus Christ hath made a sufficient atonement for sin ; that is, the Lord Jesus Christ hath made up all the wrongs that ever sin hath done to God. The Lord hath not suffered more prejudice by thy sin than he hath had honour through the sufferings of Christ for sin ; thy sin hath been very vile, and hath wronged God exceeding much, but the Lord Jesus hath satisfied for all that wrong. Now when there is such a way of atonement, that when I go to God for the pardon of my sin, and for help against it, that I know that God shall never have any wrong through my sin, but what is made up through the blood of his Son ; if I had to deal with God in himself only, then I might think that the Lord would one day or other be avenged on me though he doth forbear me for the present ; but now when I come to understand what the atonement doth mean that Jesus Christ hath made, what the price is that Jesus Christ hath paid, I now come to see a way wherein all the wrong that ever my sin hath done to God to be made up—now this cannot but raise up the heart very much.

SERMON IX.

OR,

THE COMFORTS OF MOURNERS FOR SIN.

'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'—MAT. v. 4.

To proceed; fourthly, Know it is the very way of God in bringing sinners to eternal life, to bring them in a way of mourning for sin. The bringing from the captivity of Babylon was as a type of God's bringing sinners from the captivity of sin; 'With supplications and weeping will I lead them,' saith God. It is the way that God uses to bring sinners to himself, the way to Jerusalem which signifies the vision of peace, it is Bethany the house of sorrows; Christ went that way when he went to Jerusalem; and certainly the way that God hath brought all his servants in all ages to true comfort it hath been by sorrow; the way to the valley of Beracho, of blessing, is by the way of Bacah, the valley of tears. In these wanton times there are some that think they have gotten a new way to comfort; much good may do them with their new way for comfort. Some think that there is a speedier way to comfort than that which Christ hath set here in the word; he professed that those are the blessed ones that are the mourners. They shall have comfort, and if thou thinkest that that is but a legal thing, even that that Christ preached in this sermon of his, if thou thinkest him a legal preacher for preaching that the way of comfort is by mourning, thou mayest enjoy thy thoughts; and if thou durst venture that comfort which thou hast otherways, go on with thy boldness; but Christ he propounds this way, and saith, Those that are mourners, they are they that I take care to comfort, Christ is anointed to preach glad tidings to the mourners.

Fifthly, Know this for thy comfort, that it is the work of the Spirit, that is sent into the world to be the Comforter, to convince of sin, John xvi. 8. You find that Christ promising the Comforter to come, what shall the Comforter do? The first thing that the Comforter shall do shall be to convince of sin, to convince souls of their sinful estate, what their state is out of Jesus Christ, what their wretched estate is, the Spirit, even the comforting Spirit, shall convince, saith the text. Now one would rather have thought, according to the ways of men, that it had rather been the spirit of the law, a legal spirit to convince of sin;

but it is the Spirit that is the comforting Spirit that doth convince of sin, and therefore if so be thou hast not this conviction of sin, whatever thou mayest speak of the comforts of, the Holy Ghost, certainly there is a mistake in thee, for the Holy Ghost when he comes to comfort, he comes that way into the heart, first, to convince of sin; therefore thou who hast thy spirit convinced of sin, of that unbelief that is in thy heart, and convinced powerfully so as to be affected, for that is the convincing of the Holy Ghost to set home things so as to affect the heart with it, let this be a comfort to thee. O Lord! through thy mercy, I am not only in the way that thou leadest on those that thou hast a purpose to save, but I have a work of the Comforter; I hope he is come to my soul, he hath convinced me of my sin, and I find my heart affected for my sin in sorrow in another way than formerly I have done.

Sixthly, Another way of comfort to the mourners for sin is this, that the Lord prizeth this thy mourning. Thou thinkest thou canst do but little for God, thou hast a wretched sinful soul, and thou art weak and unable to do much, but canst thou mourn; know that mourning, being such mourning as hath been opened, it is a sacrifice unto God as acceptable as any sacrifice thou canst tender up unto him, so in Ps. li., 'The sacrifices of God are a broken heart: a broken and a contrite spirit, O God, thou wilt not despise.' They are instead of all sacrifices, therefore when thou hast no sacrifice to tender up to God, yet hast thou not a broken spirit for thy sin? God highly esteems of that, yea, let me tell thee this, there is nothing that God esteems more than the tears of a broken heart, than that that comes from a broken spirit; and that is a blessing, for godly sorrow comes from faith as well as from sense of sin;—I say nothing next to the blood of Jesus Christ, that is in higher esteem by God than this, and therefore thou mayest have comfort for the present.

Seventhly, Know that however the difference of sin is a great matter in our eyes, and it should be so, we should labour to look upon our sin in the great-

ness of it, with all its aggravations, yet when it comes into the hand of Jesus Christ to satisfy for, great and small sins make no such difference with him in the work of his mediation. If you spill water in a house out of a pail it makes a great show, but there is no great difference seen if you pour it into the Thames; so though in our consciences the difference of sin is much, yet when it comes to the infinite sea of the mediation and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and the grace that is there, the difference is not so much. Oh that only such as are mourners for sin might hear this, except that the hearing of it might be a means to break the hearts of others!

Eighthly, Further, know this for thy comfort, that so long as receiving comfort from the word makes thee sensible of thine unworthiness, that sense of thine unworthiness should not hinder thee from taking comfort. This is a certain rule, when the taking comfort makes me more sensible of mine unworthiness, then the sense of mine unworthiness should not hinder me from taking comfort. For this is the great matter that troubles those that are mourners—they are afraid that they should presume in taking comfort; but take this rule, If the taking comfort makes thee more sensible of thine unworthiness, that sense of thine unworthiness should not hinder thee from taking hold of comfort. And that might be the first rule of direction, as well as a rule of encouragement, to those that mourn for sin.

But yet further, There are divers rules to help those that are mourners how to order their spirits in seeking comfort.

And the first rule is, Labour for a quiet, patient heart, for sorrow is tedious to flesh and blood; but now the sorrow that is for sin hath a mixture of the grace of God with it. And therefore if mourning for sin comes to make the heart to be impatient, to fret and vex, it is not right. But mourning for sin it hath a sweetness in it, and therefore it should make thee patient under God's hand, waiting for the time when God will speak comfort to thy soul. Lord, here I lie, and am sensible of so great an evil that is upon me, that I know all the creatures in heaven and earth cannot comfort me in this condition wherein I am; and therefore I am waiting for the good day, for the time of love, when thou shalt speak peace to my soul. And here I resolve to be waiting upon thee in the use of all means as I am able, till my last breath, whatever becomes of me. Let that be a rule for direction how to order thy heart when thou art in a mourning condition.

And then a second rule is this, Do not only lie poring upon the dungeon that thou art in, as it were; but while thou art mourning for sin, though yet thou hast not assurance that thy sins be forgiven thee, yet look up to the promise. It may be thou thinkest it

doth not belong to thee, but let thine eye be upon it. Look up to the brazen serpent if sin hath stung thee, as those that were stung in the wilderness looked up to the brazen serpent: present the covenant of grace to thy soul. As the presenting of the law hath a power to terrify the heart, so the presenting of the gospel it hath a power to draw the heart to it. There is a quickening in the grace of the gospel when it is beheld. It is not as a mere object for the eye or understanding, but there is a virtue in it. It comes into the heart, to work upon the heart; many that are mourners they suffer their hearts to sink down, only to consider of the blackness of their souls, but look not up to the graciousness of the promise. We have a most excellent scripture for that in Ps. lxxxvi. 4, 5, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant,' saith David. It seems David was in a mournful state; now mark what he saith, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul;' that is the way for joy. Thou prayest unto the Lord, Oh that thou wouldst rejoice my soul; and yet thou lettest thy soul fall grovelling upon the ground. 'But rejoice the soul of thy servant: for, O Lord, to thee do I lift up my soul.' This scripture is of exceeding use to mourners, for there is nothing that mourners for sin are more faulty in than when they desire joy to their hearts, yet they suffer their hearts to lie grovelling below; they do not stir up themselves, and strive to lift up their souls. 'For unto thee do I lift up my soul,' saith David. And in verse 5, 'For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon thee.' The Lord is ready, if thou canst but lift up thy soul and be ready. Therefore take heed that the anguish and trouble of thy soul doth not hinder thee from looking upon the promise, from listening unto the promise that is made unto thee. We find in Exod. vi. 9, that when Moses spake to the children of Israel, the text saith, 'They hearken not to Moses.' Why, what did Moses come for? He came to bring a message to them for their comfort, but they hearkened not to him. Why, 'For anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.' The anguish of their spirits and the cruel bondage was such as made them not to hearken to Moses. Take heed that this be not thy condition, thou that art a mourner for sin, that when the time shall come that I should apply the promise unto thee, that for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage thou dost not hearken to what I said to thee. It is not good for a man that is going over a narrow bridge, and under which there is a great stream and a deep river, for him, especially being weak in his head, to be looking upon the river and considering of the depth of it, and what a gulf it is that he should be swallowed up unto if he should fall; this very looking were enough to make him fall. But let him

look right on to the shore, and go as carefully as he can, and when he is got upon the shore, then he may look back safely, and bless God for his deliverance. So it should be with the heart that is afflicted for sin. Thou art mourning, and lookest upon it as a dreadful gulf that thou art ready to be swallowed up of; thou art poring upon that now that may endanger thee to be swallowed up of it. But the truth is, when thou art upon this brink, (for the work of repentance it is a kind of brink,) thou art to look on to the promise, to the grace of God in the gospel that is tendered unto thee; and when thou art got upon shore, and art enabled to apply the promise of grace, then thou mayest look back to that dreadful gulf which thou wast ready to be swallowed up of, and then bless God for it.

And then a third rule in seeking after comfort is this, Be not more solicitous about getting comfort to thyself than about the glory of God; even when thou art mourning for sin, labour to get thy heart to this frame, to be as solicitous and careful about the glory of God as about comfort to thyself. We find this by experience, that many which are afflicted much for their sin they are altogether for comfort. Oh that one would speak comfort to them; and no word is acceptable unto them except it bring comfort, and that immediately, to them. But now, in the meantime, they are little sensible of the dishonour that God hath had, or how God should have honour. Whereas the heart that is rightly wrought upon, when it apprehends the evil of sin, it is as well taken up thus: Oh the dishonour that my sin hath brought to God, and how can that dishonour be made up! Oh, if I should live any further to the dishonour of this blessed God, what should become of me! how much better had it been I had never been born, than to live to the dishonour of that God that now I see to be so blessed in himself, and so infinitely worthy of all honour from his creatures. Ay, this is good, when the honour of God takes up thy heart, and thou art solicitous about that; and because thou canst not make up that breach, therefore thou listenest after that that thou hearest of in the gospel of Christ. And yet thou art further careful of this, that whatsoever rule may be propounded to make against thy sin, or to further thee in any way of obedience to God, thy heart doth as greedily embrace those rules as those rules that make more immediately for thy comfort. I would express myself in this similitude, that you may more fully understand what I mean: Many who have weak stomachs, and their nature almost spent, they would fain have some spirits to refresh them, and they are altogether for hot waters; they find themselves cold, and want strength, and they think to take such cordials, and to take hot waters, because they have more spirits and heat in them, and are

more suitable to their condition; whereas the truth is, hot waters do but burn them up and spoil them, and makes them still weaker and weaker, and doth but consume that natural heat that they have. Whereas a wise physician when he comes and asks them what such a one took; why, every day he drunk such hot waters. Why, saith he, he hath spoiled himself; he should rather have purged out the ill-humours in the body, then take broth and other things; and though they be not so hot, yet by degrees they will strengthen nature, and then begin to nourish, and so there will be good blood, and from good blood there will be good spirits raised, and they are the best spirits. When one drinks hot waters they may be in a flame and heat for a while; ay, but that will not hold. But if one can come to have heat from good blood, that will hold, and so the man lives and comes to be strong. Thus it is for all the world in Christians; there are some that are very sensible of their sin, and they would have all comfort—they would have that which is altogether spirits preached to them, nothing else but the very name of Christ, and free grace to them; well, it may be that may heat thee a little while, but the truth is, this heat vanisheth and comes to nothing. Whereas the other, if he be a wise physician for the soul, he will apply that word that may purge out the evil from their hearts; that word that carries the life of sanctification, and walking with God in the ways of holiness, that should put them upon those things. Together with the free grace of the gospel, he will present Christ as a king to rule in the heart, as well as a priest to offer sacrifice; and this will breed good blood. Therefore be solicitous about the glory of God—how thou shouldst live to his praise, as how thou shouldst come to get comfort to thyself; for otherwise the greedy seeking of comfort to thyself may come to be thy undoing.

Fourthly, And then further thou must seek for comfort in order unto grace, rather than grace in order unto comfort. You shall have those that vanish and come to nothing in their seeking for grace; they only seek for grace that they may have comfort, and have no love to grace any otherways but because it may bring them comfort and ease to their consciences. But now a godly soul it rather seeks for comfort for the furtherance of grace, than grace for the furtherance of comfort. Why, why wouldst thou have comfort? Why, by that means I hope my heart will be more enlarged for God; and the more peace I give to my soul, the greater furtherance will this be to the grace that is in my soul, and therefore would I have comfort. But a hypocrite he would have grace because he can have no comfort without it; but the other would have comfort because else grace would not so much thrive in him.

Fifthly, And then the last rule that I would give

to mourners is this—If thou canst not be able to exercise a faith of assurance, try what thou canst do to exercise a faith of adherence; and that thou mayest do at any time, that every one hath liberty to do. You will say it is only believers can do this; but thou dost not know whether there be some seed of faith that is begotten in thy heart already, yea or no; and therefore let thy condition be the saddest that possibly can be conceived. Thou sayest that thou hast been such and such a wretched sinner; well, we will grant it. Yet I say this very instant, when thou lookest upon thyself as such a vile sinner, there is nothing to the contrary but that there may be a putting forth of the faith of adherence—that is, the casting of thy soul upon the free grace and the full grace of God in Christ, and cleaving to it. You will say, But I may presume; have I any right to it? I say this, There is never any soul had any other right to the promise of grace but by casting itself upon it; that gave it right. Now it may be thou hast not the faith of assurance—that is, to conclude thus: Well, Christ is mine, and because I know he is so, therefore I will trust and believe in him. But thou mayest do thus: I see the promise that is tendered to wretched, sinful creatures, and therefore, though I do not know that he is mine, yet I will venture my soul and eternal estate upon it; I will lie here and roll my soul upon this free grace of God in Christ for pardon, and likewise for sanctification and salvation, and for all good. This is the way of getting comfort, I say, to endeavour what you may to put forth an act of the faith of adherence in cleaving, though thou canst not put forth an act of assurance. Thus I have endeavoured to speak to those that are mourners to comfort them; for Christ saith, 'They shall have comfort.' If I could but now bring the promise that Christ hath made here to any one soul, though it may fall out so that some may be hardened and abuse what is said, yet it will be enough, and Christ will accept of it. If the comfort promised may be brought by this sermon home to any one soul, Christ saith, 'Thou shalt be comforted;' but how shall this be effected but by the word, and therefore thou dost well to come and attend upon the word. It may be thou hast come oftentimes to hear the word. Ay, but it hath not comforted thy soul; there hath not been a union between the word and thy soul, and so thou hast gone away comfortless. Well, yet come again; do not say that it is in vain for me to attend the word, for I have heard, I am sure, as precious truths delivered as ever can be heard by any, and I have not found them to comfort me. Well, though they have not at that time, there hath not been a close between thy heart and those truths; yet still come again and again, and at length there will be a close between the word and thy soul; and that may be darted into thy soul by

the Spirit of God in one sentence that thou hadst not before in all thy life. Oh, saith one, I find my heart troubled for sin, and mourning for sin; I would have comfort, and God knows I read the word, and there I find precious and excellent truths; ay, but they do not get to my heart. Well, I come to hear the word, and I find that I get nothing thereby; ay, but I will come again, and wait at the pool to see when the angel will come and stir in my heart. Well, now though it come not yet, yet at length thou shalt be able to say, as Mr Glover, that spake to his friend Austen, though he could have no comfort for a long time, yet at length when he came in sight of the stake he cries to his friend, 'O he is come, he is come.' So in the use of means wait while the word shall come and close with thy heart, that thou mayest have comfort. Well, I cannot say but that God hath comforted my soul in my mourning condition. Oh that I did but know whether it were the comfort of Jesus Christ, yea or no! Well, I will give you two or three notes to know whether it be the comfort of Jesus Christ or no.

In the first place, If thy joy and comfort be the joy of the Lord, why then it is thy strength: so Nehemiah, chap. viii. 10, saith to the people. You find joy brings strength, comfort brings strength to your souls. As thus, canst thou say, Well, through God's mercy, though I were weak heretofore, and could not overcome such and such corruptions, since God hath spoken peace to my soul I have found more strength to come into my heart to overcome my corruptions than ever I did before. Why, is this thy comfort? doth it work thus? Peace to thee, it is from God: that that carries unto God it comes from him, it is* a delusion or a fancy. Hypocrites are discovered in this as much as in anything; though when they are in terrors, then they will take heed of sin, and set upon duty; but when they have peace, then they grow more loose. But it is otherwise in such whose hearts are sincere with God.

Secondly, That that is the true comfort of Christians, is fed by that that at first wrought it. Look, what begets a thing doth nourish it, so the philosophers say; it is so in nature, and it is so in the heart of man. Look, what nourishes thy comfort, that did beget thy comfort; and what begets it, that will nourish it, and nothing else. Now then, if thy comfort be truly spiritual, be from the Spirit of Jesus Christ in thy heart, then there is nothing that will nourish thy comfort more than Jesus Christ in thy heart; and it makes thee therefore long after more communion with Jesus Christ. Hypocrites have comfort: but what doth nourish and maintain their comfort? 'Outward things that they enjoy, the esteem of the world, their gifts and parts and en-

* Qu. 'otherwise it is' ?—Ed.

largements maintain their comfort. But now the comforts of the saints are such as are maintained by higher principles. As you know, the Scripture compares joy to light; now we know in nature there is a light that is maintained and fed by mean things, as the light of a candle. But then there is the light of the sun. Now that light is of another nature; that is not fed by such low and base things as the light of candles are. Now in Scripture the joy of the wicked is compared to the light of a candle; but the joy of the saints is compared to the light of the sun: Prov. iv. 18, 'The righteous is as the sun, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' Now if thou findest this, that the light that thou hast in thy soul is maintained from principles that are above, from the Sun of righteousness shining into thy heart, surely it is a right comfort.

And then thirdly, If thy comfort be such as doth rule all other comforts in thy heart—I mean the comfort in hope of the pardon of thy sin. The comforts of a hypocrite are such, that though they are much affected with joy, yet it is not able to overrule the natural comfort they have, neither can it eat out the corrupt joy that was in their souls. But now the joy of the saints, I say it is such as overrules natural joy, and eats out corrupt and sinful joy. As the light of the sun, you know, it will put out the light of the kitchen fire, and darken the light of the candle, so the light and heat of true comfort in the soul will eat out that carnal joy that was before: saith Austin, How sweet is it to want such sweetnesses. There was a time that I thought I could not tell how in the world to be without the sweetness of such and such lusts. But now, oh how sweet is it to be without them! So many of you must live jollily; ay, but the joy that you have, what is it but joy in base and low things? it is nothing but corrupt joy which you have. But now, if you had the comforts of the Holy Ghost, it would eat out that joy, so that there would be no place for such corrupt joy as now your hearts take such content in: and thus much for the speaking to those that are mourners. We have yet a word or two to speak,

First, To those that have not yet been such mourners, and then to speak to the saints to put them on to mourn yet further, seeing Christ promises such comfort.

For those who are shy of mourning. There are a generation of men that are so shy of mourning, they think it will bring them to despair if they should give but any way in their mourning for their sin; and therefore, though sometimes they think their hearts begin to be touched by the word, they labour with all their might to put off that word, and they will come no more to hear if they meet with a word that comes to their consciences and cuts to the quick.

They will come no more; they cannot sleep so quietly that night as they did formerly; they look upon mourning for their sin with such a shy eye, as if it were the most wickedest thing in the world. Oh, poor deluded soul, thou art infinitely mistaken! Remember this text, and know that by this text thou mayest—if thou well acknowledge this to be the book of God, and these to be the words of Christ—know that thou art mistaken. Christ saith that they are blessed—'Blessed are those that mourn;' if thou wouldst come to be a blessed man, entertain even a spirit of mourning. Doth the Spirit of God begin to come to thy soul through the word? be willing to open thy heart to him, and entertain it, and make much of that word. Remember that text—I speak of it but by way of allusion—in Dan. vii. 28, saith Daniel there, 'My cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart.' It is a very observable place; Daniel had something revealed by God unto him. It is true, the case is different, Daniel's and yours; but there was a message of God revealed unto him, and the text saith, 'That the thoughts of his heart did trouble him, and his countenance was even changed.' Well, would he cast it off now? No; but I kept the matter in my heart for all that. I verily believe that some of you coming to hear the word, there is sometime darted into your spirits that doth trouble your thoughts when you lie upon your beds and awake in the night season; there is something that troubles your hearts, and you will go into company to put it off. Oh no, but you should keep it rather. How dost thou know but that now the Lord is in a way to make thee blessed? Thou didst go on before in a way that tended to wrath and misery, in a cursed way. Now the Lord Christ is coming to thee to make thee blessed, for aught thou knowest, and thou hast an opportunity for blessedness that, perhaps, if thou shalt reject, thou shalt never have again. Thou wilt now put off the word that doth now begin to work with thee. It may be, if thou shouldst, the Lord may say, Let the word never strike thy heart more, let the Spirit never accompany this word more; and then upon thy sickbed, when thou wouldst have comfort, this scripture may be brought against thee, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;' and thou hadst a wretched heart, that didst reject the ways of the Spirit, that would have made thee mourn. Oh, as ever any of you would have comfort upon your sickbeds and deathbeds, be willing to mourn, and follow on the work of the Holy Ghost, when it doth begin to stir your hearts in a mourning way for your sin! and be not put off by any conceit whatsoever; though some perhaps have taught a new way to make people wholly abandon mourning, yet know that it is the old way which the saints of God

have gone on heretofore in; and therefore embrace this, and to the end that thou mayest embrace it, take these few directions.

In the first place, It is a good way for men that find their hearts begin to be troubled for their sin, for them to get alone, to get out of the way from other company, and to retire themselves. At any time when thou findest thy heart begin to be troubled, retire thyself, get alone, be musing of thy sin, and lay the rule to thy heart all alone between God and thy soul. It is a very excellent observation that we may have from that of Peter when he had committed that great sin, and Christ did look upon him; you know the text saith, 'He went out and wept bitterly.' But I find, in one of the Gospels, it is said more than 'he went out';—though that would serve our turn, that he would not stay among the company, but when he would fall a-mourning he gets alone—but I find in Mark's Gospel, chap. xiv. 72, it is said, 'And when he thought thereon, he wept.' Now the word that is translated 'He thought thereon,' *ἐπιβλέπων*, those that understand the original know it is a word that signifies any kind of violence that a man uses upon himself, and so by some translated, 'The casting out himself'—a using a violence upon himself in casting himself out from the company; he had enough of them. Oh do thou so when thou feelest the Spirit of God begin to stir and work in thy heart! even cast out thyself, as it were, from company, and labour to work upon thy thoughts those things that may affect thy heart further.

Secondly, Present God to thy soul to the uttermost that thou art able. Consider that thou hast to deal with an infinite God in all thy ways; present God and Christ to thy soul. You will say, I dare not. Ay, but be not afraid of this; you must one day see the Lord in his glory, and therefore present the Lord to thy soul now in his glory.

Thirdly, And then do not satisfy your hearts in any duty till you find your hearts beginning to break; do thou call thyself to account, I am now praying to God, and I can pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them.' But now do I find my heart mourning for them, I speak of my sins, do I acknowledge them in the bitterness and trouble of my soul? Oh, this were an excellent frame, not to leave off till thou findest thy heart somewhat to stir. Ay, but you will say, Oh, but I cannot get my heart to stir; God knows I would give a great deal if every time I went into the presence of God I could get my heart to lament and mourn for my sin; oh, but I cannot. It is well that thou sayest that thou wouldst do it, whereas you have some that think if once they be believers, why, then, should they mourn? Now for the convincing of this vain opinion, know but thus much, that the truth is, there is rather more mourn-

ing that is required and used to be preached by the saints after the assurance of the pardon of sin than before it. I say more, and I will give you that notable example of David. You find that when David had sinned, and the prophet came to convince him of his sin, David said he had sinned; the prophet, in the name of God, saith to him, 'The Lord hath done away thy sin.' But now a long time after, when David made the 51st Psalm, you shall find he fell a-mourning afresh; and yet his sin was forgiven before, and he knew it was forgiven, and yet do but observe the 51st Psalm, what the title is that David gives to the psalm, 'To the chief musician, a psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.' So that Nathan had come to him before he makes this psalm, and Nathan, when he came to him, he told him his sin was forgiven, and yet he makes this psalm, and laments his sin in bitterness, and cries to God to restore the joy of his salvation, that the bones that he had broken might rejoice. His very bones were broken, notwithstanding he had that message from God that his sin was forgiven. If the Lord should send a messenger from heaven to tell any one of you, man, woman, all the sins that ever thou hast committed in all thy life are freely forgiven, what wouldst thou do now? Truly thou hast much cause upon this, this evening to get into thy closet and to lament thy sin, and this night, if it were possible, to water thy couch with thy tears—as David saith, he made it swim; therefore the assurance of the pardon of our sin is no hindrance to mourning for sin, only it makes our mourning more sweet and evangelical than it was before. And therefore for thy help, that thou mayest get thy heart thus to mourn, look up for the spirit of mourning: Zech. xii. 10, 'I will pour the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born.' Mark, God hath not only promised comfort to the mourners, but he hath promised mourning to the sinners too. Why, thou art not excluded, the promise is infinite: 'I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall mourn.' Why, Lord God, I have a hard heart, yet if thou wilt pour that Spirit of thine upon me, I shall mourn; therefore look up to God and plead the promise. And then that other promise, 'I will take away the heart of stone, and give them a heart of flesh;' why, Lord, this promise of thine is not to such and such upon such and such conditions, but a free and absolute promise.

And then it is a good way to converse with mourners, to go into the company of such as are broken-hearted Christians. It will make a man

think thus : Why, Lord God, such a one that walks so inoffensively, so graciously, yet what a broken heart hath such a one. I have a wretched heart, and yet I cannot find my heart break ; thus the very society of poor broken hearts will be a mighty help to thee.

And then, fourthly, If you cannot mourn, then mourn that you cannot mourn. Oh this will be acceptable unto God. You will say, I cannot have command over my heart to mourn for sin as I desire. Ay, but canst not thou go to God and make thy moan, and complain of this as the greatest evil that is upon thee : Lord, I account this dull, hard heart of mine as a most fearful evil upon me ?

And then, fifthly, Do not give way to yourselves to take any joy or comfort in anything in this world till you get your hearts broken for your sin. Will not my heart yield in way of mourning for sin, it shall not rejoice then ; I will not let it out to any vain mirth and joy until I can get it to break, and

although heretofore I took content in such and such company, and in the use of the creature. It is true, it is lawful for a man to take comfort, but is it convenient for such a man as I that can never mourn for my sin ? Nay, I will charge this upon my heart, first to labour to be affected for sin, and to mourn for sin, and then I hope I shall take more comfort both in God and his creatures than heretofore.

And then, lastly, Oh take heed of sinning after mourning, thou that wouldst have such a mourning heart as is here spoken of in this my text for thy sin. Take heed that if ever God begins to break thy heart and help thee to mourn, that thou do not sin wilfully after mourning. If God begins to wound thy heart for thy sin, above all times thou hadst need now to be watchful and careful over thyself. Oh let me lay a deep charge upon thy soul to look to itself, that now being troubled for such and such a sin, thou do not after this give way and liberty to thy soul to commit the same sin again.

SERMON X.

OR,

AN EXHORTATION TO MOURNERS FOR SIN.

'Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.'—MAT. v. 4.

I HAVE but a word or two for exhortation further about this argument of mourning for sin.

It is an exhortation even to those that have mourned for sin, to mourn still, to make it a continued work. I told you that the assurance of the pardon of sin is no hindrance to mourning for it, but should rather be a furtherance, as it was in David ; and therefore you who are the people of God, God expects that you should mourn for sin, for you know how sin is against the holiness of God, the blessed will of God, more than others do ; you know what price was paid for the purchase of the pardon of it more than others do, and therefore do you mourn. Your sins they grieve the Spirit of God more than others' do. The sins of other men may provoke God's Spirit, but yours grieve God's Spirit, Eph. iv. 30 ; your sins do more hurt than others' do, therefore do you mourn. You know what the great mischief is that sin doth in the world, Rom. viii. 21, 22 ; sin makes the whole creation to groan under the burden

of it, and shall not you be sensible of so much evil of sin as remains in your hearts ? You know that sin is a greater evil than all afflictions whatsoever, and therefore do you mourn ; go under the burden of sin with a heavy heart as long as you live. It is not long that God hath to glorify himself in your sorrow, it will not be long but you shall be delivered from your sin ; but so long as you have this body of sin about you, God expects mourning from you. God expects from you not only to mourn for your own sin, but to mourn for the sins of others, 'and blessed are they that do so, they shall be comforted.'

First, We are to mourn for the sins of others. We have very remarkable scripture for this, Ezra ix. 3. Oh the lamentable condition that Ezra was in for the sins of his people ! he doth rend his garments, and sits down astonished for their sins. And David in Ps. cxix. 53, 'Horror takes hold upon me,' saith David. What ! was there any great judgment near him ? No ; 'Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the

wicked that forsake thy law.' When he beheld the wickedness of men, his heart was struck with horror, because they forsook God's law; and ver. 136, 'Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law;' and ver. 158, 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.' David's spirit was in a very blessed frame when he penned this psalm, and see how he is affected with the sins of others; and in that famous place, the 9th of Ezekiel, there you find how God marks those that mourn for the sins of the places where they live. And if we look into the New Testament, there is nothing more full; the example of Paul, 2 Cor. xii., 'When I come God shall humble me, and I shall bewail those that have sinned;' and that place is famous, 2 Pet. ii. 7.—it is said of righteous Lot that his soul was vexed; and then in ver. 8, it is said, 'He vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.' The word in the Greek is different from what it is in your books; in the 7th verse is a word, *καταπονυμιον*, that signifies *oppressed*; as much as oppressed the soul; it was a burden to his soul, as an oppression is a burden to a man; he accounted himself wronged by the sins of others, and he went under it as a great oppressing burden. That is the meaning of the word. I find the same word in Acts vii. 24, where it is spoken of Moses that helped the man that was oppressed. The word that is there, him that was oppressed, is *καταπονυμιον*; it is the same that is here, for Lot's soul was vexed. And I find sometimes the word signifies to be weakened by sickness in other authors; so it is said of Lot, righteous Lot, the wickedness that he saw in others did so trouble his righteous soul, as it was as grievous to him as a sickness is to you. That is the meaning of the first word in ver. 7. Then the second word that is in ver. 8, there it is vexed again; but the word is in the original, *ἐδαράνζει*, he did cruciate. It is a word that is used to signify the tormenting of a man upon a rack, as if the Holy Ghost should say the wickedness of those he lived among did put that gracious soul of his upon the rack. He was as a man upon the rack, with the sins of those among whom he lived; and you that are wicked and ungodly, you must not think that you shall only suffer for your own sins, you shall suffer for the grief that you put the godly to. You must not think that your sins concern not them at all; oh yes. You do wrong them by the sins you commit. Why, if you should see a man strike your father in the street, and you should come to him and ask him why he did it; and he should answer, What is that to you? I did not strike you. But you strike my father. So when you sin you strike their Father, you dishonour their God, and this is a cruciating unto them.

The reasons therefore why we must mourn for the

sins of others as well as our own, that is the first, because the blessed God is so much dishonoured. Oh how must it needs go to the heart of a godly man to see that God, whom his soul loves—that God who is so infinitely blessed and glorious, so infinitely worthy of all honour from all creatures, to be so dishonoured by base, wretched worms! There is a report of Cræsus' son, that was dumb all his days, until he saw a soldier striking at his father to kill him, and then the affection that he bore to his father did break the bars of his speech, and he cries out, Why do you kill Cræsus? So when we see God, that blessed God, so dishonoured, whom our souls do so love, it must of necessity pierce our hearts.

And then, secondly, Our love to others should cause grief. Why? when we see others sin against God, we see them do mischief to themselves. Doth it not grieve you when you see men wound and destroy themselves? when you hear of men's houses on fire, and of the grievous pains they are in? Why, you mourn for it, and it would make, you say, the hardest heart in the world to melt. You can never see a man so miserable by anything as he is by sin; sin makes him the most miserable creature in the world, and therefore, if you have any love to your brother, mourn for his sin.

And then, thirdly, Because the sins of others doth bring a great deal of evil to the world. What is the cause of the evils that are in the world but the sins that are committed in the world? and while thou dost live in the world, thou canst not but partake of the miseries that do come by sin. In Eccles. ix. 18, 'One sinner destroys much good;' what doth many sinners then? As the vapours, they ascend insensibly up, but they come down sensibly; so the sins of the world they may ascend up, and men not regard them, but they will come down in grievous storms and tempests.

And then, fourthly, There is cause of mourning for the sins of others, because thou canst never see any man commit any sin but thou hast cause to consider that the root of that sin is in thy heart. It is reported of Bradford that he never saw a man commit a sin, never heard a man swear an oath, or the like, but he would use to say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' God be merciful to me—that is, he saw the root of that sin in his heart. It is true, the Lord hath restrained thee from such cross sins, but thou hast the root of them in thy heart; and therefore thou hast cause to mourn when thou seest sin in others. And blessed are they that do thus mourn.

For, first, This argues sincerity; this argues much of the Spirit of God. It doth not argue so much sincerity to mourn for our own sins as for the sins of others; though indeed there is more cause why we should mourn for our own sins than for others', yet

there is more sincerity in mourning for others' sins than for our own.

And then, secondly, By mourning for other men's sins thou dost free thyself from the guilt of them. How canst thou that livest in a nation or family be free from the sins of those that thou dost converse withal, if thou dost not mourn for them? But now when thou canst mourn for the sins of others, thou dost free thyself from the guilt of them, and especially when thou mournest for the sins of such as are in relation to thee, then thou dost free thyself from the guilt of those; as it may be there is such a godly child whose eyes God hath opened to see his own sins, and he mourns for them. Oh, but he thinks with himself, will ever God be merciful to me that came of such a stock? I have such a father or mother that is so profane, a drunkard, a swearer, a scornor, and I am afraid that the Lord will visit the sin of my father upon me. Now, thou that art a child hast no way to be delivered from the guilt of the wickedness of thy father and mother, or thy forefathers, but by mourning for them. Hath God pulled thee out of a wicked stock, now God doth expect that thou shouldst mourn and lament for the sins of that stock; and so thou livest in a wicked family, and the judgments of God may come upon the family for its sin, why, thou canst not free thyself but by mourning for their sins as well as thy own; and blessed art thou if thou dost so. If thou dost mourn for their sins, the Lord will not visit their sin upon thee.

And then, thirdly, Blessed are they that do mourn for the sins of others, because by this means they make themselves fit instruments of God to be used by God to help against the sins of others. No men are such fit instruments of God, to do God service, to stop the course of the sins of others, as those that take them to heart; and therefore above all men, men in public place, that God makes use of to stop the course of wickedness, they should be men that should be much exercised with this grace of mourning for the sins of others. You that God makes to be chief in parishes, and towns or cities, and puts into your hands to stop the course of sin in the place where you live, now if your hearts be not touched with the sins of the places where you live, how unfit instruments will you be for the honour of God, for the stopping of sin. No marvel though men in place care little what becomes of things; let things go which way they will, if they may get anygain. Why, to this day they never knew what it was to be in a closet alone, between God and their souls, lamenting for the sins of the places where they live; but blessed are they that do so, for they are the instruments that God doth use, and that he delights to employ in much service.

And then they shall be comforted, these that do thus mourn.

For, first, In public calamity they shall be hid. As we know Jeremiah, he was a great mourner for the sins of others; and in Jer. xv. 11 the Lord makes a promise to him in the time of public calamity to be hid. Read Jer. ix., beginning, and so on, and you shall find him bitterly lamenting, oh that his head were waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears, and that he had a cottage in the wilderness; indeed, it is in part for the slain of his people, but it is for their sins likewise. And in Jer. xv. 11 God promises that he shall be hid: and that place in Ezek. ix. is famous; the Lord would have one with a pen and inkhorn go and mark all them that mourn for the sins of others. Take notice of them, saith God; whatsoever calamity doth befall the place where they live, I will be merciful to them—one way or other I will provide for them.

And then, secondly, Thou shalt be comforted. Know thou that art a mourner for the sins where thou livest, that within a little while all the wickedness of men shall be subdued—all shall be brought under, so as God shall not be dishonoured by the sins of men as now he is, all the refuse shall be cast upon the dunghill; there shall be nothing but rejoicing at the righteous judgments of God upon wicked men. Indeed, now when we see God dishonoured by wicked men that live among us, we are to mourn, but there is a time coming that there shall be no more mourning for their sin, but rejoicing at the righteous judgments of God executed upon their sin: 'Blessed are you that mourn, for you shall be comforted.'

And for this, by way of use, briefly, thus:

Oh, let us learn then to lay to heart the sins of those where we live, not only in our parishes, families, those that belong to us, but the sins of the nation.

I will instance but in some few particulars, and you that are the most barren in meditation you may easily reckon up abundance more.

As, first, Let us mourn for the great injustice that is among us at this day; there is cause of mourning for that, the oppression and injustice. In Isa. lix. 11, 14, 15, 'We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves.' Why? 'We look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us;' and so he goes on in the 14th verse: 'And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter: yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.' What an aggravation is this to this sin of injustice, that it should be at such a time as now it is, that when the Lord by such an outstretched arm delivered us from our oppressors, that now we should oppress one another. I believe there was never a greater cry for the

sin of injustice to Heaven than there is at this day, however it may be some may complain that have no such cause; but woe to us, there is a great deal of cause, for there is woeful injustice among us.

And then, secondly, Oh mourn that Christ is no more embraced among us, that when we have as fair opportunities to bring in Jesus Christ among us as ever people had since the world began! Jesus Christ is offering himself to us in as fair a way as ever he did offer himself to any people, and yet what a spirit of malignity is risen among us, as we are ready to say, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.' Oh mourn for the ignorance, for the profaneness of the people of the land! even now when there is such a liberty of the gospel, (for never was the like,) yet they turn away from it, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life, and even do despite to the Spirit of grace. In Rom. ix. 2, mark how Paul was affected for his countrymen's sake, that he could even have wished himself to have been cut off from Jesus Christ, he was so troubled for their ignorance and rejection of Christ; one would think that, seeing God hath so wonderfully wrought to bring us to the enjoyment of the liberty of the gospel, that this should be a time that generally people should come in to embrace it. Oh, but we find it otherwise; there is a vile spirit risen among men against the ways of godliness.

And then, thirdly, Mourn we that there are such divisions now among us. The devil sees that he cannot get many to that profaneness and popery as he was wont to do, and therefore now he comes to spoil religion, and that by divisions, yea, and among the godly; and there the policy of Satan is as much seen as in anything. Yea, and the rather let us take this to heart, when we consider that almost every time men meddle with divisions, and cry out against them, they make them wider, and many they are affected indeed because of the divisions that are in the land. Ay, but it is because every one will not be of their mind, and therefore they mourn; but it is a selfish mourning, for the most part, when men cry out of divisions because they may carry away all the esteem, and honour, and dignities, and preferments, without any control whatsoever; therefore they cry out of divisions, but there is not a spiritual mourning of heart for the sins of the divisions that are among us.

And then, fifthly, Oh mourn we for the abuse of our liberty, the wantonness that is among us now. The Lord grants unto us times of liberty more than ever our forefathers had, or could have thought to have had, and now, O Lord, what an abuse of this liberty is there! How do men run out to all kind of licentiousness because of liberty; out of that pleading for that true liberty of conscience that Christ would have us to tender one another in, they run out to all

kind of licentiousness, blasphemy, and wickedness whatsoever.

Sixthly, Oh mourn we for this, that there is so much unthankfulness among us; that is, because we have not everything as we would have, therefore we are ready to say, there is nothing done. Oh it is a vile speech that comes from any mouth to say, What hath God done for us? The Lord hath done that for this kingdom that is more worth than thy life, or the lives of ten thousand more than thou art, and therefore to say there is nothing done because all is not done that thou wouldst have done, it is a most wretched unthankfulness, and you should bleed in the consideration of it.

And then, seventhly, Mourn we for the scandals that are among us, the many stumbling-blocks that lie in the way, the evils of men that are professors of religion; how do they cast stumbling-blocks in the ways of such as are coming on, and make the ways of godliness to be abhorred because of their wicked lives!

And then, lastly, Mourn we that good men when they are put upon the trial do so much miscarry. This is a sore evil that we may see under the sun at this time. There was never a time in any kingdom wherein so many godly men had so much power in their hands, either in place of magistracy or ministry, but yet, oh the miscarriages of them! How do many of them go by the same principle that others went before, but in another way! And we come to see plainly the truth of that speech, Put men into place, into power, that they may have power over others, and we see what strange spirits they have; even such as we thought were broken-hearted, and did heretofore mourn for the sins of other men that were in place, and, together with their brethren, were fasting and praying and crying to Heaven against the evils of those that were in place but a few years ago, now they come to hope to enjoy the same power, we find that they go apace towards the same way that others were in. Oh my brethren, I speak these things out of conscience, as a duty that we owe to God, to lay them to heart, and to bewail them in the bitterness of our souls. I do not speak this to upbraid any, for there is upbraiding enough abroad, but that we should mourn for them. God forbid that we should speak in way of reproach; no, but in way of lamentation, because these evils have been so much against God and against the public good. Oh if we could lay aside our wrangling a while, and fall a-mourning in one another's bosoms, reformation would go on in another manner than now it doth.

And here is yet a further evil, we have some cause to mourn for men's mourning—that is, men mourn because they cannot have their wills, and they mourn merely out of a kind of spirit of revenge, and make

many times their very fasts to be fasts for strife; we should mourn, I say, for our mourning. And thus much for this that lies so full in my text, 'Blessed are they that mourn;' such as can thus mourn are blessed. Oh that this spirit of mourning were upon us!

And then the next, that is, the last point in my text, It is those that mourn for the afflictions of the church, as well as otherwise: Blessed are those that mourn for them; and we find it in Scripture to be the way of the saints likewise to mourn much for the afflictions of God's people, as in Neh. i. Though Nehemiah were at the court himself, and had a great place, and was at ease, and had abundance of riches, yet he looks sad, and would not have the king to wonder at it, when it was so ill with the church, and a notable scripture we have in Luke xix., even in our Saviour, Christ. It is a very remarkable scripture. When Christ came near to Jerusalem he wept, both because of their sin, and the misery that was coming upon them, and said, 'Oh if thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that concern thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes.' Mark this, at what time Christ did this, it was not in a time that Christ was in any great affliction himself, for you shall find that when he did thus lament, ver. 36, 37, it was when they cut down boughs and strewed them in the way, and cried Hosanna to him; it was at that time when they honoured Jesus Christ most; and yet that did not take up his heart so as not to be affected with the miseries of others. 'And,' saith the text, 'as he went, they spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitude that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.' The people went before Christ magnifying of him, and they took off their garments and strewed them all along in the streets, and would have Christ go upon them, as not thinking it fit that such an honourable person as Jesus Christ was should go upon the ground, but go upon their garments: and they cried out before him, 'Blessed is the king that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.' What honour had Jesus Christ here! But now mark, Christ was not much taken with the honour that was done to his person; that you shall find almost in the very next words, 'And when he drew near, he beheld the city, and wept.' He falls a-weeping at that time when he is so much honoured. Oh this should for ever teach us, that how good soever our own condition be, though our tables be furnished, and we have honour and respect from others, yet this should not at all hinder our affections towards the miseries of our

brethren: we should be in our weeping and mourning condition even at those times when we have the greatest abundance of the comforts of the world. I beseech you, think of this you that are lifted up in places, and you that have means coming in, and have as great a fullness as ever you had, and it may be more than ever you had, yet at this time, if you have the Spirit of Jesus Christ in you, that that you enjoy in the fullness of it will not take away your affections unto the sorrows of your brethren. It is a command in Rom. xii. that we 'must weep with them that weep, and mourn with them that mourn;' and in Heb. xiii. 3, we must be 'even in bonds with them that are in bonds;' we must be affected with their bonds as if we ourselves were in bonds. This God requires of us. Now what shall I say of the examples of Jeremiah and David, and others of the prophets that did thus mourn, of Paul, &c. It were endless to name all examples that we might have in Scripture for this, but blessed are they; there is a great deal of cause that we should do so.

Why, first, Those that are in afflictions, they are men, mourn for them as they are men. Oh but they are our brethren, they are those that are near to us, they are the saints of God.

And consider, secondly, we have the root of the matter in ourselves. Why canst thou think in thy conscience that such men should be in such an afflicted estate and thou shouldst feel nothing thyself—thou shouldst have all things about thee as ever? Is there any reason why such excellent saints of God, that have done God so much service in their generation, should be cast out of house and home, and thou shouldst sit at thy table so full, and have thy wife and children about thee, and thy house so furnished, and all at peace, what reason can there be given? Is there not as much in thee to provoke God as in them? hast thou done more service for God than they? Oh, if thou hadst not the heart of an adamant it would break thee!

But there is another that is yet more. Consider the dishonour that God hath by the afflictions of his people. The truth is, the Lord suffers in their suffering, 'in all their afflictions he is afflicted;' the more the churches go down, the more do the wicked insult and triumph, the more doth wickedness prevail. Oh this should go to thy heart: God goes down, as I may say, and his cause goes down in the saints' going down; the glory of God is unwrapt in the good of the saints, and he suffers in it.

You will say now, If God suffers, why will he let the saints be so afflicted?

To that I answer, The Lord will let them be afflicted for the discovery of those who are true and false. And indeed he doth raise to himself a glorious name many ways; but yet though the Lord doth

raise to himself a name of praise by the sufferings of the saints, yet we must mourn and lament, because in the meantime God doth suffer, and they tend much to his dishonour, although he by his infinite power can fetch honour out of them.

And, besides, if you consider only this, the greatness of the evils that is in these days. If ever there were a time to mourn for the afflictions of others, now is the time; and those that are the witnesses for the truth have cause to prophesy even in sackcloth now. Oh if we did but understand the woeful evil and miseries of war! It is an evil that hath abundance of evils, as it were, in the belly of it. It is the cup of God's anger, and the wine thereof is red—it is as red even as blood—and it is a mixed wine. The ingredients in the cup are murder, and robbery, and rape, and deflowering, and cruelty, and torment, and famine, and pestilence—these are the ingredients in the cup; and therefore, though we sit here in our houses quietly, and find not the woeful evils of this civil wars, yet others can tell us, Did you but see those doleful miseries that they see—men that were of good rank and fashion, that lived comfortably, and were of public use and eminent saints, how they are driven from their house and home like brute beasts! Oh should we but see what hath been done in Ireland! They cry to us, O you that pass by, is it nothing to you all that we have suffered? was there ever sorrow like our sorrow? It might be of very great use to lay open the woeful misery of others; but I will shew you how blessed are those that do mourn for the afflictions of others. They are blessed,

First, Because they have much of the spirit of Christ in them. Theirs is such a kind of spirit as Jesus Christ had when he lived upon the earth, and this was a blessed spirit.

Secondly, They do evidence that they are members of the same body. Thou that canst hear of the woeful evils that the churches suffer, and not mourn, thou dost evidently declare to all the world, and God tells thee to thy conscience, that thou art but a dead member, and not a living member of the body of Jesus Christ; but when your hearts can be affected with the miseries of the churches, you have evidence to your souls that you are living members of Jesus Christ.

And then blessed are you, because in this you do walk with God—that is, you observe God's way. When God comes in mercy to his church, then you can rejoice; and when God is in a way of afflicting, then you mourn. I say this is to walk with God, to have our hearts affected according to the several administrations of God's providence; and blessed are they that walk with God.

'You shall be comforted'—that is,

First, Know there is a time that God's people shall be delivered from all their sorrows, that all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, that 'there shall be no more pricking brier nor grieving thorn,' Ezek. xxviii. 24. This is promised to the saints; and I hope that this time must be even in this world, that the saints shall be as much honoured as ever they have been dishonoured, and that wicked men shall no more persecute them, but shall be brought under them. And there is a morning wherein the saints shall have dominion over the wicked and ungodly; you shall have comfort in this, you that do mourn for the affliction of the saints: 'O thou afflicted and tossed with tempests,' now thou art afflicted and tossed, but thy foundations shall be laid with sapphires and with precious stones, Isa. liv. 11. The foundation of the church shall be so; the church shall be a burdensome stone to all that do persecute them: 'Arise, shine, O shine, for the glory of God is risen upon thee,' Isa. lx. 1, saith the Lord unto the churches; 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned,' Isa. xl. 1, 2. There is such a time that the people of God shall be so comforted, and when the saints shall triumph in the salvation of God, and shall say, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him; this is the God of our salvation.' There is, I say, such a time.

And then there are many promises to you who do mourn for the affliction of the saints. In Ps. xli., 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor'—those that consider such as are afflicted are blessed; and in Isa. lvii. 18, there the Lord promises unto his church that he will 'restore comforts to her and to her mourners'—to them both, they shall be comforted; those that now mourn with the saints, they shall rejoice with them; in Isa. lxvi. 10, there you have a promise to them, Those that mourn with the people of God they shall rejoice; and then in Zeph. iii. 18 there is a promise that those that did 'account the reproach of the solemn assembly to be a burden, God would gather them.' The saints of God are reproached, they are persecuted; others can rejoice now, but there were those that accounted it a burden to them, and to them the Lord makes a gracious promise.

Again, You that mourn for the affliction of the saints are blessed; for when God shall bring you into affliction, God will own your souls in the day of affliction. If at any time your children should be afflicted, your dear wives, &c., you may with comfort go to God and pray, O Lord, comfort me in mine affliction, and comfort me in the affliction of my wife, my children, my father, my mother! You may have comfort, I say. Why? Because you did mourn

for the afflictions of his children. Nay, saith God, here is one indeed that is afflicted. What, is the man's child or wife under any affliction? Why, I remember when my children were afflicted, they mourned for my children; why, now their children are afflicted, I will take that to heart, and have compassion upon them in their affliction; and therefore blessed are they that mourn. Now for the application of it.

First, It should have been to rebuke the jollity of men's spirits in these sad times. Oh, it is a wicked thing in these sad times to have a carnal, jolly spirit. God indeed gives you liberty to have comfort, and to rejoice in himself; for so you will say we are bidden to rejoice always. Ay, but know spiritual joy and this mourning may stand both together—know that God expects that you should abate of your carnal joy. I will give you but two scriptures for this, which are very terrible against those that are so jolly and merry in sad times. The first is in Isa. xxii. 12, 'And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you die, saith the Lord of hosts.' Oh, it is a daunting scripture to those that in these times take liberty to the flesh. I beseech you, if you do believe that this scripture is the word of God, when you come home lay it upon your hearts and consciences. Saith God, When I called to mourning and weeping, behold there was joy and gladness, and mirth, and drinking of wine. This iniquity shall

not be purged till you die, saith God; I will never pardon it. It is spoken, as in the New Testament it is said of the sin against the Holy Ghost, that it should never be forgiven. And so this is made a kind of an unpardonable sin, though I think that it is not so unpardonable as that; but though God should give you a heart to see the evil of it never so much, yet you may smart for it in this world, even as the Lord did concerning Moses. He would not hear him, but bid him speak no more of that matter, but he must die in the wilderness. Oh, the Lord cannot but look with indignation upon such as these are. What! saith God, shall I chastise my own dear children, and shall this wretch, that is good for nothing but to eat and drink and get money here, shall he not take it at all to heart? I will never bear this, saith God; it shall never be purged from him till he die. O my brethren, if ever God calls to weeping and mourning, it is now; and therefore not to have a heart in these mourning times it is a sign that thy heart is hardened from the fear of God. If ever this text of Christ were suitable it is in these mourning times, wherein those are held forth to be blessed that do mourn; and on the other side, those that do not mourn they will certainly prove to be accursed by Christ when they shall come to stand before him.

And then the other scripture is in Amos vi., where the Lord complains, 'that they drank wine in bowls, and had their music, and all kinds of jollity,' &c. Oh but, saith he, 'there was none that did remember the afflictions of Joseph;' Joseph might be imprisoned, might be sold, might endure any afflictions, what was it to them? They would not so much as remember. Oh woe to them!

SERMON XI.

OR,

HOW TO MOURN FOR THE AFFLICTIONS OF SAINTS.

'Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.'—MAT. v. 4.

BUT now, my brethren, the thing I shall speak a little to is this, to shew unto you how we should mourn for the afflictions of the saints, that so you might mourn kindly for their afflictions:

For some will say, We are affected; and God forbid but that we should be grieved when we hear that the church is so afflicted. It doth grieve our hearts when we hear of the plundering of so many good people, and how they are put out of their houses and homes. But now,

First, There may be a natural mourning for the afflictions of others, which is not this blessed mourning; and therefore if you would know the difference between the natural and spiritual mourning for the afflictions of the church, take it briefly in these three or four particulars, which I shall but name:—

The first is, Those that mourn for the afflictions of the church in a spiritual way, they mourn upon spiritual grounds; and a natural man is upon natural grounds. You mourn to hear such woeful bloodshed, desolations of countries. As you are men you cannot but be affected; but now are you most affected upon spiritual grounds, because the saints do suffer, because the liberties of the ordinances are taken from them, because the adversaries of God's people do most prevail, because religion is trampled under-foot? Do you mourn therefore? It is true these are mourning times. Most people they mourn because of fear of outward danger, or for their great taxes, and they have not things as they were wont to have; but a spiritual mourning is upon spiritual grounds.

And then, secondly, Spiritual mourning will put much upon prayer. That we spake to in the general, when we shewed how those that are in a mournful condition themselves they should pray much; so here, those that do mourn for the churches, if they mourn in a spiritual way, they will pray much for the churches. I appeal to your consciences in this thing. You hear many times sad news concerning the sufferings of your brethren abroad: it may be you will say, the Lord have mercy upon them, or so; but

when did you get alone between God and your souls, and pour forth your souls before God in secret, on the behalf of the churches of God—or it may be you have done so sometimes; but is this in your hearts to do so in an ordinary way? If your children be afflicted, perhaps you will go to prayer then, and wring your hands; but you have heard of the afflictions of the churches, and have your hearts been so affected as to go and break your spirits before the Lord in prayer? Now that is a spiritual mourning. For to have a sadness upon your spirits, upon the hearing of ill news, that may be but in a natural way; but for your hearts to break before God in prayer for the church, that is in a spiritual way. Now the churches suffer more than they have done; and are your prayers enlarged more than formerly for them? This is spiritual, and blessed are they that so mourn, as that they are put upon prayer, and enlarged in prayer by their mourning.

And thirdly, If your hearts be spiritual in your mourning, why then, look what God doth spare you in. In that you do not spend your strength in suffering as others do, it will cause you to be so much the more earnest and willing to spend your strength in service and doing for God. If your hearts were affected as they ought to be for the churches, you would consider thus: How do they suffer in their estates, and in their bodies and liberties! They are forced to spend their strength and estates in a way of suffering. Why now, Lord, thou dost not call me to spend my strength and estate in that way of suffering as thou callest my brethren to; why, Lord, thou shalt have it spent for thee in a way of doing, in a way of service. Oh it is good for us to have our strength and estates to be spent for God in the exercise of our graces, rather than to be spent for him in the suffering for our sin; and it were a very good meditation when you hear of any that suffer by any accident whatsoever: They suffer so much for God in a passive way; Oh then let me be willing to spend in an active way for God; and this will be a good argument that your hearts are spiritual.

Fourthly, Yea, further, when the thankfulness that you have for your being delivered from those heavy afflictions that are upon others shall humble your hearts as much as if you were under the same afflictions that others are under, this were a good sign of a spiritual frame. You hear of the afflictions of other men; why, now when you can be so sensible of those afflictions, so as to make you to be as much humbled in a way of thankfulness as you should be if you were under the same afflictions, now your hearts are in a spiritual way sensible of their condition. And so much for that of the spiritualness of our hearts in being sensible of the afflictions of others.

But now, in the second place, What duties doth the consideration of the afflictions of others call for from us? When we hear that others are in affliction, and we are delivered, I say, what duties doth this call for at our hands? Now to that I answer, it calls for these three:—

First, An abatement of our outward comforts in this world. We should be willing, when we hear how the churches suffer, to abate of a great part of our outward comforts that we had before for the flesh, to be willing to be cut short ourselves, so far as we may do it in a way of service for God. Certainly it is not lawful for men in such times as these are, when there is such a darkness upon the face of the land, and upon so many thousands of their brethren, it is not lawful for to give that full liberty to the satisfying of the flesh as in other times you may do. I might shew it out of divers scriptures, but that I hasten to that remains.

But secondly, The second duty is to be ready to help them in their afflictions, to let out ourselves for their comfort. Seeing that Christ hath said, 'Those that mourn shall be comforted,' every one of us should endeavour to make good what Christ hath said—that is, to comfort them by our estates, to comfort them by all the means that possibly we can; and never to think it much that you are frequently sent unto to pity them that are in an afflicted condition, though you have often contributions, yet to do it freely and cheerfully. You cannot perform the duties that God requires of you in your being sensible of their mournful condition, except you will put to your hand to comfort them. You cannot pray to God to comfort them, but you take God's name in vain, except you likewise are willing to do what you are able.

And then the third duty is this, We should put ourselves into the same condition that they are in, in our meditations, and consider what we would do if God should put us really into the same condition that they are put into. When you hear of those that have lost their estates, and are banished and driven up and down to seek bread, that were wont to

live comfortably, you should put yourselves into such a condition—Lord, what would become of me if I were so? Suppose I were under the enemy's mercy as they are, what would become of me! in what a sad condition should I be in! But you will say, Why should we so trouble ourselves, seeing God delivers us, to put ourselves into the same condition in our meditation as our brethren are in?

To that I answer, That God requires this. You cannot be so thoroughly sensible of their estates as you should, nor make that use of that afflicted condition that they are in, except you do put yourselves sometimes into their conditions, and think with yourselves, What should I do if I were in their estate? And for that I will give you this scripture, Heb. xiii. 3, 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them that suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.' 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them.' Here the apostle writes to those that were at liberty, and yet he requires of them to 'Remember those that were in bonds, as if they were bound with them.' So that those that are in prison now by the enemy, why, consider as if you were in prison with them, those that have lost all, as if you had lost all with them; so that you must remember them. Otherwise it is a very slight kind of affection that you find your hearts touched withal, if so be that you can but only say, Oh how cruelly are they used! The Lord pity them, and have mercy upon them! Ay, but lay this to heart, What if I were so? what if it were really my condition?

But you will say, Suppose we should put that to ourselves, what good use would there come of this? To that I answer, Many ways; if you would but put yourselves into their condition, and consider What if I were so, then consider from hence what duties you would be further put upon in this.

As, first, If I were in their condition, certainly I could not but then be sensible of the vanity of the creature; what a vain thing it is to rest upon any outward comforts in this world. There was a time, it may be, that not long ago they enjoyed as much of the outward comforts of this world as I do; but in one night they are stripped of all, and have nothing in their houses, and are under woeful afflictions. Why, certainly, they cannot but think thus with themselves: Oh, the creature is a vain thing. It is a vain thing to trust in any creature comfort; it may soon be taken away from me, beyond all expectation of mine. Oh I could not, if I were in their condition, but judge of the vanity of the creature. Let me do so now then.

And then, secondly, If I were in their condition, why, my conscience would be freely telling of me and charging of me for the abuse of the mercy that I have had. Suppose that all my comforts were taken

away from me, as from them, do not I think my conscience would presently fly in my face, and tell me how I have abused those mercies that I did enjoy? how I did not make use of my estate for God as I might have done? You who have comfortable estates now, and you think because they are your own that therefore you may do with them as you list; but if God should, by some accident, come and take your estates from you, the first thing that your consciences would do would be this, to charge upon you the abuse of your estates; and then, secondly, to tell you that you did not make that use of your estates for the honour of God's name as you might have done. Suppose God should come upon you by the adversary, or fire, or any other way, and sweep away all in one night, do not you think that your consciences would then tell you, Oh I might have made better use of it for God than I have done? It is an ordinary thing, when a mercy is taken from one, for conscience to accuse then for the abuse of that mercy that he did enjoy; as now, when a man buries a wife, the first thing that conscience will tell one, will be, Oh, I have not performed the duty that I owed to my wife, which I should have done; and so for any mercy, when the mercy is taken away, conscience then hath greater liberty to charge one for the abuse of that mercy than formerly it had. And so we should put ourselves in their case, and put conscience to it and say, Suppose that all the outward comforts which I do enjoy in this world were taken away from me, could I then have a clear conscience, and could I be able to say, Lord, thou that knowest all things knowest that while I did enjoy my estate, it was my care to serve thee with it, and to improve my estate to the uttermost for the glory of thy name. I am afraid that there are not many, which are deprived of their estates, that have their consciences so free in excusing of them; and so I fear that there are not many of you, but if you would put yourselves into their conditions, your conscience would deal more freely with you than now it doth; and that is a second thing that conscience would do if you were in their case.

And then the third thing, If you would but put yourselves into their condition it would be this: you would shorten your outward comforts, but you would enlarge your duties. I verily think that generally our brethren in those parts where the adversary hath been—I do not speak of such that are sottish, but any that have any work of grace—I verily believe they are larger in duties than ever they were before; they do not cut short holy duties so much as formerly. And certainly, if you were in their case, if the Lord should cut you short in respect of your outward comforts, the larger would you be in the performance of holy duties.

Fourthly, If you were in their case, you would have a more serious spirit than now you have. Now you enjoy an outward prosperity, you do not lay to heart how things are between God and you; but now, if God should come and rend away all the outward comforts that now you have, oh that would cause many serious thoughts to be in your mind, and to consider how are things between God and my soul. Things are very sad with me in respect of the world, but how are they in respect of heaven? Oh put yourselves into that condition, that the slightness and vanity of your spirits may be taken off, that you may be now as serious as you would be if you were in their condition.

Fifthly, If you were in their condition, oh you would learn to be content with a little. Therefore now put yourselves into their condition, and think with yourselves, Suppose God should take all from me, then I should bless his name if he would return but a little part of that again. But now I am in my family, and have abundance of comforts, and yet if any one thing doth but cross me, I am froward and discontent. Ay, but if God brought me as low as my brethren, I should bless his name for a little, then I would be glad of bread. Many of them that have lived as comfortably as you now live would be glad of bread and the smallest drink, if they might have but sufficient of that. Why, now put yourselves into their conditions, and bless God for that little you have; and thus you should be in bonds, in affliction with those that are in affliction.

And then, sixthly, Prize peace with God. Those that are in an afflicted condition, oh how do they prize peace with God, and peace with conscience! Now such of them as are godly, they think thus with themselves: Oh, had not we laid up peace with God, and had we not peace with our own consciences, what should we do? But blessed be the name of God, that we have kept our peace with God, and we have peace in our own consciences. In these days of war it is this only that comforts their hearts, they prize it now. Oh, therefore, put yourselves into their conditions, that you may learn to prize peace with God, and peace in your conscience.

And then the seventh and last thing of all is this, If we put ourselves into their condition, certainly you would rise up against popery and tyranny. Suppose you were in Ireland, and there were under that heavy tyranny of those barbarous papists that are there, why, would not this make you to rise against those that are popish, and to think thus: Is this the popish religion? Oh bloody religion, what wickedness would that religion countenance! a cursed religion is popery. You would be ready to charge your children to hate popery as long as they lived; oh the cruel usage of people that have been there! And so the popish

party that have prevailed here should make all to rise against popery, and so against tyranny. What a miserable condition is a people in where a few men shall tyrannise over them. Oh let us join what possibly we can to cast off the yoke of tyranny, that we may be governed by law, and know aforehand when it is that we do offend. Certainly the miseries that have been of late in these three kingdoms cannot but stir up the spirits of those in the kingdom that are not sottish and willing to be slaves, to rise against tyranny, and never suffer it to prevail over them again. By putting ourselves into their conditions, we may come to have our hearts affected in some measure as their hearts are; and thus we shall be sensible, in a right way, of the mournful estate of our brethren.

And to that end, that we may be sensible of the mournful estate of our brethren, it is good for us often to charge ourselves with the great evil of a selfish spirit. What! because I am free myself, and feel nothing myself, shall none of the afflictions of all the churches of God, and the sufferings of all the countries, come near to my heart? Oh base selfish spirit that I have! what is my flesh more than the flesh of others? Charge this upon your souls as in the presence of God, and this will be a means to break your hearts.

And secondly, Let all the mercies that you have be seasoned with the consideration of the thoughts of the afflictions of your brethren, when you sit at your table. Why, I have a full table; but how is it with others? Why, you go to bed, I go to bed, and have my house in peace; but how is it with others of my brethren? When I walk out into the streets, I go about my trade and business; but how is it with others? When I come home again, I see my wife and children and all about me; oh, but how is it still with my brethren? So upon every mercy that you do enjoy, you should as it were season the mercy with the consideration, How stands it with my brethren? As you season your meat with salt, so every mercy that you enjoy should have the consideration of the affliction of your brethren, to be joined with it for the seasoning of that mercy. Certainly your mercies would be a great deal more savoury to you if they were seasoned with the consideration of the afflictions that your brethren do endure.

And then, further, Remember you are in the body. According to that scripture in the 13th of the Hebrews, you are liable to those things that they are; and how just were it with God, if I should not be affected with the miseries of others, that God should bring as great, if not greater upon me. The Lord hath thousands of ways to bring as great afflictions upon you as ever were brought upon any part of the kingdom, and there is no such dangerous sign that God intends it towards you as the being unsensible of the afflictions of your brethren. Oh how soon may the Lord, by

secret treachery, by massacres, &c., bring you into as woeful afflictions as they; and therefore, considering how liable you are to the same, or to much greater afflictions, oh be sensible of the miseries of your brethren; the serious thoughts of them would be a mighty argument to work upon the heart.

And then, lastly, Consider that of the apostle Peter: 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18, 'If judgment begins at the house of God, what shall become of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and ungodly appear?' If so many of the righteous servants of God should suffer hard things, and that they should go through such great difficulties to heaven, what shall become of me then? Shall the righteous scarcely be saved?—that is, saved through many difficulties and dangers and sufferings. Then what shall become of me? where shall I appear? for my conscience tells me that there is much unrighteousness in me. And if God's dear saints come to heaven through so much trouble, surely there is trouble reserved for me then. These kind of thoughts would break your hearts, and cause you to mourn with them that mourn; blessed are they that do thus mourn, that are sensible of the afflictions of the people of God, for they shall be comforted. And thus now we have done with that blessedness, the second beatitude, the poor in spirit, and those that mourn.

Now then we are to proceed to the third.

Ver. 5.—'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.'

'Blessed are the meek.'

First for the word 'meek.' Some think it comes from a Hebrew word that signifies to be thin, or low, or lean; and sometimes I find it expressed by the same word that is used for humility, for they are very near akin. Christ puts them together: 'Learn of me,' saith he, 'for I am humble and meek.'

The Latins express it by the word *mitis*, one that is as it were mute, when he suffers any wrong, *ad sustinendum injuriam tacens*; or else from a word taken from beasts that are not fierce, but are accustomed to one's hand, meek. The word that is in my text it is one that is of a temper of spirit easy to be entreated; of a facile spirit. And the nature of meekness consists especially in the right moderation of the passion of anger—the due gracious moderation of the passion of anger. Those men or women that have power over themselves to moderate the passion of their anger, they are meek.

Now there is a natural meekness sometimes, from the constitution of man's body. Many men are not so prone to anger naturally as other men are, from their very temper of body; others are more choleric in their very temper. And so there is a natural meekness that arises from the strength of reason—a

man that is but a rational man, yet by his reason may be able to curb his anger in great measure. But this meekness must go beyond these—the natural meekness from the temper of the body, or that comes from the strength of reason. And if you would know how it goes beyond them, you may take it in these particulars :

First, One that is meek naturally, he is meek in some outward thing wherein others would be angry ; but this meekness of his that is but natural, it doth quench all zeal for God, it doth not stand with the exercise of the grace of zeal for God. But now spiritual meekness is such, being a grace of the Holy Ghost, as there is no opposition to any other grace ; that is a certain rule. Several vices may be contrary one to another, yet no grace can be contrary to another grace ; therefore those men that are meek spiritually, they are zealous too. They have spiritual principles in them, which makes them meek and able to moderate their anger in their own cause ; yet those principles will make them zealous for God. But now where the principle of meekness is but natural, from the constitution of a man's body, or only power of reason, why, this will quench zeal. Those that are meek thus, they are not acquainted with the grace of zeal for God, as it appears plainly. You have some men and women, you say you cannot anger them—they will never be angry. It may be their children and servants do such things as would anger you, but they are very patient and quiet and meek, and they bear all. Now it may be you think that this is from true grace. No ; and you will know it by this, that their children, when they do anything amiss against them, they are not angry—no, nor though their children sin against God they are not angry. Now this is no gracious meekness. Grace will teach men and women to be meek and gentle when they are crossed themselves, but grace will never teach them to be meek so as not to be angry when God is dishonoured. You shall find that those that are in Scripture set out as the most eminent men for meekness in their own cause, yet when it comes to God's cause they have been the most eminent in zeal. As for the example of Moses, if you read the 12th of Numbers, you shall find that the Lord doth give that testimony of Moses, that he was the meekest man upon earth ; but yet you know the story of Moses, when he came down from the mount and saw how the children of Israel had set up an idol, the golden calf, Moses was all on fire ; and having the tables of stone where the law was written in his hands, and having received them from God himself, yet when he saw that idol, he took those tables and threw them down, and brake them to pieces in his zeal for God ; yea, and after he had done that, he stirs up the people to take their swords and slay their brethren ; and yet Moses was

the meekest man that ever lived upon the face of the earth. We read of Christ himself, that he propounds himself as a pattern of meekness : ' Learn of me, for I am meek.' Yet when he comes to the scribes and pharisees, that were wretched enemies against the power of godliness, though they made an outward show, and so seduced the people, in making them believe that all religion did consist in outward forms, ' Woe,' saith he, ' to you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites.' He pronounces eight woes against them in one chapter, Mat. xxiii., and speaks in a most bitter way. Never did any godly man preach with a greater bitterness, as I may so speak ; for it was a bitter anger that Christ had against the scribes and pharisees in his speaking to them, and yet the meekest man that ever was. It was a bitterness of spirit, and you cannot find more fiery zeal in any against sin than you find in Jesus Christ. When he came and saw how they did abuse the house of God, he threw down the tables of the money-changers, and took cords and made a whip, and whipped them out of the temple. ' The zeal of God's house ate him up.' And so Paul, that was very meek, and writes to Timothy to instruct ' with all meekness those that did oppose themselves,' 2 Tim ii. 25 ; yet when Paul did but set his eyes upon Elymas, that did seek to draw away Sergius Paulus from the faith, why, ' O thou child of the devil, and full of all subtlety,' Acts xiii. 10. What ! doth any man speak more terribly than he did to Elymas ? So that this meekness is such as hath a mixture of zeal : when a man or woman can be meek in their own cause, can deny themselves in their own cause, and be able to moderate their anger ; but yet when it comes to the cause of God, they can there be all on fire for God—this is the right meekness, the meekness that here is pronounced to be blessed.

But now this meekness, as it is distinguished from natural, so we must inquire wherein it consists. In the moderation of anger in these six particulars :

As, first, In regard of the object of anger. It is that grace whereby we come to be enabled to moderate anger ; that is, first, Not to be angry and froward for nothing, and so as to be able to give an account of our anger. Where there is true meekness, the heart hath so much power, as if I am angry, I am able to give an account of it.

Secondly, When men are angry for everything ;

Or, thirdly, When they are angry for that that is good—angry at the good of our brethren, when they do but their duty ; these are not meek. But now when the soul hath a command of itself, that I will not be angry for anything but that I can give an account of it to God. Indeed many of you when you are angry, you think you are angry in a rational way, and when one asks you, Do you well to be angry ? you can say, Yes, I do well to be angry. But can

you give such an account of it to God as you do to men? Can you say, Lord, I was angry, but it was no more than thou wouldst have me to be, for it was upon such and such just grounds that I was angry? Many are angry with insensible creatures; sometimes a workman angry with his tool, and throws it away; and so likewise angry with brute beasts. That is the first, a moderation of anger in respect of the object; not to be angry at anything but that that we may give an account of to God, and say, Lord, this is the thing that hath provoked my anger, and thou wouldst have me, else I would not be angry.

And then, secondly, A moderation of anger in respect of the time of anger; that is,

First, That it be not too sudden.

Secondly, That it be not unseasonable.

Thirdly, That it be not lasting. In these three things meekness doth moderate anger.

First, That it be not sudden. There is nothing wherein men and women are more sudden than in the passion of anger; and there is nothing wherein they should be more deliberate, if there be a thing wherein there is just cause why you should be angry. Why, you may be angry an hour hence; and it were a good way, where there is anything falls out that provokes to anger you, first weigh and consider of the thing, and then, if there be sufficient cause, let out your anger after. But now, when men and women are suddenly angry, they have gunpowder spirits that a little spark puts them all on a fire in an instant, that one would wonder at the sudden change that is oftentimes in many men and women in a family; all things are quiet now, and on a sudden all things are in a hurry-hurry.

And then, secondly, That it be not unseasonable, as now, when you are to perform duties; oh take heed of anger then! Are you to go to prayer? why, whatsoever falls out, if you have the grace of meekness, you would so far curb yourselves as to say, Let passion stay till I have done my prayer. This were an excellent thing if there were this meekness in families. Why, when men and their wives and families are going to prayer, many times the devil will lay before you some temptations to provoke your passion, and he knows that then your prayer is spoiled if he can but put you into a passion; why now, if there be the grace of meekness to overpower anger, and can make anger to be a servant to you and not your lord, you frustrate Satan's design then. Suppose a servant, or neighbour, or child doth otherwise than they ought, yet you can say to anger, Stay here till I have done prayer, and afterwards I will consider of you then; and so when you come to hear the word. Oh it is a dangerous thing to give way to passion at any time, but especially upon a Lord's day! If you be put into a passion then, a ten to one

but you lose the Sabbath; for then your thoughts are rolling about the wrong that is done to you, and about thoughts of revenge, and then you will manifest your displeasure. But now meekness doth moderate anger, to give one power over one's anger so as it shall not be unseasonable.

And then, thirdly, Meekness doth moderate anger in respect of the lastingness of it, that it shall not last longer than it ought to do. Many men's and women's anger is like the fire of hell—being once kindled, it is never quenched; it is unquenchable as the fire of hell is; their dog-days do continue all the year long. You shall have some men and women, if anything have fallen out in their families, and they be got into a fit of passion, you shall have them continue day after day in that fit of passion, so that sometimes even man and wife will not speak one to another in two or three days; this sinful, this far from meekness. If thou hadst this grace of meekness, it would say to anger, Thus far shall you go, and no further. As you can raise it up when you see cause, so you can keep it down too; but many times you know the wind raises up the waves of the sea, and when the winds are down, yet the waves of the sea they are all in a broil, and do mightily rise still, and are very boisterous though the winds are down: so it is with many, though the cause of their anger be taken away, yet their anger having been raised, they are not able to overcome themselves. It is just with men and women here as with your children, if once they be displeased, put them into a cry, and though you give them the thing that they would have, yet they cannot overcome themselves presently: so it is with many, they are not lasting in other things, but in their anger there they last: in any good motion for God, there they are fickle and inconstant, but their passion, that holds. Now meekness it doth moderate anger in regard of the continuance of it.

Fourthly, Meekness doth moderate anger in respect of the measure of it. Why, if I be angry, I will be angry no more than needs must. Why so violent, why so fierce, why so cruel in anger? as many they know not how to be angry, but they must be mad. But now one that hath a meek spirit, he may be angry sometimes; ay, but his meekness will measure out his anger—so much anger and no more, after the proportion to that that I am angry for.

And then the fifth is, The ground from whence anger arises. The ground it is from pride in your hearts, or from some other lust, or from weakness; but now meekness of spirit that doth so much moderate anger, that whensoever I am angry, it shall not be from my pride, nor lusts, nor weakness. Thus meekness moderates anger.

And then the effects of anger. Oh the woeful, evil effects that come from the anger of men and women!

What acts of sin is there committed in one hour, when you give way to passions! There is more sin committed sometimes by a man or woman in one day, when they are in a froward, pettish humour, than by others that are in a meek, quiet humour, for a year, yea, it may be all their lives. Thou mayest do that in one day, that it may be may cause thee to repent all thy life after. Oh, sin is multiplied almost infinitely when we come to a passion! Passion and anger doth heat the lusts that are in the hearts of men and women, and therefore they are very active in their sin in the time of a passion—as Moses, when he came down, in his holy zeal he broke both the tables on which the law was written; so we may say that people in their sinful passion they break both the tables of the law by their woeful distempers and sinful actions. What reviling speeches, what revengeful thoughts, what words and desperate resolutions are there in the time of anger! But now, where there is meekness in the heart, it pulls anger back, and will not suffer it to proceed in any sinful effects. Nay, saith meekness, what hath the Lord given me this affection in my soul for? is it not for his glory? What! is it for the producing of such base and sinful effects as these are? The Lord forbid it. Oh the evil of anger! Oh remember in the days of your humiliation to be humbled for the wonderful wicked effects of your sinful anger! And you that have not matter to humble your souls before God when you are in secret, you want matter for prayer, oh do but consider of some fit of anger that you have been in, and see whether there are not sins enough when you have been in that to afford matter for your confessions.

And then meekness doth moderate anger in respect of the end, that when I am angry I will not be angry for myself. You are angry sometimes, but what comes of it? Now a meek heart, when it is angry, it will look at this. Oh let it be regulated so far as I may have good of it; let me have holy ends and holy aims in my anger. As now, am I angry with a child; why, it is to the end that I might shew such displeasure against such an offence as that the child may amend, and that the servant may amend. The Lord that knows all things, knows that when I do let out my anger against any man, or woman, or child, or servant, I do aim at the good of them; and did I believe that to be gentle towards them, and not to manifest my anger, would do them more good, why, they should never see me angry. This should be the resolution of every godly parent, master, &c. Oh, 'blessed are the meek;' blessed are they that are thus meek, that have thus much power to overcome the passion of their anger—they are blessed. Now I should have shewn many ways why those who are thus meek are blessed here, and for ever shall be blessed. There is as much said of this grace of meek-

ness to set out the blessedness of it, as almost any grace I know, next to faith itself, that is the great mother grace.

Why, thou that art meek art like God thy Father. When God would shew his glory to Moses in Exod. xxxiii, xxxiv, was not this a great part of his glory, 'The Lord long-suffering and gracious'? It is the glory of the Father to be so.

And it is the glory of Jesus Christ to be so; for, saith Christ, 'Learn of me, for I am meek.' Christ calls out no other grace that he would have his disciples follow him in but humility and meekness. Why, blessed Saviour, why dost not thou speak of those other excellent graces of thine? Thou hadst grace without measure, and when thou wouldst have thy disciples learn of thee, why dost not mention, Learn confidence of thee, and heavenly-mindedness of thee, and despising of the world, or any other grace? No, saith Christ; if you would be my disciples, I would commend this to you—I am humble and meek. Why, was that the great commendations of Christ? Yes, the Lord Jesus accounted it his glory to be meek. Do not you account it a dishonour? Why, is that a dishonour to thee that was an honour to Jesus Christ? Shall Jesus Christ reckon it his glory to be a meek man, and shalt not thou account it to be thy glory? Oh blessed be those that are like God the Father and God the Son!

And they have much of the Spirit of God. What was the Spirit of God compared to more than meekness? When the Holy Ghost did appear upon the head of Jesus Christ, John iii. 16, he did appear in the form of a dove. Now they say of the dove it hath no gall; it is the emblem of meekness. Therefore, if thou wouldst be like either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, thou must be a man or woman of a meek and gentle spirit. 'Blessed are those that are meek,' for they have much of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in them. It is very observable that God in his sacrifices he would not have lions, and tigers, and such wild creatures to be offered in sacrifice to him, nor no birds of prey, but he would have the dove and the pigeon, and the lamb and the sheep; the Lord doth regard rather such sacrifices than the froward, perverse spirits of men. I will give you now but one scripture for the blessedness of meek spirits. There are many promises made to those that are meek. Here is one great one in my text; but for the present only this one scripture, that one would think all those who have found any good by Scripture should for ever lay upon their hearts to meekness their spirits,—and especially it is applied to women, for they are the weaker sex, and passion and anger comes from weakness. Therefore the Holy Ghost, in 1 Peter iii. 1-3, where he is speaking unto women, exhorting them shew themselves the daughters of Sarah; saith

'Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.' But how then? women are much addicted to these things, therefore the Holy Ghost mentions these particulars. But, saith he, 'Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible.' What is that? what particular will the Holy Ghost instance in for the hidden man of the heart? Even, saith he, 'a meek and a quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.' Give me any scripture that puts such a commendation upon any particular grace. Indeed we have in effect other commendations, that come to as much, of faith,—for that is the great grace of the covenant by which Christ is made ours,—but for an explicit expression almost of any grace whatsoever, a meek and a quiet spirit is of great price with God, or, as some of your books have it, is much set by. Why would you have brave clothes and ornaments? You account them to be precious; to have costly laces and costly dressings and attire—you think to go in things that are costly. Ay, but what are these to God? As if the Holy Ghost should say, If you have but the plainest garment you are as acceptable with God; he looks into the inward man. Now to see a

man or woman to have brave clothes, and have a froward, perverse spirit, oh, such are loathsome to God,—God looks upon those as having an ugly dress upon them. But now though you be never so clothed outwardly, yet have you a meek and a quiet spirit, and that from the grace of the Spirit of God in you? Oh, saith the Holy Ghost, here is an ornament! this is of great price with God; it is much set by with God; oh be in love with it. You use to say when you have a friend comes to you, If I did but know what you love I would have it for you. Now women and others say thus to God: Oh that I did but know what thou dost love, what God doth most value! Can you say, as in the presence of God, that if you did but know what God loved most you would endeavour to the uttermost you could that God should have it? Now behold here what the Holy Ghost saith. The Holy Ghost saith this to all women,—and so it is true of men and women and servants,—that a meek and a quiet spirit is of great price with God. Therefore now though you cannot remember other things, yet go away and conclude I have been indeed of a froward and pettish temper heretofore,—and oh the sins that I have committed in my frowardness!—but the Lord hath commended meekness to me. The text saith that they are blessed, and another scripture saith that it is much set by of God. Oh the Lord give us meek spirits that we may be blessed!

SERMON XII.

OR,

MEEK PERSONS SUBJECTS FOR CHRIST TO COMFORT.

'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.'—MAT. v. 5.

GOD doth not prize the gay things in the world. Gold and silver and land and possessions and crowns, what are these to God? Wherefore the Lord saith in Isa. xl., that 'all the nations of the earth are to him but as the drop of the bucket, and as the small dust of the balance; nothing, yea, less than nothing.' He doth not regard the nations of the world with all their pomp and glory, but now a meek and a quiet spirit God prizes; that is high in God's esteem, that is worth a great deal with God, though all the

nations of the earth are no more worth than a little dust is worth. Blessed then is the meek.

We add further, Blessed is the meek, for they are the subjects that Christ is anointed by the Father to comfort, to preach glad tidings to. Surely then they are blessed. I say, Christ, as he is anointed by the Father to preach the gospel to the poor, and to those that mourn, so unto the meek; in Isa. lxxv., 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the

meek.' The truth is, they are sad and disconsolate; therefore in the forefront Christ is designed by the Father to preach good tidings to the meek, and therefore they must needs be blessed that the Father hath sent Christ unto to preach good tidings.

And then, thirdly, Surely they are blessed; for this meekness, or ability to moderate and order anger, God himself accounts it his own glory, therefore it must needs put a glory upon those that are meek. In Exod. xxxiv. 6, where God would shew his glory, this is among the rest, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering.' That he is able to moderate his anger when he is provoked, and to be long-suffering with men, that is the glory of the Father.

Yea, and it is the glory of Christ. In Psalm xlv. you have a prophetic psalm of Christ, setting him out in his glory. And observe, when the Holy Ghost would set out Christ in his glory, what he saith of him: 'Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness.' Here is the majesty of Christ set out, and his glory; and meekness is one thing that is made that puts the glory and majesty upon Christ. Therefore blessed are the meek.

And then for the Holy Ghost. You know that he appears in the likeness of a dove, which, they say, hath no gall, which is an emblem of meekness; so that the meek have that that is the glory of the Father, the glory of the Son, and the glory of the Holy Ghost upon them. Blessed, then, are the meek.

Again, further, Blessed are the meek; for meekness it is an argument of their election. It is a fruit of God's eternal love to them, of God's electing love. Wherever there is true Christian meekness, we may conclude that that soul was thought upon from all eternity by God, elected unto eternal life. In Col. iii. 12—you that are acquainted with Scripture, you cannot but know these things—'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering, as the elect of God.' That as if the apostle should say, Would you make it appear that you are the elect of God, put on then the bowels of mercy and kindness and meekness. It is not an argument that a man is the elect of God because he hath means coming in, because he hath excellent parts of nature and honours in the world, and because he gets a great deal of money; this is no argument of God's election. But meekness and loving-kindness and long-suffering, these are the things that are the fruit even of election.

And then the meek they are blessed, because meekness it is a special fruit of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the saints, and an argument of the Holy Ghost's dwelling there. In Gal. v., you have there the most full setting out of the fruits of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit that I know in all the book of God. Now mark, in the fruits of the flesh you shall find anger and wrath; and when he comes to set out the fruits of the Spirit, there saith he in the 22d verse, 'But the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.' You shall find in setting forth the fruits of the Spirit, though there be many words, yet the most of them are but as it were *synonyms* of meekness. As now the fruit of the Spirit is love; you know a meek spirit and a loving spirit have great likeness one to another. And joy, there is none have of that sweetness of spirit as meek ones; and peace, they are those that are of peaceable dispositions, and long-suffering, and gentleness, and goodness; and then he comes with meekness. The truth is, in these there is meekness; but all these words are here mentioned by the Holy Ghost on purpose to set out the excellency of this grace of meekness; therefore he names so many graces that are so near akin to this grace of meekness. And as kinsmen look one like another, so do these graces that are so near akin, and this is the fruit of the Spirit. Passion and anger is the fruit of the flesh, the fruit of the devil in the heart; but meekness is the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore blessed are the meek.

And then meekness it hath in it magnanimity; it argues a magnanimous spirit to be of a meek and quiet spirit. Men do think that their passion and frowardness doth argue them to be of brave spirits, of jolly spirits; and no men do pride themselves more in the bravery of their spirits than froward people, especially in the time of their passion. But certainly a meek spirit is the most brave spirit in the world; and that is the judgment of the Holy Ghost in Prov. xvi. 32, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Why, what greater bravery and magnanimity is there than in soldiers when they come to take cities; and men that are full of courage, we account them to be men of brave and excellent spirits. Ay, but would you know who are the men and women that the Lord looks upon as the most brave and excellent spirits; they are the meek ones: 'He that is slow to wrath is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' It may be thou thinkest thou canst do no great service for God; others are employed in great and brave works, and do much in a little time; but canst thou rule thy spirit with this grace of meek-

ness, it is a more brave exploit, and more honourable in the eye of God, than if thou wert able to overcome a city. Surely there is much spoken of this grace in Scripture to shew how blessed they are.

And then meekness we find it much the walking worthy of our calling; in Eph. iv., those that are called to partake of the grace of the gospel, they never walk so worthy of it as in this grace of meekness: 'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.' Now how should we walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called? The Lord hath called you out of your natural estate, out of darkness into light, and he would have you walk worthy of this calling. Oh, saith a poor soul, how is it possible for such a poor creature as I am to walk worthy of such a glorious calling? What! for the Lord to let others to go on in the way of sin and death, and to call me out of that way to the kingdom of his dear Son, what can I do to walk worthy of this calling? If there were anything in the world wherein I might testify my walking worthy of this glorious mercy of God to me, I would do it. Why, would you fain walk worthy of your calling? mark what follows in ver. 2, 'With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.' Here is the way to walk worthy of our calling; it is the way of walking worthy of all mercies, of God's delivering of us from our bondage, when we can in 'meekness and lowliness, and longsuffering, forbear one another.' This is the walking worthy of our calling.

Now I come to that which I have here in the text: 'For they shall inherit the earth.'

It is as strange a promise as any we have in Scripture; as much against carnal reason as anything almost in all the book of God. 'Blessed are the meek.' Ay, you will say, they are blessed; they may get to heaven when they die, but they are like to suffer a great deal of wrong while they live. Nay, if we do put up wrongs, and bear with others that do us injuries, we may have wrongs enough, and we may quickly lose all that ever we have; this is the reasoning of a carnal heart. But Jesus Christ, if you dare trust him, he professes that of all men in the world the meek are those that shall inherit the earth—it shall be better with them in the earth than with other men.

Now you will say, Can that make them blessed, that they shall inherit the earth?

To that the answer is; Yes, that way of inheritance of the earth is a great blessedness, and a certain argument of a man blessed by God, not because he shall have riches in the earth, but he shall inherit it as a child of God, he shall have the right unto the things of the earth as an heir. Men may have the things of the earth by a donation from

God's bounty, and so I do not think they are usurpers of what they have; God gives it them as a prince or judge should give a malefactor somewhat to maintain him for his diet two or three days after the sentence of death till he comes to be executed. Now he doth not usurp his meat that he doth eat, for it is given him freely. So wicked men they have the things of this earth in that way given them by donation to live; though the sentence of death be upon them, and though they have forfeited all the comforts of this world, it is given them, but they do not inherit. They have not that right to the things of this earth as they are co-heirs with Jesus Christ. Now this is a blessed thing to have all our right restored in Christ, even in the things of this earth, and to have it upon such a tenure. Certainly this love of God comes from the same fountain from whence Jesus Christ himself came, though the things that are enjoyed are but outward in themselves. Those that have the care of God, the fatherly care of God, upon them here in this world to supply their wants, to help them in all their necessities, that have the influences of the love of God let out into them through all the comforts of the creature, that they can see God's love in them, and that have all things here in this earth sanctified unto them for the furtherance of their eternal good, 'blessed are they, for they shall inherit the earth.'

And there are some things else that we find in Scripture that Christ intends to his saints here upon the earth; for the Scripture tells us there shall be new heavens and new earth—not only new heavens, but new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. And so this blessedness may be fulfilled at that day when the new earth shall be: and in Rev. v. 10, 'And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.' I will not meddle with that matter of controversy about this, but take the words of Scripture as they lie. There is certainly a reigning of the saints upon the earth some way or other, for the Scripture holds it out in so many words, it is so. Why then those that are meek ones they shall have a great share in this reigning with Christ, even upon the earth.

Ay, but why meek ones rather than others?

Why, all God's people shall have one inheritance here in this world. It is said of Abraham, in Rom. iv., that he was 'the heir of the world;' and so all the seed of Abraham doth inherit Abraham's inheritance, and every one of them is an heir of the world here as well as of heaven. But why the meek ones? Surely there is a special connexion between this promise of inheriting the earth and meekness. That I will shew you in divers particulars. As,

First, Because those that are meek, they are not given so to wrangling as other men are; they love to

be quiet, and so by that means they enjoy their estates more comfortably here upon the earth. Men and women that are froward and passionate, and love wrangling and suing and laving, many times they rend their estates, and squander away a fair inheritance that their parents have left them. There are many men of such disposition, as that for a good use, for the maintenance of the gospel, they would grudge at five shillings; yet to have their wills in a way of law upon their neighbours they care not though they spend a hundred pounds; yes, five hundred pounds. Do not you often hear them say, Well, I will have my will though it cost me a brace of hundred pounds? Oh thou art a resolute, froward fool. But didst thou ever say, We will have the gospel set up among us whatsoever it cost us? For a good use nothing comes from thee but as it were thy heart-blood, but now for thy will thou canst spend. Well, many times God lets thee do so, and yet it may be thou hast not thy will neither; but now a meek one saves all this, and so comes to live a great deal better here in the earth; and that is the first thing wherein meek ones have the advantage here of the earth.

And then, secondly, That they have, though it be but a little, yet they have it with quietness and comfort. Now 'a dish of green herbs is better with peace and quietness, than a stalled ox where there is contention.' Why, a poor man and his wife, that sits but at a stool, and hath but a little piece of bread and small-beer, and yet live sweetly together and meekly, why, they enjoy more comfort in this earth than your great men do that have great tables, but yet are froward; when their diet is brought up to their table, why, this meat is not well dressed, and this bread is not well baked, and this servant doth thus and thus! Men that have a great deal of business in the world, and have froward spirits, why, they enjoy nothing at quiet of all they have; but now the meek ones, though they have but a little, yet they have it with comfort, with peace and quiet, and so they may be said to inherit the earth rather than others; the truth is, you do not enjoy the things of the world any further than you do with quiet.

Thirdly, Meek ones surely they shall inherit the earth, because meekness is such a beautiful grace that nobody will harm. Who will harm you if you follow that which is good? Such as live meekly and quietly in a family, everybody will be ready to maintain their cause; and so they come to have benefit here in the earth rather than others.

Fourthly, The meek shall inherit the earth. Why, those that are meek they are more drawing than others; as, for instance, if you should want a servant into your family, whom would you inquire for? would not you have a man or maid-servant to be of a meek and quiet spirit? And if you hear that they are of a

froward, passionate spirit, Oh, say you, they shall not come into my house, and so you lose your good service by that means; and another servant that is of a meek and quiet spirit, Nay, saith a master or mistress, I will have this servant though I give them more wages. Now here you see how the meek come to inherit the earth rather than other. Why, if a man be to seek a wife, one of the first qualities that he will look after is to see whether she be of a meek spirit; and if she be not, let her have what she will else, she is oftentimes rejected; but now let them be of meek and quiet spirits, though their portion be the less, yet they are accepted: so that meekness helps in the things of this earth. If a man were travelling, he would rather lie in an inn where the host and servants are of quiet spirits, than in another place where they are not; meekness doth much advantage the inheriting of the earth even in these things.

Fifthly, Wherever there is meekness, there the soul doth give up its cause to God; whatsoever wrongs a meek man hath here in this world, he doth interest God in his cause, and by that means he comes to enjoy a great blessing in this earth. I beseech you mind this: I say a meek man is said to inherit the earth more than another, because his spirit comes to be so ordered that whatsoever wrongs he suffers in the world, he can keep his heart quiet, and by that means can interest God in his cause, and when you have once interested God in your cause, you are like to do well enough. As now sometimes when men cannot get some debts, if they can make the debt to be the king's, they could get it that way a great deal better than any other way. So now is there any cause that thou wouldst fain have success in here in this earth? It may be thou wilt be wrangling and quarrelling thyself, and think to get it by thy own strength, and making of friends; this will not do it, a hundred to one but thou wilt miscarry. But now if thou canst with meekness give it up to God, turn it over to God, and interest God in this cause, certainly then thou wilt have success in it, and so thou wilt come to have thy mind and will even here in this world. I will give you an excellent scripture for this; in Num. xii., you have Moses commended there for the meekness of his spirit: 'And the man Moses was very meek above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.' I remember Ambrose saith concerning Moses, that all his great works did not make him so honourable as his meekness did; and Chrysostom gives the reason why God would speak face to face with Moses rather than with any other—it was because of his extraordinary meekness; and the Jews have this tradition, that when Moses was to die, God came to him and embraced him, and sucked out his soul. However the tradition is, the soul is very dear to God, and if ever God would draw a soul out such

a way, it would be the soul of Moses. And now see how he doth interest God in a great cause, and how God doth take it. We shall find in this chapter that Moses had a great deal of wrong done him; it is said that Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married, and they said, 'Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses?' &c.; 'And the Lord heard it,' saith the text. They came and wrangled with Moses: What is this Moses? As if they should say, What! hath the Lord spoken to Moses alone? he would take all upon himself, and he would lift up himself above others. Ay, but Moses is but an ordinary man as others are, and hath married an Ethiopian woman, and so they spake against Moses. But now you do not hear that Moses began to exclaim against them, and cry out against them. No; but 'the man Moses was very meek above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.' Mark, now, how this meekness did interest God in his cause: And 'the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle.' The Lord spake suddenly; he breaks, as it were, forth from heaven. As if God should say, What! is that servant Moses, that meek servant of mine, wronged? I will quickly appear for him. Mark, Moses was not sudden in passion, and therefore God was sudden. You are very sudden in your passion and anger, but if you would be less sudden in avenging yourselves, God would be more sudden in appearing for you. The Lord spake suddenly, 'Come out you three to the tabernacle of the congregation:' come out; I will judge the cause, saith the Lord. Then it follows in the 5th verse, 'And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle'—the Lord comes down from heaven to right his meek servant Moses—'and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth.' Just as if a father that hath his children wrangling one with another, he calls those that did the wrong. Well, stand you forth. Then mark; 'And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all my house.' Mark, in the 2d verse, 'And they said, Hath the Lord spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?' Moses doth not come and tell them, Well, God hath spoken by others, but not so as by me; no, Moses doth not so. But now mark, God saith, 'If there be a prophet, I will speak to him in a dream, and vision, but my servant Moses is not so;' now mark how God takes the part of a meek servant of his: ver. 8, 'With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak

against my servant Moses?' then ver. 9, 'And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed.' Moses when he was wronged he was the meekest man upon the earth; his passion is not stirred, but God's anger is stirred. The less the anger of Moses is stirred, the more is the anger of God stirred for him to vindicate him in his cause. You think, Oh how others wrong you, and your anger is stirred presently. Ay, but you do not interest God in the cause by this means; whereas if you were but meek, God's anger would be kindled for you; and do you not think that the anger of God being kindled against those that do you wrong will sooner right your cause than when your own anger is kindled? And so I find that when David, in Ps. xxxviii. 13, had wrong, and yet was very meek in his wrong, God was interested in the business. He complains of his wrong before: 'My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off. They also that seek after my life lay snares for me; and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.' Well, was David's spirit stirred now in anger and frowardness? No; but, saith he, 'I as a deaf man heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.' Though they did speak mischievous things against me, I as a dumb man opened not my mouth. And mark in the 14th verse, 'Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth there are no reprovers;' but then in the 15th verse, 'For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.' Here is the reason that made him so meek: O Lord, saith he, when they thus spake against me and wronged me, I was as a deaf man, and I heard not; I opened not my mouth: and the reason why I did not was because I had a God to trust in. O you that are carnal indeed, and know not the way of God, when you are angry you have nothing to help you but the raising of the passion of your anger. Ay, but a saint of God hath something else to help him: saith he, 'I did hope in thee, O Lord, thou wilt hear.' Mark, I heard not, but, Lord, I hope in thee that thou wilt hear. The less thou dost hear when thou art wronged, the more will God hear. Oh that we had but such a spirit as the servants of God had in former times. Moses and David here, oh how do they interest God in the cause!

Sixthly, The meek shall have blessings here upon the earth because there are so many gracious promises; besides this, made to them of very great mercy that will help them even in the earth. This promise that you have here, it is in Ps. xxxvii. 11. It is a promise that was in the time of the law; and mark, Christ would shew that the entail is not cut off, it is renewed again in the gospel, though the promise of outward things in other places are but in the general,

that godliness hath the promise of this life, yet Christ will single out particular promises for the meek ones. In Ps. xxv. 9, 'The meek,' saith the text, 'will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way.' Oh what a promise is here! it is worth all your estates. If you were but acquainted with Scripture, you would account this promise worth thousands. Give me one scripture where the qualification of the subject is named in so few words twice; the Lord loves the subject here, as if he delighted to have the very name in his mouth. He doth not say, The meek will he guide in judgment, and teach *him* his way, but the Lord loves to have the name in his mouth; Oh the meek, the meek, twice together, I love him, and I will guide him in judgment, and teach him his way. Now this promise, it is to be understood of guiding in judgment and teaching a man his way in anything; as, for instance, suppose a man hath an outward business befallen him in this world that hath a great deal of difficulty in it, so that he knows not what in the world to do to extricate himself out of the way. A meek spirit when he is in straits, the first thing he labours to do is this, to quiet his spirit in reposing him on God, and then when he hath quieted his spirit he looks up to the promise, Lord, hast not thou said, the meek wilt thou guide in judgment, thou wilt not leave him to his own thoughts, to his own spirit; the counsel of the froward is carried headlong, but the meek wilt thou guide in judgment. Thou hast a promise that God will guide thee to order any affairs in the world, if thou canst but overcome thy passion; and there is nothing will help a man more for understanding and judgment than meekness and quietness; therefore in Prov. xvii. 27, 'He that hath knowledge spareth his words, and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.' But in the original it is, a man of understanding is of a cool spirit. Men that are of hot spirits, hot-brained men, hot-spirited men, they think they have understanding more than others; but the Holy Ghost saith otherwise—the man of understanding is of a cool spirit. There is a great advantage that meekness hath even in a natural way to help a man's spirit, but much more when there is a promise too that he will teach them. There are many other promises in Scripture tending to the same thing. In Ps. lxxvi. 9, 'When God arose

to judgment to save all the meek of the earth.' When God comes to arise to judgment abroad in the world, the Lord doth not care for froward spirits, Let them go, saith God, those whose spirits are upon every little occasion set on fire; but when God arises to judgment he will be sure to look to the meek ones. And then in Ps. cxlix. 4, 'For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation.' Meekness is a beautiful grace, and the Lord will beautify the meek with salvation; and in Isa. xxix. 19 there is a promise to the same effect; but that one more in Zeph. ii. 1, 2, there is a notable promise when there shall be times of common calamity. 'Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired; before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you, before the day of the Lord's anger come upon you.' Then mark, ver. 3, 'Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgments; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.' You will say, Through God's mercy I find I have some power over my passion. Ay, but mark, are you meek? seek the Lord then, and seek meekness still, and then it may be 'you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger;' as if the Holy Ghost should say, If there be any man in the world hid, you may be he. Oh these are the men that are public blessings in the places where they live. The prayers of the meek ones shall prevail with God, not the prayers of the froward. When you that are froward come to seek God, why, you cannot lift up your hands without wrath and without doubting; but seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth. Oh the promises that God hath made to those that are the meek ones in the earth! and all these tend to the strengthening of this great promise that is here, 'The meek shall inherit the earth.'

Now the main thing that hath been spoken hath been but in way of explication, to shew you how this promise is made good, 'that the meek shall inherit the earth.' But now we shall come to the application of it. This meekness is like our salt, that in everything we have some need of it to season our lives; the lives of men and women are unsavoury in the places where God hath set them, because of the want of this grace of meekness.

SERMON XIII.

OR,

A REPREHENSION OF PROFESSORS THAT ARE NOT MEEK.

'Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.'—MAT. v. 5.

WE shall now come to the application, which I intend but in two particulars. The reprehension of those that profess themselves disciples of Christ, and yet we cannot see the stamp of the Spirit of Christ upon them ; in this particular, in regard of meekness, we have cause to draw buckets of tears to bewail, and to quench, if it were possible, the fire of the passion of men's spirits. And those that I shall direct myself to, shall be such as profess themselves willing to be Christ's disciples, to hear Christ, for it is Christ's sermon, and he directed himself to his disciples in this sermon. And it is no marvel to see men who are carnal, who are led by an earthly spirit, for them to be froward, passionate, and proud ; but for those that are godly to be so, this is that that goes very near to the Spirit of God. It is made a special argument against passion and frowardness, and so for meekness, because otherwise the Spirit of Christ would be grieved. In Eph. iv. 30, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed.' Why, what will grieve it ? what should we take heed of, that we may not grieve the Spirit of God ? Mark in ver. 31, 'Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice : and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' The giving way to passion and frowardness will grieve the Spirit of God. You that ever have found any good by the Spirit of God in your hearts, take heed of frowardness ; labour for meekness and kindness, that the Spirit of God may delight in you, for that is very suitable to the Spirit of God, that is a dove. I confess I had some thoughts to speak of the vain pleas that many have for their passion and frowardness ; but I consider for that, if God gives life and liberty, in going on in the handling of this sermon of Christ, I shall meet with that again in the 22d verse of this chapter, 'I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.' Therefore I leave these things to that place. But now this one thing only in this use of reprehension, and that

is to labour to shew those that profess themselves saints, that frowardness, want of meekness, it is that that is as much contrary to true grace as almost any corruption that can be named, which it may be they little think of. They think they have angry and passionate natures, they are somewhat hasty, but they are delivered from other corruptions that men do wallow in. Know that a hasty, froward spirit, a spirit that is not commanded by this grace of meekness, so far as it prevails, it is as contrary unto true grace almost as anything you can think of ; and truly there may be a great deal of suspicion whether there be true grace or no in those that have not, in some measure, this meekness prevailing in them, but rather passion and frowardness. As thus,

First, Frowardness and anger is contrary to true grace ; for what is it that grace doth in the heart when it first comes ? The first thing is to shew unto the soul its own vileness, its own wretchedness and baseness by sin, and the danger that it is in through sin. Now how contrary to this is a froward, passionate heart, to the sight of its own vileness and baseness. What ! dost thou see thyself to be a vile, base, sinful worm, and yet canst bear nothing that is against thee, but presently thy heart is in a flame if anything come cross to thee ? Surely thou knowest not thyself. And,

Secondly, The first lesson that Christ teaches any that comes into his school, it is the lesson of self-denial ; that is the A B C of a Christian : 'Whosoever will follow me let him deny himself.' Now how contrary is a froward, passionate spirit to the grace of self-denial, which is the A B C of a Christian, the very first lesson that Christ doth teach any that come into his school ! Wilt thou come to learn of me ? let that be the foundation of all. You must deny yourselves, you must not be set upon your own mind, and own will, and own thoughts, so as you have been. Ay, but now there is no such self-seeker as a froward heart. What is it that raises passion, but because I conceive myself to be crossed ? I am crossed in my own will, and that I would have ; whereas did but self-

denial prevail in the least, there would be way for meekness presently.

Thirdly, When grace comes into the heart, doth it not discover to the heart the infinite need it stands in of mercy? I lie at the feet of mercy, at the dispose of mercy, and if mercy comes not in to save me, I am undone for ever. Now, how doth this stand with thy sight or sense and need of mercy, that art of a froward disposition, and canst bear nothing with others, and yet confessest thou standest in so much need of mercy thyself?

Fourthly, When grace comes into the heart it brings the heart into subjection unto God, unto another rule than it walked by before. That is a principal work of grace, to subdue the heart of a sinner to God. The hearts of sinners are naturally stout and rebellious against God, and go on in a stubborn way till grace comes and lays them under. But now this is quite contrary to frowardness and passion. A froward heart would indeed be above God and any rule whatsoever; it cannot keep itself under and lie in subjection unto rule; and hence is the reason that froward and passionate people use to have such expressions, I will, and I will, and I care not; their hearts are not subdued to the authority of God. The heart that is subdued to the Lord and to his authority, come and bring it but a scripture, it yields presently; but a froward spirit is not so. How contrary is frowardness to true grace!

Fifthly, As soon as ever there comes any grace, there comes in the spirit of Jesus Christ to the soul. That makes the soul, in some measure, to be like unto Jesus Christ. Now the spirit of Christ, as I shewed you in the opening the excellency of meekness the last day, it is a spirit of meekness: 'Learn of me, for I am meek.' Now this frowardness of thine being opposite so much to the spirit of Jesus Christ, it is opposite to the work of grace.

Sixthly, Grace, when that comes in, it brings light into the soul, it brings wisdom to the soul, and guides it wisely. Naturally, we are foolish as well as disobedient, we are darkness itself; but now there is no disposition of soul that is in greater and thicker darkness than froward and passionate people. Passion doth exalt folly; such a soul is not guided by wisdom, and therefore very contrary to the work of grace.

Again, seventhly, You know the promise of the gospel, it is to meekens spirits, to meeken men. When the gospel comes, then the wolf and the lamb shall lie down together—those that were of wolfish spirits; and the lion and the ox shall eat together; there shall be a great deal of peace, love, and quietness, where the gospel comes. Now, then, that which is contrary to the work of the gospel is contrary to the work of grace in the heart. How hath the gospel been fulfilled then, if it hath come into thy soul, to cause

a quietness in the heart, and there is none? I beseech you that profess godliness, to consider there is more danger in a froward, passionate spirit than you are aware of; and though you may think, because you make profession, and come to bear the word, and spend a great deal of time in prayer and fasting and longing after ordinances—you think now that certainly you have grace; but you may be mistaken, the frowardness of your hearts may be your bane eternally. We read of Moses, though he be commended to be the meekest man that ever lived upon the earth, yet one froward, passionate act of his shut him out of Canaan; though in the whole course of his life he was so meek that God commends him to be the meekest of all, yet shut out of Canaan for one act. Canaan, you know, was a type of heaven; though Moses was pardoned so as he was received to heaven, yet as for Canaan God would not hearken to his prayer, but would take that advantage of him to shew his displeasure against that act of his of passion, and shut him out of Canaan. Take heed lest that froward heart of yours shut you out of heaven eternally. You mightily cry out of those that are drunkards; you are no such, and you think that cannot stand with grace—they are shut out of the kingdom of heaven. Why should there not be as much danger in a drunken passion, as in drunkenness by beer or wine? Certainly the drunkenness that comes by passion doth cause often as many, as great sins as that that comes by wine or beer. You would think it a foul thing if it could be said that once a year you should be overcome with drunkenness. Oh, how often have you been drunk with passion! and that drunkenness may be as grievous to the Spirit of God as if you were drunken otherwise, by beer or wine; and therefore look upon it as a greater evil than you are aware of.

But we proceed to the use of exhortation.

Blessed are the meek. Let us all learn to be of meek and quiet spirits. I remember in the sixth of Numbers it is said of the Nazarites, that they must drink no wine; so the text saith, they must drink no vinegar neither. The Nazarites were a people separated for God—from thence they had their name, from separation—and all the saints of God they are Nazarites. As Christ was a Nazarite, so all that are Christ's are Nazarites—are separated for God's people, separated from others: the Lord separates the godly man for himself. Now this is the law upon all Nazarites: they must drink no vinegar—that is, they must not be of vinegar spirits, of sour spirits, but must be of quiet spirits, of loving and meek spirits. It concerns us all, especially those that are inferiors, that they should be of meek spirits towards their superiors; those that are under afflictions, bodily or spiritual, they should be of meek and

quiet spirits. It is unbecoming any to be of a froward, passionate heart, but especially those that are under afflictions. The Lord sends afflictions upon thee to humble thee, and to meeken thee; and if thou beest not meek now, when wilt thou be meek? We ought to be meek towards our brethren, towards one another, and to be meek towards neighbours. There are many that are so used to frowardness and passion towards their servants, their children, or wives, that even when they have to deal with God himself they shew themselves froward and passionate then too. My brethren, let us learn to be in love with this amiable and lovely grace of meekness. And all that I intend to do therefore in this use, it shall be to propound unto you some various ways or helps whereby you may come to get a habit of meekness, to behave yourselves meekly and gently in the places where you live, that so this promise may be made yours, that you are the blessed ones of Christ, and shall inherit the earth.

In the first place, If you would have meek spirits, learn to set a high price upon the quiet and sweetness of your spirits. Set a high price upon it; account it to be a rich jewel of great worth, as we told you that God accounted the meek spirit to be of great price. It is one way to get it, to have a right esteem of the rest of spirit and quietness that meekness will cause in the soul. We may say of it as Tertullus the orator said to Felix, By thee we enjoy much quietness; there is many good things done by thee, and by thee we enjoy much quietness. By meekness there is much quietness enjoyed in the heart; therefore saith Christ, 'Learn of me, who am humble and meek, and you shall find rest to your souls.' There is rest. Put a high price upon the rest and quiet of your spirits. Say as the fig-tree did, Should I lose my sweetness, and come and reign over you?—when a temptation comes to passion, Shall I lose the sweetness that I have had in my spirit, to have my will in such and such a thing? Through God's mercy I have found this, that when I have been able to overcome my passion I have had the sweetest time that ever I have had in all my life. When I could deny myself, and exercise meekness, oh the quiet of my heart! it was worth a world; and shall I lose this for a trifle now, for a toy? Oh the poor trifles and toys that men and women do cast away the quietness of their spirits for, as if they were nothing worth! If a man had a golden ball in his hand, and any in the street should cast dirt upon him, would it not be accounted a folly in him to throw his golden ball at them again that cast dirt upon him, to revenge himself that way? Truly thus you do, you that have any of this grace of meekness in your hearts, and ever have had any quietness through the exercise of this grace. Now there comes a temptation; such a one doth things displeasing to you, and crosses your will, how do you

revenge yourselves? You cast this golden ball away upon them—that is, the quietness and meekness of your spirits, you lose this upon them. Account it at a high rate, and therefore lose it not for a little. That is the first rule.

A second rule to help us against passion, from the exercise of meekness and quietness. It is often to covenant with God, yet in the strength of Christ; and though it be but for a little time, as thus, why may you not covenant thus with God, you that find that you are overcome in your passion, and you say you are troubled for them, and would fain get victory over them to the exercise of this grace of meekness, why may you not, when you rise in the morning, thus bethink yourselves, Why, it is like this day there may fall somewhat out that may stir my passion, and take away the comfort of meekness that I have had; well, I will covenant, (through God's enabling of me,) now this day that, whatever shall befall me this day, I will be quiet till night at least. I will bear it but till that time, and upon this consideration, that if there be any cause for me to be stirred and angry, I may be stirred and angry afterwards for it, and I may right myself as well afterwards as this day; but for this day I am resolved that I will set myself to curb my passion and my will for this one day. And if you think that be too long, do it but till noon; to resolve that from this time till noon, whatever befalls me, I will manifest no passion, but I will rather take it into consideration after noon, or the next day, than now. One would think this were not impossible for a man, though of a very hasty spirit, yet to be resolved for one day that, whatever falls out, to bear with it that day. But you will say, this will not mortify that corruption of passion. But though it will not mortify it, yet you cannot imagine what power there will be in keeping down your passion but for a while. As fire, we know if it be but smothered it may be put out that way; and that man or woman that can but overcome themselves for one day, will find such sweetness that day that they will begin to think with themselves, Why may not I covenant for to-morrow too? And then they will find so much sweetness for that day, they will think they may resolve for the next day. Oh, if you could but overcome yourselves for a day, you find so much good as it would exceedingly help you against another day.

But thirdly, This covenanting will not be sufficient, except there be humiliation for that that is past. Those that only resolve to set upon a duty, and are not humbled for the want of the duty before, they are like to do little good by their resolutions. You must therefore, if you would overcome yourselves, and set upon anything that God requires of you, you must be humbled for that that is past.

Physicians use to purge out cholera by bitter things; and those that would tame wild creatures, it is by keeping them in the dark. So humiliation for the distempers of passion is a special means to purge out passion, and to tame and quiet the spirits of men and women. Many of you have been overcome in froward fits, and you have seen the inconvenience of them, and it may be after you have thought, Oh this is ill, and you hope you shall do so no more; but although you think you will do so no more, yet except you be humbled for that you have done, you will fall to it again. And so it is a rule in all other things, that those who do resolve to amend in any particular, if they be not humbled for that that is past, they will fall to their sin again. It is a very remarkable example that we have of the people of Israel. Read but the two or three chapters of Exodus. Chap. xv., towards the latter end, there you find that the people did chide with Moses because the waters were bitter. Well, they were not humbled for this. And in chap. xvi. you find them at it again; though God was merciful to them then, yet when they came to another strait, they were froward and angry again; and when God delivered them there, you shall find them at it again, in chap. xvii. 2; so that upon every new occasion they fall to it again. Why? Because we do not find that in the interim they were humbled for their former distempers. Therefore you that have such froward distempers, oh get alone, and apply the salt tears of humiliation unto that cholera of yours, and see what this will do. Humiliation for that that is past will be a special help for time to come.

Fourthly, If you would have meek and quiet spirits, take heed of the first beginning of passion. We know that when a fire is, we do not stay quenching of it till the house be all in a flame; but if there be but a little fire kindled in any part of the house, if there be but a smoke, you will say, Where is it? and are not quiet till you find it out. So should it be when passion begins to arise; your house begins to be on a fire, your souls begin to be on fire; and you should be as much set upon quenching of it at the first rising as you would be when you see the fire break out in your house at the very first. Perhaps a dish of water may quench that now, that if you stay but till half an hour hence many pails of water will not. So it is in the point of passion. If so be that people would be careful at first, then with a little ado they may quench their passion, if they will take it when their passion begins to kindle; but stay a while, and there will be no rule at all, no coming near a man. So poison: take it as soon as ever a man feels his body distempered, and there may be means to help against it; but if you stay a while till it hath got power over nature, there will

be little help then. Oh, look upon passion as if it were poison, and take some remedy presently; let not your passion be working any longer. So a fever; it oftentimes may be easily cured at first. So passion; it is a fever. Take the fever at the beginning. There have been most fearful distempers of passion risen from very small beginnings, which have broken out to most fearful outrages. As I remember in the history of Venice, I have read of two sons of the Duke of Florence, that having been a-hunting, there was contention about which of their dogs killed the hare. Saith one, My dog caught it first; and the other, No, but it was mine. And so they continued till one drew the sword upon the other, and so slew his brother; and the brother's man that was slain, seeing his master slain, he draws upon the other brother, and kills him. And so the duke loses two of his sons at the same time upon that occasion.

How often is it in your families, that a little spark, what a fire doth it kindle! At the first there may be but a word spoken amiss, that might easily have been passed over. No; but that word begets another, and that word begets another, and that begets yet another, and so it grows to a most hideous flame. Take heed of the beginning of passion. Whenever any anger begins to arise in the family, or in your souls, oh it is time for you then to look to yourselves. Sometimes you shall have friends that at first their fallings-out begin but in the very countenance. One man thinks, Surely such a one looks not upon me with such a pleasant countenance as he was wont to do; and from thence he begins to have surmises and suspicions, and then comes to make misinterpretations, and from thence there comes a strangeness; and from being strange they begin to hearken to tales that are carried one against another, and to believe them, and to aggravate them; and then they begin to speak some hard words one against another; and then they begin to do some ill offices one against another; and then break out into violent and eminent contention and actings one against another; whereas, had there been but care taken at the beginning, all this might have been prevented: Prov. xvii. 14, 'The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.' Take heed of the beginnings of sin, if so be that you would keep your spirits in any meek and quiet frame.

Then a fifth rule is this, If you would keep your spirits in quietness, make account beforehand that you will meet with things that shall cross your wills. That is a good help against passion. And to quiet our hearts, as Anaxagoras said, when he heard of his son that was dead, saith he, I know that I begat him mortal; so when you hire a servant at first, make account that there will be weakness in your servant

beforehand—certainly there will be many things done by him that will displease me. When you marry a wife, you should beforehand make account—there will something fall out between us that will displease one another. And so when you take a friend, beforehand you must make account—it is a friend that hath both his frailties and infirmities. Now if we make account beforehand that while we live in this world we are not like to have our wills to be satisfied in everything, this will be a means to quiet our hearts. This is no more than I made account of. A soldier that goes into an army, when he meets with hardship, he is quieted with this, it is nothing but what I made account of beforehand. Mariners, when they are abroad and meet with storms, were it seemly for them to vex and fret? they knew that it was likely they should meet with storms. So whenever anything falls out that crosses you, remember this: If I had wisdom beforehand, certainly I could think none other but that I should have divers things would cross me; and now God puts me to trial to see whether I will bear these crosses or no that doth befall me.

The sixth rule is this, Consider thy own frailty. Others there are that do provoke thee and stir up thine anger; but thou must go by that rule, We seek pardon, and we give it. I meet with such and such things in others, and it may be within a while they may meet with things amiss in me; they offend me, and I am like to offend them too; and that is a marvellous help to quiet the spirits of those that are truly gracious. Therefore in Gal. vi. mark the argument of the apostle there, 'Brethren, if a man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness: considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted;' and then it follows, 'Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.' Bear ye one another's burden; consider you may be tempted, and then bear ye one another's burden. The burden is like to be mutual; I bear my brother's burden, and my brother is like to bear my burden; I have a burden that may as well try his patience, as his tries mine; and therefore let us bear one another's burden. As now among servants, when one of them is sick, we would account it an unreasonable thing if the other should murmur for the helping of his fellow-servant—No, he will not do it. But reason thus: I must help him now; why, I may be sick ere-long, and then he will help me. So do others cross you, be you meek towards them, as you would expect that they should be meek towards you. It is ordinary for men that have the greatest weaknesses, for them to bear with the weaknesses of others, lest they be like, in this case, to the gouty leg, that must have all the attendance itself, but is useful for nothing; so it is with many that have such proud and froward spirits, that everybody must seek to please them, and

yet they will seek to please nobody themselves. Oh remember your own frailty!

And if any of you shall say, Ay, but I am not so great a burden to others as they are to me, and therefore there is no equality for me to bear his burden because he is like to bear mine.

I beseech you, do but observe what the answer to that is.

First, Every one is ready to think that he is not so grievous to others as others are grievous to me. Grant it; but then observe, it appears that thou art stronger than thy brother, and therefore if the heavier end of the burden be upon thy shoulder, then thou shouldst quietly bear it, because it seems God hath made thy shoulder more able to bear it; and it is not more difficult for a man to bear the offences of others against him, than it is for him not to be offensive to others. And therefore rather bless God when thou thinkest thus: The burden of my brother is greater than mine, and it is God's mercy to me that he hath made my strength greater than his, and so, considering one another's burdens, let us labour to bear them meekly and quietly.

Again, a seventh rule to help is this, Labour to keep thy peace with God. There is no such means to keep the heart in quiet as to keep peace with God. Let all be well between God and thy soul, and that will quiet thee when thou meetest with crosses. As if all be well within the earth, the tempests and storms that are about it will never shake it; and so that that disquiets men's hearts, it is the corruption that is within, and not so much the temptation that is without. But for this peaceableness of spirit that comes from our peace with God, it may be we shall have some occasion to speak more of, when we come to speak of that blessedness, 'Blessed are the peacemakers;' and therefore I pass by that.

The eighth rule is this, Convince thyself that there can be nothing done in anger, but may be better done out of it. 'The wrath of man doth not accomplish the righteousness of God,' saith the apostle. As now, wouldst thou reprove a man, the best way is to reprove him in meekness; you that are spiritual, restore in meekness such as are fallen. Physicians must not give physic scalding hot. Reproofs are physic; do not give it them scalding hot; give it them but merely warm, in a spirit of love; no hotter than love will warm it. And so, whenever thou correctest thy children or servants, thou thinkest that if thou doest it not in a passion, thou must not do it at all; that is thy folly. Thou mayest do it better out of a passion than in a passion; and therefore divers of the heathen, they would not correct their servants merely because they were in a passion. If thou wouldst give an answer to another who speaks to thee that is amiss, wouldst thou convince him, thou mayest do

it better if thou canst overcome thy passion. Thou mayest reason the case with thy brother a great deal better out of thy passion than in thy passion. Ay, the truth is, those that have power over their passion have a great advantage over any that they contend withal. Consider but of this, and this will be a means to meekness thy heart: when the heart is up in anger, it would fain be acting presently; but keep down thy passion, and call in the grace of meekness. Consider, I would now be acting, but why may not I act as well out of passion as in passion? yea, I may do it better, and therefore I will do it then. If passion do but stay a while, then it will be clarified. It is true, anger is the whetstone of virtue, if it be done in a right manner; but it is as it is in physic—if the gross be given, it will do no good, but if it be clarified, then it may be of a great deal of use; and so it is with passion.

In the ninth place, When thou feelest thy passion begin to arise, labour to turn thy passion another way, upon some other object: as thus—I feel anger begin to arise against my brother, or wife, or husband, or servant, now let me labour, instead of anger, to exercise mourning; such a one hath displeased me, my wife, or child, or servant; before thou givest way to thine anger, get alone and bemoan their sin. Thou sayest they have done exceeding ill. Have they? then they have sinned against God as well as against thee; and if so, then take this rule: before thou shewest any passion—get alone, and mourn for their sin against God; then come out and see how thy passion will work after thy mourning for their sin. You would find this rule of very great use—if husbands and wives that have not lived quietly, or masters in their families—if you would but observe it that when anything is done amiss; if it be not sin against God, then there is no great matter to stir your anger, but if it hath sin in it, then be sure to mourn for it. First before God you let out your passion, and so turn anger into love. Physicians, when they would stanch blood that runs too much in one vein, they seek to turn it into another; and so should we do with our affections. And that Christian hath a great deal of skill, wisdom, and strength that is able to turn his affections: Now I will exercise anger, and now I will exercise love, and now I will exercise sorrow, and now I will exercise joy, and now I will exercise hope; so that he is able to turn his affections this way and that way. If a man be not able to turn his affections this way and that way, surely there is some distemper; but this is the excellency of a Christian, he hath command over his affections, he can turn them this way or that way. It is a good thing in dealing with children, when they are dogged or sullen, not to fall upon them in a rage, but if you can turn their

thoughts to something else. You have displeased them in one thing, do not be grating upon them in that one thing, but see if you can turn them to be thinking or looking after some other thing, and by that you shall get them sooner out of their sullen mood than by opposing it. So it is with ourselves; many times there is a sullen, dogged, froward mood upon our hearts; now the way perhaps will not be to oppose directly that sullenness of our hearts, but the way will be to have some object before us to turn the stream of the heart to.

Tenthly, Another rule to help against anger it is this: Do not multiply words; take heed in froward passion that words be not multiplied. In Prov. viii. 13, and in Mat. v. 22—divers scriptures I might shew that the multiplying of words is very dangerous in time of passion, and especially to give liberty to wild speech. Words are wind; ay, but they are that wind that blows up this fire to a mighty heat. In Prov. vii. 11, it is said of the whore that 'she is loud.' It is a most unbecoming thing for women, though they be provoked by anger, to be loud in speech, to be loud in their words, and to multiply their words. The whorish woman is described by that she is loud; and therefore those that would behave themselves as matrons in sobriety and modesty, take heed of loud speeches. And then of adding word to word; the best way is rather to be silent, rather to turn away, as we read of David, when he had to deal with his froward brethren, in 1 Sam. 17, 'He turned away from them, and would answer no more.' I confess to turn away in a sullen manner, that is not good neither; but to give a few gentle speeches and then to turn away—to turn away without any answer that may provoke as much; but first to give some gentle answer and then to turn away, and resolve not to multiply words at such a time as this is; that is another rule.

Eleventhly, If you would not be passionate, but of meek and quiet spirits, take heed of putting yourselves into too much business that God calls you not unto. And the reason is this, because there is no business but will have somewhat or other to fall cross; therefore be sure to be about nothing but what God calls you to, and there you will have the blessing of God. But when men will have many irons in the fire, more than God calls them to, no marvel though their fingers be burnt; we find that those men that are very busy are very froward. But now when you know that your business is but that that God calls you to, and you do it in obedience to God, you may expect the blessing of God upon you to quiet you; but otherwise there will be many temptations in it.

Twelfthly, Further, take heed of too much curiosity. A man that is in a family, if he will be prying into everything in the family, he must have his eyes in

every room, and take notice of every passage in the family; if so, a thousand to one but there will many things fall out that will disturb his passion. 'You must not take notice of every little fault in a servant, nor every small offence in wife or children; but you must see and not see, if you will be of meek spirits. A foolish, nice curiosity in men in prying into everything in a family, and those things it may be that do not concern them, as it is very unbecoming a man, so it is that that occasions a great deal of disturbance in the family.

Thirteenthly, Another help will be to consider thus: Oh, what if this be now a temptation of the devil! The devil owes me a spite, and who knows what the devil is now putting me upon! If thou hadst but so much power over thy heart as to think thus: Whenever I am in a fit of passion, this is like to be a temptation; the devil intends to do me some mischief at this time. It is an excellent similitude that Augustine hath about this: 'As it is with a fowler,' saith he, 'he sets his net near a hedge where the birds are, and then he goes and takes stones and flings into the hedge to scare the birds. The fowler doth not think to kill the birds by the stones, but it is to drive them by the stones out of the hedge, that so they may fly into the net.' So it is, saith he, when the devil hath an intention to draw thee to some sin; saith the devil, I cannot tell how to draw them to such and such sins except I stir their passion; let me but stir their passion, and then I shall get them to that sin well enough. The thing that the devil aims at is some sin he would have them fall into. When the devil comes to stir up passion—as the fowlers throwing stones into the hedge—he cares not so much for thy passion; but the thing that he aims at, it is the evil he would bring thee into by thy passion: so that the very thoughts of this, now a passion is come, and if this should prove but a temptation to some vile sin, what would become of me? and therefore I will sit still and do nothing rather than I will be thus hatched by the devil.

Fourteenthly, Set the example of God, of Jesus Christ, and of his saints before you; it is a mighty way to help against passion and anger, considering how meek the Lord is. When God had to deal with Cain, with what meekness and gentleness did God himself deal with Cain. 'Why, where is thy brother?' saith God; and when Cain answered God churlishly, yet God goes on in a meek way, and saith, 'If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?' And so when God had to deal with Jonas, which was that froward, pettish prophet—for so he was. 'Now,' saith God to him, 'Jonas, dost thou well to be angry?' when he saw him in a fit of anger. It is a good pattern for us, when we have to deal with others that are of angry spirits, to say, Do you well to be angry?

God did not come in a boisterous way to Jonas, but comes in a gentle and meek way: 'Dost thou well to be angry?' saith the Lord. Consider how God deals with his poor creatures; and it is no dishonour to you to deal so with your servants and children, that are not so injurious to you as you are to God.

I might also set before you the example of Jesus Christ. I remember I have read of one, that his wife asking of him how he was able to overcome himself when he had such wrongs and injuries offered him. Why, truly, this is the way that I take, saith he: I go and meditate on the sufferings of Jesus Christ; what wrongs Jesus Christ had, and yet how he was as a lamb that opened not his mouth, and I never leave meditating until I get my spirit quieted. The mediation of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and of his wounds, and his wrongs, and how gently and meekly he bare them, oh it is a special means! I remember Camerarius tells of some, when they were in a mad rage they would set a sheep or lamb before them, and it would be a means to quiet them. When we are in a passion, in a mad rage, let us but set that meek lamb, the Lord Jesus, before us, and that will be a means to quiet us. So you have it in 1 Pet. ii.; there the apostle makes use of the example of Christ to keep our spirits in a quiet and meek way, 'For,' saith he, 'hereunto were ye called,'—that is, to take patiently what wrongs were offered to us—'because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.' Read but this text, and set but this example of Jesus Christ before you, and it will be a special means to quiet your spirits.

And so I should have set before you the example of the saints, of Abraham, of David, of Stephen, of Paul, and others; but I will only name one or two others. I remember the example of Calvin towards Luther is very famous, and especially it concerns ministers. Though there were a great deal of difference in judgment and ways—Luther was of a hot and fiery spirit, and Calvin more tender; and Calvin had such a speech concerning Luther; 'Well,' saith he, 'let Luther call me devil, call me what he will, yet I will acknowledge Luther to be the servant of Jesus Christ, and one whom Christ doth use as an instrument of a great deal of good.' Here was a sweet and quiet spirit in Calvin, that was a man so instrumental for God. There is no such way to heap coals of fire upon the heads of those that do oppose us, as to carry ourselves meekly and gently towards them.

Therefore, for the close of all, I beseech you lay up these rules that you have heard.

And let this one be added more. Fifteenthly,

Take heed of the next temptation, if so be that you would exercise this grace of meekness—though you forget other rules, yet lay up this—take heed, I say, of the next temptation, go away but with this resolution: The Lord hath made me to hear of the excellency of the grace of meekness, how it is commended by Christ, and that it hath such excellent promises; and he hath shewn me somewhat of the evil of a froward spirit that is so contrary to it, and hath given me many rules for the helping of me that so I may live more quietly in my family. Well, now I shall go away, and after I have heard all this, it may be a temptation will come this night, for that is the way of the devil, that just at any time when you have heard against some particular sin, there will come some temptation to that sin. And when you have been put upon some duty, there will come some temptation to take you off of that duty; for if the devil can but prevail with you after a sermon, then he makes account that all that sermon is gone, and will do you no good. So now, after you have heard of all this about meekness, it may be this night, or to-morrow morning, there is like to come some temptation to frowardness and passion in your spirits—for a hundred to one but you will meet with something. Well, had you but a heart to think now—Well, this is

the devil's work to take away all the profit of those sermons that I have heard of meekness, and therefore, through God's grace, I hope I shall take heed of that temptation. And you cannot imagine what a deal of good the next temptation being resisted may do. But now, if either to-night or to-morrow, or two or three days hence in this next week, there comes some temptation, and the very first temptation of all overwhelms you and prevails against you, farewell these sermons then; I have lost my labour as concerning you. And whether you may live to hear any more sermons about this again it is more than you know, and therefore look to yourselves that you may not lose the word; and go away with such resolutions, Well, through God's grace, I will take an account of these truths for the ordering of my heart and of my life in my family; and all that lives with me shall see by my life that I have heard some sermons of meekness. You that are women, and it may be have lived unquiet with your husbands; and you that are husbands, that have been bitter to your wives, oh that it might appear that you have heard this blessedness, 'Blessed are the meek,' that so both husbands and wives may put this even into their prayers, Blessed be God that we have had this scripture opened to us.

SERMON XIV.

OR,

RULES AND HELPS TO CHRISTIAN MEEKNESS.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

THE last day you may remember we spoke to the close of the third beatitude here mentioned by Christ, 'Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.'

And the close of it was an exhortation to this blessed and precious grace of meekness. Divers rules were given for the furtherance of this grace of meekness. I intend not to look back at all to what we then spake, only add this one thing further as a great help to the meekening of our hearts, and that is, especially to those that are godly,

Sixteenthly, The want of this grace is a great dishonour to them and to their profession. Let such remember their own prayers, their own expressions before God in prayer; it would mightily help to meeken

us. Remember how thou hast acknowledged thy villainess before God; thou canst freely in many expressions tell God what a vile, unworthy, sinful, wretched creature thou art, and how through thy sin thou dost deserve the eternal wrath of God; that it is a wonder thou art out of hell. Thus thou canst go on perhaps in prayer, or it may be in company, a long time speaking thus against thyself; and yet as soon as thou hast done, if anybody cross thee, thou canst be as froward and as angry as any else. What! art thou the man or woman that but a while since, a few hours or a day ago, wert before God acknowledging how vile, sinful, and wicked thou wert; and that thou didst wonder thou wert out of hell all this while? Art thou

the man or woman that didst acknowledge this, and when thou comest to any cross in the world thou art not able to bear it! Thou sayest thou deservest hell; but if a child, or servant, or wife, or husband, or friend do cross thee, thou canst not bear it. If thou couldst but look back to thine expressions before God in prayer, it would cause thee to be vile in thine own eyes, and so to have thy heart to fall down when thy passion begins to rise. Thou that hast a passionate, froward heart, either in the morning thou dost pray to God, or thou dost not. If thou dost not pray, thou shewest thyself to be atheistical; if thou dost pray, I suppose one special part of thy prayer is the acknowledging of thy wretchedness, sinfulness, and vileness. Why hast thou done that in the morning, if when any temptation comes to passion in the daytime thou yieldest to it? Now if thou couldst but have the power over thyself as to think of thy prayer, and to think how unsuitable this carriage of thine is to all those acknowledgments of thine, of thy sinfulness and wretchedness, it would tame thee in the midst of thy unruly passion.

There should now have been mentioned several sorts of people that should especially labour for this grace of meekness. It concerns us all; but some more than others. I will only speak a word to those that are in an afflicted condition. Therefore the Hebrews have the same word that signifies *afflicted*, for *meek*; meekness and affliction in the Hebrew tongue are expressed by the same word. To note that such as are under affliction, they should be of meek and quiet spirits, for the hand of God is then upon them. And yet it falls out quite contrary ordinarily, that such as are most afflicted, are most froward; as many times those that are sick, when they are sick, they are more pettish and more froward than at other times; whereas they should be more meek, and quiet, and gentle under God's hand. And so many that are poor people—where do you hear such reviling communication as from such as are miserably poor? how do they lavish out words! Do but cross them in any one thing, what railing and reviling comes from them! shewing a proud, froward, passionate spirit. If God hath afflicted thee with poverty, it is, if he hath a love to thee, that he might keep thee low; and if thy heart were low, thy heart would likewise be meek.

But we let pass this of meekness, 'Blessed are the meek,' and come to that: read in ver. 6, 'Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness.' 'Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst.' This seems to be as contrary to the opinion of the world as anything can be. The world rather saith, Blessed are they that are full, than they that hunger and thirst; but the Holy Ghost pronounces a blessedness upon those that hunger and thirst, and a woe to those that are full: in Luke vi. 25, 'Woe unto you that are full.'

You think it the greatest happiness that men have their full tables, and full dishes, and full cups, and full purses; but the Holy Ghost doth not look upon men's happiness to be there. 'But woe be to those that are full; and blessed are they that hunger and thirst.'

Some understand this hunger and thirst literally; and the rather because, comparing it with what St Luke saith—as I told you in the beginning of this sermon, that, notwithstanding divers objections against it, it appears to be the same sermon—chap. vi. 21, 'Blessed are ye that hunger now.' Luke doth not mention the word righteousness, but only ye that hunger now; and opposes hunger to those that are full, and therefore they think it is literally meant. 'Blessed are they that do hunger'—that is, such men as are godly, so it must be understood; that want bread, and want drink; such as being godly are put to such great extremities as they have not bread to put in their bodies, nor drink to quench their thirst; as if Christ should say, 'Be not troubled; though you should be put to such extremity as to want bread, and want drink, this will not hinder your blessedness; you may be blessed for all that.' And whereas, when you are in great wants, you may be ready to look upon those that are full and have abundance, and to think them to be blessed; but be not deceived. 'Woe to such as are full;' but you are blessed in these your great wants and extremities. And so they take this blessedness out of the Old Testament, as the former of meekness, in Ps. xxxvii. 11, from whence Christ takes that of meekness; and this of hungering and thirsting out of Isa. lxx. 13. But to rest in this interpretation is not my purpose; and therefore we must proceed further, for the object here of their hunger and thirst leads us further than so, 'for they hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Yet I confess I find very learned interpreters and godly men, such as Calvin and Musculus, they carry these words no further than thus: Blessed are they that in their great extremity do but hunger and thirst to have that that is fit for them, that that is right. Those that are godly and brought to a low condition, and oppressed, they hunger and thirst that they might have righteous dealings in the world, that they may be dealt withal righteously, and they go no further than this; and you know Mr Calvin is one that doth usually hit the sense as right as any, and is as spiritual as any interpreter ordinarily, yet I say in these words he goes no further than this. By hunger and thirst, that clearly is meant earnest desires—desires that rise out of pain from the sense of the want of the thing that is desired, from whence the desires grow very strong and earnest; for no desires are so strong and earnest as the desires of the hungry man, or the thirsty man; and so do hunger and thirst after righteousness, either after righteous dealings,

that they may be dealt withal righteously, or that there might be righteousness in the world; that is a little higher than they go, they only speak of hungering and thirsting after this, that they themselves may be dealt withal righteously, and have righteousness; but I think we may go further even in the interpretation of this righteousness, to speak of righteousness as from your dealing, such as hunger and thirst that righteousness might prevail in the world, and this indeed I verily think to be one special thing intended by the Holy Ghost. Christ he looks upon his disciples, and as if he should say to them, You are like to meet with much unrighteous dealings in the world; you will see how the world is carried on in injustice, and unrighteousness that prevails in the world; but in the meantime this will go near to your hearts, it will be a pain and grief to your souls to see the unrighteous carriages of things in the world, and you will long for the time wherein righteousness may prevail in the world and rule among men. Well, blessed are you; do not you meddle with their unrighteous dealings, but when you see it among others, let your longing desires be for the time wherein righteousness shall prevail in the world; and blessed are you that do thus hunger and thirst. This I verily do believe is a special thing that Christ intends in the pronouncing of this blessedness, and therefore I must not pass over this so lightly as many do in handling of this blessedness. I confess the other righteousness, the most of your latter men that especially speak of this in a preaching way, they look to that that they think to be most spiritual—as thus, that hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Blessed are they that have earnest, strong, and unsatisfying* desires after the righteousness of Christ, that they may be clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and stand righteous before God through the righteousness of his Son: Blessed are they.

And then, Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after the power of righteousness in their own hearts, to be delivered from the power of sin, and to have further degrees of sanctification in their hearts. This is ordinarily, and I suppose in most of your thoughts that have minded this scripture—you have rather looked upon this righteousness to be meant the righteousness of justification by Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of sanctification by the work of the Spirit in the heart; and these two are very godly interpretations, very spiritual, and we must not exclude them, but shall speak likewise to either of these two. But for this exercise I shall speak only of the first.

'That hunger and thirst after righteousness,' after righteous dealing. And though the other are more excellent in themselves, yet I doubt much whether

* Query, 'unsatisfied' ? or 'unsatisfiable' ?—Ed.

Christ had not this in his thoughts, even first, speaking to his disciples that were like to be in a poor and mean condition; therefore he begins with those that are poor in spirit. We interpreted the meaning of that; and so now you are like to meet with much unrighteous dealings, but blessed are you that are content to submit to such a condition that you are like to meet withal, and yet send up your desires to heaven from God to clear your righteousness. As if Christ should say, The world will accuse you and revile you for being troublesome, factious, and turbulent among them; but blessed are you: can you appeal to God for your righteousness, and desire, Lord, while the world doth thus revile us, and account us to be hypocrites, to make a show of religion, and yet to have no truth in us, Lord, do thou judge our righteous cause; Lord we appeal to thee. Why, saith Christ, blessed are you while you do thus; I will look upon you, and have an eye to you. When others shall say that you are false, and that you falsify your trust that is committed to you, you can appeal to God, and desire him to come and judge your righteous cause. Lord, let righteousness appear; let it appear that under these accusations that I have behaved myself righteously. Blessed are you; be not now troubled. And so when the world accuses you of making a trouble in the world, you can appeal to God and say, Lord, thou knowest that there is nothing that I desire more than peace; and so far as I can see it to be thy mind, I can yield in anything, and therefore, Lord, appear and manifest my righteousness before the world. Blessed are you, saith Christ; be not over-much troubled that you are thus accused; you hunger and thirst for the time when the Lord shall make your righteousness appear. And so if the world shall accuse you of self-seeking—that in all things that you do you do but aim at yourselves in all—why, you can appeal to God of the righteousness of your hearts in these things, and you thirst after the time when God will come to discover the secrets of all men's hearts. Lord, thou hast a time for to manifest the secrets of hearts, and then it shall appear whether I sought myself or thy glory. Blessed are you if you can do so, and hunger after the manifestation of God's righteousness in this. If they shall accuse you for partiality, or wronging others, it may be such accusations are upon you, why, still you hunger after the time for God to clear up righteousness. There is nothing more ordinary in the world than for the wicked of the world to cast aspersions upon the saints of God for some evil or other to darken them in their holy profession; but if they bear what is cast upon them patiently, and long for the time that the righteous God will appear to manifest their righteousness, blessed are you when you thus hunger and thirst even after this righteousness.

Blessed are you, for,

First, You have the testimony of your own, consciences when men do accuse you.

Secondly, You have the testimony of God; God witnesses for you.

Thirdly, Blessed are you, for God is working for you all this while, while you lie under these accusations.

And you shall be satisfied one day, you shall be cleared; God will clear your righteousness, and he will make it break forth as the noonday. Now you are bespattered, as if Christ should say, You are all to be smeared with accusations from evil men, but you shall be clothed with white linen: in Rev. xix. 8, 'And to her,' that is, to the church, 'was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.' White linen, it is true, it is the righteousness of Christ; but it may have reference to this righteousness that I am speaking of. As if so be that a matronly woman, being in the street, should have mad people cast dirt upon her, when she comes home she hath clean linen to put upon her; so though the saints here are bespattered with dirt, to make their names to be odious in the world, yet Jesus Christ hath fine linen to put upon them, and they shall appear righteous before the saints and angels, before all the world another day; and so in Mat. xiii. 43, there is a promise that the righteous shall one day 'shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' It is true, they shall shine forth then in a great deal of glory put upon them; but this glory of their righteousness shall be as the shining of the sun, besides the other glory of their great reward in the kingdom of their Father. Now they are in the kingdom of the world, and they are where the kingdom of darkness doth prevail; but when they come to the kingdom of their Father they shall shine forth as the sun. It is meant of all righteousness, either that perfect righteousness of Christ that they shall be clothed withal, or the perfection of sanctification, or this righteousness whereby they shall be cleared from all aspersions that are cast upon them. Blessed are they, for they shall be cleared.

Yea, blessed are they, for they shall be filled. You shall be recompensed for all those accusations that are unrighteously cast upon you now; you shall be rewarded so much the more, it will increase your glory, therefore blessed. Look upon yourselves as blessed creatures when you are accounted thus unrighteous, for you shall be honoured so much the more; therefore we have that notable scripture in 1 Pet. iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.' God will certainly recompense you for all that you shall suffer this way.

But further, Those that hunger and thirst after

righteousness. Not only that God would clear their righteousness—that is one kind of righteousness that they hunger and thirst after—but that there might be righteousness among men in general; that righteousness might prevail in the world. Blessed are they that have their hearts pained when they see the unrighteousness that is abroad in the world. I say, such as find their hearts pained at the sight of that unrighteousness that is in the world; and so they do long after righteousness, and cry out to God that he would appear and set up righteousness to rule in the world, such as are grieved in their hearts to see the unrighteous dealings among the children of men. This is that that Christ aims at: saith he, Indeed you will see a great deal of unrighteousness; but you that are my disciples, it will trouble your hearts, and you will long for that time when righteousness shall prevail: Blessed are you:—

For, first, The people of God cannot but be pained in their hearts when they see unrighteous dealings in the world, as much pained as a man is that wants bread; it more troubles them than all their persecutions, than all their afflictions; and there is nothing in the world that they long for more than the coming of Jesus Christ—to this end, not only that they themselves may be saved, but that then righteousness may prevail.

For, first, When the saints see unrighteous dealings in the world, by that they see the honour of God is much eclipsed. Why, they think thus within themselves, is not God a righteous God? Oh, then what a dishonour is this to such a righteous God, that there should be so much unrighteousness in the world as there is!

Secondly, This unrighteousness that they see among men it is very unsuitable to their spirits; for the Lord hath put righteousness into their hearts. In some measure their hearts are for righteousness. Now when they see men in public place, or men that make profession of religion, to carry things unrighteously, this pains them; it is that that is unsuitable to that gracious frame that God hath put into their hearts.

Thirdly, By this unrighteousness of men they see how the godly suffer; how precious servants of God are trodden under foot; and how wicked and ungodly men they shine and prosper, and they are made of. Now this cannot but grieve their hearts to see such a disorder; yea,

Fourthly, By the unrighteousness that they see in the world, there are many temptations to a great deal of evil; yea, sometimes temptations that do in some degree prevail with such as are truly godly, as they did with David, with his righteous soul. In Ps. lxxiii., when he saw the wicked prosper, and how the godly were afflicted, David began to fail, and his foot began to slide. When such as are godly see that men that

carry things unrighteously, and yet have their designs and prosper; and that others that are truly godly, that walk according to rule, they many times suffer much, this is a great temptation even to those that are godly. Now they long for the time to have this temptation taken away; to have the dishonour of God taken away; to have that that is unsuitable to their spirits taken away; to have the sufferings of the saints taken away, and to have this temptation taken away. As if they should say, O Lord, if righteousness did prevail, then thou wouldst be honoured more than ever; then we should have that that would be the joy of our hearts; then thy saints should not suffer as they do; then we should be delivered from those temptations that we meet withal.

Fifthly, By unrighteousness they see how the wicked are burdened in their hearts. Now, say the saints, this is grievous, to see that men in unrighteous ways should so prosper as to be hardened, and think that God is like to them. Oh that there were righteousness prevailing, that wicked men may be ashamed and confounded!

Sixthly, By this means they see that many grow atheists, and they doubt whether there be a God or no, ruling in the world; therefore, O Lord Jesus, let it appear that thou dost govern things in the world.

Seventhly, By this unrighteousness they see the kingdom of Satan set up, and the kingdom of Christ, which is a righteous kingdom, that is mightily hindered by it. Why, Lord, shall the kingdom of Satan always prevail in the world? O Lord, when shall the righteous sceptre of Jesus Christ sway among the children of men?

Eighthly, lastly, This unrighteousness it tends to wickedness, to ruin, to bring all things to confusion. Now, Lord, except thou dost appear in thy righteousness to right all these things that through the unrighteousness of men are in such a disorder, all things will run to ruin and confusion; therefore, Lord, hasten and appear to be a righteous God. Thus the saints do hunger and thirst after righteousness, that there may be righteous dealings in the world; and you see what it is that pains their hearts, what evil there is in unrighteousness, and what excellency they see in righteousness.

They hunger and thirst after righteousness; they have great desires, and they send forth many prayers to God. Oh that God would hasten those times! They send up strong cries to God that righteousness might come into the world. How long, how long shall it be, holy and true? &c. They send up mighty prayers to God that righteousness might prevail in the world. And for their own parts, therefore, they, whatsoever they do, will not meddle with any unrighteous ways, but rather suffer any misery in the world than to be any means to countenance or join with

any unrighteous ways, much less to do any unrighteous actions themselves. And therefore though they be in any public place, though there be much coming in by their places, they will rather be content to lose all the advantages of their places, than to meddle with any unrighteous actions. A righteous heart doth more hunger and thirst after righteousness than after bread or drink; and therefore will shake his hands of unrighteousness, though he lives in an unrighteous world; yet, saith he, God forbid that I should have to do with this unrighteousness. No, it is righteousness that my soul doth hunger and thirst after; and therefore though I lose all my friends, my estate, my outward enjoyments, yet I will be sure to keep my conscience right, and be a friend for righteousness as long as I live. I will manifest that I do not dally and trifle with God in hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and yet be unrighteous myself. I will labour to promote it as much as I can, that righteousness may prevail in the world. Now blessed are these.

For, first, They have for the present the image of God upon them. Thou that hast such a righteous heart hast the image of God; just as God's heart is, so thy heart is. The Lord is a righteous God; the Lord loveth righteousness, and so dost thou. Blessed art thou of the Lord, who hast the image of God in thee.

Secondly, Such as do thus hunger and thirst after righteousness, they are witnesses for God in this unrighteous world. They live now in an unrighteous world; but shall the great God have none to witness for him? Yes, there are a generation of men that live among others that are unrighteous, that do stand up to witness for God's righteousness, that desire nothing in the world more than righteousness. Oh blessed, blessed are you of the Lord, you are witnesses unto God.

Thirdly, You are blessed in this regard, for this your hungering and thirsting after righteousness doth deliver you from many temptations that others are overcome withal. Other men that it may be have some resolutions not to be unrighteous, but yet when they see the unrighteousness of others, they are overcome, for their hearts are not so set against unrighteousness as thine is to hunger and thirst after it; but now when the heart is so grieved for the unrighteousness that is in the world, and so longing after the righteousness of God, this will deliver thee from temptations; the temptation that takes other souls, it takes not thy heart; and that is a blessed thing, to be delivered from temptation.

Fourthly, Those that do thus hunger and thirst after righteousness, they are blessed; for they are fit to be used in public service. They are not men that would bring righteousness down to their own ends,

and seek to make a gain of the public. What use are they fit for? But now for such as do above all things hunger and thirst for setting up of righteousness in the world, these are men fit to be employed in public service; the Lord delights to employ such. And men, when they come to see it, that their hearts are set upon righteousness, they will love to employ such, though it may be for a while those that seek to keep themselves to the rule, some will fret and vex at them; but let such men go on in a constant way promoting righteousness, such will get honour before men in the conclusion. All that do converse with them will look upon them as blessed here, and such men as are fit to be employed in public service.

Fifthly, They are blessed, for they are the men that stand against the stream of unrighteousness, to hinder the floods of it, that it doth not overflow the world. Blessed are they that are willing to stand against the stream of unrighteous dealings, to keep it from overflowing of all; they are instruments of much good to others as well as to themselves. These the Scriptures saith are blessed. In Ps. v. 12, 'For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous.' Certainly the Lord he will bless the righteous; yea, 'the secret of the Lord is with the righteous,' Prov. iii. 32; 'The Lord loveth the righteous,' Ps. cxlvi. 8; 'The Lord upholdeth the righteous,' Ps. xxxvii. 17; 'And the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry,' Ps. xxxiv. 15. Thus the Scripture is full of promises to the righteous, and shewing that they are blessed. But this promise here is, that they shall be filled.

Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled. Certainly there is a time coming that the Lord will fill the desires of his righteous ones; as thus,

First, He will fill their desires: Prov. xi. 23, 'The desire of the righteous is only good.' It is good, therefore God approves of it. He will fill it, for,

First, There is a time coming that all those that love righteousness shall certainly see unrighteousness punished, and righteousness rewarded. Now and then you see unrighteousness punished and righteousness rewarded, but that doth not fill you. There is a time coming that thou shalt see all unrighteousness in the world punished, and all righteousness in the world to be rewarded: in Ps. lviii. 11, 'So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' The time is coming for all men to be forced to say, that 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.' This will fill the hearts of the saints with joy, when they shall see God's time to bring all the children of men to an account, and to have all the unrighteousness that ever was in the world to be punished, and all the

righteousness that ever was in the world to be rewarded. This will fill them, and be a joyful day indeed. And from hence all the disorder that is in the world now through unrighteous dealing, it shall all be brought into order again. He will make a comely work out of that chaos of confusion. You shall see all things brought to a most beautiful and comely order; and will not that fill you? In the book of Ecclesiastes you read of Solomon speaking of injustice, chap. iii. 16, 'Moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.' In the very place where I thought judgment would have been, wickedness was there; and in the place where I thought righteousness would have been, iniquity was there. What then? 'I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.' God's righteous ones, that now hunger and thirst after righteousness, make much of this text, you shall be filled; for there is a time that God will judge the righteous and the wicked; there is a time for every purpose, for every work, and you shall be filled.

And all the desires of all righteous persons since the beginning of the world shall be satisfied. From Abel that was killed by Cain, so all the patriarchs, and apostles, and prophets, and martyrs, and saints, all in their generations they did hunger after righteousness; righteous Abel, and so the rest: yea, their blood doth call to the righteous God that he would manifest righteousness in the world. 'O God, my righteousness,' saith David; and so of others. Now, when the time comes that all the prayers of all the servants of God, that ever they sent up unto God, when their prayers shall come to be all heard and all granted, surely it will be a blessed time. That will fill them. Will not that satisfy thee, to have every prayer of every righteous servant of God from the beginning of the world fully answered and fully made good what they desire. Surely this will satisfy thee. Blessed art thou, for thou shalt be satisfied.

And for the satisfying of the righteous that are crying to God against the unrighteous dealings in the world, do but consider some texts of Scripture: there are a great many very famous scriptures tending this way, that there is a time coming that righteousness shall prevail in the world. In Isa. i. 26, 'And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city;' and in Isa. iii. 10, 'Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.' Mark, Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; you that are righteous you are afraid that things will not go well. 'Say to the

righteous, that it shall go well with them.' Why? 'For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.' You go on in a righteous way, committing your righteousness to God; be content and quiet a while, you shall eat the fruit of your doings, and you shall be satisfied. Here is a promise that you should feed upon when any deal in an unrighteous way with you. It would be endless to speak of all the scriptures which shew how that shall prevail in the world. In Isa. xi. 4, there, speaking of Christ, he shews how he will come and judge the world with righteousness; Isa. lx. 17, 'I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness;' chap. lxi. 10. I could name near upon twenty scriptures out of the prophecy of Isaiah, that prophesy of a glorious time of righteousness, that violence and oppression shall be done away. My brethren, comfort we ourselves in this, whatsoever violence and wrong there is, yet there is a time, and we hope it may be even here in this world, that the Lord will deliver his people from violence, wrongs, oppression, and all unrighteousness. The exactor shall be righteousness: chap. lx. 17, where the Lord makes a gracious promise to his church, 'For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.' This is apparently a prophecy of the times of the church. There are such times that the officers that the people of God shall have to deal with, shall be nothing but peace to them; and those that are their exactors they shall be even righteousness itself; they shall be as righteous as their hearts would desire. Is not that a blessed time when all men placed in public places shall be nothing but peace to the saints of God, and never wrong them more? All those that were exactors before of them, that would lay heavy burdens upon them, the Lord will make them righteousness itself. No marvel though Christ doth express this by hunger and thirst, because it will be such a glorious time. And Christ knew that there was a very glorious time coming for righteousness to prevail in the world; and the saints of God knew it in those times a great deal more I believe than we do now. The people of God they knew there would be such times; and therefore Justin Martyr, that is one of the most ancient that we have, saith, there is no man or Christian but he doth believe such times a-come. Speaking of the glorious times of the church and people of God, wherein they shall be delivered from the violence, wrongs, and oppressions of ungodly men; none a Christian but doth believe it. And this interpretation of hungering and thirsting after righteousness being not so usual among you, yet I verily believe they in the primitive times would as suddenly have pitched upon such an interpretation as any. So in 2 Pet. iii. 13, mark there

how the glorious condition of the saints is described: 'Nevertheless,' saith he, 'we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth,—not only new heavens, but a new earth. What is that?—'wherein dwelleth righteousness.' And this is, according to the promise that we have in Isa. lxx. 17, out of which chapter my text is taken, according to the opinion of all divines, 'Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.' A time of the church's restoration. Now a verse or two before this out of the same chapter is the scripture where my text is taken; for saith the text in ver. 13, 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed,' &c. My servants that now hunger, they shall be satisfied; when you that are full, you shall hunger, &c. So that it doth appear that Christ had a reference to such times. You that do hunger and thirst after such times—you, looking into the Scripture, find promises there, that though the Lord shall suffer wicked men in the world to prevail a while, and unrighteousness to have the upper hand; yet you find glorious promises in the Scripture, that there shall be a time that righteousness shall be magnified in the world, wherein the sceptre of the kingdom of Christ, that is, the sceptre of righteousness, shall prevail. And you long after these times. Oh that these times would come! Why, blessed are you, they shall come—certainly they shall come; you shall be satisfied. As if he should say, There shall be as glorious times as you can think of, and righteousness shall prevail as much as possibly you can imagine; you shall be filled. And so in Micah—almost all the prophecies are full of this—vii. 9, there you shall find that that time wherein Micah spake was a time wherein much unrighteousness was in the world; but now mark, the prophet speaks in the person of the church, and, saith he, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' The church complains that now they did suffer most fearfully; ver. 4, 'The best of them is a brier: the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge.' And so he goes on in shewing the unrighteousness which there was in those times; ver. 5, 'Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's

enemies are they of his own house.' But now mark, 'Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me;' and in ver. 9, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me,' &c. As if he should say, Lord, I will not murmur, but I will wait for thee, for I have sinned against thee; though I do not deserve such unrighteous dealings at the hands of men, yet, in respect of thee, I deserve that thou shouldst use them as instruments to afflict me, therefore I will wait upon the Lord; 'He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.' This text should help us against the unrighteous dealings that are here; and this makes way to the application of all.

Let the consideration of this point be a means to take away that great stumbling-block that now is before men, at which they stumble—namely, that God suffers unrighteous men to prevail as they do. Be not offended at this, for there is a time that righteousness shall reign, that the Lord Jesus Christ shall come and appear in his glory, and take the throne unto himself; he shall judge the world in righteousness, Acts xvii. 31. This meditation doth mightily help those that are godly, that I am speaking of; whereas others that are not acquainted with this, when they see the unrighteous world to prevail, they will fall to them and be on their side; but the saints will keep still to the righteous, and be still on their side, for they know there is a time that righteousness shall prevail. The Scripture speaks of the root of the righteous that shall prevail, and the Scripture speaks of the fruit of the righteous that shall come forth from that root, though it be under storms and tempests for a while.

And then, in the second place, If those that hunger and thirst after righteousness be blessed, then certainly cursed are unrighteous men, cursed are those that seek after unrighteousness. What! shall Jesus Christ pronounce those that seek after unrighteousness, to promote that in the world, to be blessed? Then if there be man or woman in this place, whose conscience tells them that they love the ways of unrighteousness, that they seek to increase their estates by the ways of unrighteousness, by unrighteous mammon, to gain anything in unjust ways,—thou art the man or woman that dost join with this unrighteous world to uphold the kingdom of darkness in this world. Know that Christ curses thee; it is so implied. When he blesses such as hunger and thirst after righteousness; those are cursed that rather hunger and thirst after the ways of unrighteousness, and care not if they can get anything to themselves, though it be by hook or crook, as we use to say. Oh, fear and tremble for those servants of God that thou

hast dealt unrighteously withal! They cry to God, and tell God of all thine unrighteous dealings, and God hath promised them that they shall be satisfied in their cries, and their cries shall be answered. Whenas this servant of God shall manifest his desires to heaven, O Lord, I have suffered unrighteous dealing from such a man or woman, why, know that these cries do lie in heaven to be answered one day; and what will become of thee then? We read in Acts xxiv. 25, that when Paul was preaching of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come, before Felix, though Paul was a poor prisoner at the bar, and Felix sat upon the bench as a judge, yet he made him to tremble. What was Paul's sermon of? It was of righteousness and judgment to come. As if he should say, Well, though you think you have me in your hands, and may do what you please, yet there is a righteous God that will call all over again; and be being conscious to himself of unrighteousness, did shake and tremble, though at the preaching of a poor prisoner at the bar. You are here now hearing a poor minister of God preaching to you that righteousness shall prevail. What will become of you then? Let there be taken away from some rich men all that they have gotten by unrighteous dealings, and you may leave them poor enough. Now cursed is that estate and those enjoyments that are gotten by unrighteousness—thou must vomit it all up again. And therefore the Lord now strike thy heart, that thou mayest be willing to restore! Now be a friend of righteousness so far as to restore, and labour to undo thy unrighteousness as much as possibly thou canst, that thou mayest have comfort in the day of Jesus Christ, when he shall come to manifest righteousness before men and angels.

And then the last thing should have been this, To encourage all the servants of God to go on in the ways of righteousness, follow after righteousness, and seek righteousness. In Rev. xxii., about ver. 11, 'He that is righteous, let him be righteous still.' Are there any of you that the Lord hath sown the seed of righteousness in your hearts, that your hearts do now cleave to the love of righteousness, you can say, Well, let God do with me what he will, I will walk righteously. I will walk by rule, though God hath cast me into such a generation, where I see the generality of men and women to be unrighteous. Yet I am resolved to walk by rule in righteousness, and commit all to God. Well, be of good comfort, thou shalt be satisfied, and 'be righteous still.' The Lord, the righteous God, he is with thee; and Christ, who is thy righteousness, he is with thee to fill thy soul with that that shall satisfy thee for ever. I will but give you one scripture which doth shew that both these shall be satisfied; the wicked shall be satisfied, and the righteous shall be satisfied: Prov. xiv. 14, 'The

backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways : and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.' Mark, every man shall be satisfied one way or other. The apostate, such as was forward and made show of religion, and yet to provide for himself in an unrighteous way, because he would not trust God to make provision for himself and family, he would

depart from righteousness. Well, saith the Holy Ghost, they shall be satisfied. God will fill them by giving them their own way ; but a good man is satisfied from himself. Such as are good and righteous, and walk according to the rule of righteousness, peace be to them. 'They are now blessed, and they shall certainly be satisfied.'

SERMON XV.

OR,

TIMES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS PROMISED TO THE CHURCH.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

THERE is a great blessedness in this hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that I have shewed in many particulars. When the time comes that God shall appear to all the world righteous in his ways, it will be a blessed time indeed. The saints that know anything of it, cannot but hunger and thirst for that time. God's omniscience, his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, faithfulness, will then be glorified in another way than now they are. Then all the groans and sighs and complaints of the saints shall be heard by God, and it shall appear that they are heard ; then all their appeals unto God shall be examined and judged ; all their endeavours and services shall be rewarded ; all their sufferings shall be recompensed. And the end why God hath suffered so much unrighteousness in the world for so long a time shall be declared ; their enemies shall be subdued and ashamed ; all their innocency shall be cleared, all secrets shall be disclosed ; the base ends of men shall be discovered, mistakes shall be rectified, the vanity of the plots and designs and ways of the wisdom of the flesh shall be manifested ; and this will be a blessed time. Oh when will that time come, say the saints, that this will be, that there shall be this righteousness ?

And the rather I took it to be the meaning here, because I find so many promises in the Scripture of an estate of the church that shall be wherein righteousness shall prevail, as in 2 Pet. iii. 13, 'New heavens and new earth wherein dwells righteousness.' Now that it is meant of a state of the church it is plain by comparing it with Isa. lxxv. 17. In Isa. xi. 4, there is a promise that is suitable to this in the

connexion of it with that that went before, 'Blessed are the meek ;' and then, 'blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' Mark now, 'But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.' And then, ver. 5, 'And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. This is the promise of Christ, and many such promises in Isaiah, for there is no prophet more full of the prophecy of the state of the church, what yet it shall be, as Isaiah : chap. xxxii. 16, 17, 'Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace ; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.' When was this ever yet fulfilled ? There is such a time that the saints do long for, and in Isa. xxxiii. 5, 'The Lord is exalted ; for he dwelleth on high : he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.' There is a time of filling Zion with judgment and righteousness ; and in Isa. lx. you have many expressions, one of which we spake to the last time : 'I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness.' And it follows, 'Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders ; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise,' when God shall make their exactors to be righteousness to them ; and in ver. 21, 'Thy people also shall be all righteous : they shall inherit the land for ever.' Here is that suitable to the former promise, 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the

land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.' Thus these promises shew there is a time for glorious righteousness. So in Mal. iv. 2, 'To them that fear the Lord shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.' It is the latter end of the Old Testament, it is true; he doth heal spiritually, and he doth heal outwardly too with righteousness. We might even spend this hour to shew the many promises of the righteousness that God will have among his people one day, and those that are godly, that do understand the secrets of God; for in Prov. iii. 32, 'His secret is with the righteous.' They understand the secrets of God, and they do believe that there is such a time coming wherein righteousness shall prevail, and this is that that upholds them from being overcome with those temptations that hypocrites are drawn aside withal: they keep on in their way uprightly, waiting for the time of this righteousness; and blessed are they upon divers grounds, as hath been shewn. But we shall pass by what was spoken, or might further be said concerning that interpretation. But if God appear in his righteousness, who can stand? For are not the best consens to themselves of much unrighteousness? Can they hunger and thirst after the time when the righteousness of God shall appear to the full? Yes, they can; and this is the privilege of the saints, the more just and righteous God is that they have to deal with, the more do they long, hunger, and thirst for the appearing of that God. This is a great privilege; but how can that be? There is another righteousness that enables them to stand before the infinite righteousness of God, and that is the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and to the end that when the Lord shall appear in the full glory of his righteousness to the world, they may stand before him with joy, therefore 'they hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ,' after the righteousness of Christ the mediator between God and them, the righteousness of justification; for without that even our God with whom we have to deal is a consuming fire. So we are now coming to speak of that text in the second interpretation, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ.' Surely the spirit of Paul was very blessed in this. His heart was much upon this righteousness that we are speaking of; for in Phil. iii. 8, 9, he accounts all dung and dross—yea, dog's meat. For what? That he might not be found in his own righteousness, but in the righteousness which is of faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. All things are accounted dung and dross that he might appear in the righteousness which is by faith in Christ, the righteousness of God in him—that is, the righteousness of justification. Now for the handling of

this point there are these particulars to be observed; and in this method we shall speak to it:—

First, We shall open what this righteousness of Jesus Christ is which the saints do hunger and thirst after.

Secondly, We shall shew what their hunger and thirst is; the working of their hearts in their hungering and thirsting after this righteousness.

Thirdly, What a desirable object this righteousness is; what there is in this righteousness that makes the saints so desire after it.

Fourthly, Those that do thus desire after it are blessed. They are blessed for the present.

Fifthly, That they certainly shall be filled with this righteousness. These are the five things for the explication of it.

For the first, What this righteousness is that now we are speaking of. It is the righteousness which is for justification; which I would describe thus:—

That perfect satisfaction to divine justice in whatsoever it requires, either in way of punishing for sin or obedience to the law, made by the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man, the mediator of the new covenant, as a common head representing all those whom the Father had given to him, and made over unto them that believe in him; this is the righteousness that Christ pronounces them blessed that hunger and thirst after. The other righteousness had some loveliness in it; but you shall see this is to be a matter of greater moment and consequence than the other.

Now for this we are to know that sin having made a most dreadful breach between God and man, God was resolved to have his justice satisfied, or none of the children of men should ever be saved. If his justice were not satisfied, they should be all in the same lost condition that the angels were that sinned against him. Therefore, saith God, punishment must be inflicted for sin committed; and that law of mine it must be kept, or none shall be excepted; Now when God stood upon this, that he would not merely through mercy say thus, You have sinned against me, and I will pardon you, and there is an end. No, saith God; you have now sinned, and I am resolved my justice shall be honoured, either in your eternal perdition, or some other way wherein my justice shall have as much honour as if you were eternally damned. Man is now in such a condition fallen that he hath lost all righteousness, that he is not able to think a thought, to speak a word, to do an action that is righteous, acceptable to God. But, saith God, I am resolved upon this, that I will have my righteous law kept if ever you be saved. What a dreadful condition is man in now, knowing what God stands upon! Why, then, must not all men perish eternally? If that question had been asked in heaven, after God's revealing such a determination of his, surely all the

angels in heaven must have given in their answer, Then man must perish; we cannot see any way how it is possible for them to be saved, if God stands thus upon it. But now Jesus Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, the second person in Trinity, he comes in and shews a way how the justice, the infinite justice of God may be satisfied, the law kept, and wretched, sinful, corrupt man yet saved. The Lord Jesus Christ comes and tenders himself to be the head of a second covenant, saying, as it were, after this manner, Father, all mankind is fallen from thee in that first covenant that thou hast made with them, and they are all now shut up under sin and unrighteousness. But I am content to be the head of another covenant, for to be a mediator, to take their nature upon me; and I will take such a way for their salvation as thy justice shall be no loser,—thou shalt have as much glory to thy justice as thou shouldst have if they were all damned; and thy law shall have nothing to complain of, for it shall have full satisfaction. Upon this, God the Father and the Son did, as it were, agree in that way of the second covenant, that we call the covenant of grace; and the Father makes his Son to be the head of this covenant,—to take man's nature upon him as a public person, representing all such as the Father gives to him, for he will not that all individually shall come to be saved, but those that the Father gave to him he should represent to him, and they should have the gospel in time preached to them. And this righteousness should be made known by the gospel, and by the Spirit of God they should come to be convinced of this righteousness, and by faith this should be made over to them, that the sufferings and obedience of Jesus Christ, which he tenders up to God the Father, should be made over unto believers, and they by faith able to lay hold upon this righteousness, and to tender it likewise to God the Father for satisfaction; this is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Thus do poor wretched sinners come to be made righteous in Christ; their sins are transferred upon Christ, and Christ's righteousness transferred upon them; according to that scripture, 2 Cor. v. 21, 'He that knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' This is a most glorious righteousness, as we shall speak to by and by. Now those that shall be enlightened by the Holy Ghost to see into the reality, the certainty, the beauty, the necessity, the glory of this righteousness, and upon that their hearts shall be set with hungering and thirsting after the assurance of their part in it, after the glorious effects that shall come from it, blessed are those souls, for they shall be filled with this righteousness; when they shall come to have all the good that is to be had by this righteousness, their souls shall say that they have enough. Well, though they have not yet the

full comfort, and the full assurance, or the glorious fruit of this righteousness, yet they are in a blessed condition even now while they are hungering and thirsting after this righteousness. This is the second interpretation of this text, which indeed though the other hath a meaning which concerns the glory of God much, yet this much more; and by this at any time, when you hear out of the word the preaching of the righteousness of Christ, or justification by Christ, you may come to know what it means by this short description.

Now the second thing that is to be opened, it is the work of the soul in the hungering and thirsting after this righteousness.

For the opening of that, we are to consider from whence this hunger and thirst arises. It rises from the clear apprehension and thorough conviction of these four things:—

First, The soul doth clearly apprehend and is thoroughly convinced that it hath need of a righteousness to enable it to stand before the holy and righteous God; whenas men going on in the common way and course of the world, in the ways of unrighteousness, they little mind that they have to do with a righteous God, or, if they have to do with a righteous God, yet because they think that this God is merciful as well as righteous and just, therefore they do not apprehend any absolute necessity of having any righteousness to enable them to stand before this righteous God. You see it ordinary for people that have lived very ungodly all their days, when they apprehend death to be near, they apprehend themselves to be ready to appear before this righteous God, what thoughts have they but only thus: The Lord have mercy upon me! I am a great sinner! God be merciful to me, and I trust in God's mercy! They look at nothing else when they are just upon their appearing before God. But now that soul that understands the ways of God concerning sinners, and bringing of them to salvation, such a soul comes to see not only that God is merciful, but comes to see an absolute necessity of some righteousness to enable it to stand before the righteous God, and that no unrighteous thing shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; and therefore if I go out of this world an unrighteous soul, all the mercy that is in heaven cannot save me. My conscience tells me that I have been unrighteous in my way, the course of my life hath been unrighteous and ungodly; well, now I am going to appear before the great and infinite righteous God, and it may be before the morning, must my soul stand before that righteous God to receive the sentence of my eternal doom from him. Now how shall I stand before this righteous God? certainly I must have righteousness, or I cannot stand before him. That is the first thing that raises this hunger and thirst.

Secondly, The soul comes to be convinced of the insufficiency and imperfection of its own righteousness. Must I stand before this righteous God, and must I have a righteousness to enable me to stand before him? then let me look to my heart, and ways, and life, what righteousness have I? It may be some that have not lived so wickedly as others have done: Why, if I be to stand before the righteous God, I hope I may, for I have not been so as others have been—so wicked and ungodly; I have dealt righteously between man and man, my life hath been fair; I have been no whoremaster, nor drunkard, nor no swearer nor blasphemer; and upon this they think they may stand before this righteous God. Oh these people are infinitely mistaken! and as yet the Spirit of God hath not been at work upon them, to shew how things are between God and their souls. Certainly they know not God nor themselves that think so. But when the Lord works graciously by his Spirit in the soul, it comes to look into the life and heart, and there sees all its righteousness is but as a menstruous cloth. It may be it is not raised higher than a mere moral, civil righteousness, and then I have no true righteousness at all. But suppose my heart were sanctified, and my life sincere, holy, yet this righteousness being imperfect, it will never make me able to appear before this righteous God; but that infinite burning justice that I must stand before, it will come as a mighty flame and consume me all for this. If I do set this between me and that infinite righteous God, it will be but as the putting of a piece of brown paper before a man to deliver him from a mighty flame of fire that is coming out against him. That is the second thing.

Thirdly, The soul comes to see that there is another righteousness beyond its own; that notwithstanding whatsoever righteousness is in me I see imperfect and unable to do what my soul now hath need of. Although my righteousness that I had with men may make me to be able to stand before men, so that they are not able to plead anything against me; but it is God that I have to do with, therefore there must be another righteousness. Now this is revealed in the angel. The gospel tells me that the Son of God was Surely sin, and it is through him that there is an His heart made; and here trade unto believers wisdom are speak righteousness, sanctification and redemption all dung and drop the sor dog's me. certainty of this, That he might not be found in his own not be done ness, but in the righteousness which is of upon the Christ, the righteousness which is of God by Jesus All things are accounted dung and drop that he faintly appear in the righteousness which is by faith in Christ, to the righteousness of God in him—that is, the righteousness of justification. Now for the handling of it

of it, that it is so, and not only so, but the fullness of that righteousness, so that the soul sees it sufficient to satisfy God for whatsoever sin I have been guilty of; though my sins have been very great, yet here is righteousness enough to satisfy an infinite justice.

Fourthly, The soul likewise must be enlightened in the way of the gospel's making over this righteousness to the creature. It is true Jesus Christ is come as the great mediator to work righteousness for sinners; but now how shall this be made over to my soul, to be made mine, that it should be as my righteousness, that I should stand clothed with that righteousness before the Father? Therefore that is the last thing that the Lord discovers to the soul in the way of the gospel, that Christ is tendered to every wretched sinner freely with all his righteousness, and that upon their believing, or their casting their souls upon this righteousness, willing to venture their souls and eternal estates upon it, and wholly casting their souls here, that this shall be made over to them, made as their own righteousness before the Lord. When the soul comes to see this, that this is the tenor of the gospel, that Christ with his righteousness is freely offered, and it is not what the sinner hath been, either little or great, or what the condition of the sinner hath been; but here is righteousness enough to swallow up all unrighteousness whatsoever; that all thine unrighteousness in comparison of this it is but as a drop to the infinite ocean, that can soon be swallowed up. Upon this the soul doth, as it were, launch forth into this infinite ocean of righteousness, and God the Father doth by an act of his make it over to the soul, imputing the righteousness of Jesus Christ as really to this soul as ever the sin of Adam was imputed to the sons of Adam. Now, here you see the rise of this hungering and thirsting after this righteousness, now upon such a work of God as this is.

Then mark how the soul puts forth itself in the hungering and thirsting after this righteousness.

In the first place, It doth feel it, it gets an assurance of it, it feels a mighty pain for the want of it; as you know in hunger and thirst there is a very great pain in the body till nature be supplied. There are not very many of you that have understood what the pain of hunger and thirst means; yet it may be there are some here that may understand it, and some more than others, but few of you as some have done in former times. The pain of hunger and thirst it is one of the greatest pains that our bodies are capable of here; and a man that were ready to starve would rather venture, though it were through the fire, to get meat, than he would not have it. Now, that soul that understands with what a God it hath to deal, and the infinite necessity of this kind

of righteousness to appear before this God, if it hath not the assurance of it, it cannot but be faint; it is that that lies even throbbing at the heart, and till this comes the soul is in great extremity, in most lamentable extremity, if it doth come to understand these things, and yet hath not got assurance of it.

Secondly, All other things whatsoever that you can tender unto a man that wants bread or drink, that is ready to perish for want of those things, tender what you will they are all nothing to him—he regards them as nothing, there is no savour in anything; come and bring him bags of gold or silver, it is bread that he must have; come and bring him brave suits of satin and velvet, what is that if he be ready to perish for want of bread? If you would give him all the possessions in all the world, if you give him not bread, if you do not satisfy his hunger, they are nothing to him. What is my birthright, saith profane Esau, whenas I am ready to die for hunger? and so it is with the soul that comes to understand this righteousness. It is true, God hath given me these and these outward comforts in the world, but what is all this to righteousness, to my soul's standing righteous before the great God? I must stand before him for the sentence of my eternal estate, and how long it will be before I shall be brought to him I know not; and therefore it is righteousness that I stand in need of, and such righteousness as shall be accepted of by the infinite, righteous God.

Thirdly, As all things are nothing to him till this comes, so in hunger and thirst there is a mighty strong desire, such a strong desire as the body is ready to faint if the desire be not satisfied, even to faint and die. So it is with the soul here; if I have not this righteousness I die, I faint and die—yea, I die eternally; I see myself ready to perish eternally if I have not this righteousness; there is a fainting in the spirit until this righteousness comes in.

Fourthly, There are strong endeavours after it; that must needs be in hunger and thirst. We use to say that hunger will break through stone walls; there is no work accounted difficult to a man to get bread. If he be ready to starve, he will not stay at home because it is ill weather, if there be bread to be had. Do we not hear, saith Jacob, that there is corn in Egypt? So the soul that comes to understand the meaning of this righteousness, and the need of it, doth not plead or pretend the difficulty of God's ways; such and such things are hard; for me to leave such and such sinful lusts and distempers of my heart, it is hard, very hard; and for me to turn a new life, and set upon new ways, oh it is hard, very hard to me; there is no such pleading of a soul that is in a hungering and thirsting way after this righteousness. Is it possible it may be had? This is

enough to my soul that there is any possibility for righteousness. If the Lord will require such and such things, whatsoever they be, why, to attend upon him in the use of ordinances never so long here, I am content; the soul puts forth its power, endeavours, mightily crying to God, and studying what it should do to know the way of the gospel, more than ever it did.

Fifthly, One that hungers and thirsts, his desires are resolute; there is power, and endeavours, and they are resolute; he doth not stand upon conditions, to indent this or that way, but let the endeavours be what they will be, and indeed this is the work of grace in the heart where a hypocrite fails. When the soul comes to resign itself up to God, it doth give up itself to God; it subscribes to a blank as it were—that is, let God set down what he will, here I am willing to yield up myself, as Paul in his conversion with trembling and astonishment said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' here I am content to yield up myself to do whatsoever thou requirest. Not that this is a condition still; I only speak this in a way of metaphor to shew the submission of the soul to God, for indeed this is not a thing upon which God will give faith; but this is the manner of the working of God upon the soul in bringing of it to this righteousness, when it is in this condition that Christ here speaks of, hungering and thirsting after this righteousness. It is true, God deals with a great deal more indulgence to some souls; but if you have had it sooner than others, do not you be wanton, and say, What need so much ado in hungering and thirsting, and the like? We do not impose this as a legal qualification, but we say this is the way that God doth work upon some, to keep them a great while before they come to know that they have part in this righteousness—to keep them hungering and thirsting after it, and so break their hearts.

Sixthly, Which is very observable, The soul is unsatisfied in this hunger and thirst till this righteousness doth come. A child that doth but play with his meat, or whose belly is full, may be crying after something that he sees, but you may put off a child with a rattle when his belly is full; but if he be thoroughly a-hungry, then offer him what rattles you will, yet he must have his hunger satisfied if he be hungry indeed: and so it is with the soul. Many a man or woman hath some beginnings in the work of God upon them, and they begin to think they have need of some righteousness; their lives have been wicked; and how shall I be able to appear before God, whose life hath been so wicked? And I know not how soon I may appear, and therefore I had need look to make up my peace with God. Now upon this there are some desires, and such a one will fall to prayer, and to attend upon the word for a while; but now

mark it, within a while, being wearied and tired, because he comes not off fully to God, and hath not this righteousness applied by faith, something or other doth satisfy this soul, and draws the heart away from those good beginnings. It may be, when they are hungering and thirsting after this righteousness, the devil persuades them that for them to live somewhat better than formerly, that that is righteousness enough; well, that they will do, and upon that they come to be satisfied, and so they will be forward in many public good works. This is good; but if this satisfies the soul, I say the soul is undone, undone eternally, if it be satisfied with this. Now the soul that God works savingly upon, when God puts it to hunger and thirst thus, nothing in the world shall satisfy it; though the world should come in never so fully, yet that shall not satisfy him when the soul is working after Christ to get pardon and mercy in him. The soul follows God in the use of all means and all ordinances; but now it doth not look upon these as the righteousness that it must tender up to God, but only as means to reveal righteousness, and as those ordinances that God hath appointed, through which he will convey the work of his Spirit into the soul, to bring the soul to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and so to rest here; and for want of the right knowledge of this it is that many thousands do miscarry in their profession. In the time of their youth they were vain and loose, and after they came to be men and women of discretion, they live better than before, and they think this is conversion. Now this is miscarriage, to mistake those things that are the means of revealing righteousness, or of conveying the work of the Spirit; they mistake it, and think it is the righteousness itself that they should present to God. Oh no; it is just here for all the world as it was with Abraham. God makes a promise to Abraham, that he should have a seed in whom all the nations of the world should be blessed. Now Abraham stayed a great while after the promise was made, and he began to grow very ancient, and his wife past bearing, after the manner of women, and no child comes. Why, now upon this Abraham's faith begins somewhat to stagger and fail, and therefore Abraham goes in to his hand-maid Hagar. Sarah's faith: she begins first to stagger, and she would give to Abraham Hagar, that he might bring forth children from Hagar. Why, Abraham doth it. Ay, but he should have stayed till the time of God's fulfilling his promise had come; for though Abraham had a child of Hagar, yet that was not the promised seed, and the nations of the earth could never be blessed by that child; but afterwards comes the child which he had by Sarah, and that was the promised seed. I make use of this because I find the Holy Ghost doth make use of it. The Holy Ghost compares the law to Hagar, and the gospel to Sarah,

and the fruit that came by the law bred into bondage, saith he; but that that comes by the gospel is the blessed seed indeed. It is thus with a soul that is hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and would fain come to have all made even between God and itself. The soul is using of means, praying, and attending upon the word, and saith, Oh that God would reveal to me his mercy in Christ, and that his justice it satisfied for me in Christ, oh how happy should I be! But now, when the soul hath been a long time seeking after assurance of mercy this way, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and doth not find a real work upon it, the soul is weary; and now it goes, as it were, in to Hagar—goes and seeks for this blessedness by some works of the law, that is, by reforming its life, and being otherwise than it was, and so resting in an outward, civil, or moral righteousness. This is to be so weary of waiting, as to go from this blessed seed, from that righteousness that should make thy soul blessed for ever, to go in to a Hagar, in to the works of the law, and there to rest upon the works of the law, and think that they will make thee righteous. Take heed of this mistake, it is a dangerous rock. Be forewarned all you that are seeking after the righteousness of Jesus Christ; look to yourselves here, be unsatisfied therefore in your hungering and desires; let nothing quiet your souls but the application of the righteousness of Jesus Christ by faith, so as you may be able, by the hand of faith, to present this infinite righteousness of the Son of God unto the Father for your souls. That is that that only can make you stand with comfort before the great God. Luther had a notable expression this way about the difference of righteousness. Saith he, Righteousness between man and man in a political way, it is a very sweet thing, for by that the peace of kingdoms doth stand; but if therefore, because thou art a good citizen, a chaste husband, or a just merchant, dealing justly in your merchandise—if because of these thou wouldst be just before God, thou dost of the most sweet thing make an abomination that God cannot bear. That is Luther's expression concerning this, and it is a very excellent one. Take heed of that, you that are good citizens, and in the place where you live good townsmen, or good parishioners, and none of your neighbours can find any fault with you. It is true there is none that have the righteousness of Christ but attain to this: a man may attain to this, and yet miss of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If upon this you shall satisfy your souls, if you shall from this sweet thing think to be just before God, you do make of this sweet thing an abomination that the Spirit of God will not bear. Thus you see the work of the soul in hungering and thirsting after this righteousness. Now the main thing that yet remains, and that is, to

set before you the loveliness of this righteousness—that is, what a desirable object this is the soul hungers and thirsts after. Now that we hunger and thirst after, we see much in that thing which makes us to desire it. In the opening what this righteousness was, and the work of God in causing this hunger and thirst after this righteousness, you may see cause enough why the soul should be earnest after it; but yet there be many things more to set before you, the

beauty and excellency of this righteousness, so as if it be possible to draw hungering and thirsting in all your souls after it. This is certain, there is never a one of you but have infinite need of it. Those that never knew it, if they but knew it, their hearts would be taken off from other things and set upon this. And you that have some knowledge of it, yet if you knew it more, your hunger and thirst would be increased more abundantly.

SERMON XVI.

OR,

THE DESIRABLENESS OF THE OBJECT HUNGERED AFTER.

‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.’—MAT. v. 6.

I COME now to the third thing, which is the desirableness of this object. ‘Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.’ Thus described, it is a most desirable object, and those that know it, they cannot but hunger and thirst after it, to have their share in it. For,

First, By this righteousness all despairing temptations and thoughts for want of any righteousness in ourselves are taken away. Whatsoever despairing temptations or thoughts may be in the mind for want of any righteousness in the creature, in one’s self, these thoughts and temptations are by this righteousness removed from the soul. You do not understand, many of you, what strong despairing thoughts doth possess many souls when they come to apprehend how they have to deal with an infinite great God, and then come to see what the unrighteousness of their hearts and the unrighteousness of their lives have been; you know not what throbs there are in their spirits, what warring in their thoughts; they would give ten thousand thousand worlds that they might be delivered from the anguish and trouble of those sinking, despairing thoughts and temptations that their souls are afflicted withal; but there is nothing in the world can do it but the sight and application of this righteousness of Jesus Christ, as it hath been before described. Therefore it is very desirable.

Secondly, By this righteousness the soul comes to see a way for making up all the wrong that ever was done to God by his sin. I have wronged God by my

sin, and how this can be made up it were impossible for angels and men to think of a way; but the revealing of this righteousness of Christ, made over to the soul by faith, shews a way how all the wrong that ever my sin hath done to God may be quite made up. And is not this desirable? Will not this draw the heart? Thou that art any way sensible of the wrong that thy sin hath done to God, wouldst not thou give, if thou hadst, ten thousand worlds to make it up again? Here is a way that all may be made up again. Oh what a desirable object is this righteousness!

Thirdly, By this righteousness the law is fully satisfied, and all the claim of the law is answered, that the law hath nothing to charge now upon the soul, to lay any claim to the soul for any breach of it. This is a desirable thing. There is no desirableness at all in being freed from the law as a rule of life; that is no way desirable to a gracious heart. ‘Blessed are they that love thy law,’ (as the rule of life,) ‘nothing shall offend them.’ They would choose the law to themselves; therefore that is desirable. But the claim that the law lays to the soul, and the charge that the law brings against the soul for the breach of it, the soul desires to be delivered from this. This is a sore and dreadful evil, that I stand before the law of God, that hath infinite justice in it, that hath such and such a dreadful charge to charge upon me. Oh that I could be discharged from whatever the law hath to charge! Why, this righteousness will do it; it will deliver the soul from whatever

the law hath to charge upon it. Therefore, in Rom. x. 4, it is said that 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' He is the end of the law; it hath its perfection in him. Thou mayest turn the demands of the law over to thy surety, and God will never come upon the principal in this case, but upon the surety. By having this righteousness thine, thou comest here to be able to give the law what it will claim, and to discharge it of whatever it hath to charge upon thee.

Fourthly, By this righteousness the hazard of miscarrying to all eternity is quite over. When the soul comes to apprehend this righteousness, it may see in the bowels of it, as it were, an absolute safety and blessed security. May this but be made over to my soul, though it is true that yet there will remain much unrighteousness in me, yet I know that that unrighteousness that will remain in me shall never hazard the eternal miscarrying of my soul, but that all the hazard of that is quite over. Is not this desirable? What would any troubled soul give to know the hazard of eternal miscarrying over, that doth but understand what eternity means, and apprehends any hazard of miscarrying in it! There is nothing can satisfy the soul but this. If so be that I think to satisfy my soul in the matter of my eternal estate, and in the deliverance from the hazard of miscarrying by what I do, to think I will mend my life and do better,—(though every one should do so),—yet still the fears will return upon the soul again—there will be an uncertainty whether I shall miscarry for ever or no. It may be I shall, it may be I shall not. I hope God will accept of me; but whether he will or no I cannot tell. But now, when the soul comes to understand such an infinite and a glorious righteousness to be made over to it in the way of the gospel, surely now the soul is able to bless itself in Jesus Christ, and to say, 'My soul, return unto thy rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' Now, though thou beest unrighteous in thyself, yet there is that righteousness as doth free thee from any such danger of miscarrying. But thou art certainly safe; this will certainly bring thee to eternal life, 'for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' It is impossible for a soul that God the Father shall look upon in the righteousness of his Son—a soul so righteous as a believer is through the righteousness of Christ—to miscarry to eternity, that even God should come to hate or to let out his revenging wrath upon such a soul; it is impossible, it can never be.

Fifthly, It is worth the hungering and thirsting after; for through this righteousness we come to have access to the throne of grace, and to be able to stand with boldness before the throne of grace, before God, yea, before God's infinite holiness and

justice—not only before God's mercy, but before the very throne of justice, as well as the throne of grace. Though I have to deal with an infinite holy and an infinite just God, yet here is a way to make me stand with boldness, with a holy boldness, before this infinite holiness and infinite justice of God: Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.' By him we come to have access even to the tribunal of God's justice; so that there needs no appeal now from the justice-seat of God to his mercy-seat. It is mercy that God will have such a way, that God will bring us to it, that God will accept of us in it. It is that that makes us, through him, stand before his justice-seat; our pardon is sealed in the court of justice.

Sixthly, This righteousness is a glorious robe. When Jesus Christ shall appear, and God the Father, and the holy angels, this shall be the glorious robe that shall cover the souls of the saints, of believers, in the presence of God and Christ and the holy angels at the great day; they shall be clothed with this, and this is the robe that is prepared by Jesus Christ to cover, to adorn, and beautify the saints at the day of judgment in their appearing before God. You hear much of the dreadful day of judgment; sometimes the shrill sound of the trumpet, and all appearing before the Lord to hear the sentence of your eternal doom, and it may be some terror may strike into some of your hearts; but this robe of righteousness takes away all the terror of that day. The glorious condition of the saints in being clothed with this robe before the Lord, now those to whom this righteousness comes to be revealed, they see what the use of this righteousness will be at that day. And that is the sixth thing wherein it appears so desirable.

Sevently, There must certainly be a most glorious reward of this righteousness; and this raises the condition of the saints above that of Adam in paradise—yea, in some respect, above the angels themselves. If Adam had stood in paradise there had been a righteousness suitable to such a creature, and the angels have a righteousness suitable to their natures; but here is the righteousness of the Son of God, the righteousness of God-man, and this is of a higher nature than the righteousness of Adam was, or could be, of a higher nature than the righteousness of the angels themselves in heaven; and now for this to be made over to the soul as its own righteousness, there must needs be an expectation of a glorious reward of this righteousness. If Adam had continued righteous he should have lived; but it appears not that he should have lived but only in paradise, in this world; but now this righteousness purchases

a higher degree of glory than if ever Adam had stood. Glorious must needs the reward of this be ; and as the righteousness itself is made over to the soul, so all that this righteousness doth deserve, all the fruits of the good pleasure of God the Father for this righteousness that his Son doth tender to him, shall be made over to the soul too, and is made over ; the soul hath present right unto it. When a poor creature shall come to understand such a righteousness that is beyond Adam's in innocency, that is beyond angels', the righteousness of the Son of God, to be made over to it ; and all the good that this righteousness doth deserve, all the fruits of the good pleasure of the Father for this righteousness of his Son, that is all mine too ; oh how desirable is this when apprehended really by faith !

Eighthly, This righteousness is a perfect righteousness. There is no sinner whatsoever, but at the first instant wherein it becomes a believer, and hath this righteousness made over to it, it comes in the point of justification to be equal with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with David, the patriarchs, prophets, angels, martyrs, with the most eminent saints. There is a great deal of difference between thee and those glorious prophets and saints that we read of, and martyrs, and many eminent Christians ; a great deal of difference when thou lookest upon that blind mind of thine, that dull spirit of thine, that dead heart of thine, those many strong lusts that are in thee ; and upon this thy heart is dejected, it may be. But though the difference be great in respect of sanctification, yet in respect of the righteousness of justification thou art equal with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—thou art equal with any of the prophets, or apostles, or martyrs. A perfect righteousness, that is made over to thee, and therefore it is a most desirable object ; is not that desirable and worth the hungering and thirsting after for one that hath been a base, wicked, forlorn wretch in the whole course of his life—hath been nothing but a very lump of filth and abomination ; for this man or woman at the very instant of the time of believing, to come to stand through a righteousness made over by Christ as perfect as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or of any saint that ever lived in the world ? Thy justification is equal to theirs ; certainly if you knew this, if you did believe it, one would think it impossible but that you should have a stomach to it, you should have hungering and thirsting desires after such a righteousness as this is.

Ninthly, This righteousness is that that Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father, is continually presenting before the Father, that he might be well pleased with those to whom it is applied. It is a special work of the intercession of Jesus Christ, at the right hand of the Father, to be presenting this

his righteousness before the Father for such and such souls that do belong unto him ; and for thee, though vile here in this world, and full of sin, yet to have such a mediator at the right hand of God the Father continually presenting a perfect righteousness, to the end that it should be accepted for thee : as if he should say, Lord, though these and these poor creatures be full of unrighteousness, yet behold the perfect righteousness of mine ; I perfectly obeyed, therefore accept of that righteousness of mine. Is not this an object desirable ? doth not this call for strong desires, hungering and thirsting ? and are they not blessed that have such a righteousness as this is to be clothed with ?

Tenthly and lastly, The acceptance that comes from this righteousness it doth not ebb and flow according to the difference of the gracious workings of our hearts, but it abides constant for ever. It is true the Lord looks upon the different workings of our hearts, and in respect of weakness of sanctification, or further degrees, there may be a complacency in God more or less—I mean in the manifestations for what is God's complacency but some way or other the letting out of himself towards his creature ; and the Lord is well pleased with the righteousness of sanctification too, as we shall speak to afterwards, as well as in this. But now though there may be a different letting out of God, and in some respect we may say the very complacency of God's heart may be towards his servants in a different way, according to the difference of their graces here ; but in respect of their acceptance of this righteousness, it is always the same. There is always the same acceptance of this righteousness, and no ebbs and flowings in the acceptance of this righteousness for any believer. Oh, how blessed is this righteousness of Jesus Christ, and what a desirable object is it ! Thus now you have had the third thing opened—what the workings of the heart are in hungering and thirsting after it, and what a desirable object this righteousness is.

The fourth thing is the blessedness, which is to be spoken unto : Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after this. Blessed are they,

First, Because they come to see the great mystery of godliness, in the way of God's bringing man unto himself, and this is a blessed thing. It is a blessed thing for the eyes of the understanding to be so enlightened, as to be able to see the great mystery of God in the way that he hath to bring man to himself. Most people in the world they think there is no other way of God to bring men to himself but this : Those that have been wicked sinners they must mourn, and be sorry that they have done so, and sin no more, and there is an end ; but those that do hunger and thirst after this righteous-

ness, they are enlightened by another manner of light from heaven. The beams of divine light hath shined into them, whereby they come to understand the deep counsels of God concerning his way in bringing man to himself, and blessed are those that have their eyes thus opened; blessed are your eyes, because you see these things. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst because of the enlightening that they have.

Secondly, Blessed are they for the present, for their hearts are taken with that which hath the greatest weight in it. There is nothing that ever concerned God himself, or that ever concerned man, or any creature, that had greater weight in it than this that I am speaking of; nothing of God's works, nothing, that is, *ab extra*, (for I speak of that,) nothing that ever concerned God in his working towards the creature, or in glory that he receives from the creature. There was never anything of such high concernment towards any creature as this is, the righteousness of the Son of God applied by faith. Now blessed are they who have their hearts taken with this righteousness. For the most of you, what are your hearts taken withal? they are taken with meat and drink, to live merrily, to be in company, and to play, and pour down wine, and to satisfy your lusts. Your hearts are taken with this; here is no blessedness in this. But now for to have the heart of a man that had nothing but vanity and folly in it before, to be taken with a matter of such infinite weight and consequence as this righteousness is, blessed is that heart.

Thirdly, Blessed are they, for now is the time when this righteousness of Christ is offered unto sinners; and blessed are they that by the work of God are brought into the way that God brings those into that he intends to give the righteousness of his Son unto. In the time that he is offering of the righteousness of his Son to sinners, if so be that thou hadst but stayed a while, and God had but cut the thread of thy life off before thou hadst seen the excellency of this righteousness of Christ, and before thou hadst had strong desires after it, thou couldst not have been blest; but blessed art thou that in this time of thy life, that is, the time that God offers this righteousness of his Son to sinners, that now thou seest thy need of it, and that thy heart works after it, and that thou art now in the way that God brings those into that he doth intend to bestow this righteousness of his Son upon; for though it may be yet thou dost not thoroughly know that this is made over to thee, yet thou art blessed in this, because thou art in the way that God doth use to bring those into that he hath a purpose to bless for ever in this his Son's righteousness. Thou wert not long since in a way of folly and vanity, minding

nothing less than this, minding only those things that would have undone thee for ever, and doth God now bring thee into the way that he uses to bring those into that he hath a purpose to save? blessed art thou that thou art come so far.

Fourthly, Blessed art thou that hungerest and thirstest thus after this righteousness, for it is a good evidence that the soul hath some seed of faith wrought in it already, that it makes so much after Jesus Christ. Indeed thou hast not an assurance, thou art not able to say yet, that Christ's righteousness is mine; but yet thou hast this blessedness, that there is some good evidence to thee, in these hungerings and thirstings of thine, that there is some seed of faith sown in thy heart already, for thou wouldst not otherwise cling so to Christ. Those makings of thy soul after Christ, that nothing in the world can take off thy soul from him, but still thou lingerest after him, and with mighty workings of spirit dost desire him; surely he is there already, that makes thy soul so much to work after him.

Fifthly, but especially, 'Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled;' that is thus,—

First, All fears, all misgiving thoughts shall one day be removed. Thou hast some hopes that do encourage thee, but many doubts and fears mixed, but thou shalt be satisfied in respect of them.

Secondly, All accusations of Satan shall be answered. Satan will be clamouring, but this righteousness shall appear in that beauty and glory that shall stop Satan's mouth.

Thirdly, Thou shalt be filled—that is, thou shalt have the good of this righteousness, as if thou hadst satisfied and obeyed thyself. Consider of this, this will fill indeed, thou shalt have the fruit and the benefit of this righteousness as if thou thyself hadst satisfied the law, and hadst obeyed thyself. If it were possible for a creature to satisfy God's justice and to discharge the law, there would be expecting very great good to come of it. Thou shalt have as much as if thou thyself hadst borne the punishment of what thy sin had deserved; yea, there shall be greater benefit come by what Christ hath satisfied and done than if thou hadst satisfied and done it thyself. If this had been the way of God, that so many as I intend to save, they shall lie ten thousand thousand years in flames to satisfy for their sin, and they shall perfectly obey my law, and so I will be reconciled to them; now thou wouldst think it a blessed thing that thou hadst gone through this work; but know, if thou hadst gone through it, and so God reconciled, thou couldst not expect such love from God, such acceptance with God after this as now thou mayest expect upon the satisfaction that

Christ hath made by his perfect righteousness. And therefore thou shalt be filled, for thou shalt have more than if thou hadst done it thyself.

Fourthly, Thou shalt hereafter know that God, in sending his Son to work such a righteousness as this is, he had an intention at thee in particular. When those eternal counsels of his will were that his Son should come into the world and work this glorious righteousness, the Lord had an intention toward thee, and said, Now I will send my Son to work this glorious and eternal righteousness for the good of this soul, and for the good of the other soul; and will not this fill thee?

Fifthly, Christ shall bring thee one day before his Father shining bright in this righteousness. That was the desirableness of it that I spoke of, and now I make use of it only to shew how such as do hunger and thirst after it shall be filled.

Sixthly, Thou shalt eternally enjoy all the fruits of this righteousness; and certainly this will fill thee as full as ever thou canst hold, when thou shalt come to enjoy all the benefits and fruits that will be the consequents of such a righteousness as this is. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after this righteousness, for they shall be filled. Thus we have opened this second branch—viz., the hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

By way of application;—

In the first place, The opening of what we have will presently rebuke those that never minded or regarded this righteousness that we are now speaking of, that never felt any want at all of it, and therefore never had any hungering and thirsting after it. I am afraid I speak this day but riddles to most people. I appeal to your consciences, as in the name of God. When hath God discovered the glory of this righteousness in the reality of it to your souls? when have your hearts been taken with it? And can any closet of thine, any room of thine, testify those mighty cries to God for thy part in this righteousness? when hath there been such stirrings in thy soul after this righteousness: Lord, I am undone, I perish for ever; better I had never been born, but that I had been a toad, a dog, than not to have this righteousness of thy Son: I appeal to you, when was there ever any such kind of working in your hearts? Certainly, if you be altogether unacquainted with these hungerings and thirstings after this, you are not one of those that Christ pronounces blessed; you have hungerings and thirstings after other things that can do you no good; here is an object to raise up the desires of a rational creature, here indeed is that that should whet your appetite.

In the second place, Let what hath been said quicken and sharpen your appetites after this right-

eousness, and make you say, O Lord, thou hast this day set before me out of thy word a glorious mystery of religion, a righteousness of thy Son, that I either knew not, or little minded heretofore. Lord, I see my happiness to consist in that, I am for ever made if I have that; no great matter what becomes of me in the world, what becomes of my name or estate, if I have but that to clothe me I shall be made for ever. Oh that the heavens might hear of the cries of some souls this evening after this righteousness! or if so be that some of you, upon the hearing of what is said, may but think what is the meaning of this. However, let there be this fruit of what hath been spoken, as to get alone between God and yourselves, and cry to him to help you to understand what hath been said; for certainly it is one of the great mysteries of godliness. You are undone for ever if you do not. Therefore at least do thus much: cry to God that he would reveal this to you, and that will be some good way made for the stirring up your appetites after this righteousness. There are two or three things that may serve for the quickening of our appetites.

First, Consider that thou hast to deal with a righteous God. We have a notable scripture in Rom. x. 3, 'For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' Mark, they are ignorant of God's righteousness, and so they go about to establish their own, and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God; as if the Holy Ghost should say, Did they but know God's righteousness, they would never rest in their own righteousness, but, being ignorant of God's righteousness, they seek to establish their own righteousness. Oh that God would but this night cause one manifestation of his infinite righteousness to thy soul! this would cause thee to hunger and thirst after it indeed.

Secondly, Consider this, That the Lord is absolutely resolved that he will have his justice satisfied, that no soul shall ever be saved but he will have justice satisfied for that soul. This is God's determination; and the right understanding of this, and laying this for a certain conclusion, will mightily stir up the heart to seek after this righteousness: What! is God a God of infinite righteousness, and is this a certain truth, that no soul shall ever be saved but God will be honoured in his infinite justice as well as in his infinite mercy, what then shall become of the children of men? Were it not for this satisfaction they would all perish; and this is the reason why all the angels that sinned against God perish eternally, because there is no righteousness for them, there is no way of satisfaction for their sin, and so it would be with the children of men, for God is resolved to have

his justice honoured either upon them or upon a surety.

Thirdly, Know that it would go very ill with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, with the most glorious righteous person that ever lived in the world, were

it not for this; yea, we may boldly say, Woe to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets and apostles, were it not for this righteousness. And if these things be so, we had need have our hearts to be making after this righteousness here mentioned.

SERMON XVII.

OR,

COMFORTS TO THOSE THAT HUNGER.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

FOR those that do find their hearts stirring after this righteousness, I have divers things to speak unto them by way of comfort and consolation. There are many poor souls, which, in the sense and burden of their sins, do hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so as there is nothing more that their thoughts and hearts are upon than the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that they may find it applied unto them by faith and made theirs, that they may have the comfort of it. To such I shall only speak these things briefly by way of comfort and encouragement:

First, If thy heart do in truth thirst after this righteousness of Christ that thou hearest preached of in the gospel, and thou dost in thy soul bless those that are able to make it theirs, know that thy thirst and Christ's thirst are the same. Christ thirsts after souls as much as souls thirst after him; and it is as great a satisfaction to Jesus Christ to see his righteousness applied unto souls for their discharge, as it can be any satisfaction to any soul to have the righteousness of Christ applied to it for its discharge. No soul can be more content in the assurance that Christ's righteousness belongs to it, than Christ doth to have his righteousness applied unto souls that do hunger and thirst after it, as hath been spoken of in the text; and for that I will give you only this scripture, Isa. liii., a clear prophecy concerning Christ: ver. 10, it is said, 'It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: for by his knowledge shall my righteous servant

justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.' Mark, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.' What is the travail of the soul of Christ? Surely it is, that after he hath borne the burden of the wrath of the Father, that then there might be souls given to him, and discharged of their sin through his sufferings; this is the travail of Christ's soul. Is thy soul travailling after the righteousness of Jesus Christ? Thou art as it were in a travail, and longest after that, as any woman in travail longs to be delivered. Know the soul of Christ is in as much travail for to discharge sinners, as sinners are to be discharged; and saith the text, 'He shall see of the travail of his soul, and he shall be satisfied.' There is nothing in the world can satisfy the soul of Christ as to have poor sinners come in to him, and to communicate his righteousness to them. 'For by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.' That shall satisfy his soul; as if the Holy Ghost should say, After all that Jesus Christ hath suffered for souls, when any soul shall come in and believe in him, the Lord Jesus shall apply his righteousness to them and justify them; and this is that that Christ shall account worth all his sufferings—shall, as it were, say, I do not grudge, I do not repent for all that I have suffered, seeing I have the fruit of it, that here are poor sinful souls discharged of their sins by my sufferings. This is a great help and comfort to those that are hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Jesus Christ; you see what the hunger of Christ is, the travail of his soul, and what it is that will satisfy. Surely if this be an object so satisfactory to his soul to justify sinners, then thou mayest have encouragement in this, that when thy soul travails for this, and longest after this righteous-

ness above all things in the world, and nothing can satisfy thee but that, that thou shalt in due time see the travail of thy soul, and shalt be satisfied.

Secondly, The great design that God hath in all the world to glorify himself by, it is by the honouring of the righteousness of his Son in the application of it unto sinful souls for their discharge. Of all things that ever God did, or ever shall be done in the world, the greatest design of God to honour himself is, that the righteousness of his Son may be magnified in working such a course as this is, to deliver souls from the guilt of their sin, and to set them as righteous before the Father. The Lord takes delight in no work like unto this work. Here is the masterpiece, as I may so say, of God, and the glory of God. Now, then, think thus with thyself: Is this the work that, above all things, God glories in? and is it his design to honour himself in the magnifying the righteousness of his Son, in the fruit of that righteousness to discharge sinful and guilty sinners by it? then who are they that God will honour himself in and upon, if not upon such whose souls he hath begun to stir to work after this righteousness, to long after it above all things in the world? It is that that God's heart is in, to honour himself by above all things, and it is that that God hath put into my heart to desire above all things; and I think—yea, I am sure, if I know anything of my heart—that if God would but once witness to my soul that this righteousness of his Son is mine, I should for ever give up myself to honour him. Had I a thousand lives they should all go for the glory of his name. Surely God's heart and thy heart doth meet very near together in this thing, and therefore be comforted and encouraged in thy hungering and thirsting after this thing.

Thirdly, There is nothing offered more freely than the righteousness of Christ is. Of all mercies that God doth bestow upon sinners, the mercies of Jesus Christ are bestowed the most freely. There are many mercies that God bestowed in the time of the law, upon legal obedience; but Jesus Christ and his righteousness was never given to any soul, but freely, upon mere free grace—nothing but free grace hath given him—he is the gift of God! And, together with the freedom, there is an invitation to souls to come and take it. Thou that art thirsting after this righteousness, consider of that scripture in Rev. xxii. 17, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' Thou thirstest after this righteousness, as the water of life, that would be life to thy soul. Now mark what invitation is here, 'the Spirit,' 'the bride,' that is, the church, they say, 'Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And he that is athirst come.'

Here is four times in one verse 'come.' 'And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.' There is nothing more free than this water of life. God sells it not to any; but whosoever he gives it to, he gives it freely. And now, is this the way of God in the dispensing of this great mercy, that whosoever hath had it, or ever shall have it, it must be given freely to them, that any former unrighteousness shall be no hindrance? Whatsoever unrighteousness there hath been before, that is no hindrance; for if it were, then it were not given freely. There is no unworthiness, then, that can hinder; and if so, why may not I have my portion in it as well as another? why may not I be blessed by it as well as any? It is true, I am vile, I am an unrighteous wretch, I am unworthy; but the Lord gives this water of life freely, Isa. lv. 1.

Fourthly, I will add a fourth consideration for thy further comfort; that there is nothing can give any right to any soul to apply the righteousness of Jesus Christ, but merely this free offer, and the soul's believing, the soul's casting itself upon it. There is nothing before that that gives any right to this righteousness of Christ.

You will say, I could apply it, and believe it, and cast myself upon it, but that I fear I have no right in it. Now this is as certain a truth as any we have in the gospel, that there is nothing gives any soul a right to Jesus Christ but believing in him—the venturing of the soul upon this perfect, glorious righteousness. It is this that gives right unto the soul; and therefore do not fear, but come, then, thou hungering and thirsting soul after this righteousness, and open thy mouth and thy heart wide, that it may be filled, and cast thy soul here upon this righteousness, venture thy soul and thy eternal estate—that is the best way, and the soonest way, to have the comfort of it.

Those that are hungering and thirsting after this righteousness, take these cautions:—

The first caution I shall give you, Take heed, you that are seeking after your part in this, and to have your souls to be justified through this righteousness—take heed that you do not satisfy yourselves with any righteousness beneath this, with any under-righteousness; for the devil will be ready to come in here, and he doth prevail with many, when their sins do lie upon their consciences, and they see they stand as guilty before the great God as those that are bound over unto eternal death, and they hear that there is no way of salvation but by Christ, and they seek after Christ. Now the devil seeks to put them off with some other righteousness besides this. Oh take heed that nothing satisfies you but this righteousness! It is true, through God's mercy I have broken off many of my sinful courses; and I find this in my heart, that I would not for all the world commit any

one known sin against conscience, though in secret. This is well; but do not rest in this, but know there is a righteousness beyond this. Do not think this is enough to satisfy your consciences, that you are brought to this. No; nothing shall satisfy my conscience but the application of the blood of Christ and his righteousness to my soul.

Secondly, Take heed that you be not put off and satisfied with comfort. It may be you shall have mighty flashes of comfort given you. When you are at prayer, perhaps you shall have such flashes of comfort and joy as are more than ever you have had; some may, and have had it so, and yet afterwards it hath come to nothing. Therefore you must not satisfy yourselves in that, but think thus: Is this the fruit of Christ's righteousness, yea or no? Have I the righteousness of Christ? Do I feel the work of the Holy Ghost carrying my soul to Christ, and so enabling me to rest upon his righteousness? and then is the Holy Ghost a comforter unto me as a fruit of this? Then it is good, if thy comfort comes as a fruit of the act of thy faith, casting thyself upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ; otherwise thy comfort may be but to please thee, and satisfy thee a while, and so take thee off from further pursuit after this righteousness. That is the only thing will hold, and make thee to stand with peace before the judgment-seat of God.

A third caution is this: In seeking after this righteousness of Christ, take heed of reasoning with flesh and blood. Take heed of carnal reasonings, and arguing. How can this thing be, that such a one, so vile and wretched as I am, and so ungodly as I have been, that ever God should have such love and such regard as to send his Son to be made a curse, to die, and to work out a perfect righteousness to clothe my soul with. I have heard of the glory of this righteousness, and how can it be that ever my soul should be partaker of it? This is to reason with flesh and blood; thou must in thy pursuit after this have that reasoning of flesh and blood to be swallowed up, and faith alone must be advanced in it. If faith be not put to this great point, there will never be any good done of it. If reason come in, reason will spoil all; for it is above all reason—it is infinitely supernatural. 'Reason,' saith Luther, 'is a most terrible enemy to faith;' and it is a great mystery of godliness that the angels themselves desire to pry into, and to wonder at; and therefore Christians must even, as it were, shut the eye of reason, and exercise faith upon it: it is only that that can bring peace unto thy soul.

Fourthly, And then the last thing is, Oh take heed, above all, of turning this grace of God into wantonness! look to that. You have heard this righteousness of the Son of God opened, and the glorious properties of it, the excellency of it, the desirableness

of it; it is that that very few hearts can bear; they cannot bear it. We find it by experience, that men and women that come to have any little glimmering about the righteousness of Christ, they run away with it, and draw most wretched and vile conclusions from it. Then you say, What need we look after anything further—Christ hath done all; and so grow loose in their conversations. Take heed of wantonness. There is a very wanton generation among us; and I verily believe that, if ever since Christ's time the grace of God hath been turned into wantonness, it hath been this four or five years; only I find in the story of Germany, that when Luther began first to preach Jesus Christ, there were the very same wantons in his time, abusing what he said. When the gospel began to break forth, men's bleared eyes were not able to bear the glorious light that God did cause to shine through the ministry of Luther, but did extremely abuse it; and Luther himself was much perplexed and troubled with those wantons that abused the doctrine of free grace and justification by the righteousness of Christ. And as we find that men, through their weak and corrupt spirits, are ready to abuse this, so, above all sins, it is that that goes most to the heart of God, that the heart of God doth most hate; and it is made, in the Epistle of Jude, a dreadful brand of those that are even appointed to condemnation, that do turn the grace of God into wantonness. This grace of God in the righteousness of his Son, the Lord expects that all that come to know it should even fall down upon their faces and adore and magnify him for it, and spend their days in adoring and magnifying of him, and not to make this as a means to nourish sin, to nourish unrighteousness and looseness; as we find it in many, that since such times as they have spoken most of free grace, of the righteousness of Christ, their conversations have been more loose than formerly. This is abominable wickedness, that the Spirit of God hates; and if there could be any one sign given of a man or woman that were never like to have any part or portion in this righteousness, that sign would be the most probable, that should turn this rich and glorious grace of God into wantonness. But thus much concerning this great point of hungering after the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Now to proceed to the next point, the hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of sanctification, or inherent righteousness. I shall give you the method in the same way as we went in the former.

First, What is this righteousness that now we are speaking of?

Secondly, What is the true hunger and thirst of the soul after this righteousness?

Thirdly, What the desirableness of this righteousness is.

Fourthly, Why they are blessed that hunger and thirst after this.

Fifthly, That even these also shall be satisfied with this righteousness.

Lastly, The application of all.

For the first then, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' You will say, What is this righteousness that here you are now speaking of?

It is those gracious dispositions that God works in the soul by the Holy Ghost, or the principle of holiness that God puts into the soul by the Holy Ghost, whereby the soul is enabled to work unto God as its chief good, as it were in a right line, and therefore called righteousness. It is the same thing that is called holiness, or righteousness, or grace sometimes we have it, because it is given freely by God. When a soul that lay dead in sin before, hath the Holy Ghost come and breathe upon it, and puts into it gracious principles, that enables it to act and to work unto God as the last end of all, and the highest good, as it were, in a right line. In a right line; therefore sometimes it is called uprightness—that is, when a soul that is convinced of the duty it owes unto God, and that it ought to work thus and thus unto God, whatsoever should come between God and the soul to hinder the gracious workings of it, the soul doth not fetch a compass, but goes through all difficulties; that is going in a right line—goes through all kind of difficulties that it may work itself to God. This is righteousness in the heart, inherent righteousness, when thou hast received this work of the Holy Ghost upon thee that thou findest such acting and working principles, that works up thy soul to God as the last end; and whatsoever there is between God and thy soul, thy soul will work through it; and work still, and never leave working till it works through it, that thou mayest get at God, and so come to enjoy him as thy God.

Or thus, It is the levelling and acting of the heart according to a right rule, the rule of righteousness set in the word; this is the righteousness that we are now speaking of.

Or thus more fully, It is an impression of God's righteousness upon the soul, whereby the soul comes to be enabled to act according to his measure as God himself doth act.

According to his measure. You will say, how is that? Act as God acts. That is, look, as God himself loves himself as the highest end of all things; and all other things the Lord loves in order to himself, and works for himself as the last end of all; and doth work all other things in a suitable way to the attaining of himself as the last end; so the soul who hath the impression of this upon it, comes to be enabled to work for God as the last end, and to love God for himself, and all things in order unto God,

and to act for God as the highest end, and to act all things that it hath to do with in order unto God as this last end; so that hereby the soul comes to act, even as God himself doth act, according to its measure and proportion. God he makes himself the last end; the soul makes God the last end too. God loves himself as the highest good, and all things in order to himself; the soul doth so too. God in all his workings works towards himself, and orders all things so as he may come to enjoy himself as the last end; so doth this righteous soul do, it works towards God, and so as he may enjoy all things in order unto God as the last end. This is the righteousness here to be spoken of: blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after this righteousness. Oh that it were so with me, saith this hungering and thirsting soul. I feel abundance of corruption that is in me, that keeps me from acting to God; I am convinced that the Lord is worthy. Oh, the infinite glorious first-being of all things! he is worthy of all praise and honour from all his creatures. I was made for him that I might live unto him; and how happy should I be if I could make him to be my highest end, and my heart could be taken off from all other things, and enjoy him alone to be my portion; and be acting to him, and working to him, and to make his will to be the rule of my life; then happy should I be. Oh that it were thus in my soul!

For the second thing, Know that this hungering and thirsting proceeds first from this ground, that the soul comes to understand the great good that there is in this righteousness; it looks upon itself as one that should be a most happy creature if it were enabled to do so, to work so towards God. I were made if I could feel the Holy Ghost thus in my heart, working my heart thus after the Lord.

Secondly, It doth thirst after this righteousness in a spiritual manner for itself, not only because I am convinced in my conscience I cannot go to heaven, or I must go to hell if I have it not, but I see this righteousness lovely and excellent in itself, and therefore I long after it, because of the excellency there is in itself. A hypocrite may desire to overcome his sins, and to be enabled to do duties; but mark it, it is in order to his or her peace; because I cannot have quiet and peace in conscience, therefore I would be glad if such a corruption were overcome, or I could have ability to do such and such duties that God requires. It is not because of any excellency that the soul doth see in this righteousness, but merely because it cannot have peace without it. But this blessed hunger and thirst that is here spoken of, it is that that makes the soul hunger after righteousness as for itself—my righteousness consists in it. What can be better to my soul than that I should live to God as the last end, that I should have my heart

working to God, and make his will to be my will; what can be better to my soul than this?

Thirdly, This hungering and thirsting it is illimited; by that I mean this, the soul never stints itself what measure of holiness it would have, but would have it in the highest degree that it is possible for any creature to have it. And still, if the Lord doth enable such a soul to overcome some corruptions, and to walk towards God in a better and more gracious manner than formerly it hath done, it would have still more and more, the desires are still enlarged; whereas a hypocrite may have a desire to overcome corruption and to perform some duty, but he desires only so much as he thinks may serve his turn to keep him from dangers that he doth apprehend; and that is an evident argument that he desires it not for itself. As thus: there be two men that would have learning; there is one man that is sent to the university, but it is only to give his father content, and therefore he would fain have learning; or thus, he would fain have learning that he might get some preferment—that is his end, and if he can but get so much as he may attain his end, then he loiters after that. But there is another that desires learning for itself; he sees an excellency that there is in learning, he sees that it doth raise a rational creature, and upon that he is never satisfied, but he would have more and more, and so studies to his dying day. Whether he have preferment or no, whether he hath employment or no, yet still he will be studious; whereas many wonder why such a man should be so studious; he hath not so much employment as another hath, but the very love he hath to it makes him do so, because he loves learning for itself. So one that doth desire grace to some inferior end, if he may have but so much as may serve the turn for his end, that quiets him; but whosever desires righteousness for itself, he is never quieted, but yet would have more and more grace, even as long as he lives. That is the third thing in this desire.

Fourthly, It is a ruling desire—that is, all desires are ordered by the desire after this righteousness. Whatsoever desires there are in the soul, saith the soul, Well, but let my desire after the furtherance of grace and righteousness, let that desire rule and order these desires. So far, therefore, as my other desires shall further this my desire unto this righteousness, so far I will nourish them, so far I will follow after them. But now if any desire that I have in my soul to anything else, if I find that it is rather a hindrance to me in this my great desire of righteousness than a furtherance, I will abandon that desire, I will rather oppose it, and I will bless God if God will cross me in that desire. This is the right desire after this righteousness, when it is a ruling desire. It rules in the soul, it is the chief desire; and no desire can be cherished in the soul but such a desire as may be some

way serviceable to this great desire of the soul in the hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Fifthly, The desires of the soul in hungering and thirsting after this righteousness, it is a desire that pain goes with. As was shewed in the other hungering and thirsting after the righteousness of Christ there was a pain; as in natural hunger there is a pain, so in that. The guilt of sin was painful to the soul; and so here, the unruly corruptions of the heart how grievous are they to it! When did you ever hear of Paul crying out for any of his sufferings, 'Oh wretched man that I am'? When he was buffeted, when he was imprisoned, he did not wring his hands and cry, I am undone because of imprisonment; when he was scourged he did not cry out; he could sing when he was in the stocks; but when he found his corruptions to be stirring in him, and the want of some degree of this righteousness, he gives a dreadful shriek, and cries out, 'Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' how shall I come to get power over these corruptions, and be enabled to walk after God? Oh that I could have but this! then I were a happy man. And therefore you find that this hungering and thirsting after righteousness follows upon mourning: 'Blessed are they that mourn,' and then, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness'—that is, those that first are affected with mourning for the corruptions of their hearts, and then upon this mourning there follows this hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Sixthly, This desire likewise must be very earnest; it is not a wishing and a woulding, but a mighty earnest desire. A divine of ours saith, The desires of a hypocrite, they are faint desires; but the sincere desires of the soul are such as make the soul faint—that is, they are so earnest as makes the soul even pant again. We have such expressions in Ps. cxix. 5, 'Oh that my ways,' saith David, 'were directed to keep thy statutes!' David had grace before to direct him, but he would have more: Oh that my ways were directed to keep, thy statutes! David that was a king, and had great contentment in the world, and yet the thing that makes him, with such a sigh, send up his desires to heaven, it was for the want of grace in his heart, and therefore he cries out, Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! as if he should say, Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest there is nothing in the world that would be a greater contentment to my soul than if I could find my heart directed to keep thy statutes. And then in ver. 10, 'With my whole heart have I sought thee,' saith David. Why, what is the matter? 'Oh let me not wander from thy commandments.' As if he should say, Lord, I account this to be the greatest evil that can befall me in this world, for me to wander from thy commandments; if

thou leavest me to myself, I shall wander from thy commandments. But, Lord, let me feel the work of thy grace powerfully in my heart, that I may not wander from thy commandments. And in ver. 20, 'My soul breaketh;' for what? 'For the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.' There was a breaking of David's soul; there was never any man that desired anything in this world with more earnestness. What expressions can be more than these? And in ver. 131, 'I opened my mouth and panted, for I longed for thy commandments.' Now, put all these together: 'Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes;' 'With my whole heart have I sought thee;' 'Oh let me not wander from thy commandments;' 'My soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto thy judgments at all times;' and 'My soul panteth again.' These are the earnest desires of a gracious heart after righteousness.

Seventhly, These desires are very industrious desires. They are not idle desires, as the desires of most people in the world after grace are—mere idle. The Lord give me grace, and when God gives me grace I shall do better; and so go no further than I pray God give me grace. But I appeal to thee, what labouring, what striving is in thy spirit, what painstaking, what working of thy soul after grace? and therefore observe that scripture in Ps. lxxiii. 1, 8, compared: 'My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,' saith the psalmist; but then mark what follows in the 8th verse: 'My soul followeth hard after thee,' saith David. That will be the fruit of gracious desires. If thou hast a desire to get grace, to get righteousness, if thou dost thirst for it, then this will follow: thy heart will follow hard after God in the use of all means that God is pleased to afford. If there be any ordinance of God that may further the work of thy grace, thou wilt desire that too; and if there be any pains, if ordinary means will not do it, thou wilt be willing to set upon extraordinary means. There is such a corruption that thou complaineest of, and ordinary means will not do the work; well, though it be to beat down the body, to beat down the flesh, whatsoever thou dost cross thyself in, yet this is the thing that thou art resolved, if power against corruption can be had, thou wilt have it. Thou wilt rather do or suffer the hardest thing in the world than not have these thy desires accomplished.

Eighthly, They are abiding desires. They will continue, and never be quiet until the thing be done. In Ps. cxix. 20, before named, 'My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments'—mark, 'at all times.' There are some of you that, in some good moods, you have even breakings in your souls—mighty desires—oh that God would give me grace! And you can pray mightily, and send mighty

cries to heaven for grace in some good moods. It may be when you have been upon your sick-beds, and afraid of death, or when you have been stirred in a sermon, you have gone home, and have manifested your desires to heaven, that the Lord would be pleased to help you, and purge your hearts, and give you grace; but is it at all times? At other times you are far enough from any such working of spirit after this righteousness. But it was in David; his soul did break after the judgments of God at all times. By judgments we are to understand the statutes, the commandments, the will of God—that is, that he might have his heart suitable to the will of God, revealed in his word; and in Ps. cxliii. 6, 'My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.' Now you know the thirsty land it gapes for want of water, and it never closes again till there be some showers, and so saith David, O Lord, it is with me as the thirsty land. I am, as it were, chapped, and I find a gaping in my heart after some showers of thy grace; and, Lord, till they come, I shall never have my heart closed, but as the thirsty land. Thus you have seen what kind of desires these are that the soul hath to this righteousness, as well as to the other.

I should come now to the opening of the great desirableness that there is in this righteousness. But all that I shall do now is, to desire you to take a review of this that hath been delivered to you in the description of this hungering and thirsting soul after this righteousness of sanctification. I suppose that there is not any one of you but have had some kind of desires after grace, though you have little understood what it meant; but now can you say, as in the presence of God, O Lord, thou hast wrought such kind of desires in my soul; in some measure I can say it, Lord, it hath been, not from ignorance, but from some enlightening of Christ's Spirit. I was an ignorant, sottish soul not long since, but the light of thy Spirit came into me, and shewed me the excellency of thy righteousness—what a blessed thing it was for the creature to live to God! And, Lord, thou knowest that my desires for righteousness are for itself. And there is no degree can satisfy me till I come to heaven. I would have more and more. Lord, thou knowest that all my desires are ruled and ordered by this great desire of my soul after this righteousness, next to the desires of my soul after the righteousness of thy Son. Yea, Lord, thou knowest how painful it is to me to want it. There is nothing in the world more grievous to me than the body of death that I carry about with me; so that if thou shouldst ask me from heaven, and say, Soul, what wouldst thou that I should do for thee? the Lord knows I would make this answer, Lord, let me have the righteousness of thy Son for my justification, and let me have the righteousness of thy Spirit for my sancti-

fication, to overcome my corruptions, and to enable me to live to thy praise. And, Lord, thou knowest that these desires have been earnest, and not at a mood or flash, but in a constant and settled way; and they have been industrious. Lord, thou knowest the pains that my soul hath taken, and still am willing to take. If I might but overcome such corruptions, and be enabled to walk with thee in holiness and righteousness, I care not what pains I took. And, Lord, this hath been from year to year, and I am resolved that this shall continue, and through thy grace I hope it will continue to my dying day, so as if I should perish, I would perish crying to thee for the righteousness of

thy Son, and for the righteousness of sanctification of my heart. Lord, this it is that thou hast wrought in my soul. Now, if thou canst be able thus to appeal to God, blessed art thou; blessed are those that do hunger and thirst after righteousness in this manner. But now, though in the very naming of these things, perhaps the Lord may be pleased so far to work upon some hearts as to quicken some desires after the ways of God and righteousness, yet the main thing that is to be presented to you for the quickening of your hearts, is the setting the beauty and the excellency of it before you. And so the comforting and encouraging of the soul in seeking after it.

SERMON XVIII.

OR,

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF SANCTIFICATION.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

THE third thing propounded in the opening of this great and weighty point of the righteousness of sanctification, or inherent righteousness, was the excellency of it. What is there in this righteousness that causes a soul thus to hunger and thirst after it? There are many things that men hunger and thirst after that are but vanity, and not worth the spending of our thoughts, much less our spirits, upon; and surely Christ would never pronounce them blessed that do so, that spend their time and their thoughts upon vanity. But there is a great excellency in this righteousness, whereby the soul is enabled to glorify God, and honour him as the infinite first being of all things. Now the excellency of this righteousness consists in these things:—

First, This righteousness is the right temper of the soul. The health of the body it consists in the well and right constitution of it. Look, as the body when it is in health can relish and taste things for sweetness and delight, and can work and agitate in the place God hath set it in; but if a man's body be dis-tempered through sickness and weakness, then he can neither work nor relish anything, nor enjoy himself in anything that he hath; and therefore it is that man desires health above all outward blessings. What is it for a rich man to have wealth and a great estate, and not to have health? What is it to a man

to have honours and preferments, to have friends, and all the delights this world can afford, whenas he doth not enjoy himself in those things? Now sin it is the distemper of the soul—that which puts the soul out of taste, and takes away the excellency of all it doth enjoy. Therefore it is so oft in Scripture compared unto things that are the most loathsome. Now when grace comes into the heart, it prevails against all the ill-humours of the soul, and brings health into the spirit; it makes the soul healthful and hale in the service of God.

Secondly, This righteousness is a spark of the divine nature. That expression we have in 2 Pet. i. 4: 'Whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.' Grace and righteousness is all one, and it is nothing else but a sparkling of the divine nature that is in God himself. And the soul that understands what this is, how can it but long after it; it sees a greater glory and a more worth in the least spark of this excellency than in all the glory of the world represented unto it in the most taking and beautiful show that can be. The soul by this comes to live even as God himself doth; and is not this very desirable?

Thirdly, It is the very image of God in the soul, and an image represents a thing in the chief excel-

lency of it. As the image or picture of a man, it doth not represent the legs and the feet of the man, which are the inferior parts, but his countenance, his face. The image of a man it is represented by his face, which is the glory of the man, or the head. So God's image in us is this righteousness, inherent grace. The creatures have the footsteps of God upon them. In all the creatures that are in the world we may there behold so many footsteps of God, as it were, but not God's image. If so be that a man trod on the sand of the sea, there would not remain the image of the man, but only the footsteps. We cannot say, the man being gone, that there is the image of such a man, but there is his footsteps. So all the manifestations of God in the world, in creation and providence, they shew forth the footsteps of God, that God hath been here; all the creation holds forth the footsteps of the Most High. But when we behold a saint we see the glory of God; there we behold the face of God. As in Gen. i., where the council was called, 'Come, let us make man.' How? after our footsteps? No, but 'after our own image.' Now grace is the renewing of this glorious image; for we must know that this excellent piece of God's image by man's fall was all defaced and blurred; there was a blackness and deformity upon this glorious excellency, but now grace is a-renewing of this image again. The soul it represents God in a lively way; the image of a man in his child, it is more lively than in a piece of wood; it is possible to draw it in such an excellency and feature that it may be every way like the man, but yet not so like a man's image as is his child. Grace in the heart is the image of God lively represented. God may see himself there, as a father sees himself in the face of his child. God cannot see himself so in all the world as in a saint. If so be God would say, Where shall I behold my image? If he went to acts of providence, he might see his footsteps; if he went to works of creation, he might see his power and wisdom; but surely when he goes into the heart of a saint, there he sees his image most glorious. Surely, then, grace it is an excellent thing. The prototype of this image was in Christ without measure; he received of this grace without measure, and we from his fulness receive, even of this grace, grace for grace.

Fourthly, The excellency of this righteousness it appears in this, in that it is the very life of God himself; a man may see his image, but not his life; but now grace it is God's life. That expression hints so much unto us that we have in Eph. iv. 18, 'Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God;' intimating that when the soul comes to have this righteousness, it comes to live the life that God doth himself. How is that? the same life that is in the nature of God; the soul acting as God

acts comes to live the life of God. As when a creature shall act as God acts, and make the same end that God makes, and works towards this end as God works, this is the life of God; for God's life it consists in this, in willing himself the highest good, and acting as unto an ultimate end, and ordering all his undertakings to suit with this end. This is the excellency of God; and a saint comes to live the life of God; he propounds God to be the chiefest good, the glory of God the ultimate end of all his actions, and drives all his designs to this end. And herein consists the excellency of this life of sanctification, and thus a saint doth in his measure; though he be not able to reach up to the top and height of this glory, yet every saint in his measure doth attain this end. How desirable, then, is this righteousness, that makes the soul to live that life here which it must live, and shall to all eternity.

Fifthly, It is the very glory of God in the soul of man. The soul doth not only come to live the life of God, but it comes to be the very glory of God. Rom. iii. 23, 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' or, as it is in the original, 'deprived' of the glory of God. We are now deprived of the righteousness Adam was first made in. Adam he was stated in a glorious being in paradise, but he lost that righteousness; and in that condition he was the glory of God, being the excellentest creature that God made; but he sinning, did deface that excellency. Now when this is renewed in the soul, God's glory is come into the soul. Men desire glory in the world. What are the thoughts and the desires of all men almost after, but those things that may advance themselves and their own honour? How desirous, then, is God's glory, or ought it to be unto us; this shines in the souls of the saints; and to have a principle that we shall hold forth this glory according to the measure of grace received, this is very excellent; that a poor wretch should come to such a height of excellency to hold forth the glory of the eternal God. There is not only God shining upon the soul, but God shining in the soul that holds forth the glory of God to the world. And herein is a great mystery of the excellency of this righteousness, that it doth not only shine from God upon the soul, but there is a shining in the soul that holds forth the shine of the righteousness upon this soul to all the world.

Sixthly, By this righteousness the glory of God is maintained in the world; this is that which holds up God's honour in the world. What glory should God have in the world if all were as unrighteous as some are? You think that the saints they are little worth; let me tell you it is for their sakes that the world now stands. Had God no more honour from some than he hath from the most of you, what would become of you? It is not for your sakes the world

is continued. The world is not worthy of these excellent ones; but God doth continue these, that he might have glory from them. Saith God, I have made a world, and I have placed and filled it with variety of creatures; but of all the works of my hands, I have none that doth give me that glory that my saints do. God puts such a principle into some that they give him the glory of their being. Now, is not this a most excellent thing, and most desirable, that the creature should be able to live up to the fulfilling of the end which it was created for?

Seventhly, By this righteousness all natural and civil righteousness is raised higher and to a more glorious condition than possibly it could be before. There is no action that a man can do that hath any worth in it, any further than this righteousness is in it. Men in their natural estate they work from a natural principle; but when grace comes into the heart, this inherent righteousness, the soul works in natural actions from inward principles, and makes those righteous actions; when a gracious heart follows his calling, and the things of the world, it is in a spiritual way. Carnal hearts are carnal in spiritual things, and gracious hearts are spiritual in natural things.

Eighthly, Upon the receiving of this righteousness, every action, so far as this righteousness is in it, is more worth than heaven and earth. You who are saints, prize your parts, prize your duties. It was a speech of Luther, who extolled faith and righteousness as much as ever any did, when he met with an expression of righteousness or faith, he would be sure to carry it to exalt free grace. Yet he who was so full in the extolling of the righteousness of Christ, saith, that every good work that springs from faith is more precious to God than heaven and earth. Heaven and earth holds forth God's glory in a passive way, these in an active way. Those actions that come from this righteousness hold forth the glory of God in an active way; and one action done unto the glory of God in an active way, holds forth God's glory more eminently than all the world besides.

Ninthly, This righteousness the excellency of it consists in this, this raises the heart above all creatures and enjoyments, and carries the soul beyond them all. Before righteousness comes into the heart, the heart lies below the creature, and is a slave unto every creature. When the creature bids go, it runs; when that would be obeyed, it yields presently. But this righteousness it raises the soul above them all; so as it now comes to have God alone to be higher than itself. The soul acknowledges no supreme but God himself, and is subject unto him and him alone. The soul now knows its excellency and worth, that there is no creature fit and worthy to have converse with it; it is only a companion for God himself.

If God will have it subject, it will in order to him submit to anything; but its submission shall be only in order to him; so that the good of the creature now consists not in anything the creature can give, nor the hurt in anything the creature can do, but only in God alone. The soul is now in a kind enlarged infinitely, and can be satisfied with nothing but God; nothing but a God only can fill up the cravings of the soul. Whereas before it was satisfied with every lust, with every filthy vanity, now nothing but real enjoyments, and only that which is real, can satisfy the soul.

Tenthly, The excellency of this righteousness consists in this, that it is a principle of union and communion with God himself; the soul now comes into relation, into near union, with the Father. When God made man at first he did not only give him a body and a soul, but he put a principle of enjoying communion with him; for herein lies man's happiness, that he is made capable of enjoying communion with God. But now this happiness is lost; man by his fall is now become a stranger unto God, and when God converts the soul this is restored; at the first work of conversion the soul is made near unto God, who was before afar off. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and now the soul comes to be fitted for communion with so high a good; for no creature is fit for communion with God but angels and men. Now there must be a suitableness of lives in those that enjoy communion; there cannot be communion where there is an unsuitableness in living. As a man cannot have communion with the beasts, because they live not the same life, and the beasts cannot have communion with the plant, because they live a contrary life, a natural man cannot have communion with God, because he lives not the same life that God doth; but a saint comes to enjoy communion with the Lord by virtue of this righteousness. Before, thou wanderest from God, and soughtest after vanity, and never knew what it was to enjoy communion with God. Communion with God, it was but a light thing to thee before; thou didst look upon it as a thing that had not much in it—it was but a notion to thee; thou didst hear of such a thing, and thou couldst relate it, but there was no worth in it to thee, thou didst not prize it; but now the soul comes to enjoy that which is more worth than a thousand worlds to it, and the more righteousness the soul hath, the more communion it hath with God. And this is the reason that the soul hungers and thirsts after more righteousness, for the more it enjoys of God the more sweetness it finds.

Eleventhly, This righteousness is that which sanctifies all our actions unto God, and puts a worth upon them; before, our actions they were not accepted, they were looked upon as filthy, polluted things:

'To the pure all things are pure, but to the defiled and polluted, all things are filthy;' so God looks upon them. Now, what is it to sanctify a thing? To sanctify, it is to set a thing apart for God. It is grace that sanctifies the soul. Whereas the soul was employed for common uses before, now it is separated for God; as when the vessels of the temple were sanctified, they were separated for holy uses, only for that use. So a godly man, he is separated for God, being taken out of the world and employed now in holy services. In Ps. iv. 5; not only separated for God by an act of God upon the soul, which hath been from all eternity—but though this be a blessedness and a high privilege to be sanctified and set apart from all eternity for God; but it is a sanctification by grace. There is that put into the soul whereby the soul is enabled to set itself apart for God, and so it comes to grow in grace more and more, and it is enabled for to make a sanctified use of all it enjoys; it can now tell how to make use of all creatures for the glory of God, whereas before, the world had the use of the soul—but now, saith the soul, I am separated only for high ends, for the glory of that God from whom I receive my being.

Twelfthly, This helps the soul to overcome the greatest evil in the world. Sin is the greatest evil, and one truly enlightened had rather suffer anything in the world than be overcome by the least sin; a gracious heart looks with more indignation upon the least sin than upon any sufferings. Now it is nothing but the Holy Ghost can overcome sin; it is the Spirit alone that can subdue iniquity. The soul it hath a principle within itself whereby it overcomes sin, and so goes on until the work be perfected; so that a gracious heart doth not only overcome sin by the help of the Spirit, but also from an inward principle that there is working in the soul against that which is contrary unto God.

Thirteenthly, The excellency of it consists in this, because Jesus Christ in it attains the end of his death; and certainly that wherein Jesus Christ attains the end of his death must needs be very precious. It is a part of the end why the Father sent Jesus Christ into the world, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives: Luke i. 74, 'Christ came into the world that he might have a people to serve him, that he might redeem a chosen generation.' Who are they? Certainly they must be some rare people that must have such a one to come to redeem them. Man had lost all his holiness and righteousness that he had at the first, and lay under filth and misery; but such was God's love to righteousness, that he saith to Christ, My Son, thou must go into the world to restore righteousness again; such is my love to righteousness that

thou must go; though thou art the only beloved of my soul, yet go thou must. Well, saith Christ, Father, I am willing to go, and though it cost me my life to procure righteousness, and righteous ones to be subjects for thy mercy to triumph in, I am willing to die to procure it. How excellent then is the righteousness, which is that in which Christ attains his end in dying!

Fourteenthly, This is the only thing, next to the righteousness of Christ, that will be of worth at death and judgment—next, I say, unto the righteousness of Jesus Christ. When all the world shall fail, their hearts shall quake within them, and all their civil righteousness, and all their formality, and their foolish pomp in the world, that which they have made their hope, the rock of their confidence and their stay, shall all sink under them, this is that which, I say, next to the righteousness of Christ, will hold up the head above water; this shall comfort thee, and then it will be desirable. Oh that we had oil in our lamps, and grace in our hearts! When the foolish virgins saw the glory the wise virgins were possessed of, they then saw their folly in their neglect, and they cried then, Oh that we had grace! oh that we had oil in our lamps! Certainly that which will be of such excellency then, it is no less worth now.

Fifteenthly, This is an immortal seed. When once the soul is insealed in righteousness, it is ever righteous; the least seed of it, it shall endure to eternity—and the lastingness of a thing, we say, puts a price upon it. If thou hast this, thou hast that in thee that all the devils in hell shall not overcome; they may assault, trouble, and disquiet thy peace, but they shall never undermine this righteousness, they shall never undo thee in that which is thy righteousness, thy happiness; and herein likewise is another excellency of this righteousness.

Sixteenthly, lastly, This righteousness is nothing else but the beginning of heaven. In that golden chain in Rom. viii. there is no mention of sanctification; sanctification is heaven begun. There is mention made of calling, of justification, of glorification, but no mention of sanctification; so that sanctification it is heaven begun; it is not only the way to heaven, but heaven itself. Now certainly this is very desirable: therefore put all these together, and we shall understand the meaning of that scripture in Prov. xii. 26, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' He is more excellent in that he is a healthful man; more excellent in that he hath the divine nature. In that he hath the image of God. In that he lives the life of God. In that he is made partaker of exceeding great and precious promises. In that his sins are pardoned. In that he is accepted by the Father. In this the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour. It may be his neighbour is a rich man,

his landlord, his master, the best in the parish, but he a poor man, yet if godly he is better than his neighbour, though his neighbour be a lord, a prince, though he be never so great. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour; for you that hunger and thirst after this righteousness, behold what a glorious object you have here which your thirst is placed upon.

From this point abundance of comfort flows to you that can prove yourselves to be hungerers and thirsters. We see some excellency in it; oh that we might have more! Do you say so, do you desire that you might have more? then know,

First, That these hungerings of thine are better than all the world's fillings; these desires are better than all the cravings of worldlings. The worldly man saith, Who will shew us any good? and thou sayest, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance, Lord, clothe my soul with righteousness, Lord, bring me into such a condition that I may stand with boldness at the throne of thy grace. Know that thy hungerings are better than the world's fillings.

Secondly, These desires of thine, they are better than all common gifts, the greatest parts and natural endowments that the most glorious hypocrite in the world hath. Many can pray excellently, repeat largely, and thou thinkest, hadst thou their gifts and parts, how happy shouldst thou be. Thy hungerings are better than those enlargements, for they are but common workings, and no distinguishing characters; but these hungerings and thirstings after this righteousness, they are the breathings of the Spirit of God, the special workings of the Spirit.

Thirdly, This is the thing that hath been the com-

fort of the most precious saints in all the world. Those who are now at rest in the bosom of the Father, they have comforted themselves in these hungerings and thirstings. Perhaps thou canst not see the full manifestation of this in the assurance of it; neither could they; but they hungered and thirsted after this, that God would lift up the light of his countenance upon them. Look that choice scripture, and meditate upon it as thy portion; mark how Nehemiah expresses himself, 'O Lord, let thy ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and thy servants who desire to fear thy name;' as if he should say, Lord, thou knowest though there be many weaknesses in us, yet the desires of our souls are to fear thee. Comfort thyself with this scripture when thou canst not find that righteousness thou wouldst have—when thou hast sad dejected thoughts within thee that God perhaps will reject thee, make use of this scripture, 'Lord, thou knowest the desires of our souls are to fear thy name;' Lord, let me have this and I am happy; though corruption prevails over me, yet this spark is alive and in me, for which I bless thy name, I desire to fear thee. And Christ saith in the text, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.' It is very observable he doth not say, Blessed is he that *doth* thus and thus. No; but blessed is he that *hunger*s and *thirst*s after righteousness. Though they are blessed that do this, yet for the comfort of weak ones this is said, Blessed are they that *do* desire to hunger and thirst after righteousness, blessed are they who find the want of it; and in the midst of that, the desire of their soul is to fear God. This scripture belongs to thee; comfort thyself with it as thy portion, but be sure that thy desires are right.

SERMON XIX.

OR,

THEY THAT HUNGER ARE BLESSED FOR THE PRESENT.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

THERE are two things yet to be opened about blessedness, and then we shall come fully to the application of it.

They are blessed that do hunger and thirst after righteousness. They are blessed for the present.

First, Blessed, because they are so enlightened to see wherein true excellency doth consist. Blessed are they in comparison of others, that see no higher excellency than to eat and drink, and to have contentment to the flesh. Blessed are they whose eyes God hath opened to see into the excellency of this righteousness, to understand what it means. Those whose eyes God hath opened, and minds the Lord hath enlightened but to see the excellency of this righteousness above all things that can be desired, they bless God for this; and account it the greatest blessing under heaven, next the sight of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that God hath shewn unto them the beauty, the excellency, and the glory of this righteousness.

Secondly, Blessed are they; they have a magnanimous spirit. The Lord hath given to such a spirit of magnanimity beyond other men. Men's desires are according to their spirits. A man of a poor base spirit doth bound his desires to poor base things; as some men, if they might have but so much money as to drink with their companions, they would look no higher for a blessed life. But now, another man's spirit is risen higher with desires after honours, preferments, and great things. According to the greatness of the things any man's or woman's spirit makes after, so is the greatness of their spirits. Now those whose spirits are after righteousness: first, The righteousness of Jesus Christ; and then that righteousness—that is, the divine nature, the image of God, the life of God, nothing will satisfy them but that. It is not the world nor contentments to the flesh that can satisfy them, but the righteousness of God. Here is an argument of a true magnanimous spirit. An Alexander desires great things, to be conqueror of the world, and then would fain have more worlds to conquer. Why? because

he had a great spirit, and therefore his desires are so great. A Christian hath a great spirit in a true, holy, and gracious sense, and therefore desires great things. It is not all the world that can sanctify^o the spirit of a Christian, it must have righteousness.

Thirdly, This desire after righteousness, it is the seed of God, or rather it is a fruit of some righteousness that is in the soul already, and therefore they are blessed. No soul can thus hunger and thirst after righteousness, but it hath got righteousness already. There is some righteousness in the soul, for everything desires after that that is suitable to its nature. What is it that makes the ox desire grass, or the fish desire water, or the bird desire corn? it is because these are suitable to the nature of these creatures. So a covetous man desires riches, a voluptuous man desires pleasure, an ambitious man desires honour, because suitable to them. So where there is such a desire after righteousness, there is a suitableness between righteousness and the soul; and therefore righteousness is begun already in the soul. That soul that hath a suitableness unto righteousness, certainly hath some principles of righteousness within it, and therefore they are blessed.

Fourthly, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst. Though they do not feel the righteousness that they desire, they are blessed, because in the covenant of grace God accepts of the will for the deed. Now they having righteousness manifested by their desire, they have some principles of it, they are therefore within the covenant of grace; and being within the covenant of grace, they have this blessing, that God accepts of the will for the deed. I beseech you consider of this; it is a great point, the understanding how this privilege doth come of accepting the will for the deed. Those that are under the law have no such privilege. The law requires perfect obedience, or else casts away all; and therefore, for men and women that are ignorant and graceless, have nothing of Christ in them, they yet think that God will accept of their desires, of the will for the

* Query, 'satisfy'?—Eh.

deed. But they are mistaken; this is a privilege that belongs to such as are in the covenant of grace; and it is a purchase of Jesus Christ that God should accept of the will for the deed. Now, those who have such a kind of hunger and thirst after righteousness manifested as before, they have some principles of righteousness in them, and so are under the covenant of grace; they have this privilege, that God accepts of the will for the deed, especially if that hunger and thirst after this righteousness of grace be joined with the hunger and thirst after the righteousness of Christ that before hath been opened to you. Many people who say they would fain do better than they do, yet they never understood what it was to hunger after the righteousness of Christ, and so are not acquainted with the covenant of grace, they cannot have the comfort of this blessedness; but such as having hungered and thirsted after the righteousness of Christ, and so manifested that they are acquainted with the covenant of grace, and now hunger and thirst after the righteousness of sanctification, they may hereby assure themselves that the blessing of the covenant of grace belongs to them, and that God accepts of the will for the deed. Now this is a mighty blessing, for it is a help to the soul in the midst of all infirmities. Though I find never such want of righteousness, yet having hungering and thirsting desires after it, I may comfort myself in this, the blessing of the covenant of grace belongs to me; it is accepted as if I had that very righteousness that I so much hunger and thirst for. And that is the fourth blessedness.

Fifthly, Which is a main thing to be considered of, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; because this hunger and thirst of theirs it doth quench sinful and base desires in the soul, it helps to mortify them. There is no such way to mortify sinful desires as by gracious desires, as thus it is so in all other affections. The way to get base, sordid love in the soul to be mortified, it is by love to God and love to Jesus Christ; the way to overcome sinful joy, it is by the joy of the Holy Ghost. So the way for to mortify base, sinful desires in the soul, wandering after this and the other thing, after a thousand vanities and follies in the world, that doth undo the souls of so many thousands, (for certainly the wandering of the desires after vanity and folly is the destruction of thousand of thousands of souls,) is to have their desires right set, to be taken off from vain and base things, and to be set upon righteousness, upon the image of God, and the life of God, and upon the principles of union and communion with God; they are blessed, for here are desires that do quench unlawful desires, sinful, wicked desires, and so doth regulate the soul, so that blessed are they in that respect.

Sixthly, Blessed are they, for this hungering and thirsting after righteousness makes the ordinances of God, and any beginnings of the influences of grace, to be very sweet unto the soul. How sweet is the word to that soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness! how sweet is any ordinance of God, because all ordinances are the conveyances of grace, appointed so by God, and any influence of grace to such a soul, how sweet is it! When the Lord doth come into the soul in a prayer, or in the word, and doth quicken it a little, or help it with some resolutions against sin, and gives it any power against temptation, how sweet is this to the soul! Blessed is the soul that hath this hunger, for it sweetens all ordinances, all beginnings of influence of grace.

Blessed are those souls that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they have many gracious invitations unto the Lord and unto Christ, to come in to receive mercy. The Lord invites those souls to come to him; and as they therefore said in the Gospel to the poor blind man, Be of good comfort, he calleth thee, so I say to all such as can approve their souls, that though there be much weakness in them, yet if there be this hunger and thirst after righteousness, Be of good comfort, the Lord calls you, you are invited to come. I will give you these scriptures for invitation: in Isaiah lv., (that known scripture), 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money,' no worthiness, 'come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' The grace of God is compared to these excellent things, and here is a proclamation to all that hunger and thirst to come unto the waters. These waters are both the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the righteousness of sanctification. And in John vii. 37 is another invitation. It is said, 'That in the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' Mark, Christ cries unto those that hunger and thirst. They, it may be, are under some discouragements, because they cannot find that righteousness they do desire. Christ calls unto them, 'Come unto me.' Surely they are blessed that Christ doth invite to himself, and that by crying to them that they should come to him; and that place in Rev. xxii. 17, quoted for the righteousness of Christ, and so likewise is an invitation to them that hunger and thirst after this righteousness.

Eighthly, As they are blessed because they are invited, so they are blessed because they are under many promises. There are many promises to the hungering and thirsting soul: I will give you some few; in Ps. x. 17, 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart.' The desire of such as are humble thou hast heard it; God hears it, and he prepares their heart. 'Thou wilt cause

thine ear to hear; thou preparest their heart.' These desires that they have, they are of thy preparation; thou dost prepare their heart with these desires, and thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. And then, in Ps. xxii. 26, 'The meek shall eat and be satisfied; they shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever.' They shall praise the Lord that seek him; who are they but those that hunger and thirst after him? Here is a promise, they shall praise God. You are now altogether in way of seeking, in hungering and thirsting. Here is a promise that you shall praise, and that your heart shall live for ever. There is a principle of life begun, and your heart shall live for ever. You think that, because of so much corruption that there is in your hearts, that you shall at length fall off, die, vanish, and come to nothing; but they shall praise the Lord that seek him, and your hearts shall live for ever. You shall praise God one day for these desires, for this hungering and thirsting; that is another promise. And then, in Isa. xli. 17, 'When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them, but I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water, &c. And I will set in the desert the fir-tree, the pine, and the box, together.' Mark how God's heart is in this promise to those that thirst. And we are to know that by these expressions of outward things, spiritual things are couched under them, for that was the way in the times of the Old Testament especially, that the Lord promised the graces of the gospel most under outward things, in an external way, but spiritual blessings were couched under them. And there are two things that I would observe in this promise. The first is, how many times God expresseth himself and saith, I will do this for thee; I, I, I will do it. In ver. 17, there you have I, I, twice: 'I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.' Then in ver. 18, 'I will open rivers in high places, and I will make the wilderness a pool of water,' &c. Then there is a fifth and sixth I in ver. 19, 'I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and I will set in the desert the fig-tree,' &c. I will do these things for such as hunger, as thirst after me; they shall have water. Six times in a very few words of Scripture God saith, I, I, I, I, I, I will do it; as if he should say, Poor hungering, thirsting soul, you cannot see how it can be done; you find your heart so vile, corruption so prevailing, that you are ready to think it impossible it should be done, but I, I, I, I, I, I will do it. The second thing to be opened is, that the Lord takes away the objections that might discourage hungering and thirsting souls. Say they, How shall I come to have this righteous-

ness? I live in such a place where we have no means—we have no ministry at all, or to little purpose. I want the means. Let not that discourage thee, 'I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.' Alas! thirsty people that are in the wilderness, what shall become of them? I will make the wilderness pools of water, and the dry land springs of water, saith God. Perhaps you may come to some places and hear the excellency of the gospel displayed before you, and you may think, Had we but the gospel so preached among us—as no question many poor people that have been forced to fly to this place for refuge have had such thoughts—if God would but send the gospel of the preaching of the excellency of Christ among us, how should we be satisfied! But how shall our souls be satisfied when we have not this? Mark this promise and make use of it, 'I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.' God can bring into your wilderness, and to your dry land, those springs of water that may refresh and satisfy your souls. And then, in Isa. xlv. 3, 'For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty,' saith God, 'and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.' Here is an excellent promise, even to you and your seed; for that is a most uncharitable and a very evil opinion, that is much against the covenant of grace, and doth much darken the glory of the covenant of grace, for men to say that the children of believers—of the godly—have no more promise, and are in no sense in covenant with God, no more than any other. These, besides others, that God promises to 'circumcise their hearts, and the heart of their seed;' and here, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring;' so that the seed even of the hungerers and thirsters after righteousness, they are blessed. And it may be thou that art now hungering and thirsting, and perhaps all thy lifetime continuest so, it may be the Lord will grant these things unto thy seed after thee, that thou hast been praying for thine own soul. Thou shalt have as much as may save thee, and as much as shall satisfy thee, but for the particular of these things that thou hast been praying for, it may be God will grant it to thy seed after thee. But here is a promise that God will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. And how lightly soever a carnal heart may think of the promises of the gospel, yet such as are gracious would not give their portion in them for a thousand worlds. Such a promise as this they would embrace, and make account that their riches consists more in it than the riches of a covetous man in many bonds

and bills that he hath of many hundreds and thousands.

But the main thing wherein they are blessed is in that which Christ saith, 'They shall be satisfied.' And we have many promises for this besides this of Christ. In Prov. x. 24, 'The desire of the righteous shall be granted.' In Ps. cxlv. 19, there is another promise, that 'God will fulfil the desire of them that fear him;' and in Ps. ciii. 9, 'He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.' They shall be satisfied; how is that? Thus,

First, So far all hungering souls in this world shall be satisfied, as they shall find such contentment in the ways of righteousness, as their hearts shall never turn quite out of those ways, whatever temptations they meet with. Certainly this is some satisfaction; certainly there is some satisfaction in a soul when it is in such a way as no temptation can possibly draw it out of that way. If there be a bee that fastens upon a flower, and is sucking of honey, if it cannot be got off of that flower, certainly the bee finds sweetness and honey there; so all those that have but the least beginnings of true grace, though they be hungering after more, they would fain have more, yet they find so much satisfaction as they will never turn into the ways of unrighteousness again—they will never leave the paths of God. It may be thou art complaining, and sayest, I have been desiring for many years, Oh that I might overcome such a corruption, that I might be enabled to serve God with more freedom of spirit and cheerfulness, but I cannot get anything; I find I do not grow, I get little. Why, then, temptation comes; If you can get nothing, if you strive and labour, and desire, and pray, and can get nothing, leave off all, saith temptation, and go to your former course again. God forbid, saith the gracious soul, I will never turn to my former ways; for though I cannot get what I would, yet I have a thousand thousand times more peace and contentment than ever I had in any former ways, and that is some satisfaction.

Secondly, again, Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall have grace growing. There shall be more and more grace; grace shall be always coming in. Perhaps they shall not be always sensible of it, but they shall have grace coming in to uphold them at least, if so be not so fully as to comfort them so as they desire, yet grace is coming in. And so their spirits are kept still a-working after grace, and they find something to uphold their hearts, though not so fully to comfort them as they would.

Thirdly, There is certainly a time when all these hungering souls shall be in a sensible way satisfied to the full—that is, there is a time coming wherein thou shalt never sin more, wherein thou shalt never be troubled with that wretched heart of thine, with that

proud, stubborn, carnal, distrustful heart of thine; there is a time coming wherein thou shalt serve God as much as thou wilt, as much as thou dost desire; thou shalt do God as much service as thou canst desire to do him; thou shalt have as much grace as thou canst desire to have. Certainly that is a blessed time, and that will satisfy the souls of any that are gracious, that there is a time coming that they shall serve God as much as they can. Thou shalt have, as it were, thy belly full; thou art now a vessel of mercy, and shalt be filled full with the grace of God in thee; and the very thoughts of this, that there is such a time a-coming, doth in a great measure satisfy the soul for the present; how will the soul then be satisfied when that time is come? 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: they shall be satisfied.'

Now, for application, here is a use of comfort and encouragement to those that hunger and thirst after righteousness.

This hunger and thirst of thine after righteousness, be comforted in it; it is a sign of life. If the child cry for the breast, surely it is alive: 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.' It is a sign that thou art a new-born babe at least; that is the expression of the apostle in 1 Pet. ii. 2, 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.' Here is an argument of a new-born babe. Wherefore is it that thy soul doth desire so much after the word? Is it not that thou mightest grow thereby? What is that? thou mayest have more power over thy corruptions, and be more enabled to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life; thou art a new-born babe, there is life.

Secondly, It is a good sign of a thriving Christian; not only of a living Christian, but of a thriving Christian. As you find it by experience in the body, when a man or woman begins to have a good appetite to their meat, to be hungry, we say, then they mend. A man that begins to have a stomach, to be hungry, and to taste his beer, he begins now to thrive; so it is with the soul. Thou hast not that growth that thy soul desires, but hast thou a stomach to thy meat, canst thou taste thy drink, canst thou taste the waters of life, canst thou say, These are sweet, oh that I might have more, I am athirst and desire after more? When thou comest to the word, thou gettest some milk to nourish thee, and thou hungerest after more. It is an argument that thou art in a thriving condition, it is a sign of health, that thy soul is hale, that thou hast not those distempers and corruptions that other men have. Other men whose souls are clogged with the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the world, the preferments, hon-

ours, riches, pleasures of it, they could be without the word if it were for a whole twelvemonth together, but only through custom they come and hear, whereas the poor hungry soul, when it hath been at the word but one day, it longs for the time to have another meal's meat, and for another meal's meat, and cannot tell how to spare one meal's meat. Now that is a sign that such a soul is in a thriving condition; be then encouraged from this.

Thirdly, There is an infinite fountain of grace that is set open for poor souls. Thou that hungerest and thirstest after righteousness, there is an infinite fountain of grace, and there is bread enough in thy Father's house. Thou needest not seek to satisfy thy soul with husks, there is bread enough: 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.' Jesus Christ is an infinite fountain of all grace; he is filled with all the fulness of God, and to that end, that from him hungering and thirsting souls might be satisfied, therefore Christ is thus filled: John i. 16, 'Of his fulness have all we received grace for grace.' There is grace answerable unto the grace of Christ, to be received from his fulness; and though it is true there is emptiness in thy own heart, and emptiness in all ordinances any further than Christ is in them, yet there is a fountain of grace for thy satisfying—an infinite fountain, that hath been the fountain from whence all hungering souls since the world began have been satisfied; and it is open for thee, and thou mayest come as freely for it as ever any soul did, to take that that may satisfy thy soul.

Fourthly, These hungering desires of thine are raised by no other than the Holy Ghost himself. In Rom. viii. it is the Holy Ghost that teaches us how to pray and send up groans and sighs unutterable; it is the Spirit of God that helps our infirmities. Now, in these hungerings and thirstings of thine, hast not thou been in the presence of God sending up groans and sighs unutterable? Surely thy petitions are like to be heard, that are indited by the Holy Ghost himself. When thou art crying for this bread of life to overcome thy sin, to enable thee to walk before God in holy duties, these sighs and groans unutterable are from the Holy Ghost. It may be thou canst not express these desires of thine, as a man that is hunger-starved he is not able to express the fulness of his desires after bread or drink, but though this be thy case, yet know, the Lord having stirred up those unutterable desires by his Spirit, he knows the meaning of his Spirit.

Fifthly, Your desires and God's meet. There is nothing in the world that God doth more freely bestow than righteousness. The Lord is more free and willing to bestow the righteousness of his Son (that was spoke to before) and the righteousness of his Spirit, than he is willing to bestow a piece of

bread. Thou mayest as soon have one from God as the other, for his heart is in one more than in the other. Thou desirest that thou mightest overcome sin, that thou mightest serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness, and God desires the same thing. God's heart and thy heart meet together in one.

Sixthly, If God will fill vacuities in nature, and will hear the ravens when they cry unto him, will he not fill the emptiness of thy soul? God hath so ordered things in nature that there shall be no vacuity. Philosophers say 'that the world will sooner fall to nothing than there should be the least emptiness in the world;' but it must be filled with something or other. Now hath the Lord so appointed that there must not be the least vacuity in nature, but there must be something to fill it, surely the Lord will not suffer a vacuity in an immortal soul; but he hath something to fill that soul of thine that is empty for the present, and the Scripture tells us that the Lord fills every living thing with his blessing, and shall not a soul that hungers after righteousness, and the image of God, and the grace of the Spirit of God, shall it not be satisfied? shall God regard to satisfy the hunger of a raven, and give water to a raven that cries, and shall he not satisfy an immortal soul that hungers after that that is his own image, that he might overcome sin, and serve him in holiness and righteousness? Certainly the Lord will satisfy thee.

Seventhly, Yet further the Lord bids us, that if our enemy hunger, we should give him meat, and if he thirst, we should give him drink, Rom. xii. 20. This is the charge of God. Will the Lord give a charge to us poor creatures, that when our enemy hungers, we must give our enemy meat, and when our enemy thirsts, give him drink, and shall not God himself, the infinite fountain of all mercy, when a child hungers, give meat, and when a child thirsts, give drink? Saith Christ, 'If you that are evil know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father,' &c. Certainly, if so be thou hungerest and thirstest after righteousness, God will not deny thee when thou hungerest after that. He will give thee bread, he will give thee drink, for the satisfying of thy soul. We must do it to our enemies. The Lord will much more do it to the soul that desires above all things in the world to be reconciled to him.

Eighthly, Be of comfort in this, you that are hungerers and thirsters, these hungerings and thirstings of yours will make you to be praying Christians. They are mighty ingredients in prayer; and it is a very great blessing to be a praying Christian, especially in these times. There are no such praying Christians as your hungering and thirsting Christians, that find the want of the righteousness, both of the Son of God and the Spirit of God. These are great

prayers in Israel. We have many that will enlarge themselves to God in prayer; but for a prayer to come from a hungering and thirsting soul, it is a prayer worth a hundred of those prayers that come from parts and memory.

Ninthly, Know further, that the ordinances of Jesus Christ are appointed to thee. There is a time when Jesus Christ will satisfy thy soul immediately; till that time comes he hath appointed his ordinances, his word, and sacraments, for the satisfying these hungering and thirsting souls. And comfort thyself in this, O blessed Saviour, I hope to have full communion with thee hereafter; but for the present thou hast not left me destitute, and I will take what thou hast left me thankfully for the present, expecting a more immediate satisfaction from thee hereafter. Now as I have laboured to encourage those that are hungry and thirsty,

Secondly, I desire to propound some considerations to quicken our appetites after these desires of righteousness. You that have hungered and thirsted, take heed that you lose not your appetite and stomach. There was a time that you had a strong stomach after righteousness; have you so still? Take heed of losing it. When you come home, and find not yourself well, and have no stomach to your meat, your wife and children about you begin to be afraid, and you are troubled, saying, I have lost my stomach to my meat. It is many times a forerunner of death, and so it may be of the death of the soul. Lose not your appetites, but labour to quicken them. Now these considerations will serve to quicken your appetites after this righteousness that we are speaking of; I speak to those I suppose have grace. Do not think thus: I hope God hath wrought some beginnings of grace, and that may serve my turn. No; but hunger and thirst after much. Lord, more, more grace! Thou hast begun somewhat; oh that I might have more!

First, Consider, Thou dost not know what work God may call thee to before thou diest; and therefore it is not for Christians to have a little grace, but they should desire after much. You may be called to a great deal of work. A little grace will help thee to do a little work, a great deal of grace will but help to do much work. These are times that God calls all his people to do much work. And it may be thou mayest live to such times as thou mayest be called to do more work than ever thou wert called to, and therefore be hungering after more. Lord, strengthen me with more grace, that I may be enabled to do all the service that thou shalt call me to.

Secondly, Others who have begun since you in the profession of religion, they have outgone you, they have got a great deal more than you. Perhaps thou hast been a kind of professor these twenty or thirty

years, or more. Now, how many young ones that have begun since thou, though abundance of them vanish away in disputes and errors, yet some are very gracious and godly, and oh how much of Christ, of God, of heavenliness, of savouriness, of wisdom, of holiness, have they got within a few years, more than thou hast got for this twenty or thirty years! Then hadst not thou need to be hungering and thirsting after more?

Thirdly, By this means, the more grace thou hast, the more good thou shalt do to others. It is not enough to have grace merely to carry thee to heaven, but that thou mayest be useful in the place where God hath set thee. Weak Christians may make shift to uphold themselves here in this world, and to get to heaven with much ado; but strong Christians are useful to others, and do abundance of good to others. Oh that I might have grace, then, to do good to others!

Fourthly, Consider what strong hungerings and thirstings you have had heretofore after the things of the world. Lord, I remember that in former times my heart was carnal, and what strong desires I had after the world. How did my thoughts run about my business, in my calling, that so I might thrive and prosper, and have good comings in. Lord, thou knowest that many times after base sinful lusts my soul hath been strong in the desires of them; and shall not now my soul be strong in the desires after thy righteousness?

Fifthly, Know it is impossible for thee to have a heaven upon earth. All Christians may come to have a heaven upon earth, here in this world. There is such a condition wherein our hearts may be filled with joy unspeakable and glorious, in believing, in the ways of godliness; but now this cannot be by weak grace. There must be strength of grace, whereby the soul of a Christian may be in heaven while they are upon the earth, and converse with God, his angels, and saints here in this world, as if they were in heaven. This may be had, and therefore hunger still, and thirst after further degrees of righteousness.

Sixthly, It is the only way to help thee against temptations, to grow strong in grace. Thou that hast but a little grace, thou art liable to temptations on every hand, and the devil is ready to foil thee in this and the other thing; but by strength of grace thou mayest be able to resist temptations—and it is a great mercy in this dangerous time wherein we live to resist temptations. A weak, sickly man or woman, they had need of a staff, they are ready to stumble at every stone; and so a weak Christian is ready to stumble at every offence. But a man that hath got strength, he can go steadily; and so strong Christians they are able to do it; and therefore you find that St Peter, when he would give a rule how men

should come to be steadfast, in the Second Epistle, iii. 17, 18, he saith, 'Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace,' &c. As if the Christian should say, How should we take heed that we fall not from our steadfastness! Notwithstanding the many errors there are in the times wherein we live, saith he, 'Grow in grace.' There is in these days a deluge of errors in the world, and they catch young ones, weak people, and women, and so they come to fall from their own steadfastness; but the way to prevent this is to grow in grace, hunger after more, keep your appetites after more, and let your prayers and your endeavours be after increase of righteousness, that so you may keep your steadfastness.

Seventhly, By the increase of grace you will be able to have a more abundant entrance into heaven when you die: you will die with more peace, and have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is not by having a little grace; though you may get to heaven, yet you cannot have that abundant entrance into heaven, as in 2 Pet. i. 5, 'And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor

unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 'Wherefore,' saith he in the 10th verse, 'the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if you do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' The apostle would have us add one grace to another. Have you got one grace? then labour for, and add more and more thereby you shall make your calling and election sure thereby you shall never fall, but be helped against your many doubts and fears, and the power which the devil hath had over you; the way to help against them is, by adding one grace to another, and growing up still in the ways of godliness; and by that means, saith he, 'an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' As if he should say, The broad gates of heaven shall be set open to you. As you know in great men's houses ordinarily you have the wicket, the little gate, opened; but if great men, earls, and princes should come, the broad gates are set open; so it is true God will admit to heaven where there is the least grace; but they are fain to crowd in with many discouragements, but those that have got a great deal of grace, an abundant entrance is made open for them. Oh, you Christians that have any beginnings of grace, still, still be hungering and thirsting to get more, more righteousness; for it will help you to an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

SERMON XX.

OF,

RULES TO HELP SOULS IN THE WAY OF HUNGERING.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

THERE are three things remaining in the text.

First, The propounding some rules for the help of souls that are in a way of hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and yet cannot find righteousness.

Secondly, The shewing what may support souls that are in a hungering condition after righteousness, and yet cannot find that they do grow righteous.

Thirdly, The rebuking of the want of this true hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

For the first, Is it so that the Lord hath brought thy heart to hunger and thirst after righteousness? Can ye say that this is your condition, else you can say little; or those have the weakest degree of grace should be able to say thus, at least, that they find a hungering and thirsting desire. Now, if it be so, observe these rules in thy hungering and thirsting, that thou mayest not miscarry.

First, Though thou hast not what righteousness thou wouldst have, yet be sure to renounce all unrighteousness. I am yet in a hungering way, and cannot find that righteousness I do desire; but, O Lord, this I hope shall be my care for ever, whatsoever becomes of me, I will renounce unrighteousness. Indeed, I cannot get such ability to serve God with that enlargement of spirit that I desire; I do not find that I do grow as I would grow in grace; but, Lord, this through thy mercy I hope I shall keep for ever in my heart, that whatever appears to be unrighteousness, I will not meddle with that, I will have nothing to do with that. In Ps. cxix. 2, 3, saith the psalmist there, 'Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart:' what follows? 'They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways.' They that seek the Lord with their whole heart, they do no iniquity—that is, in the meantime while they are seeking God, if it be with their whole heart, they do renounce all iniquity; there is no way of sin but they do abhor it as hell, and will renounce it. Though I am not able to guide myself as I would, and to do what I ought, yet thus far I will have nothing to do with my former unrighteous way. This is of great use to those souls

that God is bringing unto himself, in a way of seeking him, but yet do not apprehend they have found him; they will renounce unrighteousness. Many men and women they seek for righteousness—they think so at least; but in the meantime they give way to themselves to some unrighteousness; and so they flatter themselves in their desires, and think that God will accept of their desires for righteousness, though they give way to themselves in some ways of unrighteousness. Take heed of that.

Secondly, In thy hungering and thirsting after righteousness, do thou often express these thy desires before God, often express thy desires in the presence of God; when thou art alone in secret tell God of all thy desires that thou hast after his righteousness, after his ways; appeal to God of thy desires. It is an easy matter to tell men that thy desires are thus, but express to God daily thy desires after his righteousness.

Thirdly, Look to it that it be after his righteousness that thou dost hunger and thirst. Do not satisfy thyself in this, that thou hungerest and thirstest after somewhat, that thou hast a desire after something in the ways of godliness, but let it be after all the ways of righteousness; let there be no way of righteousness, but thou findest thy heart thus upright with God to hunger and thirst after it. And thou canst freely express thyself to God, that he that knows all things knows that thy heart doth make after all righteousness whatsoever; it is that thou longest after all his ways and all his commandments that thou mightest fulfil them, that thou wilt not give liberty to thyself in anything that is not according to his ways. Hunger after all righteousness.

Fourthly, When thou hast expressed thy desires to God, and that after all righteousness, look after thy desires; often consider what becomes of thy desires. How long have I thus hungered and thirsted after righteousness? When did God begin to open my conscience, and to stir my heart after righteousness? Think, hath it not been ever since I can remember, or for a long time. What then hath become of my desires all this while? What hath become of my

many prayers that I have put up to God that he would come in with his grace and renew his image in my soul? Look after thy desires; see what becomes of them. Many men and women have a kind of form in praying to God, and wishing that it were better with them; but they do not look back to their wishes. Either God grants my desires, or he doth not; either I do get more power over my corruptions, and more ability to serve him in the ways of righteousness, or I do not. If I do, then I have matter to praise and bless him; if I do not, I have matter of humiliation. But where is the man or woman that every day examines what becomes of their prayers after grace, to make either God's granting their desires matter of praise, or God's denying their desires matter of humiliation.

Fifthly, Be sure to manifest thy desires in the use of all means. Observe that rule, and observe this particular in it, that if some means will not do, then add others; if ordinary will not do it, then add extraordinary; but especially observe this in the use of means, let it be righteousness thy soul longs after and labours for. As, for instance, it may be you will say, As I have good desires, so I do use means; I pray, I hear God's word, I read, and confer with God's people. But when thou art doing all these, is it righteousness thy soul works after and longs for? Canst thou say when thou goest to prayer, O Lord, I pray, and that I would have in prayer is righteousness, that I might get somewhat this morning, some further improvement of righteousness, and increase of it. And art thou not satisfied in thy prayer except thou findest that thou hast got some further righteousness, that thou canst that day overcome thy corruptions more than before? And so when thou goest to hear the word, Why, I am going to hear a sermon; and what is it that I long for, saith a gracious soul, Oh, righteousness! oh that God would speak to my heart, whereby I might get power over my corruptions, and be more strengthened in his way, and find grace increased, find more wisdom, humility, and the fear of his name, and more spiritual mindedness than ever I have had! Oh that I might have that in the word! That is a good sermon wherein God speaks to my heart, for the furtherance of righteousness in my heart; and if I come to the word and do not meet with God there for the furtherance of the graces of his Spirit in my soul, that sermon is not good to me, whatsoever it be to others, because I do not find the work of God's grace furthered in my heart anything the more. How many times do we come to sermons, one after another, and never think of this, to come with panting desires after righteousness.

Further, For the use of means, I will give you a scripture to shew that it is not enough for you to hunger and thirst after righteousness, except you ex-

press it in the use of means. In Ps. cvii. 9, there is a gracious promise from God to such: 'He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.' He satisfieth the longing soul; the longing and hungering soul are the same, but now the word that is translated in your books the *longing* soul, it is in the Hebrew נפש שקקה, the *running* soul; he satisfieth the soul that runs up and down, that is the propriety of the word. A longing soul is a soul that runs up and down from one means to another; if one thing will not do it, another it must have; its desires must be satisfied or it cannot tell how to live, but runs up and down from one means to another. So in Mark vii. 24, 25, you have a notable scripture to shew that where the heart is set upon a thing it will leave no means unattempted. It is said of Christ that he arose and went into the 'borders of Tyre and Sidon, and went into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit,' &c. The meaning is this, that the poor woman being affected with the misery of her daughter having an unclean spirit, and believing Christ was able to help her, though Christ was hid, the poor woman resolves if he be above the ground to find him, and to have him one way or other. And therefore the scripture observes, that though Christ would have none to know where he was, yet he could not be hid because of the poor woman. So it is here; if the Lord shall be pleased to withdraw himself from the soul in one means, yet the soul that is sensible of want of righteousness it will follow after God in one means after another, and will never be at quiet and rest until it meet with God, until it come to enjoy God in the ways of righteousness according to his desire. That is the fifth rule, Let thy hungering and thirsting work in the use of all means.

Sixthly, In thy hunger and thirst, take heed that thou dost not rest in thy desires; do not rest in this, and think it enough: I have desires; God hath wrought desires in me, and that is sufficient—what need I any more? Though it is true there are many encouragements to those that have true desires, but this is as true, that when desires are right, the soul will not rest in those desires. I have desires, but it is the thing itself that I look after for the obtaining of my desire. We read in Prov. xiii. 12, 'That hope deferred makes the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.' 'Hope deferred'—that is, when the soul would have a thing, and it comes not; but when the desire cometh, that is the tree of life.' Therefore the soul that is rightly wrought upon will not rest in desires, will not think, God hath begun to work some desires in me, I hope that is grace; and if I have but the least degree of grace, that will be enough to bring me to heaven.

No; I have desires, but nothing shall quiet my soul until I come to the obtaining of my desires.

Seventhly, Exercise faith upon Jesus Christ for righteousness; that is the way to come to have thy desires satisfied. Thou dost use means? yea, that I dare not but do—my conscience puts me upon it, to pray, read, hear, and so to use all means I can, but yet I do not find my desire satisfied. This, therefore, is another rule: thou must, in the use of means, look beyond the means, and take heed of resting upon means as well as upon thy desires, but look up to Jesus Christ, from whose fulness the hearts of the saints do receive grace for grace. The Father hath put a fulness into his Son; all righteousness is in Jesus Christ; there is all grace, righteousness, and holiness in Christ beyond all measure. Now the way to attain righteousness, it is not merely to pray, hear, and use means, but by an eye of faith to behold Christ filled full of all grace as a fountain, so that the souls of those that hunger and thirst may, by acting upon him, fetch grace from him, and so come to be satisfied. It is Christ that is the tree of life; it is from him that all grace doth come into the soul. And I verily believe that there are many kept under a great spirit of bondage in the times of their hungering and thirsting, labouring for grace, because they did not look beyond means. They do not look upon Christ, that is the fountain of all grace, to act their faith upon him. They think that they must have righteousness before they come to Jesus Christ. Now, there is a mistake: thou must come to Christ that thou mayest have righteousness, for all righteousness is in him. The truth is, there is no saving righteousness but it comes through union with Jesus Christ—it comes from communion with Jesus Christ—it comes from the Spirit of Christ let into the heart; and therefore the first act should be a going to Christ for this righteousness. Act thy faith more upon Christ; labour to look upon him as he that hath all treasures of grace in him from the Father on purpose to communicate to the souls of those that shall be saved; and this is the way to have the desires of thy soul satisfied. Thou sayest thou hast been tugging and labouring, and nothing comes. Try this means, try this way, to act thy faith upon Jesus Christ for righteousness. Thou sayest, I fear I shall presume; but never fear presuming in acting upon Christ for righteousness. There is fear of presuming when thou dost act upon Christ merely to save thy soul, and to deliver thee from hell; but when thou dost act upon him for righteousness, there is no fear there. When thy soul is after righteousness, and thou findest that Christ is appointed by the Father to be the conduit of conveyance of all grace from the Father, and thou art called to cast thy soul upon him that thou mightest have

some work of his Spirit conveyed to thee, for the subduing of thy corruptions, and for the enabling thee to live righteously before God in this world, fear not presuming in this case; for presumptuous hypocrites would believe in Christ only to be saved from hell, but they do not prize the righteousness of Christ much. They would seek the kingdom of heaven for deliverance from pain and torment, but to seek the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, they do not so much look at that; it is not that that will feed their souls. But now, when thou hast a hungry soul after righteousness, and comest to Christ to close with him, know that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, both for justification and sanctification likewise.

Eighthly, If thou findest in thy hungering and thirsting after righteousness that thou hast not yet thy desire, resolve this with thyself, If my desire cannot be satisfied in this, I will never suffer my desires to wander after other things any more, till I can be satisfied here. Keep thy heart in this resolution, and this will keep thy heart in such a frame as righteousness will come. Many men and women they have good desires stirred in them for a time, but they vanish away; because, not having their desires fulfilled, they come to let out their desires to other things. But when the heart comes to this, O Lord, my desires are so set after the renewing of thy image, after righteousness, that, Lord, if I have not satisfaction here, I will not have satisfaction in anything else. It is of very great consequence for thee to labour to keep thine appetite continually after righteousness. Take heed of those things that will take away thy stomach after this righteousness. There are three things that will take away the stomach; as in the body, so in the soul.

First, A man hath his stomach taken away, either by somewhat that clogs his stomach. There is some humours that is got into his stomach, and so takes it away; or,

Secondly, By wind that may fill his stomach, and so he hath not an appetite to his meat; or,

Thirdly, For want of exercise; because he doth not stir and act. So it is in the appetites of men after righteousness. These three things will take their appetites away, either, 1. when some ill-humours are got into their hearts; by that I mean some corruptions, some ill distempers that they have given way to themselves in, and so defiled their souls. Many in their young time were wont to have mighty appetites after righteousness. They would run to the word, and how earnestly would they pray, as if they would rend the heavens again; but now we find no such thing in them. There hath got some fearful stuff into their hearts that hath defiled their souls.

Or, secondly, Some windy stuff; by that I mean,

when the heart lets out itself to carnal contentments. There be many that have made forward professions, and mighty hungerings and thirstings they have seemed to have; and the ordinances of Christ, how precious were they to them; but now they are altogether for the world, and give themselves up unto the delights of the flesh. And what company is it that now they prize most, but that company wherein they have most contentment to the flesh; that they prize most. There hath got windy stuff into their stomachs that hath taken away their appetite.

Thirdly, For want of exercise. Many Christians, they grow dull and heavy. It may be they keep themselves from the sin of the times, and from satisfying the flesh in carnal things; but they grow dull and sluggish and negligent, and there is no exercise in them, no stirrings of heart after God; whereas, if thou wouldest keep thy heart warm, every morning do not for fashion sake merely go to prayer, but pray till thou gettest thy heart warm again. As if a man hath not a stomach, it is good to go abroad in the air—that may do somewhat; but if his stomach be far gone he will not only walk abroad a little, but continue walking till he finds himself warm, and then he comes home and finds a good stomach. So let Christians be much in spiritual exercises, that will keep their appetites after spiritual things.

Ninthly, Let not your desires after more righteousness make you forget that you have; look to that. If God hath been pleased in any measure to give you any power over your corruptions, any ability to do any service for him, take notice of it, bless God for it. And because you have not all your desire, do not say you have none at all, do not wrong the grace of God, and think that all is but counterfeit, because you have not such a desire as you would have. As if a man should give a kinsman so many pieces of gold to set up his trade withal, and he should say, What hath he given me? they are but a few counters; a kinsman would think himself wronged by his saying so. So it is with many a soul that is seeking after righteousness. The Lord hath given thee the graces of his Spirit already, that are so much gold, that so thou mightest set up for heaven; but because thou hast not so much as thou wouldest have, thou thinkest it is all but counterfeit. Take heed of this, thou shouldst bless him for every little, every good motion, every good inclination; bless God for this, and so expect more. For poor bodies that were ready to starve, if you should give them but a piece of bread, they would be ready to thank you for that, and bless God for that; but if they should say, What is this—will this satisfy our hunger? and so scorn it, you would give them no more. So it is with the soul; if God gives anything, bless him for that, and

say, Lord, I find this sweet, I find the beginnings of the work of thy grace sweet to my soul; oh that I had more!

Tenthly, A further rule to be observed in this hungering and thirsting after righteousness, is, Take heed that thou seekest not after this righteousness for thy justification; that is a rule that is of very great use. You have heard before what the righteousness of Christ is, and it is that only justifies the soul before God; but now this righteousness of sanctification, it is that whereby we are enabled to serve God according to his way. But that is not the righteousness whereby I can stand just before his tribunal at the great day. Now there is a mighty mistake here. Many poor souls would fain have more grace; but why? Because they think that by their grace they shall be enabled to stand before God for acceptance to eternal life. They think thus: Were I enabled to overcome my corruptions more, and to do my duty more, by that means should I be able to look upon God's face with comfort and joy; but thou art mistaken in this. It is true, it is a comfortable evidence of God's love to thy soul, even the work of his Spirit; for it is that that God loves and takes delight in. But now thou must never think to tender up thy righteousness to God for justification; therefore, hunger and thirst after this righteousness, but as in the second place, and say, Lord, it is the righteousness of thy Son by which I expect to be justified. But now that I might serve thee in ways of righteousness, therefore I desire this grace to be in my heart, not for my justification, but for my sanctification.

Eleventhly, In thy hungering after this righteousness, let thy soul be willing to go through all discouragements that thou meetest with, and trample down all difficulties, all hindrances that lie in thy way. When thou art hungering after righteousness, it may be thou mayest meet with more temptations than ever, more stirring of corruption than ever; you must make account of this. And all those that have found this work of God in their hearts, they can by experience tell this, that when they began to stir and labour after righteousness they found more strong temptations than ever, more stirrings of corruption than ever. Ay, but this would not discourage them; they got over this, as we read of the poor woman, Mat. xv. 22-23, 'A woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not

meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.' It is a most notable scripture of any we have in the book of God, to shew that where the heart is set upon a thing it will trample upon all discouragements. For mark, one cannot imagine more discouragements than this poor woman had at this time in seeking to Christ.

First, She comes and seeks to Christ, and cries to him, Have mercy on me, O Lord; but he answers not a word. When thou art hungering and praying to God for grace, if God do not answer thee presently, thou art all-a-mortand discouraged. This woman cries, and Christ answers her not a word. This did not discourage her; neither let it discourage thee, though Christ doth not answer thee presently upon thy seeking to him.

Secondly, There came the disciples, and they besought Christ, 'Send her away, for she crieth after us.' The disciples they speak churlishly; so many poor souls that are seeking after Christ, their friends come and discourage them, they are churlish towards them. Well, it may be this hinders thee, but if thy desires be right, this will not discourage thee neither. It did not discourage this poor woman.

Thirdly, Christ answered, 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' saith Christ; 'what have I to do with this woman; she is none of the house of Israel, and I am not sent to her.' This was a fearful discouraging answer, when that Jesus Christ should say that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel; what should this poor woman do now? Thus it is with many in their seeking after grace. Saith one, It may be I do not belong to the election of God; I am none of that little number that Christ was sent for. Though Christ did say thus to her, yet this did not discourage her, but she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. She would not stand answering what Christ said, but her desire was strong: Lord, help me.

Fourthly, He answered and said, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs.' Here is a fourth discouragement. Saith Christ, You are a dog, and this is children's meat. If God should speak thus to you, as it may be you think sometimes that God speaks thus to you, you are crying for meat, that you might be satisfied with righteousness; but if God denies you awhile, you think he rejects you as a dog. Christ did tell the woman she was a dog, and one would have thought this should have beaten her off, but this would not discourage her. She came and said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the children's table. Truth, Lord, I am a dog; I am unworthy; but, Lord, one crumb, one crumb even for a dog; and upon this Christ heard

her, and then she was satisfied. This was from a mighty work of the Spirit of God in the heart of this woman; so in your desires after this righteousness, do you do thus. When you have discouragements, yet get through them, and you will be satisfied at last. There is thousands that have had good beginnings, but they have been taken off by discouragements; therefore labour to trample down hindrances what thou canst. It is very observable the story that we read of in the book of Kings. There was a time that there was a great famine in Samaria, and the prophet told them, that by the morrow this time, corn should be thus and thus cheap. Saith the captain, It cannot be, though God should open the windows of heaven. Saith the prophet to him, You shall see it, but not taste of it. And when the time came the people did so unreasonably seek to get some part of the corn that they might satisfy their hunger, that they trod upon the captain; and though he were the second man to the king, yet they trod him down to the ground, and all through their earnest desire that they might have to satisfy their hunger. And so the soul that is thus hunger-starved, as it were, saith, Oh that I might have grace, I am undone else; let there be whatever hindrance in the way there will be, I care not, I will be willing to part with all, so be it I may have grace. As we read of the poor people in Egypt, they wanted corn, and were hunger-bitten. They came and brought their money to Joseph to buy corn; then they brought their cattle, and they sold their lands and possessions that they might have corn; and then they came and sold themselves to be as bond slaves unto Pharaoh, that they might have corn to satisfy their hunger. Nothing stood in their way that so they might have their hunger satisfied. Thus it is, the soul will trample down anything that is in its way, and will be contented to part with anything for the furtherance of the grace of God in it. And thus much for the rules to be observed in our hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

The next thing is to shew what may support the hearts of them that hunger and thirst after righteousness, but find not that they do grow righteous.

The first is this, Consider that if there be but the least degree of grace, it is as true and as sure an earnest of eternal life as the greatest degree is. It may be some that are carnal may abuse what is said out of the word, but let not children lose their portion for that. The soul that finds such a working as this is after righteousness, though thou hast not righteousness as thou dost desire, yet this may support thee, that the least degree of true grace, the least seed of it—and some seeds there must needs be in that soul that hath this desire—is as true and as sure an earnest of eternal life as the greatest of all is. I do not speak this that you should rest in any degree of

grace; for that is a base spirit to say, What need have I then of more? But I speak to those whose hearts are upright—that will not so abuse it. It is called the earnest of the Spirit; and a man in a bargain, when he gives earnest, though the matter be not great, he can bind a bargain if he give but twelve pence, as well as if he give twenty shillings. So it is here, though, it is true, where there is a little grace there cannot be so much honour to God as where there is a great deal; yet the least degree of grace binds the bargain with God for eternal life, and makes it as sure to thee as if thou hadst as much grace as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It may be because thou hast but a little thou shalt not know it so fully, and so have the assurance in thy conscience; but it is as sure with God. Thou art as certainly translated from death to life, as if thou hadst the greatest degrees of all.

Secondly, Where there are true desires, there the Lord looks upon thy imperfections, not as thine, but as sin that dwelleth in thee. That is it the apostle saith, 'It is no longer I,' when I express mighty desires after grace, and found corruptions strong, 'it is no longer I, but sin that dwelleth in me.' So I say to the soul that is strong in the desires of it after grace, though there be many imperfections remaining, the Lord doth not now look upon thy imperfections so much thine, as sin in thee; there is a twofold self, as it were—there is a self corrupt, and a self grace. It is not I, but sin; the Lord charges not the remainders of sin on the soul that hath these sincere desires after the work of his grace.

Thirdly, Further, so long as thy corruptions are in thee, and be thy sickness, (observe it, for so doth the soul that is in this case find the remaining corruptions that are in it to be its sickness,) so long as thou findest the want of this righteousness to be thy sickness, know that it makes thy soul to be an object of God's pity and compassion, and not an object of God's wrath and hatred. Here is the difference between the remaining part of sin that is in the saints, and the corruptions in the ungodly. The sin that is in ungodly men and women makes their souls to be the object of God's wrath and hatred, for so the scripture saith, 'The Lord hates the workers of iniquity;' but the saints that have any beginnings of grace, though there be much unrighteousness still in the soul, this unrighteousness being thy sickness, it makes thy soul now not an object of God's wrath, but an object of his pity and compassion. As your children, when they are sick and weak, do not you love them as well as when they are at the strongest and most healthy? I appeal to any tender mother; she loves the child when it is in health, and can go up and down, and so can play with it; but when the child is sick, doth not her bowels yearn towards the child then?

When it is sick, and can do nothing for the mother, but lies sprawling, crying, and is troublesome to the house, what delight can she take in it then; but her bowels yearn towards it, and the child is sick, saith she. So the unrighteousness that remains, it is the sickness of the soul, and the bowels of God's compassions are towards his sick children, as well as towards his strong children. I will put this to a father or mother—suppose that thou hast a child that is weak, but would fain do whatsoever you would have him, and this child is got alone into a room, and the door shut upon him, so that the child thinks nobody sees it. Well, it may be thou lookest through a keyhole and seest the child what he is a-doing; he is crying and bemoaning himself, Oh that I should be so untoward as I am! oh that I should not please my father and mother more! oh how little am I able to do for my father and mother! oh that I were able to shew myself more dutiful than I have been! oh that I could so walk before them as I might never be undutiful any more! this would be the happiness of my life, if I should never be any more undutiful to father and mother. Suppose any of you should look through the keyhole and see your child thus bemoaning himself because he can be no better, and thus desiring that he might live to be more dutiful, would not your bowels yearn towards such a child? You know the child doth not think you see him, but by accident you do come to see him, would not your bowels yearn now toward him? Know that God is a compassionate Father. From whence is it that you have such compassions toward your children? is it not a drop of that infinite compassion is in God? When thou gettest alone, and art bewailing thyself that thou canst not live to the honour of God more, if thou couldest thou wouldst account thy life to be happy, know God hears all this, God looks upon thee and observes all this. Surely God will not cast off such a one as hath his heart thus hungering and thirsting after what might be acceptable unto God. You know the Scripture compares Christ to a shepherd, and believers to sheep, now saith he, My sheep hear my voice. That expression is taken from the way of those countries where shepherds did use their sheep so to the voice of them, as if they called the sheep the sheep would come after them, (as when you call a dog,) and therefore saith Christ, 'My sheep hear my voice, and they will follow me.' Suppose, when the shepherd came, a great part of the flock came after the shepherd upon his call, but one or two sheep that were entangled in the briars, and were striving and struggling to get out of the briars, but could not; they knew the shepherd's voice, and would have followed the shepherd, but when they see they cannot follow him, then they fall a-bleating and crying after the shepherd, till the shepherd take notice of them;

and when this shepherd comes to the place and sees the poor sheep labouring to get after the shepherd, will he not pity this sheep, and so untangle it from the bushes that it is got into? This is the poor weak Christian's case that is got into the briars of some corruption, and entangled in some distemper of heart or other, and Christ calls to the soul, and the soul knows the voice of Christ and loves Christ, and it would fain follow after Christ, whose voice it hears, and the soul is tugging and striving, but it is got into

the briars. Now Christ hears the voice of this sheep, and comes and sees it in the briars, and observes how it would fain get after him, and pities this poor sheep, and so at length gets it out of the briars, and doth provide for it as much as for any of the other. If this be thy condition, though grace be not come yet, yet from thy desire thou mayest have comfort, and comfort from this very text: 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied.'

SERMON XXI.

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS TO SUPPORT THE HEARTS OF THOSE THAT HUNGER AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, YET WANT GROWTH IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'—MAT. v. 6.

THE fourth thing for the support of such souls as are seeking after grace in the use of means, but cannot find that they have obtained it, is this, Consider that the conquest of the will of a sinner is a principal work of God upon the soul, and it is such a work as God doth accept of. When God conquers the will the great work is done. The will it is the great wheel of the soul, which, when it turns, all the lesser and inferior wheels of the soul move likewise; and the great difficulty of bringing a soul into eternal life it lies in this, the conquering of the will. All the inferior affections they are easily wrought upon, they are even compelled to obedience when the will is overcome; the understanding it may be forced to assent to the truth when it is discovered; the affections they will close with the truth, love it, fear it, obey it, when the will is gained to yield itself up unto the truth. But now the will, that is the great hindrance; the difficulty lies in gaining that. It is a greater work for the will to be conquered and brought into subjection unto God, than for any man to do the thing that God requires. God doth more look at the gaining of the will to obey than if so be we were able to do the thing that we desire. We would think that, could we but do the thing that we desire, we should be happy, and that then we should be accepted. Know for thy comfort, that what thou

wantest in obedience to the will of God, if thy will be gained with desire to obey God, God doth accept of the will, as if so be thou wert able to do the thing to the uttermost of thy desire. In 2 Cor. viii. 10, saith the apostle there, 'Who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.' You did such a thing; but herein I do not so much commend you, as in this, that you had a will to do it before you had ability; the will was present long before you had the ability to do. The apostle commends them more for having a will to fulfil the mind of God than to do it to their power. Thou hungerest after God, and thou wouldest enjoy communion with him; thou wouldest serve and honour him to the uttermost; thou wouldest look upon it as a great privilege if the Lord would enable thee to pray and sanctify his name as other saints do; but thou canst not attain to the doing of what thou dost desire. Know that God is as much honoured in thy will to do, as if so be thou didst do the thing; this is more than if thou couldst do the thing. A hypocrite may do any external act; there is no external act of obedience but a hypocrite may come up to the managing of it, but the will of a hypocrite is never brought under the obedience of the truth. Therefore this may be a great support to our souls, when we find our wills brought under, though we want a power for to

do. Thou art weak and hast many failings in thee, and thou canst not do what thou wouldst do ; thou wouldst obey more, thou wouldst pray better. Oh, know for thy comfort that God hath the better part of thee ; that which is thy best part God hath obtained, and that which he doth most prize. Therefore do thou look upon it as the best part, and do thou prize the gaining of thy will more than any service thou art able to do besides. Most people think the will is nothing, but would do better. Many say my heart is good, and my will too ; I would be better if I could. Thou dost not know what the changing of the will means, that hast such slight thoughts of the gaining of the will. It is the difficultest work of all, even the gaining of the will of the soul of a sinner to the obedience of the truth.

Fifthly, Know for thy further comfort, where there is the least degree of grace, there will be increasing, there will be a growth ; where there is true seed sown there is the blessing of God in it, and God, that hath begun his good work, will finish it in his good time. God never begins a work and lets it lie ; he doth always perfect his own works. God's works are like himself ; as God is perfect in himself, so whatever he works upon the soul he works perfectly ; and however weak and feeble grace may be at the first, yet know that God, as he hath begun, so he will carry on to perfecting the work. When thou findest thou hast a desire after good, and longest after this righteousness, and canst not do what thou wouldst, thy desires are better than thy ability. Thou shouldst reason thus : that God makes thee to see the vanity of thine own heart, in thinking it an easy matter to overcome corruption, a thing of nothing to stand against a temptation, herein thou shouldst support thyself. Now the Lord convinces thee of this thing, thou findest a difficulty in it, and canst not do it ; now hereby thou art convinced of thy folly and vanity ; be quiet then in submitting to the dealings of God in this thing. God doth not intend me any hurt in this. We should not make such hard and ill constructions of God's dealing in this kind, but we should improve such dispensations of God for our good ; as thus to conclude, that the Lord in this doth not intend my ruin, but the discovery of that foolish opinion which I had formerly, what an easy matter it was to overcome the base distempers of mine own heart. The Lord now intends by keeping me low in a sad condition, that thereby he might raise me up unto higher glory, that he might prepare me for greater degrees of comfort. He keeps me low and in a sad condition, that he might keep my heart sensible of its former vanity, and that thereby he might make a discovery of the excellency of his grace ; therefore thou must not now conclude that God hath forsaken thee, and that thou shalt never have the

righteousness of Jesus Christ, because thou canst not find upon the seeking of it that thou hast obtained it. No, but thou must reason thus : God's intentions are to humble me and not to leave me.

In the last place, Consider, for thy support, when, after a long time in the use of means, thou dost not find that God doth come into thy apprehension, and to satisfy thee that thou hast grace, and that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is thine—consider this, that God would have the work of righteousness appear in the abasing and humbling of thee, rather than in giving thee power over thy corruptions, it is God's design in this thing. And thou shouldst interpret the dealings of God with thee thus, that God hath various ways for the working of his own grace ; that this is God's dealing to keep thee humble and low, and herein grace is exercised : and thou shouldst say, Is this the will of God, to keep me in darkness, and not to know in what estate and condition I am ; that I should walk warily ? good is the will of the Lord. Thou shouldst believe God in this condition as much as if so be thou hadst sensible apprehensions of thy interest in righteousness. We would have righteousness many times to work upward in joy, in enlargements, and in comfort ; and when it doth thus work, then we have good hopes, and then we think our peace is made with God, and our interest is sure. But if God will have it work downward in self-abasement, soul-humbling, and spirit-dejecting, this is as well a working of the truth of righteousness in the heart as if it did work up never so high in joy and consolation, and this doth as much discover the truth of righteousness in thee as if thou hadst the greatest raptures and elevations ; and therefore quiet your hearts in this, it is a mercy that the work of God is upon thee any way. There was a time, thou mayest say, that we did not mind anything of God, but that our faces were turned against God, and that we did mind the things of the flesh. But now the Lord he hath begun to work ; and if the work be but yet in humiliation, if it be but in working downwards in the root, bless God for this, and know it is a mercy which thou canst never be thankful enough for ; for when the work of grace works downwards, it is as sure an argument of the truth of righteousness in thee as if thou hadst the greatest elevations and raptures of joy. And thus I have done with the second thing proposed in the first use.

There remains but one thing more, and that is for rebuke and reproving of those that do not thus hunger and thirst after righteousness. There are many who will say, this is a very choice point, and blessed be God we do hunger and thirst after righteousness ; and though we are able to do but little, yet this we can say for ourselves, our desires are good. But take heed you do not deceive yourselves in your

desires, for there are many who do desire, but their desires will never come to any good. I did in part discover to you what those desires were before, which did demonstrate a soul that did truly hunger and thirst after this righteousness, but here I shall add something by way of reprehension of false desires.

First, Such as see no excellency in grace, these are to be reprov'd. As those that do not desire after grace, how canst thou say thou desirest after that which thou seest no excellency in? Are there not many among you that say as those in Job xiv. 21, 'They say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy law'? These are a wicked generation. But you will say, it is not our case; surely there are none amongst us that are so vile and wicked that shall dare to bid the Almighty depart from them. Though few men dare be so wicked as to say it in their words, yet how many are there that are so wicked as to say it in their practices. Many secretly in their hearts say this; what are the meaning of those speeches of yours else to this effect? what need we have so much means, so much preaching, such reformation? can we not have our old ways? can we not go to heaven in the ways that we were formerly taught in? these are new ways. We never heard of such talk about government and worship, and the straitness of the ways of heaven, as you tell us of; may we not do as others do, and yet be saved? Formerly it was accounted a dishonour to men to wait upon the word, and they were nicknamed and accounted for Puritans by this very sign, because they did constantly attend upon the means of grace; but now it is accounted a dishonour for men not to come to the word. Oh the change that there is among men! But yet among most, the preaching of the word it is a flat, dry thing to them. Let us have the fulness of the creature, say they, and let righteousness go where it will. There is a dog-like appetite in men to the creatures—they would have more still. The dog, when you have given him as much as you can, still he desires and craves: so men, when they have never so much of the creature, they are still craving, and their appetites are longing after the world still. But you will say, We pray to God, and come to church, and we hear the word, and what would you have us do more? we live quietly and civilly, and we do no man any wrong; and surely will not this carry us to heaven? These men they have enough of righteousness; they see no need of this glorious, excellent righteousness of Jesus Christ. But those that know what righteousness means, they desire it more and more; they never are satisfied with any righteousness but this, neither are they satisfied with any degrees of righteousness attained.

Secondly, But to come more close to the point in hand. A second sort that are reprov'd from this point

are those that do content themselves in desires; that when they have desires think the work is done, and that they need go no farther; they will say this is a good point, and blessed be God they can find desires in them—we do desire. But let me tell you, are not your desires false? are your desires true? yea or nay. There are many that desire, but their desires are cold and lazy desires, such as shall never do them good; and therefore false desires they may be known by these characters:

First, Their desires are false who satisfy themselves with ignorant desires. Hath God enlightened your hearts to see the excellency of grace, that is more precious than rubies, of more worth than the gold of Ophir—hath God discovered to you the need of grace and your undone condition without righteousness? If it come not from these grounds they are but false desires. Many have a false appetite; as sick men think they could eat food, but when it is brought to them they cannot eat it—their stomachs fail them. So these men, they desire righteousness, they see worth in it, and nothing is dearer to them than righteousness; but when God in the ministry of his word tenders grace to them, holds forth his righteousness in the ministry of the gospel, they have no hearts, no mind to it. How often hath God moved thee by his Spirit, and then thou hast refused to hearken; though thou sayest thou desirest with all thy soul, yet when God comes to make a proffer thou hast no desire. Were thy desires right at any time, they would be right at all times; but this shews thy desires are not true, but that it is a false appetite which thou hast, because it is not constant.

Secondly, Such desires are false who satisfy themselves with foolish desires. When men desire the end, and not the means, when men would be happy, but will not use the means that leads to happiness, will we not account that man a foolish man that shall desire food—Oh that I had something to eat! oh that I had bread or meat!—but will not seek for it, will not take pains to get it? So a man would be at such a place, and he earnestly desires to be there, but he will not step one foot in the way that leads to it; he lies still and stirs not: so when men desire grace, and not make use of all means, nor beg of God to bless the means to them. Can you say thus, are you able to appeal as in the presence of God: Lord, whatsoever means I know thou hast appointed in thy word to attain such a thing, I have made use of it, and I have neglected no opportunity wherein I could enjoy the means for the furthering of me to such an end. Art thou able to say thus? Then thou mayest have comfort that thy desires are right; but when thy desires are large, and thy endeavours cold, and dost not make use of all means, never flatter thyself—thy desires are not right.

Thirdly, When men's desires are absurd, such desires are false. They desire grace, and yet live in that which is quite contrary to grace, which is inconsistent with grace; they would have grace and righteousness, but they would have their lusts too. To desire righteousness, and yet to take pleasure in unrighteousness, how canst thou say thou desirest after righteousness? But you will say, Is there not some unrighteousness in the best, have not they their weaknesses, do not they sin as well as others, those that make great profession? *Ans.* Though there be unrighteousness in the best, yet there is no taking pleasure in unrighteousness; taking pleasure in unrighteousness cannot stand with desire after righteousness. Therefore those desires which are so absurd as to desire grace, and yet to desire that also which is inconsistent with grace, is not true.

Fourthly, Such as satisfy themselves in cold and weak desires, whose desires are turned all into wishings and wouldings; they could wish that they had grace, and oh that they had righteousness, oh that they were delivered from wrath to come! but they are not so peremptory upon it as to conclude, I must have it or I die. Now these desires they come to nothing, they will not grow up. A man that desires grace for itself, he is resolved upon it, he must have it; as the hungry man that is ready to famish for want of bread—give me bread or I die, give me food or I perish. So saith the soul, Give me grace, let me have Christ or I am undone for ever; what will it do me good to have abundance here, and yet to have no grace? These are like little sprigs; their desires are superfluous, as the little sprigs that come out of the body or root of the tree, which do not bear any fruit, but doth the tree a great deal of hurt; they draw sap from the root of the tree and hinders fruit-bearing. Such desires and wishes as these they will never satisfy God, neither will they ever be able to satisfy your own consciences.

Fifthly, When men's desires are conditional. Conditional desires are false desires; that is thus, they would have grace and holiness so far as might stand with such and such ends, and to carry on such and such designs of their own—as to keep their estates and their liberty, their ease and credit in the world. So far as religion will ride with their designs, so far they will bear it company; so far they like the ways of holiness as they stand and suit with their ends; but if their desires were right they would be resolute. Let me have grace upon any terms; grace is able alone to make me happy, and therefore whatsoever becomes of me let me have grace. Though I perish, though I endure never so much hardship, so I may have grace, it will make amends for all; I am willing to let go anything so I may have grace, for in it I shall be happy.

Sixthly, When men's desires are fleeting and unconstant desires, they have desires in some good moods,

and in some pangs of conscience when the terrors of God are upon their spirits. But such desires as these they are hypocritical; they desire grace merely to serve their own turn, to stop the mouth of conscience, and not for grace sake. They do not see an excellency in grace which causes them to desire it, but for the ease of their tormenting consciences, and the stopping the mouth of their disquieted spirits.

Seventhly, When their desires are lazy desires, such are false desires; they are not willing to take pains for what they do desire. The Scripture is very remarkable; and a terrible scripture for this we have in Prov. xxi. 25, 'The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.' I much fear that this text may prove a most dreadful text to many. The desires of many they kill them. They desire after that which is good, but they rest in them, and trust to them, and think they have a work of grace upon their hearts, whereas in truth it is nothing so; so that they deceive themselves in this great business. In Prov. xiii. 4, 'The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing.' You are desiring that which is good, but you have nothing, like those women that the apostle speaks of in Timothy, 'that are ever learning, but they never come to the knowledge of the truth.' You have lazy desires, that take no pains to get what you do desire. People they do not examine what becomes of their desires. Have we got those things that we were so taken withal? How many times have our spirits been wonderfully affected in the hearing of the word, but what pains have we taken for the obtaining of that which we desire so strongly after? Luke xiv. 15, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.' Here they were mightily taken with the miracle that Christ had wrought, but it did vanish quickly. They were not truly taken with the things of the gospel; for the text saith they minded their estates and outward enjoyments more than the offer of mercy. So many; they come to hear the word, and are taken with it, but it doth not stir them to purpose. This will lie sad upon the consciences of many thousands another day, that these things were no more observed and taken notice of by them. But you will say, What would you have us do? We do what we can—we cannot do more; we do what we can for our lives. 'It is well if you do so; but let me propound two or three things to you. Take heed of the dangerousness of this plea.

First, You say you do what you can. Will it prove so in the end? Can you go into the presence of God, and say thus, Lord, I have done what I can. There is no means but that I have made use of to attain grace, and yet I cannot find it; and no other means there is that I know to be made use of. Lord, I have done what I can. Go into the presence of

God, and there faithfully examine your hearts, and see whether you have done your uttermost. Canst thou say that in the morning, when I arise, I arise with a spiritual heart; when I was up, I went to prayer, to seek God for myself and my family; but yet I cannot find my heart so as I desire; and I pray that the Lord would keep my heart close with him. And after prayer I had a watchful eye over my heart and thoughts, and over all my words and actions, that they might be holy, that they might be such as are warrantable by the rule; and what opportunity thou, Lord, didst afford me for my soul's good, I did take it. At night, can you say you have done this? Can you say so to God? To men, it may be, you can say so, and put them easily off. But can you tell God that from the morning to the evening you have done so? How comfortably might you live were you really earnest in this! How sweetly might you sleep and lie down in the evening, when you have kept such a watch over your own hearts! And though you have many weaknesses and failings, you might comfort yourselves in this, that your hearts have been right. Many never mind God at all in their lives. Now do you what you can when you never think of God? And therefore they put this off, and say, What can we do without the grace of God? But know for this, that God doth give thee some common grace, which would enable thee to do more than thou dost; but thou dost not put forth that strength which you might do by the power of common grace. Take heed of this plea, lest God take you at advantage.

Secondly, Suppose God should take you at your word, at this advantage, and say, Sinner, dare you venture your eternal estate upon this plea? You say you do what you can, and you know nothing more but that you would do, did you know it. Be it so; you shall be tried by this plea, that you do what you can. If I am not able to convince you you might do more, then I will yield to you that you have done what you can; but if you have not done what you can, you shall miscarry, your eternal estates shall be cast upon this plea. Dare you stand to such a plea as this in time of sickness? You find you could have done more than you have done, and you cry out, I might have done more than I have done; I might have had more communion with God, more acquaintance with the saints. Now that which a man's conscience in sickness tells him he might have done in health, that he may do; for sickness doth not infuse any power into man to act, but it stirs up men's parts, and convinces them what they were able to do. When men come to sick and dying beds, then they see they might have done more for God, and been more holy than they were in the time of their healths.

Thirdly, For the convincing of thee that thou dost not do what thou canst, what dost thou think that a damned soul in hell would do if God should bid him go and improve his time, and according to its improvement of such a stipend of time, it should either go to hell again or come to heaven? Do you think such a one would neglect any opportunity? What think you that these would not do? The torments of hell they do not put any new strength into men, but they convince them that they might have done more. I might add many more things, but these may serve as so many convictions that we do not what we can. And therefore from this point we are to be reproved which plead this plea. 'But blessed are they' that do thus; 'that hunger and thirst after this righteousness, for they shall be filled.' And thus I have finished the fourth beatitude, which hath held us the longest of any, having the most in it.

Ver. 7. 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.'

Here we see in this beatitude a sweet conjunction between the two verses, 'Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied;' and 'Blessed are the merciful.' You would have mercy, saith Christ; and that is a sweet argument to you; and you would have a share in mercy, but do you desire righteousness as well? You would have righteousness, you would have a share in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and you would have the mercy of God to pardon your sins, but are you merciful? There is nothing fills the soul with more mercy than the consideration of this, that we have our sins pardoned in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is that that fills the soul with bowels of mercy. There are many arguments that may press a man on to mercy, kindness, and pity; but there is no argument that prevails more with the soul unto mercifulness than this, that the soul hath obtained mercy in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Those that are acquainted with the righteousness of Christ, and the righteousness of inherent grace, they would have all others know what it is to have a share in the mercy of God as well as they themselves. Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness, and are you merciful? Then 'blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.'

But who is this merciful man—what manner of man is he? Mercy in the general, it may be thus described:—

It is that grace of God whereby the soul comes to be truly grieved with the miseries of others, and unfeignedly desirous to help and relieve them according to their ability. Mercy hath misery for its object; as an envious man hath the prosperity of others to be the object of his envy, so the misery of another man is the object of my pity and my compassion,

who am a merciful man. For my part, saith the soul of a merciful man, I bless God my estate is comfortable; I want nothing, I have everything about me my heart can desire, but the saints about me are in misery. Oh that I could help them that are in misery! Men are made sensible by them that are in misery. A saint's mercy is drawn forth by the miseries of others that are about him.

But you will say, The papists and the heathens they are merciful men, they are pitiful. But what difference is there then between the mercy of a man truly gracious and the mercy of others?

Therefore you may remember in the description of mercy in the general I told you that it was a grace of God's Spirit, whereby the mercy of a man is drawn forth to them that are in misery.

SERMON XXII.

OR,

THE SEVERAL WORKINGS OF MERCY IN THE HEART.

'Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.'—MAT. v. 7.

THE work we have now to do is to shew you,
First, The several workings of mercy in the heart.

Secondly, The motives unto it.

Thirdly, The object of mercy.

Fourthly, The gracious manner of the work of mercy. And then we shall come to this promise that is here made to them that are merciful, that they shall obtain mercy.

For the several workings of mercy in the heart, they are these :—

The first act of mercy upon the taking notice of the miseries of others, it grieves for them; there is a compassion towards those that are in misery. A merciful man will not slight the miseries of others, much less will he despise them, or condemn others that are in misery. A merciful man doth not think the miseries of others not at all to concern him, but he looks upon them as concerning himself; he is grieved, his heart is touched with the miseries of others.

Secondly, From these there is a working desire in his soul to relieve them. Oh that I could tell how to relieve and help souls as I see to be any way in misery, bodily misery, or spiritual misery!

Thirdly, The heart is solicitously careful about ways of help; not only wishes and desires to help, but the thoughts of the mind are very solicitous what way I may compass to be helpful to those that are in misery. You have an excellent scripture for that in Prov. xiv. 22, 'Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good.' Here is the merciful man described, and the promise of mercy to him; he is one that deviseth good. A merciful man looks upon

others in misery, casts about him in his thoughts when he lies upon his bed, and is devising how he may do good. I am here lying quietly in my bed; I am warm, others are in misery; how may I be any ways useful to them, to do them any good? He doth devise good: and in Isa. xxxii. 8, 'The liberal deviseth liberal things.' A merciful man is not only liberal and helpful when you put him upon occasion, when you come to him, when he cannot for shame, but he must give you something. No; but he himself deviseth liberal things; he plots with himself what he may do to be instrumental for the good of those that are in a sad condition. A covetous man doth not more devise how he might gain to himself to get a good bargain, than a merciful man devises how he may distribute, how he may do good. That is the third act of mercy, it is solicitously careful.

Fourthly, A timely improvement. He doth not keep his mercy in his own thoughts, but he doth improve what he hath for the good of others that are in misery, if he hath an estate, parts, friends, strength of body; or if he be poor and mean, and hath nothing else, then his prayers, all that he hath, shall be some way or other improved for the help of such as are in misery. A merciful man doth not think that God hath given him any good thing merely for himself, but for improvement. I was not born for myself, I have not an estate for myself, neither have I parts of nature or grace for myself, but I have them for to be of public good as much as may be. That is the fourth thing, a careful improvement.

Fifthly, The act of mercy is to be willing to part with much for others. Improve it I may for their

good, or lend them, but part with it I will not; but mercy will part with anything that it hath. It is my own. But how is it my own? it is my own as a steward, and not to be used as I please; therefore if I see that the Lord hath need of it, or my brother hath need, that God may have glory, and good may be done, I am as willing to part with it as ever I was to receive it.

Sixthly, If any hath offended he is ready to pardon, full of pity that way. Therein men of mean estates may be merciful as well as others, though I see miseries in others that hath need of me; though I see they are unthankful, they are unworthy, yet mercy passes by unworthiness and wrongs.

Seventhly, It keeps back justice for a time. Though it will not hinder justice, but that it shall have her glory in time, yet mercy may cause a forbearance of the stroke of justice, when justice is ready to strike the stroke; mercy comes in, as the mercy of God, when justice is striking the stroke, it comes in and pleads, Lord spare, spare yet a little while! As when Abraham was lifting up the knife to cut the throat of Isaac, the angel cries from heaven, Abraham, stay thy hand! As the mercy of God doth, so the mercy of man forbears justice, and will not have justice in the rigour and full extent of it to be executed; it causes to forbear a while, to see whether there may not something be done wherein the offender may be spared and justice not wronged, and it will moderate the work of justice as much as it can.

Eighthly and lastly, Mercy will cause one to put oneself into the same condition as those are in that are in misery. Whether it be in regard of poverty or pain, or what kind soever it be, mercy causes one to put himself into the same state, to be in bonds with those that are in bonds, and to weep with those that weep. It is true I am in this comfortable condition myself, and have abundance of choice enjoyments, but what are all these to me so long as others suffer hard things? What if I were in bonds with them, and if I were spoiled of all that I have as they are—what if God had put me into the same condition that they are, how should I be affected? And as I would have others to pity me if I were in the like condition, so I labour in my heart to pity them. Here is a merciful man, a merciful woman. These are the several workings of the bowels of mercy.

Secondly, Mercy, when it is a work of the grace of God, and not merely some natural work, as may be in natural men, there mercy arises upon gracious motives; when the heart works in ways of mercy graciously, it hath gracious motives to raise up this working, and to maintain these workings of mercy.

First, The soul looks upon God as the God of mercy, and looks upon the excellency of mercy in God himself. Oh mercy, it is lively in God! the bowels

of God's compassion yearns towards his creatures in misery; and therefore, if I be a child of God, why should it not yearn in me too? why should there not be a likeness in me to the God that I profess to be my Father?

Secondly, I myself have need of mercy every day. I live upon mercy; it is mercy that maintains me; it is mercy that keeps me out of hell; it is mercy that provides for me; and if I have such need of mercy, and live upon it, then why should not I be merciful towards others?

Thirdly, I have not only need of it, but I have received mercy. The Lord hath been merciful to me, merciful to my body, merciful to my soul. I have had preventing mercy, delivering mercy, healing mercy, comforting mercy, saving mercies; mercies of all sorts when I was in miseries. I have cried, the Lord pitied me, and hath helped me. Now, I that have received so much mercy, it is infinitely equal that I should be merciful towards my brethren.

Fourthly, When the mercy of God comes from grace, it comes from a sight of the mercy of God in Christ; not only that God is merciful, and hath been merciful to me in a way of common providence, but I look upon the mercy of God in Christ, the tender mercies of God in Christ. A man in a natural way may come to see and know that God is merciful; but when I am merciful from a sight of God's mercy to me in Jesus Christ, and therefore I shew mercy to others, this is right mercy. In Christ the beams of God's mercy are concentrated as in a burning-glass; they are all concentrated together in one; and when they shine through Christ to my soul, then they warm my heart. The beams of the sun, when they shine scattered up and down in the air, they cause some light, glory, and heat; but when they are concentrated in a burning-glass, then they will be so hot as to burn one's clothes. So the beams of God's mercy in common providence, they will heat the hearts of men, and move them to natural pity; but when our mercy comes from the concentrating of the mercy of God to my soul in Jesus Christ, as it were the burning-glass, then how do they warm and enlarge the heart of a merciful man; when he can set his soul under the beams of God's mercy, contracted and shining through the burning-glass of Jesus Christ himself, and when the heart comes to be warmed with mercy thus, then it is a gracious work indeed, and mercy beyond that of a natural man.

Fifthly, The consideration of my unworthiness. I have had mercy, and not only common mercy, but mercy in Christ, who am so unworthy; and why hath God made any difference between me and others? What is it that causes a difference, so that such a one should be poor, and I have an estate; that they are born of beggars, and I of parents that hath left me a

comfortable estate? Or if providence hath cast it so, though born of as good parents as I, yet they are in misery and I in comfort. Many of you may say you came to the city but with a staff in your hand, and what an estate hath God raised you to! If the grace of mercy works in you the consideration of your unworthiness of anything, that God should make a difference between you and others out of free-grace, and from nothing of yourselves, this doth mightily enlarge bowels of mercy.

Sixthly, Further, the consideration of the relation that these have to God that are in misery. Let it be any creature, yet it hath some relation to God; any brute creature, it is the creature of God, and so it hath relation to him—it is the work of God's hands. But if he be a man, much more if he be a Christian, much more if a saint, much more the relation that a thing hath to God, and being in misery, that moves a gracious man; it doth not move one that is moved in a way of natural pity, but those that are merciful in a gracious way. The relation that anything hath to God, that is a mighty motive to mercy.

Seventhly, The consideration that I shall honour God in this way of mercy. Not merely that I would help others in misery, or be well spoken of, or the like, but I shall honour God in this way of mercy; and it is this that moves my heart.

Eighthly, And the very love to the exercise of mercy itself; and love to such as are in misery, though they be strangers, whosoever they be, this works in a merciful heart. And that is the second thing, the motives, or what it is that sets a merciful man on work in the ways of mercy.

For the object, but a word—for it was intimated in the relation that a thing hath to God. We are to be merciful,

First, To all that are in misery. A good man is merciful to his beast. Look upon your beast, and consider, there is not such a distance between you and that; you are all of one lump. God might have made you a toad, the vilest creature that is, and therefore God expects that you should use his creatures that he hath an interest in, that you should use them mercifully, and not cruelly.

Secondly, We are to be merciful to all mankind. If you do not give to such and such a one as a man, give it to human nature, so far as not to suffer them to perish, except it be in some cases that the Scripture would have others to perish if they continue obstinately in wickedness. As, he that will not work, let him not eat, saith the Scripture; or if they sin, in the way of justice, God doth will that wicked men should perish in their sin—that is, when in a way and course of justice they come to be dealt with; but otherwise, except it be in a way and course of justice that they may be dealt with, we should have pity

upon wicked men when the hand of God is upon them in bringing misery. It is true there is a time coming that the saints shall be so swallowed up with God, with love to God, as they shall pity wicked men no more—yea, shall have no kind of compassion towards them hereafter, whenas it shall be revealed fully that they are reprobates, and that this is the way to honour himself eternally, to withdraw all mercy from them, then the saints shall not pity them. But in the meantime, here in this world, we are to pity them; because, though they be now wicked, we do not know but that they may belong to God, and be made vessels of mercy. Such a wicked blasphemer, and wicked unclean person—the most monstrous wretch that is—who knows but that God may set him apart to be a vessel of mercy to the glory of his free grace; and therefore, because you know not yet the contrary, mercy should work towards him, to pity his soul and body.

Thirdly, The next thing is, that as we should be merciful to all that are in misery, so especially to them in respect of their souls. There is many men and women have pitiful hearts to others; when they see them poor, naked, and ready to starve, then they pity them. But you shall have such pitiful men and women to have no compassion towards their souls; but where mercy is true, it is towards the soul in the first place, and then towards their bodies.

Fourthly, Further, for the object of mercy, the less guilt there is upon any, the more he is to be pitied in his misery. As thus, when any one comes into misery merely by the hand of God, and not by their own wickedness, then there is much mercy to be shewn. I confess, though men should be brought into misery by their wickedness, yet still—except it be in a way and course of legal proceeding in a course of justice—they must not be left to perish; but if it be merely the hand of God upon them, and not their own wickedness that hath brought it upon them, much mercy should be shewn to them. Such as by the providence of God, either by fire, or by wicked men that have broken in upon them, and not through their own fault, they have lived conscientiously, and yet God, by some hand of providence, hath swept away all their estate; abundance of mercy should be shewn to them.

But above all, though we are to do good unto all, yet especially unto the household of faith; to the saints especially our mercy should be shewn unto, for God shews most mercy to them. But it shall be sufficient to name the objects of mercy.

For the gracious manner of shewing mercy to those that are in misery, mercy must have these qualifications:

First, I must never be so merciful as to go against any rule of justice; but there must be a sweet concord between both. Mark how they are knit together:

'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness,' which is not only the righteousness of Christ, but between man and man, and 'Blessed are the merciful.' We must be so merciful, as yet to be righteous. Grace hath a blessed mixture in it; and though one vice be contrary to another, yet one grace is never contrary to another. Justice and mercy are never opposite one to another, but they may have a gracious mixture. I may be a merciful man, and yet hunger after righteousness, that righteousness may prevail in the world. That must be considered in the first place, for the gracious manner of the work of mercy.

Secondly, I must be so merciful as not to do hurt to those that I think to shew mercy to, or to do hurt to others by them. As thus, when men are in misery, for me to shew mercy so as to harden them in their evil way, this is no gracious act; this is a foolish pity. Or to shew mercy to one so as to hurt others; many times mercy may be shewn to one, that is cruelty to many others. Now, in Ps. cxii. 5, there the Holy Ghost, speaking of a merciful man, he saith that 'he guides his affairs with discretion.' He guides them in a discreet way; he doth not do the work of mercy in a lavish way, but considers wisely of the poor, and guides his affairs with discretion.

Thirdly, In the exercise of mercy there must be much simplicity of heart: Rom. xii. 8, 'He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity.' You will say, What is the meaning of that? The meaning of it is this:

First, Not to have any by and squint-eyed aims in my giving; but to do it in the simplicity of my heart, without any by and squint-eyed aims, and in simplicity. Many are merciful; they do things that are good, but they have squint-eyed aims at themselves.

Secondly, Simplicity—that is, not to be partial in the ways of my mercy. God would have me to shew mercy to one more than to another, according as there is reason, but not to be merciful in a way of partiality—that is, though others stand in as much need of my mercy as this man doth, and every way deserves it as well, yet out of private respects I let the course of my mercy run this way rather than the other. This is not to do it out of simplicity.

Lastly, We must so shew our mercy as that we must be sure to tender up that mercy that we shew to others for acceptance in Jesus Christ; to tender it up in Jesus Christ that it may be accepted by God. Lord, may such a soul say, I am unworthy thou shouldest shew any mercy to me, or that thou shouldest accept of any mercy that I tender up to thee. This we see admirably set forth in Nehemiah, who was one of the mercifullest men that ever we read of; yet saith he, chap. xi. 22, 'Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the

greatness of thy mercy.' He was a merciful man, and yet he pleads to be accepted in mercy for the failings that passed from him in the shewing of that mercy; and here in the text, 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.' They shall obtain mercy for those failings that they commit in the shewing of their mercy. Thus you see who this merciful man is.

We shall now come to shew that he is a blessed man: Prov. xxii. 9, 'He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor.' To open unto you the blessedness of this merciful man, take it in these particulars:

First, When God would describe a man truly godly, he calls him out by this very character, that he is a merciful man: Ps. xxxii. 6, 'For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee,' in the original, *הַיָּדֵי*, it is the 'kind man.' Godly men are called by this denomination of kind ones; and so wherever we have the word 'godly' and 'saints' in the Old Testament, it is the same with that we have in the New Testament, where they are called 'godly saints' and 'godly ones.' It is the same with 'merciful men'; to note thus much, that mercy it is the same with godliness. Now take righteousness, as I opened it in the former verse, for the grace of sanctification, and so this mercifulness is a part of that sanctification. It is a part of that righteousness which I shewed you was of such excellency in Ps. xxxii. 6. God doth not instance in any particular grace but in this of mercy: 'The merciful man shall seek him in a time when he may be found.' And in Ps. cxii., 'A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth; he will guide his affairs with discretion.' And then in ver. 9, 'He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever.' Mercy, it is a special part of righteousness. In James iii. 17, the apostle there describing the wisdom that is from above, he saith thus, 'The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits.' Mark the words, it is full of mercy and gentleness; therefore blessed are these merciful ones, for they are such as God doth cull out to give a character of, that they are godly men.

Secondly, Blessed, because they have so much of that which is so high to God, and makes God so excellent and glorious. There is nothing in a saint is nearer unto God than this very disposition of mercifulness. Now God glories in nothing more than in his mercy. This is that which God doth exalt himself withal, and that he doth glory in, that he is the merciful God. In Exod. xxv. the mercy-seat it was raised up on high above all, that it might be seen. And in Scripture God is said to delight in mercy: Micah vi. 18, 'Who is a God like unto thee? 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.' It is a very pleasing thing for God to delight in his mercy; and he is called the 'Father of mercy,' and a God 'rich in mercy.' A man accounts his glory to consist in his riches. If in anything a man doth esteem himself for, it is in his riches, in his wealth; so God's riches are his mercies, and God glories in his mercies; and when God would shew, unto Moses his glory it is in this. Moses he desires to see the face of God, and that God would let him see his glory, Exod. xxxiv. 6; how doth the Lord give a demonstration of his glory? Thus, 'The Lord God, gracious and merciful.' And the chief design that God hath in the world it is to glorify his mercy. In Eph. i. 6, the Lord he delights to glorify his power, his wisdom, and his justice; but he delights to glorify his mercy above all. When the power of God is exalted, when the wisdom of God is declared, God is glorified; but when mercy is glorified, then God is exalted. If mercy make God so excellent, surely that man must needs be very happy that hath much of this disposition in him. And you have seen that the merciful man he hath much of this disposition in him, which is by God accounted to be his own glory.

Thirdly, You are blessed, because you are under many precious promises. It were endless to mention all the promises wherein your blessedness is set forth. In Prov. xi. 25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself; Ps. cxli. 9, 'He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour;' 2 Cor. ix. 8, which is very remarkable, 'And God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always, having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.' See how words are heaped up here: 'to make grace, and all grace, and all grace to abound.' And who is it to? Unto the liberal, the merciful man. In Luke vi. 38, 'Give, and it shall be given to you.' The way for to receive more, it is to give out of what we have; and God will so order it 'that you shall have good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.' See here the latitude and height of expressions that can be. We account it good measure when it is heaped up; but when it is heaped up and pressed down, that is more; but when it is heaped up and pressed down, and then heaped up and running over again, this is as much as possibly can be made. So those that are of merciful spirits, they shall have mercy heaped up, pressed down, and running over. Surely thou must needs be a happy man when thou canst not be in that condition in which thou shalt not have mercy, but mercy heaped up, and running over, to supply thy necessity.

Fourthly, Blessed art thou, because thou hast the blessing of those that are in misery upon thee. The

blessing of the poor is upon thee who art thus merciful; thy prayers are heard, and thy prayers are for thee. They bless God for such a one who hath done them good in their straits: Job xxix. 13, 'The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.' They praise God for them; and in the text, 'they shall obtain mercy.' This is a singular privilege, were there no other scripture in all the word to encourage us to this duty but this, that we shall obtain mercy. We are ready to think that if we shew mercy we may want ourselves, we shall come to beggary, we shall come to poverty, we had need to store up for ourselves. No, we shall grow; therefore in Prov. xi. 25, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat.' Here is a strange expression; what, to gain by liberality? We have many proverbs used among us that doth quite cross Scripture; for we say, 'We had as good be out of the world as out of the fashion;' and God saith, 'Fashion not yourselves according to the world.' We say, 'He is too free to be fat;' and yet God saith here, 'The liberal man shall be made fat.' Saith the Scripture, 'You shall have mercy;' and is it not a sweet thing to find mercy from God? In 2 Sam. xxii. 26, 'With the merciful he will shew himself merciful;' and therefore 'blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' With the froward God will shew himself froward. According to our walking unto God we shall find God walking unto us: if we walk contrary unto him, he will walk contrary unto us; if we walk mercifully towards our brethren, God will walk mercifully towards us.

Fifthly, All the good that we have, it comes from the mercy of God; there is not the least good that we enjoy in any creature but it comes originally from God's mercy. Saith God, Poor soul, thou art of a merciful disposition. Art thou merciful? Dost thou do good to others, and doth thy bowels work towards them that are in misery? Art thou in straits thyself? Here is my mercy to help thee, here is my mercy to pardon thee. It is very observable that those that God intends to save, he doth so work upon them by his grace here as they shall be like him. There shall be such a work wrought upon them to answer God's will in all things. As, to instance, those that God intends to save, they shall choose him here; as those whom he hath elected unto glory, they shall in time choose him here, and elect him. Those that God doth intend to justify by Jesus Christ, they shall justify him and his ways; those that God hath separated for glory hereafter, they shall be separated from the world here; and those that God doth intend to shew mercy to hereafter, shall be of merciful dispositions. Hath God given thee a merciful heart? thou mayest assure thyself that God will shew mercy to thee at the last. Blessed are the merciful, there-

fore, for they shall have mercy; they shall have sin pardoned, they shall have their souls blessed. This is a blessed and a fruitful promise; for have not we need of mercy in our straits? There is none of us all that enjoy the most of creature comforts here but we stand in need of mercy ourselves; and when we shall come in any condition to stand in need of mercy, we may be sure we shall have mercy from God, because the Lord hath wrought in us merciful dispositions towards them that are in misery.

Sixthly, In this very thing thou hast a mighty encouragement and help to faith; for mercy, it is thy own—thou mayest cast thyself upon mercy without presuming. Thou who hast a merciful, loving disposition to the saints in their distress, it is no presuming for thee to cast thyself upon the mercy of God in thy straits. When thou art about to believe, what is the stumbling-block that lies in the way? Saith such a poor soul, Shall such a wretched creature as I have mercy from God? Will the Lord ever look upon me? Lord, thou mayest answer thus: Thou hast wrought in me a disposition to shew mercy to them that are in misery. Lord, if there be but one drop of mercy in me to shew pity to others, is there not an infinite ocean of mercy in thee? Lord, is it not much easier for thee to shew mercy unto me, whenas by that little drop of mercy which I have thou hast gained upon my heart to shew mercy unto others? Here is a mighty help against temptations and discouragements from closing with the mercy of God; for that mercy which is in us is but a drop of the fountain that is in God. Our mercy, if it be true and spiritual, as you have heard it described before, it is but an effect and fruit of the mercy which is in God himself. Lord, it is more easy to thee to shew mercy to my soul than for me to pity them that are in misery. Lord, the misery that is in others requires more of us to relieve them than for thy majesty to relieve us. Lord, thou shalt part with nothing in shewing mercy to me. Thou art infinite in mercy, and thou partest with nothing; but when we shew mercy we part with something, though it be that we receive from God; and therefore it is easier with God to shew mercy.

Lastly, Consider of this, That there is nothing holds men longer under bondage and terrors of conscience for sin than this very thing, than the rigid disposition that is in us towards them that are in misery. Therefore blessed are those that are merciful, that are of a gentle disposition, for this will be a special means to have those throbs and terrors of conscience that are inward in the soul to be removed. We are ready oftentimes to gather such conclusions as these are: Surely the Lord will never be merciful unto me. How can God shew mercy to such a wretch as I am, so stubborn and hard-hearted? I cannot shew mercy

to others that are in misery, I cannot forgive them that are in misery; and surely how can the Lord forgive me, who have done more wrong to him than ever any other hath done to me, and yet I could not forgive them, nor pass by such wrongs myself? Well, thou that art merciful mayest think thus: Lord, must I have a heart to forgive to seven times, yea, to seventy times seven? And, Lord, canst not thou do more to me? Must I forgive till seventy times seven times in a day if my brother offend me? Canst not thou forgive much more? This is a mighty help to faith, and a mighty help to prayer, that the Lord would shew mercy to us in our straits, and help in the time of our troubles: Ps. cxii. 6, 7, 'Surely he shall not be moved for ever.' The way to be established, it is to be of a merciful spirit, and he shall not be afraid of evil tidings; let what times come that will come, he shall not fear them. The days may be clouded, and troubles may grow bigger, but he shall not be afraid of them. These evil tidings shall not affright the merciful man; and that is a famous text that we have in Isa. lviii. 7, 8, when he describes the manner of the fast both in the negative and the affirmative part. He shews what they did in their false humiliations, and then he comes to shew that if they did thus and thus, 'Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here am I.' God will say, Hearken, there is a merciful man cries; there is one that is now in distress and cries to me. I must go down and hearken unto this man's request; I must go and hear what is the matter, it is a merciful man cries. Come, God will say, here am I, call upon me; what wouldst thou have? It is a merciful man that cries, I must go and relieve him. God will say to this soul, Here I am; and ver. 10, 'The light of such a man shall rise in obscurity, and his darkness be as the noon-day;' and ver. 11, 'The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.' Thou complainest of deadness and barrenness of spirit; this is the reason, it may be thou profitest no more under the means, because thou art of a wretched, harsh, cruel disposition. But for the merciful, they may go unto God and plead their cause, and say, Lord, I was merciful unto my brethren in their straits, and my mercy it was in obedience to thy command, and therefore, Lord, hear me.

To make application of this point.

First, Here is abundance of comfort to those that are of merciful spirits. Whoever you are that are thus merciful, wherever you are, (though I fear there are but few; like the gleanings after the vintage, they stand but here and there even in great assemblies,) hearken unto your comfort. Hath the Lord drawn

forth your hearts to melt at the sorrows of the saints abroad, though you have had plenty at home, yet you have been in bonds with them, and your comforts have not been so sweet to you as otherwise they would have been, because the church and people of God have been in such straits? You have been in sorrow; though you have enjoyed peace and plenty, this hath taken away the sweetness of your mercies. Know, if it be thus, take your comfort:

First, Thou art eminent in that which is God's eminency; and this is a great excellency. And this is the best service thou canst do; thou canst not do a piece of service more acceptable to God than this thing is. Thou complainest thou canst not pray; thou art disquieted in thy spirits for thy deadness, and dullness, and indisposedness of heart; but hast thou a merciful heart? Know that this is most acceptable to God: Micah vi. 6, 7, 'Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil.' See what large proffers they made there to God; shall we come with these? 'Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' No, saith God, none of these; I regard them not, I require them not, 'only to do justice, and to love mercy;' herewithal mayest thou come before God with boldness. It may be thou canst not bring rivers of oil, thou canst not bring such enlargements, such expressions, such fine placed words, yet canst thou bring a heart loving mercy; hast thou but a merciful heart, thou hast that which God delights in.

Secondly, This is a most certain argument of thy election unto mercy who hath a merciful heart: Col. iii. 12, 'Brethren, as the elect of God'—what? 'put on bowels of mercy;' as the elect of God put on bowels of mercy. It is mercy that God gives thee means to relieve others, that God gives thee wherewithal to help them that are in distress. Know it is more to have a heart to shew mercy than an estate to shew mercy. It is a greater mercy to thee for God to make thee willing to shew mercy, than if thou hadst an estate and not willing to shew mercy. And therefore, wherein do you account your riches? In having the world at will, in being in great places, and to do what thou wilt, is here thy happiness? Dost thou account it thy riches to be great in the world, and to have places and rule? If this be thy happiness, know that thou hast little evidence to thy soul of thy election. But if thou wert truly gracious, thou wouldest say, Lord, I bless thee for my estate, for my parts and riches. Ay, but Lord, I bless thee more for a heart to pity them that are in distress; I bless thee that thou hast given me a heart to shew mercy to

them that are in misery; and I bless thee that I may be more serviceable than others by my estate to them which want such an estate. I therefore prize my estate because it doth help me to be more serviceable to God than others: this is as sure a sign of grace as can be. Suppose God hath given you an estate, but withal had left you to a penurious, covetous heart, know thy estate had been a curse to thee; but if thou hast a large estate, and a large heart to do good with thy estate, it is a good sign of true grace.

Thirdly, Thou mayest with comfort expect an enlarged heart in prayer. You complain many times that your hearts are so straitened and dead; would you but examine, is not this the cause, you are so cruel to others?

And when thou comest to any affliction, the Lord will remember, and remember what thou wouldest have done, James ii. 13. Thou wouldest pray better; the Lord will accept of that desire of thine to pray better: 'Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.' There is a scripture which, though you have often read, you do not, it may be, so well understand, or at leastwise it hath been carried contrary to what I conceive the meaning is. Many conceive this scripture to be meant of the mercy of God rejoicing against the judgment of the law and condemnation; but I take it for judgment here—judgment is coming, mercy strives against. And how the Scripture saith, 'That a man shall have judgment without mercy, that was cruel.' When any judgment comes to be executed upon a kingdom, upon families, the mercy of those towards such as were in misery shall cry, and the Lord will hear the cries of mercy in the time of judgment; the mercy which they had shewn to others shall plead for them. Let whatsoever judgments come, that soul may say, the Lord intends mercy to me in it; this merciful man shall be delivered. Though there is a storm abroad in the land, and miseries in all places, yet the Lord will remember this man; he was merciful to them that were in misery, and I will regard this man; his mercy shall come up into remembrance, and say, I am above judgment. A merciful man, he may rejoice in the midst of judgment as being above judgment. The Lord hath discovered himself to me in making me of a merciful disposition to others; therefore, now the judgments of God are abroad, I question not but mercy will triumph over judgment. For me, I shall be preserved; my mercy will plead for me that judgment shall not take hold of me, because, when others were in misery, I was pitiful unto them: 'And therefore, blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' In their troubles the merciful man shall triumph and boast over judgment. Judgment shall not take hold of him, because his mercy shall be remembered in the day of his trouble.

SERMON XXIII.

OR,

COMFORTS TO THOSE THAT ARE OF MERCIFUL SPIRITS.

'Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.'—MAT. v. 7.

4. KNOW that this is a special evidence that thou didst hunger and thirst after righteousness truly, therefore Christ doth join it thereto : 'Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness : they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.' Thou thinkest thy heart is after righteousness. God knows thou canst appeal to him that thou dost hunger and thirst after righteousness, but sometimes thou art afraid whether thy hunger and thirst be true or no. Here is one rule : Hast thou a merciful heart towards others ? While thou art hungering after God's righteousness, doth thy soul hunger after the good of others, and wouldest thou do them all the good thou canst, both bodily and spiritual ? this is an argument of the truth of thy hungering after righteousness. But if so be that thou shalt please thyself with this, that thou hast a desire for righteousness, but in the meantime hast a cruel unmerciful heart towards others, certainly thy hunger after righteousness is not good, for these two are joined, and they cannot be parted one from another. Blessed are such as hunger and thirst after righteousness. Blessed are the merciful ; unmerciful men do not truly desire after grace. And this makes way to speak unto the second branch in the application. Whatsoever might be further spoke by way of encouragement, we shall bring it into the use of exhortation.

Wherefore, in the second place, here is a use of reprehension to unmerciful men, to such as have not their hearts affected with the miseries of others, nor mind not what becomes of others, so be it they may have contentment to themselves. Perhaps some of you may think this point that I am about is an ordinary thing to speak for mercy, and but a moral point. I know not what you lay upon it, but I find, and you may find it too, if you will examine Scripture, not only in the Old Testament, but in the New, Christ lays not more weight upon any one thing, excepting faith itself, than upon mercy. Take but these three particulars—faith, mercy towards others, and union one with another. These be the three great things

that the gospel doth most insist upon ; and I know no point that is so full of Scripture as this is, the point of mercy, and that out of the gospel. Many professors of religion lay too little weight upon this point, but look upon it as an ordinary point, and so they make not that conscience of the exercise of this grace as they ought. But how little you think of it, Christ puts much in it. 'Blessed are the merciful.' Therefore know,

First, That an unmerciful heart is a wretched and a vile heart. You that mind nothing else but yourselves, if you can have your tables spread, your backs clothed, your houses furnished, your children provided for, let others sink or swim and perish, no matter what becomes of them—oh wretched, vile heart of thine, what art thou more than others ? What is thy flesh more than others, that thou shouldst have so little regard to others ? Should there be any regard to thee ? Some there are that if they get a little more than others, are so far from letting out their souls to the relief and help of others, that they look upon them with despicable eyes, despising the poor, as in Prov. xiv. 21 ; they despise, look contemptibly upon such as are under them, or in a meaner condition than they. 'He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth ; but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.' Take heed you do not look upon poor people as despising them, for so it is meant of poor neighbours, both by the opposition and the verse before : 'The poor is hated even of his own neighbour ; but the rich hath many friends. He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth,' sinneth with a great sin ; 'but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he.' Such a one is mean and poor, and thou thinkest him a mean, poor fellow, and so lookest despicably upon him. Take heed of such a disposition ; God will not take it well at thy hands. And others there are that are so far from shewing mercy to those that are in misery, as they rather spend their estates that they have upon their lusts. They have more than others, and that which may serve to relieve the necessities of many poor creatures that

would bless God for their superfluities; but their superfluities are laid out and spent upon their lusts, merely to satisfy their bellies, to satisfy their uncleanness it may be, whereas they will not freely give twelve pence for good uses and for relieving others. There are pounds spent upon their filthy uncleanness, or upon their backs, and upon vanity in sporting, playing, drinking. Where is conscience in the meantime, when there are so many charges of God upon you to shew mercy, and there is so much spoken of the excellency of mercy? What a blessed man the merciful man is! And thou that hast an estate above others improveth it, and layest it out only to satisfy thy lusts, thou canst sin more freely possibly than others can, because thou hast an estate more fully than they. Oh thou unwise soul, how foolishly dost thou improve thy estate, whereas thou mightest lay it out so as hundreds might be blessing God for thee! thou employest it only in increasing guiltiness upon thy soul. And others, though perhaps somewhat it is that they will give, yet grudgingly, and only that that is forced from them, what they cannot but for shame give; but there is no freedom, no cheerfulness at all in their distribution unto others, and if anything be given, they think it is merely lost, it is gone. But what goes into their own bellies, and is put upon their own backs, that is not lost; but whatsoever they give in a way of mercy to others, they look upon it as cast away: this is an argument of a carnal heart, that knoweth not the way of God. Didst thou understand what is said in Scripture, thou wouldest account that estate of thine which thou givest out of a merciful heart for the relief of others, the best part of thy estate. And so others, when they are to die, then they think that they will give something to the poor, or to others; but in the meantime, while they live, all is for themselves, they cannot trust God for anything; and as for such promises as these are, or others in Scripture, they are but as dry things unto them. I shall speak to these, and such as have cruel and hard hearts towards others, and are altogether selfish.

First, Certainly thou knowest not God. Talk what thou wilt of religion, if thou hast an unmerciful heart towards others, thou art the man or woman that knowest not God. I will give you this scripture for it: in Hosea iv. 1, 'Because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.' These two are put together—no mercy nor knowledge of God in the land; certainly where there is the knowledge of God, there will be mercy. 'The dark places of the earth are habitations of cruelty,' saith the psalmist; in dark souls that know not God are works of cruelty. You may conclude of any man that is of a cruel disposition, a hard-hearted disposition, of a penurious, sordid disposition, of a selfish disposition—

certainly this man, this woman knows not God; if they knew what God were, what treasures of mercy there are in God, and how God delights in mercy, and that it is his glory to communicate of his goodness to his creatures, it were impossible but their hearts would be more communicative.

Secondly, God hath a great controversy against thee. Thou sayest thou art not bound to relieve such and such, thou thinkest it is no evil if thou dost not wrong others; but thy unmercifulness is enough for to cause the Lord to have a controversy against thy soul: in the forenamed place, Hosea iv. 1, 'The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land,'—for what? 'because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.' God hath a controversy with that land, with that family, with that person that hath no mercy; and canst thou stand out against the controversy of God?

Thirdly, Know that thy disposition is quite contrary to God's. Surely it is a very base one then. There is no disposition whatsoever more contrary to the disposition of God than a cruel, harsh, hard-hearted disposition; for God is mercy itself. Your heavenly Father is merciful; he is the God of mercy, (as we spake before,) so that thy heart is of a disposition cross to God. There is a mighty difference and opposition between the disposition of God's heart, and the disposition of thy heart.

Fourthly, There is a curse upon thy heart. Certainly a hard heart hath a curse upon it. There are diseases in the bowels that are very terrible. Those that have hard hearts, their bowels are diseased—their bowels are corrupted; they have not bowels of compassion, there is a curse upon their spirits. There can be no greater curse upon a man's heart than to be hardened—to be hardened from God's fear, and to be hardened from doing good to others.

Fifthly, There is a curse upon all thou hast. An unmerciful man or woman hath no sanctified use of anything they have. You keep your estates, and you think it is your own, and say, May I not do with my own what I please? may I not eat and drink, and please myself with my own? Thy own, it is defiled to thee by thy unmercifulness, and cursed to thee. You have a strange expression in Luke xi. 41, 'But rather give alms of such things that you have; and behold, all things are clean unto you;' it is a very strange expression. So that it seems without this, nothing is clean to a man. Men that do not distribute of what they have, but keep it altogether to themselves, there is nothing that they have clean unto them—that is, there is nothing sanctified; all is defiled, all is cursed to them. But now, how are things clean by this? You may see the meaning by the coherence in verse 39. The pharisees stood much upon the cleaning of the outside. 'And the Lord

said unto him, Now do ye pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness; ye cleanse cups and platters and such things, and ye stand upon ceremonial cleannesses, and your own kind of superstitious cleansings. But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean; rather look to what God requires in the use of your estates. Do not stand to cleanse cups and platters, to have them very neat, as many of you have your cupboard heads furnished, your plate shining, and furniture in your houses, and you delight in that as much in one way as the pharisees did in a superstitious way. You delight in it in a pompous way, but, saith Christ, rather give alms of such things as you have—that is, doth God give you estates beyond others, you have more than for necessity, and you have for moderate delight; now with the remainder relieve such as are in misery, and so make the right use of your estates that God hath given them to you for, and then all things will be clean to you. You shall sanctify all you have by this means; but if you have a base, penurious, and selfish disposition, to keep all for yourselves, for pomp, bravery, and delight to yourselves, there is nothing clean to you; and however you may make things so pompous and brave in your houses, they are all defiled, all cursed to you. Therefore it is an evil thing to have an unmerciful heart towards others.

Sixthly, Further, know that the misery of others cries continually against you. Thou art in thy house, and hast all about thee well, and feellest no pain, no hunger, no trouble thou meetest withal. But how many fatherless children and widows, how many of the saints that are in great extremities, have their miseries cry to heaven against thee, as if they should say, Lord, thou hast given to such and such men estates, and here we want bread, and it is in thy cause too. We have poor children that are ready to starve, and if we have one bit now, we know not where to have another, and we are in nakedness. These things cry to heaven against those that have superfluity here, that have wherewithal to relieve others, and are altogether for themselves and the maintenance of their lusts.

Seventhly, Know this, and this is a main thing, not only carnal people, but many that do profess religion, are very guilty herein; they have many of them very rigid and cruel hearts; they think to put off God with going to hear sermons, praying in their families, and it may be keeping themselves from the defilements of the times, and they look after ordinances, and purity of ordinances. In these things they do well to do so; but while thou art doing so, for thee to slight the work of mercy towards those that are in misery, know that all these acts of thy religion are thrown by God as filth and dung in thy face.

God cares for none of the acts of religion where there is an unmerciful heart. Be never so forward in hearing, in praying, in fasting, in any ordinances of God, yet when thy heart is unmerciful, the Lord despises thy offering, despises all the duties of religion that thou performest. Take two or three scriptures for this that are observable. The first is that in James i. 27, 'Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.' This is pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. If this text were in the Old Testament we should have some say that this is a legal thing; but here you see the apostle hath it in the New Testament, and tells you that pure religion consists in this: You that would be kept from the defilements of the world, from defilements in worship, and have your religion more pure than others, look to your religion in this. Here is purity of religion: 'Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.' I would we had more puritans of this kind, such puritans that are pure in this religion, that have bowels of mercy towards others. And that scripture that you have likewise in Isa. lviii. is very remarkable for this. If you read divers expressions that you have there, it is exceeding full. Ver. 3, 'Wherefore have we fasted,' say they, 'and thou seest not,' &c. 'Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.' It were well we had never any such fasts, to fast for strife and debate. Then in ver. 5, 'Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?' as if they should say, Lord, what is the fast that thou hast chosen? Ver. 6, 7, 'Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?' For so we are to account all, even strangers, as our own flesh: 'Then shall thy light break forth in the morning.' So that in these times of fast let us look to this. This is the fast that God requires. Fasting and alms are to go together. The more we fast the more merciful we are to be to others, or otherwise our fasting is nothing. More scriptures may be named, but these two are prime ones, to shew where there is not mercifulness all is rejected, even our prayers are rejected. Zechar. vii. 5, 'When ye

fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? and when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the south and the plain?' Ver. 9, 'Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute the true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother.' You only minded yourselves, and regarded yourselves when you were fasting and praying; and so we find, in Acts x., of Cornelius, when his prayers were accepted of God, the text saith that his alms and prayers came up to God both together.

Eighthly, If thou hast an unmerciful heart, thy prayers are so far from being accepted and regarded of God, as they cry against thee, and are witnesses against thee; for when thou comest to pray to God for mercy, and art unmerciful thyself, the Lord will bring thy prayers to be witnesses against thee. And whenever thou art crying to God, saith God, 'Here is a cruel, hard-hearted wretch; if he get but advantage over others, he will improve it to the uttermost, and, let others perish and suffer never so much, he cares not; yet he comes to me for mercy. Know the Lord, in the time of thy prayer, will remember all thy cruelty, and all the hardness of thy heart towards others. This is the evil of thine unmercifulness.'

Ninthly, Thou mayest expect that God will harden others against thee.

Tenthly, Know that this sin of cruelty and hardness of heart towards others, it is worse than a heathenish sin. Josephus in his 'Antiquities,' book xv. chap. 12, tells a notable story of Herod, whom you read of in Scripture, a wicked wretch. It was Herod Agrippa that was slain with worms. This Herod, Josephus tells of him, that in the time of common dearth and calamity, he melted all his plate that he had, all the gold and silver that he had in the court, he melted it all, and put it into money; and he spared nothing for the excellency of the fashion and workmanship. He had many curious pieces of plate that had excellent workmanship about them; but he spared none, but melted all, and bought corn with it, and gave it out unto the poor for their relief, and provided work for them too, and gave a great part to strangers. And because that the dearth was so great that they had not so much as seed to sow their fields withal, he did not only provide bread for them, but provided seed-corn to sow their ground for another year. Thus even Herod, wicked Herod, that we cry out so much upon—for he was ungodly, and a reprobate—yet, for the outward work

of mercy, he was thus merciful to those that were in misery.

But here it is said, 'That they are blessed that are merciful.'

It is true, if they be graciously merciful, if they exercise mercy as a work of faith, and tendered up in the name of Christ; but this was for the outward part of the work of mercy, and in this he went beyond a great many among us that make great profession of religion. Unmercifulness is worse than a heathenish sin.

Eleventhly, The Lord makes it to be the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah. One great charge that God gives against Sodom and Gomorrah, why they were destroyed with fire from heaven, was their unmercifulness, Ezek. xvi. 49: there the Lord is charging of Sodom for their vile and great sins, and saith, 'Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.' Here is a sin which was one of the sins for which Sodom was destroyed with fire and brimstone from heaven; and therefore certainly this is a greater evil than we are aware of. The evil of unmercifulness is worse than we can imagine; and therefore look to it, I beseech you. If I should be speaking of some other sin, it may be your consciences would fly in your faces. But you have a great deal of cause to have your consciences wound you, and to go and be humbled before the Lord for this sin of unmercifulness; and who is there that hath any competent estate but upon examination his conscience will charge him with this? Oh Lord, thou knowest that much of my estate hath been spent upon vanity and my lusts, or upon my will; and yet this man for a good use will grudge to give five shillings, though hundreds of pounds shall go merely to have his will and lusts. Be humbled for this sin: the Lord looks upon it with another manner of eye than you do; and this may be the sin that may cause God in the time of your distress utterly to leave you.

But the main thing in the point, it is a use of exhortation. If Christ pronounces him blessed that is merciful, let us be in love with this grace of mercy. Oh that we had more merciful men! This is a time of crying for mercy; yet it is the worst time for hardness of heart and cruelty as ever was. Certainly whosoever shall get an estate in these times with base scraping together, may expect a curse upon that estate more than ever was upon any man's estate that was gotten at another time; and therefore this scripture is a seasonable scripture. The Lord fasten it upon your hearts, that you may go away with this written upon them, 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.' There were never such

objects of mercy. Woeful extremity have many endured, and that in the cause of God; and others of the saints of God cry for mercy. We have received mercy ourselves; it is a time of God's mercy to us. What mercy do we hear of every day almost, every week; still one mercy comes upon the heels of another. This town surrendered, and this army wholly routed and spoiled, whereas we were afraid we should have lain at the mercy of cruel bloody soldiers. The Lord hath delivered us from them, and hath magnified his mercy in keeping England alive, in keeping this city alive, in preserving your families, in preserving your estates so much as they have been preserved. It is a time of mercy; the bowels of God's mercies are so enlarged, so yearning towards us, as calls for mercy to our brethren. Let us look round about us, we see nothing but mercy. There are places that wherever they look, they see nothing but footsteps of God's displeasure—of justice, wrath, and misery. But wherever we look we see mercy; when we are here now, we can every one of us look upon one another as objects of God's mercy. That we have these liberties thus to exercise ourselves, and to join thus publicly to call upon God, to pray to God, what mercy is here! And since these times hath not God been merciful to your souls, in revealing his gospel and the glorious things of eternal life to you? When thou goest home, what canst thou see but mercy? Look upon thy yoke-fellow, there is mercy; look upon thy children, there is mercy; look upon thy table, there is mercy; look upon thy servants, there is mercy; look into thy bed, there is mercy; look upon everything in thy house, there is mercy written thereon; look upon thy own body, there is mercy; take the Bible and read the eternal counsels of God concerning thy eternal estate, there is mercy; that a family can fall down upon their knees, and there be blessing God for preserving and bringing in all outward comforts that they stand in need of, still there is nothing but mercy round about us. And what, shall we in the midst of mercies be unmerciful? How do all these mercies call to thee for mercies towards others.

Again, Set before you the beauty and excellency of mercy, and consider of it. Chrysostom hath an expression about mercy, that it is more excellent than to have the gift to raise from the dead; if God should give one ability to raise from the dead, it were not a greater good than to have a heart to be merciful to those that are in misery; we need not go to him but to the Scripture. There are the most excellent things spoken of it in Scripture, that would make a man admire that any man professing godliness should not have bowels of mercy towards those that are in misery. There be six notable Scripture expressions concerning the excellency of this grace.

The first is this, It is called the administration of service, the service of God: 2 Cor. ix. 12, 'The ministry of this liturgy.' There are many stand for your old liturgy, and think it is a hard case that that is taken from them. Here you have a liturgy that you may keep, and that with the good-will of God and men too, and be in love with this liturgy—that is, the works of mercy, it is called God's liturgy. Whereas you use to call the liturgy divine service, here is a divine service that you may tender up to God. All of you that have estates, you may have this divine service. You complain thus one to another, Would we had our divine service again. You may have this every day, and be as acceptable to God as ever that was certainly, and abundantly more; and therefore seeing that is gone, make it up in this ministry, in this liturgy, for so is the word in the original.

The second commendation of this grace is this, That it is a grace doth manifest the professed subjection of men to the gospel; and till men come to have merciful hearts towards others, they do not come to have a professed subjection to the gospel. You are not brought under the subjection to the gospel in a professing way, till your hearts be brought to be merciful towards your brethren; and that you have in the same scripture, 2 Cor. ix. 13; speaking of the relief of others, and mercy towards others, he calls it there, the 'professed subjection to the gospel.' So it is in your books, the subjection of the profession to the gospel; so that, would you come and manifest a professing subjection to the gospel—viz., that whereas the Lord hath revealed in infinite mercy the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ unto you, and expects that all you should come and subject yourselves to this gospel, and make a profession that you do it. This is one thing wherein you should do it: thus, Lord, here we declare that the mercy which we have found from thee in thy glorious gospel, it takes off our hearts from all things in the world, and enlarges our hearts towards others that are in misery. In this, Lord, we manifest our professing subjection to thy gospel. And you shall find there is nothing doth more take off the hearts of men from scraping after the world than the knowledge of the gospel of Christ; and as soon as ever we find in Scripture that the gospel had brought any into subjection to it, they presently were ready and willing to distribute anything that they had to the necessity of the saints. That is the second commendation, The professed subjection unto the gospel.

Thirdly, It is called the exceeding grace of God; and that you have in the 14th verse of this 2 Cor. ix. The apostle there calls it the exceeding grace of God, because the Lord was pleased to melt their hearts towards others, and enlarge their bowels towards others. The apostle was so affected with it, that he saith, it is the exceeding grace of God. This we look

upon as the exceeding grace of God, more than the ordinary grace of God.

The fourth commendation is this, It is called 'the unspeakable gift,' and that you have in the last verse. The unspeakable gift, saith the apostle, that God should thus enlarge your hearts in mercy towards others. Here is a gift of God; you give to others that that he gives you. A heart to be merciful unto others; this is the unspeakable gift of God.

The fifth expression from Scripture is this, It is called a sweet smell, and that in Phil. iv. 18, 'An odour of a sweet smell.' You that would have your houses sweet, you may have them perfumed thus; it is the best perfume in the world. Great folks will have their frankincense to perfume their houses; and would you have yours smell sweet, perfume them with the works of mercy. When you do works of mercy towards others, you have perfumed your houses, you have perfumed your bodies and souls. Now there is a sweet smell unto God.

The sixth expression is, It is a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God; here be three in one. Would you offer a sacrifice to God? The work of mercy, it is a sacrifice, and a sacrifice acceptable, and a sacrifice well-pleasing to God, in Phil. iv. 18, 'A sacrifice, acceptable' or received, and 'well-pleasing to God.' Would you do a well-pleasing thing to God? Do works of mercy; they are well-pleasing to God, and they are sacrifices. So that those that are in misery, are, as it were, the altars upon which you do offer this sacrifice to God. So in Heb. xiii. 16, you have an expression to the same purpose, that it is a sacrifice well-pleasing to God. Consider, therefore, what comfort it will be to you when you die. Whether do you think it will be more comfort when you die to think thus: I have spent so much in a tavern, or I have relieved the necessities of so many poor people; I have spent so much upon my lusts, or upon a whore, or I have been a means that so many poor distressed people will bless God for me? Or thus, it may be when you die it shall be said that such a man died worth so much; but is it not a greater glory for so many families to come and bless the Lord for thee—I have found such a one a good master, I might have starved had it not been for such a one, I have cause to bless God for him. Would not this be a greater good to you when you die, than to think that you leave so much? What if you reckon less? Certainly a sweet memorial of the work of mercy were a great deal better than anything you could leave behind you. You know that the works of mercy will be a good testimony unto you in the day of Jesus Christ to witness for you. Luke xvi. 9, it is a scripture that hath some difficulty in it; saith Christ, 'I say unto you, make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive

you into everlasting habitations.' He calls riches mammon, because men do ordinarily make it their god; of unrighteousness, though all riches are not unrighteousness, but because for the most part they are got and used unrighteously; therefore they have this title from God. Make you friends, that is, by the works of mercy, 'that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' By this we are to understand thus much: that, look what works of mercy any one doth by faith, when he shall come to fail, as ere long all rich men must fail—that is, they must leave their estates, or they must leave them—then their good works may be as testimonies unto God, whereby they may come to be received into those everlasting mansions that Christ is gone before to prepare for them; not through the merit of these, as papists teach, but these will be a testimony to thee. Learned Chemnitz upon the place saith thus, It may be when rich men fail, those that have been merciful, and come to be sick and die, it may be here comes some minister of God, that when he was a poor scholar was relieved by him, and he comes to witness for him, and saith, Lord, I was a poor youth, and had not this man been pleased in mercy to look upon me I might have spent all my days in raking in kennels; but he was pleased to bring me up in learning, and through thy mercy thou hast made me an instrument of good in thy church; and Lord, he was a great means of it, through his bounty and mercy. Here is a witness, and this comes to witness well for such a man at the great day. And there comes another poor family, and they come and witness, Lord, had it not been for such a man, we had like to have perished and starved; Lord have mercy upon this man who thus shewed mercy to us. Thus make friends by your unrighteous mammon, by those riches that are ordinarily used in the world as weapons of unrighteousness, as means to maintain men's lusts; the more you can come to make such friends, the Lord will accept of you, and you shall be received into everlasting habitations. And what an improvement will this be of your estate, when you shall have such a testimony before God, and come to be rewarded with these everlasting habitations! You think you must provide for your house, and make it all brave and handsome; but here are everlasting habitations that are possible to be obtained. And those that are merciful in a gracious manner, they have such a promise as this.

To answer some pretences of men that hinder this work of mercy.

Say some, I am poor and mean. There is a scripture to shew that even poor people should be merciful. Though thou canst do but little, do something. You know the poor widow's mite was accepted more than all the rich men's treasure. 2 Cor. viii. 1, 2,

'Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; how that for a great trial of afflictions the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.' It is as elegant an expression as we can have in any author about such a business; it is such a high phrase as we cannot imagine a higher. They were poor, and it was a depth of poverty, and yet their deep poverty did abound to the riches of their liberality. Secondly, You will say, Our estates are very uncertain. We have somewhat now, but it may be all may quickly be gone; we had best to reserve somewhat. There is an excellent scripture for this, that this should be no hindrance from mercy, Eccles. xi., beginning, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.' Here the Holy Ghost makes that which thou wilt make an argument against it to be an argument for it. What saith the Holy Ghost? Is it like there may come evils upon the earth—is it like there may come troublesome times—let us spare for ourselves? Nay; saith the Holy Ghost, Give the rather; if thou beest afraid of evil times, give the rather, and be more abundant in the works of mercy because of that. 'If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth;' as if the Holy Ghost should say, Look, do you see how the clouds are gathered by many vapours from the earth, and then are filled with rain; they do not keep it to themselves, but empty themselves upon the earth. So you that have estates, you have gathered it from many in your employment, from this providence and the other; and now you are full, let it not be for yourselves—empty yourselves upon poor people that lie even upon the earth. 'And if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be,' saith the Holy Ghost. The meaning is this, whereas some may say, It may be we may give, and give to some that are good, and to some that are naughty, and we do not know whether there will come good of what we give. Saith the Holy Ghost, as where a tree falls when it is cut down, yet still it is to the advantage and benefit of him that owns it. He finds it when it is fallen there; he can make use of it. So you give sometimes to good, and sometimes to bad, yet the fruit of your mercy shall lie, and you shall find the benefit of it. Or rather as others, thus: they make the tree falling to signify the death of men. Be merciful while you live; the tree will fall, and look, how it falls there it lies. You know a tree, when it is cutting down, it will fall the way that there is most boughs, and that way it most inclines to whilst it was standing. So saith the Holy Ghost, the way that your

hearts most incline to, that way you will fall. If you have the fruits of mercy and good works, that you are abundant that way, and your hearts turning that way, you will fall that way; and so you will lie and be found at the great day, according to what the proportion of your hearts and your works have been. Again, 'He that observes the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.' Mark the answer to the covetous heart that would be scant in the works of mercy: I have not fit objects to bestow my mercy upon. He that observes the wind shall not sow. If a husbandman shall be looking every day, and see the wind in the clouds, and thinks it will not be fair weather, and so will not venture anything, he will never make any work of his ploughing or sowing; so, saith the Holy Ghost, be not too prying and observing of these wants of mercy, whether the object be a fit object, yea or no. It may be I may and have bestowed a great deal, but have seen no good come of it. Mark what follows in the 5th verse: 'As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' As if he should say, Go and do all the work you can; though you see nothing come of it, yet know there are secret ways of the providence of God working about his own ends and your good; and therefore be not discouraged in doing all the good you can. For as thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb, as there is a secret providence in carrying on things in the womb, so there is a secret providence in working about good in those ways that thou art not able to understand; and therefore be not discouraged. So in the 6th verse, 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that,' &c. I have done no great good with this good action, therefore I am discouraged; yet let me try another and another. 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand,' &c. There is likewise a notable scripture in Heb. xiii. 14, 15, 'For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.' We have no continuance in this world; we go up and down, and are driven from place to place. Then what follows in the 15th verse, '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.' That we will do, we will offer praise. But then what follows, ver. 16, 'But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifice God is well pleased.'

We have no abiding condition, yet let us bless God, and to do good and to communicate forget not. Though your estate be never so uncertain, yet do good, and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifice God is well pleased.

But I may want myself if I should give. See Prov. xviii. 27, 'He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack.' Darest thou trust God for thy soul upon his promise, and not for thy body and outward estate? There is no such way to come to want as to be of an unmerciful disposition towards others; 'he that giveth to the poor shall not lack,' saith the text; 'but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.' Thou art afraid thou shalt want; why! wilt thou engage God to thee that thou shalt not want? Here is a scripture that will engage God to thee, 'He that giveth to the poor, he shall not want.'

But that I do will quickly be forgotten; let me do never so many good things, within a while all is forgotten; for this look into Heb. vi. 10. It may be thou hast done many good things, and thou hast done them in secret, which is a good sign that thou dost them in faith, and fearest they will be forgotten. No, 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' Mark how God engages himself; what need God regard what we do; can we do anything but that that we have from God before? Yet God binds himself thus; as if he should say, Art thou a merciful man or woman; dost thou do good in the place where thou livest? I should be an unrighteous God if I forget thee. God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love, and your work in ministering to the saints; minister to the saints, and God will not forget your labour of love, he is not unrighteous to do it. As if he were unrighteous, if he should forget; men are unrighteous towards you—they in an unrighteous manner do forget what you do for them, but God will not be unrighteous to forget your labour of love in ministering to the saints.

Very few do anything this way, and I do as much as others. That scripture in Phil. iv. 15, 'Now ye Philippians, know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no

church communicated with me, as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. Here was the commendations of the Philippians. What a condition was Paul in, that though he was such an instrument of God's glory, yet no church did communicate to his necessities but only the Philippians. This is a high commendation, if God gives you a merciful heart rather than others. Do not you account it a great mercy and blessing if you grow rich more than others? Certainly to be rich in good works is more than to be rich in money; and this will add to your great commendations, and will add to your comfortable account in the day of Christ. Therefore take heed of vain reasonings of your hearts against the works of mercy; and whenever you are called upon for any works of mercy, take heed of such reasonings in your hearts against the same, and that for ever your vain reasonings may be stopped. In Deut. xv. 7, 8, 'If there be among you a poor man, one of your brethren within thy gates, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee; Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother.' Here is the charge, 'But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.' Then in ver. 9, 'Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the seventh year, the year of release is at hand, and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee.' Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, the year of release is at hand. God would have his to take heed, that there be not an evil thought in their hearts to object against it. There is a work of mercy propounded, and they have twenty objections against it; but beware, saith God, that there be not an evil thought in thy wicked heart. All objections against works of mercy they do come from a wicked heart, from the wickedness of men's hearts. And so you shall find the Scripture doth go on still in giving charge to relieve their poor brother, and to take heed that no objections do prevail against work of mercy. Remember, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'

SERMON XXIV.

OR,

MOTIVES TO SHEW MERCY.

'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.'—MAT. v. 7.

THE commendation of this grace of mercy you have had abundantly. Consider yet further,

That the end why God shews mercy to you more than others, it is that you might do good to others. Why would God have some poor, some rich, but that he might crown patience in one, and mercy in another? 2 Cor. i. 4, saith the apostle there, speaking of spiritual mercy, 'Who comforteth us in all our tribulations'—why? 'that we may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the same comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.' This is the end why God comforteth us in our tribulations, that we may comfort those that are in trouble with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. This is a great argument to spiritual mercy, and so by consequent for relieving in outward afflictions. Hath God bestowed any comfort upon your souls at any time, brought you out of sore distresses, answered very distracting doubts, and delivered you from dreadful fears? Now when you see others that are under dreadful and grievous temptations, know the way that God requires is that you should be merciful to them; and he hath therefore comforted you, delivered you from your spiritual afflictions, that you might help to deliver them. And so in bodily distress. Some of you have been poor heretofore; the Lord hath helped you, and given you estates; whether you have been poor or not, God hath given you estates plentifully. Certainly it is not for yourselves only, but that you might comfort those that want comfort. It is one part of God's end in this, in making a difference between one man and another.

A second motive that I would add, It is a mighty ease to those that are in affliction to consider, Though I be in afflictions, in straits, and in the depth of poverty, yet the Lord hath taken care for me, the Lord hath given the grace of his Spirit to his saints to be merciful to those that are in affliction; and the Lord lays weight upon them, and gives great charge to them to exercise the grace of mercy. Surely the Lord hath a care of me; though I want, yet the

Lord doth therefore indue his saints with the grace of mercy, that they might help me in my misery. And, I beseech you, do not discourage the hearts of those that are in misery, that they may not make their moan to God, saying, O Lord, hast thou made such a difference between me and others, and is there none care of me at all? Hast thou given charge to none to look upon me, to pity me, to help me? When thou shalt look upon the sorrows and miseries of thy brethren, and art merciful towards them, then they will acknowledge, if they be gracious, God's goodness, that the Lord hath been pleased to take care over them, and secretly to give thee a charge and a command to pity and help them. Therefore, be merciful.

Again, Hereby thou shalt honour God exceeding much. God accounts it his honour when his servants do communicate of his goodness; so it is a special part of the honour of God to be communicative; so it is the honour of his saints. In Prov. xiv. 31, 'He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor.' For men to oppress the poor, they do but reproach their Maker; as if so be that God would make such distance between man and man, and have no care of those that are in misery, you reproach God; but he that honoureth him, hath mercy on the poor. This is a great way of honouring God; 1 Pet. iv. 11, 'If any man minister, let him do it out of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.' It is spoken first of the work of the ministry in dispensing the word; but likewise applied in general to all ministering of the gifts and graces of God, and any good thing that God gives us, that of all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Further, you know those scriptures that tells you that God accounts it as his own. Christ accounts it as given to him, what is given to a disciple in the name of a disciple; 'and inasmuch as you gave it to these little ones, you gave it unto me.'

We find that God stands so much upon the works of mercy, that he is willing to have his own worship to stay upon it. If the matter lies thus, that either I must for the time be without worship, or those in necessity be without relief, saith God, I will rather be without worship than they shall be without relief. That scripture in Hosea vi., quoted divers times by Christ in the Gospel, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice,' is a text that all that are acquainted with Scripture cannot be ignorant of. God stands much upon his sacrifice, but he stands more upon mercy. Saith God, If both be laid in the balance, either a sacrifice to be offered to me, or a work of mercy unto this poor brother—if there must but one be done, let the work of mercy be done rather than sacrifice. Surely it is that that God prizes highly. The Lord is content to be without sacrifice for mercy. Be merciful therefore.

By the work of mercy, you that are in a mean condition otherwise, may come to have as high a reward as the most eminent saints of God. In Mat. x. 41, saith Christ, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.' Be merciful to those that are gracious; you may come to have as great a reward as they.

You that are poor men and poor women will say, We can do little for God; we can be employed but little in any service for God—we are weak; but here is a way how you may come to have the reward of the prophets of God, and the most eminent of the saints, by shewing works of mercy unto them.

And that these things may the rather sink into your hearts, labour to principle your hearts fully in this, That 'it is a better thing to give than to receive; you know they are the words of Christ. It will be very hard to get this principle into the hearts of many people, that it is a more blessed thing to be merciful to others than to be rich to themselves; yet that is the wisdom of Christ. Christ saith so; and did we account of mercies to be better than our riches, this would be a mighty help to the works of mercy. There is many people think that all they bestow in works of mercy is lost. No; 'He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and he shall have it again.' It is better a great deal than anything he doth enjoy; that that is given, you should look upon as the best part of your riches. It is a speech of an ancient, 'How much more glorious is it to do good to many, than to dwell sumptuously!'

Secondly, If you would have these things take impression; labour to make the times where you yourself heretofore have had need of mercy to be as present to you. When you see an object of mercy,

think, Was I never miserable myself? was I never an object of mercy myself? did I never see need of mercy myself.

Again, It may be I am well now, and all well about me, may not I be an object of mercy ere long? What if I were now in that condition, that all comfort from all creatures left me, were taken from me, that I had before—what if it were so with me now? then I would prize mercy. Is mercy good then to you, and is it not good now? Oh make these times real to you. Men that have their health, and are in peace and prosperity, they go on in their bravery and bustling as if there should never be a change; but the very thought of thy change, and the sad condition that thou mayest be soon in, would mightily work upon your bowels to shew mercy towards others.

Lastly, Let your eye affect your heart; do not turn away your eyes from them, but look upon them; Lam. iii. 51, 'Mine eye affecteth mine heart.' It is a mighty means to affect the heart, to have the eye look upon those in misery. You that enjoy all comforts, look upon the lamentable objects that there are in the world, that there are in the city; look into the hospitals among wounded soldiers, among those that are miserably poor, and let your eye affect your heart that you may be merciful, for 'blessed are the merciful: they shall obtain mercy.'

We now pass by this point of mercifulness, and shall proceed to the sixth rule of happiness that here Christ propounds:

Ver. 8. 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

There is a good connexion of these two. Some men are willing to do good works, and to be very beneficial to others, having unclean and guilty consciences of their own, and think thereby to stop the mouths of their consciences. They are conscious to themselves of vile, base ways, and they live in some secret haunt of wickedness, and so they think that if they be merciful to others, and do some good works, that will serve turn to stop their consciences. I am persuaded that many stop their consciences with such things as those are. But, saith Christ, do not deceive yourselves in that: 'Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy;' but he adds this too, 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' There must be purity in heart as well as mercifulness. There may be many works of mercy done by such as are unclean and base-hearted; and therefore look to that, that your hearts be clean and pure.

'Blessed are the pure in heart.'

This Christ makes the rule of blessedness, in opposition to the way of the pharisees. They made blessedness to consist in outward purity, in their outward washings; but, saith Christ, never satisfy yourselves in any ceremonial holiness, but look to

your hearts. 'Blessed are the pure in heart.' We shall open this purity of heart:

First, What this purity of heart is, and then shew you what a blessed thing it is to have a pure heart.

Only premise this, that by heart we are to understand not only the will or affections, but all the faculties of the soul—the mind, conscience, and thoughts, all is to be understood by heart. Blessed are those who have purity in their minds and consciences, in their thoughts, wills, and affections.

Purity, what is that? Purity consists in the immixedness of anything inferior—when a thing hath no mixture of anything inferior to itself. That we account to be pure metal which hath not anything baser than itself mixed with it. If a metal hath another metal that is more excellent than itself mixed with it, that doth not make it impure; it may be pure still. As if silver hath gold mixed with it, the silver is not made impure by the mixture of gold; but if it hath lead or tin mixed with it, it is made impure. So the soul of man. There is nothing more excellent but God himself. Now, when the soul is mixed with the divine nature, then it is made more excellent—that is the perfection of it; but if the soul of man be mixed with anything of the creature not in order to God, then it is impure—there is a mixture of something that is worse than itself; when the mind hath principles that are beneath a right rational understanding. And so when the thoughts have those things mixed that are beneath the excellency of such a faculty as thinking and meditating is; and so the will and affections, when they have anything mixed beneath the excellency of their faculty, then they come to be impure: and the more the thing is beneath the soul that they are mixed with, the more impure. As the sin of adultery and fornication, it is called by the Holy Ghost uncleanness itself, because it is one of the meanest and brutishest things for the faculty of a rational soul to mix itself with; therefore that hath the denomination of uncleanness. Thus much for what purity is in general.

But what is a pure heart?

You may take, instead of a description, these seven things to make up the purity of our hearts:

First, The heart must be cleansed from the guilt of sin through faith, made pure that way, washed with the blood of Jesus Christ; no heart is sure else: in Acts xv. 9, 'And he put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.' This scripture is ordinarily taken for the work of sanctification, that comes into the heart by faith; but if you observe the context, you shall rather find it to be that purity that comes in by faith in justification; for it is spoken of the Gentiles, that were accounted an unclean people to the Jews. But, saith the apostle here, God hath taken away their uncleanness; for he

hath purified their hearts by faith. They by faith having believed in Jesus Christ, the Lord accepts of them as of the children of Abraham. The Lord now hath taken away their uncleanness; through their believing in Jesus Christ, he hath so purified their hearts by faith, that through faith they are accounted as clean before God as any child of Abraham. They are come into the covenant with God, and so no more reckoned among the unclean ones, being purified by faith. We are all impure naturally; and though we think that by leaving some gross sins, as some men that, in the time of their youth, have lived in some gross sins, they leave them, and live better, and so think they are cleansed; yet certainly the great work of cleansing the soul is the application of the blood of Jesus Christ unto it, to wash the soul from its former uncleanness. The heart is never pure till then; all thy breaking off, and leaving thy sinful ways, and living better, will never make thy heart pure before God; it must be the washing of the blood of Jesus Christ. And so the very first moment the soul comes to believe in Jesus Christ, it is washed from the guilt of sin; for so the Scripture speaks of taking away the guilt of sin by that expression of washing with the blood of Jesus Christ, as in Rev. i. 5, 'Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.' The soul, as soon as it believes in Jesus Christ, is washed from the guilt of sin, so as it stands as pure before the Lord as the child that is new born, and much more; for there is original corruption; but he is cleansed from the guilt of all those filthy and abominable sinful courses that he hath lived in, and that the soul is defiled withal—it stands clean before God through the blood of Christ, being washed. That must be first, or else all other purity is nothing.

Secondly, A pure heart is a heart acted by pure principles. The Scripture speaks of men of corrupt minds, 2 Tim. iii. 8; and likewise of pure minds, 2 Pet. iii. 1. There is much uncleanness in men's minds, in the upper chamber of the soul, as I may so call it; and whereas the soul did act from corrupt principles, from unworthy apprehensions of God and the things of God, from base corrupt notions that it had of things it acted; now it is cleansed, that is, those corrupt principles are done away, and it comes to have pure principles, right apprehensions of God and of the ways of God, of the covenant of grace and of the course of a Christian; and whatever might further the ways of holiness in him, the soul hath right apprehensions of them, and the soul is filled with gracious and pure principles, and acts from them. We may easily see by men's ways and courses that they are of corrupt minds, and from these their hearts are so filthy and vile.

Thirdly, A pure heart is such a one as hath cast out the love of every known sin, and mingles not with

it though never so small. Such a heart as hath renounced every known way of evil, though there is remaining some impurity in it, yet it can appeal to God that there is no known way of sin but it hates and abominates it; this is called purity of heart in all gospel language. If God should reward men according to the law, it would not be accounted purity; but in the gospel language, where a heart is sincere in the renouncing of known sin, and can appeal to God, Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that though I have many evils in my heart, yet they are such things that are loathsome to me, that I abominate and renounce; and there is nothing disagreeable to thy will, but Lord thou that knowest all things knowest my heart is against; this is a pure heart in the gospel language, that hath cast out the love of every sin—let conscience speak whether it be so or no, for the blessedness is annexed to this; and certainly the contrary is that which makes the soul to be an object of God's curse.

Fourthly, A pure heart is a heart that hath a gracious frame, suitable to God's holiness. Where there is a suitableness and agreeableness in the heart of a man or woman unto the holiness of God, to the holy nature of God, and unto the holiness of God's law, this is purity.

Fifthly, Purity of heart is where there are right ends and aims; or thus, where the heart is consecrated, devoted, given up to God's service, making him the highest end of all things, and accordingly hath right ends and aims for God in all it doth. This is purity. What is the nature of God's holiness? God is a holy God. What is that? You know holiness it is the consecration of a thing, setting it apart for such an end; God's holiness it is a kind of consecration of himself, as it were, to himself as the last end. Himself is the last end, and the excellency of his nature whereby he works to himself as the last end, and wills all things in order to it, suitable to his own infinite excellency; this is God's purity. But if you will take his purity thus: that perfection of his will whereby he wills himself, and all things suitable to his own infinite excellency; that is God's purity. Now a pure heart is one that is thus consecrated to God as the last end of all, and so works as God works, and in all things hath right ends and right aims at God. This purity of heart is in opposition to falseness of heart; and so I find some divines carry this purity of heart for uprightness. When men's hearts are not double, they have not by-ends and squint-eyed aims in what they do, but their hearts are clean in this, that they are open for God, consecrated to God; their ends are for God, as for instance in the very work of mercy. But a man may be impure in the works of mercy if he hath base ends, to serve himself and cover his sin—his heart is very unclean.

A man may do many good things, and yet be very impure in the doing of things that are materially good; but now when a man doth not only do things that are right, but his ends are right, and he aims at God's glory, he is able to appeal to God, Lord, thou that searchest and triest the secrets of all hearts, try this heart of mine; I am willing my heart should lie open to all the world in such and such things; this is a pure heart.

Sixthly, A pure heart is a heart working to good ends with plainness and simplicity; for it is not enough for a man to have good ends, to say, Well, I aim at God's ends, but I will have such fetches about and such mixing of human and cunning devices. Many a man blesses himself that he hath general aims at God, but he hath a company of fetches and devices that are the stirrings of his own corruption, and so he spoils all; so that this purity is that which in other scriptures is called the simplicity of the gospel. When a man walks according to the simplicity of the gospel in all candour and ingenuity, in all plainness of spirit, this is purity; when having his ends to be good, and then in the attainment to those ends there is nothing but plainness and the simplicity of the gospel. As for policies and devices, they may besem men in the matters of the world, yet when he comes to the matters of Christ he carries all on in the plainness and simplicity of the gospel.

Seventhly, A pure heart is a heart suitable to all professions and duties that a man doth. When a man makes profession of God, and of the ways of God, and then hath a heart that doth come up to his profession, and when a man doth much service for God, and his heart comes up to his service, here is purity and agreement between the profession and services that a man makes or performs, and the disposition of his heart. The impurity and uncleanness that is in the hearts of hypocrites consists in this: their profession is great and glorious, but their hearts are not suitable. So, then, take all these together, and you see what a pure heart is—a heart washed in the blood of Christ from the guilt of sin; a heart acting by pure principles; a heart casting out the love of every known sin; a heart that hath a suitableness to the holiness of God and of his law; a heart consecrated, devoted to God, that hath right ends for God in all it doth; a heart working towards those good ends in the plainness and simplicity of the gospel; a heart that hath an agreeableness to whatsoever profession is made or services that are done—this is a pure heart. Now blessed is the pure in heart.

If this be pure, where will you find this purity of heart in any? Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say he hath cleansed his heart?'

To that it is answered that Christ speaks here in

a gospel way. That may be accepted for purity of heart that yet hath much uncleanness remaining in it; but though there be, yet together with these dispositions there is added,

First, That there be pains taken to find out what corruption is remaining in thy heart. Lord, I believe I have corruption; oh that I could find it out! When the heart of a man or woman is willing to search to find out all the corruptions, yea, the secret wanderings and turnings of my heart, the Lord knows that if he would speak from heaven and ask me what I would have, he knows that this would be one petition, that I might know my own heart.

Secondly, There is an unfeigned mourning for all the remainders of that impurity. The heart, when it hath found out any corruption, it mourns over it; it accounts it to be the evil, the distemper of the heart. And that is observable, that the more peace there is in the heart through the assurance that it is cleansed in the blood of Christ, the more doth it mourn and lament for any uncleanness that ever hath been, or is in it; that Scripture is very observable, in Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.' And so he goes on; and then, 'I will also save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the corn,' &c. And then in ver. 31, 'Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.' And God accounts them to be cleansed that do loathe themselves for their iniquities and abominations. And no men and women do more loathe themselves for their iniquities and abominations, than those that are most cleansed from their iniquities and abominations. It is a notable scripture for it, and speaks of the times of the gospel, that shews the evil of those vain and wanton spirits among us, that in magnifying of free grace grow foolish and wanton, and, never sensible of the remaining evils that are in their hearts, they think they are cleansed by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit of Christ; but the text promises that when the Lord shall cleanse his people, that then they shall loathe themselves for all their abominations, and for all their evils.

Though there be evil remaining, yet still one that hath true purity doth watch over himself, to prevent the occasions of evil as much as may be.

And fourthly, Such a one loves the strictest rule. I find much impurity in my heart, but God knows the strictest rule I aim at; and those that grow up most in godliness my heart is most with them.

Fifthly and lastly, My soul longs for perfection. I hope there is a time coming when all my defilement

shall be done away. For the present my soul is washed, perfected in respect of its justification; and I look for a time that it shall be perfect in respect of sanctification. Oh that that time were come! Certainly here is a pure heart; and therefore do not say, Where is the pure heart? and who can make his heart pure? and are there any that are pure?

The next thing is to set out unto you the excellency that there is in a clean heart.

First, A pure heart. That shews the excellency of it, that it is the fruit of the blood of Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost. Those two scriptures you had, Rev. i. and Ezek. xxxvi. clear this: It is washed with the blood of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost it is cleansed. Surely that that is the fruit of the blood of Christ, that is purity. When the blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost as water comes to be poured out upon the soul, surely these must work most glorious cleanness and purity.

Secondly, This purity of heart is the cause of soundness of spirit. It is that will help against distempers. So that, though there be outward occasions to distemper the heart, yet, where the heart is clean within, it will not be distempered as others are. As it is with the body: the body of a man that is foul, let such a one take but a little cold, presently there will grow sickness. If there be any external thing that puts him out of any orderly course, then he will see the foulness of his body, and he saith, It was the cold I took at such a time. The cold thou tookest, it was the foulness of thy body, and this cold thou hast is but that hath occasioned the stirring of the humours of thy body some way or other. A foul body is very subject to diseases upon any occasion; but one that hath a clean body, that is cleansed from such humours that are in others, let such a one endure cold or heat, whatsoever outward thing befalls him, yet his body is kept whole and sound. Why, it is from the cleanness that is in the body; so it is in the heart. The hearts of men that are impure, when any temptation comes to evil, it doth mightily distemper them: what a deal of filth appears in their hearts upon the occasion of any temptation, and they lay it upon the temptation. Though they had tempted thee never so much, yet if there had not been much foulness in thy heart, the temptation would never have prevailed. Saith Christ, 'The devil comes, and he finds nothing in me.' In that one thing of passion and anger, many of you seem to live very fair and plausibly in your course: let some come and anger you, that you are put into a passion, what a deal of filthiness and baseness will appear in you. You will say, It was such a one that angered me, and he provoked me, and why did he do thus and thus against me? So you are ready to lay all upon the temptation, when the truth is, it was from the filthiness of your cor-

ruptions. For all the filthy stuff that appears in a passion, it was there before, only there was an occasion to stir it; but there it lay before, and this temptation doth but now make appear what was before in the heart. But now one that is pure in heart, one that hath those corruptions mortified, that is cleansed from pride and self-love and the like, though such a one be wronged, yet he can keep himself in a meek and quiet temper; he can commit his cause to God, and go and make his moan to God. 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' they are of sound and hale spirits, and are not easily distempered as other men are, and hence follows they have sound hearts, (2 Tim. vii. 1.)

Thirdly, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' for they have much peace of conscience; they are able to look upon the face of God with peace and joy. When God appears in his great works abroad in the world, their consciences speak peace unto them, and they rejoice that they have to deal with such a holy God as the Lord is; and all this comes from the cleanness that there is in their hearts: in Job xi. 14, 15, 'If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.' What then? 'For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea, thou shalt be steadfast and shall not fear.' Mark, here it is spoken concerning the having of clean hands, and putting iniquity far from us; surely, when we have not only put iniquity from our hands, but from our hearts, when wickedness is not only far from our tabernacles, but far from our hearts, then shall we be able to lift up our faces without spot, to be steadfast, and not to fear whatsoever evil tidings comes; we shall be able to look upon the face of God, to lift up our countenances and not to fear. When a man hath guiltiness in his heart, and he hath an impure conscience, such a man, though he can lift up his face when he is among his impure company, yet when God comes to call him before himself, and hath to deal with him, so that he shall see plainly it is the just, right, and holy God that now I have to deal withal, that I stand before—an impure conscience, an impure heart will then cause terror to be in men, and be ready to overwhelm thee with horror; the presence of God it is very dreadful to an impure heart. 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;' the presence of God shall be joyful unto them, not to others. In Ps. li. 7, 8, David there having defiled his heart, began to look upon the presence of God as terrible to him; and therefore he cries out in ver. 2, 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin;' and then in ver. 6, 'Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;' then what follows in ver. 8, 'Make me to hear joy and gladness: that the bones

which thou hast broken may rejoice.' Make me to hear joy and gladness, as if he should say, I have defiled my soul with this sin of mine, and the voice of joy and gladness is gone from my heart, and my very bones are broken with the burden that is upon me for my sin; but, Lord, purge me and cleanse me, and then the voice of joy and gladness will be in my soul again. Can any of you, whose consciences are impure, and that tell you of base uncleanness that are in your hearts and ways—can you rejoice? have you gladness in your countenances, in your ways? Certainly you know not God, you know him not; for did you know what a God it is you have to deal withal, till the Lord had purged you, you could never have joy in your hearts. It is a sign that the grace of God is in the heart of a man or woman, when, as they have defiled themselves with any sin, there is nothing in all the world that can give joy and gladness to their hearts, till the Lord hath purged them and cleansed them: 'Blessed, therefore, are the pure in heart.' There are very many excellencies in this purity of heart.

Fourthly, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' further, for these are the men that are fit to serve God's designs in the ways of the gospel. There be no men fit for the designs and ways of God in the gospel, but your clean-hearted men; God takes no delight to make use of your cunning crafty men—that are crafty in a sinful way. It is true the Lord requires us, when we live among wicked men, to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. But I speak of cunning and craftiness when they have to deal with God; God takes no delight to make use of these, but your plain, upright, and sincere hearts are fit to serve the designs of God in the ways of the gospel. As in Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, 'Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.' Who is the man that shall ascend to the hill of God, that God will receive into his church, that is fit to be made an instrument of the honour of God in his church? 'He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; that hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity.' That is a special uncleanness in men's hearts, when they lift up their souls to vanity—that is, they will mix their own by-ends with any services that they are employed in; but such a one as lifts not up his soul to vanity, and looks at God with a single eye, this is the man that shall ascend up into God's holy hill, this is the generation of them that seek the Lord. The blessing of God shall be upon such as these are.

Fifthly, And then another should have been this, they are under many gracious and blessed promises: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they are under many blessed

promises. In Ps. xviii. 26, 'With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure'; and so in Ps. lxxiii. 1, 'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart;' as if he should say, Let the world go which way it will, yet truly God is good to Israel, even to such as these are. A clean heart is worth a world, therefore go on you whose hearts the Lord hath begun to cleanse, and labour to get them clean more and more, and keep them clean. You that are holy be holy still; account it your riches, account it more than all the world that you have a clean heart. There is such a man it may be hath a greater estate, and is more brave in the world; but the more men and women have to do with the vanity of the world, the more their hearts are defiled. The Lord hath cut me short of those things, but blessed be his name, my heart in some measure is clean more than others. There are they that have greater parts than I, but many times there are very foul hearts that are joined with excellent parts. But though I cannot do what they can, yet my conscience testifies this to me, my heart is clean. Whenever I go to prayer, I can go into the presence of God with a clean heart. This should comfort thee against the want of any comforts whatsoever; this will keep thee from the defilements of the times wherein thou livest. In Ps. cxix. 1,

'Blessed are the undefiled in the way: they walk in the law of the Lord.' It is a blessed thing to be undefiled in our way, that is, when we live in the world and can keep ourselves cleansed from the pollutions of the world, unspotted in the world, can have our hearts clean. There be very few of us hath done so; but when we look back to the times wherein we lived before, the times wherein there were so great temptations to that that was evil, where is the man or woman but doth see cause to lament the defilements of their consciences and of their hearts by the pollutions of the times wherein they lived? We have sullied ourselves by superstitious vanities heretofore, and not only in our actions have been defiled, but in our very consciences, and just it were with the Lord that we should never come to see the good land that he is bringing his people unto, because we have so sullied ourselves by the superstitious vanities of the times wherein we lived. How happy is the man or woman that lived in former times wherein there were so many pollutions, that yet kept themselves undefiled in their way! I lost more, it may be, than others did, yet I kept my heart and conscience clean, and this is that that is the comfort of my soul. Blessed are such; the blessing of God is upon them, and shall certainly be upon them in a glorious manner.

SERMON XXV.

OR,

WHEREIN A PURE HEART IS BLESSED.

'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'—MAT. v. 8.

WE entered upon this sixth rule of blessedness the last day, and shall now proceed.

'Blessed are the pure in heart.' That spiritual cleanness of the soul of a man or woman is a very blessed thing. It is blessed,

First, If we consider the excellency of a man's soul. The more excellent a thing is, the more good there is in the keeping of it clean and pure from defilements; as now, if you have a piece of coarse cloth, you do not so much care to keep that clean as you do to keep fine lawn and cambric; it is worse for that to have a stain in it than for a piece of sackcloth to have a stain in it. Why the excellency of a man's soul is such as it is beyond all creatures that ever God made, ex-

cept the angels, all the works of nature, and therefore the cleanness of a man's soul, to be kept from stains and from filth, must needs be an excellent thing.

Secondly, and besides, in the second place, By the cleanness of a man's heart, a man comes to savour the word of God, to relish spiritual and heavenly truths. They are blessed that have clean hearts, for such, when they hear the word of God that is pure, when they hear the holy truths of God, oh how do their hearts relish them, and savour them, being clean! As the stomach when it is clean, it relishes and savours wholesome food; whereas, on the other side, when men have defiled their hearts, then

the most wholesome and the most blessed truths of God are sapless to them, they have no savour nor relish, and all because of the uncleanness of their hearts. Some of you may remember a time when you could relish and savour spiritual things better than now you can. Oh, examine your hearts! look into your hearts; you will find it is through the defilement of your hearts; you have defiled your consciences in some sin against conscience. You live in some secret haunt of evil, and no marvel though you cannot relish and savour the word as you were wont to do.

Thirdly, A clean heart makes one fit to draw near to God, to draw nigh to God in all duties of worship, and it commends all the duties of worship that any one performs: in James iv. 8, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.' How will you draw nigh to God? 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' Purify your hearts, ye double-minded, and thereby shall you be able to draw nigh to God. Men that have unclean hearts they dare not come nigh to God; or if they would, conscience cannot draw nigh to God. You may go into your closets sometimes, conscience putting you upon it; but when you are there you cannot draw nigh to God, your hearts are foul. But, therefore, purify your hearts, labour for cleansed hearts, and then, oh how will your heart spring in God's presence, and presently get nigh to him! It commends all services that we tender up to God. In Mal. iii. 3, there is a prophecy that Christ when he comes 'will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.' You come and offer many things to God, make many prayers to God, and think that God will save you for your good prayers; but certainly there is no offering that ever an impure heart did tender up to God, but it is defiled and loathsome before the Lord. But then is the offering of righteousness, when the Lord hath purified the heart. And in Prov. xxi. 8, 'As for the pure,' saith Solomon, 'his work is right.' The way of a man is froward and strange, but as for the pure his work is right. When the Lord hath cleansed the heart, though it may be there be much weakness, yet the work is right in God's eyes. 2 Tim. ii. 21, 'If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.' A purged vessel is a vessel sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work; whereas those that have unclean spirits are like filthy, unclean vessels, unfit to be brought in to the presence of the Master. And therefore St Paul, speaking of the service that he did to God, it was 'out of a pure con-

science.' 2 Tim. i. 3, 'I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience,' saith the apostle. He was able to say this as in the presence of God—I endeavour to serve God, and do serve him, and it is from a pure conscience. 'Oh blessed are the pure in heart,' for they are fit to draw nigh to God, they are fit for every work that God shall employ them in. And it commends all the services that they do for God.

Fourthly, Again, a man that hath a pure heart, his life will be convincing before others. There is a great deal of beauty and excellency in grace, will appear in the conversation of that man or woman who keeps a clean heart towards God. There is an excellent scripture in Prov. xxii. 11, 'He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.' Oh that God would make good this word of his! that God would make the king the friend of Puritans. We know a time there was, that of all men in England, those that were called Puritans, and many of them who sought to worship God in purity, were looked upon by the eye of the king as the most odious in the land; yet there is this promise made, that 'He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.' God is able to make the king a friend to Puritans. To those that love pureness of heart, the pureness of their hearts will so guide them in their ways as to speak and to behave themselves in such a manner, that he shall be convinced in his conscience. These, certainly, are upright men. And others that have been about me, they have but flattered me, and deceived me, and led me into evil ways—into ways that have done abundance of mischief in the kingdom, whereby thousands have been oppressed, and their blood hath been shed. But I see these walk uprightly, according to their principles. I find that in one thing as well as in another they walk according to rule, and therefore I will be their friend. Oh let us pray that God would make good this promise! Certainly, if there be anything in the world to convince, it is a clean conversation out of a clean heart. Not that men only profess purity more than others, but that they walk answerably, and that they manifest the beauty and the excellency of a clean heart in their conversations before men. This will convince any in the world. Men may speak ill of them, and cry out of them, and say they are hypocrites. Well, let the world speak like the world; let them speak according to their own skill, as they have in the ways of religion. Do thou go on in the ways of holiness, still in a constant way, and let there be an evenness in thy conversation in one thing as well as another; manifest the purity of thy heart, and at length their consciences will tell them that thy ways are better than theirs. Thou wilt be honourable in the very consciences of those

that have cried out against thee. It is a mighty convincing thing purity of heart, when it shines forth in the life and conversation.

Fifthly, Again, Blessed are the pure, for all things are pure to them: Titus i. 15, 'Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.' Oh, thou hast a sanctified use of everything! hath God sanctified thy heart, and dost thou endeavour to sanctify the name of God in all thy ways; know that all things are sanctified to thee. And this one word it is worth a kingdom, worth a world, that all things should be made pure to those that are clean. And this the Lord saith, that thou hast a pure use, a sanctified use of everything, who labourst to keep thy heart clean before the Lord.

Sixthly, Further, Certainly those will hold out; They will never prove apostates that have clean hearts. Indeed, a man may make much profession, and be an apostate at last; but a man that hath a clean heart, and walks in sincerity before God, such a man will hold out. As it is with gold, gold that is of pure metal, put it into the fire and it will not consume. Indeed, if there be but only a gilding over, and the most that is in the thing is but dross—if it be put into the fire, it will there consume; but if it be pure gold, it will hold the fire. And so let the Lord cast his people into afflictions, into the fiery furnace; if indeed they be such as make profession to be his people, and have but an outside of holiness, there they will consume. But if they be men and women of clean hearts, they will hold out in their afflictions, they will hold out unto the end.

Seventhly, lastly, Purity of heart will make fruitful, fruitful in the ways of holiness, such who keep their hearts and consciences clean. Oh how will they grow up in the ways of holiness! they mightily thrive and grow: in John xv. 2, 'My Father purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit'—speaking of the vine. If there be any uncleanness got into thy heart, and the Lord, either by afflictions or any other way, shall purge thine heart, oh this is that that will make thee bring forth much fruit. As it is with children that are full of ill humours, they do not thrive and grow; but if you give them anything to purge out that ill humour, in a little time how will they thrive and shoot up and grow exceedingly. So it is with many of you: you do not thrive in the ways of religion; you do not grow up at all in godliness; you do not bring forth fruit to the glory of God. 'Oh, there is much uncleanness and filthiness got into your hearts; but if the Lord would please to purge you, by the renewing of the Spirit, and washing of the blood of Christ, and the renewing of the work of repentance, you would grow up in godliness, and

bring forth much fruit to the glory of God. Oh blessed are the pure in heart!

And therefore, my brethren, this point may comfort those whose consciences testify to them, that though there be many weaknesses, yet still their hearts do not mix with the time's evils. It is one thing for evil to be there, and to mix there. There may be dross, but not mixed with the heart; the heart mingles not with it. If thy conscience testify this, thou mayest have abundance of comfort from this point; and though some sin remains, yet this purity of heart may quiet thy spirits, even in the sense of many sins that are upon thee. In Isa. i. 16, 'Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil,' &c. Then in ver. 18, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' When they are washed and made clean, they are then as white as snow, as wool; and now the Lord will reason with the soul. Thou mayest go reason with God, and God will reason with thee, when thou hast washed thee, and made thyself clean. And though there hath not only been sins, but like scarlet and crimson, though there be great sins, yet when thy heart doth not mix with these sins, when thou canst renew the act of faith and repentance, and thou canst appeal to God of thy sincerity and endeavours to walk with God in what purity thou art able. It is not the greatness of thy sins that thy conscience tells thee are through infirmity, that thou dost not give way to, that thou dost not entertain in thy heart, as that that is suitable to thee. The Lord will reason the case with thee, and thou mayest reason then the case with him. Blessed are the pure in heart. Oh labour to keep your hearts clean and pure, and therefore be daily watching over your hearts. Take heed that soil and filth do not get into your hearts, and be daily cleansing of them by the renewed work of faith and repentance; for though a Christian may keep his heart from being spotted with the gross sins of the world, yet there will dust get into thee every day. Oh labour to keep your hearts bright! Some of you love cleanness in everything, in all the furniture of your houses, your stools, tables, linen, in everything; you will not be satisfied that there is not a deal of dirt upon them, but if they be but any way sullied, you are not well pleased. Oh look thus unto your hearts! the Lord loves as it were a neat Christian, as I may so call it, that every day will be cleansing of his heart anew, and especially if you have been overcome with any sin, and so brought greater defilement upon your hearts, do not lie in that sin, never be at rest and peace with your souls till you have got that sin washed away in the blood of Christ, until you have got peace in your consciences in respect of that sin. I fear some of you

may have your consciences tell you that you have lain in some sins for a long time together. David had lain a long time in sin. Oh take heed of lying in any sin, but cleanse presently.

And lastly, because I would come to the promise, Oh how far are most of us from this cleanness of heart! and what infinite cause there is that shame and confusion of face should be among many of us! The Lord knows, and our consciences know, that there is woeful uncleanness and filthiness in many of our hearts. Oh, what defiled consciences have many men and women in this place! It may be you are neat in your bodies, neat garments, clean linen; but oh, the filthy, nasty souls that you have within! God doth look upon your souls as filthy as a carrion that lies in a ditch. How canst thou come into the presence of God so as thou dost—so boldly, so presumptuously, when thou art conscious to thyself of such filthiness? Men of corrupt consciences, that have committed many acts of injustice, that have defiled their consciences many years together, yet they lie in it still, and never have made any restitution. Now, so long as thou hast got anything that is not thine own, and thou hast not restored it, all this while thy conscience hath been putrifying, and become more and more rotten; as long, I say, as thou continuest in that sin without making restitution, if God doth anyway enable thee. And then the consciences of men are impure, abundance of sin conscience hath to charge them withal. If God should but bid conscience speak, it would say, Lord, this sin was committed against my counsel and advice, and I shewed them to the contrary; and yet for all that, this and the other sin committed. And then the impurity of our hearts. Oh, what a filthy sty of uncleanness is the faculty of thinking in many men and women! In the thoughts of men's minds, there is the most abominable uncleanness, that one would wonder that an infinite holy God should be able to look upon such filthy creatures, and not come out against them in his wrath. The best of us all may find much uncleanness in our thoughts. Sometime, when thou hast been in the presence of God in prayer, how hast thou defiled thyself with unclean thoughts! How hast thou come into God's presence with a soul all-besmeared with filthiness, and come out of God's presence with a soul all-defiled with the abominable uncleanness of thy thoughts! And then the uncleanness of thy will and affections and desires. What desires hast thou had to sin, and so defiled thy soul! Oh, the faculties of men and women's souls are as filthy as any ege of unclean birds! And didst thou but understand what the infinite purity of God's nature means, and the infinite purity of God's law means, and then but understand what thy own heart is, thou wouldest abhor thyself. Many of you thank

God you have good hearts. Oh, but it is because God is not known, and the holiness of his law is not known, and your own hearts are not known. Did you but know these three things, you would see cause, I say, to abhor yourselves. I put this to you, sometimes when you have been brought upon sick-beds, then, when you have come to see that you have had to deal with God, have you not had misgiving thoughts then? When you have been ready to go into the presence of the infinite holy God, then hath not your consciences reproved you for your uncleanness?—then hath not your consciences told you, how canst thou stand in the presence of this holy God? We read in the prophet Isaiah, though he were a holy man, a man that had much purity and cleanness in him, yet, because there was but some remainders of uncleanness—mark in Isa. vi.—when he had but a sight of God, the angels did but cry, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,' &c. Then, in ver. 5, 'Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,' (and certainly if of unclean lips, then he saw some uncleanness in the heart further.) 'for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.' The sight of God did cause him to cry out, Woe to him, he was undone. Now, then, if so be that God should bring thee to have to deal immediately with him, oh the terror that thy conscience would bring upon thee. Those uncleannesses of thy heart, though they trouble thee not now, they may trouble thee one day. As we know it is in a chimney that is very foul, if the fire get into it, then it makes a flame, and it is hard to quench it; and so, when afflictions come upon men and women that have sooty hearts, filthy, unclean hearts, oh then afflictions are like to burn dreadfully. Ay, I do but appeal to your consciences in this: Suppose God should say, Well, all the congregation and men in the world shall know what uncleanness there is in every one of your hearts; they shall know all the unclean thoughts that ever you had, and all the unclean desires that ever you had, all the unclean secret workings of your hearts, it shall be known to the city and to all the world. Now would it not trouble you to think that God should turn your inside outward. Why, the infinite God he knows all; his piercing eye looks through and through; all that uncleanness of your hearts, they are before him as any actions that ever you have done. And consider this, especially you that make profession of holiness and purity, and yet God and your consciences tell you that you live in secret haunts of wickedness. Some servants that perhaps are false to their masters and governors, or are guilty of secret uncleanness, and that they might cover their uncleanness, will make great show of much forwardness in prayer and going to hear the word, and who would suspect these for falseness, for un-

cleanness, and so for others. Oh this is a most abominable thing, to have an unclean heart, and think to cover it by making a profession of religion ! Thou dost take the name of God in vain in a most dreadful manner, and know that the wickedness of thy heart will find thee out. And just it is with God to leave thee to the wickedness of thy heart, to break into outward, actual sins. This is the curse of God upon hypocrites : they do maintain much secret wickedness in their hearts for a long time together, and the saints think well of them because of their profession. But this is the curse of God upon them : the Lord leaves them to the filthiness of their hearts, and lets them break out into some scandalous sins, to be a reproach upon them that shall never be blotted out. But we have now done with this part of the text. We come to the other part.

‘For they shall see God.’

The world perhaps saith concerning these that are so pure and strict and nice, and dare not do anything against their consciences, they are poor, ignorant, silly people—silly, ignorant women, and the like. Well, as silly as they are, as ignorant as thou thinkest them to be in the matters of the world, yet they shall see God, they shall know God. Perhaps their knowledge is but weak in other things, but this is the promise, ‘They shall see God,’ they shall know him. Such as would walk in purity in the world, and dare not defile themselves so as others, they are subject to a great deal of wrongs in the world ; the men of the world they will be too wise, too cunning for them. Well, though the men of the world do outgo them in cunning, because they have simple, plain hearts, yet this is their comfort, though I have not the cunning and craftiness to provide for myself in the world, but men in the world that have unclean hearts, that are full of cunning and craft, go beyond me, yet this is the blessing of God upon me, I shall see his face. ‘They shall see God.’

See him : ‘No man hath ever seen God’—that is, with bodily eyes. God is invisible ; and you must not think that God hath any shape or fashion like man, or any creature : he is a spirit, an infinite simple being, and therefore cannot be seen with bodily eyes. But ‘they shall see God’—that is, they shall know God by the eye of their understanding, and they shall come to enjoy God ; for so ‘seeing’ is taken in Scripture. ‘They shall see God,’ they shall see him here in this world ; and the more and more clean their hearts are, the more sight they shall have of God. And they shall see him hereafter in glory ; for the more clear a glass is, the more bright will the beams of the sun be upon it when it shines. Take your ordinary glasses, as your thick green glass, when the sun shines upon that, it doth not make such a reflection as upon a clear crystal glass ; or if there be

dirt upon the glass, the sun will not appear so bright and glorious ; but take a bright and clear glass, and the sun will be very glorious indeed. So the hearts of men that are foul, there is no lustre of the glory of God upon them ; but the hearts of men that are clean, God shines in his glory upon them, and there is a reflection of God’s glory again upon their hearts. ‘They shall see God,’ saith Austin ; ‘oh most sweet light of minds that are cleansed !’ He calls God the most sweet light of cleansed minds. Now before we come to the main promise of the sight of God, there is one or two notes that are very useful.

Observe, The first note is this, That according to the cleanness or uncleanness of men’s spirits, so is their sight in reference unto God and the things of God. It arises from the connexion, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ I say, according to the cleanness or uncleanness of men’s spirits, so is their understandings in reference to God and the things of God—that is, if men have clean spirits, then they will come to have higher understanding in spiritual things ; if their hearts be unclean, then their spirits will not be able to have that right understanding in spiritual things : in Prov. ix. 10, ‘And the knowledge of the holy is understanding.’ Men that have holy hearts, if they come to know, they have understanding ; and it is an excellent understanding that a man or woman hath of heaven and the things of God, that hath a holy heart. The knowledge of the holy is understanding ; no man’s knowledge is worthy the name of understanding, but the knowledge of the holy ; if his heart be clean then his sight will be clean. And in Dan. ix. 13, there is a notable scripture that shews how our understanding of the things of God depend upon the cleanness of our hearts : ‘That we might turn,’ saith Daniel, ‘from our iniquities, and understand thy truth ;’ as if he should say, So long as we live in our iniquities, and defile our souls by our iniquities, we shall never be able to understand thy truth. But when we come to turn from our iniquities, then our understandings will be clear, then we shall know God, and the things of God, in another manner than ever we knew them before. And in Dan. xii. 10, saith the text, ‘Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried ; but the wicked shall do wickedly : and none of the wicked shall understand ; but the wise shall understand.’ When God purifies the heart, then he makes them to understand his ways ; but none of the wicked shall understand God’s mind ; their hearts being unclean, they cannot come to understand the mind of God and the things of God. The understanding of man it hath a dye from the will and the affections, that, look, as the will and affections are, so there is, I say, a dye upon man’s understanding, as it is in the body. Look how the

stomach, is, and the distemper of divers diseases are, so there is a tincture upon the eye. The eyes of men by some kind of diseases are mightily infected by ill fumes that do arise from the stomach; so the eye of the soul is very much infected from the will and from the affections. As the body, when there ascends no ill vapours up to the eyes, the eyes are clear and are able to see; but now in some diseases where vapours do ascend up to the eyes, the eye is distempered and sees according to those vapours; so if the heart of man be clean, then it sees the truths of God plainly and clearly; but if the heart of man be unclean, then it is not able to see God—nor the things of God.

Secondly, The will of man, it hath a great command over the understanding. The will of man, it is able to command the understanding, to work about such a work or about another, to turn away from this object or the other object; so that if the will of man and the affections are clean, then the will will put the understanding upon meditating on God and the things of God, of fastening the eye upon spiritual things. But now, if the heart be unclean, then it will turn away the understanding, it will not suffer the understanding of a man to fix itself upon God, or the things of God; those are objects unsuitable to an unclean heart. Or if at any time God himself shall present himself before a man or woman that hath an unclean heart, the heart will not suffer the eye of the understanding to think on God, but turns away from God to something else that is suitable to that uncleanness that is in the heart; therefore no marvel that they understand not the things of God, when their unclean spirits will not suffer the understanding to be acting upon that that should enlighten and convince them. But, on the other hand, if there be but any temptation presented that is suitable to the uncleanness of their hearts, then they presently fasten upon that, and the corrupt will and affections cause the understanding to work upon that altogether, and to think upon nothing but what will serve for the countenance and maintenance of that that is filthy and evil.

Thirdly, The Lord takes no delight at all to reveal himself to one that hath an unclean heart—a man or woman that hath a filthy, defiled conscience or heart, and so lies wallowing in filthiness. I say the Lord takes no delight or pleasure in revealing himself to such a one; for the Lord sees that such a one will reject the truth. Saith God, What! should I discover myself to such an unclean heart, that will abuse every truth that is presented to it! And therefore, in just judgment, the Lord will give them up to those things that shall rather be a means to harden their hearts in the ways of their uncleanness. There is a most dreadful scripture for that—for the Lord's not

taking delight to reveal himself to men of unclean spirits—in Ezek. xiv. 4, 'Therefore, saith the Lord, speak unto them, and say, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh, according to the multitude of his idols.' This is a most dreadful scripture. If any one shall come to you that are my prophets, and setteth up his idols in his heart—there are some secret evils that he doth maintain in his heart—let be said what will, he will have his lusts in such and such evil ways. But he comes to inquire, and would know what the mind of God is. I will answer him, saith he, according to the idols that are in his heart; he shall have no other thing from me, but what shall be to harden him in his sin. He that will be filthy, he shall be filthy; and when he comes to hear the word, he shall hear nothing but what his corrupt heart shall gather to harden him in his sins.

And hence, here is the strange difference in men's apprehensions: when before they lived in uncleanness, and afterwards, when God comes to purge them, a man or woman that lived in unclean ways, why, they have come a hundred times to hear the word, and have heard the attributes of God opened to them, and heard the mysteries of Jesus Christ preached, and the glorious things of the kingdom of God; but they never saw any excellency in these things at all—never had any apprehensions of God to strike fear into them; it may be thirty, forty, fifty years they have been hearers, and these things went away as a mere sound. But now let this man, though he hath no more to improve his understanding than he had before—let God but come and purge his heart by some work of his Spirit, I say, then this man comes and hears the word, hears sermons of the glory of God opened to him; why, he sees God now in another manner than ever he saw him; he doth not hear any attribute of God but his heart is possessed with the fear of the glory of God, and now he wonders that all the world doth not fear God. I could before live many years together in ways of enmity against this God and never be troubled; why, now I would not for a thousand worlds be one hour in that condition I was in before, because I see it is such a dreadful thing to be but a moment in ways of enmity to God. Why, what is the matter with thee? Thou hearest the same truths that thou didst before. Ay, but now thine eyes are opened; when thou hearest of Jesus Christ, thou hearest and rejoicest at the riches of that glorious grace of God in Jesus Christ, and it is no new thing that you hear now. Ay, but now thine heart is cleansed, and thine eyes come to be opened; and a great deal of difference there is in the

apprehensions of one, when God hath been pleased to cleanse the heart, to what there was before. Here now you may see the ground of the great ignorance that there is in the world. It is not because the things of God are so hard to be understood, and that because they have no means to understand them, but because of the filthiness of their hearts. No marvel though men and women live under means, and hear sermons, but yet have not known what Jesus Christ hath meant, seeing their hearts are so filthy and unclean. In 2 Tim. iii. 7, you find there the apostle speaks of women that 'were ever learning, and never were able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' And so it may be applied to men—to those that are laden with sin, and led away with divers lusts, 'They are ever learning, and never able to come to the know-

ledge of the truth.' Why do they not come to the knowledge of the truth? Why, because they are led away with lusts, and laden with sins. When men and women have uncleanness in their hearts, and are laden with corruptions in their spirits, why, no marvel though they never come to the knowledge of the truth; and therefore do not think your ignorance can excuse you to say, Why, I do according to my knowledge, and all men cannot attain to the like knowledge as other men. Alas! I am a poor creature, and am but weak, and not able to understand things so as others do. Oh, it is not for want of the strength of thy understanding so much, but the filthiness of thy heart; those filthy steams that arise from thy corrupt heart, they darken the light of the truth, that it cannot shine into the understanding.

SERMON XXVI.

OR,

THE UNCLEANNESS OF HEART CAUSE OF ERROR.

'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'—MAT. v. 8.

THE reason why there are such errors among us about God and his ways, it comes from the uncleanness of men's hearts. And mark it, either such men as heretofore have been professors of religion and fall off, and grow drossy and sensual and carnal, and give way to their lusts, they fall to strange opinions; or otherwise young ones, that have had very profane and unclean hearts, and as soon as ever their consciences begin to stir in them, why, they will make a kind of profession of religion, but their hearts never emptied of their lusts, never humbled for their sins; yea, and the devil hath got a way now to keep men from that, to tell them it is but mere legal, and it will rather hinder them from Jesus Christ than further them, and so they fall upon profession of religion, and never know any work of humiliation, so that their hearts are as unclean as ever they were. And no marvel though these men have such misshapen thoughts of God and Christ, and the covenant of grace, and the things of eternal life; their hearts were never cleansed. Yet I say, mark it, your erroneous men that fall to so many vile and damnable errors, they are of one of those two sorts, either men that have been forward professors, and beginning to be carnal and sensual

and vain; or otherwise young ones that take upon them the profession of religion, yet never knew what the sight of sin meant. These see not God; their hearts are so foul and vile, they cannot see God as God, nor the things of God in the true beauty and excellency of them. I will give you a scripture or two to shew you how errors do follow from the lusts of men's hearts, rather than from the mistakes of the head: 2 Tim. iii. 5, 8—that is, for those that are but formal professors of religion, they come to fall—'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof,' saith the text. But what are they? 'As Jaanes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.' Men before described to have the form of godliness, but denying the power, that have made some profession of religion, and denied the power; saith the apostle, turn away from them; there is no meddling with such men. Then he tells what kind of dispositions they are of: they are those that resist the truth—men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith. And so others that are drawn aside by their own lusts: 2 Peter ii. 18, speaking of false teachers, 'For when they speak

great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from those who live in error.' It is a very remarkable scripture, and much concerning our times; and saith he in ver. 19, 'While they promise them liberty, they themselves are servants of corruption.' False teachers, that speak great swelling words, you shall have them have no religion but words, to amuse people withal, that people do not understand; and people think that there are great matters in those great words which they have, but they are but a bladder swelled up with wind; do but prick them, do but examine them, and there is nothing in them—they are swelling words of vanity. You may have some cause of suspecting when you hear them preaching, or otherwise a great hane-basted words, as I may so speak—words that seem to have great things in them, and yet when they come to be examined, are but mere vanity and emptiness. And 'they allure through the lusts of the flesh.' There is more strength in the suitableness of what they speak to men's lusts, than there is of the evidence of truth in what they say. They allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness: 'those that were clean escaped'; the word is 'really escaped.' So it is apparently spoken of men that are drawn aside into errors. 'While they promise them liberty,' they tell them much of liberty, that they shall be delivered from such and such bondages, and no more be kept in a legal way of bondage: 'They promise them liberty, but are themselves the servants of corruption.' Oh, hence the many errors of our times do prevail from the uncleanness of the hearts of men, and from thence comes apostasy from the truth. The best way, then, to keep ourselves from the errors of the times, it is to keep our hearts clean. Purge your hearts, walk before God in uprightness, and the Spirit of God shall guide you then into all truth; and when you are required to know God or his mind in anything, oh make it a great part of your work to cleanse your hearts first, for otherwise you will mistake, when you are about asking of counsel, what the mind of God is! Oh I would fain know what the mind of God is! Be sure you come with a clean heart to know it, or otherwise I say it is a hundred to one but you miscarry. How many are there that seem to desire to know the mind of God, and yet in the

First place, It is not through any willingness, but they cannot tell how to help it, they must inquire. And then,

Secondly, When they do inquire, they are loath that such things should be true; they are loath that the mind of God should go such a way that is against them. And oh they would fain have the mind of God come to them, rather than to have their hearts

come to the mind of God. Here is uncleanness of the heart in these two. And,

Thirdly, When they are inquiring concerning the mind of God there is a principle in their spirits that doth turn their hearts, and sets them strongly another way. And hence it is so hard to convince men of the mind of God, if it be that that is against the bias of their hearts. And then,

Fourthly, They are unwilling upon that to examine thoroughly anything that is presented to them. When a thing is presented to them that they are afraid will make against them, they will turn away their thoughts from it, and are loath to examine it, and are very desirous to have anything they can to object against it—and all this through the uncleanness of their hearts. Now it is just with God that these should not be blessed; that they should never see God, that they should never see his ways. Oh, take heed of this! Come with plain, naked hearts. Whatsoever my thoughts have been, whatsoever my justification is, whatsoever would be suitable to my ends, let God reveal his truth; and here I am ready to yield to it with a pure and plain heart. But when God sees men have cunning hearts and devices, and propounding their ends, and they will have this and the other thing wrapped in it, I say it is just with God that they should never see God in any way of his, but that they should be blinded. The way to know the mind of God, it is to cleanse your hearts. Many there are that will say, Well, I desire to know what is God's mind. Did I but know what were the mind of God in such a business, God knows I would do it; and the Lord knows I would not do anything that were apparent against God's mind. Well, now, do you find that in your hearts that you can freely yield up your own ends, and counsels, and ways, whatsoever your hearts have been set upon before? And shall any evidence of truth be entertained, though it be never so much cross to your own minds and thoughts? Then it is like you shall know God's mind; but if you say that you would fain know the mind of God, and yet have a corrupt heart, which is so much opposite to God, the mind of God, never expect to know it. But that is the clean heart that yields to it, though never so contrary to what it had in its heart before. Ay, 'Blessed are these, for they shall see God.' That is the next note.

Observe, That the sight of God depends not upon the sight of men's natural understanding, but upon their cleanness of heart.

Poor Christians think, oh, how shall I be able to know God!—to know the mysteries of God that are revealed in his word; I cannot tell how to reach unto them. Be of good comfort if thy heart be clean. Keep but a clean heart from vile lusts, entertain no lusts within thy heart, and this is a promise made to

thee, 'That thou shalt see God.' The sight of God depends not upon man's natural understanding, but depends upon the cleanness of the heart. When the great Rabbis of the world shall be blinded, when they shall never see God savingly, God shall reveal himself to thy soul, having a clean and pure heart; for the sight of God depends upon the revelation by Jesus Christ, the great prophet of his church, and he can instruct one of weak parts as easily as one of the strongest parts of all; and God delights to make himself known to such. When one hath a clean and pure heart, and desires to know truth, what God is, and what his truth is, when he is ready to embrace it, and yield up himself to every truth, and will entertain whatsoever God reveals of himself or his ways—oh, the Lord takes delight and pleasure to make himself known to such a one. But the main point that we come now upon—'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,'—is this:

The sight of God is man's blessedness. That is our point.

By the sight of God, in the opening we shewed you, it was meant the understanding both God and his counsels, and ways and will; and those things concern our enjoyment of him. The sight of God, I say, is man's blessedness. I have read of a philosopher, Eudoxius, that was so desirous to have a full sight of the sun, that he professed if he might but come near it any little time, and be but enabled to look upon it, to see the nature of it, and the motion of it, he would be willing to be burnt by it presently.* He thought there was so much excellency in the knowledge of that one creature. Oh what excellency is there in the knowledge of God himself, in the sight of God! It was a speech of Philip unto Christ, in John xiv. 8, 'Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,' saith Philip. Do but shew us the Father, let us see God, and it sufficeth us, we have enough, whatsoever becomes of us; oh, may we but see the Father, it is enough. And the great desire that Moses had in Exod. xxxiii. 1, 18: he said, 'I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.' Let me but see thee, and it is enough for me. Oh the sight of God, it is a blessed thing! The sight of the infinite and glorious first-being of all things—that is, the fountain of all good—oh, how blessed is it! Men love to see such as have been great instruments of good. Oh what flocking would there be to see them! As in former times, when we heard that great things were done by such a man as Alexander—if such a man were alive, who would not but press hard to see him; and of late such a one as the king of Swethland; and now Sir Thomas Fairfax, or those men that God hath made public instruments of good, every one would see such a man. Oh then to be ad-

mitted to the sight of the first-being of all things, that hath been the cause of all the good that ever hath been, or shall be—to have the sight of that principal, it must needs be an infinite blessedness. If a man had never seen his father or mother, but had lived in another country since his birth to his man's estate, oh, what a desire would he have to see the woman out of whose bowels he came, and father from whose loins he came. But oh the blessed sight of God, who is the first-being of all things, our Creator! This is that that only the rational creature is capable of. The reasonable creature is not satisfied, as the sensitive creature is, merely to have a sight of that that pleases the sense for the present; but the rational creature inquires presently at the cause of its being. Here is such an excellency; from whence is it? What is the cause of it? And when he sees that, then he inquires after the cause of that, and then the cause of that; and if he understands that, why then he would know the cause of that; and so he gets up a link higher. Such is the nature of the understanding of a rational creature, to look from the effect to the cause, and then that other's cause; and so higher and higher, and never leaves till it comes to the supreme cause, the highest cause of all things: now 'they shall see God.' This is man's blessedness.

They shall see God, and shall see his counsels and will—all those counsels of God that do concern their eternal enjoyment of himself. That is the meaning: shall see God, and know his mind; and they shall see God as their God. That must be taken into these three things:

First, See God, the first-being of all things.

Secondly, Know the mind and the very heart of God; his will concerning them and their eternal estate.

Thirdly, They shall see God as their God, as having an interest in God, in all that good and excellency and glory they see in God; they shall see it as theirs, as having a propriety in it. There is a great deal of difference between a queen's looking upon the king sitting upon his throne, and a stranger's; a stranger comes and sees the king with his crown upon his head, his sceptre in his hand, upon his throne, with all the nobles about him; and it is a glorious sight for a stranger to see. But now if the queen, or the king's eldest son, should look upon her husband, and he upon his father, as he sits upon the throne with all his glory about him; the queen she looks upon all this glory as her glory, it all reflects upon me, I have an interest in all this glory: and so the prince looks upon all this glory as his glory, as his inheritance; this is my father that is in this glory. Why, so the promise must be understood, 'They shall see God,' they shall see the excellency, and glory, and majesty, and greatness of God—that is, the first-being

* Plat. Mor. v. 90.

of all beings, and the cause of all things—and know his mind and heart; and then thy shall see all this as their good. Here is my excellency and my glory, my happiness it is in this God that I now behold. This is the promise, 'They shall see God.'

Now God reveals himself and fulfils this promise many ways. By an immediate revelation of himself to the soul; for the soul of man it is capable of an immediate joining with God.

You will say, God's being and essence is infinite, and man's soul is but finite. Ay, but yet there may be an immediate conjunction between an infinite and a finite thing. As now, the soul of Jesus Christ, that was God-man, why, his soul was but a finite thing, a creature; and yet what a conjunction had the soul of Christ with the divine nature; for there was a hypostatical union between both soul and body of Christ and the divine nature. Therefore now the finiteness of the soul of man doth not hinder an immediate touch, as I may so speak, with the infinite being of God himself, and it is capable of a more immediate revelation of God himself than we are able to express or conceive; but that shall be most hereafter, the immediate revelation of God. Only for the present there is somewhat of that glory that there shall be in heaven—it is begun here in the world; as now, the union with God, or the communion with God that shall be in heaven, there is some degree of it here in this world. And so the beatifical vision of God, the very touch and close of the soul with the essence of God that shall be in heaven, there is some degree of it even here in this world, in the sight of God, but we are not able to express it. As the eye of a man, though it sees other things, yet it cannot see itself; so the soul of a man, though it act upon God, yet it cannot tell the way of its acting. They cannot tell how they see God; but this they know, that they see God other ways than ever they did. As that poor man said, 'This I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;' so many poor Christians that are mean, and women of weaker parts, and others that are of stronger parts, why, before this purity of heart now, if you asked them what God was, they would say, God was a spirit, and he must be worshipped in spirit and truth. They would tell you God was eternal, and God was almighty, and God was the creator of heaven and earth, and God was infinitely wise and infinitely holy; and many that had good strong parts, they could discourse of the attributes of God. But yet, when their hearts come to be cleansed, and God revealing himself unto them, if you should ask them, What do you know of God now more than you have done? they are not able to express, only this, We can say, We were blind, but now we see—we do see God in another manner than ever we have done.

And besides this more immediate revelation of God

to the soul, one that is pure in heart sees God in his works, in the beholding of the great works of God in the glass of the creature, in the heavens and earth and seas; it beholds God in another way than ever it did before. Oh, the glory of God that appears, when it looks upon the rising of the sun, and the moon and stars, and the vastness of the seas, and the body of the earth! Perhaps such days as these, after sermon is done, many of you will be walking up and down the fields; but what do you see? Why, you see the green grass, and other men walking up and down, and you see trees; but what of God do you see here? Now, if you did walk merely to contemplate of God appearing in his works, then it were another matter. A spiritual heart, when it looks upon the works of God, it gets through the work presently to God; it looks up to heaven, and sees the God of heaven, and the God of the earth and plants. And this is my God; and the glory of God that appears in all the creatures, it is the glory of my God. Indeed, when he goes abroad he may see more land than his own; ay, but I cannot see more land than is my Father's.

And though God shines much in his works, yet he appears more clearly in his word. And it is a good argument of one that is spiritual, that can see more of the glory of God in the word than in all the great works that ever were done in the world. If the Lord should carry a man or woman over all the world, and shew them all the countries in the world; yea, carry them up to heaven, and shew them the sun, moon, and stars, and enable them to understand all the motions of them, and shew them the seas, and be able to understand the motion of the seas, the ebbings and the flowings, and all the vastness of that creature; and so if he were able to understand all the nature of the plants, as Solomon did, and the mysteries of all arts and sciences; yet when he hath done all, coming to read the word, he shall say, 'Well, I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy word is exceeding broad,' 1's. cxix. 96; I see more in thy word than I do in all the book of nature. A few lines of thy word doth discover more unto me than all the book of nature besides. Ay, this were a good argument of purity of heart. A pure heart goes and reads in the word, and doth not read it as other books, but sees the wisdom of God there, the purity of God there, the authority of God there; the word is not a sealed book to such a soul, but it is open to it. And then it sees God in all his ordinances; they are the glasses by which he sees God. Likewise the ministry of the word and sacraments, and all other ordinances; God comes into the soul, and the soul finds those but as glasses to represent God unto it. And it sees God again in the saints; in the saints there is the image of God. There is the picture of God in the creature; but in the saints there is the lively image of God, as the image of the father is in

the child. The men of the world, they see little of God in the saints; but now, when their eyes come to be opened, and their hearts purified, they cannot look upon any godly men or women but they see much of the glory of God in them: and it is this that makes them so love the communion of the saints, because so much of God appears in them. Yea, and they see God in their own spirits more than ever before. There was nothing but darkness in their own spirits before; but now, being sanctified, there is the presence of God within them—they see God within them in their own hearts. But above all that that is here in this world, they see God in the face of Jesus Christ; there they see the glory of God, those that are of pure hearts or spirits. In Heb. i. Christ is said 'to be the character and engraven form of the image of God, the brightness of his glory.' You have not such an expression of all the angels in heaven nor men in the world. It is true, man was made according to the image of God; ay, but Christ is said to be the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person, the express image of the person of God, and therefore Christ saith that no man can know the Father, but they must do it by him: John xiv. 6, 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me. If you had known me, you should have known the Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.' There is no knowledge of the Father but it is by Jesus Christ, by the understanding of Jesus Christ: 'No man knows the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,' Col. ii. 3. 'In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:' and ver. 9, 'For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' A very strange expression; it would not have beseeemed the mouth of any man, no, nor beseeemed any angel, to have had such an expression as this, 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;' it is in Christ; the glory of God appears in Christ. If we may make a comparison of low things with high: as now, you cannot look upon the sun in its glory, as in the firmament, but when the sun shines upon the water, there you may see the lustre of the sun. So take God as in himself considered, as infinite creator of all things. As we are here in this world, our eyes do dazzle to behold God's essence; we cannot behold it, or not able to express it at least: but in Jesus Christ we come nearest to the beholding of God; in Jesus Christ as God-man, there we may come to behold very much of the glory, yea, of the face of God; and therefore you find that in the gospel we are said to behold God with open face: 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.' He speaks of it in way of distinction from the law; we could understand but little of God then. And then, indeed, in the Old Testament we find such an expression as this,

'No man can see God and live.' But here, in the New Testament, you find such an expression, that 'we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.' With open face; not needing a veil, as Moses had, but with open face we behold the glory of God; but it is as in a glass. The word is one glass, the ordinances are another glass, and then the creatures, which is the thickest glass. There is the word, the ordinances, the saints, our own spirits, but the bright glass of all is Jesus Christ. And therefore in 2 Cor. iv. 6, it is said, 'That God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness. All the knowledge of God that man hath before his conversion, it is but as darkness; and God, when he comes to shew himself to the soul, he doth as great a work as when he made the world—he did then command light to shine out of darkness. And what is the fruits of it? Hath shined in our hearts; not only in our heads, but hearts, and it shines there to give light, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Mark these gradations: he hath shined in our hearts to give the knowledge of God; to give the light of the knowledge of God; to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God; and all this in the face of Jesus Christ. Oh the blessedness of the pure in heart, that comes to see God in the face of Jesus Christ! This is a mystery that none can understand, like the white stone, Rev. ii. 17, but those that have it; those that do see God in Christ, they know what it is to see God in Christ, and they would not for ten thousand worlds lose any one sight that they have of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but it is impossible for them to express it to others. Oh blessed are they that do thus see God! It is a good thing to see the light, saith Solomon. Suppose that God had made us that we had had but four senses, only the hearing and smelling, the feeling and tasting, and had left out the sense of sight. Now I say, if this had been that God had made only four senses, and afterwards, in our days, had been pleased to add to the beauty and excellency of man's nature a fifth sense—that is, sight—oh what a glorious thing would it have been to us! As now, a man that had lived in a dungeon all the days of his life and never had seen light, if this man, after he is grown up in years, should be let out of this dungeon and come to see this glorious sun, what a glorious thing would it be to such a one! Or further, the beast, who have only the sight of the light, if God should add unto them understanding, to be able to conceive of things, why, what a glorious change would there be there! But now, when God gives us a spiritual sight of himself, there is as great a change, and that is abundantly more glorious, and more blessed it would

be than the adding of seeing to a man that never had such a sense, or the adding of reason to the beasts. It is a blessed thing to see God, and that we find in Scripture set out to us many ways.

As, first, It is made to be the fruit of the covenant of grace, howsoever men may think light of it that do not know it. As the beasts that know not what reason is, they are not troubled for the want of it; and if we had not known what the sense of sight meant, we should not have been troubled for the want of it: so the world is not troubled for the want of the sight of God, because they know no more what it means than the beast knows reason, or a man that had had the four senses could have known what a fifth had meant. But the Scripture makes it to be a fruit of the covenant of grace. In Jeremiah, mark how the Lord expresses himself, chap. xxxi. 34, 'They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more.' It is a fruit both of the covenant of grace and of the pardon of sin, that is the special mercy in the covenant. The reason why there are so many of you that know not God, it is because your iniquities are not forgiven; but God remembers your sin. You are not in covenant with God. When God brings you into covenant with himself, and forgives your sin, he makes you to know himself.

Secondly, For God to reveal himself; it is a great fruit of love, of the love of God to the soul, for God to manifest himself to it: in John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him.' How will that be manifested? 'and will manifest myself to him.' Christ's manifesting himself to the soul is a fruit of his love, and of his Father's love. Yea, *

Thirdly, It is the blessedness of the glorious church. When the Lord shall raise his church to the greatest height of glory, one of the special blessednesses that shall be then, shall be the sight of God: in Rev. xxii. 4, 'And they shall see his face.' There were many things named to set forth the excellency and glory of the state of the church, but this is the special, 'And they shall see his face.' The truth is, in comparison of what shall be hereafter, we see little or nothing at all; we see the back parts of God. But there is a time for the church to enjoy so much of God, and it is spoken of a time in this world; for the chapter before shews that it is a time when the kings of the earth shall bring their glory to the church, they shall not bring it to heaven, and they shall see the face of God.

Fourthly, The sight of God here is the beginning

of life, yea, the beginning of eternal life. 'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent into the world,' John xvii. 3. Men do not live till they come to know God. Men in the world are dead carcases; but when they come to know God, they come to live, yea, they begin to live the life of eternity. Oh blessed are they!

Fifthly, It is the glory of heaven for the saints to see God: 1 John iii. 2, 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,' saith the text. Now, the seeing him as he is, we speak not to for the present. I only mention this text now to shew that it is a very blessed thing to see God; for it is that whereby the blessedness of the saints in heaven is expressed by the Holy Ghost. 'We shall be like him.' Why? How? 'We shall see him as he is.' That will be the happiness we shall have when we come to heaven, that we shall see God.

Sixthly, It is the happiness of the angels. Not only the saints, but the angels, have not a higher happiness in heaven than the sight of the face of God; and therefore, in Mat. xviii. 10, where we read of a description of the happiness of the angels—the words are, 'In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Christ here doth forewarn men of taking heed of offending the little ones; for their angels do always behold his Father's face.

Seventhly, Yea, shall I say further, it is the happiness, as I may so speak, even of Christ himself, to see the Father: that you have in John x. 15, 'As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father,' saith Christ. Christ would set forth his excellency here. 'Why,' saith he, 'the Father knows me, and I know the Father.' It is that that Jesus Christ doth glory in himself, that he knows the Father. Now he promises this happiness to the pure in heart, that they likewise shall see God.

But wherein doth it appear to be such a happy thing? It appears many ways. I will name one or two now.

First, Oh it is a blessed thing to see God! It is the perfection of man's understanding. God hath given to man an understanding of such large capacity that it is able to be conversant with everything that is true, that is, truth in general; and therefore nothing can perfect the understanding till it come to have that that is the principal truth discovered to it.

Secondly, And an infinite satisfaction it is to the understanding; they two must needs go together; for in the perfection of a thing there must needs be the satisfaction and rest of it. Suppose all the beautiful things that ever were in the world were put into one object, that would be a beautiful thing to behold. Why, now all beauty, all excellency, all glory in all

creatures are all in God. And in the sight of God the soul sees all things that are excellent, and therefore must needs be a kind of infinite satisfaction. Saith David, in Ps. xvii. 15, 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.' It is a psalm that David made, it is very like, when he was driven from Saul's court. Now, as if he should have said, Well, I cannot behold the face of the king; he hath hard thoughts of me. Ay, but as for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, and I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness. There is an infinite satisfaction to the mind of man. Many of you seek to satisfy yourselves in base and brutish lusts. If you can be fine and gay, and eat and drink, and be unclean and filthy, there is your satisfaction. Oh the difference between the satisfaction of a soul in the sight of an infinite God, and the satisfaction of a soul in a base, brutish lust! Blessed are they that do see God, they shall be satisfied. In Ps. xxxvi. likewise, saith the psalmist there, speaking but of the sight of God, even in his house, 'How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.' Why so? 'For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.' Hence comes the satisfaction, hence comes the rivers of pleasure, hence is the fountain of all good unto them. 'For in thy light shall we see light.' They come to see God by God, as a man comes to see the sun by the light of the sun. The sun sends his beams upon the world, and by those beams of light that the sun sends down upon our eyes we come to see the sun itself. So in thy light shall we see light. The light of God shall shine upon the souls of the saints that are pure in heart, and so they shall come to see that God which is the fountain of all life. And oh the drawing of the soul to God then.

Thirdly, It is made in Scripture the very spring of all grace in the soul, being made partaker of the divine nature, and of the transforming of the soul into the very image of God: 2 Pet. i. 2, 'Grace and peace be multiplied unto you.' How? 'Through the

knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.' All grace and peace it comes through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord: 'According,' saith he, 'as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness.' How? 'Through the knowledge of him that hath called us.' Oh, the knowledge of God is a fountain of good indeed unto the soul! 'Whereby,' saith he, 'are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust:' and all this still 'through the knowledge of God.' 'Whereby,' saith he—that is, by the knowledge of God 'we come to be partakers of the divine nature.' And that fore-named place in 2 Cor. iii. 18, 'We beholding as in a glass, with open face, the glory of the Lord.' What follows? 'We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory.' The sight of God doth change the soul into the very nature of God, so far as can be. What is it that makes the saints in heaven to be so like God? it is by the sight of him; saith the Holy Ghost there, 'We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' So that the sight of God in heaven as he is, doth transform the souls of the saints, so as they come to be like God. They have the image of God perfectly in them—they see God perfectly; and according to the measure that any soul doth see God in this world, so they come to be transformed into the image of God. Oh blessed are they that see God then, for by the sight of him they come to be transformed into the likeness of him. Is it not a blessed thing for the creature to be raised to that excellency, as to be made like to God himself? This comes through the knowledge of God. Oh that men would be but in love with this sight of God; thereby they would come to know that there is another kind of excellency for mankind than to wallow in the lusts of the flesh. Alas! poor creature, while thou art satisfying thy flesh, what dost thou see? Thou seest thy money, or thy cups, or full dishes. Oh, what is this sight to the sight of God! thou hast an impure and unclean heart, and therefore thinkest there is nothing better than the beholding of these things. 'But blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

SERMON XXVII.

OR,

WHEREIN THE SIGHT OF GOD APPEARS TO BE SUCH A HAPPY THING.

'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'—MAT. V. 8.

FOURTHLY, The sight of God is a blessed thing; it is that that draws forth and acts the graces of the saints. The very setting God before the soul is that, I say, that draws forth and acts whatsoever grace the saints have, because God is such a suitable object unto the soul. As the setting before one that hath an unclean heart an object suitable unto uncleanness, draws forth that corruption; so the setting before the soul, a clean soul, the setting before it the holiness of God, and the glory and excellency of God, it hath a kind of infinite power to draw all the graces of the saints to act, to make them lively and quick.

Fifthly, Further, by this the soul comes to worship God as a God, when it comes to see him. Men and women that are ignorant of God, they worship they know not what; but when the soul comes to have a sight of God, even here in this world, then, and never till then, is the name of God sanctified by the soul; the soul worships God in a holy manner.

Sixthly, The sight of God darkens all the glory of the world before the soul, takes off the heart from creature comforts. Now the soul comes to see the comforts of the creature, that before were admired, to be as nothing; one sight of God presently darkens all the world. As the light of a candle is darkened when the sun arises, so when God arises in the heart. Acts vii. 2, it is said that Abraham saw the God of glory: the 'God of glory' appeared to Abraham, and so he came out of his own country. It was that that took Abraham's heart off from his kindred, from his father's house, from all things in the world: the God of glory appeared to him. Let the God of glory appear to the soul, and it will take off the soul from anything, whatsoever engagements there are upon the heart. Many of you, perhaps, have your hearts set upon some vain thing, some strong lust is in your heart, and you think it is impossible to have your hearts taken off. Let me tell you, one sight of God will do it; if God would but let one beam of his glory in upon you, it would take off your hearts from the strongest lust that is, and only himself would be sanctified by you. They are blessed that have seen God.

Seventhly, Yea, it would make all afflictions to be but little, and carry the soul through all difficulties whatsoever. You complain how hard it is to suffer, and that there is this and the other trouble in the ways of God; the appearing of God to your souls would presently strengthen you against all difficulties, and it would be nothing in your esteem that you suffer here in the world for his sake. That is a famous scripture which we have in the 11th of the Hebrews—it is the example of Moses—ver. 27, 'By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king.' Why? 'For he endured.' How came that to pass? 'As seeing him who is invisible.' By faith he forsook Egypt. It was one of the difficultest works that ever a man undertook; for Moses, that had so much glory in Egypt, the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and like, as some report, to have been her heir—for Pharaoh's daughter had no child (so Josephus) and adopted him—so that it is conceived he might have inherited the kingdom after Pharaoh. But now, though he were in all that glory that possibly a man could be in a kingdom, yet he forsook Egypt; away he goes out of Egypt, not fearing the displeasure of the king, that the king would pursue him. When he went out, why, he went out over a great deal of difficulties; carrying along with him so many thousands, and not knowing how to provide for them; passing through the Red Sea, yet not discouraged with fears; yea, he doth not repent him after he is come into any difficulties. Many men undertake businesses, but when they meet with difficulties they begin to repent themselves that they were so far engaged. Moses repents not upon any difficulty; for why? the text saith 'he endured,' he went through all; and all upon this ground, 'for he saw him that is invisible.' If invisible, how could he see him? If he saw him, how was he invisible? Invisible to the eye of sense; yea, and that kind of the glory of God that Moses saw was invisible to the eye of reason; it was by a principle elevating reason; by a principle of faith, that is reason's prospective glass. He saw the invisible God, and that carried him through all.

Certainly those men and women that are quickly discouraged in the ways of God never had a sight of God: the sight of God would carry through all difficulties. For God to say, I am he, as it humbled Saul, and stopped him in his way in which he was going against God, so it will raise and encourage the heart of a saint in his way, when it comes to see that it is the Lord that I have to deal with, a sight of the invisible God. Oh blessed, therefore, are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The sight of God is a blessed thing; even the sight of God that we have here. It is by that we come to have communion with him; we cannot have communion with God without the sight of him. And how many saints are there that can speak by their own experience, they would not lose some one sight of God that they have had in their converse with God, not for a world. Oh they see it is blessed; it is blessed here, but much more hereafter. They shall see God.

This promise seems to refer to what shall be hereafter; the sight of God hereafter. We sometimes think that God hath revealed much of himself now, in his great works, in his word, in his Son. Oh but there are other manner of things to be known of God than ever yet we have known. No man can see God and live. There is that sight of God that cannot stand with this life. They shall see God in heaven. There is a manifestation of God beyond what we have here; we walk here by faith and not by sight, but then we shall walk by sight and not by faith, (2 Cor. v. 7.) here it is faith that must help us when God withdraws himself from us, but there the saints shall live by sight, they shall have no need of that faith that should uphold them in God's absence and withdrawing himself. In Mat. xviii. 10, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' It is a note of a learned interpreter upon this place: Observe, saith he, that heaven is named twice here—'I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven'; why was it not enough to say, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father. But Christ repeats it twice—'In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven'—to note that that is the place of the face of God, and in comparison of that, we have but the back parts of God—that is, the throne of God, and then the saints shall see God upon his throne. There is a great deal of difference between seeing of a prince in an obscure cottage, and seeing of this prince upon his throne, with the crown upon his head, and all his nobles about him, and in all his royal robes. Now all the sight we have of God here it is but the sight of the prince in a cottage; but our sight in heaven is

like the sight of the prince upon his throne in his glory. Isa. xxxiii. 17, we have there a promise to the same that here are said to be pure in heart—namely, to those that are upright. In ver. 15, there is described those to whom this promise is made, 'He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly,' &c., and then the promise is, 'He shall dwell on high;' and in ver. 17, 'Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.' It is more to see the King in his beauty than to see the King another way. Now this is promised to the upright, to the pure in heart, to see God in his beauty. I make little question but God will appear with more beauty in the world than yet he hath done, even in this world. There is a promise in Ps. cii. 16, 'When the Lord shall build up Sion, he shall appear in his glory:' he shall put on his glorious robes. As in the time when noblemen and princes marry they put on their best attire, so when God shall build up Sion, which is the rejoicing of his soul, he shall appear in his glory. And blessed are those that shall see God then in that glory of his. But when they shall see him in his beauty and glory in heaven, upon his throne, they will be much more blessed. Then they shall see indeed all the counsels of God concerning themselves from all eternity, yea, and concerning all creatures, and the nature of all creatures. They shall see all things in God when they come to see him there. For so it must needs be, otherwise man could not be perfectly blessed except he came to understand all creatures. Man in his first creation did understand all creatures: now this knowledge must be restored again, or else man by Christ should not come to be as happy as he was in the first Adam. But certainly the happiness of man is more in the second Adam than in the first; therefore the knowledge shall be higher than this, and this must be in the sight of God that he shall have.

The sight of God that he shall have in heaven shall be more immediate than it is now. It shall not only be the sight of him by such and such ways and irradiations as now we have from him, by any intervening thing, but by an immediate union with the very being and essence of God, and so a sight of his essence. And that it must needs be, that this sight of God must be of his very being and essence is clear, not only from many scriptures that we might name, as that in 1 Cor. xiii., latter end, 'Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known.' We see through a glass, that is, through a medium; we see by seeing something else; first we see something else, and then we come to see God. But then we shall see him face to face; then shall I know even as I am known. Now God knows us without anything intervening, so we shall know as we

are known; it is a great mystery. And that place in 1 John iii. 2, 'We shall see him as he is'—as he is in himself. The reason is this, because if we saw anything but God's being, that would be but a creature; whatsoever irradiation, whatsoever glory should flow from God, conceive it to be the most glorious thing that can be, that God should represent the most glorious sight that can be imagined; yet if it be not God's being and essence, it is but a creature, and if a creature, then it cannot be the object of man's happiness. It is impossible for a man to be happy by the sight of that that is not God. Now if there be anything intervening, so as we see that that God doth, but more out of himself, and not himself, I say we cannot be happy, for it would follow then that man's happiness consisted in a creature. No; therefore we shall see him as he is. Christ saith 'That he knows the Father, as the Father knows him;' he doth not speak of himself as he is second person in Trinity, but as he is God-man—so he knows the Father as the Father knows him; so that by that you may see that even a finite creature is capable of such a knowledge, of the knowledge of the very being of God. You cannot comprehend it, because it is infinite; and if it had not been revealed to us in the Scriptures it had been impossible for us to have conceived that a finite creature could be hypostatically united to an infinite; but when the Scripture makes that out to us, that that which is finite, as the soul and body of Christ is, can be so united to an infinite, this clearly holds forth thus much to us, that the nature of man is capable of another manner of revelation of God, and union with God, than possibly by reason can be understood. The saints in heaven shall be filled with God's presence, shall see God in themselves. As the fulness of the Godhead did dwell bodily in Christ, so it shall dwell spiritually in the saints: Col. ii. 9, 'The fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in him.' Now, spiritually, the fulness of the Godhead shall be in the saints; and certainly Christ doth see God, the very being of God, the fulness of the Godhead, being bodily in him; why, then, the saints that shall have the fulness of the Godhead spiritually in them shall see him, see him immediately—not as we see a colour, but as we see the light. The light is first in our eyes, and by that the colour; so then God's very being shall be first in the eye of the soul. We see God here in this world by his effects; we see the glory of God from the effects of God's wisdom, and his power, and his goodness. What dost thou see of God, oh thou soul in this world, who art contemplating of God in the most serious manner? Why, the soul will say, Lord, I see glorious beams of thy wisdom, and thy power, and thy goodness in the creature, the great works that thou hast made. This is but to see God in the

effects of what he hath done; but we shall see him face to face. You see a workman in some piece of work that he hath done, and oh, you long to see the face of that man. Now God hath wrought this world—it is the work of his fingers; but you shall not see God then by effects so much as immediately. We come here to know rather what God is not than what he is; as thus, when we say God is infinite, what do we mean by that but that there is no bounds of his being? When we say that God is incomprehensible, what is that but that God cannot be comprehended in any place? When we say that God is eternal, that he hath no beginning, no end, no succession of time; when we say God is immutable, still it speaks rather what God is not than what he is—that is, he doth not change. When we come to say that he is a spirit, that seems to be an affirmation. What do we mean by that? It is but to take off from any conceit of bodily substance, that God is not corporeal; for if we should speak properly, God is not a spirit, not of the same nature that angels and men's souls are of, for they are but creatures. And God cannot be said properly to be the same thing that a creature is; but because he would take away all conceit from him of being bodily, therefore we say he is a spirit. When we say God is holy, what do we do when we come to describe his holiness but this—he is that whereby he hath not the least spot and stain of sin, and such kind of things; so that the truth is, the most of our knowledge of God here it is but by negations rather than any other way. But then we shall see him as he is, not only what his being is not, but what it is.

And we shall see God likewise in the unity of his nature. Here we see God in several parts; we cannot understand the excellency of God to be all one here. As thus, when we would know God, how come we to know and see him here? Why, by those several shines of his attributes, as by the power, and wisdom, and holiness, and goodness, and faithfulness, and eternity, and simplicity, and infiniteness of God. These now are several things; but certainly there are not many things in God. All these attributes are but that one infinite excellency of God; only they are diverse according to the several ways of the manifestation of that one excellency of God. As sometimes I have told you of the shine of the sun through several glasses of several colours; the same beam of the sun through a blue glass gives a blue reflection, and through a green a green, and through a red a red, but there is no such change of the sun; so the same excellency of God, working several ways, appears diversely to us; and so we see God as if he were one great excellency, made up of many excellencies. But certainly this is not so; God is not such a glorious excellency as made up of many, for he is

but one. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God in the unity of his being.

And come to see the great mystery of the Trinity—how three persons but one God; what the work of the Father is in begetting, and what the Son is in being begotten, and the Holy Ghost is in proceeding; we see these things by faith now, but then by sight.

And we shall see God in his eminency, and infinite above all creatures whatsoever, and see him in heaven as he is, and see whatever he shall do, whatever he shall be working to all eternity. The saints shall see God, (besides the being of God,) I say, see him in all his workings that shall be to eternity. The Lord, in less than these six thousand years, how glorious hath he been in his workings! And would it not be a blessed thing if any one of you had been admitted to have been with God, and have seen what God hath done from the beginning of the world to this day. Ay, but now surely, God being eternal, after this world should be at an end, as it will within a little time, why, God remains everlasting, and the saints shall remain everlasting, and they shall be with God for ever; why, then, they shall be there where they shall see what God will do for ever. Why, God he will be working for ever; after this six thousand years will be at an end God will still be working, and it is like that the meanest of his works are laid first, and he will be working still higher and higher, and more and more glorious things to all eternity. Now, for a creature to be admitted to live with God, and not only to see what himself is, and to see indeed his heart, and counsels, and will, and ways, but to see what God shall be doing to all eternity; this must needs be a blessed sight.

And this sight of God shall be without any kind of discourse from one thing to another, as we have now; but we shall see all at once, without any labour and without any pains. As now, we are fain to take a great deal of pains from one thing to another; but then intuitive—that is, it shall be with the understanding as with the eye; the darting of the eye presently takes in the object, and so the object shall be taken in without any wearisomeness. We shall see him then fully—that is, the understanding of man shall be so elevated as it shall be able to look upon the face of God fully, without any kind of weariness at all. Now, the eye of man is not able to look upon the sun, for it would destroy the sight if we should look upon it long; it is too eminent an object. And so we cannot steadily behold the face of God now; but then there shall be the elevation of the soul—the soul shall be raised to that strength as it shall be able to stand and gaze upon the face of God for ever, upon the fulness of his glory; the eye of the body shall be able to see the glory of God that doth irradiate from him, which shall be a

thousand times more glorious than the sun. As the Scripture tells us that the body of man shall be raised to that height, as it shall shine like the sun in the firmament. Now, if this lump of clay shall have such a glory put upon it, then what glory shall be put upon the soul of man, and how shall that be raised; and, indeed, if man's eye were not raised to be able to look steadily upon a more glorious object than the sun, it would be a misery for the body to be in heaven. For the light of heaven will be abundantly more glorious than the sun in the firmament, the lustre of it, and the saints shall not be wearied with it; but the glory of heaven shall perfect the eye of the saints, and then the glory of God shall perfect their souls; they shall be able fully to look upon God, and they shall so see him as never to lose the sight of him. Here in this world the saints many times have some glimmerings of God, some little sight of it; oh but they lose it—and oh how sweet were it, if it were not so little and quickly gone; but then they shall ever see his face. What would many a godly man or woman give that they might have but those beams of God's glory in a constant way shining upon them that sometimes they have had; but then you shall have them always shining upon you. 'O blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' And the reason that some give why Christ doth annex the sight of God to purity of heart, is this among others, because that the Scripture tells us that by faith the heart is purified. Now when the soul believes, and comes to be purified by faith, it is willing to give up its reason, to have its reason swallowed up. Now, because it doth here believe that which it cannot see, it shall hereafter see whatsoever it doth believe,—that is (as Austin calls it) the reward of faith. That because faith doth believe what the soul cannot see, that is, faith goes beyond reason, therefore the Lord will grant this reward unto it, that it shall hereafter see whatsoever it doth believe. Thou now hast the glorious revelation of God, and of the mysteries of salvation. Well, they are above thy reason, thou canst not understand them now, yet by faith thou dost believe them though thou canst not understand them. Why now wilt thou glorify God by believing when thou canst not see? God hereafter will make thee see what thou hast believed. Thou shalt see it fully, thou shalt see into all the reasons of the mystery of the gospel, and the things of God, that now thou dost take in by faith. Oh it is good for us now to be willing to have our reason to be swallowed up in faith; for hereafter God will by sight make known all things to us, that any way a rational soul shall be capable of. 'They shall see God.'

And this shall be one further circumstance that will much set out the blessedness of the sight of God,

They shall then see him when God shall be letting out himself fully to them, and so God shall be the more amiable and satisfying object to them. As thus, now you see a beauty in some creature, suppose a tulip; but now, if this tulip had the sweetness of a violet, had as much sweetness as all sweets together in the world, it would be a more delightful thing to behold. So it shall be here—the saints shall see God, and it shall be wonderful delight to them; for, together with all the glorious excellency that they shall see in God, there shall be fragrancy come from God—God's letting out himself to their souls, in whom they shall be blessed for ever. Many things might be said about this argument, and there is as much written and curious notions about it as anything; but I conceive that it will not be fit or profitable to enter further into the explication of this, or endeavour to acquaint you with such kind of notions as many men have had about this in their writings. I shall only make some application of this excellent point.

'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.'

First, If it be such a blessedness to see God, and this promised to the pure in heart, oh, do you consider, you that live in uncleanness and filthiness, what you lose by your sin, and what you are like to lose! This is promised to the pure in heart; but do not your consciences, many of you, misgive you, and tell you that there is woeful impurity in your hearts, base uncleanness, and so in your lives and conversations? Why, now, what dost thou lose in this? Thou lovest this glorious sight of God, thou livest here in the world without the sight of God, and so shall never come to see the face of God for good unto thee; certainly thy lusts will cost thee dear. If a man were set upon his lusts, so as he must certainly lose the sight of his eyes if he would have his lusts, as I remember Ambrose tells of Philotimus, that had such a disease upon him through drinking and uncleanness, that the physicians told him that if he did not reform, he would certainly lose his eyes for it. When he heard this, his heart was so set upon his lusts, Well, saith he, desperately, *vale lumen amicum*, farewell sight, then; as if he should say, Rather than I will lose my lusts, I will lose my sight. O Lord, how many such desperate wretches are there amongst us? Are there none this day here before the Lord? If there be any, the Lord of heaven rebuke them, and speak unto their hearts. This is thy condition, thou art set upon thy lusts. What thinkest thou now about this little glimpse of heaven's excellency? of the sight of God, what thinkest thou? Either part with thy lusts or lose thy sight. What will thy answer be before God this day, if thou shalt after this, when thou hearest that the sight of God is so annexed to purity of heart? And as the apostle in that known

place of the Hebrews, chap. xii. 14, 'Without holiness no man shall see God'—I say, if thou dost yet continue in any known sinful way, that thy heart is set upon any such beloved lust, and that for all this thy heart cannot be taken off from it, this, then, is thy desperate resolution, Farewell, pleasant sight, farewell the sight of God himself—I will venture it; I will rather please the sight of my eyes and the lusts of mine heart than I will be partaker of that blessed and glorious sight of God. Oh, thy lusts will cost thee dear; look to it therefore here in this world. How do men live without God in the world? They have no sight of God. You may speak of God, but certainly there is a sight of God that cannot stand with the love of any sin; and therefore, though we cannot tell how to express the difference between the sight of God that one hath in this life and another, yet the Scripture is clear, that whosoever walks on in the way of sin, he knows not God: 1 John ii. 4, 'He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' As if the Holy Ghost should say here, There is so much in the sight of God, as that it is impossible it can stand with the ways of sin.

Secondly, If it be such a blessedness to see God, then how vile are they that take no delight at all in seeing of him, and would rather not see him than see him. This is the cursed disposition of the hearts of many men, yea, generally of all that have guilty consciences. I say, all men and women that have guilty consciences are brought to this through the guilt of their consciences, that they had rather not see God than see him. Oh, what a pass art thou in! what hast thou brought thyself to? Oh, miserable creature, what is there in thy lusts that can so counter-vail this, the loss of the sight of God, and bring thee to such a condition as thou dost desire, never to see the face of God? Thou accountest it not a misery not to see God, but thy happiness. Oh, cursed disposition indeed! You would say a child were very desperately wicked if he should say to his father that begat him, or the mother that bare him, I would I might never see your face; but this doth every ungodly man say, Oh, that I might never see thy face! You will say, is there any so vile as to say so? Certainly, it is the language of your actions; and we read in Job xxi. 14, concerning the description of the wicked man, thus: 'Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' Why, we cannot hear men in their language say so, and I do not think that Job did hear men say so; but this was the language of their actions: 'They say unto God, Depart from us; we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.' For indeed the sight of God engages the soul to duty; and the truth is, for a man to have a sight of God, and yet to

resolve to continue in his sin, these two things are incompatible one with another; and therefore wicked men, rather than they would lose their lusts, away with holiness, they care not to see God.

Thirdly, What a misery are those in, that shall have the sight of God to be their greatest misery, and to be a curse unto them, to be dreadful to them; certainly their sin hath brought them to an evil condition indeed. Yet this is the state of impure hearts and consciences; of all sights in the world, the sight of God will trouble it, and be the most dreadful to it. They shall see God too, but see him to be the terror of their souls; their sight of God will be their curse and their misery. 'They shall see God,' but see him as an enemy; see that infinite holy face of God, and by that see how infinitely God hates them. When thou comest to see how God is holy, thou shalt see how infinitely he doth hate thee, and what an enemy he is to thee, and will be to thee to all eternity. We read in Rev. vi., latter end, that the kings and the mighty men of the earth cry out to the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, and to cover them. Why? 'That they might be hid from the sight of the Lamb.' And so certainly at the day of judgment, when God shall appear in his glory, that they shall see what an infinite God they have to do with, what an infinite power there will be stretched out for their misery, what an infinite justice will lie upon them, and the strokes of it be upon them for ever; this will be so dreadful, as they would rather have hills and mountains to fall upon them, than to have the sight of God. Oh, poor creature, what misery art thou brought into, whenas at that day, when the saints shall look upon the face of God, when God comes in all his glory and shall say, Oh this God is our God, this infinite all-sufficiency is ours, this infinite wisdom is ours, this infinite power shall work for good to us— and infinite mercy is ours, and so rejoice in that God. 'Oh, lo, this is our God, we have waited for him;' this is the God of our salvation, and their hearts leap within them to go and meet this God that appears in his glory; then for thee to stand shaking and trembling before this great God, Oh, this is the infinite God that I have sinned against, that I have rebelled against, that infinite God that comes against me in all this glory, to be avenged upon me to all eternity. This will be thy condition that hast an unclean heart; it is the pure in heart that shall see God with comfort. And if I would say but any one thing for to dent an the evil of an unclean heart, and to cause y^o face of restless until you get your hearts cleansed in the blood of Christ, and purified by his Spirit, I would say this one thing, your uncleanness will make God's presence dreadful to you. Now you can defile yourselves with unclean thoughts, with covetous thoughts: now secretly you defile your hearts, you defile yourselves

with injustice by false gain, and think to get to yourselves that way, and so your souls are defiled. Well, this defilement of your souls will make God dreadful to you one day; therefore, go away with this as your portion, all you that have defiled your consciences with unjust gain, and with the lusts of the flesh, go away with this from God darted upon you. Well, this will make the sight of God the most scaring that ever can be, when God shall appear. Oh then, learn we to purify our hearts what we can. You whose consciences tell you there is much uncleanness in you, rest not until you come to find your consciences cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, sanctified by his Spirit; fall down before the Lord—O Lord, I am an unclean wretch, and by that that I have heard this day, there is that truth presented to me that strikes upon my conscience, that this secret uncleanness that no eye in the world ever saw, yet thy eyes having seen, it is that that will make thy presence terrible to me. Lord, cleanse me, wash me, and purge me with hyssop. We read in Jer. xxxiv. 3, 'And thou shalt not escape out of his hand; but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the king of Babylon, and he shall speak to thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.' Here is a threatening to Zedekiah that his eyes should behold the eyes of the king of Babylon; that is thus: Zedekiah had dealt treacherously with the king of Babylon, and thought to shift and provide for himself, and thought he was far enough from the king of Babylon. Well, saith God in a way of threatening, Thou thinkest to shift and provide for thyself thus, but thine eyes shall see the king of Babylon. So I say to all you who deal treacherously with God, who live in any unclean lusts, and yet make shew as if you would serve God, and make profession of his name. Oh you hypocrites, that make profession of religion, God yet deal treacherously with God, this I say in this day, Your eyes shall see him, but they shall be a most dreadful thing to you. Labour to cleanse your hearts; take heed of unclean lusts, labour for pure hearts. And if ye have any uncleanness in your hearts, be pure in your hearts, as saith Matt. v. 19, 20. Out of the heart cometh evil, that do defile the man. And the filthy thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. Take see it fully, ng your hearts with unclean thoughts, if mystery of the God with comfort; and take heed of now thou dost serve in any business any further for us now to God go before you. If a man once be swallowed up in sin, oh, if things do not go according to his will, he will be shift up and down, and rational soul shall be capable of by-ways he will have to And this shall be one further take heed of that! And take set out the blessedness. Labour to live above

sense. When men and women have sensual lives, are earthly, and they must have creature comforts here, oh, they defile themselves every day exceedingly. No marvel though worldlings and unclean wretches know so little of God, and have such poor, low thoughts of God. Oh, they do defile their souls, so as they cannot see God! Labour to keep yourselves clean. And you that have, through the mercy of God, had your consciences and souls purified, keep your souls still pure, and labour for more and more purity, upon this ground, because you may more and more see God. Is it not comfortable to see the face of God! 'Light is comfortable,' Eccles. xi. 7. Oh how comfortable is it to see God! therefore cleanse your souls more and more, and improve this privilege of your eyesight; improve it. What doth Jesus Christ promise? that you shall see God. And is this the blessing promised to you? Why, then, improve it, make use of it, and set your eyes upon God while you live in this world, and make it your work to contemplate upon God. Many, even Christians, they live as if there were no blessing in seeing God; but if there be such a blessing, then why are not your thoughts more upon God than they are? Every time you see God in his creatures, you should even gaze upon the glory of God. Oh this is my God! And when you look into his word, and come to his ordinances and worship him, why do not you fix your hearts and eyes upon him? A Christian that fixes his eye upon God, oh, he will come to be a glorious Christian indeed. If we would converse with God, and fix our eyes upon him, we might grow up in holiness exceedingly. As purity of heart doth

make us fit to see God, so the sight of God will make us more clean and more pure in heart daily, so as every night thou canst appeal to God, Lord, through thy mercy I have kept my conscience clear. Though there be many frailties and infirmities in my ways, yet, Lord, there is nothing that I have deliberately gone about this day, but I bless thee for it. Oh, then, when you lie down and close your eyes, you may have a sight of God; and when you open your eyes again in the morning, you may have a sight of God, to fill your hearts with joy. Oh, thou mayest live comfortably! Let become of the world what will, thou mayest live above the world, if thou keepest thyself in the sight of God. Set the Lord before your eyes continually. God sets you before his eyes; set you God, then, before yours. And by this you shall come to die comfortably. No man can see God and live, it is true; while we live here in the flesh, we cannot have the full sight of God. Ay, but a Christian, when he is to die, he may die comfortably. Well, let me close my eyes with death. I shall go out of this world, but I shall see God in another world. Thou hearest many things of God now that are great mysteries to thee. Be of good comfort, when thou art to die, thou mayest think thus: I go to the place where I shall come to know as I am known, to know God perfectly, to know all the mysteries of the gospel perfectly. This will make death to be comfortable to the saints in their departing here. And therefore rejoice in this blessing of Christ, and exercise now thy faith upon it, and let it run in thy thoughts: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

SERMON XXVIII.

OR,

THE ORDER OF THIS BEATITUDE.

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'—MAT. v. 9.

WE finished, you may remember, the last day, the sixth beatitude—the promise to the pure in heart that they shall see God. We come to this seventh beatitude, 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'

This blessedness, for the order, it is in the seventh place. As we read in Prov. vi. the contrary unto this, that God saith he hates, it is the seventh thing which is there revealed as an object of God's hatred: ver. 16, 'These six things doth the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination unto him.' Then the Holy Ghost having named the six, the seventh thing that is named it is, 'Him that soweth discord among brethren:' that is the seventh thing that God hates. And here the seventh thing that God promises blessedness unto is the peace-makers, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' And it well follows the former, 'Blessed are the pure in heart'—and then 'Blessed are the peacemakers;' for it is from the impurity of men's spirits that there is so much discord in the world. There would be more peace if there were more holiness. 'Follow peace and holiness, without which no man can see God.' They cannot see God without peace and holiness. Those two are joined together in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And purity of heart and peacemaking are joined together here. A pure heart and a pure heart will make peace. In James iii. 17, mark there what the scripture speaks of the head: 'The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable.' The wisdom that is from above is pure—that is, not defiled; there is no by and base ends and tricks and devices, and cunning, crafty ways, in the wisdom that is from above, that is first pure, then peaceable. And here the heart is first pure, then peaceable. The pure in heart, and then the peacemakers. There is nothing makes more disturbance than men's corruptions: James iv. 1, 'From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members.' Here is a question, 'From whence come wars and fightings among you?' If so be that this question

were asked among us, From whence are wars and fightings? from whence are jars and divisions among us? One would say, It is from such a party that would have such a thing; and the other would say, It is from such a party that would have such a thing; but few would answer it as the apostle doth here. Oh it is from the lusts that are in our hearts; wars and fightings between nations and in commonwealths are from the lusts of men's hearts. And wars in the church, and divisions there, are from the lusts in men's hearts; wars and divisions in cities, divisions in families, and contentions in men's own spirits, they are all from the lusts of our hearts. Saul, before he had defiled himself so grossly, as after he did, was of a very quiet and peaceable disposition; but when he came to be corrupt, and had a defiled conscience and heart, oh then he was of a cruel, rugged, and very perverse spirit. Those that keep themselves pure, whose consciences and hearts are clean, they are peaceable, and fit to make peace with others; but corrupt hearts, they make all the stir among us, and therefore so much division, so much corruption, so much impurity in a family, in a particular person. So far as thou art contentions and troublesome in the place where thou art, there is so much impurity in thy spirit. Wicked men, that are full of sin, cannot but be full of trouble. In Isa. lvii. 20, 21, 'But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.' The wicked are troublesome; they are troublesome wheresoever they live. In Gal. v. 20, you find what the fruits of the flesh are, 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest; first he speaks of uncleanness, then in ver. 20, 'Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.' These are the fruits of the flesh. Mark how many words there are that tend almost to the same thing: 'hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders.' All comes from the fruit of the flesh. Blessed, then, are the pure in heart, for then, as they shall see

God, so they will be peacemakers. Although ordinarily men lay all the trouble upon such as desire to walk most conscientiously, that desire to keep their hearts and ways most clean. Indeed, men who can yield to anything this way or that way, they are accounted quiet men; but men that must walk according to the rule that God hath appointed, so far as they can see light for, and whatsoever becomes of their private interests or private peace, dare not go contrary to the rule, dare not go one step in the dark, these are accounted the troublers of Israel. And who were they in former times that were accounted the troublers of the state, but those that were called Puritans? but Christ accounts them the best for making peace. The pure in heart first, and then peacemakers. Yea, it was Jeremiah's lot, chap. xv. 10, to be accounted a troublesome man: 'Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth.' Jeremiah a man of strife and contention to the whole earth! And yet he pleads his innocency, he walked with a pure conscience before them all; and yet they all did account of Jeremiah as a man of strife and contention to the whole world. This is the perverse judgment of wicked men. It was just so in the primitive times, they were accounted the great troublers of states. Paul, you know, was cried out of 'as a man that turned the world upside down.' And whatsoever trouble they had, presently they cried out of the Christians, that they were the cause of it. And what kind of men now are cried out of, as causes of trouble and disturbance? You know, and God knows, that the Lord will clear those men one day for walking according to the rule that Christ would have them, and keeping themselves from uncleanness and impurity. They are they who bear up the world; and let the world think what they will of those that walk most closely and strictly with God, according to the rule of his word, yet these are the peacemakers and the sons of God. But thus much for the order of this beatitude, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' We come to the beatitude itself, to the subjects who are blessed, and to the blessedness, what it is that is here promised to them.

'The peacemakers.'

The word that is translated 'peacemakers,' I find it generally understood by interpreters, those that either keep peace or make peace; any that are furtherances of peace any way, for the preserving of it where it is, or the procuring of it where it is not. It is a blessed thing to have a peaceable heart one's-self, to keep peace within one's own soul, that is blessed. It is blessed to be of a peaceable disposition towards all with whom we live. A froward, a perverse disposition, it is a cursed disposition; but a peaceable, quiet, and gentle disposition, it is a blessed disposition.

But further, it is more blessed for to be a means to procure peace in the places where we live, among those with whom we converse; and if ever we had cause to account it a blessed thing to be a peacemaker, then at this day: 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

First, Those that labour to make peace between man and God.

And, secondly, Those that do labour to make peace between man and man.

Blessed are those that labour to make peace between man and God. They are the words of Christ, and therefore we must understand them in the most spiritual sense; we must not exclude that, however. Blessed are those who, having found the blessedness of peace themselves, and so having peace with God, they are very desirous to make peace between other men and God too; they finding the sweetness in their own hearts of their peace with God, their earnest desires are, Oh that they could bring others to be at peace with God too. When the husband hath had the work of God in purifying his heart by faith, and hath found the sweetness of peace with God; Oh that I could be a means to make peace between the soul of my wife and God too; and so the wife that hath made her peace with God, having her heart purified by faith, and feels the sweetness of it; Oh, now that I could do anything in the world, any way, with prayers and tears, and walking convincingly before my husband, to work his heart to God, that there may be peace between God and his soul likewise; so one brother having his heart purified by faith, and having the sweetness of peace with God; Oh that I could but do anything before I die to further this great work of peace between the soul of my brother and God. Oh the grace of God to my soul, in bringing it to be at peace with him; and oh that I could be any way instrumental for the furtherance of the work of the grace of God on the soul of my brother; and so one kinsman to another, and one neighbour to another. Certainly those that ever knew what the peace of God meant, will endeavour what possibly they can to make peace between their brethren and God, by telling of them what their condition was. There was a time that I went on in a wretched way, as you are now going on in. I was an enemy to God; there was nothing in my heart but enmity against God. Oh, I would not for ten thousand worlds be one hour in that condition that I was once in, for fear I should die in it, and so be eternally an enemy to God. Oh that you would consider your ways! The way that you go on in, it is certainly a way of enmity against the blessed and eternal God. Oh, consider what God hath revealed in his word concerning the glorious work of reconciliation of sinners to himself. Thus we should be pleading one with another, and praying one for another, and la-

bouring to instruct one another to be at peace with God. Oh, blessed is that man or woman that hath in a gracious way laboured to draw any to be at peace with God, and whom God hath blessed in these endeavours. Hath God brought thy heart to be at peace with him, and to desire that others might be brought in to love the ways of God? Oh blessed, that ever thou wert born to be an instrument of so great a good, if it be but to bring in one soul to be at peace with God, so that God hath one enemy in the world less through thy means and endeavours. Thou mayest bless God, I say, that ever thou hadst a being, that canst have this comfort to thy soul: though I am a poor wretch myself, and was a long time an enemy to God, yet the Lord did not only bring my soul to be at peace with him, but made me an instrument to bring others to be at peace with him likewise, so that the Lord hath one enemy less in the world through my endeavours. Oh, it is that that would rejoice thy soul! Blessed art thou that hast a hand in this work, for it is the greatest work that ever took up the heart of God from all eternity. Of all the works that ever were in the heart of God from eternity, the work of reconciling souls to himself was the greatest work of all; and of all the things that God expects glory from unto all eternity, the work of reconciling souls to himself is the thing that God makes account to have the greatest glory from, that ever he shall have to all eternity. Now then, if God shall employ thee to be instrumental in so great a work as this is, blessed art thou that ever thou didst live in the world. That man is not blessed that is great in the world, or hath fine clothes, but that is the man that is a blessed man, that the Lord makes instrumental for the furtherance of that work; for that, above all things, his heart is most in. Besides, we might speak of the great evils that thou deliverest the soul of thy brother from, and the great good that thou bringest to the soul of thy brother, and the great blessing that thy brother's soul does bless thee withal, if thou beest an instrument to make peace between him and God. Oh, those that are instrumental this way have the blessing of such as they have been instrumental of good unto. They bless God that ever they saw such a one's face. Oh, the blessing of God be upon such a man or woman! I was going on in the ways of eternal death, and partly through the holy carriage of such a one I was convinced, and partly through their holy persuasions I was brought to the word, and there I met with those things that wrought upon my heart, that I would not have been without for ten thousand worlds. Oh, the blessing of God be upon the soul of such a man—of such a woman! Why, when such a one shall lie a-dying, going the way of all flesh, launching into the infinite ocean of eternity, he shall lie blessing God that ever

he knew thee; yea, and when he shall come to heaven, shall be there blessing God that ever he knew you. Is it not a blessed thing to labour to draw others to be at peace with God?

What a blessed work is the work of the ministry then! and the calling is a blessed calling. 'Oh, how beautiful are the feet of those that bring the glad tidings of peace!' So people should account it. And the first work that a minister hath to do when he comes to a place, is to say, Peace to that place. 'To us,' saith Paul, 'is committed the word of reconciliation;' that is our great embassy; this is the work that the Lord hath designed some men to. God may bless the endeavours of some private men to be peacemakers in this sense; but the work of the ministry is appointed by God. God hath set them apart to be his great ordinance for the reconciling the world to himself. Saith the Lord, There are a company of poor wretches that are now in ways of enmity against me, yet I have thoughts of peace towards them, and I send you among them for to carry the embassy of peace unto them, and I require and command you that you open the glad tidings of peace to them, and that you tell them how my heart is towards peace with them, and that you shew them the way how they may come to be reconciled to me, and that you do woe and labour with them with all your might, though it be to spend your lives with them. Yet if you can but labour to bring them to be at peace with me, it would be worth your lives, had you a thousand. This is the work that I require of you. Oh, it is a blessed and honourable work, and look upon it so! Look upon it as the great ordinance of God, appointed by God to make peace between God and souls that are in a way of enmity against him. And then indeed hath the word had its proper work upon a people, when it hath made peace. And oh how careful should ministers be in this, in this their work. What a cursed thing is it for ministers to be negligent in such a work as this is, when they have such a glorious end appointed by God. And if any of you have been brought in by the ministry of the word, and peace made between God and your souls through it, you are not only to bless God, but to bless the instruments of it. This is that the ministers of God may require as what is due to them; for it is promised here, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' All those whom the Lord hath pleased to work this good upon by their ministry, they should bless them. When you are alone in your closets, blessing God for peace made between God and you, you are bound in conscience to bless the instruments of this, to bless those ministers of God, and to pray for a blessing upon them; because the Lord made them instruments of so great a good unto you. And this certainly must needs be

an encouragement to any minister to be faithful and laborious, to spend their lives in labouring to reveal Christ to men's souls, when they know that if they do but gain any man's soul to be at peace with God, that soul will bless them, and bless them for ever, and even in the day of Jesus Christ they shall find the blessing. 'Blessed are the peacemakers' in that sense.

And if so, oh how blessed is that great peacemaker Jesus Christ, who is designed by the Father to make up peace between man and him. All the children of men being fallen from God in Adam, they are all in an estate of enmity against God; that is certain. And all the angels in heaven and men upon earth, all the creatures in heaven and earth, could not make peace between God and one sinful soul; it was too great a work for any creature. But now Jesus Christ, the wisdom of the Father, the second person, he looks upon the wretched, miserable estate of the children of men, and saw that if they were left to themselves they were all undone, and would be eternal enemies to God, and God an eternal enemy to them. He now steps in between, and, through the appointment of the Father, he mediates between wretched man and God to make up peace. He stands, I say, as the great mediator of the second covenant. And his heart was so much in the work of making peace between man and God, as he was content to lay down his life to the end he might make peace: Col. i. 20, 'And, having made peace through the blood of his cross.' Mark, Jesus Christ's heart was so much in being a peacemaker between the world and God, as, though he knew it would cost him his dearest heart blood, saith Christ, It shall go. Yea, the Scripture tells us he was content to be a curse for man. Oh, do but consider, you children of men, what a distance there was between God and you, that Christ, God and man, must come to make peace between God and you; and he must shed his blood, he must be made a curse for the accomplishing of this great work of God. This, my brethren, is the great mystery of godliness; this is that that we should spend all our days in admiring in, in standing and wondering, and blessing our Saviour, the great peacemaker. Had it not been for him, we had all been eternally enemies to God. Oh, let our souls bless Jesus Christ; and the greater the curse was upon Christ in this work, the more let our souls bless Christ. It is the work that the angels and the saints shall be exercised in to all eternity, in saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and praise, and worship, and service be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore.' for he hath redeemed us by his blood, as in Rev. v. Those that ever knew what the blessing of peace with God means, they know how to bless God for Jesus Christ. And any

of you that sometimes will be blessing of God for outward peace, for plenty and comfort that you have in this world, I appeal to your consciences in this question, demanding of you, in the name of God, When did you spend time above in your closets in admiring at the glory of God in that great work of the mediation of Jesus Christ, in making peace between God and your souls? When was ever your hearts taken with that great work above all things in the world, and your spirits raised in admiring and worshipping of God and of Jesus Christ, that great peacemaker, blessing and magnifying and praising the name of God, and blessing Christ his Son, who was God blessed for ever, for this great work of his in making peace between your souls and God? It would be one good argument that Christ hath been a peacemaker for your souls, if you have had your hearts so affected. But if there be nothing in this work of Christ in making peace between man and God, but you only give it the hearing, and let the great mystery of godliness in the gospel pass lightly away; when you hear it, and your hearts never taken with it, it is much to be feared, nay, it may be concluded as a certain truth, that to this day yet peace is not made between your souls and God. What his blood may do, what the effects of it afterwards may be, we know not, but yet it hath not this gracious effect upon you. But now we come unto the second thing:

'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

Peacemakers between man and man, they are blessed. As for this point I confess I intended to speak but very little of it at this time, nor out of this Scripture; for in another place many sermons I have preached about the point of heart-divisions; and almost every head that is needful about this point there I handled—namely, the evil of divisions, the causes of them, and the means how to heal them; and therefore thought to have passed very briefly over this. But yet because many there are that either have not heard, or have not use of those things for the present, and because of the necessity of the point, I shall speak a little about peacemaking between man and man.

This work is a very delightful work to meddle in, in these times especially. To meddle with the point of peace between man and man, it is one of the difficultest arguments that any minister can speak of in such times as these; and there is scarce any one thing wherein a minister is more put to it, to shew the wisdom and the meekness and the spirit of Christ, than when he meddles with this argument at such a time as this is. Very difficult it is, because men's hearts are so impure, such filth and uncleanness is upon the spirits of men; and to make peace with them, how should one go about it? Difficult it is,

because there is no man almost in the world can be brought to judge himself as any cause of want of peace among others. If all the people in England were together, and you should go from one to another, and ask, What! are you any cause of the divisions that are in England? he would profess against it. Ask every man, and he would disavow it: God forbid that I should have any hand in breaches and divisions. One party casts it upon another, and the other casts it upon them again. All cry for peace, and many times even those that cry much for it are the great hindrances of it; yea, cry after it in such a manner as do very much hinder it when they are speaking about it. It is very difficult to meddle with this, because a man cannot tell how to come to the practice part of this; but he must intrench upon one side or other—he must bring some to yield something. It is impossible there should be any peace between any two that are fallen out, if there be no yielding on either side. The Spaniards have a proverb, that stone and mortar makes a wall, because one yields; but two hard things will not. Now, because it is so hard for any to yield to another, therefore it is hard for any to meddle with the point of peace; yea, it is more difficult now than ever, because we find all sorts of men that are the greatest means of division and contention, yet they will all plead the National Covenant, that was a covenant for union—they will all plead it for their parties, and for the fomenting and maintaining of disunion. It is just here as it falls out in the point of the sacrament, that is appointed by God to be the means of union in the churches, it is therefore called the communion. It is an ordinance for the union of the churches, and through man's corruption there is nothing that ever hath been occasion of so much disunion as the sacrament hath been. And so even our covenant, though certainly intended for union, yet through man's corruption, if heed be not taken, as it hath been made use of, so may be further, for as great breaches as can be. Now, to come as it were between parties that are at variance and division, oh, how should a man behave himself! Truly, thinking of it at first, I was almost discouraged to speak any word about it, because of the indisposition of men's hearts at this time for peace. The prophet Hosea saith, chap. vii. 7, that the people were hot as an oven. The meaning is this, that the people had their hearts so set upon that way and course which they were in, that whatever the prophet spake to them it was in vain; as if a man should throw a few sticks into an oven when it was red hot, they are devoured presently and consumed into ashes. As if the prophet should say, All my speech to them hath no more effect, and there appears no more of what I say to them, than there will appear of a little straw that is cast into a hot

oven. And truly, my brethren, are not men's hearts heated in their way of divisions, some in one way and some in another, and seem to be resolute, and even set on fire almost at this time, that what is said to them is as presently devoured and comes to nothing, as, I say, a little straw or stubble in a hot oven, and therefore like to be as unprofitable at such a time as this as anything, though nothing more needful? But though it may be so unprofitable, yet because there is so much blessedness in it, I shall address myself to speak a little. It is a blessed thing to be a peacemaker. Now, certainly, those that can carry it well shew that they have a gracious temper of heart, and therefore are blessed. It doth argue a very gracious and holy spiritual temper of heart to be a peacemaker between man and man, if it be done in a spiritual way, for spiritual ends. That man that would meddle in point of peace with others, he had need have all well between God and his own soul first, and had need be of a very peaceable disposition himself; for any one that is of a froward or turbulent disposition himself, if he should come to talk of peace and cry out of divisions, every one would be ready to fly in his face. He need have much self-denial, not at all to look at himself, at his own party any way in respect to himself, but to have pure aims; he need come with a pure heart, to have pure aims at God and his glory, and at public good; and then, I say, it is an evidence of much grace in the heart, and therefore he is blessed. He is a blessed man that carries this wisely and prudently and graciously.

And then blessed, because by this means he shall prevent abundance of evil. Oh the woeful evils that do proceed from jars and divisions, from national divisions, from sea divisions, church divisions, family divisions, personal divisions, divisions between neighbour and neighbour, and the like! I had thought to have spoken a few words to all of them. Oh the abundance of sin that is committed in the time of division! There were many great sins committed among the people of God in former times, but I am verily persuaded there was never, in any thirty years since the gospel was known in England, so much sins among godly people as there hath been these last three years; the people of God have more defiled themselves by sinful distempers in these last three years than ever they were defiled in any thirty since the gospel was known in England. As in a family, sometimes there is more sin committed in one hour, where there are brawls and contentions and strife, than in another family in a whole twelvemonth; yea, I verily believe sometimes in some persons, some one man put into a passionate fit, into a way of contending with others, doth sometimes commit more sin in one hour, when he is in a passionate fit, than at another time in a whole quarter of a year; he may

reckon that hour an hour that contracts more guiltiness than, I say, all the sins that he commits sometimes in a quarter of a year besides. I fear that many of you may find this by experience, as we read of Moses, when he came down from the mount he brake the two tables, when he was in a fit of anger; but that was holy anger, it was for God. Truly so it is; many men and women, in the fit of a sinful anger, breaks both the tables, all the ten commandments, in one fit. Oh there is abundance of evil, of sin, that is committed by divisions. The apostle James saith, that where there is strife and anger and debates 'there is every evil work,' James iii. 16. Oh, my brethren, this it is that makes the devil so foment our divisions, because he sees that there is so much sin committed. What railing and reviling, what hatred, what brawling, what sins in thought, plotting, contriving, counselling, and what sins in word, what sins in actions, are where there is strife and envy! nothing but labouring to mischief one another what possibly they can. The devil looks at the sin and aims at that. It is not so much the division that the devil so much cares for, as the sin that is committed by it. As sometimes I have made use of a similitude that Austin hath; saith he, 'When a fowler goes to catch fowl, he sets his net on the other side of the hedge, and then he takes stones and flings into the hedge.' Why, he doth not expect to kill the bird by his stones, but to make a disturbance, and to cause the bird to fly ont, and hopes that he shall catch the bird in the net, that is on the other side of the hedge; that is that which he aims at. So, saith he, it is when the devil would make divisions and stirs, he tempts men, as it were, to throw stones one at another, and stirs up strife one against another, and makes a great deal of stir; but that the devil aims at is the net on the other side of the hedge—he sees that this will be the occasion of abundance of sin, there will be bitterness of spirit and wrath, and there will be wicked words and actions, and so he shall catch poor souls. When you are tempted to a fit of passion, know then the devil expects a great deal of sin that will follow. Now blessed are the peacemakers, for they are the means to prevent abundance of sin; and that is a most blessed thing. What blessed work can a man be more blessed in than to be a means to prevent sin; it is a blessed thing to prevent any one sin, but to be an instrument to prevent so much sin, that must needs be blessed.

'Blessed are the peacemakers,' for they are instruments of abundance of good likewise. All things flourish where there is peace; spiritual things flourish where there is peace; little things grow to a great height where there is peace. 'O blessed are the peacemakers,' they are the cause of much good. To shew both the evil of the want of it, and the good that is in peace,

either of these would be a large point; and I having done it elsewhere, shall not mention particulars now.

'Blessed are the peacemakers,' for they are instrumental for God in the work that God takes much delight in. Read but the Scripture; you will find there is no duty in all the book of God more urged, more backed with arguments and motives and persuasions—no duty hath stronger exhortations to it than peace. Read but the Epistles to the Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Romans, Corinthians; when you read them you shall find continually peace is the thing that the Holy Ghost doth most persuade men to. And Christ himself, who is the great peacemaker, he is tender of peace, not only between God and us, but between man and man. He glories in this title. Other great captains did use to glory in the places where they had wars, as Scipio Africanus, but Christ he takes his denomination from peace; he was typed out by Solomon, who was the prince of peace; and he came into the world in the time of peace. And the angels they sung a song of peace, 'Glory to God on high, peace on earth;' and his ministers were appointed to go and preach peace; and his kingdom it consists in righteousness and peace; and his blessing is a blessing of peace. And when he rose again he spake peace; and his legacy is a legacy of peace, 'My peace I leave with you.' And an apostolical benediction, it is 'grace and peace' still. So that by these things we may easily conclude that there is no one thing that God's heart is more upon than to see peace. Blessed then are the peacemakers in being so instrumental in such a thing, in which the Lord hath so much glory in.

Certainly they shall have the blessing likewise of many upon them. As when David had an unpeaceable disposition in his spirit towards Nabal, and he would do this and that against Nabal; when Abigail came, and through her wisdom, and the peaceableness of her spirit, did allay the heat of David's anger, and so brought David into a more quiet and peaceable disposition; why, presently David blessed God for Abigail, and blessed Abigail; 'Blessed be thou, and blessed be thy counsel,' saith David to her, 1 Sam. xxv. 33; for I intended to do thus and thus. And so if men have not very wicked and vile hearts, though when their corruption is stirred, then they will do thus and thus, and they will have their minds, and make men thus to yield thus unto them; and they have most bitter thoughts and desperate resolutions; but if it pleases God to send a son of peace to them, some that shall come with a quiet and peaceable spirit, and by persuasion, by laying scripture to them, shall be a means to appease their boiling spirits, to cool that boiling passionate heart of theirs, and so to allay those desperate resolutions of theirs, I say, if

they be not desperately wicked, they will see cause to bless God for this : well, blessed be God that sent such a man to me to prevent me, for I see I should

have done that that I should have repented of. 'Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.'

SERMON XXIX.

OR,

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MAKE PEACE BETWEEN MAN AND MAN.

'Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.'—MAT. v. 9.

It is a blessed thing to be an instrument of peace between man and man. I find the story of Moses, in Exod. ii. 30, wherein he doth engage himself in a quarrelsome business, but to the end that he might make peace, to be recorded by the Holy Ghost afterwards in the New Testament as a high and great commendation of Moses. 'And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together; and he said unto him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?' Why, now Moses he might have lived at the court, and had all the delights that possibly might be, why would he meddle with the Hebrews that were striving together? In Acts vii, we find there among the great commendations of Moses, this set forth; ver. 26, 'And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?' He would have set them at one again. The Holy Ghost forgets not this, that Moses would not content himself to live at the court, and have all kind of pleasure and delight there, but he would interest himself in the fallings-out of his brethren, so as if possibly he could to set them at one again. The Holy Ghost remembers this in after ages. Then somewhat is to be said about this of making and keeping peace between men and men. It is not, blessed are those that are at peace with sin, or seek to make peace with men's sins and corruptions, but peacemakers that make peace between brethren and brethren, neighbour and neighbour; for though we should labour to be at peace with all men as much as possibly we can, yet we must not so much as endeavour nor desire to be at peace with any sin. Though God were infinitely willing and desirous to reconcile the world to himself, yet he would never reconcile sin; God and sin can never be reconciled—God and the least sin cannot. All the angels in heaven and men upon earth can never reconcile God and sin;

yea, whatever Christ did, as it was not intended by him, so it could never reconcile God and sin together; but God would remain to be an eternal enemy to sin, and that is the glory of God. So when we are endeavouring to make peace, we must not think to make peace with men's corruptions, with men's sins; we must not so love peace as to swallow it wrapt up with the dirt of guiltiness and of sin, not so as to soothe and humour men's corruptions. Certainly there is no blessedness here, but a curse. But yet thus far, though we ought never to be at peace with men's sins, yet we may forbear men though sinful—we may forbear sinners; yea, and when we come to oppose their sins, we must oppose them only with those weapons that God hath appointed. The magistrate in his place, and the church in its place, must oppose sin. There may be a great deal of turbulence of spirit, more than God allows in men, in opposing men's distempers and corruptions; but that that we are now speaking of is peace between man and man. I shall therefore first labour to propound some general rules of peace between man and man. Secondly, Some more special rules in reference unto family peace. Thirdly, Some rules in reference unto neighbourly peace. And I confess I had some thoughts of rules about church peace, and commonwealth peace; but I shall tell you after why we shall not speak to that now.

First, then, Some rules in general for peace between man and man.

That is the first : That we should never use any violence to any man, but where there is a necessity. If what we would do may be done by any means but by violence, we should rather try it. When we see such and such walk disorderly, otherwise than we would, they do wrong. First, We should study whether there may be any means to recall them before any violence be used; use that always as the last help. It is quite otherwise with most men and women. When any-

thing displeases them in another, they fly upon their faces presently, and the first way which they take for help to reduce men, it is in a violent way. Now this is not to be the child of God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called the children of God;' that is, as I shall shew afterwards, they shall be like God. Now the Lord himself doth not love to 'grieve the children of men.' So the Scripture saith, 'He delights not in the death of a sinner; he doth not willingly punish.' Why, we should be like our Father. If there can be any means that can be used besides violence, let that be first tried; let us first engage ourselves there.

Secondly, If violence must needs be used, let there not be an extent of this violence any further than needs must. By the extent of it, I mean either in regard of the subject against whom, or in regard of the violence itself. Let it not be extended to a further degree than needs, but mix it what possibly you can with gentleness and love, if there be any hope of good that way; and extend it not further than needs must in respect of the subject that you do oppose. By that I mean this, that when any do displease you, and you must act in opposition to them; fly not out against all others that have any kind of likeness to them in anything else. Indeed, you may oppose all others that do that very unjust thing that such a one doth; but this is the frowardness and the turbulency of men's spirits, that if any one do displease them, they do not satisfy themselves in opposing the person that doth it, or the thing that is unjust, but they will fly out against all men that have but any kind of correspondence with such that are of the way that they are of, and will not only oppose them that do displease them in the thing wherein they are displeased, but in all things else. Oh, this is an unpeaceable spirit! As we read of Haman, when Mordecai had displeased him, he did not think it enough to proceed against Mordecai's person, but against all the people of the Jews; his heart was against them all. And thus it is with many; if they be but angered with any one that is in such a way different from others, they will presently fall upon all that are of that way. It was just the prelatial way in former times; if any that were called a Puritan did but anger them, they would fall upon all that went on in that way, and cry out of them all; and if they were displeased in one thing, they would seek to revenge themselves all the ways they could, in opposing of them in all other things. Now this is a way of turbulency, and not the way of peace. That is the second rule: When violence is to be used, yet let it extend no further (either in regard of the measure or the subject) than needs must. Such a one hath done amiss; why, I will deal with him in his person, and deal with him about that particular thing wherein he hath done amiss. It is a

very usual thing in neighbours, if one be but angry with one in a family, they are presently angry with all in the family; and this causes a great deal of division. So likewise in a town, a church, or commonwealth. But these rules are in general.

Thirdly, If you would have peace in the world, you must resolve beforehand to be willing that it should cost you something. Every man would fain have peace. When we speak of peace, saith Austin, in his Comment upon the Psalms, all mankind desires it presently. When you speak of peace, with one mouth—Oh I desire it, I would wish it, I would have it, I love it. Every one would fain have peace; but men and women are loath that it should cost them anything. What is the meaning of that? Oh they would fain have peace, but they would fain have everybody to be all of their mind; they would fain that they might do everything whatsoever they pleased, and nobody speak against it. But now, when the heart is set upon peace, and is used by Christ to be a peacemaker, such a one is set upon peace, so as to be willing to purchase it at a dear rate, yea, to purchase it at any rate but sin. The truth is, peace is never bought too dear but by sin. And as we say, we may buy gold too dear; so we may buy peace too dear, if we betray our consciences for peace sake, or the truth for peace sake. But let us be willing to sacrifice what is our own and not God's, especially when it is public peace. If every man or woman had this resolution strongly set—Well, I am resolved so long as I live, wheresoever God casts me, I will make it my endeavour that there may be peace where I live, and I will be at any cost that so I may procure it. Yea, whatsoever shall be proposed as a way of peace besides sin, I am resolved that that way I will take where I see that God may have glory, and the public good may go on. Yea, where I see the good of my brother's soul doth depend upon it—for where there are jars and contentions, I have heard that there is abundance of sin, and I find it so by experience. Now, where I may prevent sin, and do good, I am resolved, though it cost me dear, I will not be wanting for the furtherance of this. This resolution must be in every man, to be willing that it must cost him dear; for peace is a precious commodity, and it comes not by wishing, Oh I would have peace! and it comes not by crying out one upon another, but be willing that it should cost me something. You that cry out so much for peace, I appeal to you, what doth it cost you?

And then the fourth rule for the furtherance of peace is, That every man or woman should account it the most honourable thing to yield first. That cursed principle that there is in men's hearts, that it is a disgrace to begin to yield, it is that that makes disturbance in the world, in all societies. But if men were principled in this, that where there are any

breaches, that man or woman begins first to yield is the most honourable, this would be a mighty furtherance to peace. Believe it, it is so. It is a great part of the honour of God to begin to be reconciled to us; so saith the Scripture: 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.' He was in Christ—yea, he was from all eternity in Christ. Alas! if God had not begun with us, we should have stood out with him to all eternity. Mankind would have been an enemy to God eternally, if God had not begun with him to be reconciled first. Now, is it the honour of God to begin with us poor creatures, and is it not the honour of his creature to begin with his fellow-creature? Thou sayest, Let him come to me and yield to me—I am his better; or, he hath done me the wrong, and the inferior ought to yield. If God had stood out with you upon these terms, and had said, Let the creature yield which is the inferior, and any creature that hath been unjust and done me wrong; and what would become of you? Well, would you be called the child of God? then be such a peacemaker as God is—begin the work of reconciliation first. If another doth begin, you have lost the honour of it, and lost a great part of the reward of it. It is no thanks, when another begins to be at peace, that then you come in; any base spirit can be brought to that. But if you for peace sake can yield to an inferior, and seek it first, oh, this is honourable in the eyes of God and in the eyes of man! That is a fourth rule.

Fifthly, Look to breaches betimes. When there is any breach between you and another—it is a general rule that concerns states, churches, neighbours, families—where there is any breach, begin to stop the breach betimes; let it not go far before you come in with help against it. Contention and strife is compared in Scripture to the breach of waters; and where there is a breach of waters, it is not to stand and look upon it, and say, Hereafter I will stop it; but it concerns thee to stop it presently; you know not what the end of it may be. Very great breaches do come often with very little beginnings, and a little at the first would be a means to help very great evils that afterwards great means will not help: that is a further rule of peace.

Sixthly, If you find peace be hard to make, pursue it. Pursue peace, and try one means after another; let it not be sufficient for you to say, Well, God knows, I would fain be at peace, and I have used means to be at peace; I have made fair offers. Well, but hath not that done the work that you desire? Fall to it again and again; try more conclusions. Whatsoever the heart of a man is in, and set upon, he will try all the conclusions that he can for the effecting of it. If your hearts be set upon peace, though you have a repulse the first and second time, you will on again. The Scripture bids us 'pursue

peace, and follow peace;' and mark my text, 'Blessed are the peacemakers;' he doth not say, Blessed are the peace-wishers. Some men have good affections, and say, I would there were peace; and it may be they use some slight endeavours: As for my part I have done something for peace. Ay, but is the thing effected, hast thou made peace? Thou shouldst never be at rest till thou hast made it. If there be any means in the world untried, try what that means will do.

Seventhly, Further, if after all the means used that you can, you do not find it come, but still men will be of contentious spirits, then observe this rule. However, for thine own part, resolve to walk before such in a convincing way. They are of troublesome spirits, and wrest every word you speak. You cannot meddle but you foul your fingers; yet, for all this, break off with this resolution, I say: I will do what I can to convince them in a constant way of good, of holiness, and justice, and righteousness; if it may be, I will heap 'coals of fire upon their head,' and melt their hearts that way. I am resolved, whatsoever evil they do to me, I will do good to them. As Calvin said concerning Luther—Luther was of a violent, hot spirit. Well, saith Calvin, let Luther call me a devil, let him call me what he will, I will acknowledge Luther to be a precious servant of God, whom God doth use as an instrument of great good. Here is a peaceable spirit. This is the way to make peace, When the means have been tried, and yet it cannot be done, men's spirits will not be quieted, yet walk convincingly before them; and a convincing conversation, in a few months it may be—but what if it be years?—will prevail with their hearts more than all other means that you did use to make peace between you and them. And truly now, in these days, the people of God are put to as much trial in this as in any age. I would to God he would but fasten this one thing I am speaking of upon their hearts! Such clamours and outcries and reports there are among us, that one would wonder how so much dust should come to be raised. How men that heretofore seemed to be godly and religious, their spirits are so embittered, and even mad again, one would wonder at it. But the best way is this, wait on the Lord and keep his way; walk strictly, inoffensively, commit thy cause to God, and in time all these clamours and stirrs will wash away, will come to nothing, and thy light will break forth as the noon-day, and God will incline the hearts of others to thee, and they shall be convinced, and say, Verily, here is a son of God, observe his way and course; there is nothing but the Spirit of God appears in him. This is our way, to walk in a convincing conversation, in a constant way; when we cannot quiet men other ways, this will do it.

Eighthly, And then, in the last place, use much

prayer. 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,' pray for the peace of kingdoms, cities, churches, neighbours, towns, families; be much in prayer for it. This is a good spiritual help. I might shew you Scripture for everything; but the point is so large, and I have spoken heretofore about it, so that I shall but only name the very heads of things. There is many of you cry out of the troubles of the times, and of the contentions that there are among men, and bitterness of men's spirits; you cry out of this, but I appeal this day, in the name of God, to your consciences, what time have you spent in secret to make you moan to God, to complain to God in secret between God and your souls? Perhaps some men, in prayer with others, will speak of the contentions, and it is with a spirit of contention; but when you have been in secret, have you poured out your hearts with earnest prayer that God would find out means of reconciliation? O Lord, we cannot see how men can be reconciled, men's hearts are at such a distance; but, Lord, thou that knowest how to reconcile heaven and earth together, thou knowest how to reconcile men and men! Pray much for this, and know that thy prayers at last shall return into thine own bosom. This now in the general.

Now for the particulars. For peace in families observe these rules:—

First, thus, Observe men's tempers in your family. The husband observe the temper of the wife, and consider then what she is to be indulged in in regard of her temper; so the wife the temper of her husband, the parent of the child, the master of the servant, and servants to their masters; every one observe the tempers one of another, one fellow-servant observe the temper of the other, and it will help much to peace in the family.

Secondly, Observe the fittest times and seasons to debate things in a family. You have the opportunity of any time. Be not rash in contesting one with another. The husband is not to fall a-debating things when he sees the wife in a distemper, and so the wife. No, rather forbear. A wife would live at peace. She complains of such and such evil carriages in her husband; but I appeal to you, what do you do when there is any evil miscarriage in a husband? Why, you presently fly out in words against him, and then you will debate the business when he is in a passion; whereas you should observe the fittest time, when you see him to be in the most loving disposition, then in a loving way debate what hath been unjust and amiss in him, then set it before him, and then tell him of it when he is in the fittest condition to hear; and so the husband should do accordingly to the wife. Something, I observe, hath been done amiss; watch now for the time when it may be most like an admonition will take, and this would much conduce to peace.

Thirdly, If any be angry with one another for some one thing, let them take heed that they be not angry with them for all things because there is one thing amiss. That now you find ordinarily, if there be anything amiss in a family, there is nothing will please a contentious spirit, but they are angry with everything in the family. Now wisdom would teach you thus: there is such a thing displeases me; ay, but because that displeases me, what doth the other displease me? The other is as well done as it was done when I was most pleased. I am now displeased with this one thing. Let me keep the expression of my displeasure within bounds to the thing that hath displeased me; let not me have my gall to run over. That is a great disease that physicians observe in the body, when the gall runs over, and doth not keep in its proper place. So when anything displeases me, for me to have a heart angry and bitter against all things, this is a great make-bate in a family.

Fourthly, Let superiors desire obedience out of love rather than out of fear; and let inferiors obey rather from love than from fear, or from necessity. What is the cause of the disturbance in families but this, the servants they will never care for obedience, nor children, but merely out of fear, when they must needs, or out of necessity they must do it, and therefore they do it; and governors they carry themselves towards their children and servants as if they did not regard their love at all, but they regard to have their will. Let my servant do my work and will, and there is all that I care for. Now, if you will be carried by such principles as these are in a family, certainly there will be a great deal of disturbance there; but now when in a family the master or mistress would have them obey, and their care is, oh that I might have obedience from love, that what they do they may do for me out of love; and so the husband not only care to have his wife to be under him, but to do all she doth out of love, and not out of necessity. Now it is not a little will breed disturbance in that family, but there is abundance of peace there, where the superiors do desire and endeavour obedience out of love rather than fear, and where the inferiors do obey and serve rather from love to their superiors than from necessity that they must do it.

Fifthly, Observe that when at any time there is most cause to oppose others in the family for any evil, be sure to labour at that time to shew most love; then, above all times, manifest your greatest love unto them, that they may be persuaded that you do intend their good. Let a man love me and beat me, as the proverb is. If you have occasion to manifest displeasure in your family, then your care should be to manifest love, that those that you manifest displeasure against may be convinced that even at that

time you love them. Certainly this will mightily allay the bitterness of spirit; for otherwise, if you oppose them out of bitterness, though the cause be just why they should be opposed, yet if it be out of bitterness, bitterness will raise bitterness. And so, though the other be the guilty person, yet instead of subduing his corruption, you will but only stir up his corruption; but now, if you shall so oppose him in his way as to reprove him, or if there be cause punish him, yet so as to carry yourselves towards him so as he cannot but be convinced you intend good, and no hurt to him, this will mightily overcome his spirit, and so will be much peace in the family. It is the promise made to Jerusalem, in the prophecy of Isaiah, 'That it shall be a quiet habitation.' Oh, it is a great blessing upon a family if it may be said, this is a quiet habitation! Come from morning to night, from the beginning of the week to the end, yea, from the beginning of the year to the end, you shall see nothing but quietness here. It is the blessing upon Jerusalem, and so upon your families. Oh these are the children of God! Here is nothing but peace and quiet here. Every one knows how to do his duty—the governors theirs, children and servants theirs; and so it is a quiet habitation.

Now then for neighbours. Whosoever will meddle in that had need be much self-denying, and very wise, and very loving, and very meek in dealing with them. And these rules are to be observed for peace between neighbour and neighbour:—

First, Entertain nothing against a neighbour merely upon hearsay. Take heed of that. A great deal of fire is kindled, and stir there is between one neighbour and another. Why, what is the matter? When it comes to be examined, it is nothing at all; it was a mere fancy—as sometimes soldiers have a false alarm—and there is no truth in anything; but as soon as they come to confer one with another, they shake hands and are friends together. Oh, take heed of entertaining anything merely by hearsay. Consider this peace between me and my neighbour; it is precious, and I am loath to lose the benefit, the sweetness, of it, for nothing. Therefore I will inquire whether it be true or no, and if need be I will rather go to him himself to know it, than I will entertain grudges, and that that may breed contention between us. That is the first rule.

Secondly, Take heed of being peremptory in thy judgment in thine own cause, but be willing to hear those that are not interested in the cause; and, above all times, take heed of your judgment in time of passion. Though men are never so resolute as they are in time of passion, yet the truth is, men are never so unable to judge as they are when they are angry. Of all times, do not believe your own judgment, if anger be once got up. When once the thing

is got into the affections, the judgment then vanishes; men have the weakest judgments in their passion, and yet they will be the most peremptory in their judgments then. That is the second rule: If you would have peace among neighbours, be not too peremptory in your judgments in your own cause, and especially believe not your judgments in your time of passion, but rather go and think of it—pray over it.

Thirdly, (that may be a distinct one,) Do not fall out with any neighbour till you have been before at prayer, that God would direct you in this business. Oh, here is a business falls out that is like to bring a great deal of disturbance. Lord direct me; Lord help me. Guide me in this, that I may do nothing dishonourable to thy great name—nothing disagreeable to thy will. I appeal to your consciences in this, you that have had to deal with neighbours, I appeal but to your consciences in this thing; can you say thus: There was never any falling out between me and any neighbour, but I went first to God to direct me in the business, and to teach me how I should behave myself about it, with a resolution to walk according to what directions God should grant to me by his word and by his Spirit? Certainly your contentious men, and unpeaceable men, they seldom pray—they seldom commend the cause to God; and therefore God leaves them to themselves, to bring such a deal of trouble, both to themselves and unto others.

Fourthly, Let nothing be brought into public view before private means have been used. Whatsoever offence there is between one neighbour and another, yet observe this rule—it is a rule that Christ tells us—If thy brother offend thee, tell him his fault between him and thee alone; and if yet he continues in his evil, then take two or three privately. Afterwards bring it to the church. So that this concerns Christians, that whatsoever offences fall out, first private means is to be used, and we are not to make any infirmities, any faults of any of our brethren known in public, until we have tried private means. Indeed, if the fault be public, then there may be public means used without any more ado; but if the thing that is done be private, do not you bring it into public before you have used private means to help.

A fifth means of peace is this: Oh, labour to engage one another in duties of love; make account that it is a great benefit to you, if God offers you an opportunity to engage a neighbour to yourself. We should study peace. When men or women are engaged one to another, then they will not easily break peace. But when they live as strangers one towards another, then every little thing makes them break the peace.

¹ Perit omne iudicium cum res transit in affectum.

Sixthly, Another rule is this: If my good crosses my neighbour's commodity or convenience, if anything that I would have do cross the mind of my brother, let me account it an affliction to me. Though, it is true, I may lawfully desire my right; yet if I find I cannot have my right without contention with my brother, I should make account of it as a great affliction to myself. Indeed, God doth not deny men to seek their right; but if they see they cannot have it without their brother's affliction, they should account it an affliction to themselves.

Seventhly, Farther, delight thou in doing good thyself, and rejoice to see others do good; that is the way of peace. If once a spirit of envy doth prevail in the hearts of men, there is nothing will keep them at peace. One man envies at another; he sees such a man gets more than he. Such a man gets the credit and honour of such a thing more than I. Now when a spirit of envy prevails, there will come a spirit of contention. But when men labour to do what good they can in the places that God hath set them, and they can rejoice in what good they see God makes others to be an instrument of, they can appeal to God: Lord, thou knowest what a joy it is to my heart to hear or see that thou makest others to be an instrument of good as well as I. This is acceptable to God.

Eighthly, And then the last thing that I would propound is this, That there should be often neighbourly meetings for the keeping of peace, and the making peace where there is any breach of it, and specially those that are of the chief in places and towns. And these meetings should be in their own houses; it is most honourable, and safe, and comely, and like to be most profitable, for men in parishes and towns to meet together at their own houses, and not to make the place of their meetings to be in taverns. For though, it is true, it is not simply unlawful in itself for friends to meet there; but though it be not in itself simply unlawful, yet certainly it is more honourable for those that are chief in towns that they can meet together in their own habitations. And there is more love in meeting together at their own houses than at the tavern; and there is not so much danger there; though they intend no hurt when they go, yet there is a greater temptation there; although sometimes it is but little that is either eat or drunk, yet at some other times there may be excess. And so the business of peace and love may run into the business of excess in eating and drinking, and pleasing the flesh, and so no good at all done, but rather before they part one from another, fall out one with another, when they have taken somewhat too liberal of the use of the creature. And therefore, though the thing be not in its own nature evil, yet you know what the rule of the

apostle is, Phil. iv. 8, 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' Certainly, those that shall be instruments of this are instruments of great good; they are blessings to the places where they live, and many will bless God for them. What abundance of good may but half-a-dozen chief men in a parish or town do this way, if they would set themselves about it, and not say, Well, I have business of my own, and what have I to do with them? This, I had almost said, is the language of Cain, when as God inquired about his brother Abel, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' saith he. Let no man say, Am I my brother's keeper? I must look to business of mine own. Know it is thy business, if thou wilt approve thyself to be a child of God. As God hath made it to be the greatest work that ever took up his heart to reconcile the world to himself, so you that are eminent in places should account it your own work to reconcile differences in parishes, and not let things break out to bitterness, and violence, and rage. What good is there done then? Many times when you have meetings, perhaps you are in a fair way of composing things, and carrying all things with a joint consent for the furtherance of the gospel, and the good of the place that God hath set you in. Why, one froward word puts them all into a fire presently, and there is the loss of an opportunity of abundance of glory that might have come to God. What! dost thou regard more thy passion and humour, and to stand upon thy terms and honour—dost thou regard this more than public service for God, or church, or commonwealth? Thou art not one of God's. A child of God would regard the cause of God more than his private cause. And therefore blessed are the peacemakers, either in families or parishes. Oh then blessed are the peacemakers in church and commonwealth. I confess many things I had in my thoughts to have spoken concerning these two; but times are so for the present, and the spirits of men are in such a fit, that I could not satisfy my conscience in this, to think it a seasonable time to meddle with anything. For I could not meddle with making peace, but I must shew you something about our differences, and what one side would have and the other. Now, were men's spirits in any quiet frame, fitting to hear it, it would be an acceptable work; but for the present, seeing men's spirits are in such a fit, I am verily persuaded that whatsoever is said would be as stubble to an oven. And therefore I rather desire to forbear, and commit the cause to God, desiring him to make peace among us.

SERMON XXX.

OR,

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDEPENDENCY AND PRESBYTERY.

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'—MAT. v. 9.

You know I have not as yet meddled with any matters of controversy among you, but give me leave in a few words plainly to speak a little to that great controversy that they call independency and presbytery. I will but shew you, first, where lies the principal difference there; for a great many there are whose spirits are mighty hot and violent one against another. But come to demand of these men, Do you know the controversy? do you know what it is? They are not able to give you an account where doth the main thing lie. Some will tell you that Independents would have no kind of government at all, and a general toleration for all things; this, they think, is the difference. And upon this they are misled to those things that, were they rightly informed, they could not be misled unto; for I make no question, but many whose spirits are very hot this way, yet are very godly, holy, gracious men, and go according to their conscience, and think they do God good service in a very strong opposition of them, and were it not for that they would not do as they do. Therefore, but in a word, to give you the main thing that is called independency, and that that is called presbytery, that hinders so much the peace among us.

The great thing is this, those that they call Independents, they are persuaded, first, that there can be no kind of power and authority in the church, but that that is set in it by Christ, no officers at all but them that are set in it by Christ—some of the other judgments go thus far; but here it may be it may weigh a little further, that as every office in the church and officer must be appointed by Christ, so the extent of that office, how far it should go, must be appointed by Christ. For as it is in the commonwealth—though this prove not, yet it may illustrate—as there can be no court and judicature in a commonwealth but by the authority of the supreme judicature, so no jurisdiction in the church but by the authority of the supreme, Jesus Christ; and as it appoints the office, so it appoints the extent of the office, how far it should go. But this to make way.

Now for the controversy. Say those they call Independents, For our part we think this, that the ruling power of ministers, that Christ hath appointed to feed people by word and sacraments, extends no further than where Christ hath appointed them, for to feed, by word and sacraments, in their pastoral power. Look, how far Christ hath given them power and authority to feed a people by word and sacraments, to take charge of the souls of a people; so far Christ hath given them power to rule over them in his name, and no further.

Now those that they call presbyters, they think they may go further, that though such and such ministers have only a pastoral charge but in one congregation, he cannot challenge in any pastoral relation to come and preach and administer sacraments but in this congregation; yet they think that by joining with others, his ruling power shall have an extent to a hundred or a thousand congregations that his face never saw, whenas the pastoral charge of his for word and sacraments doth extend in an ordinary way but to one. Now for my part, whoever thinks there is a greater controversy in these two, but this I am speaking of, he sees further than I can do in it. Here the controversy mainly lies, whether the ruling power of any minister extends further than his pastoral power for word and sacraments—whether he hath the charge of others to rule them together with others, and not the charge of them in an equal way to feed them in word and sacraments. Now I do not come to plead this way or that way for either side, but only so far as may be for peace.

If the controversy lies here, I appeal to your consciences, Are you so certain, so sure of one side, that you can join in a violent opposition of the other? Is one so clear and evident to you, as you can take upon you, as you would answer it before Christ, to use all the power of civil magistracy for to force one or the other side? For so I speak of either; for I would account it a very great evil for those that profess independency to force such as profess presbytery to be of their minds or practice. And so I think it will

not be acceptable to Jesus Christ for the one by a civil way to force the other, and it will never prove to be the way of peace.

But now if you will say, We will force them to do so; it is true you may by an iron chain tie men close together that they shall not be able to go at such a distance; but will that make peace here in the church of Christ in respect of men's hearts?

There is one thing more that I have observed hath been a cause of the breaking of peace exceedingly, and that is, the mistake of the point of schism; for that because we have that word in the covenant, men think in conscience that what is indeed truly schism they are bound to oppose with all their might, let become of peace what will; for that that the Scripture accounts schism, certainly we are bound by all lawful means, according to the covenant, to oppose.

But I beseech you consider this first, whether if any man that is a member of a church—for this is cried out of—that whosoever shall depart from the church that is acknowledged by himself a true church, and especially shall join with others, this man is a schismatic.

For to understand this aright, that there may not be the breaking of more peace than need, suppose that there be some men truly godly and conscientious that are in a church, but there is something done in the church that they cannot believe to be the mind of Christ; nay, after all examination, after prayer, after seeking to God, yet they cannot see it to be the mind of Christ, but they should sin if they should join with them. They can testify to God, their own consciences witnessing for them, that they would gladly join with such a church in all the ways of God's worship, but in such and such ways they cannot without sin to their own consciences. They labour to inform themselves, they go to the elders, go to others in all humility to shew their doubts in this thing; and after the receiving of reasons from them, they depart, and they do in conscience to God examine them between God and their souls, and pray over them, that God would reveal these things unto them if they be his mind. Now after all this is done, yet if they cannot see, what would you have these men do? Suppose there be a hundred of them; they cannot communicate, yet they are not presently to rend from the congregation, but to wait a while to see whether God will convince them. Now after all means used, and they cannot be convinced, shall these men live without the ordinances of the sacrament all the days of their lives? Hath Christ so tied a member of a congregation, that if he cannot without sin to him join with the church, that he must never join with any other? Truly there had need be clear warrant for this if any one shall affirm it. But now suppose these should in all humility desire that

they might have liberty together to join in the ordinances of Christ. They hold all the foundations of this church, yea, they account them brethren, they look upon them as godly, and in those ordinances wherein they can, they will join with them; but they cannot in such and such, and they must either join in some other fellowship, or they must be without those ordinances all their days. Now if these men shall in their lives appear godly, and walk peaceably towards others, so far as they can see the mind of God, do you think in your consciences that this is the schism that is spoken against in Scripture, that we are to oppose, and that that men so oppose now, which they call schism? I would put the case thus: In the bishops' time there were a company, you know, that were accounted non-conformists, which were very godly men; they could not conform to kneeling, suppose, or in any other ceremony, either in baptism or the supper of the Lord, and so they could not join with the congregations in the supper of the Lord. Upon this the bishops called them schismatics; and it was upon no other ground, they said. Now there are many of our brethren at this day, yea, I believe most of the godly ministers in England within a few years, did account those men that could not join at sacraments, because of kneeling and the cross, to be in an error; I say, the most godly men in the kingdom did believe it, and I believe many do so still.

But you will say, Though withdrawing from a congregation indeed which they could not join without sin, that was not schism; yet if they had gathered into another congregation, that had been schism. Then this satisfies,

First, In the point of negative schism; but for positive schism, to that I put this consideration to you, only that we might a little mollify men's spirits: Suppose these men might have had leave from the state—as suppose this law had been made that all men whose consciences cannot be brought to submit to kneeling at sacrament, and the cross in baptism, and cannot acknowledge the authority of prelates, that they shall have in such places in the city such meetings and such congregations where they shall enjoy the sacrament without those ceremonies, and without the acknowledgment of the authority of bishops—I say, suppose the state had allowed this, had these men been schismatics? As suppose all our brethren of Scotland that were in England in former times, why, abundance of them that lived in parishes they could not kneel at sacrament; now if this liberty had been given them, that all of the kingdom of Scotland that lived in the city of London, that they should have some particular place in the city, and should enjoy what they would there.

Ay, you will say, if the state had allowed them, then they were not.

But now consider of this, Schism is a church sin; and if anything be schism before the state allow it, it is after the state allows it. When it comes to break any order in the state, then it is a sin of another nature; but when we speak of schism properly so called, it is only a sin of the church. Now, if it be a schism before the state allows it, it will be a sin when the state allows it, that is certain; the allowance or not allowance of the state doth not change the nature of the thing. And I am confident that there is scarce any of you that are godly but would have thought it in former times a great mercy if those that were Non-conformists had had so much favour from the state as to have liberty to have joined together in such and such places appointed for them; that so long as they are orthodox in their opinions, so long as they lived godly and peaceable, they should have had liberty. If this had been, I believe not one of you would have accounted them schismatics. Now, if there be other godly men in the kingdom whose consciences cannot be satisfied in some other things, and yet you know their lives are godly—you know they are orthodox in all fundamentals of religion, they join with you, they desire to communicate with you in hearing the word and prayer, and all ways wherein they can; now if they should have a desire to enjoy the ordinances of Christ in that way wherein they may do it with peace of conscience, why, they are cried out of as schismatics; it is against the covenant, and must not be suffered. Here lies a mistake, and were there a right understanding of things, there might be ways for brethren to live together in unity, and enjoy their consciences in the fear of God, and walking peaceably one with another. But this shall suffice for this thing, Blessed are they that are peacemakers in such times as these. For my part, so far, through God's mercy, God hath made me sensible of the evil of breaches of peace, that should my life go for the procuring of it, I should account it as great a mercy, next the revealing Christ to me, as ever I had in my life. If, I say, my life might go for the making peace between these two sorts of men, and so it should be all your resolutions not to go violently on in any way, but to study what ways there may be for peace between brethren and brethren. Now I shall say no more about this, and it is like you may never hear me further to speak about such things as these are, except there should be very great occasion for it. We therefore proceed to the promise:

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'

Here is a most excellent promise to peacemaking. One would think it would encourage any living to labour for peace what they could, when from the mouth of Christ it is said, 'They shall be called the children of God'—the sons of God, so you may read the word.

First, Why are peacemakers called the children of God? And

Why is this promise here annexed to peacemaking rather than to what went before?

They shall be called so, saith Christ, because in this work of peacemaking they are like to God; they do work in the work that the heart of God is as much in as in any work whatsoever. There is no work, as I have told you before, that ever the heart of God was more in from all eternity, no work *ab extra* more than in reconciling the world to himself; and so those that are peacemakers, their hearts are in that work wherein God's heart is in so much; therefore they shall be called the children of God, for they are so like God. God is of a peaceable spirit, of a loving spirit, of a spirit of kindness. Now peacemakers they shew themselves to be of the same spirit that God is of; and so, being so like God, are said to be the children of God. As those that are like the devil are said to be the children of the devil, so those that are like God the children of God.

And further, As by their peacemaking they shew themselves like to God, so by being the sons of God they come to make peace. As thus, they look upon their Father, that is a God of peace, and this moves them to peace, and the sweet satisfaction that their souls have in the fatherly love of God, in those privileges they enjoy as the children of God—I say, that sweet satisfaction that they have in this, it makes them to be of peaceable dispositions; there is nothing makes a man or woman to be of a peaceable disposition more than when they find satisfaction within their own hearts. As now, for instance, suppose a merchant that hears of a rich ship that is come home from the Indies, wherein he hath a great venture; ay, but now when he comes home perhaps his children be untoward, and his wife not in any good temper, yet he hath so much satisfaction within, in his own spirit, that you will not have him readily angry then, because he is so comforted with what news he hath heard concerning his estate, he will bear with a hundred things in that family at that time. But let the same man at another time go abroad and meet with crosses, and hear of ill news abroad, he comes discontented home, and he is froward with everybody then, and ready to fly upon servants and children; and the ground is for want of satisfaction within, in his own spirit. Certainly this is the cause of much wrangling and contention in men's spirits; they have some guiltiness within, and have not satisfaction within in their hearts. But now those that are the children of God, that know God to be their Father, and enjoy those sweet and blessed privileges of God's children, they find so much satisfaction within in their own hearts, as, let the world do

what they will—for the world must be the world, and wicked men must be wicked men—let them go on in their way, let me indeed pray for them, and mourn for them, but let not them disturb my peace. ‘Oh my soul, return unto thy rest.’ I find that that satisfies me; and so these will be very peaceable towards others, and therefore this is joined to the peacemakers, ‘they shall be called the children of God;’ that is, they shall be so, and so accounted.

And they shall be so accounted; that is a higher degree. It is a great blessing to be a child of God, that you will all say, though the world should think you the child of the devil, and call you devil; though they should deal with you as they did with John Huss—they pictured devils upon his coat when he went to martyrdom, as if he were come out of hell. Ay, but he was the son of God for all that. Christ himself he was not always called the child of God, but he was called Beelzebub and the prince of devils. But it is some addition to this blessedness here that they are called so; that is, that they have such a promise from Christ as not only to be the children of God, but they shall be so in the very hearts and consciences of the men among whom they live. Peacemaking is so convincing, there is so much beauty and excellency in it, as will convince almost any man. Peacemaking hath such a convincing power, as that men that are wicked themselves, yet they shall be forced in their consciences to believe; surely these people, these men and women, are no other than the children of God—it is the Spirit of God that acts them and guides them. You may plainly see that peacemaking is very convincing, because no man or woman will own to have any hand in breaking of peace; as I remember I told you that if we should go and ask all the men and women in England from one to another, What! do you hinder our peace? there is never a man or woman would own it, and yet there are many guilty certainly. Well, as that is so foul to break peace that none will own it, so to make peace is so excellent that everybody is in love withal. Though men and women that have perverse and crooked spirits of their own, so that they cannot bring their hearts to be peaceable with others, yet they can love it where they see it in others, and especially when they see men to be of peaceable dispositions in things that do not much concern themselves; yea, they are at peace so as they are willing to suffer much in their own private cause, so be it that they may make peace, that there may not be sin committed; but that the glory of God may go on, that this peace may be furthered, they are willing themselves to suffer. Now when others that are of froward and selfish dispositions, when they see this in such a man or woman, it causes other manner of thoughts. Indeed my conscience tells me that if

any anger me I will be even with them, I cannot bear it; ay, but I see others bear it. My conscience tells me that if one, especially my inferior, doth wrong me, I will make him come and submit to me, and he shall begin first. Ay, but I see others, though they be wronged, they will be willing to suffer, and all out of love to peace; for they get nothing by it but merely to make peace between neighbour and neighbour, or man and man. Why, certainly this is no other than the child of peace. Methinks every time I see these I am put in mind of God, the God of peace; I am put in mind of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace; I am put in mind of the Holy Ghost, that dove-like Spirit; certainly these are the children of God. By this men shall come to be convinced that they are the children of God. That is the meaning of this promise.

Now then for the thing itself: ‘They shall be called the children of God.’ There are these two points:

Doct. 1. That it is a blessed thing to be a child of God.

Doct. 2. It is a great mercy and blessing likewise not only to be so, but so to give and so to walk before others, as to convince the consciences of others, so as they cannot but account us to be so. These are the two points.

For the opening now of this blessedness of being the child of God. The point you cannot but think it should be large, if we should handle it in common plain ways; but that I shall not do. I need not name scriptures to you: ‘Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ Oh this is the love of God indeed, that we should be called the sons of God; and it is the fruit of election: in Eph. i. 5, ‘Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.’ ‘Hath predestinated us.’ To what? ‘Unto the adoption of children.’ That is the special thing that God aims at in predestination; that is the blessing. When God was looking upon the lump of the children of men, Well, saith he, there are some that I mean to pass by and leave to the course of justice. Oh, but there are others that are good in mine eyes—that is, I make them so; and I will set them apart to the adoption of sons; they shall be my children; and I will be a Father to them for ever. Now that that I thought to have spoken of in this point should have been first the opening of this blessedness, in being the child of God.

First, What is the mystery of godliness in this point? And then,

Second, What are the great privileges those that are the children of God do come to enjoy by it?

First, the great mystery of godliness that there is in this point. God works very wonderful in this, in bringing sons to himself.

As, first, We must understand it as a mystery of godliness; because those that were before children of wrath, children of disobedience, are now made the children of God. There is no child of God that God hath, but only that only Son Jesus Christ, but was a child of wrath before he was a child of God actually made. Every man or woman that is a child of God now, certainly was a child of wrath before. And for God to make of children of wrath to be his children, this is a mystery revealed in the Scripture only, that we would not have come to have known by the light of nature. And it shews the blessedness of man, too, to be the children of God, when we were the children of wrath and of disobedience, and enemies to God.

Secondly, The mystery of godliness consists in this, that though they be adopted children, yet they are by regeneration too; this is a mystery of the gospel. We are said to be adopted children in Scripture. Now, among men, the same man cannot be adopted and begotten both, a child by adoption and a child by generation, of the same man. But it is so here; all the children of God are the children of God by adoption, and yet the children of God by generation, not in that way of generation as the second person in Trinity is the Son of the Father, nor as he is God-man, conceived by the Holy Ghost; but by another work of the Holy Ghost, which is next unto that. The next most glorious work of the Holy Ghost is for to regenerate children unto God by an immortal seed of the word, to beget them unto God; and yet for all this they are children by adoption. Now adoption is that whereby a man, when he hath no child of his own, doth take up and own another to be his child or heir. So we, that were not children ourselves by nature, God now, by his unspeakable grace, doth adopt us. But in that he doth adopt us and regenerate us both, this is a great mystery of the gospel that is in this point.

Thirdly, The great mystery is in this, that they are the children of God by their union with Jesus Christ the only Son of God; they come to their sonship by their union with Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God; they come to be children of God in a higher way than could be by creation; in a higher way than the angels are children of God. The Scripture, indeed, calls the angels the sons of God. Ay, but the saints are sons of God in a higher way than the angels are. The angels are not the sons of God by their union with the eternal Son of God, and being made one with him; and from the rays, as I may say, and glorious beams of his sonship, they are not made so. So that every believer, every peace-

maker that is godly, is a child of God by virtue of his union with the eternal Son of God, and he hath the rays and the glory of that sonship of his to shine upon him. Now this sonship is a higher degree of sonship than by nature. Adam was a son of God so, and the angels; but this is higher. By faith we are made the sons of God.

Fourthly, There is this mystery in it, that all the children of God are heirs, every one of them. It is not so with men. Men that have many children, yet but one is an heir. But all the children of God are heirs; every one, sons and daughters too, they are all heirs. This is the glory of the saints; for so the scripture saith, 'If sons, then heirs.' He doth not say, if we be eldest sons; but if we are sons, we are heirs. So in Rom. viii. 17.

Fifthly, But then there is a fifth mystery that is higher than this. Not only every one of them heirs, but they are joined co-heirs with Jesus Christ. To be co-heirs one with another is a great blessedness; but for every one of them to be co-heirs with Jesus Christ, that is a high blessedness indeed. As thus, look what inheritance Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God hath, that inheritance, so far as any believer is capable of the enjoyment of the good of it, he hath and shall have together with Jesus Christ. It is in the same place, Rom. viii., 'And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.' Perhaps before they come to inherit, here among men they have not a foot of land; but they are the heirs of God. Though not heirs of a nobleman or prince, or have not, I say, a foot of land in the world, yet they are the heirs of God—yea, and they are joint heirs with Christ. There are these two things in that:

First, They have an interest in all Christ's inheritance. Surely thou art rich and glorious however thou art in the world—the poorest youth, or man, or woman, or maid that God brings to himself to be reconciled. I say, whatsoever thou art in the world, Jesus Christ is not an heir to more than thou hast an interest in. Thou hast an interest in all that glory and blessedness and excellency there is in Jesus Christ, in all that ever God the Father will do for Jesus Christ; and therefore, in John xvii. 23, saith Christ there, speaking to his Father, 'And hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.' Surely there is blessedness enough then, if thou shalt come to have the same love from God the Father that Jesus Christ hath from God the Father. Why, so it is; thou art a co-heir with Christ. That is the first thing.

But then, secondly, Thou art as certain of thy salvation and glory as it is certain that Jesus Christ shall be happy for ever; because thou art a co-heir with Jesus Christ. You know, when men are co-heirs, the title of one is as certain as the other. If you be but a co-purchaser with another, then you have as true a

right in such a land or house as they have. Now Jesus Christ, though he be our elder brother, yet he is called an everlasting Father. Now, we are joint co-purchasers; ay, but it is more to be a co-heir than a co-purchaser: the right of inheritance is better and a more noble right than the right of purchase, and in some case it may be more certain. Now this is the right of the saints to all the good that Jesus Christ hath, they may be as certain of it as Christ himself. Christ himself shall be disinherited as soon as a believer, because a believer is a co-heir with Jesus Christ. Oh, blessed then are the peacemakers, for they are the children of God, and the children of God in a glorious mystical way. Such children, as they are co-heirs with Jesus Christ, have interest in his glory, and can be no more disinherited than Jesus Christ himself can. And I will give you one scripture as a

most excellent comfort to the saints, that Christ here doth join himself and them together in the relation that he and they have to his Father: in John xx., the latter end of ver. 17, 'I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God,' saith Christ. It is as comfortable a scripture almost as I know any in the book of God. I ascend to my Father; ay, and your Father too. He that is my Father, is your Father; you have interest in my Father as well as I: 'I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.' Oh, who can utter the soul-satisfying, soul-ravishing consolation there is in this, that the same God that is the God of Jesus Christ is my God, and the same Father that is the Father of Jesus Christ is my Father! Oh 'blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called the children of God!'

SERMON XXXI.

OR,

WHAT THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS IS IN ADOPTION.

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.'—MAT. v. 9.

YEA, they are heirs of all, of all the inheritance—the whole inheritance is every one's. Among men, the more one hath, the less the other hath. A father, though he be rich, if he gives one child a great portion, if the elder doth inherit, the younger hath the less; or if he would divide his inheritance, if one hath a great deal, the other hath but little. But it is not so in the children of God's inheritance. There is no one child of God hath less because the other hath more, but every one inherits all there is in God, all there is in Christ, all there is in heaven; it is the inheritance of every child of God one way or other, for the good of every one.

Sixthly, Another particular is this, that now in Christ there is a great deal more privilege than there was in former times to the child of God. That is one of the mysteries of the gospel. Oh, it is true; Is not Ephraim my dear son? The saints in former times were God's children, but in the times of the gospel they have far higher privilege and prerogative than before; this is a part of the mystery of the gospel. Formerly God had children in nonage, under tutorage: all the saints, the most eminent of them,

were as children in their nonage, and came not to their inheritance; but we are as children, in comparison of them, that are of years. That is made out clearly to us in Gal. iv.: 'Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of this world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.' So that it seems, till Christ came, there was no receiving the adoption of sons. Why, were not the saints children before Christ came? Truly, in regard of God's usage of them, they were not as children, they were not sons—that is, they were not sons of age, to come to enjoy their inheritance, but they were sons; as kings' sons, when they are little children, have their tutors and governors, that use them as other children of meaner men, so were they used, and God revealed little to them of the excellency of their inheritance then. But as noble-

men and princes, they are fain to please their children with plums, and rattles, and bangles, as other men please theirs—they cannot tell them of their inheritance and possession that they shall have while they are little children; but when a child comes of age, then he comes to understand his dignity, his possession, and it is that that pleases him then, and not those bangles that he had before. And the truth is, in comparison of the ordinances of the gospel and the privileges of the gospel, what the people had under the law were but as rattles, and plums, and bangles that we please children withal; and therefore the Holy Ghost calls even those ordinances that then they had to be as beggarly rudiments. But now by Christ we are redeemed, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and come to enjoy a great part of our inheritance; and it is a special part of the inheritance of children to have the gospel clearly revealed to them, and to have the blessing and the privileges of the gospel; but that we shall speak to more by and by. Thus you have the mystery of godliness in our adoption.

And the benefit of children, or the privileges that we have by being children, are very great and many. I remember Luther in his Comment upon this Gal. iv. 7, saith he, If we did but know what this privilege were, all the riches of all the kingdoms in the world would be but as filthy dung to us; that is his expression. And the greater the pomp and the glory of the world is, the more would we have it whatsoever it be; if we know but the excellency of this prerogative of being children, there are great privileges in it. In John i. 12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.' To them gave he power, he gave an authoritative power, to become the sons of God, that they may claim it and challenge it; they have a kind of authority and privilege in becoming the sons of God.

Now the first privilege of a child of God is this, great honour is put upon him. According to the dignity of the father, so is the honour and dignity of the child. If the father is a yeoman, so is the child looked upon; if the father is a gentleman, so is the child; or a duke, or a prince, or monarch, the child hath honour according to the honour of his father. Now, to be a child of God must needs be honourable. The children of great men of the earth are honourable; but the children of the infinite God must needs have honour above them by their birthright, the reflection of the honour of their Father is upon them. It is a speech of David in 1 Sam. xviii. 22; some came and communed with him about marrying of Saul's daughter, what saith David? 'Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?' Now this Saul was a wicked man, and it was to be but his son-in-law; and if that were

accounted so great an honour and privilege, much more this.

Secondly, The second privilege of the children of God it is, that they are freed from all kind of bondage, from a spirit of bondage, and from all bondage whatsoever; they are no more bond-slaves, as every man naturally is. You know what Christ saith, 'Do the children pay tribute, or strangers?' The children of the kingdom they are free, they are not in that servility as others are; they are not so much as servants, they are in a higher degree than servants; and yet to be a servant of God it is a very great privilege, but they are beyond: in Gal. iv. 7, 'Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son.' They are beyond the degree of a servant in the house of God. It was a great honour to Moses that he had this title, 'Moses my servant;' but the meanest believer in the times of the gospel hath a greater privilege than Moses had, he is a son. There is not that spirit of servility now, but a more free spirit in the child of God. Therefore, in Rom. viii. 14, 15, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' The spirit of adoption, I shall speak of that presently. But now I only shew their privilege in respect of being delivered from the spirit of bondage. They do not serve God now in that mercenary way as formerly, nor out of that slavery of spirit from fear. The people of the Jews, even the godly people,—the Holy Ghost saith in Heb. ii.,—'were all their lifetime subject to bondage through the fear of death.' There was a spirit of bondage and fear upon the hearts of the people of God in former times. Now God expects his children should serve him out of another principle, out of a principle of love, as it becometh children; which we shall shew more when we come to the duties of children, as they are the children of God. Yea, and likewise they were under the bondage of a more tedious way of worship—the bondage of the law. Now the children of God are freed from that; from the bondage of sin, and from the bondage of the law they are wholly free. That is the second privilege; free from bondage.

Thirdly, The third privilege, the entire fatherly love that they are embraced withal. God, who is the infinite glorious first-being, embraces them with an entire fatherly love. All the love that ever was in any parents towards children, is but as one drop of the infinite ocean of fatherly love that there is in God unto his people. You that are fathers or mothers, you know what the love of a parent to children means. Now, when you find that natural affection of love to children, you should help your faith by this, if you be godly: And is it so that I that am a parent have such affections and love towards my children, that

come from my body? Oh the affections then and love of God, a Father to his children! Why is it that God hath taken upon him this title of a Father, but to the end that it might be a ground of the faith of his people to look up unto him, and to see his love as entire as ever the love of a parent, the love of all parents in the world put together, is towards children. Put all the natural affections of all the most loving, tender-hearted parents that ever were in the world into one parent, you will say that father surely is a loving father, that hath all the love that all the fathers had in the world since the beginning, he hath it all in his heart; yet I say of this father, he were a hard-hearted, carnal father in comparison of God, of the love of God, that is a Father unto his saints. That is the third privilege.

Fourthly, The fourth privilege of the children of God, it is the right that they have unto the creatures, that is restored unto them by being children. Why, the Jews they were deprived of a great part of the comfort of the creature; but now the children of God have their right restored, renewed, strengthened, increased, their right to all comforts in all creatures. It is true, Adam he had a right unto the creature at first, and by sin he lost it; so that all mankind have lost their right unto the creatures.

You will say, What! are wicked men usurpers then when they make use of the creature? have they no right?

I confess this sometimes hath been taught, that though they have a right before men, yet they have no right before God, but they are usurpers. But there might be a mistake in that; for though it is true all our right is lost, that must be granted. But yet if God by a free donation shall give them right, shall give the creature again to wicked men, 'give the earth to the children of men,' we cannot say that they are usurpers, if they have it by a free gift from God, in the time of his bounty and patience towards the wicked. But still they have not that right that the children of God have; their right is merely by donation. But the right that the child of God hath, it is partly by purchase and partly by inheritance; they have a challenging right, that they can in a bold and holy way even challenge from God all good things from all creatures that they have need of as their own. A wicked man may have many comfortable things in the world for his present subsistence, and I dare not say that he is a usurper if he get them lawfully; for God in his bounty and patience doth give wicked men these things, and we say, what freer than gift? Ay, but there is no wicked man in the world that can challenge these, and say, Lord, these are mine own, it is mine inheritance, it is my purchase; this is the privilege of the children of God. If a malefactor by his offence hath forfeited his estate, hath forfeited all the right that he hath to the good

things in a kingdom, but yet if these that have supreme power to condemn him, shall out of their bounty grant unto him some provision for his supper the night before he is to be executed, you cannot say that he doth usurp it; he hath a right to it—that is, it is given him, though he hath forfeited all; and truly this is the right that wicked men have. Is there not a great deal of difference now between the right that a child hath at his father's table, and the right that a malefactor hath the night before he goes to the gallows? This now is the difference between the right of the one and the other, even before the Lord. Therefore when you look upon your estates, and see your houses furnished with good furniture, and look upon your tables and see them furnished with full dishes, consider what right you have to all these in reference unto God, whether it be merely the right of donation, as a malefactor may have to preserve him to the execution, or whether it be the right of children. But now if you be the children of God, you come to your tables, as to your Father's table; it is the provision that your Father doth make for you, and so you may look upon it. And this is the privilege of the children of God. Oh what a blessed thing is it to be a child of God then!

And then the fifth privilege of a child of God is this, he hath free access to his Father's presence; he may come at any time into his Father's presence, and so long as he is owned to be a child, he may come with comfort into his Father's presence. God hath no children that he serves as David served Absalom, 'Let him not see my face;' he acknowledged him to be his child, and yet he would not have him to see his face. No; but God loves to have his children be in his presence, and it is a part of the purchase of Jesus Christ that we should come into the presence of God by him. We have access by Jesus Christ, and we may always come and stand before our Father, which is a great privilege that those which are the children of God account of.

Sixthly, By being the children of God they come to have the image of God renewed in them. A father communicates somewhat of his nature to his child; but a father cannot communicate all the good that he pleases to his child. A father that hath wisdom cannot communicate his wisdom to his child; a father that hath holiness cannot communicate his holiness to his child. But now God he communicates what he pleases to his children; communicates of his image to them, communicates that wherein his very glory doth consist. The reason why a father cannot communicate wisdom and holiness to his child, it is because he begets the child as a man, but not as a man so qualified. But now when God begets a child, if he begets a child to himself, he must beget him like unto himself some way or other. Now God himself

is holy, and infinitely wise; it is not accidental to God to be holy and wise, and to be void and free of all kind of sin. Therefore all that are the children of God, they having on God's image, are like to God in that which is the excellency of God himself; in his holiness and in his wisdom they are made partakers of the life of God. There is no parent that begets a child but the parent makes the child partaker of his life. Now the very life of God doth consist especially in his holiness, in the acting to himself as the highest end of all things.

Seventhly, A child of God hath the Spirit of God communicated to him. That you have in those former scriptures, Rom. viii. 14-16, 'We are led by the Spirit, being sons;' and therefore 'we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' And in that forenamed place, Gal. iv. 6, 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' It is the observation of a learned man upon this place; saith he, He doth not say God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your minds, to give you knowledge and understanding, but into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. The Spirit of his Son, that now rules in the heart, God hath sent that into it; and this is a great blessing of God, that he gives his Spirit. This Spirit is an enlightening Spirit in the mind, and it is a Spirit that doth sanctify the heart, a Spirit that makes known the great and deep counsels of God to the soul, and a Spirit that guides the soul in the way of eternal life. That is the privilege of all sons: they are partakers of the Holy Ghost. I remember in one of the Gospels Christ saith, 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?' Mat. vii. 11. The other hath it, 'How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Spirit to them that ask it?' Luke xi. 13, as noting the Spirit of God hath all good things in it. Oh blessed are they that are partakers of the Spirit of God—that are not acted and carried on by their own spirits, but by the Spirit of God!

Eighthly, The privilege of God's children is, that they have protection from God; God as their Father doth provide for them, and protect them. If any of your children be in any danger, what do they do but run to their father or mother, and complain to their father? and the father, according to his power, he will protect his children; and so there is a natural instinct in the children of God to run to their Father for protection. Indeed, a carnal heart, if he be wronged, all the way he hath to help himself, it is to rage, and fret, and vex, and seek to revenge himself. But a child of God, the way that he hath, it is to go and make his moan to his Father, to make his moan to God, and to tell God of all the wrongs that he hath, of all the calumnies that are cast upon him, and of all his

accusations. He goes presently to his Father, and makes his moan there. There is a notable scripture in Ps. cix. 4; saith David there, 'For my love they are my adversaries.' What then? They are mine adversaries; and God knows I intend nothing but good unto them. There is no spirit of bitterness and rage in me; but yet they are carried on by a wicked spirit. What then? But I pray—you have it in your books—'but I give myself unto prayer.' But *give myself* is in another character, and so notes that the interpreters put it in to make up the sense, They are my adversaries; but I, am I an adversary to them again? No; but I pray. They are mine adversaries for my love; but I know what to do. Why, what will you do? I know what I will do; as if David should say, I will go to God, and tell my Father of all this. I will go to prayer; that shall be my help and refuge. That is the privilege of God's children, that they have the protection of their Father. He will protect them in all their wrongs and injuries that are done unto them.

Ninthly, lastly, They shall have a kingdom. We are made kings and priests unto the Father by Jesus Christ. Why now, my brethren, we may say concerning this point of children of adoption, as the apostle in Rom. viii., having spoken concerning the benefit both of justification and adoption together, then he concludes, after he had said this, Why, then, what shall we say unto these things? What shall we say after all this? So that these things have a reality in them, they be certain truths. What shall we say to these things—these high prerogatives and privileges of the children of God? Oh who would not be a peacemaker, when he shall have such a blessing as this is! But there is faith required to make these things real to the soul.

Tenthly, That is one thing that passed from me in his privileges. The privilege of a child of God is, his compassions towards him as a Father. God doth compassionate him both in his sins and afflictions: in Ps. ciii., 'As a father pities his child, so the Lord pities them that fear him.' And that known place in Mal. iii., 'And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; I will spare them, as a man spares his only son that serveth him.' If you have a servant that displeases you, you can turn him out of doors; but you will not so presently turn a child out of doors, or, at least, you will not be so ready to disinherit him. Nay, a man that hath a father's affections will never disinherit his child, if he return to him, whatsoever his fault be. Now this is the state of God's children. If they were in any other relation, indeed, to God, they might be cast off. As now a wife may be cast off from her husband, so as she never be entertained again, though she should be never so sorrowful, if she

commit adultery or uncleanness. Jer. iii. 1, 'They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted?' She can never return to him again; but it is not so with a child. A child can never be in such a disposition that he shall be made incapable of his father's love. There is no relation else whatsoever, but there may be such a change of it as that they may wholly lose the benefit of that relation; but a child can never while he lives. Though he be a disobedient child, yet he cannot lose altogether the benefit of that relation of a child; for, notwithstanding his disobedience, yet upon his coming in to his father, though he be never such a prodigal son, some kind of fatherly affection will work. There is no kind of father in the world, that hath but nature in him, but though the child hath been never so disobedient, yet if he were sure that the heart of the child were now changed, his bowels would yearn towards him. This is the relation of a child. I say it can never be wholly lost; but there will remain a capacity of receiving some fatherly love. A servant may be cast out from service, so as there can be no capacity of receiving him again; and so a wife. But it is not so with the child; for this is his privilege.

But now, if you ask me, what shall I say to these things? Why, I am to say these particulars unto those privileges. I have named ten privileges, and I may name nine or ten duties that follow upon our being children.

As, first, Let us learn to behave ourselves as it becomes the children of the Most High. They should shew themselves to be of noble breed, not to be of a base, vile, and sordid spirit. It is said in Acts xvii. 11 of the Bereans, that they 'were more noble than those of Thessalonica.' The word is, they were men of a better breed—more noble. Oh, let all those that are children of God shew their breed by their holiness, by their gracious carriage before men! It doth not become the children of princes to be raking in kennels, to behave themselves in a sordid way; but it becometh the children of princes to carry themselves according to the state of their father—to the state of princes they are to carry themselves. And so the children of the living God, they must carry themselves according to the estate of the children of God—that is, above the world—above these vanities of the world—look upon them as too mean and too low things for them. Oh, it is exceedingly unbecoming a child of God for to have his heart dejected for the want of the comforts of this world—because he hath not some few things that others have; for him to be dejected as if he were undone. Oh no.

But see thou live according to this rate. Look upon your father as the Lord of heaven and earth, and know that all the power, and all the goodness,

and excellency, and treasure that he hath, thou hast some way or other right unto. And therefore when any affliction doth befall thee, do not thou presently let thy heart sink, as if thou wert undone. Remember thy relation; thou art a child, and God protects thee, and is to provide for thee, and do thee good. It was a notable speech, in 2 Sam. xiii. 3, of one Jonadab: 'Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very subtle man. And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me?' He perceived the countenance of Amnon much dejected, and looked sickly upon sorrow of heart; and saith he, Why art thou thus, being a king's son? It is strange, being a king's son, that thou shouldst be so dejected in thy spirits. Hast not thou enough that belongs to thee to comfort thy heart, when thou art a king's son? Oh, so it should be with the sons of the living God. Dost thou believe that thou art a child of God?—that God hath adopted thee, and set his heart upon thee as a child? Oh, why doth the want of some few outward comforts deject thee?

You will say, If I were the child of God, God would not let me want these things.

Oh, thou art mistaken in this. God hath other manner of blessings, to let forth his fatherly love to thee in, than these outward things. A child that is sick and weak might say as well, If my father loved me, why will he not give me such and such meat? Why, the child hath need of physic. Now dost not thou love thy child when thou givest him physic, and not what he cries for? If God be thy Father, and thou his child, wilt thou not give God leave to nurture thee, his child, as he gives thee leave to nurture thine own child? Yea, let me say more to thee than this. Thou mayest, notwithstanding thy being without outward comforts, thou mayest have the same fatherly love that Jesus Christ his Son had; and will not that serve thy turn? You will say, That will serve indeed. Mark, in John xvii. 26, 'And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.' Now mark, how did the love of God work towards Jesus Christ his Son? Did he not let him be without many outward comforts in this world? There was a time that he was in hunger, and wanted bread, and then the devil would have had him distrust in his Father. Oh no. 'Though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, yet he had not a hole to hide his head in.' Thou hast as good a cottage to dwell in as Christ had. Christ he was thirsty, and he was fain to beg a little water of a woman to drink. There are very few of you that are put to more straits for outward

things than Christ was, and yet do not you think that God the Father loved his Son? and will not then that love serve thy turn that Jesus Christ the Son of God had? Though thou beest a son, yet thou art not dearer to God than Jesus Christ the Son of God was to the Father. Oh then raise up thy spirits, in the want of all outward comforts in this world, for thou art a son, and hast an inheritance to come hereafter.

Secondly, And then let there be reverence. 'If I be a father, where is mine honour?' Mal. i. 6, saith God. 'And if you call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth every man according to his work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear,' 1 Pet. i. 17. It is true, we are children, and so delivered from the bondage of the law, but yet we must have the reverence of the Father—walking before our Father with a filial reverence.

Thirdly, If God be a Father, then let there be love to him; do all you do out of love, be not mercenary. A servant doth not care to do anything any further than he may be paid for it: but a child doth not so; he doth what he doth out of love. Oh that we could bring all our obedience to be out of love to God, so that we need not stand to argue thus, Must we of necessity do this or go to hell? Shall no man be saved unless he do so strictly? This is a base spirit to argue thus. No; this is enough to a child, This would please your Father. Let any minister of God but open any point, and shew one that hath a child-like disposition, and tell him that it will but please God, and make but that out to him that it will be but pleasing to God. Oh a child will seek the acceptable and pleasing will of God; he doth not his duty merely for wages. Now most people do their service merely for wages; otherwise, what is the reason why, in the time of your greatest prosperity, you are not as serviceable to God as in the time when you lie upon your sick-bed and death-bed? Why do men upon their sick and death-beds cry, Oh that I might but live, then I would serve God better; I would not live in sin as heretofore I have done. Why? because then they are afraid they should go to hell. But now, if it were out of love, when I have the greatest prosperity of all, this shall gain my heart so much the more. Oh then you will be abundant in service, when you serve out of love.

Fourthly, And further, you must be obedient to God; the principle must be love. And look that in all your ways you be as obedient children: in Eph. v. 'As obedient children,' a command of God should be more to you than all the world besides. I will give you one instance that the Holy Ghost makes use of for the obedience of children to their parents, and that is, the obedience of the sons of the Rechabites. That the Holy Ghost doth record for their honour: Jer. xxxv. 5, 6, 'And I set before the sons of the

house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups; and I said unto them, Drink ye wine.' Mark their answer. 'But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons, for ever.' That was argument enough. This was a long time after the command; and though it was such a command that Jonadab had no power to enjoin upon his sons, but that was the obedience that they professed to owe to their father, that because their father commanded them, they would never drink wine though they might. Now, how many will call God Father, and say, Our Father which art in heaven, and the like, yet yield no obedience to him. Now though God their Father doth but command them that they should not be excessively in it, and if they be prone to wine or strong drink, that they should avoid the occasions of coming where wine and strong drink is, they regard it not. Ay, but remember it is thy Father that commands thee. The Rechabites would drink no wine at all if their father commanded them. Oh, the command of a Father should be strong unto us, if we profess ourselves to be children.

Fifthly, Another duty is to trust in our Father, and to rely upon him. If the father doth but promise anything, the child relies upon him. A child relies upon his father for provisions and all things needful. A child, when he comes to desire anything of his father, he doth not study arguments to persuade his father; it is enough to call him but father. The word father hath enough argument in it to persuade out all arguments whatsoever. If a stranger come to desire a thing, he must bring arguments to obtain it; but a child need not, because he is his father. And a stranger, if he lives upon another, though he hath a great many reasons to think why the other should maintain him, yet he will be afraid lest he should become burdensome unto him; but now a child doth not think so. Yea, if a child hath provoked his father, and he is angry with him, yet a child will trust to his father for all that; he is my father, and he will trust and rely yet upon his fatherly love; and there is no such way to obtain anything of his father as to cast himself upon his fatherly love. There is a great deal of difference between the confidence of a stranger and the confidence of a child; and a great deal of difference between the confidence of one that is begotten again by the Spirit of God—the confidence of a child and a stranger. I will give you that scripture for the confidence of the children of God trusting upon their Father, and relying upon his grace and mercy notwithstanding their offences: in Isa. lxiv. 6, 7, 'But we all are as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken

us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirs up himself to take hold on thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities;' then in ver. 8, 'But now, O Lord, thou art our Father;' for all this, though we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do fade away as a leaf, and there is none that calleth upon thy name. We are all wicked and vile, and thou hast even consumed us; but now, O Lord, thou art our Father.' This is that that answers all, 'thou art our Father;' still she relies upon God as a father. Oh this title of Father, it is a mighty rock of faith, a mighty foundation of faith unto all the saints, that God is their Father. Oh trust then in him, rely upon him for supply, for help! Were it not a great dishonour to any father that his children should go to all his neighbours to beg bread, and say, My father will not give it me, and I shall be starved for all my father. This would be accounted a great dishonour. Parents would have their children look to their duty, and let them alone for providing for them. So if thou callest God Father, let God alone for providing for thee, and rely upon him, as the heart of a child doth rely upon the parents for whatsoever it stands in need of. And therefore if you should come into any great sufferings, yet still exercise faith upon God as a Father. There is that promise for the helping of the faith of a child: in 2 Cor. vi. 18, 'I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' Mark, it is an exhortation to come out from false worship: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' If we seek to worship God as a Father, and come out from all false worship, then it may be we shall suffer much, and men will oppose and hate us, and we are like to meet with hard things in the world. Well, saith God, though others should cast you out of all, though your very parents should be against you, 'yet I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' I am the Lord Almighty, and able to do you good, able to help you and supply all your wants; and therefore, 'be not afraid, rely and trust in me, for I am your Father, saith the Lord Almighty.'

Again, If you be children, then delight in the presence of your Father. Make use of the Spirit of adoption; come often before your Father. When you go to prayer, do not go to prayer merely as a duty, but go to prayer as children use to go to their father. Oh, God takes much delight in the spirit of adoption! I remember, it is an expression that Luther hath about it; saith he, The word *father* hath

more elegance before God, than Demosthenes or Cicero had in all their elegant orations; and it pierces the heavens, and fills the heavens with the noise of it. Oh make use of the spirit of adoption! oh love to be in the presence of thy Father! though God thy Father may seem to be angry with thee, yet do not go out of his presence. A child, if he hath a childish disposition, and not a base, sordid disposition, he will not be cast out of the presence of the father. You may read in Ps. li. 11, though it was a time when God was angry with David, yet 'Lord, cast me not out of thy presence;' as if he should say, Let me be in thy presence, though it be thy frowning countenance. Oh prize duty as thy privilege, to be often in prayer to thy Father. You that pray merely as a task, and do not know what the meaning of the spirit of adoption is, do not know what it is for your hearts to spring within you when you go to God in prayer, surely there is a great deal of cause that you should fear that you are not yet among the number of children.

Seventhly, And then, if you be God's children, be zealous for him. A child would be zealous for the honour of his father, yea, a child would fight for his father though his father be angry with him; a servant will not do so for his master. I remember Cæsar his son upon a time seeing his father in danger; the story saith he was born dumb, but when he saw a soldier ready to kill his father, presently the natural affection that he had did break the bars of his speech, and made him cry out, Oh, spare Cæsar! He never spake word before, yet when he came to see his father in danger, that brake open his lips, and made him cry, Oh, kill not Cæsar. So it should be with you; though you never spake word in all your lives, yet when you see your Father dishonoured, oh cry out, Oh spare the honour of God, do nothing against the honour of God. You that are of the meekest, quietest spirits, that you can put up anything concerning yourselves, yet when you see your Father struck at, that should make your spirits boil within you. If you were children you would do so.

Eighthly, And you would imitate your father: 'Be ye holy, as your heavenly father is holy; and shew forth the image of your father.' It is the honour of a child to be like his father; a father loves his child so much the more. I remember it was said of Theodosius' son, that good emperor, he would never die so long as his son lived; and we say of some that such a man will never be dead so long as this child is alive. Thus it should be with all the children of God: 'They should labour to hold forth the virtues of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light,' 1 Pet. ii. 9. They should so walk as every one that converses with them they should put them in mind of God. There should be

the image of God in the child, that every time he be looked upon men may be put in mind of God. I have heard out of the word what a holy God God is, and Jesus Christ was of a meek and quiet spirit. I have heard much of God in his word; and every time I see the holy carriage of such a one, I am put in mind of God, for certainly they are led by the Spirit of God. That is the evidence of a child in Rom. viii., 'If we be led by the Spirit of God, we are the sons of God.' And among other things, in the point of peaceableness be like your Father there. If you would have evidence that you are begotten from above, I say shew forth the gracious Spirit of God in you, in the loving of peace, that so you may not only be the children of God, and have comfort to your own souls, that you are the children of God, but that you may be called the children of God.

And that is the next point, that this is a great blessing, not only to be the children of God, but to be called the children of God; and this is the duty of all such as are the children of God, to walk so before men, as they may be called God's children, that the thoughts of men may be convinced of them so as to say, Verily, these are the children of the living God.

Ninthly, And let the children of God walk one towards another as children of the same Father. Though it is true the children of vile persons that have no education at all, but are rude, they will be fighting one with another, and their parents perhaps look on, because they are rude and have no breeding; but if men of any rank and quality in the world, that have breeding themselves, and bestow breeding upon their children, should see them wrangle and fight one with another before their face, oh how grievous would it be to them. It is enough that the children of the world wrangle one with another and fight; let not those that profess God to be their Father, oh let them not in the presence of their Father wrangle and fight one with another, for certainly the Spirit of God cannot bear it. But we pass to that remains.

They shall be called the children of God.

They shall not only be so, but be accounted so in the world before men. That is then the point.

Doct. That it is a great blessing not only to be God's children, but to walk so as to convince all with whom we live that we are the children of God, so as in their consciences they shall own us to be God's children—they shall call us so. It was a great part of the glory of Christ himself, not only to be the Son of God, but to be declared the Son of God: Rom. i. 4, 'And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.' He was the Son of God, that was glory; and he was declared to be the Son of God, that was a special part of his glory likewise; and so it is a great addition of glory to be one that

shall be called the son of God. Christ did lay much upon that, that the world might know that God had sent him. Often he speaks of that. Why, was it not enough, oh blessed Saviour, that thou thyself didst know that the Father sent thee, and the Father knew he sent thee? No; he would have the world to know that the Father sent him; and it is that that the saints should prize as a great blessing of God, that even the world should know the relation that they have to God—that they are 'the children of God.' They shall be called so, for by walking so as that men shall be forced to acknowledge them to be God's children. Hereby,

First, There comes a great deal of glory to themselves. They are honoured in the very consciences of men.

Yea, secondly, Hereby their Father is glorified, when their lives shall hold forth whose they are.

Yea, by this their profession is glorified, and the mouths of wicked men are stopped by this means; men's consciences are convinced; there is much good done by this. Such as have not only grace, but manifest it to the conviction of others, they are of great use in the places where they live. Nay, you shall have the wickedest and vilest say, Were they all but like those, then I could have good thoughts of them; then we could not tell what to say against them. Oh, they would be ready to hearken to anything that is said whenas there is a conversation so as is convincing before them. It will be a means to restrain their malice against others, when they see that some at least walk so as to manifest nothing but the image of God. Oh, it is a great blessing to be such a one as shall force even wicked men to call them God's children. Wherefore, let us,

First, Know it is not enough, then, to have grace in the heart—to say, What do I care for men, so long as I have a good conscience. No; it is the duty of all to walk so as they may be 'called the children of God.' Therefore, it is not enough to have grace in the heart, but it must appear.

Secondly, How vile are those, then, that make profession of a near relation unto God, and yet walk so as there is nothing of God appears in them; so as by their scandalous, wicked lives they make men to think they do God good service to persecute them, and all in that way. If ever there were times wherein God's children should walk as children—should make conscience to walk so as to convince the world, then now it is; and woe to those that now are offensive. Woe to those that are scandals in such times as these, that do open the mouths of wicked men, not only against themselves, but against all that are in their way. The world is set upon offences, and glad of offences, and therefore should God's children labour to walk the more inoffensive. But either of these we shall come to speak to more fully, and of the point

too, if we shall ever come to ver. 16, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' And therefore I only speak to this now in reference to that in the text, to peacemaking, 'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' Peacemaking is a very convincing thing; and therefore such as hope they are God's children, they should manifest it in this, in being of peaceable dispositions. There are some that we hope do belong to God; and yet they are of such rugged dispositions, of such harsh natures, of such froward dispositions, that there is little of the Spirit of God appears in them. They are as furious and froward and peevish in their ways, as if they had nothing of God in their hearts. They manifest nothing but an evil and a proud and a perverse and a froward spirit in their families, and wherever they converse with any. Oh, this is vile! But now all such as profess themselves to be of God should manifest themselves to be God's children in this particular, in being of peaceable, of meek, of gentle, and of loving dispositions. Make conscience of this, all you professors of religion. It is that that is cast upon many professors of religion, that they are as proud and froward, if they be but crossed, as any. There is no quietness, humility, gentleness, meekness, patience, nor love appears in them. Oh, learn from the connexion of these two, to take out this lesson this day, that, as in many other things, you should manifest yourselves to be God's children, so in a special manner in manifesting a gentle, meek, patient, loving spirit, both in your families and the places where God hath set you in.

And further, Not only to be of peaceable spirits, but to be so peaceable as to manifest the Spirit of God in you—to be peaceable as a child of God; for a man or woman may naturally have a peaceable spirit. Some men cannot endure to be troubled, nor they will trouble nobody else. They live quietly among their neighbours, and they love no trouble. This doth not always come from a gracious disposition, but from a dull and sluggish spirit.

Quest. But you will say then, When is a man of such a peaceable disposition as he manifests himself to be a child of God in that peaceableness of his?

Ans. First, When our peaceableness doth not hinder our duty; when a man, though he love peace, yet he loves to perform his duty too. He can be peaceable among men, and yet be active in the performance of his duty to God. He can stir in the cause of God and public good, and yet can carry it on in a peaceable way too. Some men think there is no way to be peaceable but to do nothing. Let all things go which way they will, for their parts they love not to put their finger into the fire; and these are commended

for quiet and peaceable neighbours. Ay, thou mayest be commended for this before some men; but certainly God will never own thee for his child in this kind of peaceableness. But here is the peaceableness of a child of God: when a man living in the place where God hath set him shall consider, What is the duty that God requires at my hand in my relations as a husband, a master, as a chief man in the parish? What is the duty that God would have me to do? What service can I do for God? How far may I promote the glory of God in the place where he hath set me? Whatsoever becomes of mine own peace and quiet, I will venture to appear in the cause of God; and in the place where God hath set me, I will be as active as possibly I can, yet so as I hope, through God's grace, there shall appear nothing but a peaceable, quiet spirit. Oh it is an excellent temper! There is the Spirit of God in this, when men can tell how to come in between these two—that is, between a dead, sluggish spirit, and between a violent, furious spirit. There is a middle between these. Some men, because they see others to be of violent and furious spirits, they think it is best for them to do nothing. And then other men, because they would avoid sluggishness and slothfulness, they carry it on in a furious and violent way; and so they manifest nothing of God's Spirit on the other side. But now one that is led by the Spirit of God, he knows how to be active and stirring in doing his duty, and yet he can tell how to carry on the work with meekness, quietness, and peaceableness notwithstanding. Here is a child of God indeed.

Secondly, When a man is of a peaceable disposition, and he doth aim at God in it more than at his own quiet. Some men they are of peaceable dispositions. But why? It is merely because they are loath to have any trouble, therefore they will be at peace. But now when a man or woman shall consider this, by disturbance and disquiet and discontentedness, oh what abundance of dishonour comes to God! and what abundance of sin is caused between brethren, many times between those that are good, between such as live in a family, and neighbour and neighbour. Now, then, to the end that I might avoid so great sin, and to the end that I may honour God, so as I know God may be honoured by a peaceable, quiet, humble, and meek disposition, therefore it is I will deny myself rather in that that would be suitable to the flesh. I find that my flesh is prone enough to seek revenge, and to make others that have wronged me to know that they have wronged me. But that I might prevent sin, and bring honour to the name of God, mine own ends shall lie by, and I will rather put up wrongs, and walk peaceably with men, and seek to endeavour it with others too. This is such a peaceable spirit that argues him to be a child of God,

that aims at God, and denies himself. Some men would be peaceable when it may serve for their own ends; but now to be peaceable one's-self, and to make peace with others, and I shall get nothing by it, but I account my good to be unwrapped in the glory of God; and so I make peace, because I would not have the name of God to suffer. Here is a peacemaker, that shall be called a child of God.

Thirdly, And then further, such a kind of peacemaker as God himself; as we find recorded in Scripture is attributed to God—to make peace as God doth.

As thus, first, God he is willing to be at peace with those that are unworthy.

Yea, secondly, To those that have wronged him. It is not enough to say, They have wronged me, and they are unworthy, yet you should labour for peace with them, for God causes his sun to shine upon the unjust as well as upon the just; and we are commanded to love our enemies, that thereby we may be declared to be the sons of God.

Thirdly, God he begins the work of peace. If God should not have begun the work of reconciliation between man and himself, what had become of us all? Now those that would be such peacemakers as to evidence that they are the children of God, they should not stand thus and say, He hath wronged me, let him yield first. No; if God had said so, what had become of us? but God yields first. Oh now be you a child of God in this, to labour for peace as God doth; and begin first with them. If they will not begin with you, according to their duty, yet do you begin with them, as a child of God ought to do, who would be like unto his Father.

And then lastly, Be such a peacemaker as to love the peace, and that only, that God loves and delights in. Your Father loves truth, but he loves truth and peace and holiness together; let there not be anything against holiness in the maintenance of peace. God would not have any of his children commit any sin for peace, to save themselves from trouble, or to save others from trouble; that they may purchase their own peace, he would not have them purchase it with sin. It is true, a man cannot buy peace too dear, except it be by sin; but any one sin committed for the gaining of your own peace, or the peace of others, I say in that you buy gold too dear. This is not the peacemaking that becomes the child of God; but 'blessed are they that are peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' And thus much concerning ver. 9. But we proceed to ver. 10.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MAT. v. 10.

It is a strange kind of blessing this too, as the other were. Some of the other blessednesses seem

to be strange, as the first—blessed are the poor, and they that mourn, that they should be blessed; and now they that are persecuted, is it not as strange that they should be the blessed men in the world? Christ begins with the poor, and ends with the persecuted, when he would shew who are the most blessed men in the world. My brethren, see whether the wisdom of Christ be like the wisdom of the world, yea or no. When you would describe a blessed man, would you begin with the poor and end with the persecuted? Oh the wisdom of Christ, it is not according to the wisdom of the world! the thoughts of Christ concerning blessedness are not according to the thoughts of the world.

And then, secondly, This is to be wondered at, that Christ should have need to speak of the blessedness of those that are persecuted, after he had mentioned the blessedness of the former. What! blessed are the peacemakers, and blessed are the persecuted; what agreement is there between these two, or what connexion can there be? For if a man be of a peaceable disposition, who will harm him? Why, surely they will escape persecution of all men. It may be there are some, though godly, yet are of a turbulent disposition, and are furious and hot; they perhaps may be persecuted, but will the peacemakers be persecuted? Will those that in the places where they live are no occasion of evil to any that they live among, but labour to do all the good that possibly they can, and yet shall these be persecuted? Yes, truly; even these if they be godly, these if they be righteous, these must not think to escape. None that are truly godly and righteous, though they be of the most quiet and peaceable dispositions in the world, they must not think to escape; and therefore these two are joined together. Yea, this blessedness that follows upon persecution is added to all the former, to note that a man may be all the former, and yet a persecuted man. As thus: a man may be of a very poor and humble spirit, and yet persecuted; a man may be of a mournful spirit, mourn for his own sins, and for the sins of others, and yet persecuted; a man may be of a meek spirit, and yet persecuted; a man may be hungry and thirsting after righteousness; a man may be a merciful man, and yet persecuted; a man pure in heart, not having any base ends of his own, and yet persecuted; yea, a man may be a peacemaker, and yet persecuted. Such is the wickedness of the world, the vileness of the nature of man, that there is nothing in the world can keep him from persecuting of the saints, though they be of never such poor, and mourning, and meek, and pure, and merciful, and peaceable hearts. This for the connexion.

Blessed are they that are persecuted. *Διούζυμνοι*, the word translated *persecuted*, coming of *διώω*, it

signifies the following of a thing hard, a hard following of a thing; it is taken sometimes of a good sense. The same word that is here, and in divers other scriptures, is taken in an ill sense; it is often taken in a good. 1 Thes. v. 15, 'Follow that that is good,' saith the text there; *τὸ ἀγαθὸν διώκετε*, persecute that which is good. And in Heb. xii. 14, 'Follow peace,' there is the same word; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 'Follow after charity,' there is the same word there too. It signifies, therefore, so to follow a thing, as not to leave it till we have gotten what we would have. So the apostle uses it in Phil. iii. 14, 'I press towards the mark;' I persecute the mark, as it were—that is, look with what eagerness I did ever follow the saints in the persecution of them, I do now with the same eagerness press towards the mark. A man that hath an eager spirit doth press towards a thing. Now, as it is applied in an ill sense, taking the meaning of it, to follow the thing thoroughly. Now if you would know what persecution is, it is nothing but this:

A pertinacious following of one to do him hurt, tending to his destruction. When men do follow eagerly a business that is evil, and follow a man or woman in a thing to do hurt to them, and follow them eagerly, and resolve never to leave till they have got their wills of them, they may be said to persecute these men; for persecution is not merely to do a man hurt. There is a difference between wronging a man and persecuting a man. They may do them wrong in some one act; they may do them wrong accidentally. But now persecution is when, intending to follow a man or woman in a constant way, and resolve never to leave them until they have had their wills of them. Oh, blessed are they that are persecuted, that are followed by the world—those that the persecutors of the world are set upon, and are eager to do hurt unto. This is for righteousness. It is not the punishment, but the cause that makes the martyr. Those are not blessed that are followed hard for their sin, for their wickedness—that suffer for wickedness, that suffer for evil doers, for God would not have them suffer so. No; that is a part of the curse of God upon them—that as they do evil, so they should suffer evil. Now the saints that are blessed, they labour to be so far from sullering for evil-doing, that they would rather suffer all the evil in the world than do the least. There is a great deal of difference between these two.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

If you observe it, here is the same promise made to them that suffer persecution, as to those that are poor in spirit. Ambrose upon the place saith this: One is a promise of the soul's blessing. The poor in spirit, they shall have their souls blessed for ever in the kingdom of heaven. And the other is a promise of blessing to the body for bodily afflictions. Blessed

are those that are persecuted, for even their bodies shall go to heaven. But I think that doth not attain to the meaning of the Holy Ghost here. But I should rather take it thus, that those that are poor in spirit they think themselves unworthy of anything; they seem to be of the lowest form of all the saints of God, the poor in spirit are dejected in the sight and sense of their own poverty. And such as suffer persecution, they are of the highest form: the martyrs that suffer for Jesus Christ, oh they are glorious creatures. Saith one that is dejected in the sight and sense of his own poverty: I am a poor-spirited man or woman, I am not able to get through my difficulty. I am unworthy that ever God should look at me. Indeed, there are others that are of excellent spirits, and whatsoever opposition they meet withal, they can suffer the spoiling of their goods, imprisonment—they can suffer reproach, they can resist unto blood, can suffer torments for Jesus Christ—yea, they are happy men. Now mark, the same promise is both to the poor in spirit that is dejected, and thinks he is unworthy of anything—he hath the same promise with them that suffer martyrdom for Jesus Christ. A poor weak Christian may come to have the same glory that the most glorious martyr ever had. Therefore this self-same promise is annexed to both these.

Further, This is annexed to those that are persecuted, because such as are persecuted here in this world, their name is cast out as filth and vile; they are accounted to be wicked and ungodly men. Here the laws of kingdoms are against them, and the spirits of men that bear rule are ordinarily against them. Well, saith Christ to his disciples, be not troubled though here in the kingdoms of the world you suffer wrong, and are condemned as evil doers, you are followed as if you were the disturbers of the places where you live; be not troubled, yours is the kingdom of heaven. As I remember, Luther said in another case, when he heard of the determinations against him at Nuremberg: It is otherwise concluded in heaven than in Nuremberg. So may such as are persecuted comfort themselves in this, though the kingdoms of the world set themselves against us, yet ours is the kingdom of heaven. There is another court where all things shall be examined over again, and there the enemy shall be cast.

And then, secondly, Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. That is, whereas by persecution here you suffer the loss of your names, the loss of your liberties, the loss of your estates, the loss it may be of your lives; be not discouraged, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. It is the way to that kingdom which will requite all. You shall have as much glory as ever you did endure affliction in suffering. There shall be a proportion of glory to your suffering. As I remember it is said of Caligula the emperor, Agrippa

having suffered before he was emperor in speaking for him in his cause, so as he was cast into prison, and had an iron chain laid upon him; as soon as ever he came to the empire, one of the first things was to release Agrippa, and he gave him presently a chain of gold, that did weigh as much as the chain of iron did weigh when he was in prison. So saith Christ, 'Yours is the kingdom of heaven;' look, according to what you suffer here in this world, so you shall have your reward in the kingdom of heaven. And thus you have the meaning of this blessedness opened to you.

Now then, there are these three points that are the principal points in this verse:—

First, That all the disciples of Christ, live they never so inoffensively in the world, yet they must expect to suffer persecution, and that for righteousness.

Secondly, That though they be brought to suffer persecution, yet they are and shall be blessed in this their suffering. They should not at all be discouraged and troubled at their sufferings; for in the midst of them all they are blessed, and shall be so.

Thirdly, That this is the great blessedness of the saints, and in a more special manner, the blessedness of such as suffer persecution, that theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They shall have the kingdom of heaven for their reward.

I had thought to have spoken of the first point, but I see I cannot go on in it. I will only open that text in Timothy, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution.' Mark, here it is all that will live godly.

Why, they may be godly, you will say, and yet they are very indiscreet in their way, and have not wisdom to carry themselves, and so they may bring sufferings upon themselves. No, all that will live godly.

And then, all that will live godly—that is, if the heart of a man or woman be set upon the ways of godliness, that he is resolved upon it that he will live godly whatsoever comes of it—he must make account to suffer. Indeed, there is many a one in a family begins to think, my ways are not good, and these ways in the family are not good, and I would I did better. Oh, but then my master or mistress will hate me, my friends will hate me; therefore let me take heed what I do. And so the wife perhaps is afraid of the hard usage of her husband, though she hath some conviction of conscience. Ay, but all that will live godly; though I desire I might have the love of master, and mistress, and friends, but whatever I suffer, this I see to be the way of God, and I am resolved upon it, I will set upon this course.

And then, all that will live godly. The English word that we have for godliness is as significant as any to set out the nature and work of grace in the

heart; for it is to live from a principle of God, unto the glory of God, that is, to live godly. When men are resolved that the principle that shall guide them in their lives shall not be any carnal principle, principles of fleshly wisdom, but they shall be the principles of godliness, which they shall receive from God, and that that I shall aim at, it shall be that I may live to the praise and honour of God. I am resolved that though I have lived heretofore to myself, to provide for mine own ease, and all that time I lived quietly, but now I am resolved not to live any further to myself, but to God. All that will live godly.

And all that live godly. If men or women content themselves in bare wishes: Why, we may have a good heart to God; what need I trouble myself and make such shows in the world, so long as I keep a good heart to God? These may avoid persecution, but if they will live godly, that is, manifest it in their lives and conversations, they must suffer.

And then, lastly, All that will live godly in Christ Jesus. There is a kind of profession of religion that men have without any suffering—that is, for them to keep from gross and notorious sins in the world, may, but all that will live godly in Christ Jesus—that is, all that will live godly in the power of Christ Jesus, in the Spirit of Christ Jesus—all that shall manifest the power, and Spirit, and life of Jesus Christ in their carriages—all that will live godly in Jesus Christ: so that it seems there is a kind of godliness, which the world takes for godliness, that is not in Christ Jesus, there is no manifestation of the power and life and efficacy of the Spirit of Christ Jesus in it. But now, those that will live so godly, they must make account to suffer persecution, and the more eminent and forward they are, they must make account to suffer the more. Men that go on in a fair kind of way, as in former times, men that were so discreet in their way as that they were shy of suffering, and whatsoever came of it they would be sure to take heed of that; and they did not love these zealous men, and so they avoided persecution. But now, had their hearts been forward in the way of godliness, and their hearts zealous in the spirit of Christ, then they could not have avoided persecution. Those that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution—all of them. This lesson Paul learned even from Christ himself; though he lived not in Christ's time, yet it was taught him by Christ. Christ appeared to him, and he had the Spirit of Christ, and no question knew of this sermon of Christ, that all the disciples of Christ were forewarned that they must make account of persecutions. And you shall find it, that as soon as ever Paul was converted, the first thing that was told him was, that he must suffer great things. Acts ix. 17, 'For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.' Why, Paul, a young convert, yet when

he was first converted, the very first time he gave in his name to Jesus Christ, the first thing that he must be told was this, what great things he must suffer for Jesus Christ. The Lord Christ will train up converts

at the very first in this point. This is, therefore, a very useful point for young professors of religion to consider of: that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer affliction.

SERMON XXXII.

OR,

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST MUST EXPECT PERSECUTION.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MAT. v. 10.

WE made a little entrance into the first point; and it was towards the close of the exercise, so that we went but a little way.

That all the disciples of Christ must expect persecution. This is the first lesson that Christ teaches any that come to him, 'If any will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me;' and in Acts ix. 16; as soon as ever Saul was converted, presently it was declared to him what things he must suffer for Christ's sake; and in 2 Tim. iii. 12, the apostle pronounces that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. We spent a little time in the opening of that text, shewing what an emphasis there is almost in every word. But I shall proceed for the farther opening of the point by Scripture, examples, and reason, and so apply it.

We read in the book of Joshua of the Jebusites, as soon as ever they had entered into covenant with Joshua and the people of God, the kings round about them rose up against them. They were quiet enough with their neighbours before, but when they had entered into covenant with Joshua, then they rose up against them. Though men may be quiet enough living in the world, before God works upon their spirits, but if they will give up their names to Jesus Christ to come into the covenant with him, then they must expect to suffer persecution, that all the world will be against them. In Gen. xv. 12, 17, see what the Lord tells Abraham concerning his posterity: 'When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram: and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.' (It was presently upon the covenant that God had made with him and his seed.) Ye shall find, in the beginning of the chapter, God appeared to him, and told him he was his shield, and his exceeding great reward; and in ver. 5 he makes

him a promise of his seed likewise: Look towards heaven, 'and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be,' and he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness. It was therefore a covenant of grace that God made with Abraham, couched under some dark expressions. Yet Abraham knew it to be a covenant of grace, and therefore his faith was justifying faith, it was accounted for righteousness. Now as soon as he had made this promise, in ver. 12, God caused him to fall into this deep sleep, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him. To what end was that? It was to shew him, that though he had brought his seed into covenant with him, yet they must suffer great afflictions in Egypt. And ver. 17, 'It came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.' That was presented to him to declare to him the sufferings of his seed in Egypt, which was a type of the sufferings of all believers to the end of the world. That text likewise from the New Testament may be instead of all: Acts xiv. 22, 'Exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' You must expect tribulation in the entering into the kingdom of God: that is the godly man's text. The worldly man's text is in Job xxi. 13. There is a text that a worldly heart will close with: 'They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.' That concerns a worldly man; here he shall spend his days in wealth, though in a moment he goes down to the grave; but the godly, he must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven. You find that Peter dared not pray against all persecutions for the saints. 1 Pet. v. 10: 'But,' saith he, 'the God of all grace,

who hath called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make ye perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.' The God of all grace. Though he had in his prayer to deal with the God of all grace, yet he would not pray so much as that they should be presently established, but after they had suffered a while, then to make them perfect. As if Peter should say, I know the mind of Christ, and God's counsels concerning all those that will profess the truth: that while they are going on towards perfection they must suffer hard things; and therefore, though God be the God of all grace, I dare not so much as pray that they should be made perfect without any sufferings at all. But after ye have suffered a while, then to make you perfect. It is very observable, if you read the story of the seven churches in the book of the Revelation, which you have in the 2d and 3d chapters of that book. You shall find that there were but two of all those seven churches of which there is but little spoken concerning their sufferings; but of the other five there is much said. And which are those two that there is so little spoken of their suffering? If you examine the Scripture, you shall find, first, the church of Sardis, and then the church of Laodicea. The church of Sardis; read what is said of that. It was a church that the Holy Ghost saith, 'I know thy works, thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.' And the church of Laodicea; it was a lukewarm church: chap. iii. 16, 'So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.' Those two churches they were the worst of all the seven; and yet those two, you read, had less sufferings than the other: ay, they would escape better than the rest. Those that had a name to live and were dead, and those that were lukewarm, they would escape suffering of persecution. The worse men are that profess religion, for the most part they escape sufferings more; and the more power and life of godliness, the more they are like to suffer. Christians they must expect persecutions. Christ here was preaching to his disciples, and they found the use (or the reality) of this sermon of Christ in this part of it; for partly the Scripture and partly ecclesiastical stories do tell us of every one of the apostles that suffered a violent death, except only John; and yet the Scripture tells us that he suffered banishment. And some stories tell us that he was cast into a cauldron of hot, scalding lead, though God miraculously delivered him; but that he suffered banishment is clear, in Rev. i. He was banished unto the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ; and we have ecclesiastical stories, which none yet that I know do question the truth of, that doth declare the violent death of all the other apostles—not only suffering some troubles, but suffering unto blood.

Though, it is true, some differ in the manner of their death, but yet all agree in this, in their violent death. If you read where they are all twelve named, you shall find, first, concerning Peter, that stories tell us he was crucified; but he would not be crucified as Christ, but with his heels upward, as Christ was with his head upwards; and Andrew, he was likewise crucified by Egeus, king of Edessa; and James the son of Zebedee, he was slain by Herod with the sword; and then John, he was banished, as before, though we do not certainly read of his death; and Philip, he was crucified at Hierapolis, in Asia; and Bartholomew, while he was preaching the truth, multitudes fell upon him, and beat him down with staves; and Thomas, he was slain with a dart; and Matthew, he was slain with a spear, or, as some say, run through with a sword; and James the son of Alphaeus, who was called the just, was thrown down from off a pinnacle of the temple, and having some life left in him, he was brained with a fuller's club; Lebbeus was slain by Agbarus, king of Edessa; Paul, the apostle, was beheaded at Rome, under Nero; and Simon, the Canaanite, he and Jude was slain in a tumult; and Matthias, he was stoned to death. Thus the apostles they found what Christ had said, that they should suffer persecutions. Christ armed them beforehand with this scripture, preaching unto them; for so it was specially to his disciples and apostles that were nearest to him; and by this armed them for persecution, which every one of them afterwards suffered, even unto death, save only one.

Now if you should ask me, first, How it comes to pass that they suffer persecution?

First, From the devil. Secondly, From the nature of wicked men. Thirdly, From the holy ends that God hath in the sufferings of his people.

First, From the devil. He is the old serpent, the scorpion, the old dragon—Satan, that signifies an adversary, a roaring lion, that seeks whom he may devour. The devil doth infinitely hate God; and hating God, he must needs hate all that belongs to him, or anything so far as it hath anything of God in it. The devil's sin it is a sin of malice, and therefore of the same nature with the sin against the Holy Ghost. Now this is the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, that it makes any one that hath committed it to hate God, and to hate anything of God that they see anywhere, and therefore to wish all hurt unto others. As I remember I have heard a story of a man that was thought to sin against the Holy Ghost, and they asked him, though he had no thoughts to be saved himself, yet whether he would not have his wife and children to be saved. This was the answer he gave: There was a time, indeed, that I would have been glad to have had my wife and children saved; but now I wish that both they and all the

world were damned—and merely from hence, upon his hatred to God; it was not so much in hatred to his wife and children, or to the world, but because he hated God, and would have all to be enemies to God, as himself was. This is the nature of the sin against the Holy Ghost, though I do not think but it may be committed where this is not expressed, but there is this kind of malice. Now the devils having committed the sin of the same nature, because of their hatred to God, they hate the image of God, and hate all things that have any tendency unto God; and therefore, if possibly they can, they would have none to be saved; but if they cannot hinder but that some shall be saved, they resolve that they shall be saved with as much difficulty as they can help, and now the devil is called the prince of this world, and he prevails in this world much. The world it is in captivity to him. He rules, and he is called the god of this world. Now he, hating God and his saints so much, surely, while he hath so much to do in the world as he hath, all the saints of God must needs expect hard things.

Secondly, This poison of the old serpent, it is sucked up by wicked and ungodly men: Gen. iii. 15, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.' There is a natural enmity between the godly and the wicked, a secret antipathy; now antipathy is the greatest opposition, the strongest, the most secret and deadliest opposition, and constant opposition, and such an antipathy there is between the saints, and wicked and ungodly men. I read of tigers, that they are put into a rage by the smell of spices; and the savour of the graces of God in the saints will put the tigers of the world into a rage. There is in the hearts of men an opposition to godliness that is beyond all kind of reason; for it is an antipathy. Now an antipathy, you know, is an opposition of one creature against another, that there can be no reason given of it; as that a lion should be such a terrible creature, not fearing the neighing of horses, nor the beating of drums, nor rattling of spears, and yet that the crowing of a cock should scare him, and so between the elephant and the mouse, that no reason can be given for. So it is in the opposition between the wicked and the saints; let godly men walk never so inoffensively, yet there will be an opposition, though there can be no reason given. Some men, if such a dish come to a table, they are ready to faint; but they can give no reason of it. And so it is between the wicked and the godly; and therefore the apostle Paul, after his conversion, he could say and acknowledge in his persecuting of the saints he was a madman: Acts xxvi. 11, 'And being exceedingly mad against them.' Why, Paul, there was a time thou thoughtest it to be reason what thou didst. Ay,

but now Paul looks upon it as madness. There is an antipathy between the hearts of the wicked and godly men, and antipathies can never be cured without the death of one; and certainly this opposition between wicked and godly men can never be cured in this world till God doth take away the saints from them, or them from the saints; as there is a natural opposition between the fire and the water, even so the godly and the wicked, there will be an opposition between them. Read Prov. xxix. 27; there you shall see that the righteous is an abomination to the wicked, and the wicked an abomination to the righteous.

Ay, but you will say, Though the devil and wicked men be of such vile natures as they will hate the saints, yet doth not God rule over all? doth not the Lord reign in the world?

Ay, he doth so, and there is cause of rejoicing; for were it not that God did reign by his almighty power, wicked men would never suffer a saint to be alive in the world. As soon as ever any godliness were but appearing, the father would not suffer it in his child, nor one neighbour in another; but it is God that keeps in the rage of the devil, and the rage of wicked men. But yet God suffers his saints to be under persecution, and he hath many holy ends in the suffering of it.

As, first, To shew forth that great power of his, in carrying forth poor weak creatures through all the sufferings that they meet withal. I remember a heathen, looking upon the Christians in the primitive times, suffering with so much courage such great tortures and torments, he cries out, 'Of a truth the God of the Christians is a great God,'—a great God, that doth enable those that are his worshippers to go through such great sufferings with so much courage and cheerfulness. God's great power is seen in keeping the graces of the Spirit alive in the hearts of the saints in the midst of persecutions.

And then, as much of the power of God is seen, so there is much of the exercise of grace that God aims at; therefore, in his holy will and counsel he suffers his saints to be under persecution, that their graces may be exercised, that their love to himself may be exercised. It was a boasting of Scipio, a Roman, that he had so many soldiers, that if he should bid them go up upon the top of such a tower and throw themselves down, they would all be willing to lose their lives, merely in respect to me, saith he. The Lord Christ may say so: he hath thousand thousands of his saints, that if it be his will that they shall go through fire and water, and suffer the loss of their goods, liberties, lives, they will do it. Now the Lord takes a great deal of delight in the exercise of the grace of love and faith and patience and humility. Never was the church more fruitful

than when it was watered with its own blood; when the church was as a vine watered with her own blood, then it grew more fruitfully. The rose is never so sweet upon the stalk as when it is cast into the still; then it smells more sweet than it doth when it grows in all its beauty upon the bush. The exercise of grace it is a greater good than the enjoyment of any comfort in this world. Oh that we were rightly principled in this one great mystery of godliness! Whether do you account the exercise of a grace to be a greater good unto you than the enjoyment of a world, or of any comforts in this world? Oh if we did, we would not think our condition to be so hard when we are under afflictions and troubles. Thou thinkest it a fine and brave thing to live at ease, to have thy house and shop, and comings in, and clothes, and provisions for thy family and for thy children, and leaving great portions, and rich matches, and these things are brave things to the eye of flesh; but now canst thou account the exercise of the grace of humility, the exercise of the grace of faith, of the grace of patience, to be a greater happiness to thee than the enjoyment of all these good things? Certainly this were an argument indeed of a spiritual heart, of a heart that is acquainted with the ways of God, that is instructed from heaven. The Lord takes from me these outward comforts, respect and honour and esteem in the world, and my estate and liberty, and, it may be, lays heavy things upon my body too; but I bless his name I find I have more exercise of grace than ever I had. I never knew what the exercise of grace was, so as methinks I find it now. I never knew what the exercise of patience and humility was. Surely if I had not been brought into this low estate I should never have had the exercise of these graces; and I bless God I see more excellency in the exercise of these graces than there is in the enjoyment of all the comforts that I had before in the world. If thou canst say so, blessed art thou; flesh and blood hath not revealed these things unto thee. Thy heart is according to the very heart of God, who art taught in such a thing as this is; and therefore, when thou shalt suffer from the hands of God himself, yet if it be to exercise grace, thou art no loser; and if thou shalt suffer never such sore and grievous afflictions from the hands of men, yet if thou findest this effect of all thy sufferings, that God doth thereby draw forth the exercise of thy graces, certainly thou art blessed in this, and this is God's end that he doth aim at in permitting his people to be under persecutions.

And then a third end, and that is of very great use to consider of: It is for discovery of the hearts of men. If there were no suffering for his name sake, there would be little discovery between the hypocrite and between the sound professor. I re-

member I have read of Pamettrius, a heathen: saith he to the Bishop of Rome, Let me be made a bishop, and I will be a Christian—seeing the honour of the bishop; let me but have that, and I will be a Christian as well as any. If there were nothing but prosperity in the profession of Christ's kingdom, how would the truth and sincerity of men's hearts appear, and how would the hypocrisy of others appear? Fiery trials makes great separation; and indeed it is to make a discovery of our own hearts to ourselves. Before the time of suffering we do not know our own hearts, what drossiness there is in them: but when suffering comes, we may discover much drossiness of our own hearts—and to discover us to others too. In Luke ii. 35, speaking of the sufferings that should follow upon the profession of the gospel, he tells the Virgin Mary, 'That a sword should pierce through her soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be discovered.' Whenas there is such hard things following upon the profession of the gospel as if a sword did pierce through the soul, then the thoughts of many hearts shall be discovered. God intends to discover the thoughts of men's hearts by persecution. Formal professors are as withered leaves upon a tree. Now the storm will discover what leaves are withered, and what leaves have sap and juice from the root of the tree. Hang heavy things upon a rotten bough, and it will bow and break; but it will be discovered whether the bough be sound or no if it will bear a great weight when it is hung upon. So, when persecution comes, there is a discovery of who are sound and who are not. When godliness and men's own ends do part one from another, then you may discover what men did aim at in godliness. As thus, when a serving-man follows two gentlemen in the street, you cannot tell which man's servant this is; but now, do but stay till these come at a parting way, and then you shall find that the serving-man leaves one and follows the other, that is his master. So there are some that seem to follow Christ, but they follow their own ends too. Now, so long as Christ and their own ends go together, so long nobody can tell whether it be Christ they follow or their own ends. But when Christ and their own ends part one from another, then you will know whose servant this is; then you will know what the affections of their hearts are. Now the Lord doth take a great deal of delight in discovering the hearts of men here in this world.

Fourthly, That the Lord aims at is to make the saints conformable to his Son, to Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, in Phil. iii., professeth that he accounted all things as dung and dross, not only for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that he might be found in him, having on his righteousness, but that he might be made conformable to his death. Who

would not be conformable to the glory of Christ in heaven? But to be conformable to his death. It is said of Christ, Ought he not to suffer these things, and so to enter into his glory? Now the Lord would have all his people conformable to his Son, as, my brethren, God hath chosen us before the foundation of the world to be conformable to the image of his Son; that is, to be holy, as his Son is holy. It is that that God aimed at in the eternal election of men. I will have such and such men from the common lump of the world, and I will have them to be conformable to my Son. And he would have all the members of his Son to be conformable to him in his sufferings.

Fifthly and lastly, The Lord suffers his people to be under persecutions in a way of righteous judgment against the wicked and ungodly of this world, that they should be left to their own base corruptions, and stumble at this stumbling-stone, and so to perish for ever. I verily believe that it hath been an occasion of the eternal destruction of thousand thousands, the sufferings of godly people. Many other holy ends we might speak of that God doth aim at in suffering of the saints to be under persecution; but this is not the point I would enlarge myself in.

Now by way of use briefly.

Let none that begins to take up any profession of religion ever make account of any rest in this world; never think of it. Thou art infinitely mistaken in the matter of the profession of Christian religion. In Micah ii. it is said, 'Depart, here is not your rest.' Never bless yourselves in the enjoyment of habitations, of comings in, of repute and esteem, of liberty in the world, of credit and honour. Depart, let your hearts begone from these things, for certainly here is not your rest. No, you are appointed to persecution, as Paul said when they would not have him go up to Jerusalem for fear of suffering; saith he, I know not what I shall meet withal at Jerusalem, but I know that wheresoever I am, 'persecution, and bonds, and afflictions do attend me.' I have taken up this for a granted and sure principle, that wheresoever I am, bonds and afflictions do attend me. And therefore that is the special use that concerns us all, to prepare beforehand, and to lay up beforehand for such times. Let us never think, why, now we hope we shall have days of peace and prosperity, and the like.

Ay, but is this a point that doth concern us now?

I confess I would hardly have chosen such a text as this on purpose, but only that it falls in my way; therefore, seeing that providence brings this text to me, let me say thus much, that there may be much evil in men's hearts that they do not know of. It is true what the prophet told Hazeal what he should

do, that he should be thus and thus cruel to many. Why, saith Hazeal to the prophet, is thy servant a dead dog, that I should do these things? So do but tell men before they come to have power in their hands, that they will make the dear servants of God to cry to heaven for the burdens that they will lay upon them; why, they would think it the most uncharitable thing, yea, they would think in their own hearts that they were but as dead dogs, if they should do these things. Truly we cannot deny, but must say that men do such things already, such as heretofore they themselves would have thought they should never have done. How many heretofore were of dear and intimate acquaintance one with another, that did use to unbosom themselves each to other, that did use to pray and fast together, and shed tears together, groaning under the persecution that was before, and yet I will not say that they are come to such a height as to have the denomination of persecutors; but do not some begin very fair to be very harsh and very hard even towards such brethren as were as dear as their own souls, and such as are not fallen off to be worse than they were; but their consciences will tell them that they keep as close to God as ever, and yet there is a mighty alteration in their spirits; and therefore, because we do not know what the depths of evil is in the hearts of men, therefore we have cause in all times to prepare for this persecution; there is no time that is so peaceable and so serene but we have cause to lay in and to prepare for sufferings. Therefore set down and reckon upon it, when thou beginnest the profession of religion, that persecutions will attend thee. In Acts xxii. you may see how Paul reckoned upon sufferings wheresoever he came. And therefore, that you may prepare, I will not enter largely into the commonplace of preparing for sufferings, and carrying of ourselves under suffering. But only in a few words, that you may prepare.

First of all, You that profess religion, do not take profession of religion upon mere hearsay, or upon any by-ends, or to give content to your friends. No; but when you enter upon the profession of religion, be sure you lay a good foundation, know what you build upon, and let it not be enough that the word hath a little affected your hearts, and you have gone away with joy. You know the stony ground did so; but when troubles did arise, by and by they were offended, the Scripture saith. Therefore when you hear the word, and are a little affected, do not think that the work is done presently; oh, but labour to get the foundation to be laid deep, the main foundation. It is for thee to understand aright the way of the covenant of grace; be thoroughly informed in it, and likewise let your hearts be thoroughly humbled before God, that so, through the work of humiliation, there

may be a softening of the heart for the seed to soak in, and so to take root. That man or woman that ever hath been made sensible of the dreadful breach that sin hath made between God and their souls will not much regard persecutions. I remember Luther speaks of himself divers times, that though he was a man that was threatened with persecutions as much as any man, yet he was so acquainted with trouble of spirit and humiliation for sin, yet he was not afraid of all the bulls of the pope. We read of Paul, that said that all must suffer persecutions; and it was told him as soon as he was converted what he must suffer for Christ's sake. But how did the Lord prepare the heart of Paul? He knew that, as he was to be a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ, so he must suffer hard things. How did God humble him? He strikes him down off his horse, makes him cry out, 'Lord, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Ay, this man was fitted to suffer anything for Christ afterwards; so those that ever knew what sin meant, they will not think much of suffering. The reason why sufferings are so heavy to us, it is because sin is so light unto us. Labour, therefore, at first to be deeply rooted and grounded upon Jesus Christ, and sensible of the evil of sin; and learn that great lesson that prepares, in Mat. xvi. 24, 'Then said Jesus, if any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.' That man or woman that hath learned the lesson of self-denial, will learn to take up the cross; denying our self-excellency, our self-esteem, our self-will, and our self-lusts. There are a great many selfs in one man's self. I say, there is self-excellency, and self-esteem, and self-opinion, and self-will, and self-lusts; we must learn to deny ourselves, and to be as nothing in ourselves. What is it for us to be willing to suffer anything, that are wretched, cursed creatures in ourselves, whenas any man or woman can come to see themselves as vile as nothing, worse than nothing, as a firebrand of hell? I might have suffered the eternal torments of hell, I might have been fuel for the anger of God to burn upon to all eternity; and what is it for me to be called upon to suffer for his name's sake? This one meditation hath as much power as any one I know, both to prepare men for suffering, and to help them in their sufferings, when they can but think thus: Lord, what evils can men inflict upon me that shall any way be like to those evils that I might have suffered from the wrath of God for my sin? I might have been a firebrand of hell, and been under those eternal torments, in those everlasting flames of hell, roaring and crying with devils and damned spirits to all eternity. What is it to suffer a nickname, to suffer a prison and the loss of my estate, or to be frowned upon by great men? Oh let us labour to be emptied of ourselves, and let us conclude thus, that it is better

to lose for God than to enjoy for ourselves. Principle yourselves in that principle. Abundance of other such means might be named, but I would gladly have made some entrance into the other point: Blessed are they that suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. Why, if men suffer persecution for their wickedness, then they are cursed; but when they suffer persecution for righteousness, then they are blessed.

You will say, for righteousness; how many men suffer persecution for righteousness?

I, in the opening of the point, the last day shewed you something about it. But,

First, I shall shew you that all sufferings of men for matters of religion is not suffering persecution.

But then, secondly, That many men may be persecuted of others for righteousness' sake, and yet little think of it themselves. These two things I especially intended in the opening of this point.

For the first, you will say, How far may men suffer in matters of religion? when should there be any sufferings of men for matters of religion?

Men may suffer in some cases for matters of religion, and suffer righteously; and it is righteous in those that make them suffer.

First, If men sin in matters of religion against that that is against the light of nature, that by the light of nature men might, if they would, be convinced of to be a sin; in this they may suffer, and that justly. I will give you one scripture for this; it is in the case of idolatry, and in that men may justly suffer: Job xxxi. 26, 'If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge.' Now this scripture cannot be so answered as some may that you have out of the Old Testament of the kings of Judah. I confess I think that the strength of what men suffered in the time of the law, of the kings of Judah, is not so strong as many others are; for there is a great deal of difference between them and governors now. I have shewn some difference between the people that were under the pedagogy of the law, and the power of the kings of Judah, and governors now. But now, as for Job, he was not under the pedagogy of the law. The kings of Judah are said to be types of Christ, and their government was typical. But now this that is spoken of here in Job doth not at all concern any type, but that that was agreeable to the light of nature, and approved of by God. Therefore 'if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand, this were an iniquity to be punished by the judge.' That is idolatry that a man may be convinced of by the light of nature if he will; as the worshipping of the sun and moon, it is an iniquity to

be punished by the judge. So that there is some evil in matters of religion that may be punished by men; idolatry which is so clear that men by the light of nature may be convinced of it, magistrates should not suffer that idolatry.

But may we go no further?

Yes, surely. In other things that are of an inferior nature, though it is not the light of nature that will convince men, yet such things as are against the common light of Christianity, that are so clearly revealed that even those that are in place and power, and the community of the people, may take it upon them that these men, if they be ignorant, are willfully ignorant. Such things likewise are not to be suffered; for there is the same reason why they should be punished by Christians, as why those that have only the light of nature should punish those things that are against the light of nature.

Yea, so far a magistrate may go, that through the evil carriage of men in their turbulency, in their pride, manifesting apparently a stubborn spirit—if either through the nature of the thing, or through their wicked carriage, they may take upon them, as they would answer it to Jesus Christ at the last day, that they do evidently see mere wantonness and stubbornness, and not weakness and infirmity—so far as may be suitable to help against wantonness and stubbornness, the Lord hath appointed outward means, even outward punishment to be an ordinance of his; for it hath an efficacy put into it by nature. External things have by the God of nature an efficacy put into them to help against that that doth appear outwardly to be stubbornness, wantonness, or stoutness. Thus far there may be suffering in matters of religion; and those that will go farther than this, they had need make it very clear. Such as would have every kind of error as they think in matters controversial; though men should behave themselves never so meekly and humbly before others, yet if they think that God hath appointed the civil sword to put an end to the controversies in religion—I say, if they take not heed, when they think to do God good service, they will run upon the danger of being guilty of bringing the people of God under persecution.

But the other two that I have spoken of are enough to clear many from that great error that is cried out of amongst us—that men would have no kind of government, but would have all kind of things to be suffered. But now the lord judge in this case, in this wrong unto such men, that because they only plead for no further suffering a toleration but in this case where men can no way, either by the horrible-ness in the fact, in their opinions, or by the turbulency and pride and insolency of their carriage, be convinced to err through wantonness and stubborn-

ness; there they say that there should be a forbearance. But now to think that all kind of things should be tolerated, all kind of blasphemy tolerated! This is a most infinite wrong; and whosoever hath been guilty of this, to charge it upon them, surely there is much guilt upon such for this; and if God gives them not hearts to repent of it, it will be required of them another day. But now this is all that is pleaded for—that all those men that agree with us both in doctrine and worship that is fundamental, and all those that carry themselves in a peaceable, humble, and meek way, that these should have forbearance from their brethren. Now, what peace will this hinder among us? Why may not we live and enjoy one another, and never have such terms one against another, either that one would have all things suffered, or that others are persecutors, because they will not suffer all things? Thus you see that a man may suffer in matters of religion, and may suffer justly and righteously. But now this is to be limited according to the cautions that I spake to before. Now, on the other side, to convince men that they may, before they are aware, bring men in to suffer for righteousness' sake. You will say, Who will make any man suffer for righteousness' sake? Surely there is scarce any so vile.

To that I answer, The devil himself would never cause any of the people of God to suffer under the name of suffering for righteousness. If the devil did raise any persecutions against the saints, he would have some pretence or other for their sufferings. You never read of that, that the devil did cry out of men merely for their righteousness; but it is under some other name that always he hath to bring sufferings upon the professors of religion. When the devil would bring the people of the Jews to suffer, Haman comes and tells the king 'That it is not for the king's profit to suffer such men;' and it is a rebellious city, and always against government. Haman did stir up the king against the people of the Jews, that were the only church of God then, and upon this ground, that they were against government. Not merely because they were the people of God—he did not own them so; but they were against government. And so you shall find it all along. When as the apostle Paul suffered, it was not for righteousness, but he was a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition; and these did turn the world upside down, and they made a great deal of stir in the world. And in the primitive times, why, all the troubles that were abroad in the countries were ever charged upon the Christians; and under that name they suffered, as being the cause of all their troubles. And many do in this case like the heathens, when they would set the dogs upon the Christians; they would put them into wild beasts' skins, and then they would

set the dogs upon them to tear them. And this hard usage the people of God have met withal from time to time. They indeed desire to walk righteously before the Lord. Now there is so much beauty and excellency in the ways of righteousness, that men dare not persecute under that name. Therefore they will put some other name upon it, and raise some nickname and slander upon this people; and under that they fall upon them, and there they suffer. So that the saints may suffer for righteousness' sake by evil men, and yet they are not aware of it. Now something I had thought to have spoken by way of

conviction, to convince many men whose hearts are against the people of God for righteousness' sake, and yet they do not think so. And though they plead that it is for this reason and the other that they are thus and thus, yet it is for righteousness; that lies at the bottom. And it would be a good means to restrain some men, if not a means to turn them back, and to cause them to begin to bethink themselves, were they but convinced that it were for righteousness. But this would require more time than we have for the present; and therefore we shall let it pass.

SERMON XXXIII.

OR,

REASONS WHY RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST EXPECT TO SUFFER.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MAT. v. 10.

JOHN preached in a way of terror: 'Now is the axe laid to the root of the tree.' Christ's preaching is to convey his doctrine by shewing them to be blessed that do embrace it. In this long sermon of Christ, he begins with blessedness; his blessing is such as is above the apprehension of reason, even in every particular. He begins with the poor, and ends with the persecuted; blessed are the poor in spirit, and blessed are they that are persecuted.

Righteousness is enough to stir up the hearts of men to oppose it, and to cause them to persecute it. For that you have scripture plentiful: 1 John iii. 12, 'Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him?' Surely he did him some wrong—he did not behave himself like a brother. Cain was the elder brother, and Abel the younger, and he did not know his distance. No, that was not the matter. 'Wherefore slew he him?' Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. There was no other reason why Cain fell upon his brother, but because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous. It was for righteousness' sake, and there is the first persecution that we read of in the world. I will name but another scripture: 1 Peter ii. 19, 'For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.' There is a suffering merely for conscience towards God. I shall need name no more.

The reasons are these:

First, Because that righteousness itself, it is that that doth oppose the corruption of men's hearts, it is that that crosses men in the ways of their corruption, and men can endure much in anything but only against their corruptions, against some sinful distempers of their hearts. Righteousness in one kind opposes one man's corruptions one way, and another's another way, but all men's corruptions are opposed by righteousness. As a godly man can bear anything, but only when it is against righteousness, so wicked men can bear anything, for some are of patient and quiet spirits, but only in that that opposes their corruptions, and that they cannot bear.

Secondly, Again, righteousness is such a thing that carnal hearts see no reason for. They see men to be forward in a way of profession of righteousness, but they cannot understand it; it is a hidden thing to them. So that in 1 Peter iv. 4, 'They think it strange that you should not run with them to the same excess of riot;' that you will not do as they do.

Thirdly, Righteousness condemns the world; as it is said of Noah, that he condemned the world. Were it not for some men whose righteousness is raised up to a higher pitch than others, other men would be accounted good honest men; but when there are some that are raised in a profession higher than they, upon this they are condemned; even in their

own consciences they are condemned in part; and condemned by others that do behold them for coming short of that righteousness that others do attain to. And this they cannot bear, but their hearts fret against.

Fourthly, Righteousness causes men to hold to their principles in a constant settled way, however times alter. Let times alter this way or that way, righteousness, if it be engrained in the hearts of men and women, it will make them hold to their principles, and go on in their way, let heaven and earth meet together. And the truth is, there is no way to keep from sufferings, but to have such principles as may bend this way or that, according to the times. Those men, I will warrant you, will keep from sufferings. You have men that are very witty to find out distinctions, so as they can suit themselves to all times. If the times go this way, they can have a distinction to suit that; and if the times turn, they have a distinction to suit that; and if they turn a third time, they have a distinction to help them there. But now, if righteousness prevail in the heart, they keep on in their way; and because the times do change up and down, they must meet with opposition. The wind doth not oppose weather-cocks, but turns them according to it; but now, if you set up a thing that will not turn, the wind blusters against that if it turn not with it. Now, righteousness keeps the heart in a sweet way towards God, let the wind turn which way it will; and therefore must needs have the wind come blustering against them; they keep close to their principles. And the men of the world, they think it is nothing but stoutness of their hearts; whereas indeed God knows, and their own consciences know, that it is those principles of righteousness that they have in them that keep their hearts steady with God. Therefore they must suffer.

Fifthly, Righteousness, it holds forth a special claim of interest that some men have in God more than others, and the world cannot bear that. But now, when men walk in ways of righteousness beyond others, this holds forth unto the world that those men do claim a special interest in God more than others. And this makes the world storm at it, and therefore righteousness must expect to suffer.

By way of application.

First, Here we may see the wickedness of the world, that would oppose righteousness. Righteousness! That that should make all the world in love with it, and enamoured at the beauty of it! And yet so it is, that when righteousness comes abroad in the world, it is that that is the very mark that ungodly men shoot at. Righteous men should be accounted the greatest blessings in the world. Indeed they are; and if the world did but know it, they would account righteous men, that should hold forth the image of God before others—they would account

them to be as great blessings to the world as the sun, moon, and stars are, and a great deal more. But now, such is the wickedness of the world, that these they make the object of their wrath and hatred, to persecute them.

Secondly, Is it righteousness that is persecuted in the world? Do not, then, judge any cause unjust, unrighteous, because it is persecuted. Do not think that therefore the cause is not righteousness, or those persons are not righteous, because they are persecuted in the world; nay, rather it is an argument of righteousness. If we should make that to be the argument to sway our judgments, certainly Christ himself and his apostles should not be accounted righteous, nor their cause a righteous cause. Those men that lived in Christ's time, if they should have gone by this rule, that such as are opposed and persecuted, they are the worst people, surely their cause is not good; then Christ must be accounted unrighteous, and his cause so. Oh, never judge so; this is an unrighteous judgment.

Thirdly, Let men take heed that they do not rest themselves too much in a righteous cause, as to think that that shall be enough to free them from suffering. No; you are deceived in this. Many people think, Well, what care I? my cause is good. What then? Do you think that that shall keep you from suffering? Oh no. Your cause may be good, and your persons good, and you may manage your cause well, and yet suffer for all that. And therefore prepare for sufferings.

Fourthly, and then lastly, If righteousness must be persecuted, let those that profess righteousness take heed they give no other occasion of persecution but their righteousness. The world will persecute you, do you what you can; be you never so righteous, you must meet with troubles. Therefore, seeing you must meet with opposition in the world, take heed you do not suffer as evil-doers; let not your sufferings be for such things as your consciences shall tell you you have not done well in. Oh, the people of God had need walk very exactly in the midst of the world, for there is something they must suffer. Oh, let them not add to their sufferings. I have often thought this, that when such as are professors of religion live among men that are carnal and wicked, because they must keep constant unto the principles of religion, and resolve to suffer for them, therefore they had need, of all other things, walk the most inoffensively of any, and be willing to be the servants of all men, so far as they can with a good conscience, that thereby they may declare that when they do anything in way of opposition unto those that they live among, it is nothing but merely conscience puts them upon it; whereas now, if men that profess religion have a sour, stubborn spirit in things that they

may yield to, then when they out of conscience are put upon the standing out against those that they live withal, and cannot yield, yet such as they live among will judge that the reason why they do not yield it is not out of conscience, but stubbornness; and therefore that they may convince the world that when they do stand to anything that is against them, that it is not out of stubbornness, but merely out of conscience. And it concerns all the professors of religion, in whatever they are able, to yield to others—to be willing even to be servants to them, and to be as pliable to them to do any good unto them, and thereby to convince them that if there be anything wherein they do not yield, it is because they cannot, not because they will not.

But to come to that which is the main—

Persecuted for righteousness.

You will say, How can that be? Is there any that will oppose men for doing well? Surely there is somewhat else in it. Suetonius reports of Tiberius that, having a mind to have a virgin to be strangled, some come to him and tell him that it is against the law of the Romans that any virgin should be so used. Upon that he gave order to have the virgin deflowered, and then she might be put to death. So do the men of the world do with such as are righteous, and righteous causes. It is true, they have something in their consciences that tells them they must not oppose that that is righteous; therefore they will deflower it, and labour to put misapprehensions upon it, that then they may oppose it with the more freedom.

But certainly men may persecute righteousness that are not aware of it themselves. Many men that, if they were certainly and fully convinced that this is righteousness, and a righteous cause, they would not oppose it, yet they may oppose righteousness. There may be that colour put upon things whereby they may think themselves free, and yet God sees their hearts are against righteousness.

As, first, Certainly all men in the world naturally have their hearts opposite to righteousness; therefore where there is not a new nature there is an opposition to righteousness. Now most men are still natural, therefore they do oppose righteousness. If we should come into the vilest place that is, and speak with every man: What! do you hate righteousness? why, they would defy you. I believe there is not one in all this city, from one end to the other, but if you ask them the question, Do you hate righteousness? they would abhor you: yet this is a certain truth, that all men naturally are enemies to righteousness, therefore surely there are some that are against righteousness, that know not of it themselves.

Secondly, Men of great parts, that are able to un-

derstand things very far, yet they may be opposers of righteousness. Say many poor people, What! scholars, learned men, they know whether it be good or no; and if they knew that it were good they would never oppose it. Oh you are much mistaken; for some men may go against their very consciences. But always men of the greatest parts do not understand most of the mind of Christ; the scribes and pharisees were the most knowing men in the time of Christ, and yet the greatest opposites to Jesus Christ.

Yea, thirdly, Men very civilly righteous, yet may oppose righteousness; as now, the scribes and pharisees, they were civilly righteous. So it is said concerning Paul, that he persecuted the church, and was mad against them. What was this Paul when he was such a persecutor? he was no drunkard, he was no whoremaster, he was no blasphemer, according to the apprehension of the times then; but he saith of himself in Phil. iii. 6, 7, that 'concerning the law he was blameless.' Paul, before his conversion, walked in such a civil way as no man could accuse him of any way of evil; he walked blameless, and yet a mad persecutor of righteousness. And it is said of Trajan, which caused the third of the ten primitive persecutions—Trajan, of all the emperors, he was one that was the most civil, just, and righteous of any. And I remember these two or three things are said of him: that when he was an emperor he did behave himself towards his subjects, as, if he had been a subject, he would have had his prince behave himself towards him; that is the first thing is said of him. Secondly, That being emperor, when he gave the sword into the hand of an officer, he had this speech—'When,' saith he, 'that I do justice, use this sword for me; if you see that I do injustice, use it against me,' to his own officer. And then a third thing is this, That when an emperor was made, they did use to wish the happiness of Augustus to him, the uprightness of Trajan. And yet this man a most deadly enemy to the Christians, and a most abominable persecutor; such a man as this, yet so civil, morally just and honest.

Ay, but you will say, he was of a hard nature, though he were so civil, just, &c.

Therefore I add, in the fourth place, That a man may be of a very sweet nature, and yet be a great persecutor. Though of a very loving, sweet nature otherwise, yet when he comes to oppose righteousness, he may be very fierce and furious. It is said of Titus Vespasian that he was the very delight of human kind, *Delicie generis humani*, and yet a very great enemy to the people of God.

Ay, but he was of another religion, though he were of a sweet nature.

Fifthly, But further, then, a man or woman may

be very devout in the profession of religion, and yet a great persecutor—and sometimes the greatest. Those that are very devout in their own way, if any go another way that they do not apprehend, they will persecute them most, and for that you have a text in Acts xiii. 50. Paul he preached, and was much opposed, but by whom? How did the people come to oppose Paul? ‘But the Jews,’ saith the text, ‘stirred up devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.’

Ay, but can you tell us any one example that ever any godly man persecuted another?

I confess if you ask me the question whether ever you find any godly man, that had true godliness, to persecute others that were godly, you put me to a great stand; I had need search from Genesis to the Revelation to find an example. And I think I can tell you of one, that in one passionate act did it, and that was King Asa; when the prophet came to him and told him the mind of God, his heart was enraged against him, and struck him, and put him into prison. I confess I remember not any other example but him; and the Scripture speaks of him to be a godly man; therefore this is more dangerous for those that do persecute.

Secondly, It is more grievous to those that are persecuted, because their persecution is such as hath no former example. Indeed, when I come to the next verse, I shall shew you how it hath been the condition of the people of God to be persecuted; but I cannot shew you that it ever was their lot to be persecuted by godly men. Therefore if ever we fall into an age wherein godly men suffer by godly men, it is a time unparalleled, that never was in the world before that we read of. We never read in all the book of God that godly men suffered in a constant way, but only that particular act, and therefore that persecution is the sorest.

If you will say, How may we discover men that they do oppose righteousness, though they do not know it themselves? First, I will tell you that the Scripture is plain that men may oppose righteousness, and godly men, and yet they may think that they do God good service. In John xvi. 2 Christ foretells concerning his disciples, they must make account to suffer such things from men, that ‘shall think that they do God good service that kills them.’ But you will say, How may it be discovered?

I would discover it first by this, when men shall oppose that that comes under the name of righteousness before they have examined it, and come to understand it. There is a kind of show of righteousness in it, and as soon as ever there appears a show of it, before they have examined the thing whether it be real or no, they fly out upon it, and against it. Truly

here is a dangerous sign that the heart is against righteousness. As I would instance in this similitude: suppose a man sees the broad seal, and without any more ado, before he hath examined whether it be it, yea or no, he takes and stamps it under his feet, will not this man be charged for felony, if not treason? It may be he will say, I knew not what it was. Ay, but it will be answered, You should have examined whether it was it or no. And so certainly when anything comes under the name of righteousness, and hath a show of religion in it, it is true it may be it is not right; but however, stay till you examine it; for the thing that a man opposes, that hath but a pretence of righteousness in it, a man had need be very sure that it is but a pretence, and that it is not righteousness. A man must take heed, when he is to do a thing, that he knows what he doth. If I were to do an action, if it had any kind of doubtfulness in it, I am bound in conscience to examine strictly before I do it; but if I come to make another man suffer for not doing such a thing, or for doing it, I had need be very sure then indeed. Observe this rule in all things wherein you oppose others, I mean in religion, or join with them that do oppose: Go upon sure ground, examine things thoroughly, be able to give an account of it; be able to say, Well, I do oppose this, for I have this ground and this reason for it, I have examined it, and I find it to be against the mind of God, and therefore I do oppose it.

Secondly, When the more loose any man grows in his life, the more opposite he is against such a way; and if at any time he be better and more restrained, then he comes to have better thoughts of such a way. Surely this is very suspicious, that what he doth oppose, it is righteousness that he doth oppose. As now, that you may plainly know what I mean: sometimes men are a great deal better than at other times. Some men, though they have very profane principles, and are very wicked men, yet at some times they are more strict. Perhaps they have some stirrings of conscience, and have some restraint upon their spirits, and have some common gifts that keep them in; but now at other times this restraint that is upon their spirits will not hold, but their corruptions do grow too strong for this restraint, and they break the cords, and go against their consciences. Now, then, let me examine their hearts in this. How are your hearts affected to such a cause or person when you are in your best condition? It may be you begin to have good thoughts then of such men and of such causes, that at such a time, when your lusts are most hot and strong and violent, you are hottest and violentest against. Here is a very suspicious thing. It is righteousness that you do oppose, for certainly things argue thus. If it were anything but righteousness, then it is evil that you do oppose; and then the better you are, the more

you would oppose it. I say, if the thing that you oppose be evil and not good, then the better you are at any time, the more you would oppose it; but inasmuch as the worse you are at any time, the more you do oppose it, that is a sign it is rather good you do oppose than evil. For surely if a man, the worse he grows the more he doth oppose a thing, then we may gather an argument that the thing is rather good than evil that he doth oppose. Nay, consider in your mind thus, it may be when you are in your health and strength and lusty, and have all about you, and are in a tavern and heat with wine, then you scorn, deride, and speak against such and such men; but suppose the hand of God be upon you, suppose you upon your sickbeds, and you apprehend yourselves going the way of all flesh to receive the sentence of your eternal doom from God, are you of the same mind now? Are these men as hateful to you now as they were at such a time when you were in a tavern and spake so against them? Why, surely if you did speak against those men because they were naughty, then the nearer you are to answer before God, the more would your hearts be against those men; or if any way were opposed because it was naughty, then the nearer you come to be judged before God, the more your hearts would be against that way. But now we find it otherwise, that many men that would not be accounted persecutors of righteousness, yet that that they speak most against, they do it more when their lusts are heat by wine, by meat and drink, or otherwise, in the ruff of their pride, in their strength and health; they do it more then than they would do it upon their sickbeds, when they are going before the Lord to answer. And that is another discovery that, whatever the pretence was, yet it is righteousness that they persecuted.

Thirdly, When men oppose others under pretence of faults that they were more guilty of a great deal before they made the profession of religion and righteousness than now they are, and yet they could bear with them then, but now they cannot.

As, for instance, suppose one should come to make profession of religion more than before. Now your hearts are against them, but how? You will make some pretence that they did some fault, and therefore you oppose them. But I appeal to your consciences, were they not more faulty before they made such profession of religion, and yet you could bear with their faults then? Your consciences tell you that your servants, your children, your wife, was more disobedient then; and yet you could better bear with their faults before their profession than after. Therefore surely it is righteousness that is opposed rather than anything else.

Fourthly, A fourth discovery is this, when men are partial in their opposition, they can stand to it, and will plead for, and not be so severe against others,

though guilty of as great and greater faults. Surely, then, it is righteousness that is opposed, rather than those faults that are pretended.

Fifthly, When men hearing any faults in those that profess religion are glad of them, they are glad that they have that pretence; yea, they do rejoice in it, that they have that pretence against them. Oh, this is an argument that it is righteousness that is hated; for certainly if it were evil that were hated, then if a man that did profess religion should prove to be scandalous, and commit an evil, your hearts would mourn for this; Oh! religion hath got a wound! But now, when you are glad when you hear of such an evil that such a one hath fallen into, that professes religion more than others, your hearts can be merry, this is a sign that it is righteousness that your hearts are against. But if you say you are troubled in the discovery of such a man that hath discovered himself at such a time to be false; if that were so, and your spirits right, then you would mourn and lament for the sin that is committed.

Sixthly, Yea, further, it would be your care to make up the breach that is made in the profession of religion. Oh, such a man hath discovered a falsehood! He was very forward in his profession, but he grew scandalous, and so discovered himself false. Oh, what a blow hath religion got by him! therefore let me labour to make it up, by being the more godly myself. But this is not so in men; and therefore it is righteousness that your hearts are most against, rather than anything else.

Sevently, And then, when men in their opposition of that that is good shall find that their greatest strength it is from the worst sort of men—that the rout and the refuse of people they will join with them; and were it not for their hopes of having a rout of people to join with them, they would never venture in such a way;—surely in this you had need look to yourselves, for it is righteousness you do oppose.

Eighthly, When men's consciences may tell them that they have by-ends in their opposition; that, if they will examine things according to conscience, their conscience will tell them that their ends are by-ends that they do oppose upon. They say they oppose such and such things, and will not be known that they oppose righteousness. But what are your ends? is it not from some self-respect? Do not you see the times go such a way, and it is that moves you, and you shall get into countenance by this means? Certainly, if false ends do act us, it is not righteousness that is acted by us: 'The wrath of man will not accomplish the righteousness of God;' neither will men's corruptions, nor the false ends of men to provide for themselves—it will not accomplish the righteousness of God.

There are divers other evidences that might be given; but I would fain have concluded in a word of exhortation to men to take heed what they do. Many things I had thought to have spoken in a way of exhortation, that men should beware of what they oppose. Examine things thoroughly now; for, my brethren, these are the times wherein Christ is opposing antichrist more than before; and therefore, though Christ was patient towards persecutors in former times, they must not expect that he will be so patient now; for it is a time of pulling down the man of sin. Now Christ is more stirring than he was; we see Christ more acting and stirring. Christ is risen, and if Christ be risen, his enemies must be scattered; and therefore, though in the times that were before much was winked at, but now Christ is risen, and is stirring, and therefore take heed of opposing of that that is good. And further, in these times there is more light and discoveries than before; and there are more professors of religion now than heretofore, and therefore there is more danger of opposing of the saints now than before. And, besides, we are about discovering and searching out of the way of God we did not know before; and what now, in a time of searching after things, and when we come to profess many things

that heretofore we did not profess but were against, why, can we rise to the top presently, so as to fall opposing those that do not the same things that we do? And further, let us consider that England hath been guilty of this sin of persecution of righteousness, truly I think I may say, more than any other kingdom. And we should take heed to ourselves of this, because we have been under persecution ourselves. Yea, we ourselves have made much profession of late more than before, and we have engaged ourselves to the way; and when we have joined ourselves with the saints, and engaged ourselves with them, we had need take heed of persecution. And then, lastly, In these times it is a vain thing to persecute. Why? Because there is so much light discovered, and people, many of them, have not only made profession, but have a work of God upon them, that it is not persecution will prevail now: in Rev. xiv. 13, 'Blessed are they that die in the Lord,' or they that die for the Lord. Write it, from henceforth, saith the Spirit; mark it. Why, flesh and blood would not reason thus, that those that suffer for the Lord are blessed; but 'blessed are they that die in,' or for, the Lord. 'Yea, saith the Spirit.' The judgment of the Spirit is different from the judgment of the world.

SERMON XXXIV.

OR,

PRINCIPLES FOR SUFFERING.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MAT. v. 10.

I SHALL not look back to anything; there are these things further in the text. First, I shall endeavour to give unto you some principles for suffering—that is, some considerations that may help the people of God to be willing and able to suffer for righteousness' sake. Second, We shall open the blessedness of this—what a blessed thing it is to suffer for righteousness' sake. Thirdly, Conclude the verse with some application.

For the first, then: To lay down some suffering principles—that is, some considerations whereby the people of God may be fitted and prepared for sufferings; for we know not what God may call us to, and there is none but in some degree or other are some time or other called to sufferings, (I mean, that are godly.)

Wherefore the first principle to enable Christians to suffer for righteousness is, that we should look on ourselves as sent into the world for this end, especially to bear witness to the truth. That is the first principle; as a great end for which we were born, for which we live, that we might be witnesses of God to his truth. Surely, if it were Christ's end, he accounted it the end for which he was sent into the world, we have cause to account it ours too. That scripture in John xviii. 37 plainly shews it, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.' It is a notable scripture, and certainly all those that profess themselves to be the disciples of Christ should make much use of this scripture, 'For this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.' Bear witness any way. Christ did not bear witness in an active way only, but in a passive also; and he speaks of this when he was called to suffer before Pilate. Oh that Christians were well principled in this, that every one that professes himself a Christian would think thus: Wherefore was I born, wherefore came I into the world? Surely not that I should eat and drink and live bravely in the world; that was not the end for which I was born; I was born for a higher, a more noble end, that I should be a witness of God to bear witness to his truth. And if this

were the end for which I was born, then it is fit that God should call me to witness any way whatsoever, by doing or suffering; that I should be willing to do it, for I attain my end for which I was born in it, and, above all, witness for the truth. The witness by way of suffering is the most glorious witness. Saith Cyprian, concerning the martyrs that were persecuted, 'They confessed with a glorious voice.' When men confess the truth by words, from the truth in their hearts, God accepts it; but when they come to witness to the truth by sufferings, this is a glorious profession of the truth, and unto it; and herein doth a Christian attain the end for which he was born. That is the first suffering principle.

The second suffering principle is this, It is better to lose for God than to enjoy for ourselves. Let Christians but thoroughly principle themselves in these things, and you will find it an easy matter to suffer anything for Christ. It is better for a man that hath an estate to lose it for God than to enjoy it for himself; better to lose our liberties for God than to enjoy them for ourselves; better to lose our credit, our honour, for God than to enjoy them for ourselves; our pleasures and delights for God than to enjoy them for ourselves. Yea, I remember that Pliny, in his Epistle Dedicatory to Vespasian, he speaks of a heathen, Cato, that did profess he did more rejoice in the estate that he parted withal for justice, that he would not receive in way of bribes, than he did in what estate he did enjoy himself. Shall a heathen profess to rejoice more in what he parts withal for the maintenance of justice than in what he enjoyed, and shall not Christians account it better to part with anything in way of honouring of God, and doing service for him, than in enjoying of it to themselves? When any are called to suffer, for them to look upon what they are like to part with—Why, I have an estate, I may live comfortably, and shall I lose this now in this way? Why, friend, do not account it loss if thou dost part with it for God; it is the best part of thy estate. If a man loses but a limb for his country, why, that man is accounted

more beautiful in that part of his body than elsewhere. I remember ecclesiastical histories tells us of Constantine, when he came in the council, and saw one that had lost his eye for the profession of religion, he presently falls upon him, and kisses that place, as accounting that to be the most beautiful place of his face; and so certainly Christians should account it so, and never bless God more that they have an estate or credit and esteem and liberty, or a life, than when they are called to part with these things for God. I am now a happier man in the loss of these things for God than ever I was in my life in the enjoyment of them. But this, I confess, is a mystery and a riddle to carnal hearts. Only those that are truly gracious and godly, they know what this principle means.

Thirdly, Whosoever suffers anything for God, in the midst of all their sufferings they are in a better case than their persecutors. As now, when you read of any of the martyrs that were called before their persecutors, they came in all their bravery, and sat upon the bench, and glistened in their silks and satins, and spake what they list, and enjoyed themselves to the full, and had reverence and respect of all the people—they seemed to be brave; but a company of poor Christians come before them out of the prison, tattered and ragged, and stand at the bar, and answer for their lives. Now you shall have many poor people, they think these poor creatures that stand in such a miserable condition to the eye of flesh, that they are in the worst condition, but the others are happy. Oh but a Christian's eye sees quite otherwise, that looks upon the persecutors as the most miserable, wretched, forlorn, undone creatures, and look upon the saints as the most glorious creatures. It is a notable scripture that you have in Heb. xi., latter part, 'Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented.' Were not these miserable creatures? Though flesh and blood would count them miserable creatures, yet mark what the Holy Ghost's judgment is of them: ver 38, 'Of whom the world was not worthy.' They were so happy when they wandered up and down in sheep-skins and goat-skins that the world was not worthy of them. It is not so of their persecutors. They were vile; as I remember it is said of Antiochus Epiphanes, 'And in his estate shall stand up a vile person.' Though he was a mighty prince, yet, being a persecutor of the saints, he is called a vile person; and these who are thus persecuted are said, by the Spirit of God, to be such as the world was not worthy of them.

Fourthly, That it is a great deal better to suffer for Christ than to suffer for sin. Why, now, this consi-

deration hath a great deal of power in it; for when thou art called to suffer anything in the cause of Christ, thou mayest think thus: Why, the Lord might have left me to myself, that I might have suffered as much for my sin, for my wickedness, as now I am called to suffer for Jesus Christ. I am called, it may be, to suffer the loss of some part of my estate: why, I might have been converted for my sin, and by the hand of justice I might have had my estate taken from me. I am in prison; I might have been in prison for my wickedness. I am in danger of my life; God might have given me up to such a sin as I might, by the hand of justice, have had my life taken from me. Now, how much better is this, when I do stand here to lose for Christ, that might have lost for my sin. I that am in danger of my life that I may testify my respect to Christ, I might have been in danger by my sin. Oh what a blessed thing is this rather than the other: this consideration hath a mighty deal of power in it.

Fifthly, That God may make me suffer in spite of my heart. If I find a reluctancy in me to come off to suffer for Christ, I may be forced in spite of my heart to do it; and what comfort shall I then have in it? How much better is it to suffer freely and willingly for Jesus Christ than to be forced to suffer? and then there will be no exercise of grace in it, but I shall be merely passive. As I remember, the 'Book of Martyrs' hath such a story of one that was a smith, that was a means, in King Edward's time, to convert and turn another to the truth. Now, in Queen Mary's time the persecutors did seize upon him that was converted by him, and he was cast into prison, and stood out in his sufferings in witnessing for Christ. Now this man sends for him that was the means of his conversion, and wondered how he escaped all the while; for you, saith he, was the man that told me these things. Now this man sends word back to him again: I confess those things that I told you are truth, but I cannot burn, saith he. But yet this man, though he would not burn for Christ, afterwards his house was set on fire by some accident, and he was burned in his own house; and so Christ made him burn whether he would or no. Now, how much better had it been for this man to have burned for Christ. If you will not suffer any loss of your estate for Christ, Christ can make you suffer; he can set fire on your houses, and take away your estates by some providence or other. Christ can lay afflictions upon you, and diseases upon you. You are loath to venture yourselves for him; he can lay those things upon you that will be greater evils than those things that he called you to suffer for his name sake. Consider of this, that God can make you suffer whether you will or no. Oh it is better, therefore, freely and readily to give up ourselves to suffer for Jesus Christ!

Sixthly, No creature hath any good in it any further than it is enjoyed in God, and improved for God. That is a sixth suffering principle. When God gives me the use of a creature, and I enjoy it in God, in the love and favour of God, then there is some good in it; or if I can any way make use of it to improve it for the honour and praise of God, then there is comfort in it indeed. But now take away these two things in any creature that any man in the world enjoys, and there is no good at all in it—it is but a mere empty shell. As thus: thou hast such and such comforts in the creature, but dost thou enjoy anything of God in them, or dost thou enjoy them for God? Then they are good; but without this they are nothing but emptiness—there is nothing but wind in them. Now, then, if I be called to suffer in the cause of Christ, this is, as it were, to me a loud voice from heaven. This creature that now you are called to part withal in witness to my truth, you can enjoy me no further in it, nor you can improve it no further in the enjoyment of it, but in the parting with it. Now that that had a goodness in it before in the enjoyment of it, hath now the goodness in it in parting from it. That is a sixth principle; and were we principled aright in this, how easy were it to part with any creature-comfort in the cause of Christ.

Seventhly, The seventh suffering principle is this, There is no sufferings of any of the saints that they are called unto at any time, but they are ordered by God, for the time of the suffering, for the kind of the suffering, the continuance of the suffering, the instruments of the suffering. Everything in every suffering, it is ordered by God beforehand, determined by him how it shall be; that at such a time such a man shall suffer, and not such a man, and by such means and not other means, and in such a kind, and so long to continue, and no longer. You know that in the Revelation, Satan shall cast some of you into prison for ten days. He shall cast but some of you, not all; and he shall but cast you into prison, and not take away your lives; and this shall be but ten days neither. Now this consideration is a mighty strengthening consideration to the sufferings of the saints, as it was to Christ, that all his sufferings were determined beforehand. It was a strengthening to him; so certainly it is to the saints, to consider that all their sufferings are determined beforehand and ordered by God. Therefore you know what Christ saith, 'Shall I not drink the cup that my Father hath given me to drink?' He spake it of his sufferings; and so should every one that is called to suffer for the truth reason thus with themselves, and beat down any risings of their spirits against those sufferings. 'Shall I not drink the cup that my Father hath given me to drink?' It is a

bitter cup indeed that my friends should hate me, that I should prejudice my estate, and prejudice my liberty, and all these outward comforts, and live a miserable life for outwards in this world. Ay, but 'shall I not drink the cup that my Father hath given me to drink?' That is the seventh principle.

Eighthly, That whenever we suffer for Christ, Christ suffers with us; we are partakers of his sufferings, and he is partaker of our sufferings: in Isa. lxiii. 9, 'In all their afflictions he was afflicted.' Why, it is a great support and comfort to one to think, Why, my friends do sympathise with me, and are affected with my sufferings. Know now that Jesus Christ doth sympathise with you in your sufferings; yea, he suffers as much as you, ay, and more than you, in all your sufferings; and therefore it is said of Moses, 'that he accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches.' The consideration now that they are Christ's sufferings, is many ways useful to help the soul in sufferings; for not only that Christ will pity them, and compassionate them, but certainly Christ suffering with them, he will help them to bear them too. Why? because they are his own sufferings, and therefore he will order thy sufferings, and moderate them. Thou canst never suffer in the cause of Christ, but Christ doth bear the weightiest end of the staff; this now is a mighty help against sufferings, and support in it.

Ninthly, There is more evil in sufferings before they come, in imagination, than when they are come. How many that have been imprisoned for a good cause, have professed they never thought imprisonment was so easy to bear as now they find it; and so loss of estate and loss of friends, they are indeed terrible before they come, but usually when they are upon the saints they find them not so hard and grievous to them.

Tenthly, That there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest afflictions. It is an ill choice to choose the least sin rather than the greatest affliction. If sufferings be presented to thee, and thou art afraid of them, thou thinkest them terrible, why, the least vain thought of thy mind is a greater evil than all the torments that all the persecutors in the world can inflict upon you. You will say, this is hard. This is a riddle indeed to carnal hearts. A riddle! why, my text itself is a riddle; and therefore no marvel though we speak things that carnal hearts cannot understand. But certainly those to whom God hath ever made known the dreadful evil that there is in sin, they cannot but be, and are in some measure sensible of it, that there is more evil in any one sin than in any afflictions whatsoever; and therefore they had rather to endure the greatest sufferings, than willingly to commit the least known sin. It may be some of you account

light of sin, and can upon every little temptation be drawn to the commission of it. Well, but how lightly soever you make of sin, those that are the saints of God, that know what sin means, they had rather endure all the torments that can be devised in the world than to commit any one known sin wilfully. Certainly there is a great deal of difference between thy apprehension and theirs. I beseech you, brethren, lay up this tenth suffering principle, (for so I call them;) lay up as many as you can remember, and desire those that do remember or take them to help you with them, that you may lay them to your hearts, and lay them up by you against the time that God may call you to suffer for his truths.

But that in the text hath much in it: 'Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake.' There is a great blessing in suffering: that we may add as an eleventh, That suffering for Christ is a great blessing; and that is the point in the text—it is a gift of God; 'it is given to you, not only to believe, but to suffer.' It is a greater gift to be enabled to suffer for Christ, than to be enabled to do anything in the world for him. If Christ should enable you to work miracles, it were not so great a gift, if you were enabled to raise the dead out of their graves, as for Christ to give you a suffering heart. Whosoever Christ gives a suffering heart to, let such a one know he hath received a great gift from Jesus Christ. You think it an excellency to be able to pray; to be able to suffer is more. I remember we read of one of the martyrs, that when he was called to argue for the truth, I cannot dispute for it, saith he, but I can die for it, that is more. It is more to be able to suffer for the truth than to preach of it; yea, to practise the truth, it is a blessed thing. Now the Scripture is very plentiful in this argument, to shew the blessedness that there is in suffering. In Acts v. 41, 'They went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name.' Read Luke vi. 22, 23: Christ would have his disciples rejoice and leap for joy when they came to suffer anything. Read 2 Cor. xi. 23: when the apostle would glory in that that he accounted his excellency, observe what it is he glories in. Saith he, 'Are they ministers of Christ? I speak as a fool; I am more.' He falls a-glorying because he was disparaged by the false teachers. More, how? 'In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren,' &c. Now the scope of the apostle was to shew his glory. He

did not glory in this so much, I have parts more than they, or I have learning more than they, or I have honours. No; but I suffer more for Christ than they. Oh, it is a blessed thing to suffer for Christ; and so in chap. xii. 10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.' I take pleasure; it is a delightful, a pleasant thing to me. Oh, I account it a most blessed thing in suffering anything for Christ's sake. Saith Tertullian, in the primitive times, 'Your cruelty is our glory, our blessedness, our happiness.' 'I desire to know nothing,' saith Paul, 'but Christ'—ay, there is a great deal of excellency in him—'but Christ and him crucified.' Christ and his cross; I glory in that above all—that I know Christ, and that I know him practically.

Now for the blessedness that there is in suffering, many things might be said, but I shall but present before you some short view of what blessedness there is in suffering persecution.

First, If God gives thee a heart to suffer for him, thou hast in this a full evidence of the truth of thy graces, yea, and of the strength and the eminency of thy graces. Thou givest witness to all the world that thou art one that lovest Christ in sincerity, and that thy graces are strong and powerful; that thou art not as an hypocrite that will fall off in the time of trial; that thou art not as a rotten bough of a tree, that when it hath a weight upon it breaks presently. No; but that thou hast the Spirit of Christ and the strength of Christ with thee, that thy graces are of the right stamp. This thou dost declare to all the world; and it is a blessed thing to give evidence before men and angels, before the world, and before thine own conscience, that indeed thy heart is upright with Christ, and that thy graces are stronger than thou thoughtest thyself, it may be, they were. Many that are afraid of sufferings before they are called, yet when they are called to it, they find ability to go through more than ever they did imagine; and this is a blessed thing.

Secondly, There is a great deal of honour in suffering. It is a speech of Ignatius, 'I had rather be a martyr than a monarch;' and so you know Moses chose 'rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy all the pleasures and riches of Egypt.'

But above others, this is very remarkable. Chrysostom, speaking of the commendations of Paul, and in the setting out of his praises, he doth especially insist upon his sufferings, and professes if it were given to him either to hear him speak out of heaven or the prison, he had rather hear him speaking out of the prison than out of heaven. And in another place, saith he, Paul was lift up to the highest heavens, and there he heard words that were unutterable. Ay, but Paul in the prison, saith he, was a great deal more

glorious than when he was lift up to the highest heavens. When he was cast into prison, there he was more glorious than when he heard those words that were unutterable, and such kind of expressions he hath further about him. I remember, in the primitive times, reading of Tertullian, when he was to speak to those that suffered for Christ, It is not for me—I am not great enough to be able to speak to such glorious creatures as you are. Yea, and they were bound, in honour to the martyrs, to go creeping to their very chains, and kiss them in honour to them. When Chrysostom was speaking of Tabeles, a martyr, he speaks, If it be lawful to call him a man; so far they did honour those that suffered for Christ. Oh, it is honourable before men and angels, before God himself, before the churches, before all the saints. Saith Basil, speaking in his oration about the forty martyrs, 'Blessed are those tongues that shall confess Christ. They do, as it were, sanctify the air while they are speaking in the confession of Christ in their sufferings.'

Thirdly, It is a blessed thing to suffer for righteousness' sake, for it is the highest and greatest improvement of men's abilities, graces, comforts, whatsoever they enjoy. It is the highest improvement that can be for them to suffer. Never are men's graces so improved as in times of suffering. 'The people of God were never so eminent in grace as in persecuting times.' The church of God smelt sweeter when they were, as it were, roses cast into the still, and had the fire of persecution put under them, than when they grew flourishing upon the stalk. As the spices have a more fragrant smell when they are beaten to powder than when they are whole; and so the saints' graces are more fragrant in the nostrils of God, and do grow up more in the time of suffering than ever. Oh what breathings of holiness was there, and heaven upon earth, that the saints enjoyed in the times of suffering, through the eminency of grace in the primitive times. Certainly the church was never more fruitful than when it was watered with her own blood; then it brought forth more fruit to Jesus Christ. It is the highest improvement of the graces of the Spirit of God and of all your comforts—then you improve them to purpose whereas you make use of them to suffer for Christ.

Fourthly, It is blessed, for those that suffer are under many blessed promises. Why, 'If you suffer with him, you shall be glorified with him.' Read 2 Tim. ii. 12, and in Rom. viii., there you have divers excellent expressions wherein there are most excellent promises to such as suffer in the cause of Christ. Mat. xix. 29, 'Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. In James i. 12, 'Blessed is the man that endureth

temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.' It were easy to spend hours in the recollecting the many promises that are made to suffering Christians, and there are blessed comforts which they have that suffer. One James Bainam, a martyr, when they kindled the fire at his feet, 'Methinks they strew roses at my feet,' saith he. And Mr Sanders professed that he found abundance of joy flowing to his heart from all the parts of his body, that he never felt before in all his life. But above all, for the joy that there is in suffering, that place in 1 Pet. iv. 14, and which is one of the most excellent promises, saith he, 'Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' But what for the present? Why, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you;' that is, the glorious Spirit of God. All the saints have the Spirit of God; but every believer hath not the Spirit of God and of glory—that is, hath not the Spirit of God in that glorious manner as those that suffer for Christ have. And rest upon them—that is, to comfort you, to quicken you, to do good unto you, to enlighten you, 'The Spirit of God and of glory.' Would you have a glorious Spirit rest and abide upon you, not to have some flashes of it? Sometimes the saints have some flashes of the Holy Ghost, and they apprehend glory. Oh but when they come to suffer, they have the Spirit of God and of glory resting upon them!

Fifthly, And then that you have in the text, 'For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

That is, first, The blessing of the gospel that is upon them here, and the kingdom of glory in heaven is theirs. This kingdom hath these three things in it:—

First, The blessing of the gospel is theirs in an eminent special manner; for that is called the kingdom of heaven. But that I opened at large unto you in the first beatitude: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' Now, as that is promised to the poor in spirit, so here to those that suffer persecution; they shall have the righteousness of that kingdom; 'The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace, and joy.' All the good and blessing of the gospel, in all the administrations of Jesus Christ in the gospel, they shall be partakers of it in a most eminent manner. That is the first.

But then, secondly, The kingdom of heaven—that is, what part of the kingdom that Christ shall have before the time when he gives up the kingdom to the Father; they shall be sure to have an eminent share in that blessing. Now to me there is nothing more clear in Scripture than this, that there is a kingdom that Christ is to have before his giving up the king-

dom to the Father. For, so speaking of the last day, 1 Cor. xv., it is said that then 'Christ shall give up the kingdom unto the Father, and God shall be all in all.' But now the Scripture speaks of the kingdom of Christ, as it shall be here, as a promise unto the saints before that of the kingdom of the Father. Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh'—that is, notwithstanding all his sufferings—'will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.' Observe this scripture. This plainly shews that at that time there was a throne of Christ that the saints should sit on after their overcoming. Now for the throne of Christ, as he rules all the world, and in his church by the sceptre of his word and Spirit, certainly that throne of Christ they were in at that time when Christ spake to them. But now he speaks of another time as a reward of all their sufferings and overcoming; in that time they should sit upon his throne, as he sits upon his Father's throne. You will say, That shall be in heaven. Nay, there it is plain that he gives up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be all in all. But now there is another kingdom of Christ that is promised to those that overcome, and that such as suffer shall have a special share and part in, as in the Revelation, for that book is written for the encouragement of the saints in sufferings in the anti-christian times. There you shall find that Christ promises that they should reign on the earth. And if you read chap. xx., where Christ speaks of a kingdom that he shall have for a long time; and especially it is said in ver. 4, of those that were beheaded, and that did not worship the beast, nor receive his mark upon their foreheads nor hands, either openly or secretly, they were the people that Christ especially aimed at when he came to his kingdom. And in the Gospel by St Luke, Christ, encouraging his disciples in the way of suffering for him, saith he, 'Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptation.' What then? 'And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.' And that fore-named place in 1 Peter iv. 13, 'Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.' Now you are sorrowful, contemned, despised, and trodden as dirt under feet; but when Christ shall appear in his glory to take the kingdom to himself—for it is apparent that there is a time that Christ shall reign otherwise than now he doth; for, saith the voice from heaven in Rev. xi., 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for evermore.' So that, I say, the Scripture is clear that there is a time for Jesus Christ to have honour and glory in the kingdoms of this world; and these may well be called the kingdom of

heaven, though it be here in the world. As the ministry of the gospel is called the kingdom, so the rule of Christ in this extraordinary way; and when Christ shall come to take this kingdom to himself, oh, how will he own those that have suffered for him! That shall be his first work, to own and honour them in the eyes of all the world. You suffered hard things indeed in the kingdom of the world; ay, but there is another kingdom, in which you shall be honoured. In Rev. vii. 14, 'And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' 'These they are;' there shall be a glorying in them. As I remember I have read of Carus the emperor, that, hearing Agrippa suffered in his cause before he came to be emperor, the first thing that he did it was this: he called for the chain that Agrippa was chained withal for speaking in his behalf, and gave him a chain of gold that weighed just as much as that chain did. And so certainly the first work that Christ will do when he comes to take his kingdom shall be to call for all that hath suffered for his sake, and to proportion out a proportionable measure of glory. Saith Tertullian, The greatest reward follows the greatest contest, strife, and suffering for Jesus Christ. Therefore I remember I have read of Gordius, a martyr, that when he was to suffer, he told his persecutors that if they did but abate any suffering that they intended towards him, he should be a loser. When, therefore, the general judgment shall be, oh, the embracements then of Jesus Christ embracing those that have suffered for him! and then he shall set them, with white robes, upon his throne, and they shall be judges of their judges. They shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel—not only the apostles, but all the saints. They now stand before the wicked, and are judged by them. They shall sit with Christ, and judge the wicked and ungodly at that day, and so ascend with Christ in glory, and there enjoy the fruit of their sufferings. 'Blessed are those that die in the Lord,' (it may be as well read, Blessed are those that die for the Lord,) 'for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.' Now this the apostles and others, they saw clearly: 2 Cor. iv., latter end, 'For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' It is one of the most elegant expressions that ever was in any author in the world. The exceeding, excessive, eternal weight of glory; and but our 'light afflictions' that are but for a 'moment.'

But you will say, Is not this a legal way, to be encouraged, either in duty or suffering, in hope of heaven?

Truly those men that will think they have risen to

such a height of grace as they can do all out of mere love to God, so as not to have any respect to their own good in heaven, they have attained to that grace, that for my part I do not know the Scripture holds forth unto them. But the Scripture would have such as are the most eminent in grace yet to encourage themselves in hope of heaven in what they do or suffer for Jesus Christ.

You will say, It is true, we may lawfully do it; but were it not better that we might do it without such an encouragement?

Truly no; for I find Christ himself was encouraged in this; and there was no grace better than Christ's. See what is said concerning Christ himself. He is set before you as a pattern that you should make use of: 'For consider him that endured such contradictions of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds,' Heb. xii. 3. But now in the verse before saith he, 'Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him'—mark it—'endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Christ endured the cross, and despised the shame. What did help Christ to do this, and encourage him? Why, the joy that was set before him. Christ he had the joy of sitting at the right hand of the Father set before him. And it is made one fruit of the sufferings of Christ, that he is set at the right hand of the throne of God. And Christ in the midst of his sufferings

saw this: I shall after my enduring some sufferings here, within a while sit at the right hand of the throne of my Father; and it is this that helps me to carry me through my sufferings. And now if Christ will make use of this, surely it is a vanity and pride of men's spirits, to think that they have no need of it!

But now having opened these things, I had thought to have spoken but very little in way of application to you.

Only you may see, by what hath been said, how the stumbling-block of the cross is taken away. Oh, lay up these things that are presented to you, that are spoken to you this day in the name of Christ. You know not what use you may have of them. Lay them up in your hearts against the time of suffering, that you may have them ready. As men that are subject to fainting fits, they have their *aqua vitæ* bottles, and such kind of things, to help them against their fainting fits. Oh, so lay up these truths, that may help you against all fainting fits—that it may be indifferent to you whether you enjoy times of prosperity or times of persecution—that, let the world go which way it will, a Christian should go on in his way, and make all his care to do his duty, and let become of him what will. The worst that can come is this, for to be persecuted; but that will add to your glory, and help to further your future happiness. 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.'

SERMON XXXV.

OR,

SOME HEADS FROM WHAT HATH BEEN SAID ABOUT THE BLESSEDNESS OF PERSECUTION.

'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MAT. v. 10.

WE have already preached, you know, divers sermons about the point of persecution, shewing you what it is, and when men are persecuted for righteousness' sake; and how men may be guilty of persecuting others for righteousness' sake, and not think of it themselves. The last day we opened the blessedness that there is in suffering persecution; but I shall not look back, but shall proceed, only for this ver. 10, to give you a few heads, by way of application, from what hath been said about the blessedness of suffering persecution. It is a blessed thing to suffer persecution; not only that blessedness and persecution may consist together, that a man may be a blessed man *though* he be a persecuted man. No; but a man is a blessed man *because* he is a persecuted man. The world can hardly tell how blessedness and persecution can both consist; but of all the saints in the world those saints that are most persecuted are most blessed. This is a great paradox to the world, but comes out of the mouth of Christ; and by what we said the last day, we made it good.

Then by way of use.

Hence we see the excellency of a Christian's state. Look upon him in his worst condition, he is blessed; yea, and the worst condition that he can be put into makes him blessed. Surely his estate is excellent; he gets by his sufferings. The philosopher's stone is commended for turning all things to gold. Why, grace in a Christian hath the virtue to turn all their losses, all their sufferings, and the dirt and dross that is cast upon them, to turn it into blessedness, and therefore excellent. Surely, then, godly people are not fools, that are willing to suffer so much in the cause of God. They know what they do; for they know how it furthers their blessedness.

Secondly, It is a vain thing for the men of the world to think to take off the saints from any way of Christ by persecution. It may be you are engaged against servants, friends, kindred, neighbours, wife, or others, and you think with yourselves you will make them do otherwise than they do. Why, what

will you do? You will make them to suffer loss in such and such things that they might have. You will put them to hard usage, and you think that will do. There is a great mistake in that: persecution rather raises the spirits of the saints than any way takes them off from God. It improves their graces; it heightens their graces; they are above you in your persecution. I remember one told Modestus, that was the emperor's officer, when he had to deal with Basil, 'Let him alone; for Basil is above you,' said he. Those men that are carnal and wicked, they think with themselves, It would discourage us in any way of religion if we should suffer by it, and therefore they think that they can discourage others by making them suffer by it. It is true, if others went upon no better principles than thou dost, they would be discouraged by persecution; but because thou art conscious to thyself of the base principles thou goest upon, and knowest that thou wouldest be discouraged, thou thinkest that others go upon the same principles. Thou art mistaken; their principles are higher and more noble; and therefore, though persecutions would discourage thee, it will not discourage them. In Jer. xxiii. 27, saith the prophet there, 'Which think to cause my people to forget my name, by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour.' He speaks here of the false prophets, and that that is said of them may well be applied to this case, to persecution: they think to cause my people to forget my name. Oh no, they are mistaken; for their dreams could not make those that were true saints to forget God's name: so no sufferings of persecution can make the faithful to decline from the ways of God; no, they see a blessedness in them. Can you delude them from any way by making them blessed? Why, the more you rage against them the more blessed they are.

Thirdly, If it be such a blessed thing to suffer persecution, oh, how base and vile are those hypocrites and apostates that do decline from God for fear of persecution! How beneath are they those that

are true Christians! One rejoices at it, blesses God for it, accounts it an addition to his glory; he is strengthened, encouraged in the ways of God. And on the other side, thou lookest upon it as so great an evil, as thou wilt leave God, Christ, thy conscience, the truth, thy possession, saints, and all, rather than suffer in thy estate, in thy liberty, in thy name, but especially if the danger be greater. Oh, thou hast a drossy and vile spirit! thou knowest not the things of God, that art so shy of persecution, as rather wilt lose the greatest riches than to be willing to venture upon God, in that that God himself saith to be riches. Thou mightest be blessed by it; and thou wilt rather venture the loss of thy portion in God, and thine inheritance in the Almighty; thou wilt rather venture thine own conscience, and putting thyself under the wrath of the eternal God, than thou wilt venture upon the wrath of man. Such a one is enraged against thee; why, to avoid his provocation and his raging, thou wilt hazard thy soul and body to be under the wrath of the eternal God for ever. Oh, thou art a besotted fool by thy lusts, that wilt forsake Christ and his cause for fear of persecution, whenas Christ himself saith, 'Those are blessed that suffer persecution!'

Fourthly, Christians should labour to establish themselves in this truth for the preparing of themselves for persecution. Look up to Christ, and see him pronouncing this blessedness. Consider of the several particulars that have been spoken, but especially the glory of the kingdom of heaven, that will strengthen thee against persecution; for the very sight of that glory, if thou canst make it real to thy soul, it will put a magnanimity upon thy spirit, it will raise thy spirit above the world, it will make thee look upon all things as under thee, despising and contemning them. As it is said of Christ, when he looked to the joy that was set before him, he despised the shame, he looked upon it as a contemptible thing. There is nothing will make the heart of a man truly magnanimous so as the real sight of the glorious things in the kingdom of heaven; this will darken all the glory of the world in thine eyes. If once thou hast had but a glimmering of the glory of the things in the kingdom of heaven, and looked upon them as certain and real, how easy would it be for thee to suffer anything in the world. That scripture, Heb. x. 32-34, is remarkable for this: 'But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.' How came they to be strengthened to take

joyfully the spoiling of their goods? Mark the text, 'Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance.' Observe the phrase. He doth not say that you have heard say so, but knowing in yourselves; there was a revelation of it by the Holy Ghost unto their souls to assure them of it, to settle their hearts in it: 'Knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and enduring substance.' I confess, after all that I have preached to you about this, if you know it only by what I have said, or what you hear from others, that will never enable you to suffer with joy the spoiling of your goods; but when you know it in yourselves, when you have a certain sure knowledge of it by the Spirit of God revealing it to your souls, this will make you to suffer with joyfulness the spoiling of your goods. As I remember Joseph said when he sent to Jacob, ' REGARD not the stuff, for the riches of Egypt are yours;' so a gracious heart, when it comes to see the riches of heaven, the joys of eternity, he looks upon these things as stuff and lumber, he is fit to suffer any loss whatsoever, and endure any evils that can be inflicted.

Fifthly, If it be such a blessed thing to suffer with Christ, how blessed is it to reign with Christ! Take a Christian at the lowest, cast him into prison, put fetters and bonds upon him, yet he is a blessed man; take away food and raiment, let the malice and rage of all the devils in hell and men in the world inflict what evils they possibly can upon him, he is a blessed man. If he be blessed now, oh how blessed will he be when he shall reign with Christ, when he shall have the crown upon his head, and stand with glorious robes before the Father, and Jesus Christ, and angels, and sit with Jesus Christ to judge the world, and reign for ever with them! Oh how blessed will he be then!

Sixthly, Let us not have too low and mean esteem of sufferers; let us look upon them as honourable, as those that are blessed; let us not be shy of them. It is usual in the world, that when any come to suffer in a good cause, they leave them, they are shy of them, and let them shift for themselves. Oh, it is a wicked thing so to be. Like as it is in a herd of deer, they go together till the huntsman comes and shoots one of them, and when the rest of the deer see the blood come, they will push him out of their company, and will go no longer with him; and so it is many times in this vile world. Those that profess religion, if they prosper in the world, they will be content then to join with them, and make much of them, and keep company with them; but if the providence of God calls out any particular one to suffer more than other, you shall have all the other, that were wont to be inward and intimate with them, withdraw from them, and will scarce own them. Oh this is a wicked and cursed thing. Why wilt thou not own them now? What! dost thou look upon them in a worse

condition than they were? Why, now they are made blessed. As I remember Ignatius said when he felt his bones crashing by the mouths of the wild beasts, 'Now I begin to be a Christian.' So he begins to be a Christian; and it is a sign that God looks upon him as more eminent than thou, because he is called to suffer. Oh therefore be not thou ashamed of those that Christ glories in, and saith that they are blessed. It is very remarkable that we read of John, in Rev. i. 9. John speaks of himself there, and mark what he glories in: 'I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.' John doth glory in this, that he is the companion of the saints in tribulation. John doth not glory in this, Why, I John, that am an apostle, that am the beloved disciple of Christ, I John, that lay in the bosom of Christ. No; but I John, that am your companion in tribulation, and John that was banished to the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and the testimony of Christ. John glories in this, to be the companion of others that suffer in the cause of Christ, and so that forenamed scripture in Heb. x., saith he, 'Partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.' And this is a useful note that we are to lay up against such a day that the saints suffer, be willing to own them, and be not at all ashamed of them. That one scripture I shall name about glory in suffering; Christ himself he glories in suffering, and when he would shew forth his glory to Paul, in Acts ix., to bring him down, mark what he saith there, 'I heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' Thou kickest against the pricks in persecuting me. Thou persecutest me; it is not my saints but myself that thou persecutest; I own them, they are mine. And I remember there is another scripture that saith, when Jesus speaks of himself, he saith, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Now Nazareth was the place that he was scorned in, and he was scorned because he came out of Nazareth, and yet Christ glories in that title, Jesus of Nazareth.

Seventhly and lastly, If those be blessed that suffer persecution, then it becomes the saints in all their sufferings to suffer with meekness, to suffer with gentleness, not to manifest any passion in their sufferings. Why? because you are blessed in suffering. Let those have their hearts enraged that are cursed in their sufferings, but for those that are blessed in their sufferings, let their hearts be quieted and still, and be not troubled at your sufferings; carry yourselves so as to be more quiet than your persecutors. I remember I have read of Socrates, speaking to men how they should carry themselves meekly towards

those that they suffer by, saith he, If you meet one in the street that hath a body more diseased than yours, will you be angry with them because of their bodies? And so, if you meet with those that wrong you, it is the disease of their souls, and therefore let not our spirits rise against them, but rather pity them. And this was the commendation of the martyrs, to pity them, and to pray for them as Stephen did; and this indeed is true Christian like. But I am not willing to proceed further in this point, but we shall go on to the next verse.

'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.'—Mat. v. 11.

Christ having spoken of persecution in general, here he comes to instance in a particular persecution, and that is the persecution of the tongue. 'Blessed are ye,' saith he, 'when men shall revile you,'—that is, persecute you in reviling you,—'and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.' The argument that this verse holds forth unto us is, the persecution of the tongue for the sake of Jesus Christ. 'Blessed are you when men shall revile you.'

Revile you. The word it signifies to reproach with detestation and with chiding; to object evil against men, and so to chide and fall out with men, and give them evil language, that is the propriety of the word. The English word revile you, it comes from the Latin that signifies vileness, to use one as if they were base and contemptible, not worthy to be regarded, to speak so of any as vile, to seek to render a man vile and contemptible by our words. 1 Peter ii. 23, you have the same word in your books of Christ, 'that when he was reviled he reviled not again.' But it is not the same word in the Greek, but yet to the same purpose. Now there are divers points here, but the main it is;—

Observe, That the saints must expect this ill-usage from wicked men while they live here, to be reviled in the cause of Christ.

Secondly, So long as it be for Christ, and falsely, (lying,) so the word is; here it is translated, when they shall say all manner of evil falsely, when they speak all manner of evil (lying) while it is for Christ, and false, the saints are blessed in their sufferings, in this reviling that they must expect. Reviling and speaking all manner of evil, every evil thing, so is the word, they must expect; whatever hell or wicked men can invent against them, that they must expect to be cast upon them. The time would quickly be gone if we should look over scriptures to see how the saints have been reviled in all times; that it is no new thing, but that I shall rather omit till I come to the next thing, where it is said, 'For so did they use the prophets.' There we shall see how the saints in all

times have been reviled, and therefore we shall spare the mentioning of scriptures in this place, referring it to that they must expect reviling from wicked men, because wicked men hate them, and malice is very inventive to find out false accusations. Where there is hatred, if they cannot reach them with the hand, they will reach them by the tongue; those that can they will reach by the hand and tongue both, but there are not many that can do so, but there is no wicked man but can reach another by the tongue. Every wicked man hates those that are godly, and therefore will be ready to reach them by the tongue; so that it is impossible for any to live godly, but he must suffer from the tongues of men. It is possible for a man to live so as to be delivered from the hands of wicked men, but never from their tongues, because every wicked man can reach them that way, and their hearts hate them. In Prov. xvi. 27, 'An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire.' If he can see no evil in those that are godly, he will dig for it, he will labour to find it out, nay, he will frame it and conceive it; if he cannot get any real evil he digs for it. And in his lips there is a burning fire, in speaking evil, and provokingly. And the ungodly they look upon the ways of God as irrational ways; they can see no reason for them, and hence it is that they revile the saints. They do not understand their principles in their ways, and therefore they think they are but hypocrites; for indeed if a wicked man should do the same thing that the saints do, he would be a hypocrite, because he hath not principles to carry him through. Now they do not know their principles to carry them through, therefore they say they are hypocrites and false, and revile them with ill names.

Yea, they see the godly in their ways to condemn them, and that enrages them. The godly challenge a more interest in God than they have, and that they cannot bear; therefore they will invent all the ways in the world they can to cast contempt upon them. For if they should not, their godliness would make them honourable in the eyes of the world, and they do envy the honour that they have, because they are dishonoured and disgraced by it. You read of Sanballat and Tobiah, that did labour to cast reproach upon them, and what was the reason of it? This is the reason that is given by interpreters. This same Sanballat and Tobiah had their temple at Samaria. There was a temple built there in contestation about the temple in Jerusalem. Now when the temple came to be built at Jerusalem, they thought, surely now our temple at Samaria will be disgraced. Everybody would be ready to go from them to the temple at Jerusalem. When indeed the temple of Jerusalem was down, then the temple of Samaria they thought might be honoured; but if the temple at Jerusalem

were built, the temple at Samaria would be accounted nothing; therefore they raise all the accusations that possibly they can against Nehemiah, that so the honour and the credit of their temple might not go down. This is for all the world the guise and way of men that are in any way of wickedness; that is, not according to God. If any shall come to set up a way that hath any kind of seemingness of more strictness in it, oh then their hearts are embittered, and then they seek, by calumnies and reproaches, and all the ways they can, to beat down the esteem of those men. For, say they, if those go up, then ours goes down; and those that are godly will go to the temple that is built there, for it doth seem to have the more appearance out of Scripture to be the better, and therefore it is time for them to be stirring. This is the reason of the reproaches that were cast upon Nehemiah by Sanballat and Tobiah; ever such as are most forward in ways of reformation must expect reviling. We read in Zech. iii. 2, 3, 'He shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him,' &c. 'Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.' Mark, Joshua here was the great instrument of good in the work of reformation; now Satan stands at his right hand to hinder him in his work, by which means he doth seem to cast filth upon Joshua. Joshua stands clothed with filthy garments, with reproachings and revilings, and this was the way that Satan thought to hinder. And those that are forward in the work of reformation Satan seeks to hinder by reproachings and revilings. And he seeks to do it, because that indeed there is nothing more grievous to an ingenuous spirit than reviling and reproaching. It was very grievous to Christ; Christ cried out when they nodded the head at him. And we never read of the saints making their moans and complaints to God in a more lamentable manner than when reproaches were cast upon them. It is more grievous to a spirit of ingenuity than imprisonment is, than loss of goods, than pain in their bodies, yea, many times than death. Some men have been able to withstand imprisonment, loss of their estates, danger of death, that have not been able to withstand reviling and reproaching. The devil hath prevailed by that way, when he could not prevail by any other opposition of the saints. Now, then, the devil seeing that this is so grievous to an ingenuous spirit, therefore he labours by this means; if he cannot prevail with the other, he hopes he shall prevail with this, and therefore the saints must expect revilings and reproaches.

Yea, God many times hath some hand in it, in suffering them to be reviled and reproached; God sometimes doth chastise his people by the revilings of ungodly men, though it turns to their blessing at length.

They are humbled by that means ; but that we are not to speak of in this place, for we are to speak only of their reviling for the name of Christ. Wherefore then by way of use ;—

Hence then, when any of you enter upon the profession of religion at first, make account of this beforehand, make account that your dearest friends will be ready to revile you, make account in the family to have those that will revile you. And if you meet with revilings in the ways of God, do not account it a strange thing presently ; upon your profession of religion you must expect reproaches and contempt to be cast upon you. Lay in for that you, young professors that begin in the ways of godliness, that you may not be turned out of the way whensoever you meet with them.

Secondly, Let the saints labour to walk more exactly because of this ; ‘Blessed are you if you be reviled for my sake falsely.’ You see the world is set upon reviling ; take heed that you give no occasion to revile you ; but if they do revile you, that they revile you for nothing but for Christ’s sake. Oh that is an excellent thing when Christians can so walk, as when their enemies seek to find out anything, yet they have no reproach to cast upon them, but merely their forwardness in the ways of God ; and if they will revile them for anything else, it must be either by hearsay from others, or from devices of their own. Do not suffer like fools. Oh let not Christians suffer as evil-doers ; why, they are like to suffer for Christ’s sake.

Thirdly, Must the saints expect revilings from wicked men ? Oh, then, let not saints revile saints ; it is enough that the saints are reviled by the ungodly ; let not those that are professors of religion add to them. Do not you bind me, as Samson said ; so let not such as are reputed godly revile me. Oh let not the godly make the lives of other godly men to be grievous unto them any way ; though Christ will turn it to a blessing, yet it is very hard for the saints to endure revilings, especially from those that are godly too. David saith in one of the Psalms that he was reviled by his neighbours ; it was he that ate bread with me at my table, it was my friend and intimate acquaintance ; and in that David was a type of Christ, that was betrayed by Judas, that was his intimate friend. You that are the people of God, you should be very careful of one another’s names, for certainly the devil laughs much at it ; there is no greater matter of joy in hell than when one godly man reviles another. Oh you make sport even for the devils themselves, and certainly there was never the like of that as within these few years. Those that are the people of God should not revile the vile wicked ones, much less the saints. I remember I have read of Darius his general, one Memnon, that having soldiers in his

presence which did revile Alexander, against whom he fought, smote him with his lance on the head, and said, ‘Sirrah, I pay thee thy wages to fight against Alexander, and not to revile and miscall him.’ Oh, where you see any work of grace, take heed of reviling !

We might bring now that question in here, Why may we not speak evil of men that are evil ? It will either belong to this place, or when we come in way of application to the second, that those are blessed that are reviled ; wherein we should shew how the saints should behave themselves, that though they be reviled should not revile again. Those that suffer reviling are blessed ; they are blessed many ways. Not to name the many scriptures which we might, 2 Cor. xii. 10 ; Heb. xi. 26. But to shew wherein they are blessed when they suffer reviling ;—

First, Hereby they see a great difference that God hath made between them and others : they may think thus with themselves, I might have been among the number of revilers ; but behold I am reviled for Christ’s sake. Oh what a blessed thing is that : I that have as wretched a heart as any, I that might have been left to myself to have been among the rout of revilers of the saints, yet that I should rather be reviled than be among the revilers, the difference is great !

But, secondly, Blessed are they that are reviled, for by this means they come to increase in grace, rather than any way to be hindered. It is said of Luther that he was fed with reproaches that wicked men cast upon him. And indeed God doth suffer the revilings of wicked men to make the saints more fruitful, as the casting of dung upon the earth maketh it more fruitful. Blessed are they therefore—they never grow more than when they are most reviled.

Thirdly, but then further, Blessed are they for all the reproaches that are cast upon them, Christ doth own ; I account them as mine, saith Christ, and Christ takes care of their names. And Christ will honour them, Christ will reward them for every reproach, for every nickname that is cast upon them shall have a great reward in heaven ; therefore they are blessed.

Now, then, if it be so, though there be divers particulars for application, yet this is the main thing that I shall now insist upon, that if it be a blessed thing to be reviled for Christ, then those that are reviled should not seek to help themselves by reviling again. Why wilt thou in a rage revile back again ? Why, I am reviled ; who can bear it ? Why, what hurt canst thou get by it ? Christ saith thou art blessed in it, therefore thou mayest be the better patient under it ; yea, the more patient thou art in it, the more will Christ own thee. Ps. xxxviii. 12, 15, David he had been reviled and reproached, ‘They also that seek after my life lay snares for me ; and they that

seek my hurt, speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.' What then? 'But I as a deaf man heard not, and I was as a dumb man that opened not his mouth; thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.' Mark now, 'For in thee, O Lord, do I hope; thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.' The less we hear in our revilings, the more will God hear; and if we hear too much, God's ears will be the more stopped. God's people know ways how to help themselves rather than by returning reviling again. Indeed, you have many people who are scolding in the streets, and if one should cast dirt at them, they will cast dirt at them again; that is all the weapons that scolds have, to cast dirt upon one another. Now those that have manhood in them, they will not run to the kennels to help themselves, but to their other weapons. But you will say this, Do not we find in Scripture that when men are wicked and vile, that the Scripture doth give them their own; the Scripture doth speak of them as vile, and casts contemptible names upon them. And may not we do so with those that do deal wickedly and sinfully; may not we open their folly, and deal with them according to their folly, and shew their shame unto the world, and seek thereby for to humble them by aggravating their evil upon them—will you call this a reviling again?

Indeed, we read of Christ, in 1 Peter ii. 23, his example is set before us, 'Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; but committed to him that judgeth righteously.' But now, I beseech you, observe first, What the Scripture doth in some cases; secondly, Observe the rules that should be observed to make them to be different from reviling.

Certainly the saints must not revile again, that must be laid as a ground and principle, yet they may rebuke others sharply. In Titus i. the apostle there speaks of the Cretans, that were liars, and mark what words the apostle uses; ver. 10, saith he, 'There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped.' And then again, 'One of themselves said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies; this witness is true, therefore rebuke them sharply'—rebuke them cuttingly, rebuke them so as even to cut. And you know John, who was of so loving a spirit, having to deal with Diotrephes, saith he, 'If I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating against us with malicious words.' And Paul, when he had to deal with Elymas, he looks upon him, and saith, 'O thou child of the devil,' &c. And Christ, when he had to deal with the pharisees, 'O generation of vipers.' Now here lies the skill of a Christian, to know how to deal, and that according to the nature of the thing, sharply, and not to be guilty of the nature of reviling. All that I would do now for the close o

this exercise, is but to help you to deal with such as are evil, either wicked men or professors of religion—to deal with them plainly, and yet not to revile; therefore these rules are to be observed:—

First, If so be that a man should be guilty of what is charged upon him by another, then I confess, though the other be never so wicked and sinful in his charge, yet he is to put it up patiently, and not to rebuke him that is passionate with him, if himself be guilty, for that time. As Shimei comes to David, O thou bloody man, and reviles him, yet David he was under guiltiness at that time, and his conscience accused him; though Shimei did revile him in saying so, having a wicked intention in it, yet David would not speak one word; he would not say to Shimei, Why dost thou say thus? No; he was guilty himself, and therefore he dared not speak a word, but was humbled under the hand of God. If your conscience tells you you are guilty, take heed; though others should have an ill spirit in speaking evil of you, yet, I say, take heed of turning upon him again.

Secondly, You must not do it presently. Suppose that any have done anything against you, and done it wilfully, and you are not guilty—first, If you be guilty, then you are to say nothing, but put it up, and be humbled before God;—but if you be not guilty, then it is not fit presently to fall upon him that hath unjustly accused you—you had need consider of it, pray over it, examine your hearts. Those that as soon as ever they hear of any one that accuses them for any evil, presently have foul language against them, these are they that are subject to fall into the sin of reviling, instead of a just defence or reprehension of that that is evil in others.

Thirdly, You may reprove others for their sin, reprove them sharply; but it must not be for their sin of weakness, but there must be some wilfulness in the sin before you do reprove them sharply. You should consider, such a one is sinful, but is it of weakness or of wilfulness? If it be a sin of weakness, I must pity them; I may not give them any harsh language at all, as Christ did to Peter, 'Avoid, Satan.' Certainly it was a sin of weakness in Peter, when, as Peter prayed him, 'Master, favour thyself,' he rebuked him with that cutting term, and called him Satan. Not that Peter was malicious in it, but because the nature of the thing that he spake had so great evil in it; therefore Christ was the more sharp. But when the thing is of weakness, and there is no such great consequence in the nature of the offence, then you must deal tenderly. But if there be any word now that hath displeased you, and presently you go and speak sharply, you will turn to be a reviler.

Fourthly, If the offence be repented of, then, though it were a great offence, we must not deal sharply with

any. Whereas ordinarily it is in men that do revile the saints, they will revile them for the least weakness; yea, and will revile them for the sins that they have repented of; they will bring up all old things that were in the time of their ignorance, when they knew not God, to make them odious. But if it be an offence that hath been repented of, as the Lord buries it, so must we.

Fifthly, If the sin be a secret sin, then we must not reprove it before others, not to give any hard language before others; if God hath kept it secret, do not you in the presence of others reveal it. Whereas those that are of reviling spirits, if they can find out anything, though never so secret, they will blaze it presently, only that they might cast a reproach upon such as they have a love to revile.

Sixthly, You must not be partial in your hard language. You shall have many that are carnal and wicked men, that if a professor of religion do anything amiss, oh what hard and bitter language will they give against him. But let one of their companions do that which is worse, they will give no reviling speeches to him; but a professor of religion, they will be sure to lay load upon him. Now that is a sign that thou dost not reprove according to the way of Christ, when thou art partial in thy reproofs.

Seventhly, You must be sure not to give harder language than the matter will bear; that is a reviling, and not to observe the rules that before we set.

Eighthly, The manner of our spirits must be observed. It must not be passionate, that is, manifest that we are in a heat; but when we speak of the evil of others, we had need have as quiet a spirit as at any time in the world. Now, we know whence comes reviling; when men and women are put into a heat, they care not what they say. But if you come to examine, you spake such and such things, and you say they do deserve so and so, and they are guilty, what then? Why, it is not for you passionately to reprove them; but your spirits must be quiet at that time, and you must labour to still all passion when you are about the reprehension of your brethren.

Ninthly, You must not do it revengefully. It is not enough to say that they do deserve it, but you may revenge yourselves in speaking that that is but right. Perhaps they are guilty of such things; ay, but you may charge them with it, not out of a hatred to their sin, or doing them good, but out of a spirit of revenge to thyself. Shimei, whom we named before, he did revile, though the thing were true he said. Why? because he did it out of a spirit of revenge. But certainly some there are that sharp speeches does tend more to do them good; those that are Cretans, that the Scripture speaks of. The cutting speech to a Cretan is more suitable, and tends to his good rather than another speech.

Tenthly, We should observe whether they be of such natures that soft ways will do them good rather than harsh ways; and if they be of such natures that we find by anything else that any soft and gentle ways will do them good, certainly we should use them rather than sharp ways.

Eleventhly, The more sharp we are at any time in our dealing with others, the more prayers we should use. I would appeal to those, both from the former rule and this, when you deal with men that you are exasperated against, do not your consciences tell you that if they should be guilty of such a thing, that a fair reasoning the case with them would more convince them than if you should be sharp; there I say we should look to ourselves that we do convince them that way. We should use much prayer: never pray more for a man or woman than when you are most sharp towards them. Let your consciences testify this to you, and then you will have peace: that you can appeal to God in this, that though they may think you deal sharply with them, yet then I can carry them before the throne of grace, and pray heartily for them; and if they be wicked and ungodly, thou mayest pray against them, as Paul did against Alexander the coppersmith.

Twelfthly, Another rule may be this, Be ready upon the acknowledgment of the evil to close with them again. You should never so sharply reprove any, but if they shall be ready to acknowledge the evil, you should be ready to close with them, and bless God for them. But you do revile others if they shall come and acknowledge the evil that you say, and yield to you in that thing you speak against them for—nay, you are the more against them; that is a sign thou art a reviler. But if thou didst carry thyself graciously, and the other comes to acknowledge it, oh you would join with them, and bless God for them, and be more united to them than ever.

Thirteenthly, Another rule is this, That is a reviler that speaks evil of another, and is glad that he hath such an evil to speak of him. This is not one that reproves sharply according to the mind of God; but such a one, I have an advantage against him in such a sin he hath committed, and I am glad of it. Oh this is a wicked thing! That is as much as to say, I prize more my particular advantage than I do the honour of God. When thou hast to deal with an adversary, if there be anything that is evil that thou hast to say against him, I say, thou shouldst charge him according to the nature of the offence, and withal be sorry that God hath left him to such a sin; and mourn for it—appeal to God. Do you do so that do revile others—I mean, that speak evil of others? for no man will acknowledge himself to be a reviler. No; they say they have just cause to speak of it. But grant it that you

have just cause; but are you sorry from your souls that there is just cause? how doth it grieve your souls that this man is left to so much evil, that you have so much advantage against him? Certainly, if it be so, there is no fear of reviling.

Fourteenthly, lastly, When men shall come and speak evil of others before they are called to it, there certainly it doth argue a guiltiness. Herein this

man or woman is in danger to be guilty of the sin of reviling; so that now observe but these rules, (for the heart of man is very unruly,) and then you may come to know how to carry yourselves in a Christian way when you have to deal with others that do deserve sharp reprehension; you may reprehend them sharply, and not at all revile them; for he is a blessed man that is reviled falsely for Christ's sake.

SERMON XXXVI.

OR,

A WORD OF USE TO THOSE WHO ARE REVILED.

'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.'—MAT. v. 11.

THIS last rule of our Saviour's for blessedness is the most strange to flesh and blood of all the other, for them to be blessed that are persecuted, reviled; yea, the rather blessed, because persecuted and reviled. This is a riddle to flesh and blood, therefore Christ is the more large in it. There is but one short verse for any of the other, and three large verses for this. For the point of persecution, we have opened what it is, and the condition of the saints, what that is, wherein the blessedness of that consists, because few will acknowledge that they persecute for righteousness. We gave some convictions for men, whereby they may come to know that in their persecution of godly men, that it is righteousness that they may persecute. And what is contained in that promise, 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

We came the last day to speak of this particular persecution, the persecution of the tongue, reviling—'Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you.' The word for reviling, signifies to reprove one, to cast in their teeth any evil with detestation. Now the condition of the saints is such that they must expect to be reviled in the world, and to be reviled and reproached, and that we shewed you from Scripture; and for example, we shall refer to the latter end of it,—'For so persecuted they the prophets.' The use^o of reviling I gave the last day, the hatred and malice that there is in the hearts of men. All ungodly men hate the saints; but yet all cannot persecute them, but every one may revile them. They have the

liberty of the tongue to speak of them as they will, though not to persecute them; and the devil knows that reviling it is a powerful way to prevail, to weary them in their profession. Your spirits cannot bear reviling; it is a sore and heavy affliction unto many, and hard to bear, and he seeth that many times when he cannot prevail by persecution that he doth prevail by reviling. Reviling is a sore evil, and doth go very deep into the spirits of men. Many uses were made of the point in general, as when men take up their profession of religion at first, let them make account of reviling, account of all ill language; it may be parents, kindred, friends, acquaintance, masters, and all will revile you, and will have names to revile you by—and make account of this before. And then, secondly, Labour to be careful in your conversation; men will revile you, do what you can, but let them not find anything in you whereby they may revile you. Thirdly, Let not saints revile one another, for it is very sad so to do; it is that that the psalmist complained of in Ps. xxxi. 11, 'I was a reproach among all mine enemies; but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance; they that did see me without fled from me.' He makes a complaint of the reproach of his enemies, but especially amongst his neighbours; that was sore to him; it was not so much for the saints to suffer reviling languages by prelates, as to suffer one from another; this is exceeding sad. 'Do you not bind me,' saith Samson; so the godly will say of their fellow-brethren, 'Do not you bind

* Query, 'rise'? or 'cause'?—Ed.

us.' There is a great blessing in suffering of reviling. The husbandman makes his ground fruitful by casting dung on it; so doth God make his saints fruitful by the casting revilings on them by wicked men. Why is it such a blessedness? Thou art to look on it as a blessed thing, that when thou art reviled for Christ, thou mightest have been reviled for thine own wickedness. And blessed are ye, for there is a great reward; 'great is your reward in heaven.' The Lord takes care of your names while you are so reviled. The use that we stood upon the last day is this, that if it be such a blessed thing to be reviled, to suffer for Christ, then it should teach the saints that when they are reviled not to revile again; for what need they? it is that that is turned into a blessing.

Again, We must not revile others. What! may we not charge others of the evil that they are guilty of? We spent a great deal of time the last day to shew you how you may charge others of what evil they are guilty of, and charge them deeply too, and not be guilty of reviling, because it was a hard work to have to do with other men's sins, and not to be guilty of reviling. Titus i. 10, 13, 'For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision.' The word translated *sharply* is *cuttingly*,* and if any people of the world may be rebuked, they are the Cretons, that are liars. They may call them to the rule of the apostle. It is not safe, when any have provoked you, to fall presently a-rebuking. When the business concerns ourselves we may avoid the turning of reprehensions into revilings by deliberating of it; and if the sin be secret, then we must not in a public way speak evil of men; for then it is an argument that a man loves reviling, when he seeks to rake up secret things, and declares and publishes them in evil language to the world. If God keep them secret, then you should not reveal them; and you must not be glad of offences neither. Oh take heed of that! oh mourn for them, and be sure what language you give have a just foundation in the evil that is committed by those men that you speak against, and that you do not do it passionately and revengefully, but do it out of a meek and quiet spirit, and out of love to the truth. The more you speak against any, and charge any evil on them, you ought to pray the more from them; and specially, if you think there be anything of God in them, and if they have anything of God in them, do not speak anything against them but in prayer. Were these rules but observed, that as often as they prayed for them, they prayed for them as with a bitter spirit they spoke against them,† then thou wouldst

be clear in thy conscience of reviling. But not to proceed further in that which we spoke of the last day; a word or two more about this point in general.

If they be blessed that be reviled, let not the saints by reviling be put out of their way. Whenas Christ tells thee thou art blessed, what great hurt hast thou when such call thee such names, and speak such evil of thee, and thou canst bear it? Such as know what Christian religion means, indeed, they should not at all be turned out of their way because of reviling, nor dislike thereof. Do not sit down with this: Since I came to profess the Christian religion, what names have been cast on me, scorns, reproaches, and revilings! I remember a learned man hath this similitude, What a dishonour were it for a soldier with a puff of wind to be cast off his horse! Would not every one laugh at it? Such a dishonour is it for any one that is in a good way, or in a good cause, to be taken off by the reproaches of wicked men, which are but puffs of wind. Men are willing to suffer reproaches for their sin, shame, and any name for to have their lust; and wilt not thou be willing to suffer nicknames for the cause of Christ? Remember that Christ hath delivered thee from an eternal reproach: Dan. xii. 2, 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' Yea, remember that Christ takes care of thy name, and thou art under a great many of promises for clearing thy righteousness as the noonday, and it is not to sit down and think to go out of the way by reason of reviling, but pray to the Lord. Take two or three scriptures for directions to the godly when they are reviled. The one is in Ps. cix. 1, 2, 'Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.' David was a type of the church, and he suffered exceeding much all kind of suffering and reviling as much as any. Their mouths was opened. What, then, in ver. 3? 'They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.' Ver. 4, What then? What do I do, 'but I give myself to prayer.' The original, תפלה, *tephillah*, is this, but I pray; that is my refuge; prayer is my help. So in Job xvi. 20, 'My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.' Ps. lvii. 2, 3, 'I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah.' God shall send forth his mercy and his truth, and other like expressions of David. I have help in

as often as they reviled you, you prayed for them; and prayed for them with as loving a spirit as with a bitter spirit they spoke against you.'—Ed.

* ἀκριβώς signifies cuttingly or precisely, or to the quick. So Estius.

† Probably the text should be something to this effect, 'that

heaven, and therefore I need not revile again, and be discouraged in my way. Nehemiah was reproached when he was in his work, and did he cease his work? No.

In the last place, If those be blessed that are reviled, then certainly those that are revilers are cursed. It is a blessed thing when men, being godly, are reviled for Christ. Then what dost thou think, that instead of suffering for reviling, that art a reviler? Those that were reviled, and being weary of it, art turned revilers. Oh take heed of them! there are no more bitter revilers of religion in the world than such as are apostatising professors. When you see any man that hath been a forward professor, and fallen off, and turned out, remember Rabshakeh's apostasy, that was the worst reviler of all. Surely revilers of those that are godly are in a very cursed condition, for men may pray against them: Neh. iv. 3-5, 'Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him; and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity. And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.' See for ignorant ones in that place of 2 Kings ii. 23, 24, 'And he went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city and mocked him, saying, Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord: and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood, and tare forty-two children of them.' Oh take heed of reviling. Though you do it ignorantly, take heed of it; it is a most dangerous thing. You will say you do not revile them for their goodness, but because they are hypocrites. For that I will give you that scripture; you may think it may be an excuse, but it may prove to be an aggravation: Mark iii. 22, 'And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.' They would not revile them, and say, We do not speak those evils of them because they have the Spirit of God, but it is by Beelzebub. Therefore from hence note this, that it is a dangerous thing to charge that on hypocrisy or any wickedness, and God knows it comes from his own Spirit. I might shew you divers scriptures—read the 59th and 57th Psalms, but especially the 59th Psalm—that they go up and down grieving through the city. You speak contemptible of the saints, and the Holy Ghost speaks very contemptible of you. God keeps their hands short, or else they would do more; for they go grieving up and down the streets. But to go on in the text, 'Blessed are

you when men revile you, and persecute you.' Here comes in persecution again.

First, From the doubling of this—for there is nothing in Scripture that is in vain; though there be repetitions, yet there is some reason—you are blessed, and your posterity is blessed. Christ pronounceth blessedness on such as suffer for his name's sake, that suffer persecution; and it may be a great comfort to any that have had their forefathers suffered, and Christ will own them the rather, Christ will own their posterity the rather. Suppose you should have one come to you in poor tattered rags, and beg at your door, and one should come and tell you this man's father lost all that he had for your sake—his grandfather lost his life in your cause; would not any man reward this child, when he knows this was the child of the father, or the grandchild of the grandfather that suffered for you? It may be you suffer persecution now, and ye be pronounced blessed, and ye find no blessedness comes; but you have a double blessing provided for you hereafter. Those men that now have reviling spirits, if God gives power into their hands, they will have persecuting spirits. Oh let us pray that the Lord would keep them short, for they would be in danger of being persecutors.

Secondly, And further, this is added, *persecuted*, because there are some that can bear ill language that cannot bear persecution. Some men care not what they say of them in words. Words break no bones; but if they come to suffer the loss of anything—of estate, imprisonment—then they are ready to fly off. Be not only willing to bear evil words, but to bear evil actions, then when they speak ill manner of evil, they speak all speeches, all kind of evil. It is a strange thing that this should be said of the disciples, those that should be sent out, that they should have all manner of evil spoken against them, that they should be thought to be a little too strict, but not for all manner of evil to be spoken of them. But St Paul saith, 'We are the offscouring of the world,' 1 Cor. iv. 13. The word is taken, according to some interpreters, from the dung-carts; every one brings his dirt and casts into their carts, so saith Paul, 'We are the offscouring of the world,' and we are the dung-carts, and there is no man but hath some dirt or other to cast upon us.* The apostle alludes to the expiation in use among the heathens, (saith Budæus.) When certain condemned persons were brought forth, with garlands on their heads, to be put to death as an offering to Neptune, they used to say, *Sis pro nobis propitiatus*, Be thou a propitiation for us; so as if the apostle had said, we are as hateful in the sight of the

* *περικυβάρτα, purgamentum*. The word signifies properly filth and dirt, and a dung-cart that goes through the city, wherein all filth is cast. And so *περίφνητα, sordes*, filth. Both words signify the same.

people as those condemned persons that was offered up by way of expiation. And now we are loaded with cursings and revilings as those persons were. 'Blessed are ye when they speak all manner of evil.' There are some that can bear some reproaches, but not all reproaches; we must be willing to submit to all that God shall call us to—all manner of evil. It may be there is in some, some cause of suspicion, but they must not reprove men on suspicion; but if we went no further but only to speak evil because there is some ground of suspicion.* But the people of God must expect (if on no ground at all) evil men will revile them.

Secondly, Such kind of evil as is most contrary to them; as those that are the most sober and most temperate, they must be content to be reviled by the name of drunkards, and those that are the most chaste, they must be content to be reviled by the name of unchaste. Those that desire above all things in the world peace, and would not be causes of trouble, only so far as their duty calls them to, yet they must be accounted to be the troublers of the state and church. That evil which they do abhor they must be content to suffer; yea, whatsoever evil that any wicked men are guilty of, yet godly men are charged with it. When Nero would fire Rome, the Christians were the cause of it. They lay to their charge all kind of evil; why should they speak of all manner of evil? for if they be not guilty of it then it would be washed away, and to the shame of those that do cast it on them. But they will divulge the evil abroad, and abundance will come to hear of the reproach that cannot come to hear of the justification of the reproach, and of the answer to the reproach, and therefore boldly and strongly will they speak all manner of evil, though it be things that are as far distant from them as the east from the west. Yet they will seek to cause it to stick by casting it on them, take off who can, by speaking all manner of evil. From this let us learn not to judge of the saints by what we hear of them. What an infinite wrong will it be for us to think men to be guilty by whatever is cast upon them! we shall wrong the generation of the righteous, that if we should have the least thought of guiltiness by the reproaches that are abroad. And then let the godly labour to confute all evil that is said of them: 1 Pet. i. 15, 'But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.' It seems that the wicked they labour to revile with all manner of evil to cast on you, and do you labour in all your conversation to manifest all holiness, and that is the way to answer all manner of reviling.

* The meaning evidently is,—if they (evil men) went no further but only to speak evil because there is some ground of suspicion, it were not so bad; but the people of God, &c.—Ed.

Thirdly, further, 'Blessed are ye, when they revile you and persecute you, and speak all manner of evil falsely,' lyingly. It is a strange speech that some have; if so be that I were guilty it would nothing so much trouble me; but for them to charge me when I never thought on it, it must needs trouble me. If you were guilty, when they speak evil of you truly, then you had cause to roar and cry out in the anguish of your heart. Brethren, the best of all the saints they have some evil in them; therefore we should labour to walk that men, if they will revile us, we should be sure that they should not hit right; we are conscious of some evil to ourselves, but we should keep it from the eye of the world. But now, how shameful is it for those that profess godliness to give just occasion to be reviled! If men's mouths shall be opened, and it prove to be true that you are professors of religion, you by your sin put yourselves from under the blessedness. When men shall say you are thus and thus, and your own conscience tells you that you are worse than they do accuse you of, thou art in a sad condition when thou hast in thy bosom a reproving conscience. You talk of men's revilings, but what doth thy conscience? Men speak some evil of thee, but thy conscience speaks more evil of thee. Secondly, consider this, That if it prove true and not false that men reprove you for, it is the hand of God justly against thee. God doth spit in thy face, and cast shame on thee, by the reviling of other men.

Fourthly, Further, you are those that do hurt unto religion, you that give just occasion of men's reviling of them. Professors that walk scandalously, that make great show of religion, you are the men, and do the greatest mischief of any men on the earth. God will require all the sufferings of all his other saints at your hands. You do more hurt to religion than all the persecutors of the world; that Christian that makes profession of religion, and gives just occasion of reviling, he doth more hurt to religion than all the revilers of the world. And there is this reason for it: persecutors do but make men afraid to profess religion; they do not make them to be out of love with religion; but those that walk scandalously, they prevail upon men's consciences, so as to make men hate religion. Now, is not this a greater mischief for to make men hate it, than to make men afraid to profess it? Therefore look to yourselves, that if men speak any evil of you that they may speak it falsely; but if they speak it on just occasion, then you cannot make your moan to God, you are cut off from that privilege; but, being reviled falsely, then you can enjoy that privilege, as you may read in the 15th chap. of Jeremiah. It is the privilege of the saints, that when any men speak evil of them, and their conscience tells them that it is falsely, they can then go

to God. 'Then when they speak evil of you falsely for my sake,' be not offensive unto others in any matters that concern man and man. If you suffer, do not suffer as evil-doers, but suffer for the sake of Christ, suffer in the matter of God. As it is said in Dan. vi. 5, 'Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.' Their consciences were convinced, that in all matters between man and man, there was nothing to do with him; but let us watch him between the matters of the Lord his God. The Lord deliver us from such kind of spirits! So long as Christians walk so that let the world pry, and in all their converse between man and man, they can find no fault—only in the matters of the Lord their God, only for Christ's cause, and the matters of the gospel. You shall have many say of their neighbour, The neighbour that lives by me he is an honest neighbour as any can live by me; but he is thus and thus, and hath taken up such an opinion, and is strict in the matters of God. And so of servants and wife. Blessed are ye when all that pry into your ways and lives, have nothing else in it. All that you suffer it is for the sake of the Lord your God. Certainly, if so be you shall suffer only for his sake, then it must be set on his score, and he will own it in that day of his. 'In all your afflictions he is afflicted,' Isa. lxiii. 9. 'In all their affliction he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old,' Ps. lxxix. 4, 12. 'We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom the reproach wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.' If any man suffer for your sake, you account yourself bound to vindicate him; so the apostle, Rom. viii. 26, 'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' It is a comfort for the Lord to take notice of your sufferings, when thou sufferest for Christ's sake. Christ loves thee, he hath promised to help thee hereafter; he hath helped thee, and is engaged to help thee; for it is for his sake that thou sufferest. Therefore go on, and account thyself blessed for his sake. Certainly, if we be willing to suffer for his sake, certainly he will be willing to suffer for our sakes; when thou sufferest anything for Christ, he is infinitely worthy—he is worthy of all that thou hast. What hath he done

for thee? Hath he not done more for thee than thou hast done for him, or canst do for him?

Sixthly, Further, a very great use, 'Blessed are those that have all manner of evil spoken falsely for my name sake.' When you are reproached for Christ's sake you are blessed; but when Christ is reproached for your sake, Christ now is not in a way of merit. He hath finished the work; and yet, for all that, Christ may have some suffering, may have shame cast on him, even for thy sake, through thy wicked and ungodly life. Why, this is a cursed cursed thing, this is even to pull Christ down from heaven to suffer again. Why, did not Christ suffer enough, and wilt thou have him to suffer for thy sake more? Do not thou add to his suffering, but suffer as much for his sake as he hath done for thy sake. Rom. ii. 24, 'For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.' See how God is reviled! The name of God is blasphemed for your sakes. When you walk scandalously, the name of God is reproached. If a professor of religion hath any temptation to sin, consider, if thou givest any permission to that sin, thou tramplest on the name of Christ. You trample on me, saith Christ. Wilt thou go on yet to the commission of sin, though the name of God lies before thee? Oh, hard-hearted wretch! that knowest the name of God lies there, and thou wilt trample on it. It follows in ver. 12—that is, 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad;' do not only account yourselves blessed, but rejoice and be exceeding glad. Luke vi. 23, 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did the fathers unto their prophets.' Leap for joy; skip and leap for joy whenas you are reviled for Christ, that it is not enough for Christians to be patient under suffering, but they must be joyful under suffering. It doth not become true Christians to manifest any kind of sorrow under any suffering for Christ, that when at any time we suffer in his cause,—whatever we do when we suffer for our sin, there we may manifest the work of sorrow.—But when we suffer persecution for Christ's sake, Christ would not have our hearts to be sorrowful at that time, but calls for rejoicing; and here is the difference between suffering for sin and suffering for the sake of Christ. There the Lord calls for mourning and weeping when affliction is on you for your sin; but when you suffer for Christ's sake, there the Scripture doth not call for any mourning or weeping, or any humiliation, but for rejoicing and blessing God that they are accounted worthy for to suffer for him.

SERMON XXXVII.

OR,

SAINTS SHOULD TAKE HEED THEY SUFFER NOT FOR EVIL TRULY.

'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.'—MAT. v. 12.

THE last of these rules of blessedness. It is the suffering of persecution—of reviling for the sake of Christ, for blessed are they. We have spoken of persecution in general, and of reviling more particularly, and the blessedness that there is in suffering either persecution or reviling, when they shall speak all manner of evil—evil that is most unlikely—that hath no kind of show in it; yet they venture to fasten all manner of evil on us, but yet falsely. Let the saints take heed that there be no evil said of them truly, for that is a grievous thing; they are not blessed in that; but when it is spoken of them falsely, and for my name's sake—not for your own wills' sake, for your own lusts' sake, but for the Lord's sake, and then Christ will own you. So certainly Christ hath a special regard to those who suffer anything in his cause, as to have their names anyways wounded; why, he will bind up this wound. In Jer. xv. 15, 'O Lord, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy long-suffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.' When you suffer for your lusts' sake—for your own passion, you suffer these things for your own wickedness; but when it is for the Lord's sake, then you can go with comfort to prayer. Take heed that Christ do not suffer for your sakes in that sense—namely, for your sin and wickedness. Is it not enough that Christ hath suffered for your sakes in a meritorious way? Suffer for Christ's sake, but let not Christ suffer for yours.

To proceed to ver. 12, 'Rejoice, and be exceeding glad;' rejoice, and leap, and skip for joy. In Luke vi. 23, 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.' A matter of great joy should be to the saints when they are reviled and persecuted for Christ's sake,—great joy, because it is such a clear evidence that they are in Christ's way, that they are Christ's, and that they are entered far into that way, that they are come to be sufferers for him; rejoice in that. Those good

things you do, it is good to you; but not so much as in suffering, the Spirit of God and glory rests on you when you are reviled. 1 Peter iv. 14, 'If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.' That for the people of God it is not enough for them to be patient in suffering, but to be reproached. Moses accounted the reproaches for Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Persecutions for Christ to a true gracious heart, they are riches to him; therefore rejoice.

First, How shall I rejoice, for it is an affliction. 'If any be afflicted let him pray.' I confess when our affliction comes as chastisement for sin, then mourning is called for, but I never find that the Scripture doth call for mourning from the saints that suffer in the cause of Christ, though it is a great evil in itself, yet never calls for mourning. What other afflictions God may send for the sin of his people, yet we do not find that God chargeth this on his people, that they shall suffer for his cause and affliction for their sin; but when we come to suffer for the cause of Christ, God hath a further end in it than to afflict you so as to call for mourning. Rejoice and leap for joy. Why: 'for great is your reward in heaven.' You shall be rewarded for your suffering, every spot of dirt that is cast on you shall be turned into a pearl, shall make your reward more glorious. Your happiness, that happiness that the saints shall have, is called a reward, not a reward of merit, but a reward of free grace. As a father, though he intends an inheritance to his child, yet to encourage him to go to school, he promiseth him such and such a reward, but not out of merit, but out of his free love toward the child. The Lord is pleased to call all the glory in heaven a reward of that we suffer for his name's sake, though mingled with sin, and this is to encourage us, poor creatures, that are led now in hope of a reward, and great is your reward, it is much, a great reward. There is surely a difference in the glory of heaven, if they that

suffer most shall have the greatest reward; they shall have a great reward, because they suffer so much, and this for encouraging in suffering. Surely there is some difference in rewarding for suffering—they shall have a great reward. This is observable, that Christ doth not tell them what reward they shall have, he doth not instance in particular rewards, no, because it is so great as it is not to be limited, as not to be expressed; as we are not able to understand it, therefore Christ names no particular reward; but it is a great reward. Surely our hearts are too narrow when we conceive any limits of God's mercy; when we think thus, If God be merciful to us, thus and thus, then we shall be happy; thou hast too narrow a spirit to put any *thus and thus* on the mercy of God. The mercy of God, it is a deep expression, there is no carnal heart in the world, but as he limits his obedience, so he limits God's mercy, but he doth frame some final contentment that he hopes to have, and if he could have but some things he could be satisfied. A gracious heart is so large, that nothing particularly can satisfy him, and this is the ground why a gracious heart will never limit himself in any duty, but he must put itself into an infinite ocean of service for God; the expectation which such a soul hath from God, it is beyond all finite good whatsoever. Therefore, saith Christ, great is your reward. He doth not name any particular reward.

Again, 'Great is your reward in heaven.' It may be you shall meet with no reward here on earth. As long as you live on the earth you shall be reviled and persecuted; here will never be an end of this; it may be all your lifetime will be spent, and therefore look for your reward higher. If I were persecuted by some, and honoured by others, I did not much care; but it may be you shall be reviled by the wicked, and discontenanced by the godly, so that you shall have no reward at all here on earth, but you are to expect it hereafter. I confess the Lord sometimes is pleased to reward them here on earth, that is by honouring of them in the consciences of those that did revile them. Well, but if it should not be so, if you should have nothing here you must wait for it till you come to heaven, there to have that full reward; and the saints are willing so to do, they are willing to stay for all their reward till they come to heaven. We see such a reality, and certainty, and glory in the things of heaven, that we are willing to stay, and that will make amends for all when it comes. There is no carnal heart willing to stay, but they must have somewhat for the present in hand, but for the staying for that afterward they cannot do it, they have not eyes to pierce the heaven to see beyond the veil. What is this? It is said in 2 Peter i. 9, 'But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.'

Wicked men are purblind, they can see things that are just before them, but they cannot see afar off; but they cannot see heaven, but they look on the things of the earth as realities; but the saints look on the things of the earth as vain things, and empty things, and they look on the things of heaven as reality. The men of the world they trade with God for small things as it were; they must have contentment of the flesh for the present for to stay their carnal hearts, neither do they know what they are; for they trade but for little with God. But now the saints they trade with God for eternity, for glory, for a kingdom, and for a crown; and they are willing to stay till afterward. They care not what becomes of them here, so they have the kingdom of heaven hereafter. There is difference between the service that God hath in the world from men. The Lord hath some that do him service, and they must have present pay. Saith God, You shall have it, and that is your portion. When he hath given thee some outward contentment in the world, that is all you are like to have for ever. But the saints of God, they do not stand for what they shall have; but they do any service for him; he shall have all that they can do; they are resolved to serve him, whatever comes of it. Though they have not that present pay that others have in the world, yet great is their reward in heaven. The reward in heaven is great—a great reward: Ps. lvii. 2, Power from on high—that is, a glorious power, a great power. Jer. xxv. 3, 'Surely there is a reward for the righteous:' whatever they meet with here, surely there is a reward in heaven. Ps. cxix. 89, 'For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven:' there is certainly a reward for the saints. One evidence that there must be a great reward is this, that from the beginning of the world to this day they have suffered so much on earth, that he must have some time to communicate his infinite treasures, and that visibly too. Certainly the power of God will be in a kind answering to his grace and mercy, to work mightily, to manifest the infinite riches of his grace in reward-
ing. Therefore there is a reward for the saints, and, above all, for the suffering saints.

Secondly, There must needs be a great reward in heaven for them; because the Lord gives the greatest portion of the earth to the wicked, even to the dogs. There are higher things for the saints. If the earth be so excellent that he gives to his enemies, what hath he for his own saints, those that are dear to him, his children that suffer for him? When we look on this world, when we see what a canopy it hath, and bespangled with stars, and see the glory of the earth, and the riches thereof, and consider whose portion this is, even the portion of the enemies of God, a portion of those that God hates: 'The whole Turkish empire is but a crumb, that the master of the family

casts to his dog.* Surely, then, what shall the saints have! Therefore when you see the wicked prosper, reason after this manner, Is it so indeed, that wicked men have so much here? then what shall saints have, those that suffer for him?

Thirdly, A third demonstration is this: The hopes the saints here are raised unto, and that by the Holy Ghost. Their hopes for great things must not vanish, because they are raised by the power of the Holy Ghost: Rom. xv. 13, 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.' The hopes of the saints are raised, by whom? By God, and by the power of the Holy Ghost. If God will set himself on work, to raise hopes, and the Holy Ghost will set himself to raise up their hopes, surely then they must not be light hopes; surely the object of their hopes is very great, because it is the glory of God, and the glory of the Holy Ghost that raiseth up their hopes; surely they are glorious hopes. Your great men, captains and princes, if they will take a style, a title for themselves from anything, they have some high esteem of it. The hopes of the saints are such things as God takes a title from them. He is the God of their hopes; surely their reward must be a glorious reward, that they do thus hope for.

Fourthly, The fourth demonstration is this: It must needs be a great reward; because it was that that was prepared for them before the foundation of the world was laid. God from all eternity hath been preparing glory for his people; surely that work of God that he hath been preparing from all eternity will be very glorious.

Fifthly, A fifth demonstration is this, That it is a great reward you have; because whenever it comes, it comes unto the saints to that end, that God may declare unto men and angels what his infinite power is able to raise a creature to, and what his infinite mercy is able to bestow upon a creature. We are chosen to the praise of his rich and glorious grace. If this be God's end in choosing us, that he might manifest what the power of his grace is, and what the power of his grace means, here is that reward for you. To what a height an infinite God is able to raise poor creatures to! 'Great is your reward in heaven.'

Sixthly, It must be a great reward, because it is that likewise that is the fruit of the purchase of the blood of Christ, that cost so dear, that must be of as great value and worth that the blood of Christ deserved. As sin is to all eternity crying for more and more wrath to God, because sin deserves more, so the merit of Christ, if thou hast not to the utmost capacity that such a creature is capable of, the merit of Christ will cry for thee; and is not here enough to

* Luther

encourage us in suffering? It is such a reward as Christ is gone before to prepare, John xiv. It is one end of his ascension into heaven, there to make all things fit for his saints and disciples against they come. If you ask me what it is, what! should I tell you of the blessed vision of God, the enjoyment of God, communion with God, communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Scripture tells but little of the glory of the soul, because it would have us to argue ourselves from that which is more sensible; for if the Scripture tells us that the body shall shine as the sun in the firmament, then what shall the soul do? The soul is capable of communion with God, to put you in mind of this, that every time when you suffer anything you act your faith on that glorious reward: 'Blessed are ye when ye suffer for righteousness' sake, and when men revile you; for great is your reward.' In ver. 10, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake;' and in ver. 11 the person is changed. What is the reason the person is changed? First, 'Blessed are they,' and then 'blessed are ye;' the reason is because Christ would seem to direct himself unto those disciples that he sent abroad to preach the gospel. As he had spoke to all those that should profess the gospel, 'Blessed are they that suffer for righteousness,' so blessed are ye.

Observe hence—

That the ministers of the gospel are to expect a share of suffering from the evil and wicked world.

'I send you,' saith he, 'as sheep among wolves.' The ministers of the gospel do more immediately fight against the kingdom of Satan than any people of the world. It is a very strange expression that we have in John xvii. 14, 'And have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.' Presently after the giving of the word the world hates them; the more they have of the word of truth, the more the world hates them. You know what Christ saith concerning Paul in his conversion, Acts ix. 15, 16, 'But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.' If he goes to bear the name of Christ, then he must suffer great things.

Secondly, The ministers of the gospel, in regard of their place, they are more in view and in men's eyes than other men are: let them look to themselves, they are in the eyes of every man; they are the white that all men shoot at.

Thirdly, The ministers of the gospel have no weapons to defend themselves withal but spiritual. A magistrate can defend himself, for he hath the sword;

but a minister cannot. And the ministers of the gospel, they set themselves against men's lusts, against their beloved lusts. Let a minister come and preach to them in some general way, and never come to strike home to their lust, then all is well; but if they strike it home to their lust, they cannot bear that, then they must revile him.

Fourthly, The devil knows that he can do no more mischief than to keep the name of ministers down, and to take their esteem off from the people. Indeed for such and such particulars, he shall not so prevail in a great while, so much as he can any way make the ministers vile, to speak anything evil of them. Now let us take notice of this evil world, when even the ministers of God, that are the greatest blessings in the world, in that they come in the name of Christ to open the treasure and riches of the grace of God in that blessed covenant, and should be accepted as angels of the deity in respect of their message, yet this wicked world their hearts are against no people so much as against them. It should be a rule to ministers to walk circumspectly, that there be no matter found in them of objection against them.

Lastly, Labour to uphold that true honour that Christ hath sent you to do in the ministry of the gospel; you know how careful and tender Jesus Christ is of the honour and esteem of his ministers, therefore that you must not receive an accusation against an elder without two or three witnesses. You must be so far from thinking it to be true, not so much as telling it up and down, unless you have two or three witnesses, and so all that are godly should set themselves what possibly they can to uphold the honour of faithful ministers, to have a tender care and esteem of their credit, and beat down all things that may prejudice them.

'For so persecuted they the prophets.'

It is no strange thing that you meet withal, neither is it a new thing that you meet withal; you meet with persecution and reviling, why, account it no strange thing, as Peter speaks about the fiery trial.

Here consider three particulars:—

First, The history how all the prophets, from time to time, have met with persecution, especially the ministers of God; he doth not say, so did they to the saints, but to the prophets.

The second thing should have been to shew you wherein lies the power of the argument, 'That you should rejoice and be glad,' because the prophets were so persecuted.

And Thirdly, What use it is that we should make in that the prophets suffered so much.

First, How the prophets from time to time did suffer so much hardship. If we begin with Abraham you know what he suffered, and afterward Isaac what he suffered, and Moses what reproach he suffered,

in Heb. xi., and of David, if you read Ps. xxxv. 15, 'But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the objects' (or as it is in the Hebrew, נִכְסִים, *nicksim*, he smote—the smiters) 'gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not, they did tear me, and ceased not.' And of the church, in Ps. lxxxix. 4, 'We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.' You may read of Job, how he was called by the basest of people. In Job xvi. 9, 10, 'He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me; he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me. They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.' And Nehemiah, ii. 19, 'But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Gessem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?' And of the prophet Isaiah, xxviii. 13, 'But the word of the Lord was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.' There is the scorn that the prophet suffered even in regard of his ministry. It is said that he was sawn asunder, and for his ministry he suffered scorn; the Hebrew words in the sound of them shew a kind of scorn that they did use unto the prophets; here in speaking to them, they scorned him though he was a high prophet; you may read of Ezekiel and Jeremiah how they suffered. The same thing that Christ said of the prophets in all ages, may be said of the apostles and martyrs, and chief reformers in former times, they suffered; those that have been most eminent in work of reformation, they have suffered scorn, contempt, and reviling. Tertullian tells of the Christians in his time, that they were called the public enemies to the state, that they met together in the night, and blew out candles, and committed all uncleanness, and worshipped an ass's head, scorning at the Christians for a company of foolish people; and Chrysostom was banished by the empress, and much scorn was cast on him. Augustine, what revilings was cast on him in his time. When I spoke of the point of persecution of the disciples, I shewed what their sufferings was in particular, but I referred this till now, what hath been cast on most eminent Christians that are the most reformers of religion. Now Calvin, that was the famous instrument of good for the church of God, some say of him that he was eaten up with worms, and some say he called on the devil, though he was a sweet man, and had a gracious and comfortable death. And for Beza, they object against him that he desired lordship; and they

accuse him to be a froward man and of an implacable spirit, and herein they do verify that they do speak all manner of evil. It is reported that Beza did live without any gall, because he was so quiet that they could never see him provoked; although the enemies would provoke him with a most violent spirit, yet he was as quiet as if he had been a man without a gall. To shew you how it hath been the way of evil men to strive with those that any way have been instruments of good and reformation, and did seek it with the most earnestness and zeal in Queen Elizabeth's days, I mean those that set themselves against prelacy,

it is known how the bishops used them; therefore do not think your names more precious than their names. And why should you think to go easier to heaven than they? why should you think that God should rather favour you than them? and look back and remember that there is the same spirit of darkness still prevailing as ever did; therefore keep your hearts close to God and Christ, and be sure you suffer nothing but for Christ's sake, for then rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

SERMON XXXVIII.

OR,

SOME ARGUMENTS FOR THE HELPING OF SAINTS TO SUFFER.

'For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world.'—MAT. V. 12-14.

OUR Saviour, in the strengthening of his disciples against persecution and reviling, and in helping them in their suffering, amongst other things tells them that they fare no worse than the prophets that went before them—'For so persecuted they the prophets which were before them;' from whence the point was, That the consideration of what the servants of God suffered heretofore should be a means to encourage us in suffering.

First, To shew the history how all the prophets, disciples, and the saints that have gone before, have suffered great and hard things.

Secondly, Wherein the argument lies of rejoicing under persecution.

Thirdly, What use we are to make of the persecution of the prophets. I could handle but the first. To proceed to the second: wherein lies the power of this argument? There is a fivefold strength in this argument, or rather five arguments in it.

First, The same spirit of wickedness that opposed them doth still prevail, and it is the same spirit of truth that is opposed. You see you are opposed: why, it is but the old spirit of Satan, that spirit of wickedness that hath appeared heretofore; it is that that appears against you.

Secondly, Hence you may see that those that are

dear and precious to God, that they may suffer hard things. You will not say but that the prophets were beloved of God, and yet they suffered as much as you, [were] contemned as much as you, reviled as much as you; therefore be not troubled at it, but rejoice and be glad.

Thirdly, If so be God should deal with you otherwise than he did formerly with others, then it might discourage you; but they are no other things than his servants heretofore have suffered. God will lead you to heaven in the same path that he hath led his servants heretofore.

Fourthly, It is the way that God hath brought all his servants into heaven by. Why should you think that God will bring you in a better way than he did others? For so suffered the prophets; the very prophets suffered such things, and then what is your flesh better than theirs? What are your names better than theirs? It is a most intolerable thing that we that are so vile and mean, and do so little service, that we should think it much to do anything in God's cause; that those that have been better than we, have suffered more than ever we did.

The fifth argument is this, That though the prophets have suffered such things, yet the truth of God prevails. We say, if they be imprisoned and perse-

cuted, what will become of God's truth? Do not take so much care for that, for all the prophets suffered, and did not God preserve his truth? were not they made instruments of good for all their suffering? they were made instruments of the greatest good. Put these five considerations together, and you see the force of the argument.

What uses we are to make of those that went before us.

First, If so be that those that were the most eminent servants of God have suffered such hard things, then, if we be in a prosperous estate and called to suffer but little, we are to examine whether our prosperity be with the love of God or no. Doth God send us prosperity in love? They that were most beloved of him, they did not enjoy their ease and contentment as we do; therefore we had need examine ourselves to see whether that we do enjoy be with God's love or no. Many think that God loves them most because they have most. Oh no; if so be God deals not with you as he hath done with other saints, you had need examine how you do enjoy that. Methinks any man that lives in a high estate, and hath all ease unto his flesh, either when he reads of other of the precious saints of God, and he is convinced in his conscience that they have done more service for God in one week than he hath done in a whole year, doth God love me more than them? It may be this is my portion, this is all that I am like to have.

The second use we should make of this is, Were the prophets called to suffer in former time? The less we are called to passive obedience, let us be more in active obedience. The very hearing of what the prophets have suffered in former time, it would make your heart to ache; if you read the Book of Martyrs, it would be very useful. I shall only labour to make this use of it. When you hear of their suffering, think thus with yourselves: God called them to suffer in a passive way; hence they suffered what rage and tortures wicked men could devise. God doth not call me to suffer in a way of such fearful evil; surely God must have the glory of my strength. Then let me spend it in praying, honouring, and worshipping God, as others did in suffering torments from wicked men. And seeing we owe unto God the glory of our names, the glory of our estates, the glory of our lives—that if God will not take it in a way of suffering, then we should give it to him freely in ways of service. They lay on the cold earth in prison. Think thus with yourselves when you are about any service, in prayer, reading, and hearing, and it begins to be painful to the flesh: Why, shall I then leave off the service of God because my flesh is pained? What did the martyrs suffer in the flesh! It is a shame unto you for to leave off the service of God because it is painful to the flesh.

Thirdly, When we consider of the sufferings of those that went before us, it should be a means to make us abate a little of the contentment of satisfying the flesh. Though we have abundance whereby to satisfy the flesh, why, let us abate a little of it. We read that many times the prophets and martyrs they wanted bread and necessary things, and shall I abuse the creatures of God to excess? And the prophets in Ahab's time were content with bread and water, and shall I be excessive in meat and drink? You that spend whole nights in chambering and wantonness, drunkenness, gluttony, surfeiting, and wasting the creatures, and all your delight is for the flesh, and all your care is to give contentment to the flesh in satisfying your lusts, oh, check your hearts in these ways!

The fourth is this: It is to prepare for suffering. We are not now for the present called to suffer, but let us not be secure; let us not conclude that we shall always enjoy that peace we now enjoy. The prophets suffered hard things, and let us think to meet with the same.

The fifth and last use is this: Surely God hath been little beholden to the world from all ages for any maintenance of his truth; for the world hath shewn itself a wicked world in persecuting and tormenting his saints and prophets, and therefore the Lord is little beholden to this world; and the world hath set itself against God, and therefore it will not be long before the Lord breaks this sinful world in pieces.

Thus we have done with that part of Christ's sermon, the Beatitudes—the several blessings that Christ lays down upon the saints doing their duties.

Ver. 13. *'Ye are the salt of the earth.'*

Here begins plainly a new matter. First he tells his disciples of blessedness; they shall come to see their own blessedness. And having shewn them their blessedness, that, whatever the world thought of them, yet in the eyes of God they are blessed creatures. And now he tells them what service they must do in the world, which, indeed, is a great part of blessedness too. From the coherence, note, that those men that God shall put into an estate of blessedness, they are fit men, and may be very instrumental to do great service for his name's sake. When once the soul is satisfied in this, the Lord hath been merciful to me, and God hath cast a favourable look upon me—the Lord hath put me into a frame and condition of blessedness; let the world do what they can do to me, they cannot take blessedness away from me. Oh, how fit this man is to do the service of God! And in the words following, you have the greatest service that the apostles were called to in the world.

Secondly, *'Ye are the light of the world.'* It follows, more especially from what Christ told them of

persecution—you shall suffer so much, ay, and be willing to suffer. Why? for you are called to the greatest works that ever God called any men to. Let men speak what they will, revile what they will, certainly God will reward you. Ye are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world; and if you should start aside for fear of suffering, what will become of things then? And, indeed, the consideration of men's employment in the world is a great and a strong argument to carry men through what difficulty soever. Let me go on in the work. As if a general should come to some officers in the army, and tell them the battle comes sore on them; therefore keep your standing, for the welfare of the whole army depends on you, nay, the welfare of the whole kingdom depends on you. This will put courage into any man of the world, when he knoweth the great things which depend on him. Now, saith Christ, what if you be persecuted? go on in your ways; for ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world; therefore go on. 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' I confess that almost all interpreters do carry these words, as to the disciples, to the apostles, those that were sent to preach unto others, 'Ye are the salt of the earth;' but all do not go that way. One learned interpreter saith, I do not see sufficient cause to restrain these things merely to the apostles; and he gives two reasons for it, why it doth belong to Christians as well as to the apostles.

First, saith he, All the former words belong generally to all Christians, as poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and they which are persecuted and reviled. All these belong not only to the apostles, but to all Christians; and why not this as well as the former?

Secondly, The second reason is this, That that follows in ver. 16 belongs to Christians, as appears from Phil. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' You are those that are the lights, that are shining in the world.

Thirdly, And a third reason is in the latter part of ver. 13, 'But if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.' Christ apparently speaks to the multitude. In Luke xiv. 25, 34, (compare them together:) 'And there went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said unto them: Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?' Therefore, saith this learned interpreter, both former and latter belongs to Christians; ye are then the salt of the earth.

First, All Christians who have the truth of the gospel, who by their lives and in their ways do shew forth the truth of the gospel, they are the salt of the earth.

In an eminent degree, those that do carry the truths of the gospel abroad into the world, they are the salt of the earth. What is the meaning of that? It is a plain similitude that Christ useth, because that country delighted much in similitudes. You will find a great deal of excellency in this expression of the mind of God therein.

First, We find that in Scripture salt is taken for wisdom: Col. iv. 6, 'Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.' When you speak, let not your speeches be with any corrupt communication that hath no wisdom in it; but in all your speeches let there be wisdom. And in Mark ix. 50, 'Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.' Order all your ways wisely; and this was the common acceptance of the ordinary language. Salt hath been taken almost by all kind of people to signify understanding, wisdom. One saith that the Grecians were the salt of the nations; and the reason was because that Greece had almost all learnings, and that was the salt of the nations. They were wont ordinarily to express the works of man's understanding by it. I have read that in Italy, if any one doth cast salt to another, they take it for a disgrace and mockery, as if such a man wanted wit. And so the Latins saith, 'One that is foolish wanteth salt.' And the Scripture calls that that is unsavoury by want of salt, it calls it folly. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly,' Job i. 22. Again, in chap. vi. 6, 'Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt; or is there any taste in the white of an egg.' So that by Scripture, and common acceptance of people in former times, and now, by salt is meant understanding and wisdom, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The meaning is this, in the first place, you are those that be holding forth the gospel; you are they that are the ministers of the gospel, that are to bring wisdom to the world; you are they that are to declare that that will make them wise to salvation; and without the doctrine of the gospel there is nothing that will make them wise in the world. While † they come to know Christ and the gospel, their foolish hearts are darkened; but now you are sent to declare unto them the counsels of God's will about man's eternal estate,

* Sal optimum et utilissimum est ciborum condimentum, si moderate adhibeatur; transfertur autem ad sapientiam significandam utpote qua nihil est hominibus utilius in vita.—Estius.

† That is, 'till'—Ed.

so that they may come to attain wisdom for eternity. Ye are the salt of the earth. The whole world goeth on in ways of folly till the gospel comes amongst them. The generality of men that have not the preaching of the word, what ends do they propound to themselves of their lives? or if they do propound any ends, it is not the right ends they ought to propound. They are far from propounding these ends for enjoying God in his Son Jesus Christ; they are far from using the right means to attain this end. The world is led on in a passion, they hurry it on to what lust their corruptions carry them to; therefore, they have no wisdom to carry it on for what they shall do for eternity. But now ye are the salt of the earth, that shall make men bethink themselves, and to know what they were born for, and what they came into the world to do; they shall come to know what is their last end, they shall begin to muse, and weigh, and ponder things. Now, when your doctrine shall begin to prevail in their hearts, they shall then begin to have wisdom, where before there was nothing but folly in them. And so, when men converse with the saints they shall learn wisdom; then they begin to have salt, and to confer of things, and to have their hearts seasoned with wisdom. All human learning in the world makes not men wise to salvation. The rules of philosophy may shew them wisdom; but the Scripture tells, that the world by wisdom knew not God. That is the first; the gospel, it brings wisdom wherever it comes, it teacheth the world to be truly wise for salvation.

Secondly, Salt, it makes things savoury. That is the second thing to be considered in salt. Salt, it hath such a property to dry up the evil moisture that took away the relish of the savour of the thing. It is salt that savoureth everything almost that we have use for. As if Christ should say, Men's hearts naturally are very unsavoury; though they have excellent parts, yet how unsavoury are their speeches and actions. So that, come to places where there was never any preaching of the gospel heard of, how unsavoury will you find the spirits of people that know little of God! A gracious man cannot endure to tarry long amongst them; and the unsavouriness of their hearts doth make all their duties to be unsavoury. Whatever duties they perform to God, there is nothing but unsavouriness in them. It is as unsavoury meat to you, that all people that live without the gospel, that have not the gospel prevailing on their hearts, all the duties that they perform are as unsavoury to God as unsavoury meat is to you. Now, saith Christ, you shall go and preach the gospel to make their hearts savoury, and then they shall be acceptable to God. The duties they perform shall be savoury unto God; their company shall be savoury to

the saints. Whereas, now a man or woman that had not the gospel prevailing on their hearts, when he came into the company of the saints, then he could not savour them; but now, when the gospel comes to him, then he can savour their discourse, he can pray savourily, and do other duties with savour. Mat. xvi. 23, 'But he turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' Come and propound the most excellent and glorious truths of God in the gospel, yet they do not savour them; their hearts being unsavoury, they cannot savour the things of God. Rom. viii., about the beginning, 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.' Men before the gospel comes have unsavoury spirits; but when the ministry of the gospel comes amongst them, then they shall savour things in another manner than ever they have done.

Thirdly, Ye are the salt of the earth. Salt, it keeps from putrefaction, and preserves. And that is the reason of that expression we have in Num. xviii. 19, 'All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; it is a covenant of salt for ever before the Lord unto thee and to thy seed with thee;' (2 Chron. xiii. 5.) A covenant that shall not lose the vigour, virtue, and strength of it by long continuance, therefore a covenant of salt; as now meat, if it be not salted, it putrefies and loseth that nurture it had before, and grows worse and worse till it comes to have no kind of virtue to comfort the body at all. Thus, when we make covenants with God, it may be when we make them at first, they seem to be full of vigour and strength; but after the covenant hath continued a few days it is like flesh or fish—after it hath continued a little while it loseth the temperature of it, and is more unfit for nutriment than others; but if you put salt to them then they will be fit for nurture. And so it is with our covenants; at first they are full of vigour and strength, but let them continue a little while, then the covenant hath no power at all. Oh, it was not a covenant of salt! I fear our covenants that we have made privately and publicly, that they are not covenants of salt. But the Lord, when he makes covenants of salt, he remembers his covenant, and there is as much strength and vigour in it a thousand years after it is made as there was the first day it was made. Many men and women make little use of their souls, but only to keep their bodies from putrefying. 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The meaning is this, Whereas all the world grows to putrefaction; they have such evils in their hearts, as being let alone they grow worse and worse, and perish for ever. 1 John i. 5, 'This then is the message which

we have heard of him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' God doth expel darkness and ignorance and infidelity by the true knowledge of himself. And here is the great use of the ministry of the word, to keep all the world from perishing by putrefaction; and all the hearts of men and women in the world that have not the doctrine of the gospel prevailing in them, they are unto God stinking, filthy, loathsome meat, that rots and putrefies, and will certainly perish. This is the condition of the whole world. Now when the doctrine comes, it keeps the hearts from putrefying, from rotting. It is called the wholesome word, because it keeps their hearts wholesome. Ye are the salt of the earth, to keep from putrefaction, that ye shall not be unwholesome in your lives; and so to preserve your souls that you shall not be unswcet and unsavoury for the Lord. And put these three together, then you may come to understand the meaning of that scripture, where you shall find that there is a rule given that every sacrifice that was offered up to God it was salted: Lev. ii. 13, 'And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering; with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.' You think there is little in this expression. Again and again there is argued that salt must be offered in every sacrifice; all must have salt, let the offering be what it will, of meat-offerings, oil-offerings, offerings of flour; every sacrifice must have salt. Mark ix., latter end of it, 'Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.' That every sacrifice must be salted with salt, the meaning is this: whatever sacrifice you will offer to God, be it yourselves—Rom. xii. 1, 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable sacrifice'—there must be salt in it, spiritual things in the soul. There must be a savoury spirit—that is, savoury unto God, and doth savour the things of God; and then there must be a spirit that is not corrupt or putrefied. Such a one, when he offers up himself to God, is an acceptable sacrifice to him. And in your duties to God there must be a savouriness in them, and no mixture of your own corruptions in your duties; but then because this scripture, having named it, seems hard, I desire to open it to you. From whence is it that Christ here saith that every one should be salted with fire? Before you find that Christ is preaching the doctrine of mortification, mortifying our dearest lusts, what dependence is here? It is better for you that you go to heaven with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The meaning is this, as if

he should say, Though your lusts be never so dear unto you, as dear as your right eye, or as dear as your hand, yet you must be willing to mortify your corruptions and lusts; for, saith he, look to yourselves, God would have every sacrifice salted with salt. If you would be a sacrifice unto God, unto his grace and mercy, you must offer a sacrifice salted with salt, or else you will offer a sacrifice to his justice. You must be salted with fire, with that fire that is unquenchable. Thus you see somewhat is the meaning of that which Christ saith, 'Ye are the salt of the earth.' The preaching of the gospel, when it comes first to corrupt hearts, it puts to a great deal of pain, till their corruptions be subdued by it, till the gospel hath overcome your corruptions. Read that scripture in Mark ix., the latter end; compare those few verses, with any place of all the Old Testament, and in the time of the law, you never find such a terrible expression of God's wrath against sinners that will not mortify their corruptions as there is in that chapter of Mark. That place of the Old Testament, 'Cursed is every one that abideth not in everything,' hath not such a terror in it as this, that 'the worm that never dieth, nor the fire that never goeth out,'^c and other texts. For this cause comes the wrath of God on you, and you are the children of wrath. The wrath of God is against all unrighteousness. If a man would preach but one sermon in all his lifetime to make sin odious to men, he should rather choose it out of the gospel than out of the law. The gospel it is that will discover what men are in themselves out of Jesus Christ, what a price is paid for their souls; and, besides, the gospel it argueth mortification of our lusts more than the law. In this sermon of Christ, 'If a man looketh but after a woman to lust after her, he hath committed adultery with her in his heart.' The minister of the gospel hath such a power, that where it comes it prevails over all these; therefore it is called the salt of the earth. Wherefore salt is used in way of physic, in way of medicine: 2 Kings ii. 21, 22, 'And he went forth unto the springs of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.' Salt it is a great blessing of nature; it is called the very balsam of nature.

The first use from hence is, You see what a great excellency the ministry of the gospel is. It is the salt of the world—that is, the very balsam of nature;

* By which words metaphorically may be noted the twofold punishments in hell—the one of the soul, and the other of the body, saith Polycarpus Lyserus; but rather the punishment of sense, and the punishment of loss, called *pána sensus, pána damni*.

therefore we should prize that, without which all the world would be unsavoury to God. Do but go to such streets where they do not come to the preaching of the gospel, and what rotten putrefaction is there! If the gospel doth not convert their souls, yet it will take away some gross corruptions—it will civilise them. Give me any place where there hath been a ministry of salt in it, you shall find that amongst the greatest part of them that there is not so much wickedness amongst them; but those that oppose them, they grow worse against them. Oh, prize the gospel! I remember, in Isa. lx., the Holy Ghost speaks there of the saints that should flock to the preaching of the word—to the ministry; they are called the doves. The doves should come; and in ver. 8, 'Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?' The property of doves is, they are mightily incited to a salt stone, and are in love with salt stones much. The salt stone of the gospel is that that will entice, not birds of prey, as rooks, ravens, and the like, but it will entice all of dove-like spirits. They find that the gospel doth them good; it is the gospel that makes all things savoury to them. Oh, they can say that before I heard the gospel, my heart was unsavoury, and I never had the savour of things so as since the gospel hath come unto me. A foolish speech that is used amongst some, that if the salt falls, there is a sign of ill-luck; but certainly if there be an overthrow of the gospel, that is a sign of ill indeed. This is a great deal of evil to the Christian world, as in overthrowing the salt. All men cannot bear the gospel; they would have nothing but sugared things, though they rot by it. Is it not better to be preserved with brine than rotted with sugar? The ministers of the gospel must apply salt, and sometimes it must be rubbed into them. And so some men's hearts get no good by the word; their hearts are very unsavoury, and they will not take the word into their hearts. The ministers of the gospel had need rub it in by application. The preaching of the word, if only laid before the people, it doth little good, but it must be rubbed in by application.

Secondly, It serves for exhortation. Is the ministry of the gospel of this excellent use? Then take heed you do not refuse it. The preaching of the gospel, when first it comes into a place, if it be received in, it groweth to abundance of good in the soul; but if men let their lusts prevail in them, it doth little good to them; the Lord suffers them to perish eternally. This hath a power to restore those that stink—to restore them, but not usually. Look to it, ye young ones; you are not yet so corrupted but the applying of the salt may heal your souls. When men are intemperate—drunkards, that give liberty to themselves in their sensual lusts, to fulfill the wills of

them—their hearts will not receive the salt of the word. When poor men in the country go to the market, they will be sure to bring home salt for the benefit of their family. Do you do so. The doctrine is the salt; carry it home. You have a great deal of unsavoury words in your family. When you come to hear the word, carry home some salt, and apply it, the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband, the parents to the children; and let the servants all say one to another, Are not these doctrines preached this day against these evil ways that we walk in? Surely it will be a means to restrain you from your wicked courses. So if—as soon as a sin is committed, if you would but apply the salt to your heart presently, it would keep it from staining. If God hath applied it once, we must apply it again and again. Every day we must apply it, or else we shall have unsavoury hearts; and remember it, that when flesh comes to be salted, if there be a hollow part of the flesh that begins to be corrupted more than the rest, you will rub more salt there than in another place. And you should observe what are your precious corruptions; and you should think thus: I have some lusts and some sins that are more dangerous than others. There is lust that is like to overcome me; I will apply the word there. I will get some scripture that shall speak most against that sin, and I will be sure to lay that to my heart. As to instance: Suppose some have inordinate affection to satisfy the lust of the flesh. Here is a place in your heart that is like to putrefy; apply some salt to it. I will give you some few grains of salt to apply to that place that is like to be corrupted. Job xxxi. 1, 2, 'I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?' As if he should say, Lord, if I should not make a covenant with mine eyes; if I should let mine eyes wander up and down for satisfying of my flesh, I should have no portion in the Almighty. At any time when I give way to mine eyes to satisfy the lust of the flesh, I will venture to apply salt to that however. And for that sin of uncleanness I will give you another scripture to apply: Prov. xxii. 14, 'The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.' That man that is abhorred of God shall fall into the deep pit. I might have given you many scriptures in the New Testament for it. 2 Peter ii. 9, 'The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. Those that walk after the lust of uncleanness, rub this salt on your hearts, and it will be a means to take away uncleanness in that place. To

those that give themselves liberty to satisfy the lust of the flesh; Rom. viii. 13, 'For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.' That is, if there be any man or woman, he or she that give themselves liberty to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, and make that to be the chief contentment to satisfy the flesh, that man or woman shall perish for ever; they shall die. These scriptures have great matter in them to get out the corruptions of men's hearts. You that will attend on the ministry of the gospel, you will find at one time or another, but that the word will find out your particular sins,

and then go home and rub it with salt. Labour to kill and mortify your sins; the ministers of God cannot so well do it as you. Remember this: Christ speaks here by similitudes, because he would have it to be remembered by you; you have occasion when you have salt on your tables, and when you go to salt your meat. If I did not salt my meat, it would be putrefied and unsavoury, and so is my heart. Whatever God lets me have in the world, I cannot relish it or savour it without the gospel, and without salt I cannot offer any sacrifice savoury to God. The doctrine of the ministry of the word is as salt to the benefit of nature.

SERMON XXXIX.

OR,

HOW PROFESSORS ARE SAID TO BE UNSAVOURY.

'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden down under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world.'—MAT. V. 13, 14.

WE read in Scripture that sometime salt makes barren where it is sown: Judges ix. 45, 'And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.' Much salt on the earth will make the earth barren; so it is with many of our hearts. We have so much of the salt of the word sown continually, and there is no fruit at all, but rather our hearts grow barren by it. Certainly there is a curse on that ground that hath salt thus sown on it, and there is a curse on this heart that lives under the ministry of the word, and have these blessed truths preached to them, and yet be barren. Now it follows,

If salt hath lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

Now this is applicable either to professors of religion, that do in their degree carry about with them the truths of the gospel, Luke xiv. 25, compared with ver. 36, or to ministers. If they have lost their savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

To speak briefly of the words in reference to professors of religion, who have understanding of many truths of the gospel, and for a time do hold them forth and embrace them, and have been of very good

use in former time in the towns, parishes, and in families where they have lived. They have been as salt. Many have received great benefit from them by that knowledge that they have, and by the excellent gifts that they had through the gospel; but yet some of them lose their savour. Where there is true grace in the heart, that will never be lost; but where many truths and gifts come by the gospel, they may be lost; and many that have been professors of religion have lost their savour—that is, they were very full of ferventness and zeal and heat in their duties and performances; none could come amongst them but found their hearts bettered by them than they were before; but now they have lost their savour, now there is no such vigour and liveliness, but now they are grown flat and cold, flat in their duties, formal in their ways. There is little good to be gotten by them, or expected from them. When you do converse with them, many of them are grown unsavoury. They have mingled base lusts with their profession and zeal, and have lost the power of it. They are grown earthly; their corruptions have prevailed over the salt. Though they for a while seemed to be kept down, yet afterward they had got power over those truths that they had in their under-

standings, and that they had openly professed. Their corruption now has got the power, and so they have lost all their savour and vigour, and are grown formal in their duties, and all their savour is gone. This is said of such as have made profession of religion, that have lost their savour. Some do say, how are these changed or they were? If salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? * How shall this be recovered again? So the meaning is. It is not impossible, but it is a rare thing for any one that hath been a forward professor of religion, and hath had vigour and strength, and now is grown flat and cold—it is an impossible thing almost that such a one should be recovered, it is a rare thing if such be recovered.† Heb. vi. 4, 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,' &c. It is a most dreadful place; yet the scripture doth not mention in words the sin against the Holy Ghost, but lays it down in a more general way, to leave them to a most dreadful fear, to take heed that they never, never fall away. Let such take heed how they nourish any corruption. Where almost have you any recovered—any that return after that they are fallen from profession of religion? And why? It is so because that when they have had the experience of truth, the truths of God that work on other men's hearts, do no good to them at all. They knew what these truths meant many years ago, but to many it awakens their consciences, and stirs their hearts. It humbles their spirits and casts them down, and causeth them to see the dreadfulfulness of their natural estate; but let a formal professor that is fallen off from the truth of God, let him know such things, he hath got power over his conscience. There is little efficacy to prevail over it. Wherewith shall it be salted when the salt hath lost his savour? It follows of them, It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out; that is, an apostatising professor of religion is an unuseful member in the church of God or commonwealth. He is almost good for nothing. One that is a forward professor of religion, if he be not fruitful, he is not good for anything. Salt, when it hath lost its savour, there is no more use at all for it, as there can be of other things: as money, if it be broken, if it cannot go for coin, yet it is good for the goldsmith; but salt is good for nothing at all; and so professors that are apostatising from the truth. There is not a more miserable creature than an apostatising Christian; they are good for nothing, for now neither God nor man will trust them. They have been forward in religion, and they are now fallen off, and God will not trust them any more, nor will man trust them any more, because of their unfaithfulness to God. They that are not useful, they are

* See Perkins on the place. † See Dickson on Heb. vi. 4.

cast out of men's hearts. There was a time that it may be you rejoiced to be in their company, and lookedst upon it as a privilege, but now you look on them as contemptible. They go up and down as poor wretches, forsaken of God and men, because they are of no use at all to the world, of no note or account in the church, but do hurt wherever they are. God ordinarily takes their gifts away from them. When they professed religion they had gifts, and God hath taken them away. Now they cannot pray as they could formerly do; and there is a secret curse of God that goeth along with them in all that they do. That in the time of their youth, and at first when they began to make profession of truth, there was some gifts of God in them and upon them for the edification of others; but now God is gone from them, and their gifts they are gone, and they themselves are departed from God—what change is in them!—and they go up and down as burdens to the towns and families, and they are trodden under foot. No men in the world do more mischief or hurt than those that are forward in profession of religion, and yet fall off afterwards: they then look on the name of God as vile and contemptible. God will look on you as vile and contemptible; and you are the stumbling-blocks and discouragements to young beginners in the ways of God, when God begins to work on their hearts. You harden the hearts of wicked men, when once you were forward, hot, and zealous, and are fallen off. They that are wicked think that religion is but a fancy, and it is but a mere humour that men are possessed withal; and so you are discouragements to poor weak ones. They think, Lord, what shall become of me, that those that were such great ones in the church of God as they were, and they fall off that were so eminent in profession? O Lord, how shall I hold out if they fall off? You are discouragements to others, those that made profession afore, and may be not grown profane in their profession neither; but they grow sluggish, and they are vexed to see young ones come up more forward than they. And the truth is this, they should lay their hands on their hearts and say, Have not I lost my savour? and am not I more sluggish? and is it not just with God to take my esteem and repute away from the church of God? They should be willing to cry out, having apostatised from the truth, as he did: Tread upon me, tread upon me, unsavoury salt; let all tread upon me. It is just with God that all his servants should tread upon me. And I beseech you, consider of this, you that now begin to make profession of religion, and have some work of God in your hearts. Many of you that are young, there is some relish of savoury things among you. When temptation comes in, then consider of the dreadful condition of one that apostatiseth from the profession of religion; for when you are young, you

think, surely you shall hold out these truths of God that now you have; here you are persuaded that they shall never get out of your hearts again. You do not know, you do not know your own hearts.

I come now to the words as they respect the ministers. The general stream almost of all interpreters is that way; they are the salt of the earth, and if they have lost their savour, &c., that is thus: when any begin to preach at the first, their preaching is full of strength—they are mighty zealous, mighty forward; but afterwards the temptations of the world, when they come and they get livings to feather their nests well, and are settled in the world, then they begin to grow more slack, loose, and empty in the world.⁶ Their preaching is more flat than it was; there is not the savouriness in it as formerly there was; they do not speak to the hearts of men as formerly; yea, it may be, now having met with temptations, they are grown very frothy, begin to mix other things of their own invention with it, and are loath to speak those truths that should go to their hearts and consciences, and will rather preach those truths that are easy, general truths, that shall not come near any man's conscience. Then there is not salt in their teaching, but rather a flattering and slight kind of way they minister the truths of God, and they come to mingle their preaching with superstitiousness, and their preaching is only to lift up external things, to preach for superstitious vanities. A child of God, one that hath grace in his heart, how unsavoury is this preaching to him! Many that have been slow in preaching, when they come to speak against those that preach the true word of God, they are mighty hot and fierce against them: these preachers are such as Christ calls unsavoury preachers. If so be that ministers have lost their savour, and now come to be slothful in their ways and sluggish in their ministry, then they have lost their savour: wherewith shall it be salted? It is almost an impossible thing ever to recover a minister that hath fallen off from the truth of the gospel. Take any minister that heretofore hath been anything forward, and now is fallen off from the truth of the gospel, it is rare if ever he be recovered—I will not say none at all, but it is a rare thing.

First, In regard of the pride of their hearts. They scorn to be taught of others, or to be known that they have gone in erroneous ways; yea, though sometimes their consciences condemn them, yet the pride of their hearts will not let them acknowledge the error of their ways.

Secondly, The strength of their natural parts being corrupted by their sin, is now employed to keep off the truths of God that should do them good. Just as it is with a man that hath a sore in his body, the nourishment of his body will run to the feeding

of that sore; and so with man's wickedness. And there is a curse of God upon them; and it is very rare that ever they shall come to recover again. How few ministers that were malignants and wicked, that did return only at such times when they were absolutely necessitated thereunto! And therefore, by the way, it should take off the offence that men stumble at when they see learned men do thus and thus. When learned men have lost their savour, do not be offended at that, and make use of it thus: I see it is a dreadful thing for a man to sin against light. Were I in such an auditory that were full of young ministers, who are full of quickening vigour for the present, I would have these things to be caveats for them, that those that know them savoury now, may know them savoury at the last. Their natural parts may decay, yet you may see a light, and quickness of spirit, and love for God—to all that come to them such savoury and wholesome counsels to them, from what experience they have had; blessed are these; but it is most miserable for such as have been forward when they were young ministers to grow unsavoury, and not to be recovered. Henceforth good for nothing. What should we do with them, if they be good for nothing? If you send them to congregations where there are good people, it will but dead the hearts of that people. It will grieve their hearts if you send them to such congregations where the people are naught; it will make them worse. And besides, ordinarily there is a curse of God on their parts and gifts, and they will hardly be trusted, because of their unfaithfulness to God. I remember a papist, in his comment on Mal. ii. 3, saith, They are good for nothing, they shall be cast out and trodden under foot. 'Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it.' What shall become of them? To beg they are ashamed, and to dig they cannot. What shall become of them that are unsavoury? It may be some would pity them; but it is the just judgment of God that they shall be trodden under foot; yea, such ministers, it may be, that people have flocked to them heretofore, now there is no use for them in the church; and those that are the most understanding, they do reject them, they are cast out of their hearts. There may be a great deal of evil in men's hearts in withdrawing themselves from them that do preach savoury truths, that is a rarity in them; but now I speak in general, that all saints generally do cast them out, and not esteem them. Yet they may preach good things; and if they do preach good things, yet they will but little regard them. So they are of no use at all, they shall be cast out; the Lord would have men to cast them out, and tread them under foot, to despise them. There is no people in the world that

* Query, 'word'?—Ed.

are more justly under contempt than ministers whose ministry hath turned from savouriness to unsavouriness, and that from God himself, through the just judgment of God on them. I will give you some scripture for it, because it is seasonable at this time: 1 Sam. ii. 30, 'Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house and the house of thy father should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.' They regarded themselves in their office more than God's honour. No men in the world are set more on their honour than ministers are that have corrupt hearts. Saith God, They will set up themselves above me; they will set up their own trash and invention above that savoury word of mine. They shall be lightly esteemed, they shall be trod under foot, they shall be cast out. So in ver. 36, 'And it shall to come pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.' There is the threat of God on the priests, that they shall come and crouch for a morsel of bread, come and crouch to others, that afore they did scorn and contemn. This is the curse of God on them. And in the other text—it is in the prophecy of Jeremiah, chap. xxiii. 40,—'And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten. I will bring an everlasting reproach, contempt, and shame on them.' That which is most remarkable of treading under foot, and casting out, in the prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. xlv. 10–13, 'And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols, they shall even bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: they shall slay the burnt-offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord God, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor come near to any of my holy things, in the most holy place; but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.' They shall have some low place, but he saith they shall never come into their places again; that is, there was a time of trial of men. The generality of men went such ways; some for superstitious ways, they set themselves against the saints, and the ways of godliness, and truths of God; and the Levites they would

go that way they saw which way the stream went, and they went that way too for honour and preferment. And let them get their bread how they can, they shall never come to their places again, because they departed from me; they should have taught the people, they should have resisted them, and stood for my cause. Here is the judgment of God on them. And in the prophecy of Hosea, chap. iv. 6, 'My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.' Tremellius noteth on this scripture, that there is one letter more than usual in that word, 'I will reject thee;' and it is only, saith he, to shew the strength that God speaks with; as if he should say, it is not an ordinary rejection, but a strong rejection. Another remarkable place in Mal. ii. 7–9, 'For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.' You took upon you to be the priests of God, and the law should be in your mouths, and knowledge should be preserved in your lips; but you have corrupted the covenant, and been partial in the law. And you have sought to maintain your own superstitious vanities by my word; you have abused my word. What then? therefore saith God, 'I made you base and contemptible.' Saith one in his comment on this scripture, this is not so much to be expounded as waived: What is a more despicable thing than the priests? Oh how the Lord hath fulfilled this scripture! Who more in triumph about seven years ago than the prelatical priests? what stuff did they preach? what unsavouriness was in them, and proceeded from them? And now hath the Lord scattered them, and cast them down; as it is in Rev. iii. 21, 22, 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.' Let us all say, The Lord is righteous, and acknowledge the hand of God in this, and acknowledge the Lord's goodness that hath stirred up our governors to cast out unsavoury salt. It is a sign of much unsavouriness of men's spirits that they yet could savour such ministry—they thought it better than the ministry now. This disposition of men's spirits puts me in mind here of that scripture in 2 Cor. xi. 20, 'For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the

face.' That people when they were under them that their own consciences told them that their ministry was unsavoury, and they got no good by it, and that they mixed a great deal of superstitious trash; and these men, though they did tyrannise over them, yea, though they did make spoil of their goods; and that could not have a child buried but at a mighty rate, and yet notwithstanding all that they suffered under them, yet their hearts could close with them still rather than those that come to preach the truths of the gospel to them for the salvation of their souls. I wondering at this disposition of men's spirits, it brought me to think of that scripture in 2 Cor. xi. 20; the meaning is this, saith the apostle St Paul, when I come to preach the savoury truths of the gospel, your hearts are smitten; but if a man comes and teacheth false truths, you will bear with him. Is not this scripture fulfilled amongst many at this day? they would be content to bear anything from those that were unsavoury, they could bear their ministry amongst them, but for the faithful ministers of God, every word that proceedeth from them offendeth them; this is an argument of unsavoury spirits.

Lastly, Had I to speak to such as are young ministers, I should give a rule of direction to them to take a wise course to keep up their honour. There is no such way to keep up their honour in that way

that God hath set them in, as in a savouriness in his ministry and in his life. Let wicked men in taverns scorn at you, and say what they will of you, yet on their sick-beds they will be forced in their conscience to say otherwise of you. Let not ministers fret and vex when they lose repute; let them consider whether they have not lost some of their savour, and labour to be savoury, and then they need not stand for honour, for God will honour them. Certainly Austin speaks of this very excellently. A man cannot be trod upon except he be inferior, except he be under another; he is not under that doth suffer in his body—if so be that his heart be fixed in heaven, he is not under any man. This is to be thus applied, that is, let a man come and basely submit himself to the lust of any man; but let a man in his doctrine keep above the contentment of the lust of the flesh, and let his doctrine be evangelical, his life heavenly and holy, he cannot be trodden upon, his name will be above them all, above all that can be cast upon him. How savoury is the very memory of those that have been precious in former times, nay, lately; they lived above the content of men, therefore they could not be trodden upon, God hath preserved their names from generation to generation; therefore let ministers and let Christians labour to keep their savour, if they would not be trodden under foot of men.

SERMON XL.

OR,

TO BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS A GREAT HONOUR.

'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.'—MAT. v. 14.

THE salt of the earth, and the light of the world, is a great honour that God puts on his ministers eminently, and on his saints in their degree. Christ having told his disciples what suffering they were like to meet with, for their encouragement he tells them what service the Lord will employ them in however. As if he should say, Men may revile, persecute, and speak all manner of evil on you, yet go on your ways, and be not discouraged: 'Ye are the salt of the earth, ye are the light of the world.' Those who are qualified according to what went before, they indeed only are

fit to have such honour put upon them, as the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungerers and thirsters after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and they which are persecuted; these are the men that are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In the 13th verse, which we last finished, there we opened how the ministers of the gospel are the salt of the earth; and those who are in their ministry like salt, had need be in their ministry like light. The more provoking a minister speaks to a people, the more convincing he had need

speak. If he be salt, he had need be light: 'Ye are the light of the world.' It is as high an excellency this with the other almost as could be said of creatures—for a few poor fishermen to be the salt of the earth, to keep it from putrefying, and to be the light of the world. What honour could be said of men more than here is? Luther speaks of this place:* It is an excellent employment, an honour greater than all honour, to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Light it is an excellent creature; we know but little of it, and herein is discovered man's ignorance. What a poor creature man is! he hath little cause to be proud. There are two things that are most necessary, that we scarce know what to say of them, light and life. They are two things that have much of God in them. By some effects and fruits, we can see some workings of them; but what they are we know not. We find that the most excellent things are called by the name of light. God himself is light, saith the Scripture; and the uttermost of God's glory is light. And Christ he is light; he is called light, the light of the world. The angels they are light; the word, that is called light. Grace in Scripture is called light, the saints they are called light, comfort that is light, God's favour the light of his countenance, prosperity is called light, deliverance from evil is called light, and heaven itself. But here this light that is here spoken of, 'Ye are the light of the world,' it is in reference to the gospel and the ministry of it; and then in their kind and degree even the saints they are the light of the world; but the gospel, and the ministers of it, ye are the light of the world. As if he should say, Ye are now going into the world, and there to be dispensers of the glorious gospel; and this gospel that you are going to carry to the world, it is that light to the world. Ye are those luminaries that are in heaven, that scatter up and down light on the earth; so that first there is implied,

Obs. 1. That all the world is darkness till the gospel comes amongst them; all kingdoms, countries, towns, families, persons, souls, all in darkness till the gospel comes.

First, The world is in darkness. The Scripture sets out man's natural estate by darkness itself; before the gospel comes to any place in the ministry of it, they know not God: 1 Cor. i. 21, 'For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' Men of the greatest parts and abilities, they know not God. Learned men are in darkness till the gospel comes. Oh the poor, the low, the base, mean thoughts that men have of God naturally! what strange conceits have they of the infinite, glorious first being of all beings! The

foolish hearts of men are darkened; they know not the way of light, the rule of light; they know not the way of the right worship of God before the gospel comes; they know not now to worship God aright, but worship God after their own imaginations and inventions. In vain do they worship; they know not the end of man's life—what is the end that God made man for, that happiness and glory that man's nature is capable of, this is not known but when the gospel comes. They understand not what man's estate is naturally; know little of sin, of original corruption, of any breach that is between God and us. They know not what the way is that God hath appointed for reconciling the world to himself. This is a hidden mystery, that the princes of the world have never known; but by the light of the gospel they know nothing of that great work of mediation; they know nothing of the covenant of grace, that second covenant that God hath made with mankind; they know nothing of the excellency of grace. Thus man naturally is in darkness till the gospel comes; hence he doth hold little or nothing of God. He lets the great and glorious things of God pass from him without holding of them; he goeth he knoweth not whither: 1 John ii. 11, 'But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.' He walks in the ways of darkness, and his works are the works of darkness, and he stumbles at everything. He stumbles at the ways of God; every scandal that falls it makes him dislike the ways of God; and every reproach that is cast out, it makes him to judge evil of God's ways. Man naturally is in a dismal condition; he may think he hath comfort, but certainly he hath none; he may think he hath light, but he is far from it. He hath no more than a child that is in the bottom of a dungeon, and was born there. So wicked man in a natural state; he may think that he sees spiritually, but his eyes are carnal. And again their ways are dangerous; they do not know what shall become of them the next step they go, but that they may fall into perdition.

Further, They are ruled by the spirit of darkness, by reason of the darkness that there is in their own spirits. Hence the spirit of darkness and their spirits come to suit one with another more; whether the devil would so much as tempt any other way but by propounding of outward objects, were it not for the sinfulness of our hearts, were very questionable. When he came to tempt Adam when he was in innocency, we only read he came by serpents, and such like suggestions. When he came to tempt our Saviour Christ, he came not to tempt him spiritually but outwardly, taking him up to the top of the mountain, and such like temptations. Therefore, where there is no sin, the devil, that is, the spirit of darkness, cannot suit

* On Mat. v. 14.

himself to the spirit, but only by outward things can present that which is evil. But those that are in darkness, and have their spirits full of darkness, they can be suited to the prince of darkness, that he doth not only propound outward objects to wicked men, but he doth as it were mingle with their spirits, and this is the misery that natural men are in.

Lastly, All the world are so in darkness, that if they be left to themselves they will have their portion in everlasting darkness. It may be many may think that they are not in darkness; but as Christ saith, 'Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye shall have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth,' John ix. 41. The more conceited men are that they are in the light, their sin remaineth so much the rather, or is the more exceeding sinful now than before it was. No man can naturally judge of his natural estate, because he is in darkness; much less judge of spiritual things. Let us never take the judgment of men, because they have great and strong parts of nature, in spiritual things, because their foolish parts are darkened. In dark vaults there are toads and noisome things, and so there are in dark hearts. Ps. lxxiv. 20, 'Have respect unto the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitation of cruelty.' It is no marvel though men be so fierce and froward, because in the dark places of their hearts there are the habitations of cruelty. Men are in darkness before the gospel comes; where the light of the gospel comes not, the devil, the prince of darkness, doth rule in a kind of outward way, as well as in a kind of inward way. In some places where they have not heard of the gospel, the people worship the devil in a visible shape. This darkness that men are in naturally, it is that that is opposite to God himself, for God is light; it is that that is hateful to God. Yea, the darkness of men's spirit is not only privative but positive—that is, there is in their hearts an opposition to light, a hatred to light. All the darkness in the world cannot oppose the shining of the light of the least candle. The light of the least candle will prevail against all the darkness of the world; but the darkness that there is in man's heart, there is not the want of the light of things, but there is an opposition in his heart that keeps the light out, that hates the light—their darkness is the shadow of death; hellish darkness, not only that that tends to hellish darkness, but it is the beginning of hell that is in their hearts. No marvel though men do rest on such vain hopes and props of their eternal salvation. Ye are the light of the world; hence the whole world is in darkness. This being the state of man by nature to be thus in darkness, that that brings light into the world it is the gospel, the gospel in the ministry of it, ye are the light. First, Christ he is the light eminently. As that light that was made at first was scat-

tered up and down, at last was brought into the body of the sun; and whereby men come to be lightened it is all in Christ, and so Christ he scattereth up and down in the world by the ministry of the gospel. John i. 8, 9, 'He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Every man that comes into the world that hath any light, he hath it from Christ, that is the true light. It is said of John that he was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light; and that is the work of the ministry, to bear witness of that light. But Christ is that true light: John viii. 12, 'Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' 'I am the light of the world.' Christ is the light, Christ is the gospel; the gospel is nothing but the doctrine of Christ, the good tidings that come into the world about Jesus Christ; that is the gospel now that is the light of the world, that gives light unto the world—it gives light. First, Light you know it is a most lovely thing: Eccles. xi. 7, 'Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing is it for the eyes to behold the sun.' There is no object so amiable to love, so delightful as the beholding of that glory of God that shines in the gospel. There are sweet things to behold there; it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold that light. A poor sinner that hath lived in darkness all his days before, when he comes to have his eyes opened to see the light of the gospel, he stands admiring and wondering, and is amazed at the things that he seeth. The conversion of a sinner is like bringing a poor man out of a dungeon that was born there, which doth come suddenly and seeth the glorious creatures; he seeth the earth, the stars, and men, he cannot but stand amazed at it. Just so is the conversion of a sinner; examine whether you have found the light to be amiable and lovely, that your hearts have been filled with wonder, with seeing those things that you did never see before. The light, as it is pleasant to behold, so the nature of it is to discover things; that that makes manifest is light: Eph. v. 13, 'But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.' That gospel that you bring into the world is that that discovers great things to the world. What doth it make manifest? It makes God himself manifest. Men that lived without a God in the world before, men that had vain and unworthy thoughts of God, now by the preaching of the gospel they come to see God as a God, they behold God in the face of Jesus Christ; then the light of the glory of God appears indeed unto them. So the apostle in the second to the Corinthians, speaking of the light that shines unto the heart of those that God doth work upon. In 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7, 'For God, who com-

manded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not by us.' There may be some glimmering sight of God from the beholding the works of creation and providence, but the soul doth never see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God till he seeth it in the face of Christ. Ye have the glory of God, the knowledge of the glory of God, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The gospel discovers God to the soul; those that come to understand the gospel aright, they can say they could never understand the gospel afore. Again, it discovers men's estates. They never knew the breach that was between God and their souls till now; this is made manifest now to their souls. The foulness of sin can never be known by all the preaching of the law, so as it is known by the preaching of the gospel, when they come to see what the fruit of sin was. Then the happiness of man's nature, the gospel makes that manifest too. Who could ever have thought that the nature of man had been capable of union with the second person, with the Son of God? Before the gospel comes it doth nothing but to satisfy the flesh; but when it comes to hear that man's nature is come to be joined with the second person in the Trinity, surely God hath high things in it. It is the gospel that brings to life and immortality, saith the apostle: 2 Tim. i. 10, 'But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.' It is the gospel that brings life and immortality to light. So people that have not been accounted² with the gospel, what know they of the glorious things of heaven, and of eternal life? It is the gospel that brings life and immortality, the main and principal thing of the gospel that it makes manifest: it is the way of mediation, a mediator between God and man, how God hath reconciled the world to himself. There are glorious mysteries for the soul to behold—that great way of making God and man one, Christ building up the vast breach that before was made between God and man. It is all in Christ that all our good comes by a mediator. Who could ever have known this but by the ministry of the gospel revealed? Yea, that God hath filled Jesus' Christ, God-man, with all good, and he resolves that not one drop of his infinite goodness, in order to eternal life, shall be given to any of the children of men but through Christ. Here is that interest manifested that the world could never have known; but this the gospel doth discover—yea, it doth discover the right way to worship God. If we be left to our own

* Query, 'acquainted' ?—ED.

thoughts, we wander infinitely out of the way. The greater light God made to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night; the gospel, that is the greater light to discover spiritual things and the things of God's worship. Now, human nature may rule the light of the night. Had not you lived under the preaching of the gospel, what would you have known of the second covenant that God hath made with mankind? And this light of the gospel is that that brings in comfort to the heart; the heart never knew what true comfort meant till the gospel came: John viii. 12, 'Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' It is light that hath a quickening power that goeth along with it. Human learning it is like the lighting up of candles and torches; there is a light, but not the light of life. But the gospel is the light of life; it brings life to the soul, it is a light that enlightens the blind eyes. If a man be blind, and the sun shines on his eyes, it can never take away the blindness of his eyes; but the gospel, when it shines on those that be blind, it takes away their blindness that is on them. There is the power in this light that takes away their blindness, and this is a light that goeth beyond the eye and shines in the heart: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' It goeth beyond the eyes, it goeth beyond the head, it goeth into the heart; it is a transforming light, it transforms them into the same image; it is a light that makes those that were darkness to be light itself, 'Ye were once darkness, but now ye are light;' it is an increasing light; it increaseth according to the times and ages of the gospel. All is not let out at once, but by degrees—and so increaseth in the soul where it comes; and it is an everlasting light. It is the very beginning of the light of glory; it is impossible that you can conceive it till you see it. If one should speak to blind men, and make to them orations about light, is it possible for a man that never saw the light to know what the light means? He cannot conceive of the excellency of it until he sees it. So we may tell you of the gospel what light it is, but till you come to see it yourselves you are never able to understand it, nor to know the excellency of it. This light of the gospel, it is the way of God not to convey it but by the ministers of the gospel. Ministers are the light of the world, so that here is the work of the ministers of the gospel, saith Christ. All the glorious counsels of my Father are made known to me and hid in me. Saith he, I send you abroad to go and preach these things to the world, that they may come to know them; this is the work of the ministry of the gospel. Though John was that primitive light, John

v. 35, 'He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.' The ministers of the gospel, if they be as they ought to be, they are shining and burning lights, or as the Greek signifies, that lamp* burning and shining. Wherever they come, they should shine in their doctrine, and be burning in their conversations. By doctrine and life they should hold forth the light of the gospel wherever they come: Acts xxvi. 18, 'To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.' Here is the end of the ministry, to open men's eyes, to turn them from darkness to light. That which is called darkness in the first, is called the power of Satan in the second clause; for the devil, having and holding a man in ignorance, holds him in his power. It is the gospel that brings in the day of grace and salvation in the ministry of it. According to what degree the preaching of the gospel comes to any place, so the day of grace and salvation comes to that place; and as God takes that away, so he takes away the days of grace and salvation: 2 Cor. vi. 2, 'He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.' The meaning of the apostle is this, that now you come to have and enjoy the ministry of reconciliation, now is the accepting time, the day of salvation, ver. 19 of the former chapter—'to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.' Now doth the sun rise—the night is past, and the day is come. When God sends a faithful minister to any place, there God sends light to that place. Then the light of the gospel breaks forth there; now is the day of grace and salvation come. As long as God continues the light of the ministry of the gospel, so long doth the day of grace and salvation continue; but when that is taken away, then the sun is set. You are the light of the world. We have this light in earthen pitchers, but there is the lamp of the light of the knowledge of God that shines in them.

The application might be very rare if I had to speak in an auditory of ministers. I should tell them how it doth concern them to be full of light themselves, full of knowledge in the mystery of salvation, that so when he comes to preach he may come with the lustre of the gospel, it may shine on them. He may come to them as Moses came to the mount, with his face shining; so he should come with his light shining, and scatter the beams to the souls where-

ever he comes, that some souls may bless God for that light that is darted into such a soul; and his work should be to communicate light to his people, the whole counsel of God, and not to restrain anything that may give light to others. John was a burning light, and yet he consumed himself; so ministers should spend themselves, and should lay out themselves to give light to others. He should pity poor souls that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death; he should consider what a great work he is sent for to do, that he should carry light to those poor souls that sit in darkness. The ministers of God should have their ministry full of light; let them take heed then of mixing anything of their own human invention and the like. Some men when they come to preach, they will have fine mixture of their own human invention; the more of human invention is mixed with preaching, it makes it give the less light. The simplicity of the gospel and the purity of the gospel it is that lets in light to the soul; a minister should take heed that he doth not vent his own passion.

Again, further, hence is the special providence of God over them if they be faithful. If they be so they may expect a special providence of God over them to preserve their lives, and to preserve them in their ways, because they are light: Rev. i. 16, 'And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.' They cannot be plucked out nor fall, for Christ holds them in his right hand; so long as Christ would have light to shine in any place, he doth let out some star or other to them to give light; and others they shine to people but as the snuff of a candle in the socket of a candlestick. They had light in their youth, but now they have drowned those excellent parts that formerly they had: they have drowned them in sensual lusts and delights of the flesh.

Further, they should rejoice in the knowledge that the people get. God forbid that ministers should vex at the people that they have found knowledge. So ministers should be like light; light shines on dung-hills and doth not defile itself, so ministers in places should labour to do good to all, and to the worst of all, and to suit himself with them, but not so far as to defile himself. If a minister converseth with any it is to shine on them; take heed therefore of being defiled with their conversation.

Learn to prize the ministry of the gospel, because it is that that is the light of the world, and they bring the light of God unto you. Bless God that ever the gospel hath come amongst you, that ever God was pleased in mercy to look on you in your generation; as if he should say, Though I have left many generations to perish for want of the light of the gospel, yet

* δ ἄλκυρος. Lucerna scilicet eximie et singularis.—Cornel.
A Lap.

this generation shall have the light of the gospel. Though there are many that seek to blow out the lights, yet, saith God, I will keep these lights in my right hand, for why, I have the number of mine elect ones. So long as God keeps the light of the gospel shining amongst them, it is a sign that God hath good for them; be willing to maintain the charge. The light! is there any man in the world that knoweth what it is to see the light? He would rather give ten thousand pound than to be without the light. In Chrysostom's time, the good people that lived in them were so affected with the light of the gospel that Chrysostom preached to them, that they professed it were better for the sun to withdraw her beams than the mouth of John Chrysostom to be stopped. John was a burning and shining light, therefore precious; and therefore Herod needed not have stoodso upon his oath. He might have saved John's head, for his oath was that he would give to the half of his kingdom; but when she asked the head of John the Baptist he was sad, he would not reject her for his oath's sake. We should account the light a mighty blessing. Now suppose we that live in these parts of the world, that never had seen the light of the sun in all our days, if so be that the time that God appointed the sun to come should have been at its time, and we should have seen the sun rising in its glory and beauty, how should we have been amazed at it! But we, seeing the sun every day, therefore we prize it not, and so we prize not the ministry, because it is so ordinary amongst us, and so common; but if it were not so common amongst us, we should prize it more. The light of the gospel, we should rejoice at it. What an alteration would it make in our hearts if we prized it as we ought to do! The enjoyment of the gospel it recompenseth any affliction whatsoever. I will give you an excellent scripture for that instead of all, in Isa. xxx. 20, 21, 'And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.' Although, saith

he, the Lord shall give you the bread of affliction, and the water of affliction, is there anything can recompense this? Yes, there is somewhat that can recompense this. Although he gives this, yet your teachers shall be removed into the corners no more. You shall have them that shall convey the ministry of the gospel unto you. Now the putting out of our lights is not so much in the power of proud men as heretofore; but the Lord hath delivered us from them. This is a mercy to be prized, and we should be willing to endure some trouble, that we might have light. We love lightsome houses; we are loath to live in dungeons and dark houses. If you would have light, you must endure some trouble, by breaking the walls for a window for to let in some light; but he is loath to endure trouble, and so sits in darkness—you would account this man to be foolish. If a child seeth his father breaking a place in the wall, the child wondereth what his father doth; but the father is willing to endure trouble for to have light thereby. There hath been a great deal of trouble and disquiet in our kingdom, as if it had been a-breaking in pieces; but we hope it is but for the letting in of light; nay, there is now a great deal of error prevails more than ever, for the devil envies at the light of the gospel, and he raiseth out of the bottom of the pit fumes and fogs and mists. He labours to raise them for to put out the lights. Though you see a great deal of smother and smoke come out of chimneys, which seems to darken the sun a little while, but it cannot put out the sun; stay but a while, and you shall see the sun shine bright. Be patient and quiet. Notwithstanding the smother and smoke that many errors and heresies that abound do make, yet the light of the gospel doth shine, and will prevail more and more, even to the day of Jesus Christ. The fire, when it is first kindled, makes a great smoke; but when the fire is well kindled, then the smoke is gone. The Lord is kindling a great light, and there is a smoke for the present; but let not that so offend you as not to prize that glorious light of the gospel as now you have and do enjoy. When any faithful minister is taken away from a place, that place is darkened, if the Lord doth not supply that place.

SERMON XLI.

OR,

USES WE ARE TO MAKE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL.

'Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.'—MAT. v. 14, 15.

IN the next place, if the ministry of the gospel be light, let us open our hearts to receive in the light. In a morning we open our windows to take in the light; let us open our hearts to receive in the light: 2 Sam. xxiii. 4, 'And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.' Lay aside all our former conceits, and embrace in the light of the truth. 'In thy light we shall see light.' Let not the earth be between this light and our eyes. Let us never be satisfied till we come to have the glorious light of the gospel shining on our hearts. Lord, thou hast said that thy gospel is light, when shall that light shine into my heart? And further, walk in the light when you have it. John viii. 33, 'They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?' Let us all encourage one another to go to the house of the Lord, and resolve to walk in the light of the Lord. Isa. ii. 5, 'O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.' Whenever you come to hear the ministry of the gospel preached, resolve thus with thyself: Lord, I come to receive light into my soul, and I am resolved to walk in that light that thou shalt let forth to my soul; it is time to arise while the light of the gospel shines on us. Isa. lx. 1-3, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.' Now, thou hast not this light allotted thee that thou mayest play by, but merely to work by, and to work for thy soul too; and know that the work we have all here to do in this world, it is of infinite consequence and infinite concernment and value. Therefore we had need make use of the light while we have it. It were better ten thousand times that thou never hadst been

born, than that the light should be gone and thy work not done. Let us prize our light, and walk in it; and know that the work that God setteth us about here in the world it is an exact work, a work that must be exactly done, of that great work of making our peace with God for eternity. A man by twilight may be able to do some muzzling work that he need not be exact in; but if it be a work that we must be exact in, then we need great light to do it in. Now, the work that we have to do in reference to God concerning our eternal estates it is an exact work; therefore we have need of great light; therefore walk in the light. And there be many dangers in our way, many byways that we are like to be drawn into, therefore walk by light. And our time is but little that we have for our work; the time we have to provide for eternity it is but little, uncertain, and short, therefore we had need make use of the light.

Again, Every step that we go in darkness it is out of the way; every step that thou hast gone in thy way towards heaven before the light of the gospel comes unto thee, thou hast bewildered thyself, thou hast gone amiss, and gone so much out of the way. There will be no such comfort to thee on thy sickbed as to those who have walked in the light, and made use of the light to do their work by. Therefore those are rebuked from hence that are so far from walking in it that they are opposite to it. Though the light be never such a sweet thing, yet it is not good to sore eyes. Those adulterous guilty persons, those that love the work of darkness, the ways of sin, they care not for the light, because the light will discover them, and make known both them and their baseness; therefore it is that they love darkness, the light scorseth them. Some people, at the rising of the sun, it scorseth them, and then they shoot darts at it, and curse the sun; so this light, it will bring scorching to the consciences of many men. Men that are distracted do not love the light; feeble men in their sickness they must have the light kept off from them; so it is a sign of a

feeble spirit in men that cannot endure light. So it is with men that love to satisfy the lust of the flesh, or rather the wiles of the flesh: they would go on in a secure way, and would fain have the light put out; it is a dangerous thing for men to sin against the light. As it is said in the book of Job, chap. x. 21, 22, 'Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself: and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.' The light is as darkness unto them. There are many that do shut their eyes against the light, though it dazzles on them. The Lord causeth his truths to dazzle on their spirits, and they shut their eyes against it, and turn from it. There you shut your eyes against it, Job xxiv. 13, 'They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.' These are of them that rebel against the light. That this scripture may not be verified of many of you, take heed that thy conscience be not forced to take this scripture and make it thine own; this is the man, this is the woman, that rebelleth against the light. The Lord hath caused them to come and live in the places where the light of the gospel is made known in a glorious manner, and they do not only turn from it, but the light follows them, and they run away from it. When you rebel against light, you rebel against God; for God is light, and in thy hearts rising against any light, it riseth so much against God. And further, know, in thy rebelling against the light, thou aggravatest all thy former sins. In the time of ignorance God winked at it; but now, if thou dost not repent, the axe is laid to the root of the tree. It makes thy sin to be greater than the sin of the heathen; there is none of all the heathen that have such an aggravation of their sin as thou hast, because thou livest under the light of the gospel: John iii. 19, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.' This is the condemnation, above all other condemnation. There is no greater condemnation amongst any other people of the earth than this, than to rebel against the light, seeing you do make yourselves wilfully blind. Shall a base lust be chosen before all that glorious blessed God that shines in the gospel? The Lord is pleased to let out himself in the gospel, and there the beauty and excellency of God appears in the gospel; and when it comes to shine on thee so to dazzle thine eyes, yet thou preferrest a base lust before all that shining; thou shalt be condemned with a witness, thy sins shall aggravate thy condemnation. As if he should say, You that live as without a God in the world, though you were never so profane and ungodly, yet had you but embraced

the light when God sent it amongst you, then your souls might have been saved for ever; but this is that that will make your torments out of measure terrible, in that light is come into the world, and you sin against that light, and you rather choose darkness than light. You will say, I can do nothing of myself. Yea, thou dost choose darkness rather than light. You that do rebel against light, you that do sin against light, it is just with God to take it away from you, it is just with God to take the gospel away from you. There is a threat pronounced against you in Micah iii. 6, 'Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over your prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.' It would be the deadliest judgment in the world against any nation, for God to take away the light after he hath been pleased to try them with it; it would be a curse to the generation to come.

And, further, know that if so be you live under the light of the gospel, and you choose darkness rather than light—that is, if there be any one way of sin that thy soul closeth withal, and thou rejectest the light because it is against that sin of thine—there is a most terrible scripture that we have in 2 Cor. iv. 3, 'But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.' Oh that you would lay this scripture on your hearts, and that it might be as a dart on our spirits! Lord, how long have I lived under the voice of the gospel, and what do I know of it? Is it not hid from me? If the gospel prevail for salvation, and doth it not prevail for illumination? That is a sad judgment, when God shall give a people up to blindness of mind, under the light of the gospel. There are some that have had the light of the beams of the gospel shining on them, and their hearts have been taken off from some base lusts that formerly they have had; but I come, and the Lord knows they are hidden from me. 'If our gospel be hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost.' And, further, know that thy end shall be in eternal darkness. Thou lovest darkness, and that darkness shall be thy end; therefore look on this as a most dreadful thing, the rebelling and sinning against knowledge, that that thou sinnest against now will be a terror to thee hereafter. The Holy Ghost makes it to be a special argument of sincerity to look on the light. Those who are able to behold the light—those whose ways are such as they can appeal to God that there is no truth of God that God doth set to them but they walk in it; here is one that is able to behold the light, and cursed is that content that cannot stand with the light.

Learn we from what Christ saith, that the ministers are the light of the world. Learn we, then, to

lighten our candle at this light. The Scripture calls the conscience of a man his candle: Prov. xx. 27, 'The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of his belly.' The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. 'The spirit of man is able to sustain his burden: but a wounded spirit, who can bear?' The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord. God hath put in every man and woman a conscience, and that conscience is a candle; it hath some light in it. If you will have so much light as to search out what the condition of thy soul is, thou must light thy candle at the word, and so carry those truths. That light you have met withal there, carry it home in your conscience, and be searching into the corners of your heart—into all your ways. Be not afraid to take the light to search into all your ways. When the minister darts some lights into the consciences of men—yet he cannot dart into every secret sin—the souls of men have the light of the truth shining on them; but there are some corners of the heart that the light doth not shine into; but if a man takes a candle he can go to every corner of the house, and look into every chink. You have been hearing the word, and the word hath convinced you; yet there are many secret sins that the word hath not met withal; therefore you should light your candle, and search every corner of your heart, and cast out all your sins there. 'Ye are the light of the world.' They are light in their doctrine and conversations too. The doctrine of a minister is one witness, and conscience another, and if they both agree, they must both be light. And so Christians in their ways may be said to be the light of the world. Phil. ii. 15, 'That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a perverse and crooked nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.' Prov. iv. 18, 'But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'

Every family where there is a godly man or a godly woman, that godliness and holiness in that family, it is a light—that light that vexeth many a man. The light that there is in a gracious son, it may convince the parents; and so of a gracious servant. Every one should labour so to shine in the place where God hath set them in, to hold forth this light. Your hearts should be taken off from all other things; and make account that this is that that you live for, for to hold forth the beauty and excellency of the name of God in the places where you live. 'Ye are the light of the world;' and it followeth—

'A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.'

This expression, with the other of 'a candle set on a candlestick,' it aims at the same thing, and makes way to that useful exhortation, 'Let your light so shine before men that they may see your

good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'

'A city that is set on a hill.'

Some interpreters do carry these words to the church of God—not only to the apostles, but saints in a spiritual corporation; and indeed the Holy Ghost calls the church by the name of a city.* Ps. xli. 4, 'There is a river, the streams thereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.' Ps. xlviii. 8, 'As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. God will establish it for ever.' Ps. lxxxvii. 3, 'Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.' Ezek. xl. 2, 'In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, by which was as the frame of a city on the south.' This is the law of the house upon the top of the mountain; the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the house. And so the church is set on a hill. There should be that union as in the city for coming together. But I cannot think that this is the scope of Christ to set forth this, but to set forth the eminency of the gospel. You are sent into the world to preach and administer the ordinances of the gospel, and go forth in a public way, and the eyes of all men will behold you. You had need look to your ways, for the eyes of all men will be upon you. As a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid, and if there be any time of danger, that city is presently discovered; and you must go and preach in the world, and you must not think to lie hid, as some there are that have a sordid spirit, and had rather lie hid, and be of no use, than to appear publicly, and to be of use for Christ. No, saith Christ, you must not think to lie hid and be in safety, but you must be content to be the object of all the world. Luther on this place,† saith, Therefore you must not conceal anything of the truths of God. You must go and preach, and preach the truths of God plainly, and not have any respect unto the reproach or shame in the world, not have any respect unto poverty, unto riches, unto hatred, unto favour, unto life, or unto death, because the apostles, and so the Christians, did make profession of those truths that the world saw no reason for. It is to draw the eyes of the world upon them; and because that they did seek to hold forth a higher way of religion and godliness than other men held forth, it drew the eyes of men upon them. Upon which Tertullian‡ saith on this place, How comes it to pass that our Lord compares us to a city on a high hill? Know that we are awakened in our lusts, all the ministers

* This may be understood of peoples. So the Chaldee Paraphrase takes it. See Answ.

† On Mat. v. 14.

‡ On Mat. v. 14.

of God and Christ. God hath put them in a place of eminency; therefore it should be their care to walk inoffensive, because the eyes of men are upon them. Our Saviour Christ makes this an argument that they should walk exactly in their ways, and let their ways shine before men, because the eyes of men are upon them. It concerns all ministers and Christians to walk inoffensive, because the eyes of men are upon them, and therefore walk inoffensive. Take heed, when they look upon you, that they do not spy out some base and evil way, that they do not spy some filthiness and impurity in your conversations. This will be to the dishonour of Christ, and to your own dishonour.

And further, that Christ saith that ministers and Christians are in the view of all others. It should teach those that are godly to maintain the honour of the ministers of the gospel. But further, this is the main thing that our Saviour aims at, a city on a hill: I send you to preach; do not you regard your own ease, but do you hold forth my truths and mine ordinances publicly.

Note.—It is the duty of all ministers and Christians to hold forth all duties, all ordinances, to the uttermost they are able, to the view of all the world.

Therefore whosoever shall in any private way exercise any ordinance, as the preaching of the word, if they might do it publicly, there is no man that is faithful, that loves Jesus Christ, but he would rather do it in a public way a great deal. But if any doth it in a private way, and might do it publicly, certainly he doth offend against this scripture. Yet I would not have you to be hinderers of men in public, and afterward to cry out of them in private. The apostles they preached publicly. They came and preached in the temple; but they could not break bread there, they could not be suffered there; but as much publicly as they could do they did.

As a city set on a hill, that cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house.

You have received some light, but your light is as the light of the candle. If a man hath a candle, the way to preserve it is to put it under a bushel, then it will not burn out so fast as to stand on a candlestick. It is true, saith Christ, though there is this vile

spirit in some of you, that you think to hold forth what you think may cause envy or opposition, and put you to a great deal of labour and trouble; therefore you had rather hide your gifts and your talents under a bushel, partly through pride, that you are loath that others should know that which you know. Saith our Saviour, If so be that you have any gifts, any parts, any light, any knowledge in you, improve them to the highest, to the uttermost, although you spend yourselves the sooner. This is the exhortation to ministers, to all people. There is no man that hath any light, but doth hinder much if he will keep it in. It is a great deal of ease for a man that hath parts and gifts to lie still and be idle, and hath means coming in. But saith Christ, Where was it that you lighted your candle? hath God given you more light than others, and do you think that you must have more ease than another? Have you any parts for to fit you for any service for God? draw them all forth, and be of public good in the place that God hath set you in. It concerns not only all ministers, but all people also. All the gifts that thou hast are but as the talents of God, and thou must be accountable for all of them. And know, that all the sins of omission are as accountable before the Lord as the sin of commission. Oh that men would look to this, if there be anything that is evil in the place where I live, if I by any means that God hath given me could prevent this evil, and I do not do it, I am guilty of the evil done. If God hath blessed many in their trade, and they have gotten an estate, and live a brave life, and leave their trade, indeed it is an idle life, and little useful to the families where they are. They have enough coming in every year, what need they trouble themselves to exercise themselves in that which may be to the public good? It may be you may please yourselves in such thoughts as these are, but certainly they are very sinful before the Lord. If you have any talents for to bestow for the Lord, do not hide them under a bushel, but set them forth in the places where you are, that others may have the benefit of them, and the good of them. Sometimes a servant may be good to hold forth light to the family. But above all, the governors of the family, masters of families, if the Lord hath given you such talents, do not you keep them in, but hold them forth to the uttermost, that they may be improved for the good of all people.

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FINIS.

A STRANGE VINEYARD IN PALESTINA:

IN AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH'S PARABOLICAL SONG
OF THE BELOVED DISCOVERED:

TO WHICH GOD'S VINEYARD IN THIS OUR LAND IS PARALLELED.

BY

NEHEMIAH ROGERS,

MASTER IN ARTS, AND PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION AT MESSING IN ESSEX.

*'Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant
of a strange vine unto me?'—JER. II. 21.*

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO. DUBLIN: G. HERBERT.

NEHEMIAH ROGERS, B. D.

FOR almost all the knowledge that we possess of the history of NEHEMIAH ROGERS, we are indebted to the research of an American, Mr Joseph Lemuel Chester. This gentleman, believing himself to be a descendant of John Rogers, the noble proto-martyr of the English Reformation, came to England to trace the genealogical tree, and expended immense energy in investigating the family history of the martyr, both upwards and downwards. The results of his researches he has given to the world in an interesting volume,* in which, with singular ingenuousness, he confesses that the branch of the Rogerses from which he himself springs, is not that which bore the noble martyr. From this volume we shall take the liberty to quote at length the accounts which it contains of Nehemiah, and shall add to it a few notes of our own.

'Rev. Nehemiah Rogers, B.D. 1594-1660.—He was the second son and third child of Rev. Vincent Rogers, of Stratford Bow, Middlesex, and supposed great-grandson of the martyr. He was baptized in that parish, October 20th, 1594. Very little has been preserved of his history, although he seems to have been, in his times, a man of considerable eminence. Of his earlier life, it is only known that he was for some time Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. His first preferment, of which there is any account, was to the vicarage of Messing, in Essex, May 13th, 1620; for some time previous to which he had been acting as curate or assistant of St Margaret's, Fish Street Hill, in London. On the 25th of May 1632, he was appointed to the sinecure rectory of Tay Magna, in Essex. Late in 1635, or early in 1636, he presented, as a free gift, to the president and Fellows of St John's College, Oxford, the perpetual advowson of the rectory of Gatton, in Surrey, which had previously lapsed to the Crown, and which he had evidently received from Charles I. The living was then worth more than £100 per annum; and a letter from Archbishop Laud is preserved, in which his liberality is recorded in the warmest terms. On the 1st of May 1636, he was presented by the king to a prebend in the cathedral church of Ely, and became possessor of the sixth stall. In the cathedral records he is styled S. T. B. On the 26th of March 1642, he resigned the rectorship of Tay Magna, and was collated to the rectory of St Botolph's, Bishopsgate, in London, probably resigning also his vicarage of Messing shortly after, as his successor was appointed on the following 3d of May. These seem to be all the livings which he ever possessed,

* *John Rogers: the Compiler of the first Authorised English Bible, the Pioneer of the English Reformation, and its first Martyr.* Embracing a Genealogical Account of his Family, Biographical Sketches of some of his Principal Descendants, his own Writings, &c. &c. By JOSEPH LEMUEL CHESTER. London: 1861.

although that of Finchley has been assigned to him, as it appears, erroneously. Soon afterwards, probably in 1643, being an uncompromising royalist, he was sequestered of both his rectory and his prebend, though he seems to have retained both nominally until his death, as his successor was not appointed in either case until after that event. As late as February 23d, 1653, the vestry of St Botolph's petitioned the Lord Protector that the inhabitants of that parish might have liberty to make choice of a minister, and he was the rector named whose place was to have been usurped by this election. No new rector was appointed, however, until August 10th, 1660—"per mort. Rogers," according to Newcourt. He appears to have continued to preach after his deprivation, at least during several years immediately preceding his death, and to have been still in connection with the Established Church; for, in the preface to one of his books, published in 1659, he refers to his ministry for three years at Little Braxsted, and his subsequent "nomination and free presentation," to the church at Doddinghurst, both in Essex. He died at the latter place early in May 1660. While passing through the churchyard, after Sunday morning service, without any previous warning or complaint, he fell suddenly to the ground, speechless and motionless, and was a corpse before the hour for afternoon service. He was buried at Doddinghurst, on the 9th of that month.

His published works are still extant, and comprise some eight or ten volumes. They are chiefly expositions of the most interesting parables, and the subjects are handled with much skill. The titles of some of them are as follows:—"The Wild Vine; or, An Exposition on Isaiah's Parabolical Song of the Beloved"—"The Indulgent Father" (the Prodigal Son)—"The Watchful Shepherd" (the Lost Sheep)—"The Good Housewife, with her Broom and Candle" (the Lost Groat)—"The Fast Friend; or, A Friend at Midnight"—and "The Figless Fig-tree." Besides these, several other works of a similar character are announced in the publishers' advertisements. He also published, in 1631-2, a sermon, preached at the second triennial visitation of the Bishop of London, held at Kelvedon in Essex, which evinces his scholarship and high intellectual abilities. It is probable that some of his works were translated abroad, or, at least, that his eminence as a scholar or a theologian were recognised on the Continent, as the writer has seen a single copy of a fine engraved portrait of him, by Bernigeroth of Leipsic, with a German inscription, and evidently from some German work which he has not yet been able to discover.

The name of his wife has not been preserved. A daughter, Mary, died in 1642. His eldest son, Nehemiah, was a civilian, and held a responsible post in the customs. He married Mary, daughter of Edmund Porter, D.D., and sister of Sir Charles Porter, Kt., Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and their son, Edmund, was living in London in 1701. His second son, and probably his only other child, was John, the immediate ancestor of the present Blachford family, and father of its first baronet, an account of whom will be found hereafter.*

Such is Mr Chester's account of our author; we now append to it a few notes.

1. There are two questions relating to Nehemiah's descent from John; whether he was descended from him at all; and if so, in what relation he stood to him. Now there is a family of baronets who are unquestionably descended from our Nehemiah,—the first baronet having been his grandson,—and they trace their pedigree to John, asserting that Vincent, the father of Nehemiah, was one of the sons of John. But then we have a list of the eleven children of John, of which we have no reason to doubt the accuracy, and the name of Vincent does not appear in it.

* Parish Register, Stratford Bow. Kennet's Register and Chronicle. Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy. Willis' Survey of Cathedrals. Bentham's History of Ely Cathedral. Malcolm's Londinium Redivivum. Newcourt's Repertorium. Laud's Words, Oxford, 1860, vol. vii. p. 242.

Yet we have good reason for believing that Nehemiah was descended from John ; for Nehemiah's son John, the father of the first baronet, in the preface to one of his books, speaks of the martyr as his 'predecessor.' Now he was not his predecessor in any office ; and therefore we suppose that he uses the word *predecessor* in the sense of *ancestor*, a sense which it bore commonly enough at the time. Mr Chester cuts the knot by supposing that Vincent was not a son, but a grandson of John, and consequently that Nehemiah was a great-grandson of the proto-martyr. This supposition, however, is not without difficulty. Vincent married in 1586, being the minister of Stratford Bow, Middlesex. Now it is not at all likely that he was under thirty years of age at the time of his marriage ; but suppose him to have been only twenty-five ; this would give 1561 as the year of his birth. Now Daniel, the eldest son of the martyr, who became one of the most noted diplomatists of his time, was born about 1538. In 1561 therefore he was only twenty-three years old, and in that very year he graduated at Oxford. He was certainly unmarried at that time, and indeed it is probable that he did not marry till long afterwards. It seems certain, therefore, that Vincent could not be his son. John, the martyr's second son, took his degree at Cambridge in 1562-3, and was soon after elected to a fellowship. He must therefore have been unmarried in 1561, and could not be Vincent's father. Suppose that the third child of the martyr was also a son, he could not have been born earlier than 1541, and in 1561 could not be above twenty years old ; it is therefore extremely improbable that either he, or any one of his younger brothers, was Vincent's father. In this very unsatisfactory state we must leave this interesting question.

2. In his notice of Timothy Rogers, the elder brother of Nehemiah, Mr Chester states that, 'in 1623, according to Morant, he became vicar of Great Tay in Essex, and appears to have continued such until 1650, in which year his successor is first named ;' while in the notice of Nehemiah, as quoted above, he states that 'on the 25th of May 1632 he was appointed to the sinecure Rectory of Tay Magna in Essex ;' and again that 'on the 26th of March 1642, he resigned the Rectorship of Tay Magna.' Now we do not suppose that there was both a vicarate of Great Tay, and a Rectory of Tay Magna ; and therefore we presume that Timothy, appointed in 1623, resigned in 1632 in favour of his brother, who held the living till 1642.

3. The account which Walker, in his *Sufferings of the Clergy*, gives of the livings from which Rogers was removed by sequestration, differs from that given by Mr Chester, inasmuch as the former represents him as having been deprived of the vicarate of Messing, while the latter represents him as having resigned it shortly after his removal to St Botolph's. Although Walker knew little of Rogers, yet it is probable that he took the account of his sequestration from Messing from an official record, and that it is correct. It may be as well to present Walker's account of him entire. 'Nehemiah Rogers, B.D., prebendary of the 6th stall in Ely, vicar of Messing in Essex. [I take it to be one and the same person who lost all these.] I find him in possession of this prebend in the year 1642, and presume he died before the Restoration ; because in 1660 Dr Laurence Womock, afterwards bishop of St David's, was possessed of it. Not knowing the precise time of Mr Rogers' death, the same *quere* must be made of him as of Mr Wignore and Dr Hall before. As to the living of St Botolph, he was admitted to it March 26, 1642, and dispossessed of it about May 1643. Lloyd seems to make him sequestered also from the Rectory of Finchley in Middlesex ; but this is certainly a mistake ; for no such name occurs in Mr Newcourt's list of the rectors of that church. But I find by Mr Newcourt that he had some time the living of Tay Magna in Essex. Whether he suffered anything there, *quere*.'

4. The fact that Rogers, staunch royalist and episcopalian though he was, continued to officiate in

St Botolph's after his deprivation, and that in 1653 the Protector refused to the parishioners to supersede him by granting them liberty to choose a successor to him, ought to be noted as a proof of the moderation of Cromwell and his maligned 'expurgators.'

5. The works of Nehemiah Rogers are exceedingly scarce, and that which is now reprinted has been hitherto apparently the rarest of all, its name having been unknown to Watts and Darling. It will be noticed that Mr Chester gives it a different title from that by which it is here designated. This would seem to indicate that more editions of it than one had been published. This, however, we do not suppose to have been the case. The edition from which we reprint, published in 1623 was certainly the first, and we have no doubt that the present, issued after an interval of 244 years, is the second. To us it appears not doubtful that this small work will be regarded as an interesting specimen of the expositions of the 'doctrinal puritans.' Clear throughout and occasionally eloquent; at once evangelical and faithfully practical, it is worthy of attentive perusal, which the liveliness of the author's style will render a pleasant task.

T. S.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE AND

TRULY NOBLE LORD,

ROBERT, EARL OF WARWICK,

LORD RICH, BARON OF LEEZE, &c.,

AND

TO THE RIGHT VIRTUOUS AND TRULY

ZEALOUS LADY,

FRANCES, COUNTESS OF WARWICK,

AND WIFE TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD,

ROBERT, EARL OF WARWICK, &c.,

INCREASE OF HONOUR HERE, AND EVERLASTING GLORY HEREAFTER.

RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD,—May it please you to take in good worth this my bold attempt, in that, upon so little knowledge and far less deserts, I have adventured so far as to grace these my weak labours with your noble name.

Besides some personal and particular respects, which I here let pass, I have had some general inducements hereunto; and this above the rest, your Honour's love unto the truth, and great regard of the ministry thereof, which your more than ordinary painstaking to hear holy instructions, together with the great respect your Honour gives to such as bring glad tidings of peace, (whose feet—and much more their face—are esteemed by you as beautiful, Rom. x. 15.) are sufficient arguments to evince. By which and other fruits of piety you still merit renown to your noble name, and are zealously honoured of all that know you and love goodness; into which number, I hopefully presuming, have thrust myself, as being loath to be hindmost in that acknowledgment which is so nobly deserved, and joyfully rendered of all; desiring, as far as in me lieth, to make known unto the world that grace which lies lodged in your noble breast, which being united to your greatness, maketh so happy a composition, as that they who had no more than Nature's light, esteemed it only for true nobility.

'Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.'—*Juven.*

For whereas greatness makes some men scornful and imperious, yet what Plinius reports of Vespasian,

RIGHT NOBLE LADY,—*My attempt may seem a wonder, but where judgment searcheth out the cause, and prudence guideth wisdom to weigh the circumstance, the conceit of wonderment ceaseth. What hath induced me to join you with your honourable lord, needs no long relation. God hath cemented and combined you together with the nearest and strongest bands, and therefore I, in my due honouring of both, presume to conjoin you both in this one dedication.*

What is conceived and reported of your Honour's worth through all our country, I must pass over in silence; for well I know your excellent modesty will not suffer such, though deserved, a relation, your Honour rather affecting to do things deserving fame than fame itself; and, like the fixed stars, the higher God hath set you, the less you desire to seem.

I confess I am, as yet, but a stranger in these parts, yet must he be more strange that meeteth not with the report of your Honour's virtues; whose diligent pains in gaining knowledge of holy things, and conscionable practice of what you know; whose humble, sober, wise, courteous, and mo-lest carriage, (rare virtues to be found in ladies of so high a place and rank,) are so many tongues, and months, and pens, without mine, to publish your due praises.

And though through the corruption of these times this age is grown so base, as that one cannot think any to be the better or the worse for the report that flies of them, unless they be eye-witnesses either of their good or ill; yet where the sound is all so honourable, I dare

may be truly said of you, '*Nec quicquam in te mutavit fortunæ amplitudo, nisi ut prodesse tantundem posses et velles,*' (*Plin. Epist. ad Vespas.*) It had changed nothing in you but this, that your power to do good should be answerable to your will.

Yea, it may be justly thought that your Honour would teach men to take the measure of your greatness by your goodness, of so even a length and equal pace are they. And, indeed, so it must be; for should honour outrun honesty, it would hardly be overtaken.

But I must remember to whom I speak; even to such a one as careth not for long salutations in the markets. I have done, when I have once again craved pardon for my boldness, and humbly requested at your Honour's hands (whose goodness hath not wont to magnify itself more in giving than in receiving such like holy presents) acceptance and countenance to what is here offered by a thankful heart.

As for the matter herein handled, I will not fear to say it deserves it, and for the manner I must say it needs it; whatsoever it be, be it not as it should be, yet my will wisheth it to be well, but as it is

be confident of a holy inclination and gracious disposition, which hath given me such encouragement as that I have little need to misdoubt either your Honour's acceptance of this Treatise, or to advise your use, for I persuade myself that you will not only view the title and epistle (as the fashion of most patrons is) but the whole book also, in some of those hours which your Honour redeems, I daresay, for soul employments, from those idle and excessive customs wherein ladies please themselves and none else.

But I know that your Honour will be better pleased if I turn praises into prayers, therefore I will endeavour to supply that want this way; beseeching the God of majesty and mercy to sanctify your heart yet more and more, who with the New-Year give you new supplies of the graces of his Spirit, and graciously to increase in you the ground of all true honour, goodness.

Let me not offend in offering so mean a work to so worthy a personage; the weaker it is the more need hath it of a worthy patron.

I humbly betake it to your Honours' favourable protection; and so your Honours to the protection of the Highest.

Your Honours' humbly and officiously devoted in all duty,

NEHEMIAH ROGERS.

TO THE READER.

HE that feasts high estates must seek out for foreign cookeries and fantastical dishes to please their palates; but he that, in true charity, invites home his plain honest neighbours, doth well enough if he provide such homely fare as shall be competent and befitting men of meaner quality. It is the plain countryman I feast, commonly called the goodman; and therefore for thee, reader, to expect any curious division, rare invention, or rhetorical composition in this treatise, would be as vain and idle as to hope to meet with puffed paste at a ploughman's table.

As for those who drive their flocks upon the mountain-tops, for every spear of grass they there spy growing, I neither envy them nor dare follow them; for I confess ingenuously my ability and gifts will not suffer me:—

'Qui sua metitur
Pondera ferre potest.'—*Martial.*

Or if they would, yet I would forbear, and rather choose to feed my sheep in the valleys, where is grass enough, handling the doctrine of faith and good life,

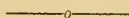
than to travel in the controverted points of predestination, free-will, church governments, &c. For he is blind who sees not that men's brains are full, but their hearts are empty. Our tongues run over; but for twenty good words we have not one good work, which is our shame.

If, then, thou lovest not plainness, lay this book by for such as love it; for though such diet be not for thy tooth, yet there are thousands of good souls who like better with such pulse than with daintier fare, growing faster in knowledge, and stronger in the faith, with such plain instructions than by more learned treatises. But if thou be such a one as desirest rather to have thy conscience than thy curiosity satisfied; thy heart seasoned and soul profited than thy ears tickled with pleasingness of words, thou art he for whom this was penned; and thou art welcome. I have said; do thou read. God bless thy reading; and do thou remain mine, as I am

Thine in Christ,

N. ROGERS.

A STRANGE VINEYARD IN PALESTINA.



'Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.'—ISA. v. 1.

IT was a practice usual* with the prophets in former times, after that they had prophesied to the people, to gather a compendious sum of what they had taught, and affix it to the gate of the temple, that the prophecy might be the better viewed and learned of all;† and after it had there remained for certain days, it was then taken down and put into the treasury of the temple, that the memory thereof might continue for ever. And thus, by God's special providence, it came to pass, that if not all, yet most of the books of the prophets were gathered and preserved, and now, as rich treasures, are enjoyed by us; wherein we have the sermons of the holy prophets, not so largely penned as they were preached, but only such general heads collected as were by them delivered.‡ Now, as before in the former chapters, so here in this, we have some such sermon notes, preached by an excellent and incomparable prophet, by name Isaiah, a man of noble birth, and of as noble a spirit. Trace him, and you shall still find him like his noble self, pithy, powerful, and, as St Paul witnesseth, Rom. x. 20, very bold in delivering of his message, fearing no cruelty nor danger, albeit for his boldness he lost his life, being by the commandment of Manasses sawn asunder with a wooden saw, if history speaks true.§

He was a courtier and a master of speech, being, saith one of the ancient,|| the eloquentest prophet for Hebrew in the Old Testament, as St Paul was the elegantest apostle for Greek in the New; to whose elegancies the rollings of Demosthenes do no

more answer than that confused noise of waters doth to that sweet noise of harps spoken of in St John's Revelation, chap. xiv. 2. In all his writings he rather seemeth to be an evangelist than a prophet, most lively describing and setting forth the nativity, preaching, persecution, apprehension, death, resurrection, ascension, yea, and latter coming to judgment of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; so that no evangelist seems to go beyond him. His auditory was Judah and Jerusalem, a stubborn and disobedient people, more brutish than the ox and ass, Isa. i. 18, whose sins were crimson, receiving a double dye, or admitting a twofold aggravation, one from God's unutterable kindness unto them, in nourishing, bringing of them up, and choosing them for his; the other, from the quality and multitude of their transgressions against him, whose sins were for number many, for nature heavy.

To these is Isaiah, *God's health*, sent, that he might heal their sickness. With these he deals, and first discovers their disease, and then labours for their recovery. He proves that they are 'a sinful nation, a people full of iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, corrupt children, whose whole head was sick, and whole heart heavy; so that from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there was no soundness; but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores,' &c., Isa. i. 4-6. And that of 'a faithful city it was now become a harlot, whose silver was become dross, and wine mixed with water,' &c. For all which God's anger was conceived against them; and yet withal he signifies his mercy, if it were received by them; using his best oratory in inviting those that did rebel, inciting those that did neglect, hastening those that did linger, and recalling those that did wander, to

* Calv. in præfat. ad hunc lib.

† Isa. viii. 1, 2, and xxx. 8; Hab. ii. 2.

‡ Muscul. in Isaiam.

§ Hieron., lib. xv. in Isaiam in fine.

|| Hieron., Epist. ad Paulinum.

sue out their pardons, and make peace with their maker. And thus he spends the four foregoing chapters. All which to have heard this orator himself press in his own words, and with his own affections, whose bowels would not have yearned and heart melted within their breasts? And yet, ah Lord! what hear I? Israel is not gathered, thy servant's report is not believed, Isa. liii. 1, even Isaiah himself labours in vain, and spends his strength for nought, chap. xlix. 4. No better fared it with him in his ministry, than it fareth with us, the ministers of thy gospel. Scarce a tenth is gathered. And yet we cannot wonder that it fareth so with us; for can we, who are but rude in speech, and of a slow tongue, hope for that which so rare a rhetorician found not? Little or no fruit could he see of all his travails; and yet he doth not faint, but, with an invincible constancy, goes on in performing his prophetic function.

Oh, how sorts the humour of many with this his practice! Such is the impatiency of our hearts, that except we see present reformation in those we have to deal withal, we are ready with Jeremiah to resolve to speak no more in the name of God, Jer. xx. 9. It is noted as his blemish, and the word of God gives him no rest until he had altered his resolution.

But what course wilt thou now take, O thou man of God, with this obdurate people? Their hearts are fully set in them to do evil; they will not obey; nay, which is worse, they will not hear thee. Would they listen to thy sermons, there were some hope they might be wrought upon; but, turning away the ear, what hope is left? Tell us then, O noble prophet, what wilt thou do? Let us be so bold with thee as to ask the question, and be so favourable as to acquaint us with thy purpose.

'Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard,' &c.—*q. d.*, I see indeed they lightly set by my ordinary sermons, and therefore I purpose to leave my accustomed manner of prophesying, and fall to singing, being unto them rather as a poet than as a prophet, Ezek. xxxiii. 32, that so by their own delights they may be allured.

Thus God seeks to draw us to himself with those baits which are somewhat agreeable to our palate: he doth compose himself to our disposition; and even as face answereth face in a glass, so doth he apply himself to fit the humours of mortal men. Do the sages love stars and dreams? a bright shining star and a dream shall instruct them in the truth of God, and direct them unto Christ, Mat. ii. Doth St Peter love fishing? he shall be won by a great draught of fishes, Luke v. Doth Augustine love eloquence? Ambrose by his eloquence shall catch him at a sermon. What is it that can win us? Which way soever our desires stand, that is not sinful, God doth in his word allure

us; the best things in earth and heaven are made our bait. Let us yield ourselves therefore to be caught, for with these doth the Lord seek us, not for any need that he hath of us, but for our own salvation.

In which song we have a parable proposed of a fruitless vineyard, which, after great care and cost of the painful husbandman bestowed on it, is left desolate and forsaken for its barrenness.

The argument of it seemeth not to differ from that of the foregoing chapters, here being nothing said that for substance was not before taught; the difference that is, is only in circumstance, the style and method only being altered and changed.

The scope and drift of the prophet is first to get audience and attention; and therefore he chooseth to deliver his message in the sweetness of verse rather than in prose, that so the ear, having that which delighted it, might without tediousness listen to that which was taught, which, being listened unto, might the better and more kindly work upon them. And questionless by this course he got him hearers; for many would flock to hear him sing, who would not step over the threshold to hear him in his wonted vein.

Secondly, That they might the sooner learn and better retain what he did teach them; for verse, being composed of certain musical proportions, both in the number and measure of feet and syllables, are sooner and with greater delight learned; and once being learned, are longer retained. As by experience we find that our common people have many unwritten songs, which are older than their great-grandfather's father, those they learned being children, and never forgot again until their death. Yea, by this means the remembrance of some things have been kept from many ages past, which both history and tradition had else for ever left neglected and forgotten.

Thirdly, That he might bring them to a sight of their ingratitude, and draw from them an impartial sentence against themselves. For look, as it is with the eye, which both seeth and correcteth all other things save itself; so is it with the sinner, when his own case is proposed to him, not as his own, but in the person of another. He will soon see the fault, and pass a just sentence on it, but else it cannot be espied. Whilst wise Nathan, 2 Sam. xii., was querulously discoursing of the cruel rich man that had forcibly taken away the only lamb of his poor neighbour, how willingly doth David listen to the story, and how sharply, even above law, doth he censure the fact: ver. 5, 'As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die.' See how severe justicers we can be to our very own crimes in others' persons. Had he known on whom the sentence would have light, it should not have been so

heavy; but now he is self-condemned. The like was our Saviour's practice with the scribes and pharisees, in propounding that parable of perfidious husbandmen, Mat. xxi., who beat the servants that were sent to receive the fruits of the vineyard, and slew the heir; and not without the like success; for being asked what the Lord of the vineyard would do to such, they answer, 'He will cruelly destroy them, and let out the vineyard to others.' Then Christ infers, 'Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation that will bring forth the fruits thereof.' And this is the reason why our prophet doth not only sing, but sings a parabolical song, propounding the truth in such an obscure manner, under a continued similitude or allegory, like some expert physician, who so cunningly wraps up his pills and conveys his dose, that it begins to work ere it be tasted.

And surely there is no one thing wherein is more use of wisdom than in the due contriving of a reprehension, which in a discreet delivery helps the disease, in an unwise, destroys nature.

In which song consider we, first, the proem or preface to it, ver. 1.

Secondly, The poem itself, or body of it, ver. 1-8.

The proem in these words, '*Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard;*' wherein these particulars are observable:

First, The inditer or author instrumental, intimated in this particle *I*.

Secondly, The kind of treatise indited, *a song*.

Thirdly, The manner of the prophet's publishing and delivering it, *will sing*.

Fourthly, The dedication of it, *to his well-beloved*.

Fifthly, The warrant and authority for the publishing of it, *of my well-beloved*.

Sixthly, The subject-matter thereof, *touching his vineyard*.

These in the proem. As for the poem, we will then limb and branch it forth when we come to the handling of it. Let us now go to the shekel of the sanctuary, and there weigh those words which we have already numbered.

Now. Some read it *Go to*, or *Go to yet*. As if the prophet should stir up himself to sing; and, like the watchful cock, first clap his wings to awake himself, before he crows to awaken others. Others read it as we have it, *Now*, or *Now I pray*, hereby stirring up his people to attention; which reading is the best, for the Hebrew particle *na* noteth the motion of the mind to persuade or entreat.

Will I sing—i.e., I will lift up my voice and make a melodious sound, modulating and singing the song I have composed.

To my well-beloved—i.e., To the grace or praise of his well-beloved; or, as some, in his defence.

Well-beloved. Some^a there are who would have God's Israel to be meant hereby; he so terming them in regard of the great love he bare towards them, and great care he had over them, they being dearly beloved of him. But the prophet explaineth his own meaning when he saith, 'My well-beloved hath a vineyard.' Now 'the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,' ver. 7. By *well-beloved* then he understandeth, not the people of God, but God himself; and he calls him so in a twofold respect.

1. More generally; as he himself was a member of the church, and in the behalf of it, and thus said Solomon, 'My well-beloved is mine, and I am his,' Cant. ii. 16, vi. 3, and vii. 10.

2. Or more specially; as he was a prophet, and so one of the bridegroom's friends, to whom the charge of the church was committed, according to that of St John, 'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly, because of the bridegroom's voice,' John iii. 29.

A song. Three kinds of songs were in use especially amongst the Jews. Some they called *mizmor*, *psalms*; other some *tehillah*, *hymns*; and another sort they had which they called *shir*, *songs* or *odes*. All which kinds St Paul mentioneth, Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16, when he willeth us to speak to ourselves with 'psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs.' The first of these were such as were artificially framed in a certain full number of words and measure, as the original word noteth; it coming of a word, *zamar*, which signifieth to prune or cut off superfluous twigs, and containeth in it holy matter of what arguments soever, whether precatory, prayers for benefits to be received; or deprecatory, petitions against adversities; or consolatory, matter of comfort and consolation. These were wont to be sung both with instrument and voice.

The second sort were special songs of praise and thanksgiving, and come of a word, *halal*, which signifieth the lifting up or exaltation of the voice, in extolling and magnifying either the worthy person or his noble action. And these are properly those that set forth the Almighty's praise; therefore saith Chrysostom, *Hymnus psalmo sanctior*,† A hymn is more divine than a psalm. These were wont to be sung either with the instrument or without.

The third kind contained in them doctrine of the chief good, or man's eternal felicity, with other such like spiritual matter, and were artificially made, and after a more majestic form than ordinary. These were sung only with the voice, without any instrument.

A learned writer‡ sheweth divers other differences

^a Calv. et Ursin., in loc.

† Chrys. in Col. iv., hom. 9.

‡ Zanch. in Col. iii. 16.

and distinctions given of these by divers of the ancients, but that I have named is the most received. Let this suffice, there were and are variety, and all allowable by the Lord.

As for this song of our prophet, it is of this latter kind,^{*} and was most artificially composed, and set out with the most exquisite skill that might be. It is of the like nature and kind with that of Solomon's, which is called the Song of Songs;† for here the great love of God towards his church, with the fruit of that his love, is set forth unto us. In this indeed they differ, as some have well observed, that is comical, but this is tragical; for though our prophet beginneth merrily, yet he endeth heavily.

Of my beloved. Here the prophet useth the same word, *dodho*, that he did before, though with some little alteration; and some‡ translate it uncle, others cousin—for so it signifieth, as well as friend or beloved; and would by it note out the Messiah and his humanity in a special manner; for Isaiah descended from David, and so was of Christ's kindred, in which regard, say they, he calleth him his uncle or his cousin. But this exposition is rejected by other of the learned§ as constrained; and they take the word here used to be the same in signification with the former, holding the addition to be but a garnishing of the prophet's speech, which liberty poets have above other writers, to the end that by the rhyme and running of the verse the memory might be the better helped and the understanding quickened.

Now, in that he saith it was of his beloved, he hereby noteth out his warrant and authority. It was the song which his beloved put into his mouth, and which he had in charge from him to publish. It was of him and *from* him, as well as *for* him.

Touching his vineyard; some read it to his vineyard, others for his vineyard. The word may be read both ways, both in the genitive and dative case, as one|| observes. By this vineyard we are to understand the church, as appeareth, ver. 7. The reasons why it is compared to a vineyard we shall hereafter see; and thus much for explanation. Come we now to matter of observation.

And first, in general, from the prophet's method and manner of proceeding—which, we see, was not as usually it was—note we,

Doct. What wisdom is requisite for God's ministers, that they may be able to apply themselves to the several affections, if not sinful, of their hearers, becoming all things to all men, seeking by all possible means to win or gain any unto Christ.

'To the Jews,' saith St Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 20, 22, 'I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to

them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.' Then follows that general exhortation, ver. 24, 'So run that you may obtain.' This course likewise took our blessed Saviour. Sometimes he taught by explication, other whiles by application; sometimes propounding doctrines, other times expounding them; sometimes he delivereth plain principles, at other times parables and dark sentences; and not seldom by exemplary similitudes. The rich man he teacheth by the rich man's care and greedy gathering; the vine-dresser by the vinitor's digging and hedging; the labourer by the labourer's hire and working; the builder by the builder's laying of a good foundation; the husbandman by the husbandman's sowing and reaping; the fisherman by the fisherman's casting in nets and drawing.[¶] By all which the ministers of the gospel are admonished to become all unto all, that they may win the more, according to our propounded point.

Use 1. Let us not, then, be discouraged, though we have to deal with a stubborn and refractory people, so as to surcease our pains. The physician omits no point of his art, though the recovery of his patient seem desperate; he will use his best skill before he gives him over. What is this divine trade of ours but a spiritual piscation? Now, how much skill and toil and patience is requisite in this art, who knows not? The world is the sea; souls, like fishes, swim at liberty in this deep, ranging up and down after their own disposition, uncaught. Ministers are the fishers in this sea, who must be ever busied, sometimes in preparing, sometimes in mending, sometimes in casting abroad, sometimes in drawing in their nets. The net to take men with is the preaching of the gospel; which net is oftentimes let down, and many a draught made by the poor fisherman, yet nothing taken; for some are crafty, and will not, as the worldling, who is so wise, at least in his generation, (Luke xvi.) that he no sooner spies the net laid, but he shuns it. Some are slippery, and cannot; as the hypocrite, who, like an eel, slips through when he is inclosed. *Qui capit anquillum per caudam non capit illam.* Some are great, and may not. 'Prophesy not at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court;' (Amos vii. 13.) So sheweth Jeremiah, chap. v. 5, when he saith, 'I will get me to the great men, and speak to them; but these have broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.' And therefore Paul, though he had caught many a soul in his nets, yet he could catch but a piece of king Agrippa. So sheweth the text, Acts xxvi. 28, 'Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.' And lastly,

* Calv., in loc.

† Moller. and Hector. Pint. in loc.

‡ Muscul.

§ Ecclamp.

¶ Calvin, Ursin.

* Muscul. in Mat. iv.

some are little, and dare not. Our Peter-like professors, whom the voice of a silly damsel, crying, 'Thou art a Galilean,' terrifies. So that the sum of the pains of many is, Luke v. 5, 'We have laboured all night and taken nothing.' Thus it pleaseth God to exercise the patience of his servants. But howsoever some fishes are too great, and some too little, some too silly and some too subtle, yet let us launch out into the deep, and once again let slip our new-washen nets at our master's bidding. What though there be no likelihood of success? yet the last throw may draw up some to grace and glory. Say then with Simon, 'Master, though we have travailed all night and taken nothing, yet at thy word we will let down the net,' and make one cast more. In so doing, certainly we at last shall find that our humble and penitent obedience shall come home laden with blessings, as theirs did; for when they had so done, saith the text, ver. 6, 'they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, so that their nets brake; and they filled their ships, so that they began to sink.' Oh happy complaint, of too large a capture! Who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou so bountifully requitest man's weakest services? Their nets break, their ships sink with the burden of that which they have taken. O blessed Saviour, if those apostolical vessels of thy first rigging were thus overlade, ours float and totter with an unballast lightness. Thou who art no less present in these bottoms of ours, lade them with an equal freight of converted souls; give us ability to take; give men will and grace to be taken, and let us praise thee for thus sinking. However, let thy work be followed, and thy leisure waited for. Assure us of this, that that pains cannot be lost which we resolve to lose for thee. For 'though Israel be not gathered, yet shall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and our God shall be our strength,' Isa. xlix. 5. Though our preaching be not a sweet savour to them that hear us; yet even in them we shall be a sweet savour unto the Lord, 2 Cor. ii. 15. If, then, we preach, and men repent not, let it never repent us of our preaching; for they are the losers, and not we: 'Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your works shall be rewarded,' 2 Chron. xv. 7.

Use 2. Let hearers hence likewise be admonished not rashly to condemn their teachers for their sometimes using a differing method from that they were wont to use. It is the wisdom of a minister, as we see, sometimes to change his note, as occasion shall require. While he hath to deal with a people of a tractable disposition, he comes in a still small voice, as God appeared to Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 12, and is a *Barnabas*, the son of consolation. When with the stubborn and refractory, then he lifts up his voice a strain higher, he 'cries aloud and spares not,' Isa. lviii. 1, being a *Boanerges*, the son of thunder. Blame

him not for this: for some men's hearts are like nettles—touch them but gently and they will sting, when rough handling is without prejudice. And others are like briars, that wound the grasping hand of reproof, but yield willingly to them that softly touch them with that lady-like hand of exhortation.

Aaron's bells must be wisely rung. Sometimes the treble of mercy sounds well, at other times the tenor of judgment, or counter-tenor of reproof, sounds better: and it often happens that the mean of exhortation sounds best of all. It is his wisdom to observe circumstances, and know how to curse as well as bless, chide as well as comfort, and speak war to a rebel as well as peace to a friend. And herein, indeed, lies the wisdom and faithfulness of a teacher. Then and only then shall he prove himself sincere and impartial, when he holds this course.

Again, when he hath to deal with a people of a shallow capacity and understanding, so he speaks, both for matter and manner of delivery, as they are best able to receive it. Should he use the Latin or Greek tongues to such as can only understand the English; or such a Roman-English, or soaring sublimity of phrase, as plain Englishmen know not what to make of; he knoweth full well he should be as a barbarian to those which hear him. Or should he tell the vulgar of fathers and historians—of Ambrose, Austin, Gregory, Cyprian, Chrysostom, with the rest; and of their homilies, it would little else than amaze his auditors. Wherefore here he useth a plainer method and more familiar style, stooping to the understanding of the simplest, daily beating upon those highway points of faith and repentance, for which his plainness let him not be despised; but reverently and devoutly see that his doctrine be received, that obscure things may afterwards be more profitably opened.* At another time it so falls out that he is to speak to a more learned and intelligent auditory, and then he takes more scope, to use the liberty of his liberal education, in quoting the fathers and alleging human testimonies. Sometimes in case of grammar, that the true sense and meaning of a word or sentence may be the clearer: sometimes in case of controversy, by shewing the consent of the ancient church, that he may free the truth from novelty, (especially dealing with an adversary that would claim all antiquity from him.) Or sometimes for conviction of atheists, heathens, and the like, who care not for the authority of scriptures.

And thus did St Paul himself, when he had to deal with the Athenians, Epicures, and Cretans, allege the sayings of Menander, Acts xvii. 28, Aratas, Titus i. 12, and Epimenides, James i. 17, whereby he

* Tene et deo ut accipe aperta, ut tibi pandantur obscura. Quomodo eris penetrator obscurorum, contempnitor manifestorum!—*Aug. Hom. de Pastor.*

did convince their wickedness. And this is an excellent way to stop the mouths of adversaries, which Julian, a wise, but wicked emperor saw. Behold, saith he,^o we are wounded with our own quills; out of our books they take armour which in fight they use against us. And therefore he made a law that the children of the Galileans should not read philosophers nor poets. In these and such like cases, and upon these and such like occasions, for a minister wisely and soberly, having respect to times and places, to allege the sayings of ancient writers in their own terms and language, (not seeking themselves, nor affecting their own glory therein,) let it not be thought unlawful nor unfitting.

Such also may be here lessoned, who would have all ministers use one method in their teaching, and that such as they best like of. This man's method is excellent, saith one; I like this kind of teaching well. Such a one I like better, saith a second, and it is more profitable. Would all had this man's vein in preaching, saith a third. He goes for my money; of all that ever I heard I like him best. And thus like foolish frampole children, we care not for the meat, except we choose the spoon. Or like those Germans, who, meeting together at a tavern, fell into discourse of their profession and religion. One protested himself to be of Dr Martin's religion; and the other vowed he was of Dr Luther's profession, whereas Martin Luther was one and the same man. Such is the folly of many of our followers, who hold with this preacher, and with that; whenas, though we have 'diversity of gifts, yet but one and the same spirit,' 2 Cor. xii. St Paul spends well near a whole chapter about this argument, in the first of those epistles which he wrote to the Corinthians, who, as it seems, were troubled with this disease; for having three famous preachers, Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, some professed themselves the followers only of Paul, despising Cephas and Apollos; and others of Cephas, despising Paul and Apollos; and lastly, others held themselves to Apollos, despising Paul and Cephas. This itch of men's wits and ears is fatal to these times, and, in the judgment of a great physician, almost incurable; for he avoucheth that there is no scab nor itch more dangerous than the ambition of sects and new opinions. Oh that we could see the richness of God's mercy towards his church in this particular, who hath given such diversity of gifts to divers men. To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the words of knowledge, to another the gifts of healing, to another diversity of tongues. Some have a more excellent gift of conference, some of prayer, some in opening of a text, some in application of his text, &c. And all,

* *Propris pennis configimur.*—Theodor. iii. 8.

† *Fatalis hec ingeniorum scabies.*—Lips. Civ. Doct., lib. iv. cap. 3; Galen. cit. a Lipsio. lib. advers. Dialog., cap. 3.

not for the making of a rent in the church, or breeding of a schism, but 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,' Eph. iv. 11, 12. This is that same πολυτάλειος σοφία, 'manifold wisdom of God,' that liking not one we might like another; and that the variety of men's affections might be satisfied with the variety of his gifts. Let us then make the true use of this mercy, and by some one's gift or other, be brought nearer to the Lord. Not being like the Jews, of whom Christ thus complains: Mat. xi. 16, 'Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, singing unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and you have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' Thus John came in one sort, Christ came in another, yet neither John's vein, nor Christ's vein could like them. If it be so with us, oh then, how inexcusable are we! Art thou a daily hearer, and hearest thou divers men, and yet doth no man's gift like thee? Can none of them so far prevail with thee, as to make thee leave thy lying, deceit, cozenage, drunkenness, profaneness, &c.? Alas for thee! Woe worth the time that ever thou wert born. Thy damnation is just.

This in general—the particulars follow. And first of the inditer, or author instrumental, *Isaiah*.

Who this Isaiah was, we find in the beginning of this prophecy, where we have him described by his parentage, 'Isaiah the son of Amoz,' chap. i. 1. Note of that Amos who is numbered amongst the smaller prophets, as some* have thought; for besides the great difference that is found in the original, both in the writing and signification of their names, the prophet's name beginning with *gajin*, and ending with *samech*, and is by interpretation, *Onustus, vel Avulsus, A man burdened and loaden*; or *one that is separated from others*. But Isaiah his father's name beginneth with *aleph*, and endeth with *tsaddi*, and signifieth *Fortis et robustus, stout or valiant*. There is great difference also in their race and descents. For that Amoz, who was father to this our prophet, was of the race royal, being brother of Amaziah, king of Judah, as most of the ancients hold, and the Jewish Rabbins report; whereas that other Amos was of mean parentage, and, as himself confesseth, Amos vii. 14, 'Neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet,' until it pleased God extraordinarily to call him to that office, 'but a herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit,' keeping amongst the herdmen of Tekoa, chap. i. 1.

* Epiph. et Dancus in proph. min. preclud. et Greci perlique.

Thus it appeareth that this our prophet was of the race royal, and being so, we thence infer,

Doct. It is no disparagement to greatness to be the Lord's prophet. Though Isaiah was of the blood royal, yet he counted it no impeachment to his birth or breeding, nothing derogatory to his reputation, to be employed in the meanest piece of service, though it be in composing songs or poems, for the setting forth God's praise and the public good of his church.

It was St John's honour to be called 'a prophet of the most High,' Luke i. 76, and therefore it cannot be a disparagement to any to serve the same master. The blessed apostles St Paul, St Peter, St James, St Jude, &c., amongst all their titles count this to be the most honourable, that they are the 'servants of Jesus Christ,' and therefore the two former set that first, and then apostles after, Rom. i. 1; 2 Peter i. 1; James i. 1; Jude 1.

What shall we say to Noah? He was a prince of the world, and yet 'a preacher of righteousness,' 2 Peter ii. 5. To Melchisedec, who was king of Salem, and yet a priest unto the Lord, Heb. vii. 1. To Samuel a judge, to David a king, and yet prophets both, 1 Sam. iii. 20, and vii. 15; 1 Kings iii. 12. And to wise Solomon his son, (before whom there was none like him, neither after him shall ever any rise like unto him,) who, amongst all his titles, and that in his wisest and best days, did count this to be the most honourable, to be called 'a preacher,' Eccles. i. 1. And to the glorious angels of heaven, who have not refused to be publishers of the glad tidings of peace, Luke ii. 9, 10. And to Christ himself, who (though 'equal in glory with the Father,' Phil. ii. 6) disdained not the title of a minister, Rom. xv. 8. How then can it be thought a thing not befitting the worth of any to be the Lord's prophet? Besides these examples, weigh the reasons.

Reasons. 1. Such serve the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is higher than the highest, greater than the greatest, richer than the richest, nobler than the noblest; and can it be any disgrace to serve such a master? If it were such a noble privilege to be a subject unto Cæsar, Acts xxii. 25, 28, and so happy a thing to be a servant unto Solomon, 1 Kings x. 8, how much greater is their privilege, and how much happier are those servants who serve such a Lord as doth at his pleasure pull down one and set up another upon the throne, Ps. cvii. 40.

Reasons. 2. Such are employed about that work which is the highest, holiest, the heavenliest and greatest of all other works—viz., the salvation of men's souls. By ministers God worketh faith; by them he converts; by them he comforteth, sanctifieth, saveth; by them he declareth to men their righteousness, Rom. x. 14; 1 Cor. iii. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 16; preacheth repentance, free forgiveness, and perfect salvation to

all that truly believe in Jesus Christ. In which respect saith Job, 'A good minister is one of a thousand,' Job xxxiii. 23. A good lawyer may be one of ten; a good physician one of twenty; a good man one of a hundred. But, saith a reverend divine,^c a good minister exceeds all, for he is one of a thousand. A good lawyer may declare unto thee the true state of thy cause; a good physician may declare unto thee the true state of thy body; but no man can declare unto thee thy righteousness but a true and faithful minister. The lawyer then in caring for thy cause, and the physician in caring for thy body, are both inferior to the minister, who careth for thy soul's salvation. No marvel then if the apostle requires that they should be 'esteemed highly even for their work's sake,' 1 Thes. v. 13.

Reasons. 3. Such shall have the greatest wages of any other, for 'they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; but they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever,' Dan. xii. 3. All good men shall have glory, yea, great glory; they shall shine as the firmament. But such as labour in the word and doctrine shall shine, and that with no ordinary glory, but as the stars, which have a brighter glory than the firmament. Seeing then the master which they serve is the highest, the work which they do is the holiest, the wages which they have is the greatest, it may be seem the worth of any to be the Lord's prophet.

Use 1. How guilty then are such as think basely of so honourable an office and function as the ministry is! Oh, cursed times! wherein profane livers do account no men's persons, no men's callings, so base and vile as ours. The name itself of *priest* and *minister*, by such is cast in our faces as terms of infamy and reproach, and used no otherwise amongst us than the name of *Christian* is amongst the barbarians in Russia, by way of disgrace. And the very weed and garment of a minister is enough to procure contempt, though otherwise he himself be free enough from all contempt. This is one of the blots of this our nation, that a minister is seldom spoken of but with diminution; and the simplest in a multitude, though he be not able to give the meaning of one petition in the Lord's prayer, yet hath eloquence enough to disgrace their persons and their callings. A horrible confusion it was, that was foretold by this our prophet, which should come on Israel, 'The child should behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable,' Isa. iii. 5. Who sees not that this confusion is befallen this generation? Who almost so vile but thinks himself a better man than the ablest minister? What gentleman so mean but thinks his child too good for this priestly trade! Yea, his whole house disgraced, his blood and family

^c Perk., Duty and Dignity of Ministers.

disparaged, if either his daughter be matched with a preacher, or his son entered into that calling! But be it known unto thee who thus basely judgest, that God hath honoured the poorest minister far above thyself, and taken him to serve at his own table when he hath rejected thee and thy father's house. Be not thou any more so much deceived as to think the calling of the ministry to be base and beggarly, and not meet for any but the poor to live by; fit only for the lame and such as are disfigured; for younger brothers, blunt-headed scholars, and such as are good for no trade else; when princes, peers, and nobles, and such as have been of the royal blood, have held it as an honour to be employed in the service of the Lord. Nebuchadnezzar would have only such to wait upon him as were of the king's stock, and comely, witty, and every way well qualified, both for lineaments of body and ornaments of mind; none of the refuse must come into his presence, Dan. i. 3. And shall they that come before the Lord to administer in his presence be the scum and offscouring of the people? What is this but to serve the Lord with the 'blind and lame,' which he abhors, Mal. i. 8. Certainly this dishonour of the ministry threatened the departure of the word, and therefore let us pray hard that this sin of contempt and base esteem of God's ministers and their callings may not be laid unto our charge.

Use 2. And so, to fall from reproving to persuading and exhorting, let every one beware how they refuse or reject the ministry, as thinking themselves, their friends, or children too high for it, and it too low for them. No man may be thought to be too good to serve God at his altar, and to administer at his table. If any so think, he deceiveth himself, and overvalueth his own condition. Amongst the Jews the priests were sometimes matched into the blood royal. Numa Pompilius would be a priest amongst the Romans; and the Egyptians chose their kings from amongst their priests;* and shall we then think basely of them? Our forefathers counted it an honour to have one of their children an abbot or a bishop, in which callings then they lived like epicures, having nothing of a good Christian, save the title only. Yea, princes of this land have renounced their crowns and kingdoms, and entered into monasteries, and have put their sons and daughters into cloisters. Shall not these condemn us? Nay, will not the very heathen rise up one day in judgment against us, who have given their sons for sacrifice unto their idols, and caused them to pass through the fire, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6, thinking them not too dear to be offered to their gods? Let us look on these and be ashamed of ourselves; for certainly the best and noblest

amongst the sons of men are a thousandfold more unfit for that high place than that calling is or can be thought unworthy of them.

And as for such as are already called to this high place, let all beware of despising of them. It is the apostle's rule, that they which rule should have 'double honour,' 1 Tim. v. 17; first, honour of countenance, and then of maintenance. One of these is not enough without the other; for it must be double. 'Beautiful are the feet,' saith this our prophet Isaiah, 'of them that bring good tidings, that publish salvation,' &c., Isa. lii. 7. If their feet be beautiful, how beautiful should their face be? Who should be so welcome to us as these? who more esteemed or revered? Remember how the Lord hath every way endeavoured to make them so, as by giving them titles of highest respect, as ambassadors for Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20, and messengers for the Lord of hosts, Mal. ii. 7, fathers, 2 Kings xiii. 14,—the first title of honour that was in the world,—angels, which are the noblest of the creatures, Rev. i. 20. Besides, he hath given them wonderful authority. He hath put the keys of the kingdom of heaven into their hands, to open and to shut, Mat. xvi. 19. Power to remit and retain sins, John xx. 23. Thus the Lord is pleased to ratify their regular proceedings in the court of heaven. Likewise he hath given them extraordinary gifts above the common rate, as knowledge, experience, comfort, and the like, Eph. iv. 8-11. Is it safe despising these whom God hath thus highly dignified?

Use 3. A last use may be for comfort unto us who wait at God's altar. Let us count it our honour to be called hereunto, and prefer it before all other callings whatsoever, not giving way to any thoughts of discontentment in respect of the many ignominies or persecutions that we daily do or are like to undergo, so as to be grieved at the Lord's leading of us to so toilsome and, in man's judgment, disgraceful a vocation, or to be moved to leave and give over our function in that respect. As sometimes that Cardinal of Lorraine did, who, after he had preached once unto the people, and was therefore derided by the prelates of his order, left off utterly the office of preaching, as a calling too base for his cardinal's hatship. Let this be far from us. If we do our duty, the world will hate us. True; but if we do it not, God will curse us. By the first we are in danger to lose our goods, our names, our lives; by the second, our soul, our heaven, our God. Now, whether it be better to please God or man, judge ye.

Let every minister, therefore, do his duty; and albeit most in the world condemn us, yet we shall find some in the world, who are not of the world, that will reverence and respect us. So long as the widow of Sarepta hath any oil we shall not want,

* Joseph. Antiq., 11; Hist. Tripart., lib. ix.; Euseb. Hist. 10; Alex. ab Alex., lib. ii. cap. 8.

1 Kings xvii. 9. However, though here we have troubles to weary us, yet in the end we shall have heaven's joy to refresh and comfort us. It is enough we have deserved. Our works shall have a reward.

And thus much for the first particular to be considered in this preface. The second follows, and that is the nature and kind of the treatise indited; and it is

A song or poem. And here occasion is offered to speak somewhat in the defence of poetry and verse. The position is—

Doct. Poesy and poetry is an art and exercise ancient, lawful, and praiseworthy.

The practices of the servants of God make this good. Moses, that man of God, was excellent herein, as appeareth by that same canticle which he made in commemoration of God's goodness for his people's deliverance out of Egypt, and for the destruction of their enemies; Exod. xv. 1, which song is held to be the most ancient song that ever was,* (I am sure it is that we read of in Scripture,) and is thought to be first composed in hexameter verse, though it is not certain; for it is no easy matter to find out the scan- sion of verse used amongst the Hebrews, such was the variety of their measures; as also by that which he made a little before his death, which he commanded should be taught the children of Israel, Deut. xxxii. ; yea, the text saith he himself wrote it and taught it them, chap. xxxi. 19, 22. Thus Deborah and Barak also composed a song, and sang it to the Lord, Judges v. 1. So David, that same sweet singer of Israel, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, had an excellent gift this way, as is evident by that same funeral song or epitaph which he made for Saul and Jonathan after their deaths, 2 Sam. i. 17, besides divers odes and hymns which he composed to the honour of God, in various kinds of verse.† This, likewise, was the practice of Christians in the primitive church, as Eusebius reporteth out of Pseudo Judæus, Eccles. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 16. 'They contemplate,' saith he, 'not only divine things, but they make grave canticles and hymns unto God in a more sacred rhyme, of every kind of metre and verse.' If any doubt remain, notwithstanding what hath been shewed, of the truth of our propounded point, let, then, this be considered of: how verse is the form of speech which it hath pleased that wise and all-knowing Spirit to choose to reveal a great part of his revealed will in, for, besides those special psalms and canticles before mentioned, there are sundry parts and books of Holy Scripture poetically penned, as the book of Job, the book of the Psalms, the book of the Proverbs, with Solomon's Ecclesiastes and Canticles, as the most learned fathers of the church have testified; and many other parcels of

Holy Scripture, which we have merely translated into prose, are verse in the original. This, methinks, should put all out of doubt, (for who can be so irreligious as to think or imagine that the Holy Ghost would ever have used any indecent or unlawful manner of expression of his holy mysteries?) and cause us to give credence to this truth—viz., Poetry and poesy is an art and exercise lawful and praiseworthy.

Reason. The commendable properties of which art appear in these two ancient verses—

'Metra parant animos : comprehendunt plurima paucis :
Aures delectant : pristina commemorant.'

Which I find by one^o thus Englished to my hand—

'Verse doth the soul prepare, and much in brief affords;
It ravisheth the ear, and things long past records.'

There is rhyme and reason, or reason for rhyme.

1. It prepares and fits the soul for holy duties, and therefore we use psalms before our sermons. 2. It comprehends much in a little, as we see in the psalms; for what are they but a compendium of both Testaments? 3. It delighteth the ear, and causeth it to hearken more attentively, as we have before seen in the beginning. 4. and lastly, It is a great help to memory, and causeth things, once learned, long to be retained, as we find by experience in children and others. What they learn in rhyme they never forget again to their dying day. Now to apply the point :—

Use 1. This may serve first to inform our judgments concerning the lawfulness hereof, that so this exercise and art, which is by some wrongfully held in contempt, may be brought into a more reverent esteem; for what is the main cause so many speak against poetry, but an ignorant misconception they have thereof? imagining it to be but a vain invention of man, and an unfitting language for to express holy and sacred matters and mysteries by. But that which hath been said before serves for the discovery—and, I trust, shall also for the recovery—of this error. God hath used verse to express a great part of his revealed will unto us, and hath mingled many of his heavenly precepts with the sweet and pleasing strains of poesy and numbers. And therefore let it neither be thought a vain and unnecessary curiosity, nor yet, as some others do, a horrible and damnable impiety. True it is, in these wretched days, for the most part we shall find that the subject of poesy is wantonness and lasciviousness, wherewith the minds of youth are wonderfully bewitched. But yet, as one† said of music, we may say of it: The proper and principal subject of it is the Almighty's praise. Shall we, then, condemn the lawful use with the

* Josephus de Antiq., lib. vii.

† Josephus de Antiq., lib. vii. cap. 10.

* Withers' Preparation to the Psalter, p. 64.

† Plut. de Music.

unlawful abuse? That may not be. Let us cast away the fashion, but keep still the stuff. Let not the exercise itself be abhorred, nor the use thereof condemned, but the corruption thereof. For, certainly, there is no art that doth set forth the glory of God, which is the chief end of man's creation, with so much excitation and expression as this art doth. And therefore by some* it is preferred to all arts and sciences. To conclude this use, if every art be the gift of God, and if it be of him to invent and find out curious works, to work in gold, and silver, and in brass, &c., Exod. xxxi. 3-6, then must it likewise be of him to guide the pen, and give the tongue for speaking such excellent things, and after so elegant a manner. The like might be said for her sister music.

Use 2. This may likewise serve for a reprehension of such as abuse this art, which in itself is so lawful and commendable, and by their wantonness cause it to grow contemptible.

And thus do vainer poets, who by their lascivious rhymes, lustful sonnets, plays, and interludes, bring shame unto the art, disgrace to poesy, and dishonour to the giver. The like is the practice of wicked fiddlers and ballad-mongers, who make it their profession, and get their living by poisoning many a soul, in alluring their minds unto vanity with their bewitching harmony, and tempting charms of lascivious music.

A shame it is that such vermin should be suffered in so well a governed commonwealth as this is; and the greater is our shame in that our magistrates have no more care for the putting such good laws in execution as are already enacted for the punishment of these.

Come we now to the third circumstance propounded in this preface to our consideration, and that is the manner of the prophet's publishing this poem which he did indite.

I will sing. As the former particular gave occasion to speak of the lawfulness of poesy and versifying, so doth this for the authority and lawfulness of voicemelody and singing. Let the point be this:—

Doct. Songs and poems, artificially modulated, may lawfully be sung for the setting forth of God's praise.

This I will make good, both by precept and practice, out of the Old and New Testament. Out of the Old: 'Come let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms,' Ps. xcv. 1, 2. And, again, 'Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honour of his name.' 'Praise the Lord, for he is good; sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant,' Ps. lxxvi. 1, 2, and cxxxv. 3. As in these and many other places it is commanded; so,

* Spondanus.

by many of God's faithful servants we may find it hath been practised. For, Num. xxi. 17, 'Israel sang this song: Spring up, O well; sing you unto it;' David and Solomon did likewise use it, and gave appointment how the Jews should sing psalms in their temple, 1 Chron. xv.; 2 Chron. v. So did Moses, Exod. xv. 1, Deborah, and Barak, Judges v. 1, with others more, as in the proof of the former doctrine appeared. In the New Testament it is commanded in these express words: 'Speak to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts unto the Lord,' Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16. And, again, 'Is any amongst you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms,' James v. 13. And there also we find it used by Paul and Silas, who at midnight prayed and sang praises to the Lord, Acts xvi. 25; and by Christ and his apostles—whose example is without exception—who sang a psalm together, as at other times, so that night in which our Saviour was betrayed, Mat. xxvi. 30. Thus out of holy writ we have proved the point. Much might be brought likewise for the further confirming of it out of ecclesiastical history—if it were as needful as easy so to do—of the practice of Christians since Christ's time; but of that much I will allege only at this time that testimony which Plinius Secundus, a heathen who lived about two hundred years after Christ, gave unto the emperor Trajan in the behalf of Christians 'They use,' saith he, 'to rise before day, to celebrate Christ in psalms as God;† and, as Socrates reports,‡ neither Constantine nor Theodosius ever began a battle but first they and their soldiers sang psalms and made supplications to the Lord. Let us now come to some profitable use.

Use 1. And, first, it serveth soundly to lesson such as condemn this exercise, or deride such as use it either in public or in private. Such mockers are everywhere to be found, who, as they deride all other parts of God's service, so, amongst the rest, this. But if it be a work of God's Spirit to sing, and if God's children sing with the spirit, as St Paul announceth, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, then against whom do these open their mouths? whom do they blaspheme? A lamentable thing it is, that in a land professing the gospel, and after the continuance of the public preaching thereof so many years, such an ancient, laudable, and holy exercise should be made a matter of scorn in the seeming of any. The Lord lay not this sin unto our charge!

Use 2. Secondly, Let us be stirred up on all sides to a conscionable performance of this Christian duty.

* *Fide* Eccles. Hist. Theod., lib. ii. cap. 14, and Clem. Alex., lib. ii.; *Pedagog.* cap. 4; Euseb. Eccles. Hist., lib. ii. cap. 17, &c.

† Lib. iii. cap. 33, and lib. viii. cap. 9, and lib. x. cap. 4.

‡ Socrat. Schol. Eccles. Hist., lib. vii. cap. 22.

We have seen it *commended* to us by the practice of God's saints, and by Christ himself; and not only so, but *commanded* likewise in express terms; so that we may not think it as a thing indifferent whether we sing or no; but every man to whom God hath given the faculty of singing, ought, as well this way as any other, to set forth his maker's praise. Now, the better to stir us up to the performance hereof—for we shall find our flesh backward enough as well in this as in any other good exercise—I might use many motives. One taken from the admirable effects and virtues of the Psalms, there being in them a precious balm for every present sore—so as that there is no temptation nor affliction which can befall a Christian, but in the Psalms he may find both the forms of expressing them and their means of remedy. Another might be drawn from the practice of the dumb creatures: as the lark and other birds, which shut up the light with a sweet ditty, and again saluted the sun when it begins to peep the next morning with such sweet strains as God hath naturally given to it. This one of the ancients^o useth as a motive to draw us to the exercise of singing. For how can men but blush, saith he, to remember that they have begun or ended a day without a psalm, when they see the birds, those wild choristers of the wood, constant in their devotions, beginning and ending the day with variety of song? But I love not to be tedious; remember only what David saith, Ps. cxlvii. 1, 'It is a good thing to sing praises to our God: it is pleasant, and praise is comely.' There are some things good but not pleasant, as afflictions; some things are pleasant but not good, as sin; and some things may be both good and pleasant, yet not comely. But this is all. It is *good*, because commanded of God, and agreeable to his will, as before hath been proved. It is *pleasant*, as the children of God experimentally have witnessed, who in time of tribulation have used them as a great means of consolation, and as a sweetening to their tortures. So did Theodorus, a man young in years, though not in grace, of whom we read,^t that being cruelly tortured with unheard-of torments, from the break of the day until the tenth hour without intermission, and then set on horseback, and on both sides tortured by the executioners, sang with a cheerful countenance the 96th Psalm; which undaunted constancy the officer perceiving, sent him back again to prison, reporting to the emperor what was done, and withal told him, that unless he forbore to exercise such cruelty, it would redound to their glory and his shame. It is *comely*; for it is the exercise of the angels in heaven to sing praises and hallelujahs to the Lord. Wouldst thou

then exercise thyself in that which is both good, pleasant, and comely? then sing psalms, for all these are met in that one duty.

Use 3. Now, forasmuch as many a good duty is marred in the making, and spoiled in the performance, let me add a third use for our direction; and therein shew what is required of us in our singing, that God may have the glory. The rules that concern this exercise are summarily comprehended in these words of the apostle to the Colossians, 'Teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord,' Col. iii. 16. Here we have directions both for *matter*, *manner*, and *end*.

1. Concerning the *matter* of our songs. It must be, first, good and wholesome, spiritual and heavenly; such songs we must sing as are either already in the word, or else composed according to the word. 2. It must be fitting, that it may edify. It must teach and admonish; and therefore wisdom is required even in choosing of a psalm, that it may be fitting the occasion.

2. Concerning the *manner* of our singing, these are the things required: First, It must be with the heart. Now, to sing with the heart is to sing with understanding and with feeling; for he that singeth, and understandeth not what he singeth, what is he better than a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal? And therefore, saith the apostle, 'I will sing, but I will sing with the understanding,' 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Our hearts must go with our voices—the one must be lift up as well as the other; for God is a spirit, and will be worshipped with the spirit. Look then to prepare thy heart before thou singest, and awake thy tongue with David before thou speakest,' Ps. lvii. 7, 8; for when the mouth singeth man hath music, but when the heart sings he makes God melody.* That is the best organ; tune that, and all is well. God hears not words without it.

'Non vox sed votum, non chordula musica sed cor;
Non cantans sed amans, cantat in aure Dei.'

'Not voice but will he brings; no harp but heart prepares;
No songs but love he sings, whom the Almighty hears.'

As it must be with the heart, so, secondly, with grace in the heart—*i.e.*, we must exercise the graces of God's holy Spirit in singing, as well as in praying, or in performing any other of God's ordinances. The disposition of the heart must be suited to the nature and quality of the song. If it be a psalm of praise, then are our affections to be suitable; our spirits must be cheerful. If of promises, then must we stir up our faith, and trust in God's mercies. If of threatenings, then must our hearts be struck with an awe and fear of God's greatness. If of petition, then must our

* Plus valet consonantia voluntatum quam vocum.—Bernard.

* Ambros. Hexa., lib. v. cap. 12.

† August. De Civ. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 52; and Ruffin., lib. i. cap. 35.

affections be fervent. If of confession, then the soul must be humbled. And this doth the apostle mean by grace in the heart. Thus for the manner.

3. The *end* is now to be considered; which is, 1. God's glory; 2. The edification of ourselves and others. First, We must direct our songs to God; for singing psalms is a part of his worship, and his glory he will not give unto another. The papists then are much to blame, who rob God of this his right, and give it to the Virgin Mary, in singing songs of praise to her. And as much to blame are they who sing to their own glory, delighting most in sweet voice, clear throat, &c. This is singing to our own selves and senses, not to our Maker's praise.

Secondly, In our singing, our own and others' edification and profit is to be respected. 'All scripture is profitable for our instruction,' 2 Tim. iii. 16; and whatsoever is written, is written for our learning; the book of Psalms then must needs be profitable for this purpose. Thus edify thyself by applying the matter sung to thy own heart, and examine thyself after the psalm is ended, what thou hast thereby profited, as well as after thy hearing of the word preached. Here likewise that manner of singing used amongst the papists in a strange and unknown tongue; as also that kind of singing psalms, wherein the words and sentences are broken and divided, which hinders the edification of the hearers, is not justifiable.

Thus we have seen the rules propounded to us. What now remains but that a watchful care be had that they be put in practice by us; and the rather for that amongst all the exercises belonging to a Christian, God is most dishonoured by this: for few sing, but, as it may well be feared, take God's name in vain in singing, because they do not so perform it as God's word enjoins. The more subject then this duty is to be performed amiss, the more cause have we of care for the right performance of it, whenever we set upon this holy exercise.

To my well-beloved. Here is the dedication of the prophet's poem; from whose practice learn we our duty, viz.:—

Doct. To consecrate all our labours unto God. Thus Moses and the children of Israel write a song and sing it 'unto the Lord,' Exod. xv. 1. And in that sweet swan-like song, which that man of God sang a little before his death, he will 'publish the name of the Lord,' Deut. xxxii. 3. So David spake unto the Lord in that same psalm of thanksgiving, which he made for God's powerful deliverance of him out of the hands of all his enemies, 2 Sam. xxii. 1. The like did Solomon, Hannah, Hezekiah, Mary, Zachary, Simeon, with other of God's saints, dedicate their labours in this kind to God's eternal praise. And so the apostles, as evidently appears by that doxology, or form of praise which they continually use in their

epistles, 'To God only wise be glory,' &c.; 'Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus;' 'Unto the king immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory;' 'To God only wise our Saviour be all glory,' &c., Rom. xvi. 27; Eph. iii. 21; 1 Tim. i. 17, and vi. 16; Jude 25. And hereunto tend those general exhortations, 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God,' 1 Cor. x. 31. And again, 'Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,' Col. iii. 17. And thus this truth is strengthened.

Reason. Besides, there is good reason for it. For the first thing in God's intention should be the first in ours. But this is the first in his, 'He predestinated us,' saith the apostle, 'to the praise of the glory of his graces,' Eph. i. 5, 6; 'He hath made all things for himself,' saith the wise man, 'yea, even the wicked for the day of judgment,' Prov. xvi. 4; 'Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory,' Isa. xlii. 6, 7. And again we read, 'All things were created by him and for him,' Col. i. 16. Seeing then God himself proposeth his own glory to himself, for the end of all his works, man should make the glory of God the end of all he doth.

Use 1. But ah! Lord God, how little is thy glory thought upon! how few make it the supreme end of all their labours! Shouldst thou 'look down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there were any that would understand and seek after thee,' to honour thee, Ps. xiv. 2; wouldest thou find one amongst a thousand that did truly do it? We all can say with Saul, 'Honour me, I pray thee, before the elders of my people,' 1 Sam. xv. 30; when notwithstanding we turn thy glory into shame, loving vanity, seeking after lies, Ps. lv.

Use 2. Oh that we could once be brought to learn this lesson! that we would not suffer any part of the repute or honour of any of our acts or labours to rest upon our own heads, but repel it forcibly from ourselves, and reflect it carefully upon our Lord and Master. It is the first grace which Christ teacheth us to beg of God, Mat. vi. 9, and it ought to be the chiefest aim of our whole lives; yea, we should prefer it before our lives, or the salvation of our souls; wherefore it is made the first petition, and set before the desire of daily bread, and the petition that is made for remission of our sins. Now at length then learn to prefer it before all the world, and promote it by our best means. Consider we for this end,

1. All creatures in their kind glorify their maker, and employ themselves in the setting forth of his praise: 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork,' Ps. xix. 1; by their admirable structure, motions, and influence,

they preach his praise; and that, (1.) All the night, and all the day, without intermission; for 'one day telleth another, and one night certifieth another,' ver. 2; (2.) In every kind of language, for 'there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,' ver. 3; and (3.) In every part of the world, in every country, city, town, village, parish; for 'their sound is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world,' ver. 4. Thus, saith one,* they be diligent pastors, preaching at all times; and learned pastors, as preaching in all tongues; and catholic pastors, preaching in all towns. And the subject of all their preaching is no other than the glory of God. And as the heavens, so do the fowls of the heavens, as the stork, crane, turtle, swallow, Jer. viii. 7; and so also the beasts of the field; for 'the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,' as Isaiah sheweth, chap. i. 3.

2. Remember, again, how little glory God getteth at the hands of most in the world; which I thus make evident. Put case, the whole world should be divided into four parts; three of the four we shall find to be overspread with Turkism, paganism, &c., they not so much as professing the true God in Christ; and therefore amongst them God can get no glory, but is continually dishonoured by their lives and actions. So that there is but a fourth part of the world, if that, which doth profess him in his Son; and amongst those, though all profess him in word, how many are there which deny him by their works! Should we make a subdivision, and again divide that fourth and least part into four parts more, we shall find the least part truly to seek his honour. One part we shall find are heretics, who rob him of his glory by their superstition and idolatry; a second part are atheists and notorious evil liveries, who are so far from honouring him, as that they daily belch out blasphemies against him; a third part are hypocrites and carnal protestants, backsliders and lukewarm Christians, who 'honour him with their lips, but have their hearts far from him,' Isa. xxix. 13. Now there is but a fourth part, and hardly that, who are sincere and faithful; and if they should not bend themselves with all their might to maintain and advance God's glory, it would be trodden under foot of all. Should not this consideration be a spur in our sides to make us forward in this duty!

3. Call to mind the practices of God's saints. Moses, that man of God, preferred it before his own salvation, Exod. xxxii. 32. No marvel then if he preferred it before the honours and treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 24. The like did blessed Paul, who professeth that for God's glory in the salvation of the Jews, he could wish himself accused or sepa-

* Bellarm. in Ps. xix.

rated from Christ, Rom. ix. 2. Remarkable also is the apostles' care in the cure of the cripple, Acts xxiv. 11, that the least part of God's praise might not cleave to their fingers, but all might be ascribed to the Lord. The four and twenty elders cast their crowns before the throne, Rev. iv. 10; they empty themselves of all glory, merit, and worthiness whatsoever, that they may give all praise unto the Lord. And lastly, have we not our Saviour's own example for our imitation, who both by prayer and practice sought his Father's glory, and only it—'Father,' saith he, 'glorify thy name,' John xii. 28; and again, 'I honour my Father, and seek not my own glory,' chap. xlix. 50. And in that sweet prayer of his, 'I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,' chap. xvii. 4. Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, and have so many examples before us for our encouragement, let us lay aside all pride of heart, self-love, vainglory, and every such like weight and sin which doth so easily beset us, and in simplicity of heart aim at our Master's praise in all we undertake. Every dull jade will follow, though he will not lead the way; we are but jades in Christianity and godliness if we continue careless, when so many have gone before us in this duty.

4. Remember, further, how we pray. Do we not desire daily the hallowing of God's name? Now, to say it with our mouths, and not seek it in our lives, is damnable hypocrisy—a sin that God abhors. Do we not likewise pray that God's will may be done in earth as it is in heaven? Now tell me, how do the angels spend their time? Do not they cry continually one unto another, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory?' Isa. vi. 3. Oh take heed lest thou multipliest lies as thou multipliest prayers, see that thy heart and tongue be not at variance. What thou prayest for with thy lips, see thou practisest in thy life. Let not your works give your tongues the lie.

5. Again, for our further encouragement hereto, consider we the benefit that comes hereby; for by glorifying God we bring glory to ourselves—the greatest fruit thereof redounds to us. His glory is as himself, eternal, infinite, and so abides in itself, not capable of our addition to it or detraction from it. As the sun, which would shine in its own brightness and glory though all the world were blind, and did wilfully shut their eyes against it, so God will ever be most glorious, let men be never so obstinate or rebellious. Yea, God will have glory by reprobates, though it be nothing to their ease; and though he be not glorified *of* them, yet he will glorify himself *in* them. Yet, notwithstanding this, he will try how we prize his glory, and how industrious we are to magnify and exalt it; wherein, if he find us pain-

ful, he will plentifully reward it, and return glory for glory, according to his promise, 'Them that honour me will I honour,' 1 Sam. ii. 30.

6. Lastly, If all that hath been said work not upon us, yet let the danger that follows upon the neglect of this duty move us. How many examples are recorded in Scripture of God's judgments upon such as did either derogate from God, or arrogate to themselves any part of that praise which was due unto his name! Moses and Aaron, yet his own dear servants, were debarr'd out of the land of promise, because they glorified him not at the waters of strife, Num. xx. 12. The high priesthood was removed from the house of Eli, and the wrath of God was kindled against him, for the iniquity of his sons which he saw in them, and stay'd them not, and so honoured them above the Lord, 1 Sam. ii. 29, 31, and iii. 13. When Nebuchadnezzar vaunted vain-gloriously of that great Babel which he had built by the might of his power, and to the honour of his majesty, how was he debased! His kingdom was taken from him, he was driven from amongst men, and sent to grass with the beasts of the field for seven years' space, until he was made to know that the most high God ruleth in the kingdom of men, Dan. iv. 30, 31. And lastly, remember God's hand on Herod, Acts xii. 22, 23, who, taking to himself the glory which was due unto the Lord, when the people applauded his eloquent oration, was immediately smitten by the angel of God, and was eaten up of worms, and so gave up the ghost. 'Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples unto us; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come,' 1 Cor. x. 11, to the intent that we should not do as they have done, lest, despising him, we be despised as they were, 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Let these things be laid to heart, and kindly work upon us; so that, whatsoever we are, we may be it 'in him, through him, and for him,' Rom. xi. 36. Begin all your works in God,^a and end in God; yea, dedicate yourselves unto him. No trades-man can endure to have any of his chief tools, which he hath made or wherewith he worketh, used to a wrong end. Man is one of God's chief instruments, whom he hath made for his own honour, and therefore cannot endure that he or any of his members should be instruments of wickedness to his dishonour; and let all good Christians take heed lest they do anything, which may cause God or his gospel to be blasphemed.

The lewd life of one professor doth more harm, and tends more to God's dishonour, than the lewd life of a hundred atheists, as daily experience maketh good. Let a profane wretch, that neither feareth God nor reverenceth man, live in the grossest sins that can be

thought of, there is hardly one word of reproof or dislike uttered. Let another that professeth religion be overtaken through infirmity, and that but once in all his life, then are the mouths of all the profane multitude opened against the very truth and profession itself. These are your Bible-bearers, your professors, your men of the holy house; see their fruits! Thus every little aberration in a professor is noted, when outrageous wickednesses of profane wretches is nothing at all regarded. When the lesser stars be eclipsed, none takes knowledge of it; but if the sun be once, then every one observes it. What cause, therefore, have all such to be careful of their carriage! Look to thyself, therefore, thou that art a professor of the gospel; thou dippest in the same dish with Christ, and therefore thou of all other shouldst be farthest off from dishonouring his name. David took it more to heart that those who did eat bread at his table did despise him, than that others did; that Absalom should seek his life, than that Shimei should rail upon him. And thou my son Brutus—*καὶ σὺ, τέκνον, σὺ*—art thou one of them? said Julius Cæsar to his son, when he saw him to be amongst them that murdered him: this pierced deeper into his soul than the swords of all his enemies did or could. So the sins of such as come near unto the Lord in a holy profession, of whom he looketh to be sanctified, is more grievous to him than the grosser sins of other men. To such he will one day say, as Cæsar to his son, 'Art thou one of them?' What! in the habit of a professor, and live like a beast? One in show that loves me, and yet a worldling, a drunkard, or the like? Oh how wilt thou answer it? Thou that gloriest in the name of a professor, and yet livest like a pagan, can God endure it? Surely no. See, then, thou so livest as that none may speak evil of thee, but that all the world may see he lieth.^b Yet, further, this would be pressed to all callings and conditions. Let magistrates mind this, and do what lies in them to establish the church's peace, and continuance of the gospel; let godliness be countenanced, sin punished, and the faithful be by them encouraged. 'It shall be their wisdom and glory in the sight of the people' thus to do, Deut. iv. 6. Let ministers be careful in a special manner of this. Oh how difficult a thing is it for us not to hurl away some part of our Master's praise! A glorious and comfortable thing it is indeed for a minister to be able to say that he hath been God's instrument to bring one soul to the obedience of Christ; yet for him to aim at his own vainglory, even in gaining of souls to God's kingdom, suits not with that sincere affection which ought to be in him, to promote not his own, but the praise and glory of

^a A Jove principium.—*Virg., Eclog. 3.*

^b Ut nemo de nobis male loqui absque mendacio possit.—*Mier.*

him that sent him. Let us, then, not suffer any part of the repute or honour of any of our labours to rest upon our own heads, but repel it forcibly from ourselves, and reflect it carefully upon the Lord Jesus, saying, with St Paul, 'Not I, not I, but the grace of God in me.' Yea, let every one, of what calling or condition soever, so carry his course of life as that God may be honoured in all things. And here let me bring to mind Joab's commendable carriage in taking of the city Rabbah—with which I will conclude the point: for when he had fought against it, and took the city of waters—that is, the waters of the city, so called by a figure—and cut off the conduits,⁵ by which his policy he brought the people into such distress as that they could no way escape, he sends this message unto David, 'Gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it, lest I take the city, and it be called by my name,' 2 Sam. xii. 28—*i.e.*, lest it redound to my honour, and that victory be ascribed unto me. Doubtless this was his great praise, so to order the battle as that his lord and king might have the glory of the day, and not himself. Should not we do thus? Are not we more bound to God than Joab was to David? Ought not we more to respect our God than he his king? What good thing, therefore, soever we do or have, give him the glory of it, saying, with the psalmist, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise,' Ps. cxv. 1.

Well-beloved. We have before seen whom the prophet meaneth by his well-beloved, together with the reasons. By *well-beloved*, God is meant. One reason for that appellation was because he is the church's well-beloved; she being his spouse, and he her husband. In which respect, as he was a member of the church, and in the behalf of the church, he so termeth him, for he did love him well. So then,

Doct. The church, and every true member of the church, doth, and so ought, to love the Lord entirely.

This we find commanded: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might,' Deut. vi. 5, and x. 12. 'Love ye the Lord, all his saints: for the Lord preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer,' Ps. xxxi. 13. 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maran-atha,' had in execration, or excommunicated to death, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. This we shall likewise find practised by God's saints: 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength,' saith David, Ps. xviii. 1. And again, 'I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice,' Ps. cxvi. 1. Thus St Peter, 'Lord, thou knowest that I love thee,' John xxi. 25. And Mary had many sins forgiven her, for 'she loved much,' Luke vii. 47. The church in the Canticles likewise plentifully: 'Tell

me, O thou whom my soul loveth,' saith she to Christ, chap. i. 7. And again, 'By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth,' chap. ii. 1. And what word more common in that song than love and well-beloved? I must bring Ignatius also to be of the quorum. 'My love Christ,' saith he, 'was crucified.* And thus hath this truth been proved, that the church, and every true member thereof, both doth and ought to love the Lord entirely.

Reason. And reason good: for, first, he loved us not existing—yea, resisting.† For while we were yet sinners, he loved us, Rom. v. 8. This reason is given by St John, 'We love him because he loved us first,' 1 John iv. 19. And surely if God prevent us with love, we can do no less than answer him in the same nature, though not, for that is impossible, in the same measure, 'Do not publicans love those that love them? Sinners do the same,' Mat. v. 46; Luke vi. 32. Though, then, we have not been forward to love first, yet let us not be backward to return love at last. *Si tardi sumus ad amandum, non tardi sumus ad redamandum.*

Reason 2. Again, we are tied to him by all the bonds of love and duty. We are his creatures, he our Maker, Ps. c. 3; we his servants, he our Lord, Mal. i. 6; we his children, he our Father, 2 Cor. vi. 18; we his spouse, he our Husband, Hosea ii. 19; yea, so strait is the union betwixt him and us, as that he is said to be the foundation, we the building, Eph. ii. 20; he the root, we the branches, John xv. 1; he the head, we the body, &c., Eph. v. 23. Being bound by so many and so near bonds, how can we but acknowledge it is our duty entirely to love him?

Reason 3. Besides, he only is love-worthy, being 'the chiefest amongst ten thousands,' Cant. v. 10. What is there to be compared with him? The most excellentest creatures are but as the beams of his beauty. That glory or goodness which is in any of them is but as a shadow, in respect of that infinite good which is in him who is the maker of them.‡ Thus this threefold cord may hold us; it will not easily be broken, as speaks wise king Solomon, Eccles. iv. 12. And now, *Triplex ex arbore fructus*, A threefold use this point affords.

Use 1. For trial. And, indeed, what better use can we make of it? There was never any Sennacherib nor Jezebel but said they loved God; and who boasts more they love him, than the profanest wretch that daily doth contemn him? It is a thing counted both common and easy to perform this duty,

* Epist. xii. quæ est ad Romanos.

† Diligit enim non existentes, imo resistentes.—Bernard.

‡ Splendor summi illius boni; pulchrum cœlum, pulchra terra, sed pulchrior qui fecit illa.

* Præcis aquæ ductibus.—Joseph.

and no man doubts he is herein to seek; when, notwithstanding this is as true as God is true, who is truth itself, that no more do truly love God than are from all eternity elected by God to salvation. And we know, or may know, for Scripture says it, that the number of them is small, Isa. i. 9; Luke xii. 32—yea, very small, comparatively considered; their account will soon be made, it is but a short work, into a short sum shall they be gathered, Rom. ix. 28.

Seeing, then, it is as narrow as God's election, and that is very narrow, let each one search narrowly his bosom for this grace. A rule of three, (1.) Our affections; (2.) Our words; (3.) Our actions, will sufficiently discover it.

(1.) By our affections will it soon be seen what love we bear to God; for love, as the greatest wheel, sets all the rest a-work. It is the strongest affection, and to it do all the rest give place. Where that goes before, desire follows after; what I love I desire to enjoy, and it is not where it begets not a desire of society. Amnon was very sick through love; his flesh did pine and waste away, because he could not enjoy his sister Tamar, 2 Sam. xiii. 2. David and Jonathan did love entirely, and as the text saith, 'their souls were knit together,' 1 Sam. xviii. 1; whence it was that they took such pleasure and contentment each in other. The story shews what shifts they made to meet, what weeping and heart-sorrow there was when they were to part, and all because they loved, chap. xx. 18, 19, 41, 42. Thus he that loves the Lord must needs desire to have society with the Lord. A joy it is to his soul to meet him, and nothing doth he desire so much as to enjoy him. And so David was affected, as appears by those many pathetical desires of his: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee,' Ps. lxxiii. 25; 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God,' Ps. xlii. 1; 'My soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land,' Ps. cxlvi. 6; 'My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning,' Ps. cxxx. 6. These and many other such like sayings shew the affection of his soul. And whereas in some places God is pleased graciously to manifest his presence after a special manner, and in some exercises there is an especial kind of fellowship had with him, we shall find what a great desire the godly have had to such places, and what great love they have borne to those duties. 'I have loved,' saith David, 'the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth,' Ps. xxvi. 8. And elsewhere thus: 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to

behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple,' Ps. xxvii. 4. And again, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness,' Ps. lxxxix. 1-10. The like is his desire after the means and exercises of religion: 'Oh how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day,' Ps. cxix. 97; 'I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold,' ver. 127; 'Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud,' Ps. lv. 17; yea, 'seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments,' Ps. cxix. 164. This hath been the desire of such, whose hearts have been inflamed with the love of God, after his presence of grace here; and as desirous have they been after God's presence of glory hereafter, with Paul desiring to be loosed that he might be with Christ, which they count best of all, Phil. i. 25; and with the Bride and Spirit in the Revelation say, 'Come; amen, even so come, Lord Jesus,' Rev. xxii. 17, 20.

Again, our joy will make known our love; for where love is, there joy will shew itself: 1. In the presence or enjoyment of the party beloved; 2. In his image or picture; 3. In such things as tend to the setting forth of his honour. As love causeth us to desire society with the beloved party, so it maketh us to rejoice in it greatly, when it is obtained and had, even as a loving wife rejoiceth in the company of her husband above the company of any other whatsoever. So saith the church, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God,' Isa. lxi. 10. The apostle Paul calleth Christ his rejoicing: 'By our rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus,' 1 Cor. xv. 31. Thus do God's children rejoice in God's presence; yea, 'their joy before him is according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil,' Isa. ix. 3.

As they joy in his presence, so do they rejoice in his image. The very picture of a friend whom we entirely love we esteem highly of, and often solace ourselves in the beholding it; so 'if we love him that begat, we love him also that is begotten,' 1 John v. 1. If we love God, it cannot be but we must needs rejoice in the image of God, which appears in his children, consisting in 'righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. iv. 24. And thus did David, 'My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth; and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight,' Ps. xvi. 2, 3. Where mark, 1. His delight was *in the saints*; 2. *In all the saints*; 3. *All his delight* was in them. The mother of Darius, as I have read, saluting Hephæstion instead of Alexander, who was but Alexander's favourite, blushed, and was much ashamed

upon notice of her mistake; which Alexander perceiving, bid her not be troubled, For, said he, he is also Alexander. Dost thou rejoice in Christ? thou must then rejoice in the godly, for they also are Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12.

And as in the image, so love causeth us to rejoice in everything that serveth to the praise or profit of the beloved party. So here. As, I. Generally; in the church's welfare. Jerusalem shall be 'preferred to our chiefest joy,' Ps. cxxxvii. 6. Thus the godly in Isaiah's days, 'Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her,' Isa. lxxi. 10. 2. More particularly; the readiness of the people to do God service will stir up joy. As in David's time, 'The people rejoiced for that they offered willingly,' 1 Chron. xxix. 9. And in Asa's time, 'All Judah rejoiced at the oath of the covenant which they had made unto the Lord; for they had sworn,' saith the text, 'with all their heart,' 2 Chron. xv. 15. So likewise will the conversion of sinners. Thus, when the Jews heard of the conversion of the Gentiles, and that the Holy Ghost was fallen upon them, as upon themselves at the beginning, 'they glorified God, saying, Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life,' Acts xi. 18. It maketh us likewise to rejoice at our own well-doing, because honour thereby redounds to the name of God. So saith Solomon, 'It is joy to the just to do judgment,' Prov. xxi. 15. And lastly, In our own salvation, 'That our names are written in the book of life,' Luke x. 20. Thus in these, and in all things else, which tend, and so far forth as they tend, to the setting forth of the Almighty's praise, doth love cause us to rejoice.

Further, Our love, if sound, will be discerned by our fear. How afraid are we to offend, or any way displease, those whom we entirely affect! And therefore these two are joined together by Moses as sisters, for where one is, there is the other, Deut. x. 20. True it is, that 'perfect love casteth out fear,' as St John speaketh, 1 John iv. 18; but that is meant of a slavish and servile fear, not of this sonlike and filial fear, for it doth establish it. Moses, in one verse, sheweth both these kinds of fears: 'Fear not,' saith he to Israel, 'for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not,' Exod. xx. 20. He bids them not to fear, viz., with that slavish fear; and yet chargeth them to fear, viz., with this godly and child-like fear. By this latter fear, then, we need not fear to try our love; for, without question, he that truly loves God is afraid to displease God by committing of the least sin, for fear lest it should make a divorce between him and his God, whom his soul loveth.

Moreover, love causeth sorrow and grief: 1. For our beloved's absence; 2. For any wrong or injury offered

unto him. Do we not see what discontentment beasts, which, out of natural instinct, love their young, do shew when they have lost them? And how grievously do parents take the death or absence of their children? In human love amongst friends it fareth after the same manner as it doth in natural. What a heavy parting was there between Jonathan and David! 1 Sam. xx. 41. And is not this the nature of religious love? The spouse having lost her well-beloved, inquires through the streets, as undone without him, 'Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?' Cant. v. 6, and iii. 2, 3. And so doth every faithful soul, when through their misbehaviour they cause the Lord for a while to leave them, and withdraw his favourable presence from them.

In the case of wrong; we have an excellent example in Jonathan. How grievously did he take it, that his beloved friend David should be injured, though it were his own father who offered it! For so saith the text, 1 Sam. xx. 34, 'He was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.' So love to God causeth a man to take to heart things done against his name and honour, be it done either by himself or other. If by himself, he goeth out with Peter, and weepeth bitterly, Mat. xxvi. 75; and, as it is said of the people of God in the day of their repentance, draws water, to pour it out before the Lord, 1 Sam. vii. 6. And so was David affected, as appears in that penitential psalm, which he made upon occasion of his foul fall into adultery and murder, Ps. li. If by others, he laments it heartily with Lot, who, 'dwelling amongst the wicked, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds,' 2 Pet. ii. 8. And thus did David, 'I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy word,' Ps. cxix. 158. 'Rivers of tears run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law,' ver. 136. So Ezra, who, when he heard how the people had sinned, and dishonoured God by taking strange wives unto them, 'he rent his garment and his mantle, and plucked the hair from off his head and beard, and sat down astonished,' Ezra ix. 3. Jeremiah, likewise, when he saw the people would not give glory to the Lord, neither would hear, he telleth them, 'his soul should weep in secret for their pride; and his eye should weep sore, and run down with tears for their disobedience,' Jer. xiii. 17. And thus did those mourners, marked with God's own mark for his, 'mourn for the abominations committed in Jerusalem,' Ezek. ix. 4, whereby they testified the soundness of this grace of love.

As grief, so patience in suffering, and undergoing of trouble, labour, pain, will manifest how great our love is which we bear to God. What infinite pains will men that love the world take for a handful of it!

Hunters, hawkers, how do they toil and moil, yet never complain! And why? They love the sport. Hard things love makes easy, great pains to it seems pleasure; no task so hard which love refuses to gratify the beloved party. For the love that Jacob did bear to Rachel, he was content to undergo seven years' hard service, and they seemed unto him but as a few days: the reason is given in the text, 'For the love he had to her,' Gen xxix. 20. If Shechem will marry Dinah, it must be on condition of circumcision; he must first suffer the cutting of his tender flesh, though it be, as questionless it would be, very painful. 'Now the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter,' Gen. xxxiv. 19. The like patience will be found in undergoing any pain or trouble for God's cause, if we truly love him. The apostles depart from the presence of the council, 'rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ,' Acts v. 40. Ignatius, that blessed martyr of Christ Jesus, thus testified his love, as appeareth by his epistle, which he wrote unto the church of Rome, where he professeth that the more he was exercised with the injuries of his oppressors, the more he was instructed, and that he weighed neither visible nor invisible things for the love of Christ. And addeth further, 'Come fire, cross, wild beasts, slaughter, tearing of bones, dismembering of the parts of my body; yea, let all the torments of the devil rush upon me, so I may enjoy Christ. Better for me to be a martyr than a monarch; my love is crucified,' &c. And so John Huss, who, being led forth to the place of execution, after he was condemned in the Council of Constance to be burned, having a cap of paper set upon his head, in which were painted three devils of an ugly shape, and this inscription added, *This is an arch-heretic*—when he beheld it, said very mildly, My Lord Jesus Christ, who was innocent, vouchsafed to wear a sharp crown of thorns for me, wretched sinner; and therefore I will bear this, though imposed as a scorn, for his name's sake.* And in that truly named *Golden Legend*, Heb. xi. 36, of how many do we read who were 'tried by mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonments; who were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword; who wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented,' &c. Thus God's servants, whose hearts have been inflamed with a love unto him, have rejoiced in their sufferings, and patiently underwent the heaviest trials, especially when it hath been for their Saviour's sake, taking greater pleasure in their iron fetters than the proudest courtier doth of his golden chain. It was Harding's invective against our reverend and precious Jewel, that we protestants

* Ex narratione historica de condemnatione Joh. Hussi in Concil. Const.

were worse than the very devils; for whereas bread and water and the cross could scare them away, princes could be rid of us by no means but fire. To whom that excellent bishop answered, that though it pleased his malicious humour to make but a jest of the blood of God's saints, yet it was no more ignominy for lambs to suffer what Christ suffered, than it was praise and credit for wolves to betray them, as Judas did.

By our zeal, lastly, may our love be tried. For whether it be an intension of love, as some would have it, or a compound of love and anger, as others describe it—certainly it is a spiritual heat wrought in the heart of man by the Holy Ghost improving this good affection of love, as one of late hath well defined it. By this Moses discovered his love, for though he were the meekest man upon the earth, yet he was not only grieved, but wonderfully angry when he saw God to be dishonoured, Exod. xxxii. 19. So Elijah, Phinehas, Samuel, David, Nehemiah, and many others did the like, as largely appeareth in their stories. And surely, if we loved the Lord, it could not be but we would be zealous for the Lord. It is a cold love that is not heated with this fire. When men can digest oaths and blasphemies as easy as the ostrich iron, and see God to be dishonoured without indignation, let them conclude love is wanting. That same Spirit, that descended first upon the Lord Jesus, in the similitude of a dove, Mat. iii. 16, descended afterwards upon his apostles in the similitude of fire, Acts ii. 3. As in some things we should be meek and patient, so in other things hot and earnest. Meekness in our own causes, but in God's zeal and fervency, doth well. And thus we have seen the first rule of trial, wherein I have been somewhat large, though I hope not over-large—forgive all good faults; brevity in the next shall make amends.

(2.) The second way for the discovery of our love is by our speeches; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,' Mat. xii. 34. Experience makes this good. The niggard will be talking of his niggardness; the worldling of his wealth; the voluptuous of his pleasures; the ambitions one of his honours and preferments, Isa. xxxii. 6; and whatsoever a man loveth most, that will he take his greatest joy in talking of. What commendation shall you hear the huntsman give of his dog, the falconer of his hawk! How large are these in praising of their sport!

'Navita de ventis, de tauris narrat arator,' &c.

Thus is the tongue the interpreter of the mind, *Lingua est animi Mercurius*, and by its language you may easily guess at the heart's meaning. If the love of God be there, thy tongue will be the tell-tale, and bewray it, either in speaking of the Lord, or for the Lord. *Of him,*

in commending or admiring him. It was the love of God in David's heart that filled his mouth with often praises, Ps. cxix. 164. The spouse in the Canticles, she loved much and praised much: 'My well-beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves,' &c., Cant. v. 10. So she goes on, her 'tongue being as the pen of a ready writer,' Ps. xlv. 1, having words at will to praise and admire everything that was in him. So, likewise, for him the tongue will be employed, if love be in the heart. David will speak for God and for his truth, 'even before kings, and will not be ashamed,' Ps. cxix. 46. To hear God to be dishonoured, his word blasphemed, his gospel scorned, his children reviled, love cannot brook; it will work within us as nature wrought in the son of Cæsar, of whom it is recorded,* that though he had been always dumb, yet, seeing one come to kill his father, the impediments and strings of his tongue were violently broken, through the force of natural affection, so that he cried out, 'O man, kill not Cæsar!' And surely we may, in this case say, as that heroic Luther said in the like, *Maledictum silentium quod hic conviçit*: Cursed be that silence that here forbeareth. Thus may we make our tongues the touchstone of our hearts: for, as the door-keeper said to Peter, Mat. xxvi. 73, so say I, 'Thy speech bewrayeth thee.'

(3.) The third and last way is, by our works and actions. Love is full of operation; so shews St Paul, 1 Cor. xiii., and hardly can it deny any work which the party beloved doth enjoin. Hence said Delilah to Samson, Judges xvi. 15, 'How canst thou say I love thee, when thy heart is not with me? Thou hast mockt me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth.' Our blessed Saviour makes this a rule of trial: 'If ye love me,' saith he, 'keep my commandments,' John xiv. 15. And again, thus: 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me,' ver. 21. And elsewhere thus: 'Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you,' chap. xv. 14. Thus Abraham made good his love by his ready obedience to God's command in offering up his son, and in leaving his own country to go to that place whither God should send him, Gen. xii. and xxii.

And as love maketh us thus obedient and dutiful, so it causeth us to be bountiful and liberal, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xiii. 4; for, where the heart is enlarged, the hand cannot be straitened; where the bowels are open, the purse is never shut. So that Herod may have his pleasure which he affects, what cares he though he part with half his kingdom? Mark vi. 23. What will a man spare from his

* Herodotus.

special friend that may be for his good? All I have is at his command to whom I have given myself. So said Jehoshaphat to Ahab: 'I am as thou art, and my people are as thy people,' 2 Chron. xviii. 3. Jonathan loves David as his soul, and he will shew it by stripping himself, even to his sword and to his bow, for the supporting and helping of his dearest David, 1 Sam. xviii. 3, 4. Of so frank a disposition is love, that it will be prodigal of its nearest and dearest things. If Mary's tears will wash her Saviour's feet, she will pour them out, and not think her hair too good to be the towel, Luke vii. 38. No spikenard shall be too costly for his head whom her soul affects, John xii. 3. What though that ungent might have been sold for some great sum of money, wherewith she might have done herself much good? Yet she had rather bestow it on her Saviour than on herself, because she loved her Saviour more than herself. Thus love will be content to be at cost for Christ, and thinks nothing too much that is done to him or for him.

As that renowned Master Fox, of whom it is reported that he would never deny beggar that asked in God's name. Thus by our obeying of him, and cost for him, our love may soon be seen; our works, indeed, do not justify, yet they testify. As in a clock, though the finger of the dial makes not the clock to go, but the clock it, yet the finger without shews how the clock within doth stir; so here. And therefore would St James speak of faith, 'Shew me thy faith by thy works, for that faith that is without works is dead,' chap. ii. 18; so say I by love. 'Shew me thy love by thy works, for that love that is without works is dead.' Ye love your backs, and spare not to clothe them; you love your children, and therefore do much for them; you love your beasts, and therefore bestow largely on them; and can you say you love the Lord, and deal so pinchingly and illiberally with him? It cannot be: for look, as the love of God is the fountain of all his benefits extended unto man, so is love in man the cause of his obedience and service to his God. God hath loved us first to do us good, and we love him next that we may do him service.

And thus we have done with the marks of trial, whereby, if we take any tolerable pains in the examination of ourselves, it would soon be seen what love to God we bear; and, as I fear, it would appear that, albeit the greatest number profess they love the Lord, yet the fewest number would be found to love him in sincerity. And, Lord, thou seest and knowest it. For how little art thou desired or sought for! How small is that joy which men take in thee or thine! Who sets thy fear before their eyes, and when thou hidest thy face, what man is troubled? Where is our patience in suffering for thy sake, when one hour in thy house of praise cannot be endured without an

ache in our bones? and of what are we so soon weary as of well-doing? As for our zeal, where is it, while we sit still and see thee dishonoured, having no courage for thy truth? And do not our tongues condemn us, while they are for all purposes except thy glory? If they should justify us, would not our works and actions testify against us? We call thee Lord, but where is thine honour? The title only, and no more, thou gettest of us; or, if thou dost, it is but the dregs and offal, the very worst of all, and yet we grudge when we have not the best from thee. O blessed Saviour, shed abroad thy love in our hearts, that we may love thee better!

Use 2. And this is the first use which I would have made of this; let our second be for exhortation, that we would love the Lord, yea, prefer him in our love above all other well-beloveds. Let our affections be set upon him, and be inflamed towards him. Let our tongues be mute to all vanities, and eloquent only unto him and for him, who gave man his tongue and speech; and whilst other men's discourses are taken up about trifles, let ours be spent in setting forth his praises. Let our actions be such as may be pleasing to him, and let us not dare to venture upon anything that may offend him. And however we cannot perfectly, yet let us all pray for grace that we may love him yet more fervently, and less feignedly, only for himself and his mercy. For this end use these helps:—

(1.) Get a true knowledge of him and of his name, Ps. ix. 16. For they that know him love him, and as our knowledge is, such is our love. The heathen man observed that unknown things were not desired, though in themselves they were never so excellent or desirable, *Ignoti nulla cupido*. And what a help this is for the attainment of this grace appears by that speech of the church unto her spouse, 'Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee,' Cant. i. 2. His name, fame, glory, and renown, was by many means made known, especially by his word, unto the world, and hence it was the church did carry such an inward affection and hearty desire to him, which she testified by an outward approving and liking of him. Thou then that desirest to love God, see thou get the true and sound knowledge of God; labour first for that, by using all good means tending thereunto, especially diligent reading and conscionable attending to the preaching of the word. 'Search the scriptures,' saith our Saviour; 'for in them ye think to have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me,' John v. 39.

(2.) Seriously meditate of God's love to thee in Christ, before all worlds were, and of his rich mercy which he offers thee through Christ. Consider what a difference he hath made between thee and many other that are reprobates, which only came from the

riches of his love; for by nature thou wert as vile as they, as miserable as they, a child of wrath as well as any of them, not a hair to choose between them and thee. Consider of it likewise in other particulars, as thou shalt have occasion, and it will work thy heart to love him. Love is love's loadstone; so sheweth the apostle, 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' 2 Cor. v. 14. Labour then to love God a little, who hath loved us exceeding much; and, indeed, as Bernard^a speaketh, we cannot answer God well in anything but in love; for if he be angry with us, we may not answer him again in anger; if he judge us, we may not again judge him; if he chide us, we must be patient; if he command, we must obey. But in that he loveth, we may, yea, must, return love for love, for he loveth to be loved.

(3.) Remember often his holy presence, and do not dare to go whole weeks, nor days, nor hours without thinking of him, for that will estrange our affections more and more from him. We see how it often happens with new married couples, who though at first they seem somewhat strange, and hardly can affect each one the other, yet through daily familiarity and communion they come at length entirely to love.

(4.) Withdraw your hearts from the love of the world if you would love the Lord, for the love of God and it cannot stand together; so witnesseth St John, 'If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,' 1 John ii. 15. And so St James, 'The friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God,' James iv. 4. And thus our blessed Saviour, 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon,' Mat. vi. 24. We must therefore either renounce the world or our part in Christ, for worldliness and Christianity, as we see, are two such ends as will never meet. Thy love to the world must abate, if thou wouldst have thy love to Christ increase.

(5.) See thou frequent the company of the godly. Thou must 'walk in the steps of the flock, and feed thy kids near the tents of the shepherds,' Cant. i. 8. Thou must converse with holy Christians who are 'sick of love,' and abound in holy affections, chap. ii. 5. When those daughters of Jerusalem, who at first despised Christ, and wondered why the church should make so much ado for him, had a while conversed with the church about him, and heard her speak with such affection, admiring and extolling him, then they also fall in love with that beloved, and offer their service to the church in joining with her to seek him out. 'Whither is thy beloved gone,' say they, 'O thou fairest amongst women, whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?' Cant. vi. 1. Thus holy conference with such as love

^a Ser. 83 in Cant.

Christ is an excellent means to inflame our hearts also with a love to him.

(6.) The last help is prayer, for 'every good and perfect gift cometh from above,' James i. 17. Ask it therefore at God's hands, for 'He giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth no man,' ver. 5. These are some helps for the attainment of this grace, which, if we conscientiously practise, I doubt not but we shall soon find kindled in our bosoms, to our endless comfort. And that is our second use.

Use 3. A third we now infer, but briefly, and that for consolation of such as love the Lord, esteeming him as their best beloved, setting their whole hearts and souls upon him. In so doing they have performed a worthy work, and such a work as in the end brings peace. Oh, the privileges, the super-excellent privileges that belong to such a one! 'He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him,' saith our Saviour, John xiv. 21. So that, we see, here is no love lost. Christ will respect them most graciously for evermore, and always do them good. Yea, everything shall further their good and welfare; and so saith the apostle, 'All things work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. Everything, the least *ens* and being, anything that can be named or conceived, shall work thy good, thy good of grace here and glory hereafter; so that the devil in the end shall get nothing by tempting thee to sin, but the greater overthrow of his own kingdom, and thou thereby shalt grow the better; it shall make thee more humble, lowly, watchful, careful, &c. Thus, blow what wind can blow, the illest wind shall blow thee good; hap what happen may, it cannot make thee miserable. Thou standest in a centre, the circumference is mercy. Whatsoever cometh to thee, be it loss, cross, pain, sickness, death, it must first come through the circumference of mercy; and so taste and relish of mercy before it come at thee or touch thee. Oh, what a privilege is this, how excellent, how admirable! This is thy privilege who lovest God, for to thee it is made, and to none else besides.

Can we marvel now at the apostle's words, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him'? 1 Cor. ii. 9. Many excellent and beautiful objects hath the eye beheld, and the ear hath heard relation made of things far surpassing those which the eye hath seen, but the heart is able to conceive of things more excellent than either eye hath seen or ear hath heard: yet neither eye hath seen nor ear heard, nor yet can the heart conceive, saith he, the things that God hath prepared for such as are lovers of him. He hath promised, saith St James, a kingdom unto such, James ii. 5, and a crown of life, chap. i. 12, which

they shall receive. Let then the love-sick hearts of the godly be cheered up, for God doth not forget their labour and love, but he will recompense it with an everlasting love. Let it serve likewise to enkindle our love, so that where it is now but in the spark, it may break out into the flame; loving him with all our soul, strength, and might, desiring nothing above him, equally with him, or without him, loving him for himself, and all things else for him. And so, to end the point and use with that sweet meditation of Austine,^a 'Blessed is he, O Lord, who thus loveth thee, and his friend in thee, and his enemy for thee; for only that man cannot lose anything which he loveth, who loveth nothing but in thee, who cannot be lost.'

And thus much for the first reason that is given for this title or appellation; come we now to the second, and see whether we can be briefer there.

In a more particular respect also might the prophet call the Lord his well-beloved—viz., in respect of his office and calling, as he was a prophet, to whom the charge of Christ's queen, the church, was committed. And in regard of this ministers are called Christ's friends, according to that saying of St John, 'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice,' John iii. 29; where by *friend* he understands himself, and in himself all other ministers, both prophets and apostles; and that both because they labour to make the marriage between the church and Christ, as also endeavour to hold fast the church unto Christ, being jealous over her for his sake, lest she should be seduced. Taking this as a reason, which indeed is the usual reason rendered by our expositors^f for this appellation, by good consequence it will follow that,

Doct. Ministers are Christ's paronyms. In a special manner they are his friends, to woo the church and win the church unto himself, to fit it and prepare it for himself.

So witnesseth the apostle when he saith, 'We warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, whereunto,' saith he, 'I also labour,' Col. i. 28, 29. And writing to the Corinthians he thus speaketh, 'I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin unto Christ,' 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3; by whose practice we see the minister's duty, dignity, and office, both to fit and prepare the church for Christ; as also to hold fast the church unto Christ, that she break not her marriage covenant with him. I hasten to the uses, for in this I have promised brevity.

Use 1. Let us ministers hence learn our duties.

^a August. iv. Confess.

^f Calv., Ursin., Moller., Trem., and Jun.

And seeing we have the church committed to our care, and are so far honoured as to be betruſted with Chriſt's queen, let us uſe all poſſible means that we may deliver unto the bridegroom a pure and chaſte virgin. When Abraham ſent his ſervant to fetch a wife for his ſon Isaac, he brought him godly and beautiful Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. We are the Lord's ſervants, ſent to fetch a wife for Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God. Oh let us be as faithful to God the Father and to Jeſus Chriſt his Son, as that good ſervant was to Abraham and Isaac. Let us do our meſſage with diligence, and execute our charge with faithfulness and prayer; let us ſpeak of Chriſt, and only of Chriſt, making him the ſcope and ſubject of all our preaching; and, as is the old emblem of St Chriſtopher, under which our ancient mythologiſts have deſcribed the good paſtor, wade through the ſea of this world, ſtaying on the ſtaff of faith, and lifting up Chriſt aloft to be ſeen of men, as the brazen ſerpent was on a pole, to be ſeen of the Iſraelites who were ſtung, John iii. 14. Let us ſo ſpeak of him as that the daughters of Jeruſalem may fall in love with him, working firſt upon the underſtanding of our people, bringing them to a thorough knowledge of this Chriſt, whom we tender unto them as a huſband, for this is requiſite in marriage; *error persone* makes a nullity. And then, ſecondly, upon their affections, that they may take liking of him. To further which, we muſt ſpeak earneſtly and ſeriously, not coldly, careleſſly; uſing the beſt of our ſkill, with arguments and motives to win them to his love. What a ſhame then is it for a miniſter either to be ignorant of this Chriſt, whom he ſhould commend as a huſband to the church; for what wiſe man will ſpeak for a ſtranger, of whom he hath no knowledge—or knowing him, yet be dumb or ſilent, never ſpeaking to the church in his praiſe and commendations; or if he doth, yet then to ſpeak either idly and fooliſhly, as, alas! too many do, whereby many are diſcouraged and driven further off from Chriſt; or elſe unfaithfully, ſpeaking two words for themſelves and one for him, deſiring to draw diſciples rather after them, Acts xx. 30, than win ſouls to God. Oh let not theſe things, my brethren, be found in any of us, but ſeeing we are called to ſuch honour, let us be inſtant in preaching, holy in living, earneſt in perſuading, careful in admoniſhing, giving to God's people the golden bracelets of God's truth, that ſo as Jacob returned with many more ſouls out of Syria into Canaan than he brought, Gen. xxxii. 10, ſo we may go out of this world, with many ſouls converted and won by us to Chriſt's love, into the world to come.

Uſe 2. Let hearers hence alſo be exhorted. For ſeeing miniſters are Chriſt's ſervants to offer and perſuade marriage betwixt the church and him, let them be bid welcome and hearkened unto. What

maid will not mark and give good attention when matter of marriage is broken to her, eſpecially if the offer be of ſome great heir, nobly born, well deſcended, &c., and ſhe herſelf but mean and of low degree? Should ſhe turn away her ear from hearkening to ſuch a motion, and ſay nay to ſuch a perſonage ſeeking and ſuing to her, would ſhe not be judged, and that juſtly, to be a fooliſh woman? And yet thus it is with us; the Son and heir of the great King of heaven ſends his ambaſſadors to treat with us poor beggars, yea, worſe than beggars, concerning marriage. And yet, good Lord, how coy are we; we cannot be ſpoken withal, forſooth—we be not at leiſure. And when our leiſure ſerves us, what a deal of wooing needs there! A man, indeed, would think it would be but an eaſy ſuit, and that God's miniſters ſhould not need to ſpend much breath before they have obtained; and yet they, with all their perſuaſions and entreaties, cannot ſo far prevail with us as to make us hearken to it. Every ſuitor ſhall have hearing, yea, and ſpeeding too, before Chriſt Jeſus. The devil, though he comes ever masked, and never dares ſhew his face, as well knowing, if he did appear in his own colours, no ſoul could then affect him; yet—becauſe his promiſes are great and large, as they were to our bleſſed Saviour when he offered to jointure him in many kingdoms if he would love him and fall down and worſhip him, Mat. iv. 9—is ſoon heard and answered. The world, though it be a warped, aged, and decrepit ſuitor, exceeding old, blind, and lame, having ſore eyes, blear and raw with cares, ſwollen legs diſeaſed with ſurfeits, and but a few minutes more to live, all as bad qualities in a ſuitor as may be, yet promiſing large jointure, good maintenance, wealth at will, honours and preferments, with the like; this old dotard ſpeeds. And for the fleſh, though, as St Jude ſpeaketh, ver. 23, it be spotted all over like an unclean leper or ulcerous Moor; yet, becauſe it is, as it were, a home-bred child, and pleads more than familiarity with us, promiſing all pleaſure and content unto us, as ſoon ſpeeds as either of the former. But as for Chriſt, who is beſt worthy, he hath but a cold ſuit of it. But, beloved, be more wiſe; give not, oh give not thy conſent to any other ſave Chriſt alone; if thou doſt, thou art undone for ever. The devil, he is large in promiſes, his words drop nectar; but he is a liar and a murderer, John viii., and ſo thou wilt find him in the end, if thou doſt truſt him. And for the world, it hath but a weak tenure of all that it poſſeſſeth, and can aſſure thee of no other dowry than vanity and vexation, as Solomon witneſſeth, Eccles. i., who proved it. If, then, thou beſtowedſt thyſelf on it, be thou aſſured that in the end thou muſt be left without being ſatisfied. As for that other ſuitor, the fleſh, he is leaſt worthy the

hearkening to of any. Remember he is an ill wooer that wanteth words; they are the cheapest chaffer a man can part withal; and therefore no wonder if he doth seek to insinuate himself by promises. But pass not for them, nay, stop your ears against them, and in this point be like the adder, 'which will not hear the charmer, charm he never so sweetly,' Ps. lviii. 4, 5. For be you well assured, if you make him your head and lord of all, he will soon consume all to your final undoing. Give entertainment, therefore, I beseech you, to the Lord of glory. For him I am a deputed wooer at this time; my suit unto you is for your loves for Christ my Master, for, 'as though God did beseech you through us, we pray you in Christ's stead, that ye be reconciled unto God,' 2 Cor. v. 20. Were he evil favoured or deformed, then you might have some cause to refuse to love him; but he is not. 'He is white and ruddy, the chiefest amongst ten thousand,' Cant. v. 10, infinitely fairer than all the sons of men, being 'the brightness of the glory of his Father, and the express image of his person,' Heb. i. 3. Or were he poor, like Lazarus, you might have some reason to disaffect him; but he is not, for he is rich and wealthy, being the greatest heir that ever was, even 'heir of all things,' Heb. i. 2. Or could you allege that his stock is mean, his birth ignoble, it were somewhat; but that you cannot, for he is 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' Rev. xix. 16, and xvii. 14, which dignity is his by birth. Or could you object against his wisdom, it might be some excuse for your refusal; but neither can you here except, for 'in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge,' Col. ii. 3. Seeing then he is the fairest, wealthiest, noblest, and wisest of any other whatsoever, set thy heart upon him, and love him until thou be sick of love for him. We see how many in this world marry; some only for beauty's sake; many again for riches' sake; other some for nobility and gentry's sake, and not a few for wisdom's sake; but where all these meet, it is judged a match unmatchable. Why, see, all these are abundantly in him; and therefore seek no further, for thou wilt assuredly speed worse. Standest thou upon dowry? Alas! thou hast little cause; for what bringest thou but sin and beggary? And yet he will instate thee into a kingdom of incomprehensible glory. Ahasuerus promises Esther half his kingdom; but Christ's performances outstrip his promises—he gives his a whole one: 'With joy and gladness shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace,' saith the psalmist, Ps. xlv. 15, speaking of the church, Christ's spouse. He hath a glorious house, a city of gold to entertain thee; the foundations of whose wall are garnished with precious stones. St John, in his Revelation, sets down a full description

of it, chap. xxi. Whoso will, let him read it and regard it, though it passeth the measures of geometry to measure it, the skill of logic to define it, and the eloquence of rhetoric to express it. But thus conceive: If the house of this world be so excellent, as that it deserves to be so esteemed by us, wherein God lets his enemies dwell; and if the lowest pavement of that heavenly mansion be so gloriously bespangled with the sun, moon, and twinkling stars, as we see it is, what, then, is the mansion itself? How glorious must the sides and ceiling of that eternal tabernacle be, which God hath sequestered for himself and spouse! These things being well considered, I hope thou wilt forbear to set thy love upon any other suitor, and now at length suffer thyself to be wrought upon by our ministry, not to gainsay, that we with all speed and haste, as Abraham's servant did, may return again to him that sent us. And thus much for the appellation, which I could not pass over without some useful observation. His warrant is next to be considered, which he brings for the publishing of this his song, and is implied in these words:—

Of my beloved—i.e., the song which his beloved put into his mouth, and which he had in charge from him to publish; for albeit Isaiah was the author instrumental and penman of it, yet God was the author principal. We see, then, he set it forth, *Cum gratia et privilegio regie majestatis.*

Doct. And hence let ministers learn to deliver nothing for doctrine, but what they are able to shew warrant and commission for the delivery of. Good warrant we must have for what we teach our people, whether it tend to the informing of their judgments, or rectifying of their affections, and be able to shew that we deliver nothing but what we have received in charge from God to deliver.

It was the usual manner of the prophets, preaching unto the people, to prefix before their message these and such like prefaces, 'Thus saith the Lord,' 'Hear the word of the Lord;' 'The word of the Lord which came,' &c., Ezek. ii. 4; Hosea iv. 1; Joel i. 1, *et alibi*; whereby they shewed they had authority from God. And thus doth St Paul ground his doctrine as upon a sure and certain foundation. 'I have received of the Lord,' saith he, 'that which I also have delivered unto you,' 1 Cor. xi. 23. And again elsewhere thus: 'First of all I delivered unto you that which I received,' &c., 1 Cor. xv. 3. This the Lord himself enjoins his servants: 'Thou shalt go to all that I will send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak,' said the Lord to Jeremiah, chap. i. 7. And to Ezekiel was this charge given: 'Thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me,' chap. iii. 17. So likewise when our Saviour sent out his apostles into the

world to teach all nations, he willet that they should 'Teach them to observe all things, whatsoever,' saith he, 'I have commanded you,' Mat. xxviii. 20. Yea, our blessed Saviour himself professeth, 'My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me,' John vii. 16. And again, 'The things that I have heard of him, those speak I to the world,' chap. viii. 28.

Reason. And the reason of this good—viz., that the faith of our hearers should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God: which reason the apostle himself renders why he came not with excellency of speech, nor enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of spirit and power, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.

Use. 1. The use is twofold. First, it concerns us ministers, that we be careful of our doctrine, and see that it be warrantable, sound, and good; not ours but God's. The lawyer, saith one, begins with reason, and so descends to common experience and authority. The physician he begins with experience, and so comes to reason and authority. But we divines must begin with authority, and so proceed to reason and experience. We are Christ's ambassadors, and in his stead, saith the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 20. Now, we know an ambassador is to speak nothing but what is given him in commission. He may not add nor alter, chop and change, invent or devise anything of his own. No way is he to depart from what is given in charge, but he must be found faithful in the execution of his office; and so see we be. Beware we, oh beware we of propounding any such doctrine as tendeth either to the infecting of the judgment with error, or tainting the life with uncleanness. Take heed how we dare to broach any new conceit or unnecessary quiddit, fitter to breed jangling than godly edifying; still remembering that it is the conviction of the conscience, the information of the understanding, the resolution of the judgment, the gaining of the affections, the redress of the life, that should be our aim in dispensing of the word. Now as for tricks and cranks, grammatical and rhetorical descant, ends of gold and silver, what help they to this business? Aaron's bells must be golden bells; not brass nor copper, nor any such like metal, but pure gold. Doctrines proceeding from our own brain, coined on the anvil of our own inventions, are not *cum gratia et privilegio*. God's pure truth must be dispensed, and all the truth, and nothing but the truth. So help us God!

Secondly, This nearly concerns all hearers, that they receive nothing into their heads and hearts but what they find seen, and allowed, and published by authority. 'To the law and to the testimony,' said the oracle of God of old; 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. viii. 20. This is the touch by which all doctrine

must be tried. If we have authority of Scripture for our propounded points, it being rightly understood, then we have authority from God himself for the delivery of it, else not. Too [much] to blame then are our over-credulous multitude, who hand over head admit and receive for orthodox whatsoever is propounded unto them by their teachers; and think this is a sufficient warrant for any point they hold, Our minister said it, or, Such a preacher delivered it in a pulpit; as if there were not some who run before they are sent, Jer. xxiii. 16, and publish the visions of their own brain, prophesying that which God never spake. In matters civil we are more cautious and wary; no gold, almost, we take before we have tried it by the touch, or weighed it in the balance; and what is the reason? Because there is much of it light and naught; yea, hardly we will take a groat without bowing, bending, rubbing it, and the like, being therein oftentimes over-curious; but in religious matters, which concern our faith and souls' salvation, we are over-careless, albeit we are forewarned of many false prophets that are gone into the world, 1 John iv. 1, and therefore willed not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God. This is a great yet common fault amongst us. Were he an angel from heaven that preacheth to thee, yet art thou bound to look into his doctrine and examine it, and not to take it upon credit without he bring sufficient proof and warrant for it, Gal. i. 8. By virtue of our place we challenge audience. Harken to a matter you must because we say it; but we cannot by and by challenge credence, for you may not believe it until you know upon what ground we speak it. And, therefore, like good Bereans, see you search the Scriptures whether these things be so, Acts xvii. 11.

The matter subject of this song is the last thing to be considered in the proem; the text saith it is,

Touching his vineyard. Of which vineyard we shall hereafter speak more largely. In the meantime this observe we:

Doct. The good of God's church is the subject of a preacher's labours; that is it whereupon he must especially attend, as did our prophet, whose art, wit, learning, time, and pains was especially spent about that which might make for the welfare of God's vineyard.

Hereunto tends that exhortation of the apostle, 'Let us wait on our ministering; he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation,' Rom. xii. 7, 8. With which duty he straitly chargeth Timothy, and us in him, 'Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them. Preach the word; be instant in season and out of season,' &c., 1 Tim. iv. 13-15. And according to this doctrine was his and the other

apostles' practice, who would not admit any other charge to be joined to their ministry, no, not the office of deacons, but laid the charge of providing for the poor on others—thinking it not fit to leave the word of God to serve tables, Acts vi. 2.

Reas. And did we but consider the weightiness of the calling, we would soon confess a minister had little need to employ himself in any by-affairs. For as it is an honour, so it is a burden, and such a burden as is too much for half a man, it requires the whole man, yea, the strength and ability of angels to stand under it, *Humeris angelorum formidandum*; and therefore, saith the apostle, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' 2 Cor. ii. 16.

Object. But St Paul exercised a manual occupation and became a tent-maker, labouring with his hands, and that after he was called to his apostleship. And so St Peter and others were fishers, and followed fishing.

Ans. I grant the apostles did so, but it was only in case of necessity, in time of the church's wants and poverty, to the end they might support the need and necessity of it, as also that they might cut away all occasion from them who watched for an occasion, whereby they might disgrace them and win credit to themselves. And thus for a minister to join another calling to his calling, when he is not able to maintain his charge, and in the general want and poverty of the church, it not being able to maintain him and his, cannot be thought unlawful. But where there is a church well established and reformed, this cannot be allowable.

Use 1. This doctrine likewise, like Rebekah's womb, doth twin. It affords a double use: one to us who are the Lord's warriors, that we 'entangle not ourselves with the things of this life,' 2 Tim. ii. 4. The Lord hath laid a heavy burden upon thy shoulders; couch not down with Issachar's ass to receive any other load. What a shame is it for to see a minister to turn farmer, grazier, physician, or the like, and all for a little pelf! so loading his mind with the burden of cares and covetousness, as if he were exonerated of the burden of the gospel! May we not well wonder with Synesius* how he comes to gain so much leisure as to serve two masters—God in *choro*, and mammon in *foro*? I know there is a care of secular affairs belonging to us; for a bishop must be able to rule his own house honestly, 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5. And again, 'if there be any'—without exception—'that provideth not for his family, he denieth the faith, and is worse than an infidel,' 1 Tim. v. 8. But these things must not hinder our constant care for the welfare of God's vineyard. Neither do I think it a thing unlawful for a minister to study physic, or have to do with some other calling; for, besides in the forenamed cases, so

it be at spare hours, *horis subsecivis*, and used rather as a recreation than occupation, it is allowable; yet still divinity must be our most and mainest study, that we may save and win souls to God, *Major pars vitæ atque ingenii huc ætet*. Let us, then, that are ministers of God's word, neither be idle nor ill occupied; and when we are about anything which belongs not to our calling, then remember we the check that Christ gave to Peter, 'What is that to thee?' John xxi. 21. The church is thy proper element, and the pulpit thy right *ubi*; the temple should be the centre of all thy circumference. Do that which belongs unto thy office; as Valentinian said to Ambrose, Thou art a minister, mind thou that: *Clericus in oppido, piscis in arido: age quod tui muneris est: verbi es minister, hoc age*.

Use 2. And now for our people, this use concerneth them. I doubt not but you will subscribe to what hath now been taught, and say, Thou hast well said in all that thou hast spoken. But now mark your duties; for if this be so, then ought you so to provide for your ministers and their families, as that they may have no cause to divert their studies. A necessary living, saith Chrysostom,^o ought plentifully to be ministered unto your teachers, lest they should be discomfited, and that they might not deprive themselves and you of great things, while they be busied about the smallest. And surely this is one of the blemishes of our church, that many well-deserving ministers are of necessity compelled to leave studying of sermons, and study for bread to put in their own and children's mouths. What vocation is there in this land, honest in itself, and industriously followed by the professors of it, wherein a man may not live and leave well behind him for the maintenance of such as shall come after, except only in the ministry? Physic and law bring wealth and honour—*Dat Galenus opes, dat Justinianus honores*—but learning follows Homer with a staff and wallet. The study of divinity brings contempt and beggary. Look, how it was with the Jews under the tyranny of Egypt, Exod. v., so is it now with us; when we should make brick, work in our profession, we are enforced to gather straw, seek out for sustenance; and yet if our tale of brick be not made up, we are cried out upon for being idle. But God hears our cries, and will one day plead our cause. In the meantime, let such places and parishes as would have their ministers thus to follow close their callings, see that they so provide for their certain maintenance, as that they may without distraction follow it.

We have done with the poem, now we come to the poem or song itself.

My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, &c. Wherein is set forth God's great love to-

* Epist. 57.

* In 1 ad Tim.

wards his people Israel and Judah; and their horrible ingratitude and disobedience towards him, together with their fearful and final ruin for that their disobedience. All which is darkly and obscurely propounded under a continued similitude or allegory of an unprofitable vineyard, which did not answer the cost and expectation of the vinitor by bringing forth of fruit meet for him that dressed it, Heb. vi. 7.

In opening whereof we need not doubt of finding out the true and proper sense and meaning in the general, as who this vinitor is, and who the vineyard, and what the fruit, these being explained and expounded by our prophet, ver. 7. But in the particulars there is question as what is meant by *hill*, *fence*, *stones*, *plant*, *tower*, *winepress*: forasmuch as these parts are not followed by him, and are diversely interpreted by expositors. By *hill* some understanding the field of this world; others the city of Jerusalem, which was higher than all other cities, and the country thereabouts; and others the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey.

By *fence* or *hedge* some understand the law which was given by Moses, whereby the people of Israel were fenced in and kept within compass; others the covenant which God made with his people the Jews, wherewith he did hedge them in unto himself to be his peculiar people; and others understand thereby the divine protection, by which, as by a hedge, the Lord did continually protect his people.

By *stones*, some understand their wicked kings—Saul, Ahab, and the rest—who, by their wicked practices, did hinder the growth of God's church. Others—the Gentiles and heathen people—the Canaanites and Hittites with the rest, whom the Lord cast out before the people of Israel. Others understand thereby all kind of idolatry, errors, abominations, which the Lord purged his people from; and there are some others, who by *stones* understand the wall wherewith the Lord did make the fence or hedge, and that because the word here used (*sakal*, in Piel.) signifieth as well, to build with stones, and gather them together for that end, as to remove stones.

By the choice *plant*, some would have the Lord Jesus to be meant, and that because the prophet speaketh in the singular number, both in the parable and in the exposition of it. He saith not *vines* or *plants*, but a *vine* or *plant*; and the *man* of Judah, not the *men* of Judah. Others understand thereby the best and choicest persons amongst that people, especially them of the house of Judah—as David, Solomon, and the rest—whom God had chosen and endued with an excellent measure of his Spirit, for rule and government; and others understand it more largely for the whole body of that people, the stems and branches of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, those honourable plants.

By *tower*, some understand their prophets, priests, and princes, whom the Lord gave unto them, to watch—as out of a tower—over them for their good. Others would have us understand thereby Jerusalem, that great metropolitan city of the Jews; and others, the temple which was built therein.

By *winepress* that was therein, some do understand the doctrine of the prophets—their exhortations and reprehensions, whereby they did labour to bring the people to repentance; others, passions and afflictions, which the Lord laid upon them for their sins. And others understand thereby the altar in the temple, upon which they did offer up their sacrifices and oblations. Thus we see the diversity of opinions concerning these particulars, and the variety of paths wherein our interpreters walk, so that it is no easy matter to take the right; yet, amongst all, I had rather follow them who, by this fruitful *hill*, understand the land of Canaan, for of it the Scripture thus speaketh: 'The land, whither you go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. A good land and large, flowing with milk and honey,' Deut. xi. 9, 11, 12.

By *fence*, or *hedge*, his mighty protection, whereby he defended and preserved his people from all their enemies. This was that hedge which the Lord made about Job, and about his house, and about all that he had on every side, Job i. 9; and this hedge did the Lord promise to make about Jerusalem, so that none should hurt it, Zech. ii. 5. Of which fence read at large, Ps. xc.

By *stones*, the Canaanites and Hittites, of whom David thus speaketh: 'Thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out,' Ps. xlv. 2; of which stones, say some,^{*} John Baptist speaketh when he telleth the Jews—bragging they had Abraham to their father—that 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham,' Mat. iii. 9. But that I deliver not for doctrine.

By choice *plant*, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the men of Israel and Judah, as appears ver. 7; one number there being put for another, the singular for the plural, a thing usual in Scripture. And thus we read: Ps. lxxx. 8-12, 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt; thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her

* Alphons. Salm. in parab. vineæ, Mat. xxi.

branches unto the river.' And elsewhere thus: 'I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how, then, art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?' Jer. ii. 21; in both which places the people of Israel are meant.

By *tower*, the glorious temple that was in Jerusalem, that stately edifice or building. According to that of the prophet, 'He built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever,' Ps. lxxviii. 69. And so it is termed elsewhere, 'a tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion,' Micah iv. 8.

By *winepress*, the ministry of the prophets, and the discipline of the church, whereby the fruits of true repentance were pressed forth; and they caused to bring forth fruits of new obedience to the glory of God, and their own souls' good.

And this is the sense, amongst all the former, I approve and fasten on, as judging it to be the best and least dangerous, it being consonant to other scriptures, as I have before shewed. However, I intend not to dwell on it, nor largely to insist on every one of these particulars, but will content myself with pointing at some general observations, arising most naturally and clearly, when I come to the handling of them. Now for the parts.

In this song or poem there is considerable: first, A parable, ver. 1-7; secondly, The application of it, ver. 7.

The parable is briefly propounded, ver. 1, and then more largely prosecuted from the second verse unto the seventh.

In the proposition of it, we have—1. The vinitor; 2. And his vineyard, generally to speak of.

My well-beloved hath a vineyard. By *well-beloved* he meaneth God himself, as before we have seen; and by *vineyard* he meaneth the church visible, as in the application, ver. 7, we may see. By which similitude the nature and condition of the church is usually set forth in Scripture, and by none more, Ps. lxxx. 8; Jer. ii. 21; Mat. xxi.; John xv. 1. For indeed there is no earthly thing that doth better resemble it than a vineyard doth, as will appear if we compare the one with the other, either in general or more special respects. And first, more generally,

1. A vineyard, we know, is a place severed and hedged in from the open champaign or common. It doth not of itself spring up or naturally grow, but it is planted by hand and art, and so it is made a vineyard. And thus the church is called and separated from the rest of the world both in life and conversation, and is gathered by the word. 'Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God,' saith Moses; 'and he hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself above all nations that are upon the earth,' Deut. xiv. 2. And again, 'I am the Lord

your God, which have separated you from other people,' Lev. xx. 24-26. This is that Solomon saith, 'A garden enclosed is my sister,' whereby he understands the church, 'my spouse: a spring shut up, a fountain sealed,' Cant. iv. 12. And thus our Saviour telleth his disciples, 'Ye are not of the world: I have chosen you out of the world,' John xv. 19. Thus we see God hath taken it in out of the vast wilderness of this wretched world, and hath imparted it with the pales of his mercy, and separated it from all other grounds whatsoever, to be a vineyard for himself.

2. Secondly, A vineyard requires great pains and diligence after it is once planted, and stands in need of daily husbanding and dressing; no field more. And thus the church of God requires daily looking to; there must be pruning, propping, weeding, stoning, and continual watering by the preaching of the word, else all will run to ruin. And therefore, when our blessed Saviour ascended up on high, 'he gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and others teachers,' Eph. iv. 11, 12; and all was to husband his church, that it might be brought unto perfection, to which it cannot very suddenly be brought. The hardness of our hearts, the finiteness of our affections, and the stinking weeds of wickedness, are not at one instant, but by degrees removed. Should, then, the husbanding of it be neglected, it would soon decay, and the estate of the church would prove worse than the estate of a no-church.

3. A vineyard, of any other field, is most subject to be wasted by wild beasts, and lieth open to the prey of many kinds of spoils, and that in regard of its pleasant shadow and sweet fruit. So the church of God, of all other places and societies, is exposed to greatest dangers. The old fox and his young cubs study to destroy the vines, and lay this vineyard waste, Cant. ii. 15. It is like 'a lily amongst thorns,' chap. ii. 2, assaulted on the one side by unbelievers, and on the other side by misbelievers; on the right hand by the contentious oppositions of schismatics, and on the left hand by the blasphemous propositions of heretics; openly wronged by cruel tyrants, secretly wronged by backbiting hypocrites. These 'break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage,' Ps. xciv. 5. Would any man take the church's picture? Then let him, saith Luther,^c paint a silly poor maid, sitting in a wood or wilderness, compassed about on every side with hungry lions, wolves, boars, and bears, and with all manner of cruel and hurtful beasts, and in the midst of a great many furious men, assailing her every moment and minute: for this is her condition in the world. And what is the cause of this her trouble and mo-

* Loc. com. tit. de persec. veræ ecel.

lestation? 'What hath the righteous done?' Ps. xi. 3. Surely godliness and grace is that which breeds the quarrel. Aristides must be banished out of Athens because he is just, and Christians must be thrown to the lions because they are Christians. *Justus quia justus, Christianus quia Christianus.* 'The dragon is wroth with the woman, and makes war with the remnant of her seed;' mark now the reason, 'because they kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ,' Rev. xii. 17.

4. A vineyard, of any other possession, is most dear to him that holds it, that he will not part withal on any terms. 'The Lord forbid it me,' said Naboth to Ahab, 'that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee,' 1 Kings xxi. 3. Thus is the church more dear and precious to the Lord than all other societies in the world. 'He loveth the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob,' Ps. lxxvii. 2. 'It is precious in his sight. He will give men and people for her life,' Isa. xliii. 4. It is 'a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God,' Isa. lxiii. 3. Hence it is called 'the beauty of the earth,' the 'standard of the nations,' 'the holy city,' 'a city whose walls and gates are of precious stones,' 'the streets of gold,' 'the rose of the field,' 'the lily of the valleys,' 'the fairest amongst women,' 'an orchard of pomegranates,' 'a fountain of gardens,' 'a well of springing waters,' Isa. xlix. 22; Mat. iv.; Rev. xxi. 2, 19; Cant. ii. 1, and iv. 13, 15. And being compared with other societies, 'as a lily amongst thorns,' and 'like the apple-tree amongst the trees of the forest,' chap. ii. 2, 3. So then, by all these comparisons, it is evident that there is no society in the world so excellent, none so worthy, none so amiable, none so lovely, none so dear, none so precious unto the Lord, as is his church.

And thus, in general, we have seen what excellent proportion and congruity there is between them, and how lively by a vineyard the nature and condition of the church visible is set forth. Now, more particularly, if we compare the church and the vine itself together, we shall find the resemblances manifold, either in respect of the root, or of the branches, or of the bark, or of the wood, or of the leaves, or of the fruit, there being no property in the one which is not, in a sort, answered in the other.

1. For the *root*. That we know sendeth sap to every stem and branch, whereby they flourish and bring forth fruit; and unless they continue in the root they can never thrive nor prosper, for thence it is whence they have their moisture—

'Qui vires in foliis venit à radicibus humor.'

Thus the church, and every true member of it, re-

ceiveth the life and sap of grace from Jesus Christ, who is the root, and into whom the multitude of true believers are engrafted, whereby they grow and bring forth fruit to God. So that unless they continue in him, they cannot prosper, but must needs fade and wither, according to our Saviour's speech: 'As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them up, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned,' John xv. 4-6.

2. In the *branches* there is great resemblance divers ways.

(1.) There are many branches in the root, yet all make but one vine; so all the faithful in the congregation, and all the congregations of the faithful in the whole world, make but one only church. And albeit there are 'threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number,' Cant. vi. 8, 9, yet, saith Solomon, speaking in the person of Christ, 'my dove, my undefiled, is but one.' And so witnesseth St Paul, 'Now are they many members, yet but one body,' 1 Cor. xii. 20. One, as sucking sap from one and the same root, living by one and the same Spirit, Eph. iv. 4, and ruled by one and the same head, Christ, blessed for ever. But of this more hereafter.

(2.) All the branches of a vine, though they seem to stand alike in the stock, are not alike fruitful, neither do they all draw sap and moisture from the root; for as some are fruitful and flourish, so some again are barren and wither, which are cut off, and cast into the fire. Thus is it in the church visible; all the members thereof are not alike incorporated into the root through the invisible bonds of the Spirit, neither do they bring forth fruit in him, John xv. Some there are who are only externally engrafted; others there are who are also internally. The former sort are such members of the church visible who by external baptism have given their names to Christ, and so entered into the profession, yet indeed are not Christ's, because they have not the Spirit of Christ; for though they are baptized with water, yet they are not with the Holy Ghost. They have John's baptism, but not Christ's baptism. This kind of sacramental engrafting will suffer a cutting off, John xv. 2, because they have not the sap of grace ministered unto them from the stock of life, but are as dead trees and branches. The other sort are they who, besides the outward engrafting, are also inwardly engrafted by the Holy Ghost into the stock, Christ Jesus, and do live in him, and grow in him, and bring forth fruit to the praise of his name.

Notwithstanding both these sorts, as they communicate together in the outward bonds of one profession, as they visibly continue together like one visible body upon that one root, Christ Jesus, on whom they all outwardly profess that they depend, as on the fountain of their sap and life, so they both together make this visible vineyard and church on earth.

(3.) There is no branch of any tree that exceedeth it in growing and spreading forth itself; in one week, yea, night, how exceedingly is it shot! * So the true members of the church exceed all others in growth, in grace; they are still spreading forth their branches, growing from one degree of grace unto another. They are all for addition and multiplication, nothing for division or subtraction, except in evil. They sing the *song of degrees*,† 'adding to faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity,' 2 Pet. i. 5. They be not like the old moon in the wane, but like the new, ever in her increasings.

(4.) The branches of the vine grow the better for their pruning, and not the worse; bringing forth, after it is cut, more and better grapes, not worse nor fewer. Thus the church, and true members of the church, the more they be afflicted the more they flourish; as the people of Israel under Pharaoh's tyranny, the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and grew, Exod. i. 2. Thus the church of God ever riseth in its ruin, prospereth in its persecution. The blood of martyrs is but the seed of it, *Sanguis martyrum est semen ecclesie*, and the chopping off their heads but as the pruning of this vine. And as Joseph said, so may every true Christian say, 'The Lord hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.' Their 'tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and that maketh not ashamed,' Rom. v. 4, 5. And thus for the resemblance in the branches.

3. Now in the *bark* or *rind* let us compare them. We see that the bark of the vine seemeth more withered and dry than the rind or bark of any other tree whatever; yet it hath plenty of sap and abundance of moisture under it. Thus the church of God seems black and deformed outwardly to the world's eye, which only beholdeth and judgeth the rind, by reason of the scorching heat of persecution; yet she is inwardly glorious and beautiful, for there the invisible graces of faith, hope, love, patience, holiness, are hid. This shews the psalmist, 'The king's daughter is all glorious within,' Ps. xlv. 13; and the church maketh this confession of herself, 'I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,

as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon,' Cant. i. 5, 6. And this is the cause that her mother's children look upon her, and are angry with her.

4. In the *wood*, let us see what likeness we can find.

(1.) That we know is the weakest and feeblest wood of any other. The trees of the forest are strong and tall, but the vine so weak that it cannot bear up itself without a stay or prop. Thus the church, of any society, is least able to help itself, it cannot stand against a storm without the prop of God's protection, by reason of her natural weakness. It is a weak tent in itself, not fortified with any walls, Isa. xxxiii. A small flock of sheep very impotent and feeble, Zeph. iii. 12. A humble and poor people, yea, a very worm, for so the Lord calleth her; 'Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord,' Isa. xli. 14: ver. 10, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee,' &c. Thus God's strength is made perfect in the church's weakness, 2 Cor. xii. 9; by his power is it sustained, on her beloved she is fain to lean, coming out of the wilderness of this world, Cant. viii. 5. The altar of the sanctuary, which at the base had lions of brass for supporters of it, we may well think was a type of this.

(2.) Secondly, Unless it bear grapes it is the unfittablest wood of any; 'Son of man,' saith God to Ezekiel, 'what is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is amongst the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, when it was whole, it was meet for no work,' &c., Ezek. xv. 2, 3. Thus the wood of this plant is meet for no use; being cut down or taken from the root, it is only fit fuel for the fire. This is the condition likewise of all barren and fruitless professors, they are good for nothing but to be fuel of God's wrath. But of this hereafter.

5. In the leaves likewise the resemblance is excellent.

(1.) The leaves of the vine are good for shadow, Hosea iv. 13; everything delights in the heat of summer to harbour under their shade. And thus, however the church and members of the church are persecuted and afflicted by the wicked, and well edged, as fruit trees are in summer, yet in the day of trouble their shadow is good; then can the wicked run to them for shelter. Thus Pharaoh and his courtiers in the evil day can send for Moses and Aaron, and desire them to pray unto the Lord that there be no more mighty thunders and hail, &c., Exod. ix. 27. So Saul, in foul weather, runs to David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 21; and Jeroboam to the man

* Sine modo crescent.—*Pliny*.

† Virtutes Christianæ sunt copulative.

of God, 1 Kings xiii. 6; Belshazzar to Daniel, chap. v. 12, 13; Zedekiah to Jeremiah, chap. xxxvii. 3; the foolish virgins to the wise, Mat. xxv. 8. These, besides many more that might be reckoned, have found the best harbouring to be under their shade, and that no leaves could so well keep off a storm of vengeance as these leaves could. Themistocles, though he were banished in peace, yet he was sent for home in war. And so the godly, though they be passed over in the days of pride, yet when the showers of God's wrath shall fall, then they and their shadow shall be more regarded.

(2.) The leaves of the vine are good for medicine; they are very profitable and of excellent use for healing wounds, cleansing sores, if they be taken and applied. 'The fruit thereof shall be for meat,' saith Ezekiel, speaking of the church, 'and the leaf thereof for medicine,' Ezek. xlvii. 12. Thus the very outward profession of a Christian, the very leaves and outward carriage of the godly, is for medicinal use; hereby many have been healed, thousands have been won to a love and liking of the truth, 1 Pet. ii. 12. Thus Lucianus, an ancient martyr, persuaded many Gentiles unto the faith by his grave countenance and modest disposition, insomuch that, as it is recorded, Maximinus, that persecuting emperor, durst not look him in the face for fear he should turn Christian. And so mention is made by Beda* of one Albane, who, receiving a poor persecuted Christian into his house, and seeing his holy devotion and sweet carriage, was so much affected with the same, as that he became an earnest professor of the faith, and in the end a glorious martyr for the faith. And so their words, they have a healing quality with them if they were applied—they tend to the 'edification' and 'feeding of many,' and 'minister grace unto the hearers,' as the apostle speaketh, Eph. iv. 29; Prov. x. 21; Col. iv. 6. 'The mouth of the righteous will speak of wisdom,' saith David, Ps. xxxvii. 30, and his tongue talketh of judgment. They are sometimes persuading, sometimes instructing, sometimes admonishing, sometimes comforting, other whiles praying, all tending to the healing of wounded and distressed consciences. And thus in this we see a good agreement.

6. Now, lastly, for their fruits. And first for the quantity, then for the quality of it. (1.) The vine, we know, beareth first plenty of fruit; it beareth in bunches and clusters many grapes together. So the church 'aboundeth in good works,' 1 Cor. xv. 58; being 'filled with the fruits of righteousness,' as the apostle speaketh to the Philippians, chap. i. 11; 'bringing forth much fruit,' as our Saviour testifieth of his disciples, John xv. 5; 'Full of mercy and good works, without partiality and without hypocrisy,'

* Eng. Hist., lib. i. cap. 7.

as St James saith, James iii. 17, 18, which fruit of righteousness, as he further speaketh, 'is sown in peace of them that make peace.' Thus they bring forth grapes in clusters, united in the bond of peace and love.

(2.) The vine beareth pleasant fruit. No fruit more delectable to the taste than is the grape, nor more comfortable to the heart than is the wine made of the grape. 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man?' saith the vine to other trees in the parable, Judges ix. 13. And so the fruit of Christians. How do their works of love and mercy refresh the bowels of the saints distressed, brethren afflicted! How do their fruits of justice and equity ease and relieve the oppressed soul! How is God glorified, John xv. 8, angels and men rejoiced, by the fruitfulness of these trees of righteousness! whereas the fruit of other trees and plants is but bitter fruit, fruit unto death, as the apostle speaketh, Rom. vii. 21.

In divers other particulars the comparison might be followed; but I desire not to be more curious than profitable. By this that hath been said we cannot but see the aptness of the similitude. Now to some profitable observations. And first, something may be noted in general, in that the prophet useth a parable or similitude, and that from a vine or vineyard, a thing earthly and temporal, whereby he doth set out the estate and nature of the church, together with God's care and cost for the welfare of the church, things heavenly and spiritual.

Doct. As, first, It is lawful to make resemblances and likenesses between corporal and spiritual, earthly and heavenly things, for our better instruction.

The prophets and apostles, and Christ himself, that chief shepherd of the sheep, have used thus to teach. For proof read these places, amongst multitudes that might be brought, Ps. xcii. 12; Mat. xiii. 3, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47; Luke xiii. 6, 15, 18.

Use. Let ministers wisely and soberly use this their liberty in teaching, for the edification of their hearers, whom, if they be of the weaker sort, let them not trouble with profound matters which they are not able to understand, but let us be content to use plain similitudes and home-bred comparisons, fetched from heaven, from the meal tub, or other domestical business; knowing therein we do no other than Jesus Christ, our great doctor and master, himself did. We are called nurses, 1 Thes. ii. Now, nurses are not ashamed, nay, they rather delight in it, to condescend to the balbutient infancy of their nurselings. And so let us; becoming, in this sense, barbarians unto barbarians. Thus learned Austin, as himself speaketh, chose rather to speak barbarously than finely, and to use the barbarous word *ossum* in his exposition, rather than the word *os*, though he allow it in the text, and so reads it, because, though it were not so grammati-

cal, yet it was the more intelligible word, and he desired his people's profit above his own credit;* holding it better that the learned should reprove him, than that the ignorant should not understand him. So, then, let us preach, not as we are able to speak, but as our people are able to hear, Mark iv. 33; John xvi. 12, and as they can bear; remembering still that we must rather seek to make our people scholars, than to shew ourselves scholars unto our people.

Now in using of parables, similitudes, allegories, &c., these rules, as I have elsewhere† shewed, are to be followed:

1. That they be not far-fetched, but fitting for the matter in hand.
2. That they be borrowed from things well known and easy to be conceived.
3. That we still have a care of the majesty of Scripture, avoiding all ridiculous and base stuff.
4. That we use them rather for instructing of life than for proving any point of faith.
5. That we turn not all into allegories, to the destroying of the letter, which was Origen's fault.
6. That they be quickly despatched, and not too much insisted on.

Use 2. Let hearers learn not to despise their ministers for their plainness, but, if any, themselves for their childishness, who may be thus lisped to. Seek not so much to have thy ear tickled as thy understanding enlightened. The painful bee passeth by roses and violets, and sits upon thyme; so shouldst thou rather choose to feed on plain and wholesome doctrine, though hot and biting, than on the quirks and flowers of man's invention. In a word, learn evermore to judge that sermon best, though plain, whereby thou understandest most. And so much for this first point. Now hear a second:

Doct. *There is no earthly thing which may not be applied to some special use for our edification in grace.* Things earthly may put us in mind of things heavenly, things natural of spiritual.

What is there in this world that hath any being but may read to man a divinity lecture? From the highest angel to the lowest worm, all teach us somewhat. The sun, moon, stars, are good schoolmasters: 'When I behold thy heavens, the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man,' say I then, 'that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou so visitest him?' Ps. viii. 3, 4. Thus 'The heavens preach the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork,' Ps. xix. 1: So the fowls of the heavens, 'The stork knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the

crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming,' Jer. viii. 7. These may teach us to know the day of our visitation and the judgment of the Lord. The beasts of the field likewise may instruct us: 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,' Isa. i. 2. By them may Israel be schooled and learn obedience. Yea, of the little ant or emmet may man be taught providence: 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest,' Prov. vi. 6. And as the creatures, so may every action and ordinary occasion be applied to good purpose. The husbandman breaking up his ground teacheth us the necessity of repentance, and calleth upon us for the 'breaking up of the fallow ground of our hearts,' Jer. xiv. 4. His 'casting in his seed,' and sowing of his field, sheweth us the nature of the word, the necessity and utility of the same, Mat. xiii. 3. The corn dying and fructifying preacheth to us that article of our faith; the resurrection of the body, 1 Cor. xv. 37. The beholding of tares and weeds in the field, may instruct us of the state and condition of the church militant, Mat. xiii. 25. The merchant searching for pearls, and paying dearly for that of price, should remember us of a far more precious pearl, ver. 45: the gospel of the kingdom, which we should highly rate, and sell all to buy. Children's asking for bread or meat at their father's hands, and the father's readiness to give them what they ask, may teach us our duties towards God, and set forth the readiness of God's love to us, Mat. vii. 9, 10. Servants waiting upon their masters, and maids attending upon their mistresses, should teach us to wait upon the Lord our God until he have mercy on us, Ps. cxxiii. 2. Thus God's wisdom is in this kind remarkable; directing us, by all things that may run into our senses, to raise us furtherances in spiritual things. Yea, not only things lawful, but we shall find likewise that things sinful and unlawful afford resemblances to admonish of duty. The employment of our gifts to the glory of the bestower we have pressed by resemblance of the usurer's cursed courses, Mat. xxv. 27. Wisdom to provide for everlasting tabernacles, by liberality to the poor saints, is taught us by the unjust policy of the deceitful steward, Luke xvi. 8, 9. Watchfulness for the sudden coming of Christ, by the unexpected coming of a thief to his prey, Mat. xxiv. 43. In a word, there was nothing which our Saviour could hear, or see, or do, but he made spiritual use of it, and took occasion thereby to administer heavenly instructions unto his followers. Thus we have seen this truth proved, now let us hear it further applied.

Use 1. This may serve for our humiliation, seeing that by our sin and apostasy we are degraded beneath the beasts and become their scholars. Our father

* Habeo in abscondito quoddam ossum. Sic enim potius loquarum. Melius est ut reprehendant nos grammatici, quam non intelligant populi.—*Aug. in Ps. cxxxviii.*

† See my Exposition on the Parable of the Prodigal, pp. 13, 14.

Adam was made lord of the creatures, and by the knowledge wherewith God endued him he knew the Lord and the creature also. At one court he imposed names to them all according to their kinds, as knowing them better, in their nature and virtue, than they did themselves, Gen. ii. 19, 20. The knowledge which he had of God led him to this knowledge of the creature, and it was not by the creature that he learned the knowledge of the Creator. But by sin, man falling away from God, he hath so far degenerated from his own kind as that he is now become inferior unto them, and they, as Balaam's ass, Num. xxii. 28, can teach their master. To the school of the creature is man now sent, and put back, like an idle truant, to his A B C, to learn the glory, goodness, and providence of the Creator, by looking upon it; neither are we able to learn so much as the creature can teach us when we ply our lesson hardest. Consider we how far the creature doth excel man; and that not only in natural faculties, as the ape in tasting, the spider in touching, the lynx in seeing, the boar in hearing, the vulture in smelling,^o &c., wherein we come not nigh them; nor yet only in natural gifts and qualities of the body, as the horse in strength, the roe in swiftness, the lion in courage, &c., wherein we are not able to compare with them; but also they far excel us in many virtues, as the dove in simplicity, the stork in kindness, the dog in fidelity, the ox and the ass in thankfulness and obedience; in all which we come far short, and wherein they may become our tutors. Not to speak of the spider, which, say some, taught man first to weave; nor of the eagle, which, say others, taught man first to build; nor of that same Egyptian bird ibis, which, as others hold, gave knowledge to physicians how to use the glisten, for these are but conjectures. We have seen enough to humble us, yea, even the proudest of us, seeing in many good things they now excel us, though, indeed, in vice and evil we excel them all, being by our sin become more cruel than the wolf, more crafty than the fox, more envious than the serpent, more venomous than the adder, more proud than the peacock; yea, all vices which are but several in beasts, are mustered and trooped together in us. And this is our natural condition.

Use 2. It may serve likewise for reprehension, in that we have such empty hearts and heads, when in every corner we have so many teachers to inform us and instruct us. The plea of ignorance is a common plea, and goeth for current: Alas! sir, we are ignorant and not book-learned, we want teachers, &c.; and this is the strongest pillar and prop that many have. But how is this possible? Doth not the great book of the creatures, termed aptly by some the Shepherd's

Kalendar and Ploughman's Alphabet, lie open, in which even the most ignorant may run and read.* Do not the heavens, and those celestial orbs that are placed therein, plainly catechise thee in the first elements of religion, and teach thee that there is a God, and that this God is but one; and that this one God excelleth all other things both in might and majesty, and that he will be worshipped, &c., Rom. i. 20. And, indeed, the whole world is nothing else but God expressed.† Can men, then, plead ignorance? 'Ask now the beasts,' saith Job, chap. xii. 7, 8, 'and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.' Look above thy head, below thy feet, on thy right hand, and on thy left hand; all thou seest would enforce thee, if thou hadst a heart to learn. The rudest rustic hath his horse and plough, his earth and seed, to instruct him in his duty. All which leave not God without witness, Rom. i. 20-28, leave men without excuse, as they did the Gentiles, who, because they knew not God according to those means, neither honoured they him according to that natural knowledge gotten by those means, were given up to vile sins and grievous punishments. Oh, then, that we were as ready to learn good lessons as these kind of tutors are to teach us them, how much better should we be than now we are! They will learn when they are corrected, but man waxeth worse and worse when he is reprov'd, Isa. i. 5. We lay load upon an ass, saith Bernard, and he careth not, because he is an ass; but if you offer to thrust him down some steep hill, or to drive him into the fire, he holdeth back, and shuns it all he can, because he loveth life and feareth death:‡ whereas wretched man, more blockish and senseless than the very ass, more brutish than the brutishest of beasts, hath no fear nor dread of that which will be his eternal bane, and bring everlasting damnation upon him. And if such as do not further their salvation by the creatures are justly to be taxed, then much more cause have we to condemn such as hasten their perdition by them, using, or rather abusing, them to excess and riot, eating to gluttony, drinking to drunkenness, spending their wealth to the maintenance of pride and wantonness. Surely the damnation of such sleeps not.

Use 3. A third use is for instruction, that we so use and behold things earthly, as that thereout we draw some heavenly lesson: for there is a double use

* Du Bartas, 1 day, 1 week. Hab. ii. 2.

† Universum mundum nihil aliud est quam Deus explicatus.—Cusan.

‡ Oneramus asinum, et non curat, quia asinus est. At si in ignem impellere, si in foveam precipitare velis, cavet quantum potest, quia vitam amat et mortem timet.—Bern. de diversis, 12.

* Nos aper auditu precellit, aranea tactu, vultur odoratu, lynx visu similia gustu.

of every creature; the one is natural, the other spiritual. If we content ourselves with the natural use without the spiritual, we do not take the one-half of that comfort in the creature which God gave it for. And indeed what do we more than the brute beast, which hath a carnal and natural use of the creature as well as we? Let us, then, no longer be like children, who look upon the pictures and babies in their books, and gaze upon the gilded leaves and cover, never looking to their lesson which they should learn therein; but let us do as travellers in a foreign country, make everything we see a good instruction, and every action a stirrup to heavenly meditation, translating the book of nature into the use of grace; which, unless we do, how can we comfortably thank God for the use of his creatures? they being by us but abused when they are half lost: yea, God is wronged, and our own souls most of all injured, when the creatures are so neglected. And therefore now at length, for better late than never, learn to pick your bones cleaner, and suck more sweetness out of the creatures than heretofore you have done.

My wellbeloved. We see, then, who was the vinitor or husbandman, and he was no other than this well-beloved, God himself. So, then, the point is evident.

Doct. God is the husbandman of his church; he it is that husbands it,—‘I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment,’ saith God, ‘lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day,’ Is. xxvii. 3. And so St Paul calleth the church of Corinth, that they were ‘God’s tillage or husbandry,’ 1 Cor. iii. 9. This our blessed Saviour doth there intimate when he saith, ‘Every plant that my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up,’ Mat. xv. 3; and elsewhere, in plain terms, avouch, ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman,’ John xv. 1. Thus the point is proved; and yet, that it may be further cleared, a question would be answered, for some may demand whether God’s ministers are not husbandmen; are not they to set, sow, plant, pluck up, and to dress this vineyard? Jer. i. 10; Luke xiii. 7. How then can God be said to be the husbandman thereof?

I answer, God is the principal, they are but subordinate and inferior, being called of him and set a-work by him; they are not ‘lords of the heritage of God,’ 1 Pet. v. 3, but servants and under-workmen, being taken in as ‘labourers,’ 1 Cor. iii. 9, who, when the even is come, shall from this lord of the vineyard receive their hire, Mat. xx. 8. God is the chief Lord and owner; he directs and rules the other, and prospers their work as it pleaseth him; so then the former point still remains good, God is the husbandman of his church.

Use 1. Now here methinks I have a good occasion to speak something in commendation of this vocation of husbandry, seeing God singleth out this calling to

set forth his own care and pains by; what exception can be taken against it when God himself so highly honours it? Mercers, goldsmiths, jewellers, and others of the like rank, are not so often mentioned in scriptures as these are, neither doth God so much credit them, in so often resembling himself unto them. And yet, alas! how is this profession disdained! and how are such condemned as hinds and clowns, &c., who are professors of it! And what man almost so mean but he scorns to be of it, or put his child unto it! And yet God himself assigned it to Adam, Gen. ii. 8; and Adam made a choice of it for his eldest son, Gen. iv. 2. Surely it is righteous with God, as one* saith well, that tillage is so much decayed when it is no more regarded, and that there should be so much daily detracted from the employment of men, because there are so few men that are willing to be employed in it. But I am loath to step too far out of my way to salute a friend.

Use 2. This point sets forth unto us the excellent privilege and prerogative of the church; forasmuch as it hath such a keeper and dresser as the Lord himself is, to watch over it and husband it; this is the church’s royalty, and who can compare with her herein? Neither is this prerogative merely titular, but very commodious and profitable; for he is not non-resident upon his garden, but he dwelleth in it to preserve and guard it by his power, Cant. vii. 13. Great was God’s care for Israel’s safety, as Moses sheweth, Deut. xxxii. 10-12; for he ‘led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up the nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him.’ But the ground of all was, ‘The Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.’ How blessed a thing then is it to be within the hedge and pale of God’s church! For then we see God becomes our husbandman; he protects us and defends us from all evils and dangers, and provides for us whatsoever shall be needful, as hereafter we shall see more largely and particularly.

Use 3. And secondly, hence we may have a ground of trial whether we be true members of the church of God or no. We may thus know it; if God’s husbandry appeareth in our souls. And for this purpose hear a parable, Prov. xxiv. 30, 31, ‘I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding: and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.’ Thy heart is this field; examine now what grows in it: ‘Do thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley?’ as Job speaketh, chap. xxxi. 40. Do the thorns and nettles of hard-heartedness and hypo-

* Dod on Prov. xii. 11.

crisy, pride and blasphemy, profaneness and impiety; doth beastly drunkenness, filthy whoring and uncleanness, chambering and wantonness, or the like to these, cover the face thereof? why then be thou assured an ill husbandman owns this ground; it is the envious man, the devil, that sows these seeds, and husbands such plats as these. But, on the contrary, is the fallow ground of thy heart turned up, and is the stoniness thereof taken away? Are those brambles and briars, noisome lusts and strong corruptions, which formerly grew therein, now weeded up and cast out? and art thou fenced in with good purposes and resolutions for time to come? and doth this wall stand firm and sure? Why then assure thyself thou art one of God's chosen closes; a true member of that church whereof he is the husbandman, for he husbands it, and only it; and in that his tillage and husbandry is so effectual in thee, questionless thou art not only *in* it, as many are, but *of* it, as few are. Stick this as a nosegay in thy bosom.

Use 3. Thirdly, This may admonish every one that lives in the church, and profess themselves to be members of the church, patiently to suffer themselves to be husbanded by the Lord, enduring all things with much meekness and quietness, which he in his wisdom hath ordained to break us up withal, and to make us fair and fruitful. The earth we see is cut and wounded with shares and coulters, and therefore called *earth*,* yet is patient to suffer it, and returns fruit to those that ploughed it. Let earth teach earth; *Terra quam terimus*, the earth we tear, may instruct *terram quam gerimus*, the earth we bear, this lesson of contentedness. And let none think it is better to have their hearts lie waste than to be thus broken up, for a barren waste is a woeful and cursed estate, and there can be no comfort in it. Doth God then come unto thee himself with his pruning-hook in his hand, and cut thee near, yea, so near that in thy sense and judgment there is no hope of ever after flourishing? Well, yet be content; for thus deals the vintner with the most generous plant. He oftentimes prunes it so close, as that in sense and reason it was utterly dead and clean killed; yet it revives again, and after this is more richly laden than ever it was before. And so albeit 'no chastisement seemeth joyous for the present but grievous; yet it afterwards bringeth with it the pleasant fruit of righteousness,' Heb. xii. 11. Or doth he send his deputies the prophets to thee with the plough and harrow of the law, to break up that heathy ground of thy heart, and turn up the weeds of sin by the very roots, that they may never more revive? Why, then, subject yourselves to be directed by their care and pains without repining, remembering still your hearts as of themselves will never yield any other fruit than weeds, or grass at the best; needs,

* *Terra quia teritur.*

then, must they be accursed, if you refuse to have them by these husbanded that they may grow fruitful.

Use 4. Lastly, This may serve for a direction to us, to whom to go and make complaint when the vineyard is wasted, or in any way annoyed by the boar of the forest, or wild beasts of the field. Make God acquainted with it, and tell the vine-dressers, God's ministers, thereof, and will them tell their Master, that he may take some order for his vineyard's safety. Yea, dost thou or any other member of the church need husbanding? Then go to God and tell him of the barrenness of thy heart, and with a holy boldness urge him with his care and pains. Say thus, or in this manner, to him: Ah, Lord, how barren is my soul of what is good! How fruitful it is in what is bad and naught! What ignorance, pride, senselessness, security, grows there, where knowledge, humility, zeal, patience, and other such like graces ought to grow! Now since thou hast taken the charge upon thee to be the husbandman of thy church and people, husband thou this heart of mine, and be mindful of me, O my God. Let it not be thought an ill husband owes it, or one that is negligent and slothful in his business; but let thy care appear in dressing of it, that the fruits of all heavenly graces may abundantly spring forth and grow, to the praise and glory of thy name.

And so much of the husbandman; a word or two of his possession.

Hath a vineyard. This vineyard is the church, as we have seen before, together with the reasons of the similitude. The observation is,

Doct. The church is God's heritage. For the further proof thus we read, 'Destroy not thy people and thine inheritance which thou hast redeemed. Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance which thou broughtest out,' Dent. ix. 26, 29; 'The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,' Deut. xxxii. 9; 'The Lord hath anointed thee to be captain of his inheritance,' said Samuel to Saul, 1 Sam. x. 1; 'They have driven me this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord,' saith David, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; 'Why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?' said that same wise woman unto Joab when he battered the walls of Abel, 2 Sam. xx. 19; 'Remember thy congregation which thou hast purchased of old, the rod of thine inheritance, this mount Sion wherein thou hast dwelt,' saith the psalmist, Ps. lxxiv. 2; and again, 'Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance; feed them also, and lift them up for ever,' Ps. xxviii. 9. 'Yea, the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Israel my inheritance,' Isa. xix. 25.*

* Read Ps. xxxiii. 12, lxxviii. 70, lxxx. 1, 13, xciv. 5, and cvi. 5, 40; Isa. xlvii. 6; Jer. ii. 7, iii. 19, and xii. 7; 1 Peter v. 3.

Use 1. Now for use. Let us hence take notice whence it is that the devil doth so molest the church, and see the reason why the wicked do so afflict her. It is not so properly for their own sake as for the owner's. They malign and spite it because God doth countenance and grace it, as being the lord and possessor of it. An envious man we know will mischief the brute beast of him he bears a spleen unto, and will not stick to wrong his very dog, and all to despite the owner. Dost thou then persecute the church, or any member of the church? The more wretch thou; for, let me tell thee, thy hate is not originally and properly to them—pretend what thou wilt pretend—but to God himself, whose inheritance they are.

Use 2. And, secondly, seeing the church is God's inheritance and peculiar possession, let none that profess themselves to be of the church give themselves from him to any other; but let us live to him and die to him, for whose use we are enclosed. 'Ye are not your own, therefore glorify God in your souls and bodies,' saith the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20, 'for they are his.' If his, then not the world's, nor the flesh's, nor the devil's. Why, then, do we suffer these, or any of these, to sow tares and corrupt seed in God's closures? Why do we endure the plants of wickedness to be set in his field? And why do we bring forth fruit unto ourselves or any other, rather than unto him? Remember whose thou art, or at leastwise dost profess thyself to be, and be no longer for the weeds of sin, nor for voluptuous pleasures to feed on, as bullocks do on pasture land; but be thou God's garden of sweet flowers, his vineyard of fruitful grapes, and bring all unto him for first-fruits and tithes, that thou mayest be his blessed land and possession for evermore.

Use 3. Lastly, This may assure us for our comfort, that, seeing we are his heritage, he will not easily leave us nor forsake us, if we bring forth fruit unto him. Naboth could not be drawn to part with the inheritance of his fathers, though Ahab made him never so large proffers for it, 1 Kings xxi. 2, 3; and much less will God, who gave it for a law and ordinance that none should sell away their inheritance for ever, Lev. xxv. 25; but if, in case that any of his people had sold away any part thereof, then he or his kin should redeem it again, if they were able; and in case of inability, that which was sold should remain in the hand of him that bought it until the year of jubilee, in which year it should go out, and then every man should return again unto his own possession. Surely he that made this law will be mindful of it, and will not easily be driven to give over his own inheritance which he hath chosen. And if in case, for the barrenness thereof, he should forsake it for a time, as he did this people Israel, yet it

would be but for a time, and not perpetual: in the end he will return again unto his own. And thus much briefly for this point.

Now further, in that the prophet speaketh in the present tense, 'My beloved *hath* a vineyard.' Albeit the whole church of Israel and Judah was at this time so generally corrupted, as that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there was nothing found but wounds, swellings, and sores full of corruption, as he had before testified, chap. i. 5, we do observe that—

Doct. Albeit a church be corrupted with error and idolatry, yet it is still to be accounted God's church till he hath divorced and forsaken her.

Thus, in the days of Eli, Israel was called God's people, 1 Sam. ii. 24, 29; and so his church, albeit they were not then separated from all false ways, and Eli's sons, sons of Belial, saith the text, who knew not the Lord, remained amongst them. So Moses calleth Israel God's people, when he was upon the mount; and yet at that time they were in the very act of their idolatry, which was not unknown to Moses; for God himself informed him thereof, Exod. xxxii. 11. So in this our prophet's time, albeit this people were sunk deep in rebellion and idolatry, yet for all that God himself doth call them his people: 'Israel doth not know,'—'My people doth not consider,' Isa. i. 21, 22, 29, ii. 6, 8, and lxx. 11, i. 3. Turn we our eyes from the estate of the church in these times to after-times, as it was under the gospel, and we shall see the truth of the point propounded. Look upon Jerusalem in our Saviour Christ's time, Mat. xxiii. 37, and we shall see the eleven tribes were become apostates, and the church amongst them was wonderfully corrupted both in doctrine and manners, as appeareth by our Saviour Christ's severe reproof of both, Mat. v. 21; yea, the temple itself was almost become a den of thieves, full of buyers and sellers, John ii. 14: yet at this time it was the true church of God, else the evangelist would never have called it 'the holy city,' Mat. iv. 5, and xxvii. 53. In St Paul's time, the Corinthians were called the church of God, 1 Cor. i. 1, 2, and yet at that very instant some of them were in a heresy, others in incest, and other some that had not repented of their filthiness, chap. v. 1; 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21. Such was the estate of the churches of Asia, Rev. ii. and iii., yet the title of true churches were given to them.

Use 1. Those, therefore, that condemn the Church of England for a no-church, and make a separation from it in regard of the errors and corruptions that are in it, are far from the spirit of Christ, and the prophets and apostles, who never made any schismatical and bodily separation from any true church for the corruptions, though gross, that were therein found. I deny not but blemishes are in every church

—for what church ever breathed in so pure an air as that it might not justly complain of some thick and unwholesome evaporations of error and sin?—but because our mother wants some beauty, hath she lost her face? Because she is black, hath she no comeliness at all? What is it they charge us with but with corruptions?—*—for fundamental error they can discover none. Now, do corruptions in a man make a false man, or a corrupt man? So that, though they make the worst they can of our church, they can make it but a corrupt church, and not a false church. We have the true word of God preached, the true sacraments of Christ Jesus administered, which all divines† in all the reformed churches in Christendom, which now are or have been, do hold to be the infallible tokens of a true church, and are reciprocally converted with the true church. We maintain every point of the most ancient creeds, we overthrow not the foundation by any consequence, and as yet we have not received a bill of divorcement. As for discipline, the want whereof they charge us with, our church is not destitute of it altogether. I would we had the execution of so much as our church alloweth. Neither do we deny but therein there may be some defects and wants, as appears by those words in the Book of Common Prayer,‡ ‘until the said discipline may be restored.’ But doth it follow hereupon, that because discipline is wanting the church is fading, and that the infirmity of the one maketh a nullity of the other? That this is necessary for the well-being of a church I grant; that it is necessary to the essence and being of a church I utterly deny; neither will they ever be able to prove it by evidence of God’s word. The church of the Jews thus saith of the church of the Gentiles,—‘If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver; and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar,’ Cant. viii. 9. She calleth her a sister, because she had a wall, though not of silver, and a door, though not of cedar. So is our church a sister to all reformed churches, though she may have some spots in external matters. And our hope is, that her wall shall be made more costly and silver-like, and her door of cedar, in God’s good time. In the interim, ‘Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhort one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching,’ Heb. x. 25. Whom thou canst, amend; whom thou canst not, tolerate; in any case, beware of offering thy mother so great an injury as to fly from

her. Say she were poor, ragged, weak; say she were deformed, yet she is not infectious. Or if she were, yet she is thine, which should be motive enough for thee to pity her, to pray for her, to labour for her redress, not to avoid her.

Quest. Before I end this point, some haply may demand, what may be thought of the Church of Rome? whether is it to be accounted God’s church, it being so corrupted with idolatry as it is?

Ans. For answer whereto, a distinction must be made. Errors and corruptions in a church are of two sorts, either such as concern manners, or such as concern doctrine. As for corruption in manners, they make not no church, but a bad church; and, therefore, in respect of them, they are not to be forsaken by us, neither to be accounted of, as no church of God. For corruptions in doctrines, they are either such as are *contra fundamentum*, besides the foundation, and these trouble—or *circa fundamentum*, about the foundation—and these shake; or *contra fundamentum*, against the foundation—and these overturn all. The two former are weakening errors, and do not debar them from being the true church of God, being but the building of hay and stubble on the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 12; the stubble burnt, (I mean not in their fire of purgatory,) their souls may be saved. The latter are destroying errors, and in these consideration must be had, whether a church erreth of weakness or of malice. If it be of weakness, then are we not peremptorily to conclude against such a church; for St Paul writes to the Galatians as a church of God, though they were perverted to another doctrine, embracing a fundamental error of justification by works, Gal. i. 2. But if it be of malice or affected ignorance, like ‘Jannes and Jambres that withstood Moses, resisting the truth,’ 2 Tim. iii. 8, then doth such a church cease to be a church; neither is it any longer to be reputed as a church. Thus the Church of Rome doth wilfully and obstinately destroy the foundation itself, and therefore may be concluded for no church of God. And so much briefly for the answer to the question, with which answer we end this point, and come unto another.

The prophet doth not only speak in the present tense, *hath*, but he also speaketh in the singular number, *vineyard*, not *vineyards*; and thence we note,—

Doct. The church and vineyard of God is but one. There are, indeed, ‘threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number:’ but ‘my dove, my undefiled is but one: she is the only one of her mother,’ Cant. vi. 8. Thus testifieth St Paul, ‘As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ;’ that is, the church, 1

* See a little book set forth by the Separatists of the confession of their faith

† Bucer, Martyr, Fagius, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger, Zanchius, Junius, Rollock.

‡ In the Communion.

Cor. xii. 12. Hitherto, likewise, tends that saying of our blessed Saviour, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd,' John x. 16.

True it is, this one church may have many parts; as the ocean sea is but one, yet distinguished according to the regions upon which it lies. And so there is the German Ocean, the Spanish Ocean, the English Ocean, the Irish Ocean, and the like. And thus there is a church in Geneva, a church in France, a church in Scotland, a church in England, and yet but one militant church upon the earth.

Reason. For as a kingdom divided into many shires, and more towns and villages, is called one, because it hath one and the same king, one and the same law, so the church is one, because it liveth by one and the same Spirit, and is ruled by one and the same Lord, and professeth one and the same faith; hath one and the same hope, and hath been baptized with one and the same baptism, as St Paul, writing to the Ephesians, declareth, chap. iv. 4, 5; and not one as tied to any one place, much less to any one person, as the popish antichristian crew, who, though they have nothing in their mouths so much as, *The church, the church*—and therein, like oyster wives, do outery us—yet exceedingly infringe the liberties of the church, for all of them have made the catholic church to be nothing else but the Roman church, and some* of them have made the Roman church to be nothing else but the pope: and this is their *one*. But now for use.

Use. This unity or oneness of God's vineyard should teach us all unity and concord that profess ourselves to be of this vineyard; and as in the natural body there is a perpetual sympathy between all the parts, so ought there to be in this body mystical. 'If one member suffer, all should suffer with it; if one member be had in honour, all should rejoice thereat,' 1 Cor. xii. 26. 'The eye must not say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head, again, unto the feet, I have no need of you;' but every member ought to be helpful to its fellow-members, and willingly yield to every one that which belongeth to them; and, according to that of St Peter, 'As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one unto another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God,' 1 Peter iv. 10. For as the incolumity of the body depends upon the concord of the parts in the mutual performance of their duties, so the welfare of the church, when we thus shew ourselves to be members one of another; and therefore, as God hath called us, so let us walk, whether we

be magistrates, ministers, or others. Art thou a magistrate? Then thou, as the head, shouldest rule and govern wisely. Woe be to the body when the head is frenzy, drunken, idle, or the like. See thou be not so; but, as the head doth hear and see, taste and smell, for the good of the inferior members, so shouldest thou in that place wherein God hath set thee. Art thou a minister? Then, as the heart, thou shouldest be the fountain of life and vital spirits. Doctrine, like dew, should distil from thy lips. Little joy have the other members when the heart is sick or heavy. Art thou in meaner place?—a tradesman, husbandman, or the like. Then, as the foot, see thou be sound and serviceable, being ready to go or run for the least good that may betide the body. And that unity and love may the better be continued and maintained, let these evils be avoided:

First, Envy or repining at the gifts of others—a sin too common, and yet unnatural; for doth the foot envy at the head because it is preferred before it, as more honourable? Or is it discontented because it is clad in leather, when, it may be, there is a chain of gold about the neck, or a precious stone upon the finger? Each member is apparelled and decked with such ornaments and vestures as are most seemly for it. A garter is unseemly about the neck, and so is a chain about the leg. A foul fault, then, it must needs be to envy any in higher place for that credit, honour, and respect which they have above us.

Secondly, Arrogancy and highmindedness for any gift that is in us above our brethren. The eye is honoured with that necessary and noble sense of seeing, and so is the ear with that worthy and needful sense of hearing; and the nose is preferred before them both, in that profitable and useful sense of smelling. Thus he that taketh place before all in some things must be content to give place and come behind others in some things else. Let this cause thee to contemn none that are inferior to thyself in show.

Thirdly, Curiosity, or busy meddling with things belonging not unto us. The eye meddles not with hearing, nor the ear with seeing, nor the foot with either of them both; but each member knows its own office, and that it looks to. So arrogate not to thyself anything out of thy own calling, but contain thyself within thy own bounds and limits. If a mote should fall into the eye, were the foot a fit member to be thrust into the eye to pluck it out? No; for, though the foot be sensible of the trouble, yet it leaves the helping of it to the hand. It is neither fit nor comely for the people to meddle with the office of magistrates, directing them how to govern, nor with the calling of ministers, teaching them how to preach.

* Harvæus de Potest. Papæ, cap. 23. See B. Jewel's Defence of Apolog., fol. 610.

And therefore let all take the apostle's counsel, and 'study to be quiet, meddling with our own business,' leaving other things to whom they do concern, 1 Thes. iv. 11.

Use 2. For a second use, Is the church but one? Then woe to such as are authors or favourers of any division or separation, and so break the unity of the church. Such sin grievously, as St Paul sheweth, writing to the Corinthians, and avoucheth that such are carnal, and walk as men, 1 Cor. iii. 3. What answer will Brownists and Separatists make to God at the last day? Oh they were wicked magistrates, ungodly ministers! &c. But if the head ache, doth the foot refuse to bear it? or if the eye be blemished, doth the rest of the members disdain it or condemn it, or whilst it remaineth in the body, refuse to have fellowship with it, and renounce their own part in the body because of it? Methinks this being well considered must needs convince them. But of these before.

Hitherto I have been in the proposition of the parable. The prosecution, explication, or narration of it followeth now to be handled, which beginneth at the latter end of the first verse, and continueth to the end of the sixth.

Wherein we have laid down to be considered—first, The vineyard's plantation, in the latter part of the first and in the second verses; secondly, The supplantation thereof, in the four next.

In the first of these we have two things to entreat of; as, first, Of the vinitor's great pains and cost which he bestowed upon it; and, secondly, Of his just expectation which he made to receive fruit from it.

His pains, cost, and care for this his vineyard's good, appears in six sundry particulars:—

First, In the situation of it; for it grew, 1. Upon a hill; 2. Upon a very fruitful hill, 'In an horn of the son of oil,' for so the words are, by which Hebraism is set forth the fatness and fruitfulness of the place; for by a *horn* is noted strength, power, and height usually in Scripture, 2 Sam. xxii. 3; Ps. lxxv. 4, 5; Luke i. 69; and by *oil*, fatness and plenty, Job xxix. 6; and by the *son of oil* is meant that which cometh of the oil, and is of it, a phrase usual amongst the Hebrews. And so we read of the 'son of days;' of the 'son of death;' of the 'son of plenty,' and the like. By this phrase then is noted thus much, that they were excellently seated, both for pleasure and profit;* and in so fruitful a place, as if it had been the son of oil, and born of it.

Secondly, In the protection of it; for he fenced and enclosed it in strongly, that it might not be wasted nor any way annoyed.

Thirdly, In the elapidation or cleansing of it; cast-

ing out the stones, and preparing of the soil by purging it from all noisome things.

Fourthly, In the election or choosing of choice and noblest plants, such as were of the best kinds to set it with.

Fifthly, In the fortification and further strengthening it: for he built a tower in the midst thereof for the preservation of it.

Sixthly and lastly, In the erection and setting up a winepress in it, as being desirous to supply all things that might be useful for it, so that by all these he testified that his care for its good was very great. Before I come to speak of these particulars in general, observe we—

Doct. God is no way wanting or defective in any one point of good husbandry towards his church and vineyard.

Is anything wanting in it? that he supplies. Is anything hurtful in it? that he removes. Is any violence offered to it? that he withstands. No husbandman shall so labour his ground as God will do it.

And thus doth God speak of himself, professing his provident care for the good of it: 'In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red vine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day,' Isa. xxvii. 2, 3.* Where, by watering of it, he comprehends whatsoever belongs to the dressing and manuring of it; so that no duty shall be left unperformed whereby the good thereof might be procured. And unto this he addeth vigilancy; for what would it avail to husband a vine with great pains and labour, if afterwards it should be left open for thieves and beasts to enter in and waste it at their pleasures? Therefore he promiseth withal that he will keep it so that no hurt shall be done unto it, but the fruits shall have time to ripen, so that afterwards they may be reaped in their season. So our Saviour, having compared his Father to a husbandman, sets out his great care in trimming and dressing of his vine, by taking away those branches which were barren, and purging those which were fruitful, so that they might become more fruitful, omitting no part of his skill, neither to the one or other, John xv. 2. The like care is shewed in that parable propounded by our Saviour of the fruitless fig-tree, Luke xiii. 8; and in that which the apostle propounds of the good and bad soil, in both which the great and constant pains of this husbandman is declared, Heb. vi. 7.

Reas. 1. And no wonder; for, first, God loves his vineyard dearly, as hath been before shewed. Now we see that field which a man takes most pleasure in, he takes most pains about. No man will bestow such cost and labour upon a tenement he holds but

* Muscul., in loc.

* Calv. and Muse., in loc.

from year to year, as he will upon his own inheritance. This may be one reason why he so husbands it, to make it pleasant and fruitful, because his love is set upon it, and his delight is in it.

Reas. 2. Secondly, The church's fructifying is God's glorifying, as our Saviour telleth his disciples, 'Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit,' John xv. 8; Mat. v. 16. For look, as it tends to that husbandman's praise, whose fields exceed the fields of other men in fruitful crops; so we, being God's vineyard, set and planted by his right hand, do then commend his husbandry, and set forth his praise, when we are laden with the fruits of righteousness, as the apostle sheweth, Phil. i. 11. No wonder, then, if God be so diligent in his husbanding of his church, seeing the fruitfulness of the church brings praise and honour to his name; which is the main end he proposeth to himself in all his actions, as hath been before proved.

Use 1. And is God so careful a husbandman of his church? Hath he so provident a care for the good of it, as that if anything be wanting, he supplies it; or if anything be hurtful in it, he removes it? Then may all wicked ones hence take out a lesson, to their grief and terror. For woe to them who are in the church of God but as thorns and briars, hurtful and noxious to the lilies, Cant. ii. 2. God is a better husbandman than to suffer these for ever. A day will come when he will view his field, and stub up all winding and wounding briars, all renting and rankling thorns that fetch away the clothes, yea, skin and flesh too, from off the lambs of Christ, with their entanglements. It may be God may suffer these for a while, as he did the Canaanites in Israel, lest the wild beasts should break in upon them; and, as a wise husbandman, permits such to lie in the hedge for a year or two, and makes them serviceable for the stopping of a gap, or some such purpose; but in the end, when they are sear and rotten in their sins, then he will have them to the fire; for that is their portion.

Use 2. Secondly, It should admonish all to look unto their growth, that it be good and kindly. If the roots of trees run too deep into the earth, they must be cut off shorter; if the branches of a vine spread too far, they must be pruned nearer; and if the canker once eat into, or cleave unto our trees we set, we burn them, smoke them, or the like. And so if we be too much rooted by our affections in things below, or suffer them to spread abroad too far, or let the canker of sin to eat into our souls, be we what we will be, God will give us many a cutting, pruning, smoking, that if it be possible we may be brought into better case.

Use 3. Thirdly, This may comfort such as are evermore bewailing their little growth in grace. Mar-

vellous defective they are in virtues of all kinds, as in faith, meekness, patience, thankfulness, heavenly-mindedness, and the like; and albeit they have some good desires and unfeigned purposes and resolutions to bring forth fruit to God, yet withal they find such strong corruptions in themselves, as pride, vain-glory, worldliness, lust, passion, revengefulness, with such like, as that they be even out of hope, and know not what to judge of their own estate, but fear they belong not unto God, because they are no better husbanded. Now let me speak a word to the souls of these, and let my words be to them as 'the rain to the new-mown grass,' Deut. xxxii. 2. Dost thou not see the husbandman suffer his ground to lie as though he had forsaken it; and for a time to endure to have weeds and thistles grow thereon, even when he hath a purpose to break it up with his plough, and bestow much cost thereon?—yea, and after he hath turned it up, to let it lie, as if he were weary of his pains; when notwithstanding he comes with his plough again, and gives it another tilt or two, and then sows his seed, being all the while before but a-preparing of the soil for the receiving of it. The like is God's dealing with his dearest servants. He many times suffers them to bring forth the weeds of sin, and to lie in their wickedness for a time, as we see in David, Peter, and some others, as if he had cast them off; but it is for no other end but to mellow their hard hearts by humiliation and godly sorrow, and to teach them to distaste their pride, and not to trust to their own strength hereafter. But, notwithstanding, in due season he doth return, restore, and lift them up again. And therefore wait thou a while. Is thy heart hard and stony? Why, in his due time he will mollify and mellow it, and make it fit for the seed of grace, by bringing down all high hills of presumption, and making deep and long furrows of mortification in it. Hath he begun to scatter the seeds of grace within thy soul? Why, then, he will follow thee, and so husband the least drachm thereof, be it but a grain of mustard seed, Mat. xiii. 31, 32, as that it shall shoot up to ripeness, and become as a mighty tree, so that the birds of the air shall come and lodge in the branches of it. And forasmuch as thy heart is as apt to bring forth sin upon the least temptation, as the best and fattest ground is to bring forth weeds upon the sweetest April shower, God will daily look unto thee; and no sooner shall a weed peep out, but he will with his weeding hook have it up; nor a superfluous twig sprout forth, but he will with his pruning knife cut it off. According to that which our Saviour teacheth, 'Every branch that bringeth forth fruit, he purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit,' John xv. 2. And therefore discourage not thyself; for thy soul is the field, not of the sluggard, but of a careful hus-

bandman, who will so follow thee, as that thou shalt every day grow more fruitful in grace and goodness.

Use 4. And lastly, Hence let good ministers, who are God's deputies to husband this his vineyard, learn diligently to follow their vocation, omitting no manner of pains that may tend to the fructifying of the church, seeing God himself omits none. Let us observe our times and seasons, and sometimes plant, and at other times water, with exhortations, persuasions, and the like; and as occasion serves, let us sometimes prune with reprehensions, oburgations, and, if need require, with the knife of discipline; evermore being occupied about something that may make for the good thereof; remembering that it is God's vineyard we labour in, and not man's; and he is able to recompense the faithful, and punish the unfaithful, which should make us to be the more circumspect and laborious in our calling, taking heed to what seed we sow, and to what plants we set. Alas for such as are idle, negligent, and regardless of the vineyard of the Lord, who, like harlots, so soon as they be brought to bed, put forth their children to other nurses,* that themselves might have the better leisure to take their pleasure and satisfy their lust. How will God allege his own example against such for their conviction, and strike their ears with that chiding and unpleasant voice, Away, thou disloyal and unprofitable servant, into utter darkness!

This in general. Come we now to the particulars, wherein this good husbandman shewed his great care for his vineyard's good. In handling of which I would be loath to be found too curious. I confess I am of their† judgment who think it not so fit to sift every branch too exquisitely or exactly; for every string of a parable is not to be strained, nor too curiously to be pressed, lest instead of milk we fetch blood. *Theologia symbolica non est argumentation.* The principal scope is especially to be regarded, beyond which nothing is to be urged. I intend therefore to gather from these branches such fruit as hang lowest for my reach, and as will readily and naturally, and as it were of its own accord, fall into our hands. I hope I shall offend no reasonable hearer nor reader in so doing.

The first particular wherein God commends his love and care to this his vineyard, is in the situation of it. He chose for it such a place and plat as was, first, commodious, for it was a *hill*, which place vines love well, and best prosper on—

‘Bacchus amat colles, Aquilonem et frigora sylva.’

Secondly, fertile and plenteous, for it was a *very fruitful hill*, or the horn of the son of oil, by which Hebraism the fatness and fruitfulness of the place is set

* Damasc. Papa, cpist. iv., dist. 78.

† Calvin and Ursin, *in loc.*

forth, as we have seen before. Put both together, and thence we learn,

Doct. The fat of the earth is often given by God to his church and people for their possession.

God often gives abundance of temporal good things and earthly blessings to his own people, as well as to the wicked; and as David sheweth, he ‘prepareth a table for them even in the presence of their enemies, and doth anoint their heads with oil, and so fill their cup as that it runneth over,’ Ps. xxiii. 5. A cloud of witnesses might be brought to justify as much, both out of the Old Testament and New. Out of the Old these: Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob, Job, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, besides others, all good and rich, Gen. xiii. 7, and xxiv. 35; Job i. 1-3, and xxxi. 24, 25. Out of the New Testament these: Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, an honourable counsellor, and he was a good man and just; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, both disciples and followers of Christ, with many others of all estates, Mat. xxvii. 57; Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 50, and viii. 3; some rich, some noble, some wise, some mighty and of great account, as the apostle sheweth, I Cor. i. 26. Agreeable hereunto is that promise, that ‘riches and treasures shall be in his house that feareth the Lord,’ Ps. cxii. 1, 3, and that prophecy, that ‘the rich should come to the people of God, and join with the church,’ Isa. lx. 11.

Reasons may be rendered, as these: first, that the wicked might not altogether trample on them; or, secondly, say God could not enrich them. And therefore God will give to some, that they may see he could enrich all the rest if he saw good, and that it would make for their good; or, thirdly, that neither they nor theirs may stand to the wicked's finding, who are hard-hearted, and would give them but short allowance, if they were at their providing.

Use 1. This may serve, first, to restrain men from rash censuring of the rich, as if wickedness were of necessity bound to wealthiness, as heat is to the fire, when we see a rich man may be a good man. Wealth and wisdom may dwell together, righteousness and riches may kiss each other. ‘Ye cannot serve God and mammon,’ saith our Saviour, Mat. vi. 25. He doth not say, as it is well observed,* Ye cannot *have* God and mammon; but, Ye cannot *serve* God and mammon; for he that is the servant of God must be the master of his money, and so he may have both the one and the other. Poor Lazarus indeed attained unto everlasting life, and the rich glutton was tormented; but yet it was rich Abraham which did hold poor Lazarus in his bosom.† And therefore conclude we, it is not wealth, but vice that excludes out of God's kingdom. A man may be wealthy and wise,

* Chrysost. Aret. *in loc.* † Aug. in Ps. ix., ser. 1, tom. 10.

great and gracious. In heaven you may find such, though they be rarities there.

Use 2. Secondly, This may teach us not to condemn these outward things, but to esteem of them as good blessings in themselves, and be thankful for them when we have them given us. 'Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour,' Prov. iii. 16. They are the gifts of God then, and therefore good;* indeed they are but gifts of the left hand, and therefore not the chiefest good. They are given to the good, that we may not undervalue them; and they are given to the bad, that we may not too highly prize them.† It was then but a foolish part of Crates, a man of great riches, and a philosopher at Thebes, to cast his wealth into the sea, saying he would destroy it lest it should destroy him, for neither needed. And as great folly for friars, hermits, and anchorites, to vow and profess voluntary poverty upon the like ground. I have seen a rotten log yield as much sawdust as a piece of good timber, and Jerome espied a proud heart under a monk's cowl.‡

Obj. If any do object that our blessed Saviour call-eth riches 'the mammon of unrighteousness,' Luke xvi. 9, and 'thorns and snares' to choke and catch the soul, Mat. xiii. 22, they are to know that our Saviour therein aimeth not at riches as they are in their own nature, nor as they are used and possessed by the faithful, but as they are abused by the wicked unto sin, either in their unlawful getting or possessing, and so they are as a sword in a madman's hand. The abuse, and not themselves, is to be rejected.§

The second particular that manifests God's care is his protecting of it in building a fence about it; and that teacheth us,

Doct. God's church and people are strongly fenced in and protected from the rage and fury of their enemies.

What the devil confesses of Job is true of all God's people, 'Thou hast made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side,' Job i. 10. The truth of this I will endeavour to shew in sundry particulars.

For, *first*, The unreasonable creatures are as a hedge and defence unto them. God many times sends armies of them as a valiant garrison to defend his Israel. Yea, the very waters shall be as a wall of defence unto them, as well on their right hand as on their left, Exod. xiv. 22. The cruellest of these creatures God often makes both their friends and patrons.

Secondly, They are oftentimes fenced and protected by the very wicked. Chaff and straw is good to preserve the corn, though otherwise it be good for little but to burn. Thus the cursed Canaanites shall remain a while amongst the Israelites, as before was shewed, and not be destroyed at once, but by little and little, as God's people got more and more strength, that the wild beasts of the field might not break in upon them or molest them.

Thirdly, The godly as a holy army do rise up in their defence to help them; sometimes by making apology for them; other whiles by sending aid and succour to them, and continually by their prayers which they put up to God for their preservation and safety.

Fourthly, The glorious angels that excel in strength do pitch their tents about them, and keep them in all their ways. These are the watchmen over the walls of the new Jerusalem and of the mountains about the same, Ps. ciii. 20, xxxiv. 7, and xci. 11; Isa. lxiii.

And *lastly*, In all these, and above all these, the Lord himself is the defence and protection of his people. He is unto them 'a wall of fire round about,' Zech. ii. 5. He is their covert, their shadow, and their place of refuge, Isa. iv. 6. He is their rock, their fortress, their strength, their buckler, their high tower, and their deliverer, Ps. xviii. 2.

Reason. Desire we to know the reason why the godly are so hedged about and so strongly fenced? then take it in a word. There is a near bond and conjunction between God and them; they are his friends, they are his subjects, they are his servants, they are his children, they are his spouse, yea, the members of his own body, according to that saying, 'He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye,' Zech. ii. 8.

Use 1. Which being so, let none think to prevail against them or overcome them. True it is, the church is a weak tent in itself; and the godly are like a small flock of sheep, for the most part very impotent and feeble in regard of outward strength; when their enemies are like raging lions; and besides for multitude very many, who use all their wit and wealth, power and strength that possibly they can use or devise, for the raising and overthrowing of God's church and people. Yet the flock of Christ still remains, and ever shall remain; all the power and policy of men and devils shall never be able to subdue them. For albeit we are harder assaulted, yet not any are better protected; their garrison is strong and mighty; God himself is their rock and fortress, their shield and buckler, and until that be broken or smitten through, they shall never be wounded. Let then all atheists, papists, and all other, cease plotting and devising anything which may be hurtful or pernicious to any of

* Sunt Dei dona, ergo in se bona.—Aug. epist. 70 ad Bonif.

† Ne potentur mala, dantur et bonis; ne potentur summa bona, dantur et malis.

‡ Quid facit sub tunica penitentis regius animus?—Hier.

§ Crimen non est in rebus, sed in usu agentis.—Bern.

God's children; for if they do, let them be well assured their labour will be in vain, Ps. ii. 1. And he is a very fool that will attempt anything which he knows for certainty will never come to good, but prove his bane and ruin, as all their wicked plots and projects will most assuredly in the end.

Use 2. Hence also ariseth much comfort to God's people, for they are safe and sure under the wings of the Almighty, they are strongly fenced about and preserved with a continual guard. That which Elisha and his man saw with 'bodily eyes, 2 Kings vi. 17, every believer may be assured of by faith.

No monarch on the earth hath a stronger garrison than the meanest Christian, neither is any man's safety better provided for than is the godly man's; so that he may be bold and confident at all times, in all places, and in the midst of the greatest dangers. Whether he walk abroad or stay at home, whether he be in company or alone, whether it be in the day or in the night, whether he wake or sleep, he may sing and say with David, 'I will fear no evil,' Ps. xxiii. 4. Let the enemies of the church band themselves together against it to molest it, let Pharaoh and his host pursue God's Israel; God will suddenly step forth and cause the cloudy pillar to remove behind his people, and to be betwixt their enemies and them, Exod. xiv. 19; as if God should say, Before they touch thee they shall overcome me, O Israel. Let us then go on as God commanded them, and keep ourselves in our ways, and then fear nothing, for God will fight for us, let us hold our peace, ver. 14.

The third particular here mentioned is its elapidation or cleansing, 'He gathered out the stones thereof;' whereby is meant, as before was shewed, the idolatrous heathen, whom God drove out before his Israel, Ps. xlv. 2, that they might not hinder this his vineyard's growth. Hence we infer,

Doct. It is not safe nor profitable for the church to suffer wicked idolaters, or other obstinate sinners, to remain within the church. Of such God's vineyard must be rid, and his church purged.

Will you hear in a few words what the Scriptures say for confirmation hereof. It is commanded in the law, that the false prophet, 'and seducing idolater, whether he be brother, or son, or daughter, or wife, or friend, should be taken away and slain without mercy or pity, that all Israel may hear and see and fear, and not dare to commit the like,' Deut. xiii. 1, *et seq.* And again, 'There shall not be amongst you man, nor woman, nor family, nor tribe, which shall turn away his heart from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations,' Deut. xxix. 18. Besides, it forbade sowing of the field with mingled seed, Lev. xix. 19; ploughing with an ox and an ass together, Deut. xxii. 10; the wearing of a garment of

divers things, as linen and woollen mixed together. Now these laws according to the letter seem ridiculous, saith the gloss,* but the thing that God intends hereby to shew is, that he cannot away with a mixed religion. The church of Ephesus was commended for hating the works of the Nicolaitanes, Rev. ii. 6; but Pergamus was reproved for suffering them that maintained the doctrine of Balaam, ver. 14; and Thyatira blamed for suffering Jezebel to teach and deceive God's servants, ver. 20. And why in Scripture are idolaters called stumbling-blocks, snares, thorns, traps, whips, and destruction, Joshua xxiii. 3; Judges ii. 1, but because they prove so to the people amongst whom they live? Israel found them so; and England did no less in Queen Mary's days; and France doth so. For from whence spring these commotions, tumults, horrible massacres, and bloody tragedies, but from the diversity of religion amongst them?

Reason 1. And indeed what agreement hath light with darkness, or God with Belial? The Lord can never digest two contraries, though never so well mixed or wisely tempered, in matters of religion, as the church of Laodicea sheweth, Rev. iii. 16. Hereupon zealous Elijah exhorted the people after this manner, 'If the Lord be God, follow him; and if Baal be God, go after him,' 1 Kings xviii. 21.

Reason 2. Besides, 'Do ye not know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?' 1 Cor. v. 6. Sin, therefore, being infectious, the sinner is not to be tolerated in the assembly of the righteous.

Use 1. Take we occasion hence to magnify God's name, who hath been so gracious to this his vineyard, which his own right hand hath planted in this land, as to cleanse it of all such stones as might any way hinder the prosperity or flourishing estate of it. Our streets are well swept and rid of that popish rubbish, wherewith formerly they have been much annoyed. Those dens of thieves are dispersed; those buyers and sellers of popish trash, monks, friars, mass-mongers, and Jesuits, are whipt out of the temple, and driven from amongst us. He hath pulled down that great idol of the mass, with other idols that were set up to be adored, and hath abolished the manifold heresies and corruptions of false doctrine, and withal hath blessed us with so religious and prudent a king as is a constant 'defender of the faith,' and an open adversary to superstition and idolatry. What shall we now render to the Lord for all these testimonies and tokens of his love towards us? but take the cup of salvation, and praise with tongue and heart the name of God, acknowledging his goodness in delivering us from the Romish bondage, labouring to bring forth the fruits of the gospel, to the glory of his name and our own endless salvation.

* *Hæc ad literam videntur esse ridicula.—Ordin. Gloss. in Levit.*

Use 2. This likewise serveth for the admonition, 1. Of ministers, whom God hath reposed such great trust and confidence in, as to be the dressers and keepers of his vineyard; that we be found faithful, and, what lies in us, remove whatsoever may any way annoy it. For which end, Christ hath not only committed unto us 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,' Eph. vi., wherewith we may convince gainsayers, Titus i., but also 'the keys of the kingdom,' Mat. xvi. 19, that men, being convicted and not converted nor reclaimed, they may be cast out and expelled, either for a time, as the incestuous Corinthian was, 1 Cor. v. 5, or for ever, even unto the coming of the Lord. Which kind of excommunication the apostle calls *Maran-atha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22, of *Mora*, the Lord, and *Ata*, he cometh, *a* being interposed for sound's sake. Which censure being so grievous as it is,—for it is a delivering up to Satan, 1 Cor. v. 5,—ought not to be inflicted rashly for every trifle, but deliberately in matters of weight and moment, and in such cases as expressly shut out of the kingdom of heaven, such as those the apostle mentioneth, 1 Cor. vi., because it is a declaration of that which is by God done in heaven. In the execution whereof let all such as it doth concern beware of filthy lucre, and faithfully discharge what is committed to them, not suffering the notoriously profane to remain within the church, lest others be endangered and infected by their society; for 'their very words'—and much more their conversation—'creepeth and corrupteth as a gangrene,' 2 Tim. ii. 17.

2. Magistrates, who must second the word of information with the rod of reformation,* and back the ministers of the word by the use of the temporal sword, which they must not bear for nought, but as the ministers of God, take vengeance on them that do evil. These are God's surrogates, and the preacher's hopes, Rom. xiii. 4. Our words are thought air, where their hands do not compel. Good laws are made against the wicked and profane; but what are we the better for God's own laws without execution? If those who have the charge imposed, and the sword put in their hands, stand like the picture of St George, with his hand up, yet never strike, it will fare full ill with the vineyard of the Lord. Let it be their care with David, 'early to destroy the wicked of the land, and to cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord,' Ps. ci. 8. 'Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes,' Cant. ii. 15. Let neither young nor old be spared. And of all other, let that Romish reynard and his cubs, extravagant priests and Jesuits, with other obstinate recusants, be hunted as most hurtful to our vineyard.

For what think you of these positions †—(1.) Neigh-

* Verbum informans, virga reformans.

† Decret. Papal. apud Grat. cens. 15. Gloss.

bours, if heretics, meaning thereby protestants, may lawfully be spoiled of their goods, though indeed it were better, say they, to do it by the authority of the judge.

(2.) It is lawful for parishioners to defraud protestant ministers of their tithes, and of this, *Non est dubium*, say they, there is no doubt to be made.*

(3.) Men are not bound to restore that which they have received, or to satisfy their creditors, who are tainted with heresy.†

(4.) A Catholic wife is not bound to give due benevolence to her husband, being a protestant.‡

(5.) By the heresy of the father a child is freed from his obedience. So that, if a priest returning into England findeth his father to be a protestant, he may deny him to be his father, meaning that he is not such a one as he ought to acknowledge for his father.§

(6.) That heretics may not be termed either children or kindred; but according to the old law, thy hand must be upon them to spill their blood.||

(7.) That it is not lawful for Christians to tolerate an heretical king: they may expel him, depose him, yea, murder him. And this, they say, is agreeable to the apostolic doctrine.¶

(8.) If war be once proclaimed by them against sectaries—that is, in their language, us protestants—then it is lawful for any private man to take, spoil, kill such sectaries, and burn their houses over their heads.**

(9.) It is lawful for Catholic princes to make league with protestants only for their own advantage; as, for example, to despatch some businesses which hinder them from falling upon protestants with their whole forces.††

(10.) And that one may swear with equivocation and mental reservation, is good positive divinity with them.‡‡

By these and the like positions, which they maintain, we plainly see how they dissolve all bands of human fellowship, and strangle the vital spirits of human society. Whether it be safe then to suffer such, judge ye. Besides, as is their doctrine, such is their practice, in deposing kings and emperors, practising hellish treasons, justifying the murdering of princes, making leagues only for their own ends; breaking their promises, oaths, vows, at their pleasure. Can it then be well with the vineyard, if these

* Alanus Card. et Parsonus.

† Simancha Epis. Paces. Instit. Cath., tit. 46, sec. 73.

‡ Simanch. Instit. Gregor., 13.

§ Simanch. quo sup., tit. 46, sec. 74, et Alan. Card.

|| Apud Grat. gloss. in Decret. lib. v. ex Decret. Greg. 9, Caus. 23, q. 8.

* Bellar. lib. v. de Rom. Pontif., cap. 67 and 4.

** Simanch. Instit. Cathol., cap. 45, sec. 13.

†† Paulus Windebeck in delib. de heret. extirp., p. 414.

‡‡ Card. Tol., lib. iv., Instit. Sacerd., cap. 21.

foxes be at liberty? Can it be well with the lambs of Christ, if these wolves be suffered to range about? Can Israel enjoy the land of Canaan in quiet, if these Canaanites be not subdued as servants to the congregation, or subverted as enemies? Let, therefore, all such magistrates as tender the good of their king and crown, land and state, do their best to watch and catch these foxes; lenity and mildness hath long been used. Now, to use the words of a late worthy prelate,* some justice with mercy would do well; some frosts with the fire that warms these snakes in the bowels of our land; some plucks at these thorns and prickles in our eyes, the meantime, and will be hereafter in our sides and hearts; lest, if justice go on to sleep, as it were, her dead sleep, the tares of disloyalty, treasons, and seditious be so thick-sown in the field of this kingdom by those envious ones, the seedsmen of Rome, that it will be difficulty and mastery afterwards to remove them.

3. And let all good Christians, of what estate or degree soever, beware of having any inward society or familiarity with idolaters, or other obstinate sinners and offenders. It is worthy remembering how, when the emperor Theodosius, senior, was desirous to confer with Eunomius, the Arian bishop, his wife, Placilla, the empress, very earnestly dissuaded him, lest he, being perverted by his speeches, should begin to like of his heresy.† And surely there is more danger of being infected by them than of doing good upon them. Easier is it to draw a profane person from hell gates than to remove an opinion from a wilful mind. Let us all, with Jacob, cleanse and purge our families of these and such-like baggage, Gen. xxxv. 2, not suffering any ungodly person to dwell with us, Ps. ci. We see how it is in the body; when nature hath any evil or unprofitable humours that oppress the stomach, it is forced to cast them out for the preservation of the health of other parts. So should it be with us: if we perceive our families to be endangered by obstinate and obdurate sinners, it should vomit them out as raw and undigested humours by timely ejection, lest the whole head wax heavy, and the whole body sickly, and so the vital parts languish. To conclude, let us all pray, and pray heartily, for this vineyard in this land, as all are directed by authority:‡ 'Lord, strengthen the hands of our gracious king, the nobles, and magistrates of the land, that with judgment and justice they may cut off and root out that Babylonish and antichristian sect out of the confines and limits of this kingdom, that they may never prevail against us, nor triumph in the ruins of this church.' And with

our prayer let all protest with one joint voice to God 'Thou art my Lord, &c.; thy sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips,' Ps. xvi. 2, 4.

Now, in the next place, consider we of God's great love to this his vineyard, in regard of the choice vine wherewith he planted it. It was not of an ordinary, but of the best and noblest kind; which, whether it be meant of all the seed of Abraham in general, as some would have it, or of some of the choicest persons of the house of Judah in particular—as of David, Solomon, and other such godly kings—as some other take it, yet this will follow:—

Doct. The godly and their seed are the noblest plants and choicest persons. Such as are godly, such are most excellent.

'My goodness,' saith David, 'extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight,' Ps. xvi. 2, 3. Where see how that kingly prophet honoureth such as are saints with the name of *excellent* and *worthies of the earth*; and Solomon, his son, affirmeth as much when he telleth us, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' Prov. xii. 26; he is better beloved and graced of God, and hath that in him which maketh him more honourable than any other who is unrighteous and sinful. And our prophet Isaiah calleth the godly, in plain terms, 'The glory.' 'Upon all the glory,' saith he, 'shall be a defence,' chap. iv. 5. Thus, as the godly go before all other in virtue, so they go before them in honour, and as they exceed others in piety, so they surmount them in excellence.

Reason. And that this is truth—viz., that the godly are the noblest and choicest of persons—may appear further if we consider,

(1.) Their race and pedigree, for they are descended of the blood royal, 1 Pet. ii. 9; they are born of God, John iii. 9, being 'sons and daughters of the King of kings and Lord of lords,' 2 Cor. vi. 18; and whereas other men are called 'children of the earth,' or 'children of disobedience,' Col. iii. 6, or 'children of iniquity,' Hosea x. 9, or 'children of wrath,' Eph. ii. 3, or 'children of death,' 1 Sam. xxvi. 16, or 'children of the devil,' John viii. 44, or 'children of perdition,' John xvii. 2, or 'children of hell,' Mat. xxiii. 15; we shall find that all the godly are called either 'children of light,' John xii. 36, or 'children of the prophets,' Acts iii. 25, or 'children of the promise,' Rom. ix. 8, or 'children of the wedding chamber,' Mark ii. 19, or 'children of the kingdom,' Mat. viii. 12. Thus for birth and blood they exceed all other of the earth besides.

(2.) Their kindred are very rich and noble. For their Father they have him 'in whose hands are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of all hills

* Dr King's Sermon at Whitehall, Nov. 5, 1608.

† Sozoma, lib. vii. cap. 7.

‡ Prayers appointed for the 5th of November, the first after the second lesson.

is his also. The sea is his, for he made it; and his hands prepared the dry land. A great God is he, and a great King above all gods,' Ps. xcv. 3-5. For their mother they have a great queen, Ps. xlv. 9, who hath king's daughters and honourable women for her attendants, being clothed in raiment of gold and needle-work. For their brethren they have Christ, the great heir of the world, 'who is not ashamed to call them brethren,' Heb. ii. 11, and all saints upon the earth besides. Now, 'seemeth this a light thing unto you?' 1 Sam. xviii. 23.

(3.) Their place and dignity is very great; they are in high place and office, being made by Christ 'kings and priests unto God his Father,' Rev. ii. 6. They are in high authority to command and rule, like kings and priests, who have the chiefest rooms of all.

(4.) Their attendants are honourable. The glorious angels that are above, and which excel in strength, do evermore wait upon them, Ps. xxxiv. 7, xci. 11, and are become 'ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who are heirs of salvation,' Heb. i. 14. Yea, kings and queens are but as 'nurses' to them, Isa. xlix. 23; and they must do them homage, 'worshipping with their faces towards the earth, and licking up the dust under their feet.'

What shall we need to speak of other things, wherein one man is wont to excel another, and thereby wax glorious and become renowned? Who are wise besides these? Are not these only 'a wise, prudent, and understanding people?' Dent. iv. 6. Who are valiant but these? Are not these the 'chariots and horsemen of Israel?' 2 Kings ii. 12, xiii. 14. Who go fine but these? Are not these they who are 'arrayed with pure fine linen and shining?' Rev. iii. 5, xix. 8. Do not these go clothed with the golden and silken robes of Jesus Christ, and of his Spirit? Who fare so well as these? Are not these fed with manna, the bread of life? John vi. 33; Rev. ii. 17. Have not these prepared for them 'a feast of fat things, even a feast of fined wines, of fat things full of marrow, of wines fined and purified?' Isa. xxv. 6. Who are out of debt but these? Hath not Christ discharged them of all their sins, which are called debts, Mat. vi. 12, and cancelled the bonds? 1 Pet. ii. 24; Col. ii. 14. Who have peace within and without but these? God is now reconciled with them, so that they have peace not only with God himself and his creatures, Rom. v. 1, Phil. iv. 7, 2 Cor. v. 19, but also with themselves in their own souls and consciences. Who enjoy health but these? Their souls are sound and well; and daily they 'go on from strength to strength, till they appear perfect in Sion,' Ps. lxxxiv. 7. Who speaks so pure a language as these? Their language is 'the language of Canaan;' out of their mouths 'no filthy, unsavoury, nor rotten communication doth proceed,' Col. iv. 6. What shall

I say more? Who can compare with these, who have the heavens for their inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 4, the Scriptures for their evidences, the sacraments for their seals, and the Holy Ghost for their assurer. Who have 'all things theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's,' 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

Use I. Now, if this be so, that the godly are the choicest plants and chiefest personages, why then are such most contemned, and accounted, according to St Paul's saying, 'as the filth of the world, and off-scouring of all things?' 1 Cor. iv. 13. But let me say to worldlings, as the apostle of those great ones who put the Lord of life to death, 'If they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of life and glory,' 1 Cor. ii. 8. So didst thou but know who these are, and what manner of persons they are, whom thou thus despisest, thou wouldest more respect them, yea, love and reverence them—nay, kiss the very ground they go upon. Indeed, they seem outwardly black and weather-beaten; but what then? Yet under that baseness and blackness is hid great honour and beauty. Within that leather purse is a precious pearl: in those earthen pots is abundance of golden treasure. As mean and base as they seem in thy eyes, they are children of God—great heirs and princes, and shall one day reign with Christ in glory. Be therefore well advised, and disdain them not. Had Shimei ever thought that David should ever have recovered again the crown and kingdom, and so sovereignty over him, he would have spared his cursed speeches used against him, and have been more temperate, 2 Sam. xvi. Or had Joseph's brethren as much believed his dreams, Gen. xxxvii. 11, that they should come and bow to him, as they envied him for them, they would have used him with more mildness; but they, when they sold him, thought never to have seen him more, much less did they expect to have been told of their cruelty from his mouth. And yet, whatever they thought, it so fell out contrary to all their expectations. Now, when they hear him which was a ruler in Egypt say, 'I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold,' Gen. xlv. 4, how amazingly do you think they looked one upon another? with what paleness and silence do they stand before him? Wonder, doubt, reverence, fear, hope, guiltiness, struck them at once. The more they considered, they wondered the more; and the more they believed, the more they feared. For those words, 'I am Joseph whom you sold,' seemed to sound thus much to their guilty thoughts, You are murderers, and I am a prince in spite of you; my power and this place give me all opportunities of revenge; my glory is your shame, my life your danger, &c. Even thus it is and shall be with all wicked ones. When they revile and mock God's children, do they think they shall ever see Joseph more? or ever come and

bow before him and do him reverence? Alas, they have no such thought; and yet they must and shall, for Joseph will appear, though not in Egypt, yet in heaven, to their confusion and shame. Then will they be vexed and amazed, who now set God's children at nought; then will they change their minds, and sob and sigh for grief of spirit, and say within themselves, These are the men and women whom we disdained and contemned, and called puritanical fools, and precise fellows; these are they whom we slandered and molested. But now we see how highly they are advanced, being counted amongst the children of God, having their portion with the saints. Oh that such as vex and molest the righteous, either with virulent tongues, as Shimei, 2 Sam. xvi, or with violent hands, as Herod, Acts xii., or with both, as Julian the apostate; whether by themselves, as Diotrophes, 3 John 9, or by other, as the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. xxvi. 3; whether closely, like Jezebel, 1 Kings xxi., or openly, like Pharaoh, Exod. v., would think of this change and alteration! And how soon it may come; who knoweth? But certainly it will come, and then what the psalmist speaketh shall infallibly be verified,—'Their horn shall be exalted with glory. The wicked shall see it, and be angry; he shall gnash with his teeth and consume away: the desire of the wicked shall perish,' Ps. cxii. 9, 10.

Use 2. And therefore, let this serve further for our instruction, that we learn highly to esteem of such as be truly godly, seem they never so mean or base in the world's eye. Thus did St Lawrence, that blessed martyr of Christ Jesus, who being demanded of the tyrant, where the riches of the church lay, looking for store of gold and such like treasure, he gathered together a multitude of poor Christians, telling the tyrant that there was the riches and beauty of the church, and albeit they were now ragged and unseemly in the eyes of men, yet they should one day be clad in white robes, and shine in majesty and glory before the throne of God. The like, as I have read,* was the practice of Ingo, an ancient king of the Draves and Veneds, who, making upon a time a stately feast, invited thereunto all his nobles, who were at that time pagans, and unconverted to the Christian faith, and a multitude of poor Christians. His nobles he set in his hall below, and those poor Christians with himself in his presence chamber, entertaining them with the royallest cheer and kingliest attendance that might be. At which, when his nobles wondered, he told them this he did not as he was king of the Draves, but as king of another world, wherein these should be his companions and fellow princes. To them he would give civil due in the government of the common-

wealth; but these he must love and honour in his heart, as most honoured and best beloved of God. Read this to thy shame, who knowest not how to shew the least respect unto a Christian. And if thou wouldest not have it to condemn thee, let it mend thee, causing thee to be more respective in thy carriage towards such as serve the Lord. So shalt thou imitate God like a good child herein, and get a testimony to thy own conscience, that thou art God's, because thou lovest his image, 1 John iii. 2, which mark of a child of God may comfort thee when all others in the time of temptation may fail thee.

Use 3. Hence also we may have direction how to become excellent and famous, namely, by becoming gracious. This way will not fail to effect it, and no other course can be available without it. Men may be wealthy, and ignominious; they may have gorgeous apparel, and yet be contemptible. Pharaoh's horses had costly trappings, Cant. i. 8; and the Midianites' camels had chains of gold about their necks, Judges viii. 26. Grace and goodness do more deck and adorn than all these do or can. This is that which the apostle calleth seeking glory and honour by well-doing, Rom. ii. 7; and only is that whereby Abel, Noah, Abraham, and the rest obtained a good report, Heb. xi. 12. How grossly, then, are such deceived as think godliness doth cause contempt, and the way to become honourable is to grow graceless and sinful! For can any wise man think that the dunghill of wickedness is a fit mine to dig out a good estimation, or that the puddle water of vanity will make a man seem beautiful and fair? or that the only way to make a man sweet is to tumble in a jakes? Certainly figs grow not upon thorns, neither is the sweet ointment of a good name compounded of those stinking ingredients, pride, drunkenness, whoredom, profaneness, or the like. A good name ariseth out of honest things, as the poet* could say, and not from actions sinful and dishonest. Cain and Esau we know were wicked men, and dead many hundred years ago; yet the Scripture never speaketh of them but with great reproach, as 'profane Esau,' Heb. xii. 16; 'Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother,' 1 John iii. 12. And so Judas, who is never almost spoken of but he is called by the name of 'traitor.' The patriarchs, prophets, and apostles have likewise been a long time dead, and yet how lovely are their names! Scripture never speaks of them but with great respect; as, 'Abraham the father of the faithful,' Rom. iv.; 'Moses the servant of God,' Ps. xc., title; 'David the sweet singer of Israel,' 2 Sam. xxiii. 1; and St Peter, St Paul, St John, and so the rest. Thus the wicked leave a filthy savour behind them, as a greasy snuff, when it goeth out, which every

* *Famam extendere factis
Hoc virtutis opus.*

* *Æneas Sylvius, cap. 20.*

one that passeth by stops his nose at; but the godly leave their names behind them for a blessing. The very remembrance of them is sweet; and like the end of some sweet wax candle, which every one loves to have the scent of, even after it hath left burning. Wouldst thou then be counted excellent? see that thou 'do worthily in Ephratah, and so be famous in Bethlehem,' Ruth iv. 11. It is virtue only that can emblazon thy name, and that will do it. A field of sincerity charged with deeds of piety, cannot but be accomplished with a crest of glory. But if thou livest licentiously and profanely, so loathsome will thy abominable life make thee, as that thou shalt scarce ever come into mention of God's people but with a style like that of 'Jereboam the son of Nebat, that made Israel to sin,' 2 Kings x. 29.

Use 4. And lastly, for consolation, let this serve to the godly poor despised by the rich and worldly wise. Know thou for thy comfort thou art a choice plant in God's account, and he that knows the true worth of things, esteems thee precious, and holds thee for one of his jewels of great price, Mal. iii. 17, whatever men do deem. And when that day of separation shall come, he will then make it known to all the world. First, by his setting thee on his right hand as one of his darlings, whom he purposeth to advance and honour when all other shall be turned to the left hand as base and contemptible, Mat. xxv. Secondly, By that his gracious call and sweet sentence, 'Come, thou blessed,' &c. The prosecuting of this point would be very comfortable, but I hasten, and now come to the fifth particular here mentioned, whereby God's love to this his vineyard was manifested, in these words:

He built a tower in the midst of it; which was as well for the beautifying and adorning it as for the further strengthening of it. By which tower, whether we understand the glorious temple in Jerusalem, that stately edifice and building, or Jerusalem itself, whereto all the tribes resorted, and the nations came to worship, Ps. cxxii. 4, it will lead us to this observation, that,

Doct. The beauty and bulwark of a place is God's service and worship erected and set up in that place. For neither is Jerusalem nor Zion here compared to a tower, especially in regard of the stately buildings, multiplicity of turrets, aspiring towers, or the like; but in regard of religion that was found in it. In Jerusalem was the continual worship of God, in the temple the continued service of God; and this was it which gave the grace and countenance, this made it the golden head of the picture, lady of the world, seat of the monarchy, and as Micah, agreeing with this of our prophet, calls it, the 'tower of the flock, and the strong-hold of the daughter of God's people,' Micah iv. 8.

We read how that good woman, the wife of Phine-

has, upon hearing tidings of taking of the ark, with very grief fell in travail, and gave up the ghost, 1 Sam. iv. 20, 21; before whose death neither could the birth of a man-child, nor the kind and comfortable speeches of those women then present with her, any whit comfort or content her; but she cries out, 'The glory is departed from Israel, because the ark of God was taken;' yea, she doubles her passionate complaint, and again, with her last breath, says, 'The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken. And thereupon she gives her son a name, and calls him *Ichabod*, as much as to say, 'where is the glory?' or rather, 'no glory;' and all because the ark of God was taken. And thus not state, not wealth, not outward magnificence, but the presence of God in his ordinances, was ever accounted to be the glory of that people.

And so the apostle, in reckoning up the privileges and prerogatives of the Jews, telleth us that 'to them belonged the adoption and the glory,' Rom. ix. 4, 5, meaning thereby the ark, which was a token of God's presence, whence God also heard the prayers and praises of his people, and gave forth oracles unto such as sought him.

As it was their glory, so it was their strength. By it great things had been for them wrought. Before it the waters of Jordan were divided, Josh. iii. 14. The idol Dagon was laid flat upon the floor; the strong walls of Jericho were demolished by the presence of it, Josh. vi. 11; before it their enemies cannot stand. And this caused Israel too superstitiously to trust in the ark of wood, when they had God their enemy; for when they fell before their enemies they thus advise, 'Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh amongst us it may save us out of the hands of our enemies,' 1 Sam. iv. 3. Besides this that hath been said and shewed of the ark, for making good this point, that of the prophet Isaiah might be brought, 'In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks,' &c., Isa. xxvi. 1. But I hasten to the use.

Use 1. See here what enemies all irreligious persons are to this state and kingdom, as likewise such as seek to suppress and overthrow God's worship and true religion. These are the capital enemies of our nation, inasmuch as they labour to the utmost to pull away that which is the stay and pillar of our land. Satan and his instruments have ever charged true religion, and the professors of it, to be the authors of all contentions, tumults, and insurrections, and the greatest enemies of states and kingdoms, which imputation the father of lies hath laid before the eyes of great ones, to alienate the minds of princes both from it and them. Thus was Ahasnerus in-

censed against the Jews, Esther iii. 8; and Nebuchadnezzar against the three companions of Daniel, as if they had been disobeyers of the king's laws, and contemners of his edicts, Dan. iii. 12. So St Paul was often accused by the stoics in Athens, by Demetrius, by Tertullus, that he was a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition amongst the Jews through the world, and a sect-master, Acts xvii. 18, xix. 26, and xxiv. 5. And in the time of the first ten persecutions, if there were any public plague or calamity fallen on city or country, the heathen would straight cry out upon the Christians, accusing them to be the authors and causers of it. If Nilus overflowed not her banks, if the clouds withheld their rain, if the earth quaked, if famine increased, if the sword spoiled, if pestilence continued, by and by the poor Christians, as the sheep of Christ, were cast unto the lions. They were charged to make privy conspiracies, to devise secret counsels against the commonwealth, with the murdering of children, and eating man's flesh, as Eusebius doth record. Thus Nero, when he set Rome on fire, laid the fault on them. And where would the papists have laid the gunpowder treason, had the blow been given, but upon the puritans? But as the wolf in the fable, (oh, that it were but a fable!) when he sees the lamb drinking at the pool, comes blundering into the water, and troubles it, then quarrels with the lamb for troubling the water—

'Sic nocet innocens nocens, causamque nocendi Querit.'

So though Ahab, the wolf, troubles all Israel, yet Elijah, the lamb, shall be accused for it, 1 Kings xviii. 17, 18. And herein the wicked plays Athaliah's part, who cried out, Treason, treason, when she was the traitor, and none else. Therefore, as Elijah answered the crime objected, and rejected the same back, that it rebounded at him that gave the charge, so do I. It is not the godly and religious, but you irreligious and profane, who are the troublers of this kingdom.

Use 2. Hence let all be exhorted to use all good means to their utmost, that true religion may be established; for look, as Samson's strength lay in his hair, Judges xvi. 19, so doth the strength of our land consist herein; which if it should be shaved and deprived of, which we trust shall never be, though every shower were a shower of gold, every stone in the land a pearl, every beggar an honourable senator, every fool as wise as Solomon, every weakling as strong as Samson, yet our wealth, honour, strength, wisdom, and glory are gone, and we shall sing a doleful *misereere* with Phinehas his wife, 1 Sam. iv. 21, *Ichabod*: The glory of England is gone; for religion is gone. And therefore let every one, both magistrates and others, as they love their souls, their bodies, their king, their country, their peace and prosperity, pray

heartily, and pray continually for the establishing of it; esteeming it for God's best friend, the king's best friend, the court's best friend, the city's best friend, the country's best friend, and best friend to us all: 'Exalt her therefore, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee,' O England, 'to honour, if thou dost still embrace her,' Prov. iv. 8.

The sixth and last particular follows; and that is the erection and setting up of a winepress in it, for the pressing of the grapes and saving of the wine. And this, saith one, shews what hope the vinitor conceived of the fertility of his vineyard. As if the prophet should say: he nothing doubting of the fruitfulness thereof, made a winepress therein.

About which winepress our expositors are very various in their judgments; and yet the opinions of the most of them have some probable ground. Amongst all, theirs seemeth probablest who understand thereby the word and discipline. But forasmuch as we have not here so sure footing as we have had in the former, in that we want Scripture for the seconding such an exposition, I will content myself with this general observation:—

Duct. God hath his winepress, for the pressing, pruning, and discovering of his vineyard's fruit.*

The truth of this I will endeavour to prove by an induction of particulars.

First, The word preached is an excellent winepress for this end. This discovers what is in a man; and therefore it is compared to an axe put to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10, because it discovers who are sound and unsound, as the axe doth. For albeit by the eye it is not so soon perceived what trees are good and what naught, for many a one there may be which is straight without, having a goodly top, and fair rind, and yet rotten and hollow within, yet when the axe is brought and laid to the root, and it felled, then what was before unknown is manifestly seen. In the same respect it is compared to a fan in Christ's hand, whereby he doth purge his floor, ver. 12. Chaff and corn, good and bad, lie together upon a heap a while; but when the gospel comes, it being preached with power and a good conscience, it blows so mightily, as with the gust thereof hypocrites are scattered, and the faithfulness of such as with honest and good hearts embrace it is revealed and made known. After the same manner is the word compared unto fire, Jer. xxiii. 29, which hath a double effect; to waste stubble and dross, and to purify that which is refinable as gold and silver. It inflames some men's hearts with a zealous love to God and his glory, and setteth others on fire to persecute and impugn it. And to a sword with two edges, Heb. iv. 12, which cutteth both ways, and divides between the joints and the sinews, and the marrow and the

* Query, 'pruning?'—Ed.

bones. It doth anatomise the hearts of men, and discover the soundness or unsoundness of them. And to light, Eph. v. 13, which maketh all things clear and manifest, which before, lying in the dark, could not be discerned nor discovered. Thus we see the nature of the word, which, like a winepress, will make known what is within, laying open the poison that lurked in the wicked, and the grace and goodness that lay hid in the bosom of the godly.

Secondly, Crosses and afflictions, wherewith God exerciseth his church, are as God's winepress. By these he doth discover what is in his people that profess his name. Thus Moses said he led his people Israel forty years in the wilderness, 'for to humble them, and prove them, to know,' that is to make known, 'what was in their hearts,' Dent. viii. 2. And so God, speaking of the remainder of his people, whom he did not utterly cut off in judgment, saith thus: 'I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried,' Zech. xiii. 9. And St Peter, comforting the faithful in their afflictions, speaketh after this manner: 'Dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is amongst you to prove you, as though some strange thing were come unto you,' &c., 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. And St James, after the same manner, calleth afflictions, trials, and temptations, chap. i. 3, because they serve to try us what is in us, and make it known. And, indeed, afflictions are blabs and tell-tales, as one saith well—they will not conceal the truth, but make it known; they press out of the godly that sap and juice of grace which is within them; yea, the more they are pressed, the more the liquor of grace distilleth from them, the more abundant they are in prayer, confession, humiliation, &c. But from the wicked they can press nothing but noisome, stinking putrefaction: if they send forth in the day of trouble is railing, murmuring, and impatience.

Thirdly, Discipline or the spiritual censures of the church, executed against such members of the church as have fallen into any scandalous offence,—the highest degree whereof is excommunication, and debarring from the public ordinances of God, and society of the faithful, both public and private,—are as a winepress. And though it be not absolutely of the essence of the church, no more than the winepress is essential to the vineyard, yet it cannot well be wanting in the church, no more than a winepress can be wanting in a vineyard. By and in the true use whereof, the sinner becomes humbled and reformed, 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Thes. iii. 14; others are terrified and made afraid, 1 Tim. v. 20; and the ordinances of God are kept in reverence, 1 Cor. v. 6, 7. The sweet juice that this ordinance of God bringeth forth, St Paul sheweth in his second epistle to the Corinthians, 'For, behold,'

saith he, 'this self-same thing, that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter,' 2 Cor. vii. 11.

Use. All this may serve to stir up every one to look that their hearts be upright and sincere, and our graces sound and saving, for God will in time discover us. His winepress is for some use and end; we must assuredly be brought unto the trial; first or last, He will press us to the purpose, and then what will become of fair shows and flourishes? The house that is built upon the sands makes as goodly a show as any other in a fair sunshine day, and stands as well while the weather is calm; but when the winds arise, and the rain beats, then it falls, and is not able to stand out the trial; 'And the fall of that house is great,' saith our blessed Saviour, Mat. vii. 27. If thou beest not sound at the core, thy false-heartedness will appear; when thou comest unto the press, it cannot be hid. Haply the word and discipline hath discovered abundance of corruption in thee, and caused thee to murmur, repine, and grudge, &c. Well, assure thyself, the winepress of affliction will discover far more, when thou shalt be brought unto it, and how soon we may be tried therewith, God only knows. Lesser and lighter afflictions make thee as the raging sea, 'foaming out mire and dirt,' Isa. lvii. 20, 21; what then will common* afflictions and heavier persecutions, which may befall the church, cause thee to do? And yet, as St Paul saith, concerning heresies, so say I of these, 'They must needs be, that the approved may be known,' 1 Cor. xi. 19. Wouldst thou then be able to endure the press? Look well unto thy inside; thy faith must be unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5; thy love unfeigned, 1 John iii. 18; in deed and truth, thy repentance an unfeigned renting of the heart, Joel ii.; and thy wisdom without dissimulation, James v. 17; and then thou needest not fear it; for as good grapes, thou are pressed to be preserved and not spoiled. A child or a fool indeed would think a goodly cluster of grapes spoiled when it is cast into the press; but a wise man knoweth, if it be not cast in, it will perish within a few days. If it had not been so, we had wanted the vine we now have. Thus the precious liquor distilled from thee shall be kept to refresh the heart both of God and man, Judges ix. 13; out of that gracious and sweet juice, God will glorify himself and comfort others, *De hoc liquore secula futura bibent.* And thus much of these particulars, wherein the great care and diligence of this vitinor did appear for his vineyard's good. Now see the success.

* Query, 'uncommon'!—Ed.

He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. His hope and expectation was to find grapes in the vine, or clusters of grapes, as the word noteth. But it deceived the hope and expectation of the Lord, and, like a degenerated plant, brought forth wild grapes. Not leaves or no fruit, but, as the word signifieth, stinking and bitter fruit; such a kind of fruit, as in smell, was most odious and stinking, and in taste most loathsome and unsavoury, being neither answerable to the nature and kind of the noble plant, nor yet to the care and cost of the good and painful husbandman.

Two things then are here to be considered:—

First, What God expected for his cost and pains.

He looked for grapes.

Secondly, What it returned, and how it answered the hope and expectation of the vinedresser. *It brought forth wild grapes.*

Quest. Before I come to any observation, let me make answer to a question. Some may demand, Whether God can fail of his end in any of his actions, or be deceived of his hope and expectation?

Ans. The answer is, God's knowledge is absolute and perfect, knowing all things from all eternity at one instant; and it is most certain, and cannot any way be deceived, all things being known of him as they are, and all things are as they are known of him.* The future degeneration and ingratitude of this people the Lord foresaw even from the beginning, and knew full well what he should receive from them; and causeth his servant Moses to sing and write thereof even before they came into the land of Canaan, Deut. xxxi. 20, 29; and so he telleth them by this our prophet that he knew they would deal very treacherously with him, Isa. xlviii. 8. This, then, is not spoken as if God's hope and expectation were uncertain, or could be frustrate, or as if he were doubtful what would follow, but by a figure (*αἰδωτοπείθετα*) he thus speaketh, shewing thereby—1. What they ought to have done; 2. How acceptable and pleasing it would have been to him if they had so done.

Now to some instructions. And, first, from God's expectation, this we note:

Doct. Where God hath taken pains in planting and husbanding, there he justly expects fruit somewhat answerable to his pains.

He looks for the fruits of his travails from them on whom he hath bestowed it: 'I went down into the garden of nuts,' saith the well-beloved, 'to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded,' Cant. vi. 11. He having purged and dressed his garden, came to see how his handiwork did thrive and prosper, expecting in convenient time some answerable return. That parable which our Saviour doth propound of

the vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen, Mat. xxi. 34, is a pregnant proof; for when the season came and time of fruit drew near, that great householder sends out his servants to those husbandmen that they might receive the fruits. And in the application of that parable we read that 'He will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen who should render him *fruits* in due season.' And when our Saviour telleth us of his Father's purging and pruning of the vine, John xv. 2, he withal sheweth us what is his aim and scope therein—namely, that Christians should be abundant in bringing forth of fruits beseming their profession.

Reas. There is good reason for it: for 'who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?' 1 Cor. ix. 7. What husbandman bestows his seed and pains upon his land, and doth not expect a good crop therefrom? And is it not then just and equal that the Lord should look for some answerable return for all his pains?

Use 1. Let this, then, serve for our instruction, that we answer this husbandman's hopes in some good measure. Let us remember the end of all his cost and labour, and consider with ourselves the reason why we have received so many blessings from him. Let us set before our eyes his many favours, spiritual and temporal, and then say whether he hath not been as careful a husbandman for England as ever he was for Israel. Hath he not taken us out of the Romish Egypt, where we grew not well, and planted us 'in a very fruitful hill,' in a land flowing with milk and honey? Hath he not fenced us about with his mighty protection, and defended us from many dangers and devilish plots devised against us by the enemies of the truth,* so that neither bear nor wolf nor fox, Turk nor Pope, could yet invade us or prevail against us? Hath he not rooted out and expelled those ranking thorns and renting brambles, (I mean the papists,) and cast out of this his vineyard the stumbling-stones of superstition and baggage of man's traditions with the relics of idolatry, hammering and beating down the popish Dagon? And hath he not planted choice plants in this his vineyard, giving us such princes as may be compared with the best princes of Israel and Judah, under whom we have a long time enjoyed the gospel, with the fruits of the gospel, peace and plenty, so that we may sit under our own vines and fig-trees, conferring of the ways of God, and quietly enjoying our goods and earthly happiness? No church under heaven more enriched with treasures and gifts from God than ours is. What could he have done more for this his vineyard than he hath done? And what can he expect less from this his vineyard than he

* Zanch. de natura Dei, cap. ii. quest. 13.

* Remember '88 and 1605.

now doth, abundance of sweet grapes and good fruits? Yea, in particular, let every one consider this, and make application of it to himself: Hath not the Lord chosen thee above many thousands in the world, and afforded unto thee such means as he hath not granted unto many who by nature are as good as thyself art? Hath he not sent his servants unto thee early and late to call upon thee, that thou shouldst bring forth fruit worthy, amendment of life? Hath he not often trimmed thee with his pruning-hook of afflictions and crosses—sometimes in thy friends, at other times in thy goods—sometimes one way, at other times another—and to what end hath all this been but that thou shouldst be fruitful? Thus should every one commune with his soul, and put the question to himself, what God meant in being at such pains and cost with him, that so those fruits may be found in us which the hand of God looks to gather from us; for ‘to whom much is given, of them much shall be required.’ Oh beware, then, that thou deceivest not God’s hope! He expecteth fruit of thee, let him find it in thee.

This point, though plain, I find so needful to be pressed in this barren age, as that I must be bold to pursue it, and shew—First, The motives or reasons inducing us to fruitfulness; and, secondly, Acquaint you with some profitable means that must be used to make us grow more fruitful; and, thirdly, Acquaint you with the nature and quality of that fruit which we must bring forth, that God may accept of it, and take pleasure in it. All which are necessary points to be handled in the prosecuting and following of this use.

To begin with the motives. Besides what hath already been said and shewed of God’s deserving it, by reason of his pains and cost, which strongly bindeth us to obedience, sundry other reasons may be brought. 1. As first, Every creature in its kind is fruitful. The poorest creature that God hath made is enabled, with some gift, to imitate the goodness and bounty of the Creator, and to yield something from itself to the use and benefit of others. The sun, moon, and stars, as they are endued with light, so they restlessly move to impart their light and influence to the enlightening of this inferior world. The clouds fly up and down, emptying themselves to enrich the earth, from which, notwithstanding, they reap no harvest. The earth liberally yields her riches, and brings forth food for the maintenance of those innumerable armies of creatures that live thereon. Green herbs for the cattle, and oil and wine for man. The valleys stand thick with corn; the mower filleth his scythe, and the binder up of sheaves his bosom. Thus it returns fruits in abundance to the painful tiller and dresser of it. Yea, what herb, plant, or tree grows upon the earth which

is not in its kind fruitful, spending itself and the principal part of its sap and moisture in bringing forth some pleasant berry, or other such like fruit, which, being ripe and perfect, suffers to have plucked from it for the good of man, and voluntarily lets drop down before his feet? And doth not every one dislike sterility in his grounds and barrenness in his cattle, expecting fruitfulness in all that belongs unto him? Now, then, how can it be allowable, when heaven and earth are fruitful in their kind, and neither bird, beast, nor plant are idle, but are ever bringing forth for the good of their lords and owners, that only man should remain unfruitful—his faculties and graces idle, and he himself a burden to the earth? Shall not every creature be a witness against man, and rise up in judgment to condemn him, if he be barren, fruitless? And therefore, as the earth to man, so let man to God return a blessed usury—ten for one; nay, thirty, sixty, an hundred-fold.

2. Secondly, The fruitfulness of a Christian is the groundwork of all true prosperity, so that ‘whatsoever he doth shall prosper,’ Ps. i. 3. Oh, what a large extent is here of God’s goodness towards such a one. He shall prosper, not in some things, but in all things, whatsoever he undertakes or goes about ‘Blessed shall he be in the city, and blessed in the field: blessed in the fruit of his body, and in the fruit of his ground, and in the fruit of his cattle, and in the increase of his kine, and in the flocks of his sheep: blessed in his basket, and in his store: in his coming in, and going out; yea, the Lord shall bless him in all that he shall set his hand unto,’ Dent. xxviii. 3-8. And thus it was with Joseph, that ‘fruitful bough,’ Gen. xlix. 22. ‘The Lord was with him,’ saith the text, ‘and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper,’ chap. xxxix. 23. As it is thus with him in whatsoever he undertaketh by action, so shall it be with him in whatsoever he undergoeth by passion or by suffering. His losses, crosses, troubles, persecutions, or what else betides him, shall be for his good, as the apostle witnesseth, Rom. viii. 28, and tend to the furthering him with that eternal weight of glory. Let tortures, torments, fire, gallows, ‘tribulation, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword,’ or any such like befall him, yet they shall never wrong him, but prove an advantage unto him, and he at length shall prove a noble and a worthy conqueror over them. They will but help him sooner to that crown which he hath so long strived for; and, to use the words of blessed Bradford,* If there be any way to heaven on horseback, this is the way. So that these shall never hinder him in his journey. Methinks this consideration should work effectually with us and upon us all, and

* Fox, Martyr, fol. 1492.

if I should say no more, this were enough to make every one that is not settled on his lees to resolve to become fruitful; for who would not do anything to have such a privilege as this is? What man would not himself follow, and set his child unto, such a vocation, in the which every action would bring profit and great commodity?

3. Again, if we be fruitful, bringing forth fruits of the Spirit, 'there is no law against us,' for so witnesseth the apostle, Gal. v. 22, 23. An excellent privilege this is indeed. There is no law to condemn such, nor domineer over such. Though there is a law *for* them, which is as a rule unto them of obedience, yet there is no law *against* them, for such are freed, first, from the obligation and rigour of it, as it bindeth us to perfect obedience in ourselves and by ourselves, for the obtaining of eternal life, according to the tenor thereof: 'Do this, and thou shalt live.' And, secondly, from the curse of the law for any breach thereof, either in thought, word, or deed; so that there is no condemnation belongs unto them, Rom. viii. 1. Though the best do things worthy of condemnation, and have need to use David's prayer, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord,' Ps. cxlii. 2, yet they shall never be condemned.

Stay, Christian, meditate a while of this privilege before thou proceedest further; ponder it well in thy mind, and consider the excellence hereof. Art thou a fruitful branch? Why then thou hast liberty to live and 'serve God without fear' of damnation, Luke i. 74; whereas otherwise thou canst not but quake and fear upon the thought of hell and judgment, and, as the apostle speaketh, 'all thy lifetime must needs be subject to fear and bondage,' Heb. ii. 15. Hence likewise, thou mayest comfort thyself in thy desires and weak endeavours to obey, which God will accept at thy hands for obedience itself, because thou art freed from the rigour of the law, so that thy many weaknesses and imperfections in doing good duties need not discourage thee, for the Lord will not examine thy actions according to the strict rule of his law, but according to the purpose, desire, and endeavour of thy soul will he reward thee, and 'spare thee as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,' Mal. iii. 17. But, on the other side, so long as thou continuest fruitless, the law hath power over thee to require exact and personal obedience at thy hands unto it, and to accuse and condemn thee for the least breach of it. Thy desires, thy endeavours, thy meanings, thy purposes, cannot stand thee in stead, nor defend thee from the wrath of a revenging God; no whither canst thou fly for succour or relief; thy case is fearful. Again, thou mayest 'rejoice in tribulation,' Rom. v. 3, and sing in the very stocks with Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. 25. Though thou be persecuted and afflicted, railed upon and reviled by evil men, yet seeing there

is no law against thee, and the curse, which maketh these things bitter, is removed from thee, thou needest not fear them before they come, nor be discouraged when they are come, but, *à contra*, if thou bring not forth the fruits of the Spirit, then assure thyself that whatsoever loss or cross befalls thee, they fall upon thee with a curse; the venom and sting is in the tail of them, they tend to thy perdition. Were these things well weighed by us, how could we then but labour to be filled with 'the fruits of righteousness?' Men of this world commonly comfort themselves with this, that however they fail, yet the law cannot take hold upon them. Be thou a fruitful branch, and this comfort thou mayest have, for the law moral is no killing letter to thee.

Fourthly, The circumstance of time calls upon us to bring forth the fruits of obedience. Our Master hath suffered us our first year already, yea, our second, nay, our third, Luke xiii. 7, or rather our third score year, for is it not rather three times twenty years than three years since the Lord hath spared us, as he spared the fig-tree? Forasmuch then as he hath year by year, for so long succession of years, sought for fruit of us and found none, it is now high time to look about us and bring forth plenty, or else, with fear and trembling, it is to be expected that we shall stand no longer, but be stubbed up, and have that sentence passed against us which was sometimes passed against the fig-tree, 'Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?' Besides these motives, our blessed Saviour useth many more in that same sweet sermon, which he preached to his disciples a little before his departure from them, John xv., and, as some think, in the way between the place where he did eat the Passover, and the garden wherein he was betrayed. 'Herein,' saith he, 'is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit,' ver. 8.

1. Our fruit-bearing tends much to God's glorifying, and in glorifying him, our glory doth consist; for the glory of man without glorifying his Maker is but dung and worms; but this dung and worms by glorifying God shall be made glorious. Now the only way to bring glory to his name is by bringing forth the fruit of our planting.

2. Again he saith, by this we shall be his disciples, that is, know, and have a testimony that we are so, and indeed without fruit none can have his vocation, adoption, or engrafting into Christ sealed up unto his soul. He then that is unfruitful wants this testimony, which every one desires to have, and none to be without.

3. Again he telleth them, this was the end of their election before time, and special vocation in time, ver. 16, 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit.'

4. Besides, if a man endeavour to bring forth fruit,

he is sure to speed when he hath any suit to God, and therefore in the same verse he addeth this as a reason to his exhortation, 'that whatsoever they should ask of his Father in his name he might give it them.'

5. If all this will not serve to make us fruitful, that which our Saviour saith in the beginning of that chapter, methinks, should awaken us, for 'every branch that beareth not fruit, he taketh away,' ver. 2, and presently after, 'if a man abide not in me' (viz., to bring forth fruit,) 'he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.' Much more might be said for the pressing of this so necessary a duty. My desire is to say enough, and but enough. Now, what hath been spoken is enough, if God shall please to accompany it with his grace and operation of his blessed Spirit, without which neither this, nor all that can be said, will be enough to work us hereunto.

By this time haply thy heart may smite thee for thy barrenness, and the Spirit may begin to work within thee a desire after the fruits of holy life; insomuch that, out of the longing desire of thy soul which thou hast of fruitfulness, thou wilt now come to me, as those publicans and soldiers came to John, saying, 'What shall we do?' Luke iii. 10; or as that lawyer came to Christ with, 'Master, what shall I do?' chap. x. 25. If this be thy next question, What thou shouldst do to become fruitful, I would advise thee to follow these directions:

1. See thou be removed out of thy natural soil, and be engrafted into another stock. For that thou mayest be fruitful, thou must be, as it is said of the godly man in the first psalm, 'A tree planted,' Ps. i. 3, because by nature the best of us are but as wild olives. And if ever we become fruitful trees, we must of necessity be transplanted from the first Adam into the second. The tree must be good before the fruit can be.—'Either make the tree good, and the fruit good; or the tree evil, and the fruit evil,' saith our Saviour, Mat. xii. 33; for 'men gather not grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. As a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, so neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit,' chap. vii. 16. Until thou be a plant planted in the house of the Lord, and engrafted into Christ by a true faith, and made a new creature by regeneration, having a believing heart, and a good conscience, thy fruit can never be good. All thy works are as so many sins, yea, thy best works are but as rotten weeds. Thorns and thistles thou bringest forth, and therefore art 'nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned,' Heb. vi. 8; but being once engrafted into this stock, Jesus Christ, thou canst not but bring forth fruit incontinent,—though not such plenty and store of fruit as afterwards,—for such a lively power of life is in it, that wert thou as dry as Aaron's withered rod, yet

thou shalt presently be changed into a flourishing and fruitful tree. As the thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 39, who no sooner was set into it, but he bears fruit in an instant: (1.) Reproving his fellow-thief, for his sin in railing upon Christ; (2.) Justifying Christ, and pleading his innocence, giving a good testimony of him; (3.) Condemning himself, acknowledging God's righteousness in laying that punishment upon him; (4.) Craving mercy and forgiveness from his Saviour, desiring him to remember him when he came into his kingdom. So thou being joined unto him, that is, raised from the dead, 'shalt bring forth fruit unto God,' Rom. vii. 4. Labour therefore to be engrafted. The ordinary means is the word preached; for as in grafting, so here, God is the husbandman, Christ the stock, believers the imps, the Spirit the sap, the word the saw, the sacraments the ligatures. As therefore, without a knife or saw to open and rive the stock, and let in the imps, no man can graft; so without the word no hope of this benefit. And this that hath been said overthrows a point of natural and Popish religion,—viz., That a man may be justified and saved by his good works, when by this that hath been said, we see that good works can only be the fruits of persons already justified;* and that which follows cannot be the cause of that which went before. The fruit cannot make the tree to be good, it doth only declare and manifest that it is good; according to that speech of our Saviour, 'The tree is known by his fruit,' Mat. vii.

2. In the second place, that thou mayest be fruitful, see thou plant thyself by the running brooks. Seat thyself under a powerful ministry, that so thou mayest be partaker of those waters which 'flow from under the threshold of the sanctuary,' Ezek. xlvii. 12. Water, we know, causeth fruitfulness, as drought doth famine. The inundations of the river Nile caused Egypt to be so fruitful; so these spiritual waters will cause us mightily to fructify and increase, and make us 'spring up as amongst the grass, and as willows by the water-courses,' Isa. xlv. 4. Thus the church, as it was planted in a fruitful field, so was it likewise placed by 'great waters,' Ezek. xvii. 5, insomuch that it grew and became a spreading vine. And the godly man, being 'planted by the rivers of waters, brought forth his fruit in due season,' Ps. i. 3. Is it then the true desire of thy soul to fructify and bring forth fruit? See then that thou frequent the sanctuary of the Lord. 'Can the rush grow up without mire? or can the flag grow up without water?' Job viii. 11. Is it possible that thou shouldst increase in grace and goodness, and yet never drink of the waters of Shiloah? It cannot be.

* Non procedunt justificandum, sed sequuntur justificatum.
—August.

If, therefore, thou hast not in thy own fountain, seek to thy neighbours, and carry thy pitcher with thee; for nothing can more dangerously or uncomfortably be wanting to thy soul.

3. Besides, see thou labour for humility and tenderness of heart. The ground which is hard and stony is unfit for fruit, as our Saviour hath manifested in that parable of the seed, Luke viii. 6; for neither can the seed sown take any root, neither will it drink in the rain that the heart of it might be moistened; it may be the outside may be a little washy, but it gets not in to prepare it to fruitfulness. Thus hardness of heart keeps the soul dry and barren; and surely here is the reason, why after so long time of preaching, there doth so little fruit appear. Much water hath been poured on us, many a gracious sermon hath been preached to us, but what are we the better? The invincible hardness of our hearts will not suffer one drop of these heavenly dews to sink into our souls. How many handfuls of good seed do God's seedsmen daily cast amongst us; and can they say with Isaac that they have reaped an hundred fold, as he did in the land? Alas! so far are they from seeing such an increase as that, they would be heart-glad of thirty, nay, of ten. Yea, let me tell you, many ministers would be glad, if they could see their seed again; and what is the reason but this, that men's hearts are so stony, flinty? Labour then for greater tenderness of heart, if thou wouldest bring forth more fruit in thy life; and see thou retain the waters, and drink in the rain, Heb. vi. 7; hold fast what thou hearest by conscientious meditation.

4. Fourthly, Thou must beware of overshadowing thy heart by any sinful lust, whereby the warm beams of the Sun of righteousness is kept from it. Husbandmen have evermore a great care of this; and will not by any means endure to have their young nurseries overshadowed by any bough or tree, but so plant them as that they may enjoy the benefit of the sunbeams, for no ground or plant will ever prove good which hath not a favourable aspect from the heavens. And thus our hearts are made fruitful by the heavens answering the earth, as Hosea speaketh, chap. ii. 21, though in another sense; I mean, when Christ the Sun of righteousness darts the beams of his gracious countenance and favour upon our souls, warming and cherishing Paul's planting, and Apollo's watering, with the influence of his grace, for without him we can do nothing, John xv. 5, nor have life in us. And, therefore, beware lest through 'superfluity of lusts,' or 'inordinate desires,' through worldliness and covetousness, or any other such like sin, thy soul be so shaded as that this Sun of righteousness cannot shine upon it, if thou wouldest grow fruitful.

5. Fifthly, A special care must be had to the root, that that grow well, if we would bring forth fruit

abundantly. Now faith is that same radical grace, which must especially be regarded; if that thrive not, no other grace can prosper. Foolish then and preposterous is their care, who seek and study how to be laden with the other fruits of God's blessed Spirit, as with love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance, and the like, and yet neglect the looking to this grace of faith. This is no otherwise, saith one,* than if a man should water all the branches of a tree, and not the root.

6. Sixthly and lastly, We must be earnest with the Lord, that he would make us fruitful, and give us wisdom from above, which wisdom, saith St James, is 'full of good fruits,' James i. 5, iii. 17. Call upon him earnestly and frequently for grace; and not only so, but withal seek the prayers of God's vine-dressers, his ministers; and desire them to be earnest with God for you, that you may be fruitful; for however this ungrateful world contemneth and despiseth these, yet the truth is they can prevail much with God, Luke xiii. 6, 7; and if they should not oftentimes rise up and stand in the gap, woe would be to thousands for the barrenness of their lives.

And thus I have shewed you the way, how of barren you may become fruitful. If, then, any amongst you that hear me this day do hereafter continue barren and fruitless, it must needs be because they are wilful, or slothful, or both; for put in practice what now you have been taught, and I dare pass my word and pawn my credit that in a short time the barrenest professor in this congregation will bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit abundantly. For what should hinder? Is there any fault in the husbandman to be found? Surely no: for we have heard it before proved, that he is no way wanting nor defective and therefore cannot justly be charged with the barrenness of any man's heart or life, as hereafter shall be cleared. Where then lies the fault? Is it in the stock or root? No, neither: for we have lately heard how lively and full of juice it is; insomuch that who-soever is set into it doth incontinently fructify and bring forth fruit. If, then, there be any want, it must be in thyself, in not using the means that hath been now prescribed. Oh that men would now at length be brought to look about them, and suffer themselves to be so far prevailed with as to make trial of these means in uprightness and sincerity of heart. Consider, I beseech thee, with thyself, how exceedingly hitherto thou hast frustrated the Lord's hopes and expectations, as likewise in what a woful estate and condition thou hast lived, and still livest in, whilst thou art under that same curse, that heavy curse which is never far from thee, 'Cut it down, why cumberest it the ground,' Luke xiii. Urge, therefore, and press thy soul unto this fruitfulness, and in some

* Ward's Life of Faith.

good measure answer the Lord's hopes hereafter, and content not thyself with shows and leaves; but as a tree of righteousness, do thou shew forth thy grapes, and figs, and sweet fruits, for that is it which God expects.

Object. But we are fruitful members of the church; we hear the word, receive the sacraments, and delight therein; we keep good orders in our families, speak against common abuses, and reform evils in ourselves and ours; what would you more?

Ans. Yet something may be wanting. The fig-tree had leaves enough, and by the flourishing greenness seemed to promise great store of fruit; no wonder, then, if such fair green leaves as these cause many a soul to deceive himself and others also; when, alas, all this, and more than this may be, and is in many who are like to have the doom that fig-tree had, 'Never fruit grow on thee more,' Mat. xxi. 19. And, therefore, before thou boastest, see thy fruits have these properties:

(1.) First, look that the fruit that thou boastest of be proper fruit. It must be thy own, done by thyself, not by a deputy nor attorney. Thus the godly man is compared to a tree that 'bringeth forth her fruit in due season,' Ps. i. 3. It must not, then, be borrowed fruit, for so a heart as stony and barren as Cheapside itself, may be made a far richer garden than some of those are where those herbs brought thither naturally grew. The Papists, indeed, would fain make us to believe that if our own lamps be without oil, we may go and borrow of our neighbours to supply our wants. For holy men of God, say the Rhemists,* have done not only that which they ought to do, but more than was required at their hands: as, for example, John Baptist lived more than he was commanded, and Mary lived more strictly than she was required. Now, these superabundant works, as a church treasury, becometh an advantage to others who are more defective; and, indeed, hang as it were upon the pope's tally, for who gives most. But these works of super-erogation are works of superarrogation. Our Saviour hath taught us this lesson: Luke xvii. 10, 'When we have done all we can, we are but unprofitable servants.' And, therefore, let none build their hope upon such a sandy foundation as the good works of others. Another man's meat cannot nourish me; another man's garment cannot warm me; another man's eye cannot guide me, neither can another man's works save me. You call upon your minister to preach for himself, upon your servants to do their work for themselves, and upon your captain to lead his company for himself; and therefore let me call upon you to do good duties by yourselves, and for yourselves. Let not great men think to go to heaven

by their chaplains, nor wives by their husbands, nor parents by their children, nor servants by their masters, by whom usually they are religious here, and think to be glorious hereafter. Let me crave your patience a little in hearing a story, which though in itself it be idle and feigned, yet may be of good use to set forth a truth unfeigned. There was a certain man, saith the legend, which would never go to church himself, but ever when he heard the saints' bell ring would say to his wife, Go thou to church and pray for thee and me. One night he dreamt that both he and his wife were dead, and that they knocked together at heaven's gate for entrance; Peter, being the imagined and supposed porter, lets in the wife, but keeps out the husband, telling him thus, *Ille intravit pro se, et te*—She is entered in both for herself and thee; for as she went to church for thee, so she is gone to heaven for thee. This is the fable. The moral is good, and instructs every one to have a personality of faith, and propriety of fruit; that himself serving God, himself may be blessed of God. So willet the apostle, 'Have rejoicing in thyself alone, and not in another,' Gal. vi. 4. It is his own faith the just shall live by, Hab. ii. 4, and a man's own works that he must give an account of, 2 Cor. v. 10; Luke xvi. 2. For at the last day the question will not be, what hath *he* done? but, what hast *thou* done? And therefore let thy grand care be to provide an answer to that question, which will put the greatest part of the world to a nonplus. See then that thou preach for thyself, if thou have a calling thereunto, pray for thyself, give thanks for thyself, serve God for thyself, and thus make the proverb good, which otherwise is devilish, Every man for himself, and God for all.

And yet to avoid all scruples, I would not so be understood, as if we might not join with others in holy duties, for that we may, yea, must; or that we are not to pray for others, or have others pray for us; for this ought to be; only we are not to content ourselves with what is done by them, unless we join in heart and do the like ourselves. Neither do I think it a thing unlawful, but fitting, if a Samuel be in presence, that he should perform these holy duties, be it in any family, and bless the meat, be it at any man's table; for at such a time the lord and master of that house or family, how great soever, should give way. But as for children to give thanks at their father's board, except in case before, that they are prophets, I think it not expedient. Sure I am Christ never put his disciples to it, though they were men grown up, and of ripe years, but ever gave thanks himself and therefore the practice of many parents is too, too childish, who make their children their chaplains; and if they be out of the house, grace shall be out of the parlour, as if it were unbecoming their worthi-

* Supererogatio quasi super id quod erogatur.—*Rhem. Annot.* on Luke x. 35; 2 Cor. viii. 14; 1 Cor. ix. 16.

ness to call upon God for a blessing upon what they eat.

(2.) Secondly, Our fruit it must be kindly fruit; for no man gathereth grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles, Mat. vii. Good ground we know bringeth forth fruit of the same kind and nature with the seed that it was sowed withal; and not tares when wheat was sown, nor cockle when barley was cast into the ground. Thus a Christian man's fruit must be such a conversation as may besem the gospel, Phil. i. 27. Thy fruits may not be fruits of the flesh, which are so rife, so ripe, yea, rotten; no, nor fruits of civil righteousness, wherewith many content themselves, concluding they are trees of righteousness because they pay every man his own, deal justly, truly, and so carry themselves as that no man can say black is their eye, when notwithstanding they are void of all true piety and sanctity. No, nor fruits of external profession of religion or outward reformation; but the fruit God expecteth from thee must be kindly, resembling the Author, which is the Spirit of grace, and that holy and pure seed, which is the word of grace. Such fruits as those reckoned up by the apostle, Gal. v. 22, 23, 'Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,' &c. Other fruits than these, or the like to these, besem not Christians: 'As for fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you,' saith the same apostle, Eph. v. 3, 4; 'as becometh saints: neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient.' If it becometh not a saint once to name these things, much less to bear them and bring them forth. Muddy water is less offensive in a puddle than in a fountain, brambles and briars do a great deal better in a hedge or thicket than in a garden knot; let one worldling do as another worldling does, but let no worldling's practice be a precedent to thee. What if my lady Jezebel and other gentlemen in court and city have such a complexion, such hair, not as God hath made, but as the devil hath been the dyer of, as one of the ancients* speaketh? What if they disguise themselves like harlots, more like than attiring themselves as chaste matrons, what is that to thee? And what if many—it may be the greatest in your country, Master Justice or thy landlord—will drink till they be drunken, swear, lie, and break God's Sabbaths, wilt thou imitate and follow them in their lewdness? It becometh thee not; learn more manners than to do as such great ones do. The consideration of whom I am should teach me what a one I should be. Think then thus with thyself: I am a tree of righteousness, a branch of the true vine, the planting of the Lord, whose heart hath been sowed with pure seed, and shall I bring forth such fruit? will such works

become me? Good Nehemiah being persuaded to fly and save his life, would not, but said to him that persuaded him unto it, 'Should such a man as I fly? and who is there that being as I am would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands,' Neh. vi. 11. So say thou when thou art enticed into lewdness, Should such a one as I do thus? Shall I swear, swagger, drink to be drunk, or the like? I will not do it; for who is there, being as I am, what heart, having been sowed with such seed as mine hath been, would bring forth such fruit, so unanswerable thereunto? Now therefore, O Lord, strengthen my hands, give grace to withstand, for I will not do thus.

(3.) Thirdly, Our fruit, if acceptable, must be timely and seasonable. This is a commendable property in our grounds, trees, plants, that they bring forth their fruit in due season, as it is said of that tree which was planted by the rivers of water, whereto the godly, blessed man was resembled, Ps. i. 3. If our corn should not ear until harvest was past, nor our trees bud until after midsummer, men might look to have but small store of fruit, and to reap but a sorry and slender crop. Thus the grace of our fruit is the seasonableness of it. God himself, for our example, hath an appointed time and fit season for all his works, Eccles. iii. 1.

Quest. But is any time unseasonable for the bringing forth of fruit?

Ans. I answer, Yes. A good work may be unseasonable, as well as fish or flesh. For the clearing this we are to know there is a difference of good things to be performed by us. Some good things are as continual acts to be performed by all persons, at all times, and in all places; from the doing whereof no part of our life is exempted, because they reach to all times of this life, and yet only to this life. As, for example, the exercise of faith, repentance, mortification, amendment of life, working out our salvation with fear and trembling, seeking reconciliation with God, and such like. These are daily and hourly to be performed by every one of us; and yet for these there are some times and seasons more fit, though all be fit, wherein if they be done they will be more acceptable: as to repent in the day of our youth, and to remember our Creator before our old years come, Eccles. xii. 1. Who will not confess that young age is a fitter time to learn the horn-book or primer in than old? Yet it is better for a man of threescore to learn his A B C than die a dunce. So for repentance. God takes no delight to pledge the devil, and drink those snuffs and dregs that he hath left.

Other good duties we are bound to do that reach not to all times and places, but are limited to some particular place, time, and season: as hearing, reading, set and solemn prayer, singing, conference, alms-

* Non quos Deus fecit, sed quos diabolus infeit.—*Cypri.*

deeds, and the like; and these are they that may unseasonably be performed. Take an instance. In time of public exercise, while the minister is preaching, here is no fit time for any person to fall a praying, otherwise than by ejaculation or lifting up the soul to God; for he is now God's mouth, and by him the Lord is speaking unto us. Now it is no point of good manners to speak to our betters before they have made an end of speaking. And so, while the minister is praying, for a man then to fall a reading is unseasonable; for he is now the voice of the people to the Lord, and all must join with the congregation in that duty. And let not this seem strange to any; for it is an old policy that the devil hath, to jumble out a greater good by a less. He can be well content that we should do duties, for *matter* good, so we dishonour God in the sinful *manner* of performance of them. Neither let any think I speak against these duties; for my desire is that men would pray more, read oftener, &c., but only against the unseasonableness in the performance of them, which maketh our best service, in God's esteem, no better than the 'sacrifice of fools,' Eccles. v. 1. Wisely, then, observe thy time, and bring forth fruit in the right *Quando*, in the due season; for know it for a truth, all duties done unseasonably are hopeless, fruitless.

(4.) Fourthly, our fruit must be ripe fruit, if commendable. Would a husbandman respect that tree which every year doth bud and blossom, like many of our outlandish plants, but never bring any fruit to its perfection? And yet, if haply he should delight in it and nourish it in his orchard, because of the sweetness of the blossom, or fairness of the leaf or flower, which may yield a comfortable shade in the heat of summer; yet God will never. He knows not how to entreat such whose goodness is but 'as the morning dew,' Hosea vi. 4, and whose righteousness is but 'as a cake not turned,' vii. 8; who have some good purposes and motions in their minds, and so begin to blossom, but within a short space suffer all to fade. See, then, thou bring thy actions to perfection; let thy resolutions be brought to execution, and suffer them not to perish like an abortive birth. Thou hast a purpose to leave thy ungodly course of life and sinful trade, and take a new course, &c. Thou blossomest very fair, what a pity is it if the frost should nip these in the head?

Many make their purposes like our eves, and their performances like our holidays. Servants work hard upon the one, that they may have the more liberty to play upon the other. So do they labour hard upon their purposes, but are idle and play upon their performances. But purpose without performance is like a cloud without rain, and not unlike to Hercules's club in the tragedy—of a great bulk, but the stuffing is moss and rubbish. Would such blossoms

bring a man to heaven, Baalam and many other wicked wretches, who are now in torments, would have gotten thither long ago. The five foolish virgins intended to go in with the bridegroom; but before the time their lights dropped out. If a bare intention would serve the turn, God's church on earth would be fuller of saints, and his court in heaven fuller of souls. Good motions and resolutions are to be respected, but thou must up and be doing, else God distastes them.

(5.) A fifth property of good fruit is universalities. It must be 'all fruit,' as Isaiah speaketh, chap. xxvii. 9, fruits of the first and second table: of holiness towards God, and righteousness towards man; for what God hath joined may not be divorced. Particulars were infinite. Fruits inward; as good thoughts, motions, purposes; good desires, longings, faintings after God and his graces; good affections, as love, joy, fear, sorrow, patience, compassion, &c. Fruits outward, as good words, favourite speech, pure and wholesome language; and good works, such as we are bound to perform within the compass of our calling, whether general or special. In a word, 'Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, those things must we think on to do,' Phil. iv. 8; and as Mary said to the servants, John ii. 5, 'Whatsoever he saith, do it,' so say I. Whatsoever the Lord commands, that must be done. We may not pick and choose, and do what best likes us, but as once Israel said, so must we always, 'Whatsoever the Lord commandeth, that will we do,' Exod. xix. 8, xxiv. 3-7. True it is, many points of our Master's will we know not, but our desire must be to know; and many things we do not, but our desire must be to do: for our obedience must reach to God's whole revealed will. Every Christian duty, thou must make account, belongs to thee as well as to any other; and therefore, as a man that is to plant an orchard will be sure to get of every good fruit some, so do not hear of any fruit that good is, but carry it home and set thy heart therewith. Memorable was the practice of blessed Bradford,* who was content to sacrifice his life in God's cause. He used to make unto himself a journal or day-book, wherein he used to set down all such notable things as either he did see or hear each day that passed. If he did hear or see any good in any man, by that sight he found and noted the want thereof in himself, and added a short prayer, wherein he craved grace and mercy that he might amend. If he did hear or see any plague or misery, he noted it as a thing procured by his own sins, and still added, 'Lord have mercy upon me.'

* See Mr Sampson's Preface to Bradford's Sermon of Repentance.

Oh that we would tread in this saint's steps ! how much more fruitful should we then be than now we are ?

(6.) Lastly, our fruit must be constant fruit. Constancy crowns all. Thus it is said of the blessed ground, 'It bringeth forth fruit with patience,' Luke viii. 15. And herein we may not be like to other trees, which grow barren with their age ; but we must bring forth fruit in our old age, and continue fat and flourishing, Ps. xcii. 14 ; nay, not so much as a leaf must fade or fall, Ps. i. 3 ; there must not be any appearance of being out of the state of grace,' Heb. iv. 1 ; none of us must seem to be deprived or come short of entering into God's rest. Alas for such ! who have left bearing—yea, lost their very leaves and shows of profession, which formerly they have made ; being now worse than that cursed fig-tree, which was green. What hope have these, who come short of those that come short of heaven ? Shall the former fruitfulness of such professors be regarded or rewarded ? Surely no. 'All their righteousness which they have done shall never be mentioned : but in their trespass that they have transgressed, and in their sin that they have sinned, in them they shall die,' Ezek. xviii. 24. And if every man shall receive according to his fruits, then such shall one day feed upon the bitter fruit of their apostasy and backsliding, and find how bitter a thing it is to forsake the Lord, and feel what they will not now be brought to believe : That 'it had been better for them never to have known the way of truth, than thus to have departed from the holy commandment,' 2 Pet. ii. 21. Look, then, thou walk not in a good course for a fit ; but 'be constant to the death, and so receive the crown of life,' Rev. ii. 10 ; for 'glory and immortality' is the part and portion only of such as 'by constancy in well-doing seek it,' Rom. ii. 7. 'To you,' saith our Saviour, Luke xxii. 24, 'which have continued with me in tentations, have I appointed a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me a kingdom.'

And thus we have seen what is necessarily required, that our fruit may be acceptable and pleasing unto God. Now then, thou that braggest of thy faithfulness and fruitfulness, tell me, darrest thou abide the trial ? Why, then, answer me to these interrogatories which I propound unto thee : Is thy fruit thy own ? Is it done by thy own self, and in thy own person ? Dost thou rest and rely upon thy own faith, and live by it, and by no man's else ? Again, tell me, Is thy fruit kindly, answerable to the good seed that hath oftentimes been cast into thy heart, and beseeching the stock wherein thou sayest thou art engrafted ? Is not swearing, lying, cogging, and dissembling, and such stinking fruit as this, the fruit thou bearest ? I demand again, Dost thou observe the time and season, not contenting thyself

in doing good for matter, unless also thou do it then when God may have most glory by the doing of it ? Answer me yet further, 'Dost thou labour that thy fruit may come to some perfection ? Not resting thyself in this, that thou bloomest, blossomest, but still art striving that every bud may be brought to maturity and ripeness ? Besides all this, Dost thou truly and unfeignedly desire and endeavour to be fruitful in all good works, making no exceptions, like a lazy servant, at any of God's commands, seem they never so hard or harsh, so mean or base ? And lastly, tell me, Dost thou continue constant in bearing fruit, not giving over in the year of drought, but even then continuest fresh and flourishing ? What answerest thou ? Canst thou stand out this trial ? And doth thy conscience witness that these things are so ? Why then, indeed, thou art a fruitful branch, and hast whereof to rejoice, inasmuch as thou bearest fruit to God, who doth so accept it, that he will reward it. 'For the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for him by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God,' Heb. vi. 7. But if thou findest it otherwise with thee, and art not able to endure the trial, then let me tell thee, Thou deludest thy own soul, in thinking that thy leaves and shows will or can answer God's hopes and expectations ; neither canst thou comfort thyself in thy estate, for it is wretched, fearful. All such barren, or rather evil-fruited ground, is 'high unto cursing ; whose end is to be burned,' ver. 8.

Use 2. And so I am fallen into a use of reprehension of thousand thousands in the world, who frustrate the Lord's hopes, and never think of making any return unto the Lord for his many mercies, resting only in the means of fruitfulness, thinking that enough. What abundance of dead ground is there in the world which brings forth just nothing ? They think it will prove somewhat a troublesome journey to go towards heaven, and therefore they sit them down, and fall fast asleep. Let these idle wretches know that though they sleep out their time, 'their damnation sleeps not,' 2 Pet. ii. 3. And what abundance of ground is there that for all God's care and pains, return but leaves, which are as good as nothing ? Numbers of carnal gospellers, who content themselves with the form of godliness, denying the power thereof ; boasting much of this, that they are harmless men, and no drunkards, whoremasters, thieves, usurers, extortioners, and the like. All this is well ; and I would to God all you that hear me this day could so boast. Oh how would it beautify this assembly ? But all this is not enough. Negative divinity and Christianity, which is so safe, and grows almost in every hedge, is not the fruit that must answer God's hopes. The parable damns the evil servant for not doing good with his

talent, though he misspent it not, Mat. xxv., and Dives for not helping Lazarus, though he hurt him not. It is not enough that thou canst say, I bring forth no evil fruit, I bear fair leaves, &c. For thou deceivest God's expectation if thou bringest forth no good; and whatever thou thinkest of thyself, or others think of thee, thou canst not escape the fire; for 'every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire,' Mat. iii. 10; and therefore be more wise than to trust to these fair leaves and shows wherewith thou are richly decked, and makest a goodly show, as the fig-tree did, for they cannot save thee from the curse. And yet a worse kind of ground than either of these,—such ground as my text speaks of, which instead of grapes brings forth wild grapes, that brings forth hedge fruit like the heathen—nay, not so good, but like those figs the prophet Jeremiah speaketh of, 'They are evil, very evil; they cannot be eaten, they are so evil.' 'Their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps,' Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. Oh, beloved, weigh it; if barrenness and leaves will not, cannot escape the axe and fire, how shall the evil-fruited tree? If the barren vine fare so bad, the wild vine must fare far worse. What, hell, and how many torments, are prepared for oppressing Dives, when Dives, that but denied his own, shall be so tortured and tormented in endless flames? Shall he that gives not, wring his hands? then certainly he that takes away shall rend his heart. The old world did but eat and drink, plant and build, marry and be merry, things lawful in themselves, and yet were swept away with the besom of destruction, Mat. xxiv. 28. And shall we think that liars, swearers, whoremongers, malicious, monstrous, scandalous offenders, whose works are in themselves simply unlawful, will ever escape unpunished? Certainly, if omission of good works be whipped with rods, commission of impieties shall be scourged with scorpions. At the hands of these, and every one of these, will the Lord of the vineyard require fruit, and judge them according to their works.

Use 3. And now, before I leave this point, let me give a word of comfort to all such as find themselves so qualified in some good measure, as is necessarily required he should be, whose fruit God accepteth, as we have before shewed. However these have in them many weaknesses and corruptions; yet, allowing and maintaining none, let them assure, and secure themselves, against all the fears of their own hearts, and cavils of Satan, or this wicked world, that they are truly fruitful, and in some good measure answer the Lord's hopes and expectation. The husbandman, as we see, though he receive not a crop of an hundred fold, yet he will think it well, and count his ground

for good, and his labour well bestowed, if he might receive sixty or thirty fold; so though we be not the best ground yet we may be good ground, as he may be a good servant, that is not best of all. And it is not good ground that is rejected, it is only the bad and barren that God accepteth not, Heb. vi. 7. Let not then the littleness of thy fruit discourage thee, though it humble thee. It is not, *how much*, but *how good*, that God doth especially regard. We see the fruitfulness of the tree that groweth loath many of her buds and blossoms; some are smitten with blasting, some are nipped with frosts, and bitten with the cold and dry east wind; and some again are eaten up with worms and caterpillars; and if the tithe thereof come to perfection we think it well. Thus our buds and blossoms, holy purposes and resolutions, often perish, sometimes in the very thought, and go no further; sometimes they come to words; we talk and tell what our purpose is, and there it rests; much ado there is to bring them into works; the devil, the world, and flesh, so nip us with their temptations; and if we, when we have done all we can, can save the tithe, nay the tithe of the tithe of our resolutions, and bring them to execution, we have done well. Look more, therefore, to the quality than to the quantity of thy fruit, though look to both, and see it be not counterfeit nor feigned; let that be thy chiefest care, that as men say of their plums and pears, &c.: Here is but little, but it is good; I have not many of them, but them that be are very dainty, they are right of such and such a kind, I dare assure you; so thou mayest say of thy faith, repentance, and obedience: Though it be very little, and not so much as I could wish it were, yet I assure myself it is of the right kind, true and good, what is of it. And then assure thyself, to thy endless comfort and more cheerful undergoing of holy duties, that thou art a fruitful Christian, and shall every day grow fruitfuller than other. Go then and eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart, for God accepteth of thy works,' Eccles. ix. 7.

And it brought forth wild grapes. This was the return it made to God for all his cost and pains. He doth not say it was barren and brought forth no grapes, for that had been more tolerable, but it was fruitful. 'It brought forth;' but what? 'wild grapes,' saith the text; such grapes as we find after mentioned in this chapter by the prophet—injustice, oppression, covetousness, avarice, and the like, which fruit was loathsome and unsavoury to God's smell and taste, and nothing answerable to the kind and nature of the root.

Here, then, we have taxed in them a real, actual, sensual, senseless ingratitude and unthankfulness. And yet this doth not sufficiently express it; it goeth a degree beyond it. Mere ingratitude returns

nothing for good; but here we have evil returned for good, and therefore we may rather call it a contumacious and contumelious retribution.

Doct. Thus the wicked answer heaven's kindness with an ungrateful wickedness. For many blessings which they have from God received, they return horrible and more than brutish ingratitude.

Great and many were the favours which this people had received from God, for 'he chose them,' saith Moses, Deut. xxxii. 10-18, 'for his own inheritance.' He kept them in the wilderness as the apple of his eye; he 'bore them on his wings, as the eagle her young ones; he fed them with the best, and gave them plenty of all things: honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock: butter of kine, milk of sheep, fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; yea, they did drink the pure blood of the grape. But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: when he was waxen fat, and grown thick, and covered with fatness, then he forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations provoked they him to anger. They sacrificed to devils, and not to God: to gods whom they knew not: to new gods that came newly up, whom their fathers feared not.' Hence was that complaint which the prophet made, ver. 6, 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?' The like complaint makes God himself in the first chapter of this prophecy, vers. 2-4, 'Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward.' Oh, piercing words! Woe unto such as occasion God thus to complain.

Use. Beware we, then, oh beware we of it! Be not so ungrateful as to conceal the many favours thou hast received from the Lord, and much less so unthankful as to make so wicked a retribution. To return evil for evil, and that to man, is damnable; but to return evil for good received is far more inexcusable. If it be thus between man and man, then is the case more grievous between God and us. How do we provoke him every day? yet he, to win us, bestows abundance of blessings on us—giving us life, health, food, raiment, liberty, peace, plenty, comfortable seasons, &c. But the more he followeth us with his favours, the further are we off; the more he ladeth us with his blessings, the more we oppress him

with our sins; and the better he is to us, the worse we be to him; like springs of water, which are then coldest when the sun is hottest; and like the Thracian flint, whereof I have read, that it burns with water and is quenched with oil; or like the nature of that country (which if true is wonderful) wherein—*siccitas dat lutum, imbres pulverem**—a great drought and heat makes abundance of mire and dirt, but store of rain causeth dust. So it is with us; experience makes it good. The plentiful showers of God's blessings rained down upon us is answered with the dusty and sandy barrenness of our lives. The sweet dews of Hermon have made the hill of Sion more barren. Oh, how inexcusable shall we be! How can such a generation as this escape the damnation of hell? Needs must we perish and be consumed in the indignation of the Lord if we amend not.

Use 2. And let this be a ground of patience to us, when we have unkindness returned for kindness shewed. 'They rewarded me evil for good,' saith David, Ps. xxxv. 12, 'to the spoiling of my soul.' Well, David, be content; for the like measure God himself hath found, and daily doth find, at the hands of sinful men; and the servant must not think to fare better than his Lord and master.

Doct. Again, observe we hence how the wicked divert the means of their salvation to their confusion. God plants and sets, prunes and waters, to make this vineyard fruitful; and this his pains engenders nothing in their wicked hearts but noisome and stenchful fruits. Instead of grapes, they bring forth wild grapes.

Thus the gospel was given for the bringing of men to Christ, and therefore the apostle calls it 'the power of God to salvation,' Rom. i. 16, and yet it was found to be to some, 'a savour of death unto death,' 2 Cor. ii. 15, and a swift furtherer of their perdition. So the sacraments were ordained, in their true and proper use, as a means to increase faith; but the matter by many is so handled that they serve for no other end than to increase their judgment, 1 Cor. xi. 29, yea, Christ himself, who was 'laid in Zion as a chief corner stone, elect and precious,' 1 Peter ii. 6, on whom whosoever believeth shall never be confounded, becomes a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to disobedient ones, ver. 8; 1 Cor. i. 23. And thus it is with every other good blessing and ordinance of God.

Reas. For as it fares with him that hath a surfeited stomach, the more good meat he eats, the more he increaseth his corruption, the former crudities undigested having the greater force, turn the good nutriment into themselves, so is it with the wicked, whose hearts are full of poisonous corruption, and surfeited with sin; and so corrupt everything that they have or do receive, Tit. i. 16. Yea, such an antipathy

* Plin.

there is betwixt God's grace and man's bad heart, that the more it wrestles with him to bring him to salvation, the more he wrestles against it for his own confusion.

Use 1. Hence then we may take notice, first, of the poisonous nature of sin, which corrupteth and altereth the nature of all things, be they never so good, so excellent; making that hurtful, which in itself is healthful. Christ, the word, the sacraments, the creatures, yea, God himself, are by it made occasions of evil. Yea, look, as God's wisdom and goodness can draw good out of the greatest evil, (as out of man's fall, Judas his treason, the Jews' objection, &c.,) so man's sin can draw evil out of the greatest good, and make it hurtful and pernicious to his soul. Should we not then hate it and abhor it?

And, secondly, of the wretched estate of the sinner who is poisoned by sin. Needs must his condition be fearful, who brings swift damnation on himself, not only by foul gross sins, but even by the most holy things of God, as the wicked doth. For as 'all things work together for the best unto them that love God, even to them that are called of his purpose,' as witnesseth the apostle, Rom. iii. 28; so by a rule of contraries, to them who are unregenerated, all things work together for the worst. They corrupt all things, they defile all things. Their tongues are adders' spears, their lips are instruments of guile, their hands work iniquity, and their feet are swift to the shedding of blood. Their wits they abuse to cavil with, their wealth to oppress, their strength to steal, their friends to bolster them out in all, with their knowledge they beguile and deceive the simple and unstable soul. The Scripture they make a cover for their profaneness; for when they be espied or reproved, they will tell you they do no more than what they can justify by holy warrant. Their marriage they abuse for lust, their children for covetousness, the day for open evil, and the night for secret shame. How near must their damnation be, when everything doth further it! Every word, every action, yea, every thought doth hasten it. Oh the misery of the wicked, who in the top of their happiness, and in the midst of their store and plenty, are hastening to death, to hell!

Use 2. Again, Let this admonish us not to content ourselves with the enjoyment of things, in themselves good, unless we have a sanctified use thereof. And surely herein many do delude themselves in thinking all is well, and they are the blessed of the Lord, in that they have so many good things, and such plenty of God's good blessings showered down upon their tabernacles, when, alas! as we have seen, many have as much, whose 'table becomes a snare unto them,' Rom. xi. 10, and their prosperity their ruin. Do not, then, content thyself in the simple enjoyment of things good, unless they be good to thee. Better be

as poor as Lazarus, than, with Dives, to have much wealth, and have no grace to use it. 'Wisdom is good,' saith wise King Solomon, Eccles. vii. 11, 'with an inheritance;' but an inheritance without wisdom is passing hurtful.

Use 3. Lastly, Learn that the means which God affordeth for man's good shall never return in vain; for if they further not man's salvation, they will hasten his destruction and confusion. If we will not be the better for his mercies, we shall be a great deal worse. Some effect will follow thereupon; if they produce not sweet grapes, they will sour. For, 'as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread unto the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,' saith the Lord, Isa. lv. 10, 11. The preaching of God's word, and all other of his ordinances, is such physic as will either cure or kill. None ever heard the one, or used the other, but was thereby made either much better or much worse; they became either more barren or more fruitful. The word, in Scripture, is called 'a two-edged sword,' Heb. iv. 12, that cuts both ways—it is either a converting or a convincing power. A savour it hath to all, either of death or life. And look, as fire hath a double operation upon the several subjects it works upon, it fires stubble, but refines the gold; so hath the word. Some hearts, as we have heard, it inflames with zeal and love unto it, other hearts it sets on fire, to persecute and molest it, and the bringers of it. At one sermon Sergius Paulus was converted, and Elymas obdured, Acts xiii. 7, 8; at another sermon 'some believed, and some believed not,' Acts xvii. 4, 5. And upon our Saviour's preaching we may read how 'some went back, and walked no more with him,' John vi. 66; but others stuck more fast and close unto him, knowing full well that he had 'the words of eternal life,' and therefore 'whither should they go?' ver. 68. Thus is it to conversion, if believed; to confusion, if despised. How should this stir us up to a zealous preparation before we come to the house of God! We return not to our own homes as we came from thence, but we are one step nearer to heaven or to hell. Oh, what a grief and heart-break will it be unto thee at the last day, to see many who have heard the word with thee, been of the same parish, under the same ministry, sat in the same stool, to be received into heaven, because they believed and repented, and thou thyself thrust down to hell for thy infidelity and hard-heartedness! Look, therefore, well about thee, and regard the means. When Moses threw the rod out of his

hand, it became a serpent, Exod. iv. 3; but when he laid hold of it, and took it to him, it became that rod wherewith he wrought those many and mighty miracles. Thus, if thou castest the word thou hearest from thee, look to find it as a serpent that will sting thee to the heart; but lay hold of it, and take it up, obey it, and apply it, and thou shalt have the great work of thy salvation wrought thereby.

Before we leave this verse, one thing more I would have observed. The fruit that is brought forth is said to be 'wild fruit.' The word, as was before noted, signifieth such a kind of fruit,* which in smell is most odious and stinking, and in taste most loathsome and unsavoury. And this teacheth us thus much:—

Doct. The fruit of disobedience and sin is a stinking and unsavoury fruit. It is such a fruit as is odious and unsavoury in God's nostrils—bitter and unpleasant to his taste.

Moses, in his last song, speaking of the wicked and ungodly enemies of the church, saith thus: 'Their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps,' Deut. xxxii. 32, 33. For the better understanding of which words we are to know that the vale of Jordan, where Sodom and her sisters stood, was, before the destruction thereof, one of the goodliest, pleasantest, and fruitfulest places in the world, even like 'Eden, the garden of the Lord,' Gen. xiii. 10, or like the land of Egypt. But after the destruction and overthrow thereof, it became the 'breeding-place of nettles and salt-pits,' Zeph. ii. 9; yea, it was turned into a most ugly and loathsome lake, which is called to this day the lake of Sodom, or the Salt or Dead Sea, wherein there is not any fish or other living creature, though it be more than twenty miles of length, neither will it admit anything into it that hath life, as Josephus, a Jew born, relates;† which relation is seconded by some of the fathers,‡ and by all such as have travelled in those parts. The report whereof seemed so strange unto the Romans, that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, he would needs go thither to make a trial, and taking six men that could not swim, he bound their hands and feet, and cast them all into the water, and not one sunk, but all swam like leaves. This Josephus witnesseth he was an eye-witness of; who lived there, and went with him. Round about the brinks of this lake there grow store of vines and fruit trees of all sorts, which bear grapes and fruit most pleasant to the eye, as evidences of the former fertility and fruitfulness of

that place; but take those grapes and fruits, and break or bruise them to be eaten, and there is nothing but filthy and stinking ashes, as though some vile matter had been newly burnt. By this, then, it doth appear what Moses means in the former words, 'Their vine is as the vine of Sodom,' &c.—that is, fair and pleasant to the outward show, but within filthy, stinking, and unsavoury. And that such is the fruit of sin appears yet plainer in sundry places of holy Scripture. In the first chapter of this prophecy, ver. 11-15, God tells these Israelites that 'he delighted not in the blood of bullocks, nor of lambs, nor of he-goats: their incense was an abomination unto him; their new moons, and sabbaths, and calling of assemblies he could not away with; for it is iniquity, even their sclemn meetings. Their new moons and appointed feasts his soul hated, they were a trouble to him, he was weary to bear them. And when they spread forth their hands, he would hide his eyes; and when they make many prayers he would not hear, for their hands were full of blood.' The Scripture for our understanding ascribes senses to God, and here we find every sense displeased with their sins.

(1.) They were offensive to his *tasting*; for their burnt-offerings of rams, with the fat of lambs, &c., he could not relish—they *delighted him not*, they were sour to his palate.

(2.) They were offensive to his *smelling*; for he tells them that their incense was an *abomination* unto him—that precious perfume, which was made with so many sweet spices and pure frankincense, Exod. xxx. 34, 35, did stink in his nostrils, the scent thereof he could not abide.

(3.) They were offensive to his *feeling*; for their new moons and appointed feasts were a *burden* unto him, he was weary to bear them. And though he be not weary of bearing the whole world, yet he is weary of this burden; so heavy is it to his sense, that he complains he is 'pressed under it as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves,' Amos ii. 13.

(4.) They were offensive to his *seeing*; and therefore he tells them, though they spread forth their hands, he will *hide his eyes*. His pure eyes 'cannot behold evil,' Hab. ii. 13, nor endure to look upon iniquity, and therefore he must turn away his face from them.

(5.) They were offensive to his *hearing*; for when they make many prayers *he will not hear*. Their prayers were as jarring in his ears as if divers distracted musicians should play upon divers bad instruments so many several tunes at one time.

Neither were their sins only displeasing to his senses, but also grievous to his *mind*, and therefore he tells them, their new moons and appointed feasts *his soul did hate*; which is an emphatical speech, and an argument of God's hearty detestation. Now, 'is

* *Baaschim*, Vvas putridas, seu fectidas.—Moller. in loc. Aeerbas ac insuaves.—Vatab.

† Joseph. de bello Judae.

‡ August. de Civ. Dei. Hieron. in Ezek.

it a small thing for you to grieve men, but you must grieve God also?' Isa. vii. 13.

Besides this, the divers names given to sin in Scripture, and the comparisons used to set it forth, may shew unto us the odiousness of it. It is called a pollution, a leprosy, a contagion, the vomit of a dog, and wallowing of a swine in the mire. Again it is called uncleanness, filthiness, the execrable thing, and everywhere it is said to be abomination. From all which we may safely conclude that sin and the fruits thereof are odious and loathsome to the Lord.

Reas. Take the reason in a word. God is light and purity, and perfection itself; and therefore cannot but he must detest and abhor that which is his contrary.

Use 1. Hence, then, we see what the apostle teacheth, Rom. viii. 8, 'They that are in the flesh cannot please God;' the very oblations of their defiled hands stink in his presence. Their hearts are like to some fen or bog, and every action they do is as an evil vapour ascending thence. Of all the sacrifice and service of wicked men, Solomon saith, Prov. xv. 8, 'It is an abomination to the Lord.' And of their 'whole way,' ver. 9, he saith as much; every action of their lives God abhors. Their actions spiritual, as prayer, reading, hearing, singing, &c., God takes no pleasure in. 'He that sacrificeth a lamb is as if he cut off a dog's neck,' &c., Isa. lxvi. 3. Their actions civil, as buying, selling, giving, lending, honest dealing, &c., shall have no better acceptance with him. Their actions natural, as eating, drinking, sleeping, recreation, &c., all are stinking, loathsome. Alas, for the fearful estate of such! Oh that the eyes of these were open, that they might see their misery!

Use 2. Secondly, Let us be admonished to take heed of sin, yea, of every sin; for, *omnis malitia eructat fumum*, all wickedness belcheth forth an evil savour which God cannot endure nor abide. Shall we delight in that which God abhors, or take pleasure in that which makes us loathsome to him? Be it far from us so to do. True it is, while we live here upon the earth, we cannot but we shall fall, and that often; yet let us not lie still and wallow in uncleanness. For casual defilements there is hope; but for wilful pollutions there is little. How can God dwell or abide with us, if we be swearers, drunkards, usurers, oppressors, or the like? Assuredly he neither can nor will; for these impieties, and such like, are more odious to him than any carrion is or can be to us; nay, the devil himself is not so hateful to him as sin is, for, *non odit peccatum diaboli causa, sed diabolus peccati causa*, he hates not sin for the devil's sake, but the devil for sin's sake. And, therefore, to shut up all with that exhortation of the apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves

from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.'

Hitherto we have entreated of the vineyard's plantation. The supplantation of it follows next to be handled, which is contained in ver. 3-6, wherein we have,

First, The Lord's plea with them, ver. 3, 4.

Secondly, The verdict or judgment passed upon them, ver. 5, 6.

In the plea, we have first an appeal made to them, ver. 3; and, secondly, an indictment against them, ver. 4.

In the appeal divers circumstances are considerable, as—

1. The manner of it, which is not in commanding-wise, as it might have been, but by way of entreaty and request—I pray you.

2. The matter requested, and for which this appeal was made, and that is, that they would discern wisely of the matter, and accordingly pass sentence—*judge*.

3. Who they be which are made judges of the cause; and they are the men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, even the whole multitude.

4. The parties between whom the controversy and variance is, and they are God and his vineyard; God being the plaintiff, and Israel the defendant.

Ver. 3, And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard, &c.

And now, or now therefore. These are the words of God himself, *q.d.*, Seeing it is thus that my vineyard hath so frustrated my hopes, therefore, now, &c.

O inhabitants, and men. The words are in the original read in the singular, not in the plural number, *O inhabitant, and man*, by whom some would have the Lord Jesus to be meant, as before was shewed; but it is evident that here the Lord appealeth to the Jews themselves, and makes them judges in their own cause, referring the matter between him and them to their own consciences. And we know it is no rare thing in Scripture to find one number put for another, the plural for the singular, and the singular for the plural. Now, the reason why the Lord speaketh to one man, as it were, rather than to all, or to them all as if they were but one, may be this, because he would have judgment, not as simply of them altogether, but particularly of every one; willing every singular person of Judah and Jerusalem, to commune with their own hearts, and accordingly give sentence. And, therefore, Tremellius and Junius, with divers others, read as the original hath it, *imò viri Jehudæ singuli*.

Jerusalem, Judah; Judah was the country, Jeru-

* Singulariter loquitur, postulans non simpliciter omnes, sed et unumquemque.—*Muscul.*

salem was the chief city in that country; and, indeed, one of the most famous cities of the world, full of people, great amongst the nations, princess amongst the provinces, and in one respect exceeded all other cities in the world besides; for therein was Mount Zion, the place of God's service and worship, and therefore it was called 'The city of the Lord of hosts,' 'The city of God,' Ps. xlviii. 1, 8.

Judge; To judge sometimes signifieth to pass an upright or impartial sentence against any, true or false; so Christ willesh the Jews to 'judge righteous judgment,' John vii. 24. And sometimes it is only taken for the understanding and discerning of all things; so meaneth the apostle when he saith, 1 Cor. xiv. 29, 'Let two or three speak, and let the other judge,' i.e., discern what is spoken. This latter some would have only here meant, as if the Lord did not require sentence, but only an inspection into the cause. But it may rather seem the Lord requires not only that they should consider and discern, but also that they should speak their mind and give sentence against such a vineyard.

We shall not need to stand longer upon interpretation; the other words are clear. We come now to doctrine, with the uses and duties which we are to learn from each of the particulars. And, first, from the manner of this appeal, *I pray you*, learn that—

Doct. With much meekness and mildness doth God proceed against sinners. When he hath to deal with them, he doth not come in fury and rage, but in mild and peaceable terms, with kind entreaties. He doth not, as we see, imperiously command them with *sic volo, sic jubeo*, &c., but vouchsafeth kindly to request them, *Judicate, quæso, I pray ye judge.*

The like was God's manner of proceeding with Adam after his transgression: Gen. iii. 9, 11, 'Adam, Where art thou?' 'Who told thee thou wert naked?' Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I told thee thou shouldest not eat?' In the like manner he comes to Cain, Gen. iv. 9, 'Where is thy brother Abel?' 'What hast thou done?' And so our blessed Saviour, how mildly did he deal with him that smote him unjustly: John xviii. 23, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?' And what mildness and meekness did he shew to Judas, when he came to betray him, even at that time calling him *friend*, 'Friend, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?' Mat. xxvi. 50. In that parable of the marriage of the king's son, Mat. xxii. 11, wherein God's proceeding against wicked and ungodly professors who repent not of sin, neither do believe in Christ, is set forth, this point may have further confirmation; for to him that hath not on a wedding garment, the king saith thus, 'Friend, how earnest thou in hither?' &c., quietly and peaceably examining and convincing him.

Reason. And this the Lord doth, that he may the sooner and the better bring the sinner to a sight and sense of his sin and fault, and that he might, if it were possible, be pricked in his heart, and be brought to see that it is out of love which the Lord beareth to him, as he is his creature; and that he desireth not his death, but his repentance, that he might live. And certainly this mild and gentle kind of dealing doth much sooner cause the offender to see his fault than a hasty and passionate proceeding doth or can. So that unworthy guest, when he was so friendly dealt withal, had nothing to answer, but was speechless, Mat. xxii. 12.

Use 1. Herein let us be followers of God, as dear children, in manifesting this notable fruit of the Spirit, when we have to deal with sinners, which hath in it the very pith of love, which when it accompanieth a reprehension or oburgation, it is as that same 'precious oil which shall not break the head,' Ps. cxli. 5. Let ministers here learn how to deal with their hearers, entreating, exhorting, beseeching, even then when they may lawfully command. In things of this life, see how men are fain to entreat and sue hard for that which is their own, and heart-glad they are if by any such course they can gather up their debts. How glad, then, may we be if by any earnest persuasion or fair entreaty we can gather up the debt of obedience which our people owe unto the Lord! I will never think much to speak fair and friendly, so that may follow thereupon. And thus the apostle Paul doth come unto his hearers with 'I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God,' Rom. xii. 1; and 'We beseech you, that you would be reconciled unto God,' 2 Cor. v. 20; and, again, 'I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ,' 2 Cor. x. 1. These are his usual exhortations. And surely when ministers speak thus to sinful men, and proceed after this manner with them, 'I beseech thee, by the mercies of God,' I pray thee that thou wouldst leave thy drunkenness, profanation of God's Sabbath, swearing, &c., and be reconciled unto God; it must needs strike deep into their hearts, if they be not sealed up with hardness and unbelief. Let magistrates hence learn to shew mercy and compassion, and all tokens and testimonies of love towards malefactors, even then when justice is to be executed and punishment inflicted, that offenders may see it is not malice, but justice, that inflicteth that punishment upon them; and that it is not their blood, but their good, and the good of others, which is sought. And thus dealt Joshua with Achan after he was apprehended for that execrable wickedness which he had committed, and whereby all Israel was troubled: 'My son,' saith he, 'I beseech thee give glory unto the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me,' Josh.

vii. 19. For want of this Jehu the king of Israel is threatened to be punished; for albeit he executed the judgments of the Lord against the house of Ahab, according to God's command, yet doing it with a cruel and revengeful mind, without all pity and compassion, God was displeased, and saith he will 'revenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu,' Hosea i. 4. Let all Christians in general take out this lesson which the Lord himself doth here and elsewhere teach us by his practice; and in informing or reforming offending persons, let us use all moderation and meekness, endeavouring in the quietest and mildest manner to convince them of their sins. In so doing we shall, first, tread in the steps of God himself; secondly, give obedience to God's commands, which requires us to 'restore such as are fallen with the spirit of meekness,' Gal. vi. 1; thirdly, manifest we have the Spirit of God in us by the fruits, whereof this is one, chap. v. 23; fourthly, have some hope that our reproofs, admonitions, exhortations, &c., shall be profitable; for if ever we do good, it must be by weight of good arguments, pressed in meekness of wisdom, with mildness of spirit, that must be as sugar, without which the bitter pills of reproof will not be swallowed. But, alas! we cannot hit of those steps which our heavenly Father hath trodden in, and wherein our blessed Saviour hath gone before us. How doth that hastiness in many of us ministers, who, because we see not present success of our labours, are ready to surcease our pains and forego all, sort with this truth or that injunction which St Paul giveth to Timothy, and in him to all other ministers: 'In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth,' 2 Tim. ii. 25. How do those bitter jests, taunts, and reproaches, cast out against such as are in misery,—what though they be evildoers, standing at the bar to be judged and arraigned,—usually to be heard in the places of justice and judgment, by such as are in place of authority, come nigh this copy which God hath set? How can we see we imitate God like good children, when, having to deal with friend or foe, we grow hot and boisterous if we be a little moved? Alas for us! Oh that we could but remember God's peaceable proceeding, even with the vessels of his wrath, and learn more mildness.

Quest. But are we to deal thus mildly with all? we may some demand. Is there no time when, nor no person to whom, rigour and severity must be shewed?

Ans. Surely much patience and lenity must be used even unto the very worst, until it be despised and wilfully contemned. And then, if it be clear no meekness will serve to win men, it is high time to use severity towards such, who by mild entreaties will not be persuaded. And thus our blessed Saviour, though

in his first sermon he pronounced blessings, Mat. v., yet in his other he denounceth woes and curses against the scribes and pharisees, Mat. xxiii., whenas the former did not work upon them.

Use 2. Let this teach us likewise to admire the great goodness and unspeakable mercy of the Lord. Men commonly are entreaters for those things which are profitable to themselves; but who is he that is earnest with another to do that which tends only to the profit of him with whom he dealeth? If a man of himself cannot see what maketh for his own good, and do it of his own accord, we think him well worthy to smart for his own folly. But here see God's dealing with us the sons of men, who desireth and entreateth us to sit in judgment against ourselves. And why? Surely for this end, that he might not judge us; for as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xi. 31, 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord;' so that the profit thereof would be our own. How should our hearts relent! how should we be overcome with this kindness of the Lord, who so graciously and mercifully requesteth and entreateth us for our own welfare!

Use 3. And, lastly, Is God so mild even when he hath to deal with sinners? and doth he proceed in such quiet and peaceable terms, even with wicked and ungodly ones? Then let this stay the hearts of God's people, for assuredly with them he will not be rigorous nor extreme. If these fare so well, certainly God's children shall fare far better. Lift up then thy dejected spirit, and cheer up thy disquieted and perplexed conscience, thou poor one who tremblest under God's hand for thy manifold infirmities, as the child doth under the rod, and be not out of heart or hope. 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, who will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for evermore,' Ps. ciii. 8. He beareth patiently with the wicked, his slaves, his vassals; and will he not with thee, who art his child, his darling? Is it possible that he should be worse towards thee who seekest his face, than he is with them who seek it not at all? That cannot be. And thus much for the manner, how he maketh his appeal; now for the matter, or thing itself, for which he doth appeal, and that is judgment.

Judge, I pray you. He doth not say condemn these, or justify my proceedings; but judge, advise, take counsel, and accordingly pass sentence. Thus,

Doct. God is content to submit his courses unto scanning, and to bring his proceedings with the sons of men unto a trial before he proceed to judgment.

In the first chapter of this prophecy we read how the Lord doth, as it were, provoke the people to a pleading with him, 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord,' &c., Isa. i. 18; as if h

should say, If you are so well persuaded of the goodness of your cause, and are so ready to accuse me, and excuse yourselves, which is the property of all hypocrites, let us reason about the business, and bring the matter unto a trial, that so it may appear whether I or yourselves be most in fault. The like plea he offers his people by the prophet Jeremiah, 'Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children I will plead,' Jer. ii. 9. And by the prophet Micah he summons them to the like business, willing them to plead the cause with him, as it were at even hand, offering to make answer to whatsoever they could object or lay unto his charge; and he calls upon the hills and mountains to be witnesses, yea, judges of the cause: 'Hear, O ye mountains,' saith he, 'the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me,' &c., Micah vi. 2, 3.

Reas. And the main reason hereof is, that the justice of God might hereby be cleared, and every man's mouth stopped, 'That he might be justified when he speaketh, and cleared when he judgeth,' Ps. li. 4.

Obj. But the apostle reproveth such as dare word it with the Lord, and dispute with him about his proceedings: 'Who art thou, O man,' saith he, 'that pleadest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?' &c., Rom. ix. 20.

Ans. True; for though God be content to offer it for the clearing of his justice and conviction of the sinner, yet it is over-great boldness and sauciness for any man to require and demand it. Here was Job's failing, Jeremiah's weakness, and David's infirmity.

Make these uses of this point:—

Use 1. First, Let it serve for our instruction, that we admire the rich mercy and great goodness of the Lord, who is content so to abase himself as to put his holy actions and proceedings to our scanning, and plead with us, clay and dirt, dung and worm's-meat, about his just and righteous proceedings. Should he use martial law against us, and as soon as ever we offend, like Draco, write his laws in blood upon us, it were but just and right. Now for him to come and reason with us, and plead about the justice of his cause, before he proceeds to judgment, this deserves acknowledgment and admiration in the highest degree. Should the wood quarrel with the carpenter, or the iron with the smith, or the clay with the potter, would they do thus? And yet there is more difference between God and us than is or can be between the carpenter and his wood, the smith and his iron, the potter, though he were a king, and his pot,

though it were of the worst fashion, or for the basest use. 'Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and loving-kindness of our God! how unsearchable is his goodness, and his mercies past finding out!' Rom. xi. 33.

Use 2. Secondly, Let it be for admonition unto us, that we beware how we tax God of the least injustice in any of his proceedings, for he is so assured of the equity of his actions, as that he fears not the scanning of them by his very enemies; yea, so far is he from fearing it, as that he will provoke them to a pleading with him that do accuse him. Now we know none call for a day of trial, but such as are well persuaded they are of the surer side; as for those that do evil, they 'hate the light,' as our Saviour speaketh, 'lest their deeds should be reprov'd,' John iii. 20. Be thou then contented with his will; he hath reason for his actions, though thou knowest it not. This is a lesson we cannot hit on; the best of us are much wanting in it. We can all say, It is a shame to contend with the Almighty; yet when his hand lies any way upon us, then, Oh that I might speak with the Almighty. Holy Job, while he was himself, acknowledgeth this, chap. ix. 1-3; but being tried with affliction, then he forgot himself, chap. xxiii. 3, 4; for which God sharply reproves him, chap. xl. 2; and then Job cries *peccavi*, chap. xlii. 1, 2; and acknowledgeth his own vileness, and promiseth amendment. Whatsoever God doth, acknowledge to be most just; say not, What a hard case is this, or How can this stand with justice? But learn thou better things, and with Eli say, 'It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good,' 1 Sam. iii. 18. And with Mauritius, remember that of David, 'Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgments,' Ps. cxix. What thou canst not understand, inquire not a reason of, but reverence it. Couldst thou understand it, thou shouldst much more understand that thou hast no reason to complain, though it were for the reprobation of thy husband's, wife's, child's, or own soul.

The parties who are appointed judges in the cause are in the next place to be considered, and they are themselves.

You inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah. He doth not put the business to this or that friend to arbitrate, neither doth he call upon 'heaven and earth,' Isa. i. 2, nor on the 'mountains and strong foundations,' as he doth elsewhere, Micah vi. 1, 2, to hear the quarrel, for it might have been thought these would have been partial. But he makes his adversaries themselves the judges of the cause. Whence note we,

Doct. God will fetch witness from his adversaries' own consciences, for the justifying and condemning themselves. God will neither choose nor use any other judge to condemn man than man himself.

Thus the Lord, after he had used all good means for the converting of Ephraim and Judah, demands of no other than of themselves, what he should do more, Hosea vi. 4; and so our Saviour, after he had propounded that parable of the vineyard, let out to wicked husbandmen, requires of the priests and rulers their judgment; and they sentence them, and in them, themselves, thus: Mat. xxi. 40, That they were worthy to be destroyed, and to have the vineyard taken from them, and let out to others who should render the fruits in their seasons. The like I might shew of Pharaoh, who, by force of conscience, was made to justify the Lord to his own confusion, Exod. ix. 27; and of Adonibezek, who acknowledged, when Judah had taken him and cut off his thumbs and toes, that as he had done by others, so had God requited him, Judges i. 7; and of Judas, who read the sentence against himself, there being none else to do it, Mat. xxvii. 4; besides many others of whom mention is made in Scripture, whose mouths have been opened to read their own doom, to the justifying of the Lord and condemning of themselves. Hereunto tends the apostle's speech, when he telleth us that the sinner is subverted and sinneth, being 'self-condemned,' Titus iii. 11. Thus, God loves to have a sinner accuse himself before he accuse him, condemn himself before he condemn him.

Use 1. See, then, here the use of conscience, and what good service it will do. The Lord God hath set it as his deputy in the breast of man, which, though it be oftentimes a neuter when the act is doing and while sin is a-committing, yet afterwards it will prove a friend and faithful witness for the Lord, but an adversary against man. Oh that the wicked would think of this, who sin in hope of secrecy! Why, who sees them, who can witness anything against them, who can condemn them for such or such an action? Alas, poor soul! there is a conscience within thee that sees thee, and will condemn thee; thyself shall pass sentence against thyself. Now thou canst hide, cover, and cloak thy sin, and plead in the defence thereof; but when God shall cite thy conscience to give in evidence, that shall be as a thousand witnesses, *conscientia mille testes*, and condemn thee for thy most secret sins. Though thou do escape all apprehension and accusation in this world, yet thy own conscience will arrest thee, and hale thee unto judgment; and albeit thou escape man's judgment, yet the judgment of thy own conscience thou shalt never escape. Neither think that what thou thyself knowest shall ever be concealed; thou art privy to thy own lewdness, and knowest of thy drunkenness, adultery, theft, &c. What art thou the better, then, in that nobody else is privy to them, so long as thou hast a conscience within thee? *Quid tibi prodest non habere conscium, habenti conscientiam?*

Neither think thou that, because thy conscience is now asleep, or seared and benumbed, through a continuance in the custom of sin, that it will never be awakened, or that this is nothing so; for, as the poise of a clock being down all motion ceaseth, the wheels stir not, but, being wound up, all is set on going; so albeit now, while thy conscience is down, there is no noise nor moving in thy heart, all is quiet; yet when it is wound up by the justice of God, as one day assuredly it shall, it will set all the wheels on working: thy tongue, to confess and say, *Guilty*, Lord, *guilty*; thy eyes to weep, thy hands to wring, thy voice to cry, thy heart to ache; and yet all in vain. Be watchful, therefore, and ever remember conscience. Beware of hypocrisy and secret sins; for, though thou canst hide them from men and devils, yet not from it; and look thou neglect not the checks of conscience. Doth it now check thee and reprove thee for thy ways?—know the time cometh when that conscience, which doth now check thee shall judge thee and condemn thee; and that which doth now reprove thee shall hereafter torment thee in endless woe if thou repent not.

Use 2. Secondly, Seeing this is so, that man shall judge himself and justify the Lord, then let it teach us this point of wisdom, to begin betimes, and now 'judge ourselves, that we may not be judged,' 1 Cor. xi. 31. Self-condemning is an especial means to prevent future condemnation; and the more speedily we set upon the work, the more mercifully will the Lord deal with us. It is recorded of Edward the First, sometimes king of this land, that being crossed by a servant of his in the sport of hawking, and further incensed by a saucy answer which he made unto the king's threatenings, telling him it was well there was a river between them, spurred his horse into the depth of the river, not without great danger of his life, the water being deep, and the banks too high and steep for his ascending; yet, at last, recovering land, pursues his servant with his drawn sword. The servant, finding himself too ill-horsed to outride the king, and seeing no way to escape his fury, lights from his horse, and, on his knees, exposed his neck to the blow of the king's sword. The king, seeing this, puts up his sword, and would not touch him. Behold how humble submission and self-judging soon pacifies him whom a dangerous water could not withhold from violence!

Whiles men stand out against God, justifying themselves, stubbornly flying from him, he that rides upon the wings of the wind posts after, with the sword of vengeance drawn; but when we condemn ourselves and cast ourselves down at the foot of his mercy, then will his wrath be soon appeased towards us.

Use 3. Thirdly, Here we have a pattern for our imi-

* Acts and Monum.

tation, and a copy set to write after. Let us herein also be 'followers of God, as dear children,' Ephes. v. 1, and be so upright and just in our proceedings as that we may dare to appeal to the consciences of our adversaries for witness and testimony of our innocence; and, as the apostle willeth, let us 'approve ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God,' 2 Cor. iv. 2. Such was David's carriage towards Saul, as that he was constrained twice to testify of him, 'Thou art more righteous than I,' 1 Sam. xxiv. 18, and xxvi. 21. The innocence of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, caused Nebuchadnezzar to pronounce with his own mouth, they were 'the servants of the high God,' Dan. iii. 26. Though Plinius Secundus be an enemy to Christians, and a persecutor of them, yet their holy and godly conversation shall make him to certify the emperor his master, Trajan, that they are harmless persons. Thus let thy life be holy and innocent, and then thou mayest fetch a testimony from the conscience of the very enemy. And as David said unto Michal, objecting unto him that even his own servants contemned him for his dancing before the ark, 'Of the servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour,' 2 Sam. vii. 22, so say I. Even those wicked ones that outwardly traduce thee and revile thee, cannot but inwardly they must acquit thee and commend thee. Their heart and conscience shall speak for thee even then, when their tongue and lips do speak against thee; and whenever it shall please the Lord to set their consciences on the rack, or to compass them about with the snares of death, then shall their tongue be constrained, will they, nill they, to discover what now lies hidden, for the justification of thy righteousness. Then they cry out, Oh send for such a man, or such a woman. They will pray for me, and do me good, and give me comfort. And do we not see daily that they sooner trust, for all their talk, such as they term hypocrites, dissemblers, and precisians, with their goods, and with their children, and with their portions—yea, and with their souls also, before any other?

The last thing propounded to our consideration in this appeal is, the parties between whom the variance is, and they are the Lord and Israel, God and his vineyard, God being the plaintiff, and the whole body of the people—even all Israel and Judah—the defendants; as unequally matched as ever were earth and heaven, strength and weakness, or the great behemoth and the silliest worm that creeps in the chinks and crannies of the earth. God contends with man—he that is excellent with them that are but dust. Who, then, is like to have the day?

Between me and my vineyard. And is it possible that there should be a controversy between God and his vine, which he planted with his own right hand?

—between him and that people whom he had so highly honoured? Then it will follow, that—

Doct. Sin will make-bate and stir up strife between God and his dearest people.

There is no city—no, not Jerusalem; no people—no, not Israel nor Judah, be they graced with never so many privileges, crowned with never so many blessings, but sin will set the Lord and them at variance. 'The Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land,' saith Hosea, 'because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land,' &c., Hosea i. 1, 2. Sin was the breeder of it. 'Babylon, the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,' Isa. xiii. 19. Yet her pride set her and God at variance, so that her palaces were made dens of dragons. Wild beasts of the field did lie there; their houses were cages for unclean birds; owls did dwell there; satyrs did dance there; with doleful creatures were they filled. And thus Sodom, sometimes as fair and beautiful as paradise itself, Gen. xix. 24, was set at variance with the Lord, by reason of her sins. 'Pride, idleness, and fulness of bread,' &c., bred the quarrel, Ezek. xvi. 49, and was the cause that she was made 'a perpetual desolation,' Zeph. ii. 9. And will not those seven famous churches of Asia, Rev. i. ii., and iii., Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Laodicea, Philadelphia, Sardis, in the midst whereof God is said to have his walk, witness as much? Did not their sins cause the Lord to contend with them a long time, and in the end make him to give up their land to be inhabited by Zym and Oehim—Turks and infidels? What shall I need to say more? Such a variance it made between God and the angels, as that they were turned out of heaven, Jude 6—between God and our great-grandfather, as that he was drove out of paradise, Gen. iii. 22—between the Lord and Moses, as that it kept him from Canaan, Deut. xxxii. 51, 52. And such a contention it daily breeds between God and men, as that infinite thousands are thereby kept out of the kingdom of heaven, 1 Cor. vi. 9; Rev. xxi.

Use 1. Let all wicked ones hence take notice of their estates, which by this doctrine they may as clearly see as in a glass; for doth sin set God and man at odds? and is it a make-bate between them? Then certainly such as live in it, and harbour it, cannot be at peace with God. 'What peace,' saith Jehu to Joram, 'so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, are so many?' 2 Kings ix. 22. So say I, What peace so long as that make-bate is harboured in thy breast? Nay, 'There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,' Isa. lvii. 21. 'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? what communion hath light with darkness? what concord hath Christ with Belial?' 2 Cor. vi. 14. God

is thy enemy, and hath against thee, Mat. v. 25, and therefore see thou agree quickly with thy adversary. We say in a proverb, He is poor that God hates. True, none so poor as the wicked are; for what though they have riches, honours, friends, &c., when there is a controversy between God and them? 'If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge for him,' said old Eli to his sons: 'but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?' 1 Sam. ii. 25. Seek therefore reconciliation; cast that make-bate out of thy bosom, which stirs up all this strife. Sin is thy own creature; destroy that, and God must needs love thee, who art his creature: but if thou wilt not, then expect no peace, but contention and destruction. If the pot will needs contend with the pottier, it cannot be but it must be broken. Thou art but an earthen pottier in the hand of thy Maker, and he can full easily dash thee against the wall, and stamp thee into powder. It is good counsel that the wise man gives thee, Eccles. vi. 10, 'Content not with him who is mightier than thyself: and if thou beest not a fool, I advise thee to follow it, lest *woe* and *alas* come too late.

Use 2. And, secondly, See here the reason why the Lord doth so often bend his brows, and turn away his face from his own people in displeasure. Sin is it that bred the quarrel; that was it which causeth it. The fashion of many in the day of affliction is to cry out of evil tongues that have forespoken them: And surely, say they, we are bewitched; but if we look well about us, we shall find the grand witch to lie lurking in our own bosoms. It is sin that hales down those judgments on us and ours. 'What shall I say, O Lord, when Israel turns their backs before their enemies?' said Joshua to God. Now mark God's answer! 'Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, they have transgressed my covenant which I have commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even amongst their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except you destroy the accursed thing from amongst you,' Josh. vii. 8-13. This answer may we give to the like demand: Why are we so often punished, afflicted, plagued? Surely we have taken of that execrable thing, and broken the covenant of the Lord; and until that accursed thing, sin, be searched out and cast away, never hope for any favour to be shewed from the Lord: Jonah must be cast overboard before the storm cease, Jonah i. 15.

Use 3. Lastly, Seeing sin sets God and his dearest people at variance, be they graced with never so many excellencies or privileges: then 'be not high-

minded, but fear,' Rom. xi. 20; for whatsoever thou art that sinnest against the Lord, be thy privileges never so many or excellent, 'wert thou as a signet upon God's right hand, or as the apple of his eye,' Jer. xxii. 24, yet he will have a controversy with thee. And so for our land in general, which may seem to outvie the felicity of all other nations in high and rich prerogatives. Of all the trees in the garden, we may seem to be the vine that God hath set his heart upon. Amongst all the variety of flowers, England is the lily and the rose; amongst all the princes, we have had a Deborah, and have a David; amongst all the prophets of the Lord, we have the most reverend Elishas; amongst all the nurseries and springs of learning, we have the most famous Naioths; amongst all lands, we have that Canaan, which abounds with plenty of all good things; and amongst all cities, we have Jerusalem. But will these privileges bear us out, if we take liberty to sin against the Lord? Alas! they cannot. Nay, so far are they from stopping God's wrath, as that they will rather make way for it. As a man is more offended with the evil behaviour of a servant that hath been advanced by him; so the Lord with us. When Saml behaved himself not so well in his kingdom as he ought, it was taken from him and given unto David. Hold that thou hast, O England, lest misery come upon thee.

And thus much for the appeal, which was the first thing we considered in the plea. The indictment follows in these words; *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*

Wherein we have an action commenced against them of ingratitude, which is prosecuted and proved to their faces, and therein,

More particularly we see, first, how the Lord excuseth himself from being in any fault for that their barrenness. No way was he defective; he had done as much as might be done to make it fruitful. 'What could have been done more to my vineyard,' saith he, 'that I have not done in it?'

And, secondly, he accuseth them for horrible unthankfulness in making so ungrateful a return; which accusation is amplified by an antithesis between his just demand, 'He looked that it should bring forth grapes,' and their unjust demeanour, for 'it brought forth wild grapes.'

The form of the words, as we see, is interrogatory; 'What could have been done? Wherefore when I looked,' &c. And it is observed by some, that before man fell to sinning, God fell not to questioning; all his speeches to him were either commendatory or commendatory. But when man turned his heart to another object, then God turned his voice to another accent; and the

first word he speaks to him after his transgression was a question, 'Adam, Where art thou?' Gen. iii. 9; and with the same form and method of speech he goeth on, ver. 11, 'Who told thee thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee thou shouldest not eat?' And ever since it is usual with the Lord to discuss with man after the same manner, sometimes to teach him, sometimes to reprove him, sometimes to confirm him, and oftentimes to convince him. For albeit man's questions are for the most part effects of dubitation, doubting being the mother of them, that breedeth them and causeth them; yet God's questions are of another nature, and have another use, for they for the most part tend to convince the conscience, and bring it to a sense and science of sin. And so here, God doth appeal to the consciences of these Israelites, and fetch evidence against them from the impartial evidence of their own hearts, 'What could have been done more?' *q.d.*, Is there anything that could have been desired of a husbandman wherein I have been wanting? Shew me wherein I have failed of my duty; allege what you can against me; let your consciences speak.

'Wherefore when I looked,' &c. Some^o read it, 'Why have I looked,' as if God should expostulate with himself why he expected any good fruit from so naughty and perverse a people; and that he doth after the manner of men, who oftentimes complain of themselves, and are offended with themselves, when the event of a thing doth not answer their hope and expectation, for that they have bestowed such cost and pains to so little purpose. But others^f think this sense to be the plainer: 'Seeing I have fully discharged my duty, and have done above all that could have been expected in husbanding my vine, whence comes it that it yields me so evil recompense?'

Obj. Now haply some may object that albeit God had thus planted and watered his church, and used all outward means for the fertility thereof, yet seeing, as the apostle sheweth, Paul's planting is nothing, nor Apollo's watering, without God's blessing, 1 Cor. iii., how could God say he had done all that could be done, when he withheld a blessing, and softened not their hearts that the means might become profitable? Might not this man of Judah and inhabitant of Jerusalem have had replied in the words of the leper, 'Why, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make us clean'? Mat. viii. 2.

Ans. 1. For answer hereunto, first, we are to know that God here speaketh of the sufficiency of the outward means, and not of inward grace. That was done to this wicked vineyard, which, if it had been good, would have brought forth the fruit of repentance and new obedience. The rain falls, the sun

shines upon the earth, the garden hereupon brings forth herbs, the desert thorns; whence is this, but from the nature of the ground? There is as much done to make one fruitful as the other.^o Thus God had done enough; the means he used were sufficient, had not this people been of such a peevish and froward disposition.

Ans. 2. And, secondly, God speaketh not here of his absolute power, whereby he can do whatsoever pleaseth him—he could make iron swim, and cause stony rocks to yield forth streams of water; he could raise up of stones children unto Abraham, and give Christ more than twelve legions of angels to deliver him—but he denies that he was bound to do any more for them than he did. And therefore that evil would have been but frivolous, saith Calvin, for their consciences pricked them in such wise as that they could not escape by laying the fault upon another. For albeit God does not pierce with efficacy into the hearts of men by his Holy Spirit to make them teachable; yet it will be in vain for any notwithstanding to mutter that this was wanting to them, seeing that their external vocation doth sufficiently cut off all pretext and show of ignorance whatsoever. And now let us come to some such instructions as the text will naturally afford. And, first, we see how—

Doct. God is altogether out of fault, and can in no way be charged with the sinfulness and barrenness of men's hearts and lives.

In another place of this prophecy we find the Lord complaining that he had 'held out his hands all the day long to a gainsaying and rebellious people,' Isa. lxv. 2. His arms were stretched out, he ready to receive; but they did gainsay and rebel, and refused to come into his arms. And by the prophet Jeremiah he telleth the people how he 'sent all his servants, the prophets, unto them, rising early, and sending them, saying, Oh do not such abominable things which I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ears to turn from their wickedness,' chap. xlv. 4, 5. And by the prophet Hosea he thus speaketh: 'I have spoken unto them by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets,' chap. xii. 10. The meaning is, that he had declared his will, and made known his mind unto them so plainly, as that they could not plead ignorance, or any way charge him with fault. And our Saviour Jesus Christ complains thus: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as

* 'Loquitur de sufficientia externorum mediorum, non internæ gratiæ.'—*Hieron. et Ursin.* 'Simul pluit Dominus super segetes et super spinas: sed segeti pluit ad horreum, spinis ad ignem, et tamen una est pluvia.'—*August. de benedict. Esau et Jacob.*

* Moller., in loc.

† Calv., in loc.

a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not ! Mat. xxiii. 37. Where we see clearly how God would their conversion—understand it of his signifying^c will—and therefore gave them the outward means, ‘sending unto them prophets, wise men, and scribes,’ ver. 34, messengers clad with all variety of gifts, administrations, and operations, and that not once, but often. ‘How often would I have gathered!’ Often by the mouth of his servants; often by his own self, as the loving hen is always caring for her chickens—always clucking and calling them, if they wander out of her sight never so little, that she may gather them and guard them from the mischief of all vermin. But they would not; they themselves gainsaid. Where, then, lay the fault? And so St Stephen complaineth of the Jews—yea, telleth them to their faces that they were ‘stiff-necked and of uncircumcised hearts and ears, and did always resist the Holy Ghost,’ Acts vii. 51; that is, the work of the Holy Ghost in the ministry of the word, and would not be wrought upon.

Obj. But the Scripture speaketh of God’s hardening Pharaoh’s heart, so that the means should not be profitable unto him, Exod. vii. 3, and x. 27; and God himself commandeth Isaiah to preach unto the people, that they may be hardened, and so not converted, Isa. vi. 10, and Lxiii. 17.

Ans. 1. True; and yet in all this God cannot be charged with any fault or blame; for it is a just and righteous thing with God to punish sin with sin: ‘My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: so I gave them up unto their own hearts’ lusts, and they walked in their own counsels,’ Ps. lxxxi. 12. Thus, then, God doth this for a punishment of such as withstand and condemn those gracious means he offers them for their good. If Pharaoh harden his heart against the means, God will harden his heart that he shall not profit by the means.[†] So, then, though Satan hardeneth as a malicious author, and man hardeneth himself as a voluntary instrument, yet God hardeneth no otherwise than as he is a just judge and righteous avenger of sin.

Ans. 2. And, secondly, God doth not harden by infusing evil, but by withholding of his grace,[‡] and forsaking of his creature, which divines call spiritual desertion. As the sun freezeth the water, not by adding coldness to it, but by keeping back his heat; so is God a deficient cause of hardness, but no efficient thereof. And this must be marked, that we err not on this point. Now let us make the use.

¹ Use 1. And, first, This frees us from a slander that he papists have laid upon us, in giving out that we teach directly, or by consequence, that God is the author of sin, and only cause thereof. Now, whether this be true or no, judge you. You now hear it taught, that he is out of fault, and may no way be charged with the least spot of sin: he is most holy, just, and pure in all his ways and works. Now, therefore, the Lord be judge between them and us.

Use 2. And, secondly, See how damnable and excuseless shall the carelessness of the most be in the matter of their salvation. To excuse and lessen their own sin, they will not stick to lay the fault on God himself, and charge their Maker with their damnation. They swear, swagger, drink to drunkenness, defile forbidden beds, shoot at heaven with their blasphemous oaths, and then fetch from God’s decree and purpose excuses for these their outrageous wickednesses. And why should fault be found with them? If God would it should be otherwise, ‘Who hath ever resisted his will? and why doth he yet find fault?’ Rom. ix. 19. He hath decreed it, and his decree must stand. If the devils in hell should speak, what could they say more? We have fallen, and God caused it. Wicked and fearful thoughts! When Adam sinned, he blamed his wife, and she God himself, Gen. iii. 12. And we have sucked the same milk; but as it would not serve Adam’s turn, no more will it serve ours. Cease, then, thou foolish one, from charging God, or drawing him in as an necessary to thy profaneness. God would have thee saved, but thou wilt not; he labours to make thee good, and darest thou lay to his charge thy own voluntary badness? Behold, God is so far from being guilty of thy misery, as that he giveth thee his word, his sacraments, and affordeth thee all good helps to mollify thy heart, justifying himself by these proffered means of thy salvation, that he hath no desire nor delight in thy destruction; and darest thou charge him with thy damnation?

Obj. 1. Thou sayest, If God would, it should be otherwise; if he please, he could save without these means.

Ans. True, if we speak of his absolute power, as was before shewed, but it is his actual power that thou must look unto. And so he, having tied the end and the means together, cannot, because he will not, bring thee to the end without thy using of those means which tend unto the end; for that is the ordinary course which he hath decreed to use, and which he will not alter but upon special occasion, as our Saviour noteth in the cure of Naaman, and in the feeding of the widow of Sarepta, Luke iv. 26, 27. God hath ordained that a man’s body should live by the means of meat, drink, sleep, &c.; shouldst thou now neglect these means for the preservation thereof, and yet accuse God if thou growest sick, and weak,

* ‘Voluntas signi,’ not ‘voluntas beneplaciti.’

† Pharaoh seipsum induravit liberio arbitrio: Deus induravit Pharaonem justo judicio.—*Aug.*

‡ Non inducendo malitiam, sed subtrahendo gratiam.—*Aquin.*

&c., because if he would he could continue health and strength unto thee without these helps? I am sure that all men would condemn thee; nay, that thou wouldst condemn thyself of folly and presumption.

Obj. 2. Thou pleadest further God's decree, for albeit thou use the means, yet the end is already decreed, and who can alter it?

Ans. But secret things belong unto the Lord; leave them to him. It is not for thee to pry into that ark which is covered with a curtain of holy secrecy, not to be drawn aside until that day comes, wherein we shall know as we are known. That signed and revealed will, written in tables, published with trumpets, is it to which thou standest bound. Neither doth the necessity of this decree excuse, for God doth not by his decree force thee unto evil; but he finds thee evil and prone only unto it of thyself. He decrees that thou shalt be so or so; and knoweth that thou wouldst be so had he never decreed it; but seeing thou knowest not what this his decree is, use the means, and condemn not God.

Thus learn to chamber thy tongue, vain man, for God cannot be charged nor any way blamed with thy sinfulness and barrenness. Lay thy hand upon thy mouth, and condemn thyself, for 'thy destruction is of thyself, O Israel,' Hosea xiii. Say not, What can I remedy it if God will not save me? for what can God do more than he hath done for thee? God rains upon thee his holy dews, and is not wanting in his purging and pruning thee with his corrections. He hath given thee strange and excellent means, so that it is only thou that art wanting to thyself; heaven is good, but thy ground is naught. A cunning carver can cut the similitude of any creature, yet not on a rotten stick. Where lies the fault? Surely in the rottenness of the wood, and not in the carver's cunning; that thou art not wrought upon, the fault is thy own, and not the Lord's. Thy case is that of Jerusalem; how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldst not? If then thou smartest for thy sinful and barren life, thank thyself, for thou art the cause, God only the avenger; thy blood then be upon thy own head; that which will die let it die. And thus much for the first point. A second follows, and I propound it thus:—

Doct. *The wicked will still continue wicked, although God use all good means that can be used to bring them unto good, and make them better.* God had done what might be done, and yet his vineyard is as bad, nay, worse than ever; a pregnant proof of this our prophet gives us when he saith, 'Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord,' Isa. xxvi. 10. Such is the vile and cursed nature of them, as that

no mercy nor favour can work with them to do well; nay, in the land of uprightness, amongst many occasions and means of good, they will do wickedly. And thus Jeremiah to the same purpose, 'In vain I have smitten your children; they received no correction, &c. O generation, see ye the word of the Lord. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? Wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?' chap. ii. 30, 31. And again, 'O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return,' chap. v. 3. And so Amos sheweth how incorrigible the wicked of his time were; no correction that the Lord could use would better them, chap. iv. 6. Many are the examples likewise that might be brought for the further strengthening of this truth, as of Pharaoh, Ahaz, and others; but I purposely forbear, inasmuch as something hath formerly been spoken to this purpose. Now briefly for the use, which is—

Use. For admonition, that we beware of this sin which hath an aggravating circumstance with it, for then is sin most vile and filthy when it breaks out against those means that should have kept it in. Amongst many of which means these are some, which let us all take especial notice of:—

1. First, Our *vows* and promises which we have often made unto the Lord, both in health and sickness, that we would do such or such a holy duty, and refrain from such or such an evil action. Let us beware of sinning against these. Our vows are God's debts, and they must be paid, and therefore saith Solomon, 'When thou vowest a vow to God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay,' Eccles. v. 4, 5. And indeed he is justly required to pay that was not compelled to vow.* And amongst all other vows, be mindful of that solemn vow which thou madest to God in thy baptism, and hast often since renewed in thy coming to the supper of the Lord. Oh, what a fearful thing is it if we wittingly and wilfully break covenant with God, when civil honesty maketh some conscience of keeping promise made with man!

2. Secondly, *Check of conscience.* God hath set conscience within us as a monitor to give us an *item* when we do amiss, and to forewarn us of evil. This oftentimes tells us we may not do such or such an action, or when we have done it, that it is not well. Now beware we of sinning against conscience; ne-

* *Juste exigitur ad solvendum, qui non cogitur ad reddendum.—Bern.*

glect not the checks thereof reproving us of our ways, but heedfully mind its watchword; for else know assuredly that the conscience which now checks thee shall hereafter judge thee, and that which now reproveth thee will hereafter vex thee and torment thee for thy neglect. Beware also how thou suppressst any good motion suggested by conscience; for in so doing, thou wilt in the end clean silence conscience, and quite kill it, so that the grossest sins shall be practised without any check or remorse, Eph. iv. 18, 19. Fearful is this sin, and such as is the forerunner of a reprobate mind, Rom. i. 21, 26.

3. Thirdly, *Corrections and afflictions*. These are the thorns wherewith God doth hedge us in, Hosea ii. 6, and serve to keep us from leaping out of God's pastures into the pasture of wickedness and sin. Beware we then of leaping over this hedge; take we heed of sinning against these means. Let it not be said of us as it was of Ahaz, 'This is that king Ahaz who, in the time of his distress, did trespass yet more and more against the Lord,' 2 Chron. xxvii. 22. To be afflicted, and not to be purged by affliction, to be stricken with the rods of God, and to have no correction nor reformation follow, is a sign of a fearful induration. 'The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed with fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them,' Jer. vi. 29, 30.

4. Fourthly, *God's many and great mercies*, especially the word, and the light of the gospel. Take we heed how we withhold the 'truth of God in unrighteousness,' Rom. i. 18, 'hating to be reformed, casting it behind our backs,' Ps. l. 16. Such a sin is this as brings condemnation with a witness, with a vengeance—sore and heavy condemnation. 'This is that condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil,' John iii. 19. The clear light of the truth shining hath discovered to us that swearing is a sin, drunkenness is a sin, Sabbath breaking is a sin, &c. What now will such plead for themselves that live therein? Surely they have now 'no cloak for their sins,' John xv. 22. St Paul would have the word of God to 'dwell plentifully in our hearts,' Col. iii. 16, to have full scope and the whole sway in the heart of a Christian. And so be it. These and the like means which God affordeth us for our good, let us profit by, and by no means sin against them; for if we do, assuredly God will require it of us; for good turns aggravate unkindnesses, and our offences are increased with our obligations. Of all the gracious means he affords us he keeps a reckoning. The sundry afflictions wherewith his people were afflicted are by him remembered, Amos iv. 6-11; and so the sermons and prophecies of his

servants, with the circumstances of time and place, and under what king's reign, are likewise by him recorded, Isa. i. 1; Jer. i. 1; Hosea i. 1. Since, therefore, God keeps such a precise account of the means he vouchsafeth to us, let it stir up all to make better account and use of those means; for otherwise they will be reckoned for no other end but to make our reckoning the heavier. So many means, will the Lord one day say, I have afforded you, so many ministers have lived amongst you, and warned you, so many hundred sermons you have heard and lost. We read that he took account of how many men were won by a sermon, Acts ii. 41; and shall we then think he doth not take an account of how many sermons are lost by men? Oh, how should this make every one see that they profit by the means which God affords!

Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

Whether we take this second member as a complaint made by God against himself, for that he expected fruit from so bad a vineyard, as, we noted before, some do, or else as a complaint made by him against them for not profiting by the means, it is not much material; from either of them both we may collect,

Doct. God takes it grievously that the means which he useth for man's good should be contemned. For this is a complaint, and proceedeth, as it were, from a grieved heart and troubled mind.

To prove this point, remember what is said of the old world. After God's Spirit had strived with them a long time by admonition, reprehension, threatening, and expectation, Gen. vi. 3, for that is there meant by his Spirit's striving, labouring in vain to bring them to repentance: 'It repented the Lord he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at the heart,' ver. 6. This caused the Lord to take up that pitiful complaint against Israel and Judah, 'O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, how shall I treat thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the morning dew it goeth away,' Hosea vi. 4. As if he should have said, Hitherto I have used all means that possibly I can to humble you for your sins and to do you good, so that I know not what I shall do more for you, and yet I can bring you to no good pass; therefore it grieves me for you, and I cannot but mourn to see you so rebellious. And thus our blessed Saviour beheld Jerusalem and wept over it, saying, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace,' &c., Luke xix. 42. He considering the obstinacy and stubbornness of his people, despising his word, reproaching his miracles, and rejecting his grace, could not refrain but he must burst forth into tears. By these scriptures it is evident that it is grievous unto

God to see men neglect the good means ordained and afforded for their good and welfare.

Reas. And, indeed, a little unkindness at their hands of whom we have deserved well must needs be grievous, when much indignity received from an enemy shall never be regarded.

Use 1. Whose example may be for our instruction. When we see the froward and perverse disposition of wicked ones, who will not be reclaimed by any means that is or can be used, let us grieve and mourn for the hardness of their hearts: 'My leanness, my leanness,' crieth out this our prophet Isaiah, 'woe is me! the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously, yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously,' chap. xxiv. 16. He did so grieve at the transgressions of the people, that he became exceeding lean therewith, as the doubling of the word importeth. The prophet Jeremiah likewise is full of passion on this behalf, and cries out, 'My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me: I cannot hold my peace,' chap. iv. 19. Yea, he wisheth that his 'head were full of water, and his eyes a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the sins of the people,' and also tells them, chap. ix. 1, that if they still condemn the means, and turn away the ear refusing to hear, 'his soul should weep in secret places for them, and his eyes should weep sore, and run down with tears,' chap. xiii. 17. Thus did righteous Lot 'vex his soul with the unclean conversation of the wicked,' 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. And thus did Samuel weep for the sins of Saul, 1 Sam. xvi. 2; and so did David's 'eyes gush out with tears, because men kept not God's law,' Ps. cxix. 139. Thus did Ezra weep for the sins of the people in his time, chap. x. 1; and Paul weep for them that did walk inordinately amongst the Philippians, Phil. iii. 18. Did God's children so weep in those days for the obstinacy and hard-heartedness of the wicked, how comes it to pass then in these days that we are so dried? Is it because the men of this generation are not so bad? Or rather, as the truth is, we that profess ourselves Christians are not so good? Soon may we guess then of what stamp they are of who are so far from mourning and grieving at the sinfulness and hard-heartedness of this age, as that they make themselves merry therewith and rejoice thereat, in theatres, playhouses, and such like meetings, not only with patience, but with content and delight, hear blasphemy, and behold uncleanness. Blasphemy, pride, drunkenness, and such like profaneness, they can see and hear without remorse, yea, laugh at. What monsters are these! Meroz must be cursed bitterly for not helping the Lord against the mighty, Judges v.; and can such look to be blessed, that laugh with those that fight against him? When thou seest the iniquity of the people,

remember God grieves for it; and wilt thou rejoice at it? If those infernal and hellish spirits have any delight, this is their delight, to see men sin and offend their God. And wilt thou make the devil's delight thine? Do not so, but be thou contrary to him, and grieve at that which he takes pleasure in. Wouldest thou instead of a smile afford a tear, when thou seest sinners to transgress, it might so come to pass that thy grief might work also a grief in them, and thy tears cause them to relent,—as many times we see, the seeing others fall heartily to their meat brings on their stomach,—when thy smile confirms them in their wickedness.

Use 2. And, secondly, Seeing this is so, that God takes it grievously when the means he useth for our good is contemned by us, let this serve to press that use which we lately heard, and cause us to profit by all the gracious means that God affords. Thou art afflicted and liest under God's correcting hand. Oh, how grievous will it be to God if thou comest out of this fire not refined! Thou comest to his house, and sittest down at his table, and departest again away less justified than thou camest thither. Oh, how doth this cause God to mourn! Have you no regard of this his sorrow? 'Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by?' Lam. i. 12. What creature is there that God hath made in heaven, earth, seas, or all depths, brings heaviness into the courts of happiness, except man? It is he, and only he, that doth it. Thou mockest at thy oppressions, oaths, sacrileges, lusts, frauds; for these he grieves. Thou scornest his gospel preached; he bewails thy scorn. That which is sorrow to his soul, is but a pastime unto thee, Prov. xiv. 9. Oh do no more so wickedly, my brethren; bewail sin past, and amend for time to come.

Use 3. And, lastly, Hence may the humbled and contrite soul suck forth much sweetness. For doth he grieve when we profit not by the means, then questionless his ears must needs be open to the sighs and groans, to the prayers and supplications of such as are wrought upon by the means, to turn unto him with true contrition and godly sorrow, and call upon him with a lively faith. How should this encourage such as are coming on, to come on with cheerfulness! But if we will not, then assuredly he will destroy us, though with grief; as the judge passing sentence on a malefactor, though he be moved with indignation against him, as he is a thief or murderer, &c., yet with compassion as he is a man. And if we be condemned, whether it be with the will, or against the will, all cometh to one end; our pains and plagues shall be never the less nor lighter.

And now go to: I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof,

and it shall be trodden down : and I will lay it waste : it shall not be pruned nor digged ; but there shall come up briars and thorns : I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

Look, as in courts of justice, and seats of judgment, after conviction follows sentence of condemnation, so here we have the like proceeding : they being convicted by their own consciences, and as condemned persons by their own mouths, sentence passeth against them on the plaintiff's side, and that most fearful ; for it is a sentence of destruction and desolation, even of the whole land and people. He will take from them those many blessings and favours which he had bestowed on them. And that is not all ; for he will also lay them open, and give them up to the spoil of their enemies, so that they shall be trodden down and made desolate.

In which sentence is considerable : First, A gracious premonition, in the beginning of the fifth verse.

Secondly, A terrible execution of the judgment threatened, from the middle of the fifth verse, to the end of the sixth.

In the premonition, observe we God's merciful goodness ; First, In foretelling them of the judgment, *And now go to, I will tell you.* Secondly, In prolonging it ; for he doth not by and by punish them, but a while defers, and therefore he speaketh in the future tense, *what I will do.*

In the execution, consider we these three circumstances :—1. The party punishing, and that is the Lord himself ; *I will take away, I will break,* &c. 2. The parties punished, and they are God's own people, his chosen vineyard, his own inheritance ; it shall be trodden down, the hedge thereof, &c. 3. The punishment itself ; and that consists both in the pain of loss and pain of sense ; good things shall be removed, and evil things inflicted. For, first, he will *take away the hedge, and break down the wall*, whereupon shall follow *eating up, treading down, laying waste.* And then, secondly, he will withdraw his pains in pruning and digging of it, and withhold the clouds from *raining rain* upon it ; and thereupon shall follow the *barrenness of it* ; for it shall bring forth nothing, or worse than nothing ; *briars and thorns shall grow upon it.*

Having now seen the sum, let us spend a little time in the opening of the words, that so having found out the sense and meaning, we may the better raise some profitable observation.

And now go to. The Lord seems here to excite and stir up himself, after the manner of men, to proceed in judgment.

I will shew you what I will do to my vineyard ; or, I will give you to understand, or, make known unto you, as some read it, *q.d.,* Seeing that you are condemned in your consciences, and yet will not pro-

nounce sentence with your mouths, therefore go to now, I myself will tell you what I will do.

I will take away the hedge thereof. By hedge, as before, ver. 2, we have seen sundry things may be understood ; but not to trouble you with repetition of what was before taught, we are especially, as I take it, to understand thereby God's divine protection, which was as a hedge or wall about them, and whereof they should be now deprived. As if he should have said, Hitherto you have had my merciful protection, which hath ministered unto you safety and defence from all your enemies ; but now I will leave off to help, succour, or defend you any more. This was that for want whereof the church did complain, 'Why hast thou broken down her hedges, so that all they that do pass by the way do pluck her ?' Ps. lxxx. 12.

And it shall be eaten up, or that it may be eaten up, and devoured ; to wit, by the beasts of the field, the enemies of the church. Not only their neighbours nigh about them, but also their enemies far off, should molest and trouble them, according to that threatening, 'Mine anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them,' &c., Deut. xxxi. 17. This also doth the church complain of in the place before quoted, 'The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it,' Ps. lxxx. 13.

And break down the wall thereof ; or, as some read it, *tear down the wall thereof :* and so indeed the word signifieth, to tear down a thing with violence, which noteth out the vehemency of God's wrath ; for it shall not fall down of itself, but be violently torn or broken down. Now by this wall many understand the tower which he spake of before, ver. 2, that was built in the midst of the vineyard, whereby, as we saw, after the judgment of many of the learned, the temple was to be understood. But what need we be so exact in each of these particulars ? For if by wall we understand no other thing, than that before was meant by hedge, we should not fall into any great absurdity.^o

And it shall be trodden down ; or, *for a treading.* He here alludeth to the manner of wild beasts breaking into a vineyard, which do not only eat and devour, but tread down and spoil ; and this notes a higher degree of wrath than the former did. The enemies of this people should not only trouble them and afflict them, but overcome them and enter into their possessions ; and not only carry away, but also make strip and waste, havoc and spoil what they leave behind. This also sets out unto us the rage and fury of the wicked against God's church.

* Idem aliis atque aliis verbis hic dicit.—Mus., in loc.

And I will lay it waste, or make it a desolation. So that it shall become as a vast desert, without any to inhabit it. And here we have a higher degree than either of the former; for though the enemy might overcome them and spoil their country, yet there might remain some city; and albeit some cities might be assailed and destroyed, yet some houses in those cities might still continue. Or say it should so fall out that all their cities, and houses in their cities, should be laid level with the ground, yet some men might haply escape by flight, and afterwards return and build new houses, cities, and erect new laws and government. But in that he threatens to lay it waste, and make it a desolation, all hope is gone. This is that which the Lord speaketh in the next chapter, where he seemeth to comment upon these words, 'The cities shall be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate. And the Lord will remove men far away, and there shall be a great forsaking in the midst of the land,' Isa. vi. 11, 12. All which befell this people at their carrying away into Babylon. And much more fully and completely was it fulfilled after Christ's time, when Jerusalem was utterly destroyed, so that one stone was not left upon another, to which time some refer it.

It shall not be pruned nor digged. By cutting or pruning, he seemeth to understand fatherly discipline and correction, which now he would withhold from them, according to that in the first of this prophecy, 'Why should you be stricken any more?' Isa. i. 5. As if he should have said, I see it is but lost labour to smite you; for the more I correct you, the worse you prove. And by digging he understandeth that point of husbandry whereby the earth is drawn into ridges or heaps, chiefly about the vines, which is so convenient and necessary in such places where vine-tages are, as that without it the vines will never prosper. And here he alludeth unto such husbandmen as having barren vineyards and fruitless trees, do neglect to prune or cut them, dung or dig about them, because they take no pleasure or delight in them.

But there shall come up briers and thorns. By briers and thorns some^o here understand the Gentiles, according to that of our Saviour, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled,' Luke xxi. 24. But we may better understand thereby, idolatry and superstition, with other errors and abominations, that for want of God's husbandry should, as afterwards there did, grow up amongst them. And thus sins and transgressions are compared to thorns and briers, elsewhere in Scripture, Heb. vi. 8. And that fifty: 1. For their wounding and pricking those that handle them; for whom doth not sin wound? whom hath it not stung

that ever dealt with it? 2. For their holding together, and twining one within another. Sins grow in heaps, and where you find any you may find many. And therefore when the apostle speaks of them, he couples them, 'Chambering and wantonness, gluttony and drunkenness, strife and envying,' Rom. xiii. 13; thus they grow like thorns and hedges, by companies. 3. Because they choke the plants, and hinder them from the sun's heat and influence of heaven; thus the seed is choked by these thorns, as our Saviour teacheth, Mat. xiii. And therefore St Peter willeth to 'lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy, and envies, and evil speakings,' those cursed thorns and briers, 'and then as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word to grow thereby,' 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. By clouds understand we^o the prophets, and by rain the word. The metaphor is usual. Moses thus begins his song, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass,' Deut. xxxii. 2. And so the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, and said, 'Son of man, set thy face towards Jerusalem, and drop thy word towards the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel,' chap. xxi. 2. And thus Amos speaketh to Amaziah, 'Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel, and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac,' Amos vii. 16. In which places it is apparent, that God's prophets are as clouds, and their words or prophecies like drops of rain. Now in comparing the rain and the word, we shall find good resemblance in sundry particulars; as, 1. In regard of cooling heat; 2. Quenching thirst; 3. Cleansing the air; 4. Allaying the winds; 5. Mollifying and mellowing the parched and heat-hardened earth. In each one of which, if we should spend time, we should find an excellent agreement; but, especially in a sixth respect, it is a principal means and subordinate cause that all things fructify and grow. And therefore this must needs be a heavy judgment, and argue God's hot displeasure against his vineyard, in commanding the clouds to rain no more rain upon it, according to that charge given to Micah, 'Prophecy ye not unto them,' chap. ii. 6; seeing that without it, it was impossible the vine should grow or flourish. Thus we see that as by briers and thorns the plants should be choked, so for want of rain their very roots should wither.

And thus much for the literal exposition. Now to come to some particular observation.

And now go to, I will tell you.

Doct. This is the usual manner of God's dealing, to warn before he strikes, and foretell the judgment before he inflicteth it. He punisheth none before he hath

* Musculus, in loc.

* Chald. Paraph. et Hect. Pint.

admonished them; smiteth none before he hath forewarned them.

That of the prophet Amos makes this good, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets,' Amos iii. 7. He sendeth his heralds to proclaim war before he makes it, and foretells them of such judgments as he is purposed to inflict, that they may forewarn others. Take the old world, my brethren, for an example. Did he not foretell the destruction of it unto Noah, before he brought that great deluge upon the earth? Heb. xi. 7. And was not Noah 'a preacher of righteousness' unto them, whose hand taught them as much as his tongue? 2 Peter ii. 5. His business in building the ark was a real sermon to the world, wherein at once were taught mercy and life to the believer, and to the rebellious destruction. And did he not the like by Sodom and Gomorrah, unto whom he sent his servant Lot, 'whose righteous soul was vexed from day to day with their unlawful deeds'? 2 Peter ii. 8. Was not this likewise his dealing with Pharaoh and his people? Did he not again and again admonish them, and threaten them by his servants Moses and Aaron, that if they would not let his people go, he would do thus and thus unto them? Exod. viii. 2, 21, ix. 3, 14, 19, and x. 4. And so with the Ninevites, unto whom he sent Jonah with this cry, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown,' Jonah iii. 4. And with Jerusalem, which was often forewarned by his prophets, and by our Lord himself, of her destruction before it fell, Mat. xxiii. 37.

Reas. 1. Two reasons may be rendered for this truth; the one is in regard of the godly, and such as fear the Lord, that they may not be taken at unawares, but may be awakened out of their security, and timely prevent those judgments threatened; as those did, who upon the hearing of that plague of hail which Moses foretold would fall on Egypt, Exod. ix. 20, sent their servants to fetch their cattle into their houses.

Reas. 2. The other is, that the wicked may be left without excuse in the day of wrath. 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had had no sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin,' saith our blessed Saviour, John xv. 22. These may be some reasons why God gives a caveat before his *cupias*, and doth warn before he wound.

Use 1. And is this God's usual dealing? Why then are we smitten, plagued, punished? Were we not forewarned of judgment? Oh our wilfulness and folly! On whom, O man, canst thou lay the fault? Whom wilt thou charge with thy smart? Canst thou justly say God's silence was any cause thereof? Hath not he shot off many a warning piece, and sounded many an alarum, before he set himself in battle array against thee? In the secret of thy soul thou knowest he hath done this. Often and often he hath,

by his servants, the ministers, warned thee of danger at the door; and by thy own conscience many a time reproved thee, and premonished thee of future vengeance. He hath not played the part of a subtle enemy, and stolen upon thee at unawares, but, as Tamerlane, that warlike Scythian, displayed first a white flag, in token of mercy, and then a red, menacing and threatening blood, before that black flag, the messenger and ensign of death, was hung abroad. Accuse not the Lord then of any hard dealing, but the hardness of thy own heart, which will take no warning. He need not to give thee any warning of his judgments; thou gavest him no warning of thy sins, no respite; yet that God might approve his mercies to thee, he gives thee warning, and respite of repenting. How loath art thou, O blessed God, to strike, that threatens before! He that delights in revenge, surprises his adversary; whereas he that gives warning, desires to be prevented. Were we not wilful, what need we ever feel smart?

Use 2. Oh that this might teach us wisdom, to see the evil and fly from it! Which that we may the better do, let us diligently observe the usual ways whereby the Lord premonisheth; and they are sundry. As (1.) By the ministry of his servants the prophets, whereby he foretelleth when wrath is ready to fall upon us for our sins. By them he foretold the Israelites of the king of the Chaldeans coming up against them, whom they laughed to scorn and contemned, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. And by them Jerusalem was forewarned, as before noted. Their threatenings, therefore, and menaces should not be lightly despised, but feared; not passed over, but prevented; not derided, but applied to our consciences. For though they die, Zech. i. 5, yet God's word shall live, and his judgments they denounced seize upon us except we die to sin.

(2.) By signs and wonders, of which sort was that earthquake which happened in Uzziah's days in the whole country, Amos i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5. And those strange apparitions seen in the heavens a little before the destruction of Jerusalem: as that blazing star like a sword, which hung over the city a whole year's space; horses and chariots, with armed troops of men, seen in the air; the eclipse of the moon for twelve nights together, with many other wonders, whereof Josephus hath at large written.* As that voice heard in the temple the night before the feast of Pentecost, Let us depart from hence: and the constant crying of one about the walls for a long space, Woe, woe, woe to Jerusalem, and the like. And thus doth God forewarn us of the end of the world, as our blessed Saviour sheweth, Mat. xxiv. 32.

(3.) By lesser and lighter judgments, by gentle and fatherly corrections, that by them we may be brought

* Joseph. de Bell. Jud., lib. vii. cap. 12.

to turn unto him, and so escape further vengeance. Thus were the Israelites often warned from the Lord: sometimes he smote them with blastings and mildews, Amos iv. 8; and at other times by giving their gardens, vineyards, fig-trees, and olive-trees to the palmer-worm to devour; and when these warnings would not serve, then he sent amongst them the pestilence, after the manner of Egypt, and slew their young men with the sword, and took away their horses, &c., and when nothing would serve, he overthrew them as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. And so our Saviour, having foretold many evils that should come upon Jerusalem for their contempt of the gospel, and refusing of grace offered, addeth, 'All these are but the beginnings of sorrows, the end is not yet,' Mat. xxiv. 6, 8. There were more in number and greater in weight to follow after these. Thus lesser judgments are as it were the prints of God's foot, whereby we may trace him, if he be come out against us.

(4.) By the death of the godly, and such as fear his name, are future judgments forewarned; especially if they be such as are great and eminent, whether in church or commonwealth; if these be taken away, it is a fearful sign that some grievous judgment will overtake the remnant of the people. This is that whereof our prophet Isaiah speaketh, 'Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient, the captains of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor,' &c., chap. iii. 1-3. And elsewhere, thus, 'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to his heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come,' chap. lvii. 1. Thus was that good king Josiah dealt withal, 2 Kings xxii. 20, not long after whose death followed the captivity of Babel. In that grave wherein he was interred, the liberty, glory, and peace of Jewry lay also buried. And so Luther, after whose death presently followed that miserable calamity upon Germany, which he had often foretold would come upon them for their contempt of the word, and which he desired he might never live to see, as Calvin observes in his comment upon that place of Isaiah last quoted, chap. lvii. 1.

These are some ways whereby the Lord forewarneth us that evil is at hand, and therefore it behoveth us, when by any of these he premonisheth us of danger nigh, we 'prepare to meet him,' and prevent it, Amos iv. And surely if ever there was a cause, then now there is, why we should humble ourselves before him in sackcloth and ashes; for who can be ignorant of the many warnings we have had in each particular kind? The turtles of this land have groaned out the sad tunes of woe and misery. God hath so guided the hearts and tongues of his ministers, as

that they all, even as one man, do constantly cry out, with that Jesus the son of Ananias a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, Woe to England, and to the inhabitants thereof, by reason of such outrageous wickedness as everywhere aboundeth; which thing is not lightly to be passed by, but deserves pondering on. For certainly, if we be not persuaded to fear their threatenings, we shall in the end be constrained to feel them, whether we will or no. Besides, what strange signs and wonders, and what variety of them, have we lately seen,* both in the heavens and upon the earth! What wonderful and mighty tempests, fearful thundering and lightning, hath lately happened! whereby much hurt hath been done at sea, many ships and barks cast away, and that in the safest roads and harbours of this land, besides the almost incredible hurt done by land† throughout this kingdom, the violence of the wind, thunder and lightning, being such as that, in many places westward, whole fields of corn have been blasted, stacks of corn scorched; and here with us, the corn hath been so dispersed and scattered as if it had been sown again, and so beaten out of the ears as if it had been threshed on the floor; so that with the mildew and blasting which was sent upon our corn in general before our harvest, and now with this sudden judgment of wind upon that little store of corn remaining in harvest, God hath taken from us our stay and staff of bread. What shall I need to speak of those many earthquakes, mighty inundations of waters, great hailstones, strange eclipses, monstrous births, which every year brings forth? Certainly, if the sorcerers of Egypt were now amongst us, they would confess these to be the finger of God. But fools, and blind that we are, who have no eyes to see, nor hearts to understand these things, or at most, make of them but a nine days' wonderment, and so pass them over!

And again, hath not God often warned us by lesser and lighter judgments? Hath he not visited us with famines, pestilence, and other such like infection of sickness? These are but as warning pieces shot off in our ears, and assured forerunners of greater judgments, unless repentance cut off their course.‡ For, look, as one cloud followeth another till the sun consume them, so one judgment hastens after another, and repentance only is the sun that must dispel them. And lastly, that the righteous perish, who seeth not? And yet, alas, who seeth it so as to consider it in his heart? The Lord's hand hath been upon us these many years, and hath come, not in favour, to weed out the worst, but in displeasure, to

* This present year 1622, on August 19.

† As appears in that relation of the tempest which happened in Devon, the year and month aforesaid, which is in print.

‡ Peric. Exhort. to Repent.

gather the best and ripest. Amongst our princes he hath snitten at our chiefest. Amongst our nobles he hath taken of our noblest. Amongst our magistrates he hath fetched away of our uprightest. Surely, surely, God never thus beheads a state or country but for some treason. The shepherds are snitten for the sheep's unthankfulness, unfruitfulness. What shall I say more? Death hath been at the city as well as at the court, and in the country as well as in the city, and hath fetched away of all sorts almost the best. And can this be any other than a plain prognostication of some evil nigh at hand, which evils they have prevented by their death? God grant we likewise may prevent them by our repentance!

To draw towards a conclusion of this point. Let every one in particular, yea, thou that hearest and redest this, go home to thyself, and make application hereof to thy own soul, for God speaketh in particular to thee, as well as to any other, and demandeth of thee how thou hast profited by these or the like warnings. For hath he not often, by the ministry of his servants, come so home unto thy conscience as that thou hast been persuaded and enforced to confess thou art the man he meaneth, and at whom he aimeth? And what drunkard or profane Esau is there here amongst us who hath not been at some times or other told by them that if they repent not they shall be damned? Besides, have not thine eyes seen his signs and wonders in the heavens, upon the earth, &c.? Thou hast heard, and hast been told of such a child, born without a mouth, or with two heads, or with one eye, &c. Why, take thou warning; this is meant to thee as well as to any other. And hath not the Lord smote thee, hitherto, with a little rod? afflicted thee with light losses, crosses, &c.? See then thou 'hearest the rod, and who hath appointed it,' Micah vi. 9. And once again I will demand of thee, answer me, Hast thou not been deprived of some faithful friend?—it may be of a godly husband, a religious wife, a Christian and careful parent, a gracious child, a faithful shepherd, or a true-hearted brother. If it be so, take it as the shaking of the rod, and as a warning from God unto thee that thou mend thy manners. Remember Solomon's proverb, 'A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished,' Prov. xxii. 3. Be thou that wise man, not this fool; but foresee the danger, and prevent it before it fall. Oh happy man, to hear this word, before it fall, sound in thine ears! As for many thousands, it is fallen irrecoverably upon them already. To those poor souls it cannot be said, as now it is to thee, Prevent it by repentance, before it fall, for judgment hath already seized upon them; but how happy art thou, if thou knewest thy happiness in that day is yet to come! And

therefore I say to thee, take warning by these things, and prevent the evil before it fall; for when it is fallen there is no preventing of it. 'Oh that thou knewest, at the least in this thy day, those things which belong unto thy peace, and that they were not hidden from thine eyes!' Luke ix. 41. My prayer shall be for thee, myself, and the whole laud in general, that we may so do. Even so, O Lord, open our eyes, that we may so see thee warning as that we may fear thee threatening, and obey thee teaching, and patiently suffer thee chastising, and at last be by thee made partakers of those good things which 'neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor can enter into the heart of man!' 2 Cor. ii. 9. Amen, Amen.

What I will do. Great was God's mercy towards this his people in foretelling and premonishing them of vengeance. And this makes it greater in his prolonging of it. He doth not by and by inliet, but will a while defer. There shall be some delay and pause, some *lucida intervalla misericordiae*. A breathing time and merciful space is granted between the fault and punishment. And therefore he speaks not in the present tense, but in the future, *What I will do*. Where we see, and whence we learn,

Doct. God is of a patient and forbearing nature, of much gentleness and long-sufferance, forbearing sinners for some space after they have transgressed before he proceed to punish.

Many examples might be brought for proof. 'All the day long' he did wait upon the Israelites, 'stretching out his hand to that disobedient and rebellious people,' Isa. lxv. 2. A whole night did he forbear destroying Sodom after he had told Abraham thereof, and forewarned them by Lot, Gen. xix. 1, 23. Forty days did the Lord allot unto Nineveh for their repentance: 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed,' Jonah iii. 4. Three years did he bear with the barren fig-tree before he would cut it down with the axe of his judgments, Luke xiii. 7. He 'suffered the ill manners'—the word is very significant—of the Israelites 'forty years in the wilderness' before he would destroy them, Acts xiii. 18. One hundred and twenty years' respite of repenting God gave the old world, even all the while the ark was a-preparing, Gen. vi. 3; 1 Pet. iii. 20. For the space of four hundred years he spared the Canaanites and Amorites, Gen. xv. 16. Yea, he suffered the Gentiles to wander in their own ways and in the vanity of their minds almost for three thousand years together, Acts xiv. 16. Thus, 1. All a day; 2. A whole night; 3. Forty days; 4. Three whole years; 5. Forty years; 6. One hundred and twenty years; 7. Four hundred years; 8. Three thousand years' breathing-time is given man between the threatening and execution. Oh, how loath is God to strike, that threats so long! In a word, have we not all experience of this truth? Are there not so many

thousand witnesses as there are consciences in this congregation to confirm this point? Had not this been true, where should every one of us have been at this present? Surely I should neither have been here to speak nor thou to hear, but long before this hour we should have been swept from off the earth like dung, had there not been this patience and longanimity in God. Thus sundry ways hath God made good his name, which all of us must needs feelingly subscribe unto: 'The Lord, the Lord strong, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abundant in goodness and in truth,' &c., Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Reason 1. And no marvel, if we consider, first, that he is God. Were he not God, it were impossible for him so long together to hold his hands; but he is God and not man, therefore he forbears. This reason seems secretly to be implied in those words of the Chronicles, 'The Lord God of their fathers sent to them his messengers,' &c., 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, 15.

Reason 2. He 'knoweth our weakness, our frame, and remembereth that we are but dust;' he therefore 'dealeth not with us after our sins, nor rewardeth us after our iniquities,' Ps. ciii. 10, 14. This reason is rendered by the psalmist why he pitieth, spareth.

Reason 3. 'He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance,' 2 Pet. iii. 9. He desires our conversion, not destruction, and therefore bears so long. And this is the reason that St Peter gives.

Reason 4. He beareth a long time with the vessels of his wrath, to the end that they may 'fill up the measure of their sins,' Gen. xv. 16. And this is the reason the Holy Ghost makes why the Amorites were forborne so long before punishment was executed on them for their wickedness. Let us now apply these things unto ourselves. And—

Use 1. First, This serves for information of our judgments, whence it comes that wicked men are so long spared and suffered to run on in sin. We see how wretched and profane many are, being blasphemers of God's name, profaners of his Sabbaths, contemnors of his word, and given over to the committing of all sin with greediness, and yet are suffered to run on without punishment, which causeth matter of wonderment oftentimes in the hearts of God's children, Jer. xii. 1.* But see here the reason: God is of a patient and forbearing nature. The wicked think it is because God is like them, Ps. l., a lover and liker of sin; but be not thou deluded, learn the cause.

* Non ille amisit providentiam, aut amisit potentiam, sed patientiam exercet suam, dum penitentiam expectat tuam.—August.

Use 2. Admire the richness of God's grace in bearing so long with rebellious sinners. For God to bear with his own children when they provoke him is very much; but to suffer his enemies, and bear so long with the vessels of his wrath; to suffer drunkards, whoremongers, Sabbath-breakers, to run on in a course of sin, living day after day, week after week, year after year, and never in all that time to seek his favour, but to wax the worse because they are forborne, this must needs argue an infinite perfection. Oh, how can we sufficiently magnify such a God as this! How can we enough admire his goodness, or set forth his praise! Here is mercy, patience, goodness, past the comprehension of all finite spirits, and only to be conceived by him whose it is.

Use 3. And thirdly, if this be so, that God is of such a patient and forbearing nature, see what an odious contempt of God's grace it is to take occasion by this patience, to continue and increase in sin. In things of this life, we hold it detestable if a servant should thus reason from his master's bounty: He dealeth thus and thus graciously with me, therefore I care not how I provoke him and displease him. And yet this is the reasoning of thousands in the world; for thus say some—and far more think: I have lived in such or such a course, as I hear preachers say of sinning, for many years, but I see that God hath blessed me as well as the preciseest of them all; I live still and thrive well, God I thank thee, and therefore I purpose to hold on as I have begun, talk these preachers what they please, I pass not. And thus, 'because sentence is not speedily executed, ungodly men take courage to offend,' Eccles. viii. 11; dealing with God as birds do with the scarecrow. At first they are afraid; but seeing it not to stir, at length they come near it and sit upon it. So these, at first they are somewhat fearful to offend, but through impunity they harden themselves to commit iniquity. And yet, saith Solomon, ver. 12, 13, 'Though a sinner do evil a hundred times, and God prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear the Lord, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.' Understand, therefore, O ye unwise amongst the people, all is not well because God forbears to punish. His patience and longanimity is no good argument of man's innocency. It may be by the prayers of the vinedressers respite hath been obtained for thee for a while before thy cutting down, as was for that barren fig-tree, Luke xiii. 6. Or else it may be thy sins, though heinous enough amongst us, are not come as yet to their full ripeness, Gen. xv. 16. Or haply, God thus forbears thee, to shew his loathness to destroy. However, his patience always tends not to continuance received courses, but

to give occasion to alter our accustomed evils. And what though his wrath comes slowly, yet in the end he will make amends for his delay with the weight of vengeance. *Lenito gradu ad vindictam sui.* His mill grinds slow, but yet sure and small. All this while he bears, he is but a-fetching of the blow; and the higher he lifts, the heavier it lights. Now he is preparing his deadly arrows; this time he takes to fit them to the string, and because he means not to miss the mark, he stands long at level, and draws far, even to the head, that his arrows may pierce deep, even to the soul. Take Jerusalem for an example, and set that famous city before thine eyes. Did ever any people taste more of God's patience, or drink deeper of the cup of his merciful forbearance, than Jerusalem, famous Jerusalem did? How long did he spare them! How many ways did he forewarn them! And when nothing would serve, how was his patience turned into fury! 'Not one stone left upon another,' Mat. xxiv. 2, and the inhabitants and their posterity made slaves and vagabonds for this sixteen hundred years. Say not then with Agag, 'Surely the bitterness of death is past,' 1 Sam. xv. 32, because thou art a while forborne. No, no; the longer before the reckoning, the greater the account will be, *Patentia lesa fit furor.* And evermore remember, that there is no wrath so furiously outrageous, as that which ariseth from patience long and obstinately abused.

Use 4. See therefore, in the next place, thou beest admonished to beware how thou abusest this patience and long-suffering of the Lord. And see thou follow the apostle's direction, 'Let it lead thee to repentance,' Rom. ii. 4. Happy thou, if thou do thus use it. And indeed, except thou dost so, thou never makest the true and proper use thereof. 'There is mercy with thee, that thou mayest be feared,' saith that kingly prophet, Ps. cxxx. 4. God's children do fear God and his goodness, Hosea iii. 5, and fear to offend God in regard of his goodness. Joseph reasons thus, My master hath dealt thus kindly with me, &c., 'how then can I commit this great wickedness?' Gen. xxxix. 8. So must all God's children reason.

Use 5. Again, This may be for imitation. As God is and hath been towards us patient and long-suffering, so let us be towards others. That hasty spirit of calling for fire from heaven for every disobedience, was sharply reprov'd by our blessed Saviour, Luke ix. 54. Let us learn to have an eye to the rich patience of our God, who is daily by us provoked; and, after his example, tolerate the froward infirmities of our ignorant brethren, with meekness instructing them, rather than with rashness of zeal rejecting them, 2 Tim. ii. 25; and in case of wrong, say not, I will recompense evil. It was a good speech, and coming out of a heathen's* mouth, deserves the more regard,—

* Socrates.

I will willingly neither suffer wrong nor do it; but if I must choose one, I will rather choose to suffer than to do. But why speak I of the heathen, unless to shame us, when we have God himself to imitate? How patient is he towards reprobates and vessels of his wrath! If thou puttest up an injury patiently once or twice, thou hast thyself highly in admiration, and, in thy own conceit, deservest to be chronicled for a rare pattern of patience. But God doth bear with thee and other many thousand times in a day; write after that copy, and forgive 'not seven times, but seventy times seven times,' Mat. xviii. 22, if thou beest so often wronged. And be thou 'transformed into the same image of God, from glory to glory.'

Use 6. Lastly, Hence may perplexed and disquieted consciences, who tremble under God's hand, fearing the power of his wrath by reason of their sins, have a use of comfort for the lifting of them up. It is God's nature to be patient, be not therefore out of hope. He is long ere he be provoked, and when he is provoked, easy to be appeased. An earthly father will not take every advantage against his child; he will tell him and forewarn him before he doth correct and punish him. And why should we think God harder than ourselves? How long bears he with such as never grieve, mourn, nor complain of sin! Will he then be hasty to mark what is done amiss by such as groan under the burden of their corruptions? He spareth such as never so much as say, 'What have I done?' And is it possible that he should not spare such as with the prodigal cry out, 'Father, I have sinned?' Luke xv. Certainly if the wicked fare so well, the godly shall fare much better, and be thou persuaded so. And thus much for the premonition; the execution follows.

I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down, &c.

Here, according to our propounded method, consider we first, the party punishing; and who it is that doth inflict this judgment on them; and that is the Lord himself, 'I will take away,' &c. Thence observe—

Doct. God's holy hand hath a special stroke in those afflictions and visitations which are laid upon his church and befall his people, whosoever be the instrument.

What truth more strongly confirmed in holy writ than this? Do we not there read thus:—'Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground,' Job v. 6. 'I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things,' Isa. xlv. 7. 'The Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act,' chap. xxviii. 21. 'The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth

up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low and lifteth up,' 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7. 'I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand,' Deut. xxxii. 39. And, 'What evil is there in the city?'—understand it of the evil of punishment—'that I have not done?' Amos iii. 6. Hereupon doth the church mutually exhort one another to 'return unto the Lord, because he hath torn and he will heal, he hath smitten and he will bind up,' Hosea vi. 1. And by St Peter we are instructed to 'humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us in due time,' 1 Peter v. 6. And hereupon Joseph, though of his envious brethren sold into Egypt, saith, 'God hath sent me hither,' Gen. xlv. 8. And David, being cursed by Shimei, said, 'God hath bid him curse,' 2 Sam. xvi. 10. And Job, robbed by the Sabeans, saith, 'God hath taken away,' Job i. 21.

Reason. And how can it otherwise be, seeing that a sparrow falleth not to the ground, nor a hair from off our heads, without the providence of the Almighty, as our Saviour hath taught us? Mat. x. 29. If then God's providence reacheth to matters of such small weight, it must needs reach to matters of greater moment.

Object. If any now object, that wicked and bad men, yea, the devil himself, doth persecute God's church, and sorely afflict his people, and that the most evils which befall God's children come from them, how then can it be said, they are of God?

Ans. I answer, We are to know that these are but as the executioners, God employing them no otherwise than as a judge doth some base slave in making him the hangman. Still hath God a hand in those punishments inflicted on his by those evil ones, which shews itself in these actions:—

1. First, In ordaining and appointing them even from all eternity, 'to do whatsoever thine hand and counsel hath appointed to be done,' Acts ii. 28.

2. In ordering and disposing them: First, In regard of the time when they shall both begin and end; so as that all the fury and malice of the wicked cannot any jot hasten, lengthen, or prolong them. There is an hour appointed for the powers of darkness to work in, and till that hour be come a hair shall not fall from the heads of any of the godly. Let the Jews take up never so many stones against Christ Jesus, yet he shall escape; let them seek to take him, yet none shall dare to lay hold upon him, because 'his hour is not yet come,' John vii. 30. And when that hour is come, they shall not be able to lengthen it one moment, as we may see in the four hundred years appointed to the Israelites in the Egyptian servitude, which being once expired, they came out, maugre all the malice of their enemies, 'even the self-same day,'

Exod. xii. 41; and in the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, Dan. ix. 2, 21-23; as also in the afflictions and persecutions of the church of Smyrna, raised up by Satan, which is restrained to a determinate time of ten days, Rev. ii. 10. Secondly, In regard of the measure, which is also appointed in such an exact and strict manner, as that it is alike impossible for all the powers of men or devils to add one drachm into the weight, as we see in Job's example; for as Satan at first could not touch him until he had received a commission from God, chap. i. 12, so neither could he add anything to his first afflictions until his commission was renewed, chap. ii. 6. To this purpose speaketh the psalmist thus: 'Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure,' Ps. lxxx. 5. And, Thirdly, In regard of their ends and issues, turning them to his own glory and church's good: 'All things working together for their best,' Rom. viii. 28. Thus Joseph said of his selling into Egypt, 'God disposed it to good,' Gen. i. 20, though it was evil which his brethren intended against him. Thus the Chaldeans steal Job's wealth to enrich themselves; the devil afflicts his body in his hatred to mankind. God suffers all this for the trial of his patience: man for covetousness, the devil for malice, God for the probation of the afflicted's constancy, and advancing his own glory. The covetous extortioner or griping usurer spoils thee of thy goods; God in wisdom raiseth profit from it, and by thy poverty in purse helps thee to the riches of his grace, and suffers these snares to be taken from thee to save thy soul, yet no thanks to them. Thus we have seen how God hath a hand in such evils as are inflicted on us by wicked instruments.

Quest. 1. Now hence again it may be questioned, why God doth not rather correct his servants by his own hand, and let his chastisements come purely from himself, or by the means of righteous and just men, than by such wicked instruments, who infuse into those afflictions the poison of their maliciousness and spleen.

Ans. The execution of punishment in itself is a base and servile thing, and doth not so fitly agree with the nature of the most High, who being the chief goodness, taketh his chief delight in doing good. Now because it is not familiar and delightful to his nature, he doth it not by himself, nor yet by the godly, but commonly alloteth it to the devil and wicked ones, as being fittest for such a service. For do we not see a carpenter hath divers kinds of tools? some are coarse, which he useth about stones or gravel; others are choice, which he useth about finer work. Thus when God hath some base work to effect, he hath some reprobate at hand, about which he is employed; but if a more honourable piece of

service, then he usually fetcheth a tool of a purer metal and finer making, one of his children shall be sent for. He will not use the Virgin Mary, or such choice pieces, but a Judas, a Caiaphas, a Pilate, and such like as they, if Christ is to be crucified.

Quest. 2. But how can it stand with God's justice, to punish the wicked for afflicting of his church and people, seeing they are but his instruments in executing of his judgments, and do no other than that whereabout he sets them?

Ans. 1. Know we that the will of God is secret or revealed. The former was never propounded as a rule for us to conform our actions unto; but the latter, which we find written in his law, unto which he requireth conformity and obedience; and by it we are enjoined to love our neighbour as ourselves, and by all good means to seek the good and advancement of our brethren. Now though they do the secret will of God—which the devil and all reprobates do, and cannot otherwise choose but must do, will they kill them—yet because they run full butt against God's revealed will, the rule and square of all their actions, their condemnation is most just.

Ans. 2. Again, They aim not therein at the glory of God, and never think of the effecting of his counsels and secret will, but only aim at and labour for the accomplishing of their own hearts' lusts, desiring to glut their cruelty, and to advance themselves out of the ruin of God's servants. See an excellent example hereof in that Assyrian king whom God sent in his secret counsel against his people to afflict them for their sins: 'Howbeit,' saith the text, 'he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so,' Isa. x. 7. His intent and purpose was to destroy and cut off not a few nations, that he might make all his princes kings, and so himself a mighty monarch. This then serveth not for their excuse, that they are but instruments, seeing they are such instruments. Now we come to apply the point unto ourselves. And first,

Use 1. Seeing it is so, that all afflictions and visitations that befall us come from God, and are inflicted by him, it confuseth and taxeth us for a vanity at least, I had almost said a blasphemy, deeply rooted and settled amongst us. When any calamity doth befall us, we straight cry out Bad luck, bad fortune. If any loss or cross betide us, Oh, say we, what luck and fortune was this! In every misery blind fortune is complained of. And so, *à contra*, when any good thing happens, luck and fortune must be thanked for it; thus walking after the lusts of the Gentiles, who held Fortune as a goddess, and assigned her a place in heaven;* representing her by a woman sitting upon a ball, as if the whole world were at her command; having

* Te facimus, Fortuna, deam, cœloque locamus.—*Juvén.*, Sat. 10.

with her a razor, as if she could at her pleasure cut off and end man's happiness; bearing in her right hand the stern of a ship, as if she could turn all things about at her pleasure, and in her left hand the horn of abundance, as though all plenty came from her. Which palpable idolatry that was amongst them should be renounced and abhorred by us Christians. Yea, so far should it be had in detestation, that the very name of *fortune* should not once be named amongst us, and much less anything ascribed to it, whereof we see not an apparent cause.

Use 2. Secondly, Seeing afflictions are inflicted by the hand of God, this should teach us patience, as it did David when Absalom rose up against him: 'I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it,' Ps. xxxix. 9. It must needs be a bold audacious impudence to murmur in afflictions, considering God is the author and inflictor. If our inferior strike us, we revenge it treble; if an equal, we requite it; if a superior, we have learnt this wisdom, not to repine, or if we mutter, yet not to utter our discontent. Think whose hand strikes: it is God's, whoever be the instrument; the blow was his, whatsoever be the weapon. It is usually seen that in corrections coming immediately from God's hand we are not ordinarily so impatient as in those which come by means of wicked instruments; and what is the cause, but this? we do not so apparently behold God's holy hand striking us in these latter as in the former. Did we but seriously consider that it is God that scourgeth us by them, we would then be ashamed of our folly in being angry at the rod without any regard of the smiter; in snarling like dogs at the stone, never considering the flinger. Do we not see how patiently lords and nobles condemned to die suffer the stroke of death at the hands of the base hangman, shewing therein their subjection and obedience to their prince? Even so should we quietly and patiently endure all the indignities that are offered unto us by wicked worldly men, therein giving testimony of our obedience to God, who useth them as instruments of his justice to correct us. See then that thou dost so; never sever the cross from God's hand, though there be never so many instruments, but 'hear the rod, and who hath appointed it,' so shalt thou with patience and meekness bear that affliction that is inflicted. But if otherwise, if when the cross comes, thou art willing to see anything rather than God, running upon inferior causes, gazing on men or means, regarding more the staff wherewith thou art smitten than the hand moving and ruling it, it will then be intolerable, and thou must needs then break the bounds of patience.

Quest. But may we not have an eye upon second causes? Are we utterly to neglect the instruments of our afflictions?

Ans. In all afflictions, we are to consider not only the action and work as it is simply natural, and the disposition of them to the manifestation of God's glory and our good, in which respect God is the chief author of them, but also an accidental confusion and malignity of the action, which is wholly to be ascribed to man's corruption, by whom it is performed; in regard of which malignity and sin, we are to have some respect unto them, that we may hate and fly that evil and injustice that is in them, and use all good and lawful means whereby we may cross them in their wicked purposes, and free ourselves from their injuries and oppressions; having herein the word of God for warrant, which enjoineeth us to use all honest courses that spiritual wisdom can suggest unto us for our preservation and safety.

Use 3. Thirdly, If God be the author of affliction, this may serve for direction unto us what course to take in time of danger, even that which is given us by the prophet Hosea, to 'come and return unto the Lord,' chap. vi. 1, for it is he that spoils, and he must heal; it is he that wounds, and he must bind up; there is none that can take off God's hand but himself, Job x. 7. He is a foolish malefactor that seeks to the executioner and not unto the judge; and yet as foolish are we who, in the day of trouble, rest upon vain helps that cannot profit, hoping to have release from some saint or angel in heaven, or, which is worse, from conjurers and witches here upon the earth. As sometimes the heathen man said,

'Flectere si nequeo superos, acheronta movebo.'

If I cannot entreat the gods, I will go unto the devils; and as King Ahaziah did, who, being sick, sent to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, 2 Kings i., whether he should recover of his disease or no. Woeful is that cure which is wrought by such physicians. We have learned better things. The general rule for all troubles is, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Ps. l. 15. 'As the eyes of servants therefore look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes shall wait upon thee our God, until that thou have mercy on us,' Ps. exxiii. 2.

Use 4. And lastly, Seeing God hath a hand in all afflictions that befall, this may afford great comfort to the godly, in that they are not left into the hands of their cruel and crafty enemies, but are in the hands of so gracious and merciful a God and loving Father, through whose sweet hand the sharpest and bitterest afflictions do pass. As for our adversaries, they are but as the rod in the hand of him that smites. As, therefore, the rod can of itself do nothing further than the force of the hand using it gives strength unto it, no more can they do anything unto us fur-

ther than they have 'power given them from above,' John xix. Boisterous Tubeco may haply dismay us with his thundering speeches, but let us know there is an overruling hand to moderate and restrain him. The swinging rod the child sees in his father's hand may somewhat terrify him, yet the child may certainly persuade himself his father will so use it, as it shall do him no more harm than a smaller one would do. Let the wicked storm and fret, and breathe out threatenings against God's church and people; this we know assuredly, they may do what they can, but they cannot do what they would. And thus much for the first circumstance, which concerneth the author or infliter of the judgment. Now followeth the second, which concerns the punished, or the parties on whom it is inflicted; and they are God's own people, a people whom he chose for his peculiar, before any other people in the world beside; it was his vineyard, his own inclosure, as these words *thereof* and *it* do note unto us.

Let this then be our observation hence—

Doct. That God will not spare his own people, if they sin against him, but will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with strokes.

The Scriptures propose many examples; our ears have heard many reports, our eyes behold daily many precedents which may confirm this doctrine. What doleful complaints do we read that the church maketh everywhere in the Lamentations: 'Behold, O Lord, how I am troubled, my bowels swell, my heart is turned within me, for I am full of heaviness. The sword spoileth abroad, as death doth at home,' &c., chap. i. 18, 20, and ii. 1, &c. How lamentably do the godly bemoan themselves and the estate of the church in the prophecy of Isaiah: 'Be not angry, O Lord, above measure, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem desolation: our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised thee is burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste,' chap. liv. 9-11. And how doth the prophet David express the burden of his afflictions wherewith he was afflicted, in the book of Psalms: 'Thine arrows,' saith he, 'stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin.' And again thus, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow.' And many such like pathetic complaints he makes, Ps. vi. 3, xxxii. 4, xxxviii. 2, 3, and exvi. 3. The whole book of the Judges may be a proof for this truth, wherein we see how the people of Israel proceeding to do evil in the sight of the Lord, he sold them into the hand of his and their enemies. We

might further instance in Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, Hezekiah, and others, all which make this good, that God spareth not his own people when they sin against him.

Reas. 1. Two reasons may be given hereof; First, That the Lord might declare himself to be an adversary to sin in all men, Ps. li. 4, and that the wicked may see he is not partial to any when his commandments are not regarded.

Reas. 2. Secondly, That he may reduce his servants from running on headlong with the wicked to perdition. For, were we altogether exempted from the rod, how wanton and froward would we grow, and into how many perils would we cast ourselves! And so, saith St Paul, 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world,' 1 Cor. xi. 32.

Obj. But did not Christ give himself for his church, and shed his blood for their redemption? was not their sins punished in him? How comes it then to pass they are still subject to God's heavy visitations?

Ans. True it is that Christ did bear away all our punishments; but he hath not freed us from fatherly corrections. Now, when God afflicteth his in this world, it is more for medicine than for punishment, more for a correction than for a penalty. Losses, crosses, poverty, imprisonment, sickness, yea, death itself, are not to us punishments nor curses properly, but fatherly chastisements, being inflicted as furtherances of sanctification, not as means of satisfaction. And thus you have this objection answered, and my doctrine confirmed, viz., God will not spare any, no not his own people, when they sin against him.

Use 1. Which being so, this may terrify wicked and ungodly ones, who make a trade of sin, driving after it, as it was said of Jehu in another case, as if they were mad; and yet imagine, because God for a time holdeth his peace and keeps silence, that he is such a one as themselves, a lover and approver of their wicked ways, Ps. l. 21. But, O you fools, how long will you love folly, and when will you grow wise? Doth God correct the flock of his own pasture, the children of his own household, and shall you go scot-free? Doth the Lord chastise them so heavily, the burden of whose sins Christ hath borne in his body on the cross, and shall such as Christ never died for, nor yet prayed for, (John xvii. 9,) escape? Shall not many prayers and tears, sighs and groans, petitions of God's saints, requests of the Spirit, together with the daily intercession of Jesus Christ, God's only and well-beloved, in whom he is well pleased, keep off such bitter things from them, who but now and then break out? Woe and alas then! what shall become of you, who never pray, sigh, nor shed tears for sin, for whom God's blessed Spirit

makes no request, and who have no interest in the mediation and intercession of that just and righteous advocate, who sin not of infirmity and weakness, but boldly and presumptuously, with a high hand against the Lord! Think of an answer to those interrogatories which the Spirit of God propoundeth to thee in holy writ: 'Lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and shall you go utterly unpunished?' Jer. xxv. 29. And again, 'Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup, have assuredly drunken; and art thou he that shalt escape?' chap. xlix. 12. And again, 'If these things be done to the green tree'—to them who have in them the sap of grace—'what shall be done to the dry?' to them who have no moisture of goodness, Luke xxiii. 31. And again, 'If judgment first begin at us who are the house of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?' 1 Peter iv. 17, 18. What answerest thou to these? why speakest thou not? And now, O my God, behold how I am troubled, my bowels swell, my heart is turned within me; for I hear an answer, true, but terrible, 'The Lord indeed will try the righteous in his furnace, but the wicked, and such as love iniquity, doth his soul hate: upon the wicked shall he rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and stormy tempest; this in the portion of their cup,' Ps. xi. 5, 6. He will indeed judge the just man for his transgressions in this life, but he will 'wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy pate of him that walketh on in his trespasses,' Ps. lxxviii. 21. Yea, 'in flaming fire shall God come, taking vengeance on them that know him not, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and they shall be punished with everlasting perdition from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,' 2 Thes. i. 8, 9; 'Then shall the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man'—whose names are not written in the Lamb's book—'hide themselves in dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,' Rev. vi. 15, 16. But as it was with the old world, when God rained from heaven the greatest shower that ever the earth did or shall sustain, their shifts were bootless, so will it now be. They then thought to over-climb the judgment, and haste up to the highest mountains, and being there, with some hope look down on the swimming valleys; but, alas! the water begins to ascend to their refuged hills, and within a small time the place of their hopes becomes an island; now they hitch up higher to the tops of the tallest trees, but soon after the waters following,

overtake them half dead with hunger and with horror. Thus those mountains could not save those in that day of fire. For the very heaven 'shall depart as a scroll that is rolled up together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places,' ver. 14. And what hope then remains in them of security or refuge? Tremble, tremble at this, all you ungodly ones: 'Stand in awe, and sin no more,' Ps. iv. 4. A judgment is reserved for you, deceive yourselves no longer. Weakness in God's children must be corrected, and shall wickedness in you escape unpunished? Is it possible you should think it? Methinks it is a thing impossible you should be so senseless. No, no; if God thus afflict his children, he will never suffer disobedient bastards to go free. He whips the one with rods, he will scourge the other with scorpions; for 'Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, and therefore much more the wicked and the sinner,' Prov. xi. 31. And this for the first use; a second follows.

Use 2. This serves for admonition to the best, that they beware of sin; for if they will take liberty to break God's laws, let them look for stripes. God loveth his like a wise father, aiming at their good, and chooseth rather to profit than to please; and not fondly and effeminately, like some foolish mother, who gives herself to follow the foolish lusts and appetite of her child. He hath his rod lie by him, and will discipline us; and if we enter into a course of sinning, he will reclaim us by his chastisements. And therefore let no man think nor say he is safe, because he hath some assurance of his election, and therefore cannot be deprived of salvation. For though thou beest in the state of happiness for the life to come, yet thou mayest fall into great misery in this life present. David was as well elected as thyself, and as safe from being condemned as thou art or canst be, and yet such calamities befell him as made him 'groan and cry, yea, roar;' so that his 'blood was dried up, and his moisture was like unto the drought in summer,' Ps. xxxii. 4. Yea, he felt as great anguish as if his bones had been broken, or all out of joint; and therefore be not high-minded, but fear. For it is not the virtues that thou hast that can be a warrant to thee to fall in vice, nor yet thy profession or religion, no, nor yet election, that will keep the rod from off thy back, if thou play the fool in committing folly. I confess God will not wipe out those whose names he hath written in the book of life, nor damn any of his elect which are in Christ; yet if they or any of them wax wanton, he will whip them to the purpose, and make them tame. The magistrate, we know, hath many punishments for offenders besides death and gallows—he hath the stocks, the whipping-post, the pillory, the jail; and so hath God more judgments

besides damnation—he hath his stocks, his whip, his little-ease, his purgatory, for his own in this world; though he do not reprobate them, yet he may so hide his face, and conceal their pardon from them, as that they may find little difference betwixt a reprobate and themselves. 'Be wise now therefore,' O ye Christians, 'be instructed, all ye' golly of the earth. 'Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him,' Ps. ii. 10-12.

Use 3. And lastly, From hence much comfort may be gathered, inasmuch as afflictions do not disable us from being God's. It was Gideon's weakness to argue God's absence by them. 'If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?' saith he, Judges vi. 13. Fond nature thinks, God should not suffer the wind to blow upon his dear ones, because herself makes this use of her own indulgence. But we shall read, that none out of the place of torment have suffered such or so many afflictions as his dearest children, Heb. xi. 36, 37. There is no reason then why we should imagine that God's favour is the less towards us when we are exercised though with great and heavy afflictions; for 'whom he loveth he doth chastise,' Prov. iii. 12; and nearest to God, fullest of sorrows, as one* saith well. Hence it is that the apostle informeth us after this sort, 'My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees,' Heb. xii. 5-13. See how large our apostle is in his comfortable exhortation. Surely he full well knew how hardly the very best are persuaded that God is with them in the day of trouble, and how apt the godly are to make hard conclusions against themselves in the day of their calamity; and therefore is he so large in his comforts. Fain would the devil have had persuaded Christ that he was none of God's, because he was afflicted with hunger, Mat.

* Clem. Alexand.

iv. 6, and the same would he willingly persuade thee of; but remember thou the former consolation, and relinquish not thy hope of happiness in heaven, because thou art recompensed with judgments here on earth; for in so doing thou wilt but add to thy own sorrow, and needlessly increase the weight of thy own burden. And thus much for this use, as also for this second circumstance; the third follows, which concerns the punishment inflicted, and what it is.

The hedge thereof shall be taken away, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste, &c.

The judgment here inflicted, as we see, consists in the pain of loss, and pain of sense. First, Good things shall be removed and taken from them, as the hedge and wall will be broken down, his pains in digging and pruning he will withdraw. And he will withhold the clouds from raining any more rain upon it. Secondly, Evil things shall be imposed and inflicted on them; for it shall be eaten up, trodden down, and laid waste by their enemies. Moreover, it shall be cursed with barrenness; for thorns and briars shall be the best crop that will grow therein; fit fuel for the fire.

Before we come to the particulars, let us observe in general—

Doct. The ungrateful abuse of God's blessings and favours, causeth the Lord to deprive a people of them, and to bring upon them the contrary evils.

This is that which is here threatened to this people; because instead of the sweet grapes of righteousness, it brought forth nothing but the sour grapes of sin, after all his pains bestowed about it, he would not only abandon and let it alone, but pull down the hedge, break down the wall, and lay it waste, so that the beasts of the field should devour it; and it should become as a barren heath and forsaken wilderness.

This is that which is threatened by Moses, the servant of God, against Israel, 'Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee,' Deut. xxviii. 47, 48. This is that also which is threatened by Hosea, against those priests who ungratefully abused all those benefits and prerogatives wherewith they were endowed above the rest of the people, to God's dishonour. 'For as they were increased, so they sinned against me, saith the Lord; therefore I will turn their glory into shame,' chap. iv. 7. He would not only take from them their honour and advancement which they so abused, but he will bring upon them the contrary evils—viz. shame and reproach. The like we may find threatened by

the prophet Joel, against the people, for their abuse of God's creatures by gluttony and drunkenness; their condition should be so far changed, that 'the new wine should be cut from their mouths,' chap. i. 4, 9-12, that is, they shall not have any taste of it at all. 'The field and the corn should be wasted, the new wine dried up, the oil shall languish. So that their husbandmen should be ashamed, their vine-dressers should howl, for the wheat and for the barley, because the harvest of the field is perished.' A marvellous and great change, if it be well considered, that they who had so great plenty should now fall into such exceeding penury. But herein we may see the just judgment of God, against such as abuse his favours to licentiousness. We might further confirm this truth by the prodigal's example, of whom it is said, that after he had lavished out his patrimony upon whores and riotous company, he came unto such exceeding misery, that he would gladly have 'fed upon the husks that the swine ate, but none gave them unto him,' Luke xv. 16. Upon which parable read my exposition,* if you desire more of this doctrine, where you shall find this truth handled at large in sundry observations, to which I refer thee; for now I will content myself with a word of exhortation for the use, and so proceed.

Use. This being so, how should it stir us up on all hands to return thankfulness to God for his benefits, who hath with such a liberal hand sown the seed of his favours amongst us, and cause us to beware that we abuse not his good blessings unto sin, lest the contrary evils do betide us. When a child beginneth to play with his meat, a wise father will take it from him; if we wax wanton by reason of God's good favours, he will withdraw them, and turn our peace into war, our health into sickness, our liberty into thralldom, our plenty into penury; or, which is worse, if they be continued to us, he will cause them of blessings to become curses, so that 'our table shall be made our snare, and our prosperity our ruin,' Ps. lxix. 22.

I will take away the hedge, and break down the wall. We have seen before in the exposition what is meant by this hedge and wall—namely, the divine protection of the Almighty, wherewith they were compassed about, so that their enemies could not once touch them to hurt them. Of this they should be now deprived, so that there should be a gap made for their enemies to enter in upon them. Hence we infer—

Doct. Sin depriveth man of the protection of the Almighty, and layeth him open to the rage and fury of the enemy.

When the people of Israel had committed idolatry in making their gods to go before them, the text saith, 'they were naked amongst their enemies,' Exod. xxxii. 25; whereby he means that they wanted

* True Convert.

God's favour and protection, which is as the clothing of his children. So, when Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and all Israel with him, had forsaken the Lord, the prophet is sent unto him with this message,

Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me; therefore have I left you in the hands of Shishak,* 2 Chron. xii. 5. The like we read in the book of Judges. No sooner had Israel fell to idolatry in worshipping Baal and Ashtaroth, and such other idols as the nations served who dwelt about them, but God as soon left them, and delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies, Judges xiii. 14; x. 6. In the book of Joshua, likewise, chap. vii. 12, we read, that when Achan had taken of the accursed thing, and transgressed God's covenant, in stealing that Babylonish garment, the shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold, they could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before them, and all because God was not with them with his protection, by reason of that offence committed, neither would God be with them any more, except that accursed thing were destroyed from amongst them. Hitherto tends that also of this our prophet, Isa. lix. 1, 'Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your sins have separated betwixt you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.' And thus is the point made good, that sin depriveth a people of God's protection. It breaketh down the hedge and wall of their defence, and layeth them open to the fury of their enemies.

Reason. And no wonder, seeing sin is a breach of the covenant made betwixt God and us. 'I am God all-sufficient; walk before me and be upright,' Gen. xvii. 1. Where the promise on God's part is to be an all-sufficient God, to bless, save, protect, and defend us; the condition required on our part is upright walking before the Lord, in all faithful, constant, cheerful, and universal obedience. If then the latter be not performed, the former cannot be expected; for God is not bound unto us further than we keep the promise which hath been made by us. And this is the ground of my propounded point, why sin should deprive us of God's protection.

Use 1. And this may serve first for information. See here what it is, and who they are that doth weaken a kingdom—surely sin and sinners. *This* and *These* open the gates, throw down the walls, and let in the enemy. Were our armies never so strong, our cities never so sure blocked, our walls never so well fortified, that we feared not to have them scaled, yet so long as our Hams continue their scoffing, our Esaus their profaning, our Sennacheribs their blaspheming, our Achans their thieving, our Nabals their

coveting, our Jezebels their whoring, and all of us our sinning and rebelling, we deceive ourselves if we think we be strong, for we are weak. How can God be with us when these accursed things are found so rife amongst us? And how shall we stand before our enemies when the most high God hath forsaken us? Oh, the weakness of this land wherein sin doth so abound! This is it which will weaken our forces, overthrow our castles, break down our towers, batter our bulwarks, and make frustrate all our devices. When Phocas had built a mighty wall about his palace for his security in the night, he heard a voice thus speaking: 'Though thou build as high as the clouds, O king, yet the city will easily be taken, for the sin within will mar all.* True it is, we have no enemies without, but are at peace with all about us; but what are we the better when our chief enemies are within: sin is harboured within our walls and gates; our wicked manners are stronger than armed men.† This is enough to bring upon us those days of desolation, the days of darkness and gloominess, the days of wasteness and confusion. What hath been the ruin and overthrow of the most famous kingdoms in the world but it? What hath turned the noblest cities into dust but it? What hath brought those infinite calamities of famine, sword, pestilence, fire, slavery, and bondage, but it? From this cometh the ruin of countries, cities, families, yea, and of particular persons. Do not many ruined monuments and monasteries seem to tell passengers, *Hic fuit hostilitas*, war hath been here? And may we not also there read in those rude heaps, *Hic fuit iniquitas*, sin hath been here; idolatry rather than war pulled down those walls: for had there been no enemy to raze them, they would have fallen alone, rather than hide so much superstition and impiety under their guilty roofs. Oh that we could once see this! Oh that we would be once persuaded of it; then would there be some hope that that accursed thing would be cast out from amongst us, that so God might be our defence and fortress. And let us assure ourselves that until repentance make up our breaches, we lie open to the fury of our adversaries. Wickedness hath struck up the drum, and we may every day expect for destruction to come marching on.

Use 2. Secondly, This may serve for our instruction. When we go about any enterprise of God, let us see that our hearts be clear from any pollution of sin, and when we be thwarted in our hopes, or crossed in just and holy quarrels, let us then ransack ourselves and search our hearts for some lurking sin. For we may almost, nay, altogether persuade ourselves there is some secret evil unrepented of; and then no wonder

* Cedron. Hist., p. 542.

† 'Graviores sunt inimici mores pravi, quam hostes infesti.' —Ambros. Ser. 87.

if the Lord do, as it were, tumble down the wall of our protection, and seem to leave us to ourselves. Our great iniquities hearten our adversaries; they profess to build all their wickedness against us upon our wickedness against God. Let us, therefore, now at last prevail against our own evils, and we shall certainly prevail against all our enemies. The powers of Rome, the powers of hell itself, can never hurt us if we hurt not ourselves. Let us cast down our Jzebels that bewitch us, and pluck away sin, which like ivy weakens the wall of our protection, and fear nothing, for we shall stand immovable.

Use 3. Thirdly, Here is a commination against the wicked. For if this be so, that sin deprives man of the protection of the Almighty, then woe to them who harbour sin. How open do they lie in every part to the rage and fury of their adversaries, Satan, death, and hell! Yea, every creature is adversary to them whom God hath forsaken, and therefore they are not safe from the rage of any. Oh the woeful and fearful condition of such as these who have not God for their defence! In what perpetual peril and danger of destruction live they in! Can they say they are safe in any fort, in any castle, in any tower? Can any place or any power upon the earth, or in the earth, or above the earth, keep back the stroke of death and destruction, hell and damnation? Can any wicked man say with warrant, I am here free from the dart of death; I shall surely carry myself from hence; judgment shall not seize on me in this place? Can any of them say at any repast or recreation, I shall continue out this feast, or game, or sport, to the end, before my fall or ruin; this delight shall not be interrupted and broken off by fear and torment before it be fully finished? Alas! they cannot, for 'evil shall hunt the wicked' to destruction, Ps. cxl. 11, and pursue him, Prov. xiii. 21, and in the end overtake him, and seize upon him, Dent. xxviii. 45. So that as the hare runneth in hazard and jeopardy before the greyhound, and is at last snatched up, so is it with the wicked, 'whose damnation sleepeth not.'

True it is, no men's estates seem to be more happy, nor no men's stays more strong; and who more secure than these men are! But all is not gold that glitters. Their hope is as the spider's web, their staff they lean on is but an Egyptian reed that will in the end break, run into their shoulders, and lay them flat along the earth. Their security is but senseless and blockish stupidity, and well compared to that of Jonah's, who slept most soundly when he had most cause to watch and pray, Jonah i. The Lord is pursuing him as a vagrant and fugitive. The officers of God are about him to apprehend him; the wind rageth, the waves of the sea roar and beat against the ship wherein he was, and roll with violence against the

bark, refusing all other satisfaction offered by the mariners, so that all the company that be with him are afraid, and compelled to cry every man unto his god; yet Jonah is still sleeping under hatches. Thus fareth it with the wicked; the Lord stands offended with them; the heavens above are closed upon them; hell beneath is open to receive them; God's fearful judgments are ready to lay hands upon them; the devil is at hand, waiting when they shall be delivered to him; yet they lie snorting in their sins, sleeping between death and hell, as Peter did between the two soldiers being fast bound with chains, Acts xii. 6, or to use Solomon's proverb, as a sailor upon the top-mast in the midst of a storm, there being but a hair's-breadth between them and their destruction. See then thy estate, thou who art from under God's protection; living in thy sins thou livest in perpetual peril; thou mayest eat and drink, make merry and be jocund, but thou hast little reason. Belshazzar may carouse it in gold and silver vessels, but he had little cause when his doom was written on the wall, Dan. v. 2-5. Amnon's heart may cheer him, but as little reason had he, death being so nigh at hand, 2 Sam. xiii. 28. Be then as merry as you will, you wicked ones; this I am sure of, your wretched estate gives you no leave.

Use 4. Lastly, Here is a ground of encouragement for the faithful, when they have just cause to band themselves against the wicked, and are constrained to meddle with evil men, or to undertake war against the enemies of the church either for the defence of true religion, or for the relieving and delivering of such as are oppressed for religion, or for the safety and defence of land and people,* or for other such like just causes, that we lift up our heads and hearts with hope of victory, because we have to do with weak and naked men. Thus Joshua and Caleb comforted the people against the Canaanites, saying, 'Rebel ye not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are but bread for us: their shield is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not,' Num. xiv. 9. This was that also wherewith Abijah, the king of Judah, comforted himself, going against the mighty army of Jeroboam, 2 Chron. xiii. 10-12; with this let us and all God's people comfort ourselves, when we are to go out against our adversaries, for they come out into the field as soldiers without weapons, they have neither shield, nor buckler, nor breast-plate, nor helmet, nor sword, nor spear; their loins are ungirt, their feet unshod, their heads are uncovered in the day of battle; they lie open as naked men to be wounded and destroyed; and, therefore, 'Be strong and courageous; fear not, neither be afraid for the wicked, nor all their multitude, for there is more with

* Pax populi, patriaeque salus, et gloria regni.

us than is with them. With them is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, for to help us, and to fight our battles,' 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8. And so much for this; now we go on.

It shall be eaten up and trodden down. This follows upon the former. The hedge and wall being plucked up and broken down, way is made whereby the beasts of the field—that is, the enemies of the church, shall have free egress and regress to eat and devour; and not only so, but to tread down and spoil; they should not only trouble and afflict them, but also overcome them, and enter into their possessions, carrying away what they list, making strip and waste of the rest.

Doct. The first point hence to be observed is, *Until God break down the wall, and pluck up the hedge of his protection, wherewith his people are encompassed, the wicked and ungodly cannot hurt them or any way harm them.* God must give, yea make, way, before they can come in upon them to afflict them. 'How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight,' saith Moses in that same sweet song which he sang a little before his death, Deut. xxxii. 30, 'except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?' This was a thing impossible, that one enemy should chase a thousand Israelites, and two Gentiles put a thousand Jews to flight, had not that God, who had been before their rock, delivered them up into the hands of those their enemies.* The devil himself, who is the greatest of all their enemies, and strongest of that hellish band, being the great Goliath in that army of Philistines, can do nothing without permission; he must have a commission to go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, that he and his people may fall at Ramoth-Gilead, 1 Kings xxii. 22. He must beg leave at God's hands to touch Job, Job i. 11, such a hedge being made about him, and all he had, on every side, that there was no coming at him except God leave open some gap for this foul beast to enter. The like protection have all God's people, whereby they are so fenced, that neither the devil nor any of his limbs can hurt any of them, without special warrant and commission from the Lord. Hitherto tends that which we read of in the Acts, chap. iv. 27, 28, 'Doubtless, against thy holy Son Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, gathered themselves together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel hath determined before to be done.' And that answer of our Saviour unto Pilate, John xix. 11, 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.'

* Id est, qui fieri potuisset ut hostis unicus persequeretur mille Israelitas, nisi quod, &c.—*Yatab. in voc.*

Reas. For as our Saviour saith elsewhere, 'My Father is stronger than all,' John x. 29; all power and strength is of him and from him originally, according to that in Daniel, 'Wisdom and might are God's,' Dan. ii. 20. He can give and take away at his pleasure.

Use 1. Which being so, this discovers unto us a notable delusion of the devil, in that he persuadeth witches and wizards that he can do all things, and at their request or command will lame and kill men or beasts; and whatsoever they bid him do, or hire him to do, that shall be done. With which conceit also many of our people are possessed, which causeth them to be so afraid of witches as that they dare not any way displease them, or give them a foul word, for fear they should send their spirits to torment their bodies, destroy their goods, lame their cattle, or do them some other mischief. And thus are thousands deluded by the devil, yea, and bewitched before they be aware, and led into all manner of error and of falsehood.

That there are witches, by whom the devil worketh, I deny not—Scriptures and experience do make it evident; but that these witches can send the devil to kill or lame either men or beasts, when they list and where they list, I utterly deny.

Reas. 1. For, first, we are to know that the devil hath of himself no power over the least fly. The high providence of the Almighty hath so chained and bridled him up as that he cannot pluck off a feather from the wing of a little wren or sparrow without leave and power given him from God. It follows, then, that he at his pleasure cannot do the least harm to man or beast to gratify a witch; neither doth the sending of the devil by a witch give him any power and commission to do anything, for God must give way before any evil can befall, according to our doctrine delivered.

Reas. 2. Secondly, The devil is more forward and ready to do evil than any witch can be, for he is like 'a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Pet. v. 8, and like a red or fiery dragon, Rev. xii. 3, burning in malice against God's church and people; so that he needs not to be stirred up or sent by a witch, he being so forward and watchful of himself to do mischief. Whence it follows there is no more nor less hurt done than would be done if there were no witches; for as the devil can do nothing to hurt the poorest creature before he have power granted unto him from the Lord, so when he is permitted and hath his power granted, he is not so sottish as not to execute his power, except some witch do send him. True it is, if he can, he will do it, as entreated and sent by witches, so cunning and crafty is he, that he may do the more harm, using them but for a colour to draw on worse matters.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, The devil is the commander, the witch is but his drudge and servant. He is the god of this world, and ruleth with power in the hearts of the children of disobedience; she is but his slave and subject, to serve him, and not command him; and using her as his instrument, he wholly directeth her heart unto the wickedness. And, therefore, whereas there be many natural causes in the bodies of men and beasts—of tortures, lameness, and of death itself—which, though the learnedest and most expert physician cannot espy, yet he can see and know, and can conjecture very near the time when they will take effect; he plieth it with the witch, and inflameth her mind with malice, and moveth her to send him against that party; upon which sending, the man or beast suddenly and strangely are tormented, fall lame, and die; and then he telleth her that he did it upon her sending and command—when, indeed, she obeyeth him, being led by his suggestion, and not he her. The like is his practice when God gives him liberty to strike with bodily plagues any of the godly for the trial of their faith and patience: he covets, if he can, to bring it thus about; so that we see she is but his drudge, and not he her servant. Let us not, then, be so deluded by this deceiver, neither stand in fear of any witch or sorcerer, but of God alone, for neither one or other can any way molest or hurt us until God please to give way and smiter them.

Use 2. For a second use, seeing none can hurt us until God give way, let this serve for admonition unto us all that would live in safety, that we keep in with God; for if he be our friend, what need we care who be our enemies? 'If he be with us, who can be against us?' Rom. viii. 31. Be then of David's resolution, to make God thy 'shield and buckler, thy refuge and thy fortress,' Ps. iii. 3; xci. 2; and thus being in David's taking, thou mayest be in David's tune. 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?' Ps. xxvii. 1. 'I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about,' Ps. iii. 5. 'Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not be troubled; though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock,' Ps. xxvii. 3, 5. I end this use as David ends that psalm, ver. 14, 'Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.'

Use 3. Thirdly, This may serve to daunt the hearts and proud spirits of the wicked, who insult over the godly because they are so few, so mean, so simple, and so weak; and pride themselves oftentimes in the con-

ceit of their own greatness, power, policy, and malicious intendments against the godly. But these grossly deceive themselves, for let them know their rage and power is limited by the Lord, so that they cannot do what they list, but what God will; they cannot execute what they please, but what pleaseth him. Let atheists, papists, and all other profane persons, desist from devising evil against God's Zion. A prophet of their own side will teach them it is in vain to curse whom God hath blessed, Num. xxiii. 8.

Use 4. Lastly, As Noah's dove brought in her mouth an olive leaf, Gen. viii. 11, so doth this doctrine bring with it tidings of peace and comfort to such as are in Christ. For if it be so, that man cannot hurt until God give way, then 'let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield,' Ps. v. 11, 12. What the apostle speaks in case of damnation, Rom. viii. 1, may be spoken also in case of danger, 'There is none unto them.' They are alike safe in every place, even in the midst of their mortal enemies, as amongst their kindest friends. And so likewise at all seasons; for whereas the wicked, who are without God, are like a bird without a nest, or a beast without a den, liable to any storm that ariseth and danger that befalls; yet it is otherwise with the godly, they know whither to go to be hid from the strife of tongues, and violence of tyrants. God's favour joined with his mighty power and faithfulness, is 'a strong tower, thither the righteous run and are exalted,' Prov. xviii. 10; which fort and castle of defence is everywhere, and no time is unseasonable to repair unto it; no place an impediment to hinder them from it; no bodily weakness can disable them of it. Their journey may be undertaken at mid-night as well as at mid-day, and they may run apace as they sit in their houses, or lie in their beds; and the feeblest cripple may make as good speed as the swiftest footman. The walls thereof can no enemy scale; the forts thereof can no adversary batter. Well may our enemies assault us, but no multitude nor power can prevail against us, because 'he that is with us is stronger than they that are against us,' 2 Kings vi. 18; so that the floods of great waters can never come nigh us,' Ps. xxxii. 6. Oh the security and felicity of the faithful! marvellous great it is; who have such a tower to fly unto, and such a shield to cover and compass them round about as is impenetrable; no sword, no dart, nor shot, can possibly strike them until it pierce him. So fenced are they in their goods, in their cattle, and in all that belongs unto them, that no wicked spirit by any art can come near to touch them, without a special commission from the Almighty. When

Philip, king of Macedon, had slept a sound sleep, and at length waking, spying Antipater by him, he used these words, as the story saith,* 'No marvel I slept so soundly, seeing Antipater was by and watched.' It would not have fallen out so well with this land in general, and many, no nor any of us in particular, had not this Antipater, our gracious Father, who was before all worlds, been our merciful keeper. In '83 fierce enemies intended the invasion of this land, but they were foiled, and England triumphed; for the Lord of hosts was our defender. Many enterprises have been undertaken against our most gracious sovereign, especially that hellish attempt of popish monsters in that infernal powder plot; yet King James is waked, and long may he wake, for ANTIPATER stood by and watched,—oh, still stand by and watch,—but as for his enemies they are executed as traitors, and have slept their last. And so let them perish, O Lord.

Obj. But do we not see how the godly are wronged, spoiled, yea, and sometimes killed by their adversaries?

Ans. True, yet this cometh not to pass through the force of their adversaries' might, but by the will and permission of the Lord; neither doth he suffer it to satisfy their foes, but to increase their felicity, and for their good. For it is with the godly as with the beast in the field, which is safer in a storm than in the fairest seasons: the storm driveth him to his den and harbour; but when it is over he cometh forth, and is in danger to be taken of the hunter. Thus in trouble, the godly fly unto the clefts of their rock, and get under the wing of their Protector; but when troubles are over, they are in greater danger to be ensnared. We know rain and thunder are many times better for corn and grass than fair sunshine; so here.

Again, God hath promised not to defend us from troubles, but preserve us in troubles. Our fear shall be taken away, not our fight.† And so, though we be persecuted, yet we be not forsaken; though slain, yet not overcome: nay, when we seem to be overcome, then do we overcome our enemies. Though we bear away the blows, and are slain by them, yet God still preserves us, and we obtain a noble victory, Rom. viii. 37. Excellent was that speech, which sometimes Anaxarchus used, when as Nicocreon the tyrant commanded he should be beaten to death in a mortar: Beat and bray, said he to the executioner, as long as thou wilt, Anaxarchus his satchel, meaning his body, but Anaxarchus thou canst not touch. Thus are the godly preserved by God, who putteth his right hand under their heads, and gives them grace sufficient, proportioning their strength to the burden, mitigating their sorrows, making them possess

their souls in patience—yea, to rejoice in their tribulation, as appeareth, not only in the examples of the apostles in the Acts, chap. v. 41, and xvi., but also by the practice of some in our own nation in the time of persecution, as Glover, Farrar, Hawkes,* with divers other. The latter of which three, being desired by some of his godly friends, to give some token when he was in the flames, whether the pain were tolerable or no, for their further confirmation, after his eyes were started out of his head, his fingers consumed with the fire, and when every one thought him dead, and did expect the fall of his body, suddenly lifts up his stumps, and thrice, as a famous conqueror, claps them over his head in token of victory. Thus the faithful famously conquer when they seem to be conquered by their enemies. I remember what one saith † of St Laurence his patience and constancy, when he was broiled on the gridiron: That God was more glorified by it, than if he had saved his body from burning by a miracle. So, undoubtedly, it is as much for God's glory to preserve us in our suffering, as to preserve us altogether from suffering.

Thus, then, we see that our enemies could not so far prevail, did not God permit them; neither would he suffer them so far to prevail, did it any way tend to his dishonour or our damage. Our God is omnipotent, doing what he will, and suffering no resistance in that he will not; so that only he which can overcome him can hurt us, *Nemo nos ledit nisi qui Deum vincit*. That godly gloriation, then, which the apostle useth against the enemies of our souls, may fitly be used by us against the enemies of our bodies: 'What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?' Rom. viii. 31. And then a little after, ver. 35-37, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.' Thus, as if all these had been but flea-bitings, he doth triumph over them. And then in a strain beyond all admiration, he goeth on thus: ver. 38, 39, 'For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' If then we be God's, though Satan and sinners would, yet they can do nothing against us, that shall be for our hurt, and though God himself can, yet he will do nothing to us that shall not turn to our endless and everlasting good.

Further, in that it is said, The wall shall not only

* Plutarch.

† Formido sublata est, non pugna.—*Leo*.

* Read their stories in the Acts and Mon.

† Rupertus.

be broken, but that it shall likewise be trodden down, we may see, as in a glass, the beastly and brutish disposition of the enemies of the church.

Doct. No beast of the field doth shew itself more raging or ravenous than do the wicked when God suffers them to break into his vineyard for the afflicting of it. Look, as it is with beasts, who do not only eat and devour, but tread down and spoil, when they come into good pastures, more than they eat; so is it with them, and therefore Scripture gives them names agreeing with their natures. They are called fowlers, Ps. cxxiv. 7; hunters, Micah vii. 2; cannibals and men-eaters, Ps. liii. 4. They are also named lions, 2 Tim. iv. 17, and Ps. lvi. 6; and this was Nero's style, who was the first that stained his sword with the blood of Christians, as Eusebius sheweth in his Ecclesiastical History. They are likewise called boars, Ps. lxxx. 13, 'the boar out of the wood doth waste it;' and bulls, yea, strong bulls of Bashan, Ps. xxii. 12. They are also compared to unicorns, ver. 21; bears, Ps. lvi. 4; leopards, dragons, serpents, asps, adders, Ps. lxxiv. 13, 14; Prov. xvii. 12; Ps. iii. 7; and they have their horns, tusks, teeth, talons, mouths, jaws, paws, cheekbones, given to them. These names they have made good in all ages. If we should view the Scriptures, or read over the histories of the primitive church, we should find plenty of examples for the confirming hereof. Such and so great cruelty hath been practised by them towards God's people, that, as Eusebius affirmeth,* it far exceedeth the credit of any relation. If we come to our own times we shall not want examples of their cruelty for the proving this truth. What unnatural cruelty was it to take the infant issuing out of the mother's womb in the midst of the flame, and cast it in again with their forks,† that, as the offspring of a heretic, it might burn together with her! O blessed babe! to be no sooner born, but as soon baptized with fire; before thou art lapped in swaddling-clothes, to be crowned with martyrdom; and before thou fully breathest in the breath of life, thou happily breathest out thine own innocent soul to God. But out upon such cruelty, such transcendent outrageous cruelty! Are these catholics? Are these they that hold it for an article of their faith, that all children dying unbaptized are damned, and yet would wittingly put this innocent child to death before it had received baptism? Can any judge otherwise but that they purposed to have flung this infant both body and soul into a fire on earth and the fire in hell both at once? 'Cursed be their wrath, for it was cruel.' And is it not yet fresh in the memory of our fathers how cruelly they dealt, not only with the quick in burying them alive, as Marion at Burges,‡ but also with the dead in unburying them, as they dealt by Wickliffe,§ digging

up his bones one and forty years after his death, and burning them; and so by Peter Martyr's wife at Oxford,¶ and Mr Bucer and Phagius at Cambridge, besides others? And herein their cruelty exceeds that which is in some beasts, which extends itself only to the living and not unto the dead, *Ursi non serviunt in cadavera*. But the rage and cruelty of Sion's enemies extendeth itself, even as the kindness of her friends doth, Ruth ii. 20, both to the living and the dead; to the one as well as to the other.

We find in history that the first founders of Rome were nourished by a wolf; certain it is that the offspring of that people have the hearts of wolves, being savage and cruel. Their city it was first founded in blood,‡ the blood of a natural german-brother; Romulus slaying his brother Remus, to settle the kingdom in his own person. And as it was with the city, so was it the papacy; for the foundation of that see was laid in blood, when Phocas slew his liege lord and emperor.‡ And cruelty and bloodshed is at this day the ensign and badge of that church. The habit of that harlot is according to her heart, purple and scarlet, Rev. xvii. 6, and her diet is the diet of the cannibals: 'I saw her drunken with the blood of the saints.' Can we think this to be the religion that God doth take delight in, which upsetteth and upholdeth itself by such cruelty?

Reas. But what is the reason that the enemies of the church are so outrageous? Surely it may soon be given; they are led by the spirit of the devil, and he doth participate of his nature unto them. He is a roaring lion, 1 Peter v. 8, a cruel dragon, a subtle serpent, a false accuser of the brethren, Rev. xii. 1; and he labours to have his like him in cruelty and mischief. We hasten to the uses.

Use 1. And first; let us all be admonished not to trust those too far who are irreligious. A lion is a lion though he be chained; it is good not coming within his reach though he seem to fawn. A wolf is a wolf though he be in sheep's clothing, and at length will shew his wolfish disposition. They have the voice of Jacob, but the hands of Esau; words of a brother, but hands of an enemy; they can salute with a kiss, but persecute with the sword. The fisher baits the hook when he would deceive the fish, and the fowler sings sweetly when he would deceive the bird: so the enemies of the church, when they pretend greatest courtesy, then they intend greatest villainy; when they offer treaties of peace, leagues of marriages, and such like confederacies, then is it to be feared the net is a-spreading, and the snare a-laying. It is wisdom therefore not to trust them. No faith, saith the papist, is to

* Acts and Mon., p. 1785.

† Aug. De Civ. Dei, lib. xv. cap. 5.

‡ Suffocas Phoca imperium, stabilisque papatum.—Gail. Stamp.

* Eccles. Hist., lib. viii. cap. 3, 10, 11.

† Acts and Mon. p. 1864. ‡ Ibid., p. 816. § Ibid., p. 1780.

be kept with heretics, and we are rank ones, as they say; therefore no faith to be kept with us. Take heed therefore of them, and though they seem now to be foxes passant, and dogs couchant, yet were time and opportunity offered,—which Lord for thy mercy sake never suffer!—they would shew themselves to be lions rampant, seeking only our ruin and desolation.

Use 2. And secondly, Seeing the enemies of the church are so outrageous when they are suffered to enter into God's vineyard, making strip and waste of all, oh then let us all strive with God by earnest prayer, that we may be delivered and preserved from such 'unreasonable men,' 2 Thes. iii. 2, whose wrath and malice knoweth no end nor measure, being of Hannibal's mind, in whose eyes no sight was more pleasing than a ditch swimming over with man's blood! And seeing that by reason of our sins we have deserved great plagues, which we may daily look for and expect, let us pray with David, that we may rather fall into the hands of God than of man, because with him is mercy, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14; yea, in his very correction 'he remembereth mercy,' Hab. iii. 2. But if we be given over into the hands of the wicked, there is no mercy to be looked for, no moderation to be expected. They can never find in their hearts to say that to themselves which God did to his destroying angel, 'It is enough, put up thy sword,' 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. Hitherto God hath taken the rod into his own hand, and smitten us himself by famines, pestilence, inundations of waters, and the like; but if he should deliver us into the hands of our bloody enemies, the papists, we should then soon discern the difference betwixt the loving chastisements of a father, and the bloody strokes of an enemy. Let us therefore turn to God with Israel, and pray with their words, 'We have sinned, O Lord, we have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good to thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day,' Judges x. 15. Why shouldst thou sell us into the hands of idolatrous papists, who will give thine honour to stocks and stones, and not unto thy majesty, who giveth them the victory? For thy name's sake, be merciful to us, our God; and if we must fall by reason of our fearful sins, let thine own hand cast us down, not theirs, for there is mercy in thy blows. Do thou then take us to do, O God, and shew thyself a tender and indulgent father towards us, by correcting us thyself, as hitherto thou hast done; and deliver us not to that merciless generation, whose 'teeth are swords, and their jaws as knives,' Ps. xxx. 14, and lvii. 4, who know no end of scourging us, till they have also made an end of us whom they scourge. So shall we sing praises to thy name, and say, 'Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey unto their teeth,' Ps. cxxiv. 6.

And I will lay it waste, or, I will make it a desola-

tion, so that it shall have none to inhabit it. The people of the land shall be swept away with the sword, and the earth shall be robbed of all her goodly ornaments. It shall neither be inhabited by men, nor adorned with her beautiful fruits, as it were with her princely coat of divers colours, but become as a desolate and forsaken wilderness. This is the meaning. And hence note we the misery of war.

Doct. War is that miserable desolation which finds a land before it like Eden, and leaves it behind like Sodom, a desolate and forsaken wilderness. The fierceness and rage of it Moses expresseth and describeth, when he telleth the Israelites of a nation that should come from far, as swift as the eagle fleeth, and of fierce countenance, who should not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young; who should eat the fruit of their cattle, and the fruit of their land, until they were destroyed; who should not leave them either corn, wine, or oil, nor increase of kine, nor flocks of sheep; but should besiege them in their gates, until their high and fenced walls came down, wherein they trusted, throughout all their land; by reason whereof they should be driven to eat the fruit of their own body, the flesh of their sons and of their daughters, which the Lord their God had given them, in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith their enemies should distress them. So that men should have evil or covetous eyes towards their brethren and wives of their bosoms, and their children which they should leave, in not giving to any of them of the flesh of their children which they should eat, for fear lest they should have none left for themselves in the straitness of the siege. And the tender and delicate women, who would not adventure to set the sole of their feet upon the ground for delicateness, shall be as niggardly towards their husbands, and towards their sons and daughters, and towards their young ones. For they shall eat their children secretly and in corners, that none might get any part away from them, because of the siege wherewith their enemy should distress them, Deut. xxviii. 49-58. Fearful threatenings! But is it possible that the misery or mischief of war should be so great? Were not these threatenings made to keep them in obedience only? Surely nothing is there threatened but war hath brought forth. To instance in that unmatchable instance of the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian, who besieged it for the space of five months, three-score and eleven years after Christ's incarnation, or thereabouts. In which time there passed many assaults and skirmishes, much slaughter and bloodshed being made both on the one side and other. The famine meanwhile afflicting the city was such as no history can parallel. Horses, asses, dogs, cats, rats, were good unto their tastes. But this food failing, they were driven to eat coarser fare, yea, those

things which unreasonable creatures would not eat, as the leather of their shoes, and of their targets, of their bridles, and of their girdles, and the like.* Ox-dung was a precious dish unto them, and the shred-dings of pot-herbs, cast out and trodden under foot and withered, were taken up again for nourishment. What miserable meat was this! And yet, as miserable as it was, the child would snatch it from his parent, and the parent from his child, even from out his jaws.† Yea, some to prolong their lives would not stick to eat up that that others had vomited and cast up. And yet hearken to a far more lamentable accident than all this yet: the mother takes her own child from her breasts—a harmless suckling, silly infant, and thus speaks to it:—Little infant—poor wretch! in war, in famine, in sedition, for whom shall I preserve thee? for whom shall I save thee alive? If thou live, thou must be a slave unto the Romans; but famine prevents thy servitude; yea, and the mutinous Jews are more cruel than either the Romans or the famine. Be thou therefore meat to me; a fury to the mutinous, and even a mock of the life of man.‡ And when she had thus spoken she killed it, and boiled the dead body of it, and ate the one half and reserved the other for another time. The mutinous Jews drawn by the scent and savour of this meat, break into this woman's house, and threaten to slay her, if she bring it not forth unto them. She tells them she hath meat indeed, but she had reserved it for herself; nevertheless, seeing they did so urge her, she would bring it to them. So she brings them the relics of her son; at which sight they standing amazed, and shrinking back with fear and horror, the mother said thus unto them:—This meat you see is indeed part of my own son; it was my deed to kill it; eat ye of it, for I have eaten. Will you be more tender than a woman? more pitiful than a mother? Eat, I say, for I have eaten. If you will not eat, it shall remain for me, his mother. Oh fearful, horrid, inhuman act!

The famine still continuing, they are compelled to begin to issue out of their city gates, and no sooner were they out, but they were still taken and crucified upon crosses and gibbets set up before the walls, that they who were within might, by beholding of this spectacle, be moved to give over; but yet they continued obstinate and would not. Five hundred a day were thus hanged up, till there were neither trees to be gotten, nor any more space left to set them in:

* Fame impellebantur ut vel equorum lora, et suos bathreos, et calceos, et coria comederent.—*Pontan. Bibl. conc. Tom. 4, ad dom. 10. Trind.*

† Trepidant parentibus filii, parentibus filius, et de ipsis fanci-bus cibis proferabatur.—*Hegesip. de accid. Hieros. lib. v. cap. 18.*

‡ Joseph de Bell. Judaico, lib. vi. cap. 3.

and desire being made to know the number of dead carcases which were carried out of the city for want of burial, to be thrown in ditches as dung upon the earth, they found the number to be numberless, so that no way could it certainly be known; but out of one gate the keeper had noted a hundred and fifty thousand dead bodies to be carried out. And thus, what with the extremity of the famine, what with the fury of the sword, and what with sickness during the time of this war, there perished in Jerusalem, and the province adjoining, as some credible authors³ affirm, about six hundred thousand able men to bear arms; or as others[†] hold, who were present at the war, there died eleven hundred thousand, besides others taken captive to the number of ninety-seven thousand.

The Jews thus dead and scattered, what became now of their glorious city? Their holy temple it was burned; their strong and high walls were thrown down; all the city became waste and desolate, and so it remains to this day. And thus we see what Moses there threatened, is here fulfilled to the utmost; both which prove my doctrine and make it good, That albeit war find a land like Eden, it will leave it like a Sodom, a desolate and forsaken wilderness. If these be not sufficient, read the whole book of Jeremiah's Lamentations, and there we shall find that the mercies of war are cruel. As also what this our prophet Isaiah saith in the ninth of this his prophecy, where speaking of the troubles that should befall the people for their sins, he saith, 'The people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm,' Isa. ix. 19, 20. Where we see war is compared to the fire, and it feedeth upon and destroyeth the people, as the fire consumeth straw or wood; or like as a hungry man, who snatcheth at the right hand and at the left, and is not satisfied, such is the unsatiable hungry desire of war; there is no measure nor satiety of blood. Let us thus apply this point:—

Use 1. First, For admonition unto us all, that we be heartily and unfeignedly thankful for the long peace and prosperity that we have enjoyed under the conduct of our worthy Deborah, our late sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and still do enjoy under the government of our peaceable Solomon, and princely Ecclesiastes, who came unto us like Noah's dove, with an olive branch of peace, Gen. viii. 11, and hath shut the iron gates of war, and settled peace amongst us, so that we may sit every one under our own vines and fig-trees, and there is none to make us afraid, 2 Sam. vii. 1. Which blessing is no common bless-

* Euseb. in Chro. Orosius, lib. vii.

† Joseph de Bell. Jud., lib. vi. cap. 7.

ing that we of this little island at this day do enjoy. Our neighbours round about us are at this day whirled about in tumultuous broils, while our Britain, like the centre, standeth still unmoveable, inasmuch that it is hard to say whether other nations more envy or admire us. In peace our merchants trade abroad, and bring home 'wines to make glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine,' Ps. civ. 15. In peace our magistrates sit at home, and 'give judgment in the gates of Israel,' for maintaining of peace, 2 King vii. In peace the messengers of peace preach unto us the sweet tidings of the gospel, Isa. lii. 7. In peace our husbandmen 'sow their corn in hope, and reap with joy,' James v. 7. In peace our 'sons as plants grow up in their youth, and our daughters are as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Our garners are full, affording all manner of store: our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets. Our oxen are strong to labour: there is no breaking in, nor going out; there is no complaining in our streets,' Ps. cxli. 12-14. In a word, all honest occupations and honourable professions thrive under the peace that we enjoy. For which peace, what cause have we to be thankful to the God of peace! especially considering how often by our sins we have broken our truce with God, and given an alarm to the king of heaven, by our pride, Isa. iii. 16, and contempt of the gospel, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17, two usual forerunners of the sword. And therefore, in the midst of this our peace, let us not grow secure. We have not so many blessings, but we may forfeit them all by our disobedience. When we most feared war, God sent us peace. Now we most brag of our peace, we may well fear that God will send us war.

Use 2. Secondly, For reprehension of such as grudge their own peace and welfare, and both wish and pray for wars. Never good days since so much peace, say some; and Would we had wars again! say others. Fools that we are, that know no better how to use our peace, and testify so great unthankfulness for so great a mercy! Had we been in the coats of our forefathers, or did we feel the scourge of war, as our neighbours do, we would better know how to esteem this blessing and prize this garland of peace. We never saw our towns and cities burning, while the flame gave light to the soldiers to carry away our goods; we never saw our houses rifled, our temples spoiled, our wives ravished, our children bleeding dead on the pavements, or sprawling on the merciless pikes; we hear not the confused cries of men sounding in our distracted ears, some dying, others killing, others insulting, others resisting; we see not our highways strawed with breathless carcasses, men and horses wallowing in their blood, and

the ghastly visages of wounds and death in every corner; these things we can only judge of by report and hearsay; did we know them by experience, we would not so repine at the peace we now enjoy. Were it not a woeful and lamentable thing to see fire without mercy, and without quenching, consuming houses, and eating up all things, making spare of nothing? How much more to hear, and see, and feel the affliction of war, when all things are in confusion and combustion! When 'there is no peace to him that goeth out or in, but great troubles to all the inhabitants: when nation is destroyed of nation, and city of city, and all are troubled with adversity,' 2 Chron. xv. 5, 6. Alas! what good, what profit, what sweetness can we find in these things?

And as these are to be reprov'd, so methinks I find another sort of people to be sharply censured, who go a degree further than the former, counting of war but as a matter of sport and play. So speaketh Abner, captain of the host, 'Let the young men now rise and play before us,' 2 Sam. ii. 14. His meaning was, that they should come forth and try their valour, one in hewing and cutting of another, and so shew them a bloody play.^c Such were those sword-plays in use amongst the Romans, wherein cruel spectacles were exhibited on each side in the shedding of human blood. Such also are our challenges made and performed by fencers upon the stage, now in use amongst us, whereby God's image is oftentimes defaced, and blood spilt as water upon the ground; and yet what running and thronging to see such bloody fights! being counted by many but a sport, or matter of recreation. Which kind of savage and beastly spectacles, Theodosius, the emperor, abhorred and would never behold. And one Demonax, among the Athenians, hearing the people consult about such plays, told them they must first break down the altar of mercy; because such fights were so merciless and cruel. Let all such as fear the Lord beware of countenancing such by our presence, lest we make ourselves guilty of their sins, and stand as guilty before the Lord of shedding that blood which they do shed.

Thirdly, For our instruction this serves. Seeing there is such cruelty in war, and fearfulness and devouring in the sword, let us take heed of the beginnings thereof, and cut the cords of all contention and debate, living peaceably one with another, as brethren ought to do. 'From whence come wars and contentions amongst you?' saith St James; 'are they not hence, even of your lusts that fight in your members?' chap. iv. 1. These distempered lusts are the cause of all strife and contention, causing a continual war within a man, and oftentimes wars with

* Vatab. et Jun. *in loc.*

other men, to the ruining not only of private persons, but of whole families, cities, kingdoms. The greatest wars have been kindled by private discords, as histories declare. Let every one, then, beware of sowing the seeds of division, for in time they may come to yield a comfortless crop of cares and confusions. Brawl not, chide not one with another; and as St James saith, chap. v. 9, 'Grudge not one against another,' for these are the foundations of war, and therefore have no hand in laying them. Civil dissensions ruinate a commonwealth more than open war, as Jerusalem and Rome can testify, both which, by private factions, made themselves a prey to the common enemy. The French, and we English also, have some experience hereof in those homebred garboils which were between the house of Lancaster and York before they were united; in which unhappy quarrel there were cruelly butchered fourscore princes of the blood-royal, as one^o witnesseth, besides an infinite number of the commonalty that were slain. And thus we see St James his saying true, 'Where envying and strife is, there is sedition and all manner of evil works,' chap. iii. 16.

Use 4. Lastly, Seeing there is misery and mischief in war, let this serve for exhortation, that we 'mourn with them that mourn, and weep with them that weep,' Rom. xii. 10-15. Our brethren in France and Germany are whirled about in these bloody tumults: they hear the dismal cries of cruel adversaries, crying *kill, kill*; the shrieks of women and infants, the thundering of those murdering pieces in their ears, while we 'lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch ourselves upon our couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; while we drink wine in bowls, and anoint ourselves with the chief ointments,' Amos vi. 4, 6. We are strangers to those miseries they undergo in passion. I pray God we be not strangers to their miseries in compassion, which I fear, I fear we are. Let us think we see the calamities of war with our neighbours' eyes, and feel them through their sides, and let not the afflictions of poor Joseph be forgotten. And seeing they are in the valleys fighting against the Amalekites, the cursed enemies of God's church and people, let us be upon the mountains lifting up our hands for their victory and deliverance, Exod. xvii. 8, praying with the words of David, Ps. lxxiv. 2, 19-21, saying, 'Remember, O Lord, thy congregation, which thou hast purchased of old: the rod of thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed. Oh deliver not the soul of thy turtle dove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever. Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Oh let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor

and needy praise thy name.' Ps. lxxix. 11-13, 'Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.'

It shall not be pruned nor digged. Look, as husbandmen neglect to prune, cut, dig, or dress such grounds and plants as they despair of and have not pleasure in, so God here despairing, as it were, of this his vineyard, tells them he will husband them no more, but he would withhold such means from them as formerly he had used for their fructifying. Whence learn we—

Doct. When the Lord hath used all means, both by his word and works, to bring a people to good, and they nevertheless neglect and condemn those means of their good—continuing still in carnal security, gross infidelity, and impenitency—then will the Lord deprive such a people of those means of their good, and give them over to their own wicked courses and hearts' lusts, and suffer them to fall headlong, as well into the evil of sin, as into the evil of punishment. So we see here dealt he with this people: he deprieth them of the means, withholding his pains in pruning, digging, and the like, as also the rain from falling on them any more, and so suffers them to bring forth thorns and briers, noisome sins and lusts, even to their own ruin and perdition. Thus in the first chapter of this prophecy we may read how that after God had bestowed many and great favours upon his people, notwithstanding all which they continued obstinate and rebellious, and neither by mercy nor misery would be reclaimed nor reformed, but would still desperately persevere in their defection; he tells them plainly he would smite them no more, seeing it was so that they were set upon evil, and had as it were sold themselves to work wickedness: 'Wherefore,' saith he, 'should you be stricken any more? seeing you will revolt more and more,' Isa. i. 5—*q. d.*, To what end should I any more correct you? for full well I see that you become worse after you are afflicted than you were before; and therefore I will withhold my hand, and leave you to yourselves. The like judgment we find threatened in Hosea's prophecy against the apostate Israelites, chap. iv. 14, 'I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery;' seeing they would not be amended, he would lay the reins upon their necks, and withhold the means whereby they might have been reclaimed. And thus when the Gentiles would not serve God according to that light of nature which he had given unto them, he 'gave

* Comineus.

them up to their own vile affection,' and to 'a reprobate mind,' Rom. i. 28. And upon such as having long had the means of knowledge and regeneration, and yet continue still in their unrighteousness and corruption, he passeth that definitive sentence, Rev. xxii. 11, 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.*' And thus we see it to be true, that God will remove and deny means of reclaiming, when having long enjoyed them, we make no good use of them, neither are reclaimed by them.

Reas. And why so? Because it is but lost labour and cost cast away, to administer physio to such patients whose diseases are desperate. Now God is a most wise physician, and knows with whom he hath to deal; and therefore when he sees men rend in pieces his prescripts, and pull off his plasters, and reject those wholesome potions which he ministereth to purge men from their corruptions, he giveth them over to themselves to sink or swim, and suffers them to die and perish in their sins, and in the sickness of their souls.

Quest. But is it just with God to suffer such as are grown desperate in sin, and become incorrigible, to run on without punishment?

Ans. 1. I answer, first, We are not to understand what hath formerly been spoken, generally and absolute, as though he would inflict upon such no kind of punishment; but more specially he would not lay upon them that kind of punishment which is called chastisement and correction. He will not, in punishing them, play the part of a physician, but rather of a chirurgeon, cutting that clean off which he hath no hope to cure.

Ans. 2. Secondly, I answer, They are punished even while they are spared, and that most fearfully. For what greater punishment can be inflicted than to be given up to one's own heart's lusts, and so to have sin punished with sin; sin foregoing, with sin following?†

Ans. 3. And thirdly, We are to know that this world is more properly the place of doing, than of suffering; and therefore though God suffer them to heap sin upon sin, seeing thereby they do but 'treasure up unto themselves wrath against that day of wrath,' Rom. ii. 5, wherein every transgression of theirs shall receive its recompence, God may not be thought to be unjust, Eccles. xii. 14. Some sins are here punished, that we may know there is a providence in God; others escape here unpunished, to assure us that there is a judgment reserved, and a day of wrath appointed.

* It is spoken *prophatando*, non *optando*.—*Collus.*

† Insipiens pena est et vindicta impietatis convivere Deum ac indulgere peccantibus, et non modo impunitatem sed et longam concedere prosperitatem.—*Philo. lib. de confus. ling.*

Thus is the point proved and cleared; hear it now applied.

Use 1. This concerns this our land and people very nearly, who, in regard of the means, with Capernaum have been lifted up to heaven, Mat. xi. 23, and yet are so little bettered by the means. Wherein hath God been wanting to us either in word or deed? What means can be devised to do us good that God hath not used? Is there any way by which a man may learn, but by the same the Lord hath taught us? By his precepts he hath instructed us, by requests he hath exhorted us, by his mercies (great and many) he hath allured us, and by his judgments he hath terrified us. He hath sent his servants of sundry qualities, according to their several gifts, early and late unto us: some, like Moses, to teach us; some, like Isaiah, to comfort us; some, like Jeremiah, to mourn for us; some, like David, to sing to us; all labouring to win us to repentance, that we might be saved. But where is our repentance? where our reformation? If we look with an impartial eye, we shall soon see all manner of sin to abound instead of these. Doth not pride, gluttony, drunkenness, &c., abound here? When I see and hear, I must needs say unto my soul, 'How should God spare us for these?' Jer. v. 7. I pray God that that we take to be an argument of his favour, viz., peace and outward prosperity, do not rather strongly argue his fiery and hot displeasure.

Use 2. More particularly, this may be for admonition to all and every of us, that with all careful diligence we make profitable use of the means which the Lord hath given us, of what sort and kind soever they have been; remembering always that to whom much is committed, of him much shall be required; the longer our day of learning hath been, and the lighter, the more work and service will God expect at our hands, and the better. We do not look for nor expect so much fruit of a tree that hath grown but a few years in a ground that is barren, as of that which hath grown many years in a soil that is fertile; and therefore it concerneth such as have been most and longest taught, to shew themselves most zealous, righteous, and devout.

In regard of the means, you in this famous city should be like Saul, higher than others by the shoulders, 1 Sam. x. 23. A sin and shame then it would be for you to come behind others in your obedience. Look then to it, for assure yourselves a lesser and smaller measure of knowledge, faith, obedience, &c., will be accepted in others, than will or can be in you, because your means are more. In this respect Christ deemeth the damnation of the Capernautes to be more horrible and fearful than that of the Sodomites, Mat. xi. 21, 22, because the one had more means to make them good than the other had. And so will it be with you; for if you bring forth no better fruit

answerable in some sort to the means which God hath bestowed on you, the time will come assuredly that you shall wish, Oh that I were a Sodomite! oh that I were a Gomorrian! Yea, you will envy their happiness in regard of your own misery; and in the meantime you will be left of God as a desperate cure, and be suffered to run on in a course of sinning, until you fall into that bottomless pit of destruction, and gulf of condemnation.

I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

We have seen before what is meant by clouds and rain. The prophets and ministers of God's word are meant by the former, and the word they preach is meant by the latter. I intend not to follow the metaphors in the particular resemblances wherein they may be compared, they having been touched afore in the exposition. From hence I will only observe one point of doctrine, and take it thus briefly:—

Doct. Ministers have no power nor ability of themselves to perform their ministerial function.

It is of God, and from God. It is God that will withhold these clouds, his prophets and preachers, from dropping the showers of his word into the ears of this people. He will command, and they must obey. It is he that 'makes the heart of the priest' fat, and creates the fruit of the lips to be at peace,' Isa. lvii. 19. It is he that 'openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth,' Rev. iii. 7. This St Paul acknowledgeth, that we are 'not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers,' 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. And further confesseth, that though he had laboured more abundantly than the rest, yet it was not he, but the grace of God which was in him, 1 Cor. xv. 10. And of all ministers whatsoever he saith indefinitely, that 'neither he which planteth is anything, nor he which watereth, but God is all in all,' 1 Cor. iii. 7. Thus Christ is said to have the ministers as 'stars in his right hand,' Rev. i. 16; not only for their defence, but also to make them rise or set, when and where he pleaseth. Hence it is that the rain of the gospel, like the rain of the clouds, hath sometimes gone by coasts, raining sometimes upon one city and not upon another, Amos iv. 7. Gideon's fleece hath been wet, and no place else; and every place else, and not Gideon's fleece, Judges vi. 37.

Use 1. Which being so, methinks this should teach many of our hearers better things than to impute every disability that is seen in ministers—yea, sometimes in such ministers as at other times are able and sufficient enough, through God that strengthens them—to their own idleness and negligence. It often happens that the faithfulest la-

* Query, 'people' ?—Ed.

bourers and workmen are often tongue-tied; and though they be clouds thick and full, and likely enough to drop down showers, yet when they come to the place of exercising this their ministerial function, they are so withheld, that they cannot be as a reprover unto their people. Now how do our people censure these for their ignorance, negligence, fear, pride, unfaithfulness, and the like! I deny not but these, and every one of these, do often stop the mouths of God's ministers, 1 Cor. xvi. 9, 10; Heb. xiii. 17. For polluted lips are no lips of utterance. The lips of the minister must be touched with the coals of knowledge, zeal, and mortification, Isa. vi. 5. But certain I am that it is the sins of the people that most usually puts their ministers to silence. 'Son of man, I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou shalt be dumb, and thou shalt not be to them a reprover.' Mark the reason. 'For they are a rebellious house,' Ezek. iii. 26, 27; Hosea ix. 7. You see then it was the rebellion of the house of Israel that made Ezekiel dumb. When such an accident falls out, condemn more thy own sins than thy teacher's negligence or ignorance. This is thy best and safest course.

Use 2. And secondly, How should this stir up people to 'pray for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, that we may open our mouths boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel of Jesus Christ!' Eph. vi. 19; Col. iv. 3. What is it for us to come unto you richly laden, *crura thymo plena*, and to be as full of good matter as ever Elihu was, Job xxxii. 18, if God be not with our mouths, as he promised Moses, Exod. iv. 12, and teach us what to say? Pray, therefore, oh pray earnestly to God for us, that he would excite us, stir us up, and enable us to utter such holy things as we have studied and thought upon; for 'the preparations of the heart are in man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord,' Prov. xvi. 1; and therefore except he do to us as he did to Jeremiah, stretch out his hand and touch our mouth, and put his words into it, Jer. i. 9, there is small hope that our tongues should so set out those wonderful works of God, and those great things of his law, Hosea viii. 12, as that the souls of God's people may have any cause to bless God that ever they did hear us.

Use 3. Thirdly, What cause have such to bless God, as are under such clouds, and live under such ministers, whose 'doctrine drops as the rain, and whose speech distills as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass!' Deut. xxxii. 2. Oh that men knew but this gift of God, and were answerably thankful for so great a gift! Satan grudges, yea, envies the church this gift, and sets himself by all means to withhold these clouds from dropping, as knowing full well

what a great disadvantage they are unto his kingdom. Hence is it that all Ephesus is in an uproar upon Paul's teaching, and hence is that outcry of our people, Never was merry world since so much preaching! Oh, how cursed a generation are we fallen into! who repine at that, as if it were some heavy plague, for which we are bound to bless God for, as a special blessing. A day will surely come when such will wish to have but one drop fall from these clouds to cool the heat and horror of their consciences, and to ease the agonies they are perplexed withal, but shall not obtain it.

Use 4. And lastly, This may teach us who are ministers of the word, to seek ability and liberty from the hands of God, that we may be enabled to deliver unto our people what we have thought upon and meditated on before; for if he will give liberty, who can restrain it? and if he will silence, who can enlarge it? Let us then not be over-confident of our own ability; but if we be to speak of matters of moment, be more careful to crave God's aid and direction than trust to our own readiness or preparation.

And so much for this. I hope a word to the wise will be sufficient. We have done with the parable. The application follows.

The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Here we have the allegory explained and applied by shewing—

First, Who this vinitor is; and he is God himself, who is here described by his titles and epithets; first, *Lord*; secondly, *Lord of hosts*.

Secondly, Who this vineyard was; and they are, first, *The house of Israel*; secondly, *The men of Judah*, even all the whole body of them.

Thirdly, What were the fruits; first, which he expected, and they were *judgment* and *righteousness*; secondly, which they returned, and they were *oppression* and a *cry*.

The vineyard. We have seen before in the beginning of the parable the reason why the church is compared to a vineyard, with the several concurrences wherein the comparison stands, which is needless here again to recite; therefore thither I refer you.

Of the Lord. God is called a *Lord*, because of his absolute power, dominion, and authority that he hath over all creatures; for, as we know, he is properly called the lord of anything, that hath interest, authority, and government over the same. Now seeing God hath an absolute, free, and eternal right to all things both in heaven and in earth, this title of Lord is truly and properly given to him.

Of hosts. He is called not only a Lord, but Lord of

hosts; first, because his creatures are many and a multitude, as an army consists of many troops; secondly, in regard of their order, which is admirable, as order makes an army beautiful; thirdly, and especially, in regard of their obedience; for no soldier is so ready *presto* at the command of his captain, as all creatures are ready to fulfil the will of God.

Is the house of Israel. This name *Israel* God, for honour's sake, gave to Jacob, upon a special occasion mentioned in his story, Gen. xxxiii. 38; and it signifieth a *prince* or *prevailer with God*. And he thought it an excellent blessing to have his children called by his name *Israel*, as we may see in that his prayer made for Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, 'The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them,' &c., Gen. xlviii. 16. And this name was given to Jacob's seed as a title of honour. See Rom. ix. 4. So that by 'the house of Israel' is meant the seed and posterity of Israel, they who came of that house, and issued from his loins.

And the men of Judah. Though Israel was a common name to the twelve tribes, while they were but one kingdom, which was from the beginning of Saul's reign to the end of Solomon's, yet after they were divided into two kingdoms, they were called by these two names, Israel and Judah. When and how this rent was made, we find expressly delivered both in the books of the Kings and Chronicles, 1 Kings xii.; 2 Chron. x. For the time, it was after the death of king Solomon, and not before. And for the manner thus:—

Rehoboam, king Solomon's son—censured by Jesus the son of Sirach, to be even the foolishness of the people, and one that had no understanding—succeeding in his father's throne, did, upon advice given him by his young counsellors, threaten sharp usage and hard measure unto his people, so that his little finger should be heavier than his father's loins; and whereas his father did burden them with a grievous yoke, he would make it heavier; his father did chastise them with rods, but he would correct them with scourges; which unkind entreating of his people caused a rebellion and revolt. Ten of the twelve tribes much discontented, break forth into speeches of impatience, 'What portion have we in David? we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David.' So they forsook Rehoboam their rightful lord, and set up Jeroboam, son of Nebat, to be king over them; two tribes—viz., the tribes of Judah and Benjamin—only continuing their obedience. Thus was Israel divided from Israel; ten tribes from the other two, which made both the ten and the two miserable.

The ten revolted tribes have divers appellations in the sanctified writings of the holy prophets, as *Bethel*,

Beth-aven, Samaria, Joseph, Jezreel, Ephraim, Jacob, but none more usual than this of Israel.

The two other tribes, Judah and Benjamin—called in Scripture but one tribe, because of the mixture of their possessions, as 1 Kings xi. 13—have in like sort their divers appellations, as sometimes they are called *Benjamin*, other times *Jerusalem*, and other whiles *Sion*, and sometimes again we may find them called the *house of David*, but most commonly they are known by the name of *Judah*, as here. And thus we see the reason of these different names given to one and the same people; for all came of Jacob, and issued out of his loins.

His pleasant plant; that is, the plant which he took delight in. Now this is not spoken as if they of the tribe of Judah were more approved of than were the other Israelites, but rather to aggravate their sin, in that God having so many ways advanced that tribe above the rest, and according to Jacob's prophetic blessing, Gen. xlix. 8, 12, made it lord and king over the other tribes, so that the right of the kingdom belonged to it, and was to continue in Judah's line until Shiloh came; yea, and out of that tribe should the Shiloh and Messiah come, which was a special prerogative that that tribe had above the rest; yet, notwithstanding all this, Judah should deal so ungratefully with God, as instead of sweet grapes to bring forth wild grapes.

He looked for judgment, but beheld oppression. The prophet here, as well as in other places of this his prophecy, sheweth his rhetoric, using a figure (*μετανομασία*) whereby he doth excellently adorn his speech; for we have here a meeting together of words, which hath a very good grace with it, and yet cannot be so well expressed in any other tongue as in the original; in sound the words seem to be almost the same, and yet are of contrary significations, and differing much in sense by the changing of a letter; the one, *misphat*, signifying *judgment*; the other, *misphat*, *oppression*: the one, *zedakah*, *justice*; the other, *tebhakah*, a *cry*.

These words especially respect magistrates and their office, and may seem to shew unto us the wellspring of all that wickedness which was amongst them; it came from the head, and so dispersed itself to the members.

He looked for judgment; that is, this he expected for all his many favours, that judgment and justice should be administered, the cause of the innocent should be heard and pleaded, the quarrel of the poor revenged, and the wicked and ungodly sharply censured and severely punished.

But beheld oppression; or, as some expound it, a *conspiracy*; the magistrates themselves conspiring together with the wicked to oppress the poor, according to that in chap. i. 23, 'Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves,' &c.: so here, while these

judges and magistrates should punish such as did oppress the poor, they themselves did conspire with the wicked, while they did accompany them in dealing extremely and cruelly with them.

For righteousness; that is, that every one might have their due, and no man wronged nor injured. And this hath a larger extent than the former, comprehending under it all the duties of love and charity which ought to be shewed unto our neighbour.

A cry, or clamour; to wit, of such as were unjustly oppressed by those corrupt magistrates. The cries of the widows and fatherless came into the ears of the most high God. And this was wickedness with an *ecce*, behold it; yea, and again behold it; for it is twice used, *behold oppression, behold a cry*; which particle hath a great emphasis with it, and being double, the greater. It is as a watchword to awake us to the consideration of what is said; we should not lightly pass this over, that there should be such wickedness, to be beheld amongst them, beyond hope or expectation of God or men; thus much for explication. Now come we to observation. And first, from the prophet's practice, learn we in general, that—

Doct. Preachers are to apply their doctrines in particular to their hearers. This course took Nathan when he had to deal with David; he did not only in a parable make him condemn the sin, 'He shall die that hath done this thing,' 2 Sam. xii. 7; but by particular application comes home unto him, 'Thou art the man,' and so makes him condemn himself.* And thus did St Peter in that sermon wherein he converted three thousand souls, 'Whom ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain,' Acts ii. 23. 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ,' ver. 36. Such was his dealing with Simon Magus, 'Thy money perish with thee. Repent of this thy malice, thou art in the gall of bitterness: it may be thy sin may be done away,' chap. viii. 20-23. The like was our Saviour's practice, whose example is without all exception: 'I tell you nay, but except ye repent you shall all likewise perish,' Luke xiii. 5. 'Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: Woe unto you also, you lawyers,' chap. xi. 44-46. And John to the Jews thus: 'O generation of vipers, who hath forewarned you to flee from the wrath to come?' Mat. iii. 7.

Reas. 1. And there is good reason for this course, because application is the life of doctrine. This leads it to the thoughts and intents of the heart to discern them; if sinful, to captivate them; if right, to inflame them. This makes the word to become ours, and causeth us to taste the sweetness of it. Without this, no fruit in the threatenings for our humiliation; no fruit in the promises for our restitution; no true

* Vide Dr Hall on Nathan.

understanding of either, without our own faith mingling and truly applying both. That which is spoken to all, is as good as spoken to none at all.

Reas. 2. Secondly, God's ministers are compared unto builders, and therefore are not only to lay the foundation, but also to erect up the building. Now doctrine is but the laying of a ground, and application is rearing up of the walls, and as the building up of a Christian in grace and goodness.

The uses concern, first, us ministers; secondly, you our hearers.

Use 1. We that are ministers must labour herein, and not content ourselves with idle or intricate discourses, further than to lay them as grounds for exhortation. A lesson without use, saith one,* is a devised thing idly without end; and it is less cunning to give a precept, than to shew aptly the use thereof. We are stewards; now, saith the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2, 'it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.' Faithful, first, in providing wholesome food for the whole family; and, secondly, in a wise distribution of the provision, giving to every one in the house their portion. Thus must we, first, see our provision be good and seasonable, delivering not for doctrine men's precepts, nor the fancies and inventions of our own brains, which fill full of wind, and not sound nourishment. And, secondly, give every one their part of the wholesome word of life: comfort to whom comfort belongs, and judgment to whom judgment belongs; making difference, not serving all alike, nor sending that to the master's board which was provided for the men—for there is no faithfulness in this—but setting before every one what is fittest for him; giving the bread of consolation to the child, and the whip and staff of reprehension to the dog. This is the course whereby holy doctrine is fastened, as with nails, by the masters of assemblies. And the want of this is the cause why many men's pains are so lifeless, fruitless; for as a rich man discoursing of bread to a hungry beggar, or a physician describing his patient's disease, and leaving him to himself; so is a preacher not applying. Or as a whole loaf set before children would do them no good, for they might starve well enough unless it be divided; so is a general doctrine amongst our auditors. In itself, indeed, it is nourishable, but being not applied, it seldom is so to them. I end this use with a meditation of a worthy of our times:†—'Those that are all in exhortation, no whit in doctrine, are like to them that snuff the candle, but pour not in oil. Those that are all in doctrine, and nothing in exhortation, drown the wick in oil, but light it not, making it fit for use if it had fire put to it; but as it is, rather capable of good, than profitable in present.' Doctrine without

exhortation makes men all brains, no heart. Exhortation without doctrine makes the heart full, but leaves the brain empty. Both together makes a man; one makes him wise, the other good; one serves that we may know our duty, the other that we may perform it. In both which we must labour; and who can say in whether most? Men cannot practise unless they know; and in vain they know if they practise not. Let none think I take upon me to task or censure any; I only, as my duty is, and occasion given me by this our prophet's practice, labour to shew what we ought to do.

Use 2. And now for hearers, let them learn to suffer with meekness the word to be brought home, and applied close unto their consciences, and quietly to receive that which is their appointment. In these misjudging days, saith one, it is a hard matter to overreach the devil. If we let sin alone, his kingdom flourisheth; if we strike at him, and hit not the bough he sits on, we move him not. If we hit him, by taking the very sin on the head, then we are judged partial, personal, and wreckers of our own spleen. Hence grows the quarrel betwixt us and you; for were it not for special application, we should please you well enough; but because we tell you the truth, we are become your enemies. Beloved, if it were profitable for you, it were peaceable for us to shoot at rovers, and speak at random; but both our duty and your necessity calls for particular application. Art thou a blasphemer, a Sabbath-breaker, an ungodly usurer, or such like? Why then thou hast thy portion appointed thee, and that is brimstone and fire: it is somewhat hot indeed; but this is the portion of thy cup, as the psalmist speaketh, Ps. xi. 6, this is appointed for thee to drink. Art thou angry with thy minister for telling thee this? If thou beest, thou hast little reason for it. For where is the fault, in thee or him? I pray thee heartily repent, and amend thy life, and such things shall not be spoken to thee; become a child, and thou shalt have a child's part, the bread of consolation. But while thou continuest thus profane and dissolute, look for no other than the whip of reprehension, and content thyself therewith, if thou wilt become no better.

Yea, let every one help the minister in this his labour, and learn to apply what is taught to their own consciences, accusing or excusing. We usually hear the word as we do news out of foreign countries, as not pertaining to ourselves; and come to hear sermons as women come to costly banquets, to pocket up and carry away for others that are at home more than for themselves; or as they do at feasts, laying liberally on their neighbours' trenchers, letting their own lie empty. Thus when we hear any sin threatened or disgraced, we can post it off to others: Oh, such a one is met withal, and that is for him. But hear not so

* Bernard's Faith. Sheph.

† Dr Hall's Vows and Meditations, third Cent. Med. 35.

idly. The Lord speaks to thee, and intends that exhortation or reprehension to thy soul; take it, then, as spoken to thyself. Is it comfort? Repent and believe, and it is meant to thee. Is it judgment? If thou repentest not, it is to thee as surely as if he had named thee. And this is the way to hear savingly. So much in general.

The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel. God himself, as we see here, is the owner of this vineyard, who is called a Lord, and a Lord of hosts. From the first of these we learn,

Doct. God is an absolute Lord over all creatures.

He it is that hath an absolute dominion, power, authority, and sovereignty over all. This Nebuchadnezzar, after he was himself, acknowledged: 'Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation,' Dan. iv. 3. David in his prayer makes an ample confession of it: 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thy hand is power and might, and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all,' 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. And in that form of prayer which our blessed Saviour hath given us, Mat. vi. 13, we are taught to acknowledge that 'kingdom, power, and glory' is God's.

Reas. And no marvel, seeing he alone made all without any help, Col. i. 16. Yea, he it is that doth preserve and uphold all things that are made, Acts xvii. 24; Rev. iv. 11; and therefore he must needs have absolute sovereignty and authority over all.

Obj. But Satan is called 'the god of this world,' 2 Cor. iv. 4, and most obey him; how, then, is God so absolute a Lord?

Ans. 1. Satan is so called, first, because he challengeth it to himself, and not that he is so; for 'the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein,' Ps. xxiv. 1. He only usurps it, as he did when he told our blessed Saviour, 'All the kingdoms of the world he would give him, if he would fall down and worship him,' Mat. iv. 8. And thus the devil is called the god of this world, as Absalom was called king, by usurpation.

Ans. 2. Secondly and especially, He is called a god, because the wicked make him so, suffering him to rule over them, and reign in them, giving him that honour and worship which indeed belongs to God. It is not then Satan's power that makes him a god, but man's weakness in yielding to his suggestions. Neither doth this obedience, which most give him, make against what is now taught; for we may not measure and esteem of sovereignty and authority by the obedience or disobedience of subjects, but by the

right of authority which any hath over a land or people. What if most men should not obey their prince, but his enemy? would it follow hereupon that he should not be their lord, but that other whom they serve? Nothing less. So here. And again, Satan himself is but God's slave, serving as an executioner or tormentor of the wicked. Now we know princes are as well lords over such, as they are over the very best. Now we come to see what uses will follow hereupon.

Use 1. And first, Seeing God is absolute Lord over all that is or ever was, let wicked men be admonished advisedly to consider from whom they have had what now they do enjoy, and whether they hold their lands and their possessions, as we say, *in capite*. All, as we see, is God's; and if we hold not what we have from him, we are but as thieves, robbers, and usurpers. Tell me, then, thou worldly, wealthy, wise one, canst thou say of thy lands, possession, leases, moneys, as Jacob did, Gen. xxxii. 10, that God hath given them thee? I fear me nay; the bad means thou usest for the attainment of them will gainsay it. God gives what he gives by lawful means. Thy courses were sinful and unlawful; as lying, cozenage, oppression, usury, extortion, or the like, whereby these were gotten. Whence is it that trades are called crafts and mysteries, but from hence, in that more vile by the craft and sin of their trades than by the trade itself? Hence also is it that men are fain to be as wary in buying and bargaining with most tradesmen in these sinful days, as if they were fallen into the hands of thieves and cut-purses. Will not these things witness against many at the last day, that they have not lawfully what they have? Will not these sinful courses convict thousands of theft before the Lord? Yes, questionless. Happy were it for these if they could in time see it, and repent thereof, and make restitution of what they have thus unjustly gotten, while there is help and hope; otherwise let such be assured a day will come whenas they shall be compelled to restore, and say to Satan and the world, as Judas to the high priests, Take your silver, your gold, your wealth again, 'it is the price of blood,' Mat. xxvii. 3, 4; but shall find no better answer than that they gave him, 'What is that to us?' thou shouldst have looked to it.

Use 2. Secondly, Is God such an absolute Lord, having power and dominion over all? Let this serve for our instruction, and teach us all to shew our allegiance to him in the practice of these duties.

First, In carrying in our hearts a fear and reverence of his majesty, even such a fear as doth proceed from love. This God requireth: Mal. i. 6, 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is my honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?' saith the Lord Almighty.

Secondly, By an open profession and acknowledg-

ment that he is our Lord. Even as servants by their livery make known to all men whose they are and whom they serve, so do thou, both by words and deeds, make known to whom thou dost belong; and be not ashamed of thy Master, thou hast no cause. He is far from being a faithful servant that can stand by and be dumb in case his master be dishonoured.

Thirdly, In giving him absolute and universal obedience, cheerfully subjecting ourselves in all things and at all times to his commands. Here must be no reasoning about, no inquiring into his commandments, as may be into men's; for they must be obeyed in him, yea, disobeyed for him, if they command anything contrary to his will; but he must be obeyed absolutely in all the parts of his will revealed. His sayings must be our doings: *Ipse dixit*, must be sufficient.

Fourthly, By acknowledging ourselves to be accountable unto him for all our ways and works. Still remembering the goods we use are none of ours, they are our Lord's, and we are but stewards, who must shortly be called to a reckoning, Luke xvi. 2. He that spendeth his own need care the less; but he that hath a matter of trust committed into his hands, and cannot spend but out of another's stock, had need to look about him, because he must be countable, and so enforced to make good whatsoever he cometh short in his reckonings. Ask then thyself, What have I that I have not received of my Lord and Master? Whence had I these gifts of body, mind, health, wealth, &c., but of him? And so carry thyself in the using of these as that thou mayest be able to hold up thy head before the Lord in that day of reckoning. And thus we see some particulars wherein we are to testify our loyalty and obedience.

Use 3. Lastly, This may be a ground of moderation and meekness for all superiors in their dealings with their inferiors, and such as are under their government, seeing as they are lords over others, so they have a Lord above them. This the apostle putteth masters in mind of, and on this very ground stirs them up to just and equal dealing with their servants, because they also have a Master in heaven, Eph. vi. 9; Col. iv. 1. As if he should say, Beware that you abuse not your authority; for know that you have a supreme Lord and Master above you, as you are above these, who hath more power over you than you have over them, and therefore look unto your carriage.

The second attribute given to him is *Lord of hosts*. The reasons have been before rendered, and this one of the principal, because all creatures are as his hosts, executing his will and pleasure. Whence learn we—

Doct. God is a God of power. He hath all creatures for his hosts, ready *presto* to fight his battles and revenge his quarrels.

Moses sings this forth, and proclaims it abroad, that 'the Lord is a man of war, his name is Jehovah,' Exod. xv. 3. Yea, and that we might the better observe it, Almighty God hath spoken 'once and twice; that power belongeth unto him,' Ps. lxxii. 11. One text repeated twice, pressed again and again, must needs be plain and peremptory;* and therefore we will make no doubt of this truth, for if we should, his mighty works of creation, gubernation, and redemption would convince us.

Use 1. Which being so, how should this teach us to fear this mighty God, who hath such mighty armies and so many hosts to destroy his enemies withal! He need not arm himself with any weapons, either offensive or defensive; it is enough if he but 'arise, for then his enemies shall be scattered,' Ps. lxxviii. 1.† His soldiers are in a readiness, and if he do but move his little finger it is enough. If he say but to a host of frogs, or flies, or lice, or grasshoppers, or caterpillars, to all or any of them, Go, they go immediately, and Pharaoh nor all his host shall ever be able to withstand them. Oh beware then of offending this mighty God, for he hath his armies in the heavens, in the earth, in the air, in the sea, yea, in hell itself. A thousand ways he hath to revenge himself upon us if we rebel.

Use 2. Secondly, If this be so, let the ungodly tremble; for what greater corrosive can come to the heart of a wicked man than the hearing of this truth, that God is so strong, so powerful? 'Hast thou found me, O my enemy?' said wicked Ahab to good Elijah. So may they say to every creature they meet withal, who have God against them. The number of the stars in the sky, fowls flying in the air, beasts feeding in the field, are numberless; how infinitely infinite then is the number of thy enemies, who art enemy to God! In what a woeful and fearful estate art thou, when all that is within thee, without thee, above thee, about thee, God and man, angels, saints, fish and fowls, birds and beasts, and all creeping things, are up in arms against thee, to revenge the Lord's most just and righteous quarrel! What hope of heaven? what hope of having access into God's gracious presence in time of need? Shouldest thou come with a petition to an earthly prince, and find all his officers and attendants to oppose thee, thou couldest have but cold comfort of ever speeding in thy suit. This is thy case—yea, far more woeful. Be not then secure, for thy case is wretched. What Cain sometimes said, thou hast just cause to fear: 'Every creature that meeteth me shall slay me,' Gen. iv. 14. Thou walkest all day long as it were upon a mine of gunpowder; either by force or stratagem thou wilt

* Verba toties inculcata, vera sunt, viva sunt, sana sunt, plana sunt.—Aug. † Cal. in loc.

be surprised and taken. Oh that men would once learn to meddle with their match, and beware of contending with him that is stronger than themselves, lest they be consumed in the end!

Use 3. And lastly, Let the godly rejoice, yea, let them sing for joy, seeing they have such a God, even 'the Lord of hosts, the Lord mighty in battle,' Ps. xxiv., on their sides to preserve and keep them. It is a comfort to serve a master that will take one's part in case of need; but to serve such a master as is able to defend one, is a far greater comfort. Such a one is that God 'whom we serve, he is able to deliver us,' Dan. iii. 17. England was sometimes said to have a warlike George; but the papists being offended with us, to do us, as they suppose, a mischief, have robbed us of our George. And though to other countries they allot a several saint—imitating therein the Gentiles, who going to war had their several gods for their protectors,—as to Spain, St James; to France, St Dennis; to Ireland, St Patrick; to Rome, St Peter and St Paul, and the like,—yet England shall go without. They will leave us God alone to fight our battles, and revenge our quarrel. For which honour and favour all English hearts are bound heartily to thank them.* Let them keep their George, and give us this man of war, whose name is the Lord of hosts; in having him we have enough. If he be with us, we fear neither their he-saints, nor she-saints, nor a thousand more of them, though they be against us. And therefore as our church hath taught us in her liturgy to pray, so let us pray continually, 'O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine inheritance. Give peace in our time, O Lord, because there is no other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.'

Is the house of Israel and the men of Judah his pleasant plant?

Having spoken of the vinitor, and who he was, it followeth now to speak of the vineyard, and who it is. 'The house of Israel and the men of Judah,' saith my text, is it; that is, the whole body of the Jews, both Israel and Judah, even both the kingdoms. Of both which we will speak jointly, seeing they were but one body. The house of Israel and the men of Judah, that is, the seed and posterity of Israel and Judah, those people who issued out of their loins. Whence note we:—

Doct. Good progenitors may have a degenerate and unregenerate offspring.

Israel was good, but his posterity naughty.

Of the first brace of sons which the world's eye did see, one was a branded runagate upon the face of the earth, Gen. iv. 14; such a one as was undutiful to his father, unnatural to his brother, heretical towards his God, damnable to his own soul. From

* Dr Boys, Spr. part. p. 227.

Adam come we to Noah; and of his leash of sons one was a Ham, Gen. ix. 22, 25, who takes an advantage by his father's weakness, discovers his nakedness, and makes him the argument of his sport. Come we from him to faithful Abraham, of whose great care in the well nurturing and training up of his children God himself doth witness, Gen. xviii. 19, yet his condition is no better; for of his two sons, Ishmael was a scoffer, chap. xxi. 9. And as it was thus with the father, so it happened to be no better with his son. Unto Isaac is born not only Jacob, who was this Israel, but also profane Esau, Gen. xxv. 32, so branded as it were in the forehead by the Spirit of God, Heb. xii. 16, for selling away his birthright for a mess of pottage. 'And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of' Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 12, and of Samuel, 2 Sam. xiii. 14; of David, 2 Sam. xv. 16, Josiah, 1 Kings i. 5, and Hezekiah, 2 Kings xxi. 2, 3, with other men of God, whose sons have been sons of Belial, that knew not the Lord.

Reas. The reason is, because that goodness which is in man, he hath it not by nature, but by grace. Now man communicates to his children that which he hath of nature, in begetting children according unto nature, and not that which he hath above nature, by the grace of regeneration.* The grains of wheat which are sowed in the earth, though they be never so well purged from all their superfluities, having neither stalk, nor ears, nor chaff; yet when they spring up again, bring all these with them, because, as one of the fathers saith, that purgation of the corn is not made by nature, but by the art of man. So here in this.

Use 1. Which being so, let none think to be saved by their forefathers' faith or goodness: 'The just shall live by his own faith,' saith Habakkuk, chap. ii. 4; not by the faith of his father, nor, of his father's father. How grossly, then, do such deceive themselves, that run into all excess of riot, and think to have mercy shewed unto them, because of the godliness of their parents!

Obj. 1. But we read that the promise of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost is made to us and to our children, Acts ii. 39.

Ans. True, yet not to all of them, but only to 'so many of them as the Lord our God shall call;' for so it followeth in the words immediately following.

Obj. 2. 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now they are holy,' 1 Cor. vii. 14. Now if they be clean and holy, then are they under the election of grace.

Ans. There is a double holiness: first, of regenera-

* Homo liberis gignit ex carne vetusta et peccatrice, non ex spiritu: quocirca minime mirum si justus justos non gignat, sicut peccator peccatorem.—Aug. con. Pelag., lib. ii. cap. 9.

tion; secondly, of the covenant. In regard of the first, they are rebellious; but in regard of the second, they are holy, whereby they are received into the church visible, and made partakers of the outward privileges thereof, as of the word and sacraments.

So, then, though thou be born of godly parents, this will not profit thee to salvation, except thou believest and repentest; for as the sin of the father prejudiceth not the believing child, no more doth the righteousness of the father save the unbelieving.

Use 2. Secondly, Let not parents be too much discouraged, if it so happen that their seed be untoward and ungracious, seeing, as we have seen, it hath been the condition of the best and faithfullest; yea, God, who is the Father of us all, complains that he had 'nourished and brought up children, but they had rebelled against him,' Isa. i. 2. Grace is no inheritance, it cannot be conveyed by us to our children as our land and houses can; neither can we leave it to them as we leave them a possession, to descend by a continued succession, from the father to the son, and so to the son's son, in one race and generation. It is God's free gift, and he giveth it where he pleaseth, and to whom he pleaseth. Only let us use the means to bring them unto God, for that we are bound to do, and then commit the success to him with patience. There is a threefold duty that we owe unto them, which we must look we faithfully discharge: First, that we have a care of their education, to 'bring them up in the information of the Lord,' as St Paul requireth us, Eph. vi. 4. Secondly, that by a godly life we give them good example; for it is an evil great enough that we have derived sin unto them by propagation; let them not draw it also from us by imitation. Thirdly, that we be earnest in the Lord by prayer for them, that he would be pleased to give them a new nature, and to take away the corruption of the old, which in their first generation we communicated to them;^a which duties, if we neglect, we shall be guilty of their blood; but if we perform faithfully and conscionably, we are free, and have delivered our souls, and may comfort ourselves in the testimony of a good conscience, knowing that we only can use the means, it is God only that must give the blessing thereupon.

Use 3. Lastly, Hence let me give a caution to every one, that they beware of over-rash censuring of parents for the loose carriage of their children. We have seen it cleared by a cloud of witnesses, that reformed men have had unreformed children, as circumcised parents begot children which were uncircumcised. And though it be true amongst irrational creatures, that they ever bring forth their like; eagles have eagles, and doves, doves; yet, in

^a A child of so many prayers and tears cannot be lost, as one said concerning Augustine, the son of Monica.

man's progeny there is often found not so like a proportion as unlike a disposition. To condemn then the parent upon this ground, for that the child is dissolute, is too too rash; for in so doing we may condemn the generation of the just. And thus much for this first point; now a second follows.

These people, as we see, were called by the name of Israel and Judah; good names both, and honourable; one signifieth a *prince* or *preailer* with God, and the other signifieth *confession* or *praise*; and yet this people were reckless, dissolute. Hence learn we—

Doct. Good names and titles profit nothing at all, if our lives be not conformable to those names and titles that are given us.

Cain, a good name, signifying a *possession*; but what is he the better for it, when he is a murderer? Gen. iv. 8. So Absalom, which made war against his father, had the name and made goodliest show to be *his father's peace*, and yet he proved to be his greatest heart-smart, 2 Sam. xviii. 33. Judas his name was good, and proclaimed him to be a *professor*; but what doth that avail him, when by his deeds he shewed himself a devil? John vi. 70. Thus the Jews bragged they were Abraham's seed, John viii. 33; but alas, will it profit them when they are the servants of sin? Surely it cannot profit them at all.

Reas. And no wonder, for God respecteth truth in the inward parts, and not outward titles; he regardeth substance more than shadows.

Use. This being so, let none content themselves with their good names, or outward titles of honour that are given them; but let them use them as a spur to stir them up to imitate such good men as have been before so named. And surely this was one reason why this people were thus called by the name of Israel, that they might hereby be put in mind of their pedigree, and so of their predecessors' piety; and consequently to make them ashamed of their own apostasy, who were so far degenerated from those religious men of whom they were descended. Neither content thyself with that honourable title of a *Christian*, or of a *professor*, or of a *protestant*, unless thou makest good those names by a holy and godly life. Tell me then, thou that art thus called, hast thou those gifts and graces which those names import? hast thou received an ointment from that holy one? hath he opened thy eyes, quickened thy dead heart, sanctified thy unclean affections? If it be thus, then indeed these names and titles are well befitting thee; but if it be otherwise with thee, if thou livest loosely and profanely, thou mayest blush so often as thou hearest thyself called *Christian*, or *professor*, or the like; for thou art nicknamed and mis-called. It is as if a cobbler should be

called *worshipful*, or a car-man, *honourable*; and who could away with that? Nay, more, it is a kind of sacrilege, under those holy names to live an unholy life. Belshazzar sinned against God by excess and intemperancy in his eating and drinking; but in that he abused the holy vessels of the house of God, to serve him to such profane and unholy uses, was a sin more fearful and sacrilege most horrible. Thus for thee, as thou art a *man*, to sin, provokes God's wrath, and deserves damnation; but to sin *under the Christian name*, and commit wickedness as thou art a *gospeller*, it is with Belshazzar to abuse and profane the holy vessels of God's house; and this must needs plunge thee into the hottest fire of hell. To conclude this use, let me tell you what I have read of a libidinous gentleman,* who sporting with a courtesan in a house of sin, happened to ask her name, which she said was *Mary*, whereat he was stricken with such a remorse and reverence, that he instantly not only cast off the harlot, but amended his future life. Art thou called a Christian, and yet followest drunkenness, swearing, &c.? let that very name cause thee to be ashamed of thy folly. Let all apply what I forbear to amplify.

Further, in that these people have these titles, *Israel, Judah*, the names of their forefathers, given them as titles of honour, and names of excellency, we learn a third lesson; and observe another note—viz.,

Doct. Good parents and progenitors are great ornaments to their posterity. Parents that are godly and religious do no whit at all disgrace their children by their piety and godliness, but much countenance and grace them by it, inasmuch that it is an honour for posterity to descend from such worthy ancestors.

Solomon's proverb may be a sufficient proof hereof: Prov. xvii. 6, 'Children's children are the crown of the elders; and the glory of the children are their fathers'; to wit, if they be godly and pious. Besides sundry instances and examples that might be brought for the confirming of this truth; as of Abraham, what an honourable title was it accounted to be called the son of Abraham, and child of Abraham! The Jews brag and boast therefore, they were 'Abraham's seed,' and they 'had Abraham to their father,' John viii. 33; Mat. iii. 9. And so it was indeed to them that walked in his steps, and were like him in grace. And so afterwards in David, what an excellent prerogative was it accounted to be, to descend from him and be of his family!

Reas. For such are the seed of princes and lineage of kings; for thus hath God advanced the godly to be kings, priests, and prophets unto himself, Rev. i. 6. They come of the noblest house and family that is, whose original cometh not out of some corner of the earth; but they spring of Christ, of whom all the

families in heaven and earth are called. And this is right and proper nobility indeed.

Use 1. This being so, it first reproveth such parents as hope to bring credit and renown to their posterities by their lewd and sinful courses; they live miserably and deal unjustly, and open the mouths of all to cry out upon their falsehood and deceit, their covetousness and extortion, and yet think to raise up their houses, and advance their names, and adorn their children with glory and estimation. But this truth may discover unto such parents their folly and great madness; for this is not the way to bring credit, but disgrace to their posterities, yea, when they are dead and rotten, their evil courses will be cast as dung in the faces of such as they leave behind, as experience makes good. Such a man, saith one, was this child's father. What! that usurer, that worldling, that extortioner, that drunkard, that whoremaster? saith another. How can thy child stand by and hear this without red cheeks? It must needs be matter of shame and grief unto him. Wouldest thou indeed be an ornament to thy child, and child's child after thee? Then see thou be righteous and religious, and so thy name shall be remembered in them when thou art dead. Oh what a credit is it now accounted to be of the posterity of Latimer, Bradford, Ridley, and other of those men of God who suffered for the truth! How are such esteemed and accounted of amongst all! Let experience make thee wise, and so live thou that thy children also may account it their honour, not their shame, to name thee when thou art raked up in the dust.

Use 2. Secondly, Let children who have had, or have, godly and religious parents, be thankful for them, and repose their gentry more in their forefathers' virtues that they had than in their great lands and revenues that they possessed; esteeming them the worthiest of all their ancestors who were the godliest, rather than they who were the wealthiest. And withal, let such be stirred up to tread in their fathers' steps; for all that hath been said is with this *proviso*, that we their children be adorned with their gifts and virtues. For though we descend from godly and worthy ancestors, yet if we degenerate from them, as a base and bastard brood, Ezek. xviii. 10, 13, it can be no honour, credit, comfort, nor commendation to us. Put case a man have a thousand pound land a year left him by his friends, and he spend it all, like the prodigal, in riotous and voluptuous living, Luke xv.; what credit is it for him to brag that such an estate was left him? nay, is it not a shame? So if the virtues of thy parents live in thee, it is then a grace unto thee that thou descendedst from their loins; otherwise the contrary. The very heathen^o have rather chose to descend of un noble parents, so

* Montaigne's Essays.

* Ovid. Metam. lib. xiii. Juvenal, Sat. 8.

themselves were noble and renowned through virtue, than to come of worthy parents and progenitors, and themselves to grow base and degenerate out of kind. So it is better to be religious, and the son of wicked parents, than being the son of godly parents to be wicked. Cain, Ham, Ishmael, and Esau, might boast of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, the noblest parents; who, on the other side, might blush and grieve at such degenerate issues. Walk then in the steps of thy godly parents, and speak not of thy blood, but of thy good; not of thy parent's virtues, but of thy own, *Non genus, sed genius: non gens, sed mens*; for what hath a coward to do to glory in the valour of his father? And I would that papists would consider of this, who brag that their pope and bishops are the successors of Peter, and the rest of the apostles. Well, admit this to be true, yet can they shew us how they succeed them in their gifts and graces? If they cannot, as all the world may see they cannot, their personal succession is nothing worth, and they brag of an empty title without honour.

It remains now that we come to take a view of the fruits which this vineyard brought forth, which is the third and last thing I propounded to be considered.

He looked for judgment, but beheld oppression: for righteousness, but beheld a cry. Here we see, first, what fruits they were which God especially expected; and they were fruits of the second table—judgment, righteousness. And, secondly, what were the fruits which they returned—namely, oppression, a cry.

I might observe hence, from the prophet's elegancy, adorning of his speech rhetorically by a figure, thus much, that—

Doct. Rhetoric is an art sanctified by God's Spirit, and may lawfully be used in handling of God's word. There might be brought divers instances out of holy Scripture wherein all the parts of rhetoric are used, and every approved rule of it practised, yea, even in this very prophecy. But I hasten towards a conclusion, and therefore pass from this with a word of admonition to all, that we beware how we condemn the lawful use with the abuse. For the art itself is to be approved, and only the abuse thereof to be condemned. But I come to the particulars in my text.

He looked for judgment, righteousness. He doth not say he expected oblations and sacrifices, which this people were abundant in, as chap. i. 11; but he expected that judgment and justice should be administered, the cause of the poor pleaded, and all good duties and offices of love should be shewed towards our brethren, and those who were in need. Sundry points might hence be raised, but I will only observe this one, which is as the sum of all.

Doct. The works and duties of the second table are in special manner expected and respected by God. In the first chapter of this prophecy we may read how forward this people were in the outward duties of the first table, offering multitude of sacrifices and burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts, &c., Isa. i. 11. But God he calls them off, and tells them he would none, because they had no regard of the duties of the second table, for their 'hands were full of blood,' ver. 15, 16. Then exhorting them to repentance, he wills them to testify the truth thereof by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. And for their better direction, he instanteth in some particulars, making choice not of such duties as immediately concern himself, but of such as especially concern our neighbour: ver. 17, 'Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.' As if he had said unto them, You offer multitudes of sacrifices, and observe solemn days and feasts, the new moons and sabbaths, and the like, and are not wanting in the outward duties of the first table: but I especially respect the duties of the second, wherein you have been wanting; and therefore labour to find out what is right, and seek after that justice that God requires in his law, dealing with others as you would be dealt withal; give over your cruelty, exercise mercy, and stretch forth your helping hand for the relieving and defending of such as are in need. And in the 58th of this prophecy, ver. 6, 7, we may read how God rejects their prayers and fastings, because they regarded not to shew mercy and kindness unto the poor and needy; and withal shews them what manner of fast it was that he required, namely, to 'loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free. To deal bread unto the hungry, to bring the poor that are cast out unto their houses, to clothe the naked,' and the like. This was the fast that God did especially respect. In the prophecy of Micah we may read what large proffers the wicked make: They will 'come with burnt-offerings and calves of a year old; they will offer thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil; they would give their firstborn for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul,' chap. vi. 6, 7, so that God would be pleased herewith. But yet all this would not please him. Ver. 8, 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' without this all the former is nothing worth. Thus we see verified what we find recorded by the prophet Hosea, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' chap. vi. 6. It is better pleasing unto God to see the duties of justice and righteousness, of mercy and loving-kindness performed to our neighbour, than to have sacrifices never so many or great severed

from these done unto himself. The works and duties that the second table requires to be performed of us are most expected and respected by him.

Reas. For the touchstone of piety and true religion towards God is our just and righteous dealing with our brethren: 1 John iii. 10, 'Herein are the children of God known, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.' True faith is operative, and worketh by love, and is to be manifested by our works, without which it is to be judged dead, as St James speaketh, chap. ii. 18-26. No marvel then if God do so much set by the practice of these duties.

Use. Which serveth to reprove such as bring forth fair leaves of profession in the first table, but are little or nothing at all in the duties of the second table. In the outward and public exercises of religion they are very diligent, as in repairing to the congregation, hearing the word, receiving of the sacraments, and the like. But look on them in those things which concern men, and there you shall find them exceedingly faulty, being unmerciful, unjust, and unrighteous in their dealings. Certainly the religion of these men is in vain; their best services do stink in God's nostrils when righteousness towards man is wanting. Let all such as are in the place of justice—for to them this is especially intended—advisedly consider of this, and beware how they 'turn judgment into gall and wormwood,' as Amos speaks, 'and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock,' Amos v. 7 and vi. 12. I would such would often put Job's question to their soul: 'What shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?' Job xxxi. 14. It would be a good means to make them take up his practice—not to withhold from the poor his desire, nor cause the eyes of the widow to fail; not to lift up their hand against the fatherless, though they saw their help in the gate, and might do it undiscerned, ver. 16, 21. Yea, let us all consider this, and endeavour to be conscientiously just and upright in our dealings between man and man. When the question is made to God what manner of men should dwell in his tabernacle, and rest in his holy mountain—*i.e.*, which should have a good estate here, and a habitation in heaven for evermore, he describeth them by their innocent and harmless behaviour towards their brethren: Ps. xv. 2, 3, 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.' Certainly he regardeth that work very much, which he rewardeth with such and so great wages, and he is well pleased with that person in this life, whom he will receive to dwell with him in everlasting life. But I will be sparing in prosecuting this, in regard of the near affinity

which it hath with the succeeding doctrine, to which I hasten.

But behold oppression. The clean contrary was found to that which God expected. He looked to have the poor defended and their causes heard by such as were in place, but by none so much as they were they injured and oppressed. A sin beyond thought or expectation, and therefore set out with a note of admiration. '*Behold oppression,*' &c. Hence our note shall be—

Doct. Oppression of the poor, especially by such as ought to be defenders and relievers of the poor, is a sin heinous, grievous.

In the first chapter of this book we find it to be of a bloody nature. Isa. i. 15, 'Your hands are full of blood.' And in the third chapter, to make the former good, we shall find oppressors charged with beating the people to pieces, and grinding the faces of the poor, chap. iii. 15; and in the fourteenth Psalm, with 'eating them up as one would eat up bread,' Ps. xiv. 4. The prophet Amos chargeth oppressors with 'swallowing of them up,' Amos viii. 4; and Micah chargeth princes and magistrates yet further—to wit, with 'eating the very flesh of his people, and flaying their skins from off them, and breaking of their bones, and chopping them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron,' Micah iii. 3. How fearfully was Jehoiakim threatened for this sin! Jer. xxii. 13-19, 'Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work. . . . Shalt thou reign, because thou clothest thyself in cedar? Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: . . . but thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or Ah my sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.' These are proofs sufficient for my doctrine, strongly confirming what I have now taught—*viz.*, oppression of the poor, especially by such as ought to defend and relieve the poor, is a heinous and grievous sin.

Reas. 1. For, first, It is a sin against nature and race. Beasts, we see, molest not their own kind.

Sevis inter se convenit ursis.

Lions fight not with lions; serpents spend not their venom upon serpents; and therefore it is more

than brutish for man to devour man by this sin of oppression. This made Cyprian, seeing it practised by some, to cry out with wonderment and admiration, Oh the detestable cruelty of man's malice! The fierce lions spare Daniel in the den; the ravenous birds do feed Elijah in the wilderness; but one man exerciseth cruelty upon another,* and only man to man is become pernicious.

Reas. 2. Secondly, It is a sin against *religion and grace*; for 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,' Titus ii. 11, 12. And this was prophesied of long since, that in the time of the gospel, 'the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the leopard should lie with the kid,' &c., and that 'none should hurt and destroy in all the mountain of the Lord's holiness,' Isa. xi. 6.

Reas. 3. Thirdly, When it is practised by great men, it is a sin against *place*. Now as there is no impiety to that impiety which is committed in God's sanctuary, Jer. vii. 11; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, so there is no injustice to that injustice which is committed and practised in the very seat and sanctuary of justice; and whereby men amidst the law sin against the law,† as Ananias the high priest did, in commanding Paul to be smitten contrary to the law, Acts xxiii. 3. It, therefore, being a sin against race, grace, and place, I doubt not but on all sides it will be confessed to be most heinous.

Use 1. Which doctrine serves first for reprehension, even of all those who use any kind of injustice, either by violence, or by colour of law, or by any other cunning dealing whatsoever, against such as are not able to withstand them, for that I call oppression, 'whose teeth are as swords, and their jaws as knives,' to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from amongst men; who are lions, wolves, kine, bulls, beasts, yea, monsters in the shape of men; with which beasts or monsters many countries swarm, as Egypt did with frogs and locusts. They abound both *in foro* and *in choro*, in change and chancel, church and commonwealth. To rip up all the sorts of them were infinite; with some of the principal I will only deal. And first, to begin with them whom I have not least cause to think upon, our church oppressors, those greedy and harpy-like devourers of sacred things, who prey upon their patrimony who pray for them, and unjustly turn the revenues of the church unto their own proper use; against whom that kingly prophet David bestows a whole psalm, and calls them God's

enemies, tumultuous, proud, God-haters, crafty enemies, confederate enemies, who combine themselves together to annihilate a church, Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3; and that we might not be deceived in the persons, he describes them to us by their words: they are those that say, 'Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession,' ver. 12; they beat their brains, and spend their wits how to appropriate that to them and theirs, which the Almighty is invested in. And that they have, and hold, but by what right or title the very name of *impropriations* doth shew, as being altogether *improper* for them that have them, and held by an *improper title*. For tithes are due only to the church, and cannot be alienated to any other use, they having once been passed over to God, and dedicated to the church; neither have the laity ought to do herewith; for where tithes are paid, there must be a matter of giving and receiving; the minister giveth spiritual things, saith the apostle, and receiveth carnal things, Phil. iv. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 11. Now because laymen cannot perform the one, they have not to meddle with the other; for not keeping the condition, they cannot claim the covenant. I do not deny but it may be in the power of civil magistrates to allow any other maintenance unto the minister, so it be competent; but seeing tithes are by law established amongst us for this purpose, to be the hire of the Lord's labourers, and the wages of his workmen, it is as great a sin to defraud the minister of his portion, as to keep back the meat or wages from an ordinary labourer; yea, far greater. And yet St James saith, that is a sin that crieth loud in the ears of God for vengeance, James v. 4. How many thousands, then, in this land stand obnoxious in a high degree to the judgments of God for this same sin, which is the bane of our people and blemish of our church! Some there are who rob God of his main tithes, yet are content to leave him still the lesser; they pluck our fleeces and leave us the tag-locks, poor vicarage tithes, whilst themselves and children are kept warm in our wool, the parsonage. And others yet more injurious, who think that too much. Would the law but allow them a pair of shears, they would clip the very tag-locks off. These, with the deceitful tailor, are not content to shrink the whole and fair broadcloth of the church to a dozen of buttons; but they must likewise take part of them away, and nim the very shreds, which only we have left. After they have full gorged themselves with the parsonage grains, they can find means, either by unconscionable leases, or compositions, to pick the vicarage bones. And thus as Dionysius dealt with Jupiter Olympius,* who took from him a massy garment of gold, which Hiero had dedicated to him of the spoils of Carthage, and gave him a woollen cloak, saying, that the other was too heavy for summer and

* *Ferre parent, aves pascunt, homines serviunt.*—Cyp. scilicet.

† *Inter leges ipsas contra leges delinquitur.*—Cyp. ad Donat., lib. ii. epist. 2.

* *Ælian. Var. Hist., lib. i. cap. 20.*

too cold for winter, but this was fit for both seasons; even so, I say, we are dealt withal. And now our poverty is flouted at by them that have our livings, as the Jews, who, having spoiled Christ of his vestments, then mocked him with baseness. Every gentleman thinks ministers mean, and yet all the world sees that our means have made them gentlemen. But let all such persons know, as have any way intruded upon church rights, God hath a *quare impedit* against them, which one day they must make answer to.

Obj. 1. You say they were taken away from idle drones and fat-bellied monks.

Ans. True, from the unworthy they were taken, and from the worthy they are detained. Wicked papists had them, ungodly robbers have them.² And as one observes upon the battle of Montlecheri, some lost their livings for running away, and they were given to those who ran ten miles farther. Idleness hath lost, and oppression hath gained.

Obj. 2. You object again, that they were given by our forefathers not to us, but to Romish priests and bishops, who are deprived of them; and therefore you have as much right to them as any of our clergy.

Ans. Thus is this objection answered: These were given to religious uses, and for the increase of true religion and learning. Now if they, by injury of the time, through ignorance mistook the truth, it is no wrong, nay, it is great right, to keep their general purpose, with amendment of their particular error.

Obj. 3. Again you plead, they are your inheritances, left by your fathers; and if they have been taken from the church, you took them not. But learn what that meaneth:

Ans. If a father 'that hath oppressed the poor and needy, and spoiled by violence, &c., beget a son that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth and doth not the like, &c., he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live,' &c., Ezek. xviii. 14-19. And then that objection is answered.

Obj. 4. Yet law is on your side, and you do no more than that allows.

Ans. Though the laws of men are for you, yet the laws of God, by which you must one day stand or fall, are plain against you. And albeit it holds in the courts of men, yet it will never hold in the court of heaven.[†] Besides, the civil laws are not on your side; for they hold that the things of God—such as are our tithes and revenues of the church—ought not to belong to lay persons. But say they were, yet what are you the better that the laws of men do patronise you in it, when the law of God condemns you for it? Oh that all such as are any way guilty of

this sin would in time bethink them, and call to mind the horrible examples of God's judgments in former ages for it. Belshazzar, king of Babylon, abusing the holy vessels of the temple to profane uses, was first wounded inwardly with terror of conscience, and afterwards was cruelly murdered, Dan. v. 2-7. In both the books of the Maccabees, we read of Alcynus, Heliodorus, Lysimachus, Antiochus, Menelaus, and Nicanor, all notorious church robbers, and all came to fearful ends.^{*} The example likewise of Ananias and Sapphira is not to be forgotten, who for withholding part of that money which was consecrated to God by their own gift, were by the severity of God's justice struck dead, as invaders of God's right, Acts v. 2. Thus according to Solomon's proverb, 'It is a snare to a man that devoureth holy things,' Prov. xx. 25. And as a snare, first, it catcheth suddenly; secondly, it holdeth surely; and, thirdly, it destroyeth certainly. Let our impropriaries apply it, and learn to be wise by others' harms. Let them beware how they Jewishly with the spoils of Christ purchase fields of blood for themselves and theirs. For questionless the church's goods have proved more unfortunate to the gentry of this land than ever did the gold of the temple of Tholossa to the followers of Scipio, of which whoever carried any part away, never prospered after. This hath been as that coal which hung at the piece of meat which the eagle stole from the altar, where-with she fired her nest, and burnt up herself and young ones. Had it not been for this, it may be thought many a fair family had at this day stood, which is now ruined. God is as just as ever, and detesteth this sin as much as ever he did; and therefore let such as will not leave it and repent of it assure themselves that they shall speed as others have done before them. To you that have any impropriations in your hands, I say as Daniel did in the like case to Nebuchadnezzar, 'Let my counsel be acceptable to you, break off this your sin by righteousness,' Dan. iii. Make restitution of that which most unjustly you have so long detained, that so there may be a healing of your error. Thou hast taken away the church's dowry, and spoiled her of it, now it were but reason, if thou shouldst make her a jointure to recompense the wrong offered, and the loss she hath sustained. But, however, restore to God his own, that God may restore to you your own.[†] For with what face canst thou expect an inheritance from Christ in heaven, who detainest away from Christ his inheritance upon earth? What you get by such a destiny shall be your fatal destiny; you shall leave the gold behind you, but carry the guilt with you to everlasting fire.

^{*} Possidebant papiste, possident rapiste.—*Cominæus*, lib. i. cap. 4.

[†] In jure fori, non in jure cœli.—*Aug. De Vit. et Morib. Cler.*

^{*} 1 Mac. ix. 54-56; 2 Mac. iii. 24, 25; iv. 39, 41, 42; v. 15, 16; cum xer. 11; xiii. 4-8; xv. 30-34.

[†] Moneo ut reddatis Deo sua, ut Deus restituat vobis vestra.—*Chrys. in Mat. iii.*

And that which you devour here, you are like to digest in hell hereafter,* except by restitution you vomit it up before. We do not crave that you would with Zacheus restore fourfold—though it is apparent that the tenths were got in old time from us by most false and forged evilations—we only crave our own, we would ask no more, nor willingly take less, for our whole duty is still required, then why should not our whole due be paid?† And yet that the world may learn of us contentedness, as well by our practice as our doctrine, we would for the present take in good part, and rest contented with a part of our own. And some competent portions out of the impropriations, proportioned to the quantity of the charge imposed, and the gifts and pains required, would for a time be a reasonable satisfaction in our ministry, until our state found itself either better enabled or more straitly tied in conscience to full restitution. And therefore let all such as have impropriations in their hands be hereby moved to make some restitution, in whole or part, as their estates may bear, as some already have done, to the disburdening of their consciences, and good example of others. But here I look to have that counsel given me which one did once give Luther, when he first began to preach against the pope's usurpation and tyranny: You had as good hold your peace; this wickedness is so powerful, that you will never prevail against it. Get you to your study, and say, Lord have mercy on us, and procure to yourself no ill-will. Well, if the worst come, I can but speed as others have done before me. I fear, indeed, I do but beat the air, for this devil is not easily cast forth. The sons of Zerniah are too hard for us, unless Christian magistrates, who are 'nursing fathers' to the church, Isa. xlix. 23, do by their power, with good Nehemiah, work a reformation, Neh. xiii. 11, 12, and compel them to bring their tithes again into the house of God. It is the king's evil; no hand but his can heal it. But as the prophet said in another case, 'For Zion's sake I cannot hold my tongue, and for Jerusalem's sake;' for the poor church's sake, 'I cannot cease,' Isa. lxix. 1; and I would to God that God's ministers were here *Boanerges*, sons of thunder, to thunder out God's judgments against this horrible sin of sacrilege. And that all we who have anything to do with any of these persons, how great soever, would cry aloud against them, and not spare, Isa. lvi. 1, that if it be possible they might be roused and awakened out of this same sin, which in many places causeth prophesying to fail, and consequently the people perish, Prov. xxix. 18.

* *Multi in hac vita manducant quod postea apud inferos digerunt.*—Aug.

† Mr Crashaw, Epist. Dedic. to Perk. treat. of the duty and dig. of Min.

Leave we now the church, and come we to the commonwealth, and there we shall meet with more of this bloody generation. First, Such as my text here especially speaks of, corrupt judges and magistrates, who 'judge not the fatherless, neither doth the widow's cause come before them,' Isa. i. 23. As Amos speaketh, who 'turn judgment into wormwood and gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock: who afflict the just, take a bribe, and turn aside the poor in the gate from their right,' Amos v. 7, 12 and vi. 12. These the prophet Zephaniah is not afraid to call 'roaring lions and ravening wolves,' Zeph. iii. 3; and our prophet Isaiah, being 'very bold,' Rom. x. 20, calleth them 'companions of thieves,' Isa. i. 23. And why so? Did they take purses by the highways? No; but they took bribes in their chambers. 'Every one loved gifts, and followed after rewards,' &c. And, as the prophet Hosea speaketh, they 'loved to say with shame, Give ye,' Hosea iv. 18. Now, I pray you, what difference is there between *Give ye* and *Deliver ye*, except it be this: *Give ye* goeth often in chains of gold, whilst *Deliver ye* lieth in fetters of iron? Before God there is no difference between thievery and bribery. I doubt not but this kingdom will afford as worthy judges and magistrates as any land or people in the world. And as Justinian said, so with a safe conscience many of our rulers may; they can lift up their hands clean to God, to the king, and to the law, and make protestation with just and uncorrupt Samuel; they have 'defrauded none; they have oppressed none,' 1 Sam. xii. 3. Yet I wish—and therein, I hope, do no man harm—that all could say so. Then would not justice be made a hackney, to be backed for money; neither could a golden spur do anything to bring her to the desired journey's end of injury and wrong.

But oh the wickedness of these times! wherein, with Solomon, we may observe many a 'just man to perish in his righteousness,' Eccles. vii. 15, and the wicked to prosper in their wickedness. Is a man well moneyed? Then, saith the proverb, he is too heavy to be cast; for what is wanting in the goodness of his cause, the greatness of the fees will make up.‡ So that the rich may say unto the poor, as *Æsop's* wolf unto the sheep, when they were in contention together, Thou hast a better cause than I, but I have stronger teeth than thou. Gain and rewards be the *remora* to the ship of justice. She cannot now be called the Speed, but the Delay. A motion this term, an order next, and instantly all is crossed. A writ of error puts all out of course. Jethro was not pleased, as it seems, to see causes hang from morning to evening, Exod. xviii. 14: had he lived in

* *Pecuniisens damnari non potest. Cui vis est jus non metuit, jus abruitur vi.*

these days, how would it have grudged him to see them hang from term to term, from year to year! and the best causes to be used as sore legs are by unconscionable chirurgeons, held long in hand, not for the difficulty of the cure, but for the gain thereof! The poor client is fain to trudge up this term and next, emptying his purse with paying fees to one and to another, and still the web of his suit is drawn out of a greater length till he want weft to prosecute it; and so, after all his pains and cost, is in the end enforced to let it fall. Or say he have the day, yet he makes no saving match, by reason the charges of his suit are greater than the costs that shall be awarded.^o Oh the uncertain events of suits, besides the trouble! I hope to see an end this term of my suit, saith the poor blood-drawn wretch; when, alas, he sees no end the next term, nor next after that—yea, oftentimes the next and next year is past first: his suit is a suit of durance, almost an everlasting suit. And thus, while the poor oppressed runs to them, who should be as a 'shelter from the wind, and a covert from the tempest,' Isa. xxxii. 2, it oftentimes falls out that, with the silly sheep running in a storm to the hedge or thicket, they are so ensnared amongst the thorns and briars as that they can hardly wind and wrest themselves out without loss of wool and coat. What with delays, demurs, and a thousand tricks which money will find out, they lose their fleece, and carry away their flesh whole upon their backs with much ado. If this weather hold, many men will go nigh to be of the mind that Themistocles was sometimes of, who professed that if two ways were shewed him, one to hell, and the other to the bar, he would choose that which went to hell, and forsake the other. See, then, all you that are in place of justice, that you keep yourselves untainted of this sin. 'Walk righteously, speak uprightly, despise the gain of oppression, shake your hands from holding of bribes, stop your ears from hearing of blood, and shut your eyes from seeing evil,' Isa. xxxiii. 15.

2. Merciless and cruel landlords, who, partly by racking and improving of old rents, and that without the old minds of our forefathers, I mean their charity, for so it is lawful to improve them, partly by enclosing of greens, commons, woods, or other of the like, which appertain of right unto their tenants, partly by burdening them with carriages, and such like services, more than was covenanted or agreed upon, and partly by making their leases void when it pleaseth them, so that a covenant to-day shall be none to-morrow, and that which is none now shall be one anon,[†] they oppress their tenants, grind their

faces, and suck their bloods. The poor farmer he is fain to endure the heat and burden of the day: he riseth early, goeth late to bed, eateth the bread of carefulness, and sitteth with many a hungry meal, not being able to spare a morsel of bread to others, nay, hardly able to give food unto his family; and all that he does or can do is but as a prey to his greedy landlord. Good words it may be, prayers they shall sometimes have returned, as *God help you, bless you, and give you good of it, &c.*; but if their prayers were worth a penny they would keep them to themselves, their tenants should not be troubled with them.

And herein they are like Darius, who prayed for Daniel that God would deliver him when he himself sends him to the lions' den, Dan. vi. 16. These are oppressors, and such ones as God hath sworn to take away with hooks, and their posterity with fish-hooks, Amos iv. 2.

3. Ingressors, whose practice is to compass sea and land to get a commodity into their hands; which having once obtained, they set a price upon it as large as their own consciences, or else hoard it up only to make a dearth without a scarcity. I deny not but it is lawful to buy the overplus of any commodity, and when men's turns are served in times of plenty, to take the residue, as Joseph did, that in time of dearth he may have to help the commonwealth, with some good and moderate gain to himself also. But these, instead of laying up to prevent a dearth, do hoard up to procure one, which time is the ingressor's day wherein he doth enrich himself with the spoil of the poor. Against these very persons Amos thus prophesieth: 'Hear this, O you that swallow up the poor, that you may make the needy of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, and make the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsify the weights by deceit? and buy the poor for silver, and the needy for shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?' Amos viii. 4-6. They had long, as it may seem, kept up the corn for this purpose, that it might grow dear, and now they had a time to serve their turn in, and they must set it to sale in all haste, so that they thought the new moon and the sabbath-days appointed for God's own service too long until they were a-selling. And now they intend to prey upon the poor, for they will sell little for much; lessening the measure and enhancing the price. The poor shall buy the refuse dear, which is little worth, and sell themselves cheap, even in a manner for old shoes, to pay for it. Here God sent corn, and the devil sent garners; nay, in some sort they were worse than the very devil himself, for he seemed to have some charity in him when he would have had Christ to turn stones into bread, Mat. iv., and so make a plenty in time of scarcity, but

* Major est expensarum sumptus quam sententiae fructus.
—*Elian*, lib. ix. cap. 18.

† Pactum non pactum est, non pactum pactum est quod illis libet.—*Plaut*.

these endeavoured, what in them lay, to make a scarcity in the midst of plenty, turning bread into stones, a trick beyond the devil. Are not these oppressors?

4. Usurers, who may well be compared to the timber worm, which to touch is as soft as silk, but hath teeth so hard as that it eats the oak; or like the beaver, which biteth so sore as that he never looseth his teeth until he have broken the bones.^o It may be truly said of these, 'Desolation and destruction is in their path,' Isa. lix. 7; whosoever they set foot, they make havoc of all. The prophet Ezekiel doth hedge in this sin between bribery and extortion: 'In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord; therefore I have smitten my hands at thy dishonest gain,' Ezek. xxii. 12. And in another place we shall find that it and oppression is made both one: 'If thou lend money to my people with thee, thou shalt not be an usurer, thou shalt not oppress him,' Exod. xxii. 25. Thus by God's own testimony these are oppressors. Not inaptly may we compare the usurer to the nether millstone, which is slow and stirs not; he sits at home and spends his time in a devilish arithmetic, in numeration of hours, days, and moneys, in subtraction from other men's estates and multiplication of his own, until he have made division between his soul and heaven, and divided the earth to himself, and himself to hell. His broker we may compare to the upper millstone, without which the nether millstone may seem unprofitable, that is quick and stirring, and runs round. The poor, like corn, who between both these is grinded into powder. Surely it is for our sins that God suffers usurers amongst us. It may be he suffers these a while, as he did the Canaanites in Israel, lest the wild beasts should break in upon them, lest pride and a full estate should spill men's souls; yet we may safely say of these, as Joshua did of those, they are 'pricks in our sides, and thorns in our eyes.' Now the mercy of God rid us of them! Let them bring what excuses, apologies, mitigations, evasions, or distinctions they possibly can invent; let them reply, Usury is no sin, many learned men are of this opinion; yet what are they the better, if God himself be not of the same mind those learned men are of? And let them tell me if their consciences can be so satisfied. Would not the greatest usurer willingly give a hundred pound bag to be secured in this point? It is not safe wading far in a questionable water. Oh yet that there were hope with any sayings to move, then I would spend some time, and take some pains in persuading these men, who deal altogether in letting out their money to men, their time

to mammon, their body to pining, their mind to repining, their soul to Satan; that they would fall to restoring, because the sin is retained until the gains of usury be returned;^o which saying, though it seem hard, yet it is most true. And what though they should in so doing restore all they have? I would tell them, as the prophet did Amaziah, 'The Lord is able to give thee more than this,' 2 Chron. xxv. 9. A mansion in God's kingdom is worth all thy cash. But I speak to the belly that hath no ears. Shew me the usurer, except Zachæus, that ever repented truly; for as humility is the repentance of pride, so is restitution of this sin. I doubt not but there are some, but they will be as dainty dishes in heaven as venison is on a ploughman's table. Wherefore I will forbear any further dealing with these, and rather speak in general to all oppressors of what kind soever, and so hasten to an end. Let all such know as use any kind of injustice, *vi* or *dolo*, by force or fraud, against the poor and needy, who are no way able to withstand them, that they flay their skins off, they grind their faces; yea, eat their very flesh, as sometimes that poor lean widow told Baldwin, an archbishop of Canterbury,† when she heard him boasting that he had never eat flesh in all his days, that he had eat up hers in taking away her cow, whereby she lived. And let them call to mind the fearful woes that are thundered out against them for this sin. There is a woe from Isaiah, chap. iii. 14, 15; a woe from Jeremiah, chap. xxii. 13; a woe from Micah, chap. ii. 1, 2; a woe from Habakkuk, chap. ii. 12. Woe and alas then, that such can be secure. Oh that such would now at length call themselves to account for their oppressions, that some remorse might be wrought in their hearts if it were possible! Such as these in former times have been executed, as thieves are now amongst us. Catillus, a British king, hung up all oppressors of the poor.‡ And after him king Edward, commonly called good king Edward, banished such the land. And by the ancient laws of England, the goods of oppressors, dying without restitution, were forfeit to the king, and all his lands unto the lord of the town.§ And it is apparent by the canon law,|| that heretofore they have been denied Christian burial. Were the same laws still in force, undoubtedly it would be a good restraint. And yet what is all this to expulsion out of God's kingdom? Oh that these would bethink them of that dreadful day of reckoning, and of that terrible sentence which shall be then denounced, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' Mat. xxv. 41. There is the

* Non remittitur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.—Aug.

† Acts and Mon., p. 233. ‡ Stow in his Summary.

§ Glanvil, lib. vii. de leg. et cons. Angl., cap. 37.

|| Extra de Usur., cap. Quia in om.

* Jul. Solin, cap. 23.

rejection, For 'I was an hungry, and you gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye did not relieve me,' ver. 42. There is a reason of their rejection. Oh then, how fearful will their case be against whom the Judge may thus proceed in sentence, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:' for I had meat, and by force you took it from me: I had drink, and you spoiled me of it: I had a house, and you thrust me out of doors: I had clothes, and you pulled them from my back: I was in health, and you made me sick: I was at liberty, and you imprisoned me! For if by that sentence they be damned who have not done the works of mercy; much more shall they be damned who have acted the works of cruelty. If by that sentence they be damned who have not succoured nor relieved the poor; much more shall they be damned who have oppressed and crushed the poor. To wind up all in a word, and so to turn the use from reprehension to exhortation, 'Let no man from henceforth oppress nor defraud his brother, for the Lord is the avenger of all such things,' 1 Thes. iv. 6. Let us all so carry ourselves, as that with blessed Paul we may glory as he did, 'We have wronged no man, we have consumed no man, we have defrauded no man,' 2 Cor. vii. 2. And so I leave this, which especially respects the agent, and come to what remains, which especially respects the patient.

Behold a cry, i.e., of the poor and needy, of the fatherless and widow, and such as were oppressed. Here we see,—

Doct. The cries of the oppressed ascend up into the Almighty's ears. He hears their groans, and beholds their grievances.

The Lord told Moses as much when he called him to be the deliverer of his people Israel, 'I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them,' Exod. iii. 7, 9, and ii. 23, 24. Afterwards, when God forbade his people to oppress the stranger, fatherless, and widow, he addeth this as a reason, 'I will surely hear their cry,' Exod. xxii. 23. Job announceth as much as I have delivered, 'They cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted,' Job xxxiv. 28. So doth the psalmist, 'The righteous cry,' when he is thus oppressed, 'and God heareth him,' Ps. xxxiv. 17. St James likewise confirmeth it, 'Behold the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept

back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.'

Reas. 1. And how can it be otherwise? For mark our blessed Saviour's own argument, Luke xviii. 4, 'If unfortunate clamour prevail with the unjust judge, who neither regardeth man nor feareth God, shall not God much more avenge his own elect ones, that cry day and night unto him, for the wrong that is done unto them, through the oppression of the mighty? I tell you, saith our Saviour, though he forbear long, yet at length he will do it.'

Reas. 2. David furnisheth us with another reason: 'A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, is God in his holy habitation,' Ps. lxxviii. 5. These are his clients, he hath taken them into his protection; he is become their judge; and 'shall not the judge of all the world do right?' Gen. xviii. 25.

Use 1. This nearly concerns both oppressors and the oppressed. As for oppressors, they had need be well advised what they do; for if they continue in their cruelty, the poor must needs sigh and cry, and God will hear them, which if he do, he will cause their oppressors to hear of him. 'He will judge the fatherless, and the oppressed, that the man of earth may no more oppress,' Ps. x. 17. Or suppose that they themselves cry not, but 'sit down by it,' and thrust their mouths 'in the dust,' Lam. iii. 28, 29, 'swallowing their grief with silence,' Ps. xxxix. 9, yea, praying for them who persecute and oppress them, rather than putting up any bill of complaint to God against them, Ps. cix. 4, Acts vii. 60, Luke xxiii. 34; yet the sin itself will cry though they be silent.

Clamitat in cœlum vox sanguinis et Sodomorum,
Vox oppressorum, merces retenta laborum.

Every sin indeed hath its voice to discover itself to God, saith one,^c and not a voice only, but feet also, yea, and wings too, to make way and speed into heaven for vengeance; but yet there are four sins, and but four, as is observed,[†] mentioned in Scripture, that are said to cry. The first is homicide, murder, or manslaughter, whereof Almighty God thus speaketh unto Cain, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from off the earth,' Gen. iv. 10. The second is sodomy, a sin against nature, whereof the Lord speaketh thus unto Abraham, 'Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is exceeding grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry which is come unto me,' Gen. xviii. 20. The third is this of oppression, as the places before

* Omnis namque iniquitas apud secreta Dei judicia habet voces suas.—*Greg. Mor. 5, cap. 8.*

† Aquin. in Jac. v. 4.

quoted shew, as also that of Habakkuk, chap. ii. 11, 12, where the very timber and stone from the building that is founded upon falsehood and oppression, is said to cry for vengeance from heaven. The fourth is the keeping back of the labourer's hire, as that place even now brought out of St James for the proof of our point, witnesseth, Jas. v. 4. These sins are not only vocal, but importunate, they will have no nay, but hale down judgments upon the heads of the miserable authors and wretched actors of them. So then it is impossible for oppressors to escape unpunished; and however vengeance may seem limply to pursue them, yet it will overtake them in the end, without repentance hinder.

Use 2. As for the poor oppressed, this may serve for their comfort, and it may teach them patience. He that is over-swayed with might against equity and right in some one court, yet is not out of heart nor hope so long as he may appeal to some other that is higher, especially if he be persuaded of the integrity and uprightness of that judge to whom he makes appeal. Art thou then wronged and injured by the mighty? Yet be not discouraged; for though thou canst have no help at man's hand, yet there is a higher to whom thou mayest appeal, even God in his holy habitation, who beholds thy troubles, hears thy sighs, bottles up thy tears, is acquainted with all thy griefs, and will right thy wrongs. 'For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him at liberty from him that puffeth at him,' Ps. xii. 5. Hear this, you fatherless and widows, you poor and needy ones. And albeit these mighty Nimrods 'ride over your heads,' and 'plough upon your backs, making long furrows there,' Ps. lvi. 12, and thus wound your flesh, yet let them not wound your patience; but 'let your weak hands be strengthened, and your feeble knees confirmed; for behold your God will come with vengeance, your God will come with recompence,' Isa. xxxv. 3. Commit therefore your cause to him who judgeth righteously, and see you assuage your grief and sorrow when you are thus oppressed. He will come, he will come assuredly in due time; he will

come and deliver you from out the paws of the blood-thirsty and cruel man. Though passion therefore possess your bodies, yet let 'patience possess your souls,' Luke xxi.

And now for the *ecce*, which is here twice used, *Behold* oppression, *behold* a cry. Once using is not enough. *Behold*, and *behold* again. One* calls this a starry note. Another† compares it to a hand in the margin of a book, pointing to something of great succeeding consequence. Another‡ compares it to the sounding of a trumpet before some proclamation. Another to the ringing of a bell before the sermon of some famous preacher. And indeed, as often as it is used, for it is used six hundred times in Scripture, it is never used but in matters of great moment, worthy of our deepest and most serious observation, being still put for a word of wonder and note of admiration. So here; behold the wonderful and unspeakable mercy and goodness of the Lord towards this his vineyard. How great things he had done for it, and what means he used for the prosperity and welfare of it; yea, in every one of the former particulars behold it. Again, behold the horrible ingratitude of this his vineyard. Ingratitude in its full proportion, with all the dimensions of its ugly stigmatic form, in it behold. Yea, we may move attention from this word to all that hath been said; for there is nothing in this song but deserves to have this character, *behold*, to be stamped on it. Consider well of all this scripture; examine every parcel; let not one jot or tittle pass away unregarded. God hath commended, yea, recommended what is here taught unto us with this remarkable note, *behold*, yea, *behold again*. See, therefore, that you have been here present with your minds, as well as with your bodies. And all you that are here present, behold from the highest to the lowest, for it deserves deep pondering upon. 'Let him that hath ears to hear, hear,' Mat. xiii. 9; and 'let him that readeth consider,' Mat. xxiv. 15; even so consider we what hath been said, 'and the Lord give us understanding in all things,' 2 Tim. ii. 7.

* Bernard.

† Vega.

‡ Pontan.

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE,

FOR THE READIER FINDING OUT THE CHIEF AND MOST MATERIAL THINGS CONTAINED IN THIS BOOK.

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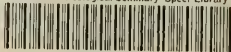
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