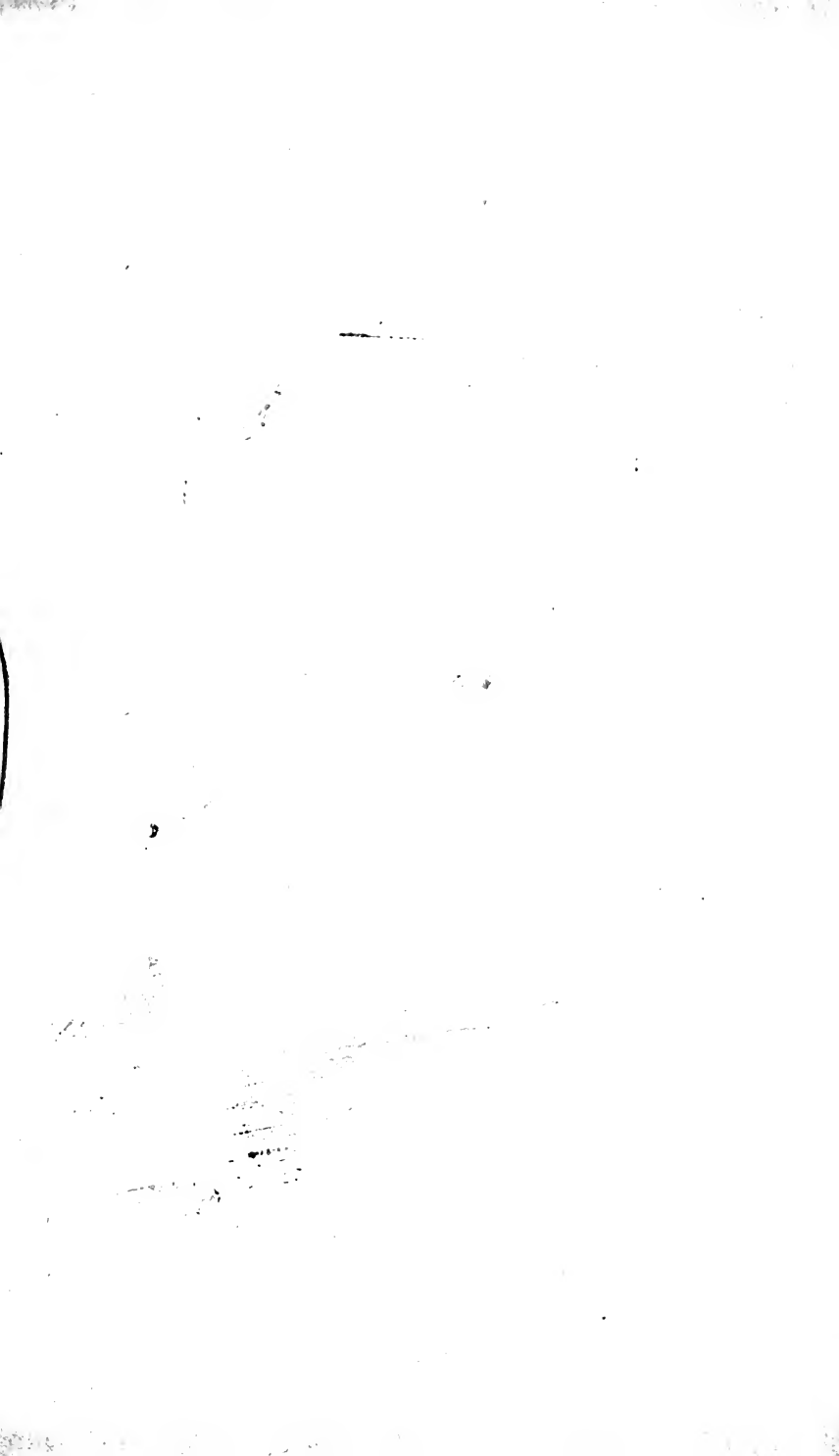
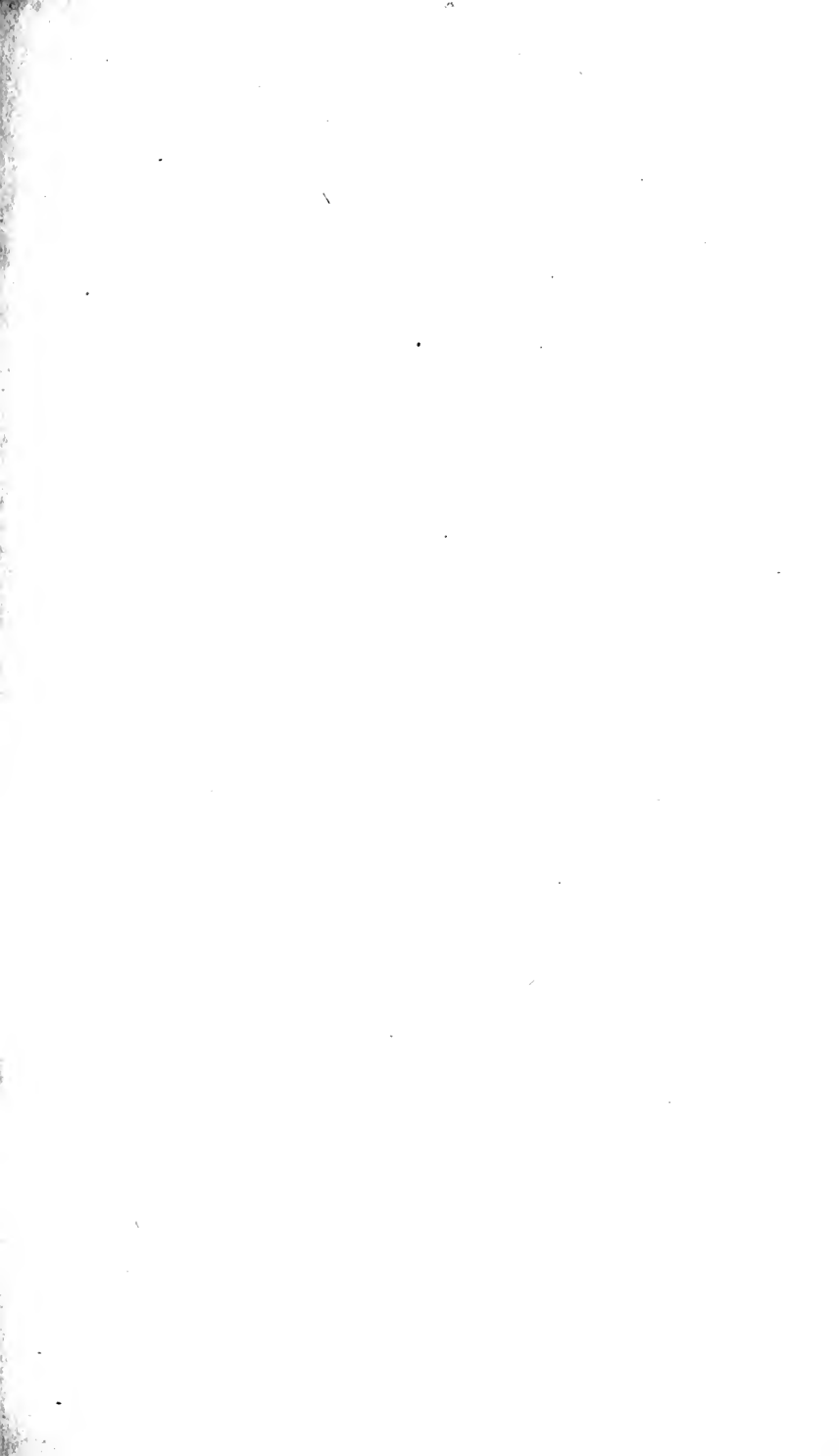


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The whole works of John
Flavel







G. W. Musgrave

THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT DARTMOUTH, DEVON.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE

OF THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE WHOLE.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

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VOL. VI.

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1820.



PREPARATIONS
FOR
SUFFERINGS:

OR THE
BEST WORK IN THE WORST TIMES.

Wherein the Necessity, Excellency, and Means of our readiness for Sufferings are evinced and prescribed; our Call to suffering cleared, and the great unreadiness of many professors bewailed.



THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

IT was the observation of the learned Gerson (when the world was not so old by many years as now it is) that *mundus senescens patitur phantasias*: The aged world, like aged persons, dotes and grows whimsical, in its old age; the truth of which observation is confirmed by no one thing more, than the fond and groundless dreams and phantoms of tranquillity, and continuing prosperity, wherewith the multitude please themselves, even whilst the sins of the times are so great, and the signs of the times so sad and lowring as they are.

It is not the design of this *Manual* to scare and affright any man with imaginary dangers, much less to sow jealousies, and foment the discontents of the times; it being a just matter of lamentation that all the tokens of God's anger produce with many of us no better fruit but bold censures and loud clamours, instead of humiliation for our own sins, and the due preparation to take up our own cross, and follow Christ in a suffering path, which is the only mark and aim of this tract.

We read the histories of the primitive sufferers, but not with a spirit prepared to follow them. Some censure them as too prodigal of their blood, and others commend their courage and constancy; but where are they that sincerely resolve and prepare to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises? Heb. vi. 12. or take them for an "example of suffering, affliction, and "of patience," Jam. v. 10.

It is as much our interest as it is our duty to be seasonably awakened out of our pleasant but most pernicious drowsiness. Troubles will be so much the more sinking and intolerable, by how much the more they steal upon us by way of surprisal. For look, as expectation deflowers any temporal comfort, by sucking out much of the sweetness

thereof before-hand, and so we find the less in it when we come to the actual enjoyment: So the expectation of evils abates much of the dread and terror, by accustoming our thoughts before-hand to them, and making preparation for them: So that we find them not so grievous, amazing, and intolerable when they are come indeed.

This was exemplified to us very lively by holy Mr. Bradford the martyr, when the keeper's wife came running into his chamber, saying, 'O Mr. Bradford, I bring you heavy tidings, for to-morrow you must be burned, your chain is now buying, and presently you must go to Newgate.' He put off his hat, and looking up to heaven, said, O Lord, I thank thee for it; I have looked for this a long time; It comes not suddenly to me, the Lord make me worthy of it. See in this example the singular advantage of a prepared and ready soul.

Reader, The cup of sufferings is a very bitter cup, and it is but needful that we provide somewhat to sweeten it, that we may be able to receive it with thanksgiving; and what those sweetening ingredients are, and how to prepare them, you will have some direction and help in the following discourse; which hath once already been presented to the public view; and that it may at this time also (wherein nothing can be more seasonable) become farther useful and assisting to the people of God in their present duties, is the hearty desire of

Thine

and the Church's

Servant in Christ,

JOHN FLAVEL.

Acts xxi. 13.

*Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?
For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem
for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

CHAP. I.

Wherein the text is opened, and the doctrine propounded.

THE Divine providence is not more signally discovered in governing the motions of the clouds, than it is in disposing and ordering the spirits and motions of the ministers of the gospel, who, in a mystical sense, are fruitful clouds, to dispense the showers of gospel-blessings to the world. The motion of the clouds is not spontaneous, but they move as they are moved by the winds; neither can gospel-ministers chuse their own stations, and govern their own motions, but must go when and where the Spirit and providence of God directs and guides them; as will evidently appear in that dangerous

voyage to Jerusalem in which the apostle was at this time engaged, Acts xx. 22. "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem," [bound in the Spirit:] Alluding to the watery vapours which are bound up in clouds, and conveyed according to the motions of the wind. This journey was full of danger; Paul foresaw his business was not only to plant the gospel at Jerusalem with his doctrine, but to water it also with his blood; but so effectually was his will determined by the will of God, that he cheerfully complies with his duty therein, whatsoever difficulties and dangers did attend it.

And indeed it was his great advantage, that the will of God was so plainly and convincingly revealed to him touching this matter; for no sooner did he employ himself to obey this call of God, but he is presently assaulted by many strong temptations to decline it.

The first rub he met in his way was from the disciples of Tyre, who pretending to speak by the Spirit, said unto Paul, that he should not go up to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 4. The Lord by this trying the spirit of his apostle much, as he did the young prophet coming from Judaea to Bethel, 1 Kings xiii. 18. but not with like success.

His next discouragement was at Cæsarea, where Agabus (whom Dorotheus affirms to be of the seventy-two disciples, and had before prophesied of the famine in the reign of Claudius, which accordingly came to pass) takes Paul's girdle, and binding his own hands and feet with it, said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles," Acts xxi. 11. And surely he was not ignorant what he must expect whenever he should fall into their hands; yet neither could this affright him from his duty.

But then, last of all, he meeteth with the sorest trial from his dearest friends, who fell upon him with passionate intreaties and many tears, beseeching him to decline that journey: O they could not give up such a minister as Paul was! this even melted him down, and almost broke his heart, which yet was easier to do, than to turn him out of the path of obedience: Where, by the way, we may note two things:

First, That divine precept, not providence, is to rule out our way of duty.

Secondly, That no hindrances or discouragements whatsoever will justify our neglect of a known duty.

All these rubs he passes over; all these discouragements he overcame, with this heroic and truly Christian resolution in the text; "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus."

In which words we have,

1. A loving and gentle rebuke.
2. A quieting and calming argument.

First, He lovingly and gently rebukes their fond and inordinate sorrow for his departure, in these words, *What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart?* As if he should say, What mean these passionate intreaties and tempting tears? To what purpose is all this ado? They are but so many snares of Satan, to turn my heart out of the way of obedience: You do as much as in you lies to break my heart; let there be no more of this I beseech you.

Secondly, He labours to charm their unruly passions with a very quieting and calming argument; *For I am ready*, &c. *ετοιμος εχω, parate habeo.* I am prepared and fitted for the greatest sufferings which shall befall me in the pursuit of my duty; be it a prison, or be it death, I am provided for either: Liberty is dear, and life much dearer, but Christ is dearer than either.

But what was there in all this, to satisfy them whose trouble it was to see him so forward? Let the words be considered, and we shall find divers things in them to satisfy and quiet their hearts, and make them willing to give him up.

First, I am ready; that is, God hath fitted and prepared my heart for the greatest sufferings; this is the work of God: flesh and blood would never be brought to this, were not all its interests and inclinations subdued, and over-ruled by the Spirit of God. What do ye therefore in all this, but work against the design of God, who hath fitted and prepared my heart for this service?

Secondly, I am ready; that is, my will and resolution stands in a full bent, my heart is fixed, you cannot therefore study to do me a greater injury, than to discompose and disorder my heart again, by casting such temptations as these in my way, to cause the flesh to rebel, and the enemy that is within to renew his opposition.

Thirdly, I am ready; that is, my heart is so fixed to follow the call of God, whatever shall befall me, that all your tears and intreaties to the contrary are but cast away; they cannot alter my fixed purpose; you had as good be quiet, and cheerfully resign me to the will of God.

Thus you see the equipage and preparation of Paul's spirit to receive both bonds and death for Christ at Jerusalem; this made him victorious over the temptations of friends, and the malice and cruelty of his enemies: By this readiness and preparation of his mind, he was carried through all, and enabled to finish his course with joy. From hence the observation is,

Doct. *That it is a blessed and excellent thing for the people of God to be prepared, and ready for the hardest services, and worst of sufferings, to which the Lord may call them.*

This is that which every gracious heart is reaching after, praying, and striving to obtain; but, ah! how few will attain it! Certainly there are not many among the multitudes of the professors of this generation that can say as Paul here did, "I am ready to be bound, or to die for Christ."

CHAP. II.

Shews, that although God takes no delight in afflicting his people, yet he sometimes exposeth them to great and grievous sufferings; with a brief account why, and how he calls them thereunto.

THE mercies and compassions of God over his people are exceeding great and tender, Psalm ciii. 13. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." He delights not in afflicting and grieving them, Lam. iii. 33. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." The scripture intimates to us a seeming conflict betwixt the justice and mercy of God, when he is about to deliver up his people into their enemies hands, Hosea xi. 8, 9. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Which shews us with what reluctance and great unwillingness the Lord goes about such a work as this. The work of judgment is his *strange work*, it pleases him better to execute the milder attribute of mercy towards his children. Hence we find, when he is preparing to execute his judgments, that he delays the execution as long as the honour of his name and safety of his people will permit, Jer. xlv. 23. He bears till he can bear no longer: he often turns away his wrath from them, Psal. lxxviii. 38, 39. He tries them by lesser judgments and gentler corrections to prevent greater, Amos iv. 6. When his people are humbled under the threatenings of his wrath, his heart is melted into compassion to them, Jer. xxxi. 17, 20. and whenever his mercy prevails against judgment, it is with joy and triumph, Jam. ii. 13. *Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*

For he feels his own tender compassions yearning over them; he foreseeeth, and is no way willing to gratify the insulting pride of his and their enemies. Deut. xxxii. 26, 27. "I said I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men, were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, &c.

Yet all this, notwithstanding, it often falls out, by the provocations of his sons and daughters, that the Lord gives them up into the hands of their enemies for the correction of their evils, and the manifestation of his own glory. Seneca, though a heathen, could say, that God loves his people with a masculine love, not with a womanish indulgence and tenderness: If need require, they shall be in heaviness through manifold temptations, 1 Pet. i. 6. He had rather their hearts should be heavy under adversity, than vain and careless under prosperity; the choicest spirits have been exercised with the sharpest sufferings, and those that now shine as stars in heaven,

have been trod under foot as dung on the earth. 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13. "Unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour working with our hands; being reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it, being defamed we intreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things unto this day." The eleventh chapter to the Hebrews is a compendium of the various and grievous sufferings of the primitive saints: "They were tortured, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being afflicted, destitute, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, in dens, and in caves of the earth." And since the earth hath dried up those rivers of precious blood, whereof the sacred records make mention, what seas of Christians blood have since those days been shed by bloody persecutors? Histories inform us that in the ten primitive persecutions, so many of the saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ have been slain, as that you may allow five thousand a day to every day in the whole year. Those bloody emperors sported themselves with the death of God's dearest saints; many precious Christians were burnt by night at Rome, to serve as torches to light their enemies in the passage through the streets; eight hundred thousand martyrs are mentioned within the space of thirty years, since the Jesuits arose out of the bottomless pit.

To what grievous sufferings did the Lord give up those precious servants of Christ, the Waldenses and Albigenses, who received the light of reformation about the year 1260, when the fogs of Antichristian darkness overspread the earth! a people sound in judgment, as appears by their letters, catechisms, and confessions, which are extant; a people of a simple, plain, and inoffensive behaviour: Yet, with what fury and rage did that impious pope Pius persecute them to destruction! driving them into the woods and mountains, except the aged, and children that could not flee, who were murdered in the way: Some famished in the caves and clefts of the rocks; others endured the rack for eight hours together; some beaten with iron rods, others thrown from the tops of high towers, and dashed to pieces.

What bloody shambles and slaughter-houses have France, Ireland, and England, been made by popish cruelty! More might be related out of each story than a tender hearted reader is able to bear the rehearsal of. But what God hath done, he may do again: We are not better than our fathers, dismal clouds of indignation are gathering over our heads, charged with double destruction; should the Lord please to make them break upon us; we cannot imagine the rage of Satan to be abated, now that his kingdom hastens to its period, Rev. xii. 12. nor are his instruments grown less cruel and skilful to destroy. The land, indeed, hath enjoyed a long rest, and this

generation is acquainted with little more of martyrdom, than what the histories of former times inform us of: But yet let no man befooled himself with a groundless expectation of continuing tranquillity. Augustin thinks that the bloody sweat which over-ran the body of Christ in the garden, signified the sharp and grievous sufferings which in his mystical body he should afterwards endure; and indeed it is a truth, that these are also called the remains of Christ's sufferings, Col. i. 24. His *personal sufferings* were indeed completed at his resurrection, that cup was full to the brim, to which no drop of sufferings can be added; but his sufferings in his mystical body are not yet full; by his personal sufferings he fully satisfied the wrath of God, but the sufferings of his people have not yet satisfied the wrath of men: Though millions of precious saints have shed their blood for Christ, whose souls are now crying under the altar, *How long, Lord! how long!* yet there are many more coming on behind in the same path of persecution, and much Christian blood must yet be shed, before the mystery of God be finished; and notwithstanding this lucid interval, the clouds seem to be returning again after the rain. Thus you see to what grievous sufferings the merciful God hath sometimes called his dearest people.

Now God may be said to call forth his people to suffer, when he so hedgeth them in by providence, that there is no way to escape suffering, but by sinning; whatsoever providence labours with such a dilemma as this, is a plain signification of God's will to us in that case. We may not now expect extraordinary calls to suffering work, as some of the saints had of old, Gen. xxii. 2. Acts ix. 16. but when our way is so shut up by providence, that we cannot avoid suffering, but by stepping over the hedge of the command, God will have us look upon that exigence as his call to suffer: And if the reasons be demanded, why the Lord, who is inclined to mercy, doth often hedge in his own people, by his providence, in a suffering path; let us know, that in so doing, he doth both,

1. Illustrate his own glory. And,
2. Promote his people's happiness.

First, Hereby the most wise God doth illustrate the glory of his own name, clearing up the righteousness of his ways by the sufferings of his own people: By this the word shall see, that how well soever he loves them, he will not indulge or patronize their sins; if they will be so disengenuous to abuse his favours, he will be so just to make them suffer for their sins, and by those very sufferings will provide for his own glory, which was by them clouded in the eyes of the world. He hates not sin a jot the less, because it is found in his own people, Amos iii. 2. And though, for the magnifying of his mercy, he will pardon their sins, yet for the clearing of his righteousness, he will take vengeance upon their inventions, Psal. xcix. 8.

Moreover, by exposing his people to such grievous sufferings, he gives a fit opportunity to manifest the glory of his power in their sup-

port, and of his wisdom, in the marvellous ways of their escape and deliverance. It is one of the greatest wonders in the world, how the church subsists under such fierce and frequent assaults as are made upon it by enemies. "I will turn aside (said Moses) and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed," Exod. iii. 3. That flaming bush was a lively emblem of the oppressed church in Egypt; the crackling flames noted the heat of their persecution, the remaining of the bush unconsumed in the flames, signified the wonderful power of God in their preservation: No people are so privileged, so protected, so delivered, as the people of God. Much less opposition than hath been made against the church, have overturned, and utterly destroyed, the mighty monarchies of the world.

* ——— *Sic Medus ademit*
Assyrio, Medoque tulit moderamina Perses,
Subjecit Persen Macedo, cessurus et ipse
Romanis————

‘ Assyria’s empire thus the Mede did shake,
 ‘ The Persian next, the pride of Media brake;
 ‘ Then Persia sunk by Macedonia prest,
 ‘ That, in its turn, fell by Rome at last.’——

And no less admirable is the wisdom of God, in frustrating and defeating the most deep and desperate designs of hell, against his poor people. Now, you may see the most wise God going beyond a malicious and subtle devil, overturning in a moment the deep laid designs and contrivances of many years, and that at the very birth and point of execution, Esth. vi. 1. snaring the wicked in the works of their own hands; making their own tongues to fall upon them; working out such marvellous salvations with his own hand, as fills them with astonishment and wonder, Psal. cxxvi. 7. "When the Lord turned back the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed."

Secondly, As God provides for his own glory, by the sufferings and troubles of his people; so he advanceth their happiness, and greatly promotes their interest thereby.

For, *First*, These troubles are ordered as so many occasions and means to mortify the corruptions that are in their hearts; there are rank weeds springing up in the best soil, which need such winter weather to rot them: And, certainly, if we reckon humility, heavenly mindedness, contempt of the world, and longing desires after heaven, to be the real interest and advantage of the church; then it is evident, nothing so much promotes their interest, as a suffering condition doth: Adversity kills those corruptions which prosperity bred.

Secondly, By these trials their sincerity is cleared, to the joy and satisfaction of their own hearts; many a doubt and fear, which had long entangled and perplexed them, is removed and answered. When adversity hath given them proof, and trial of their own hearts, one sharp trial wherein God helps us to be faithful, will do more to satisfy our fears, and resolve our doubts, than all the sermons that ever we heard in our lives could do.

Thirdly, These sufferings and trials of the church, are ordained to free it of abundance of hypocrites, which were its reproach, as well as burden, Amos ix. 9, 10. Affliction is a furnace to separate the dross from the more pure and noble gold. Multitudes of hypocrites, like flies in a hot summer, are generated by the church's prosperity; but this winter weather kills them: Many gaudy professors grow within the inclosure of the church, like beautiful flowers in the field, where they stand during its peace and prosperity, in the pride and bravery of their gifts and professions; but the wind passeth over them, and they are gone, and their places shall know them no more; to allude to that in Psalm ciii. 16. Thunder and lightning is very terrible weather, but exceeding useful to purify and cleanse the air.

Fourthly, The church's sufferings are ordered and sanctified, to endear them to each other. Times of common suffering, are times of reconciliation, and greater endearments among the people of God; never more endeared, than when most persecuted; never more united, than when most scattered, Mal. iii. 17. "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another." Certainly there is something in our fellowship in the same sufferings, that is endearing and engaging; but there is much more in the discoveries that persecution makes of the sincerity of our hearts, which, it may be, was before entertained with jealousy; and there is yet more than all this in the reproofs of the rod, whereby they are humbled for their pride, wantonness, and bitterness of their spirits to each other, and made to cry, in the sense of these transgressions, as Psal. lxx. 8. "Remember not against us former iniquities."

Lastly, By these troubles and distresses, they are awakened to their duties, and taught to pray more frequently, spiritually, and fervently. Ah! what drowsiness and formality is apt to creep in upon the best hearts, in the time of prosperity; but when the storm rises, and the sea grows turbulent and raging, now they cry as the disciples to Christ, *Lord, save us, we perish*. They say music is sweetest upon the waters; I am sure the sweetest melody of prayer is upon the deep waters of affliction: For these, among many other righteous, wise, and holy ends, the Lord permits and orders the persecutions and distresses of his people.

CHAP. III.

Shows that it is usual with God to premonish his people of approaching trials and sufferings; with some account of the manner how, and the reason why he so forewarns them.

AS Paul had many clear premonitions and fore-notice of the sufferings that should befall him at Jerusalem, that he might not be surprized by them when they came; so it is usual with God (though not in such an immediate and extraordinary a manner) to admonish the world, and especially his own people, of great trials and sufferings before-hand. Amos iii. 7. "Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets."

Thus, when he was about to bring the flood upon the world, he gave one hundred and twenty years warning of it before it came, Gen. vi. 3. and when he was to destroy Sodom, he saith, Gen. xviii. 17. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" And the like discovery he made about the same judgment to Lot, Gen. xix. 12, 13, 14. So when the captivity of the Jews was nigh at hand, the people had many forewarnings of it; God forewarned them both *ministerially* and *providentially*; he warned them by the prophets, Ezek. iii. 17. "Hear the word of my mouth, and give them warning from me." And when the time drew nigh to execute the judgment determined upon Jerusalem, and the temple, how plainly did Christ foretel them of it? Luke xix. 43, 44. "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee."

And when the storm was just ready to fall, * their own historian tells us, a voice was heard in the temple, saying, *Migremus hinc, Let us go hence.* 'Which voice † Tacitus also mentions in his annals, affirming it to be more than a human voice, telling them 'God was departing, and that it was accompanied with a rushing noise, as of persons going out. These were extraordinary warnings.' The like signs have been given to divers other nations, by dreadful *eclipses* of the heavenly bodies, *portentous comets*, *earthquakes*, and other signs of judgment.

Now, though we have no ground to expect such extraordinary warnings, yet we have the most apparent and certain signs of approaching calamities; after which, if they surprize us, the fault must lie in our own inexcusable negligence; for we have a standing rule to govern ourselves in this matter, and that is this; 'When the same

* Josephus de bello Jud. lib. 7. cap. 2.

† Audita major humana vox excedere Deos, simul ingens motus excedentium. Tacitus, lib. 21.

‘ sins are found in one nation, which have brought down the wrath of God upon another nation, it is an evident sign of judgment at the door; for God is unchangeable, just, and holy, and will not favour that in one people which he hath punished in another, nor bless that in one age which he hath cursed in another.’ Upon this very ground it was that the apostle warned the Corinthians, by the example of the Israelites, whose sins had ruined them in the wilderness, 1 Cor. x. 6. “ Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” As if he should say, Look upon those dead bodies which are, as it were, cast up upon the scripture-shore for a warning to you: Follow not the same course, lest you meet in the same curse; if you tread the same paths, expect the same punishment. God is as righteous now as he was then: he hates, and will punish sin in you as much as he did in them.

Let us therefore consider what those provocations were, that hastened the wrath of God upon his own Israel, a people that were nigh and dear unto him: a people upon whom he spent as much of the riches of his patience, as upon any people in the world; that so we may reckon whereabout we are at this day, and what is like to be the lot of this sinful and provoking generation; and we shall find, by the consent of all the prophets, that these sins were the immediate forerunners, and proper causes of their overthrow.

First, The great corruption of God’s worship among them kindled his wrath, and hastened their ruin, Psal. cvi. 39, 40, 41, 42. “ They were defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions; therefore was the wrath of God kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance, and he gave them into the hand of the heathen, and they that hated them ruled over them; their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.” They that will not bear the golden yoke of Christ, shall be galled with the iron yoke of men: nothing more provokes the anger of God than the adulterating of his worship; a man will bear a thousand infirmities in the wife of his bosom, but unfaithfulness in the marriage-covenant breaks his heart. After the manner of men, so abused and grieved, the Lord expresseth himself, Ezek. vi. 9. “ I am broken with their whorish heart, which have departed from me, and with their eyes that go a whoring after their idols.” Men cannot invent a surer and speedier way to their own ruin, than to bring their own inventions into God’s worship.

Secondly, Incurrible obstinacy and impenitency, under gentler strokes and lesser judgments, make way for utter ruin and desolation, Amos iv. from the 6th to the 12th verse. Scarcity, mildews, pestilence, and sword, had been tried upon them, but without effect; for the remnant that escaped those judgments (although plucked as so

many brands out of the fire, in which their fellow sinners perished) were not reformed by those gentler and *moderated* judgments.

Thirdly, Stupidity and senselessness of God's hand, and the tokens of his anger, were provoking causes and forerunners of their national desolation; they neither saw the hand of God when it was lifted up, nor humbled themselves under it when it was laid on; the hand of God is then said to be *lifted up*, when the providences of God prepare and posture themselves for our affliction. When the clouds of judgment gather over our heads, and grow blacker and blacker, as theirs did upon them, and do upon us at this day, but they took no notice of it, Isa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see;" and (which is the height of stupidity) they all remained senseless and regardless, when the hand of God was laid upon them, Isa. xlii. 24, 25. "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his law. Therefore he hath poured upon them the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle; and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart."

O prodigious sottishness! It was not some small drops of God's anger, but *the fury of his anger*; not some lighter skirmish of his judgments with them, but *the strength of battle*: It was not some particular stroke upon single persons or families, but *it set him on fire round about*, a general conflagration; yet all this would not awaken them.

Fourthly, The persecution of God's faithful ministers and people were another sin that procured, and a sign that foretold the destruction of their nation, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16. "And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy." There were also a number of upright souls among them, who desired to worship God according to his own prescription; but a snare was laid for them in Mizpah, and a net spread for them upon Tabor, Hos. v. 1. and this hastened judgment towards them: Mizpah and Tabor were places lying in the way betwixt Samaria and Jerusalem, where the true worship of God was: and in those places spies were set by the priests to observe and inform against them; so that it became very hazardous to attend the pure and incorrupt worship of God, which quickly hastened on their ruin.

Fifthly, The removal of godly and useful men by death, in more than ordinary haste, was to them a sign of desolation at hand. Isa. lvii. 1. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." In this case God acts

towards his people, as the husbandman in a catching harvest doth by his corn; he hurries it with a shuffling haste into the barn when he sees a storm coming: or as a careful father with his sons that are abroad at school, who sends his horses to fetch them home speedily, when he hears the plague is begun in the place. Upon this ground the prophet Micah bewails himself, Micah vii. 1. "Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat; my soul desired the first-ripe fruit." Q. d. Alas! alas! what miserable days are at hand! what miseries must I expect to see! The pleasant clusters, i. e. the societies of the saints are gathered away by the hand of death; there are but few that remain, here and there a single saint, like grapes after the vintage is done, two or three upon the utmost branches.

Sixthly, The general decay of the life and power of godliness among them that were left, foreboded destruction at the door: this is both a provoking sin, and a fore-running sign of national calamity. Hos. iv. 18. *Their drink is sour*. A metaphor lively expressing the deadness and formality of the people in the worship of God. It was like sour or dead drink, which hath lost its spirit and relish, and is become flat. Such were their duties; no spiritual life, affection, or savour in them: they heard as if they heard not, and prayed as if they prayed not; the ordinances of God were to them as the ordinances of men, of which the apostle saith, that they perish in the using.

Seventhly, To conclude; Mutual animosities, jars, and divisions, were to them manifest symptoms of national calamities and desolations: for then Ephraim envied Judah, and Judah vexed Ephraim, Isa. xi. 13. Hos. ix. 7. "The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come, Israel shall know it: The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquities, and the great hatred."

When such symptoms of God's indignation do appear upon any people, the Lord, by them, as by so many glaring meteors and blazing comets, forewarns the world that his judgments are near, even at the door. These signs all men ought to observe, and behold with trembling. If you ask, Why doth God usually give such warnings of his indignation before it comes? The reasons are,

1. To prevent the execution.
2. To make them more tolerable.
3. To leave the incorrigible inexcusable.

First, Warning is given, with design to prevent the execution of judgments, Amos iv. 12. "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel; and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel;" i. e. Prepare thyself to meet me in the way of my judgments, by humiliation and intercession to prevent the execution. And what else was the design of God in sending Jonah to the great

city Nineveh, but to excite them to repentance for the prevention of their ruin. This Jonah knew to be the Lord's meaning, how positive soever the words of his commission were; and therefore he declined the message to secure his credit; knowing, that if upon warning given they repented, the gracious nature of God would soon melt into compassion over them, and free grace would make him appear as a liar; for so we must expound his words, Jonah iv. 2. "Was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil." Q. d. Yea, Lord, I knew beforehand it would come to this; thou sendest me positively to denounce thy judgments to Nineveh, mean time desiring nothing more than the execution of them might be prevented by their repentance. And thus thy mercy hath exposed my reputation, in saving them from destruction.

Secondly, God forewarns his people of judgments, to make them more tolerable when they come; expected evils are nothing so heavy as those that come by surprisal; for look, as the expectation of a mercy makes it less sweet, our thoughts having anticipated and sucked out much of the sweetness before-hand; so the expectation of judgments before they befall us, make them less bitter and burdensome than else they would be, the soul having inured and accustomed itself to them, by frequent thoughts, and prepared and made ready itself to entertain them, as Paul did in my text. To prevent the disciples surprisal and offence at those days of persecution that were coming upon them, Christ foretold them, and gave them fair warning beforehand, John xvi. 4.

Thirdly, He forewarns his people of approaching dangers, to leave the incorrigible wholly inexcusable, that those who have no sense of sin, nor care to prevent ruin, might have no cloke for their folly when judgments overtake them, "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?" Jer. xiii. 21, 22. As if he should say, What plea, or apology is left thee, after so many fair warnings and timely premonitions? Thou canst not say, I have surprised thee, or that thou wast ruined before thou wast warned. Thy destruction therefore is of thyself.

CHAP. IV.

Demonstrating the excellency of a prepared heart for the worst of sufferings; and what a blessed thing it is to be ready to be bound, or to die for Christ, as Paul here was.

I AM ready.] O blessed frame of spirit! how hard, but how happy is it to get a heart so tempered! Every Christian can say, I

would be ready, and the Lord make me ready for sufferings; but few can say, I am ready, my heart is prepared and fitted for such a work: yet this example shews us it is attainable: and what a blessed thing it is to attain it, the following particulars will abundantly convince us.

First, Readiness for sufferings will bring the heart of a Christian to an holy rest and tranquillity, in a suffering hour, and prevent that anxiety, perturbation, and distraction of mind, which puts the sinking weight into afflictions. The more cares, fears, and troubles we have before our sufferings come, the more calm, quiet, and composed we are like to be when our sufferings are come indeed. It is admirable to consider with what peace and patience Job entertained his troubles, which, considering the kinds, degrees, and manner in which they befel him, one would think they should at least have startled and amazed him, and put his soul (as gracious and mortified as it was) into great disorder and confusion; but you find the contrary: never did the patience of a man triumph at that rate over adversity; he worships God, owns his hand, and resigns himself up to his pleasure, Job i. 20, 21. And whence was this? Surely had his troubles come by way of surprise, he could never have carried it at that rate; but in the days of his peace and prosperity he had prepared for such a day as this, Job iii. 25, 26. "I was not in safety, neither had I rest; yet trouble came; the thing that I feared (saith he) is come upon me." He laid it to heart before it came, and therefore it neither distracted, nor brake the heart when it came. In like manner the prophet Habakkuk stood upon his watch-tower, i. e. he made his observations by the word upon the probable events of providence, whereby he got a clear foresight of those troublesome days that were at hand; which though it made him tremble in himself, yet it gave him rest in the day of evil, Hab. iii. 16, 17, 18. There is a twofold rest in the day of evil, viz.

1. A rest of deliverance.

2. A rest of contentation.

It is a singular mercy to find rest in a man's own spirit; to enjoy inward peace, and tranquillity of mind, when there is no rest without; and the way to obtain this, is to foresee, count upon, and make due preparation for troublous times before-hand: evils that come by way of surprisal, are not only amazing, but very frequently destructive evils; it is a sad aggravation to feel a misery, before we fear it; those calamities that find men *secure*, do usually leave them *desperate*; the enemy that comes upon our backs hath a great advantage to ruin us, yet this is the common case of the world, "For man knoweth not his time, but as the fishes are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth on them suddenly," Eccl. ix. 12. Thus perished the old world; there was but one Noah provided for the flood, and he only, with his family, was preserved in it: all the

rest were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the flood came and swept them all away, Mat. xxiv. 38. Men will not use their foreseeing faculties; but because it is all quiet to-day, they conclude it shall be so to-morrow. Those that are at rest in their habitation, and have got a safe pillow under their heads, are apt to fall asleep in security, and dream pleasantly of continued rest and peace; and loth they are to interrupt their sensual pleasure with melancholy thoughts of changes and sufferings.

Philosophers tell us, that immediately before an earthquake the air is very quiet and serene; and before the great rain falls, the wind is usually still: were the aspect of second causes much more favourable and encouraging than it is; yet there is cause enough, for all that are wise in heart, to fear and tremble, under the consideration of that national guilt which is treasured up, and will certainly produce distress and trouble.

O Christians! look out for days of visitation; prepare for a storm, and provide you an ark, an hiding-place in Christ, and the promises, as ever you expect rest, and peace in your own spirits, when the earth shall be full of tumults, uproars, and desolations.

Secondly, Our preparation for sufferings is an excellent argument of the honesty and sincerity of our hearts, in the matters of religion: he that makes account of sufferings, and is daily at work with his own heart, mortifying his corruptions, weaning its worldly affections, exciting and making ready its suffering-graces, resolving in the strength of God, to take his lot with Christ, wherever, and howsoever it shall fall; this is the man that hath deliberately closed with Christ upon his own terms, and is like to be the durable and victorious Christian.

As for hypocrites, (Christ's summer friends) they have either their exceptions against the severities of religion, and study to secure to themselves a retreat from danger, or else they rush inconsiderately into the profession of Christ, never debating the terms which he proposes to all that will follow him, Mark viii. 34. The necessity of a rational and well-advised closure with Christ upon suffering and self-denying terms, is by himself fully set forth in that excellent parable, Luke xiv. 25, 26, 27, 28. There was a great multitude that followed him at that time; Christ began to grow in request among them; they flocked from all parts to see and hear him; but he foresaw, that if once a sharp trial should befall them, it would quickly thin, and diminish that great multitude, and reduce them like Gideon's host, into a little handful: and therefore he resolves to deal candidly and plainly with them; he propounds his terms, and sets down his conditions, which every one of them must subscribe, that will follow him; the sum of which is this, "Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." And to evince the rationality of these terms, he argues, from the most common and obvious practices of men in their civil affairs: no man, that exerciseth reason, will begin to build

an house, and lay a large foundation, when he is not provided with a stock to carry up the walls, and complete the work: no man, in his wits would engage with a handful of men, against a great and armed multitude; possibly they may intend to *face*, but no man would think they intend to *fight* the enemy, on such a disadvantage. Just so stands the case in our profession of Christ; if we really intend to go through with the business of religion, we must sit down, and compute the cost and charges of Christianity, think upon the worst, as well as the best, reckon upon reproaches, prisons, and death for his sake, as well as the easier and more pleasant parts of active obedience; and having so done, if then we can be content to run all hazards, and forego all the rest upon his account, and accordingly manage ourselves in a day of suffering, then we deal with Christ, and clear ourselves from the danger of hypocrisy. It is for want of this, that so many professors faint, and fall away, in times of temptation, furnishing the devil with so many triumphs over religion, and the more upright professors of it. It was for want of *depth of earth*, (i. e.) a deep consideration, and well-rooted resolution at first, that the stony-ground hypocrite so quickly withered away, when the sun of persecution began to shine fervently upon him, Mat. xiii. 5, 6. And doubtless it is to prevent this fatal issue of our profession, that God makes such deep wounds by conviction upon his people's hearts at first; it is for our establishment in future trials, and sufferings, that he so distresses, and humbles them; that he makes sin so bitter and burdensome to them; as well knowing that all this is no more than needs, to prevent their returning again to sin, in the times of their temptation.

O professor! if thou be one that art come to Christ in this way, and hast thus deliberately closed with him; if thou hast as well be-thought thyself of bearing his cross, as of wearing his crown; thou hast then a fair evidence of the uprightness of thy heart, than which, the world affords not a sweeter comfort.

Thirdly, The advantage of preparation for suffering lies in this, that it prevents, and cuts off the scandal and offence of the cross, with respect both to ourselves and others.

First, It prevents our own offence at sufferings; and by Christ's own testimony, that soul is blessed, that is not offended in him, Mat. xi. 6. Among the multitudes of professors, few are found that are no way offended at suffering for Christ; they expected much peace, honour, and prosperity in the ways of religion, but finding their expectations frustrated, and their carnal interest rather exposed, than secured by their profession of Christ, they go back like those John vi. 66. and walk no more with him. And it is very remarkable, that Christ dates the offence that men shall take at him, from the first appearance of suffering, Mat. xxiv. 8, 9. "All these are the beginnings of sorrows, and then shall many be offended." Sorrows and apostasies commence together.

But, reader, if thou be one that makest it thy business to foresee,

and prepare for an evil day, thou wilt have as good thoughts of Christ, and his ways at the lowest ebb, as ever thou hadst in the greatest flourish, and time of prosperity. "Great peace (saith the Psalmist) have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." O happy soul! whom no troubles, reproaches or sufferings, are able to offend! thou mayest meet with prisons, death, banishments, yea, but none of these things shall offend, or stumble thee, but thou shalt peaceably and safely pass over them, because they are no more than thou expectedst, and providest for.

Secondly, And by this means thou wilt also prevent the offence and scandals of *others* at the ways of religion. It is a sad, and dangerous thing to be an occasion of stumbling, either to the weak or to the wicked. "Woe to the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh," Mat. xviii. 7. The apostasies and sinful compliances of ungrounded professors and weak Christians in times of temptation, are the woeful occasions of prejudicing others against religion, and shedding the blood of souls. Ah! it were much better never to be in the ways of profession, than to be there only as a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to others: but all this mischief will be prevented by thy serious expectation of, and provision for the evil day.

Fourthly, A fourth excellency of preparation for sufferings lies in this, that it hath a tendency to convince and awaken the drowsy world. O! if the Lord's people would but engage in this work in earnest, and live as people that are providing for a storm, and resolve, in the strength of God, to run all hazards and hardships for Christ, I am persuaded it would be of more use to startle, and convince the world, than all the sermons that ever they heard: for here is that which dashes and cuts the throat of all our labours. We preach up self-denial, and contempt of life, and liberty for Christ: now though they hear us preach the necessity, and excellency of these things, and hear you profess them as your principles; yet when they look upon the lives of professors in times of danger, and find no proportion betwixt profession and practice; when they see us cling to the world, and are as loth to give it up as others; when they observe prisons and sufferings affright and terrify us as much as those that make no profession; when they see us start like hares, at every sound, and that we live not loose from the world, as men prepared to let it go and give it up for Christ: why then they conclude that we dare not trust our own principles, when it comes to the push. And how can they be persuaded to believe that which they think we ourselves do not really believe, although we persuade them to believe it?

My friends, the world hath *eyes* to see what you can *do*, as well as *ears* to hear what you can *say*; and as long as they see you do no more than others, you may talk your hearts out ere they will believe your way is better than others.

But now when persecution ariseth, did they see you providing your-

selves for it, and putting on your harness to enter the lists, carry your dearest enjoyments in your hands, and put on the shoe of preparation, to follow the Lord through the roughest ways of sufferings; this would convince to purpose, and preach the excellency of Christ, the vanity of the creature, the rationality and certainty of Christian principles, in a more intelligible and rousing dialect to them, than all our cheap and easy commendations of them did. And hence it is that Noah was said to condemn the world, Heb. xi. 7. "By faith "Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet," i. e. of the deluge that was coming, though no appearance of it yet, the heavens being as clear as ever; yet believing the threatening, "He was moved "with fear." The fear of God, an effect of his faith in the word of God, *moved* (i. e.) impelled him to his duty; set him about his preparation work to provide an *ark*, and this was it by which he *condemned the world*, left them excuseless. For they not only heard of an approaching flood by his ministry, but now saw he himself believed what he preached, by his daily preparations against it came. O consider this, how much it would tend to the world's conviction; now they will see that you are in good earnest, and that there is a reality in godliness: this will induce them to search into the matter more than ever, and remove those prejudices they have taken up against the good ways of God, as if they were but *phantasms* and conceits.

5. In the next place, this foresight and preparation must needs be an excellent thing, because the Spirit of God every where sets an honourable character upon it, and always mentions such persons with some singular commendation and respect. These only were wise men in the judgment of God, and all the rest (what great politicians soever they are famed to be among men) are accounted fools, Prov. xxii. 3. Eccl. ii. 14. "The wise man's eyes are in his head;" that is, he is a fore-seeing man; "but the fool goes on, and is punished:" Rushes on without consideration, suspecting no danger that he at present sees not, and so smarts for his folly. Beloved, there are *signs of the times*, as well as of the weather, Mat. xvi. 3. You may see the clouds of judgment gathering before the storm falls upon you. And this is the meaning of Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Gather yourselves together, "before the decree bring forth, and the day pass as the chaff." Where there is a *conception* of judgment there will be a *birth*, unless the reformations and prayers of the saints cause it to miscarry. But it requires wisdom to discern this; they must be men of much observation that can descry it at a great distance; yet this may be done by considering what God hath done in like cases in former ages, when nations have been guilty of the same sins as now they are: For God is as just now as then, and hates sin as much as ever he did; and partly by attending to things *present*, to what fulness and maturity the sins of a nation are grown, Joel iii. 16. or what beginnings of

judgment are already upon a people, as harbingers and forerunners of more at hand. Luke iii. 30, 31. 1 Sam. ii. 12. Or what is the universal note and cry of God's ministers, who are his watchmen to foresee danger, Ezek. iii. 17. and his trumpeters to discover it, Num. x. 8. And when these have one mouth given them, certainly there is much in it, Luke i. 70. Or, lastly, by pondering those scripture-prophecies that yet remain to be fulfilled. They must all go out their times, and accomplish their full number of years and months; but certainly they shall be fulfilled in their seasons.

By attending to these things, a Christian may give a near guess at the judgments that are approaching a nation, and so order himself accordingly. Eccl. viii. 5. "A wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment." And this is (even in the judgment of God) a choice point of wisdom; whereas, on the contrary, heedless and careless ones, that regard not these things are branded for fools, and upbraided with more brutishness than the beasts of the field, or fowls of the air. Mat. xvi. 3. Jer. viii. 7. "The stork in the heavens, the swallow, turtle, and crane," observe their seasons of departing, and returning upon the approach of the *winter* and *spring*, and that by a natural instinct, whereby they prolong their lives, which else must perish. But though God hath made man wiser than the fowls of the air, and beasts of the earth, which by instinct will quit colder climates, or run to the hedges when winter, or storms approach; yet the heavens may be astonished at this, to see nature cast by sin so far below itself; and that in reasonable creatures.

But now, if this be foreseen, then there is a singular advantage in a man's hand, either to use the means of preventing those approaching calamities, Zeph. ii. 3. or if it cannot be prevented, yet to take sanctuary in Christ, Mic. v. 5. to run to the promises and attributes, Isa. xxiv. 21. and so have a good roof over his head while the storm falls and the weather is tempestuous abroad. And therefore certainly this preparation is an excellent thing. Whatever the Spirit of God speaks in the commendation of foreseeing evils, is with respect to this duty of preparing for them; for foresights of evils without preparation, rather increases than diminishes the misery.

6. A sixth excellency of preparation lies in the influence that it hath into a Christian's stability in the evil day. You cannot but know that your stability in that critical hour of temptation, is a choice and singular mercy, inasmuch as all you are worth in the other world depends upon your standing then, Rev. xxi. 7, 8. Rom. ii. 6, 7. Luke xxii. 27. neither can you be ignorant how much you are like to be tried, and put to it then, whether you respect the enemy that engages you, Eph. vi. 12. or your own weakness, who have been so often foiled in lesser trials, Jer. xii. 5. All the grace you have will be little enough to keep the field and bear you up from sinking; and therefore it cannot but be a blessed thing, to be able to stand and cope with the greatest difficulties in such a time of trial as that will be.

“ Now he that expects to do this must put on the whole armour of “ God.” See Ephes. vi. 12, 13, 14. There is no expectation of standing in the evil day, except *your foot be shod*, that is, your wills prepared with the *preparation of the gospel of peace*.

It is true, that our ability to stand is not from our own inherent grace; “ For by his strength shall no man prevail,” 1 Sam. ii. 9. And yet it is as true, that without grace, both inherent in us, and excited and prepared for a storm, we cannot expect to stand; For these two, grace inherent in us, and grace exciting and assisting without are not *opposed*, but *co-ordinated*. Grace in us, is the weapon by which our enemy falls: but then that weapon must be managed by the hand of the Spirit.—Well then, look upon this as a choice mercy, which tends so much to your stability.

7. A seventh excellency of a prepared heart, is that it is a very high justification of our love to Jesus Christ, when we thus shew our willingness to take our lot with him, and follow him wherever he goes. What an high expression of love was that of Ruth to her mother Naomi? “ I will not go back, but where thou lodgest I will lodge, and where thou goest I will go.” It is excellent when a soul can say to Christ, as Ittai to David, 2 Sam. xv. 21. “ Surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or in life, even there also will thy servant be.” This is love indeed, to cleave to him in a time of such distresses and dangers. This is “ love which the waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown,” Cant. viii. 7. *Probatio amoris, est exhibitio operis*: If you love Christ indeed, shew your love by some fruits of it; and surely this is a very choice fruit, and proof of it. There are many that profess a great deal of love to Christ, but when it comes to this touch-stone, it appears false and counterfeit; but a mere flourish when no danger is near. But that soul which buckles on the shoe of preparation, to follow him through thorns and briars, and over the rocks and mountains of difficulties and troubles, loves him indeed, Jer. ii. 2, 3. Beloved, it is one of the choicest discoveries of your love to your master Christ, yea, it is such a justification of love to him, as angels are not capable of. They shew their love by their readiness to do his will, in the execution of which they fly as with wings, Ezek. i. 24. but you only have the happiness of testifying your love by your readiness to suffer for him, and is not this excellent?

8. When the heart is prepared for the worst sufferings, it is an argument that your will is subdued to the will of God; for till this be done, in a good measure, you cannot stand ready to suffer for him. But now, to have the will subdued by grace to the will of God, is a very choice and excellent frame indeed; for in this the main power of grace lieth: Look in what faculty the chief residence and strength of sin was, in the same chief residence the power of grace, after conversion, is also: Now it is in the will that the strength and power of sin (before conversion) lay. See John v. 40. Psalm lxxxi. 11. Jer.

xliv. 16, 17. And indeed it was the devil's strong hold, which, in the day of Christ's power, he storms and reduces to his obedience, Psal. cx. 3. O what a blessed thing is this ! The will rules the man, it hath the empire of the whole man ; it commands the faculties of the soul, *imperio politico* ; and it commands the members of the body, *imperio despotico*. Now to have Christ and grace rule that which rules and commands your inner and outer man too, is no small mercy ; and a better evidence that it is so cannot be given than this, that you stand ready, or do seriously prepare yourselves to suffer the hardest things for Christ : If your will can like that work, it is an argument grace hath conquered and subdued your wills indeed.

9. This preparation of heart to sufferings, is an excellent thing, because God is so abundantly pleased with it, that he often excuses them from sufferings in whom he finds it, and accepts it, as if the service had been actually done. So Abraham, Gen. xxii. 12. he was ready to offer up his Isaac's life to God ; but God seeing his servant's heart really prepared, and ready for that difficult service, and high point of self-denial, provided himself another sacrifice instead of Isaac. Abraham shall have his son Isaac back again, and that with advantage ; for he hath with him not only a choice experiment of his love to God, but God's high approbation of him, and acceptance of his offering. It was all one in respect of divine acceptance, as if he had been slain ; and so the scripture represents it, Jam. ii. 21. And in this sense that promise is often made good to God's people who stand ready to give up their Isaacs, their lives, liberties, and dearest enjoyments to the Lord : " He that will lose his life for my name's sake, " shall save it," Luke ix. 24.

Now what a blessed thing is this ! you may this way have the crown of martyrdom, and yet not shed one drop of blood for Christ actually. Ah ! how kindly doth God accept it at his poor creatures hands, when he sees how willing they are to serve him with their best enjoyments ! " It is well (saith he to David) that it was in thy heart," 1 Kings viii. 18.

10. And then, lastly, to add no more, it is beyond controversy an excellent and blessed thing ; because should such a Christian, after all his pains and preparations, be overborne, and fall by temptation : yet this preparation of his heart excuses his fall, from those aggravations that are upon the falls of others, and will give him both *support* under such a condition, and *encouragement* to hope for a speedy recovery out of it. Ah ! it is no small comfort when a poor soul that hath been over-borne by temptation, can come to God and say, ' Lord, thou knowest that this was not a wilful departure from my duty but contrary to the bent and resolutions of my heart ; thou sawest my diligence before-hand to prepare for it ; thou sawest my fears and tremblings of heart about it : O Lord, forgive, O Lord, ' recover thy servant, wash away this spot, it is one of the spots of thy

‘ children, an infirmity, not a rebellion :’ This may much stay the soul.

Surely, in this case, thou hast many grounds of comfort that another wants; for thy sin being but an infirmity, (1.) It is that which is common to all saints, Psal. ciii. 11, 12, 13, 14. (2.) God hath mercy and pardons for such sins as these, else woe to the holiest soul, Psal. cxxx. 3, 4. Solomon, upon this ground, pleads for mercy for them that prepared their hearts, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. And God hath laid in sweet grounds of encouragement for such souls, Numb. xv. 27, 28. Heb. v. 2. How tenderly doth Christ deal with his disciples under this kind of sin, Matth. xxvi. 41. and though they forsook him for a time, yet he received them again; though they fled from him, yet they all returned again and appeared boldly for Christ afterwards, and sealed their confession of him with their blood. And that which recovered them again was this, that their fall and departure was contrary to the resolution, and standing frame, and bent of their hearts; for they resolved all to cleave to him to the death, Mat. xxvi. 35. whereas those that engaged in a profession of him inconsiderately, and never resolved, nor prepared for the worst, fell off from him, and never returned any more, John vi. 66. So then, upon the whole, you cannot but grant, that it is a very blessed and excellent thing, to prepare thus for the greatest suffering that can befall us for Christ. We come next to shew wherein it lies.

CHAP. V.

Evincing the necessity of a sound and real work of grace upon the heart, to fit a man for suffering for Christ.

HAVING shewed you that God doth sometimes put his dearest people upon very hard services for him, and what an excellent thing it is to prepare ourselves to obey the call of God to them: In the next place I come to shew you, wherein this *preparation*, or *readiness* for suffering consists, and how many things concur and contribute their assistance to this work.

Now there is a twofold *preparation* or *readiness* for suffering; the one is *habitual*, the other *actual*: That *habitual readiness* is nothing else but the *inclination* of a soul to suffer any thing for Christ: which *inclination* ariseth from the principles of grace infused into the soul: But then as fire, though it have a natural inclination to ascend, yet may be violently depressed and hindered, that it cannot ascend actually, so may it be in this case; and therefore, before a man can be fitted for sufferings as Paul was, there must, to this habitual, be super-added an *actual readiness*, which is nothing else but the rousing of grace out of the sleepy and dull habits, and awakening it to its work

in a time of need : as the lion is said to lash himself with his tail, to rouse up his courage before he fight. The former is a *remote* power, the latter a *proxim* and immediate power. I must handle the former in this chapter, and you are to know that *it consisteth in a sound and real work of grace or conversion wrought upon the soul ; without which I shall make it evidently appear to you, that no man can be fit or ready to suffer as a Christian.*

Whatever stock of natural courage, moral principles, or common gifts of the Spirit be lodged in any man's breast, yet all this (without special grace) can never fit him to suffer for Christ. And had not this work been really and soundly wrought upon the heart of this blessed man, as indeed it was, Acts ix. 3, 4, 5. he had quickly fainted under his sufferings : and so will every soul sooner or later do, that suffers not upon the same principles that he did.

1. For first, No man can suffer for Christ until he be able to deny himself. See Matth. xvi. 24. Self-denial goes in order of nature before sufferings. Beloved, in a suffering hour the interest of Christ and self meet like two men upon a narrow bridge, one must of necessity go back, or the other cannot pass on : If you cannot now deny *self* you must deny *Christ*. The yoke and dominion of *self* must be *cast off*, or else Christ's yoke and burden cannot be taken on.

It is confessed self may not only *consist with*, but be a *motive* to some kind of sufferings : Ambition and applause may carry a man far this way : pride is a *salamander* that it seems can live in the flames of martyrdom, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. But to be a *servant* to self and a true *sufferer* for Christ is incompatible. Self may make you the *devil's martyrs*, but grace only can make you *Christ's martyrs*. So that let a man be seemingly carried for a while with never so high a tide of zeal for Christ, yet if self be the spring that feeds, those self-ends, like so many little ditches joined to the brink of a river, will so suck and draw away the water into themselves, that the lofty stream will sink and come to nothing ere it have ran far : So then, of necessity, self must be dethroned in the hearts of Christ's suffering servants.

But now it is real grace only that disposes self, and subjects its interest to Christ's ; for sanctification is nothing else but *the dethroning of exalted self, and the setting up of Christ's interest above it in the soul*. This is it that alters the property of all a man hath, and super-scribes them with a new title, *Holiness to the Lord*, Isa. xxiii. 18. Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Thenceforth a man looks at himself as none of his own, but past into another's right, 1 Cor. vi. 19 ; and that he must neither *live*, nor *act ultimately* for himself, but for Christ, Rom. xiv. 7. Heb. xiii. 7, 3. Phil. i. 20. He is no more as a *proprietor*, but a steward of all he hath ; and so holds upon these terms, to lay it out as may best serve his Master's ends and glory.

All that he is or hath, is by grace subordinated to Christ ; and if once *subordinated*, then no more *opposed* to him, *subordinata non pugnant*. This is it that makes him say, I care not what becomes of me or

so Christ may be glorified, "Let Christ be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death," Phil. i. 20.

By conversion Christ enters the soul, as an army doth an enemy's garrison by storm, and when he is possessed of it by grace, he presently divides the whole spoil of self betwixt himself and his church. This is the first thing that evinces the necessity of a work of grace to prepare the heart for sufferings. 2 Cor. x. 5.

2. And then in the next place, it is as evident that a man can never be fit to suffer hard things for Christ until his spirit be enlarged, raised, and ennobled, so that he be able to despise dangers, and look all difficulties in the face. That low and *private* spirit must be removed, and a *public* spirit must possess him. If a man be of a feeble and effeminate spirit, every petty danger will daunt and sink him; delicacy and tenderness is as unsuitable to a Christian as to a soldier, 2 Tim. ii. 3. They that mean to enter into the kingdom of God, must resolve to make their way through that break of troubles betwixt them and it, 2 Tim. iii. 12. They that will be crowned with victory, must stand to it, and play the men, as that word imports, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Look over all the sacred and human histories, and see if you can find a man that ever honoured Christ by suffering, that was not of a raised and noble spirit, and in some measure able to contemn both the allurements and threats of men. So those three noble Jews, Dan. iii. 16, 17. So Moses, Heb. xi. 27. And so our apostle, Acts xx. 24. And the same heroic and brave spirit was found in the succeeding ages amongst the witnesses of Christ. When Valence the emperor endeavoured to draw Basil from the faith by offers of preferment, 'offer these things (saith he) to children;' when he threatened him with torments, 'threaten these things (saith he) to your people gallants that live delicately.' And the same Basil relating the story of the forty martyrs, saith, That when great honours and preferments were offered them to draw them from Christ, their answer was, 'Why offer you these small things of the world to us, (O emperor) when you know the whole world is contemned by us!' So Luther, money could not tempt him, nor the fear of man daunt him. 'Let me (said he in his letter to Staupicius) be accounted proud, covetous, a murderer, guilty of all vices, rather than of wicked silence and cowardice in the cause of Christ.' Thus you see to what an height, and holy greatness, the spirits of suffering saints in all ages have been raised.

But now it is grace that thus raises the spirits of men above all the smiles and honours, frowns and fears of men; and no other principle but grace can do it. There is indeed a *natural stoutness* and generosity in some which may carry them far, as it is said of Alexander, that when any great danger approached him, his courage would rise, and he would say, *Jam periculum par animo Alexandri*; Here is a danger fit for Alexander to encounter: So Pompey, when dissuaded from a dangerous voyage, answered, *Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam*.

‘It is necessary that I go, not that I live.’ But this being fed only by a natural spring, can carry a man no higher than nature, and will flag at last. If applause, and the observation of the world supply it not, it quickly ebbs and fails.

But as grace raises men much higher; so it maintains it even when there is nothing to encourage without; when forsaken of all creatures and visible supports, 2 Tim. iv. 10. And this it doth three ways: (1.) By giving him that hath it a view of far greater things, which shrinks up all temporary things, and makes them appear but trifles and small matters, Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor iv. 18. By grace a man rises with Christ, Col. iii. 1. It sets him upon his high places, and thence he looks down upon things below as very poor and inconsiderable. The great cities of Campania seem but little spots to them that stand on the top of the Alps. (2.) By teaching him to value and measure all things by another thing than he was wont to do. He did once measure, life, liberty, riches, honours by sense and time; and then they seemed great things, and it was hard to deny them, or thus to slight them; but now he values and measures all by faith and eternity; and esteems nothing great and excellent but what hath a reference to the glory of God, and an influence into eternity. (3.) Grace raises and ennobles the spirit thus, because it is the divine nature; it is the Spirit of Christ infused into a poor worm, which makes a strange alteration on him, transforms him into another manner of person; as much difference betwixt his spirit now and what it was, as betwixt the spirit of a child that is filled with small matters, and taken up with toys, and of a grave *statesman* that is daily employed about the grand affairs of a kingdom.

3. A man can never suffer as a Christian till his will be subjected to the will of God. He that suffers *involuntarily*, and out of necessity, not out of choice, shall neither have acceptance nor reward from God. Of necessity the will must be subjected; a man can never say, *Thy will be done*, till he can first say, *Not my will*.

But it is grace only that thus conquers and subjects the will of man to God’s, Psal. cx. 3. This is that which exalts God’s authority in the soul, and makes the heart to stoop and tremble at his commands. It is that which makes our will to write its *fiat* at the foot of every command, and its *placet* under every order it receives from God. No sooner was grace entered into the soul of Paul, but presently he cries out, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Acts ix. 6. The will is to the soul what the wheels are to the chariot; and grace is to the will what oil is to those wheels. When we receive the Spirit of grace, we are said to *receive an unction from the Holy One*, 1 John ii. 20. And when the soul is made as the chariots of Aminadab, Cant. vi. 12. *Non tardat uncta rota*, it runs freely after the Lord, and cheerfully addresseth itself to the very service

4. A man can never suffer as a Christian until his heart be composed, fixed, and determined to follow the Lord through all hazards

and difficulties. As long as a man is hesitating and unresolved what to do, whether to go forward, or return back again to the prosperous world, when a man is at such a *pause*, and stand in his way, he is very unfit for sufferings. All such divisions do both *weaken* the soul, and *strengthen* the temptation: The devil's work is more than half done to his hand in such a soul, and he is now as unfit to endure hardship for Christ, as a ship is to ride out a storm that hath neither cable, anchor, nor ballast, to hold and settle it, but lies at the mercy of every wave, Jam. i. 8. "The double minded man is unstable in all his ways." But it is grace, and nothing besides, that brings the heart to a fixed resolution and settlement to follow the Lord, it is grace that *establishes the heart*, Heb. xiii. 9. and unites it to fear the name of God, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. This gathers all the streams into one channel, and then it runs with much strength, and sweeps away all obstacles before it. So that look as it is with a wicked man that hath sold himself to do wickedly, if he be set upon any one design of sin, he pours out his whole heart and strength into the prosecution of that design, which is the ground of that saying, *Liberet me Deus ab homine unius tantum negotii*, let God deliver me from a man of one only design. He will do it to purpose: So is it also in grace; if the heart be composed, fixed, and fully resolved for God, nothing shall then stand before him. And herein lies much of a Christian's habitual fitness and ability to suffer.

5. The necessity of saving grace in all sufferers for Christ, will farther appear from this consideration, that he who will run all hazards for Christ, had need of a continual supply of strength and refreshment from time to time. He must not depend on any thing that is failable; for what shall he do then when that stock is spent, and he hath no provision left to live upon? Now all natural qualifications, yea, all the common gifts of the Spirit, are failable and short-lived things; they are like a sweet flower in the bosom, that is an ornament for a little while, but withers presently: Or like a pond or brook occasioned by a great fall of rain, which quickly sinks and dries up, because it is not fed by springs in the bottom, as other fountain-waters are; and hence it is they cannot continue and hold out when sufferings come, Mat. xiii. 21. Because there is no root to nourish and support. The hypocrite will not always call upon God, Job xxvii. 10. Though they may keep company with Christ a few miles in this dirty way, yet they must turn back at last, and shake hands eternally with him, John vi. 66. These *comets* may seem to shine for a time among the stars, but when that earthly matter is spent, they must fall and lose their glory.

But now grace is an everlasting principle, it hath springs in the bottom that never fail. "I shall be in him (saith Christ) a well of water springing up into eternal life," John iv. 14. The Spirit of God supplies it from time to time, as need requires. It hath daily incomes from heaven, 2 Cor. i. 5. Phil. iv. 13. Col. i. 11. So that

it is our union with Christ the Fountain of grace, that is the true ground of our constancy and long suffering*.

6. And then lastly, it will appear by this also, that there is an absolute necessity of a real change by grace on all that will suffer for Christ; because although we may engage ourselves in sufferings without it, yet we can never manage our sufferings like Christians without it. They will neither be honourable nor acceptable to God, nor yet beneficial and comfortable to ourselves or others, except they be performed from this principle of grace: For upon what principle soever beside this any man is acted in religion, it will either cause him to decline sufferings for Christ; or, if he be engaged in them, yet he will little credit religion by his sufferings. They will either be spoiled by an ill management, or his own pride will devour the praise and glory of them. I do not deny but a man that is graceless may suffer many hard things upon the account of his profession, and suffer them all in vain as these scriptures manifest. See 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Gal. iii.

4. And although you may find many sweet promises made to those that suffer for Christ, yet must consider that those pure and spiritual ends and motives by which men ought to be acted in their sufferings, are always supposed and implied in all these promises that are made to the external action. And sometimes it is expressed, 1 Pet. iv. 16. To suffer [as a Christian] is to suffer from pure Christian principles, and in a Christian manner, with *meekness, patience, self-denial, &c.* and this grace only can enable you to do: So that by all this, I hope what I have undertaken in this character, viz. To evince the necessity of a work of grace to pass upon you, before sufferings for religion come, is performed to satisfaction.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein the nature of this work of grace, in which our habitual fitness for suffering lies, is briefly opened, and an account given of the great advantage the gracious person hath for any, even the hardest work thereby.

HAVING in the former chapter plainly evinced the necessity of saving grace to fit a man for sufferings; it will be expected now that some account be given you of the nature of the work, and how it advantages a man for the discharge of the hardest services in religion: Both which I shall open in this chapter by a distinct explication of the parts of this description of it.

This work of grace, of which I am here to speak, consists in the real change of the whole man by the Spirit of God, whereby what saving grace is. he is prepared for every good work: In which brief description I shall open these four things to you,

1. That it is a change; that is palpably evident, both from scrip-

* We are only so far safe as we are united to Christ.

ture and experience, 2 Cor. v. 17. "Old things are past away, behold all things are become new;" and it is so sensible a change, that it is called a *turning from darkness to light*, Acts xxvi. 18. and a new creature formed and brought forth. But to be a little more distinct and particular, there are several other changes that pass upon men, which must not be mistaken for this; and therefore, (1.) It is not a mere change of the judgment from error to truth, from Paganism to Christianity. Such a change Simon Magus had, yet still remained in the gall of bitterness, and fast bound in the bonds of iniquity, Acts viii. 23. (2.) Nor only of a man's practice, from *profaneness to civility*: This is common among such as live under the light of the gospel, which breaking into men's consciences, thwarts their lusts, and over-awes them with the fears of hell: Which is no more than what the Gentiles had, Rom. ii. 15. (3.) Nor is it a change from mere *morality* to mere *formality* in religion. Thus *hypocrites* are changed by the common gifts of the Spirit, illuminating their minds, and slightly touching their affections, Heb. vi. 4, 5. (4.) Nor is it such a change as justification makes, which is relative, and only alters the state and condition, Rom. v. 1, 2. (5.) Lastly, It is not a change of the essence of a man; he remains essentially the same person still. But this change consists in the infusion of new habits of grace into the old faculties; which immediately depose sin from its dominion over the soul, and deliver up the soul into the hands and government of Christ, so that it lives no more to itself, but to Christ. This is that change whereof we speak: And this change (2.) I assert to be real, no fancy, no delusion; not a groundless conceit, but it is really existent, *extra mentem*, whether you conceit it or not. Indeed the blind world would persuade us it is *suppositious* and *fantastic*; and that there is no such real difference betwixt one man and another as we affirm grace makes. And hence it is, that whosoever professeth it, is presently branded for a fanatic; and that scripture, Isa. lvi. 5. *Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou*, &c. clapt in their teeth in their absurd and perverse sense of it.

But I shall briefly offer these seven things to your consideration, which will abundantly evince the reality of it, and at once both stop the slanderous mouths of ignorant men, and silence those atheistical surmises, which at any time Satan may inject into the hearts of God's own people touching this matter. And *first*, let it be considered, that the Spirit of God hath represented to us this work of grace under such names and notions in scripture, as if they had been chosen purposely to obviate this calumny. It is called a *creature*, Gal. vi. 15. a *man*, 1 Pet. iii. 4. a *new birth*, John iii. 3. Christ formed in us, Gal. iv. 12. All which express its reality, and that it is not a conceited thing. (2.) It appears to be real by the marvellous effects it hath upon a man, turning him both in judgment, will, affections, and practice, quite counter to what he was before. This is evident in that famous instance of Paul, Gal. i. 23. which is abundantly attested and

sealed by the constant experience of all gracious souls that are witnesses of the truth hereof. (3.) A divine and Almighty power goes forth to produce and work it; and hence faith is said to be of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. Yea, that the same power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead, goes to the production of it, Eph. i. 19, 20. And if so, how much less than blasphemy is it, to call it a conceit or fancy? Doth God set on work his infinite power to beget a fancy, or raise an imagination? (4.) Conceits and whimsies abound most in men of weak reason: Children, and such as are crackt in their understandings, have most of them: Strength of reason banishes them, as the sun doth mists and vapours: But now the more rational any gracious person is, by so much the more he is fixed, settled, and satisfied in the grounds of religion: Yea, there is the highest and purest reason in religion; and when this change is wrought upon men, it is carried on in a rational way, Isa. i. 18. John xvi. 9. The Spirit overpowers the understanding with clear demonstrations, and silences all objections, pleas, and pretences to the contrary. (5.) It is a real thing, and gracious souls know it to be so; else so many thousands of the saints would never have suffered so many cruel torments and miseries, rather than forsake a fancy, and so save all. They have been so well satisfied of the reality of that which the world calls a fancy, that they have chosen rather to embrace the stake than deny it. The constancy of Christians, in cleaving to religion, was common to a *proverb* among the *heathen*; who when they would express the greatest difficulty, would say, 'You may as soon turn a Christian from Christ as do it.' Surely no wise man would sacrifice his liberty, estate, life, and all that is dear, for a conceit. (6.) Its reality appears in its uniformity in all those in whom it is wrought: *They have all obtained like precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1. *They are all changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Three thousand persons affected in one and the same manner at one sermon, Acts ii. 37. Could one and the same conceit possess them altogether? Take two Christians that live a thousand miles distant from each other, that never heard of one another, let these persons be examined, and their reports compared, and see if they do not substantially agree, and whether as face answers face in the water, so their experiences do not answer one to the other? Which could never be, if it were a groundless conceit. (7.) And lastly, It is manifest it is a reality, and puts a real difference betwixt one and another, because God carries himself so differently towards them after their conversion; now he smiles, before he frowned; now they are under the promises, before they were under the threats and curses; and what a vast difference will he put betwixt the one and the other in that great day? See Mat. xxv. Surely if these nominal Christians did but differ in conceit, not really from others, the righteous Judge of all the earth would not pass such a different judgment and doom upon them.

By all this you evidently see, that grace is a real change, and not a conceited one.

3. We say that this real change passes upon the whole man: he is changed in *soul*, *body*, and *practice*: all things are become new. (1.) This change appears in his soul: For by it, (1.) His understanding is strangely altered, and receive things in another way than formerly. It did look at Christ and things eternal as uncertain and light matters; the things that are seen and present do mostly affect, and appeared great and excellent: It admired riches and honour, whilst Christ and glory were overlooked and despised. But now all these temporals are esteemed dung, dross, vanity, Phil. iii. 8, 11. Rom. viii. 18. And Jesus Christ is now esteemed *the wisdom and the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. It did look on the saints as despicable persons, but now as the *excellent of the earth*, Psal. xvi. 3. Strictness and duty was once esteemed a needless thing, but now the only thing desirable, Psal. cxix. 14. "Oh, saith the renewed soul, where were mine eyes, that I could see no more excellency in Christ, his ways and people?" (2.) It stops not there (as it doth in hypocrites) but passes on further, and reduces the will; that strong hold is taken, and delivered up to Christ. It did rebel against God, and could not be subject, but now it submits, Acts ix. 6. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* In the day of Christ's power he presents himself in all his drawing glory and loveliness before the will, and cries to that stubborn faculty, *Open to me, open to me*; with which word there goes forth an opening and subduing power, which the will no sooner feels, but it spontaneously moves towards him, and saith, *Stand open ye everlasting gates, that the King of glory may come in*. Henceforth it votes for God, subscribes and submits to his will as its only rule and law; and indeed it becomes the principal seat where grace makes its residence; and where, for the most part, it is more visible than in any other faculty. For after a man hath searched for it in all other faculties, and cannot discern it, yet here he ordinarily finds it; to will is present, Rom. vii. 18. (3.) The will being thus gained to Christ, love comes in of course; it, feeling the power of grace also, presently changeth its object: It seizeth not so greedily on earthly objects as before, but is strangely cooled and deadened to them, by the appearance of a far greater glory in Jesus Christ; which hath so captivated the soul, and strongly attracted their affection, that it is now become very remiss in all its actings towards them; and often (especially at first) it is so weaned from all things on earth, that the temptation seems to lie on the other extreme, even in too great neglect of our lawful employments and comforts. Now Jesus Christ, Cant. i. 3. his ordinances, Psal. cxix. 97. and his saints, 1 John iii. 14. are the only delights and sweetest companions; he could sit from morning till night, to hear discourses of Christ his beloved, and could live and die in the company of his people, whose

company is now most delightful and sweet, Psal. cxix. 63. (4.) The desires are altered, they pant no more after the dust of the earth, Psal. iv. 6. but pant for God, as the *hart after the water-brooks*, Psal. xlii. 1. Yea, so big is the soul with them, that it is sometimes ready to faint, yea, to break with the longing it hath after him, Psal. cxix. 20. (5.) The thoughts are changed, Psal. cxix. 113. and the thoughts of God are now most precious, Psal. cxxxix. 47. musing when alone of him; and in its solitudes the soul entertains itself with a delightful feast, which its thoughts of God bring in to refresh it, Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6. (6.) The designs and projects of the soul are changed; all are now swallowed up in one grand design, even to approve himself to God, and be accepted of him, 2 Cor. v. 9. and if he fail not there, it will not much trouble him, if all his other designs should be dashed. It were easy to instance in the rest of the affections, and shew how grace spreads and diffuses itself into them all, as light in the air, or leaven in the lump; but this may suffice, to shew how it passes upon the whole soul, and enters the several faculties and affections thereof.

And the soul being thus possess'd for God, the body with all its members is consequently resigned up to him also: For the will hath the empire of the members of the body, as well as of the passions and affections of the soul. These are not any more delivered up to execute the lusts of Satan, but are yielded up to God for his ends and uses, Rom. vi. 19. And thus you have the third thing in the description made out also, that it is an universal, as well as a real change. But then,

4. Lastly, You must know that by this change God prepares a man for choice and excellent services; and this indeed is the main thing designed in this chapter, and is the result and issue of all that hath hitherto been said about this work of grace.

Beloved, can you imagine that God could employ his infinite and glorious power to produce this new creature in such an excellent nature, it being the master-piece of all his works of wonder wrought upon man, and not aim at some singular use and excellent end? Every wise agent designs some end; and what God aims at he hath told us, Isa. xliii. 21. Eph. ii. 20. And accordingly he expects singular things from such persons, Mat. v. 47. If God had not aimed at some new service, he need not have made a new creature: the old creature was fit enough for the old use and service it was employed in. But God hath some choice service to be done wherein he will be glorified. He will have his name glorified, even in this world, by the active and passive obedience of his people. But this being far above all the power of nature, God therefore brings them forth in a new and heavenly nature, endowed with rare, supernatural, and divine qualities, by which it is fitted and excellently prepared for any service of God, by doing or by suffering, which before he had no fitness or ability for.

The very make and constitution of this new creature speaks its use and end: As now, if a man look upon a sword or knife, (supposing he had never seen either before) yet, I say, by viewing the shape and properties of it, he will say, this was made to cut. Even so here, this new creature was formed for some glorious and singular service for God, to which it is exceedingly advantaged, whether God put you upon doing or suffering. If you ask wherein this advantage of the new creature to honour God either way lies; I answer, it principally consists in its *heavenly inclination*, or *natural tendency* to God. This is its great advantage; for, by virtue of this,

1. If God call a man to any duty, there is a *principle* within, closing with the *command* without, and moving the soul freely and spontaneously to duty, Psal. xxvii. 8. If God say, *Seek my face*, such an heart echoes to the call, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek*: And this is it which is called, *The writing of God's law in the heart*, Jer. xxxi. 33. and must needs be a mighty advantage; for now its work is its delight and wages, Psal. xix. 11. The command to such a soul is not grievous, 1 John v. 3. and by this it is kept from tiring in duty, and being weary of its work. As you see what pains children can take at play, how they will run and sweat, and endure knocks and falls, and take no notice of it; put them upon any manual labour, and they cannot endure half so much: When our work is our delight, we never faint nor tire at it. This inclination to God is to the soul as wings to a bird, or sails to a ship. This carries the soul easily through every duty. O there is a vast difference betwixt a man that *works for wages*, and one whose *work is wages to him*. And here you may at once see wherein the principal difference betwixt the hypocrite and real Christian lies in the performance of duty; and also have a true account of the reason why one perseveres in his work to the end, when the other flags. Why, here is the true account of both; the one is moved to duty from a natural inclination to it, the other is forced upon it by some external motives: For the hypocrite takes not delight in the spiritual and inward part of duty, but is secretly weary of it, Mal. i. 13. only his ambition and self-ends put him upon it as a task. But now the upright heart goes to God as his joy, Psal. lxxiii. 4. And saith, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God," Psal. lxxiii. ult. When the sabbath comes, (*that golden spot of the week*,) oh how he longs to see the beauty of the Lord in his ordinances! Psal. xxvii. 4. And when engaged in the worship of God, he cannot satisfy himself in *bodily service*, or to serve God *in the oldness of the letter*. He knoweth that *this persuasion comes not of him that called him*, Gal. v. 7, 8. He labours to engage his heart to approach to God, Jer. xxx. 21. And hence those mountings of heart and violent sallies of the desires heavenward. And thus you see one rare advantage to glorify God actively, flowing from the inclination of this new creature.

2. But then, *secondly*, hence in like manner hath the soul as great an advantage for sufferings; for this new creature having such a na-

tural tendency to God, will enable the soul in which it is, to break its way to God through all the interposing obstacles and discouragements. What are persecutions, what are reproaches, what are the fears and frowns of enemies, but so many blocks thrown into the soul's way to keep it from God and duty? And indeed where this principle of grace is wanting, they prove inaccessible mountains. Graceless hearts are stalled, and quite discouraged by them: but now this tendency of the soul to God enables the Christian to break his way through all. You may say of him in such a case as the historian doth of Hannibal, (who forced a way over the Alps with fire and vinegar) either he will find a way, or make a way; "Shall sword or famine, or any other creature separate me from Christ?" saith an upright soul. No, it will make its way through all to him, and that from this tendency of his new nature. You see in nature, every thing hath a tendency to its centre; fire will up, do what you can to suppress it; water will to the sea; if it meet with dams, yea, mountains in its way, if it cannot bear them down, it will creep about some other way, and wind and turn to find a passage to the sea. God is the centre of all gracious spirits, and grace will carry the soul through all to him. This is grace, and this is your advantage by it in the most difficult part of your work. It will carry you through all; make the hardest work easy and pleasant, 2 Cor. xii. 10. And if great sufferings or temptations interpose betwixt you and your God, it will break through all, and enable you to withstand all; as it did Paul in the text, who forced his way not only through the fury of enemies, but also through the intreaties and tears of friends.



CHAP. VII.

In which the necessity of getting clear evidences of this work of grace in us, in order to our readiness for sufferings, is held forth, the nature of that evidence opened; and divers things that cloud and obscure it removed out of the way.

I HAVE done with *habitual readiness*, consisting in an in-wrought work of grace. The following particulars are the things in which our *actual readiness* lies. And of them, that which comes next to be handled, is the getting of clear evidences in our own souls, that this work hath been wrought in us: this will exceedingly tend to your strengthening and comfort in a suffering hour. Blessed Paul, who here professeth himself ready both for bonds and death, was clear in this point; 2 Tim. i. 12. and iv. 6, 7. And indeed had he been cloudy and dark in this, he could not have said, *I am ready*. No, he had been in an ill case to undertake that journey to Jerusalem: and thou wilt find it a singular advantage in dark and difficult

days, to have all clear and right within. Now, for the opening of this I will shew :

I. What the evidence or manifestation of the work of grace is.

II. How it appears to be of such great advantage to a suffering saint.

III. Prescribe some rules for the obtaining of it.

I. What it is. And, in short, it is nothing else but the *Spirit's shining upon his own work, in the hearts of believers, thereby enabling them sensibly to see and feel it to their own satisfaction.* And this is expressed in scripture under a pleasant variety of metaphors. Sometimes it is called the "shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart," Rom. v. 5. Sometimes "the lifting up of the light of God's countenance," Psal. iv. 6. and sometimes it is expressed without a trope, by Christ's *manifesting himself* to the soul, John xiv. 21.

For the opening of it, I desire you would consider these six things.

1. That it is attainable by believers in this life, and that in a very high degree and measure. Many of the saints have had it in a full measure, 1 Cor. ii. 12. John iii. 24. John xxi. 15.

2. Though it be attainable by believers, yet it is a thing separable from true grace, and many precious souls have gone mourning for the want of it, Isa. l. 10. This was sometimes the case of Heman, David, Job, and multitudes more.

3. During its continuance it is the sweetest thing in the world. It swallows up all troubles, and doubles all other comforts: it puts more gladness into the heart, than the increase of corn and wine, Psal. iv. 7. *Suavis hora, sed brevis mora; sapit quidem suavissime sed gustatur rarissime.* Bernard.

4. Both in the continuation and removal of it the Spirit acts *arbitrarily*. No man can say how long he shall walk in this pleasant light, Psal. xxx. 7. "By thy favour thou hast made my mountain stand strong, thou hidest thy face, and I was troubled." And when in darkness, none can say how long it will be ere that sweet light break forth again. God can scatter the cloud unexpectedly in a moment, Cant. iii. 4. "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth." There is such an observable difference in David's spirit in some Psalms, as if one man had written the beginning and another the end of them.

5. Though God can quickly remove the darkness and doubts of a soul, yet ordinarily the saints find it a very hard and difficult thing to obtain and preserve the evidences of their graces. Such is the darkness, deadness, and deceitfulness of the heart; so much unevenness and inconstancy in their practice, so many counterfeit graces, and so many wiles and devices of Satan to rob them of their peace, that few (in comparison) live in a constant and quiet fruition of it.

6. Notwithstanding all these things, which increase the difficulty; yet God hath afforded his people a sure light, and sufficient means, in the diligent use of improvement whereof they may attain a certainty

of the work of grace in them. And there is a threefold light by which it may most clearly and infallibly be discovered.

1. Scripture-light, which is able to discover the secrets of a man's heart to him; and is therefore compared to the Anatomizer's knife, Heb. iv. 12.

2. The innate light of grace itself; or, if you will, the light of experience, 1 John v. 10. It hath some properties and operations which are as essential, necessary, and inseparable, as heat is to the fire, and may be as sensibly felt and perceived by the soul, Psal. cxix. 20.

3. The light of the Spirit, superadded to both the former, which is sometimes called its *earnest*, sometimes its *scal*. The Spirit doth but *plant* the *habits*, *excite* and draw forth the *acts*, and also *shine* upon his own work, that the soul may see it; and that sometimes with such a degree of light as only begets peace, and quiets the heart, though it doth not fully conquer all the doubts of it. And at other times the heart is irradiated with so clear a beam of light, that it is able to draw forth a triumphant conclusion, and say, Now I know the things that are freely given me of God: I believe, and am sure.

And so much briefly for the opening of the nature of this evidence.

II. I shall shew you the advantage of it to a suffering saint in order to the right management of a suffering condition.

And this will appear by the consideration of five things.

1. You will readily grant, that the Christian's love to God hath a mighty influence into all his sufferings for God. This grace of *love* enables him victoriously to break through all difficulties and discouragements. "The floods cannot drown it, nor the waters quench it," Cant. viii. 6, 7. It facilitates the greatest hardships, 1 John v. 3. And whatever a man suffers, if it be not from this principle it is neither acceptable to God, nor available to himself, 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

But now nothing more inflames and quickens the Christian's love to God, than the knowledge of his interest in him, and the sensible perception and taste of his love to the soul. Our love to God is but a reflection of his own love; and the more powerful the stroke of the direct beam is, the more is that of the reflex beam also. Never doth that *flame* of Jah burn with a more vehement heat, than when the soul hath the most clear manifestations of its interest in Christ and his benefits, Luke vii. 47.

2. It must needs be of singular use to a suffering saint, because it takes out the sinking weight of affliction. That which sinks and breaks the spirit, is the conjunction and meeting of inward and outward troubles together; then if the Lord do not strangely and extraordinarily support the soul, it is wreckt and overwhelmed, as the ship in which Paul sailed was, when it fell into a place where two seas met, Acts xxvii. 41. O how tempestuous a sea doth that soul fall in, that hath *fightings without*, and *fears within*! how must that poor Christian's heart tremble and meditate terror, that when he retires from

troubles without, for some comfort and support within, shall find a sad *addition* to his troubles from whence he expected relief against them! hence it was that Jeremiah so earnestly deprecates such a misery, “Be not thou a terror to me, thou art my hope in the day of evil,” Jer. xvii. 17. This is prevented by this means; if a man have a clear breast, and all be quiet within, he is like one that hath a good roof over his head when the storm falls. “We glory in tribulation, because the law of God is shed abroad in our hearts,” Rom. v. 3, 5.

3. It is a fountain of joy and comfort in the darkest and saddest hour. Hence the glorious triumphs of saints in their afflictions, Rom. v. 5. And in the Christian’s joy in the Lord, lies much of his strength for sufferings, Neh. viii. 10. If once the spirit droops and sinks, the man is in a bad case to suffer: Holy joy, is the oil that makes the chariot-wheels of the soul free to follow the Lord, *Non tardat uncta rota*. To suffer with joyfulness for Christ is a qualification that God’s eye is much upon in his suffering servants, Col. i. 11. How did the famous worthies that went before us magnify Christ, and glorify religion by the holy triumphs of their faith and joy under tribulation! one kissed the *apparitor* that brought him news of his condemnation, and was like a man transported with an excess of joy: Another upon the pronouncing of the sentence kneels down, and with hands and eyes lifted up, solemnly blesses God for such a day as that. Oh how is Christ magnified by this! and this cannot be until interest be cleared. It is true, the *faith of recumbency* gives the soul a secret support, and enables the Christian to *live*; but the *faith of evidence* keeps him *lively*, and prevents all those uncomfortable and uncomely sinkings and despondencies of spirit, 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. and therefore cannot but be of a singular use to a soul at such a time.

4. And, lastly, It is of special use to a Christian under sufferings, inasmuch as it enables him to repel the temptations that attend upon sufferings. Nothing sets a keener edge upon his indignation against unworthy compliances, than this. Indeed a poor cloudy and dubious Christian will be apt to catch at deliverance, though upon terms dishonourable to Christ; but he that is clear in point of interest, abhors compositions and capitulations upon unworthy terms and conditions, Heb. xi. 35. and x. 34. He that sees the gain and reward of suffering, will think he is offered to his loss, when life and deliverance are set before him upon such hard terms as sin is.

And thus you see what influence it hath into a suffering condition.

III. In the next place I promised to prescribe some rules for the attaining of this evidence, and the dispelling of those doubts by which it is usually clouded in the souls of believers. And oh, that by the faithful use of them you may attain it, against a suffering day come upon you.

1. *Rule*. And the first rule I shall give you is this, make it your business to improve grace more; for the more *vigorous* it is, the more

evidential it must needs be, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Oh how much time have many Christians spent in inquiring after the lowest signs of sincerity, and what may consist with grace? Which had they spent in the diligent improvements of the means of grace, for the increasing of it, they would have found it a shorter cut to peace and comfort by much.

2. *Rule.* Mistake not the rule by which you are to try yourselves, lest you give a false judgment upon yourselves. Some are apt to make those things signs of grace, which are not; and when the falseness of them is detected, how is that poor soul plunged into doubts and fears, that leaned upon them? As now, if a man should conclude his sincerity from his diligence in attending on the word preached; this is but a *paralogism*, (as the apostle calls it,) Jam. i. 22. By which a man deceiveth his own soul; For that which is a note or mark, must be proper to the thing notified, and not common to any thing else. There are divers sorts of *marks*; some are *exclusive*, the principal use of which is to convince bold pretenders, and discover hypocrites; such is that, 1 Cor. ix. 9. It is a most certain sign where these are, there is no grace; but yet it will not follow on the contrary, that where these are not, there is no grace. See Luke xviii. 11. Others are *inclusive*, the use of which is not so much for trying of the truth, as the strength and degrees of grace. As now, when faith is described by the *radiancy* of it, or by some of its heroic acts, and promises made to some raised degrees and operations of it; as that, Eph. iii. 12. &c. here a mistake is easily made. Besides those, or rather betwixt these, are another sort of marks, which are called positive marks; and these agreeing in the lowest degree of grace, are for the trial of the truth and sincerity of it. Such are these, 1 John iv. 13. 1 John ii. 3. Matth. v. 3. Be sure to try by a proper mark.

3. *Rule.* Take heed of such sins as violate and waste the conscience; for these will quickly raise a mist, and involve the soul in clouds and darkness, Psal. li. 8, &c. Such are sins against light, and the reclamations of conscience.

3. *Rule.* Labour to shun those common mistakes that Christians make in judging of their state; among which I shall select these five as principal ones.

1. Call not your condition into question upon every failing and involuntary lapse into sin. "Iniquities prevail against me, as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away," Psal. lxxv. 3. In short, thou needest not call thy condition into question, provided thou find thy spirit working as Paul's did under the surprizals of temptations: viz. If, (1.) Thou do approve of and delight in the law, though thou fall short of it in thy practice, Rom. vii. 12, 14. (2.) If thy failings be involuntary, and against the resolution and bent of thy soul, ver. 15, 18, 19. (3.) If it be the load and burden of thy soul, ver. 24. (4.) If the thoughts of deliverance comfort thee, ver. 25.

2. Question not the truth of thy grace, because it was not wrought

in the same way and manner in thee, as in others: For there is a great variety, as to the circumstances of *time* and *manner*, betwixt the Spirit's operations upon one and another. Compare the history of Paul's conversion with that of the Jailor, Zaccheus, or Lydia, and see the variety of circumstances.

3. Conclude not that you have no grace, because you feel not those transports and ravishing joys that other Christians speak of. If thou canst not say as Paul doth, Rom. viii. 38. yet bless God, if thou canst but breathe forth such language as that, Mark ix. 24. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

4. Say not thou hast no grace, because of the high attainments of some hypocrites, who in some things may excel thee. When some persons read the sixth chapter to the Hebrews, they are startled to see to what a glorious height the hypocrite may soar; not considering that there are these three things wherein they excel the most glorious hypocrite in the world. (1.) That self was never dethroned in hypocrites, as it is in them. All that an hypocrite doth is for himself. (2.) The hypocrite never hated every sin, as he doth; but hath still some Agag, Rimmon, or Delilah. (3.) That the hypocrite never acted in duty from the bent and inclination of a new nature, taking delight in heavenly employment, but is moved rather as a clock by the weight and poises of some external motives and advantages.

5. Conclude not you have no grace, because you grow not so sensibly as some other Christians do. You may be divers ways mistaken about this. (1.) You may measure your growth by your desires, and then it appears nothing; for the Christian aims high, and grasps at all. (2.) Or by comparing yourselves with such as have larger capacities, time, and advantages than you. (3.) Or by comparing your graces with other men's gifts, which you mistake for their graces. (4.) Or by thinking that all growth is upward in joy, peace, and comfort; whereas you may grow in mortification and humility, which is as true a growth as the former. Oh! take heed of these mistakes; they have been very prejudicial to the peace of many Christians.

5. *Rule.* Lastly, Decline not sufferings when God gives you a fair call to them. Oh! the Christian's suffering time is commonly his clearest and most comfortable time. "Then the Spirit of God and glory resteth on them," 1 Pet. iv. 14. That which hath been in suspense for some years, is decided and cleared in a suffering hour. And thus I have shewed you how to *attain this necessary qualification also.*

CHAP. VIII.

Discovering the necessity of an improved faith for the right management of sufferings, and directing to some special means for the improvement thereof.

THE next thing conducing to our actual readiness for sufferings, is the improvement of faith to some considerable degree of strength.

This is the grace that must do the main service in such an hour, and hath the principal hand in supporting the Christian under every burden. This is the grace that crowns our heads with victory in the day of battle, Eph. vi. 16. "Above all taking the shield of "faith." It is true every grace is of use, and contributes assistance: Suffering saints have been beholding to them all. But of this we may say, as Solomon of the virtuous woman; "Though many graces have "done excellently, yet this excels them all." In this grace Paul was very eminent; it was the life he daily lived, Gal. ii. 20. Oh! it is a precious grace, 2 Pet. i. 1. So precious, that Christ, who seldom admired any thing, yet wondered at this, Matth. viii. 10. A victorious grace it is that overcomes all difficulties, Mark ix. 23. By this sword it was that all those famous *heroes* Heb. xi. atchieved all those glorious conquests; and in every distress it may say to the soul, as Christ to the disciples, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do no- "thing." This is that *sword* that hath obtained so many victories over the world, 1 John v. 4. And that trusty *shield* that hath quenched so many deadly darts of temptation, which have been levelled at the very heart of a Christian in the day of battle. By it a Christian lives, when all outward, sensible comforts die, Hab. ii. 4. It is the ground upon which the Christian fixes his foot, and never fails under him, 2 Cor. i. 24. The necessity of it will more clearly appear, by considering how many ways it relieves the soul in trouble, and disburdens the heart of all its sinking loads and pressures: There are two things that sink a man's spirit when under sufferings: viz. The *greatness* of the troubles, and the *weakness* of the soul to bear them; against both which faith relieves the soul, viz. by making a *weak* soul *strong*, and *heavy* troubles *light*.

First, It makes a weak soul strong and able to bear; and this it doth divers ways.

By purging out of the soul those enfeebling and weakening distempers: not only *guilt* in general, which is to the soul as a wound upon the bearing shoulder, Rom. v. 1. The removal whereof enables the soul to bear any other burden, Isa. xxxiii. 24. But it also removes *fear*, that tyrant passion, that cuts the nerves of the soul. For as *faith* comes in, so *fear* goes out: Look in what degree the fear of God is ascendent in the soul, proportionably the sinful fear of the creature declines and vanisheth, Isa. viii. 12, 13. This fear extinguishes that, as the sun-shine puts out fire, "The righteous is bold as "a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1. The word *בְּרָרִי* signifies a young lion in his hot blood, that knows no such thing as fear! And look, how much of the soul is *empty* of faith, so much it is *filled* with fear: "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Matth. viii. 26. Certainly, it is a rare advantage, to be freed from the *common distraction*, in times of *common destruction*; and this advantage the soul hath by faith.

2. It strengthens the soul to bear afflictions and hardships; not

only by purging out its weakning distempers, but by turning itself to Christ, in whom all its strength lies; and that suitably to the several exigencies of the soul in all its distresses. Doth darkness, like the shadow of death overspread the earth, and all the lights of earthly comforts disappear? then faith supports the heart by looking to the Lord, Micah vii. 7. And this look of faith exceedingly revives the heart, Psal. xxxiv. 5. and enlightens the soul. Doth God pluck away all earthly props from under your feet, and leave you nothing visible to rest upon? in that exigence faith puts forth a suitable act, viz. *Resting or staying upon God*, Isa. xxvi. 3. and by this the soul comes to be quieted and established, Psal. cxxv. 1. Do temptations strive to put off the soul from Christ, and discourage it from leaning upon the promise? Then it puts forth *an act of resolution*, Job xiii. 15. And so breaks its way through that discouragement; or hath the soul been long seeking God for deliverance out of trouble, and still there is silence in heaven, no answer comes; but instead of an answer comes a temptation, to throw up the duty, and seek to deliver itself? Then faith puts forth another act upon Christ, suitable to this distress, viz. *An act of waiting*, Isa. xlix. 23. which *waiting* is opposed to that *sinful haste* which the soul is tempted to, Isa. xxviii. 16. Or doth God at any time call the soul forth to some difficult service, against which the flesh and carnal reason dispute and plead? Now faith helps the soul, by putting forth *an act of obedience*; and that whilst carnal reason stands by dissatisfied, Gal. i. 16. And hence it is, that obedience carries the name of faith upon it to shew its descent, Rom. xvi. 26. Faith encourages the soul to obey, not only by urging God's *command*, but by giving it God's *warrant* for its indemnity, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. Or doth a poor believer find himself overmatched by troubles and temptations, and his own inherent strength begin to fail under the burden? Then faith leads him to an omnipotent God, and so secures him from fainting under his trouble, Psal. lxi. 2. In the Lord is everlasting strength. *El Shaddai* is a name of an encouragement to a feeble soul, Isa. xl. 29, 30, 31. And thus you see the first particular made good, viz. What a strengthening influence it hath upon a weak soul.

Secondly, In the next place let us see how it *lightens* the Christian's burdens, as well as *strengthens* his back to bear.

And certainly, this grace of faith doth strangely alter the very nature of sufferings, taking away both the *heaviness* and *horror* of them; and this it doth divers ways:

1. By committing the business to Christ, and leaving the matter with him; and so quitting the soul of all these anxieties and perturbations, which are the very burden and weight of affliction, Psal. xxxvii. 5. For certainly that which sinks us in days of trouble, is rather from within, from our unruly, seditious, and clamorous thoughts, than from the troubles themselves with which we conflict: But by committing the matter to God, the soul is quickly brought to rest.

2. By discovering much present good in our troubles; the more good faith discovers in a trouble, the more supportable and easy it makes it to the soul. Now faith brings in a comfortable report, that they are not *only evils*, as the troubles of the wicked are, Ezek. vii. 5. but have an allay and mixture of much good, Heb. xii. 10. Isa. xxvii. 9.

3. By foreseeing the end and final removal of them, and that near at hand, 2 Cor. iv. 17. That which daunts and amazes men in times of trouble is, that they can see no end of them. Hence the heart faints, and hands hang down through discouragement: But now faith brings the joyful tidings of the end of troubles; and saith to the soul, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why so disquieted and discouraged within me? as if thy sufferings were like the sufferings of the damned, endless and everlasting, whereas they are but for a moment; yet a little while, a very little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. Yet a little while, and then the days of thy mourning shall be over.

4. By comparing our sufferings with the sufferings of others, which exceedingly diminisheth and shrinks them up; sometimes the believer compares his sufferings with Christ's, and then he is ashamed that ever he should complain and droop under them. Oh! saith he, what is that to that which the Lord Jesus suffered for me? He suffered in all his *members*, head, hands, side, feet, from all *hands*, friends and enemies, in all his *offices*; yea, in his soul, as well as in his body: And indeed the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings: Sometimes he compares them with the sufferings of others of the saints in former ages: When he reads in faith the history of their persecutions, he is shamed out of his complaints, and saith, 'Am I better than my fathers?' Sometimes he compares them with the sufferings of the damned: 'O what is this to everlasting burnings! What is a prison to hell? How light and easy 'is it to suffer for Christ, in comparison of those sufferings which 'are from Christ?' And thus the soul is quieted, and the terror of sufferings abated.

5. Faith entitles Christ to the believer's sufferings, and puts them upon his score; and so it exceedingly transforms and alters them: Ah! it is no small relief when a man can hold up the Bible, as that *martyr* did at the stake, and say, 'This is that which hath brought me hither:' Or as the Psalmist; "For thy sake we are killed all the day long;" Or as the apostle, Col. i. 24. "I fill up that which 'is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh."

6. Lastly, Faith engages the presence of God, to be and abide with the soul in all its solitudes and sufferings: It lays hold upon the promises made to that purpose, Psal. xxiii. 2. Isa. xliii. 2. Heb. xiii. 5. John xiv. 18. And whilst a poor soul enjoys this the very sense of troubles is swallowed up.

And thus I have given some brief hints how faith relieves and strengthens the soul in a suffering hour: The next thing is to direct

you how to improve this excellent grace, that it may do you such service as this in a time of need : And, in order thereunto, I shall give you these seven directions.

1. Attend diligently upon the ministration of the gospel, which is not only the procreant, but also the conserving cause of faith, 1 Pet. ii. 2. The *doctrine of faith* is the food and nutriment of the *grace of faith* : There are its rules, its encouragements, its cordials : Thence faith takes and treasures up its *nichtams*, to which it hath recourse in times of need : Every *attribute, command, or promise* that shines forth there, is a dish for faith to feed on ; but all together are a royal feast, Psal. lxxiii. 5. Some say the land of Judea, is called *the land of the living*, in Psal. xxvii. 13. in respect of the ordinances of God which that people enjoyed. Certain it is, they are the great instruments of quickening souls at first, and preserving that life it so begat in them : But then be sure they have Christ's stamp upon them, and that they be ministered by his own officers, and in his own way : And so you may reasonably expect more fruits and influences from them than from all private gifts and helps in the world : " For the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob," Psal. lxxxvii. 2. And all private helps may say, in comparison of Christ's public ordinances, as Gideon said to the men of Ephraim, Judges viii. 2. " What have we done in comparison of you ?"

2. Improve well your sacrament seasons, those harvest days of faith : This ordinance hath a direct and peculiar tendency to the improvement and strengthening of faith. It is a pledge superadded to the promise for faith's sake : Heavenly and sublime mysteries do therein stoop down to your senses, that you may have the clearer apprehensions of them ; and the clearer the apprehensions are, the stronger the assent of faith must needs be : By this seal also the promise comes to be more ratified to us ; and the firmer the promise appears to the soul, the more bold and adventurous faith is in casting itself upon it ; Oh ! how many poor, doubting, trembling souls have, in such a season, gathered the full ripe fruits of assurance from the top-boughs of that ordinance !

3. Frequent actings of faith are rare and special means of improving it : *To him that hath*, i. e. that improves and uses what he hath, *shall be given*, Mat. xxv. 29. This was the way by which Paul thrived in faith and every other grace so exceedingly, that he outgrew them that were in Christ before him, 1 Cor. xv. 10. It is true, its beginning in the soul is not after the manner of other habits, either moral or natural : This is not of natural acquisition, but by divine infusion : But yet its improvement is in the same manner. Oh then ! if ever you would have a flourishing faith, rouse it up out of the dull habit, and live in the daily exercise of it.

4. Go to Jesus Christ, who is the Author and finisher of faith, and cry to him, as Mark ix. 24. *Lord, increase my faith* : Yea, beg

the assistance of others prayers in this behalf, as the apostle did, 1 Thes. iii. 10. 2 Thes. i. 11. faith animates prayer, and prayer increaseth faith.

5. Improve times of affliction for the increase of faith: For certainly, sanctified afflictions do notably exercise and increase this grace, 1 Pet. i. 7. In times of prosperity we know not what stock of faith we have: We live so much upon things seen, that we cannot many times tell whether we have faith or no: But when difficult days come, then we must get out our whole subsistence and livelihood by faith, Hab. ii. 4. Yea, then we have many proofs and experiments of God's fidelity in the promises, which is a choice help to faith, 2 Cor. i. 10.

6. Keep catalogues of all your remarkable experiences; treasure them up as food to your faith in time to come: Oh! it is a singular encouragement and heartening to faith, when it can turn over the records of God's dealing with you in years past, and say as Joshua, *Not one thing hath failed*, Joshua xxiii. 14. When it can say so of promises that have already had their accomplishments, then they will be apt to say concerning those yet to be accomplished, as Elizabeth said to Mary, Luke i. 45. "Blessed is the soul that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which are told it by the Lord."

These experiments are the food of faith, Psal. lxxiv. 14. "Thou breakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to thy people inhabiting the wilderness," i. e. That famous experience of the power and love of God in their Red-sea deliverance, where he destroyed that sea-monster Pharaoh, and his host, was meat to the faith of God's Israel in the wilderness afterwards. We often find Christ charging the people's unbelief on a bad memory, Mat. xvi. 8, 9. And hence it was that the Lord commanded the Israelites to keep *journals* of every day's occurrences, Num. xiii. 1, 2. It is a thousand pities such choice helps should be lost. Oh! if you could but remember, how the Lord hath appeared for you in former exigencies, and how often he hath shamed you for your unbelief, it would exceedingly animate your faith, both in present and future distresses, Micah vi. 5.

7. Lastly, Beware of sense, which is the supplanter of faith. O if you live upon things earthly, you put your faith out of its office: Things earthly have an enmity to faith. "This is the victory by which we overcome the world, even our faith," 1 John v. 4. Overcoming denotes a conflict, and conflicts infer oppositions. Oh you that live so much by sight and sense on things visible, what will you do when in David's, or Paul's case, Psal. cxlii. 4. 2 Tim. iv. 16. when all outward encouragements and stays shall utterly fail? What had Abraham done if he had not been able to believe against hope, i. e. such an hope as is founded on sense and reason.

Reader, I advise and charge thee in the name of the Lord, and

as thou hopest to live when visible comforts die, that thou be diligent in the improvement and preparation of this excellent grace of faith: if it fail, thou failest with it; and as thy faith is, so art thou. Consult also the cloud of witnesses, and see if thou canst find a man amongst them that did not achieve the victory by his faith. Had they not all been run down by the furious assaults of temptation, and instead of a *cloud of witnesses*, been so many *pillars of salt*, and monuments of reproach and shame to religion, if their faith had failed in its trial.

CHAP. IX.

Wherein the necessity and usefulness of Christian fortitude in order to sufferings is evinced, with a brief account of its nature and the means of attaining it.

THE next grace which occurs to the completing of our actual readiness for sufferings, is *Christian fortitude*, or holy courage; which must say in thy heart in a time of danger, as Elijah once did, "As the Lord lives I will shew myself." This also is a choice part of your preparation-work. In this grace our apostle was eminent: when he was told, "Bonds and afflictions waited for him;" he could say, That "none of these things moved him," Acts xx. 24. Yea, when he was to appear before the lion Nero, and not a man would own or stand by him, yet he stands his ground, resolving rather to die on the place, than dishonourably to recede from his principles and profession, 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. He set the world, with all its threats and terrors lower than it set him. O how conspicuous was this grace in all those *heroes* that have past on before us: And if ever you hope to stand in the evil day, and be fetched off the field with honour, you must rouse up and awaken your courage for God: And the necessity thereof will appear upon these four considerations.

1. Because the success and prevalence of Satan's temptations in the hour of persecution depends upon the fainting and overthrow of this grace. Wherefore doth he raise persecutions in the world, but because such terrible things are fitted to work upon the passion of carnal fear, which rises with those dangers, and makes the soul as a tumultuous sea. This is it he aims at, Neb. vi. 13. This is a multiplying passion that represents dangers more and greater than they are, and so drives the soul into the very net and snare laid by the devil to take it. Prov. xxix. 25. "The fear of man brings a snare;" which was sadly exemplified in Abraham, Gen. xii. 12. and divers others of the saints. If he can but subdue this grace, he will quickly bring you to capitulate for life and liberty, upon the basest and most dishonourable terms; therefore the preparation of this grace is so exceedingly necessary.

2. Because this is the grace that honours Jesus Christ abundantly, when you are brought upon the stage for him.

There is a great solemnity at the suffering and trial of a saint: heaven, earth, and hell, are spectators, observing the issue, and how the saints will acquit themselves in that hour. *We are made a spectacle*, saith the apostle. The word is *Θεατρῶν ἐργηθήμεν*, we are as set upon a theatre in public view, 1 Cor. iv. 9. God, angels, and saints wait to see the glorious triumphs of their faith and courage, reflecting honour upon the name and cause of Christ. Devils and wicked men gape for an advantage by their cowardice. Certainly very much lies now upon the Christian's hands. Should he faint and give ground, how will it furnish the triumphs of hell, and make Christ's enemies vaunt over him, as if his love ran so low in the hearts of his people, that they durst not adventure any thing for him? Or, as if, notwithstanding their brave words and glorious profession, they durst not trust their own principles when it comes to the trial: But if now they play the men, and discover an holy gallantry of spirit and resolution for Christ, how will it daunt the enemies, and make them say as Marcus, bishop of Aretheusa made one of Julian's nobles, present at his torments, to say concerning him, *We are ashamed, O emperor, the Christians laugh at thy cruelty!* And how will God himself rejoice and glory over them, as he once did over Job when he fetched him with honour off that first field! Job ii. 3. "Still he holdeth fast his integrity."

3. Your own peace is wrapt up in it, as well as God's glory. Is it nothing, think you, to be freed from those *vultures* and *harpies* that feed upon the hearts of men at such times? Surely God reckons, that he promiseth a very great mercy to his people when he promiseth it. Prov. i. ult. Psal. cxii. 7. When Borromæus was told of some that lay in wait to take away his life, it troubled him not, but he said, *An Deus est in mundo pro nihilo?* What, is God in the world for nought? And like to this was the answer of Silentarius in the like case; *Si Deus mei curam non habet, quid vivo?* If God take not care for me, how do I live; Oh this is it that brings you to an holy quietude of spirit in times of confusion and distraction, which is a choice mercy.

4. Your magnanimity is of special use to other saints, who are following you in the same path of sufferings. If you faint, it is like the fainting of a standard-bearer in an army: you bring thereby an evil report upon the cross of Christ, as the *first spies* did upon the land of Canaan. And a like influence with that it is like to have on your brethren; so that there is a necessity of improving this grace also before you can say with Paul you are ready.

2. But what is this Christian fortitude, and wherein doth it consist.

I answer briefly, *It is an holy boldness in the performance of difficult duties, flowing from faith in the call of God, and his promise to us in the discharge of them.*

And so you have the nature of it in these four particulars.

1. It is an *holy boldness*, not a natural or sinful boldness, arising either from the natural constitution, or evil disposition of the mind.

2. It is expressed about duties for truth, not error, Jer. ix. 3. for the interest of Christ, not of the flesh.

3. The season in which it appears is, when duties are surrounded and beset with difficulties and dangers, Dan. iii. 16. vi. 10.

4. The fountain whence it flows is faith, and that as it respects the command and call of God to duty, Acts xvi. 10. And his promise to us in the discharge thereof, Josh. i. 5, 6.

And his grace stands opposed both to the fear of man in the cause of God, Heb. xi. 27. and to apostasy from the truth for fear of suffering. Thus briefly of the nature of it.

3. In the last place I shall lay down some rules for the promoting and improvement of it, and so finish this chapter.

Now there are ten rules heedfully to be observed for the breeding of holy courage in the breast of a saint in evil times.

1. *Rule.* And the first rule is this, Get a weaned heart from all earthly enjoyments. If the heart be inordinately fixed upon any one thing that you possess in the world, that inordinate estimation of, and affection for it, will strangely effeminate, soften, and cowardize your spirit when your trial comes, 2 Tim. ii. 4. You meet not with a man of courage for God, but had his heart dead to earthly things; so it was with Paul, Phil. iii. 8. Since the apostles, we scarce meet with a greater example of magnanimity than Luther; and if you read his story, you will find few men ever set a lower rate on the world than he. All the Turkish *empire* in his eye was but a crumb cast to the dogs. *Germana est haec bestia pecunium non curat.* Money could not tempt him.

2. *Rule.* Suffer not guilt to lie upon your consciences: it is a fountain of fears, and you can never attain boldness for God till it be removed, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. *The spirit of a sound mind* is opposed to the spirit of fear, 2 Tim. i. 7. Now that sound mind is a mind or spirit that is not wounded, and made sick and infirm by guilt. O what black fogs and mists arise out of guilt, which becloud our evidences, and fill us with fear and discouragements! Gen. xlii. 21, 22.

3. *Rule.* Clear your call to difficult services, be well satisfied that you are in that way and posture God expects to find you in. O what courage this will give! Josh. i. 9. Then a man may promise himself God's presence and protection, 2 Chron. xv. 2. But whilst a man is dubious here, and cannot tell whether it be his duty or not that he is engaging in, how can he have courage to hazard any thing for it? For thinks he, I may suffer much from men, and yet have no thanks of God for it, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And further, till a man be clear in this, he cannot commit his cause to God. And it is a sad thing to be cut off from so choice a relief as that is, 1 Pet. iv. 19.

4. *Rule.* Get right notions and apprehensions of your enemies.

We are apt to *magnify* the creature, as if he could do more than he *can*, and thereby *disable* ourselves from doing what we *should*. Possess your souls with the belief of these five things concerning them. (1.) That they are poor weak enemies, Isa. xl. 15, 17, 22. But as a swarm of gnats in the air. See how God describes them, Isa. li. 13, 14.

(2.) That little power they have is limited by your God who hath the bounding and ordering of it, John xix. 11. Psal. lxxiv. 10. (3.) They carry guilt upon them, which makes them more timorous than you, Isa. viii. 12. Their fear is a strange fear. (4.) They only use carnal weapons against you, which cannot touch your souls. If they were praying enemies that could engage God against you, they would be formidable enemies indeed; but this they cannot do. The largest commission that any of them ever had from God, extended but to the bodies and bodily concernment of the saints, Luke xi. 4, 5. They cannot thunder with an arm like God, nor blot your name out of the book of life, nor take your part out of the *New Jerusalem*; therefore fear not man. (5.) Your enemies are God's enemies; and God hath espoused your cause and quarrel. The more cruel they are, the kinder he will be to you, John ix. 34, 35.

5. *Rule.* Labour to engage the presence of God with you in all places and conditions. Whilst you enjoy this, your spirits will be invincible and undaunted, Josh. i. 9. Psal. cxviii. 6. A weak creature assisted and encouraged by the presence of a great God will be able to do and suffer great things. Poor flesh in the hand of an almighty Spirit acts above itself. A little dog, if his master be by, and animates him, will seize upon a greater beast than himself, though he would run from him were his master absent. Our courage ebbs and flows as the manifestations of the divine presence do. Oh get thyself once within the line of that promise, Is. xliii. 1, 2. and thou art invincible.

6. *Rule.* Get an high estimation of Jesus Christ, and all his concernments. They that *value* him *highest*, will *adventure* for him *farthest*. Magnanimous Luther, how inestimable a value did he set upon the truths of Christ! *Ruat calum, &c. Let heaven rush rather than a crumb of truth should perish.* Thou wilt never be a man of zeal and courage for Christ's interest, until that interest of Christ have swallowed up all thine own interests. No sooner is the soul acquainted, with, and interested in Christ, but he heartily wishes well to all his affairs and concernments, Psal. xlv. 3, 4. This is that which puts metal and resolution for Christ into the soul.

7. *Rule.* Beware you be not cheated with maxims of carnal policy, mistaken for Christian prudence. Many are so: and they prove destructive to all true zeal and courage for Christ. Never was religion professed with greater plainness and simplicity, than by the primitive Christians; and never was there an higher spring-tide of courage and zeal for God, than in those days. We are apt to call it prodigality, and are grown wiser to husband our lives and comforts, better than

than they did. But indeed our prudentials have even swallowed up our religion. It is true, there is such a thing as Christian prudence; but this doth not teach men to shun all costly and difficult duties, and prostitute conscience to save the skin, "A man of understanding walketh uprightly," Prov. xv. 21.

8. *Rule.* Look upon the inside of troubles for Christ, as well as upon the outside of them. If you view them by an eye of sense, there appeareth nothing but matter of discouragement. To look on the outside of a prison, banishment or death, is affrighting and horrible: but then if you look into the inside of these things by faith, and see what God hath made them to his people, and how joyful and comfortable they have been in these conditions; what honey they have found in the carcase of a lion, what songs in the stocks and dungeons, what glorying in tribulation, and hundred-fold reward even in their sufferings: O then! that which looked like a serpent at a distance, will appear but as a rod in hand. How many have found themselves quite mistaken in their apprehensions of sufferings; and been more loth to come out of a prison, than they were to go in! If you did but see your supports and the comforts that souls ordinarily meet with in their troubles for Christ, you would not look on them as such formidable things.

9. *Rule.* View the issue and reward of sufferings by an eye of faith: this also will strongly abate the horror and dread of them, Heb. x. 34. Upon this account it is the saints have so slighted and contemned them, Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. But then see that you act your faith, (1.) Upon the certainty of it: look at it as a most real and substantial thing, Heb. xi. 1. (2.) View it as a great and *glorious reward*; And, (3.) As near at hand: And then say to thy soul, come on my soul, come on; seest thou the joy set before thee! the crown of glory ready to be set on thy head by the hand of a righteous God. Oh, what comparison is there betwixt those sufferings, and that glory!

10. *Rule.* Propound to yourselves the best patterns and examples. Keep your eye upon the cloud of witnesses; these are of special use to beget holy courage, Heb. xii. 1. James v. 10. Who would be afraid to enter the lists, and grapple with that enemy that he hath seen so often foiled, and that by a poor weak Christian? See how the enemy with whom you are to grapple, hath been beaten hand to hand, and triumphed over by poor women and children; they had as great infirmities, and you have as gracious assistances as those that are gone before you.

CHAP. X.

Discovering the necessity of an heart mortified to all earthly and temporal enjoyments, in order to the right managing of a suffering condition; with several directions for the attaining thereof.

THE next thing wherein your actual readiness for bonds, or death consisteth, is in *the mortification of your affections to all earthly interest and enjoyments; even the best and sweetest of them.* Till this be done, in some measure, you are not fit to be used in any such service for the Lord, 2 Tim. i. 21. The living world is the very life of temptations: the travailing pains of death are stronger and sharper upon none, than those that are full of sense and self. As you see in nature, what conflicts and agonies strong and lively persons suffer when they die; when others, in whom nature is decayed and spent before-hand, die away without half that pain, even as a bird in a shell. Corruption in the saints, is like sap in the green wood, which resisteth the fire, and will not burn well, till it be dried up. Prepared Paul had an heart mortified in a very high degree, to all the honour and riches of the world, accounting them all but trifles, Gal. vi. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

The need of this will be evinced by these five considerations.

1. Unless the heart be mortified to all earthly enjoyments, they will appear great and glorious things in your eye and estimation; and if so, judge what a task you will have, to deny and leave them all in a suffering hour. It is corruption *within*, that puts the lustre and glory upon things *without*: it is the carnal eye only that gazes admiringly after them, 2 Cor. v. 16. and hence the *lust* is put to express the *affection*, 1 John ii. 16. because all that inordinate affection we have to them, arises from our high estimation of them, and that estimation from our lusts, that represent them as great and glorious. Therefore, certainly, it will be difficult (if not impossible) to deny them, till they have lost their glory in your eye; and that they will never do, till those lusts within you, that put that beauty and necessity upon them, be first crucified. As for instance, what a glory and necessity doth the pride of men put upon the honour and credit of the world, so that they will rather choose to die, than survive it? But to a mortified soul it is a *small matter*, 1 Cor. iv. 3. So for riches, how much are they adored, till our lusts be mortified? and then they are esteemed but *dung and dross*, Phil. iii. 8. It is our corruptions that paint and gild over these things; when these are crucified, those will be lightly esteemed.

2. Mortification of corruptions is that which recovers an healthful state of soul: sin is to the soul, what a disease is to the body; and mortification is to sin, what physic is to a disease. Hence those that are but a little mortified, are in a comparative sense called *carnal*, 1 Cor. iii. 3. and *babes*, ver. 2. in respect of weakness. Now, suffering

work being some of the Christian's hardest labour and exercise, he cannot be fitted for it, until his soul be in an healthful state: a sickly man cannot carry heavy burdens, or endure hard labours and exercises: the sick soldier is left behind in his quarters, or put into the hospital, whilst his fellows are dividing the spoils, and obtaining glorious victories in the field. To this sense some expound Rom. viii. 13. "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." Whereas *death* is put to note a languishing state of soul, whilst mortification is neglected; *solife* is put to express an healthful and comfortable state; *vivere pro valere*; so that upon this account also the necessity of it appears.

3. Your *corruptions* must be mortified, else they will be raging and violent in the time of temptation, and, like a torrent, sweep away all your convictions and resolutions. It is sin unmortified within that makes the heart like gun-powder; so that when the sparks of temptation fly about it, (and they fall thick in a suffering hour) they do but touch and take. Hence the *corruptions* of the *world* are said to be *through lust*, 2 Pet. i. 4. With these internal unmortified lusts the *tempter* holds correspondence; and these be the *traitors* that deliver up our souls into his hands.

4. Unless you be diligent and successful in this work, though you should suffer; yet not like Christians; you will but disgrace religion, and the cause for which you suffer; for it is not simple suffering, but suffering *as a Christian*, that reflects credit on religion, and finds acceptance with God. If you be envious, fretful, discontented, and revengeful, under your sufferings, what honour will this bring to Christ? Is not this altogether unlike the example of your Lord? Isa. liii. 7. and the behaviour of suffering saints? 1 Cor. iv. 13. Yet thus it will be, if your pride, passion, and revenge, be not first subdued: for what are the breakings forth of such distempers of spirit, but as the flushes of heat in the face from an ill-affected liver? Most certain it is, that all the evils are in your natures, and as certain it is, they will rise like mud and filth from the bottom of a lake, when some eminent trials shall rake you to the bottom; *Natura venata prodit seipsam*.

5. Lastly, Mortification must be studied and plied with diligence; else you will find many longings and hankerings after earthly enjoyments and comforts, which will prove a snare to you: what is sin but the *corrupt* and *vitiating* appetite of the *creature*, to things that are earthly and sensual, relishing more sweetness and delight in them, than in the blessed God? And what is sanctification, but the rectifying of these *inordinate affections*, and placing them on their proper object? A regenerate and mortified Christian tastes not half that sweetness in forbidden fruits that another doth: set but money before Judas, and see how eargerly he catches at it—"What will ye give me, and I will betray him?" Set but life, liberty, or any such bait before an unmortified heart, and how impotent is he to with-

stand them, as offered in a temptation? Oh those unmortified lusts! how do they make men hanker, long, and their lips water (as we use to say) after these things? This makes them break prison, decline sufferings, though upon the basest terms; whereas a mortified Christian can see all these things set before him, yea, offered to him, and refuse them, Heb. x. 35. It is with them much as it was with old Bazzilai, 2 Sam. xix. 35. When nature is decayed, they find but little pleasure in natural actions, Eccles. xii. 1. And look as the body of sin decays and languishes, so do these longings also: It weans the soul from them all, and enables it to live very comfortably without them, Psal. cxxxi. 1. Phil. iv. 12. There needs no more to be said to evince the necessity of mortification, and discover what influence it hath into a Christian's readiness for sufferings.

It remains therefore, that I open to you some of the principal *corruptions*, about which it mostly concerns you to bestow pains ere sufferings come. Now look as there are four principal enjoyments, in which you are like to be tried, viz. *Estate, name, liberty, life*; so the Christian work in suffering times lies in mortifying these four special *corruptions*, viz. *First*, The love of the world. *Secondly*, Ambition. *Thirdly*, Inordinate affection of freedom and pleasure. *Fourthly*, Excessive love of life.

1. For the love of this world, away with it, crucify it, crucify it: down with the idol, and let it be dethroned in all that intend to abide with Christ in the hour of temptation: how else will you take the spoiling of your goods? How will you be able to part with all for Christ, as these blessed souls did? It grieves my heart to see how many professors of religion are carried captive at the chariot-wheels of a bewitching world. Oh! good had it been for many professors if they had never tasted so much of the sweetness of it. *Sirs*, I beg you for the Lord's sake, down with it in your *estimations*, down with it in your *affections*, else temptations will down with you ere long. I shall offer five or six helps for the crucifying of it.

First, Consider your espousals to Christ, and how you have chosen and professed him for your Lord and husband: therefore your doating upon the world is no less than adultery against Christ, James iv. 4. If Christ be your husband, he must be a covering to your eyes; an unchaste glance upon the world wounds him.

Secondly, The more you prize it, the more you will be tormented by it; did you prize and love it less, it would disquiet and vex you less: it is our doating on it that makes it draw blood at parting.

Thirdly, Get true *scripture-notions* of the world, and rectify your judgments and affections by them. If you will have the *true picture* and *representation* of it drawn by the hand of God himself, see 1 John ii. 16. it is nothing else but a *phantastic glory*, and that also passeth away. What is become of them that ruffled it out in the world but one hundred years ago? What could the world do for them? Are

they not all gone down to the sides of the pit? “ But he that doth “ the will of God abideth for ever.”

Fourthly, Study and contemplate Christ and the things above more: this would veil all its glory, and kill it at the root, Phil. iii. 18, 19. Just as a man that hath been gazing upon the sun, when he takes off his eye from that bright and glorious *creature*, and looks to the earth, there is a veil of darkness overspreading the face of it, that he can see nothing. I wonder how such as pretend to live above, and enjoy communion with God, can ever relish such sweetness in the world, or have their hearts enticed and captivated by it.

Fifthly, Remember always, that by your love and delight in worldly things, you furnish the devil with the chiefest bait he hath to catch and destroy your souls. Alas! were your hearts but dead to these things, he would want an handle to catch hold on. What hath he more to offer you, and tempt you off from Christ with but a little money, or some such poor temporal rewards? and how little would that soul be moved by such a temptation, that looks on it all but as dirt?

Sixthly, Lastly, Take notice of the approaches of *eternity*: remember you are almost at the end of time: and when you come to launch out into that endless ocean, how will these things look then? It seems glorious whilst you are in the chase and pursuit of it: but upon a death-bed you will overtake and come up with it, and then you will see what a deceitful and vain thing it is: stand by the beds of dying men, and hear how they speak of it. O! the difference betwixt our apprehensions then and now! Thus labour to wean off your affections, and crucify them to the world.

2. Mortify your *ambition* and vain *affectation* of the repute and credit of the world: Oh stand not on so vain a thing as this: judge it but a small thing to be judged of man, to have your names cast out as *evil*: let not *scoffs* and *reproaches* be such terrible things to you. It is, without doubt, a great trial; else the Holy Ghost had not added a peculiar *epithet* to it, which is not given to any other of the sufferings of the saints: not cruel tortures, nor cruel stonings, burnings, slaying with the sword; but *cruel mockings*, Heb. xi. 36. Yet learn to be dead to, and unaffected with these things; set the reproaching world as light and as low as it sets you: *Despise the shame*, as your master Christ did, Heb. xii. 2. And to promote *mortification* in this, take these helps.

1. Consider this is no new or strange thing that hath happened to you: the holiest of men have past through the like, if not worse trials, Heb. x. 33. Psal. xlv. 14. Reproaches have been the lot of the best men. They called Athanasius, Sathanasius; Cyprianus, Coprianus, a gatherer of dung; blessed Paul, a *pestilent fellow*; Dr. Story threw a faggot at sweet Mr. Denlie's face as he was singing a psalm in the midst of the flames, saying, *I have spoiled a good old song*.

2. It may be religion hath been reproached and scoffed at for your sakes; and if so, think it not much to be reproached for religion's sake.

3. It is much better to be reproached by men for discharging duty, than by your own consciences for the neglect of it; if all be quiet within, never be moved at the noise and clamour without: If you have a good roof over your head, be not troubled though the winds and storms bluster abroad, 1 Pet. iv. 14. Take heed what you do, and be heedless what the world says.

4. Always remember, that you neither stand nor fall at the world's judgment, and therefore have the less reason to be troubled at it, 1 Cor. iv. 3. If your condition were to be cast to eternity by it, it were somewhat.

5. There is a worth and excellency in the reproaches of Christ, as bad as they seem; and such an excellency, as it is not to be matched by any earthly enjoyment, Heb. xi. 26. The reproaches of Christ are of more worth than the treasures of Egypt, though Egypt then was the magazine of the world for treasures. The apostles counted them their honours, Acts v. 41. When Ludovicus Marsacus, a knight of France, saw those that were to suffer with him in the chains, and that they put none upon him, because of the nobility of his birth, he said to the executioner, *Cur me non quoque torqui donast et illustris illius ordinis militem non creas?* 'Why do ye not honour me with a chain too, and create me a knight of that noble order?'

6. *Lastly*, Should scoffs and reproaches scare you from Christ and duty; then, though you should escape the reproaches of men, yet shall you fall under the everlasting contempt of God, angels, and good men. Therefore, "Fear ye not the reproaches of men that shall die, nor be afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool, but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation," Isa. li. 7, 8.

3. Mortify your *inordinate affections* of liberty, pleasure, and delicate living. O let not a prison seem so formidable to you. It is true, as Christ told Peter, in John xxi. 18. "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." You have now your liberty to go whither you will, and it is a precious mercy if well improved; the birds of the air (as one saith) had rather be in the woods at liberty, though lean and hungry, than in a golden cage with the richest fare. But yet, if God will call you to deny this also for Christ, see that you be ready to be bound as Paul was, and receive the chain and bonds of Christ with thanksgiving: To which end consider,

1. That the affliction, in such cases of restraint, is more from within, than from without you. There is no place but may be delectable to you, if your heart be heavenly, and the presence of God be engaged with you. What a sweet night had Jacob at Bethel! Paul and Silas in the stocks! See that precious *letter* of Pomponius Algerius.

* *Transtulit in cælum Christi præsentia claustrum ;
Quid faciet cælo ? quæ cælum jam creat antro.*

It is your own unbelief and impatency that gives you more trouble than the condition.

2. No *keeper* can keep the *comforter* from you, if you be the *Lord's prisoners*, Acts xvi. If they could bar out the Spirit from you, it would be a dismal place indeed: But ordinarily, there the saints have their clearest *visions of God*, and sweetest *presence* of the Spirit. You are the *Lord's freemen*, whilst men's *prisoners*: All the world cannot divest you of the *state of liberty* Christ hath purchased for you, John viii. 36.

3. Though a *prison* looks sad and dismal, yet it is not *hell*: Oh bless God for that, that is a sad *prison* indeed! Beloved, men have their *prisons*, and God hath his: *God's prison* is a *terrible prison* indeed, thousands are now there in chains, 1 Pet. iii. 19. and there you deserved to have been sent long ago: If God exchange an *hell* for a *prison*, have you any cause to complain?

4. How obdurate and cruel soever men are to you, yet the *Lord Jesus* is kind and tender-hearted to his *prisoners*; he puts the kindnesses that any shew them upon his own account, Matth. xxv. 36. "He looks down from heaven to hear the sighings and groanings of his prisoners," Psal. cii. 20. He will tenderly sympathize with you in all your *prison-straits* and *troubles*.

5. A *prison* hath been handselled and perfumed by the best and holiest of men in all ages, 1 Kings xxii. 27. Jer. xxxii. 2. Mat. iv. 12. Acts v. 18. and xxvi. 10. God hath made it a settled *school of discipline* to them.

6. Should, you, to avoid a *prison*, commit a sin, instead of being man's *prisoner*, you shall be clapt up by God, for he hath a *prison* for your souls even in this world, Psal. cxlii. 7. And this is ten thousand times more dreadful than any *dungeon* in the world. Oh it is a *dark prison*! nothing to let in the least *beam of God's countenance* upon your poor *souls*. What a sad exchange have you made then?

7. Consider what a ground of comfort God hath laid in that word, Rev. ii. 10. to obviate the fears and terrors incident to us in such a condition: God hath limited Satan and his instruments, both for time, number, and all circumstances of the trial.

8. *Lastly*, You do not know what a mercy may be in it: It may be a time of retirement from the world, and the clamours and distractions that are abroad. These days of imprisonment may be your holy-days; as a prisoner of Christ once called them.

4. Get an heart mortified to the excessive and inordinate love of life: This, I confess, is the highest and hardest point of *self-denial*, because it wraps up all other *self-interests* in it. But yet consider,

* If the presence of Christ once changed a prison into a kind of heaven, what will it do in heaven itself, which even here doth make a dungeon like heaven?

First, Though life be very dear, yet Jesus Christ is ten thousand times dearer than thy life: If you be a saint he is the life of thy life, and the length of thy days; and in comparison of him and his glory, saints should, and have despised and slighted their lives, Luke xiv. 26. Rev. xii. 11.

Secondly, Die you must: and if by shrinking from Christ you should protract a miserable life for a few days longer, in the mean time losing that *which is better than life*, Psal. lxxiii. 3. Mat. x. 39. Oh! when you lie upon your death-bed, you will wish that you had obeyed God's call, and so have departed in peace.

Thirdly, If you have cordially covenanted with Christ, (as all sincere believers have done,) then you have yielded up your lives to him, to be disposed of for his glory, Rom. xiv. 7. So that, look as Christ both lived and died for you; so *ought you to live as Christ*: And all the excellency you see in life consists in that reference and subserviency it hath to his glory. I say then, if you have understandingly and cordially transacted in a covenant-way with him, your care will not be so much how to shun death, as by what death you may most glorify God, John xxi. 19. And certainly you can never lay them down upon a more honourable and comfortable account than in his cause, and for his sake. It was a great trouble to Luther, that he carried his blood to his grave.

Fourthly, To die for Christ, is one of the highest testifications of your love to Christ, that you are capable of, John xiii. 37. Yea, it is such a testification of your love to the Lord Jesus, as angels are not capable of making.

Fifthly, Why should you decline even a violent death for Christ, when as the bitterness of death is past, and there is no *hell* following the *pale horse*? It cannot separate you from Christ, Rom. viii. 38.

Sixthly, Think what a death Christ suffered for you: In which the fulness of the wrath both of God and man met together, so that he was sore amazed; yet with desire did he desire it for your sakes.

7. *Lastly*, Think what a life you shall have with Christ as soon as this is delivered up to, and for him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. It is but wink, and you shall see God.

Oh that these things might provoke you to follow on, and ply the work of *mortification*.



CHAP. XI.

Wherein is opened the singular advantage that suffering saints have by their skill and insights into the methods and mysteries of Satan's temptations: some of those wiles of Satan opened, and rules for the avoiding of the danger briefly prescribed.

THE hazards and dangers of Christians in times of persecution, arise not so much from their sufferings, as from the tempta-

tions that always attend, and are by Satan planted upon their sufferings : for the most part, sufferings and temptations go together, Heb. xi. 37. And therefore it behoves such as are, or expect to be called to sufferings, to dive into the mysteries of temptations, and be well acquainted with the enemy's designs upon them. So was Paul, and so he supposes all others to be that engage in the same cause : " We are not ignorant of his devices," 2 Cor. ii. 11. There is a manifold advantage redounding to suffering saints thereby.

1. He that is well acquainted with the methods of temptation, will be better able to descry the first approaches and beginnings of it, and a temptation discovered, is more than half conquered. It is a special artifice of Satan to shuffle in his temptations as undiscernibly as may be into the soul ; for he knows, that " in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird," Prov. i. 17. And therefore he ordinarily makes a suffering season to be a tempting season ; because sufferings, like fire to iron, make it impressible and operable, they do ordinarily put the soul into an hurry and distraction, and so gives him an advantage to tempt the soul with less suspicion and greater success. But now, a skilful Christian that is acquainted with his wiles, will discern when he begins to *enter into temptation* ; as Christ's expression is, Luke xxii. 46. And so check the temptation in its first rise when it is weakest, and most easily broken. Doubtless one reason why so many fall by temptation is, because it is got within them, and hath prevailed far before it be discovered to be a temptation.

2. He that is well acquainted with Satan's methods of tempting, will not only discern it sooner than another ; but also knows his work and duty, and how to manage the conflict with it, which is a great matter. There are many poor souls that labour under strong temptations, and know not what to do : They go up and down complaining from Christian to Christian, whilst the judicious Christian plies to the *throne of grace* with strong cries, see 2 Cor. xii. 8. keeps up his watch, Luke xxii. 46. countermines the temptation, by assaulting that *corruption*, by endeavours of *mortification*, which Satan assaults by temptation, 1 Cor. ix. 27.

3. Lastly, To name no more ; he that is best acquainted with the *mystery of temptation*, and can maintain his ground against it, he shall be the preserving Christian under persecutions, and the victorious Christian over them. Here lies the main design of Satan, in raising persecution against the saints. It is not so much their blood that he thirsteth after, as their fall by temptation : and all persecutions are designed by him to introduce his temptations. These work upon our fear, and fear drives us into his trains and snares, Prov. xxix. 25. The devil's work in raising persecution, is but as the fowler's work in beating the bush in the night, when the net is spread to take the birds, which he can affright out of their coverts. He that understands that, is not easily moved by the strongest opposition, from his place and

duty; and so is like to prove the most constant and invincible Christian in times of persecution.

Oh! then, how necessary is it, that since all persecutions are intended as means to promote temptation, and that skill and insight into these designs of Satan so advantages as to frustrate his designs in both? I say, how necessary is it that you should be all instructed wherein the strength of temptation lies; as also how to resist those strong and dangerous temptations, which your sufferings only are intended to usher in, and make way for?

It will not be unseasonable or impertinent, then, in this chapter, to shew you, *First*, Wherein the force and efficacy of temptation lieth; *Secondly*, What you are to do, when in a suffering hour such temptation shall assault you. And first,

Quest. Wherein doth the efficacy and power of temptation lie?

Sol. I answer, It lies principally in three things.

I. In the kind and nature of the temptation.

II. In the craft and policy of Satan in managing it.

III. In that secret correspondency that Satan hath with our corruptions.

I. It lies in the kind and nature of the temptation itself; for it is most certain, that all temptations are not alike forcible and dangerous. Some are ordinarily more successful than others; and such are these that follow.

1. Strange and unusual temptations, I mean not such as none have been troubled with before us; for there is not a dart in Satan's quiver, but hath been let fly at the breasts of other saints, before it was levelled at ours, 1 Cor. x. 13. But by strange and unusual, I mean such as the people of God are but rarely troubled with, and possibly we were never exercised with before. These are the more dangerous, because they daunt and amaze the soul, and ordinarily beget despondency, even as some strange disease would do that we know not what to make of, nor can learn that others have been sick of.

2. Mark them for most dangerous temptations, that are *adapted* and suited to your proper sin, or *evil constitution*: For certainly that is the most dangerous crisis of temptation when it tries a man there. Now, if he be not truly gracious, he falls by the root irrecoverably, Luke xxii. 5, 6. Or if sincere, yet without special assistance, and extraordinary vigilance, he falls scandalously, 2 Sam. xi. 2. compared with 1 Sam. xvi. 12.

3. When it is a *spiritual temptation*, which rises undiscernibly out of the Christian's duties. This is the less suspected, because temptations usually come from the strength and liveliness of *corruptions*; but this, from the slaughter and conquests we make of them. Duties, and enlargements in them, which are the poison of other lusts, prove the food and fuel of this, 1 Cor. iv. 7, 8. And how much the more

covert and close any temptation is, by so much the more dangerous it is.

II. The strength and efficacy of temptation lies much in the skill and policy of Satan in the management of it : And hence they are called wiles, methods and devices, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 11. and himself an old serpent, Rev. xii. 9. And among the rest of his deep and desperate stratagems these following are remarkable.

1. In employing such instruments to manage his temptations as are least suspected, and have the greatest influence. *A Teacher*, Gal. ii. 14. *A wife*, Gen iii. 6. *Job ii. 9. Friends*, Acts xxi. 13. The devil knows it is a bad business, and therefore must make the best of it ; Paul's sorest trial was by his dearest friends.

2. In the orderly disposition and ranging of his temptations, beginning with little things first, and then by degrees working over to greater. His first motions are commonly most modest, Gen. iii. 1. Should he discover the depth of his design at first, it would startle the soul, and make it reply as Hazeel, "Am I a dog that I should do thus?" It is far easier to gain his end by parts, than putting for all at once.

3. In endeavouring to engage the soul upon his own ground. I mean to tempt him from his station and duty where God sets, and expects to find him. He knows while you are with God, God is with you, 2 Chron. xv. 2. Whilst a man abides there, he abides with God, 1 Cor. vii. 24. Whilst he is there, the promise is a good breast-work to keep off all his darts : And therefore, as fishers, when they have spread their nets in the river, beat the fishes out of their coverts and caverns ; so doth Satan.

4. In not presenting the temptation, till the soul be prepared to receive it. He loves to strike when the iron is hot. He first lets their troubles come to an height, brings them to the prison, gibbet, or fire, and then offers them deliverance, Heb. xi. 35, 37.

5. In tiring our souls with a long continuance of temptations. What he cannot win by a *sudden storm* he hopes to gain by a *tedious siege*. Forty days together he assaulted the Captain of our salvation, Mark i. 13. And truly it is a wonder the soul yields not at last, that hath been tried long, Psal. cxxv. 3. "When the rod of the wicked lies long upon the back of the righteous, it is much if he put not forth his hand to iniquity."

6. In falling most violently upon them, when they are lowest and most prostrate in their spirits and comforts : So he assaulted Job with a temptation, *to curse God and die*, when he sat in that deplorable state upon the dunghill, Job ii. 8, 9. He loves to fall upon us, as Simeon and Levi did upon the Shechemites, when we are sore and wounded : And therefore ordinarily you find times of *divine desertions* to be times of *diabolical temptations*. So that, look, as the wild beasts of the desert come out of their dens in the night, and then roar after their prey,

Psal. civ. 20. so doth Satan, when the soul seems to be benighted and lost in the darkness of spiritual troubles.

And this is the second thing wherein the efficacy and strength of temptation lies.

III. Lastly, It lies in that secret correspondency Satan holds with our bosom enemies. Were it not for this *domestic traitor*, he could not surprize us so easily: As you see in Christ; he could do nothing because he found nothing to fasten a temptation on. He was like a *chrystal glass* filled with pure fountain water: So that though he should have been agitated and shaken never so much by temptation, yet no filthy sediment could appear; but now we have an enemy within that holds intelligence with Satan without; and this would prove a *devil* to us, if there were no other *devil* to tempt us, Jam. i. 14, 15. It is a fountain of temptation in itself. Matth. xv. 19. and the chief instrument by which Satan doth all his tempting work, 2 Pet. i. 4.

Our several passions and affections are the handles of his temptations. Every thing, saith Epictetus, hath *δύο λαβας*, two handles to take it by. Our affections are the handles of our souls. The temptation of self-confidence and pride takes hold of a daring and forward disposition, the temptation of apostasy upon a timorous disposition, &c. These inbred lusts go over to the enemy in the day of battle, and fight against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. This is a more dangerous enemy than the *devil*. It is true they both work against us, but with a double difference. Satan works *externally* and *objectively*; but lust *internally* and *physically*, i. e. *quoad materale*, as it is capable of physical efficiency. "Sin wrought in me all manner of concupiscence," Rom. vii. 8. Yea, it is a subtle enemy that doth his business politiciely, Rom. vii. 11 *Sin deceived me*; it betrays with a kiss, strangles with a *silken halter*, Heb. ii. 12. Eph. vii. 22. These be his agents sitting at the *council-table* in our own breasts, and there carrying on his designs effectually: Yea, it is the restless and perpetual enemy, no ridding your hands of him. Satan is sometimes put to flight by resistance, Jam. iv. 7. and sometimes ceases his temptations, Luke iv. 13. But when he ceaseth to *tempt* and *inject*, this ceaseth not to irritate and solicit; where we are, it will be; it is our sad lot to be tied to it, and perpetually assaulted by it, Rom. vii. 24. We may say of it as Hannibal said of Marcellus, that it is never quiet, whether a *conqueror*, or conquered; yea, it is a potent enemy too, it hauls men away to the commission of sin, Jam. i. 14. it seizeth the magazine of the soul, and delivers up the arms, I mean the members, to be *οπλα αδικιας*, weapons of unrighteousness.

Thus you see wherein the efficacy and power of temptation consists. And it mightily concerns you that are, or expect to be sufferers for Christ, to be acquainted with these things, and know where the strength of your enemy lies.

But how shall the suffering saint so manage himself in a suffering

hour, as not to be captivated by temptations? This brings me upon the second thing I promised; viz. to prescribe some rules for the escaping or conquering of those temptations that are incidental to a suffering state. And first,

1. *Rule.* Labour to cut off the advantages of temptations before they come. It is our inordinate love to life, estate, liberty, and ease, that gives the temptations so much strength upon us. Do not over-value them, and you will more easily part from them, Rev. xii. 11. O mortify self-love, and creature-love; let your heart be loosened and weaned from them, and then the temptation hath lost its strength.

2. *Rule.* Secure to yourselves an interest in the heavenly glory. When once you clearly see your propriety in the kingdom above, you will set the lighter and lower by all things on earth. That is a pregnant text to this purpose, Heb. x. 34. It is our darkness and uncertainties about those that make us cling so fast to these.

3. *Rule.* Settle this principle in your heart as that which you will never depart from, that it is better for you to fall into any suffering, than into the least sin, Heb. xi. 24, 25. This all will acknowledge, but how few practise it! Oh that you would practically understand and receive it! Suffering is but a *respective, external, and temporal* evil; but sin is an universal, internal, and everlasting evil.

4. *Rule.* Believe that God hath cursed and blasted all the ways of sin, that they shall never be a shelter to any soul that flies for refuge to them, Mark viii. 35. Prov. xiii. 15. The way of transgressors is a hard and difficult way. There is no security in the way of iniquity. He that runs from suffering to sin, runs from the seeming to the real danger; from the painted to the living lion.

5. *Rule.* Live up to this principle that there is no policy like sincerity and godly simplicity. This will preserve and secure you when carnal wisdom will expose and betray you. Psal. xxv. 2. Job ii. 3. Sinful policy never thrives with saints.

6. *Rule.* Consider sadly what the consequence of yielding up yourselves to temptations will be: The name of God will be dreadfully reproached, 2 Sam. xii. 14. A fatal stumbling-block is laid before the blind world, 1 Sam. ii. 36. The hearts of many upright ones made sad, Psal. xxv. 3. The fall of a professor is as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and a dreadful wound it will be to thine own conscience, 2 Cor. ii. 7. Mat. xxv. 76. One hour's sleep of security may keep you many days and nights waking upon the rack of horror.

7. *Rule.* Never engage a temptation in your own strength, but go forth against it trembling in yourselves, and relying on Divine aids and assistances, Eph. vi. 10. What! are you to grapple with spirits, to enter the lists with *principalities* and *powers*? Or what is your strength that you should hope?

8. *Rule.* Let the days of your temptation be days of strong cries and supplications. Thus did Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 8. Psal. cix. 4. Your best posture to wrestle with temptation, is upon your knees.

9. *Rule.* Dwell upon the consideration of those choice encouragements God hath laid up in the world for such a time. As, (1.) Though he give Satan leave to tempt you, yet you are still in his hand to preserve you, Deut. xxxiii. 3. John x. 28. (2.) That whilst Satan is sifting and trying you on earth, Christ is interceding for you in heaven, Luke xxii. 31, 32. (3.) That an eternal reward is laid up for those that overcome, Luke xxii. 28, 29. Rev. xxi. 7, 8. And now is this reward to be won or lost.

Lastly, Be content till God open a door out of your temptations, 1 Cor. x. 13. The time of the promise will come, Acts vii. 17. Wait for it, though it tarry, and seem to be deferred; in the end it will speak, and not lie, Hab. ii. 3. There was a secret door in the ark, though it could not be seen whilst the waters prevailed: And so there is in all your temptations, though at present it be not discernible by you.

And thus have I brought you one step nearer to Paul's blessed frame. O give diligence to make yourselves ready for sufferings.

CHAP. XII.

Sheweth that a choice part of our preparation and readiness for sufferings consists in the improvement of our praying abilities, and keeping close with God in that heavenly and excellent duty in days of suffering; wherein also is opened the nature and means of its improvement.

PRAYER is said to be amongst duties, as faith is amongst the graces. Doubtless it is of special use and service at all times to a Christian: But yet in suffering days it is of more than ordinary use and necessity, Heb. iv. 16. James v. 13. And therefore it is reckoned among those choice pieces of armour which suffering saints are to put on, Eph. vi. 18. I will here briefly discover the necessity of it, and then shew you that a Christian may improve himself to an excellent degree in it; and, lastly, prescribe some means for an improvement.

The necessity of it to a suffering saint will demonstratively appear, if you consider,

1. That this duty is the outlet of troubles, and the best way the poor Christian hath to ease his heart when surcharged with sorrow. Griefs are eased by groans. Such evaporations disburden and cool the heart, as the opening of a vein in some cases doth. Oh the sensible ease that comes in this way! When grief in the mind, like vapours in the air, are condensed into black clouds that overspread the soul, and darken that beautiful light that once shone there, then prayer, like the sun dispels and scatters them, 1 Sam. i. 18. Many a saint, by prayer, hath sucked the breast of a promise, and then fell asleep by

Divine contentment in the bosom of God. A time may come when thy heart is ready to break with trouble, and not a friend to whom thou canst open and ease it, and then blessed be God for prayer, Micah vii. 5, 6, 7. That which sinks others is, that when troubles fill and overwhelm their hearts, they try what reason, merry company, or outward comforts can do: But, alas! this is to palliate a cure, it returns again with the more violence: But prayer gives sensible relief, Psal. cii. *title*, Psal. lxii. 8. For, (1.) This opens and gives a vent to troubles, Jer. xx. 12. (2.) It gives our troubles a diversion, and so a cure, Psal. v. 1. and the last verse compared. Yea, (3.) By praying over them they are not only diverted, but sanctified, and so cease to be distracting, or destroying troubles.

2. As it gives a vent to our troubles, so an in-let to unspeakable comforts and consolations. See a pregnant instance of this, Acts xvi. 25. For, (1.) Hereby they obtain gracious answers from the Lord concerning their troubles, 2 Cor. xii. 9. In this also they meet the gracious smiles of God, which swallow up their troubles, Psal. lxxxv. 8. And, lastly, hereby they prevail with God to open a seasonable and effectual door out of all their troubles, Psal. xxxiv. 4, 6.

3. Prayer begets and maintains holy courage and magnanimity in evil times. When all things about you tend to discouragement, it is your being with Jesus that makes you bold, Acts iv. 13. He that uses to be before a great God, will not be afraid to look such little things as men are in the face. The woman clothed with the sun, had the moon under her feet. And what need you have of courage in evil times, hath been already shewed.

4. This is a duty you may perform at any time, or in any condition: No adversary can cut you off from it. It cannot be said so of many other duties. None can hinder the intercourse betwixt heaven and your souls: You may perform it in a prison, Acts xvi. 25. in a banished condition, Psal. lxi. 2. And so is fitted for a suffering condition.

Lastly, You must strive to excel in this, forasmuch as no grace within, or service without, can thrive without it. God hath ordained the whole work of grace to grow up to perfection this way, Judg. xix. 20. He will have all mercies fetched out this way, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Jer. xxix. 11, 12, 13. All that comes from God to you, or to you from God, must come in this channel. Be convinced then of the need you have to improve yourselves herein, as ever you hope to stand in the evil day.

But how are these praying abilities capable of improvement in the people of God?

Praying abilities are either external and common, or else internal and special. The external and common ability is nothing else but that dexterity and skill men get to express themselves to God in prayer. Thus many can put their meaning into apt and decent expressions,

to which the Spirit sometimes adds his common touches upon the affections. And this hypocrites rest on, and glory in. Or else they are special and internal, whereby men are enabled to pour out their souls to God in a gracious manner. And this may be considered either in the habit or the act. The habit is given by the Spirit, when the principles of grace are first infused into the soul, Zech. xii. 10. Acts ix. 11. By being sanctified we are made near, and by acting those principles in prayer we are said to draw near, Psal. x. 17. Now in our actual drawing near to God, the Spirit hath the chief and principal hand: And his assistance therein is threefold.

1. He excites the heart to the duty; it is he that whispers to the soul to draw nigh to God, Psalm xxvii. 8.

2. He suggests the matter of our prayers, and furnishes us with the materials, Rom. viii. 26. guiding us as to the matter, not only to what is lawful, but also to what is expedient for us.

3. He stirreth up suitable affections in prayer, Rom. viii. 26. And hence those groans and tears, those gaspings and vehement anhelation. But notwithstanding all our abilities, both habitual and actual, be from the Spirit, and not from ourselves, yet are they capable of improvement by us: For though in respect of acquirement, there be a great difference betwixt natural and supernatural habits, yet their improvement is in the same way and manner; and this improvement may be made divers ways: For,

First, Though you have the Spirit, and can pray, yet you may learn to pray more humbly than before: Though you rise no higher as to words, yet you may learn to lay yourselves lower before the Lord, as Abraham and Ezra did, Gen xviii. 27. Ezra ix. 6.

Secondly, You may learn to pray with more sincerity than formerly: Ah! there is much *hypocrisy* and *formality* in our *prayers*, much of custom, &c. Now you may learn to pour out more *cordial prayers*. See Psal. xvii. 1. Psal. cxix. 10.

Thirdly, You may learn to pray with more zeal and earnestness than before: Some saints have excelled and been remarkable for this, Dan. ix. 19. Hosea xii. 4. James v. 16.

Fourthly, With more assiduity and readiness at all times for it, Eph. vi. 18. *Praying always*, with all prayer. Hence Christ gives that commendation to the church, Cant. iv. 11. "Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb." The *honey-comb* often drops, but always hangs full of drops ready to fall.

Fifthly, You may learn to pray with more faith: Oh the qualms of unbelief that go over our hearts in a duty; faith is the soul of prayer, and according to the faith God finds in them, he accepts and values them. Now in all these things you may improve yourselves abundantly.

1. By being more frequent in the duty, Job xxii. 21. "Acquaint thyself with the Almighty;" in the Hebrew it is, *accustom*

thyself: Those that have been excellent have also been abundant in it, Psal. xv. 17.

2. By taking heed that you grieve not the Spirit, on whose influences and assistances you so entirely depend: Even as much as a ship doth upon the gales of wind for its motion.

3. By honouring the Spirit which enables you to pray, and that especially two ways; (1.) By dependence on him; go not forth in your own strength to the duty, trust not to your own promptness, or preparations. (2.) By returning, and with thankfulness ascribing the praise of all to him; be humble under all enlargements: say, *Not I, but grace.*

4. By searching your own hearts, and examining your necessities and wants, when you draw nigh to God; this will be a fountain of matter, and give you a deep resentment of the worth of mercies prayed for.

5. Lastly, By looking more at the exercise of graces, and less at the discovery of parts; by labouring for impressions more, and pumping for expressions less. And thus I have briefly shewed you how to furnish yourselves with this needful qualification also.

CHAP. XIII.

Wherein is shewed the necessity of going out of ourselves, even when our habitual and actual preparations are at the greatest height; and depending as constantly and entirely upon the Spirit, who is Lord of all gracious influences, as if we had done nothing: Together with the means of working the heart to such a frame.

THUS you have seen your habitual and actual readiness for sufferings, and blessed is the soul that gives diligence to this work: But now lest all that I have said and you have wrought, should be in vain; I must let you know, that all this will not secure you, unless you can, by humility, faith, and self-denial, go out of yourselves to Christ, and live upon him daily for supply of grace, as much as if you had none of all this furniture and provision for sufferings. I confess grace is a very beautiful and lovely creature, and it is hard for a man to look upon his own graces, and not doat upon them. But yet know, that if you had all these excellent preparations that have been mentioned, yea, and all angelical perfections superadded, yet are you not complete without this dependence upon Christ, Col. ii. 10. Whenever you go forth to suffer for Christ, you should say at the head of all your excellent graces, duties, and preparations, as Jehoshaphat did, when at the head of a puissant and mighty army, 2 Chron. xx. 12. "O Lord, I have no might nor strength, but my eyes are unto thee." This is one thing in which Paul excelled, and was a special part of his readiness. See 1 Cor.

xv. 10. What a poor creature is the eminentest saint, left to himself in an hour of trial? the *hop*, the *ivy*, and the *woodbine*, are taught by nature to cling about stronger props and supporters: What they do by nature, we should do by grace.

The necessity and great advantage of this will appear upon divers considerations.

Consid. 1. The Christian's own imbecility and insufficiency, even in the strength and height of all his acquirements and preparations; what are you, to grapple with such an adversary? Certainly you are no match for him that conquered Adam hand to hand in his state of integrity. It is not your inherent strength that enables you to stand, but what you receive and daily derive from Jesus Christ, John xv. 5. "Without me," or never so little separated from me, "ye can do nothing; all your sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. Upon this very consideration it was, that the apostle exhorts the Ephesians "to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," i. e. not to depend upon their own stock and furniture; but Divine assistances and daily communications; "For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers," Eph. vi. 10, 12. In his own strength shall no man prevail.

Consid. 2. It is the great design of God in the gospel to exalt his Son, and to have all glory attributed and ascribed to him, "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 18. That Christ "might be all in all," Col. iii. 11. Hence no saint must have a self-sufficiency, or be trusted with a stock as Adam was, but Christ being filled with all the fulness of God, and made the *πρωτον δεκτικον*, or first receptacle of all grace; "For it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell;" all the saints are therefore to go to him for supplies, and of his fulness to receive, John i. 16. This fulness being a *ministerial fulness*, like that of the sun, or of a fountain, intended to supply all our wants. And hence it is that faith, a self-emptying and denying grace, is appointed to be the instrument of fetching our supplies from Christ. All must be derived from him, that all the praise and glory may be ascribed to him, Phil. iv. 14. And this is a most wise and congruous ordination of God, for hereby not only are his people the better secured, but by this also the reproach that lay upon Christ is rolled away. He was reproached on earth, as barren, empty, weak; "Can any good come out of Nazareth? He was looked upon as a "Root springing out of a "dry ground," but by this shall his reproach be wiped away: So that unless you will go about to cross the great design of God, in the exaltation of his Christ, you must go out of yourselves, and humbly and constantly rely upon supplies from Christ and his grace to help in the times of need.

Consid. 3. A Christian is constantly to depend upon Christ, notwithstanding all his own preparations and inherent qualifications: because the activity even of inherent grace depends upon him. Inhe-

rent grace is beholden to exciting and assisting grace for all it is enabled to do. You cannot act a grace without his Spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 10. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xv. 5. It may be said of grace in us, as it was "of the land of Canaan, Deut. xi. 10, 11, 12. "It is not as the land of Egypt, whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs: but a land of hills and vallies, drinking water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: his eyes are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year." As the life and fragrancy of vegetables depend on the influences of heaven, so do our graces upon Christ. And hence he is called, (1.) A root, Isa. xi. 10. (2.) An head, Col. i. 18. (3.) A sun, Mal. iv. 2. (4.) A fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. All which comparisons do fully carry this truth in them.

Consid. 4. Lastly, In this life of dependence lies your security; and indeed this is the great difference betwixt the two *covenants*. In the first, Adam's stock was in his own hands, and so his security or misery depended upon the unconstrained choice of his own mutable and self-determining will. But now in the new covenant, all are to go to Christ, to depend upon him for supplies, and are so secured against all destructive dangers, Jude 1. 1 Pet. i. 5. Should you go forth in your own strength against a temptation, either your grace would fail, and you fall in the conflict; or if you obtain any victory over it by your own strength, yet it is a thousand to one but your pride would conquer you, when you had conquered it: Like him that slew an *elephant*, but was himself slain by the fall of that *elephant* which he slew. But now, by this way, as God hath secured you against the dangers without; so also the frame and constitution of this new covenant is such as prevents the danger arising from our own pride too. Not *Ego et Deus mens*: I and my God did this; as was once said by a profane mouth; "but self is abased, and the Lord lifted up in his own strength," 1 Cor. v. 7. And thus I have briefly evinced the necessity of this daily dependence.

But next it concerns you to know what this dependence we speak of is: this also I shall briefly open to you, laying down somewhat *negatively*, and somewhat *positively* about it.

1. *Negatively*. It is not to deny the grace wrought in us by the Spirit; this were both injustice and ingratitude; we may know our own graces so as to be thankful for them, though not so as to be proud of them, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

2. *Neg.* It is not a lazy excuse from our duty: you do not *depend*, but rather *dishonour* Christ, by so doing; you must not say, because Christ must do all, therefore I must do nothing: but rather work out your salvation, because it is he that worketh both to will and to do, Phil. ii. 12, 13. These are not *opposed*, but *subordinated*.

But then positively, it lies in three things.

1. *Positively*. In seeing and acknowledging the infinite sufficiency

and fulness that is in Christ: to acknowledge him to be all in all: not only by way of *impetration* procuring all, Heb. ix. 12. but also by way of *application*, bringing home to the soul all the blessings purchased by his blood, and settling us in the possession of it, John xiv. 3. And so from first to last to eye him as the author and finisher of our faith.

2. *Posit.* In seeing the necessary dependence that all our graces have upon him. So that as you see the stream depending on the fountain, the beam upon the sun, the branch upon the root, the building upon the foundation, even so do our graces upon Christ: on him they live, and cut off from him they die. "Our life is hid with Christ in God," Col. iii. 3. When you see this, and also see that all your activity, and striving, is but as the hoisting up of the sails, in order to the motion of the ship, which can do nothing till there come a gale; when you look upon your grace as a creature that must be upheld, fed, acted, and preserved by Christ, Col. ii. 19. then you are prepared for this act of dependence: As for instance, you can never depend upon Christ for the acting of that grace of hope, until you see Christ to be the prop and foundation of it, and that it depends upon him, as upon its cause, 1 Pet. i. 3. as upon its object, Heb. vi. 19. and as upon its *foundation* and ground work, Col. i. 27.

You can never depend upon Christ for your joy and comfort, until you see what a necessary dependence this also hath upon him, Phil. iii. 3. and that, both as to its being and acting, John xvi. 22.

You can never depend upon him, for strength in any duty, until you see how your duties depend upon Christ, not only for the *strength* by which they are performed, John xv. 4, 5. but also for *acceptation* when they are performed, 1 Pet. ii. 5. It were easy to instance in any other grace.

(3.) It lies in * looking off from your own grace whenever you are put upon the acting of it, (I mean in regard of any dependence upon it) and looking by an eye of faith for acceptation to Christ, Heb. xii. 2. To the putting forth of which act of dependance upon Christ, holy ejaculations in our own on-sets upon duty, or those quick and vigorous liftings up of our souls to God that way, are of special use, it being a duty fitted for the purpose, when there is no room for set and solemn prayer. And thus briefly of its nature.

And to urge you to this duty, I shall offer these seven considerations: which, oh, that they might prevail upon your hearts, and make you for ever to clasp and cling about Christ more than ever you have done.

Consideration 1. You have little reason to rely upon the strength of your own graces, for you may be easily deceived in that matter, and think you have much more grace than you have. How often are the common gifts of the Spirit mistaken for his special graces! the sixth chapter to the Hebrews is able to make a man tremble in this thing.

* Αφορμῆς εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγόν. Looking off to the author of our faith.

Consid. 2. Suppose you have much grace, yet have you not strong corruptions, and may you not meet with strong temptations also? He that hath less of other graces than you, may have more humility and self-denial than you, and so may stand when you fall. Great enlargements are often attended with great temptations of pride, &c.

Consid. 3. Whatever measures of grace you have arrived at, yet all is not able to secure you from falling, if God withhold or withdraw his aids and influences. Abraham had more faith than you, and yet he fell into a sin contrary to that very grace wherein he so excelled others, Gen. xx. 2. Job had more patience than you; which of you could behave yourselves as he did, had you been in the like circumstances as he was? chap. i. 2. he is renowned for it in the scripture, James vi. 11. yet he fell into that sin which is contrary to this grace also, chap. iii. Moses had more *meekness* than you: "Now the man Moses was the meekest man upon the earth." If you be but reprov'd, and that justly for your faults, how waspish are you? Yet see how this grace failed even in him, in an eminent trial of it, Numb. xi. 13, 14, 15. Adam was much more advantaged in this respect than you, being made upright, and no corruption inherent in him, yet he fell; the *angels* more again, yet they fell. Oh when will you learn the vanity of self-dependence.

Consid. 4. Nothing more provoketh the Lord to withdraw his Spirit, and let you fall, than this sin of self-confidence doth, Luke xiv. 29, 30, 31. God will teach you by sad experience your own weakness, and what frail and vain things you be, if you will learn it by no other means.

Consid. 5. If God permit you to fall, (as doubtless he will, if you be self-conceited,) then the more eminent you have been, or are for grace, the more will the name of God be reproached by your fall. This will furnish the triumphs of the uncircumcised, and the lamentations of your brethren, and make them say, "How are the mighty fallen!" What dismal consequents will attend your fall.

Consid. 6. Have you not sad experience of your own weakness from day to day in your lesser trials? Have you not said in some smaller conflicts, as David once did, "My feet had well nigh slipt." O methinks this should teach you to look more to God, and less to self. "If you have run with footmen, and they have wearied you in the land of peace, *think sadly how* you should contend with horses in the swellings of Jordan." Do not you see that you are but feathers in the wind of temptation? Consult your former experiences, and they will tell you what weaklings you are.

Consid. 7. Lastly, Hath Christ given you more grace than others, then how much more hath he obliged you to honour him thereby? And is this your requital of his love! What! to take the crown from his head, and put it upon your own! Certainly a greater injury cannot be done to Christ than this.

Well then, by all this be persuaded to cease from yourselves, yea,

from your religious selves ; and to all your other preparations, add this as a choice one ; if you do these things, you shall never fall. And thus you see the complete Christian in his equipage for sufferings.

CHAP. XIV.

Containing the first use of the point by way of conviction, discovering the unreadiness of multitudes of professors for suffering-work.

YOU have seen, by all that hath been spoken, what the necessary pre-requisites unto a suffering condition are ; and what manner of persons you must be, (both for habitual and actual readiness), if ever you honour Christ by bonds, or death for him. And I doubt not but your judgments and consciences yield to the evident necessity of these things, wherein I have placed the Christian's readiness. But, alas ! where shall we find among the throngs and crowds of professors, any considerable numbers thus qualified and prepared ? To suffer for Christ is a gift that few have received. We are fallen into the dregs of time. O how little of primitive zeal and simplicity remains among the professors of this age ! latter times have produced a sort of professors of another stamp and spirit. These have the *light*, but they had the *love*: these *see* more, but they *did* and *suffered* more. How many that are no ornament to religion, do adorn themselves with the name of it !

Now, according to this account given of a ready Christian, divers professing persons will be convicted of their unreadiness and stability to manage suffering-work : As first,

1. The politic and hypocritical professors, whose hearts were never *set right* at first, and therefore cannot be *stedfast* when trials come, Psal. lxxviii. 8. Their hearts were never *sound in God's statutes*, and therefore no wonder if they be not only a *shame to*, but *ashamed of* their profession, Psalm cxix. 80. Never wonder if you see that profession which began in *hypocrisy*, to end in *apostasy*. These want their habitual readiness for sufferings, and so cannot drink of that cup: Needs must they fall when tried ; and when they fall, they fall dreadfully, and often irrecoverably ; for they neither have the *seed of God in them*, nor any *promise* of God made to them.

And are there not many such to be found in every place ? For, (1.) How difficult is it to persuade many of you to any duty that hath loss or hazard attending on it ? Doth not the sincere heart stand inclinable and disposed to all the known will of God ? Psalm cxix. 6. Do Christians use to enquire more what is cheap, easy, and safe for them, or what is their duty ? Gal. i. 16. Speak conscience, for to thee do I appeal ; art thou not conscious of some reserves limitations, and exceptions ? Doth not the man, like Naaman, desire the Lord to excuse and pardon him in this or that thing ? 2 Kings v.

17. And thinkest thou that this is consistent with sincere obedience, which excepts no duty, nor quarrels with any command, because they all flow equally from the sovereignty of God, Jam. ii. 11. and so doth what it doth *intuitu voluntatus*, upon the sight of God's will. Say conscience, are there not great strugglings, disputes, and contests betwixt thee and fleshly interests in such cases? And art thou not frequently over-borne? O search your hearts in this particular.

Yea, *secondly*, I appeal to you, whether there be not many among you that choose sin rather than affliction? This is always the hypocrite's option and choice: He judges sufferings the greatest evils, and so orders himself in his election. It was merely to avoid persecution that those hypocrites, Gal. vi. 12. constrained others to be circumcised only to gratify the Jews; that so by a sinful compliance with them, the offence of the cross might cease. If Paul would have done so, he might have avoided it too, but he durst not whatever he suffered, Gal. v. 11. O this is a shrewd sign of a false heart, Job xxxvi. 21. And the contrary disposition is always found in the upright heart, Heb. xi. 25.

Nay, are there not some that have, and others that are ready to throw up their professions, when they see into what difficulties it involves them? Whilst they could live upon the profession of truth, they entertained it; but when truth comes to live upon them, they thrust it out, and cry, away with this profession, it will beggar and undo us: They then repent of their forwardness, and secretly wish they had never engaged in it. O examine whether your hearts be not thus turned back, and your steps declined. If so, it is manifest you are hypocritical professors, and that it was some outward self-respect at first engaged you in your profession, but can never enable you to hold out when difficult days come. I say it is manifest by this departure from your profession, that some outward self-respect at first allured you to it. As now, when I behold the artificial motions of the wheels in a *watch*, and see how regularly the needle marks the journal-hours of the sun upon the flat of the *quadrant*, and see nothing that moves or guides it; it would cause admiration if I had never seen it before, or did not understand the cause and motion; but when I look upon the other side, and there find wheels, ressorts, and counterpoises, and a spring that causes all those motions, I cease to wonder. Certainly some lust or other was the spring of all thy religious motions; stop or take off that, and motion ceases: And if it be so, this *scab* of hypocrisy will at last break out into that *botch* of apostasy. Thou canst never hold out long under trials, Matth. xiii. 21. Oh how many such sad sights may we live to see as trials come! Difficult times are coming on, 2 Tim. iii. 1. And woe to such then as want sincerity at the bottom of their profession.

2. And as these have no habitual readiness for sufferings, and, consequently, must be ruined by them, so there are others that may

be truly godly, and have the root of the matter in them, who are yet far from an actual readiness, and so continuing, are like to be a reproach to religion when their trial comes: for it is not a little grace in the sleepy habit that will secure you from falling scandalously by the hand of temptation: and although that seed of God which is in you will recover you again, and prevent total and final apostasy, yet, Oh, consider what a sad thing it is to enter into, and be conquered by temptation, to be led away in triumph by the tempter, and made a reproach to Christ. O it is a sad consideration to think how many there be amongst the people of God, that discover little or no actual preparations for sufferings: As first,

1. Upon how many of the saints is the spirit of slumber poured out? Even the wise, as well as foolish, seem now to be asleep. There is a twofold spiritual sleep, the first is *total*, upon wicked men: and it is one of God's sorest and dreadfulest strokes upon their souls, Isa. xxix. 10. * The Hebrew word there is the same with that which is used of Adam, when God cast him into that deep sleep whilst he took out his rib. And in 2 Tim. ii. 26. it signifies such a sleep as that which is occasioned by drunkenness; out of such a sleep doth the Lord awaken all that are saved, and they never fall into it any more. The other is *partial*, Cant v. 2. and is incident to the people of God, Matth. xxv. 5. This is nothing else but the torpor or sluggishness of Spirit which seizeth upon the saints; and never did it prevail, I fear, among them more than now. For where is their activity for God? Where is he that *stirreth up* himself to take hold of God? Isa. lxiv. 7. Where is there such a generation as that, Psal. xxiv. 6. We pray, confer, and hear, for the most part, but, as men speak, betwixt sleeping and waking. Where can you find, except here and there one, that hath a quick and lively sense of God's indignation upon him, or that trembles at his judgments? Is not that the very case of the most which God describes, Isa. xlii. *ult.*

2. How many are seized by a private and worldly Spirit, every man turning to his own house, and eagerly pursuing the *world*? Hab. i. 9. Jer. xlv. 4, 5. Oh! how are we intangled in the wilderness? How doth the world eat up our time, and eat out our zeal, cowardize and soften our spirits, and render us utterly unfit for the yoke and burden of Christ? You that see so much beauty, and taste so much sweetness in the creature, you will have an hard task when called to deny it: You are not yet prepared to drink of the cup, or take up the cross of Christ.

3. How many poor Christians are of a low and timorous Spirit, ready to tremble at the shaking of a leaf? Ah poor hearts! how unfit are you for bonds or death! This passion of fear that so predominates in you, is the very passion which Satan assaults, and lays siege to in the hour of temptation, as was before noted: And commonly

it is occasioned (where it flows not from the *natural constitution*) from an excessive love to the world, or some guilt upon the spirit. It is true, the Lord can so assist weak faith, and so subdue strong fears, as that you may be enabled to stand the shock when it comes: (For, as I noted formerly, our strength lies not in any thing inherent in us, but we are strong or weak, according to the divine presence and assistances that we enjoy) but yet if you labour not to mortify this evil, and stir not up yourselves in the use of all appointed means, to rouse your zeal and courage for God, I know no warrant you have to expect such assistances.

Lastly, How many poor Christians among us are to this day dark and cloudy in their evidences for heaven? Had they walked closely with God, being laborious in the disquisition and search of their own hearts, they had long since obtained a clearness and satisfaction about the state of their own hearts: But as the case stands with them, how unfit are they for bonds or death. Oh! it is a sad case, when inward and outward troubles meet together, as you may see, Gen. xlii. 21, 22. when there shall be *fightings without*, and *fears within*: When such a pang as that, Lam. iii. 17, 18. shall come over thy heart, what wilt thou do?

By all that hath been said, it appears that the most of professors are in a very unready posture for sufferings; so that as troubles come to an height, we are like to see many sad spectacles: Many offences will come; religion is like to be wounded in the house of its friends. Oh! what a day of mercy have we enjoyed? What helps and choice advantages, above any precedent age, and yet unready? How sad and inexcusable is this?

CHAP. XV.

Containing another use of the point, by way of exhortation, persuading all the people of God, whilst the Lord respites, and graciously delays their trials, to answer the end of God therein, and prepare themselves for greater trials; where several motives are propounded to excite to the duty.

UP then from your beds of sloth, awake from your security, O ye saints, get upon your watch-towers, tremble in yourselves, that ye may rest in the day of evil, Hab. ii. 1, 3, 16. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and when you have done all, to stand," Eph. vi. 11. O let it never be said of your dwellings, as it is said of the tabernacles of the wicked, Job xxi. 9. "Their houses are safe from fear."

Augustus hearing of one that was deeply in debt, who yet slept heartily, sent for his pillow, supposing there was some strange virtue in that pillow. I wonder what pillow ye have gotten, O ye drowsy saints, that you can sleep so quietly upon it, now that all things about

you are conspiring trouble, and threatening danger. Can you sleep like Jonah, when seas of wrath are tumbling and roaring round about you, and threaten to entomb you and all your enjoyments? Behold, "The stork in the heavens knows her appointed time," Jer. vii. 8. and hath not God made you *wiser than the fowls of the air*, Job xxxv. 11. It may be the sound of some present judgment may a little startle you, like a sudden clap of thunder in the air; but how soon doth sloth and security prevail, and overcome you again. They say poison by being habituated, may be made innocent: We are so used to, or rather hardened under calamities, that nothing moves or effectually awakens us. Lord, what will the end of these things be? Wilt thou surprise thy people at unawares? Shall thy judgments find them *secure*, and leave them *desperate*? O that God would persuade you "to gather yourselves together, yea, to gather together," (not in an unlawful and seditious way, but in the way of duty,) "before the decree bring forth, and the day pass as the chaff," Zeph. ii. 1, 2. O prepare to meet your God, Amos iv. 12. Prepare your *faith, love, courage*, &c. before God call you to the exercise of them.

And to excite you to this duty, besides all the forementioned benefits of a prepared spirit, consider these following particulars by way of motive.

1. *Motive.* The many calls which God hath given you to this work. The Lord hath uttered his voice, and called from heaven unto you; will you be deaf to his calls? He hath called upon you, (1.) By the word: God would have it cry to you first, because he would give the first honour to his word. He hath given all his prophets *one mouth*, Luke i. 70. and they have warned you faithfully. (2.) By the *rod*: this also hath a loud voice, Mic. vi. 9. Psal. ii. 5. Men of understanding will hear this voice; and those that will not hear it shall be lashed by it even till they are sick with smiting, verse 13. (3.) By prodigious and portentous signs in the heavens and earth, such as no age can parallel, these have a loud voice to all that regard the works of the Lord, or the operations of his hands. Eusebius calls them *God's sermons to the world* *. O that we were wise to consider what God's ends are in these things! one observes, 'That as they are the plainest and most obvious to sense, so they are commonly the last sermons which God intends to preach to nations, before he inflicts his punishment on them, if they repent not.' O let not God, speaking in ordinary and extraordinary ways to you, still speak in vain.

Your preparations for sufferings, is the most probable means of preventing your fall and ruin by those sufferings.

2. *Motive.* Sufferings prove fatal and destructive to some; but it is to secure and careless ones; Such as are diligent and faithful in the use of God's means, are secured from the danger. Christ lays our

* Τα τα θεα κηρυγ μαλια. Euseb. hist. lib. iii. cap. 8.

constancy and perseverance very much upon our forecasting the worst that may fall out, Luke xiv. 28. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand," Eph. vi. He that hath first severed Christ in his thoughts from all worldly advantages, and puts the case thus to his own soul, O my soul, canst thou embrace or love a naked Christ? Canst thou be content to be impoverished, imprisoned, and suffer the loss of all for him? He is most likely to cleave faithfully to him, when the case is really presented to him indeed. And can it seem a light thing in your eyes, to be enabled to stand in such an evil day? If you fall away from Christ, then all you have wrought is lost, Ezek. xxxiii. 13. Gideon's one *bastard* destroyed all his seventy sons. This act renders all former actions and professions vain. If you fall, you shall thereby be brought into a more perfect bondage to the devil than ever, Mat. xii. 23. Yea, ordinarily, apostates are judicially given up to be persecutors, Hos. v. 12. 1 Tim. i. 20. and are seldom or never recovered again by grace, Heb. vi. 4, 6. They that lick up their vomit, seldom cast it up any more. It is a fall within a little as low as the unpardonable sin, whence never any rise again. In some cases the *judge* will not allow the *offender* his book. And is it not then a choice and desirable mercy to escape and prevent such a fall as this? O good souls, ply your preparation-work close then; prepare, or you perish.

3. *Motive*. This will best answer the grace of God, in affording you such choice helps and advantages as you have enjoyed. How long have you enjoyed the free liberty of the gospel, shining in its lustre among you? This sun, which to some other nations hath not risen, and to divers on whom it hath shined, yet it is but as a winter's sun, remote, and its beams but feeble; but you have lived, as it were, under the *line*, it hath been over your heads, and shed its richest influences upon you. Yea, God's ministers, who are not only appointed to be *watchmen*, Ezek. iii. 16. but *trumpeters* to discover danger, Num. x. 8. These have faithfully warned you of a day of trouble, and given you their best assistance to make you ready for it. And is not their joy, yea, life, bound up in your stability in such a day of trial? Doth not every one call upon you in the words of the apostle, Phil. iv. 1. "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved, and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." Will it not cut them to the very heart, if after all their spending labours among you, they still leave you unready? enemies still to the cross of Christ, impossible to be reconciled and persuaded to suffering-work for Christ.

I remember I have read of the Athenian Codrus, who being informed by the *oracle*, that the people whose king should be slain in battle should be conquerors: he thereupon disrobed himself, and in a disguise went into the enemies quarters, that he might steal a death to make his people victorious.

Oh! how glad would your ministers be, if you might conquer and

overcome in the day of temptation, whatever become of their lives and liberties! *Yea, and if they be offered up upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, they can rejoice, and joy with you all.* Such is their zeal and longing after your security and welfare. But if still you remain an unready people, and do become a prey to temptation, Oh how inexcusable will you be!

4. *Motive.* Remember how ready the Lord Jesus was to suffer the hardest and vilest things for you. He had a bitter cup put into his hands to drink for you, into which the wrath both of God and man was squeezed out. Never had man such sufferings to undergo as Christ, * whether you consider, (1.) The dignity of his person, who was in the form of God, and might have stood upon his *peerage* and equality with him; he is the *sparkling diamond of heaven*, Acts vii. 56. the *darling* of the Father's soul, Isa. xlii. 1. *glorious* as the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14. *yea, glory itself*, Jam. ii. 1. *yea, the very brightness of glory*, Heb. i. 3. He is the *deliciæ Christiani orbis, fairer than the sons of men*; And for him to be so debased, below so many thousands of his own creatures, *become a worm, and no man*; this was a wonderful humiliation. It was Jeremiah's lamentation, that such as were brought up in scarlet, embraced dunghills; that princes were hanged up by the hands, and the faces of elders were not revered: But what was that to the humiliation of the Lord of glory? Or, (2.) That he suffered in the prime and flower of his years; when full of life and sense, and more capable of exquisite sense of pain than others: for he was *optime complexionatus*, † of a singular constitution; and all the while he hanged on the tree, his sense of pain not at all blunted or decayed, Mark xv. 37, 39. Or, (3.) The manner of his death. It was the death of the cross, which was a *rack* to Christ: for in reference to the distention of his members upon the cross is that spoken, Ps. xxii. 17. "I may tell all my bones." Or, (4.) That all this while God hid his face from him. When Stephen suffered, he saw the heavens opened. The *martyrs* were many of them ravished and transported with extasies of joy in their sufferings; but Christ in the dark. He suffered in his soul as well as in his body; and the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings. It was the Father's wrath that lay so heavy on him, as to put him into such an agony, that an instance was never given of the like nature: for he sweat *ἰσχυροί*, great drops, or clodders of blood, which fell from his body to the ground, Luke xxii. 44. "It amazed him, and "made him very heavy;" see Mark xiv. 33. *yea, sorrowful even to "death,"* Mat. xxvi. 38.

And yet, as bitter as the cup was, he freely and willingly drank it up, John xviii. 11. prepared himself to be offered up a sacrifice, Psal. xl. 6, 7. "gave his back to the smiters," Isa. l. 6. *yea, longed exceedingly for the time till it came,* Luke xii. 50.

* *Dolor Christi fuit major omnibus doloribus.* Aquin.

† *Aquinas.*

Now, if Christ so cheerfully prepared and addressed himself to such sufferings as these for you, should you not prepare yourselves to encounter any *difficulty* or *hardships* for him? O my brethren, doth not this seem a just and fair inference to you, from the sufferings of Christ for you? 1 Pet. iv. 1. "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered "for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

Oh, trifle no longer, feed not yourselves with fancies and groundless presumptions of immunity and peace, but foresee difficulties, and fit yourselves to bear them.

CHAP. XVI.

Containing the last use of the point, by way of support and comfort to poor trembling souls, who do take pains to make themselves ready for sufferings; but yet finding such strength in Satan's temptations, and their own corruptions, fear that all their labour is vain, and that they shall faint, and utterly apostatize, when their troubles and trials come to an height.

IN the last place, if it be such a blessed thing to be ready for bonds, or death for Christ, this may minister much comfort to such souls, who though they cannot say as Paul here did, that they are ready; yet are at work daily upon their own hearts to make them ready, and strive, in the use of all means, to *conquer* those corruptions that hinder it, and improve those graces in which it mainly consisteth. O poor soul, whatever present unreadiness or indisposition thou findest, and complainest of in thine heart, yet thy condition is safe.

Objection. Oh! but I cannot be satisfied in that: I fear I shall be over-borne by temptations when they come to an height. I have such experience of the deceits and treacherousness of my own heart, that it seems impossible to me to do as these blessed souls did, when I come to the like trials.

Solution. It is well thou suspectest thine own heart, and tremblest in thyself; this fear will keep thee waking, while others are securely sleeping. It was a good saying of a reverend minister,

Mr. A. H. now with God, 'He that fears to flinch, shall never flinch for fear.' It is true, seeming grace may be totally lost, Luke vii. 18. Heb. vi. 4, 5. 2 Pet. ii. 20. It is granted also,

that the sin of believers deserve that God should forsake them, and that he may suffer grace in them to be sadly abated, and they may fall before a temptation, as Peter, and all the disciples did: but that thou shalt never be separated from Christ, or fall *totus a toto, in totum*, utterly away from God, thou mayest be abundantly satisfied, upon these five or six grounds.

1. From God's eternal electing love, wherewithal gracious souls are beloved and embraced, be their graces never so weak, or their cor-

ruptions never so strong. This is immutable, Heb. vi. 18. and hence it is said, Mark xiii. 22. "They shall deceive (if it were possible) the very elect." Now, this immutable purpose of God, is not founded upon any mutable ground or reason in thee, Rom. ix. 11. Yea, when he, Rom. viii. 29. elected thee, he saw what thou wouldst be, and yet that hindered him not.

2. From the covenant of grace, in the bosom of which thou art wrapped up: this is all thy salvation, and all thy hope; it will afford thee abundant satisfaction, if thou do but weigh particularly these three things about it. 1. That the Author of this covenant is not a *fickle* creature, but a *faithful* God, with whom there is not *yea* and *nay*; with whom *there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*; whose gifts and callings are without repentance; so that once within this blessed covenant, and in it for ever. 2. That God hath established the covenant with you in the blood of Christ; therefore the *sacramental cup*, is called "the cup of the New Testament in his blood," Luke xxii. 20. The everlasting merit and efficacy whereof gives the soul of a believer the highest satisfaction imaginable. *Lastly*, Add to this, that in this covenant God hath undertaken for us, as well as for himself: so that what is a *condition* in one scripture, is the matter of a *promise* in another, Jer. xxxii. 40.

3. From that strict and intimate union that is betwixt Christ and thee. And hence it is impossible thou shouldst be lost. For, 1. Thy union with his person brings interest in his properties along with it. Whatever he is, or hath, it is for thee: his eye of knowledge, arm of power, bowels of pity, it is all for thee.

2. This union with his person, secures thy feeble graces from perishing, John iv. 14. Thy graces have an everlasting spring. Whilst there is sap in this root, it will ascend into the branches.

3. It implies thy perseverance, because by this union thou becomest an integral part of Christ's body, which would be mutilated and defective, should thou be *cut off* and lost.

4. From the prevalent intercession of Jesus Christ in the heavens, for all his saints, in all their trials here on earth. From hence the apostle infers the certainty of our perseverance, Rom. viii. 34. and a pregnant instance of it you have in Peter's case, Luke xxii. 32. So Heb. vii. 25. speaks fully to the case. To strengthen this, consider, 1. Who it is that intercedes: It is Christ, whose person is most dear and ingratiated with the Father, John xi. 42. 2. What he intercedes for: Surely for nothing but what is most suitable to his Father's will. The will of Christ's and his Father's do not clash, John xvi. 26, 27. yea, what he prays for, he prays not for *gratis*, or asks upon any dishonourable terms to the justice of his Father; but they are all mercies purchased and paid for; and therefore fear not the failing of your graces.

5. From the Spirit of Christ which dwelleth and abideth in thee, and hath begun his saving work upon thee. I say, *saving*, for else it

would afford no argument. His common works on hypocrites come to nothing, but in thee they cannot fail. For, 1. His honour is pledged and engaged to perfect it. That reproach of the foolish builder shall never lie upon him, that he began to build, but could not finish. Besides, this would make void all that the Father and the Son have done for thee; both their works are complete and perfect in their kinds, and the Spirit is the last efficient in order of working. 2. Besides, the grace he hath already wrought in thee, may give thee yet further and fuller assurance of its preservation, inasmuch as it hath the nature of a *seal*, *pledge*, and *earnest* of the whole, Rom. viii. 23. 2 Cor. i. 22. So that it cannot fail.

6. From those multitudes of *assertory*, *promissory*, and *comparative* scriptures, the rich veins whereof run through the book of God, as so many streams to refresh thy soul. Of *assertory* scriptures, see John vi. 39. John x. 28. 1 John ii. 19. Of *promissory* scriptures, see Isa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 40. 1 Cor. i. 8, &c. Of *comparative* scriptures, see Psal. i. 3. Psal. cxxv. 1 John iv. 14, &c. The principal scope of all which is to shew the indefectible nature of true grace in the saints.

And now, how should this refresh thy drooping soul, make thee gird up the loins of thy mind, since thou dost “not run as one uncertain, neither fightest as one that beats the air,” 1 Cor. ix. 26. but art so secured from total apostasy, as thou seest thou art by all these things. O bless ye the Lord.

Obj. 2. But the Lord seems to be departed from my soul; God is afar off from me, and troubles are near. I seem to be in such a case as Saul was when the Philistines made war upon him, and God was *departed* from him; and therefore I shall fall.

Sol. Not so; for there are two sorts of Divine desertions; the one is *absolute*, when the Lord utterly forsakes his creatures, so that they shall never behold his face more: The other is *limited* and *respective*, and so he forsook his own Son, and often does his own *elect*: and of this kind, some are only *cautional*, to prevent sin; some are merely *probational*, to try grace; and others castigatory, to chastise our negligence and carelessness. Now, though I have not a word of comfort to speak in the case of total and absolute desertions; yet of the latter (which doubtless is thy case) much may be said by way of support, be it of which of the three sorts it will, or in what degree it will. For, 1. This hath been the case of many precious souls, Psal. xxii. 1, 2. Psal. lxxvii. 2. Psal. lxxxviii. 9. Job xiii. 24, 25, 26. This was poor Mr. Glover’s case, as you will find in his story, and it continued till he came within sight of the stake; therefore no new or strange thing hath happened unto you.

2. The Lord by this will advantage thee for perseverance, not only as they are cautioned against sin, but as they make thee hold Christ the faster, and prize his presence at an higher rate, when he shall please graciously to manifest himself to thee again, Cant. iii. 4.

3. This shall not abide for ever: it is but a little cloud, and will blow over. It is but for a *moment*, and that moment's darkness ushers in everlasting light, Isa. liv. 7.

Yea, lastly, The light of God's countenance shall not only be restored *certainly*, but it shall be restored *seasonably*; when the darkness is *greatest*, thy troubles at the *highest*, and thy hopes *lowest*. He is a God of judgment, and knows how to time his own mercies, Psal. cxxxviii. 3.

Obj. 3. But I am a weak woman, or a young person, how shall I be able to confess Christ before *rulers*, and look great ones in the face?

Sol. Christ delights to make his power known in such, 2 Cor. xii. 9. for he affects not social glory.

2. "Thou shalt be holden up, for God is able to make thee stand," Rom. xiv. 4. Thou that art sensible of thine own infirmity, mayest run to that promise.

3. Such poor weak creatures shall endure when stronger (if self-confident) fall, Isa. xl. 30, 31. "Even the youths shall faint, and be weary, and the young men utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint."

Youths, and young men, are bold, daring, and confident persons, that trust to their own strength; to whom such as wait upon the Lord stand here opposed; they shall faint, but these shall renew their strength.

Art thou one that waitest and dependest upon an all-sufficient God, in the sense of thine own weakness? This promise then is for thee.

4. You may furnish yourselves at pleasure, with examples of the mighty power of God resting upon such as you are, out of our own martyrology.

Thomas Drowry the poor blind boy, Fox, vol. 3. p. 703. What a presence of spirit was with him, when examined by the Chancellor!

Eulalia, a virgin of about 12 years of age, see how she acted above those years, yea, above the power of nature. Fox, vol. 1. p. 120. Tender women, yea, children, act above themselves, when assisted by a strong God.

And thus you have some help offered you by a weak hand, in your present and most important work.

The Lord carry home all with power upon your hearts, that if God call you to suffer for him, you may say as Paul did, "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to them also which love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. And as you expect so to finish your course with joy; be di-

ligent in the use of all means, to prepare and make yourselves ready to follow the call of God, whether it be to bonds, or to death, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

THE
BALM OF THE COVENANT

APPLIED TO THE

BLEEDING WOUNDS

OF

AFFLICTED SAINTS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SERMON preached for the Funeral of that excellent and religious Gentleman, JOHN UPTON, of LUPTON, ESQ.

To the Virtuous and Much Honoured
 Madam, URSULA UPTON, of LUPTON in DEVON.

MADAM,

IF I find it an hard task to write on such a doleful subject, it cannot be imagined but your part must be abundantly harder, who feel over and over what is here written. Could I tell how to administer counsels and comforts to you, without exasperating your sorrows, I would certainly take that way; but seeing the one (in this case) cannot be done without the other, it is our duty to submit to the method Providence hath prescribed to us.

The design of the ensuing discourse, is to evince the truth of what seems a very great paradox to most men, namely, that the afflictions of the saints can do them no hurt, and that the wisdom of men and angels cannot lay one circumstance of their condition (how uneasy soever it seems to be) better, or more to their advantage than God hath laid it. I attempt not by a flourish of rhetoric to persuade you against the demonstrations you can fetch from sense and feeling to the contrary, but to overthrow the false reasonings of flesh and sense, by the allowed rules of Scripture, and sure principles of religion.

And methinks you, and every Christian, should gladly entertain

that comfortable conclusion, when you shall find the foundation of it as *strong*, as the influences thereof are *sweet* and comfortable.

Certainly, Madam, the intent of the Redeemer's undertaking was not to purchase for his people riches, ease, and pleasures on earth; but to mortify their lusts, heal their natures, and spiritualize their affections; and thereby to fit them for the eternal fruition of God. Upon this supposition the truth of this conclusion (how strange soever it seems) is firmly built.

It was not without divine direction, that the subject of the ensuing discourse was as pertinently, as seasonably, recommended to me by your dear husband, in the day of your sorrows for your only son. He took, I hope, his portion of comfort out of it before he died, and it is now left as a spring of comfort to you, who then mourned with him, and now for him.

Heavy pressures call for strong support, and fainting seasons for rich cordials. Your burden is indeed heavy: yet I must say it is much our own fault our burdens are so heavy as we feel them to be; for according to the measure of our delight in, and expectation from the creature, is our sorrow and disappointment when we part from it. The highest *tides* are always followed with the lowest *ebbs*. We find temperance and patience knit together in the same *precept*, and intemperance and impatience as inseparably connected in our own *experience*. It may be we did not suspect ourselves of any sinful excess in the time of their enjoyment; but it now appears the creature was gotten deeper into our hearts than we imagined, by the pain we feel at parting: Did we not lean too hard upon it, there would not be such shakings as we feel when it is slipt from us.

But, Madam, it is high time to recal your thoughts, and bound your sorrows, which the following considerations would greatly assist you in.

1. What is the very ground and reason of our excessive sorrows for the loss of earthly comforts? Is it not this, That they are *perishing* and *transitory*? That is, that you find them to be as God made them. And can we expect that God should alter the laws of nature to please and humour us? It is as natural to our relations to die, as it is for *flowers* to wither, or the *moon* to wane.

2. That there is no such necessary connection betwixt these things and our comfort, that whenever God removes the one, he must needs remove the other with it. Christ and comfort are indeed so united, but nothing beside him is or can be so. I hope you will shortly experience the truth of this conclusion, by the comfort God will give you in the absence of those comforts you have lost. Can you not now have as free access to God as before? Yea, do not these very afflictions send you oftener into his presence? And if God meet you in those duties, (as in days of distress he uses to meet his people,) then it will be evident to you that your joy and comfort lives, though your husband and children be laid in their graves.

3. That the removing of your earthly comforts hinders not but that you may still pursue the great end and business of your life, and carry on all your designs for heaven as successfully as ever. Indeed, Madam, had we been sent into this world to raise estates; contract relations, and then sit down in the midst of them as our portion, then our design had been utterly dashed and disappointed; but you know this is not your main end, or great business upon earth, but to honour God by an holy fruitful life here, and make ready for the full enjoyment of him hereafter. And what hinders but you may as prosperously manage and carry on this your design as ever? You do not think the traveller is disabled for his journey, because he hath fewer clogs and hinderances than before. I think few Christians find much furtherance heavenward by their multiplicity of engagements or enjoyments in this world. Your cares and fears about these things, will now lie in a narrower compass than they did before, and thereby you may have your thoughts more about you, to attend the great concerns of God's glory, and your own salvation.

4. But above all, you will certainly find your relief and consolation to lie in the everlasting covenant of God. Thence it was, that David fetched his support under a much heavier burden and smarter rod than yours: For your relations were such as gave you comfort in their lives, and left you many grounds of hope in their deaths; but his were taken away in their sins. But though the grounds of his sorrow (blessed be God) are not yours, yet I hope the grounds of his comfort in the text are fully yours.

I confess, I have prepared these things in too much haste and distraction of thoughts, which in this juncture was unavoidable; nor have I bestowed much of art or language upon them: And if I had, they would have been never the more effectual to your relief for that. But such as they are, I humbly present them to you with my hearty prayers, that God would make them a *sovereign balm*, by the blessing of his Spirit on them, to your wounded spirit, and to all other godly families groaning under the like strokes of God with you, and remain,

MADAM,

Your most Faithful

Sympathizing Friend and Servant,

JOHN FLAVEL,

2 SAM. XXIII. 5.

Although my house be not so with God ; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure : for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

THESSE are part of David's last words. The last words of dying *saints*, but especially of dying *prophets*, are ponderous, memorable, and extraordinarily remarkable ; and such are these acknowledged to be, by all expositors. It is a golden sentence, a divine oracle, fit to be the last words of every dying saint, as well as of David.

They are called his *last words*, not simply and absolutely, as though he breathed them forth with his last breath ; (for he spake many things afterwards) but either they are the last he spoke as a prophet, by Divine inspiration, or because he had them often in his mouth, to his last and dying day. They were his *epicedium*, his sweet swan-like song, in which his soul found singular refreshment, and strong support, amidst the manifold afflictions of his life, and against the fears of his approaching death.

The whole chapter is designed for a *coronis* or honourable close of the life of David, and gives us an account both of the worthy expressions that dropped from him, and of the renowned worthies that were employed by him. But all the heroic achievements recorded to the honour of their memories, in the following part of the chapter, are trivial and inglorious things, compared with this one divine sentence recorded in my text ; in which we have two things to consider, viz.

1. The preface, which is exceeding solemn.
2. The speech itself, which is exceeding weighty.

1. In the preface, we have both the instrumental and principal efficient cause of this divine sentence distinctly set down, ver. 1. and the efficient, or author of it, ver. 2.

The instrument or organ of its conveyance to us, was David ; described by his descent or lineage, *the son of Jesse* ; by his eminent station, *the man that was raised up on high* ; even to the top and culminating point of civil and spiritual dignity and honour, both as a king, and as a prophet ; by *his divine unction, the anointed of the God of Jacob* ; and lastly, by the flowing sweetness of his spirit and stile, in the divine psalms that were penned by him, whence he here gets the title of *the sweet psalmist of Israel ; the pleasant one, in the psalms of Israel*, as some read it.

The *principal efficient cause* of this excellent passage, is here likewise noted, and all to commend it the more to our special observation and acceptance : "The Spirit of God spake by me, and his word was "in my tongue." This stamps my text expressly with divine authority. The Spirit of God spake by David, he was not the author,

but only the scribe of it. Thus the ensuing discourse is prefaced. Let us next see,

2. The matter or speech itself, wherein we shall find the maxims and general rules of government prescribed, and the felicity of such a government elegantly described. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." Princes being in God's place, must exalt the righteousness of God, in the government of men; and when they do so, they shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds, &c. What halcyon days shall that happy people see, whose lot is cast into such times and places! All this is typically spoken of David, and those pious princes who succeeded him; but mystically and eminently points at Christ, who was to rise out of David's seed, Rom. i. 5. and to sit upon his throne, Acts ii. 30. So that in this he was raised on high to an eminency of glory and dignity indeed: he was so in his ordinary natural seed; a royal race, deriving itself from him, and sitting upon his throne in a lineal succession, till the Babylonish captivity, which was about four hundred and thirty years. And after that, the Jews had governors of his line, at least rightful heirs to that crown, till the promised Messiah came. But that which was the top of David's honour, the most sparkling jewel in his crown, was this, that the Lord Jesus was to descend from him, according to the flesh, in whom all the glorious characters before given should not only be exactly answered, but abundantly exceeded. And thus you find the natural line of the Messiah is drawn down by Matthew, from David to the virgin Mary, Matth. i. And his legal line by Luke, from David to Joseph, his supposed father, Luke ii. 23.

Now, though the illustrious marks and characters of such a righteous, serene, and happy government, did not fully agree to his day, nor would do so in the reigns of his ordinary natural successors, his day was not without many clouds both of sin and trouble; yet such a blessed day he foresaw and rejoiced in, when Christ, the extraordinary seed of David, should arise, and set up his kingdom in the world, and with the expectation hereof, he greatly cheers and encourages himself: Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made "with me an everlasting covenant," &c. In which words four things are eminently remarkable.

1. Here is a sad concession of domestic evils.
2. A singular relief, from God's covenant with him.
2. The glorious properties of this covenant displayed.
4. The high esteem and dear regard his house had unto it.

1. Here is David's sad and mournful concession of the evils of his house, both *moral* and *penal*. "Although my house be not so with God," i. e. neither so holy, nor so happy as this description of a righteous and flourishing government imports; alas! it answers not to it: For though he was eminent for godliness himself, and had solemnly dedicated his house to God, Psal. xxx. as soon as it was built,

yea, though he piously resolved to walk in the midst of it with a perfect heart, and not to suffer an immortal person within his walls; yet great miscarriages were found even in David's house and person, which God chastised him for, by a thick succession of sharp and sore afflictions, Psal. ci. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Tamar was defiled by her brother Amnon, 2 Sam. xiii. 13. Amnon was barbarously murdered thereupon, by the advice of Absalom, 2 Sam. xiii. 28. Absalom unnaturally rebels against his father David, and drives him out of the royal city, and perishes in that rebellion, 2 Sam. xv. 1. then Adonijah, another darling-son, grasps at the crown settled by David upon Solomon. and perishes for that his usurpation, 1 Kings ii. 25. O what a heap of mischiefs and calamities did this good man live to see within his own walls, besides the many foreign troubles that came from other hands! How many flourishing branches did God lop off from him, and that in their sins too? So that his day was a day of clouds, even from the morning unto the evening of it: Psal. cxxxii. 1. "Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions." Well might he say, "his house was not so with God." But what then, doth he faint and despond under these manifold calamities? Doth he refuse to be comforted, because his children are gone, and all things involved in trouble? No, but you find,

2. He relieves himself by the *covenant* God had made with him: "Yet hath he made with me a covenant." He looks to Christ, "There is more in the covenant than this my house before God," as the Chaldee turns it *. This little word *yet*, wraps up a great and sovereign cordial in it. Though Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah be gone, and gone with many smarting aggravations too; "yet hath he made with me a covenant," yet I have this sheet-anchor left to secure me. God's covenant with me, in relation to Christ, this underprops and shores up my heart.

This covenant was, without controversy, a gospel-covenant. It was David's gospel: For all his salvation and all his desire were in it; which could never be, except Christ had been in it, who is the salvation of all the ends of the earth, and the desire of all nations.

It is true, it was a more obscure and imperfect edition of the *covenant of faith*; yet clearer than those that were made before it; it came not up to the fulness and clearness of the discoveries made by Jeremy and Ezekiel: But yet in this covenant with David, God revealed more of Christ than had been ever revealed before; for the light of Christ, like that of the morning, increased still more and more, till it came to a perfect day. It is worthy our observation, how God made a gradual discovery of Christ from Adam, down along to the New Testament times. It was revealed to Adam, that he should be the *seed of the woman*, but not of what nation, till Abraham's time; nor of what *tribe*, till Jacob; nor of what *sex* and *family*, till David;

* *Plus est quam hæc domus meu ante Deum.* Jon.

nor that he should be born of a virgin, till Isaiah ; nor in what *town*, till Micah. The first revelation of this covenant with David, was by Nathan the prophet ; 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, 14. afterwards enlarged and confirmed, Psal. lxxxix. By it he knew much of Christ, and wrote much of him. He spake of his *person*, Psalm xlv. 6, 11. Psalm viii. 4, 5, 6. of his offices, both *prophetical*, Psal. xl. 8, 9, 10. *priestly*, Psal. cx. 4. and *kingly*, Psal. ii. 6. of his incarnation, Psalm viii. 5. of his death on the cross, Psal. xxii. 16, 17. of his burial, Psal. xvi. 8, 9, 10. resurrection, Psal. ii. 7. and triumphant ascension, Psalm lxxviii. 18. there was the sum of the gospel discovered, though in dark and typical terms and forms of expression ; but if out of this covenant as obscure as its revelation was, David fetched such strong support and consolation amidst such a heap of troubles, then the argument is good *a fortiori* : What support and comfort may we not draw thence, who live under the most full and perfect display of it, in all its riches and glory ; enough hath been said to prove it a gospel-covenant ; but if any doubt should remain of that, it will be fully removed, by considering,

3. The eximious properties and characters of the covenant, as we find them placed in the text ; and they are three, viz.

(1.) Everlasting.

(2.) Ordered in all things, and

(3.) Sure.

(1.) It is an *everlasting covenant*, or a perpetual covenant, a *covenant of eternity*, * not in the most strict, proper, and absolute sense : For that is the incommunicable property of God himself, who neither hath beginning nor end ; but the meaning is, that the benefits and mercies of the covenant are durable and endless to the people of God : For Christ being the principal matter and substance of the covenant, there must be in it an everlasting righteousness, as it is called, Dan. ix. 24. everlasting kindness. Isa. liv. 8. everlasting forgiveness, Jer. xxxi. 34. and in consequence to all these, everlasting consolation, Isa. li. 11. in all which the riches and bounty of free grace shine forth in their greatest glory and splendor.

(2.) It is a covenant *ordered in all things*, or orderly prepared, disposed, and set, as the word imports †. Every thing being here disposed and placed in the most comely order, both persons and things here keep their proper place : God the Father keeps the place of the most wise contriver and bountiful donor of the invaluable mercies of the covenant : and Christ keeps the proper place both of the purchaser and surety of the covenant ; and all the mercies in it ; and believers keep their place, as the unworthy receivers of all the gratuitous mercies and rich benefits thereof, and the most obliged creatures in

* כרימ צולמ דיאθηαη αιωνεος. i. e. A covenant of age.

† ציך *ordinavit, disposuit, aptavit.*

all the world to free grace, saying, although my house, yea, although my heart and my soul be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant. And as *persons*, so *things*, all things in this covenant stand in the most exquisite order, and exact correspondence to each other. O it is a ravishing sight to behold the habitude and respect of the mercies in the covenant, to the sins and wants of all that are in it! Here are found full and suitable supplies to the wants of all God's people. Here you may see *pardon* in the covenant, for *guilt* in the soul; *joy* in the covenant, for sorrow in the *heart*; *strength* in the covenant, for all defects and weaknesses in the creature; *stability* in the covenant for the mutability in the creature. Never did the wisdom of God shine forth more in any contrivance in the world, (except that of Christ, the surety and principal matter of the covenant) than it doth in the orderly dispose of all things in their beautiful order, and comely proportions in this covenant of grace.

(3.) It is a *sure covenant*, or a covenant safely laid up and kept, as the word imports*; and upon this account the mercies of it are called, "The sure mercies of David," Isa. lv. 3. And so Psal. lxxxix. 28. speaking of this very covenant, God saith, "My covenant shall stand fast with him;" there shall be no vacillancy, nor shaking in this covenant: and ver. 34. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Every thing is as its foundation is. Now, God's covenant being founded in his unchangeable counsel and purpose, wherein there can be no lubricity, and Christ being the surety of it, it must needs be, as the text calls it, a sure covenant, wherein the faithfulness of God is as illustriously displayed, as his bounty and wisdom are in the two properties of it. And such a covenant as this, so everlastingly, aptly disposed, and sure, must needs deserve that precious respect and high esteem from every believing soul, which David here doth pay it in.

4. The singular and high valuation he had of it, when he saith, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire," or as some translate † "all my delight, or pleasure;" i. e. here I find all repaired with an infinite overplus, that I have lost in the creature: Here is a life in death, fulness in wants, security in dangers, peace in troubles. It is *all my salvation*; for it leaves nothing in hazard that is essential to my hapiness; and *all my desire* for it repairs whatever I have lost, or can loose: It is so full and complete a covenant, that it leaves nothing to be desired out of it. O it is a full fountain! Here I repose my weary soul with full satisfaction, and feed my hungry desires with sweetest delights: so that my very soul is at rest and ease in the bosom of this blessed covenant. Thus you have the parts and sense of the text. The notes from it are three.

Observation 1. *That God's covenant people may be exercised with many sharp afflictions in their persons and families, Eccl. ix. 9.*

* *A שמר custodivit, servavit.*

† *וכל הרצו.*

Even David's house was the house of mourning; "Although my house be not so with God, though he make it not to grow." All sorts of outward afflictions are incident to all sorts of men, "All things (saith Solomon) come alike to all: There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean, and unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not." The providences seem one and the same, though the subject on whom they fall be vastly different. Estates and children, health and liberty will still be like themselves, vanishing comforts, whoever be the owners of them. No man's spiritual estate can be known by the view of his temporal estate. A godly family cannot be a *miserable*, but it may be a *mournful* family. Religion secures us from the *wrath*, but it does not secure us from the *rod* of God. The Lord hath chosen another way of expressing his love to his people, than by temporal and external things: Therefore *all things come alike to all*. The covenant excludes the *curse*, but includes the *cross*, "If his children forsake my law, &c. then will I visit their iniquity with the rod, and their sin with stripes: nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take away."

Nor indeed would it be the privilege of God's covenanted people, to be exempt from the rod; a mark of *bastardy* can be no man's felicity, Heb. xii. 8. to go without the chastising discipline of the rod, were to go without the needful instructions and blessed fruits that accompany and result from the rod, Psalm xciv. 19.

Let us not therefore say as those irreligious persons did in Mal. iii. 14. "It is in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked monrnfully before him?" Surely none serve him *in vain* but those that serve him *vainly*. Godliness cannot secure you from affliction, but it can and will secure you from hell, and sanctify your afflictions to help you to heaven. But I stay not here.

Observation 2. *A declining family is a sore stroke from the hand of God, and so to be acknowledged wherever it falls.*

It was a growing sorrow to David, that his house did not grow; and he eyed the hand of God in it, *He made it not to grow*, as he speaks in the text. He felt as many deaths as he had dead children. It is God that *builds* and destroys families; he enlargeth and straiteneth them again. A family may decline two ways, viz. either,

1. By the death: or,

2. By the degeneracy of its offspring.

1. By their death, when God lops off the hopeful springing branches thereof; especially the last and only prop of it, in whom not only all the care and love, but all the hope and expectation of the parents is contracted and bound up. For,

The hearts of tender parents are usually bound up in the life of an only son *. As a man's wife is but himself divided, so his children

* *Omnis in ascanio stat chari cura parentis.* Virgil.

are but himself multiplied: and when all love and delight, hope and expectation, is reduced to one, the affection is strong, and that makes the affliction so too. If it were not an unparalleled grief among all earthly griefs and sorrows, the Spirit of God would never have chosen and singled it out from among all other sorrows, to illustrate sorrow for sin by it, yea, sorrows for that special sin of piercing Christ, as he doth, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one that mourneth for an only son." How naked are these walls, and how unfurnished is that house, where the children (its best ornaments) are taken down and removed by death? It is natural to all men to desire the continuance of their names and families on the earth; and therefore when God cuts off their expectations in that kind, they look upon themselves as dry trees, or as the withering stalks in the fields, when the flowers are fallen off, and blown away from them.

2. Or, which is yet much worse, a family may decline by the degeneracy of its offspring. When the piety, probity, and virtues of ancestors descend not with their lands to their posterity, here the true line of honour is cut off, and the glory of a family dies, though its children live; the family is ruined, though there be a numerous offspring. Surely it were better mourn for ten dead children, than for one such living child.

How many such wretched families can England shew this day! How hath Atheism and debauchery ruined and subverted many great and once famous families! O it were better the *arms* of those families had been reversed, and their hands alienated, yea, better had it been a succession had failed, and that their names had been blotted out, than that Satan should rule by profaneness in the places where God was once so seriously and sweetly worshipped.

Whensoever therefore God shall either of these ways subvert a family, it becomes them that are concerned in the stroke, not only to own and acknowledge the hand of God in it, but to search their hearts and houses to find out the sins which have so provoked him; yet not so as to fall into an unbecoming despondency of spirit, but withal to relieve themselves, as David here doth, from the covenant of God; "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant." Which brings us to the third and principal point I shall insist on.

Observ. 3. *That the everlasting, well-ordered, and sure covenant of grace, affords everlasting, well-ordered, and sure relief to all that are within the bonds of it, how many or how great soever their personal or domestic trials and afflictions are.*

This point will be cleared to your understandings, and prepared for your use, by clearing and opening three propositions, which orderly take up the sum and substance of it, viz.

Proposition 1. *That the minds of men, yea, the best men, are weak and feeble things under the heavy pressures of affliction, and will reel and sink under them, except they be strongly relieved and supported.*

A bowing wall doth not more need a strong shore or *buttress*, than the mind of a man needs a strong support and stay from heaven, when the weight of affliction makes it incline and lean all one way, "Unless the law had been my delights, I should then have perished in my affliction," Psal. cxix. 92. q. d. What shift other men make to stand the shock of their afflictions, I know not; but this I know, that if God had not seasonably sent me the relief of a promise, I had certainly gone away in a faint fit of despondency. O how seasonably did God administer the cordials of his word to my drooping, sinking soul!

This weakness in the mind to support the burdens of affliction, proceeds from a double cause, viz.

1. From the sinking weight of the affliction.

2. From the irregular and inordinate workings of the thoughts of it.

1. From the sinking weight that is in affliction, especially in some sorts of afflictions: they are heavy pressures, ponderous burdens in themselves. So Job speaks, "O that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea, therefore my words are swallowed up," Job vi. 2, 3, 4. q. d. If all the sand that lies upon all the shores in the world, were shovelled up into one heap, and cast into one scale, and my sorrows into the other, my grief would weigh it all up. How heavy are the hearts of the afflicted! what unsupportable sorrows do they feel and groan under, especially when God smites them in the dearest and nearest concerns they have in the world.

2. But especially the reelings and staggerings of the mind, are occasioned by the inordinate and irregular workings of its own thoughts. Were it but possible to keep the mind in a serene, sedate, and ordinate frame, our burdens would be comparatively light to what we now feel them to be; but the falling of the thoughts into confusions, and great distractions, spoils all. Upon this account it is, that afflictions are compared to a stupifying doze, which casts the soul into amazement, Psal. lx. 3. "Thou hast shewed thy people hard things, thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment." Afflictions are called the wine of astonishment, from their effects upon the mind: for under a great and sudden stroke of God, it is like a *watch* wound up above its due height, so that for a time it stands still, neither grace nor reason move at all: and when it begins to move again, O how confused and irregular are its motions! it is full of murmurs, disputes, and quarrels: these aggravate both our sin and misery. It is our own thoughts which take the arrow of God shot at us, (which did but stick before in our clothes, and was never intended to hurt us, but only to warn us,) and thrust it into our very hearts.

For thoughts as well as *poniards*, can pierce and wound the hearts

of men, Luke ii. 35. "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul;" i. e. Thy thoughts shall pierce thee. They can shake the whole fabric of the body, and loose the best compacted and strongly jointed parts of the body: Dan. v. 6. "His thoughts troubled him, and the "joints of his loins were loosed." And thus a man's own mind becomes a rack of torment to him; a misery which no creature, except men and devils, are subjected to. O how many bodies have been destroyed by the passions of the soul! they cut through it, as a keen knife through a narrow sheath, "Worldly sorrow works death," 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Proposition 2. *The merciful God, in condescension to the weakness of his people, hath provided the best supports and reliefs for the feeble and afflicted spirits.*

"In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul," Psal. xciv. 17. Carnal men seek their relief under trouble, from carnal things; when one creature forsakes them, they retreat to another which is yet left them, till they are beaten out of all, and then their hearts fail, having no acquaintance with God, or special interest in him: for the creatures will quickly spend all that allowance of comfort they have to spend upon us. Some try what relief the rules of *philosophy* can yield them, supposing a neat sentence of Seneca may be as good a remedy as a text of David or Paul; but, alas! it will not do: submission from fatal necessity will never ease the afflicted mind, as Christian resignation will do. It is not the eradicating, but regulating of the affections, that composes a burdened and distracted soul. One word of God will signify more to our peace than all the famed and admired precepts of men.

To neglect God, and seek relief from the creature, is to forsake the fountain of living waters, and go to the broken cisterns which can hold no water, Jer. ii. 13. The best creature is but a cistern, not a fountain; and our dependence upon it makes it a broken cistern, strikes a hole through the bottom of it, so that it can hold no water. "I, even I (saith God) am he that comforteth you," Isa. lvii. 12. The same hand that wounds you, must heal you, or you can never be healed. Our compassionate Saviour, to assuage our sorrows, hath promised *he will not leave us comfortless*, John xiv. 18. Our God will not contend for ever, lest the spirit fail before him, Isa. lvii. 16. He knew how ineffectual all other comforts and comforters would be, even physicians of no value, and therefore hath graciously prepared comforts for his distressed ones, that will reach their end.

Proposition 3. *God hath gathered all the materials and principles of our relief into the covenant of grace, and expects that we betake ourselves unto it, in times of distress, as to our sure, sufficient and only remedy.*

As all the rivers run into the sea, and there is the congregation of all the waters; so all the promises and comforts of the gospel are gathered into the covenant of grace, and there is the congregation of

all the sweet streams of refreshment that are dispersed throughout the scriptures. The covenant is the store-house of promises, the shop of cordials and rare *elixirs*, to revive us in all our faintings; though, alas! most men know no more what are their virtues, or where to find them, than an illiterate rustic put into an *apothecary's shop*.

What was the cordial God prepared to revive the hearts of his poor captives groaning under hard and grievous bondage, both in Egypt and in Babylon? Was it not his covenant with Abraham? And why did he give it the solemn confirmation by an oath, but that it might yield to him and all his believing seed, *strong consolation*, Heb. vi. 17, 18. the very spirit of joy amidst all their sorrows.

And what was the relief God gave to the believing *cumuchs* that kept his sabbaths, took hold of his covenant, and chose the things in which he delighted? "To them (saith he) will I give in mine house, and within my walls, a place, and a name better than that of sons or of daughters," Isa. lvi. 4, 5. Though they were deprived of those comforts other men have in their posterity, yet he would not have them look upon themselves as dry trees; a covenant-interest would answer all, and recompense abundantly the want of children, or any other earthly comfort.

Certainly, therefore, David was at the right door of relief and comfort, when he repairs to the covenant, as here in the text, "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant." There, or nowhere else, the relief of God's afflicted is to be found.

Now, to make any thing become a complete and perfect relief to an afflicted spirit, these three properties must concur and meet in it, else it can never effectually relieve any man.

I. It must be able to remove all the causes and grounds of troubles.

II. It must be able to do so at all times.

III. It must be capable of a good personal security to us.

For if it only divert our troubles, (as creature-comforts use to do,) and do not remove the ground and cause of our trouble, it is but an *anodyne*, not a *cure* or *remedy*. And if it can remove the very ground and cause of our troubles for a time, but not for ever, then it is but a temporary relief: our troubles may return again, and we left in as bad case as we were before. And if it be in itself, able to remove all the causes and grounds of our trouble, and that at all times, but not capable of a personal security to us, or our well established interest in it, all signifies nothing to our relief.

But open your eyes and behold, O ye afflicted saints, all these properties of a complete relief meeting together in the covenant, as it is displayed in the text. Here is a covenant able to remove all the grounds and causes of your trouble; for it is *ORDERED in all things*; or aptly disposed by the wisdom and contrivance of God, to answer every cause and ground of trouble and sorrow in our hearts. It is able to do this at all times; as well in our day, as in David's or Abra-

ham's day: for it is an *everlasting covenant*; its virtue and efficacy is not decayed by time. And, lastly, is capable of a good personal security or assurance to all God's afflicted people; for it is a *sure covenant*. The concurrence of these three properties in the covenant makes it a complete relief, and perfect remedy, to which nothing is wanting in the kind and nature of a remedy. These three glorious properties of the covenant are my proper province to open and confirm, for your support and comfort in this day of trouble.

I. *That the covenant of grace is able to remove all the causes and grounds of a believer's trouble, be they never so great or many.* This I doubt not will be convincingly evidenced and demonstrated by the following arguments, or undeniable reasons.

Argument 1. Whatsoever disarms afflictions of the only sting whereby they wound us, must needs be a complete relief and remedy to the afflicted soul.

But so doth the covenant of grace, it disarms afflictions of the only sting by which they wound us.

Therefore the covenant of grace must needs be a complete relief and remedy to the afflicted soul.

The sting of all afflictions is the guilt of sin; when God smites, conscience usually smites too: and this is it that causes all that pain and anguish in the afflicted. It is plainly so in the example of the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 18. when her son, her only son, and probably her only child, died, how did that stroke of God revive guilt in her conscience, and made the affliction piercing and intolerable! as appears by her passionate expostulation with Elijah, who then sojourned in her house: "What have I to do with thee, O man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" q. d. What injury have I done thee? Didst thou come hither to observe my sins, and pray down this judgment upon my child for them? The death of her son revived her guilt, and so it generally doth, even in the most holy men.

When Job looked upon his wasted body under afflictions, every wrinkle he saw upon it, seemed to him like a witness rising up to testify against him. "Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me; and my leanness rising up in me, beareth witness to my face," Job xvi. 8.

Affliction is like a *hue and cry* after sin in the ears of conscience, and this is the envenomed poisonous sting of affliction: pluck out this, and the afflicted man is presently eased, though the matter of the affliction still abide with him, and lie upon him. He is afflicted still, but not cast down by affliction; the anguish and burden is gone, though the matter of trouble remain.

This is plain both in scripture, and in experience. Suitable hereunto is that strange, but sweet expression, "The inhabitants shall not say I am sick, the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquities," Isa. xxxiii. 24. It is not to be imagined these people

had found such a fortunate *island*, or happy *climate*, where no disease could touch or invade their bodies; no, sickness will find out the bodies of the best men, wherever they live; wherever sin hath been, sickness and death will follow it. Heaven is the only privileged place from these miseries: but the meaning is, though they be sick, they shall not feel the pains and burdens of sickness, “they shall not say “they are sick:” And why so? because *their iniquities are forgiven*; plainly confirming what was before asserted, that the anguish of an affliction is gone as soon as ever the sting of guilt is plucked out. And hence, pardoning of the soul, and healing of the body, are put together as *conjugate mercies*; “Bless the Lord, O my soul, who “forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases,” Psal. ciii. 1, 3. When the soul is at ease, the pains of the body are next to nothing: Sickness can cloud all natural joys, but not the joy of a pardon.

Nay, which is yet more; pluck out but the sting of sin, and there is no horror in death, the king of terrors, and worst of all outward evils. See how the pardoned believer triumphs over it: “O death, “where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of “death is sin,” 1 Cor. xv. 55. They are words of defiance, as men use to deride and scorn a boasting, insulting enemy, when they see him cast upon his back, and his sword broken over his head.*

Where are your boasts and menaces now? O death, thou hast lost thy sting and terror together. Thus the pardoned believer, with an holy gallantry of spirit, derides and contemns his disarmed enemy death. So then it is manifest, that whatever plucks out the poisonous sting of affliction, must needs be an effectual remedy and cure to the afflicted person.

But this the covenant of grace doth; it reveals and applies gospel-remission to them that are within the blessed bond of it. “This shall “be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; I will “forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,” Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. † Behold here a gracious, full, and irrecoverable pardon! *I will forgive*, or be propitiously merciful, as that word imports; pointing plainly to Christ our propitiation, our sins are forgiven us for his name's sake. And a pardon as *full* as it is *free*; iniquity and sin, smaller and greater, are here forgiven; for God, in the remission of his people's sins, having respect to the propitiating blood of Christ, he pardons all as well as some; that blood deserving and purchasing the most full and complete pardons for his people, 1 John i. 7. “The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin.”

And this covenant-pardon is as *firm*, as it is *free* and full. So run the expressions in the grant, *I will remember their sin no more*: Or in

* Where is now thy threats? See there thy fury laid. *Ovid.*

† מלח נל.εως εσομαι, It respects the propitiatory expiation of sin by Christ, who is therefore called *ιασμος*, and *ιλασηριον*. 1 John ii. 2. and Rom. iii. 25.

the apostle's works, Heb. viii. 12. & $\mu\eta\mu\epsilon\sigma\epsilon\omega\ \epsilon\tau\iota$, I will not remember them again: That is, not so remember, as to impute them, or condemn my pardoned ones for them: For the pardoned persons come no more into condemnation, Job v. 24. Their sins are cast into the depths of the sea, Mic. vii. 19. Sooner shall the East and the West, the two opposite points of heaven, meet, than the pardoned soul and its sins meet again in condemnation, Psal. ciii. 12.

Now, the case standing thus with all God's covenant people, all their sins being graciously, fully, and irrevocably forgiven them, how convincingly and sweetly doth this conclusion follow, that the covenant is a complete remedy to all afflicted believers? As nothing can befall us before Christ and pardon be ours, which is sufficient to raise us, so nothing can befall us afterwards, which should deject and sink us. This is the first benefit afflicted believers receive from the covenant, and this alone is enough to heal all our sorrows.

Arg. II. As the covenant of grace disarms all the afflictions of believers of the only sting by which they wound them: so it alters the very nature and property of their afflictions, and turns them from a *curse* into a *blessing* to them: And in so doing, it becomes more than a *remedy*, even a choice benefit and advantage to them.

All afflictions in their own nature, are a part of the *curse*; they are the consequence and punishments of sin; they work naturally against our good: But when once they are taken into the covenant, their nature and property is altered. As waters in their subterranean passages, meeting some virtuous mineral in their course, are thereby impregnated, and endowed with a rare healing property to the body; so afflictions passing through the covenant, receive from it a healing virtue to our souls. They are, in themselves, sour and harsh, as wild hedge-fruits; but being ingrafted into this stock, they yield the pleasant fruits of righteousness. "If his children break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their iniquity with the rod, and their sins with stripes: Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take away, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31. Here you may see all the rods of affliction put into the covenant, as Aaron's rod was into the ark. And hence two things necessarily follow.

(1.) That such afflictions can do the children of God no hurt. They may affright, but cannot hurt them: We may meet them with fear, but shall part from them with joy: An unsanctified rod never did any man good, and a sanctified rod never did any man hurt: He may afflict our bodies with sickness, deny, or cut off our comfort in children, impoverish our estates, let loose persecutors upon us; but in all this he really doth us no hurt, as he speaks in Jer. xxv. 6. No more hurt than a skilful surgeon doth in saving his patient's life, by cutting off a mortified, gangrened member: No more hurt than frost and snow do the earth in killing the rank weeds that exhausted the sap and strength of it, and preparing and mellowing it to produce

a fruitful crop of corn. By these he recalls our minds from vanity, weans our fond and ensnaring affections from the world, discovers and mortifies those lusts which gentler methods and essays could not do : And is this for our hurt ?

I confess God's thoughts and ours often differ upon this case. We measure the good and evil of providences, by their respect to the ease and pleasure of our flesh, but God sees this is the way to cast our spirits into a dead formality, and in removing them, he doth but deprive us of the occasions and instruments of spiritual mischiefs and miseries, in which certainly he doth us no hurt.

(2.) But that is not all. Afflictions once put into the covenant, must promote the good of the saints ; they are beneficial, as well as harmless things. " We know (saith the apostle) that all things work " together for good to them that love God." This promise is the compass which sets the course, and directs the motions of all the afflictions of the people of God ; and no ship at sea obeys the rudder so exactly, as the troubles of the righteous do the direction of this promise. Possibly we cannot discern this at present, but rather pre-judge the works of God, and say all these things are against us ; but hereafter we shall see, and with joy acknowledge them to be the happy instruments of our salvation.

How often hath affliction sent the people of God to their knees, with such language as this, ' O my God, how vain and sensual hath ' this heart of mine been under prosperity ! How did the love of ' the creature, like a sluice, cut in the bank of a river, draw away ' the stream of my affections from thee ! I had gotten a soft pillow ' of creature-comforts under my head, and I easily fell asleep, and ' dreamed of nothing but rest and pleasure, in a state of absence ' from thee ; but now thy rod hath awakened me, and reduced me ' to a right sense of my condition. I was negligent or dead-hearted ' in the course of my duty, but now I can pray more fervently, feel- ' ingly, and frequently, than before. O it was good for me that I ' have been afflicted. O, saith God, how well was this rod bestow- ' ed, which hath done my poor child so much good ; now I have ' more of his heart, and more of his time and company than ever ; ' now I hear the voice, and see the gracious workings of the spirit of ' my child after me again, as in the days of his first love.' The sum of all this you may see in the ingenuous meltings of Ephraim under a sanctified rod, Jer. xxxi. 19, 20. and the sounding of the bowels of mercy over him. ' Ephraim mourns at God's feet, and God falls ' upon Ephraim's neck. I have been as a beast, saith Ephraim : ' Thou art a dear son, a pleasant child, saith God. My bowels are ' troubled and pained for sin, saith Ephraim : And my bowels are ' troubled for thee, and my compassions rolled together, saith God. O blessed fruits of sanctified rods ! such precious effects as these rich- ly repay you for all the pain and anguish you feel. And thus as the wound of a scorpion is healed by applying its own oil, so the evil of

affliction is cured by the sanctified fruits that it produceth, when it is once put into the covenant.

Arg. III. The covenant doth not only alter the nature and property of the saints afflictions, but it also *orderly disposes*, and aptly places them in the frame of providence, among the other means and instruments of our salvation; so that a council of angels could never place them, or the least circumstance belonging to them, more aptly and advantageously than it hath done. The knowledge of this must needs quiet and fully relieve the afflicted soul: And who can doubt it that believes it to be a covenant ordered in all things, as the text speaks? Here all things, yea, the most minute circumstances that befall you, are reduced to their proper class and place of service; so exactly ordered, that all the wisdom of men and angels know not how to mend or alter any thing to your advantage.

If a small pin be taken out of the frame of a watch, and placed any where else, the motion is either presently stopped, or made irregular. And as Galen observes of the curious fabric of an human body, that if the greatest naturalists should study an hundred years to find out a more commodious situation, or configuration of any part thereof, it could never be done. It is so here: No man can come after God and say, this or that had been better placed or timed than it is, if this affliction had been spared, and such an enjoyment stood in the room of it, it had been better. All God's providences are the results and issues of his infinite wisdom: For "he works all things according to the counsel of his own will," Eph. i. 11. The *wheels*, i. e. the motions and revolutions of providence are full of eyes, Ezek. i. 18. They are well advised and judicious motions, *Non cæco impetu voluntur rotæ*; they run not at random. The most regular and excellent working must needs follow the most deep and perfect counsel, Isa. xxviii. 29. "He is deep in counsel, and excellent in working."

Now, every affliction that befalls God's covenanted people, being placed by the most wise and infinite counsel of God in that very order, time, and manner in which they befall them, this very affliction, and not that, at this very time, and not at another, (it being always a time of need, 1 Pet. i. 6.) and ushered in by such forerunning occasions and circumstances: it must follow, that they all take the proper places, and come exactly at the fittest seasons; and if one of them were wanting, something would be defective in the frame of your happiness. As they now stand, they work together for your good, which displaced, they would not do.

It is said, Jer. xviii. 11. "Behold, I frame evil, and I devise a device." It is spoken of the contrivance and frame of afflictions, as the proper works of God. The project of it is laid for his glory and the eternal good of his people. It turns to their salvation, Phil. i. 19. But O how fain would we have this or that affliction screwed out of the frame of providence, conceiving it would be far better out

than in! O if God had spared my child, or my health, it had been better for me than now it is. But this is no other than a presumptuous correcting and controuling of the wisdom of God, and so he interprets it, Job xl. 2. "He that reproveth God, let him answer it." God hath put every affliction upon your persons, estates, relations, just where you find and feel it; and that whole frame he hath put into the covenant, in the virtue whereof it works for your salvation; and therefore let all disputings and reasonings, all murmurs and discontents cease; nothing can be better for you, than as God hath laid it; and this, one would think, should heal and quiet all. You yourselves would mar all, by presuming to mend any thing. "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" Isa. xl. 13, 14. Well then, be satisfied it is best as it is; and nothing can be so advantageous to you, as God's projects and contrivance, which you are so uneasy under, and dissatisfied about.

Arg. IV. As the covenant sorts and ranks all your troubles into their proper classes and places of service, so it secures the special, gracious presence of God with you in the deepest plunges of distress that can befall you; which presence is a full relief of all your troubles, or else nothing in the world is or can be so.

The very heathens thought themselves well secured against all evils and dangers, if they had their petty household-gods with them in their journeys: but the great God of heaven and earth hath engaged to be with his people, in all their afflictions and distresses. As a tender father sits up himself with his sick child, and will not leave him to the care of a servant only; so God thinks it not enough to leave his children to the tutelage and charge of angels, but will be with them himself, and that in a special and peculiar way: so run the express words of the covenant, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts; and they shall not depart from me." Here he undertakes for both parts, himself and them. *I will not, and they shall not.*

Here is the saints security for the gracious presence of God with them, a presence which dispels all the clouds of affliction and sorrow, as the sun scatters the morning mists. The God of all consolation is with you, O poor dejected believers, and will not such a presence turn the darkness into light round about you? There is a threefold presence of God with his creatures.

1. Essential, which is common and necessary to all.
2. Gracious, which is peculiar to some on earth.
3. Glorious, which is the felicity of heaven.

The first is not the privilege here secured; for it is necessary to all, good and bad: In him we all live, and move, and have our being. The vilest *men* on earth, yea, the *beasts* of the field, and the very *devils*

in hell, are always in this presence of God, but it is their torment, rather than their privilege. The last is proper to the glorified saints and angels. Such a presence embodied saints cannot now bear; but it is his special gracious presence which is made over and secured to them in the covenant of grace; and this presence of God is manifested to them two ways.

1. Internally, by the Spirit.

2. Externally, by Providence.

1. Internally, by the Spirit of grace dwelling and acting in them, this is a choice privilege to them in the day of affliction: for hereby they are instructed and taught the meaning of the rod, Psal. xciv.

12. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, and teachest him "out of thy law." O it is a blessed thing to be taught so many lessons by the rod, as the Spirit teacheth them! Surely they reckon it an abundant recompense of all that they suffer. "It is good for me "that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes," Psal. cxix. 71. Yea, he refreshes as well as teaches, and no cordials revive like his. "In the multitude of the thoughts I had within me, thy "comforts delight my soul," Psal. xciv. 19.

Yea, by the presence and blessing of his Spirit, our afflictions are sanctified to subdue and purge out our corruptions. "By this shall the "iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away sin," Isa. xxvii. 9. Now, if a man be instructed in the ends and designs of the rod, refreshed and comforted under every stripe of the rod, and have his sins mortified and purged by the sanctification of the Spirit upon his afflictions; then both the burdensomeness and bitterness of his afflictions are removed, and healed by the internal presence of the Spirit of God with his afflicted ones.

2. Besides this, God is providentially present with his people, in all their troubles, in a more external way; ordering all the circumstances of their troubles to their advantage. He orders the degree and extent of our afflictions, still leaving us some mercies and comforts to support and refresh us, when others are cut off. In measure doth he debate with his covenanted people, staying the rough wind in the day of the east-wind, Isa. xxvii. 8. He might justly smite all our outward comforts at once, so that affliction should not rise up the second time: for what comfort soever hath been abused by sin, is thereby forfeited into the hand of judgment. But the Lord knows our inability to sustain such strokes, and therefore proportions them to our strength. We have some living relations to minister comfort to us when mourning over our dead: He makes not a full end of all at once. Yea, and his providence supports our frail bodies, enabling them to endure the shocks and storms of so many afflictions, without ruin. Surely there is as much of the care of Providence manifested in this, as there is in preserving poor crazy leaking barks, and weather-beaten vessels at sea, when the waves not only cover them, but break into them, and they are ready to founder in the midst of them.

O what a singular mercy is the gracious presence of God with men! even the special presence of that God, "who is above all, and through all, and in you all," as the apostle speaks, Eph. iv. 6. *Above all*, in majesty and dominion; *through all*, in his most efficacious providence; and *in you all*, by his grace and Spirit. As he is above all, so he is able to command any mercy you want, with a word of his mouth; as he is through all, so he must be intimately acquainted with all your wants, straits, and fears; and as he is in you all, so he is engaged for your support and supply, as you are the dear members of Christ's mystical body.

Objection. But methinks I hear Gideon's objection rolled into the way of this sovereign consolation: "If God be with us, why is all this evil befallen us?"

Solution. All what? If it had been all this rebellion and rage against God, all this apostasy and revolting more and more, all this contumacy and hardness of heart under the rod; then it had been a weighty and stumbling objection indeed: but to say, If God be with us, why are all these chastening corrections and temporal crosses befallen us? why doth he smite our bodies, children or estates? is an objection no way fit to be urged by any that are acquainted with the scriptures, or the nature and tenor of the covenant of grace. Is afflicting and forsaking all one with you? must God needs hate, because he scourgeth you? I question whether Satan himself hath impudence enough to set such a note or comment upon Heb. xii. 6. "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

No, no, Christian, it is not a chastening rod, but the denying of such a favour, and suffering men to sin with impunity, and go on prosperously in the way of their own hearts, that speaks a rejected man, as the next words, ver. 7. inform you. As he never loved you the better for your prosperity, so you may be confident he loves you never the less for your adversity: and will not this close and heal the wounds made by affliction? What, not such a promise as this, *I will be with him in trouble*, Psal. xci. 15. Will not such a presence revive thee? What then can do it! Moses reckoned that a wilderness with God, was better than a Canaan without him, "If thy presence go not with me, (saith he) then carry us not hence," Exod. xxxiii. 15. And if there be the spirit of a Christian in thee, and God should give thee thine own choice, thou wouldst rather chuse to be in the midst of all these afflictions with thy God, than back again in all thy prosperity, and among thy children and former comforts, without him.

Arg. V. As this covenant assures you of God's gracious and special presence, so it fully secures all the essentials and substantials of your happiness, against all hazards and contingencies; in which security lies your full relief and complete remedy against all your troubles for the loss of other things.

There be two sorts of things belonging to all God's people, *viz.*

1. Essentials.
2. Accidentals.

1. They have some things which are essential to their happiness; such are the loving-kindness of God, the pardon of sin, union with Christ, and eternal salvation. And they have other things which are accidentals, that come and go, live and die, without affecting or altering their happiness; such are health, estates, children, and all sorts of relations and earthly comforts. These are to our happiness, as leaves are to the tree, which fade and fall away without endangering the tree; but the other as the vital sap, without which it withers and dies at the very root. Now if it can be made out that the covenant fully secures the former; then it will strongly follow, that it therein abundantly relieves us under all our sorrows for the latter: And that it doth so, will evidently appear by reviewing the covenant, wherein you shall find all these substantial and essential mercies of believers, fully secured against all hazards and contingencies whatsoever.

There the loving-kindness of God is secured to their souls, whatever afflictions he lays upon their bodies, "Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not take away," Psal. lxxxix. 33. And their pardon is as safe as the favour of God is; it is safely locked up in that promise, "I will remember their sins no more," Jer. xxxi. 34. Yea, heaven, together with our perseverance in the way to it, are both put out of hazard by that invaluable promise, "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," John x. 28.

Thus are all the essentials of a believer's happiness secured in the covenant; and these being safe, the loss of other enjoyments should not much affect or wound them, because if he enjoy them, they add nothing to his happiness; and if he lose them, he is still happy in God without them. And this unriddles that enigmatical expression of the apostle, 2 Cor. vi. 10. "As having nothing, yet possessing all things:" i. e. the subtraction of all external things cannot make us miserable, who have Christ for our portion, and all our happiness entire in him.

If a man travelling on the road, fall into the hands of thieves, who rob him of a few shillings, why this doth not much affect him; for though he has lost his spending money, yet his stock is safe at home, and his estate secure, which will yield him more. Or if a man has been at court, and there obtained a pardon for his life, or a grant of a thousand pound *per annum*, and returning home should chance to lose his gloves, or his handkerchief, sure if the man be in his wits, he will not take on or mourn for the loss of these trifles, whilst the pardon or grant is safe. Surely these things are not worth the mentioning.

It is true, the loss of outward and earthly things are to a believer real trials, yet they are but seeming losses: and therefore they are expressed in the apostle's phrase, with a *tanquam, sicut*: "As chasten-

“ed, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,” 2 Cor. vi. 9. And if your losses be but as it were losses, your sorrows should be but as it were sorrows: much like a physic-sickness, which we do not call a proper sickness, but as it were a sickness because it conduceth to the *health*, and not to the *hurt* of the person; as all God’s medicinal afflictions on his people also do.

Indeed, if the stroke of God were at our souls, to cut them off from Christ and heaven, to raise our names out of the covenant, or revoke the pardon of sin; then we had cause enough to justify the extremity of sorrow; cause enough to weep out our eyes, and break our hearts for such a dismal blow as that would be. But blessed be God you stand out of the way of such strokes as these; let God strike round about you, or lay his hand upon any other comforts you possess, he will never smite you in these essential things, which is certainly enough to allay and relieve all your other sorrows.

My name is blotted out of the earth, but still it is written in heaven. God hath taken my only son from me, but he hath given his only Son for me, and to me. He hath broken off my hopes and expectations as to this world, but my hopes of heaven are fixed sure and immoveable for ever. My house and heart are both in confusion and great disorder, but I have still an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. I cannot say my son liveth, but I can still say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever,” Isa. xl. 8.

Arg. VI. As God strikes none of the substantial mercies of his covenant people, so when he doth smite their external accidental comforts, the covenant of grace assures them, that even those strokes are the strokes of love, and not wrath; the wounds of a friend, and not of an enemy; which is another singular relief to the afflicted soul.

The most frightful thing in any affliction, is the mark or character of God’s wrath which it seems to bear: take away that, and the affliction is nothing. “O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure,” Psal. vi. 1. He doth not deprecate the rebukes, but the anger of God; not his chastening, but his hot displeasure. God’s anger is much more terrible than his rebuking, and his hot displeasure than his chastening. Therefore he intreats, that whatever God did to him in the way of affliction, he would do nothing in the way of wrath; and then he could bear any thing from him. A mark of Divine anger engraven upon any affliction, makes that affliction dreadful to a gracious soul.

But if a man be well satisfied, that whatever anguish there be, yet there is no anger, but that the rod is in the hand of love: O how it eases the soul and lightens the burden! Now this desirable point is abundantly cleared in the covenant; where we find a clear consistence, yea, a necessary connection betwixt the love and the rod of

God, Psal. lxxxix. 31. and Heb. xii. 6. Nay, so rare are the afflictions of the saints from being marks of his wrath, that they are the fruits and evidences of his fatherly love.

Two men walking through the streets, see a company of boys fighting, one of them steps forth, and singles out one of those boys, and carries him home to correct him; which of the two, think you, is that child's father? The case standing thus with all God's people, surely there is no reason for their despondencies whatever their afflictions be.

Arg. VII. Lastly, The covenant doth not only discover the consistence and connection betwixt the love and the rod of God, but it also gives full satisfaction to the saints, that whatsoever contemporary mercy they are deprived of, which was within the bond of the covenant when they enjoyed it, is not lost, but shall certainly be restored to them again with a rich improvement, and that they shall enjoy it again to all eternity.

What a rare model or platform of consolatory arguments hath the apostle laid down to antidote our immoderate sorrows, for the death of our dear relatives which died interested in Christ and the covenant! 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep," they are not dead, but asleep. Sleep is but a parenthesis to the labours and travels of this life; and it is but a partial privation, not of the habit, but acts of reason, to which, upon awaking, the soul returns again. Just such a thing is that which in believers is commonly called death. And we do not use to bewail our friends because they are fallen asleep: and therefore it no way becomes us to sorrow as those that have no hope, nor to look upon them as lost; for as he strongly argueth and concludeth (ver. 14.) their restoration to their bodies, yea, and to our enjoyment again, is fully secured both to them and us by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The influence of his resurrection is by the prophet Isaiah compared to the morning-dew, Isa. xxvi. 19. to shew that what virtue there is in the morning-dew, to cause the languishing plants of the earth to revive and flourish, that and much more there is in the resurrection of Christ, to revive and quicken the dead bodies of these saints; their bodies shall be restored by virtue of the warm animating dew or influence of his resurrection.

Objection. But the marvellous change which the resurrection makes upon glorified bodies, and the long separation of many ages betwixt us and them, seems to make it impossible for us to know them, as those that were once related to us upon earth; and, if so, then that comfort which resulted from them, as in relation to us, is perished with them at death.

Solution. Whatever change the resurrection shall make on their bodies, and the length of time betwixt our parting with them on earth, and meeting them again in heaven shall be; neither the one nor the

other seem sufficient to destroy the grounds of our hope, that we shall know them to be the very persons that were once so dear to us upon earth. There may remain some lineament or property of individuation, whereby the acute glorified eye may possibly discover who they were; or if not, yet none can doubt but it may be discovered to us by revelation from God; and that one way or other it will be discovered, is highly probable, because nothing will be denied to that perfect state which may contribute to, or complete the joy and happiness thereof, as we cannot but think this knowledge will do. If Adam knew Eve to be flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, in the state of innocence; and if the apostles knew Moses and Elias upon the mount, yea, if Dives in hell knew Abraham and Lazarus in heaven; sure we may well allow that knowledge to the glorified saints in heaven, which we find in the state of innocence, or in the sinful state on earth, or in the state of the damned in hell.

And if so, then the covenanted parents shall be able to say in that day, this was our child for whom we prayed and travailed again, till Christ was formed in him; this is he whom we educated for God, and trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: and now we see the fruit of our prayers, counsels, catechisings; a child of so many prayers perished not. And the covenanted child shall say, this was my pious Father, who took such care for my soul; and this my tender mother, who, like another Monica, was zealously concerned for my eternal happiness. These are they that sowed so many prayers, which God gave them not time to reap the fruits of on earth, but now they shall reap the fruit and comfort of them for ever. O joyful meeting in the kingdom of God! The joy of such a meeting abundantly recompenses for all the tears and groans of a dolorous parting.

Now, put all this together, and value the arguments produced to make good the first thing propounded, namely, the sufficiency of the covenant to relieve and remedy all the sorrows and losses of believers, be they never so many, or so great: this cannot be doubted, since it hath been proved, that it *disarms* all their afflictions of the only sting by which they wound; *alters* the very nature and property of their afflictions, turning them from curses into blessings; *ranks* and *disposes* them into their proper class and place of service, so as the counsel of men and angels could never lay them better to our advantage; *engages* the gracious and special presence of God with you in all your troubles; *secures* all your essential and substantial mercies from all hazards and contingencies; discovers a consistency, yea, a connection betwixt the rod and the love of God; and *assures* you, that whatever temporal mercy you ever enjoyed, in and by virtue of the covenant, shall be restored to you again with an admirable improvement, and singular advantage. It is by all this, I say, abundantly proved, that the covenant is a sovereign and effectual remedy to all the sorrows of God's

people; and that it was no *hyperbole* in David's *encomium*, when he called it *his salvation, and all his desire*. But then, as I hinted before,

II. It must be able to do these things at all times, and in all ages, or else it will be but a temporary relief to some only and not to all. Now, that the covenant hath this ability in all ages, and is as able to relieve us now, as it was to relieve David in his day fully appears by the epithet given it in the text, it is an **EVERLASTING COVENANT**. "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant."

Time is the measure of other things; but everlastingness is the measure of the covenant. When the Lord espouseth a people to himself in covenant, "he betrothes them to himself for ever," Hos. ii. 19. And from that day forward they may say on good grounds, "This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death," as it is in Psal. xlviii. 14. Nothing in nature is so firmly established as the covenant is. Hills and mountains shall sooner start from their basis and centre, and fly like wandering atoms up and down in the air, than this covenant shall start from its sure and steadfast foundation, Isa. liv. 10.

The causes and reasons of the immutability of the new covenant, are,

1. The unchangeable purpose of God, which is a sure and steadfast foundation, 2 Tim. iii. 29. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." The first act of God's love to the creature, is that by which he chooseth such a one to be his, and is therefore called the foundation of God, as being that on which he lays the superstructure of all other mercies. And this stands sure, there can be no vacillancy or slipperiness in such a foundation; for he knows who are his; he knows them as his creatures, and as his new creatures in covenant with him; as his by election, and his by covenant-transaction and compact. The purpose of his grace before time, gave being to the covenant of grace in time, and is the foundation of it.

2. The free grace of God in Christ, is that which gives immutability to this covenant. It is not built upon works, but grace: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace: to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed," Rom. iv. 16. This covenant is not founded as the first was, upon the variable and inconstant obedience of man, but upon grace, which is a steady and firm foundation of it.

3. The suretiship of Christ gives everlasting stability to this covenant, Heb. vii. 22. "He was made * the surety of a better testament," or covenant: For *διαθηκη* signifies both; he struck hands, or engaged himself for the whole covenant, and every condition in it, and that both on God's part and ours; to undergo all our punishments, to pay all our debts, and to work in us all that God required

* *Εγτυος*, from *εγτυαω* which signifies to strike hands. *εν γυιοις*.

of us in the covenant of grace: And all this under the penalty that lay upon us to have undergone. And this not as other sureties, who enter into one and the same bond with the principal, so that the creditor may come upon which he will: but he lays all upon Christ, and relies wholly upon him for satisfaction, knowing he was able to perform it; and so under the type of God's covenant with David, Christ is brought in, Psal. lxxxix. 19. "Thou spakest in vision to thy holy One, and saidst, I have laid help on one who is mighty:" q. d. I know thy ability, my Son, thou art able to pay me, and therefore I lay all upon thee.

It follows strongly from what hath been said, that the virtue of the covenant decays not by time as other things do, but is at this day, and will be to the end of the world, as potent and efficacious a relief to all God's people, as ever it was to David, or any of the believers of the first ages.

And if so, certainly nothing can be more strongly supporting, or sweetly relieving in such a changeable world than this, He hath made with me an everlasting covenant. What David speaks of the natural heavens will be found true, of things overspread and covered by them, Psal. cii. 26, 27. "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: and all of them shall wax old like a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." The creature was, and is not; but my covenant God is the same; his name is *I am*, and his covenant is the same that ever it was; which is the second property or ingredient of this complete remedy to the saints afflictions. The covenant hath not only all power, virtue, and efficacy in itself to relieve a distressed Christian, but it hath it in all ages, as well for one as for another. The third and last follows, namely,

III. That it is a *sure covenant*. So David stiles it in my text. The certainty of the covenant is the glory of the covenant, and the comfort of all that are in it. The certainty of it in itself is past all doubt, by what hath been said before. It is certain God did make such an everlasting covenant with his people in Christ, and it must remain an eternal truth, that such a covenant there is betwixt God and them. It is as impossible that this everlasting covenant should not be made with them, as it is impossible for God to lie, Heb. vi. 18. If he might make himself not to have covenanted everlastingly with them when once he had so covenanted, such a supposition would destroy the foundation of all faith and certainty, and overthrow the apostle's consequence on which the faith and comfort of believers is built. Nor is it an infringement of the Almighty power, to say, God himself cannot do that which implies a plain contradiction, as *factum infectum reddere*, to make that which was done, not to be done.

But of this there is no doubt; it is a sure covenant in itself. That which makes to my purpose here, is to prove it capable of personal security and certainty to us. David had, and all the federates, as

well as he, may have a subjective or personal certainty also. He speaks categorically and positively in the text. "Yet hath he made [with me] an everlasting covenant."

Objection. If it be said, he might have a personal certainty of it, because it was revealed to him in an extraordinary way by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, 14. and *extraordinaria non current in exemplum*, this was a peculiar favour, which we may not expect.

Solution. I reply, and why may not we know it with as full a certainty to whom God is pleased to make it known in his ordinary way? Think you his word and Spirit cannot ratify it as fully and firmly to our souls, as Nathan's discovery of it did to David's soul? God give me but such a seal of it in his ordinary method and way of confirmation, and I will desire no more of him in this world for my relief and comfort, whatever afflictions it shall please him to lay upon me.

And thus you see all the properties of a complete remedy in the covenant, and of it every believer may say, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire, though he make not my house to grow." And now what hinders, but that all God's afflicted should say from henceforth, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psal. cxvi. 7. I have all the desires of my heart in the covenant of God, though he take away the desire of mine eyes upon earth with his stroke. In this covenant my soul is at rest, and my very heart is centred. No affliction can be great enough to make the consolations of the Almighty seem small in mine eyes. Worldly sorrows may swallow up worldly comforts, but no sorrows upon earth can swallow up the consolations of the covenant.

I know many Christians droop and are dejected under the rod, notwithstanding such sovereign cordials are prepared for them in the covenant; but this is not for want of efficacy in the covenant, but for want of faith to clear their interest, and draw forth the virtue of it to their relief. Some are ignorant of their privileges, and others diffident about their interest. It is with many of God's children, as it is with our children in their infancy, they know not their father, nor the inheritance they are born unto.

That which remains, is the improvement of this truth to our actual comfort and relief in the day of trouble. And this I shall assist you in, as God shall assist me, by way of,

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.
3. Examination, and
4. Consolation.

USE 1. For information, in three corollaries.

Corollary 1. By what hath been discoursed from this text, it appears, *That God governs the spiritual part of the world by faith, and not by sense. He will have them live upon his covenant and promises, and fetch their relief and comfort thence, under all their sorrows and distresses in this life.*

God never intended temporal things for his people's portion,

therefore from them they must not expect their relief in times of trouble. He will have us read his love to us by things within us, not by things without us. He hath other ways of expressing his love to his people, than by the smiles of his providence upon them. How would earthly things be overvalued and idolized, if besides their conveniency to our bodies, they should be the marks and evidences of God's love to our souls! A Christian is to value himself as the merchant, or the husbandman doth. The merchant values himself by his bills and goods abroad, not by the ready cash that lies by him. And the husbandmen by his deeds and leases, and so many acres of corn he hath in the ground, and knows he hath a good estate, though sometimes he be not able to command twenty shillings. Christian, thy estate also lies in good promises, and new-covenant-securities, whether thou hast more or less of earthly comforts in thy hands.

Every creature feeds according to its nature; the same plant affords food to several sorts of creatures: The bee feeds upon the flower, the sheep upon the branch, the bird upon the seed, and the swine upon the root. One cannot live upon what the other doth. So it is here: A Christian can feed upon the promises, and make a sweet meal upon the covenant, which the carnal mind cannot relish. "The life that I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God;" saith the apostle, Gal. ii. 21.

This is that mysterious and excellent life of faith, and the test of true Christianity, to relieve ourselves by our hopes of things to come, against present evils; to balance the sorrows and losses of this life, with the promises and expectations of the next. Thus did the renowned believers of the first age; whenever they felt a pang or qualm upon their hearts, under their trials and sorrows from the world, they would presently run to their cordial, the promises, and, by faith, from thence would refresh and invigorate their souls with new life and power. "We faint not, whilst we look not at the things which are seen, for they are temporal; but at the things which are not seen, for they are eternal," 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18. And truly so must we also, when our hearts are faint within us in days of affliction, or our spirits will fail, and we shall go away in a faint fit of despondency.

Corol. 2. Learn hence the sovereign efficacy of the word, and what a choice privilege it is to have these lively oracles of God in our hands, in a day of distress and trouble.

It is no ordinary mercy to be born in a land of bibles and ministers; to have these choice supports and reliefs at hand, in all our fainting hours. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me," Psal. cxix. 50. It was no small mercy gained by the reformation, that it put the oracles of God into our hands. It affords us many cordials for the support of our souls. For this, among other great and excellent uses, the scriptures were written, "That we, through patience, and comfort of the scriptures, might have

“hope,” Rom. xv. 4. In other parts of the world, it is a sealed book; bless God it is not so to you. All creature-comforts have a double defect, they are neither suitable nor durable; but the word is so. Compare the arguments that have been urged from the covenant with such as these. It is in vain to trouble ourselves about what we cannot help: We are not alone in trouble, others have their losses and afflictions as well as we. Alas! what dry and ineffectual comforts are these! they penetrate not the heart, as pardon of sin, peace with God, and sanctification of troubles to our salvation do.

And no less is the mercy of an able New-testament ministry, to open, apply, and inculcate the consolation of the scriptures, to be esteemed. It is no common favour to the afflicted soul, to have with or near him an “Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto “him his uprightness,” Job xxxiii. 23. O England, prize and improve these mercies, and provoke not thy God to bereave thee of them.

I can find no such settlement made of the gospel and ministry upon any place or people, but that God may remove both upon their abuse of them; and if he do, sad will the case of such a people be, especially when a day of distress and trouble shall be upon them. It is sad to be in a storm at sea, without a compass or pilot to direct and advise the distressed passengers. Much so is the case of the afflicted, when deprived of the word and ministry.

Let it therefore be your care to hide the word in your hearts, and get the teachings of the Spirit; that whatever changes of providence be upon the world, you may have the light and comfort of the scriptures to direct and cheer your souls. Sanctification is the writing of God’s law in your hearts; and what is written there is secure and safe. The word within you is more secure, sweet, and effectual, than the word without you. Jerom saith of Nepotianus, that by long and assiduous meditation of the scriptures, his breast was at last become the library of Christ. O that the breast of every Christian were so too.

Corol. 3. How sad and deplorably miserable is their condition, who have no title to, nor comfort from the covenant of God, when a day of affliction and great distress is upon them!

Unrelieved miseries are the most intolerable miseries. To be overweighed with troubles on earth, and want support and comfort from heaven, is a dismal state indeed; yet this is the case of multitudes in the world. If a believer be in trouble, his God bears his burden for him, yea, he bears up him and his burden too; but he that hath no covenant-interest in God, must say as it is, Jer. x. 19. “This is my “affliction, and I alone must bear it.”

There are but two ways they can take for relief, either to divert their trouble by that which will inflame them, or rest their burdened spirits upon that which will fail them. To run to the tavern or ale-house, instead of the closet, is to quench the fire by pouring on

oil: and to run from one creature which is smitten and withered, to another which still continues with us, is to lean upon a broken reed, which not only deceives us, but wounds and pierceth us. What a miserable plight was Saul in, and how doleful was his cry and complaint to Samuel, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. "I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more." Heaven and earth forsook him at once.

Reader, if this be thy case, I advise thee to rest no longer in so miserable a condition. Thy very distress seems by an happy necessity to put thee upon God, and drive thee to him for refuge; and it seems to be the very aim and design of God in blasting all thy earthly comforts, to necessitate thee to come to him, which thou wouldst never be persuaded to do, whilst thou hadst any creature-prop to stay and rest upon. And think not that thou shalt be rejected, because thou art brought by a plain necessity to him; come sincerely, and thou shalt not be upbraided because a necessity threw thee upon him.

Use II. Seeing then that the covenant of God is the great relief and support of all his afflicted people, let the afflicted soul go to this blessed covenant; study and apply it in all distresses. It is in itself a sovereign cordial, able to revive a gracious spirit at the lowest ebb; but then it must be studied and applied, or it will never give forth its consolations to our refreshment. Extreme sorrows are apt to deafen our ears to all voices of comfort. The loud cries of affliction too often drown the sweet still voice of spiritual consolation; but either here or no where our redress is to be found. Why seek we the living among the dead? Comfort from things that cannot yield it? The covenant can discover two things which are able to pacify the most discomposed heart, viz.

- | | | |
|-------------|---|----------------|
| 1. The good | } | of affliction. |
| 2. The end | | |

1. It will discover to us the good of affliction, and so rectify our mistaken judgments about it. God is not undoing but consulting our interest and happiness in all these dispensations. It will satisfy us, that in all these things he doth no more than what we ourselves allow and approve in other cases. It is not merely from his pleasure, but for our profit, that these breaches are made upon our families and comforts, Heb. xii. 10. Who blames the mariner for casting the goods over-board to save ship and life in a storm? or the surgeon for lancing, yea, or cutting off a leg or arm to preserve the life of his patient? or soldiers for burning or beating down the suburbs to save the city in a siege? And why must God only be censured, for cutting off those things from us which he knows will hazard us in the day of temptation? He sees the less we have of entanglement, the more promptness and fitness we shall have to go through the trials that are coming upon us; and that all the comforts he cuts off from our bodies are for the profit and advantage of our souls.

2. Here you gain a sight not only of the good of affliction, but also of the comfortable end and issue of affliction. This cloudy and stormy morning will wind up in a serene and pleasant evening. There is a vast difference betwixt our meeting with afflictions, and our parting from them. "You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen "the end of the Lord." O get but Job's spirit under affliction, and you may see as happy an end of them as he did.

Had Naomi seen the end of the Lord in taking away her husband, and starving her out of Moab, she would not have changed her name; or said the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, in grafting her daughter by that providence into that noble line, out of which the Saviour of the world was to rise; and could you but see that good in order to which all this train of troubles is laid, you would not murmur or despond as you do.

Objection 1. O but this is a grievous stroke; God hath smitten me in the apple of mine eye, and written bitter things against me. No sorrow is like my sorrow; it is a mourning for an only son; I have lost all in one.

Solution 1. You can never lose all in one, except that one be Christ; and he being your's in covenant can never be lost. But your meaning is, you have lost all of that kind in one, no more sons to build up your house, and continue your name.

2. But yet religion will not allow you to say that your dead children are a lost generation. *Præmittuntur, non amittuntur*; They are sent before, but not lost. For they are a covenant-seed, by you dedicated to the Lord: They were children of many prayers; a great stock of prayers was laid up for them; in them also you, and all that knew them, discerned a teachable spirit, pious inclinations, and conscience of secret duties, some good things toward the Lord God of Israel, as was said of young Abijah, 1 Kings xiv. 13. So that you parted from them upon easier terms than good David parted from his Amnon, Absalom, or Adonijah, who died in their sins and open rebellions. There was a sting in his troubles which you feel not; and if he comforted himself, notwithstanding, in the covenant of his God, in this respect you may much more.

Object. 2. O but my son was cut off in the very bud, just when the fruits of education were ready to disclose and open.

Sol. Let not that consideration so incense your sorrows; God knows the fittest time both to give and to take our comforts; and seeing you have good grounds to hope your child died interested in the covenant of God, you have the less reason to insist upon that afflicting circumstance of an immature death. He that dies in Christ hath lived long enough both for himself and us. That mariner hath sailed long enough that hath gained his port; and that soldier fought long enough that hath won the victory; and that child lived long enough that hath won heaven, how early soever he died.

Beside, the sooner he died, the less sin he hath committed, and the less misery he saw and felt in this wretched world, which we are left to behold and feel. And it is but a vanity to imagine that the parting pull with him would have been easier, if the enjoyment of him had been longer: For the long enjoyment of desirable comforts doth not use to weaken, but abundantly to strengthen and fasten the ties of affection.

Submit your reason therefore, as is meet, to the wisdom of God, who certainly chose the fittest season for this affliction.

O but,——No more buts and objections, I beseech you. Enough hath been offered from the covenant of your God, to silence all your objections, and to give you the ease and pleasure of a resigned will. And what are all your buts and objections, but a spurning at Divine Sovereignty, and the thrusting in the affliction deeper into your own hearts, which are wounded but too deep already?

I persuade you not to put off, but to regulate natural affections: To be without them would deservedly rank us among the worst of heathens: but rightly to bound and manage them, would set you among the best of Christians.

I cannot imagine what ease or advantage holy * Basil gained by such a particular and heart-piercing account as he gave of a like affliction with this; nor to what purpose it can be to you, to recal and recount those things which only incense and aggravate your troubles: Doubtless, your better way were to turn your thoughts from such subjects as these; to your God in covenant, as David in the text did, and to recount the many great and inestimable mercies that are secured to you therein; which death shall never smite, or cut off from you, as it doth your other enjoyments.

Quest. But yet unless we can in some measure clear our covenant-interest, all these excellent cordials prepared, will signify no more to our relief, than water spilt upon the ground: Help us therefore to do that, or else all that hath been said is in vain? How may a person discern his covenant-right and interest.

Ans. This indeed is worthy of all consideration, and deserves a serious answer, forasmuch as it is fundamental to your comfort, and all actual refreshment in times of trouble; and will bring us to the next use, which is for trial of our covenant-interest.

USE III. The great question to be decided, is, whether God be our covenant-God, and we his people? A question of the most solemn nature, and such as requires awful attention.

We cannot expect satisfaction in this matter by such an extraordinary way as David had it, but we may know it by,

First, Our covenant-engagements.

* I once had a son (said he), who was a young man, my only successor, the solace of my age, the glory of his kind, the prop of my family, arrived to the endearing age, &c.

Secondly, Our covenant impressions.

Thirdly, Our covenant-conversations.

First, By our covenant-engagements, or dedications of ourselves to God; sometimes called our *joining ourselves to the Lord*, Zech. ii. 11. our yielding ourselves to him, Rom. vi. 19. our giving ourselves to him, 2 Cor. viii. 5. The soul that freely and deliberately consents to take or choose the Lord to be his God, may warrantably conclude the Lord hath taken or chosen him: for our choice of God is but the result of his choice of us, John xv. 16. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," i. e. you could never have chosen me, but in consequence to, and by virtue of my first choice of you.

Well then, let it be seriously considered, whether you have duly consented to take the Lord for your God, and Christ for your Redeemer. This includes two things in it.

1. Your relinquishing of all things inconsistent with him.

2. Your acceptation of all that promotes the glory and enjoyment of him.

1. Your relinquishing of all things that are inconsistent with an interest in him. Except we let these go, God cannot be our God, nor Christ our Redeemer. The things to be relinquished for Christ are, in short, both our *sinful*, and our *righteous self*. Sinful-self must be disclaimed and renounced: For we cannot be the servants of sin, and the servants of Christ too, Rom. vi. 14, 18. And righteous-self must be renounced also. or we can have no part or interest in his righteousness, Rom. x. 3. These are two difficult points of self-denial, to part with every beloved lust, and to give up our own righteousness. Thousands choose rather to be damned for ever, than to do either of these.

2. Your acceptance and embracing of all things that promote his glory, and further the enjoyment of him. As all the painful ways of duty, hearing, praying, meditating, and all this with the intention of the inner-man, and offering up of the soul to God, in these duties; and the more painful ways of suffering for God, and enduring all losses, reproaches, torments, and death for him, if his glory requires it, and you may be thereunto called. All this is included in your choosing God to be your God. And upon our understanding and free consent, and sealing to these articles, we have right to call him our God. Matth. xxi. 24. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Now, have you considered the terms of the covenant, weighed and balanced all the conveniences and inconveniences of godliness, and then determined for Christ and holiness, let the cost be what it will; then you have chosen him aright for your God. Many think they have chosen God for their God, that never understood or deliberated these terms. But *non consentit, qui non sentit*: He that neither knows nor ponders them, is not capable of giving a due consent.

Secondly, We may discern our covenant-interest, in the covenant-

Impressions that are made upon our souls. All God's covenant-people have a double mark or impression made upon them, viz.

1. Upon their minds.

2. Upon their hearts.

1. Upon their minds, in a more spiritual and efficacious knowledge of God, Jer. xxxi. 33. "They shall all know me, from the greatest of them, even to the least of them." This knowledge is said to be given, not acquired by mere strength of natural abilities and human aids; and *given as in the face of Christ*, not by the footsteps of the creatures only, as he speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 6. It is the choice teaching of the anointing, 1 John ii. 27. A knowledge springing from inward experience and spiritual sense; as we know the sweetness of honey by tasting, better than by all the descriptions and reports that can be made of it.

2. Upon their hearts, in that gracious tenderness and meltings of it for sin, or the discoveries of free-grace in the pardon of it. So you read in Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."

It is as easy to melt the obdurate rocks into sweet syrup, as it is to melt the natural heart into a penitential and tender melting for sin; but now there is a principle or habit of tenderness implanted in the soul, whereby it is disposed and inclined to relent and thaw ingenuously upon any just occasion.

Thirdly, Our covenant-interest may be evinced in and by our covenant-conversations. All the knowledge which is communicated to our minds, and all the tenderness given to our hearts, do respect and tend to this: Ezek. xxxvi. 27. "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Habits and principles are for action and practice: Grace in the heart is for obedience and holiness of life.

It is true, that as our graces are imperfect, so is our obedience also. Perfect working is not to be expected from imperfect creatures. God's own covenanted-people do often grieve him, and provoke him to bring them under the rod of affliction; but those their infirmities break not the bond of the covenant, Psal. lxxxix. 30, 31, 32. Care and watchfulness ordinarily go before them, conflicts and resistance accompany them, and shame, grief, and renewed care, usually follow them, 2 Cor. vii. 11. By these things (which deserves a more copious discourse than my present design can allow) we may be helped to clear our interest in the covenant of grace: And that being done, it should be out of the power of all the afflictions in the world to sink your spirits. Let me therefore in the last place add,

USE IV. A word of consolation to your dejected and drooping hearts, upon this sad and mournful occasion. Why are you so troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Methinks there hath been so much of support and comfort already discovered to you

in this blessed covenant, that could your faith but once fix upon it, and realize and apply it, I might lay down my pen at this period, and say, The work is done, there needs no more; but knowing how obstinate deep sorrows are, and how difficult a task the comforting of an afflicted mind is, I will, for a close, superadd a few considerations more, to all that hath been urged and argued before.

Consideration 1. Consider how small and trivial the comforts, whose loss you bewail, are in comparison with Jesus Christ, who is still your own, under the bond of a sure covenant. A son, an only and promising son, is a great thing, when he stands in comparison with other creature-comforts, but surely he will seem a small thing, and next to nothing, when set by, or compared with Jesus Christ. Behold the Father, Son, and Spirit! Pardon and eternal salvation are this day presented in the covenant of grace before your souls, as your own. "God, even our own God, shall bless," Psal. lxxvii. 6. When you feel your hearts wounded with such a thought as this, I cannot embrace my children in my arms, they are now out of my reach; then bless and admire God, that the arms of your faith can embrace so great, so glorious a Saviour, and that you can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Consid. II. Consider what evil days are coming on, and what a mercy it is to your dead, that God hath taken them away from the evil to come, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. There are two sorts of evils to come, viz. Evils of *sin*, and evils of *sufferings*; and it is no small favour to be set out of the way of both. The grave is the hiding-place where God secures some from the dangers of both.

We are apt to promise ourselves times of tranquillity, and then it cuts us to think that our dear ones shall not partake with us in that felicity: But if we wisely consider the sins or the signs of the times, we have more cause to rejoice that God hath set them out of harm's way.

All things seem to conspire and work towards a day of great temptation and tribulation. Now as Christ told his disciples, who were so dejected, because he was to leave them, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father:" So truly you would much better express and manifest your love to your children, in your satisfaction in the will and appointment of God, in taking them into rest and safety, than in your dejections and sorrows for their removal. Surely they are better where they are, than where they were, whom God hath housed in heaven out of the storm and tempest. And could your dear friends that are with Christ, have any more intercourse with this world, and see your tears, and hear your sighs for them, they would say to you, as Christ did to those that followed him wailing and mourning, Weep not for us, but for yourselves, and such as remain in the world with you, to see and feel the calamities that are coming on it.

Consid. III. Consider how near you are to that blessed state your-

selves, where *God shall be all in all*, and you shall feel no want of any creature-comfort, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Creature-comforts are only accommodated comforts to this animal life we now live, but shortly there will be no need of them: for *God will be all in all*: That is, all the saints shall be abundantly satisfied in and with God alone. As there is water enough in one sea to fill all the rivers, lakes, and springs in the world: And light enough in one sun to enlighten all the inhabitants of the world: So there is enough in one God eternally to fill and satisfy all the blessed souls in heaven, without the addition of any creature-comfort. God is complete satisfaction to all the saints in the absence (I cannot say want) of wives and children, meats and drinks, estates and sensitive pleasures; There will be no more need of these things, than of candles at noon-day. You shall be as the angels of God, who have no concernment for relations.

Your fulness of years, infirmities of body, and I hope, I may add, your improvements in grace, speak you not far short of this blessed state: And though you may seem to need these comforts in the way, your God shall supply all your wants.

Consid. IV. To conclude, Whatsoever your troubles, wants, fears, or dangers are, or may be in your passage to this blessed state, the covenant of grace is your security, and by virtue thereof your troubles shall open and divide, as Jordan did, to give you a safe passage into your eternal rest.

Look, as when the Israelites came near the land of promise, there was a swelling Jordan betwixt it and them, which seemed to forbid their farther passage and progress; but as is said, Josh. iii. 17. "The priests that bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, stood firm on the ground in the midst of Jordan; and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." Just so it is here: The covenant of grace stands on firm ground, in the midst of all the deep waters of tribulation you are to pass through, to secure unto you a safe passage through them all. Rejoice, therefore, and triumph in the fulness and firmness of this blessed covenant, and whatsoever affliction your God shall please to lay upon you, or whatsoever comfort he shall please to remove from you, still comfort and encourage yourselves, as David here doth. "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: For this is all my salvation, and and all my desire; although he make it not to grow."

A

SERMON

Preached for the FUNERAL of that Excellent and Religious
GENTLEMAN,

JOHN UPTON, OF LUPTON, Esq.

2 CHRON. xxxv. 24, 25.

His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers: and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and all the singing-men and the singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and behold they are written in the lamentations.

IN this context we have the history of the *pious life*, and *tragic death* of good king Josiah. The history of his life gives us an account of both what he *was*, and what he *did*. As to his personal endowments and qualifications, they were singular and eximious, as appears by the fourfold character by which he is described in the context: For,

First, He espoused the interest of religion betimes, even in his youth; chap. xxxiv. ver. 3. “For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father:” And that under the great disadvantage of an ill education, such a morning promised a glorious day.

Secondly, He hated all corrupt mixtures in the worship of God, and was answerably zealous for reformation: “And in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves,” &c. as knowing well he and his people might expect no more of God’s blessing on the ordinances, than there was of his presence in them; and no more his presence can rationally be expected, than there is of his own order and institution.

Thirdly, He was of a very tender and impressive heart, mourning for public sins and dangers; chap. xxxiv. 26, 27. “Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof; and humblest thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes and weep before me,” &c. He was not so intent upon his own pleasures, (though in the sprightly vigour of youth) nor on the

weighty concerns of the kingdom, as to forget the interest of God, and the greater concerns of his glory.

Fourthly, He was exceeding careful to propagate the interest of religion, and spread it far and wide among his people. Though he could not infuse the *inward principle*, (that was the work of God) yet he did enjoin the *external practice* of it upon all his subjects, which was his part and duty: chap. xxxiv. ver. 33. "He made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the God of their fathers."

But yet good Josiah had his mistakes and failings. The best of men are but men at best: he was too rash and hasty in resolving, and too stiff and obstinate when resolved; and this was the occasion of his ruin. The case was thus:

Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, was at that time making war upon Charchemish, a place that belonged to him, but was taken from him by the king of Assyria; so the war of Necho was a just war; and Judah lying between him and Charchemish, and being at peace with Judah, he requests leave of Josiah to march his army peaceably through his country to the seat of war: Josiah takes an alarm from this message, and arms against him. Hereupon Necho sent ambassadors to Josiah, chap. xxxv. ver. 21. saying, "What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: For God commanded me to make haste; forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not."

Expositors conceive Necho had this discovery of the mind of God, from the prophet Jeremiah, *Per oraculum non scriptum, sed viva voce editum**: even by word of mouth. If so, no doubt Jeremiah also dissuaded Josiah from going out against him: however, this is clear, Josiah did not consult the mind of God about that expedition as he ought, and was too hasty and resolute therein; chap. xxxv. 22. "Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him," &c. By this means this excellent man came to a tragical end, and that in the very flower of his days. He dies in that unhappy expedition, from which he would not be diverted; is brought home to Jerusalem in the second chariot: dies, and is buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, to the universal sorrow of all good men in Israel, as you read in the text; wherein we have these two parts to consider;

I. The nature and quality of the lamentation.

II. The cause and grounds of it.

1. For the lamentation here made, it was extraordinary; never such cries heard before in Israel at any funeral, whether we consider it either,

* Jerom. a Lapide. Just. Mart.

1. Extensively,
2. Intensively, or,
3. Protensively.

1. *Extensively*, All Judah and Jerusalem, that is, city and country mourned that day; not every individual, but all that had any sense of the worth of the man, the good that he did, or the evils that followed upon his removal. No doubt the priests of Baal, their abettors and associates, secretly rejoiced at his fall; but all good men mourned. But among all the mourners, one is only specified by name, and that is Jeremiah the prophet, in whom all the faithful ministers of God were included. To them he was a true and faithful friend; and in him they lost a father, and a famous instrument of reformation.

2. Consider it, *Intensively*, as to the degree of the sorrow, it was a bitter lamentation: so pungent, intense, and deep, that the mourning of the Jews for Christ, at the time of their conversion to him, is compared to this mourning for Josiah, Zech. xii. 11. "In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon." This Hadadrimmon was a little town in the valley of Megiddon, near the place of this fatal battle, whose inhabitants receiving the first tidings of the fall of Josiah, made the town ring with doleful cries and lamentations.

3. Consider it *Protensively*, in its continuance and duration, it was "made an ordinance in Israel;" and accordingly "the singing-men and singing-women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day;" i. e. Whenever any solemn funeral or public calamity was solemnized in Israel, those persons that were skilful in lamentations, brought in the story of Josiah's death, as the burden of that doleful song or funeral elegy.

II. Let us consider the cause and ground of this lamentation, which certainly was great and weighty enough to justify that sorrow, as great and bitter as it was: for in him they lost a faithful, public, useful, zealous, and tender-hearted instrument, whose life had been eminently useful to the church of God, and whose death opened the gap to all the following calamities upon Judah.

Now, considering Josiah here, especially in his religious capacity, as so faithful, industrious, and useful an instrument for the church of God, rather than in his political capacity as a king, the note from it will be this,

Doct. *That faithful, active, and public-spirited men in the church of God should not be laid in their graves without great lamentations.*

When Jacob was buried, a man famous for religion, a great and sore lamentation was made for him, Gen. l. 10. And when Aaron died all the house of Israel mourned for him thirty days, Numb. xx. 29. When Stephen the proto-martyr died, devout men carried him to his grave with great lamentations, Acts viii. 2. and indeed for any good man to be laid in his grave without lamentation, is lamentable. The living saints have ever paid this respect and honour to dead saints,

as men sensible of their worth, and how great a loss the world sustains by their removal.

I know the departed souls of saints have no concernment in these things, yet respect is due to their very bodies, as the temples wherein God hath been served and honoured, as they are related to Christ, who will one day put great glory and honour upon them.

In the explication and confirmation of this point, I will shew you,

1. *Negatively*, On what account the death of good men is not to be lamented.

2. *Positively*, On what account tears and lamentations are due to them, with the grounds and reasons thereof.

1. *Negatively*, There is not a tear or sigh due to the death of any good man, upon the account of any real loss or detriment that he sustains thereby. No, in this case all tears are restrained, all sorrow prohibited by the principles and rules of Christianity, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. Religion differences the sorrows, as well as the joys of its professors, from the common joys and sorrows of the world. Dead saints are better where they are, than where they were; to be with Christ is far better: death to them is gain and infinite advantage, Phil. i. 21, 23. This world is the worst place that ever God designed his people to live in; for if a state of perfect holiness and purity be better than a state of temptation and corruption; if a state of rest and peace, be better than a state of labour and sorrow; if it be better to be triumphing above than sighing and groaning beneath; then it is better for departed Christians to be where they are, than where they were. And could they now communicate their minds to us by words, as they lately did, they would say to us as Christ said, Luke xxiii. 28. "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Or, as he spake to his disciples under their sad resentments of his departure, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father." So then no tears of sorrow are due to them, or becoming us, upon the account of any real loss or detriment they receive by death.

2. *Positively*. But the true grounds and causes of our lamentation, are upon divers other weighty accounts; as,

1 *Reason. First*, Because so much of the Spirit of God as dwelt in them, when amongst us, is now recalled and gathered up from this lower world. Those precious graces which they exercised among us, in prayer, conference, and other beneficial duties, are now gone with them to heaven.

The church had the benefit of them during their abode with men, but now no more, except only what the remembrance of their holy words and instructive examples (whereby they still speak to us, though dead) may afford unto us.

There are choice effusions of the Spirit at the time of our sanctification, of which the church reapeth the benefit whilst we live; but all these are recalled at our dissolution, and thenceforth we can be no

farther useful in this lower world: for as the soul is the subject in which these precious graces inhere, so they accompany and go along with the soul into glory.

Now, as it is a real loss to a company when any merchant withdraws a great stock he had running in trade, out of the bank; so certainly it is a great loss to the church of God, when the precious gifts and graces of the Spirit, dwelling in the saints, are drawn out by death; so as the church can have no farther benefit by them, their prayers for us, and with us, are now ended; Abraham knoweth us not, and Israel is ignorant of us.

2 Reason. Secondly, The death of the saints deserves a bitter lamentation, because thereby a breach is made, a gap opened, to let in the judgments of God upon the remnant that is left. It is said of Moses, Psal. cvi. 23. "Therefore he said, that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, lest he should destroy them." A metaphor from a besieged city, when a breach is made in the walls, and an enemy ready to enter; but some champion stands in the breach to defend the city. Such a champion was Moses, who by his constant and fervent prayers, put a stop to the inundation of God's judgments against Israel. And such another was Lot, Gen. xix. 22. whose prayers for that wicked place he lived in bound up the hand of judgment, insomuch as the Lord told him, *I can do nothing till thou art gone.* But when the Lord by death removes such men, he thereby *makes a way to his anger*, as the expression is, Psal. lxxviii. 50. Hence the death of eminent saints, especially when many are taken away at or near the same time, hath been ever looked upon as a direful omen, and dreadful presage of ensuing judgments, and that not without good scripture-authority, Isa. lvii. 1. "The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

Thus Methuselah, whose very name signified *a flood cometh*, died the year before the flood: Augustine, a little before the sacking of Hyppo: Paræus, a little before the taking of Hydelberg: And Luther, before the wars broke out in Germany. Death, as a *pioneer*, clears the way to a troop of miseries following after. This, therefore, is a just and weighty ground of our lamentations for the death of useful and godly men.

3 Reason. Thirdly, The beauty and ornaments of the places they lived in, are defaced and removed by their death; they look not like themselves, when the godly are removed out of them: for as wicked men are the spots and blemishes, so good men are the beauty and ornaments of their country. A good man was wont to say of Mr. Barrington, of Barrington-hall, in Essex—Methinks the town is not at home when Mr. Barrington is out of town. How desolate and dismal doth a family look (whatever other ornaments be about it) when the religious governor of it is gone! Take away good men from their

families and country; and what are they but like a vineyard when the vintage is past? as the prophet speaks, Mic. vii. 1.

4 Reason. Fourthly, The death of good men deserves a bitter lamentation, because thereby the passage of the gospel, and propagation of religion, is obstructed in the places from whence they are removed. Of how great use in a country may one zealous, public-spirited man be? Hundreds may have cause to bless God for such a man. It was the apostle's desire to the Thessalonians, "to pray that the word of the Lord may have its free course, that it might run and be glorified," 2 Thess. iii. 1. The removal of such a person as naturally took care for the souls of those that were about him, to provide food for them, is no small loss, nor lightly to be passed over.

5 Reason. Fifthly, The consideration of the time in which good men die aggravates the loss, and justly incenses the sorrow of them that remain, and that upon a threefold account (1.) That it falls out in the declining state of religion, when the spirit and power of godliness is so much weakened and impoverished. This is like the loss of good blood in a consumptive body, which must bring it very low. (2.) That it falls out also in a time when the numbers of the godly are so much thinned and lessened, not when the church's children say in her ears, the place is too strait, give place that we may dwell: but when they are every where lamenting the paucity of good men, as the psalmist did, Psal. xii. 1. "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the righteous fail from among the children of men." At a time when they are bewailing themselves in the language of the prophet, Micah vii. 1. "Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desireth the first ripe fruit." Alluding to a hungry man that goes into a vineyard to refresh his spirits with the fruit thereof; but, alas! there is not one pleasant bunch to be found, none but sour grapes to increase his hunger, and set his teeth on edge (3.) And that which more aggravates the loss is this; when it falls in a time wherein the spring and succession of good men is obstructed. In this case death, like a storm of wind, overturns the fairest, pleasantest, and most fruitful trees in the orchard, when there is no nursery from whence others may be taken to plant in their rooms.

6 Reason. Lastly, There is just cause to lament the removal of public and pious men, when we consider what influence our sins and provocations have had upon those judgments and calamities: our unworthiness of them, unthankfulness for them, and non-improvements of such mercies have bereaved us of them. I look upon every good man, as a good book, lent by its owner for another to read, and transcribe the excellent notions and golden passages that are in it for his own benefit, that they may return with him when the owner shall call for the book again: But in case this excellent book shall be thrown into a corner, and no use made of it, it justly provokes the owner to take it away in displeasure.

Thus you see upon what account our sorrows for the death of good men are restrained, and upon what accounts and reasons they are a due debt to the death of eminent and useful instruments for God. What remains, is the application of this point. And,

1. *Use. First,* The point before us justly reproves three sorts of men.

1. The worst of men, such as secretly rejoice, and are inwardly glad at the removal of such men; they took no delight in them while they lived, and are glad they are rid of them when they are dead. Those that persecuted and hated them when alive, may be presumed to be pleased and gratified with their death. But, alas! poor creatures, they know not what they do! The innocent preserve the island. "Except the Lord of hosts (saith the prophet) had left us a small remnant, we had been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrah," Isa. i. 9. It is a proverb among the very Jews, *Sine supplicationibus non staret mundus*: The world stands by the prayers of the godly. Let the world think what they will of them. I tell you these men are a screen, a partition wall, betwixt them and destruction.

2. It reproves the insensibleness of good men, who are apt too slightly to pass over such tremendous strokes of God: For this it was that God reproved his own people, Isa. lvii. 1. *No man layeth it to heart.* Where the want of *affection* is charged upon the want of *consideration*, none considering their worth, their use, or the consequences of their fall. Such rebukes of God do certainly call for a deeper sense and sorrow, than is found in most men.

3. It reproves the very best of men, who though they do bewail and lament the loss of such men, yet they do not lament it in the due manner. They lament it one to another, saying, Alas! alas, such a worthy is fallen, such an eminent instrument in the church or state is dead; but they do not lament it in prayer to the Lord, they mourn not over the matter to him, as David did, Psal. xii. 1. "Crying, Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth." Help, Lord, the remnant that is left; help, Lord, to repair the breach made by their death; let the God of the spirits of all flesh raise up a man to fill the room, and supply the want. Alas, how insignificant are the lamentations of most men upon this account.

Use 2. Secondly, This point invites us all this day to bewail the stroke of God that is upon us. I could wish that he that looks upon this text and then upon the countenance of this assembly, might be able to discern the agreeableness of the one to the other, on such a sad and solemn occasion.

O let all that love Zion lament, this day, the fall of one of her true friends and lovers. I know funeral *panegyrics* are apt to be suspected of flattery; but as I want a rhetorical tongue for such a work, so if I had it, it should never be saleable for so bad a use and purpose. I am sure, by sending the generality that die to heaven, many are confirmed in the way to hell: Nor can I but think of that serious

line in Chrysostom, 'What a poor comfort is it to be praised, where a man is not; and to be tormented where he is?' "But yet the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance," Psal. cii. 6. Expect nothing from me on this occasion, but what may be spoken with the greatest assurance of truth, and that intended for the benefit and imitation of all that hear it. Some may think it a strain too high, to compare a private person with such a glorious king as Josiah was; but if Christ compared and preferred the very grass of the field to Solomon in all his glory, I know no reason why we may not compare and parallel the precious graces of a private person with a royal saint; especially since the comparison is made in the *religious*, not in the *civil* capacity.

I am sure the graces, and gracious performances of David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, with all the other dignified saints, were intended and propounded as patterns for our imitation; and no doubt but private Christians may measure by their pattern. Beside, it is abundantly more safe to relate the virtues of the saints when they are dead, than whilst they were alive; for now there is no danger of provoking pride and vain-glory in them that are praised, but much hope of provoking a holy emulation and imitation in them that hear them.

Well then, *Absit invidia verbis*: Suffer me this day to erect a pillar, to perpetuate the memory of this deceased worthy; to pay the tribute of my tears due to that mournful *hearse*; and to engage you to imitate those excellencies of his, which I shall, with equal truth and modesty, display this day; that we also may be duly affected with the rebuke of God upon us, and mourn over it before him.

If, when an eminent *commander* in any army falls, the whole army is affected with, and concerned at his death:

*The mourning drum, the lance and ensigns trail'd,
The robes of honour all in sables veil'd.*

Let it not be thought much, Christians should express their sense and sorrow in sighs and tears, for so useful and worthy a man as God hath this day removed from among us; whose character I shall give you in the following imitable particulars.

1. That worthy man, whose fall we lament this day, was seasoned with religion in his youth, by God's blessing upon his pious education; In this he had the advantage of Josiah. His progenitors were men of piety, and himself a child of many prayers: and as Monica said of her son Austin, it was not likely that a child of so many prayers should perish. How importunately did they request the fervent prayers of their pious friends for him, in the time of his education? Nor was it in vain, for they were manifestly answered in him: He soon discovered that *probity* and *piety*, in his youth, which justly raised great expectations from him in his riper years.

2. Nor did he frustrate those hopes; for as soon as ever God had fixed him a proper *sphere* of activity (I mean a family of his own) those graces that were in him shone forth to the comfort and benefit of

all that were about him : Joshua's pious resolution was his ; " And for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

He kept up the worship of God in his closet, as well as in his family : And truly, if religion languish in the closet, it will quickly die in the family. His house was a *temple* consecrated to God ; there the morning and evening sacrifices of prayers and praises were offered up : He called his children and servants to those duties, not reckoning that time lost to him which was spent for God. The Lord had endowed him with an excellent spirit of prayer himself. I have sometimes accidentally heard him praying in his family, with such solidity of judgment, pertinency of expressions, and holy warmth of affection, that hath at once edified, refreshed, and reprov'd me in hearing him.

He constantly read the scriptures in course before prayer, and oft-times with a *commentary* upon them, for his own and his family's edification.

The Lord's day he sanctified, not only in more public attendance on the ordinances, but in the duties of reading, repeating, singing, and catechising all his children and servants about him : And all this before he allowed himself or them any bodily refreshments, lest the edge of their affections should be blunted in duty, by the clogging of nature with creature-repasts. And thus did he, as Job, continually : to this course he was severe and constant ; no incident occasions, how great or many soever, could divert him from it.

3. Neither was his holy zeal and Christian care limited and circumscribed within his own family, but was extended to the souls of all in his neighbourhood, who desired helps and means in the way of salvation.

His house was seldom without a godly minister in it ; and loth he was to eat his pleasant morsels alone. It was the joy of his heart to see his house filled on this account : How many witnesses to the truth of this are here this day ! Like another Joseph, he provided food for your souls ; he loved, honoured, received, and encouraged the ministers of the gospel in their deepest sufferings ; gave them opportunities of service, when some durst not own them, and others violently persecuted them.

4. When God called him to public employments in the commonwealth, he neither purchased, nor abused that trust ; but with a true English, rather a Christian, zeal and courage, he dedicated himself to the service of God and his country ; cheerfully quitting all domestic concerns, spent his estate, time, and pains, to heal the breaches of England. I know not a man, whose zeal for the common good would have carried him nearer to the example of that noble Roman, who, when a *chasm* was made by an earthquake, and the *oracle* had declared, that it could never be closed, except something of value was thrown into it, cast in himself to close it.

I could truly have said, had there been conveniency and opportunity for it, when he was laid in his grave. ' Here lies a man that

‘ never betrayed nor deserted the public, for any private interest of his own.’

5. He was a man that came as near Josiah in tenderness of heart, as ever I had the happiness to be acquainted with. The church’s troubles were his troubles; they all met in him as lines in a centre; he even lived and died with the interest of religion: And of him I will say, as the apostle said of Timothy, Phil. ii. 20, 21. “ I have “ no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state, for “ all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” *Naturally*, in this place, is not opposed to *spiritually*, but to *artificially*. Many can *artificially* act the part of a zealot, when their own interest lies in it; but he *naturally*, and therefore, freely, cheerfully, and constantly.

6. But though these excellencies were in him, he had his *nævi*, blemishes, and imperfections. Elias was a man of like passions and weaknesses of spirit. All these I doubt not but God hath covered, and he is now perfectly freed from them all.

There is now no passion left within him to be stirred by temptation; no despondencies and sinkings of spirit under dismal aspects of providence. His graces are perfected, and his corruptions finally eradicated.

7. To conclude; He was a man of great *afflictions*, as well as tender *affections*. And as the Lord greatly honoured him in the course of *active obedience*, so he greatly proved and tried him in a course of *passive obedience*. He not only gave the *cross* in his *coat*, but bare it upon his *shoulders*: For besides those troubles which were properly *sympathetical*, he had his *idiopathetical* sufferings also, and that both from the hands of men, and from the hand of God. His piety made and marked him for an object of persecution; the archers shot at him, and sorely grieved him; he and his family were hunted with a net: The Lord lay it not to their charge; *Et hinc illæ lachrymæ*. The sad effects thereof I chose rather at this time to pass over with a sigh, than in this place to commemorate.

And as the hand of man was upon him, so the hand of his God also: first lopping off all the pleasant branches that sprang from him, and that one after another, when come to the endearing age, opening and disclosing the bud; and, as the complement and issue of all, breaking his constitutional strength with a long languishing disease, which at last extinguished this bright lamp, and hath left his family and neighbourhood in darkness and sorrow. His poor heart was the *anvil* on which many *hammers* of affliction had been a long time beating; and no wonder it appeared relaxed and tumified when it was inspected, having endured so many successive strokes of sorrow.

And now what the Lord spake of Israel, in Jer. xi. 16. is fulfilled upon this worthy person: “ The Lord called thy name a green olive “ tree, fair and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he

“hath kindled a fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken.”

Use 3. Thirdly, I shall wind up the whole in several seasonable and necessary counsels; some more general, others more particular, and some most particularly and especially.

First, Counsel to all in general to awaken themselves, and recover a due sense of such sore rebukes of God as this is. When Saul fell, “David lamented it, saying, The beauty of Israel was slain on thy “high places.”

God hath this day stript off an ornament from this country. Such dispensations of Providence speak indignations coming on: It requires almost an age to breed and furnish a man with due qualifications for the service of the church and commonwealth. England doth not so abound with pious, zealous, and faithful gentlemen at this time, but that it may sensibly feel the loss of such a man.

Secondly, More particularly, let the ministers of Christ lament his fall, as Jeremiah did the fall of Josiah in the text. He was a true friend to Christ’s faithful ministers, and had them in honour for their work’s sake. It is true, he hath no more need of us, he is now wiser than his teachers; but we greatly need him, and men of his spirit, in such a dull degenerate age as we live in.

Thirdly, And most particularly, I shall apply and close all with a few words of counsel to the dear and now *desolate relict* of this worthy person, whose sad lot it is this day, to overlive the mercies and comforts she once enjoyed in him.

Madam, God hath this day covered you with sables, written bitter things against you, broken you with breach upon breach. Your sorrows need not to be excited, but regulated. It is my trouble that I cannot discharge my duty to the memory of your dear husband, without exasperating your griefs, which, alas, were too acute before; but rods have their voices; “Blessed is the man whom God correcteth, and teacheth him out of his law.” Hear you the rod, and who hath appointed it; and, oh! that your soul may this day take in these necessary counsels and cautions, without which your afflictions cannot be sanctified to the advantage of your soul! And,

1. Learn from hence the vanity of the creature, the emptiness, and nothingness of the best things here below. How hath God made your best comforts on earth to shrink up and vanish into nothing? How do your fancies varnish and gild over these empty bubbles? What great expectations are we apt to raise from them? How apt to fall asleep in the bosoms or laps of earthly enjoyments, and say with Job, “I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand?” When lo, in a moment, the projects and expectations of many years are overturned. O what a difference will you find betwixt hope founded in Christ, comforts drawn out of the promises, and the flattering comforts and vain hopes founded in the creature, whose breath is in its nostrils?

It is time for you, and for us all, to wean off from this vain world;

mortify your fancies and affections to it, and place them where they shall not be capable of disappointment.

2. Guard carefully, I beseech you, against those temptations which probably may accomplish this affliction. It may be Satan will suggest to your heart, what he once put into their lips; Mal. iii. 14. "What profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked "mournfully before him?" Where is the fruit of prayer? What good have I seen of fasting? What hath religion availed? Do not prayerless and ungodly families thrive and prosper? Beware of this. *Madam*, I doubt not but you will acknowledge, there have been sins and provocations within your walls, yea, within your heart, for which God may as justly and severely judge your house as he did Eli's. Remember the rewards of religion are not in this world; and should we speak thus, we shall offend against the generation of his children. All we must expect from religion, is to save our souls by it.

3. Call not the love of God into question to yourself, or yours, because of these severe strokes of God upon you and them: You know Josiah was dear to God, yet he died in the prime of his days, by a violent hand, remote from his own home, and was brought home in the *second chariot to Jerusalem*; a spectacle of far greater sorrow than your dear husband was; and yet, notwithstanding all these sad circumstances of his death, the promise of his God was punctually performed to him, that he should die in peace, and not behold the evil that was to come. "There is a vanity (saith Solomon) which "is done upon the earth, that there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: Again, there be "wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the "righteous," Eccl. viii. 14. But then remember, that it is but in the earth; here, or no where, God must chastise his children.

4. See that you maintain that holy course of religious exercises in your family, and in your closet, wherein he walked so exemplarily before you. Let religion live, though he be dead; and convince the world, I pray you, that it was God's influence, and not your husband's only, which was the spring and principle of this holy course.

5. Strive not with your Maker, nor fret against the Lord under this irksome and painful dispensation: Remember, there is a *woe* hanging over this sin; Isa. xlv. 9, 10. *Woe to him that striveth with his Maker.* There is a twofold striving of men with God, one lawful and commendable; when we strive with him upon the knee of importunity in prayer; thus Jacob wrestled with God, and prevailed, Hos. xii. 4. The other is highly sinful and dangerous, when we presume to censure, or accuse any of his works, as defective in wisdom or goodness. He that reproveth God, let him answer it, i. e. At his peril be it. This sinful striving with God is twofold; either *vocal* or *mental*.

1. *Vocal.* When men, in bold blasphemous language, arraign the

wisdom, power, goodness, or faithfulness of the Lord, at the bar of their own reason; and there condemn them, setting their mouths against the heavens, Ps. lxxiii. 8, 9. This is the sin of the wicked, yea, of the first-born sons of wickedness.

2. *Mental.* In inward frets, murmurs, repinings against God; Prov. xix. 3. "The foolishness of man perverts his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord." The heart may cry out impatiently against God, when the tongue is silent: And if the frets and murmurs of the heart be (as indeed they are) interpretatively no better than a striving with our Maker; then this sin would be found more common among good men in the *paroxisms* of affliction than we imagine. It will be necessary therefore, for your sake, and for the sakes of many more in a like state of affliction with you, to stay a while on this head, and consider these following queries.

Query I. How far may we enquire of God, expostulate, and complain in times of affliction, without sin?

Query II. Wherein lies the sinfulness and danger of exceeding these bounds?

Query III. What considerations are most proper and powerful to restrain the afflicted soul from this sinful excess?

Query 1. How far may we enquire of God, expostulate with him, and complain to him in times of affliction, without sin?

Sol. 1. We may humbly enquire into the causes and reasons of God's displeasure against us, not to seek matter for our *justification*, but *direction* in the work of our *humiliation*: so David enquired about the three years famine, and the Lord informed him, for whose sake, and for what sin it was, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. And thus Job addressed to him in the day of his affliction, Job x. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me*; i. e. convince me, what special sin it is, for which I am thus afflicted. This is so far from being our sin, that it is both our duty, and the excellency of our spirits: it is a child-like temper, willing to know, that we may be particularly humbled for that sin, and for ever the more careful to shun it. "That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more," Job xxxiv. 32. Thus far we are safe.

2. We may plead by prayer, and put him in mind of his mercies, relations, and promises, in order to the change of his providential dispensations towards us: We may say to him under the smartest rod, as the church did, "Doubtless thou art our Father," Psalm lxxiv. 20. Have respect to the covenant; or as Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 9, 12. "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good."

3. We may complain to God under our sufferings, and spread them before him in all their circumstances and aggravations, as Job, Heman, Asaph, Hezekiah and David did. He allows his children to complain to him, but not of him: "I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble," Psal. cxlii. 2. To whom

should a child make his complaint, but to his father? So far we are safe.

4. We may submissively pray for the removal of his hand from us, and entreat, that his anger may cease, and that he will turn again and heal us and our families, and not draw forth his anger for ever. So did David, Psal. xxxix. 10. "Remove thy stroke away from me; "I am consumed by the blow of thine hand;" q. d. Ah, Lord, I am not able to endure another stroke. All this while, we are safe, within the bounds of our duty. But then,

Query 2. Wherein lies our sin and danger, in exceeding these bounds? I answer,

Sol. When forgetting God's sovereignty, and the desert of our iniquities, we arrogantly censure his affecting, or permitting providences, as if they had no conducency to his own glory, or our good. This is both sinful and dangerous: For,

1. This is a proud exalting of our own reason and understanding above the infinite wisdom of God. God hath made our reason a *judge* and *arbiter* in matters within its own *sphere* and *province*: but when it comes to summon God to its bar, and article against heaven, it is an insufferable arrogancy; and we do it at our own peril. God will have all men know, that he is an unaccountable being, Job xxxiii. 13. Yea, he will have us to know, that the "foolishness of God is "wiser than men," 1 Cor. i. 25. That is, that those very works of God, which man's proud reason adventures to censure as not so wise a method as their own would be, hath more wisdom in them, than all the deep-laid designs of the greatest politicians in the world. And it is strange that men should dare to attempt such a wickedness as this, after God hath so severely punished it in the fallen angels.

2. It is no less than a spurning at the sovereignty of God, from whose pleasure we derive our beings, and all our mercies, Rev. iv. 11. In these quarrellings at providence, and frets at divine appointments, we invade his throne, and controul his sovereign pleasure: How monstrous were it to hear a child quarrelling with his father, that he was not so and so figured; or the clay to chide the *potter* for moulding it as it is?

3. It is destructive to our inward peace and tranquillity of mind, which is part of the punishment of this sin: and a smart stripe, a sore rebuke it is from the hand of God upon us.

Contention is uncomfortable, though but with a neighbour, worse with a near relation; but a quarrel with God is destructive to all comfort in the world. Afflictions may disturb a good man's peace; but a mutinous spirit against God, destroys and stabs it at the very heart. What is the sin and torment of the devils, but their rage against the Lord, and swelling against the methods of his grace? "He "seeketh rest, but findeth none," Mat. xii. 43. The peace of our spirit is a choice mercy, and might be maintained amidst all our af-

fictions, were but our interest in his promises, and the true level of his providences cleared to us.

4. It is irrational, and highly unjust, to give the cause, and quarrel at the *effects*. God hath righteously and inseparably linked *penal* with *moral* evils; sin and sorrow, by the laws of heaven are tacked and linked together; he that doth evil, shall feel evil, Gen. iv. 7. We adventure upon sin, and then fret at affliction, Prov. xix. 3. "The foolishness of man perverts his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord." Is this becoming a reasonable creature? Doth not every man reap as he soweth? Can the seed of sin bring forth a crop of peace and comfort? "Why doth the living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Lam. iii. 39. Search your hearts, and search your houses, and you will quickly find that all your afflictions in this world, were they ten thousand times more, and heavier than they are, do not come near to the desert of one sin. All sorrows, losses, afflictions on this side hell, are quite below the value of sin, the meritorious and provoking cause of them all.

5. It is foolish and vain, to strive against God, and contest perversely with him. Can our discontents relieve us? Or our murmurs ease us? Will they turn God out of his way? No, *He is in one mind, and who can turn him aside?* Job xxiii. 13. The wheels of providence go straight forward, and turn not when they go, Ezek. i. 17. We may bring them over us to crush us, by standing thus in their way; but cannot turn them out of their way.

"If they still walk contrary to me, then will I walk contrary to you, and punish you yet seven times for your sins," Lev. xxiii. 14. Or I will walk in the rashness of mine anger,† smiting you without moderation, as men do in their rage and fury. This is all we shall get by fretting against God. Never expect relief under, or release from the yoke God hath laid on your necks, till you be brought to accept the punishment of your iniquities, Lev. xxvi. 41.

6. It is a sin full of *odious ingratitude* towards your God: Which appears (1.) In murmuring because it is so bad, when we should be admiring that it is no worse. Are there not millions in hell that never sinned at higher rates than you have done? Is this affliction as bad as hell! Hath God pardoned you and saved you, and yet doth he deserve to be thus requited by you? (2.) In murmuring that our condition is so bad, when we may every day see others in a far worse case, who are equal with us by nature, and we are equal with them in guilt and provocation. If we speak of outward afflictions, certainly others would be glad to exchange conditions with us, and account themselves happy in our circumstances. Consider the description given of those persons, Job xxx. 3, 4, 5. And how little they differ in the manner

* When a patient struggles under the physician's hand he receives a smarter touch.

† בקרו *temere ambulabo*, i. e. I will walk rashly.

of life from brute beasts: And if we speak of inward troubles, compare your own with those of Heman, and Asaph, in Ps. lxxvii. and lxxxviii. and if both together, and that in an intense degree, consider Job vii. 4. and you will soon find your condition full of sparing mercy: Those excellent persons that were so much above you in grace, were yet plunged so much deeper than you into afflictions. And is it not then vile ingratitude in you, thus to mutiny and *charge your God foolishly*? (3.) But especially here lies our ingratitude, in quarrelling and censuring those providences, whose very end and errand is our eternal good; Heb. xii. 10. "But he for our profit, that we might " be partakers of his holiness."

7. It is a sin that deprives us of the fruits and benefits of our afflictions: A tumultuous raging spirit reaps no good by the rod. The fruits of affliction are called the *peaceable fruits*, Heb. xii. 11. because they are always gathered and reaped down by the afflicted soul in a quiet and peaceful temper: *Anima sedendo, & quiescendo fit sapiens*. Blossoms and flowers open not in the boisterous storms of winter, but in the mild and gentle spring.

Well then, be convinced of the sin and danger of a discontented spirit under the hand of God, and instead of mourning over lost relations, now mourn for the loss of patience, the want of submission, and for the pride and arrogancy of your own reason, that presumes to correct the works of the Almighty; and say to God, as Joseph did to his father, when he wittingly crossed his hands in blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, *Not so, my father*. This is not fit.

Query 3. But how may these evils be prevented or cured, and the tempestuous soul calmed under the rod? How shall all strifes betwixt God and his people be ended, and the soul made quiet at his feet?

Reply. This blessed frame of spirit may in a great degree and measure be attained in the use of the following *directions*: I say, in their use and application, not by the prescription or simple knowledge of them. And,

Rule 1. The first rule or direction is this: *Study well the glorious sovereignty of God over you, and awe your hearts with the same consideration of it*. From his mere pleasure, you, and all that is yours, proceeded; on his pleasure you depend, and into that good pleasure of his will, your wills therefore ought to be resolved: "Whatever the " Lord pleased, that he did, in heaven and in earth, in the sea, and " in all deep places," Psal. cxxv. 6. Man and man stand on equal ground; and if our reason be not satisfied about the equity of men's dealings with us, we may ask who did it, and demand the reasons why he did it; but when we have to do with God, we must not dispute his pleasure. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth; but let not the clay dispute with the *potter*. Now the sovereignty of God is gloriously displayed in his *decrees, laws, and providences*. (1.) In his *decrees*, appointing the creatures to their ends, whether to be vessels of mercy, or of wrath, Rom. ix. 18, 19, 20. In

this case there must be no disputing with God. (2.) In his *laws*, appointing the work and duty of the creature, as also the rewards and punishments; Jam. iv. 12. "There is one Lawgiver, that is able to save and to destroy." In this case his sovereignty immediately and indispensably binds the conscience of man, and no human authority can dissolve that obligation: Nor must we snuff at the severest command. (3.) The glorious sovereignty of God is displayed in his providential administrations, appointing every man to that station and condition in which he is in this world; whether it be high or low, prosperous, or afflicted: Ps. lxxv. 6. "I said to the fools, deal not foolishly, &c. for promotion cometh not from the east, nor the west, but God is Judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Let not them that are at the top of the world be lifted up; nor those that are at the bottom be dejected; for God casts every man's lot, and changeth their condition at his pleasure; a word of his mouth plucks down the lofty, and exalts the lowly; he woundeth, and his hands make whole. Hence it becomes the afflicted to be still, and know that he is God, Psal. xli. 10. to put his mouth in the dust, and quietly to wait for his salvation: All our fretting and struggling cannot shake off the yoke which he hath put upon us; but a meek and quiet submission to his will, and compliance with his designs, is the best expedient to procure our freedom. There is not one circumstance of trouble befalls you without his order; nor can you expect deliverance but by order from him.

Rule 2. *Study the transcendent evil of sin, and what the demerit of the least sin that ever you committed is.* This will becalm your tempestuous spirits, and at once work them into *contentment* with your present state, and *admiration* that it is no worse, Lam. iii. 22, 39, 40.

Consider, thou querulous and discontented soul, that the wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. *ult.* that tribulation, anguish, and wrath, are due by law, to every soul of man that doth evil; that so often as we have sinned, so often have we deserved hell: and shall we then charge God with severity, for scourging us with the rods of gentle, fatherly, chastisements? Is this hell? Dare you say the severest affliction that ever was upon you, is above the demerit of your sin?

It is true, indeed, the Lord tells Jerusalem, that she had "received of his hand double for all her sins," Isa. xl. 2. But that is not the language of strict justice, but of compassions rolled together. There is not a gracious soul in all the world but will readily subscribe Ezra's confession, that God hath afflicted it less than its iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13. Oh! if once we measure our afflictions by our sins, we shall admire they are so few, so mild and gentle as they are!

Rule 3. *Consider what a difference there is betwixt the saints meeting with afflictions, and their parting with them.* You meet them with trembling and astonishment, but you shall part with them with praise and thanksgiving; blessing God for the manifold blessings they have instrumentally conveyed to your souls. It is good for me, saith

David, that I have been afflicted. By these things sin is prevented, discovered, and mortified, the ensnaring world embittered, and the rest to come sweetened.

Many other excellent rules may be added: try these, and the blessing of the Spirit accompany them.

To conclude; be not swallowed up of sorrows for what you have lost; but balance all the troubles of this life with the hopes of the next. Your dear children are gone, your sweet husband is gone; but to consider who took them, and whither. It is said of Enoch, Gen. v. 24. "He walked with God, and was not, for God took him." Mr. Upton is not, and yet he is: he is not with men,—he is with God: he ceases not to *be*, though he ceases to *breathe*: he is taken away, but God took him: he is better where he is than where he was: though he be not in your bosom, he is in Christ's.

Imitate his zeal, plain-heartedness, diligence in duties, and you shall shortly meet him again, and never part any more; 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16, 17, 18. "For this we say by the word of the Lord, that we
 " which are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not
 " prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall des-
 " cend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the arch-
 " angel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise
 " first: Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up
 " together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:
 " and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one
 " another with these words." Did you but know the deep *emphasis*
 of these words, *ever with the Lord*; I doubt not, but you would find
 comfort enough in them for yourself, and a great overplus for the
 comforting of others.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
ASSEMBLY'S CATECHISM.

With Practical Inferences from each Question:

As it was carried on in the Lord's Days Exercises in Dartmouth, in the first Year of Liberty, 1688.

THE PREFACE.

THAT catechising is an ordinance of God, few will doubt, when they consider the apostles did first lay the fundamentals of religion; Heb. vi. 1. And "fed babes with milk, teaching them the first principles of the oracles of God," Heb. v. 12. and questionless taught them in that manner, which was most suitable to the capacity of the learners, which may be well supposed to be by plain and short questions, and suitable answers thereunto; and therefore this hath been a constant practice in the church of God; and the primitive church had a particular person appropriated thereunto, whom they called *Catechist*.

And so all well-governed, and wisely-managed churches, have still maintained and used it, as knowing the necessity and usefulness thereof; for the younger sort to inform them in the principles of that religion whereinto they were baptized; and for the establishment of the adult and more aged therein.

Hence have issued those little composures of all the fundamental doctrines of faith and practice so handled (which we call Catechisms) in the churches; and particularly in ours, whereof there are many and divers, whose authors have well deserved for their endeavours to inform and edify the people thereby.

But among them all, none excel this little Catechism of the Assembly for orthodoxy, fulness, and method.

And because the answers therein are some of them pretty large, and treat of the most profound mysteries of our religion; therefore several persons have bestowed their good and laudable pains, some in descanting more largely, and proving by scriptural reasons the particulars: one has shown the harmony thereof with the articles and homilies of the church of England (designed, I suppose, to remove the prejudice which some have taken against it:) others have parted the

questions and answers into several little ones, under each, to make them more intelligible to younger ones, and more easy to be remembered.

Among whom, worthy, orthodox, and excellent Mr. John Flavel may be ranked, who among other of his many most profitable labours, applied himself to the chewing of this bread of life, or crumbling it into smaller pieces, for the convenience of children, and, indeed, of all; wherein (as in all his other works) he hath shewn himself a workman, that needs not to be ashamed.

There needs no other recommendation to this posthumous piece, but the worthy author's name; he was removed before he had completely finished it; he had prepared his questions and answers upon the second petition of the Lord's Prayer; but lived not to propose them in the public congregation. God then translated him into his kingdom of glory above, while he was so industriously endeavouring to promote the kingdom of grace below.

The other five remaining questions and answers (to complete the work) were done by a ruder hand; as may be easily discerned by any observant reader, who will find himself transferred from a plain, clear, and delightful stile, method, and manner, into more rough, disorderly, and unpleasant ones; for, who indeed could equal this divine labourer? Not the completer; who would account himself to have made very great attainments in divinity and usefulness, if he were left but a few furlongs behind him.

Let the reader use and peruse this piece, and he will see cause to bless God for the author.

VALE.

TO THE READER.

THE Divine Providence having unexpectedly cast my lot, for a few days, in Dartmouth, where that blessed man of God, Mr. John Flavel, did for many years honour Christ, and was honoured by him; I have been favoured with a sight of that most judicious explication of the Assembly's Catechism, which is emitted herewith.

Being desired to testify my respect to the worthy author, by pre-facing this excellent labour of his with a few lines; I can truly say, (as sometimes Beza of Calvin,) Now Mr. Flavel is dead, life will be less sweet, and death less bitter to me.

My heart bleeds to look on this desolate place, and not to see him, that, whilst living, was the glory of it.

But neither the author, nor his writings, stand in need of the commendation of others, much less of mine.

His works, already published, have made his name precious in both Englands; and it will be so, as long as the earth shall endure.

There are some considerations which may cause the reader to ex-

pect (and he will not find himself disappointed therein) that which is extraordinary in this little *manuel*; for the author's heart was very much engaged in doing this service for Christ, in thus feeding his lambs. And he did himself design the publication of what is here committed to the press; and was very desirous (with an holy submission to the will of God) to have perfected this work before his decease; but had strange intimations that he should finish his course before that could be done.

When he did, *viva voce*, deliver his meditations, there were many enlargements, and lively passages, which are not hereinserted; nevertheless, here is as much as he thought needful for public view, not being willing that his book should be voluminous.

In his last catechetical exercise, concerning *Hallowing the name of God*, he was exceedingly enlarged; but he must himself go into the kingdom of glory, when he intended to have discoursed on that petition, *Thy kingdom come*.

He also began some meditations on the *joys of heaven*; but before he had an opportunity to express what had been in his heart, the Lord Jesus said unto him, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And thus doth it happen many times to the eminent and holy servants of God.

Another consideration, recommending what comes herewith, is, that it was amongst Mr. Flavel's last works. The (*εξοδια ζημαλια*) last sayings of wise and great men have been esteemed oraculous; and the Scripture puts an emphasis on *the last words of David*, the sweet singer of Israel, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. Not that those were the last words that ever David spake, only they were written not long before his death, when he was come near heaven.

So was what is now put into the reader's hand, written by Mr. Flavel not long before his translation to the world of souls, where the spirits of just men are made perfect.

There was a more than ordinary presence of God with him to his last; and in his last day, not the last *sermon* that he preached (which was June 21, 1691.) he did more than once surprize his hearers with an intimation, that that might be the last time he should speak to them in the name of the Lord. And was not then the secret of the Lord with him?

Dartmouth will know, and Devonshire will know, that there has been a prophet among them.

And now my soul bleeds to look on the dear flock of God, which are as sheep without a shepherd. The Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, have compassion on them, and give them a shepherd like to his blessed servant Flavel, who did for many years feed them with knowledge, and with understanding.

Dartmouth, March 21st, }
1692. }

INCREASE MATHER.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
ASSEMBLY'S SHORTER CATECHISM.

Question I. Of Man's chief End.

WHAT is the chief end of man ?

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

Q. 1. Seeing a chief supposeth an inferior end ; what is that inferior end for which man was made ?

A. It is prudently, soberly, and mercifully, to govern, use, and dispose of other creatures in the earth, sea, and air, over which God gave man the dominion ; Gen. i. 26. And God said let us make man in our own image, after our likeness : and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So Psal. viii. 6. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands ; thou hast put all things under his feet.

Q. 2. What then is to be thought of those men, who being wholly intent upon inferior things, forget and neglect their principal end ?

A. They are dead whilst they live ; 1 Tim. v. 6. But she that liveth in pleasure, is dead whilst she liveth : They have their portion in this life ; Psal. xvii. 14. From men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and their end is destruction, Phil. iii. 19. Whose end is destruction.

Q. 3. How can a man glorify God, seeing he is perfectly glorious in himself ?

A. Man cannot glorify God by adding any new degree of glory to him ; Job xxxv. 7. If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, but by manifesting his glory with the lips ? Psal. l. 23. Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me ; or with the life ; Matth. v. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Q. 4. Wherein consists the enjoyment of God ?

A. It consists, first, in the facial vision of him in heaven. Secondly, in full conformity to him ; 1 John iii. 2. But we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Thirdly, in that full satisfaction which results from both the former ; Psal. xvii. 15. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.

Q. 5. Can none enjoy him in heaven, who do not glorify him on earth?

A. No adult person can scripturally expect happiness in heaven without holiness on earth; Heb. xii. 14. And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Rom. viii. 30. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Q. 6. How comes the glory and enjoyment of God our chief end?

A. He is our Master, and rightful Owner and Benefactor; we receive our being and preservation from him, of him, and through him, and therefore to him be all things, Rom. xi. 36.

Q. 7. Do all men make God their chief end?

A. No, they do not; some make their sensual pleasure their chief end: Phil. iii. 19. Whose God is their belly: and some the world, Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Q. 8. What are the signs of a man's making himself his chief end?

A. Those make themselves their chief end, who ascribe the glory of what they have, or do, to themselves, and not to God; Dan. iv. 30. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon which I have built? Isa. x. 18. For he saith, by the strength of my hand have I done it; and by my wisdom, for I am prudent; therefore they sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense unto their drag, Hab. i. 16.

Q. 9. Why are the glorifying and enjoying of God put together, as making up our chief end?

A. Because no man can glorify God, that takes him not for his God; and none takes him for his God, that takes him not for his supreme good; and both these being essentially included in this notion of the chief end, are therefore justly put together.

Q. 10. What is the first truth inferred hence?

A. That God hath dignified man above all other creatures on earth, in giving him a capacity of glorifying God here, and of enjoying him hereafter.

Q. 11. What is the second truth inferred hence?

A. That the soul of man is not annihilated by death, but advanced by it; Phil. i. 21. To die is gain. V. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Q. 12. What is the third truth inferred hence?

A. That it is the duty and wisdom of every Christian to renounce, deny, and forsake all inferior interests and enjoyments, when they come in competition with the glory of God, and our enjoyment of him: Luke xiv. 33. So likewise whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Q. 13. What is the fourth inference hence?

A. That we are to abhor and renounce all those doctrines and practices, that debase the glory of God, and exalt and magnify the creature.

Of the Scriptures as our Rule.

Quest. 2. **W**HAT rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and new Testament, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. 1. How can the Scriptures be called the word of God, seeing the things contained there were spoken and written by men?

A. They are truly and properly called the word of God, because they came not by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21.

Q. 2. What are the principal arguments to persuade us that the scriptures are of Divine authority and inspiration?

A. Three things especially convince us: First, The holiness of the doctrine therein contained. Secondly, The awful efficacy thereof on the soul. Thirdly, The uncontrollable miracles by which they are sealed, put it beyond all rational doubt that they are the very words of God.

Q. 3. What is the holiness of the scriptures; and how doth that prove them to be God's word?

A. The holiness of the scriptures doth appear in two things: First, In commanding and encouraging whatsoever is pure, and holy; Phil. iv. 8. Whatsoever things are pure. Secondly, In forbidding all unholiness, under pain of damnation; 2 Cor. vi. 9. Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, &c. This shews that they came not from Satan, being cross to his design; nor from man, it being against his corrupt nature; and therefore from God only.

Q. 4. What is their authority and efficacy on the soul? and how doth that prove them divine?

A. Their authority, and efficacy on the soul, consists in three things: First, In the power they have to search and discover the secrets of men; Heb. xii. 4. The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Secondly, In their converting efficacy, changing and renewing the soul; Psalm xix. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Thirdly, In their cheering and restoring efficacy, when the soul is cast down under any inward or outward trouble; Psal. xix. 8. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. No human power can do such things as these; John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

Q. 5. How do miracles confirm it?

A. Because all proper miracles are wrought only by the hand of God: John iii. 2. And no man can do these miracles that thou

dost, except God be with him : and so are his seal to whatsoever he affixes them, and it consists not with his truth, and holiness to set it to a forgery.

Q. 6. What was the end of writing the word?

A. That the church to the end of the world might have a sure, known, standing-rule, to try and judge all things by, and not be left to the uncertainty of traditions; John v. 39. Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.

Q. 7. Doth not the authority of the scriptures depend on the church, fathers, and councils?

A. No, the scriptures are not built on the authority of the church, but the church on them; Eph. ii. 20. And are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And as for councils and fathers, the scriptures are not to be tried by them; but they by the scriptures; Isa. viii. 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Q. 8. What may be fairly inferred from this proposition, that the scriptures are the word of God?

A. Three things may be hence inferred. *First*, The perfection of the scriptures, which being the only rule given by God, must therefore be perfect. *Secondly*, That it is the right of common people to read them; John v. 39. Search the scriptures, Acts xvii. 11. These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. *Thirdly*, That we owe no obedience to the injunctions of men farther than they are sufficiently warranted by the written word; Matth. xv. 9. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Of Faith and Obedience.

Quest. 3. **W**HAT do the scriptures principally teach?

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

Q. 1. Why is faith conjoined with obedience, and put before it?

A. Because faith is the principle from whence all obedience flows; and no man can perform any duty aright in the estate of unbelief; Heb. xi. 6. But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is.

Q. 2. Can there be no saving faith where the scriptures are not known and preached?

A. No; for the apostle saith, Rom. x. 14, 15. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they

be sent? And ver. 17. So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Q. 3. Are not we bound to believe what learned men teach us, as points of faith, though the things they teach be not contained in the word of God?

A. No; if the things they teach be not contained expressly, or by necessary consequence in the word of God, we are not obliged to believe them as points of faith; Isa. viii. 20. To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them: Gal. i. 8. Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. And Christ hath charged us, Matth. xxiii. 10. To call no man master, for one is your master, even Christ.

Q. 4. Are there some things in scripture more excellent than others; because it is said, the scriptures principally teach matters of faith and duty?

A. Every part of scripture is alike pure; Prov. xxx. 5. Every word of God is pure, and of equal authority, but not of equal weight; as several pieces of gold are alike pure, and of the same stamp, but not of equal value.

Q. 5. What may be inferred hence for use?

A. *First*, Hence it is our duty to examine what we hear, by the word; and not receive any doctrine because men confidently affirm it, but because the scriptures require it; Acts xvii. 11. These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. *Secondly*, That the Christian religion is not notional, but practical; and that impractical faith saves no man; James ii. 20. Faith without works is dead.

God is a Spirit.

Quest. 4. **W**HAT is God?

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

Q. 1. Can the nature of God be defined, so as men may express properly and strictly what God is?

A. No; Job xi. 7. Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

We do then conceive most rightly of God, when we acknowledge him to be inconceivable; and therefore, one being asked the question, what God is? answered rightly; If I fully knew that, I should be a God myself; for God only knows his own essence.

Q. 2. How many ways are there by which men may know and describe the nature of God, though still with imperfect knowledge?

A. There are two ways of knowing God in this life. *First*, By

way of affirmation; affirming that of God by way of eminence, which is excellent in the creature; as when we affirm him to be wise, good, merciful, &c. *Secondly*, By way of negation, when we remove from God, in our conceptions, all that is imperfect in the creature; so we say, God is immense, infinite, immutable; and in this sense we also call him a Spirit, i. e. he is not a gross corporeal substance.

Q. 3. How many sorts of spirits are there? and of which sort is God?

A. There be two sorts of spirits, created and finite, as angels and the souls of men are. *Secondly*, Uncreated, and infinite; and such a Spirit God only is, infinitely above all other spirits.

Q. 4. If God be a Spirit, in what sense are we to understand all those scriptures which speak of the eyes of the Lord, the ears and hands of God?

A. We are to understand them as expressions of God, in condescension to the weakness of our understanding; even as the glory of heaven is expressed to us in scripture by a city, and the royal feast. These shadows are useful to us whilst we are in the body; but we shall know him in heaven after a more perfect manner.

Q. 5. What may be inferred from the spiritual nature of God?

A. Hence learn, that it is both sinful and dangerous to frame an image or picture of God. Who can make an image of his soul, which yet is not so perfect a spirit as God is? And as it is sinful to attempt it, so it is impossible to do it; Deut. iv. 15, 16. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, &c.

Q. 6. What else may be inferred from thence?

A. That our souls are the most noble and excellent part of us, which most resembles God; and therefore our chief regard and care should be for them, whatever becomes of the vile body; Matth. xvi. 26. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Q. 7. What further truth may be inferred hence?

A. That men should beware of spiritual sins, as well as of gross and outward sins; for there is a faithfulness of the spirit, as well as of the flesh; 2 Cor. vii. 1. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; and as God sees them, so he greatly abhors them, as sins that defile the noblest part of man, on which he stamped his own image.

Q. 8. What also may be inferred from hence?

A. Hence we learn, that spiritual worship is most agreeable to his nature and will; and the more spiritual it is, the more acceptable it will be to him; John iv. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Externals in worship are of little regard with God; as places, habits, gestures, &c.

Apply this,

First, To superstitious men, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2, 3.

Secondly, To children, that say a prayer, but mind not to whom, nor what they say,

Of God's Infinity.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the sense and meaning of this word, infinity?

A. It signifies that which hath no bounds or limits, within which it is contained, as all created things are.

Q. 2. In how many respects is God infinite?

A. God is infinite and boundless in three respects.

First, In respect of the perfection of his nature; his wisdom, power, and holiness, exceed all measures and limits; as 1 Sam. ii. 2. There is none holy as the Lord, &c. *Secondly,* In respect of time and place; no time can measure him; Isa. lvii. 15. Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity; 1 Kings viii. 27. Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built? The heaven of heavens contains all created things; but not the Creator. *Thirdly,* In respect of his incomprehensibleness, by the understanding of all creatures; Job xi. 7. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?

Q. 3. If God be thus infinite, and no understanding can comprehend him, how then is it said in 1 John iii. 2. We shall see him as he is?

A. The meaning is not, that glorified saints shall comprehend God in their understandings; but that they shall have a true apprehensive knowledge of God; and that we shall see him immediately, and not as we do now through a glass darkly.

Q. 4. What is the first lesson to be learnt from God's infinity?

A. That therefore men should tremble to sin even in secret; Psal. cxxxix. 11. If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me.

Q. 5. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. The second instruction is, That there is an infinite evil in sin, objectively considered, as it is committed against an infinite God; and therefore it deserves eternal punishment: and no satisfaction can possibly be made for it, but by the blood of Christ; 1 Pet. i. 18. Forasmuch as ye know that we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ.

Q. 6. What is the third instruction from God's infinity?

A. The third instruction is, that those who are reconciled to God in Christ, need not fear his ability to perform any mercy for them; for he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, Eph. iii. 20. And those that are not reconciled are in a very miserable condition, having infinite power set on work to punish them; 2 Thess. i. 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting des-

truction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Q. 7. What is the fourth instruction from God's infinity?

A. That no place can bar the access of gracious souls to God; They are as near him in a dungeon, as when at liberty; and that he knows their thoughts when their tongues cannot utter them.

[*Eternal.*]

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is it to be eternal as God is?

A. The eternity of God is, to be without beginning, and without end; Psal. xc. 2. From everlasting thou art God.

Q. 2. How doth God's eternity differ from the eternity of angels, and human souls?

A. It differs in two respects; *First*, In this, that though angels, and the souls of men shall have no end; yet they had a beginning, which God had not. *Secondly*, Our eternity is by gift from God, or by his appointment; but his eternity is necessary, and from his own nature.

Q. 3. In what sense is the covenant called the everlasting covenant?

A. The covenant is called an everlasting covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. because the mercies of it, conveyed to believers, as pardon, peace, and salvation, are mercies that shall have no end.

Q. 4. In what sense is the gospel everlasting?

A. The gospel is called the everlasting gospel, Rev. xiv. 6. because the effects thereof, upon the soul it sanctifies, will abide in them for ever.

Q. 5. In what sense is the redemption of Christ called the eternal redemption?

A. The redemption of Christ is called eternal redemption in Heb. ix. 12. because those whom he redeems by his blood, shall never more come into condemnation; John v. 24. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

Q. 6. Why is the last judgment of the world by Christ called eternal judgment?

A. The last judgment is called eternal judgment, not because God judged men from eternity, or because the day of judgment shall last to eternity; but because the consequences of it will be everlasting joy or misery to the souls of men; therefore it is called eternal judgment; Heb. vi. 2.

Q. 7. What may wicked men learn from the eternity of God?

A. Hence wicked men may see their own misery in the perfection of it; that they will have an eternal enemy to avenge himself upon them for ever, in the world to come; 2 Thess. i. 9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord.

Q. 8. What may good men learn from it ?

A. That their joy and happiness will be perfect and endless, who have the eternal God for their portion ; Psal. xvi. 11. In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Q. 9. What may all men, good and bad, learn from it ?

A. All men may learn three things from the eternity of God ; *First*, That their life is a thing of nought compared with God ; Psal. xxxix. 5. Mine age is as nothing before thee. *Secondly*, That sins, or duties, long since committed, or performed, are all present before God. *Thirdly*, That God can never want opportunity to do his work, and carry on his designs in the world. All time is in the hand of the eternal God ; Rev. xii. 12. The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Of God's Unchangeableness.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT scriptures plainly assert this attribute ?

A. Exod. iii. 14. And God said unto Moses, I AM that I AM. Dan. vi. 16. For he is the living God, and stedfast for ever ; Jam. i. 17. With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Q. 2. Whence doth God's immutability flow ?

A. The immutability of God flows from the perfection of his nature, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken away. If any thing could be added to make him better than he is ; or if any thing could be taken away, to make him less good than he is, then he were not the chiefest good, and, consequently, not God.

Q. 3. By what other argument prove you his immutability ?

A. I prove it from the eternity of God. If God be eternal, he must be immutable : for if he change by addition of something to him he had not before, then there is something in God which he had not from eternity : And if he change by diminution, then there was something in God from eternity, which now is not ; but from everlasting to everlasting he is the same God, and therefore changeth not.

Q. 4. But it is said, God repents, and repentance is a change : How then is he unchangeable, and yet repents ?

A. In these phrases God speaks to us, as we must speak of, and to him ; not properly, but after the manner of men : and it only notes a change in his providence, not in his nature.

Q. 5. But how could God become man, and yet no change made on him ?

A. There is a twofold change ; one active, made by God, that we allow : He made a change upon our nature by uniting it to Christ ; but a passive change made upon God, we deny. The nature of man was made more excellent, but the divine nature was still the same.

Q. 6. What is the first instruction from God's immutability?

A. That those that are most unchangeable in holiness, are most like God: Let him that is holy be holy still.

Q. 7. What is the second instruction hence?

A. That the happiness of God's people is firm and sure, being still upon the word of an unchangeable God; Mal. iii. 6. For I am the Lord; I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed, Heb. vi. 18.

Q. 8. What is the third instruction from this attribute?

A. That the hopes of all wicked men are vain, being built upon a presumption, that God will not deal with them as he hath threatened he will do.

Q. 9. What is the last instruction from God's immutability?

A. That Christians may take as much encouragement now from the nature, word, and providence of God, as the saints in any former generation did, or might do; for he is the same now he was then.

Of God's Wisdom.

Quest. 1. **H**OW manifold is the wisdom of God?

A. There is a personal and essential wisdom of God; the personal wisdom is the Son of God; 1 Cor. i. 24. Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God; Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The essential wisdom of God is the essence of God; of which this question speaks.

Q. 2. What is the essential wisdom of God.

A. The essential wisdom of God is his most exact and perfect knowledge of himself and all his creatures, and his ordering and disposing them in the most convenient manner, to the glory of his own name; Eph. i. 11. According to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Q. 3. What is the first property of God's wisdom?

A. The first property is, he is only wise; Rom. xvi. 27. To God, only wise, be glory: And whatsoever wisdom is in angels, or men, is all derived and borrowed from God, but his from none; Isa. xl. 14. With whom took he counsel? and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

Q. 4. What is the second property of God's wisdom?

A. The second property is, that he is incomprehensible in his wisdom; Rom. xi. 33, 34. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, &c.

Q. 5. What is the third property of the wisdom of God?

A. The third property is, that God is perfectly wise, which no creatures, no, not the very angels in heaven are: Job iv. 18. And his angels he chargeth with folly.

Q. 6. What is the most glorious and eminent discovery of the wisdom of God?

A. The most glorious display of the wisdom of God, was in the work of our redemption by Jesus Christ; Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; 1 Cor. i. 24. Christ the wisdom of God.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction from God's wisdom?

A. The first instruction is, that God is a fit object of our trust, dependence and resignation; Isa. xxx. 18. And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait for him.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. The second instruction is, that it is a dangerous arrogancy in the creature, either to prescribe unto God, and direct his Maker; Job xxi. 22. Shall any teach God knowledge, seeing he judgeth those that are high? Or to quarrel with his providences, as not so fit and convenient as they should be; Job xl. 2. Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction from it?

A. That the people of God have much reason to quiet and encourage themselves, when crafty and subtle enemies surround them; for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, 1 Cor. i. 25.

Q. 10. What is the fourth instruction from God's wisdom?

A. The fourth instruction is, that the true way to wisdom is to be sensible of our own folly; 1 Cor. iii. 18. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. And to apply ourselves by prayer to God the foundation of it, Jam. i. 5. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God.

Q. 11. What is the last instruction from God's wisdom?

A. That the study of Christ, and of the scriptures, is to be preferred to all other studies in the world; Col. ii. 3. In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And the scriptures contain all that wisdom which is for our salvation; 1 Cor. ii. 17. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory.

Of God's power.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the power of God?

A. An essential property of his nature, whereby he can do all things that he pleases to have done; Jer. xxxii. 17. Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm; and there is nothing too hard for thee.

Q. 2. What evidences have we before our eyes of the almighty power of God?

A. It appears in the creation of the world; Rom. i. 20. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. And its sustentation; Heb. i. 3. Who upholdeth all things by the word of his power.

Q. Did God's power ever act its utmost?

A. No; he can do more than ever he did, or ever will do; Mat. iii. 9. God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham, Mat. xxvi. 53.

Q. 4. Are there not some things which God cannot do?

A. Yes, there are; but they are such things as are inconsistent with his truth and holiness; Tit. i. 2.—which God, that cannot lie; 2 Tim. ii. 13. He cannot deny himself.

Q. 5. What is the first thing inferred from God's power?

A. That all the creatures necessarily depend on him for what ability they have; and without the permission of the supreme power they can do us no hurt; John xix. 11. Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above.

Q. 6. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That the difficulties which lie in the way of the promises need be no stumbling-blocks to our faith; Rom. iv. 20, 21. He staggered not at the promises through unbelief, being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform.

Q. 7. What is the third inference from this attribute?

A. The saints need not to be scared at the greatness of their sufferings; their God can carry them through; Dan. iii. 17. Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.

Q. 8. What is the fourth inference?

A. That the salvation of God's people is certain, whatever their dangers be, being kept by this mighty power; 1 Pet. i. 5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Q. 9. What is the last inference hence?

A. That the state of the damned is inconceivably miserable; their punishment proceeding from the glory of the Almighty? 2 Thes. i. 2. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

Of God's Holiness.

Quest. 1. **H**OW manifold is the holiness of God?

A. The holiness of God is twofold; communicable, or incommunicable; of his communicable holiness the apostle speaks, Heb. xii. 10. But he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Of his incommunicable holiness that scripture speaks, 1 Sam. ii. 2. There is none holy as the Lord.

Q. 2. What is the essential and incommunicable holiness of God?

A. It is the infinite purity of his nature, whereby he delights in his own holiness, and the resemblance of it in his creatures, and hates all

impurity; Hab. i. 13. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.

Q. 3. What is the first property of God's holiness?

A. He is essentially holy: Holiness is not a separable quality in God, as it is in angels and men; but his being and his holiness are one thing.

Q. 4. What is the second property of God's holiness?

A. God is essentially holy, the author and fountain of all communicated holiness; Lev. xx. 8. I am the Lord which sanctifieth you.

Q. 5. What is the third property?

A. That the holiness of God is the perfect rule and pattern of holiness to all creatures; 1 Pet. i. 16. Be ye holy, for I am holy.

Q. 6. What is the first instruction?

A. That the holiest of men have cause to be ashamed and humbled when they come before God; Isa. vi. 3, 5. And one cried unto another, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory: Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, &c.

Q. 7. What is the second instruction from God's holiness?

A. That there is no coming near to God without a Mediator; for our God is a consuming fire.

Q. 8. What is the third instruction from God's holiness?

A. That holiness is indispensably necessary, to all those which shall dwell with him in heaven; Heb. xii. 14. And holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Q. 9. What is the fourth instruction from hence?

A. That the gospel is of inestimable value, as it is the instrument of conveying the holiness of God to us; 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we all with open face, beholding as it were in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: John xvii. 17. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.

Q. 10. What is the last instruction from God's holiness?

A. That all the despisers of, and scoffers at, holiness, are despisers of God; for holiness is the very nature of God; and in the creature it is his represented image.

Of God's Justice.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the justice of God?

A. The justice of God is the perfect rectitude and equity of his nature; whereby he is just in himself, and in all his ways towards the creatures; Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity: just and right is he.

Q. 2. What is the first property of God's justice?

A. That it infinitely excels all human justice in the perfection of

it. No creature can compare in justice with God; Job ix. 2. How shall man be just with God?

Q. 3. What is the second property of God's justice?

A. That he is universally righteous in all his administrations in the world; Psal. cxlv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

Q. 4. What was the greatest demonstration of the justice of God, that ever was given to the world?

A. The greatest evidence that ever was given of the justice of God, was in his exacting full satisfaction for our sins of Christ; Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, Rom. viii. 32. He spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all.

Q. 5. What is the second discovery of God's justice?

A. The second discovery of the justice of God, is in the eternal punishment of sin in hell upon all that do not repent, and come to Christ by faith, in this world; Rom. ii. 5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Q. 6. What is the third evidence of God's justice?

A. The third evidence of the justice of God, is in making good all the mercies he hath promised to believers, exactly to a tittle; 1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day.

Q. 7. What is the first inference from God's justice?

A. That sinners have no cause to complain of God's judgments, though they be never so terrible or durable; Rom. ii. 5. But after thy hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Q. 8. What is the second inference from God's justice?

A. That without doubt there is a judgment to come in the next life, otherwise God would not have the glory of his justice; Eccl. iii. 16, 17. I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there; I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous, and the wicked.

Q. 9. What is the third inference from God's justice?

A. That penitent and believing sinners need not doubt of the forgiveness of their sins; 1 John i. 9. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Q. 10. What is the last inference from it?

A. The last inference is, that meekness and patience under afflictions, is our unquestionable duty; and murmuring against God, is a great sin and evil; Lam. iii. 39. Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

Of God's Goodness.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the goodness of God?

A. It is an essential property of his nature, whereby he is absolutely and perfectly good in himself, and the fountain of all communicated goodness to the creature; Psal. cxix. 68. Thou art good, and dost good, teach me thy statutes.

Q. 2. How doth the goodness of God differ from the mercy of God?

A. It differs in its objects; for misery is the object of mercy; but goodness extends to the creatures that are happy, as well as miserable, as the angels; Psal. cxlv. 9. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Q. 3. What is the first property of God's goodness?

A. That all his other attributes flow out of it as their fountain: the other acts of God are but the effluxes of his goodness; Exod. xxxiii. 19. And he said I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy unto whom I will shew mercy. Exod. xxxiv. 6. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Q. 4. What is the secondary property of the divine goodness?

A. That it is supreme and perfect in itself, so as the goodness of no creature is, or can be; Luke xviii. 19. None is good save one, and that is God: And consequently above all additions from the creature; Psal. xvi. 2. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, My goodness extendeth not unto thee.

Q. 5. What is the third property of God's goodness?

A. That it is communicative with pleasure and delight to the creature: no mother draws out her breast to an hungry child with more pleasure than God doth his goodness to the saints; Psal. cxlv. 9. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

Q. 6. In what acts hath God manifested his goodness?

A. He hath manifested it in the creation and government of the world; Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all.

Q. 7. What was the principal work in which God hath manifested his goodness to men.

A. The principal manifestation of God's goodness was in the work of redemption by Christ; Rom. v. 8. God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 1 John iv. 9. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, be-

cause that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Q. 8. But are not the judgments of God on the wicked, and his afflictions on the saints, impeachments of his goodness.

A. No; it is the property of goodness to hate and punish evil in the impenitent; Exod. xxxiv. 7. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, &c. And the affliction of the saints flow from his goodness, and end in their true and eternal good; Heb. xii. 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, Psal. cxix. 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

Q. 9. What may we infer from the goodness of God?

A. The first thing is, that sin hath made our natures base and disingenuous, in that we take no notice of his goodness; Isa. i. 3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider, and answer not the design of it; Rom. ii. 4. Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.

Q. 10. What is the second inference from the goodness of God?

A. That therefore God is the fittest object of our delight and love, and of our trust and confidence, (1.) Of our delight and love; Psal. cxvi. 1. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications. (2.) Of our trust and confidence; Psal. xxxiv. 8. O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

Q. 11. What is the third inference from God's goodness?

A. That Christians should imitate God in his goodness, in love to our enemies; Matth. v. 44, 45. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

Q. 12. What is the last inference from God's goodness?

A. That Christians have great encouragement to go to God for pardon in case of sin; Psal. cxxx. 4. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared; and for refuse in dangers. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; he knoweth them that trust in him, Nahum i. 7.

Of God's Truth.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the truth of God?

A. It is an essential property of his nature, whereby he is perfectly faithful in himself, and in all that he hath spoken; Deut. xxxii. 4. He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he, Psal. cxix. 142. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

Q. 2. What is the first property of Divine truth?

A. The first property of it is, That it is essential and necessary to God: He cannot lie, Titus i. 2.

Q. 3. What is the second property of it?

A. The second property is, That it is everlasting, and abiding to all generations, Psal. c. 5. For the Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations. Isa. xxv. 1. O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee——thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

Q. 4. What is the third property of Divine truth?

A. The third property is, that he is universally true in all his words and works. (1.) In all his words; John xvii. 17. Thy word is truth. (2.) In all his works; Psal. xxv. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant.

Q. 5. What is the first lesson from God's truth to be learnt?

A. That truth and sincerity of heart is that which is most suitable and pleasing to God; Psal. li. 6. Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts.

Q. 6. What is the second lesson from God's truth?

A. That whatever God hath foretold shall assuredly come to pass, and be fulfilled in his time; Josh. xxiii. 14. Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord our God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Q. 7. What is the third lesson from the truth of God?

A. That a promise from God is full security to the faith of his people, and they may look upon it as good as a mercy in hand; Heb. x. 23. For he is faithful that promised.

Q. 8. What is the fourth lesson from God's truth?

That whatever God hath threatened in his word against sinners shall surely come upon them except they repent; Zech. i. 6. But my word, and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned, and said, like as the Lord of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us. Ezek. xii. 27, 28. The word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God.

Q. 9. What is the fifth lesson from God's truth?

A. That falsehood in words and actions is contrary to God's nature, and abhorred by him; John viii. 44. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own? for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Q. 10. What is the last lesson from God's truth?

A. The day of judgment will rightly and justly state every man's

condition; Rom. ii. 2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

Of one God.

Quest. 5. **ARE** there more gods than one?

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

Q. 1. How doth it appear that there is but one God?

A. It is evident from scripture there is but one God; Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Jer. x. 10. but the Lord is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King: and as scripture reveals no more, so reason will allow no more.

Q. 2. Why will reason allow no more but one God?

A. Because God is the first being; Rev. i. 11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and there can be but one first being, and God is the most perfect and excellent being; Psal. lxxi. 19. Thy righteousness, also, O God, is very high, who hath done great things: O God, who is like unto thee? And there can be but one most perfect and excellent being.

Q. 3. But doth not the scriptures say, in 1 Cor. viii. 5. that there are gods many, and lords many?

A. Yes; there are many in title, and many in opinion, but one only in truth; Jer. x. 10. But the Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King.

Q. 4. Why is he called the true God?

A. To distinguish him from the idols and false gods of the heathens; 1 Thes. i. 9. How ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. Acts xiv. 15. We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.

Q. 5. Why is he called the living God?

A. Because all life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, is in him, and from him only. First, Natural life; Acts xvii. 28. For in him we live, and move, and have our being. Secondly, Spiritual life; Eph. ii. 1. You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Thirdly, Eternal life in glory; Col. iii. 4. When Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Q. 6. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. If but one God, then all his children should be of one heart, having one and the same Father; Eph. iv. 5, 6. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Q. 7. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That it is idolatry to perform worship to any other but God only; Psal. lxxxvi. 9, 10. All nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name, for thou art great, and dost wondrous things, thou art God alone.

Q. 8. What is the third inference from it?

A. That our supreme love is due to God only, and it is very sinful to place it in any other; Deut. vi. 4, 5. Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Q. 9. What is the fourth inference from God's unity?

A. That God only must have the reliance and dependence of our souls; Jer. xvii. 5, 7. Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, that maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.

Q. 10. What is the last inference from it?

A. That we have great cause to be thankful for the gospel, which discovers the only true God to us; and that we are not as the heathens, worshipping many and false gods; 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Of three Persons in the Godhead.

Q. 6. **H**OW many persons are there in the godhead?

A. There are three persons in the godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Q. What mean you by the word, godhead?

A. It is the nature, essence, or being of God, as the apostle speaks, Acts xvii. 29. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, and man's device.

Q. 2. What is a person in the godhead?

A. It is the godhead distinguished by personal properties; each person having his distinct personal properties; Heb. i. 3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power.

Q. 3. How doth it appear there are three persons, and no more?

A. First, From Christ's baptism; Mat. iii. 16, 17. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending, like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.

Q. 4. How else in the second place, doth it appear?

A. From the institution of our baptism; Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 5. What is the third proof from scripture?

A. From the apostolical benediction; 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of

the holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen: Where the three distinct blessings are wished from the three divine persons in the godhead, *grace* from Christ, *love* from the Father, and *communion* with the Spirit.

Q. 6. What farther evidence is there of it in scripture?

A. From plain positive assertions of the scripture, asserting, *First*, A trinity of persons. *Secondly*, A unity of essence? 1 John v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

Q. 8. What is the first instruction from the trinity?

A. That the doctrine of the gospel concerning Christ, is fully confirmed and ratified by three witnesses from heaven, who are above all exceptions; 1 John v. 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction from the trinity?

A. Hence we learn the true order and manner of worshipping God, in the Son; John xvi. 23. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you. And by the Spirit; Eph. vi. 18. Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction from the trinity?

A. That the covenant of grace conveys a rich portion to believers in making over all three persons to them; Jer. xxxi. 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Q. 10. What is the fourth instruction from the trinity?

A. That as it is the duty of all the saints to give distinct glory to the three persons in the Godhead; so it will be a special part of their blessedness in heaven, to contemplate the distinct benefits received from them all; Rev. i. 5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth; unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Of God's decrees.

Quest. 2. **WHAT** are the decrees of God?

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

Q. 1. What things are decreed of God?

A. All things whatsoever come to pass, even the smallest; Eph. i. 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Q. 2. What is the end of God's decrees?

A. The glory of his own name; Eph. i. 11, 12. Who worketh

all things according to the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Q. 8. But there are some evil things done in the world; Do they fall under God's decree?

A. Though God doth neither approve them, nor necessitate men to commit them, yet he doth permit and suffer them to be done, and will turn them to his own glory; Acts iv. 27, 28. For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel are gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Q. 4. Who are the objects of God's special decrees?

A. Angels and men are the objects of God's special decrees; 1 Tim. v. 21. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, &c. Rom. viii. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?

Q. 5. What is the first property of God's decrees?

A. That they are most wise acts of God, laid in the depth of wisdom and counsel; Rom. xi. 33. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!

Q. 6. What is the second property of God's decrees?

A. The decrees of God are most free, all flowing from the mere pleasure of his will; Rom. ix. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Q. 7. What is the third property of God's decrees?

A. They are most firm and stable; 2 Tim. ii. 19. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; Zech. vi. 1.

Q. 8. What is the fourth property of God's decrees?

A. They are eternal, and before all time; Acts xv. 18. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.

Q. 9. What is the fifth property of God's decrees?

A. They are most pure, and altogether unspotted of sin; 1 John i. 5. This 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.

Q. 10. What is the first instruction from God's decrees?

A. That we ought to ascribe nothing to chance, but to the appointment or providence of God; Prov. xvi. 33. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.

Q. 11. What is the second instruction from God's decrees?

A. That God's hand is to be acknowledged in the greatest afflictions that befall us; 2 Sam. xvi. 11. And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, behold my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction from God's decrees?

A. That we ought to be thankful to God for all the good, and patient under all the evils that befall us; Job ii. 10. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?

Quest. 8. **H**OW doth God execute his decrees?

A. *God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.*

Of the Creation.

Quest. 9. **W**HAT are the works of creation?

A. *The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.*

Q. 1. What is it to create?

A. To create, is to give a being to that which had no being; or to bring something out of nothing; Heb. xi. 3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things that do appear.

Q. 2. How did God create the world?

A. By his infinite power, executed in his word of command; Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth; for he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

Q. 3. What attributes of God shine forth in the creation?

A. The wisdom of God shines forth gloriously, not only in their formation, but dependence one upon another; Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches.

Q. 4. What may we learn from the creation?

A. That God perfectly knows all that is in the creature, be it never so secret; Psal. xciv. 8, 9. Understand, O ye brutish among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear: He that formed the eye, shall he not see?

Q. 5. What is the second instruction from the creation?

A. That God is the rightful owner of us all, and may do what he will with us? Rom. ix. 20. Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God! shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?

Q. 6. What is the third instruction from the creation?

A. That God only is the proper object of worship; Jer. x. 11. Thus shall he say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.

Q. 7. What is the fourth instruction from hence?

A. That Christians should not fear the power of creatures, since they derive their being and power from God; Isa. liv. 16, 17. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy; no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.

Q. 8. What is the fifth instruction from hence?

A. That Atheism is a sin against natural light and reason; Rom. i. 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that they are without excuse.

Q. 9. What is the sixth instruction from hence?

A. That God's glory is the end of all being; Col. i. 16. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.

Q. 10. What is the seventh instruction from hence?

A. That there is an unnatural rebellion in sin, smiting at him that made and preserves our being; Isa. i. 6. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

Q. 11. What is the eighth instruction from hence?

A. That God can in a moment revive and save the church when at the lowest ebb; Isa. lxxv. 18. Behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction from hence?

A. That it is easy with God to revive a dejected soul; Isa. lvii. 19. I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

Of Man's Creation.

Quest. 10. **H**OW did God create man?

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Q. 1. How did God create man?

A. God created man in his own image; Gen. i. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them.

Q. 2. What is meant by the image of God?

A. Not a resemblance of God in any bodily shape or figure, but in holiness; Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Q. 3. In what graces did man resemble God?

A. In such a knowledge of God himself, and the creatures, which made him happy; Col. iii. 10. And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.

Q. 4. In what other graces did this image consist?

A. In righteousness as well as holiness; Eph. iv. 24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Q. 5. What is the first inference from hence?

A. The deplorable misery of the fall; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Q. 6. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. The beauty of holiness, which is the image of God, and the excellency of man; Psalm xvi. 3. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

Q. 7. What is the third instruction from hence?

A. We have infinite cause to bless God for Christ, who repairs this lost image in his people; Eph. iv. 23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Q. 8. What is the fourth instruction from hence?

A. That the despisers of holiness are the despisers of God; for holiness is God's image.

Q. 9. What is the fifth instruction from hence?

A. The excellency of sanctification, which defaces the image of Satan, and draws the image of God upon the soul of man.

Of Divine Providence.

Quest. 11. **W**HAT are God's works of providence?

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

Q. 1. How doth it appear that there is a Divine Providence?

A. It appears by plain scripture testimonies. Heb. i. 3. Upholding all things by the word of his power. Col. i. 17. By him all things consist. Luke. xii. 6, 7. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God; but even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Q. 2. How else is providence evinced?

A. By scripture emblems; as Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; behold the angels of God ascended and descended on it: And Ezekiel's wheels, Ezek. i. 20. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go, and the wheels were lifted up over against them, for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

Q. 3. What farther scripture evidence is there?

A. The sure accomplishment of scripture predictions; as Israel's captivity, and deliverance from Egypt and Babylon; Christ's incarnation; the rise and ruin of the four monarchies; Dan. ii. 31. Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. Dan.

vii. 3. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from the other.

Q. 4. What is its first act about the creatures?

A. It sustains, preserves, provides for them; Psalm cxlv. 15, 16. The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season; thou openest thine hand, and satisfied the desire of every living thing, and defendest them from danger. Psalm xxxvi. 6. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a great deep; O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.

Q. 5. What is the second act of providence about the creatures?

A. It rules and governs the creatures and their actions; Psalm lxvi. 7. He ruleth by his power for ever, his eyes behold the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

Q. 6. How manifold is Divine Providence?

A. It is common and general over all, or special and peculiar to some men; 1 Tim. iv. 10. Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.

Q. 7. How is providence exercised about sinful actions?

A. In permitting them; Acts iv. 16. In restraining them; Psalm lxxvi. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shall thou restrain. And over-ruling them to good; Gen. i. 20. But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Q. 8. What are the properties of providence?

A. It is (1.) Holy; Psalm cxlv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. (2.) Wise; Psal. civ. 24. O Lord, how manifold are all thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. (3.) Powerful? Dan. iv. 35. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doth according to his will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?

Q. 9. What is the first instruction from it?

A. That God's people are safe amidst all their enemies and dangers; 2 Chron. xvi. 9. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose hearts are perfect toward him.

Q. 10. What is the second instruction from it.

A. That prayer is the best expedient to prosperity and success of our lawful affairs; Psalm cxlv. 18. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction from it?

A. That God's people should rest quietly in the care of his providence for them in all their straits; Matth. vi. 26. Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet our heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better than they?

Q. 12. What is the last instruction from it?

A. That it is no small privilege to be adopted children of God, and the members of Christ; for all is ordered for their eternal good; Eph. i. 22, 23. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Of the Covenant of Works.

Quest. 12. **W**HAT special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?

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

Q. 1. What was God's covenant with Adam before the fall?

A. It was to give life and happiness upon condition of perfect personal obedience; Gal. iii. 12. The law is not of faith; but the man that doth them shall live in them.

Q. 2. Was this covenant made only with Adam, or with him and his posterity?

A. It was made with him, and all his natural posterity, descending in the ordinary way of generation from him; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Ver. 14, and 18. Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come: Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Q. 3. Was Adam able to perform the obedience required of him in this covenant?

A. Yes; for he was made upright; Eccl. vii. 29. God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

Q. 4. Had this covenant any Mediator?

A. No; he neither had, nor needed any Mediator for satisfaction, because no sin was in him; nor intercession, for he wanted nothing.

Q. 5. Did this covenant admit of no repentance, nor accept any shorter endeavours?

A. No, it did not; but sentenceth and curseth the transgressors of it, for the least breach; Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Q. 6. How was this threatening fulfilled, of dying the day he eat, seeing he lived 930 years?

A. He died spiritually that day: and though the sentence on his

body was respited in order to posterity, yet then his body received the death's wound, of which afterward he died.

Q. 7. What is the first inference from Adam's covenant?

A. Miserable are all they that grow on the natural root of the first Adam: Gal. iv. 21, 22. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.

Q. 8. What is the second inference?

A. That God is just in all the punishments and miseries that come upon man; yea, infants that never sinned after his similitude; Rom. v. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

Q. 9. What is the third inference?

A. The glorious privilege of believers who are under a better covenant, established upon better promises; Heb. viii. 6. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which is established upon better promises.

Q. 10. What is the last inference?

A. That we should pity the unregenerate, especially our own among them; and labour to plant them in the second Adam.

Of the Fall of Man.

Quest. 13. **D**ID our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. *Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.*

Q. 1. How doth it appear that man is fallen?

A. By the scripture history: An account of it is in Gen. iii. 6, 7. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons? and they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden. And the sad experience we all have of it in ourselves; Rom. v. 12. Therefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Q. 2. How could man fall, since he was made upright?

A. Though he was upright, yet his will was mutable; and by abusing that liberty, he fell; Eccles. vii. 29. Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.

Q. 3. How did God leave him to abuse the freedom of his will?

A. Not by inclining him to abuse it; but by withholding that further grace which he was no way obliged to continue to him.

Q. 4. Did the will of man lose its liberty to good by the Fall?

A. Yes, it did, and is so wounded, that it cannot, without thy preventing and regenerating grace, put forth one spiritual and saving act; Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, least any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, &c.

Q. 5. What was the aggravation of Adam's sin?

A. It was aggravated in his being a public innocent person, so newly placed in a state of happiness and liberty.

Q. 6. What is the first inference from the fall?

A. That the best creature left to himself, cannot be long safe; as the angels, and Adam; Psal. xlix. 12. Nevertheless, man being in honour abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish.

Q. 7. What is the second inference?

A. That since man could not be his own keeper, he can be much less his own saviour; 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

Q. 8. What is the third inference?

A. That it is impossible for the covenant of works to justify any one; Rom. iii. 20. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; Rom. viii. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

Q. 9. What is the last inference?

A. What cause have we to bless God for Christ, who recovered us when the fall left us helpless? Rom. v. 6. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Of Sin.

Quest. 14. **W**HAT is sin?

A. *Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.*

Q. 1. What is meant by the law?

A. The commands and rules flowing from God's sovereignty, whereby his will is manifested, and the creature bound to obedience.

Q. 2. Where is this law written?

A. It is written either in the heart; Rom. ii. 25. Which shews the work of the law written in their hearts, (which we call the law of nature;) or in the Bible, which we call the written moral law.

Q. 3. What conformity is due to the law of God?

A. A twofold conformity is due to it: *First*, Internal, in our hearts. *Secondly*, External, in our lives; and the want of either is sin; 1 John iii. 4. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law.

Q. 4. How doth it appear that the want of internal conformity is sin?

A. Because the law requires it; Mark xii. 30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; for this is the first commandment: And condemns the want of it? Rom. vii. 7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! nay, I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

Q. 5. Is nothing a sin but what is against God's law?

A. No, nothing can be a sin but what God hath either expressly, or by consequence, forbidden in his word.

Q. 6. Wherein lies the evil of transgressing God's law?

A. The evil of sin principally lies in the offence and wrong done to God, whose sovereignty it labours to shake off, and despises his will; Psal. li. 4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.

Q. 7. What further evil is in sin?

A. It highly wrongs the sinner's soul by defacing, defiling, and damning it; Prov. viii. 36. But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death.

Q. 8. Wherein is the evil of sin manifested?

A. It is manifested in the death of Christ, the terrors of conscience, and torments of hell.

Q. 9. What course must the sinner take to recover himself out of his misery?

A. Repentance towards God, faith towards Christ, and both evidenced by new obedience; Acts xx. 21. Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 10. What may we infer from hence?

A. That we have infinite cause to bless God for Christ's satisfaction of the law for our sins.

Of the Tree of Knowledge.

Quest. 15. **W**HAT was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. *The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.*

Q. 1. Why was this tree called the tree of knowledge?

A. Not from any natural efficacy it had to give knowledge, but the

knowledge he should have by eating, or not eating, was experimental knowledge, i. e. Knowledge to his sorrow.

Q. 2. Why did God forbid him this tree?

A. *First*, For the discovery of his dominion over man. *Secondly*, For the trial of his subjection and obedience. *Thirdly*, For the aggravation of his sin, if he should eat.

Q. 3. What evil was there in eating of it?

A. There was a twofold evil, the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment, both very great.

Q. 4. What was the evil of sin?

A. A threefold evil of sin. *First*, Against God, called disobedience; Rom. v. 19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. *Secondly*, Against himself, soul, body, and estate. *Thirdly*, Against his posterity; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Q. 5. What was the evil of punishment?

A. *First*, Loss of God's image. *Secondly*, Horror of conscience. *Thirdly*, Sorrow on the female sex. *Fourthly*, Curse on the creature. *Fifthly*, Expulsion from paradise. *Sixthly*, Death both of body and soul.

Q. 6. What is the first instruction from it?

A. To take heed of small beginnings of temptations, and to resist it in the first motions; James iii. 5. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.

Q. 7. What is the second inference?

A. Not to hold a parly with the tempter; see 2 Cor. xi. 3. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Q. 8. What is the third inference?

A. That Satan's policy lies much in the choice of his tempting instruments; as Eve and Peter, &c.

Q. 9. What is the fourth inference?

A. A necessity of keeping strong guards on our senses; Isa. xxxiii. 15. That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil, he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks.

Q. 10. What is the fifth inference?

A. That covenant-breaking is a heinous sin, which God will punish; Hosea viii. 1. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant, and transgressed against my laws.

Q. 11. What is the last inference?

A. That the corruption of our nature is much seen in desiring forbidden things; Rom. vii. 7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid; Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I

had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

Of the Fall of Adam, and ours in him.

Quest. 16. **D**ID all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. *The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.*

Q. 1. Did no man ever escape the sin of Adam?

A. Yes, the man Christ Jesus did, and he only; Heb. vii. 26. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

Q. 2. Why was not Christ tainted with it?

A. Because he came into the world in an extraordinary way; Matth. i. 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 3. How doth it appear all others are tainted with it?

A. It appears by scripture testimony, Rom. v. 12. Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; and experience of the best men, Rom. vii. 21. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Q. 4. How came all men to fall with Adam?

A. Because all were included in Adam's covenant, as a man's covenant includes his children before they be born, or the treason of the father affects his posterity.

Q. 5. What infer you from hence?

A. The stupendous wisdom of God in sending Christ in our nature, and yet without the sin and taint of it; 1 Cor. i. 24. Christ the wisdom of God.

Q. 6. What is the second inference?

A. Hence we learn the admirable love of Christ in taking our nature, with all the sinless infirmities thereof; Rom. viii. 3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

Q. 7. What is the third inference?

A. The necessity of our union with Christ, in order to our participation of his righteousness and redemption; 1 Cor. xv. 22. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Q. 8. What is the fourth inference?

A. Hence we learn the malignant and mortal nature of sin, inasmuch as one sin defiled and destroyed a whole world.

Q. 9. What is the fifth inference?

A. That though all be not equally sensible of their need, yet one sinner needs Christ as much as another.

Q. 10. What is the last inference?

A. That no man hath any cause or reason to boast of the goodness, of his nature, since the best were by nature under the same sin and misery as the worst; Eph. ii. 3. Among whom also, we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others.

Of Original Sin.

Quest. 17. **I**NTO what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. *The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery.*

Quest. 18. **W**HEREIN consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. *The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.*

Q. 1. How many sorts of sins are all men under?

A. All men are guilty before God of two sorts of sin; of original, and of actual; Psal. li. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Eccles. vii. 20. For there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not.

Q. How can we be guilty of Adam's first sin?

A. We are guilty of it, because Adam sinned not only as a single, but also as a public person, and representative of all mankind: Rom. v. 15, 16, 17. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift: for if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many: And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation.

Q. 3. How else came we under his guilt?

A. We are guilty of his sin by generation; for we were in his loins, as treason stains the blood of the posterity, or parents leprosy the children: Psalm. li. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Q. 4. Wherein doth it consist?

A. It consists in two things. *First*, In our aversion and enmity to that which is good; Rom. vii. 18. In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, *Secondly*, In proneness to that which is evil; Rom. vii. 14. But I am carnal, sold under sin.

Q. 5. Is this corruption of nature in all men?

A. Yes; in all mere men, and women, none exempted; Rom. iii. 10. and 23. As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Q. 6. In what part of our nature doth this sin abide?

A. It abides in the whole man, in every part of man, both soul and body; Gen. vi. 5. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; 1 Thess. v. 23. Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 7. How is the body infected by it?

A. In the readiness of the bodily members to further sin, and its temptations in the soul; Rom. iii. 13, 14, 15. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood.

Q. 8. What learn we from original sin!

A. To bear patiently the miseries we see on our children, and their death also without murmuring; Rom. v. 14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

Q. 9. What is the second instruction?

A. It teaches us humility, and should be matter of confession and humiliation, when we sin actually; Psal. li. 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Q. 10. What is the third instruction?

A. It should provoke parents to use their utmost diligence for the conversion of their children who draw sin from them.

Q. 11. What is the last instruction?

A. It teaches us the necessity of regeneration, and should provoke us greatly to desire it.

Of Man's Misery.

Quest. 19. **W**HAT is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse; and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Q. 1. What communion had God with man before the fall?

A. Man that enjoyed the gracious presence and favour of God with him, which was better than life.

Q. 2. How doth it appear this was lost by the fall?

A. It appears by scripture-testimony, that Adam lost it as to himself; Gen. iii. 8. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, among the trees of the garden. And we in him; Eph. ii. 12. At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Q. 3. Was this the only misery that came by the fall?

A. No; man did not only lose communion with God, but fell under his wrath and curse; Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature children of wrath, even as others.

Q. 4. Doth the wrath and curse of God then lie on all men?

A. It lies on all the unregenerate in the world; Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them: But believers are delivered from it by Christ; 1 Thess. i. 10. Even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Q. 5. How are the miseries of man by the fall divided?

A. They are divided into the miseries of this world, and of the world to come.

Q. 6. What are the miseries that come on them in this world?

A. The miseries of life, as sickness, pain, poverty on the body; fear, trouble, sorrow on the mind, and at last death itself; Rom. vi. ult. The wages of sin is death.

Q. 7. What are the miseries after this life?

A. The pains and torments of hell for ever; Psal. ix. 17. The wicked shall be turned into hell.

Q. 8. What are the torments of hell?

A. Pain of loss and pain of sense; Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire.

Q. 9. What learn you from hence?

A. The woeful state of the unconverted; miserable here, and miserable to eternity.

Q. 10. What else learn we hence?

A. The great salvation believers have by Christ from all this misery; Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.

Of the Salvation of God's Elect, and of the Covenant of Grace.

Quest. 20. **D**ID God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery;

A. *God having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery; and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.*

Q. 1. Are some persons chosen to salvation, and others left?

A. Yes: God hath chosen some to salvation, and passed by others; as the Scriptures speak; See Rom. viii. 30. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called. And Jude 4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, &c.

Q. 2. Did God chuse some, because he foresaw they would be better than others;

A. No: God's choice was not on foreseen works, but merely of his grace, and good pleasure of his will; Eph. i. 5, 6. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.

Q. 3. Is this election of God made in time, and that according as men use their free-will, or from eternity?

A. Election is an eternal act of God before the world was, and depends not on man's using his free-will; as appears from Eph. i. 4. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.

Q. 4. Shall all that are elected be called and saved?

A. Yes, the scripture is full and plain for it; Acts xiii. 48. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Rom. viii. 30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, &c.

Q. 5. By whom are the elect saved?

A. By Christ, the only Redeemer; Titus iii. 4, 5, 6. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Q. 6. Is there no other way of salvation but by Christ?

A. No; no other way is revealed in scripture; Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Q. 7. What learn you from God's election?

A. What cause we have to admire free-grace in our choice, who were no better than others; Eph. ii. 3. And were by nature children of wrath even as others.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction?

A. It teaches us humility; we made not ourselves to differ, but the free-grace of God made the difference; 1 Cor. iv. 7. For who maketh thee to differ from another?

Q. 9. What is the third instruction?

A. It teaches us diligence to make our election sure to ourselves, by our calling; 2 Pet. i. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.

Q. 10. What is the fourth instruction?

A. It is matter of comfort to God's elect, amidst all dangers in the world; 2 Tim. ii. 19. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.

Of the Covenant of Grace.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the covenant of grace?

A. It is a new compact, or agreement, made with sinners, out of mere grace, wherein God promiseth to be our God, and that we shall be his people, and to give everlasting life to all that believe in Christ; Jer. xxxi. 33. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Q. 2. How doth this covenant differ from the covenant of works?

A. They differ many ways; but principally in three things. *First*, The covenant of works had no Mediator; the covenant of grace hath a Mediator; Heb. xii. 24. And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. *Secondly*, In the former no place was found for repentance; in the *second*, God admits it; Heb. viii. 10. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; ver. 12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins will I remember no more. *Thirdly*, in their condition, the former requires exact obedience; the latter faith and sincere obedience; Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.

Q. 3. May a sinner that hath no worthiness at all of his own, be taken into the covenant of grace?

A. Yes, he may; Isa. xliii. 25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. This covenant is not of works, but of grace, Rom. xi. 6. And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.

Q. 4. Is this covenant changeable, or an unchangeable covenant?

A. No, it is not changeable, but everlasting and unchangeable for ever; Isa. liv. 10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.

Q. 5. What are the principal things bestowed in this covenant?

A. God himself, and in and with him pardon and salvation; Jer. xxxi. 33. I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Q. 6. Can no sin be forgiven out of this covenant?

A. No, God pardons none out of this covenant; John iii. 18. But he that believeth not is condemned already.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction hence?

A. Humbled and believing sinners have singular supports from this

new covenant, 1 John ii. 12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. That it is the great concern of all men to examine whether they be in this covenant or no; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your ownelves; know ye not your ownelves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Q. 9. What is the third instruction?

A. See here the miserable state of the wicked, which have no interest in it: Psalm l. 16. But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?

Q. 10. What is the last instruction?

A. That Christians are obliged to walk as people in covenant with God; 1 Pet. ii. 9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Of the only Redeemer.

Quest. 21. **W**HIO is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. *The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person for ever.*

Q. What doth the name Redeemer signify?

A. It signifies one that frees another out of captivity and bondage, as Christ did us; Matth. xx. 28. And to give his life a ransom for many.

Q. 2. What was the misery from which Christ delivered us?

A. A twofold misery, viz. Sin and hell. *First*, Sin; Matth. i. 21. Thou shalt call his name JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins. *Secondly*, Hell; 1 Thess. i. 10. Even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come.

Q. 3. How did Christ deliver us from this misery?

A. *First*, by price. *Secondly*, By power. By price; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Ye are not redeemed with silver and gold from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot. By power; Col. i. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

Q. 4. When was the redemption wrought by Christ?

A. It was decreed from eternity; it was actually wrought on the cross; Col. i. 20. And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Q. 5. How then could they be redeemed that died before?

A. Though Christ's blood was actually shed after the Old Testament believers died: yet the virtue of Christ's death extends to them, as well as us; Heb. xi. 39, 40. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better things for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Q. 6. Why would not God deliver us without such a Redeemer?

A. Because it was not so much for the honour of his justice; Rom. iii. 25, 26. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That all that are out of Christ are in a miserable bondage and captivity; John viii. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction?

A. Hence see the heinous nature of sin, which required such a price to satisfy for it; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. We were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction from hence?

A. The wonderful love of Christ in redeeming us at such a rate; Rev. i. 5. Who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Q. 10. What is the last instruction?

A. This strongly obligeth us to an universal holiness; 1 Cor. vi. 20. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Of Christ's Incarnation.

Quest. 22. **H**OW did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ the Son of God became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Q. 1. Who is the only Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ is their only Redeemer, and there is no other Redeemer besides him; Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Q. 2. How is he the Son of God, or can be, as no other is so?

A. He is the Son of God by nature, from all eternity, and so no angel or saint is; Heb. i. 5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?

Q. 3. Why was it necessary he should become man ?

A. That he might be capable to suffer death in our room ; Heb. ii. 15, 16, 17. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham ; wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

Q. 4. Why must the Redeemer be God as well as man ?

A. Because the blood of a mere man could not satisfy and redeem us ; Acts xx. 28. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Q. 5. Do these two natures make two persons ?

A. No, the human nature is united to the second person, and subsists in union with it ; John i. 14. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Q. 6. Was the union only for a time ?

A. No, it continues and abides for ever ; Heb. vii. 24. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction from hence ?

A. Hence we learn the transcendent love of God to poor sinners ; John iii. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction ?

A. Hence we learn the matchless love of Christ, that he should stoop to such a condition for us ; 2 Cor. viii. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction ?

A. That the greatest sins are capable of remission to believers ; John i. 29. Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.

Q. 10. What is the fourth instruction ?

A. That those that be in Christ need not fear the denial or want of any other mercy ; Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all ; how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?

Q. 11. What is the fifth instruction ;

A. Hence we learn how impious it is to ascribe any part of the glory of redemption to any other besides Christ.

Q. 12. What is the sixth instruction ;

A. This teaches us the miserable condition of all that are out of Christ, and the necessity of their damnation, he being the only Redeemer.

Of the Manner of Christ's Incarnation.

Quest. 1. **W**AS Christ's incarnation a voluntary act in him?

A. Yes, it was; for though he had a command to die for us, John x. 18. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. Yet he came willingly; Psal. xl. 6, 7. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offerings and sin-offerings hast thou not required; lo, I come; in the volume of thy book, it is written of me. Ver. 8. I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.

Q. 2. Was the body of Christ a real and true human body?

A. Yes, it was a true and real body, not the appearance and shape of a body only; Luke xxv. 38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Ver. 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have.

Q. 3. Had he a true human soul as well as a body?

A. Yes, he had a real human soul also, and all the natural faculties and powers thereof; Matth. xxvi. 38. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

Q. 4. Was he then in all respects like to other men?

A. No, his conception was not like others; Isa. vii. 14. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name EMMA-NUEL. And he had no sin in him as others have; Heb. vii. 26. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

Q. 5. Did Christ put off the human nature at his ascension?

A. No, he did not, but carried it up to glory, and now is in our nature in heaven; 1 Tim. iii. 16. Received up into glory.

Q. 6. Why did he assume our nature?

A. That he might die in it for our salvation; Heb. ii. 15. And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Q. 7. Why did he rise in it after death?

A. He raised it from the dead for your justification; Rom. iv. 25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Q. 8. Why did he ascend in our nature into heaven?

A. To be a Mediator of intercession in our nature; Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Q. 9. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That the body of Christ is not every where, but is contained in heaven; Acts iii. 21. Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things.

Q. 10. What is the second instruction?

A. That Christ is full of tender compassion to his people's infirmities; Heb. iv. 15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction?

A. That great and admirable is the glory designed for the bodies of believers; Phil. iii. 21. Who shall change your vile bodies, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction?

A. That the bodily eyes of believers after the resurrection, shall see Christ in glory; Job xix. 26, 27. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

Of Christ's Offices.

Quest. 23. **W**HAT offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, doth execute the office of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. 1. What are the states and conditions of our Redeemer?

A. Christ's states are twofold; namely, his state of humiliation, and his state of exaltation; Phil. ii. 8, 9. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.

Q. 2. How many offices belong to Christ in these states?

A. Christ hath a threefold office; namely, of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king.

Q. 3. Why doth Christ take all these three offices?

A. Because they are all necessary for our salvation, and we have the benefit of them all; 1 Cor. i. 30. Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Q. 4. Can no man take Christ in one office, and not in another?

A. No; whoever will have the benefit of any one, must receive him in all; Acts v. 31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Q. 5. What respect have the offices of Christ to the promises?

A. The promises flow out of them as out of their fountain; 2 Cor. i. 20. For all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him, Amen.

Q. 6. What promises flow out of the prophetic office?

A. All promises of illumination, guidance, and direction flow out of Christ's prophetic office?

Q. 7. What promises flow out of the priestly office?

A. All the promises of a pardon and peace flow out of it.

Q. 8. What promises flow out of the kingly office?

A. All the promises of defence, protection, and deliverances.

Q. 9. What is the first instruction?

A. Hence we learn the completeness of Christ for all the wants of his people; Col. ii. 10. And ye are complete in him.

Q. 10. What is the second instruction?

A. Hence we learn the folly and misery of all those hypocrites that close partially with Christ.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction?

A. Hence we learn the singular dignity of the Lord Jesus: None ever having had all those offices but Christ.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction?

A. That faith is a considerate act; and requires much deliberation.

Of Christ's Prophetical Office.

Quest. 24. **H**OW doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Q. 1. What doth Christ's prophetical office imply?

A. It implies man's natural blindness and ignorance; 1 Cor. ii. 14. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Q. 2. What else doth it imply?

A. That Christ is the original and fountain of all that light which guides us to salvation; 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. 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.

Q. 3. How doth Christ teach men the will of God?

A. He doth it by external revelation of it; Acts iii. 22. For Moses truly said to the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear, in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And by internal illumination; Luke xxiv. 45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scripture.

Q. 4. What need then of man's ministry?

A. Very much; for Christ hath instituted ministers as instruments, by whom he will teach us; Eph. iv. 11, 12. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists and some pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins.

Q. 5. Can no man savingly know the will of God without the teachings of Christ?

A. No; though common knowledge may be obtained in a natural way, yet not saving; Matth. xi. 25. At that time Jesus answered, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord, of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

Q. 6. How appears it that Christ is appointed to this office?

A. We have the written word for it; Acts iii. 22. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. None need be discouraged at their natural weakness, if Christ be their teacher; Matth. xi. 25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Psalm. xix. 7. The testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction?

A. That it is a dreadful judgment to be spiritually blinded under the gospel; 2 Cor. iv. 3. 4. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction?

A. That prayer is the best expedient to obtain saving knowledge; James i. 5. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Q. 10. What is the last instruction?

A. Learn hence the transcendent excellency of the knowledge of Christ above all other knowledge; Phil. iii. 8. Yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Of Christ's Priesthood,

Quest. 25. **H**OW doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. *Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.*

Q. 1. What is the priesthood of Christ in general?

A. It is his expiation of our sins by the sacrifice of himself, and obtaining God's favour for us; Col. i. 20. And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

Q. 2. What are the parts of Christ's priestly office?

A. It hath two parts. *First*, Oblation, or offering of himself; Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God? *Secondly*, Intercession for us; Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Q. 3. What is the end of Christ's oblation?

A. The end of it, as to God, was to satisfy his incensed justice; Rom. iii. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. And as to men, to put away their sins; Heb. ix. 26. For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Q. 4. What is the first difference between Christ and other priests?

A. Other priests offered the blood of beasts; Christ his own blood; Heb. ix. 12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Q. 5. What is the second difference?

A. They offered many sacrifices; Christ perfected all by one offering, Heb. x. 14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Q. 6. What was the sacrifice Christ offered to God?

A. His body; Heb. x. 10. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And his soul; Isa. liii. 10. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.

Q. 7. Whence is the efficacy of this sacrifice?

A. From the divine Person to whom that soul and body was united; Acts xv. 28. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Q. 8. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That believers are discharged by Christ from all their sins and debts; Acts xiii. 39. And by him, all that believe are justified from all things.

Q. 9. What is the second inference?

A. That it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an absolute God; Luke xxiii. 31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Q. 10. What is the third inference?

A. That it is impossible for man to satisfy God for his own sins; Psal. cxxx. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

Q. 11. What is the last inference ?

A. That the Christian religion only settles the conscience in peace; Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?

Of Christ's Kingly Office.

Quest. 26. **H**OW doth Christ execute the office of a king ?

A. *Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.*

Q. 1. How manifold is Christ's kingdom ?

A. Twofold. *First*, Internal in men's souls; Luke xvii. 21. Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. *Secondly*, External, over all the world; Eph. i. 22. And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things to the church.

Q. 2. What is the end of Christ's providential kingdom ?

A. The good and salvation of the church; John xvii. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Q. 3. Wherein doth he exercise his kingly power ?

A. In restraining his, and his people's enemies; Psal. lxxvi. 10. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Q. 4. How else is it exercised ?

A. In protecting his church amidst all enemies; Exod. iii. 3. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

Q. 5. What instruments doth Christ use ?

A. Angels are ministring spirits to him; Heb. i. 14. Are they not all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation; And men, yea, the worst of men; Rev. xii. 16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Q. 6. In what manner doth Christ rule the world ?

A. By supreme power; Rev. xix. 16. He hath on his vesture, and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. And perfect wisdom; Eph. i. 11. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

Q. 7. What learn we from hence ?

A. That the church is saved amidst all dangers; Jer. xxx. 11. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee; though I make a full end of all nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.

Q. 8. What is the second instruction ?

A. That the godly may safely trust to Christ's care; 2 Chron. xvi. 9. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.

Q. 9. What is the third instruction?

A. That all plots against the church shall surely be defeated; Isa. liv. 17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.

Q. 10. What is the fourth instruction?

A. It gives the saints full satisfaction in all conditions; Rom. viii. 28. And we know that all things work together, for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.

Q. 11. What is the last inference?

A. We should not stand in a slavish fear of men; Isa. li. 12. I, even I am he that comforteth you; who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass.

Of Christ's Humiliation.

Quest. 27. **W**HEREIN did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. *Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.*

Q. 1. What doth Christ's humbling of himself import?

A. His voluntariness in the deepest point of self-denial? Psal. xl. 7. Then said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me.

Q. 2. What was the first act of Christ's humiliation?

A. His taking man's nature on him, with all its sinless infirmities; Rom. viii. 3. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

Q. 3. What is the second part of his humiliation?

A. That mean life he lived in this world, which obscured his divine glory? Mark vi. 3. Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?

Q. 4. What was the first thing in Christ's life that humbled him?

A. The poverty of it; Mat. vii. 20. And Jesus saith unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Q. 5. What was the second thing in his life that humbled him?

A. The temptations of Satan, to which he was subject; Mat. iv. 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, and that for our sakes. Heb. ii. 17. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren. ver. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Q. 6. What was the third thing in Christ's life that humbled him?

A. His subjection to the law; Gal. i. 4. But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

Q. 7. What was the fourth thing in Christ's life that humbled him?

A. The revilings and contradictions of sinners; Heb. xii. 3. For consider him that endureth such contradiction of sinners against himself.

Q. 8. Whercin was Christ humbled in his death?

A. His death was painful and ignominious; Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: For it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Made a curse for us, and deserted in it; Mat. xxvii. 46. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani; that is to say, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Q. 9. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That lowliness and humility becomes Christ's followers; Mat. xi. 29. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.

Q. 10. What is the second inference?

A. That Christ's love to sinners is astonishingly great; 2 Cor. viii. 9. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.

Q. 11. What is the third inference?

A. Christians should be ready to suffer for Christ; 1 Pet. iv. 1. Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.

Q. 12. What is the last inference?

A. That humiliation is the true way to exaltation; Mat. xxiii. 12. And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.

Of Christ's Exaltation.

Quest. 23. **W**HEREIN consists Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day; in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q. 1. What is the first step of Christ's exaltation?

A. His resurrection from the dead.

Q. 2. How doth his resurrection appear?

A. By the scripture prophecies accomplished in him; 1 Cor. xv. 4. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.

Q. 3. Why did Christ rise again?

A. To establish our faith, and abolish our sins; 1 Cor. xv. 17. And if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Q. 4. What other end was there of Christ's resurrection?

A. To declare his divine power; 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. And to evidence the fulness of his satisfaction; John xvi. 10. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more.

Q. 5. Did Christ rise in the same body he laid down?

A. It was substantially the same; John xx. 27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.

Q. 6. What doth Christ's resurrection teach us?

A. The certainty of our resurrection after death; 1 Cor. xv. 20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

Q. 7. What is the second step of Christ's exaltation?

A. His ascension after forty days into heaven; Acts i. 2, 3. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost, had given commandment unto the apostles, whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Q. 8. Why did Christ stay so long on earth?

A. To assure the truth of his resurrection, and to settle the due government of his church, Acts i. 2, 3.

Q. 9. For what end did he ascend?

A. To take possession of his glory; John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. And that as our fore-runner, Heb. vi. 20. Whither the Fore-runner is for us entered, even Jesus, &c.

Q. 10. In what manner did Christ ascend?

A. Triumphantly, and magnificently; Psal. xlvii. 5. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

Q. 11. What doth his ascension teach us?

A. Heavenly-mindedness; Col. iii. 1, 2. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God; set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. And an encouragement in our Christian race; Heb. xii. 1, 2. Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the

cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God.

The second Part of the 28th Question of Christ's exaltation.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT was the third degree of Christ's exaltation ?

A. His sitting at God's right-hand in heaven; Heb. i. 3. When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right-hand of the majesty on high.

Q. 2. What doth God's right-hand signify ?

A. A state of honour; Heb. i. 13. But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool? And power; Matt. xxvi. 64. Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right-hand of power.

Q. 3. What is implied in Christ's sitting there ?

A. That his work on earth is finished; Heb. x. 12. But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right-hand of God.

Q. 4. What else doth it signify ?

A. Christ's power over all his enemies; Psal. cx. 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

Q. 5. What learn we from Christ's sitting there ?

A. The high honour believers are advanced to by Christ; Eph. ii. 6. And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Q. 6. What is the last step of Christ's exaltation ?

A. His coming to judgment; Acts x. 42. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

Q. 7. Is it certain there shall be a judgment-day ?

A. Yes; the scripture assures it; 2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. And every man's conscience witnesseth to it; Rom. ii. 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Q. 8. What is the first property of Christ's judgment ?

A. It will be awful and solemn; 1 Thess. iv. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Q. 9. What is the second property of it ?

A. It will be exact and critical; Rom. ii. 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. Mat. xii. 36. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.

Q. 10. What is the third property of it ?

A. It will be an universal judgment; Rev. xx. 12. And I saw the

dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened.

Q. 11. How is this a part of Christ's exaltation ;

A. He now acts in the fulness of his kingly power ; Mat. xxv. 34. Then shall the king say unto them on his right-hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And this will roll away the reproach of his enemies ; Rev. i. 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.

Q. 12. What learn we from Christ's being judge ?

A. That believers shall not be cast in judgment ; Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

Q. 13. What learn we from hence ?

A. The deplorable state of Christless persons ; Luke xix. 27. But those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Q. 14. What else learn we from Christ's judgment ?

A. To give all diligence to be found of him in peace ; 2 Pet. iii. 14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace.

Of the Application of Christ.

Quest. 29. **H**OW are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Q. 1. What did our redemption cost Christ ?

A. It cost him his own blood to obtain it ; Heb. ix. 12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Q. 2. Can none have the benefit of it, except it be applied to them ?

A. No, if Christ be not applied, we cannot be saved ; John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Q. 3. Whose work or office is it to apply Christ to us ?

A. It is the office and work of God's Spirit ; Titus iii. 4, 5. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 4. What means doth the Spirit use in applying Christ ?

A. The external means he makes use of, is the ministry of the gospel ; 1 Cor. iii. 5. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed ?

Q. 5. Is this sufficient of itself ?

A. No, the blessing and power of the Spirit must accompany it, or Christ cannot be applied ; 1 Thess. i. 5, 6. For our gospel came

not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 6. To whom doth the Spirit apply Christ ?

A. To those that were given him of the Father before the world was; Acts xiii. 48. And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. John xiv. 17. Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Q. 7. Is the application of Christ to a soul finished at once ?

A. Though the first act of faith unites the soul to Christ, yet it is a continued act; 1 Pet. ii. 4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone.

Q. 8. What learn we from hence ?

A. What a destitute thing the soul is that is out of Christ; Rev. iii. 18. Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Q. 9. What else doth it teach us ?

A. The riches and dignity of believers. Christ and all his purchases are theirs; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Q. 10. What else doth it teach us ?

A. The righteousness of God in the destruction of all unbelievers; John v. 40. Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Of our Union with Christ.

Quest. 30. **H**OW doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ ?

A. *By working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.*

Q. 1. Can none have saving benefit by Christ, but such as are united to him ?

A. No, for as Adam's sin could not hurt us, except we had been in him; so Christ's redemption cannot profit us, except we are in him; 1 Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Q. 2. What are the bonds of this union ?

A. The Spirit on God's part; 1 John iii. 24. And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given

us. And faith on our part: Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

Q. 3. What is the first property of this union?

A. It is an intimate union; Eph. v. 30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Q. 4. What is the second property?

A. It is an union never to be dissolved; Rom. viii. 35, 38. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 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.

Q. 5. What is the third property of this union?

A. It makes Christ, and all that he hath purchased, become ours; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. All are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

Q. 6. What is the fourth property of this union?

A. It is the foundation and root of all our spiritual and acceptable obedience; John xv. 4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

Q. 7. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That saving grace in the saints is immortal, being secured to them in and by Christ; Col. iii. 3. Your life is hid with Christ in God.

Q. 8. What is the second inference?

A. That the relation between Christ and believers is very near and intimate; Eph. v. 30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Q. 9. What is the third inference?

A. That believers need not be afraid to go down to the grave; Rom. viii. 38, 39. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, —nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And this union holds after death; Mat. xxii. 31, 32. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living.

Q. 10. What is the fourth inference?

A. That in wronging and persecuting the saints, men wrong and persecute Christ himself; Acts ix. 4. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Q. 11. What is the fifth inference?

A. That in relieving and refreshing the saints, we relieve and refresh Christ himself; Matth. xxv. 35, 36. For I was an hungered,

and ye gave me meat; and I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Ver. 40. Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Q. 12. What is the last inference?

A. That there is a sympathy in Christ, under all the pressures and grievances of his people; Heb. iv. 15. We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Of Effectual Calling.

Quest. 31. **W**HAT is effectual calling?

A. *Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.*

Q. 1. What makes the difference between effectual and ineffectual calling?

A. Ineffectual calling is, when men have nothing but the external sound of the gospel; Matth. xx. 16. For many be called, but few chosen. Effectual is, when the Spirit works in conjunction with the word; John vi. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God; every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Q. 2. What is the first act of the Spirit in effectual calling?

A. Conviction of sin; John xvi. 8. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.

Q. 3. Do the called of God hear any voice from heaven?

A. Ordinarily it is a call without sound, yet as efficacious as an audible voice from heaven.

Q. 4. What is the second act of the Spirit in our effectual calling?

A. The illumination of the mind in the knowledge of Christ; Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Q. 5. In what things doth it enlighten them?

A. In this; That Christ is their only remedy; Acts iv. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. And their all-sufficient remedy; Heb. vii. 25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.

Q. 6. What is the third act?

A. His renewing of the sinner's will, and making it flexible; Psal. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I

put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Q. 7. Can no man come to Christ till thus enabled?

A. No; it is not in the power of man's nature or will, till thus renewed and enabled; Eph. i. 19, 20. And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him on his own right-hand in the heavenly places. John vi. 44. No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.

Q. 8. What sort of men are most ordinarily called?

A. The poor and mean ones in the world; 1 Cor. i. 26. For ye 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.

Q. 9. What is the first instruction from it?

A. Souls effectually called are never lost; Rom. xi. 29. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Q. 10. What is the second instruction?

A. All things co-operate to their good; Rom. viii. 28. For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction?

A. It is dangerous to refuse God's call; Prov. i. 24. Because I have called, and ye have refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction?

A. That Christians are obliged to walk suitably to their heavenly calling; 1 Thess. ii. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory.

Of the Concomitants of Vocation.

Quest. 32. **W**HAT benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A. *They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.*

Q. 1. Are all that be effectually called, justified?

A. Yes; God justifies all, and every soul that obeys and answers his call; Rom. viii. 30. Whom he called, them he also justified.

Q. 2. What other benefits have the called in this life?

A. They are all the adopted children of God; Eph. i. 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

Q. 3. Are those all the benefits the called receive?

A. No; they are not only justified and adopted, but also sanctified; 1 Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Q. 4. Do these three blessings come singly to the called?

A. No; they are all accompanied with multitudes of other blessings flowing from them; Eph. i. 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ.

Q. 5. What are the mercies flowing from justification?

A. They are great and manifold; Rom. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Therefore 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, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Q. 6. What are the benefits flowing from adoption?

A. Free access to God; Eph. iii. 12. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. And a title to heaven; Rom. viii. 17. If children, then heirs.

Q. 7. What blessings accompany sanctification?

A. Union with Christ; Heb. ii. 11. For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. And right to the inheritance; Acts xx. 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Q. 8. What is the first lesson from hence?

A. That they are enemies to their own souls, who obey not the gospel call; 2 Thes. i. 8. In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 9. What is the second lesson from hence?

A. That the estate of believers abounds with spiritual privileges; 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Q. 10. What is the third lesson from hence?

A. That all the believer's privileges are not in hope, but some in hand; 1 John iii. 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Q. 11. What is the fourth lesson from hence?

A. The greatest sufferers for Christ have no reason to repent their call; Rom. viii. 18. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.

Q. 12. What is the last lesson from hence?

A. That we have infinite reason to bless God for the gospel, by which we are called; 2 Thes. ii. 14. Whereunto he called you by our gospel.

Of Justification.

Quest. 33. **W**HAT is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q. 1. What are the parts of justification?

A. It consists of two parts. First, The pardon of sin; Acts xiii. 39. And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Secondly, The acceptance of our persons as righteous; Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. Therefore 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, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Q. 2. Whose act is it to justify sinners?

A. It is the act of God alone; Rom. viii. 33. It is God that justifieth. Man's justifying of himself is nothing; Luke xvi. 15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed amongst men, is abomination in the sight of God. Nor other men's justifying of us; Rev. iii. 1. I know thy works, that thou hast a name to live, and art dead.

Q. 3. Is there any thing in man to merit his justification?

A. No; it is an act of free grace in God; Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.

Q. 4. If it be not for any inherent righteousness; how then?

A. It is for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us; Rom. iv. 6. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.

Q. 5. How is Christ's righteousness made ours?

A. By application of it to us by faith; Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Q. 6. Is it not partly by Christ's righteousness made ours, and partly our own?

A. No; by Christ's righteousness, without any mixture of ours; Rom. iii. 28. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Q. 7. But doth not James say otherwise, James ii. 14. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works; Can faith save him?

A. The two apostles contradict not one another; Paul speaks of .

justification before God; and James of justifying our faith before men.

Q. 8. Is no regard then to be had to good works?

A. Yes, very great; they that believe must be careful to maintain good works; Tit. iii. 8. That they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

Q. 9. Why can none be justified by works?

A. Because all are guilty before God; Rom. iii. 29. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also. And the law curses all that are under guilt; Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Q. 10. What is the first inference from hence?

A. The happy state of believers who are now at peace with God; Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And whom he justifieth he glorifieth. Rom. viii. 30. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Q. 11. What is the second inference from hence?

A. The excellency and necessity of faith; Rom. iii. 30. The circumcision is justified by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.

Q. 12. What is the third inference?

A. That the greatness of sin is no bar to faith, since it is the righteousness of Christ that justifieth; 2 Cor. v. 21. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him.

Q. 13. What is the last inference?

A. That believers ought to be exceeding humble, and far from boasting. The law of faith excludes boasting; Rom. iii. 27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded: By what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith.

Of Adoption.

Quest. 34. **W**HAT is adoption?

A. *Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.*

Q. 1. How many sorts of sons are there?

A. There is one by generation, and another by adoption; John i. 12, 13. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Q. 2. What moves God to adopt any man?

A. Nothing but his free love; 1 John iii. 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Q. 3. Is this privilege common to all men ?

A. No ; it is peculiar to them that receive him ; John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.

Q. 4. What is the first property of adoption ?

A. It is a costly relation ; Gal. iv. 4. When the fulness of 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.

Q. 5. What is the second property of adoption ?

A. It is an high and honourable relation ; 1 John iii. 1. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Q. 6. What is the third property of adoption ?

A. It is a free relation on God's part ; Eph. i. 4, 5. According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. And it makes us free ; John viii. 36. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Q. 7. What is the fourth property of adoption ?

A. It is a permanent relation ; John viii. 35. The Son abideth in the house for ever.

Q. 8. What is the first privilege of the adoption ?

A. They have an interest in God, as children in a father ; 2 Cor. vi. 18. And I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Q. 9. What is the second privilege ?

A. Being God's sons, they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; Rom. viii. 17. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Q. 10. What was the third privilege ?

A. Seasonable and sanctified afflictions ; Heb. xii. 6. He scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Q. 11. What is the fourth privilege ?

A. The attendance and ministry of angels ; Heb. i. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?

Q. 12. What is the fifth privilege ?

A. The assistance of the Spirit in prayer ; Rom. viii. 15. For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. And God's audience of their prayers ; 1 John v. 14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, That if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

Q. 13. What use should we make of this ?

A. It teacheth us to carry ourselves as children to our heavenly Father. *First*, In our imitation of him; Eph. v. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children. *Secondly*, In our submission to him; Heb. xii. 9. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? *Thirdly*, In our dependence on him; Matth. v. 32. For your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things.

Of Sanctification.

Quest. 35. **W**HAT is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q. 1. What are the parts of sanctification?

A. Dying unto sin, and living unto God; Rom. vi. 11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Q. 2. Who is the Author of sanctification?

A. God only; Jude ver. 1. To them that are sanctified by God the Father.

Q. 3. What is the instrument of it?

A. The word of God; John xvii. 17. sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

Q. 4. What part of man is sanctified?

A. Every part, both of soul and body; 1 Thess. v. 23. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 5. Is sanctification perfected at once?

A. No; but by degrees; 2 Pet. iii. 18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Q. 6. When will it be made perfect?

A. When we come to heaven, and not before; 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Q. 7. What are the signs of true sanctification?

A. When it runs into all parts of our conversation; 1 Pet. i. 15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. *Secondly*, And continues to the end; Rev. xxii. 11. Let him that is holy be holy still.

Q. 8. What is the inseparable companion of sanctification?

A. Righteousness towards men; Luke i. 74, 75. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness, and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

Q. 9. What is opposite to sanctification?

A. All filthiness of flesh and spirit; 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

Q. 10. What is the privilege of the sanctified?

A. They are all elected, and shall be glorified; 1 Pet. i. 2, 4. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit—to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

Q. 11. What is the case of them who live and die unsanctified?

A. They shall never see God; Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness; without which no man shall see the Lord.

Q. 12. What differenceth true from pretended sanctification?

A. True sanctification purgeth the heart from the love of sin; Rom. vii. 15. For that which I do, I allow not. And the life from the dominion of sin; Rom. vi. 19. As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

Q. 13. May great sinners be sanctified?

A. Yes; the Spirit of God can sanctify the vilest heart; 1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.

Of Assurance, the Fruit of Justification.

Quest. 36. **W**HAT are the benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. *The benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.*

Q. 1. Is assurance possible to be attained in this life?

A. Yes; for some have had it; Cant. vi. 3. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. And all Christians are commanded to strive for it; 2 Pet. i. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence, to make your calling and election sure.

Q. 2. How many sorts of assurance are there?

A. There is an objective assurance; 2 Tim. ii. 19. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And a subjective or personal assurance; Gal. ii. 20. Who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Q. 3. Is personal assurance perfect in this life?

A. No; It admits of doubts and fears, which interrupts it, and it is not always at one height; 1 Cor. xiii. 10. When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Q. 4. On what testimony is personal assurance built?

A. Upon the testimony of God's Spirit witnessing with ours;

Rom. viii. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that are the children of God.

Q. 5. Doth the Spirit make use of signs in us to assure us?

A. Yes; ordinarily he doth; 1 John iii. 14. We know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. And ver. 24. Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Q. 6. How is true assurance discerned from presumption?

A. True assurance humbles the soul; Gal. ii. 20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And makes the soul afraid of sin; 2 Cor. vii. 1. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Q. 7. What is the usual season of assurance?

A. The time of greatest sufferings for Christ; 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.

Q. 8. Is personal assurance absolutely necessary to salvation?

A. No; a man may be saved, and in Christ, without it; Isa. l. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

Q. 9. What is the fruit of assurance?

A. Joy unspeakable amidst outward troubles; Rom. v. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Q. 10. What sins usually eclipse our assurance?

A. Negligence in duty starves it; 2 Pet. i. 10. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: For if you do these things ye shall never fall. And sinning against light, stabs it; Psalm li. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Q. 11. What is the first inference from this doctrine?

A. That no unregenerate person can have any assurance; for it is the fruit of justification, adoption, and sanctification.

Q. 12. What is the second inference?

A. That all the joys of heaven are not to come; but some communicated in this life; 1 Pet. i. 8. Whom having not seen ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Q. 13. What is the third inference?

A. That assured believers need to be circumspect persons, that they grieve not the Spirit; Eph. iv. 30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Of Peace of Conscience.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT doth the word peace signify in scripture?

A. In the language of the Old Testament it signifies all temporal good; 1 Sam. xxv. 6. Peace be both to thee, and peace be in thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast. And in the New Testament all special good; as 2 Thess. iii. 16. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always.

Q. 2. What are the kinds of special peace?

A. There is a twofold peace; one without us, by reconciliation; Rom. v. 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. And peace within us, by way of consolation; Col. iii. 15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

Q. 3. What did our peace cost Christ?

A. It cost him bloody stripes and sufferings; Isa. liii. 5. The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed.

Q. 4. Can none have true peace but such as are in him?

A. No; others may have false peace; Luke xi. 21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. But believers only have true peace; Rom. v. 1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 5. Have all believers peace in their consciences at all times?

A. No, they are always in a state of peace, but have not always the sense of peace; Isa. l. 10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

Q. 6. What is that which hinders the sense of peace in believers?

A. Their sins against the Lord, and grieving of his Spirit; Isa. lix. 2. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Q. 7. What maintains the state of peace when the sense of peace is lost?

A. Christ's continual and potent intercession with the Father for us; 1 John ii. 12. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Q. 8. What is the best way to maintain our peace with God?

A. Strict walking by gospel rules; Gal. vi. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.

Q. 9. Doth this peace come and go with outward peace?

A. No; we may enjoy this when no peace is to be had in the world; John xvi. 33. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

Q. 10. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That the wicked are in a sad case at all times, but especially in evil times; 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.

Q. 11. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. That the chief care of a Christian should be to keep his peace with God; Jer. xvii. 17. Be not a terror to me; thou art my hope in the day of evil.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction from hence?

A. Let the saints long to be in heaven, the state of full and perfect peace; Isa. lvii. 2. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

Of Joy in the Holy Ghost.

Quest. 1. **H**OW many sorts of joy are there among men?

A. There is a sensitive joy; Acts xiv. 17. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. A sinful joy; Prov. xv. 21. Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom. And a spiritual joy; Rom. v. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. 2. Why is spiritual joy called joy in the Holy Ghost?

A. Because the Holy Ghost is the author of it; Gal. v. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c.

Q. 3. What is the first thing begets joy in the saints?

A. The first thing they joy in is, their justification before God; Isa. lxi. 10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robes of righteousness. Rom. v. 11. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Q. 4. What is the second thing that breeds this joy?

A. Hope of glory breeds joy in the saints; Rom. v. 2. And rejoice, in hope of the glory of God.

Q. 5. What is the instrument by which the Spirit conveys this joy?

A. Faith is the instrument of it; Phil. i. 25. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.

Q. 6. What is the first property of this joy?

A. It is joy unspeakable, and full of glory; 1 Pet. i. 8. Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Q. 7. What is the second property of it?

A. That it is not in the power of men to deprive the saints of it; John xvi. 22. And your joy no man taketh from you.

Q. 8. What is the third property of it?

A. It makes the soul free and cheerful in the ways of obedience;

Psal. cxix. 32. I will run the ways of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

Q. 9. What is most destructive to a Christian's joy?

A. Sin, especially sin against light; Psal li. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Q. 10. What should be the main care of a Christian in this world?

A. To maintain his joy in God to the last; Acts xx. 24. But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy.

Q. 11. Have not hypocrites their joys as well as real Christians?

A. Yes; but the joy of the hypocrite is not grounded upon scripture-warrant, and will vanish away, and will come to nothing at last; John v. 35. He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

Q. 12. What is the first inference from hence?

A. Let all that expect joy in the Holy Ghost, see that they preserve purity of conscience and conversation; 2 Cor. i. 12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards.

Q. 13. What is the last inference?

A. That religion is no melancholy thing, but the fountain of all joy and pleasure; Prov. iii. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Of the Increase of Grace.

Quest. 1. **D**OETH all true grace increase and grow?

A. Yes, it doth, like the morning light; Prov. iv. 18. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And for that end God hath appointed ministers and ordinances: Eph. iv. 11, 12. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Q. 2. Cannot false or seeming grace grow?

A. It may spring up, and seem to flourish for a time, but comes not to perfection; Luke viii. 14. And that which fell among thorns, are they, which when they have heard, go forth, and are choaked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Q. 3. What is the first respect in which grace grows?

A. It grows by deeper rooting itself in the soul; Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able, &c.

Q. 4. What is the second respect or manner of its growth?

A. It grows in respect of its greater fitness and readiness for acts

of obedience; Col. i. 11. Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.

Q. 5. What is the third respect or manner of its growth?

A. It grows in respect of its abilities to fix the mind more steadily on spiritual things. Hence grown Christians are called spiritual men; Gal. vi. 1. Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.

Q. 6. Why must all true grace grow?

A. Because there is a stature to which Christians are appointed; Eph. iv. 13. Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Q. 7. What are the causes of a Christian's growth?

A. Union with Christ; John xv. 4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. And his blessings on the ordinances; Isa. lv. 10, 11. 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 to 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. And providences; Phil. i. 19. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayers, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Q. 8. May not true grace sometimes decay?

A. Yes, it may; Rev. ii. 4. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. But not utterly; 1 John iii. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him.

Q. 9. What is the first inference from hence?

A. To bless God for gospel ordinances; Psal. xcii. 13, 14. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.

Q. 10. What is the second inference?

A. Hence we see the miserable state of them that grow worse and worse; Jude, ver. 12. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds: Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the root.

Q. 11. What is the third inference?

A. Christians should not be discouraged at their weakness in grace, for they have a merciful Christ; Isaiah xlii. 3. A bruised reed shall he not break; and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. And a sure promise; Job xvii. 9.

The righteous also shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Q. 12. What is the last inference?

A. That all true Christians draw daily nearer and nearer to the heavenly and perfect state; 2 Cor. iv. 16. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; Rom. xiii. 11. For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Of Perseverance.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is perseverance to the end?

A. It is the steady and constant continuance of Christians in the ways of duty and obedience, amidst all temptations and discouragements to the contrary: Col. i. 23. If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister.

Q. 2. Do all that profess Christ continue in him?

A. No; many that at first zealously profess him, afterwards fall away; John vi. 66. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Q. 3. Why do not all persevere?

A. Because all professors have not a good root and foundation; Matth. xiii. 20, 21. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Q. 4. What is the first ground of the saints perseverance?

A. God's electing love, in which they are given to Christ; John x. 20. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Q. 5. What is the second ground of perseverance?

A. The immortal nature of sanctifying grace; John iv. 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life, 1 John iii. 9. For his seed remaineth in him.

Q. 6. What is the third ground of it?

A. The covenant of grace; Jer. xxxii. 40. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Q. 7. What is the fourth ground of it?

A. Christ's effectual intercession; Luke xxii. 32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.

Q. 8. Are there no declinings of grace in the saints?

A. Yes, there are; Rev. ii. 4. Nevertheless I have somewhat

against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Yet grace cannot be totally or finally lost: For the seed of God remaineth in the sanctified; 1 John iii. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: And he cannot sin; because he is born of God.

Q. 9. Is there no hope of salvation for final apostates?

A. No, the gospel gives none; Heb. x. 38. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

Q. 10. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. It warns all men to lay a good foundation, lest the buildings of hope be over-turned when the storm comes; Matth. vii. 24, 25. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

Q. 11. What is the second instruction?

A. That all men should look to themselves, lest they lose the things which they have wrought; 2 John, verse 8. Look to yourselves, that ye lose not these things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. 1 Cor. x. 12. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Q. 12. What is the last instruction?

A. Let no true Christian be discouraged, how weak soever, for God is able to make him stand; Rom. xv. 4. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.

Of Perfection at Death.

Quest. 37. **W**HAT benefits do believers receive from Christ at their death?

A. *The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.*

Q. 1. What is the state of perfect holiness?

A. It consists in a perfect freedom from sin, or the least inclinations to sin; Eph. v. 27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Q. 2. Wherein else doth perfection consist?

A. It consists in the attainment of the highest measures and degrees of holiness the creature is capable of; Eph. iv. 12, 13. For the perfecting of the saints,—Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Q. 3. Cannot this be attained whilst in the body?

A. No, for here all our graces are imperfect; 2 Cor. xiii. 12. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face. And we

live at a distance from God; 2 Cor. v. 6. Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

Q. 4. How is this attained at death?

A. At death the roots of sin are pulled up out of the believer's nature; Heb. xii. 23. And to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Q. 5. Why must the soul be made perfect at death?

A. Because the purity of the heavenly state admits no sin or imperfection; Rev. xxi. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Q. 6. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That death should be lovely and desirable in the eyes of believers; Phil. i. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

Q. 7. What is the second inference?

A. That God hath provided singular relief for his people that now groan under their sins, and many imperfections; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. For 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.

Q. 8. What is the third inference?

A. That the heavenly state is infinitely above and beyond whatever we enjoy here; 1 Cor. ii. 9. But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Q. 9. What is the fourth inference?

A. That believers are but at a small distance from the satisfaction of all their desires; Rom. xiii. 11. For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

Q. 10. What is the fifth inference?

A. That the saints should earnestly pursue that perfection, even in this imperfect state; Phil. iii. 13, 14. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Q. 11. What is the sixth inference.

A. That death to the saints is better than life; Phil. i. 21. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Q. 12. What is the last inference.

A. That faith is absolutely necessary to entitle us to this perfect state.

Of immediate Glorification.

Quest. 1. **D**O all that die in Christ immediately pass into glory?

A. Yes, they do; Luke xxiii. 43. To day shalt thou be with me in paradise; Phil. i. 23. Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.

Q. 2. What is the first reason for their immediate glorification ?

A. Because heaven is prepared and ready for them ; Matth. xxv. 34. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Q. 3. What is the second reason for it ?

A. Because at death they are as ready for heaven as ever they shall be ; John ix. 4. I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work.

Q. 4. What is the third reason for it ?

A. Because death else could not be gain, as it is, Phil. i. 21. For to me to live is Christ ; and to die is gain.

Q. 5. What is the fourth reason for it ?

A. Because there is the same reason for all, as for any one : But some are immediately glorified ; Luke xxiii. 43. To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

Q. 6. What is the fifth reason for it ?

A. Because Christ longs for their coming to him, and they for his enjoyment ; and these longings are in vain, if not satisfied ; Rev. xxii. 17, 20. And 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 the water of life freely. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Q. 7. What is the first instruction from hence ?

A. That the apparition of departed saints ordinarily are but fables : They wander not ; Rev. iii. 12. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.

Q. 8. What is the second inference ?

A. That Purgatory is a groundless fable, and invention of men ; and the scriptures alleged to countenance it, grossly abused ; 1 Pet. iii. 19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

Q. 9. What is the third inference ?

A. That heaven must needs be a marvellous surprise to believers, how long soever they have conversed with it here.

Q. 10. What is the fourth inference ;

A. The consideration of this should provoke saints to work hard to finish all they have to do on earth ; Eccles. ix. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Q. 11. What is the fifth inference ?

A. That there is no reason to grieve excessively for departed saints ; 1 Thess. iv. 14. Even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

Q. 12. What is the last inference ?

A. That Christless ones are immediately in hell; Luke xvi. 22, 23. The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.

Of Rest in the Grave.

Quest. 1. **W**HY must believers come to the grave ?

A. Because where sin has been, death by the law must follow; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Rom. viii. 10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness.

Q. 2. What is the first privilege of their bodies there ?

A. It is the privilege of their bodies to be there in union with Christ; 1 Thess. iv. 14. Them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.

Q. 3. What is their second privilege ?

A. Their graves are places of rest; not prisons, but beds of rest; Isa. lvii. 2. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

Q. 4. What is the first evil they rest from ?

A. All the toils, and troubles, and afflictions, of this life; Rev. xiv. 13. They may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Q. 5. What is the second evil they rest from ?

A. They rest from all persecutions from men; Job iii. 17. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

Q. 6. What is the third evil they rest from ?

A. They rest from sin, never to feel temptation or inclination to sin; Heb. xii. 23. And to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Q. 7. How long shall the bodies rest in the grave ?

A. Not for ever, but till the day of the resurrection; Job xix. 26. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Q. 8. What is the first inference from hence ?

A. That union with Christ redounds to the singular advantage of the body, as well as the soul; Rom. viii. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Q. 9. What is the second inference ?

A. That death dissolves not the union betwixt Christ and the souls or bodies of his; Mat. xxii. 32. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Q. 10. What is the third inference ?

A. That seeing our bodies are to have so long and so sweet rest in the grave, we should not spare them in God's service now; 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance: Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

Q. 11. What is the fourth inference?

A. That Christians should neither too much fear their own, nor sorrow for others death; Rom. viii. 38, 39. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, —nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. 1 Thess. iv. 13. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

Of the Resurrection.

Quest. 1. **I**S the resurrection a credible doctrine?

A. Yes, it is; Acts xxvi. 8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

Q. 2. Why then doth it seem incredible to man?

A. Because they err, not knowing the scriptures and the power of God; Mark xii. 24. Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God? The power of God assures us it may be so, and the word of God tells it must be so.

Q. 3. Is it sinful to doubt of the doctrine of the resurrection?

A. It is not only a sin to doubt it, but an heresy to deny it, it being a fundamental article; Heb. vi. 2. And of the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor. xv. 13, 14. But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Q. 4. Who must rise again at the resurrection?

A. All men, good and bad, must rise again; Acts xxiv. 15. And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust, Rev. xx. 12, 13, 14. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, &c.

Q. 5. What is the first difference betwixt the resurrection of the just and unjust?

A. Saints rise by virtue of their union with Christ; Rom. viii. 11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you: But the wicked by his power.

Q. 6. What is the second difference?

A. The second and main difference will be in the contrary ends to which they rise; some to life, and some to condemnation; 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.

Q. 7. What is the glory to which saints bodies shall be raised?

A. In the likeness of Christ's glorious body; Phil. iii. 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body.

Q. 8. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That every man should strive to the uttermost to attain to the resurrection of the just; Phil. iii. 10, 11. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Q. 9. What is the second inference?

A. Comfort to them that now groan under manifold distempers, and deformities of body; they being made equal to angels; Mark xii. 25. For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven.

Q. 10. What is the third inference?

A. Get union with Christ by faith, as you expect a joyful resurrection; John xi. 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

Q. 11. What is the fourth inference?

A. Saints should not fear death; Gen. xli. 3. Fear not to go down into Egypt.

Q. 12. What is the last inference?

A. Employ your bodies for good now.

Of Christ's acknowledging Believers.

Quest. 38. **W**HAT benefit do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. *At the resurrection believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged, and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.*

Q. 1. What is it to be acknowledged by Christ?

A. It is Christ's owning of the special relation betwixt him and them; Mat. xxv. 34. Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Q. 2. Whom will Christ acknowledge for his?

A. Such as confess Christ now; Mat. x. 32. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Q. 3. Before whom will Christ confess them?

A. Before his Father, angels and men; Rev. iii. 5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Q. 4. Who shall be denied by Christ in that day ?

A. All that now deny Christ, shall be denied by him ; 2 Tim. ii. 12. If we deny him, he also will deny us, Tit. i. 16. They profess that they know God ; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Q. 5. Why will Christ openly acknowledge them ?

A. To wipe off all aspersions and censures that now are cast upon them ; Isa. lxvi. 5. Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified ; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

Q. 6. What will be the effect of Christ's acknowledgment ?

A. It will put a full end to all doubts, fears and jealousies of themselves ; 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment ; yea, I judge not my own self ; for I know nothing by myself, yet I am not hereby justified ; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord.

Q. 7. What other effect will it produce in them ?

A. Joy unspeakable and transcendent : hence called time of refreshing ; Acts iii. 19. When the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Q. 8. Is this the only time Christ acknowledgeth them ?

A. No ; he acknowledgeth them by his Spirit's testimony now, but that is private in their bosoms ; Rom. viii. 16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God.

Q. 9. What is the first inference from hence ?

A. To warn all how they pass rash censures on Christ's servants ; Psal. lxxiii. 15. If I say, I will speak thus ; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children.

Q. 10. What is the second inference ?

A. Let none be afraid or ashamed to confess the person, office, or any truth of Christ, for any loss or danger that may threaten them ; Luke xii. 8, 9. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God. But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.

Q. 11. What is the third inference ?

A. Let Christians abound in good works. Every act of charity for Christ shall be acknowledged by him in the day of judgment ; Mat. xxv. 35. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

Q. 12. What is the last inference ?

A. Let all Christians love and long for the day of Christ's appearing ; 2 Tim. iv. 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.

Of Christ's acquitting Believers.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is it to be acquitted by Christ?

A. It is to be discharged and cleared from all the guilt of sin, and punishment due to it by the law, upon the account of Christ's righteousness imputed by God, and received by faith; Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Q. 2. How many ways are believers acquitted?

A. They are acquitted now in the court of heaven; Rom. viii. 33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. In the court of their own consciences; 1 John iii. 21. Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. And in the day of judgment: both particular, Heb. ix. 27. As it appeared unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. And general; Acts iii. 19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Their sins are then blotted out.

Q. 3. How doth Christ's acquittance now, differ from that at judgment?

A. They differ in respect of publicness; this is secret in the believer's bosom, and that open before men and angels; Rev. iii. 5. I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Q. 4. What is the second difference?

A. They differ in respect of subjective certainty and assurance. A believer may doubt of this, but not of that; 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5. For I know nothing of myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me, is the Lord; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.

Q. 5. What is the third difference betwixt them?

A. They differ in point of consolation: this way always bears proportion to the certainty of it. Hence that day is called the time of refreshing; when Christ blots out their sins by sentential justification; Acts iii. 19. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

Q. 6. Do believers then lie under condemnation till that day?

A. No; they are truly and fully justified now; John v. 24. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. But this sentence is not yet published by Christ's own mouth, as it shall be then.

Q. 7. On what account shall they be acquitted in that day?

A. On the very same account and score they are now, viz. For the imputed righteousness of Christ in the way of free grace; Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Q. 8. Must the saints be summoned to Christ's bar in that day?

A. Yes; they must appear as well as others; 2 Cor. v. 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. But not to the same end; John v. 29. And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Q. 9. What is the first inference hence?

A. How sure is a believer's justification, being so ratified privately and publicly in this world, and that to come.

Q. 10. What is the second inference?

A. Though the day of judgment be awfully solemn, it should not be dreadful to believers: they should look for, and hasten to the coming of the day of God; 2 Pet. iii. 12. Looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, &c.

Q. 11. What is the third inference?

A. That faith is a grace of absolute necessity, and unspeakable excellency; Rom. v. 1, 2. Therefore 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.

Q. 12. What is the last inference?

A. All unbelievers are in a miserable state now; John iii. 18. He that believeth not, is condemned already. And worse in the world to come; Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Of the full enjoyment of God.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT doth perfect blessedness suppose and imply?

A. It supposes the total freedom of believers from all the moral evil of sin; Eph. v. 27. That he might present you to himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. And from all the penal evils of suffering; Rev. xxi. 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

Q. 2. What else is implied in perfect blessedness?

A. It implies the full and perfect enjoyment of God; 1 Cor. xv. 28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Q. 3. What is it for God to be all in all?

A. It implies three things in it. *First*, That all the saints shall be filled and satisfied from God alone. *Secondly*, That there shall be no need of other things out of which they were wont to fetch comfort. *Thirdly*, That all other things, as heaven, angels, saints, shall be loved and enjoyed in God.

Q. 4. In what respect shall they enjoy God in heaven?

A. They shall have the glorious and immediate presence of God with them; Rev. xxi. 3. God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

Q. 5. In what other respects shall they enjoy God?

A. They shall see him as he is; 1 John iii. 2. We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Q. 6. What will such a vision of God produce?

A. It will produce perfect conformity in them to God; 1 John iii. 2. When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And perfect joy will result from hence; Psalm. xvi. 11. In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Q. 7. Do not the saints enjoy God here?

A. Yes, they do; but not so as they shall enjoy him in heaven; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Q. 8. What are the special differences between the saints communion with God here, and that in heaven?

A. Their communion with God here is clogged with sin; Rom. vii. 21. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. Here it is not constant; Psalm xxii. 1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Nor is it satisfying; but in heaven it will be pure, constant, and satisfying.

Q. 9. How long shall they here enjoy God?

A. Not for days, years, ages, but for ever and ever; 1 Thess. iv. 17. And so shall we be ever with the Lord.

Q. 10. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That the world is not the place of the saints rest and satisfaction; Heb. iv. 9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 2 Cor. v. 2, 6. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven: therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.

Q. 11. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. That death is a singular benefit to the saints; and though it be an enemy to nature, yet it is the medium to glory; 2 Cor. v. 4. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Q. 12. What is the third instruction from hence?

A. The necessity of faith and regeneration in this world. None shall be raised up in glory, acknowledged, acquitted, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God, but believers; Rom. viii. 30. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified,

them he also glorified. Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Of Man's Duty to God.

Quest. 39. **W**HAT is the duty that God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

Q. 1. Is obedience to God's will the duty of every man?

A. It is unquestionably the duty of every man to obey the will of God, so far as he hath made it known to him; Micah vi. 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.

Q. 2. On what account is man's obedience due to God?

A. It is due to him, First, as he is our Creator, in whom we live, and move, and have our being; Acts xvii. 27, 28. Secondly, As he is our Benefactor, from whom we receive all our mercies; Deut. xxviii. 47. 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, thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things. Thirdly, As he is our Lord, and lawgiver; James iv. 12. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.

Q. 3. Is obedience due to none but God only?

A. Yes; subjects must obey their lawful magistrates; Rom. xiii. 1. Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; The powers that be are ordained of God. People their ministers; Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account. Children their parents; Eph. vi. 1. Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. But not as they are to obey God.

Q. 4. What is the difference betwixt our obedience to God's commands, and men's?

A. We are to obey God, chiefly and supremely, for his own sake, but creatures secondarily, and for God's sake; 1 Pet. ii. 13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of men for the Lord's sake. And Eph. vi. 1. Children obey your parents [in the Lord,] for this is right.

Q. 5. What must we do when the commands of God and men fall cross to one another?

A. In that case we must yield our obedience to God, and not to man, whatever we suffer for it; Acts iv. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

Q. 6. Why must we obey God rather than man?

A. Because God is the supreme and sovereign Lord of our consciences; and no creature hath power to command our obedience but in and from him; Isa. xxxii. 22. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.

Q. 7. Have the people liberty to compare the laws of God and men, and judge how they agree or differ?

A. Yes; their judgment of discretion is both commanded; 1 Cor. i. 10, 15. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. And commended; Acts xvii. 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Q. 8. What is the only rule for our obedience to God?

A. The will of God revealed in the scriptures is our only rule of obedience; Isa. viii. 20. To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Q. 9. But if a man have a voice, a vision, or a dream, seeming to hint the secret will of God, may he not obey it?

A. Yes; if it be consonant to the revealed will of God in the word, otherwise not; Deut. xxix. 29. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed, belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

Q. 10. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That it is highly sinful and dangerous to disobey the known will of God in any thing; Rom. i. 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Luke xii. 47. And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

Q. 11. What is the second instruction?

A. That is a blessed man, who conscientiously labours to obey the will of God, so far as he can discover it; John xiii. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. Gal. vi. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.

Q. 12. What is the third inference?

A. It is highly sinful and dangerous to command others, or obey commands from others, which are not according to God's command; Hosea v. 11. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment. Jer. vii. 31. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

Of the Moral Law.

Quest. 40. and 41. **W**HAT did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

Q. 41. Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

Q. 1. Is every man under the direction and obligation of law?

A. Yes; man being a reasonable creature, is capable of, and fitted for government by law, which other creatures are not; and being an accountable creature to God, must needs be under a law; Rom. ii. 15. Which shew the works of the law written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.

Q. 2. How could man be under a law before the law was given by Moses?

A. Before ever the law was given at Sinai, all the race of Adam had a law written in their hearts, viz. the light of reason, and dictates of natural conscience; Rom. ii. 14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. And besides this, the church had the revealed will of God to direct them; 2 Pet. i. 19, 20. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

Q. 3. What is the meaning of the moral law?

A. It is not a law to direct and order our manners; but a law that binds universally and perpetually, as the ten commandments do those to whom they are promulged, and the light of nature doth all others; Rom. ii. 14. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Luke xvi. 17. It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Q. 4. Why is it said to be summarily comprehended in the ten commandments?

A. Because much more is included in every command than is express, as our Saviour shews in his exposition of it; Mat. xxii. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Q. 5. Doth the moral law bind Christians under the gospel?

A. Yes, it doth, as a rule to order their conversations by; Jam. ii. 8, 9, 10. If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors; for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.

Q. 6. Is the moral law the same thing with the covenant of works, and imposed for the same end?

A. God never designed the law to be the way of man's justifica-

tion since the fall; Gal. iii. 21, 22. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid! for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law; but the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But it was promulgated to convince man of sin; Rom. vii. 7. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid! Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. And bring them to Christ; Gal. iii. 24. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Q. 7. What is the first inference from hence?

A. Hence we learn the abominable nature of Popery. The Pope being that lawless one, who will not be bound by the laws of God himself; 2 Thess. ii. 8. Then shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; but assumes power to dispense with God's laws to others.

Q. 8. What is the second inference hence?

A. That man dieth not as beasts die; which are under no moral law, and therefore capable of no sin; but must come to judgment after death; Eccl. iii. 21. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? Heb. ix. 27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, so after this the judgment.

Q. 9. What is the third inference hence?

A. That though the actions of men naturally considered are transient, yet their consequences and effects are permanent; an act is soon done, a word soon spoken, a thought soon thought; but when done, spoken, or thought, they are placed to account; Gal. vi. 7, 8. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.

Q. 10. What is the fourth inference from hence?

A. That God will proceed with men by different rules in the day of judgment, according to the different laws they lived under in this world; Rom. ii. 12. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.

Q. 11. What is the fifth inference from hence?

A. That those who have sinned against the clearest light, and best helps, will, if they die impenitent, be judged to the greatest misery; Matth. xi. 23. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have

remained until this day. Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.

Q. 12. What is the sixth inference from hence?

A. That we are to prize the moral law highly, as a rule of life; Ps. cxix. 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path: So are we to bless God for the gospel dispensation, by which only we can attain to justification and salvation; Heb. xii. 22. But ye are come to mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels.

Of love to God and Man.

Quest. 42. **W**HAT is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. *The sum of the ten commandments is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.*

Q. 1. What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. To love the Lord our God with a supreme love, and men with a sincere love, in and for him; Mat. xxii. 37, 38. Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment: The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. 2. What is the first thing contained in our supreme love to God?

A. It implies the loving of God purely and absolutely for himself. The excellencies that are in him; Cant. i. 3. Thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love thee. And the benefits we receive from him; Psal. cxvi. 1. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.

Q. 3. What is the second property of this supreme love?

A. Supreme love denotes the whole man to God and Christ: So that in life and death that man designs the glory of God as his main end; Rom. xiv. 7, 8. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.

Q. 4. What is the third property of supreme love?

A. It causes the soul to depreciate and slight all other things in comparison of God's glory, and an interest in Christ; Acts xx. 24. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy; Phil. iii. 8. I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

Q. 5. What is the fourth property of supreme love?

A. It centers the soul in God as its only rest; Psal. cxvi. 7. Return unto thy rest, O my soul. And cannot be satisfied till it come to the full enjoyment of him; 2 Thess. iii. 5. And the Lord direct

your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Q. 6. Why must we love God with a supreme love ?

A. Because such a love only suits the transcendent excellency of God ; commands all we are and have for God ; and is the only love that will continue to the end ; Rom. viii. 35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?

Q. 7. What is it to love our neighbour as ourselves.

A. It is the exact observation and practice of the golden rule of Christ ; Matth. vii. 12. Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets.

Q. 8. Are all men to be loved alike, and with the same degree of love ?

A. No ; though we must love all men with the love of benevolence, yet the saints only with the love of complacency ; Ps. xvi. 3. But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. Ps. xv. 4. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned ; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. And to such we must especially do good ; Gal. vi. 10. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Q. 9. What is the first instruction from hence ?

A. Hence we learn the excellency of divine love. Moses expresses the whole duty of man in ten commandments : Christ hangs the whole law upon these two, love to God and our neighbour ; Mark xii. 30, 31. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength : This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself : There is none other commandment greater than these. And the apostle reduces these two into one ; Gal. v. 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even this.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. 10. What is the second inference from hence ?

A. It convinces the holiest of men how far short they come in their obedience to the rule of duty, and therein the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, Gal. iii. 24.

Q. 11. What is the third inference from hence ?

A. It discovers the excellency and perfection of the law of God ; Psal. xix. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : And that we are highly to honour and magnify it as a rule of duty, though we must utterly renounce it as the way of our justification.

Q. 12. What is the last inference from hence ?

A. That there is nothing too dear for a Christian in this world, but he must give it up by self-denial, when it comes in competition with his supreme love to God ; Luke xiv. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and

brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; i. e. Love them less than me.

Of the Preface to the ten Commandments.

Quest. 43. **W**HAT is the preface to the ten commandments?

A. *The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

Q. 44. What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?

A. *The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.*

Q. 1. Why doth God use arguments and inducements to win men to the obedience of his laws?

A. Because he loves to work on man as a rational creature, according to the principles of his nature; Hos. xi. 4. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: And because he delights in none but free and cheerful obedience; Psal. cx. 3. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

Q. 2. What is the first argument in this preface?

A. It is the sovereignty of the Lawgiver, [I am the Lord,] which should awe the heart of every man to obedience; James iv. 12. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.

Q. 3. What is the second argument to obedience?

A. Our propriety in God by covenant, [I am the Lord thy God;] this obligeth to obedience, and aggravateth disobedience; Psal. l. 7. Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee; I am God, even thy God. Hos. ix. 1. For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God.

Q. 4. What is the third argument unto obedience?

A. The benefits of redemption that they receive from God. Benefits persuade to duty; and the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance, Rom. ii. 4.

Q. 5. How can deliverance out of Egypt be an argument to them that never were in Egypt?

A. As that deliverance was a type of our deliverance, so it is an argument to us, and an argument from the less to the greater; for it obligeth us more than them; Luke i. 74, 75. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Q. 6. What is that deliverance we have? and how doth it oblige us to obedience?

A. Our deliverance is not from Egypt, but from hell; Col. i. 13. Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. And our persons are bought by the Redeemer to glorify God; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. What

know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you? For ye are bought with a price: Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Q. 7. Is it not mercenary to serve God upon the account of benefits received, or to be received?

A. He that maketh religious duties mediums to attain carnal advantages only, is of a worse than mercenary spirit; Hosea vii. 14. And they have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds: They assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me. But to be quickened by mercy to duty is not mercenary, but evangelical; Hosea iii. 5. They shall fear the Lord, and his goodness.

Q. 8. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That great is the condescension of God to man, that he will use arguments to induce him to obedience, who might exact it only by his sovereignty, and justly damn us for our disobedience; 2 Cor. v. 20. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Q. 9. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That the more mercy any receive from God, the more obligations are laid on them to obey him; Psalm cxvi. 1, 2. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, and my supplications: Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Q. 10. What is the third inference from hence?

A. The more mercies and favours any man sins against, the greater is that man's sin, and the sorer will be his punishment; Amos iii. 2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

Q. 11. What is the fourth inference from hence?

A. That God's expectations are greater, where his mercies and favours have been so; Isa. v. 4. 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.

Q. 12. What is the last inference from hence?

A. That memorials of God's mercies are to be kept by us, to provoke us to constant and cheerful duties of obedience; Exod. xvii. 14. And the Lord said unto Moses, write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua. Psal. ciii. 2, 3. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Of the first Commandment.

Quest. 45. **W**HICH is the first commandment?

A. *The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

Q. 1. What is the first duty enjoined in the first commandment ?

A. It is to know and acknowledge the existence or being of God, and consequently condemns all atheism, both in judgment and practice; Heb. xi. 6. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Ps. xiv. 1. The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.

Q. 2. What is the second duty of the first commandment ?

A. It requires all men to know and acknowledge the unity of God; Deut. vi. 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And condemns polytheism, or plurality of gods; 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many;) but to us there is but one God.

Q. 3. Whence sprang the opinion of more gods than one at first in the world ?

A. It sprang from ignorance of God's omnipresence and omnipotence. Hence came their vain imaginations; Rom. i. 21. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. They thought the presence and power of God might reach one place, and not another; 1 Kings xx. 23. And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we: But let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

Q. 4. What were the first creatures worshipped as gods ?

A. Probably the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars, because of their splendour and influences. These as heralds, do proclaim God to the world; Ps. xix. 1, 2. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work: Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. And these messengers of God were mistaken for God himself; Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28. 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, for I should have denied the God that is above.

Q. 5. What doth these words [before me] import ?

A. It notes God's perfect knowledge and abhorrence of all idolatry, or worshipping of another God, as what he cannot endure to behold; Jer. xliv. 3, 4. Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense to serve other gods whom they knew not, neither they, you, nor your fathers. Howbeit, I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early, and sending them, saying, Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate.

Q. 6. Are none guilty of this sin but heathenish idolaters ?

A. Yes; all that place their supreme love or trust in any creature,

make that creature their god ; and in scripture are called idolaters, Col. iii. 5. And covetousness, which is idolatry. Phil. iii. 19. Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.

Q. 7. How doth the idolatry forbidden in the first, differ from that forbidden in the second commandment.

A. The idolatry forbidden in the first commandment is a sin respecting the object of worship, when we set up any thing in the place of God, which by nature is not God ; Gal. iv. 8. Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But that against the second commandment is, when we pretend to worship the true God, but do it by such means, and in such a manner as he hath not required, or hath forbidden ; Exod. xxxii. 4. And he received them at their hands, and fashioned it with a graven tool, after he had made it a molten calf ; and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Q. 8. What is the first inference from the first commandment ?

A. That it is a special mercy to be brought forth in a land where the true God is known and worshipped ; Psal. cxlvii. 20. He hath not dealt so with any nation ; and as for his judgments, they have not known them ; praise ye the Lord.

Q. 9. What is the second inference from the first commandment ?

A. That it is a great and dreadful sin to live without the worship of God in the world ; Eph. ii. 12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Q. 10. What is the third inference from the first commandment ?

A. That Christians must not comply with idolatrous and superstitious worship, when they are cast into idolatrous places, how great soever the danger be ; Psal. xvi. 4. Their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another god ; their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their name into my lips.

Q. 11. What is the fourth inference from hence ?

A. That supreme love, fear, and trust of the soul, is God's peculiar right and due. Whosoever places them on any other besides God, is guilty of a very heinous and great sin against him ; 1 John ii. 15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world : If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Compared with Job xxxi. 24,—28. If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, thou art my confidence ; this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge ; for I should have denied the God that is above.

Q. 12. What is the fifth inference from hence ?

A. That God's eye discovers the closest idolatry in the world,

whether it be in secret actions; Ezek. viii. 12. Hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark? Every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, the Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth. Or inward affections; Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Q. 13. What is the sixth inference from hence?

A. That an high and full condition in the world, is a dangerous condition, and lies most exposed to the danger of heart-idolatry; Prov. xxx. 9. Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? Mark x. 24. How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven?

Q. 14. What is the last inference?

A. That in covenanting with God, and avouching him for our God, we must wholly renounce all others, and take God alone for our portion, and object of our love and dependence; Hosea iii. 3. Thou shalt not be for another man; so will I also be for thee. Luke xiv. 33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Of the second Commandment.

Quest. 49. **W**HICH is the second commandment?

A. *The second commandment is, [Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.]*

Quest. 50. What is required in the second commandment?

A. *The second commandment requireth, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word.*

Quest. 51. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. *The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.*

Quest. 52. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. *The reasons annexed to the second commandment, are God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.*

Q. 1. What is the sin especially forbidden in the second commandment?

A. *The sin here forbidden, is the corruption of God's worship, by making any similitude of any person in the Godhead, and performing*

divine worship before it, or to it; Exod. xxxii. 8. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: They have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, these be thy gods O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Deut. iv. 15, 16. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire) lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female.

Q. 2. What is the second sin forbidden in this commandment?

A. The second sin against this commandment is will-worship, consisting in the addition of man's inventions to the worship of God, as a part thereof; Matth. xv. 9. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Col. ii. 20, 21, 22, 23. Whereof if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances. (Touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Q. 3. But if those additions be for the more decent worshipping of God, is it not allowed by 1 Cor. xiv. 40. Let all things be done decently, and in order?

A. No; that scripture commands that God's institutions be regularly and decently performed, but not that we invent ceremonies that are symbolical, to make them more decent than Christ left them.

Q. 4. Why is the second commandment left out in all the public offices of the popish church?

A. Because it expressly condemns their idolatrous images, kneeling at the sacrament, prayers to saints, and all their superstitious crosses, surplices, and chrisme, as sinful.

Q. 5. Do they not clear themselves from idolatry, by telling us they only worship God before, or by them, but not the images themselves?

A. No, they do not; for the use of images in God's worship is expressly condemned in this commandment; as if this would excuse the papists, it had also excused the Israelite in worshipping the calf, Exod. xxxii. 4.—And they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.

Q. 6. What is the first reason annexed to the second commandment?

A. The first reason annexed is God's sovereignty, *I the Lord*; which shews that it belongs to God only to institute his own worship, and make it effectual; and therefore to do that in his worship which he never commanded, is sinful and dangerous; Jer. vii. 31. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the

son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

Q. 7. What is the second reason annexed to the second commandment?

A. The second reason is God's propriety in us: He is our God, and we belong to him; and therefore to corrupt his worship, greatly aggravates our sins; Hosea ix. 1. Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people; for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, &c.

Q. 8. What is the third reason annexed to the second commandment?

A. The jealousy of God over his worship and worshippers; so that this sin of corrupting his worship will dreadfully incense his wrath, as it did, Lev. x. 1, 2. And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire thereon, and offered strange fire, before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

Q. 9. What is the first instruction from the second commandment?

A. That it is an heinous sin to neglect the worship of God in that manner he hath appointed us to worship him, as in prayer; Jer. x. 25. Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name. Hearing the word; Prov. xxviii. 9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

Q. 10. What is the second instruction from the second commandment.

A. That those who suffer for endeavouring to preserve the purity of God's ordinances, and nonconformity to the contrary injunctions of men, have a good warrant to bear them out in all such sufferings; Deut. iv. 2. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction from the second commandment?

A. That it is highly sinful and dangerous to innovate and prescribe by human authority such symbolical rites in the worship of God, as he never appointed or allowed in his word; Matth. xv. 9. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Q. 12. What is the fourth instruction hence?

A. Hence we learn how much parents and children are obliged to worship God constantly, spiritually, and agreeably to his will revealed in his word; otherwise the jealousy of God will visit them both in the way of judgment: For as obedience entails a blessing, so disobedience entails a curse on posterity; Exod. xxxiv. 14. For thou shalt

worship no other god; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Of the third Commandment.

Quest. 53. **W**HICH is the third commandment?

A. *The third commandment is, [Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.]*

Quest. 54. What is required in the third commandment?

A. *The third commandment requireth the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, words, and works.*

Quest. 55. What is forbidden in the third commandment?

A. *The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known.*

Quest. 56. What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?

A. *The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.*

Q. 1. How doth this commandment differ from the first and second?

A. The first hath respect to the object of worship, forbidding us to worship any other but God. The second respects the means of worship, forbidding us to worship God by any other means than what he hath prescribed. But the third respects the manner of his worship, forbidding all careless, or profane use of his name, and commanding an holy reverence from us in all our solemn addresses to him, or ordinary mention of his name. Mal. i. 6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear! saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name: And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

Q. 2. What is the first thing especially required in the third commandment?

A. It requires the most awful and reverential frame of our hearts in all our approaches to God; Psal. lxxxix. 7. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. And in his worship; John iv. 24. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Q. 3. What is the second thing required in this commandment?

A. It requires truth in our witness-bearing, as knowing God seeth our hearts, and is witness to all that we think or speak; Zech. v. 4. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name, &c.

Q. 4. What is the third thing required in this commandment?

A. That in all our appeals to God in secret, or doubtful matters, we be sure that the appeal be necessary, awful, and true; Jer. xvii. 16. As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee, neither have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee. Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting.

Q. 5. What doth this commandment especially forbid?

A. It forbids and condemns all profane oaths, as most injurious to the name of God, Matth. v. 34, 37.—Swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, &c. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.

Q. 6. What is the danger of profane or false swearing?

A. Such are reckoned enemies to God, Psalm cxxxix. 20. Thine enemies take thy name in vain. The curse of God enters into such families. Zech. v. 4. I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by my name, &c. And the Lord will not hold them guiltless.

Q. 7. What else is forbidden in this commandment?

A. It forbids and condemns all heedless, wandering, and drowsy performance of God's worship; Isa. xxix. 13, 14. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouths, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work, and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. And 2 Kings x. 31. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel, with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Q. 8. What other sin is forbidden in this command?

A. It forbids all light and irreverent use of the scriptures, especially in our jests, or by way of scoffing; Jer. xvii. 15. Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the Lord? Let it come now. Jer. vi. 10.—Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.

Q. 9. By what argument doth God enforce the third commandment on men?

A. That the breakers of this commandment shall surely be punished by the Lord, either in this life, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God: Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and

sore sickness, and of long continuance: Or in that to come, Rom. ii. 5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God: Except they repent and reform.

Q. 10. What is the first instruction from the third commandment?

A. That great and infinite is the patience of God in forbearing and provoking sinners so long as he doth; Rom. ix. 22. What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?

Q. 11. What is the second instruction from hence?

A. That God is to be justified in the severest of his judgments, by which at any time he manifests his displeasure against the profaneness of the world; Hosea iv. 1, 2, 3. Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

Q. 12. What is the third instruction from hence?

A. That God takes special notice of, and greatly delighteth in them that fear and reverence his name; Isa. lxvi. 5. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. Mal. iii. 16.—And a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

Q. 13. What is the last inference from hence?

A. That those parents have much to answer for, that by their examples teach, or by their negligence encourage their children to profane God's name: Jer. v. 7. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods, &c.

Of the Sabbath.

Quest. 57. **W**HICH is the fourth commandment?

A. *The fourth commandment is, [Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger which is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.]*

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God, such set time as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be an holy Sabbath unto the Lord.

Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Q. 1. What special marks of honour hath God set upon this fourth commandment.

A. God hath set four peculiar marks of honour on it.

(1.) It is the largest of all the commands.

(2.) It hath a solemn *memento* prefixed to it.

(3.) It is delivered both positively and negatively, which the rest are not. And,

(4.) It is enforced with more arguments to strengthen the command on us, than any other.

Q. 2. Why will God have a Sabbath on earth?

A. God will have a Sabbath on earth, to give us therein an emblem of that eternal Sabbath in heaven, wherein his people shall be serving him, and praising him without interruption, or mixture of any other business throughout eternity; Heb. iv. 9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Q. 3. For what other reasons will God have a Sabbath?

A. He will have a Sabbath for the honour of his name, Isa. lviii. 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words. For the good of men's souls; Mark ii. 27. And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. And in mercy to the bodies of men and beasts.

Q. 4. Is this commandment moral and perpetual, or ceremonial and temporary?

A. It is, and must needs be moral, and not ceremonial; because all the reasons that enforce it are perpetual, and the Sabbath continued when the ceremonial law ceased, and was vanished; Mat. xxiv. 20. But pray ye, that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day.

Q. 5. What day of the seven is the Christian Sabbath?

A. The first day of the week is our Sabbath, since the resurrection of Christ. This is the day which was foretold to be our Sabbath; Psal. cxviii. 24. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. The Lord hath marked it for himself, by setting his own name on it; Rev. i. 10. I was in the Spirit on the

Lord's day. And the apostles and primitive church constantly set it apart to religious uses and ends; Acts xx. 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, &c. 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Q. 6. When doth the Christian Sabbath begin?

A. It appears that this day is not to be reckoned from evening to evening, but from morning to morning; because the Christian Sabbath must begin when the Jewish Sabbath ended, but that ended towards the morning, Mat. xxviii. 1. In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre.

Q. 7. What is the ground of changing the day?

A. The solemn commemoration of our redemption by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, is the ground of translating the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week: Psal. cxviii. 24. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Mark xvi. 9. Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Q. 8. Is it the whole day, or only some hours of the day, that are set apart for God?

A. Not a part, but the whole day is the Lord's; and it is as dangerous to halve it with God in point of time, as it was for Ananias and Sapphira to halve their dedicated goods, and bring in but a part. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day, is the command.

Q. 9. Is there any other day holy besides this day?

A. No day but this is holy by institution of the Lord; yet days of humiliation and thanksgiving may be lawfully set apart by men on a call of providence; but popish holidays are not warrantable, nor to be observed; Gal. iv. 10. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.

Q. 10. But seeing every day should be a Sabbath to a Christian, what needs any other set time?

A. Though Christians must walk every day with God, yet every day cannot be a Sabbath, because God calls us to other duties on those days, but will have this to be a solemn and entire day to himself.

Q. 11. But if a man scruple the change of the Sabbath, may he not keep both days weekly?

A. No; for then, by doing more than God requires, he breaks a plain command, Six days shalt thou labour.

Q. 12. At what time should Christians be up, and at their duties, on the Lord's day?

A. As early in the morning as their strength will permit, to prepare by private for public duties; yet the public are not to be en-

trenched on by private duties ; Acts x. 33. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Of the Sabbath.

Quest. 60. **H**OW is the Sabbath to be sanctified ?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by an holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. What are the sins forbidden in the fourth commandment ?

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.

Q. 62. What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment ?

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employment, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath-day.

Q. 1. What is the rest which God requires on the Sabbath ?

A. It is not a mere natural or civil, but an holy rest, resembling the rest in heaven, wherein the mind is most active and busy in the work of God, though the body be at rest, and the spirit not wearied with its work ; Rev. iv. 8. and the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Q. 2. May not any works of our civil calling be ordinarily done on that day ?

A. No ; it is sinful to put our hands ordinarily to our callings on that day, and God usually punishes it. Neh. xiii. 15, 16, 17, 18. In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the Sabbath, and bringing up sheaves, and lading asses, as also wine-grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day ; and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath, unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day ? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city ? Yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.

Q. 3. May we not refresh our bodies by recreations, or our minds

by thoughts of earthly business, or discourses, on that day?

A. Recreations of the body, which are lawful on other days, are sinful on this day; and all the recreations of the mind allowed on this day, are spiritual and heavenly; Isa. lviii. 13, 14. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Q. 4. What works may lawfully be done on that day?

A. Christ's example warrants works of necessity, and works of mercy, but no other; Mat. xii. 3, 4. But he said unto them, have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him, How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests. And ver. 7. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, &c.

Q. 5. What are the holy duties of the Sabbath?

A. The public worship of God; in reading, and hearing the word preached. Isa. lxvi. 23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord, Luke iv. 16.—And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood for to read. And prayer; Acts xvi. 13, 14. And on the Sabbath-day we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, &c. And receiving the Sacrament; Acts xx. 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached, &c.

Q. 6. Are private duties in our families required, as well as public, on the Sabbath?

A. Yes; it is not enough to sanctify the Sabbath in public ordinances, but God requires it to be sanctified in family and private duties; Lev. xxiii. 3.—But the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

Q. 7. With what frame of spirit are all Sabbath duties, both public and private, to be performed?

A. They are to be performed with spiritual delight; Isa. lviii. 13. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, &c. And all grudging at, and weariness of spiritual exercises, is a sin forbidden; Mal. i. 13. Ye said also, behold what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts, and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should

I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. Amos viii. 5. When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat? &c.

Q. 8. What is the first reason annexed to this command?

A. The first reason is the sufficient, and large allowance of time God hath given us for our civil callings, and earthly business. Six days in the week is a large allowance.

Q. 9. What is the second reason annexed to this fourth command?

A. The second reason is God's sanctifying and separating this day by a special command and institution for his service; so that to profane this time, is to sin against an express divine command.

Q. 10. What is the third reason annexed to this command?

A. The third reason is God's own example, who rested the seventh day from all his works, and blessed this day, by virtue of which blessing we are encouraged to sanctify it.

Q. 11. Is it not enough to sanctify this day in our own persons?

A. No; if God hath put any under our authority, their profaning the Sabbath will become our sin, though we be never so strict in the observation of it ourselves.

Q. 12. May we continue our civil employment to the last moment of our common time?

A. Except necessity or mercy urge us, we ought to break off before, and allow some time to prepare for the Sabbath, Luke xxiii. 54. And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

Q. 13. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That we have all great cause to be humbled for our Sabbath transgressions, either in our unpreparedness for it, our want of delight and spirituality in it, or the due government of our families as God requires.

Q. 14. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That Christians on the Sabbath-day have a fair occasion and help to realize to themselves the heavenly state, in which they are to live abstract from the world, and God is to be all in all to them.

Of the fifth Commandment.

Quest. 63. **W**HICH is the fifth commandment?

A. *The fifth commandment is, [Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.]*

Quest. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. *The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honour, and performing the duties belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.*

Quest. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. *The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing any*

thing against the honour and duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.

Quest. 66. What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Q. 1. What relatives are directly and more especially concerned in this fifth commandment?

A. All superiors and inferiors are concerned in it; especially, (1.) Political fathers and their children; that is, kings and subjects; Mark xi. 10. Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, &c. (2.) Spiritual fathers, and their children; that is, ministers, and their people; 1 Cor. iv. 15. For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the gospel. (3.) Natural parents, and their children; Eph. vi. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. (4.) All civil superiors and inferiors, as husbands and wives, masters and servants; Eph. v. 22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. And Eph. vi. 5. Servants be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, &c.

Q. 2. What is the duty of political fathers, or magistrates, to their political children, or subjects?

A. It is to rule and govern the people over whom God hath set them with wisdom; 2 Chron. i. 10. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people. Justice; 2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, 7. And he set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city. And he said to the judges, take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment. Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed, and do it, &c. And piety; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. Carefully providing for their souls in every place of their dominion; 2 Chron. xvii. 9. And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people. And for their common outward peace and safety; 2 Chron. xvii. 12. And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly, and he built in Judah castles and cities of store.

Q. 3. What are the duties of subjects to their rulers?

A. It is to pray for them; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. I exhort therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: For kings, and for all that are in authority, &c. To honour them; 1 Pet. ii. 17.—Fear God, honour the king. To obey their just laws; Rom. xiii. 1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, &c. And to pay them the tribute that is due to them; Rom. xiii. 7. Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, &c.

Q. 4. What are the duties of ministers to their people?

A. Their duty is, (1.) To feed their flock constantly with wholesome food; 2 Tim. iv. 2. Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season; rebuke, reprove, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. (2.) To be full of bowels of tender affection to them; 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. (3.) To pray for them, Eph. i. 15, 16. Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. (4.) To watch over them; 1 Pet. v. 2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, &c. And, (5.) To walk as an example of godliness before them; Tit. ii. 7. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works, &c. All which duties require their residence among them; 1 Pet. v. 2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, &c.

Q. 5. What are the people's duties towards their ministers?

A. Their duty is, (1.) To esteem and love them dearly for their work's sake; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. (2.) To attend on the word preached by them, as the word of God; 1 Thess. ii. 13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God. (3.) To pray for them, and the success of their labours; Heb. xiii. 18. Pray for us, &c. (4.) Not to receive light and malicious reports against them; 1 Tim. v. 19. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. (5.) To make a competent and comfortable provision for them; Gal. vi. 6. Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.

Q. 6. What are the duties of natural parents to their children?

A. It is their duty, (1.) To be tenderly, but not fondly affectionate to, and tender over them; Isa. xlix. 15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? (2.) To educate them for God; Eph. vi. 4. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (3.) To restrain their sins by correction; Prov. xxix. 15. The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame. (4.) To provide for their livelihood; 1 Tim. v. 8. But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (5.) To pray daily for them; Job i. 5. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that

Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morn, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts: Thus did Job continually. (6.) To encourage them with endearing language in the way of godliness; Prov. xxxi. 2, 3. The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. What, my son? and what the son of my womb? and what the son of my vows? Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings.

Q. 7. What are the duties of children to parents?

A. Their duty is, (1.) To obey them only in the Lord; Eph. vi. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. (2.) To reverence and honour them; Lev. xix. 3. Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, &c. (3.) To submit to their reproofs and corrections; Heb. xii. 9. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. (4.) To provide for them, if they be poor and needy, and we have ability; Gen. xlvii. 12. And Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families.

Q. 8. What shall children do when parents abuse their authority, by forbidding duty, or commanding sin?

A. In such cases children are to obey God, rather than their parents; Acts iv. 19. But Peter and John answered, and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. But yet to manage their refusals of obedience with all meekness and humility.

Q. 9. What is the first duty of husbands to their wives?

A. The first duty, on which all other duties depend, is cohabitation with them; 1 Pet. iii. 7. Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them, according to knowledge, &c. And nothing can make this duty void, but a lawful divorce for adultery; Mat. v. 31, 32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery, &c.

Q. 10. What is the husband's second duty to his wife?

A. True and hearty love to soul and body; Eph. v. 25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. Evidencing itself in careful provision for them; 1 Cor. vii. 33. But he that is married, careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. But especially to their souls, in winning them to Christ; 1 Cor. vii. 16. Or, how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? And building them up in Christ; 1 Pet. iii. 7. Likewise ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

Q. 11. What are the duties of wives to their husbands?

A. It is their duty. (1.) to be in subjection to their own husbands;

Eph. v. 22, 23. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord: For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. (2.) To reverence them; Eph. v. 33. And the wife see that she reverence her husband. (3.) To express their reverence in suitable words and actions; 1 Pet. iii. 6. Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, &c. (4.) To be faithful to them; Prov. xxxi. 12. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. (5.) To adorn their relation with meekness, and quietness of spirit; 1 Pet. iii. 4. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Q. 12. What are the duties of servants to their masters?

A. It is their duty, (1.) To be faithful in all things committed to their charge; Tit. ii. 10. Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, &c. (2.) To honour them in all respectful words and carriages; 1 Tim. vi. 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, &c. (5.) To bear patiently their rebukes; 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

Q. 13. What is the first duty of masters to their servants?

A. The first duty is to rule over them with gentleness, and not with terror and rigour; Eph. vi. 9. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: Knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.

Q. 14. What is the second duty of masters to their servants?

A. To pay them their wages fully, and without delay; Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it, for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee. And to provide food for them convenient; Prov. xxvii. 27. And thou shalt have goat's milk enough for thy food, for the food of thy household, and for maintenance for thy maidens.

Q. 15. What is the third duty of masters to their servants?

A. The third and principal duty is, to engage them as much as in them lies, to the ways of God, and duties of religion, as Abraham did; Gen. xviii. 19. For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, &c. And Joshua, Josh. xxiv. 15. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Of the sixth Commandment.

Quest. 67. **W**HICH is the sixth commandment?

A. *The sixth commandment is, [Thou shalt not kill.]*

Quest. 68. What is required in the sixth commandment?

A. *The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.*

Quest. 69. What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?

A. *The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.*

Q. 1. What is the natural order of these commandments in the second table?

A. In these commands God begins with the nearest concern of man, which is life; Job ii. 4.—Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life. Next to that his command guards his nearest relative, from whom the best outward comfort is to rise, his wife: Mark x. 8. And they twain shall be one flesh, &c. After that his good name, which is very precious to him; Eccl. vii. 1. A good name is better than precious ointment. And then his goods, which support his life; Isa. iii. 1. For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water.

Q. 2. How far doth this commandment extend itself?

A. It prohibits all cruelty, and commands all help, care, and pity, so far as men's hearts and hands can go, for the relief and preservation of others; Ps. cxix. 96.—But thy commandment is exceeding broad.

Q. 3. Doth this command respect only the outward action, or also the inward passion of the soul?

A. It respects and bridles the inward passion of the soul, as well as outward actions; as hatred, 1 John iii. 15. Whosoever hateth his brother, is a murderer, &c. And causeless anger; Matth. v. 22. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, &c.

Q. 4. Doth this command only respect the lives of others?

A. No; it primarily respects our own lives, and forbids us all things that tend to the shortening and ruin of them; Eph. v. 29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord doth the church.

Q. 5. How many ways may men sin against this command, with respect to their own lives.

A. A man sinneth against his own life, not only by destroying himself, as the jailor would have done; Acts xvi. 27. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled; but by refusing food or physic to preserve life, or macerating our bodies with excessive sorrows; 2 Cor. vii. 10.—But the sorrow of the world worketh death. Or envy at others felicity; Prov. xiv. 30.—But envy, the rottenness of the bones.

Q. 9. How are men guilty of murder with respect to others?

A. Murder, with respect to others, may be either with relation to their bodies; Numb. xxxv. 30. Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death, &c. Or to their souls, which is the most heinous murder in the world; Ezek. iii. 18. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life: the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.

Q. 7. Is all destruction of another's life murder in the account of God?

A. No; It is not, if the life of a person be taken away in the course of justice; Gen. ix. 6. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. Or, in a just and necessary war; Judg. v. 23. Curse ye Meroz, (said the angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Or by pure accident; Deut. xix. 5. As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live. Or in self-defence; Exod. xxii. 2. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.

Q. 8. Is there no other way of breaking this command?

A. Yes there is: Innocents may be murdered under the forms and solemnities both of justice and religion. So Naboth was murdered by Jezebel: 1 Kings xxi. 12, 13. They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: And the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones that he died. And the martyrs by bloody Papists. And this strongly proves a day of judgment; Eccl. iii. 16, 17. And moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there, and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. 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.

Q. 9. Are duels forbidden in this commandment?

A. Yes, they are; for whatever point of honour be touched, or whatever provocation be given, we are not to be our own avengers; Rom. xii. 19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, &c.

Q. 10. What is the first inference hence?

A. That we have great cause to bless God for his protecting law, and for human laws grounded upon his law for the protection of our lives; Rom. xiii. 4.—For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.

Q. 11. What is the second inference hence?

A. That all that are guilty of this sin, have great cause to be hum.

bled and afflicted: For it is a crying sin, Gen. iv. 10.—The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. Yet not to despair of mercy upon true repentance. Manasseh shed innocent blood, and yet was pardoned, upon repentance; 2 Kings xxi. 16. Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, &c.

Q. 12. What is the third inference hence?

A. Let all men watch against pride, passion, malice, and revenge, the sin of the heart, from which this horrid sin proceeds; Mat. xv. 18, 19. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, &c.

Of the seventh Commandment.

Quest. 70. **W**HICH is the seventh commandment?

A. *The seventh commandment is, [Thou shalt not commit adultery.]*

Quest. 71. What is required in the seventh commandment?

A. *The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity in heart, speech, and behaviour.*

Quest. 72. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. *The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.*

Q. 1. What is the duty required in this commandment?

A. The first duty required in this commandment is, the preservation of our own chastity in heart, lip, and life; 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. And Eph. iv. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, &c.

Q. 2. Why must we preserve our own chastity?

A. Because our bodies are, or ought to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19. Know ye not, that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? And it is the express charge of God that they be kept pure and clean; 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication. That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.

Q. 3. What is the second reason?

A. The second reason is, because of the evil of it to ourselves: As, (1.) It injures the body; 1 Cor. vi. 18. He that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body. (2.) It levels us with the Heathen; Eph. iv. 17, 19. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk,—who being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. (3.) Dishonours our names; Prov. vi. 32, 33. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman, a wound and

dishonour shall he get, &c. (4.) Scatters our estates; Prov. v. 10. Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of strangers. (5.) Destroyeth the soul; Prov. vi. 32.—He that doth it, destroyeth his own soul.

Q. 4. What age is most incident to this sin?

A. The youthful age is most apt to be drawn into this sin; Prov. vii. 7. And behold among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding. And 2 Tim. ii. 22. Flee also youthful lusts, &c.

Q. 5. How far doth this command extend itself?

A. It extends itself to the heart, mind, and fancy, as well as to the body, and external actions; Matth. v. 28. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Q. 6. What are the usual inducements to this sin?

A. The usual inducements to this sin are, (1.) Idleness and fulness of the creatures; Ezek. xvi. 49, 50. Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters, &c. (2.) Wanton gestures; Isa. iii. 16. Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet. (3.) Filthy communication; Eph. v. 4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, &c.

Q. 7. What is the first remedy against this sin?

A. The first remedy, and the most effectual, is, to get the Spirit of God within us, to sanctify and rule us; Gal. v. 16.—Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

Q. 8. What is the second remedy?

A. The keeping of a strict watch over the heart; Prov. iv. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence, &c. And over the external senses; Job xxxi. 1. I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

Q. 9. What is the third remedy against it?

A. Deep and serious consideration of the danger of this sin, and what God threatens against adulterers; Heb. xiii. 4.—Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.—Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate,—shall inherit the kingdom of God. And how he describes them, Prov. xxii. 14. The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.

Q. 10. What is the fourth remedy against it?

A. Prayer; Psalm cxix. 37. Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, &c. And, to evidence our sincerity in prayer, we must study to shun all occasions of this sin; Psal. xviii. 23. I was also upright before him; and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

Q. 11. What is the first inference from hence?

A. What cause those have to bless God, that have been kept from this sin; though the best ought to be humbled for their heart-pollutions.

Q. 12. What is the second inference from hence?

A. Let it warn parents to do what in them lies to prevent the ruin of their children by this sin, (1.) By filling their heads and hands with lawful business. (2.) By serious admonitions and prayers for them. (3.) By keeping them from vain and tempting company. (4.) By disposing them seasonably in suitable marriage.

Q. 13. What is the third inference from hence?

A. Let those that are defiled with this sin repent seriously of it as David did; Psalm li. 8. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. And apply the blood of Christ by faith; for in so doing it may be pardoned; 1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God.

Of the eighth Commandment.

Quest. 73. **W**HICH is the eighth commandment?

A. *The eighth commandment is, [Thou shalt not steal.]*

Quest. 74. What is required in the eighth commandment?

A. *The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth, and outward estate of ourselves and others.*

Quest. 75. What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. *The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbour's wealth, or outward estate.*

Q. 1. What is presupposed in this commandment?

A. It presupposeth that God hath given every man a propriety in his estate, and that no man's goods are common to others, except by his consent in times and cases extraordinary; Acts ii. 44. And all that believed were together, and had all things common.

Q. 2. What is required in this commandment?

A. It requires of every man diligence in a lawful calling, to get and preserve an estate for his own and other's good; Prov. xiii. 11. He that gathereth by labour, shall increase. Eph. iv. 28.—But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Q. 3. What else is required in this commandment?

A. It requires us not only to get and keep the things of the world in a lawful manner, but to distribute and communicate them to those that are in want, and not cast them into temptations of sin, or inevitable ruin; Isa. lviii. 10. And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul: Then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; 1 John iii. 17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and

shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?

Q. 4. What else is required in this commandment ?

A. It requires in every man a public spirit to procure and promote the good and prosperity of others : 1 Cor. x. 24. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

Q. 5. What else is required in this command ?

A. It requires restitution of all goods, unjustly gotten, or taken from others ; Lev. vi. 4. Then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, &c. And the restoring of pawns and pledges, when they are due ; Ezek. xviii. 7. And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, &c. Or things lost, if we can discover the true owners.

Q. 6. What is the first sin forbidden in this command ?

A. It forbids all cozening and cheating of others in our dealings, and civil commerce with them ; 1 Thess. iv. 6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, &c. Prov. xxvi. 28. A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.

Q. 7. What is the second thing forbidden in this command ?

A. It forbids all exaction and oppression of our neighbour, by going beyond them, or working on their necessities, or detaining their dues ; Lev. xxv. 14. And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another ; Prov. xxiv. 28, 29. Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause : And deceive not with thy lips. Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me : I will render to the man according to his work.

Q. 8. What is the third thing forbidden in this command ?

A. It forbids all unlawful weights and measures, which is no better than theft in God's account ; Micah vi. 10, 11. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable ? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights ?

Q. 9. What is the fourth sin forbidden in this command ?

A. It forbids all family frauds by children ; Prov. xxviii. 24. Who-so robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer. Or servants ; Tit. ii. 9, 10. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters ;—not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, &c.

Q. 10. What is the fifth thing forbidden in this command ?

A. It forbids all tempting of, or encouraging others to defraud those who have any trust committed to them ; Psalm l. 18. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him ; Prov. xxix. 24. Whosoever is partner with a thief, hateth his own soul, &c.

Q. 11. What is the sixth thing forbidden in this command ?

A. It forbids the taking away of another's goods by open robbery by sea or land; Job v. 5.—And the robber swalloweth up their substance. Or clandestinely and privately; 1 Pet. iv. 15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, &c.

Q. 12. What is the danger of this sin?

A. It brings men's souls, bodies, and estates, under the curse of God; Zech. v. 3, 4. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: For every one that stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side, according to it:—I will bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief.

Q. 13. What is the first instruction hence?

A. Let all that are guilty of this sin repent, and restore, as they expect mercy from God; Eph. iv. 28. Let him that stole, steal no more, &c. Luke xix. 8. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken away any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

Q. 14. What is the last inference from hence?

A. To excite all, to whom God hath given a competency of the things of the world, that they bless God for keeping them from the temptations of this sin; Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Of the ninth Commandment.

Quest. 76. **W**HICH is the ninth commandment?

A. *The ninth commandment is, [Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.]*

Q. 77. What is required in the ninth commandment?

A. *The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.*

Q. 78. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. *The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.*

Q. 1. What is the general scope and aim of the ninth commandment?

A. The ninth command aims chiefly at the preservation and promoting of truth amongst men; Zech. viii. 16.—Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour, &c. This being of indispensable necessity to the subsistence and welfare of human society; Eph. iv. 25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.

Q. 2. What is the first thing required particularly in this command?

A. This command requires every man to take care of preserving his own good name, by ordering his conversation in universal integrity; 1 Pet. iii. 15, 16. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

Q. 3. What is the second thing required in this command?

A. It requires all due care to preserve the good name and honour of other men as well as our own; for Christians are not to be of narrow and private spirits, which centre only in their own interests and concernment; Phil. ii. 4. Look not every man on his own things; but every man also on the things of others.

Q. 4. How are we to preserve the good names of others?

A. We are to preserve the good names of others by an inward esteem of all the good that is in them; Phil. ii. 3.—In lowness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves. And manifesting our inward esteem of them by a wise and seasonable expression thereof for their encouragement in the ways of godliness; Rom. i. 8. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Q. 5. How else are we to defend other men's names?

A. By our readiness to receive with joy the reports of that good that is in them; 3 John 3. For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. And discountenancing all reproaches maliciously vented against them; Psalm xv. 3.—Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

Q. 6. But what if the report be evidently true?

A. In that case we are to grieve for their miscarriages, as the effect and fruit of our love to their souls; 2 Cor. ii. 4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears, not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. And to discharge our duties privately and faithfully, in order to their recovery; Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, &c. Winking at, and concealing in love, their lesser and common infirmities; 1 Pet. iv. 8. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: For charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Q. 7. What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. It forbids us to injure others, by raising or receiving lies, and false reports which are highly injurious to their good names; Col. iii. 9. Lie not one to another, &c.

Q. 8. What else is forbidden in the ninth commandment?

A. It especially forbids perjury, or false swearing, whereby not only the names, but estates and lives of the innocent are injured and ruined; Psal. xxxv. 11. False witnesses did rise up. They laid to my charge things that I knew not; Prov. xix. 5. A false witness shall not be unpunished: And he that speaketh lies shall not escape. A sin which God will punish; Mal. iii. 5. And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, &c.

Q. 9. What else is forbidden in this commandment?

A. It forbids all whispering and backbiting of others secretly; 2 Cor. xii. 20.—Lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, &c. And all tale-carrying from one to another, to our neighbour's injury; Lev. xix. 16. Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among the people, &c. And 1 Tim. v. 13.—And not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.

Q. 10. What else doth the ninth commandment forbid?

A. It forbids all rash and unwarrantable judging of other men's hearts and final estates which is usually accompanied with ignorance of our own; Matth. vii. 1, 3. Judge not, that ye be not judged. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Q. 11. What else is forbidden in this commandment?

A. It forbids the eclipsing of the true worth and honour of others, by a proud exalting of ourselves; 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. Charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, &c. Or by crying up one to the disparagement of another good man; 1 Cor. iii. 4, 5. For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal? &c.

Q. 12. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That the best Christians have cause to be humbled for the sins of the tongue whereby God is dishonoured, and others are injured; James iii. 2. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. And verse 5, 6. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things: behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Q. 13. What is the second inference from hence?

A. It is our great concernment to walk with that piety and justice towards God and men, as to cut off all just occasions of reproach from our names; 2 Cor. xi. 12. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasions, &c. 1 Tim. v. 14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Q. 14. What is the third inference from this commandment?

A. To bless God that our names are kept sweet and honourable in the world among good men; 3 John 12. Demetrius hath a good report of all men, &c. Or if we be reproached, it is by none but wicked men, and that for our duty to God; 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.

Of the tenth Commandment.

Quest. 79. **W**HICH is the tenth commandment?

A. *The tenth commandment is, [Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.]*

Q. 80. What is required in the tenth commandment?

A. *The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, and a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his.*

Q. 81. What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?

A. *The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.*

Q. 1. What is the principal scope and aim of the tenth commandment?

A. It is to prevent all occasions of transgressing the other precepts of the second table, by restraining this sin of covetousness in the heart; Psalm cxix. 35, 36. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Q. 2. What doth this tenth command require of us in reference to ourselves?

A. It requires of us perfect contentment and satisfaction with that estate and condition wherein God hath placed us in the world; Heb. xiii. 5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have, &c. Reckoning it to be good for us to be in that state we are, though never so low or afflicted; Psal. cxix. 67. Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word. And verse 71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

Q. 3. Is contentment with God's appointments attainable in this life?

A. Some Christians have attained to a very great measure, and eminent degree of contentment in the midst of changeable and afflictive providences; Phil. iv. 11.—I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. Psal. xvi. 5, 6. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places : yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Q. 4. Is there no danger of the sin of discontentment in a full and prosperous condition ?

A. Fulness of the world secures no man from the sin of discontentment with his own, or covering that which is another's ; because the desires enlarge as the estate doth ; Psalm lxii. 10.—If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. An instance whereof we have in Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 4. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased, because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him : for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers ; and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

Q. 5. Whence doth discontent with our condition spring ?

A. It springs partly from our ignorance of God's wisdom and love in ordering all for our good ; Rom. vii. 28. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, &c. Partly from our inconsiderateness of the vanity of the creatures ; 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. And partly from our unbelief ; Matth. vi. 31, 32. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? Or what shall we drink ? Or wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek ;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Q. 6. Is contentment with our own estate all that this commandment requires ?

A. No ; it requires a charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbours also ; Rom. xii. 10, 15. Be kindly affectionate one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Q. 7. What is the first sin forbidden in this commandment ?

A. It directly and especially forbids all sinful and inordinate desires and motions after other men's enjoyments ; Col. iii. 5. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Q. 8. What is the second sin forbidden in this commandment ?

A. It forbids all cruelty and incompassionateness to others in necessity, and keeping back from them that relief which is made theirs by God's command ; Prov. xi. 24. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Lev. xix. 9, 10. And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard : thou shalt leave them for the poor and the stranger : I am the Lord your God.

Q. 9. What is the third sin forbidden in this commandment?

A. It forbids the detaining of the hirelings wages, when it is due; Hab. ii. 9, 10, 11. Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil. Thou hast consulted shame to thy house, by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

Q. 10. What is the fourth sin forbidden in this commandment?

A. It forbids all inward grudgings at, and envyings of the enjoyments of others, whether they be inward goods of the mind, or outward, belonging to the body; 1 Cor. xiii. 14. Charity envieth not, &c.

Q. 11. What is the mischief of covetousness?

A. It distracts thy heart in duties; Ezek. xxxiii. 31. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouths they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. Provokes the wrath of God; Isa. lvii. 17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, &c. And where it reigns it becomes idolatry; Col. iii. 5. And covetousness, which is idolatry.

Q. 12. What is the first inference from hence?

A. It calls all men to humiliation for the inordinacy of their affections towards the world, their discontent with their own and envyings of others conditions.

Q. 13. What is the second inference from hence?

A. As ever we would keep clear from this sin, let us make God our portion; Psal. xvi. 5, 6. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. And labour to get the soul-satisfying comforts of his Spirit; John iv. 14. But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, &c. 2 Cor. vi. 10. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Q. 14. What is the last inference from hence?

A. If God has given us a sufficiency of the things of this life for our necessity, let us be satisfied, though we want other things for our delight; 1 Tim. vi. 8. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. And relieve ourselves by an expectation of those better things laid up in heaven for us, if we be believers; James ii. 5. 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.

Of keeping the Law.

Quest. 82. **I**S any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?

A. *No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the*

commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.

Q. 1. Wherein doth the perfect keeping of God's law consist?

A. It consists in the perfect and constant conformity of the internal and external actions of heart and life, to every command of God; Gal. iii. 10. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Matth. xxii. 37, 38, 39. Jesus said unto them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Q. 2. But if a man commit no external act against the law, may he not be said perfectly to keep it, although in mind or thought he should transgress?

A. No; for an inward motion of sin in the heart, that never breaks forth into act, is a violation of the law, and brings the soul under the curse of it; Matth. v. 21, 22. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, &c. And ver. 27, 28. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Q. 3. May not a man keep the law if he keep some of its commands, though he cannot keep every one of them punctually?

A. No, he cannot; for the transgression of any one command in the least degree, is a breach of all, and brings the curse of the whole upon a man's soul; James ii. 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Q. 4. Was the law never kept by any since it was made?

A. Yes, Adam in his innocent state kept it; for he was made upright; Eccl. vii. 29. God made man upright, &c. And Christ perfectly kept it; Mat. v. 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Q. 5. What is the first reason why no mere man in this life can fulfil and keep the law of God perfectly?

A. It is because the law of God is perfect, and the best of men in this life are imperfect; Psal. xix. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, &c. Eccl. vii. 20. For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Q. 6. But may not men perfectly keep it when regenerate, and born of God?

A. No; because even in the regenerate there is a law of sin, which wars against the law of God; Gal. v. 17. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, &c. Rom. vii. 22, 23. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another

law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, &c. And though they are said not to sin, 1 John iii. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, &c. That is not to be taken absolutely, but comparatively, as they once did, and others still do.

Q. 7. But did not Christ command the young man to keep the law ?

A. It is true that Christ did put the young man upon this task ; Matth. xix. 17. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. But it was not on a supposition that he was able to do it ; but to convince him of the impossibility of justification that way.

Q. 8. But doth not the apostle say, that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in believers ?

A. It is true that the apostle doth say, Rom. viii. 4. but the meaning is not, that we fulfil it in our own persons, by our complete obedience to it ; but it is fulfilled in us, by our union with Christ, who perfectly kept it ; and the righteousness of the law, which is in Christ, becomes ours, by God's imputation of it to us ; Rom. iv. 23, 24. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.

Q. 9. What is the first inference from hence ?

A. That justification by our own works is utterly impossible to the holiest of men ; Gal. ii. 16. For by the works of the law no flesh can be justified ; Psalm ciii. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities ; O Lord, who shall stand ?

Q. 10. What is the second inference from hence ?

A. Hence we learn what an infinite mercy it is, that God sent Jesus Christ made under the law ; Gal. iv. 4, 5. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, &c. To do that for us we could never do for ourselves ; Rom. viii. 3, 4. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh ; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us ; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Q. 11. What is the third inference from hence ?

A. That the dreadful curse must needs lie on all unbelievers that are out of Christ ; John iii. 36. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him. And seek their justification by the deeds of the law ; Gal. iii. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse, &c.

Q. 12. What is the fourth inference from hence ?

A. That a deluge of sin and misery brake in upon the whole world by the fall of Adam, and all his posterity being by him plunged under both ; Rom. v. 12. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin : And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Q. 13. What is the fifth inference from hence ?

A. That the Popish doctrines of merits, and works of supererogation, are false and groundless doctrines, springing out of the ignorance and pride of man's heart.

Q. 14. What is the last inference from hence ?

A. That all God's people should sigh under their unhappy necessity of sinning; Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ! And long to be with Christ in the perfect state ; Heb. xii. 23. And to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Of the inequality of Sin.

Quest. 83. **A**RE all transgressions of the law equally heinous ?

A. Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Q. 1. Whence ariseth the first difference of sin ?

A. The first difference betwixt one sin and another, ariseth from the immediate object, against which the sin is committed ; on this account, sins immediately committed against God, are more heinous than sins immediately committed against man ; 1 Sam. ii. 25. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him : But if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him ? And all sins of the first table are greater than those of the second : yet there are crying sins against the second.

Q. 2. What is the first sin noted for an heinous sin ?

A. The sin of murder is in scripture set down for an heinous and crying sin in its own nature ; Gen. iv. 10. The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the earth.

Q. 3. What other sin is noted for a crying sin ?

A. The sin of oppression is noted in scripture for a crying sin ; Hab. ii. 11. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Especially the oppression of the widow and fatherless ; Exod. xxii. 22, 23. Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry.

Q. 5. What is reckoned in scripture an heinous sin against the first table.

A. The sin of atheism, or denying the being of a God, is a sin of the first magnitude ; Job xxxi. 28. This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge ; for I should have denied the God that is above. This was the sin of Pharaoh ; Exod. v. 2. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go ? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

Q. 5. What other sin is heinous in God's account ?

A. The sin of idolatry is a most heinous sin, and goes nearer to the heart of God than other sins do ; Ezek. vi. 9. And they that escape of you, shall remember me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives ; because I am broken with their whorish heart, which

hath departed from me, and with their eyes, which go a whoring after their idols; and they shall lothe themselves, for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations. Jer. xlv. 4. O do not this abominable thing that I hate.

Q. 6. What is the most heinous of all the sins in the world?

A. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the most heinous of all other sins, and shall never be forgiven by him; Matth. xii. 31. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

Q. 7. From whence doth this scripture aggravate sin?

A. The Spirit of God in scripture aggravates and estimates sin, from the degree of light and knowledge men sin against; Luke xii. 47. And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. John xv. 22. If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: But now they have no cloak for their sin.

Q. 8. What is the second thing that aggravates sin?

A. The more mercies any man sins against, the greater is his sin; Rom. ii. 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? And especially when it is against spiritual mercies, and means of salvation; Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? &c.

Q. 9. Are heinous and crying sins capable of forgiveness?

A. Yes; great and heinous sins are capable of forgiveness, upon true repentance; Isa. i. 18. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Q. 10. From what fountain doth the pardon of all sins, both great and small, flow?

A. They all flow from the free grace of God; Luke vii. 41, 42. And when they had nothing to pay, he forgave them both. And through the meritorious, satisfying blood of Christ; Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Q. 11. What is the first inference hence?

A. Though some sins are more heinous than others, yet no sinner should absolutely despair of mercy; for the vilest have been pardoned; 1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you: But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, &c.

Q. 12. What is the second inference hence?

A. That there are different degrees of torments in hell, proportioned to the different degrees of sins on earth; Mat. xl. 21, 22. Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida: For if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But

I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you.

Q. 13. What is the third inference hence?

A. That great sinners, when pardoned and received to mercy, should excel all others in love to Christ; Luke vii. 42, 43. Which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

Q. 14. What is the last inference hence?

A. Let no man neglect Christ, because his sins are not so heinous as others; because the least sin without Christ is damning; Rom. vi. 23. For the wages of sin is death, &c. And greater sinners are often called when lesser are not; Mat. xxi. 31, 32. The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

Of the Demerit of Sin.

Quest. 84. **W**HAT doth every sin deserve?

A. *Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come.*

Q. Wherein doth the evil of sin principally consist?

A. It consists principally in the offence it gives, and the wrong it doth to God; Psalm li. 4. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.

Q. 2. What is the first offence and wrong sin doth to God?

A. It consists in its enmity to God; Rom. viii. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, &c. Expressed in scripture by walking contrary to him; Lev. xxvi. 40. They have also walked contrary to me. Fighting against God; Acts v. 39. Lest haply ye be even found to fight against God. And resisting his Spirit; Acts vii. 51. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.

Q. 3. Wherein is its enmity to God further discovered in scripture?

A. It is discovered under the names and notions of hatred of God; Rom. i. 30. Backbiters, haters of God, &c. Rebellion against God; 1 Sam. xv. 23. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, &c. And despising the commandment of God; 2 Sam. xii. 9. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord?

Q. 4. What are the attributes of God that sin wrongs?

A. It wrongs all his attributes; for it slightes his sovereignty; Exod. v. 2. And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? Resists his power; 1 Cor. x. 22. Are we stronger than he? Despiseth his goodness; Rom. ii. 4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, &c. Taxeth his justice; Ezek. xviii. 25. Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal, &c. And clouds his holiness; Jam. ii. 7. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by which ye are called?

Q. 5. What doth sin deserve in the course of justice from God?

A. It deserves all temporal and eternal effects of God's wrath, on the souls and bodies of sinners, all which in scripture go under the name of death; Rom. vi. 23. For the wages of sin is death, &c.

Q. 6. Can these sufferings satisfy God for all this wrong?

A. No, they cannot; and therefore they must, and shall be eternal on the damned; Matth. v. 26. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing. Mark ix. 44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Q. 7. Shall all sinners bear the desert of their sins?

A. No, all that are out of Christ shall; but Christ hath freed believers from it; John iii. 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned, &c.

Q. 8. But is it not hard, that sinners should suffer eternally for the sins of a few years?

A. No, it is not; for the evil of sin is not to be measured by the time in which, but by the object against which it is committed; Psal. li. 4, 5. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, &c.

Q. 9. What learn we from hence?

A. Hence in the first place we learn the impossibility of satisfying God's justice for the least sin that ever we committed; Job vii. 20. I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee? &c. Psalm cxxx. 3. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?

Q. 10. What is the second instruction hence?

A. Hence we see the necessity of a Mediator betwixt God and us; Psal. xl. 6, 7. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, &c. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction hence?

A. That the greatest suffering is rather to be chosen than the least sin; Heb. xi. 25. Chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Q. 12. What is the fourth instruction hence?

A. It teacheth us what an invaluable mercy the full, free, and final remission of sin is; Psal. xxxii. 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, &c.

Q. 13. What is the fifth instruction hence?

A. It vindicates God in his severest strokes on sinners; Hos. vi. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

Q. 14. What is the last instruction?

A. Hence we learn the infinite nature of Christ's sufferings; Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Of what God requires of us.

Quest. 85. **W**HAT doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means, whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q. 1. What are the things required of us to escape God's wrath and curse due to us for sin?

A. The things required of us are, (1.) Faith in Jesus Christ; Acts xvi. 31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. (2.) Repentance for sin; Acts iii. 19. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, &c. (3.) Diligent striving in the use of all God's appointed means; Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: For many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Q. 2. Are these things in man's power to perform, that God requires of him?

A. Though they are our duties, yet we have no power in ourselves by nature to perform them, but the power is of God; 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

Q. 3. But if men be in Christ, and justified from eternity, what need of this?

A. Though God from eternity decreed, and Christ long since purchased the salvation of the elect; yet have they no union with Christ till they believe; Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love. Nor remission of sin; Acts iii. 19. That your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. But lie under wrath as others do; Eph. ii. 3, 12. And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Ver. 12. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Q. 4. If it be God that can only work these graces in us, to what purpose is our striving?

A. God's working doth not exclude man's striving, but more excites and obliges us to it; Phil. ii. 12, 13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure.

Q. 5. To what purpose is it to strive in the use of means, except we knew we were elected?

A. The knowledge of our election is not antecedent to our diligence, but our diligence is required antecedently to that knowledge; 1 Pet. i. 10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, &c.

Q. 6. Is it not legal to put natural men upon striving in the use of means?

A. No, it is not; for Christ himself enjoins it? Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, &c. And so did the apostles after him; Acts viii. 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.

Q. 7. Is there no escaping of God's wrath and curse without faith and repentance?

A. No, it is impossible to escape them; John iii. 18. He that believeth not, is condemned already. Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

Q. 8. But if a man reform his life, and live soberly and justly for time to come, may he not that way escape God's wrath and curse?

A. No; sobriety and reformation are duties, but it is faith and regeneration that puts men into Christ, and out of danger; Matth. v. 20. Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Tit. iii. 5. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Q. 9. Do all believing and penitent sinners escape God's wrath and curse?

A. Yes, they do, and shall for ever escape it; Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, &c. Col. i. 12, 13. Giving thanks unto God the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. John v. 24. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Q. 10. What is the first inference hence?

A. Hence it appears how false and dangerous the Antinomian doctrine is, which teaches that our sins are pardoned before they are committed, or we either believe or repent; contrary to Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sin, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. James v. 20. He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, &c. Acts x. 43. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Q. 11. What is the second inference hence?

A. Hence it follows, that it is dangerous on the one side not to strive in all the ways of duty for Christ and salvation, contrary to

Luke xiii. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. And as dangerous, on the other side, to rest in, and depend on our own works and duties; Phil. iii. 9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Q. 12. What is the third inference hence?

A. Hence we learn the miserable state of all unbelievers, and impenitent persons; the curse and wrath of God lies upon them; Gal. iii. 10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, &c. And their mittimus for hell is already made; John iii. 18. He that believeth not, is condemned already.

Q. 13. What is the fourth inference hence?

A. Hence we learn the happy state into which faith and repentance bring the souls of men; Acts xiii. 38, 39. By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Of saving Faith.

Quest. 86. **W**HAT is faith in Jesus Christ?

A. *Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.*

Q. 1. What is the root or cause of faith?

A. Not the power of man's will; Eph. ii. 8. For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; But the Spirit of God. Gal. v. 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. John i. 12, 13. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Q. 2. How doth the Spirit of God ordinarily produce faith?

A. By the preaching of the word he ordinarily begets it; Rom. x. 17. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; though sometimes he doth it immediately.

Q. 3. Who are the proper subjects of faith?

A. Convinced and sensible sinners are the proper subjects of faith; John xvi. 8, 9, 10. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me: of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more: of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

Q. 4. What is the seat or habitation of faith?

A. Not only the head or understanding, but principally the heart and will; Rom. x. 10. With the heart man believeth unto righteous-

ness, &c. Acts viii. 37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.

Q. 5. But is not the assent of the understanding true faith ?

A. The mere assent of the understanding to the truths of scripture, is not such a faith as will save the soul ; James ii. 19. Thou believest that there is one God ; thou dost well : the devils also believe, and tremble.

Q. 6. What is the act of faith that justifies a sinner ?

A. It is the receiving of Christ, by the full and hearty consent of the heart that justifies us ? John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

Q. 7. What is the object of faith ?

A. The primary object of faith is the person of Christ, and the secondary are his benefits ; Isa. xlv. 22. Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, &c. Phil. iii. 8, 9. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ ; the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Q. 8. May not a man look partly to Christ, and partly to his own works and duties for righteousness ?

A. No ; he must eye Christ only, and exclude all others, or he cannot be justified ; Phil. iii. 9. And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ : The righteousness which is of God by faith, Rom. iv. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Q. 9. Is it enough to eye the person of Christ only in believing ?

A. No ; we must eye the person of Christ, as clothed with all his offices ; Acts xvi. 31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house. Our ignorance needs him as a prophet, our guilt as a priest, our sins and enemies as a king.

Q. 10. Is true faith faith exclusive of all fears and doubts ?

A. No ; it is not, but true believers are troubled with many fears and doubtings ; Isa. l. 10. Who is he among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, &c. Mark ix. 24. And straightway the Father of the child crieth out with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

Q. 11. Is no man actually justified till he believe ?

A. No, he cannot be justified actually till he believe actually ; Gal. iii. 22. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe

John iii. 18. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Q. 12. Is every man that believes justified immediately and fully upon his believing?

A. Yes, he is; Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. John v. 24. He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Q. 13. What is the true character or description of a believer?

A. He is one that, having been convinced of his sin and misery, and of his own and all other creatures inability to save him, and of the ability and willingness of Christ to save him, lets go all hold and dependence on creatures, and his own righteousness, and casts himself entirely upon Christ for righteousness and life.

Of the Properties, Signs, and Means of Faith.

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the first property of faith?

A. It is a most precious grace; 2 Pet. i. 1. To them that have obtained like precious faith with us, &c. And must needs be so, seeing it is the bond of our union with Christ; Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love. That by which we are justified; Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by faith, &c. And that by which our souls do live; Heb. ii. 4. The just shall live by faith.

Q. 2. What is the second property of saving faith?

A. The second property of faith is this, that it is the most useful grace in this world to a believer, it being the soul's eye; Heb. xi. 27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: For he endured, as seeing him who is invisible, &c. It is hard to apprehend Christ; Phil. iii. 12. That I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. It is a cordial in a fainting season; Psal. xxvii. 3. I had fainted unless I had believed, &c.

Q. What are the foundations that support faith?

A. The first foundation or prop of faith, is the power of God; Rom. iv. 20, 21. He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Heb. vii. 25. He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, &c.

Q. 4. What is the second prop of faith?

A. The truth and faithfulness of God in his promises; Heb. x. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that hath promised. Heb. vi. 18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a

strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

Q. 5. What encourages the faith of the saints?

A. The manifold, sweet, and sensible experiences of others; *Psal.* lxxiv. 14. Thou breakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat for the people inhabiting the wilderness. And especially their own experiences; *Josh.* xxiii. 14. Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.

Q. 6. What is the first sign of a weak faith?

A. Staggarings in our assent to divine truths, argue the weakness of faith; *Rom.* iv. 10. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, &c.

Q. 7. What is the second sign of a weak faith?

A. Inability to trust God in time of danger, evidenced by sinful haste to avoid it; *Isa.* xxviii. 16. He that believeth, shall not make haste.

Q. 8. What is the third sign of a weak faith?

A. When we cannot live purely by faith, except we have some sensible encouragement; *John.* xx. 25. Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Q. 9. What is the fourth sign of a weak faith?

A. When a new temptation makes us easily let go our former confidence; *Luke* xxiv. 21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

Q. 10. What is the fifth sign of a weak faith?

A. The prevalence of carnal fears, in times of trouble, argues weak faith; *Matth.* viii. 26. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? &c.

Q. 11. What is the sixth sign of a weak faith?

A. Too much carefulness and anxiety about the things of this life; *Matth.* vi. 30. Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Q. 12. What is the first benefit of a strong faith?

A. A strong faith gives much glory to God; *Rom.* iv. 19, 20. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

Q. 13. What is the second benefit of a strong faith?

A. It gives the soul the ravishing foresight and foretastes of heaven upon earth; *1 Pet.* i. 8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in

whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Q. 14. What is the last office faith doth for a believer in this world?

A. It supports and encourages him at death by the promises, when all other comforts fail; Heb. xi. 13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Of saving Repentance.

Quest. 87. **W**HAT is repentance unto life?

A. *Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.*

Q. 1. Who is the author of saving repentance?

A. The Spirit of God is the author of it; the heart by nature is so hard, that none but the Spirit can break it; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, &c.

Q. 2. In what act doth all true repentance begin?

A. It begins in a true sight and sense of sin, and the danger and misery we are in by sin; Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, &c.

Q. 3. Why doth God work such a sense of sin and misery?

A. He doth it to make Christ desirable in the sinner's eyes, that he may fly to him; Matth. ix. 12, 13. But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, and I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Q. 4. Is the sight of sin sufficient to repentance?

A. No; there must be apprehension of mercy and forgiveness with God, or else no man can sincerely repent; Rom. ii. 4. Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. And this mercy must be discerned in and through Christ; Zech. xii. 10. And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

Q. 5. Wherein doth repentance chiefly consist?

A. It consists in real inward sorrow for sin, as committed against God: Psalm li. 3, 4. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, &c. A loathing of ourselves for it; Ezek.

xxxvi. 31. And shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. And of our best duties, as sinful and insufficient things; Isa. lxiv. 5, 6. We are all as an unclean thing; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, &c.

Q. 6. Wherein else doth it consist?

A. In turning from sin, as well as grieving for it; Isa. lv. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, &c. Prov. xxviii. 13. He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.

Q. 7. Is turning from sin sufficient?

A. No, that is but the negative part of religion; there must be also a sincere turning to God; Psalm cxix. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies; Acts xi. 23. And exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

Q. 8. Is all sorrow for sin saving?

A. No; there is a repentance that doth no good; Matth. xxvii. 3. Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, &c. And a repentance unto life; Acts xi. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Q. 9. What are the signs of true repentance?

A. Fear of sin; care to preserve ourselves from it; and zeal to honour God by new obedience; 2 Cor. vii. 11. For behold, this self-same thing that ye 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 you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Q. 10. Is there a necessity of repentance in order to forgiveness?

A. Yes, there is; and they are therefore conjoined in scripture; Acts v. 31. For to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And destruction threatened to the impenitent: Luke xiii. 3. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Q. 11. What is the first inference hence?

A. That it is a false doctrine which teaches us that sins are actually forgiven from eternity; and therefore no need either of repentance or prayer, save only for the manifestation of pardon.

Q. 12. What is the second inference hence?

A. That an hard heart is a dreadful sign of a lost state of soul; Rom. ii. 5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Q. 13. What is the last inference hence?

A. That there is no cause to despair of the vilest sinner, seeing there is power enough in the Spirit of God to break the hardest heart;

Ezek. xxxvi. 26. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Of Christ's Ordinances.

Quest. 88. **W**HAT are the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances; especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q. 1. What makes any thing become a divine ordinance?

A. The institution or appointment of God, is that alone which makes a divine ordinance; Matth. xxviii. 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, &c.

Q. 2. Are the institutions of all ordinances alike clear in scripture?

A. No; Some are more explicitly and clearly revealed in scripture than others; as the Lord's supper is more clear than baptism: But whatever hath scripture-warrant, in the words or consequence, is of divine appointment.

Q. 3. May not men institute ordinances of divine worship?

A. No; this in scripture is condemned as will-worship; Col. ii. 20, 22, 23. Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world; why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances? &c. Which things indeed have a shew of wisdom in will-worship, &c.

Q. 4. Why cannot man institute a divine ordinance?

A. He cannot do it, because it is the prerogative belonging to Christ's kingly office; Mat. xxviii. 20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.

Q. 5. For what other reason cannot man do it?

A. Because he cannot bless them, and make them effectual to their ends: but they will be in vain; Matth. xv. 9. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Q. 6. Why are the ordinances called means of salvation?

A. Because by and through them the Spirit of the Lord conveys spiritual graces into men's souls; 1 Cor. i. 21. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. 1 Cor. iii. 5. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

Q. 7. Whence is the virtue of ordinances?

A. It is not in and from themselves, or the gifts and abilities of him that administers them, but from the blessing and Spirit of the Lord; 1 Cor. iii. 7. Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.

Q. 8. Do all God's ordinances attain their end?

A. Yes; there is none of them in vain, but do attain their end, in

the salvation or damnation of all that come under them; Isa. lv. 10, 11. 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 to 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 send it. 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life, &c.

Q. 9. Are instituted ordinances the only means of salvation?

A. They are not the only means; for God can convert men to Christ without them; Acts ix. 4, 5. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. But they are the ordinary standing means; Rom. x. 14, 15. How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? &c.

Q. 10. To whom are the ordinances made effectual to salvation?

A. To all God's elect they are effectual to salvation, and to them only; Acts xiii. 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed. John x. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, &c.

Q. 11. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That great preparation is due to all the ordinances, before we engage in them; Job xi. 13, 14. If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him. If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. 1 Chron xxix. 18. And prepare their heart unto thee.

Q. 12. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That great reverence is due to God's ordinances, when we are actually engaged in the use of them; Psalm lxxxix. 7. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

Q. 13. What is the third inference from hence?

A. That those people that want ordinances, are in a sad and deplorable condition; Eph. ii. 11, 12. Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.

Q. 14. What is the last instruction hence?

A. That those that perish in the midst of ordinances, and means of

salvation, will perish with aggravated perdition; Mat. xi. 23. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

Of the Word read and heard.

Quest. 89. **H**OW is the word made effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners; and building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

Q. 1. What mean you by the word?

A. By the word is meant the word of God, consigned to writing in the books of the Old and New Testament; which though it be ministered by men, yet is no other than the very word of God, and as such to be received; 1 Thess. ii. 13. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men; but (as it is in truth) the word of God, &c.

Q. 2. Whence is the efficacy of this word?

A. It is wholly from the Spirit of God that it becomes effectual to any man's salvation; 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. I have planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Q. 3. Is the reading of the scripture an ordinance of God for men's salvation?

A. Yes, it is; Deut. xvii. 19. And it shall be with him, and he shall feed therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes to do them. And in reading of it, God sometimes comes in by his Spirit to men's conversion; Acts viii. 27, 28, 29. And he arose and went, and behold a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Isaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot, &c.

Q. 4. Is the hearing of the word a means of salvation?

A. Yes, it is; Isa. lv. 3. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, &c. 1 Cor. i. 21. It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.

Q. 5. To what end is the word useful to men?

A. The first end and use of the word is to convince men of their sin and misery out of Christ; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is con-

vinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, &c.

Q. 6. What is it useful for, besides conviction ?

A. It is useful for conversion, as well as conviction ; Psal. xix. 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, &c. Acts xxvi. 18. To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, &c.

Q. 7. Doth the word convince and convert all that hear it ?

A. No, but those only that are ordained to eternal life ; Acts xiii. 48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Q. 8. What else is the word useful for ?

A. To build up the saints to perfection in Christ ; Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man ; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Acts xx. 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Q. 9. May the common people read the scriptures ?

A. Yes, it is a duty commanded by Christ ; John v. 39. Search the scriptures, &c. And commended by the apostle ; Acts xvii. 11. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Q. 10. Is it their duty or liberty also to preach it ?

A. No, it is not ; for besides abilities for that work, there must be a call ; Rom. x. 14, 15. How shall they hear without a preacher ? and how shall they preach, except they be sent, &c.

Q. 11. What is the first instruction from hence ?

A. That the enjoyments of the scriptures, and an able, faithful ministry to expound and apply them, is a special mercy to any people ; Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel ; he hath not dealt so with any nation ; and as for his judgments they have not known them.

Q. 12. What is the second instruction ?

A. That men cannot expect special and spiritual blessings from God in the wilful neglect of the ordinances ; Prov. xxviii. 9. He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

Q. 13. What is the third inference ?

A. That sad is their condition, who sit all their days under the word to no purpose at all ; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost : in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the

glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.

Q. 14. What is the last inference?

A. That Christ's ordinances and ministers should be most welcome to the people to whom God sends them; Isa. lii. 7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth.

Of the Manner of Hearing.

Quest. 90. **H**OW is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?

A. *That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in your hearts, and practise it in your lives.*

Q. 1. If the matter we read or hear be good, is not that enough for our salvation?

A. No, God requires that the word be read and heard in a due manner, and the manner of hearing is of special regard with God; Luke viii. 18. Take heed therefore how ye hear, &c.

Q. 2. How many things belong to the due manner of hearing?

A. Three sorts of duties belong to it; some antecedent, as preparation and prayer; some concomitant, as due diligence and retention; and some subsequent, as practice.

Q. 3. What is due preparation for hearing?

A. It consists in serious consideration of the greatness and holiness of that God whom we approach in hearing the word; Acts x. 33. Now therefore we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. And awing the heart even to a degree of holy trembling thereby; Isa. lxvi. 2. To him will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

Q. 4. What is the principal consideration thus to awe the heart?

A. The word is in its own nature a heart-searching word; Heb. iv. 12. For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And that eventually it will be the savour of life or death to us; 2 Cor. ii. 16. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life, &c.

Q. 5. What else belongs to due preparation to hear?

A. The discharging of the heart from worldly cares; Mat. xiii. 7. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choaked them. And carnal lusts; James i. 21. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Q. 6. What is the third act of due preparation ?

A. Longing after the word for further communications of grace by it; 1 Pet. ii. 2. As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. Isa. ii. 3. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Q. 7. What is the second antecedent duty of hearing ?

A. Prayer is an antecedent duty to hearing the word, and that both for the assistance of the minister; 2 Thess. iii. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you. And our own illumination; Psal. cxix. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Q. 8. What else should we pray for ?

A. That God would pour out his Spirit with the word, according to that promise, Prov. i. 23. I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.

Q. 9. Doth unpreparedness for the word always hinder its efficacy on the heart ?

A. No, God sometimes is found of them that sought him not; Isa. lxxv. 1. I was found of them that sought me not, &c. But it is a sin to neglect it, and needs a pardon of God.

Q. 10. What is the first motive to prepare for solemn duties ?

A. That it argues the sincerity of the heart, and in that case God will be merciful to infirmities; 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. For a multitude of the people, even a multitude of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did eat the passover, but not as it is written; wherefore Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord be merciful towards him that prepareth his whole heart to seek the Lord God, the God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

Q. 11. What is the second motive ?

A. It is a sweet sign that God will make that duty successful for which the heart is prepared; Psalm x. 17. Thou preparest their heart; thou bendest thine ear to them.

Q. 12. What is the third motive to preparation ?

A. The majesty and jealousy of God, to whom we approach, obliges us to solemn preparation; Heb. xii. 28, 29. Whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire.

Q. 13. But must a man neglect the duty, if his heart be not duly prepared for it ?

A. No; for that would be to add a new sin to a former, and aggravate it the more.

Q. 14. In what manner must the prepared heart go to the word?

A. Not in dependence on its own preparations, but upon the Spirit's assistance; Psal. lxxi. 16. I will go forward in the strength of the Lord God, &c.

Q. 15. What is the first act of faith due to the word?

A. The assenting act of faith is required to the word read or preached, whereby we acknowledge it to be of divine authority; 2 Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; 2 Pet. i. 21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Q. 16. What is the second act of faith required of us?

A. An applying act of faith is also required of us; Rom. xv. 4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Q. 17. What is the first end in applying the word?

A. It is first to be applied to our conviction both of sin and misery; Acts ii. 37. Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Q. 18. What is the second end, or use of applying it?

A. It must be applied for our guidance and direction to Christ; John vi. 45. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Q. 19. What is the third use to which it must be applied?

A. We must apply it for our direction through the whole course of Christian duties: 2 Pet. i. 19. We have also a most sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.

Q. 20. What other use must we apply it to?

A. It must be applied for our comfort in all inward and outward troubles: Rom. xv. 4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Q. 21. On what account are we to receive it with love?

A. We are to love it for its author's sake, because it is the word of God; Psal. cxix. 159. Consider how I love thy precepts, &c.

Q. 22. What is the second motive of love to the word?

A. The holiness and purity of it deserves and engages our love to it; Psal. cxix. 140. Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.

Q. 23. What is the third motive to engage our love to it?

A. The great and constant usefulness of it to our souls, as that we

cannot subsist without; Job xxiii. 12. I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

Q. 24. How doth this love to the word manifest itself?

A. Our love manifests itself in our longing after it; Psalm cxix. 20. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times. Our diligent attendance on it; Acts x. 33. Immediately therefore I sent unto thee, and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Q. 25. How is faith and love evidenced to the word after hearing it?

A. By preserving it carefully in our hearts and memories; Psalm cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Q. 26. What is the best cure for a bad memory?

A. Labour to get an high esteem of it, and an experimental feeling of it, and frequently meditate on it; Psal. cxix. 16. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. Psal. cxix. 93. I will never forget thy precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me. Psalm cxix. 99. Thy testimonies are my meditation.

Q. 27. How is faith and love principally manifested to the word after hearing?

A. It is principally manifested by bringing forth the fruits of it in our lives; Col. i. 5, 6. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye have heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth.

Q. 28. What is the use of all this?

A. This serves to reprove our formal and dead hearing the word, and excites us all to evidence and exercise more faith, love, and obedience, in hearing it.

Of Sacraments as Means of Salvation.

Quest. 91. **H**OW do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. *The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.*

Q. 1. What is the first proper sense of this word sacrament?

A. It primarily signifies a solemn oath taken by soldiers, when they list themselves under a prince or general; and this oath was mutual.

Q. 2. Why do we use it, seeing it is not a scripture word?

A. Though the word be not found in scripture, yet the thing intended by it is, and that brings the word in use; for in the sacraments God obliges himself to us by confirming his covenant by it; Rom. iv.

11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also. And we oblige ourselves to God; Rom. vi. 3, 4. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Q. 3. What is here meant by salvation?

A. By salvation is meant our complete and final deliverance from sin and misery, both temporal and eternal. From sin, Mat. i. 21. For he shall save his people from their sins. From misery, 1 Thess. i. 10. Even Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come.

Q. 4. What is a mean of salvation?

A. A mean of salvation signifies any appointment of God, whereby he promotes and accomplishes his design of saving our souls; so the word is a mean; Rom. i. 16. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth.

Q. 5. How doth the word and sacraments differ as means of salvation?

A. The word is appointed to be the first means of begetting faith; 1 Cor. iii. 5. Who then is Paul? And who is Apollos? But ministers by whom ye believed, &c. Sacraments are to seal and confirm it; Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith, &c.

Q. 6. What is meant by an effectual mean of salvation?

A. By an effectual mean, is meant such a mean as fully obtains and accomplishes the end it was appointed for, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men; but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Q. 7. Do not all the means of salvation prove effectual to men?

A. Though the means of salvation prove effectual to all God's elect, yet they are not so to others; Acts xxviii. 23, 24. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Q. 8. Do not the sacraments save all that partake of them?

A. No, they do not; baptism may pass on a cast-away; Acts viii. 23. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. And the Lord's supper may be received unworthily; 1 Cor. xi. 27. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink

the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Q. 9. What is the reason they prove not effectual to all?

A. Because their virtue and efficacy is not in themselves, but in God; for we see they work as God's Spirit concurs, or not concurs with them, as in the instance before given.

Q. 10. But is not that for want of wisdom, holiness, or zeal in the minister, that they have no more efficacy?

A. No, it is not principally, or only from thence; for it is not in the power of the holiest minister in the world to make them effectual; 1 Cor. iii. 7. Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Q. 11. Whence is it that sacraments become effectual?

A. It is only from the Spirit of Christ working in them, and by them on the souls of men; 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,—and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Q. 12. What is the first instruction hence?

A. That men enjoying all the ordinances of the gospel, and partaking of the sacraments annexed to the covenant of grace, may yet perish for ever; 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5. And did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; (for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.) But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness; Luke xiii. 26, 27. Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.

Q. 13. What is the second inference?

A. That men should not idolize some ministers for the excellency of their gifts, and despise others, seeing it is not in them to make the means effectual.

Q. 14. What is the last inference?

A. That in all our attendance upon the means of salvation, we should be careful to beg the Spirit and blessing of Christ, without which they cannot be effectual to our salvation.

Of the Nature of Sacraments.

Quest. 92. **W**HAT is a sacrament?

A. *A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.*

Q. 1. How many sorts of sacraments are found in scripture?

A. Of sacraments there are two sorts, some extraordinary and transient, as the fiery pillar, manna, and water out of the rock; 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 3, 4. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed

through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; (for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ.) And some ordinary and standing, as circumcision and the passover, before Christ; and baptism and the Lord's supper, since Christ's death.

Q. 2. How many things are to be considered in every sacrament?

A. In every sacrament five things must be considered; (1.) The author. (2.) The parts. (3.) The union of those parts. (4.) The subjects. (5.) The ends and uses of it.

Q. 3. Who is the author of the sacraments?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ as King of the church, by whose sole authority baptism was instituted; Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, &c. And the Lord's supper; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.

Q. 4. Are the old sacraments yet in being and in use in the church?

A. No, they are passed away, and the new come in their room. Baptism takes place of circumcision; Col. ii. 11, 12. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, &c. And the Lord's supper of the passover; 1 Cor. v. 7. Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened, for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Q. 5. Of what parts doth every sacrament consist?

A. Every sacrament consists of two parts, one external and earthly; another internal and heavenly, or spiritual. Bread, wine, and water, are the external, Christ's blood and Spirit the internal parts; Rom. vi. 3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? 1 Cor. xi. 25. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, &c.

Q. 6. Wherein consists the sacramental union of those parts?

A. It consists, by virtue of Christ's institution, in three things; (1.) In apt signification. (2.) Firm obsequation. And, (3.) Real exhibition of the blessings signified and sealed.

Q. 7. What are the blessings signified by water in baptism?

A. It signifies our implantation into Christ, and communion with him in his death and resurrection; Rom. vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should

walk in newness of life. And our solemn admission into the visible church; Gal. iii. 26, 27, 28, 29. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; For ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Q. 8. What are the blessings signified by bread and wine?

A. They signify Christ's body and blood, broken and poured out for us, with all the blessings of remission, peace, and salvation purchased by his blood, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Q. 9. Do the sacraments seal, as well as signify these things?

A. Yes, they do; Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, &c. Their use is to confirm God's covenant with believers.

Q. 10. Who are the proper subjects of the sacraments?

A. Believers and their seed are the subjects of baptism, but adult Christians only of the Lord's supper; Acts ii. 38, 39. Repent, and be baptized every one of you; for the promise is unto you, and to your children, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 1 Cor. xi. 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Q. 11. What is the main use and end of sacraments?

A. It is to ratify and confirm God's covenant with believers; Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised, &c. 1 Cor. xi. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Q. 12. What is the first instruction from hence?

A. That the abuse of such holy and solemn mysteries is a sin of dreadful aggravation, and such as God will punish; 1 Cor. xi. 27. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Q. 13. What is the second instruction?

A. Hence we learn the tender care and love of Christ over the church, in instituting such useful and comfortable ordinances for us.

Of the Number of Sacraments.

Quest. 93. **W**HICH are the sacraments of the New Testament?

A. *The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism and the Lord's supper.*

Q. 1. How many sacraments hath Christ appointed in the New Testament?

A. Christ hath appointed two, and no more : these being sufficient for our initiation and confirmation.

Q. 2. How many have the Papists added to them ?

A. They have added five more ; viz. Confirmation, penance, ordination, marriage, and extreme unction.

Q. 3. What is their sacrament of confirmation ?

A. It is the anointing of the baptised with chrism in the forehead, with this form of words ; I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Q. 4. What is their ground for this practice ?

A. The abuse of that Scripture, Heb. vi. 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and laying on of hands, &c. which, by a figurative speech, expresseth the whole standing ministry in the church, by laying on of hands.

Q. 5. What is their sacrament of penance ?

A. It is repentance manifested by outward signs, to which the word of absolution coming, makes it a sacrament misgrounded on John xx. 23. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Q. 6. What is their sacrament of orders, or ordination ?

A. It is the laying on of hands in ordination of ministers, by which they conceive spiritual grace is given ; by mistake of 2 Tim. i. 6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands.

Q. 7. What is their fourth superadded sacrament ?

A. It is marriage, grounded upon those words of the apostle, Eph. v. 32. This is a great mystery ; but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Which only shews a similitude of our union with Christ, not an instituted sign to that end.

Q. 8. What is their fifth superadded sacrament ?

A. Extreme unction, or anointing the sick, near death, with consecrated oil, grounded on Mark vi. 13. And anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. And James v. 14. Is any sick among you ? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. Which are neither sacramental rites, nor of ordinary standing use in the church, but extraordinary and temporary for that age.

Q. 9. What learn we hence ?

A. Hence we learn, how apt men are to corrupt God's ordinances, by their superstitious additions ; Mat. xv. 9. Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Q. 10. What is the second instruction hence ?

A. How just and necessary our separation from Rome is, who have grossly corrupted God's ordinances, and left men no other remedy ; Rev. xiii. 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to

blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

Q. 11. What is the third instruction?

A. That the reformation of religion is an invaluable mercy, a great deliverance from spiritual bondage; Rev. xi. 19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Q. 12. What is the fourth instruction?

A. That Rome shall certainly fall, and all her adherents, for the horrid injury done by them to Christ, and the souls of men; Rev. xviii. 20, 21. Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great milstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

Of Baptism.

Quest. 94. **W**HAT is baptism?

A. *Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.*

Q. 1. What is the external part of baptism?

A. It is pure unmixed water; Hex. x. 22. And our bodies washed with pure water. And therefore it is a vile practice of Papists, to add oil, salt, and spittle, to water in baptism.

Q. 2. What doth water in baptism signify?

A. It signifies the blood of Christ; Rev. i. 5. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Q. 3. What is the first resemblance it hath to Christ's blood?

A. In the freeness of it to all, it represents the unpurchased blood of Christ; Isa. lv. 1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.

Q. 4. What is the second resemblance to Christ's blood?

A. It resembles it in its refreshing quality; water refresheth the thirsty, so doth Christ's blood; John vi. 35. He that believeth on me shall never thirst.

Q. 5. What is the third resemblance it hath to Christ's blood?

A. The cleansing property of water shews the purifying virtue of Christ's blood; Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?

Q. 6. What is the fourth resemblance it hath to Christ's blood ?

A. It resembles it in the necessity of it: For as the body cannot live without water, so neither can the soul without Christ's blood; Heb. ix. 23. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Q. 7. What is the fifth resemblance of water to the blood of Christ ?

A. As water neither refresheth nor purifies the body without application; so neither doth Christ's blood refresh or purify the soul till applied; 1 Cor. i. 30. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Q. 8. Is it necessary to plunge the whole body under water, in baptizing every person ?

A. The word [baptize] signifying as well to wash, as to plunge; a person may be truly baptized, that is not plunged. And we cannot think by the circumstance of time and place, that the jailor, in the night, was carried to a river out of the city; Acts xvi. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway.

Q. 9. But it is not said, John iii. 23. That John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized ?

A. The word signifies many waters, that is, springs of waters there; which are known by travellers to be small, not capable of plunging into.

Q. 10. What are the benefits accruing to us by baptism ?

A. The benefits are twofold: some external, called the fatness of the olive-tree; i. e. ordinances, and visible membership; Rom. xi. 17. And thou being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakers of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. And some spiritual and saving; 1 Pet. iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Q. 11. What engagements are laid on the baptized ?

A. They are engaged to be the Lord's people, and to walk suitably to that engagement; Rom. vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Q. 12. Is baptism to be reiterated, as the Lord's supper ?

A. No; for the Lord's supper is a sacrament for nourishing, but this for implantation; Rom. vi. 4, 5. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in new-

ness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we should be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

Q. 13. Doth baptism regenerate men, and confer saving grace?

A. No, it doth not, in its own virtue, convey grace, no more than the Lord's supper; but the Spirit of God is the author of grace, and works it as he pleases, before or after baptism.

Of the Subjects of Baptism.

Quest. 95. **T**O whom is baptism to be administered?

A. *Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.*

Q. 1. Who are to be baptized?

A. Believers, and their infant-offspring; Acts ii. 39. For the promise is to you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, even many as the Lord our God shall call.

Q. 2. How doth it appear, that the infant-seed of believers ought to be baptized?

A. It appears by this, that they being Abraham's seed, were taken into covenant with God, and ordered to have the sign of the covenant applied to them; and that grant was never reversed; Gen. xvii. 7, 10. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; even every man-child among you shall be circumcised.

Q. 3. But was not that the covenant of works; and so will not hold, to infer their privilege under the covenant of grace?

A. No, it was not; for God never did, nor will become a God by way of special interest to any people; by virtue of the covenant of works, since the breach of it by the fall.

Q. 4. But if it were the covenant of grace, how doth it appear the right of believers infants is still the same it was before in Abraham's time?

A. It appears plainly from the apostle's own words and arguments; Acts ii. 39. For the promise is to you, and to your children, &c.

Q. 5. But though infants then were members of God's visible church among the Jews, how doth it appear they are so now, when God hath cast them off?

A. It appears, the membership and privileges are as free and complete to them now, that are the children of Gentile believers, as ever they were to the Jewish infants; Rom. xi. 17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, were grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree.

Q. 6. How else doth it appear they are within the covenant?

A. It appears by this, that they are pronounced holy; 1 Cor. vii. 14. Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy. Which is a federal holiness, and none out of covenant can be holy by covenant.

Q. 7 But may not that place mean only their legitimacy?

A. No, it cannot; for then the apostle must pronounce all the infants in the world bastards, that descend not at least from one believing parent.

Q. 8. But infants are not capable to covenant with God, or to perform covenant-duties; and therefore why should they be admitted to covenant-privileges?

A. A child now of eight days old, is as capable of being admitted into covenant with God, as children of the same age were in Abraham's days: and then it is manifest they were admitted.

Q. 9. Though they were admitted by circumcision then, will it follow, they may be so by baptism now, seeing that ordinance is abolished?

A. Yes, it will: For though circumcision cease, yet baptism is come in its place; Col. ii. 10, 11, 12. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, &c.

Q. 10. But circumcision was a seal of the covenant of works; and the argument will not hold, from a seal of the covenant of works, to a seal of the covenant of grace?

A. Circumcision never was, nor was intended to be a seal of the covenant of works, but of the righteousness of faith; Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet, being uncircumcised, &c.

Q. 11. But have we no express command in the New Testament to baptize infants?

A. There needed no new command; their privilege had been settled many ages before upon them, and never reversed by Christ, or his apostles, but their former right declared to continue still to them; Acts ii. 39. For the promise is to you and to your children, &c.

Q. 12. But if they have a right, we might expect to find some examples of their baptizing?

A. It is manifest that believers households were baptized with them; Acts xvi. 15, 33. And when she was baptized, and her household, &c. Ver. 33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And if infants are not named, so neither are any of age, born of Christian parents.

Q. 13. But many trust to their infant-baptism, as to their regeneration, and so much mischief is done?

A. They do so; yet the duty is not therefore to be neglected. The

preaching of Christ is to some a stumbling-block; yet Christ must be preached for all that.

Q. 14. But many baptized infants prove naught?

A. And so do many baptized at age too. Duties are not to be measured by events.

Of the Lord's Supper.

Quest. 96. **W**HAT is the Lord's supper?

A. *The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.*

Q. 1. By whose authority is the Lord's supper instituted and appointed?

A. By the sovereign authority of Christ, the king of the church, and not by the pleasure of man; 1 Cor. xi. 23. For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

Q. 2. Of what parts doth this sacrament consist?

A. It consists of two parts; one earthly and visible, to wit, bread and wine; the other spiritual and invisible, the body and blood of Christ; 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

Q. 3. How doth these earthly and heavenly things become a sacrament?

A. By the word of institution, and blessing coming from Christ upon them; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25. For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; This do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Q. 4. When did Christ ordain and institute this sacrament?

A. He instituted it in the same night he was betrayed; 1 Cor. xi. 23. The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. It could not be sooner, because the passover must be first celebrated, and, by the institution of this, abrogated; not later, for soon after he was apprehended.

Q. 5. What doth the time of its institution teach us?

A. It teaches us, how great Christ's care and love to his people is, that he makes in his ordinance such provision for our comfort, though he knew his own bitter agony was just at hand.

Q. 6. What is the general use and end of this sacrament?

A. It is to confirm, seal, and ratify the new covenant to believers; 1 Cor. xi. 35. This cup is the New Testament in my blood: This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Q. 7. What are the particular ends and uses of it?

A. The first particular end and use of it, is, to bring Christ and his sufferings afresh to our remembrance; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. This do in remembrance of me.

Q. 8. What kind of remembrance of Christ is here intended?

A. Not a mere speculative, but an affectionate heart-melting remembrance of him like that of Peter, Matth. xxvi. 75. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock shall crow thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly. Or of Joseph, Gen. xliii. 29, 30. And Joseph made haste, for his bowels did yern upon his brother: And he sought where to weep, and he entered into his chamber and wept there.

Q. 9. What doth this end of the sacrament imply?

A. It implies this; that the best of God's people are too apt to forget Christ, and what he hath endured and suffered for them.

Q. 10. What else doth it imply?

A. It implies this; that none but those that have the saving knowledge of Christ, and have had former acquaintance with Christ, are fit for this ordinance; for no man can remember what he never knew; 1 Cor. xi. 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Q. 11. What is the second particular use and end of this sacrament?

A. It is to represent Christ to believers, as an apt sign of him, and of his death; and that both memorative, significative, and instructive.

Q. 12. How is it a memorative sign of Christ?

A. It brings Christ to our remembrance, as his death and bitter sufferings are therein represented to us, by the breaking of bread, and pouring forth of wine; 1 Cor. xi. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come.

Q. 13. How is it a significative ordinance?

A. It is a significative ordinance, not only as it represents Christ's sufferings, but the believers union with him as the Head, and with each other as members of his body; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread, and one body, &c.

Q. 14. In what respect is it an instructive sign?

A. It is an instructive sign in divers respects; namely, first, as it teaches us, that Christ is the only nutritive bread, by which our souls live; John vi. 51. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the

bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. And, *secondly*, as it instructs us, that the New Testament is now in its full force, by the death of Christ the Testator; Heb. ix. 16, 17. For where a Testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no force at all, whilst the Testator liveth.

Thus much of the Author, nature, and ends of the Lord's supper.

Of the Elements, Action, and Subjects of it.

Quest. 1. **A**RE not bread and wine too small and common things, to represent the body and blood of Christ?

A. Though a bit of bread, and a draught of wine, be things of small value in themselves; yet they are great in respect of their use and end. A pennyworth of wax is a small thing in itself, but being applied to the label of a deed, may be advanced to the worth of thousands of pounds, as it receives the seal to a great inheritance.

Q. 2. Is not the bread in the sacrament turned into the very body of Christ itself, by transubstantiation?

A. No, it is not; but the elements retain still their own proper nature of bread and wine, after the words of consecration; and are so called; 1 Cor. xi. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, &c. Mat. xxvi. 29. But I say unto you, I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Q. 3. What is the first argument, by which Protestants confute the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation?

A. The first argument against it, is taken from the end of the sacrament; which is, to bring Christ's body and blood to our remembrance; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. This do in remembrance of me. Now signs for remembrance, are of things absent, not present.

Q. 4. What is the second argument?

A. Because the language in which our Saviour spake, had no other property of expression; there being no other word for signify, but is instead thereof, as is manifest in both Testaments; Gen. xli. 27. And the seven ill-favoured kine, that came up after them, are seven years of famine. Rev. i. 20. The seven stars, are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

Q. 5. What is the third argument against transubstantiation?

A. The manifold gross absurdities, that naturally and necessarily follow on this doctrine, shew the falseness of it, and that it is justly rejected and abhorred by all sound Christians.

Q. 6. What is the first absurdity that follows it?

A. This doctrine allows that to a silly priest, which is not to be allowed to all the angels in heaven. It allows him power to make his Maker, and eat his God; and in justifying this by the omnipotency

of God, they say no more, than what a Turk may say to justify the most ridiculous fooleries of the Alcoran.

Q. 7. What is the second absurdity of transubstantiation ?

A. The second absurdity is this, that it denies the truth of the testimony given by the senses of all men, that it is real bread, and real wine, after consecration, and not flesh and blood. And if the testimony of sense be not certain, then the being of God cannot be proved by the things that are made ; contrary to Rom. i. 20. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, &c. Nor the truth of Christ's resurrection, by seeing and feeling ; contrary to Luke xxiv. 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself ; handle me, and see, &c.

Q. 8. What is the third absurdity of transubstantiation ?

A. The third absurdity is this, that in affirming the accidents of bread and wine to remain, and their substance to vanish ; they affirm, that there is length, breadth, thickness, moisture, and sweetness ; and yet nothing long, broad, thick, moist, or sweet ; which is a perfect contradiction.

Q. 9. What is the fourth absurdity of transubstantiation ?

A. It implies, that the entire living body of Christ sat at the table, and at the same time was dead, and in the disciples mouths and stomachs in the first sacrament ; and that in all after-sacraments it is wholly in heaven, and wholly in as many thousand places in the world, as there are sacraments administered.

Q. 10. What doth the breaking of this bread, and pouring out of wine in the sacrament, signify ?

A. It signifies the violent painful death, and bitter sufferings of Christ for us ; 1 Cor. xi. 26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Q. 11. What doth the giving and taking of the sacramental bread and wine signify ?

A. These actions signify God's exhibiting, and the believers applying of Christ, and all his benefits, to their souls.

Q. 12. Who are fit subjects to receive the Lord's supper ?

A. None that are grossly ignorant, scandalous, or unbelievers in their natural state, for such cannot examine themselves, as the word requires ; 1 Cor. xi. 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. But do eat and drink judgment to themselves ; 1 Cor. xi. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Q. 13. Are morally honest and sober persons qualified for this sacrament.

A. No ; civility and morality do not qualify persons, they are not the wedding-garment ; but regenerating grace and faith doth, in the smallest measure ; Mat. xxii. 12. And he saith unto him, Friend,

how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? &c. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Of the Duties of Communicants.

Quest. 97. **W**HAT is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body; of their faith to feed upon him; of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q. 1. What are the duties of worthy receivers?

A. There are three sorts of duties incumbent on them; some antecedent to it, some concomitant of it, and some subsequent to it.

Q. 2. What are the antecedent duties to it?

A. They are two. (1.) Examination of their graces. (2.) Preparation of their souls. Examination of their graces; 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. And preparation of their souls; 1 Cor. v. 8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Q. 3. What is the first grace to be tried?

A. Our saving knowledge of God in Christ, without which we cannot discern the Lord's body; 1 Cor. xi. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Q. 4. What are we to enquire of, touching our knowledge of God in Christ?

A. We are to examine whether it be competent for quantity, and savingly operative and influential on the heart and life, for quality; Hosea iv. 6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, &c. 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal.

Q. 5. When is knowledge competent and influential?

A. When we truly understand, by the teachings of the Father, the sin and misery of the fall, the nature and necessity of Christ, and, under these convictions, come to him in the way of faith; John vi. 45. —Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. And subject ourselves to him in sincere obedience; Mat. xi. 28, 29. Come unto me, all ye that labour and

are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Q. 6. What are we to examine ourselves about, besides knowledge?

A. We are obliged to examine ourselves about our faith, whether we have it in any saving degree; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: Prove yourselves, &c. For without faith we cannot please God; Heb. xi. 6. But without faith it is impossible to please God, &c. Nor enjoy spiritual communion with Christ; Eph. iii. 17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith: that ye being rooted and grounded in love, &c.

Q. 7. What other grace must be examined and sought for?

A. We must examine our love to Christ, and all that are his: because no gifts signify any thing without love; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Q. 8. What else must worthy receivers examine themselves about?

A. The sincerity of their hearts, evidenced by their obedience; without which they cannot worthily approach the table; 1 Cor. v. 8. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Q. 9. But if, upon examination, we are in doubts about our faith and sincerity, must we forbear?

A. If our doubts arise from the weakness, and not the total want of grace, such doubts should not hinder us; Rom. xiv. 1. Him that is weak in the faith, receive you, &c.

Q. 10. What is the danger of coming to the Lord's table without these graces?

A. The danger is exceeding great both to soul and body. (1.) To the soul; 1 Cor. xi. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, &c. And to the body; 1 Cor. xi. 30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

Q. 11. What are the duties of worthy receivers at the Lord's table?

A. Their duties at the table are, to discern Christ by the eye of faith, under those signs of his body and blood; 1 Cor. xi. 29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. On the discovery of him, to mourn bitterly for sin; Zech. xii. 10.—And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. And to excite all their graces into vigorous acts for the applying of Christ to themselves; Cant. iv. 16.

Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, &c.

Q. 12. What is the duty of worthy receivers, after the sacrament?

A. Their duty is, heartily to bless God for Christ, and the benefits of his blood, Matth. xxvi. 30. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. To double their care and watchfulness against sin; Eph. iv. 30. And grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption. And to grow more fruitful in all spiritual obedience; Col. i. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Q. 13. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That the abuse and profanation of this ordinance, either by coming to it for carnal ends, or being forced upon it by fear of sufferings, or approaching to it without due qualifications, is a dreadful sin, which God will terribly avenge: Matt. xxii. 11, 12, 13. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not a wedding-garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king unto the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Q. 14. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That great and manifold are the blessings and advantages which Christians duly prepared may reap by this ordinance.

Of Prayer.

Quest. 98. **W**HAT is prayer?

A. *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.*

Q. 1. Who is the proper and only object of prayer?

A. God only is the proper object of prayer; it is a part of his natural worship, therefore it is peculiarly his honour and prerogative, and none else can hear and answer them but God; Psalm lxxv. 2. O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

Q. 2. Through whom, or in whose name, are our prayers to be directed to God?

A. Our prayers are to be directed to God only through Christ, and his name; and not by the mediation of angels or saints; Col. ii. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels. For the merit and satisfaction of Christ alone give success and acceptance to our prayers; Rev. viii. 3, 4. And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar, which was

before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand. 1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Q. 3. What is the first property or quality of acceptable prayer?

A. No prayer can be acceptable to God, except the matter of it be agreeable to his will; Jam. iv. 3. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts; 1 John v. 14, 15. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him.

Q. 4. Is it enough to make prayer acceptable, that the matter is agreeable to God's will?

A. No, it is not; for the manner, as well as the matter, must be so too; Psalm lxvi. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Q. 5. What is the first qualification of an acceptable prayer, respecting the manner of it?

A. That it be sincere, and flowing from the heart of a regenerate person; Prov. xv. 29. The Lord is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. Jer. xxix. 13. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

Q. 6. What is the second qualification of prayer respecting the manner?

A. It must be performed in the heart of a child of God by the Spirit of adoption; Gal. iv. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 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.

Q. 7. What is the third qualification of an acceptable prayer, respecting the manner?

A. It must be fervent and important, not cold and formal, James v. 16.—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Matth. vii. 7. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Q. 8. Wherein doth true importunity with God in prayer consist?

A. Not in the multitude of words: Matth. vi. 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the Heathen do: for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. But in an holy earnestness of spirit to be heard; Psalm cxliii. 7. Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. A prudent choice of prevalent argu-

ments; Job xxiii. 4. I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. And a resolute persistence in our requests, till they be granted; Isa. lxii. 7. And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Q. 9. Do not prayers thus qualified sometimes miscarry;

A. God may delay and suspend the answer of them for a time; Psal. xxii. 2. O my God I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not, &c. But sooner or later God will always answer them, either in the very thing we ask; 1 John v. 15.—We know that we have the petitions that we desired of him: Or in that which is equivalent, or better; Gen. xvii. 18, 19. And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee: And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.

Q. 10. Is there no prayer but what is stated and fixed?

A. Yes, there is a sudden occasional prayer, which we call ejaculatory. Such was Jacob's, Gen. xlix. 18. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord. And this is exceeding useful, to maintain constant communion with God, and keep the heart in a spiritual frame.

Q. 11. Is all stated and fixed prayer public in the congregation or church?

A. No; stated prayer ought to be in our families, with those under our charge; and in our closets, betwixt God and us alone; Josh. xxiv. 15.—But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, And Mat. vi. 6. But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Q. 12. What do you infer from hence?

A. That the restraint of prayer is not only a great sin, but an ill sign of a graceless heart; Job vi. 4. Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God. And that which entails a judgment and curse upon men, and their families; Jer. x. 25. Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.

Q. 13. What is the second inference from the ordinance of prayer?

A. That the true reason why we enjoy not the mercies we pray for, is not because God is unwilling to grant mercies, but because we either neglect prayer, or miscarry in the manner of prayer; James iv. 2, 3. Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Of Direction in Prayer.

Quest. 99. **W**HAT rule hath God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer ; but the special rule of direction, is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the Lord's prayer.

Q. 1. Do men need directions, rules, and helps in prayer ?

A. They do greatly need them, for in, and of ourselves we know not what to pray for as we ought ; Rom. viii. 26. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, &c. Nor how to pray in a right manner, and for right ends ; and a mistake in either frustrates our prayers ; James iv. 3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Q. 2. When do men mistake in the matter of their prayer ?

A. They mistake in the matter of prayer, when they ask of God things that are not lawful, good and agreeable to his will. So the disciples were ready to do, in calling for fire from heaven on the Samaritans ; Luke ix. 54, 55. And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did ? But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

Q. 3. When do men mistake in the manner of prayer ?

A. They mistake in the manner, when they ask mercies of God for carnal ends, to satisfy their lusts ; James iv. 3. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Or in a drowsy and careless manner ; Isa. lxiv. 7. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee, &c.

Q. 4. What helps hath God afforded us to furnish us to prayer, both in respect of the matter and manner ?

A. The scriptures abundantly furnish us with all sorts of helps and directions for the matter of prayer. It directs us, both in confession of sin, original and actual ; Psalm li. 4, 5. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, &c. Petition and thanksgiving ; Phil. iv. 6. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

Q. 5. Doth it afford us any help, or direction, as to the manner of prayer also ?

A. Yes, it doth ; and that both as to, (1.) Our sincerity in prayer ; Heb. x. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith ; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (2.) As to our humility in prayer ; Psalm x. 17. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble ; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. (3.) As to our faith in prayer ; James i. 6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, &c. (4.) As to our fervency in prayer ; James v. 6.

—The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Q. 6. Are these external rules and directions sufficient in themselves to enable us to pray acceptably?

A. In respect of external direction they are sufficient, and we need no other outward rules than what the scriptures furnish; but besides that, the internal helps and assistances of the Spirit are necessary to the offering up acceptable prayer; 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, &c.

Q. 7. But doth the scripture only furnish us with general rules of direction for prayer;

A. No, it furnishes us also with an excellent pattern and example of prayer, composed by Christ for our direction; Matth. vi. 9. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

Q. 8. Are Christians tied by a necessity to use that form of words? Or was it only intended for a directory to them?

A. That form of words may be lawfully used, but it is plain its intention was to regulate our petitions by it; and therefore they that use it in spells and charms, as the Papists; or those that think nothing is prayer, but that form of words; abuse Christ's intention in it.

Q. 9. How doth it appear, it was not Christ's intention strictly to bind us to that very form of words in our prayers?

A. Divines give us these reasons against it, (1.) Because this prayer is set down diversly by the evangelists; Mat. vi. 10, 12. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And Luke xi. 3, 4. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (2.) Christ and his apostles did not always use this form of words afterwards, as appears by his prayer at Lazarus' grave, John xi. and that for his apostles, John xvii. (3.) Because these words, Mat. vi. 9. After this manner, &c. plainly shew, its use was intended for a directory to us.

Q. 10. What is the first inference from hence?

A. Hence we learn the fulness and completeness of the Scriptures, not only for the guiding and settling of our faith in things that are to be believed, but also of our whole practice, in every duty we are to perform.

Q. 11. What is the second inference hence?

A. Hence we are informed, how necessary it is to acquaint ourselves with the mind of God, revealed in his word, that we may guide ourselves in prayer, both for matter and manner thereby: and not utter to God words without knowledge.

Q. 12. What is the last inference from hence?

A. That those who neglect all prayer, and those that satisfy them-

selves with a form of prayer, which they utter without knowledge or affection, do greatly sin against God. And that it is the duty of all Christians, from a sense of their own sins, wants, and mercies, to be often with God in prayer, guiding themselves in that spiritual duty, by such inward, and outward helps, as his word and Spirit are able to furnish them with.

Of the Preface to the Lord's Prayer.

Quest. 100. **W**HAT doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The preface to the Lord's prayer, which is, [Our Father which art in heaven,] teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a Father, able and ready to help us: and that we should pray with and for others.

Q. 1. What doth the word Father import in this preface?

A. It imports the Spirit of adoption to be the principal thing in all acceptable prayers; Gal. iv. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Q. 2. What is the first benefit, or help we have in prayer, from the Spirit of adoption?

A. He excites our spirits to seek God in prayer; Psal. xxvii. 8. When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Q. 3. What is the second assistance he gives us in prayer?

A. He indites and suggests suitable and acceptable matter to us in prayer; 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, &c.

Q. 4. What is the third benefit we have by him in prayer?

A. He fills our souls with spiritual and holy affections in prayer, and helps us to act his graces in our duties; 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.

Q. 5. What else doth this word Father import?

A. It imports that holy confidence which believers may, and ought to draw near to God withal, as children to a Father; Eph. iii. 12. In whom we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of him.

Q. 6. Doth it only signify our relation and confidence?

A. No, it also signifies the reverential fear of God, which ought at all times to be on our hearts, especially in prayer; Mal. i. 6. A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: If then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear?

Q. 7. What is further imported in this word Father?

A. It imports God's willingness and readiness to grant the best

mercies to his people that seek them duly at his hand; Mat. vii. 11. If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Q. 8. Why is he here called our Father?

A. To signify to us, that it is not only our duty to pray secretly by and for ourselves, but also with and for others? Eph. vi. 18. Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance, and supplication for all saints.

Q. 9. Why is God said here to be in heaven?

A. It is to note his sovereign power and dominion over all, as a ground-work of faith in prayer.

Q. 10. What else doth it import?

A. The great distance between God and us, which should fill our hearts with an holy awe of him; Eccl. v. 2.—God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Q. 11. What is the first inference from hence?

A. It shews us, what a sad case all those are in, that have no special interest in God as a Father.

Q. 12. What is the second inference from hence?

A. It shews us, what a glorious privilege the Lord Jesus Christ hath purchased for, and settled on his people? Heb. iv. 15, 16. For we have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Q. 13. What is the last inference from hence?

A. That seeing believers have a Father in heaven, they should never fear wants while they live, nor be afraid to die, since death brings them to heaven their Father's house.

Of sanctifying God's Name.

Quest. 101. **W**HAT do we pray for in the first petition?

A. *In the first petition, which is, [Hallowed be thy name,] we pray, that God would enable us and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.*

Q. 1. Is there any word full enough, perfectly to express what God is?

A. No, his name is secret; Judges xiii. 18. And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? A name which none can tell; Prov. xxx. 4.—What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell? A name above every name; Phil. ii. 9. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. But the name by

which he more especially manifests himself, is the name **I AM**; **Exod.** iii. 14. And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM**: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you.

Q. 2. What doth the name of God, **I AM**, signify to us?

A. It signifies to us, first, The reality of his being, in opposition to idols, which are but imaginary and fantastic things; **1 Cor.** viii. 4. —We know that an idol is nothing in the world, &c. God is not only the most perfect Being, but the root of all other beings.

Q. 3. What else doth this name **I AM** import?

A. It imports both the perfection and eternity of God's being. **I AM** implies, he hath not that now, which he had not formerly; and that he shall not afterwards have, what he hath not now; and that there is neither beginning, end, nor succession with God, whose name is **I AM**.

Q. 4. But what are we here to understand by the name of God?

A. All those things are here intended, by which he manifests himself to the creature; as his words, works, and ordinances, but especially his glorious attributes; **Exod.** xxxiv. 5, 6. —The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Q. 5. What is it to hallow, or sanctify his name?

A. Not to infuse any holiness into him, which he had not before; so he sanctifies us; but to manifest and acknowledge the holiness of God; **Isa.** xxix. 23. But when he seeth his children, the work of my hands in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the holy one of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

Q. 6. Why hallowed or sanctified, rather than glorified? Why that word, rather than this?

A. Because his holiness is the beauty and lustre of his other attributes. His greatness appears in his holiness; **Isa.** xii. 6. —Great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. So doth his power; **Luke** i. 49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name. And therefore his holiness is that attribute, which angels single out especially to celebrate; **Isa.** vi. 3. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, &c. And so did men also, as it is the cause why they should glorify him; **Exod.** xv. 11. —Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, &c.

Q. 7. What is the first thing we are to intend in this petition?

A. The meaning is, that God would so dispose and order all things in the world, as may best promote and advance the glory of his name; on which account we may pray for the defeat of God's enemies; **Psal.** lxxxiii. 16, 17, 18. Fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish; that men may know that thou, whose name alone is **Jehovah**, art the most High over all the earth. And the deliverance of his church and people; **Psalm**

lxxix. 9. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name's sake.

Q. 8. What is the second thing we are to intend in it?

A. That God would fit us for, and use us in the most serviceable capacity for the glorifying of his name; Psal. lxxvii. 1, 2, 3. God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us: That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.

Q. 9. What is the third thing intended in this petition?

A. That God may not only glorify his own name, and use us to glorify it, but that it should be our endeavour and joy to have it glorified by others all the world over; Psalm cxlv. 4, 5, 6. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and I will declare thy greatness.

Q. 10. Why must our hearts be so intently set upon the sanctification of God's name?

A. Because this is the ultimate end of our own, and every other being; Rom. xi. 36. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever, Amen. And the particular end of God in our effectual calling; 1 Pet. ii. 9. but ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Q. 11. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That the dishonour of God's name must needs be a cutting affliction to a gracious soul; Psalm xlii. 10. As with a sword in my bones my enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

Q. 12. What is the second inference hence?

A. That it is a dreadful infatuation, and spiritual judgment upon those men that think they glorify God in doing those things which his soul hateth; Isa. lxvi. 5. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: But he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed. And John xvi. 2. They shall put you out of the synagogues: Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, he will think that he doth God service.

Q. 13. What is the third inference from hence?

A. That it should be indifferent to a Christian what condition God puts him into, so that he may but be useful to sanctify and exalt the name of God therein; Phil. i. 20.—As always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.

Q. 14. What is the last inference hence?

A. That it is an high and dreadful provocation of God to profane and abuse his worship, whereon his name is called, and wherein it is to be sanctified; Lev. x. 1, 2, 3. And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, this is that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people will I be glorified.

Of God's Kingdom.

Quest. 102. **W**HAT do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, which is, [Thy kingdom come,] we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q. 1. What is the first thing signified by the kingdom of God here?

A. The gospel is here intended by the kingdom of God, Matth. xiii. 47.—Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.

Q. 2. What is the thing signified by the coming of this kingdom of God?

A. It signifies the removal of all impediments, that hinder its propagation in the world; 2 Thess. iii. 1. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.

Q. 3. Who, and what hinders the propagation of it?

A. Antichrist, that man of sin, hinders it externally; 2 Thess. ii.

4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. The devil and men's lusts internally; 1 Thess. ii. 18. Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again; but Satan hindered us. Luke xix. 14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a messenger after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

Q. 4. What then is the desire of all good men, with respect to the coming of the gospel-kingdom?

A. That all nations may be brought to Christ by the preaching of it, and so Christ's kingdom be greatly exalted and enlarged; Isa. ii. 2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it.

Q. 5. What is the second thing here meant by the kingdom of God?

A. It signifies and intends the work of saving grace wrought in

men's souls; Luke xvii. 21.—Behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Q. 6. Why is this work of grace called the kingdom of God?

A. Because wherever saving-grace comes, it subdues the soul to Christ's sceptre; 2 Cor. x. 5. Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?

Q. 7. Wherein consists the kingdom of grace?

A. It consists not in external rites and observances, but in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; Rom. xiv. 17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Q. 8. What do we ask of God in this petition, with respect to this kingdom of grace?

A. Herein we desire not only our own personal progressive sanctification, but the sanctification of others all the world over; Acts xxvi. 29. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

Q. 9. What is the third thing here meant by the kingdom of God?

A. By it is here meant the future state of glory and blessedness; 1 Cor. xv. 50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, &c.

Q. 10. Why is the heavenly state called the kingdom of God?

A. This is called the kingdom of God, because in that state God reigns over his people gloriously, there being no rebellion in them in the least degree; Luke xx. 36.—For they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. And they reign with Christ; Rev. iii. 21. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, &c.

Q. 11. What do we desire in prayer for the coming of this kingdom?

A. We desire not only our preservation in our passage to that state of glory; 1 Pet. v. 10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. But the hastening of it to ourselves and others; Rev. xxii. 20.—Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.

Q. 12. What is the first instruction hence?

A. That the gospel is an invaluable mercy, as it is the instrument of bringing us into Christ's gracious and glorious kingdom; Acts xxvi. 18. To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Q. 13. What is the second inference from hence?

A. That men may really hate and oppose the very thing they pray for.

Q. 14. What is the last instruction hence?

A. That how firmly soever Satan's and Antichrist's kingdom seem to be founded in the world, they must and shall fall before the daily prayers of the saints.

Concerning the Doing of God's Will.

Quest. 103. **W**HAT do we pray for in the third petition?

A. *In the third petition, which is, [Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven], we pray that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.*

Q. 1. What will of God is here intended?

A. Not the will of his decree; for that is in himself alone; 1 Cor. ii. 11. The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Q. 2. What will then is here meant?

A. The will of his providence may be here meant; Psal. cxxv. 6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, and in the seas, and all deep places. And Psal. cxix. 89. For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Ver. 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy servants.

Q. 3. How are we to understand the doing of this will of providence in heaven?

A. (1.) As it done by the sun, moon, and stars; Psalm cxix. 89. Thy word is settled in heaven. Ver. 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances. Psalm xix. 6. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. (2.) As it is done by angels; Psal. civ. 4. Who maketh the angels spirits, his ministers a flaming fire. Heb. i. 14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Q. 4. How do these perform the will of God's providence?

A. (1.) The heavenly bodies do it evenly, constantly, and unweariably; Psalm civ. 19. He appointeth the moon for seasons, the sun knoweth his going down. (2.) The angels do it speedily, voluntarily, cheerfully, and so knowingly; Psalm ciii. 21. Ye ministers of his that do his pleasure.

Q. 5. Must we be agents in this providential will?

A. Yes, we must; Acts xiii. 36. For David, after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.

Q. 6. How must we do it?

A. By employing our abilities, faculties, and interests, in the duties of our particular callings, and by moving constantly, prudently, and vigorously in our own sphere, and so imitate those in heaven.

Q. 7. Why do we pray that God's will of providence may be done by us?

A. Because we are his creatures, and the most noble instrument of the inferior world; and therefore we should be willing to be acted by him, and active for him; and because this will of providence is always just, good, and true, and for his own glory; Psalm cxlv. 17. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Psal. cxix. 89. For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Ver. 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances; for all are thy servants.

Q. 8. What other will of God is here meant?

A. The will of his precepts, and this is chiefly intended.

Q. 9. And how is this will of God done in heaven?

A. By the angels it is done universally, cheerfully, constantly, humbly, thankfully, readily; Psalm ciii. 20. Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. And so it is done by the saints in heaven; Rev. vii. 15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; And chap. xxii. 3. And his servants shall serve him.

Q. 10. Do we pray then that we may thus do the will of God?

A. Yes; for though we cannot perfectly without sin do it, yet that is our duty; Mat. v. ult. Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. And in all other particulars we may and we must intimate them herein; Psalm cxix. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Verse 14. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. Verse 69. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments. Verse 112, &c. I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always even unto the end.

Q. 11. How must we know God's will?

A. Not notionally and rationally only; but spiritually also; 1 Cor. ii. 14. They are spiritually discerned.

Q. 12. Why is knowing God's will placed here before doing it, &c.?

A. Because the understanding is the leading faculty, without which it is impossible there should be any obedience; Prov. xix. 2. Also that the soul be without knowledge it is not good. Jer. v. 4. Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.

Q. 13. Why pray we to God for this knowledge? can we not know it of ourselves?

A. No, it is the special gift and grace of God; Gal. i. 15, 16. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Eph. i. 17, 19. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.—And what is the exceeding great-

ness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. Eph. v. 8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.

Q. 14. Why do we pray that we may obey; can we not do it of our own free-will when we know it?

A. No, for our wills are stubborn and rebellious against God's commands, as well as our minds ignorant of them; Rom. viii. 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. 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 I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Phil. ii. 13. For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Q. 15. What is meant by submitting to God's will?

A. (1.) Either a voluntary subjection of soul, and a preparedness actually to do his will: Or, (2.) A voluntary and silent submission to his will of providence in affliction: but in this particular we cannot imitate those in heaven, because no cross ever befalls them.

Q. 16. Why is will added in all things?

A. Because partial obedience is no obedience; he that does not obey God in every thing, obeys him in nothing; James ii. 10. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Q. 17. Why do we pray that God by his grace would work this will in us, and by us?

A. Because it is free grace that determines it; 2 Tim. i. 9. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began. And efficacious grace that works it in us, and enables us to do it; Eph. v. 8. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Verse 10. Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Q. 18. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That it is man's glory and felicity to be conformed to the will of God, Prov. xii. 26. The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour. Psal. xix. 10, 11. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Q. 19. What is the second inference?

A. That we must mortify in ourselves every lust that contradicts God's will, and renounce without ourselves every thing that comes in competition therewith; 1 Cor. ix. ult. But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. Gal. vi. 14. But

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

Q. 20. What is the third inference?

A. That it is in vain, yea, a provocation to pray, if we be not obedient to God's will; Prov. ii. 8, 9. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

Q. 21. What is the fourth inference?

A. That the law still hath the authority of a rule to believers, because it reveals God's will, which they must do.

Concerning our daily Bread.

Quest. 104. **W**HAT do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. *In the fourth petition, which is, [Give us this day our daily bread,] we pray that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.*

Q. 1. Why is this petition placed after the three former?

A. Because those concern immediately and generally God's glory, in the advancement of his name, kingdom and will, which ought to be preferred to all our personal concerns; Psal. lxix. 9. The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. Acts xxi. 13. I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Q. 2. Why is it put before the two following petitions?

A. Not for its worth, but for its order; for we can have no spiritual blessings, unless we have a natural being in this life.

Q. 3. What kind of bread is here meant?

A. Not spiritual bread, or our Lord Jesus Christ, (as some,) but corporal and temporal.

Q. 4. What is included in this word bread?

A. Not that only which we call strictly bread, but all the good things of this present life.

Q. 5. Do we hereby beg pure necessities only?

A. No, we pray for conveniences for our comfort, as well as necessities for our life.

Q. 6. Do we herein pray only for personal good things for our being?

A. No, we pray for civil good things for our condition, that according to our degree in the world, in which God hath placed us, we may have a convenient allowance.

Q. 7. Do we pray here for ourselves only?

A. No, but also for our charge, children, and family, that under and with us they may have the good things of this life.

Q. 8. Why do we pray to God for these good things, can we not get them ourselves, or our fellow-creatures give them to us?

A. Not without God: whatever we have of these things, they are from God; whoever be the second cause or instrument: If ourselves, God gives us ability and success to get them; if others, God inclined their hearts, and opened their hands to bestow them; Deut. viii. 17, 18. And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.

Q. 9. Why do we pray to God to give us bread?

A. Because the least crumb of bread is a free gift, and never can be merited by all we can do or suffer; Luke xvii. 10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

Q. 10. Why are all these things couched under the expression of bread?

A. (1.) Because bread is one of the most necessary and useful things to preserve life. (2.) Because we must not ask delicacies and dainties of God.

Q. 11. What is meant by day in our petition?

A. Either (1.) A natural day of twenty four hours; or, (2.) The day of our whole life.

Q. 12. Why do we pray for daily bread?

A. Because God must give us the mercies and good things of every day, or else we cannot have them.

Q. 13. Why should we not pray for weekly, or monthly, or yearly bread, as well as daily?

A. (1.) Because it is fit we should be still sensible of our dependence upon God. (2.) Because we do frequently pray to God, and so exert our graces, and maintain communion with him, and daily render thanks for daily favours; Psalm lv. 17. Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.

Q. 14. What need we to pray for daily bread, when we may have stores laid up for years?

A. They that have the good things of this life need to pray this petition, as well as they that have them not. Not that they may have bread, but that it may be bread to them: for except God give his blessing upon it, bread would be ashes, and not sustenance to us; neither could all the comforts of this life do us any good; Isa. iii. 1. For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water. Mal. ii. 1, 2. And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you: if ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the Lord of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart.

Q. 15. Why do we pray only for daily bread, or a competency, may we not pray for abundance and riches?

A. No, because riches are a great snare and temptation; Matth. xix. 23, 24. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.

Q. 16. What shall we then do with riches, if providence cast them upon us, shall we cast them away?

A. No, for some of the best of men, and greatest of God's favourites, have lived and died rich. But, (1.) We must wean our hearts from them; Psal. lxii. 10. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. (2.) Be thankful for them; and, (3.) Fruitful with them in acts of piety and charity; 1 Tim. vi. 17, 19. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy: laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Q. 17. Wherefore is the bread called our bread?

A. Not because we are absolute lords and possessors of it, for it is God's only; Psal. xxiv. 1, 2. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Psalm l. 10, 12. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. But, (1.) Because we must have a covenant right to it; and, (2.) A civil right; we must come lawfully and honestly by, and so keep the good things of this life; 2 Thess. iii. 10. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

Q. 18. Having prayed for our daily bread, need we to labour and endeavour to get it?

A. Yes, we must labour in good and honest callings; God's blessing and man's industry must concur towards the present maintenance of life; Psal. cxxviii. 1, 2. Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord: that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Prov. x. 4, 22. He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

Q. 19. What is the first inference from it?

A. That we must not seek great matters for ourselves, neither make

them the matter of prayer to God; nor the end and design of our labours and callings among men.

Q. 20. What is a second inference from hence?

A. That having food and raiment, we must be therewith content, and therefore thankful; 1 Tim. vi. 8. And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. 1 Thess. v. 18. In every thing give thanks.

Q. 21. What is the third inference?

A. That we ascribe not our success in the world to our own skill and industry, for the wisest and most industrious do sometimes labour in the fire, and put their gain in a bag with holes; but to God's free donation to us, and to his blessing upon our endeavours; Gen. xxxiii. 5, 11. And he lift up his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, the children which God hath graciously given thy servant.—Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee, because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. Deut. xxviii. 3. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Ver. 6. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

Concerning Forgiveness of Sins.

Quest. 105. **W**HAT do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. *In the fifth petition, which is, [And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,] we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.*

Q. 1. Why doth this petition immediately follow the former?

A. To teach, that all temporal and corporal good things, without special and spiritual ones, are little worth; Psalm iv. 6. There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Psalm xvii. 14, 15. From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure. They are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness? I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Q. 2. Why is it annexed to the former with the copulative *and*?

A. To teach, that to be one minute in the confluence of all earthly good things, without the pardon of sin, is a very dangerous and dreadful condition; Luke xii. 16, 20. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

Q. 3. Why is forgiveness of sins placed in the front of spiritual blessings?

A. Because till sin be pardoned, we are under wrath, and can have no special saving grace applied to us, till we are accepted; till we are in Christ, we have no covenant-right to the blessings of Christ; Mat. xi. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Ver. 30. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light; John xv. 4, 5. Abide in me, and I in you; 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.—Ver. 7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you; ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. John iii. *ult.* He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Q. 4. Why do we pray for forgiveness? Cannot we make amends for our sins, and be freed from their guilt, without pardon?

A. No, all that we can ever do, or suffer, can never expiate the guilt of the least sin; Psalm xlix. 7, 8. None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him; (for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever) 1 Sam. ii. 25. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?

Q. 5. Does God then freely, and out of mere grace, forgive us?

A. Yes, without any respect had to anything we can do, or be; Isa. xliii. 25. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Rom. ix. 15. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Ver. 18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Q. 6. How doth God forgive sins?

A. (1.) Universally, all sins; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Jer. xxxiii. 8. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned against me; And I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. Hosea xiv. 2. Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. (2.) Completely, and perfectly; Isa. xliii. 25. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Psal. ciii. 12. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Mic. vii. 19. He will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. Isa. xxxviii. 17. For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. (3.) Everlastingly; Jer. xxxi. 34. For I will

forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Heb. viii. 12. And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Q. 7. But doth not God punish them afterward, whom he has justified and forgiven?

A. No, not with a proper and vindictive punishment; but he brings evils upon them for their sins, as a Father chastises his child; and other sorts of afflictions for their spiritual good: He may be angry, as a Father, with those he has pardoned, but never hate them as a condemning Judge; Psal. lxxxix. 28. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. Ver. 34. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Q. 8. How can God be said freely to pardon all our sins, when we pray it may be done for Christ's sake; does not that imply that Christ has satisfied God for our sins, and deserved our remission?

A. Yes, it does so; for the Lord Christ, by his life and death, did satisfy Divine Justice, and did merit our forgiveness: But if he did so, we did not so; our sins cost him dear, but their pardon cost us nothing; our pardon is perfectly free to us, though due to Christ, for God gave Christ freely for us; God accepts of his merits, and applies them to us freely; Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

Q. 9. But is there nothing required from us as the condition of pardon? and if so, how can it be absolutely free?

A. There are required repentance from sin, and faith in the Lord Christ; Luke xiii. 3. But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish; John iii. ult. And he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. This is required from us towards our pardon, but yet it is free, (1.) Because God freely ordains thus to pardon. (2.) Because both these are the free gifts of God; Acts xi. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. Eph. ii. 8. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Q. 10. When then are our sins forgiven?

A. Just upon our closure with Christ by faith, in that very moment; Rom. v. 1. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. viii. 1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Q. 11. Why do we pray, in the answer, for the forgiveness of all our sins?

A. Because if the least guilt should remain upon us, it would exclude us from God's favour, and lodge us in everlasting burnings; Rom. vi. ult. For the wages of sin is death.

Q. 12. What are the privileges and blessings that accompany pardon?

A. Justification is accompanied with adoption; John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the

sions of God, even to them that believe on his name. With the Spirit and principle of all grace and holiness; 1 Cor. vi. 11. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. With an infallible title to eternal glory; John iii. 16. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; Rom. viii. 30. Whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Q. 13. How may we know that we are pardoned and justified?

A. Ordinarily, by our sanctification, by our loathing of sin, our contempt of the world, our valuing of Christ, our love and thankfulness to God, &c. 1 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are sanctified. Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Gal. vi. 14. By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious. Luke vii. 47. Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.

Q. 14. What is meant by [our?] Is it only such sins as we have personally and actually committed?

A. No, but also Adam's sin, which is ours by imputation; Rom. v. 19. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners. And original sin, which is ours by inhesion; Psal. li. 5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. And other men's sins, which we have made ours, by exciting them to them, not hindering of them, silence at them, and other ways; 2 Sam. xii. 9. Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. 1 Tim. v. 22. Neither be partaker of other men's sins.

Q. 15. Wherefore are sins called debts?

A. Because they are a non-payment of God's dues, a non-performance of our duty; which makes us liable to the arrest of death, and to the prison of hell.

Q. 16. Why do we plead our own forgiveness of others?

A. Not as any merit of our own pardon; but either as an encouragement of ourselves to beg pardon; seeing such evil, envious, and malignant persons, are enabled to forgive others, much more may we hope the good and gracious God will forgive us: or, as a condition, without which we can have no pardon, and with which we shall; Matth. vi. 14. For if we forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Q. 17. How do others trespass against us?

A. When they injure us, either in our persons, or names, or families, or estates, or souls, &c. 1 Sam. ii. 25. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?

Q. 18. Can we forgive our neighbour freely, fully, and perfectly, as God doth forgive us?

A. We cannot.

Q. 19. What then is the meaning of God's forgiving us, as we forgive others?

A. Not as to the quantity and perfection of forgiveness, but as to the sincerity and quality thereof; Mat. xviii. ult. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Q. 20. Are we always bound to manifest outwardly our love and forgiveness to all our enemies, and to behave ourselves towards them as friends?

A. No, if we have experienced them to be treacherous and false, and see no change, we are not bound to trust them; if they be, and remain wicked and profane, we must not associate with them; Psal. xxvi. 5. I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked. Ver. 4. I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

Q. 21. What then must we do to such?

A. We must heartily forgive them all their injuries, we must love them with the love of benevolence, pray for them, and be ready and willing to do them all good, both of body and soul; Mat. v. 44, 45. But I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Q. 22. If we forgive others, shall we be forgiven ourselves?

A. We shall, if out of obedience to God, and love to Christ, we do it.

Q. 23. What is the first inference from hence?

A. That except our sins be forgiven, we are lost and undone creatures; and therefore we must never be contented, till we are pardoned.

Q. 24. What is a second inference?

A. That God is a God of love, goodness, and pardon; seeing he will not pardon us, if we do not pardon others; but will, if we do so.

Q. 25. What is a third inference?

A. That if we live in hatred when we pray the Lord's prayer, we pray for our own damnation; Mat. xviii. 22. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven. Ver. 45. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Of God's leading us into temptation.

Quest. 106. **W**HAT do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. *In the sixth petition, which is, [And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil:] we pray, that God*

would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. 1. Why is this petition joined to the former with the copulative *and*?

A. Because it will be but little advantage to have former sins pardoned, and to be left to the power and practice, to the love and trade of sin for the future; Ezek. xviii. 26. When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die.

Q. 2. What is meant by temptation?

A. In general, a trial or probation of what is in us, or of what we will do.

Q. 3. What is meant by temptation here?

A. Temptation to sin and wickedness.

Q. 4. How may we be said to be tempted to sin?

A. (1.) Effectually by ourselves, and our own hearts; Jam. i. 14, 15. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (2.) Formally, with an intention to draw into sin; and so we are tempted of the devil; 1 Chron. xxi. 1. And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. Mat. iv. 1, 3. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. (3.) Innocently, and blamelessly; and so God is said to tempt; 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel; and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah.

Q. 5. How many ways may God be said to tempt evil?

A. (1.) By withdrawing his grace, either common or special; 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land; God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart. (2.) By permitting Satan, and wicked men, to tempt; 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. He moved David against them, to say, Go and number Israel and Judah. With 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David. Matth. iv. 1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. (3.) By presenting occasions in his providence, which he knows will be abused to sin; as in the fall of Adam, the hardening of Pharaoh, &c.

Q. 6. What do we beg in this petition?

A. We beg, that we may not any of these, or any other ways, whereby the holy God may be said to lead into temptation, be led thereinto; Psalm cxli. 1. Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties, Psal. xix. 13. Keep back thy servant also from

presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me : Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Q. 7. What is meant by evil ?

A. Some understand of the devil, but the best meaning is sin, which is the evil of evils, and makes the devil evil, and is the worst of evils the devil can bring upon us, and is usually so understood in scripture ; Psalm xlvii. 10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil, Isa. i. 16. Cease to do evil. Amos v. 15. Hate the evil, and love the good. Rom. xii. 9. Abhor that which is evil.

Q. 8. What is meant by deliverance from evil ?

A. That if God sees meet to permit us to be tempted by Satan, and the wicked without, or by our own hearts within, to sin ; or occasionally, by his providence ; that he will not leave us, but undertake for us, that we may not be led into sin thereby, but by his grace be made more than conquerors. Psal. li. 10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Psal. cxix. 133. Order my steps in thy word and let not any iniquity have dominion over me. According to his promise ; 1 Cor. x. 13. But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. 2 Cor. xii. 9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Q. 9. What is the first inference ?

A. That sin is the worst of evils.

Q. 10. What is the second inference ?

A. That without God's grace we can never withstand, but shall be overcome by every temptation ; 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves ; but our sufficiency is of God, John xv. 5. For without me ye can do nothing.

Q. 11. What is the third inference ?

A. That we must do all we can to keep ourselves from temptation, and to engage the grace of God with us in temptation, by prayer, by pleasing the Spirit of God, by looking to Jesus, &c.

Of the Conclusion.

Quest. 197. **W**HAT doth the conclusion of the Lord's prayer teach us ?

A. *The conclusion of the Lord's prayer, which is, [For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever ; Amen.] teacheth us, to take our encouragement in prayer from God only : and in our prayers to praise him ; ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him ; and in testimony of our desire, and assurance, to be heard, we say, Amen.*

Q. 1. Why is the conclusion joined to the particle *For* ?

A. To teach us, that therein are included arguments, or reasons to press God withal, and to prevail with him for audience.

Q. 2. But is it lawful to argue with God, and to urge him with reasons in prayer ?

A. It is not only lawful, but expedient, yea, highly commendable; as is seen in the saints prayer. In Moses, Num. xiv. 13. And Moses said unto the Lord, Then the Egyptians shall hear it, (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them.) Ver. 19. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now. In Joshua's, chap. vii. 7. And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord God; wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan. Ver. 9. For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? In Asa's, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee; and in thy name we go against this great multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let no man prevail against thee. In Jehoshaphat's, 2 Chr. xx. 6.—And said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? And Hezekiah's, 2 Kings xix. 15. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims; thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: Thou hast made heaven and earth. Ver. 19. Now therefore, O Lord our God, &c.

Q. 3. But to what purpose, can we think to prevail with God, by our arguments and importunities?

A. They are not used, as though we would put God in remembrance of any thing, or would prevail with God to do that for us, which he is unwilling to give.

Q. 4. Why then?

A. For our own profit, for the enlarging of our own hearts, for the exciting of our fervency, for the exerting of faith, hope, zeal, charity, &c. in prayer; and so to prepare ourselves for the mercy, that we may the more gratefully receive it, and the more fruitfully employ it.

Q. 5. How many arguments are in this conclusion?

A. Three.

Q. 6. From whence are they taken?

A. From God's kingdom, from his power, and from his glory.

Q. 7. What kingdom is here meant?

A. God's universal, essential, and absolute kingdom; wherein may be, and is involved, his special kingdom over the church.

Q. 8. What are the arguments from hence?

A. Because all that we can pray for in this prayer, is for the ad-

vancement and perfecting of this his kingdom, by the destruction of all persons and things that oppose it, and the completion of his dominion over all his subjects; therefore he would grant all these requests.

Q. 9. What is another ?

A. Because he being such an absolute Lord and Sovereign has an undeniable right, and unquestionable authority, to give and grant all we ask, and to effect and bring to pass all we beg: For all persons and things are his own, and at his disposal. Mat. xx. 15. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ?

Q. 10. What is meant by power ?

A. God's essential, infinite, irresistible power, whereby he can do what he pleases; Psal. cxxxv. 6. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, &c.

Q. 11. What is the argument from hence ?

A. That we ask nothing from God, but what we can do with infinite ease, in despite of all the opposition that hell, earth and heart can make to the contrary; Phil. iii. ult. According to the working, &c. Eph. iii. 20. Now unto him that is able, &c.

Q. 12. What is meant by glory ?

A. Not his essential glory, which no man, or angel, can ever apprehend.

Q. 13. What glory then ?

A. His declared and acknowledged glory, even the accomplishment of all his decrees by his providence; and then the love, the adoration, and the praises, the self-dedications of angels and saints, returned to him for the same.

Q. 14. What is the argument or motive from hence ?

A. That seeing the substance of every request does directly tend to, and will perfectly end in, this glory of God, when they are fully answered; therefore he would gradually answer them while we are here, and perfectly at last, to the advancement of his glory now, and the completion of it then. 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, &c. Josh. vii. 9. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? Isa. xlii. 8. I am the Lord, that is my name, &c. Isa. xlvi. 11. For my own sake, even for my own sake, will I do it, &c.

Q. 15. Why is Amen added ?

A. Because it is the usual conclusion of prayers and praises; Psal. xli. 13. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, &c. Psal. lxxii. 19. And blessed be his glorious name for ever, &c. 2 Cor. xiii. ult. The grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, &c. Rom. xvi. 20. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Q. 16. But what does this word here signify ?

A. It signifies, (1.) The reality and ardency of our desires to be granted in what we pray for: Rev. xxii. 20. He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus.

Q. 17. And what besides?

A. Our trust and firm confidence that we shall be heard and answered in all these our requests; Rev. i. 7. Even so, Amen. Rev. vii. 12. Saying, Amen. Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, &c.

Q. 18. What are the inferences from hence?

A. That we ought to use in prayer all such arguments, as may most and best affect our hearts towards God, excite our graces, and succeed with God.

Q. 19. What is another?

A. That all we pray for must be in a subserviency to God's kingdom, and with a desire of his glory.

Q. 20. What is the next?

A. That we must act according to our prayers; do all we can for the advancement of God's kingdom, and the exaltation of his glory, as subjects and votaries thereto; Psalm cxvi. 16. 1 Cor. x. 31.

Q. 21. What may more be gathered hence?

A. That as we ought to begin, so to continue, and conclude our prayers, in lowest adorations of God, and acknowledgments of his glory and attributes.

Q. 22. What more doth this conclusion teach?

A. That in prayer we must be fervent in our desires, and longing for what we pray, James v. 16.

Q. 23. Is there any thing besides?

A. That praying for things agreeable to God's will, we ought to be confident that we shall succeed in our requests praying for the matter, and after the manner of this prayer; James i. 6, 8. Matth. xxi. 22.

Vindiciæ Legis et Fœderis :

OR, A

R E P L Y

TO

MR. PHILIP CARY'S SOLEMN CALL ;

Wherein he pretends to answer all the Arguments of

MR. ALLEN,
MR. BAXTER,
MR. SYDENHAM,MR. SEDGWICK,
MR. ROBERTS, AND
DR. BURTHOGGE,For the Right of *Believers Infants* to BAPTISM.

By proving the law at Sinai, and the Covenant of Circumcision with Abraham, were the very same with Adam's Covenant of Works, and that because the Gospel-covenant is absolute.

A friendly PREFACE to the AUTHOR of the *Solemn Call*, and the more discreet and charitable of the Party concerned with him in this Controversy.

Christian Friends,

WHEN we open our Bibles, and read that text, 1 Cor. i. 10. we have cause to deal with it as Origen once did by another scripture, even close the book and weep over it, in consideration of the weak and feeble influences such melting words, delivered with such a pathos, have upon the hearts of professors this day. “Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.”

I beseech you] He dips the nail in oil, that it may drive the easier. *I beseech you, brethren*] A compellation breathing sweetness and affection, and should drop from our lips into each others ears with the same effect that word once did upon the ears of Benhadad's servants, *My brother Benhadad. Sirs,* (said Moses to the striving Israelites) *ye are brethren.* O when shall the church become a true Philadelphia?

I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ] or as you love Jesus Christ, *ut quantum ipsum amant tantum studeant con-*

cordiæ, saith Calvin; Be as studious of concord as you are free in professing love to Christ.

That there be no divisions] or rents among you; a *Σχισμα*, schism, or rent in the church, is much the same, and altogether as dangerous as a *Στασις*, or sedition in the commonwealth, and harder to be cured. For as the Lord Verulan truly observes, Differences amongst persecuting enemies and the church, are like the strivings of the Egyptian with the Israelite, which Moses quickly ended by knocking down the Egyptian; but dissensions in the church are like the striving of one Israelite with another; and all that Moses can do to quiet and part these, is only by fair and gentle words, and reminding them that they are brethren.

Great is the mischief of divisions among Christians; and the less the grounds and causes are, the greater always is the sin and mischief of them. In the *primitive church* contentions grew fervent about meats lawful and unlawful, *which did not profit*, the meaning is, it greatly damnified them that were occupied therein, Heb. xiii. 9. Practical religion among them grew cold, as disputations about these trifles grew fervent.

The readiest way to cool such heats is, by discovering the trivial nature of the matter contended about; as Demosthenes appeased the tumult among the people raised by a small occasion, by relating to them the story of a man that hired an *ass* to carry him a journey, but the sun shining fervent, he was forced to quit her back, and betake himself to her shadow; the owner withstood him, alleging, that he had hired the body of the ass, but her shadow was not in the bargain; and so the contention between them grew as hot as the sun. Many such trifles have raised great contentions in the world, witness the great contention betwixt the *Eastern* and *Western church* about keeping of Easter.

Other points there are of greater moment, about which good men contend, and yet these oftentimes are magnified much above their true intrinsical value. So I am sure it is in the controversy before us. Mr. Cary tells us, that these things will be found at length to be of highest concernment unto us, and must therefore be our most serious practice, p. 243. If so, then the proper subject of baptism must be one of those that is of greatest weight, and the profession thereof the very Schibboleth to distinguish one person from another in matters of religion. No wonder therefore the fires of contention are blown up to such a vehement heat, even in such an improper season; much like the contentions among the English *fugitives* at Frankfort, when their brethren were frying in the flames at Smithfield. Just so we must be scuffling, whilst thousands of our brethren are bleeding in Ireland. Had we a true sense of the quality of the subjects, or the unseasonableness of the time, it should certainly allay those heats among us. Did we see who stand by, and look with pleasure upon our follies, it would quickly allay our hearts. Tertullian tells the Christians of his

time, that they were like the Funambulones, or men that walk upon hopes, the least tread awry might be their ruin, so narrowly did their enemies watch them.

Sirs, the peace, safety, and honour, of the dissenting interest are things of too great value to be hazarded amongst the hands of our common enemies. You may fancy they will neglect the advantage you give them; but if they do, the devil will call them fools for it. Hr. Herle tells us of a king's fool, who wrote down the king himself in his table among his brother-fools, because he had trusted an African stranger with four thousand pounds to buy Barbary horses. The king asked him how he would make him amends, if the stranger should come again? Why then (said he) I'll blot your name out of my table of fools, and write down the African in your stead. Think not our enemies are such fools to neglect the advantage we cast into their hands. It is a weighty note of Livy, *Consilia non dant homines rebus, sed res hominibus*; Men do not counsel things, but time and things counsel men. Methinks the postures of times and affairs give us better counsels than we seem to be governed by in such work as this. Divisions of forty years standing and more, about infants baptism, have eaten up the time, wasted the spirits, and alienated the hearts of English professors, divided them both in society and love; by reason whereof God's pleasant plant in this resembles the bramble, which taking root at both ends, by reason of the rencounters of the sap, commonly withers in the middle. Your brethren, in their Narrative from their General-Assembly, make a sad and sensible complaint of withering in the power of godliness. And truly we as well as they may complain with the church, *We do all fade as a leaf*: The Lord help us to discern the true cause, whether it be not the misplacing of our zeal, our being cold where we should be fervent, and fervent hot where it should be cold; and whether the eating up of so much time and study about baptizing of infants, have not kept us these forty years in the infancy of our graces?

I well remember that blessed time, when *ours* and *yours* were terms almost unknown amongst professors in England. When their affections and prayers melted and mingled together sweetly in days of humiliation, and other duties of edifying and heavenly communion; and then churches began to flourish, and the graces of Christians every where flourished, and became fruitful: but no sooner did the saints divide in society and affection, but these pleasant blossoms were nipt by it, as by a frosty morning, the church formed itself as it were, into two armies set in *battalia* against each other. It was now with us much like as it is said of the *amphisbena*, that hath an head at either end, of which neither can well move without the consent of both; but, if each move a contrary way, the body tears in the middle. I doubt not but many that differed from us belonged to Christ, the same head with us; and yet it is past doubt, that many who seemed to be of us were headed by Satan; and quickly discovered themselves to

be so, by running farther than we first, or you next, imagined, even into Quakerism, Socinianism, Ranterism, and the foulest puddle and sink of complicated errors; of which an imperial stranger, under the name of Honorius Reggius, *αναρχαμματακως*, Georgius Hornius having heard the report in his own country, came over on purpose into England for his particular and perfect information, and hath given the foreign churches a full and sad account thereof in a Latin narrative, which I have by me; whereby I find, that, if the Lord in mercy to us had not let in a third party with the common calamity upon us all, we ourselves must in all probability have mutually ruined each other. But God saw other hands fitter for such dirty work than ours; and now it was time to reflect upon former follies, and renew our ancient acquaintance in the common goals. And, through the goodness of God, this did somewhat allay the heats of good men, and gave us fresh hopes of an hearty and lasting redintegration. We hoped the furnace might have purged our dross, and melted our hearts into unity, both by discovering the evils for which the Lord afflicted us, and the sincerity of the sufferers hearts under those trials. ‘Christians, (saith Mr. Jenkins) if we must die, let us die like men, by an unanimous holy contention against the common enemy; not like fools, by giving him our sword, and destroying one another by schisms in our own bowels.’

But alas! alas! no sooner is the rod of our backs, and a respite from sufferings given us, but we are presently sounding an alarm to the battle again, and, to my sorrow, myself unavoidably engaged therein.

Friends, I have a witness in many of your bosoms, how peaceably and respectfully I have always carried it towards you, even to such a degree as began to bring me under the suspicion of some of your party, that I was inclining to their opinion, though I did not openly profess it. But the true reasons of my moderation in this point were, (1.) That I ever did, and still do look upon many of you as Christians, sound in the other great doctrines of the gospel. (2.) That there are difficulties in this controversy which may puzzle the minds of well-meaning Christians. (3.) I highly value the peace of the church, and durst do nothing that tended to keep open the breaches upon a controversy of this nature, you being for purity in doctrine and worship in most other controverted points, as well as we. (4.) I observed how rare a thing it is for engaged parties to give ground.

Qui velit ingenio cedere, rarus erit.

‘Mad disputants to reason seldom yield.’

(5.) My head, heart, and hands have been filled with better employments, from which I am extremely loth to be diverted. If Bellarmine turned with loathing from school-divinity, because it wanted the sweet juice of piety, much more may I turn from such perverse disputes as these: Sure I may find as fair expositions of scripture, and

and as accurate and legitimate distinctions among the *school-men*, as in Mr. Tombes' Examen and Apology; or (which for the most part is but a transcript of both) in Mr. Cary's Solemn Call. But I see I must not be my own chuser; I cannot now be both silent and innocent; for in this Solemn Call I find the great doctrines of God's covenants abused by my neighbour; the books dispersed into many families related to me in this place, one of them delivered to me by the Author's own hands, with a pressing desire to give my judgment upon it: Several objections which I privately and seasonably sent him to prevent the sin and folly of his attempt, pretended to be answered from p. 164. *ad* p. 183. Thus I am necessarily brought into the field of controversy: whither I come not a *volunteer*, but a *pressed man*; not out of choice, but necessity. And now I am here, I resolve to be only *Adversarius litis, non personæ*, an adversary in the controversy, not to the person, especially of my friendly neighbour. Neither would I have appeared thus publicly against him, if differences could have been accommodated, and the evil prevented, in a more private way; in order thereunto, I have punctually observed and kept the rules and measures of friendship.

It is possible some may judge my stile against him to be too sharp; but if they please to read the conclusion of his *Call*, and my *Answer*, I presume they will find enough to make atonement for that fault, if it be a fault. It is from the nature of the matter before me, not from defect of charity to the person or party, that I am forced to be so plain and pungent as I am.

To conclude, I suspect this very preface may be also censured for its plainness and tediousness. I confess, when times are busy we should be brief; and I am persuaded a sufficient preface may be contracted into four words, *ανευ προσεμιων και παθων*, *without preface or passions*. However, I have a little eased my own heart, by discharging my duty to my differing brethren, and pleased myself, if not them.

The God of peace create peace in all the borders of Sion, beat our *swords* into *plow-shares*, and our *spears* into *pruning-hooks*; I mean, our *polemicals* into *practicals*; that Jerusalem may once more be a city compact, and no more terrible to herself, but only to her enemies, as an army with banners. This, brethren, is the prayer, and shall ever be the endeavour of,

Your Friend and Servant in Christ,

JOHN FLAVEL.

PROLEGOMENA.

BEFORE we enter into the main controversy, it will be necessary to acquaint the reader, why I begin with the middle of the book; and it is because I there find these three principles or positions, on which the other parts of his discourse are superstructed; and these being destroyed, his other discourses are but *arena, sine calce*. I properly therefore begin with the foundation.

Next I shall shew how far we are agreed in the matters here controverted, and where it is in each of these that the controversy indeed lies betwixt us. And as to

I. *Position, viz.*

That the Sinai law is the same with Adam's covenant of works, made in paradise.

The difference betwixt us here is not (1.) Whether both these be called covenants in Scripture? Nor (2.) Whether there was no grace at all in both, or either of them; for we are agreed, it is grace in God to enter into covenant with man, whatever that covenant be. Nor (3.) Whether the Sinai law be not a covenant of works to some men, by their own fault and occasion? Nor (4.) Whether the scriptures do not many times speak of it in that very sense and notion wherein *carnal justiciaries* apprehend and take it; and by rejecting Christ, make it so to themselves? Nor (5.) Whether the very matter of the *law of nature* be not revived and represented in the *Sinai law*? These are not the points we contend about. But the question is, Whether the Sinai law do in its own nature, and according to God's purpose and design in the promulgation of it, revive the law of nature, to the same ends and uses it served to in Adam's covenant; and so be properly and truly a covenant of works? Or whether God had not gracious and evangelical ends and purposes, viz. By such a dreadful representation of the severe and impracticable terms of the first covenant, instead of obliging them to the personal and punctual observance of them for righteousness and life, he did not rather design to convince them of the impossibility of legal righteousness, humble proud nature, and shew them the necessity of betaking themselves to Christ, now exhibited in the new covenant, as the only refuge to fallen sinners. The latter I defend according to the Scriptures, the former Mr. Cary seems to assert and vehemently argue for.

2dly, In this controversy about the Sinai law, I do not find Mr. Cary distinguish (as he ought) betwixt the law considered more largely and complexly, as containing both the *moral* and *ceremonial law*, for both which it is often taken in Scripture, and more strictly for the *moral law* only, as it is sometimes used in Scripture. These two he

makes one and the same *covenant of works*; though there be some that doubt whether the mere *moral law*, may not be a *covenant of works*; yet I never met with any man before, that durst affirm the *ceremonial law*, which is so full of Christ, to be so; and to this law it is that *circumcision* appertains.

3dly, The moral law, strictly taken for the ten commandments, is not by him distinguished (as it ought to be, and as the scripture frequently doth) according to God's intention and design in the promulgation of it, which was to add it as an appendix to the promise, Gal. iii. 19. and not to set it up as an opposite covenant, Gal. iii. 21. as the carnal Jews, *mistaking and perverting the use and end of the law*, and making it to themselves a covenant of works, by making it the very rule and reason of their justification before God, Rom. ix. 32, 33. Rom. x. 3. These things ought carefully to have been distinguished, forasmuch as the whole controversy depends on this double sense and intention of the law; yea, the very *denomination* of that law depends hereon: for I affirm, it ought not to be denominated from the abused and mistaken end of it amongst carnal men, but from the true scope, design and end for which God published it after the fall: and though we find such expressions as these in Scripture, "The man that doth them shall live in them;" and, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," &c. yet these respecting the law, not according to God's intention, but man's corruption and abuse of it, the law is not thereby to be denominated a covenant of works. God's end was not to justify them, but to try them by that terrible dispensation, Exod. xx. 20. whether they would still hanker after that natural way of self-righteousness; for this end God propounded the terms of the first covenant to them on Sinai, not to open the way of self-justification to them, but to convince them, and shut them up to Christ; just as our Saviour, Matth. xix. 17. puts the young man upon keeping the commandments not to drive him from, but necessitate him to himself in the way of faith.

The law in both these senses is excellently described, Gal. iv. in that allegory of Hagar and Sarah, the figures of the two covenants. Hagar, in her first and proper station was but a serviceable *handmaid* to Sarah, as the law is a *schoolmaster* to Christ; but when Hagar the handmaid is taken in Sarah's bed, and brings forth children that aspire to the inheritance, then saith the Scripture, "Cast out the bond-woman with her son." So it is here; take the law in its primary use, as God designed it, as a *schoolmaster* or *handmaid* to Christ and the *promise*, so it is consistent with them, and excellently subservient to them; but if we marry this handmaid, and espouse it as a *covenant of works*, then are we bound to it for life, Rom. vii. and must have nothing to do with Christ. The believers of the Old Testament had true apprehensions of the right end and use of the law, which directed them to Christ, and so they became children of the *free-woman*. The carnal Jews trusted to the works of the law for righteousness,

and so became the children of the *bond-woman*; but neither could be children of both at once, no more than the same man can naturally be born of two mothers. This is the difference betwixt us about the first position. And as to the

II. Position.

That Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. is an Adam's covenant of works also, because circumcision was annexed to it, which obliged men to keep the whole law.

The controversy betwixt us in this point, is not whether *circumcision* were an ordinance of God, annexed by him to his *covenant* with Abraham? Nor (2.) Whether Abraham's ordinary and extraordinary seed ought to be, and actually were signed by it? Nor, (3.) Whether it were a seal of the righteousness of faith to any individual person, for he allows it to be so to Abraham? Nor (4.) Whether it pertained to the *cercmonial law*, and so must cease at the death of Christ? But the difference betwixt us is, Whether (1.) It was a seal of the covenant to none but Abraham? And (2.) Whether in the very nature of the act, or only from the intention of the agent, it did oblige men to keep the whole law, as Adam was obliged to keep it in innocency? (3.) Whether it were utterly abolished at the death of Christ, as a condition of the *covenant of works*? or being a sign of the same *covenant of grace* we are now under, it be not succeeded by the new gospel-sign, which is baptism? Mr. Cary affirms, that it was in itself a condition of the *covenant of works*, and being annexed to God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. it made that a true Adam's *covenant of works* also. This I utterly deny, and say, Abraham's covenant was a true covenant of grace. (2.) That circumcision was a seal of righteousness of faith, and therefore could not possibly belong to the *covenant of works*. (3.) That as it was applied both to the ordinary and extraordinary infant-seed of Abraham, during that administration of the covenant, so it is the will of Christ that baptism should take its place under the gospel, and be applied now to the infant-seed of all Abraham's spiritual children. These are the things wherein we differ about the second *position*. And lastly, as to the

III. Position.

That neither Moses' law, Exod. xx. nor God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. can be any other than an Adam's covenant of works, because they have each of them conditions in them on man's part; but the gospel-covenant hath none at all, but is altogether free and absolute.

The controversy here betwixt us is not (1.) Whether the gospel-covenant requires no duties at all of them that are under it? Nor (2.) Whether it requires any such conditions as were in Adam's covenant, namely, perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, under the severest penalty of a curse, and admitting no place of repentance? Nor, (3.) Whether any condition required by it on *our* part, have any thing in its own nature meritorious of the benefits promised? Nor (4.) Whether we be able in our own strength, and by the power of

our free-will, without the *preventing* as well as the *assisting* grace of God, to perform any such work or duty as we call a *condition*? In these things we have no controversy; but the only question betwixt us is,

Whether in the new covenant some act of ours (though it have no merit in it, nor can be done in our own single strength) be not required to be performed by us, antecedently to a blessing or privilege consequent by virtue of a promise? And whether such an act of duty, being of a suspending nature to the blessing promised, it have not the true and proper nature of a *gospel-condition*? This I affirm, and he positively denies.

These three *positions* being confuted, and the contrary well confirmed, viz. that the law at Sinai was not set up by God as an Adam's covenant, to open the old way of righteousness and life by works; but was added to the promise, as subservient to Christ in its design and use, and consequently can never be a pure Adam's covenant of works. And, *secondly*,

That Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. is the very same covenant of grace we are now under; and, (*2dly*,) That circumcision in the nature of the act did not oblige all men to keep the whole law for righteousness. And (*3dly*,)

That the *new covenant* is not absolutely and wholly unconditional, though notwithstanding a most free and gracious covenant; the pillars on which Mr. Cary sets his new structure sink under it, and the building falls into ruins.

I have not here taken Mr. Cary's two Syllogisms, proving Abraham's *covenant* to be a *covenant of works*, because I find myself therein prevented by that ingenious and learned man, Mr. Whiston, in his late answer to Mr. Grantham. Neither have I particularly spoken to his twenty-three arguments to prove the Sinai law to be a pure Adam's covenant, because *frustra fit per plura, quod fieri, potest per pauciora*: I have overthrown them all together at one blow, by evincing every argument to have four terms in it, and so proves nothing. But I have spoken to all those scriptures which concern our four *positions*, and fully vindicated them from the injurious senses to which Mr. Cary (following Mr. Tombes) had wrested them.

These things premised, I shall only further add, that if Mr. Cary shall attempt a reply to my answer, and free his own *theses* from the gross absurdities with which I have loaded them, he must plainly and substantially prove against me,

(1.) That the Sinai law, according to its true scope and end, was promulgated by God for man's justification and happiness in the way of personal obedience; and that the Jews, that did accordingly endeavour after righteousness by the works of the law, did not mistake its true end and meaning; or if they did, and thereby made it what God never intended it to be, a *covenant of works* to themselves, that the Sinai law ought rather to be denominated from their mistake

and abuse of it, than from its primary and proper use, and God's design in its promulgation.

(2.) He must prove against me, with the like evidence of truth, that circumcision discovered no more of man's native corruption, nor any more of his remedy by Christ; nor sealed to any person whatsoever the righteousness of faith, than Adam's covenant in paradise did; and that it did in its own nature oblige all upon whom it passed, to the same terms of obedience that Adam's covenant obliged him. And,

(3.) That there is not to be found in the *new covenant* any such act or duty of ours, as hath been described and limited above; which is of a suspending nature to the benefits therein granted. And,

(4.) That the respective expositions he gives of the several texts to be explained and vindicated, are more congruous to the scope and grammar than mine are, and more agreeable to the current sense of *orthodox expositors*; and then he shall be sure to receive an answerable return from me, else it is but labour lost to write again.

A

REPLY

TO

MR. PHILIP CARY'S SOLEMN CALL, &c.

THE book I have undertaken to animadvert briefly upon, bears the title of a *solemn call*; but I am not so much concerned with the *solemnity*, as I am with the *authority* of this call. Not *how* it is, but *whose* it is. If it be the call of God, it must be obeyed though it be to part not only with the *privileges*, but *lives* of our dearest children; but then we had need to be very well assured it is the call of God, else we are guilty at once of the highest folly, and basest treachery, to part with so rich an inheritance, conveyed by God's covenant with Abraham, to us believing Gentiles, and our seed, at Mr. Cary's call.

You direct your *Solemn Call* to all that would be owned as Christ's faithful witnesses.

Here you are too obscure and general: do you mean, all that would be owned by you, or by Christ? If you mean, that we must not expect to be owned by you till we renounce infants baptism, you tell us no news, for you have long since turned your back upon our ministry and assemblies: yet, methinks it is strange, that we who were lately owned as Christ's faithful witnesses, under our late sufferings, must now be disowned by you, when we have liberty to amplify and con-

firm our testimony in the peaceful improvement of our common liberty.

But if your meaning be, (as I strongly suspect it is) that we must not expect to be owned by Christ, except we give up infants baptism; then, I say, it is the most uncharitable, as well as unwarrantable, and dangerous censure that ever dropt from the pen of a sober Christian. It is certainly your great evil to lay *salvation* itself on such a point as the proper subject of baptism, and to make it *articulus stantis vel cadentis religionis*, the very *basis* on which the whole Christian religion, and its professors salvation must stand. I hope the rest of your brethren are more charitable than yourself; but however it be, I do openly profess, that I ever have, and still do own you, and many more of your persuasion, for my brethren in Christ, and am persuaded Christ will own you too, notwithstanding your many errors and mistakes about the lesser and lower matters of religion. Nor need your censure much to affect us, as long as we are satisfied you have neither a faculty nor commission thus solemnly to pronounce it upon us.

But what is the condition upon which this dreadful sentence depends? why, it is our attendance or non-attendance to the primitive purity of the gospel-doctrine.

Sir, I hope we do attend it, and, in some respects, better than some great pretenders to primitive purity, who have cast off not only the initiating sign of God's covenant, (this did not Abraham) but also that most comfortable and ancient ordinance of *singing Psalms*: and what other primitive ordinance of God may be cashiered next, who can tell?

We have a witness in our bosom, that the defence of *Christ's pure worship and institution* hath cost us something; and as for me, were I convinced by all that you have here said, or any of your friends, that in baptizing the infants of believers, we did really depart from the primitive purity, I would renounce it, and turn Anabaptist the same day.

But really, sir, this discourse of yours hath very much convinced me of the weakness and sickliness of your cause, which is forced to seek a new foundation, and is here laid by you upon such a foundation as must inevitably ruin it, if your party, as well as yourself, have but *resolution* enough to venture it thereupon.

And it appears to me very probable, that they intend to fight us upon the new ground you have here chosen and marked out for them, by the high *encomiums* they give your *book* in their epistles to it, wherein they tell us, *your notions are of so rare a nature, that you are not beholden to any other for them*; and it is a wonder if you should, for I think it never entered into any sober Christian's head before you, that Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. was the very same with Adam's covenant made in *paradise*; or that Moses, Abraham, and all the elect of God in those days were absolutely under the very rigour and tyranny of the *covenant of works*, and at the same time under the *covenant of grace*, and all the blessings and privileges thereof; with

many other such rare *notions*, of which it is pity but you should have the sole propriety.

I am particularly concerned to detect your dangerous mistakes, both in love to *your own soul*, and care of *my people's*, amongst whom you have dispersed them; though I foresee by M. E's epistle to *your book*, what measure I am like to have for my plain and faithful dealing with you: for if that gentleman, upon a mere surmise and presumption that one or other would *oppose your book*, dare adventure to call your unknown answer, before he ever put pen to paper, a *man-pleaser*, a *quarreller at reformation*, and rank him with the Papists, which opposed the faithful for their non-conformity to their inventions; what must I expect from such rash censurers, for my sober, plain, and rational confutation of your errors?

As to the *controversy betwixt us*, you truly say, in your title page, and many parts of your *book*, and your brethren comprobate it in their epistles, that the main arguments made use of by the Pædo-baptists, for the support of their practice, are taken from the covenant of God with Abraham, Gen. xvii. You call this the very hinge of the *controversy*; and therefore if you can but prove this to be the very same *covenant of works* with that made with Adam in *paradise*, we shall then see what improvements you will quickly make of it.

Ay, sir, you are sensible of the advantage, no less than a complete victory you shall obtain by it: and therefore being a more hardy and adventurous man than others, put desperately upon it, (which never any before you durst attempt) to prove Abraham's covenant, which stands so much in the way of your cause, to be a mere *covenant of works*, and therefore now abolished.

My proper province is to discover here, that part of the *foundation* (I mean Abraham's *covenant*) whence our divines with great strength and evidence, deduce the right of believers infants to baptism now. Next, to evince the absurdity of your assertions, and arguments you bring to destroy it: And, lastly, to reflect, briefly upon the answers you give in the beginning of your *book*, to those several texts of scripture pleaded by the learned and judicious divines you oppose, for the justification of *infants baptism*.

(1.) Those that plead God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. as a scripture-foundation for baptizing believers infants under the gospel, proceed generally upon these four grounds or principles.

(1.) That God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. was the same covenant for substance we Gentile believers are now under; and they substantially prove it from Luke i. from the 54th to the 74th verse; which place evidently shews the sameness of the covenant of grace they were, and we are now under; and from Matth. xxi. 41, 43. the same vineyard and kingdom the Jews then had, is now let out to us Gentiles; and from Rom. xi. that the Gentile Christians are grafted into the same olive-tree, from which the Jews were broken off for

their unbelief; and that the blessing of Abraham cometh now upon the Gentiles, Gal. iii. 8, 14, 16. And in a word, that the partition-wall betwixt them and us is now pulled down; and that we, through faith, are let into the self-same covenant, and all the privileges they then enjoyed, Eph. ii. 13.

(2.) They assert and prove, that in Abraham's *covenant* the infant-seed were taken in with their parents, and that in token thereof, they were to have the sign of the covenant applied to them, Gen. xvii. 9.

(3.) They affirm and prove, That the promise of God to Abraham and his seed, with the privileges thereof to his children, do, for the substance of them, descend to believers now, and their seed, Acts ii. 38, 39. and though the external sign, viz. *circumcision*, be changed, yet baptism takes its place under the gospel, Col. ii. 11, 12.

(4.) They constantly affirm, that none of those grants or privileges made to the infant-seed of Abraham's family, were ever repealed or revoked by Christ or his apostles; and therefore believers children are now in the rightful possession of them; and that therefore there needed no new command or promise: In Abraham's covenant we find our duty to sign our children with the sign of the covenant; and in Abraham's promise we find God's gracious grant to our children, as well as his, especially since the apostle directs us, in this very respect, to the covenant of God with Abraham, Acts ii. 38, 39.

These, sir, are the principles on which we lay (as you say) great stress, and which to this day you have never been able to shake down; here therefore you attempt a new method to do it, by proving this covenant is now abolished; and this is your method, in which you promise yourself great success: Three things you pretend to prove;

(1.) That the Sinai covenant, Exod. xx.

(2.) That Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. are no gospel-covenants; and that because,

(3.) The gospel-covenant is absolute and unconditional.

How you come to hook in the Mosaic *covenant* into this controversy, is not very evident, unless you think it were easy for you to prove that to be a *covenant of works*; and then Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. being an Old Testament covenant, were the more easily proved to be of the same nature. I am obliged to examine your three positions above noted, and if I evidence to the world the falsity of them, the cause you manage is so far lost, and the right of believers infants to baptism stands firm upon its old and sure foundation. I begin therefore with your

I. Position.

That the covenant made with Israel, on mount Sinai, is the very same covenant of works made with Adam in innocency, p. 122. and divers other places of your book, the very same.

Now, if you prove that this assertion of yours doth naturally and regularly draw many false and absurd consequents upon you, which you are, and must be forced to own, then this your *position* cannot be true; for from true premises, nothing but truth can naturally and regularly follow; but I shall make it plain to you, that this your position regularly draws many false conclusions, and gross absurdities, upon you; some of which you own expressly, and others you as good as own, being able to return nothing rational or satisfactory in your own defence against them.

(1.) From this assertion, that the Sinai *covenant* was a pure *covenant of works*, the very same with Adam's *covenant*, it regularly and necessarily follows, that either Moses and all Israel were damned, there being no salvation possible to be attained by that first covenant; or else, that there was a covenant of grace at the same time running parallel with that covenant of works; and so the elect people of God were at one and the same time under the first, as a covenant of death and condemnation; and under the second, as a covenant of grace and justification.

This *dilemma* pinches you. To assert, that Moses, and all the elect of God, under that dispensation, were damned, you dare not; and if you had, you must have expunged the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, and a great part of the New Testament, together with all your hopes of sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. The latter, therefore, (seeing you cannot avoid) you are forced upon, and in plain words yield it, p. 174, 175. 'That Moses and the whole body of the children of Israel, without exception of any, were under, yea, absolutely under the severest penalties of a dreadful curse; that the covenant they were under, could be no other than a covenant of works, a ministration of death and condemnation; when yet it is also evident from the same holy scriptures of truth, that at the same time both Moses and all the elect among that people were under a pure covenant of gospel-grace; and that these two covenants were just the opposite the one to the other; but to this you have nothing to say, but with the apostle in another case, O the depth!'

Here, sir, you father a pure and perfect contradiction upon the holy scriptures, that it speaks things just opposite and contradictory one to the other, and of necessity one part or member of a contradiction must be false: this all the rational world knows; but so it is, say you, and fly to the infinite wisdom to reconcile them; for you say, You know not what to say to it. Just so the *papists* serve us in the *controversy* about *transubstantiation*, when they cannot reconcile one thing with another, they fly to the omnipotent power to do it.

But, sir, I wonder how you hold and hug a principle that runs naturally into such gross absurdities: Do you see what follows from hence by unavoidable consequences? You must, according to this principle, hold, That Moses, and all God's peculiar elect people in Israel,

most, during their life, hang mid-way between justification and condemnation; and, after death, between heaven and hell.

(1.) During life, they must hang mid-way between justification and condemnation; justified they could not be, for justification is the soul's passing from death to life, 1 John iii. 14. John v. 24. This they could not possibly do, for the ministration of *death* and *condemnation* hindered. He that is under *condemnation* by the law, cannot, during that state, pass into life. And yet to be under *condemnation* is as impossible on the other side; for he that is justified, cannot at the same time be under *condemnation*, Rom. viii. 2. John v. 24. What remains then, but that during life they must stick mid-way betwixt both, neither justified nor condemned; and yet both so and so. Justification is our life, and condemnation our death, in law: Betwixt these two, which are *privately opposed*, there can be no *medium* of participation, and yet such a *medium* you here fancy.

(2.) And then after death they must necessarily hang betwixt heaven and hell; to heaven none can go that are under the very rigour and tyranny of the law, a pure *covenant of works*, as you say they were.

To hell they could not go, being under the pure *covenant of grace*: What remains then, but some third state must be assigned them? and so at last we have found the *limbus paturim*, and your position leads us right to *purgatory*: a conclusion which, I believe, you yourself abhor as much as I.

(2dly.) This hypothesis pinches you with another *dilemma*, viz. Either there was pardon or repentance in Moses' *covenant*, and the Sinai *dispensation of the law*, or there was none; if you say none, you directly contradict Lev. xxvi. 40, 46. if there were, then it cannot be Adam's *covenant of works*.

You answer, p. 179. 'That God promiseth pardon for the breach of Moses' covenant, and of Adam's covenant too, but neither Adam's covenant, nor the Jewish legal covenant, promised any pardon upon repentance, but rather threatens and inflicts the contrary.'

Reply. Either this is a direct answer to my argument, to prove the law at Sinai cannot be a pure Adam's *covenant*, because it had a promise of pardon annexed to it, Lev. xxvi. 40. but Adam's *covenant* had none. If your answer be direct, then it is a plain contradiction in saying it had, and it had not a promise of pardon belonging to it. Or else it is a mere evasion, and an eluding of the argument; and your only meaning is, that the relief I speak of is not to be found in any promise belonging to the Sinai dispensation, but in some other gospel covenant or promise. But, sir, this will not serve your turn; you see I cite the very promise of grace made to the Israelites on mount Sinai by the hand of Moses, wherein God promiseth upon their humiliation to remember his covenant for their good. Now, sir, you had as good have stood to your first answer, which is less contradictory, as to this which is no less so; as will evidently appear, by a nearer and more particular view of the place, and gathering up your own concessions

about it. That this text, Lev. xxvi. 40. hath the nature of a gracious promise in it, no man will deny, except he that will deny that God's remembering of his *covenant*, for the relief of poor broken-hearted sinners, is no gospel promise pertaining to the covenant of grace: That it was made to the penitent Israelites upon *mount Sinai*, and there delivered them by the hand of Moses for their relief, is as visible and plain as the words and syllables of the 46th verse are to him that reads them. Let the promise then be considered both ways. (1.) In your sense, as a *plain direction to the covenant of grace made with Abraham for their relief*; for you say it was, p. 180. or let it be considered absolutely, as that which contained relief in itself for the penitent Israelites that should live towards the end of the world, after they should be gathered from all their dispersions and captivities, as you there speak, and more fully explicate in your accommodation of a parallel promise, p. 111, 112, 113. First, let us view it in your sense, as a *relative promise to the covenant of grace made with Abraham, Gen. xii.* to which, say you, it plainly directs them; and then this legal *dispensation* can never be the same with Adam's *covenant*, for to that *covenant* no such promise was ever annexed, which should guide and plainly direct them to Christ and pardon, as that star which appeared to the wise men directed their way to Christ. If there be any such relative promise belonging to Adam's *covenant in paradise*, as this which I plainly shew you was made on *mount Sinai*, be pleased to produce it, and you end the *controversy*; but if you cannot, (as you know you cannot) then never say the legal dispensation at Sinai, and the covenant of works with Adam in *paradise*, are the very same covenant. *Secondly*, Let us consider this promise absolutely in itself, and then I demand, was there mercy, relief and pardon contained in it for any penitent sinner present or to come? Yes, say you, it extends relief to penitents, after God shall gather them from all their captivities at the end of the world; very good. Then it is a very vigorous promise of grace, which not only reaches 430 years backward, as far as the first promise to Abraham, but also extends its reliefs and comforts many thousand years forwards, even to the purest times of the gospel, just before Christ's coming to judgment: And can such a promise as this be denied to be in itself a gospel-promise? Sure it can neither be denied to be such, nor yet to be made upon *mount Sinai* by the hand of Moses. This *dilemma* is as pinching as the former.

Perhaps you will say, This promise did not belong to the *moral law* given at Sinai, but to the *ceremonial law*: If so, then I should reasonably conclude, that you take the *ceremonial law* (of which you seem to make this a branch, p. 181.) to be a covenant of grace, seeing one of its branches bears such a gracious promise upon it. No, that must not be so neither; for say you, p. 151. the *ceremonial covenant* is of the same nature with the *covenant of works*, or law written in tables of stone: Whither then shall we send this promise?

To the covenant of grace we must not send it, unless only as an *index* or finger to point to it, because it was made upon *mount Sinai*, and delivered to Israel by the hand of Moses: To the gospel-covenant we must not therefore annex it; and to the legal dispensation at Sinai you are as loth to annex it, because it contains so much relief and grace in it for poor penitents; and that will prove, that neither the *moral* nor *ceremonial law* (place it in which you please) can be a pure *covenant of works* as Adam's was.

Moreover, in making this the promise which must relieve and comfort the distressed Israelites in the purest gospel-times, towards the end of the world, you as palpably contradict yourself in another respect; for we shall find you by and by stoutly denying, that the gospel promises have any conditions or qualifications annexed to them; but so hath this, which you say relates to them that shall live at the end of the world, "If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and if they accept the punishment of their iniquities, then will I remember my covenant," &c. But be this promise conditional or absolute, two things are undeniably clear: (1) That it is a promise full of grace, for the relief of law-transgressors, ver. 40. (2.) That it was a *mount Sinai promise*, ver. 46. And such a promise as you can never shew in Adam's covenant.

Besides, it is to me an unaccountable thing, that a promise which hath a double comfortable aspect 430 years back, and some thousands of years forward, should not cast one comfortable glance upon the penitents of the present age, when it was made, nor upon any till near the end of the world. What think you, sir, of the 3000 Jews pricked at the heart, Acts ii. had they no relief from it, because their lot fell not late enough in time? Were the penitent Jews in Moses and Peter's days all born out of due time for this promise to relieve? O what shifting and shuffling is here? Who can think a man that twists and winds every way, to avoid the dint of an argument, can possibly have a moral assurance of the truth of his own opinion?

(3.) You say, *page 134*. 'That through Christ's satisfaction there is no repugnancy, or hostile contrariety, betwixt the law and promise, but an agreement betwixt them, and that they differ only in respect of strength and weakness; the gospel is able to go through-stitch with it, which the law cannot do.'

Reply. Well then, the law considered as a covenant of works, whose terms or condition is, "Do this and live;" and the promise or gospel, whose condition is, "Believe and thou shalt be saved;" are not specifically different, but only gradually, in point of strength and weakness: and the reason you give is as strange, that *this comes to pass through the satisfaction of Christ*. Good sir, enlighten us in this rare notion. Did Christ die to purchase a reconciliation betwixt the covenant of works as such and the covenant of grace, as if both were now by the death of Christ agreed, and to be justified by works and by faith, should after Christ's death, make no odds or difference between

them? If it be so, why have you kept such a coil to prove Moses' and Adam's covenant, yea, Abraham's too, being a *covenant of works*, can never consist or mingle with the *gospel-covenant*? And then I say, you contradict the *apostle*, who so directly opposes the *covenant of works* as such, to the *covenant of grace*, Gal. iii. 18. and tells us they are utterly inconsistent and exclusive of each other; and this he spake after Christ's death and actual satisfaction. But,

(4.) That which more amazes me, is the strange answer you give to Mr. Sedgwick, p. 132, 133. In your return to his argument, 'That if the law and the promise can consist, then the law cannot be set up as a covenant of works. You answer, 'That the law and the promise having divers ends, it doth not thence follow, that there is an inconsistency betwixt them, and that the law, even as it is a covenant of works, instead of being against the promise, tends to the establishment of it. And p. 133. that by convincing men of the impossibility of obtaining rest and peace in themselves, and the necessity of betaking themselves to the promise, &c. the law is not against the promise, having so *blessed a subserviency* towards the establishment thereof.' Here you own a *subserviency*, yea, a *blessed subserviency* of the law to the promise, which is that Mr. Sedgwick and myself have urged to prove it cannot be so, as it is a pure Adam's covenant, but that thereof it must come under another consideration; only here we differ; you say it hath a *blessed subserviency* to the promise, as it is the same with Adam's covenant; we say it can never be so as such, but as it is either a covenant of grace, though more obscure, as he speaks; or though the matter of it should be the same with Adam's covenant, yet it is subserviently a covenant of grace, as others speak; and under no other consideration can it be reconciled to the promise.

But will you stand to this, that the law hath no hostile contradiction to the promise, but a *blessed subserviency* to it, as you speak, p. 173. where you say, 'That if we preach up the law as a covenant of life, or a covenant of faith and grace (which are equipollent terms) let us distinguish as we please between a covenant of grace *absolutely* and *subserviently* such; then we make an ill use of the law, by perverting it to such a service as God never intended it for, and are guilty of mingling law and gospel, life and death together.'

Reply. Here, sir, my understanding is perfectly posed, and I know not how to make any tolerable orthodox sense out of this position: Is the law preached up as a pure *covenant of works*, (that is, pressing men to the personal and punctual obedience of it, in order to their justification by works) no way repugnant to the promise, but altogether so, when preached in subserviency to Christ and faith? This is new divinity with me, and I believe must be so to every intelligent reader. Do not I oppose the promise when I preach up the law as a pure covenant of works, which therefore as such must be exclusive of Christ and the promise? And do I oppose either, when I tell sinners the terrors of the law serve only to drive them to Christ, their only remedy, who is

“the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth,” Rom. x. 4. Are works and grace more consistent than grace with grace? Explain your meaning in this *paradoxical expression*, and leave not yourself and others in such a maze. I read, Gal. iii. 19. for what end God published the law 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham, and find *it was added because of transgression*, *πρὸς ἁμαρτίαν*, it was put to, not set up by itself alone as a distinct covenant, but added as an *appendix* to the *covenant of grace*; whence it is plain, that God added the Sinai law to the *promise*, with *evangelical ends and purposes*. If then I preach the law to the very same evangelical uses and purposes for which God added it to the promise, do I therein make an ill use of the law, and mingle life and death together? But preaching it, as a pure *covenant of works*, as it holds forth justification to sinners by obedience to its precepts, do I then make it blessedly subservient (as you speak) to the *promise or covenant of grace*? The law was added because of transgression, that is, to restrain sin in the world, and to convince sinners under guilt, of the necessity of another righteousness than their own, even that of Christ, and for the same ends God added it to the promise. I always did, and still shall preach it, and I am persuaded, without the least danger of mingling law and gospel, life and death together, in your sense.

It is plain to me, that in the publication of the law on Sinai, God did not in the least intend to give them so much as a *direction* how to obtain justification by their most punctual obedience to its precepts, that being to fallen man utterly impossible; and beside, had he promulged the law to that end and purpose, he had not added it, but directly opposed it to the promise; which it is manifested he did not; Gal. iii. 21. “Is the law then against the promise of God? God forbid.” And verse 18. makes it appear, that had it been set up to that end and purpose, it had utterly disannulled the promise; for *if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more by promise*. What then can be clearer, than that the law at Sinai was published with gracious gospel-ends and purposes, to lead men to Christ, which Adam’s covenant had no respect or reference to? And therefore it can never be a pure Adam’s *covenant*, as you falsely call it, neither is it capable of becoming a pure *covenant of works* to any man, but by his own fault, in rejecting the righteousness of Christ, and seeking justification by the works of the law, as the mistaken carnal Jews did, Rom. x. 3. and other legal justiciaries now do. And upon this account only it is that Paul, who so highly praises the law in its subserviency to Christ, thunders so dreadfully against it, as it is thus set by ignorant mistaken souls in direct opposition to Christ.

(5thly,) And further, to clear this point, the apostle tells us, Rom. x. 4. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Whence I argue, That if Adam’s *covenant* had an end, namely, the justification of men by their own personal obedience; and the law at Sinai had a quite contrary end, namely, to

bring *sinner*s to Christ by faith for their righteousness; the one to keep him within himself, the other to take him quite out of himself, and bring him for his justification to the righteousness of another, even that of Christ; then that Sinai *law* cannot possibly be the same thing with Adam's *covenant of works*. But the antecedent is true and plain in the forecited text, therefore so is the consequent.

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. Take the law here either more strictly, for the *moral law*, or more largely, as it comprehends the *ceremonial law*, still *Christ is the end of the law*. The moral law shuts up every man to Christ for righteousness, by convincing him (according to God's design in the publication of it) of the impossibility of obtaining justification in the way of works.

And the *ceremonial law* many ways prefigured Christ, his death and satisfaction, by blood, in our room, and so led men to Christ their true propitiation; and all its types were fulfilled and ended in Christ. Was there any such thing in Adam's *covenant*? You must prove there was, else you will never be able to make them one and the same *covenant*.

(6thly,) It seems exceeding probable from Acts vii. 27, 38. that the Sinai *covenant* was delivered to Moses by Jesus Christ, there called *the angel*. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us." Now, if Christ himself were the Angel, and the precepts of the law delivered by him to Moses were the *lively oracles of God*, as they are expressly affirmed to be; then the law delivered on mount Sinai cannot be a pure Adam's *covenant of works*: for it is never to be imagined that Jesus Christ himself should deliver to Moses such a covenant, directly opposite to all the ends of his future incarnation; and that those precepts (which, if they were of the same nature, and revived to the same end, at which Adam's covenant directly aimed) should be called the *lively oracles of God*; when contrariwise, upon your supposition, they could be no other than a ministration of condemnation and death: but that they were *lively oracles*, viz. in their design and intention, is plain in the text; and that they were delivered to Moses by Jesus Christ, the *angel of the covenant*, seems more than probable, by comparing it with the former verses.

(7thly,) Neither is it easy to imagine how such a *covenant*, which by the fall of Adam had utterly lost all its promises, privileges and blessings, and could retain nothing but the curses and punishments annexed to it, in case of the least failure, could possibly be numbered among the chief privileges in which God's Israel gloried; as it apparently was, Rom. ix. 4. "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises."

These things considered, with many more (which the intended brevity of this discourse will not now admit) I am fully satisfied of the

falsity of your *position*, and so may you too, when you shall review the many gross and palpable absurdities with which I have clogged and loaded it, with many more, regularly and fairly deducible from it; which I could easily produce, did I not suspect these I have produced, have already prest your patience a little too far; but if ever I shall see (which I never expect) a fair and scriptural solution of these weighty objections, you may expect from me more arguments against your unsound *position*, which, at the present, I judge needless to add.

To conclude: These *premises* (as before I noted) can never be true, from whence such, and so many gross and notorious absurdities are regularly and unavoidably deducible. For *ex veris nil nisi verum*, from true premises nothing but truth can regularly follow.

Had you minded those things which I seasonably sent you, you had avoided all those bogs into which you are now sunk, and been able fairly to reconcile all those seeming contradictions in Paul's *epistles*, with respect to the law at Sinai: But, however, by what hath been said, your first position, *That the Sinai covenant is the same covenant of works with Adam's in paradise*, vanishes before the evidence of scripture, truth, and sound reason.

But yet, though what I have said destroys your false position, I am not willing to leave you, or the reader ignorant, wherein the truth lies in this controverted point betwixt us; and that will appear, by a due consideration of the following particulars.

(1.) It is plain and uncontroverted, that Adam's covenant in *paradise*, contained in a perfect law and rule of natural righteousness, founded both in God's nature and in man's; which, in its perfect state of *innocency*, was every way enabled perfectly to comply therewith: For the scripture tells us, Eccl. vii. 29. That *God made man upright*; and his punctual complying therewith, was the righteousness by which he stood.

(2.) This *covenant of works* being once broken, can never more be available to the justification and salvation of any fallen man. There was not now a law found that could give righteousness: The broken *covenant of works* lost immediately all the blessings and privileges which before it contained, and retained only the *curse* and *punishment*; in token whereof, *cherubims*, with flaming swords, turning every way, were set to keep the way of the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24.

(3.) Soon after the violation of the *covenant of works*, God was graciously pleased to publish for the relief of mankind, now miserable and hopeless, the *second covenant*, which we call the *covenant of grace*, Gen. iii. 15. which is the first opening of the grace of God in Christ to fallen man. And though this first promise of Christ was but short and obscure, yet it was in every age to be opened clearer and clearer, until the promised seed should come. After the first opening of this new covenant, in the first promise of Christ, the first covenant is shut up for ever, as a covenant of life and salvation; and all the world are shut up to the only way of salvation by Christ, Gal. iii. 23. It being con-

trary to the will of God, that two ways of salvation should stand open to man at once, and they so opposite one to another, as the way of works, and the way of faith are, Acts iv. 12. John xiv. 6. Gal. ii. 21.

(4.) It is evident, however, that after the first opening of the promise of Christ, Gen. iii. 15. God foreseeing the pride of fallen man, who naturally inclines to a righteousness of his own in the way of doing, was pleased to revive the law of nature, as to its matter, in the Sinai dispensation; which was 430 years after the first promise had been renewed, and further opened unto Abraham, of whose seed Christ should come: And this he did, not in opposition to the promise, but in subserviency thereto, Gal. iii. 21. And though the matter and substance of the law of nature be found in the Sinai covenant, strictly taken for the *ten commandments*; yet the ends and intentions of God in that terrible Sinai dispensation were twofold; (1.) To convince fallen man of the *sinfulness* and *impotency* of his nature, and the impossibility of obtaining righteousness by the law, and so by a blessed necessity, to shut him up to Christ, his only remedy. And, (2.) To be a standing rule of duty, both towards God and man, to the end of the world. But if we take the Sinai *covenant* more largely, as inclusive of the *ceremonial* with the *moral law* (as it is often taken, and is so by you, in the New Testament;) then it did not only serve for a *conviction* of impotency, and a *rule* of duty; but exhibited and taught much of Christ, and the mysteries of the new covenant in those its ceremonies, wherein he was prefigured to them.

(5.) Whence it evidently appears, that the Sinai *covenant* was neither repugnant to the *new covenant* in its scope and aim; "The law is not against the promise," Gal. iii. 21. nor yet set up as co-ordinate with it, with a design to open two different ways of salvation to fallen man; but was added to the promise in respect of its *evangelical* purposes and designs; On which account it is called by some a covenant of faith, or grace, in respect of its subserviency unto Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness, Rom. x. 4. and by others a subservient covenant, according to Gal. iii. 23, 24. And accordingly we find both tables of the law put into the ark, Heb. ix. 4. which shews their consistency and subordination with, and to the method of salvation by Christ in the *new-covenant*.

(6.) This design and intention of God was fatally mistaken by the Jews, ever since God promulgated that law at Sinai, and was by them notoriously perverted to a quite contrary end to that which God promulgated it for, even to give righteousness and life, in the way of personal and perfect obedience; 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." Hence Christ came to be slighted by them, and his righteousness rejected: For they rested in the law, Rom. ii. 17. were married to the law, as an husband, Rom. vii. 2, 3. and so might have no conjugal communion with Christ. However, Moses, Abra-

elect, discerned Christ as the end of the law for righteousness, and were led to him thereby.

(7.) This fatal mistake of the use and intent of the law, is the ground of those seeming contradictions, in Paul's epistles. Sometimes he magnifies the law, when he speaks of it according to God's end and purpose in its promulgation, Rom. vii. 12, 14, 16. But as it was fatally mistaken by the Jews, and set in opposition to Christ; so he thunders against it, calls it a *ministration of death and condemnation*: and all its appendant ceremonies *weak and beggarly elements*. And by this distinction, whatsoever seems repugnant in Paul's epistles, may be sweetly reconciled; and it is a distinction of his own making, 1 Tim. i. 8. "We know that the law is good if we use it lawfully." There is a good and an evil use of the law. Had you attended to these things, you had not so confidently and inconsiderately pronounced it a pure *covenant of works*.

II. *Position.*

Secondly, You affirm with like confidence, *That the covenant of circumcision is also the same; viz. the covenant of works made with Adam in paradise.*

This I utterly deny; and will try whether you have any better success in the proof of your second, than you had in your first *position*. And to convince you of your mistake, let us consider what the general nature of this ordinance of *circumcision* was; what its ends were; and then prove, That it cannot be what you affirm it to be, the very same *covenant* God made with Adam before the fall, but must needs be a *covenant of grace*.

(1.) *Circumcision*, in its general nature, was, (1.) An ordinance of God's own institution, in the 99th year of Abraham's age; at which time of its institution, God renewed the *covenant* with him, Gen. xvii. 9, 10. (2.) That it consisted (as all sacraments do) of an external sign, and a spiritual mystery signified thereby. The external part of it (which we call the sign) was the cutting off the foreskin of the genital part of the Hebrew males, on the eighth day from their birth. The spiritual mystery thereby signified and represented, was the cutting off the filth and guilt of sin from their souls, by regeneration and justification, called "the circumcision of the heart," Deut. x. 16. And though this was laid upon them by the command, as their duty, yet a gracious promise of power from God to perform that duty, was added to the command; Deut. xxx. 6. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart to love him," &c. just as promises of grace in the New Testament are added to commands of duty. (3.) Betwixt this visible outward sign, and spiritual mystery, there was a *sacramental relation*; from which revelation it is called the "token of the covenant," Gen. xvii. 12. "The sign and seal of the covenant," Rom. iv. 11. Yea, "the covenant itself," Acts vii. 8.

(2.) Next, let us consider the ends for which *circumcision* was instituted and ordained of God: Of which these were the principal.

(1.) It was instituted to be a *convictive sign* of their natural corruption, propagated by the way of natural generation: For which reason, this natural corruption goes in scripture under the name of the *uncircumcision of the heart*, Jer. ix. 26.

(2.) It also signified the putting off of this body of sin, in the virtue of Christ's death, Col. ii. 11.

(3.) It was appointed to be the initiating sign of the covenant, or a token of their *matriculation*, and admission into the church and covenant of God, Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 11.

(4.) It was ordained to be a discriminating mark betwixt God's covenanted people, and the Pagan world, who were strangers to the covenant, and without God in the world. And accordingly both parties were, from this ordinance, denominated the *circumcision* and the *uncircumcision*, Col. iii. 11.

(5.) It was also an obliging sign to Abraham and his seed, to walk with God in the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts, in the performance of all covenanted duties; in which duties, Abraham, and the faithful, walked *obediently*, with God, looking to Christ for righteousness: but the carnal Jews resting in, and trusting to those duties and ordinances for righteousness and justification, made it a covenant of works to themselves, and circumcision itself a *bond* of that *covenant*.

(6.) Now, forasmuch as *circumcision* prefigured Christ, who was to come of this holy circumcised seed of Abraham, and his death also was pointed at therein, Heb. ii. 16. Col. ii. 11. of necessity this ordinance must vanish at the death of Christ: and accordingly did so.

These things duly pondered, how irrational is it to imagine this *covenant of circumcision* to be the very same with the *paradisical covenant*? Did that *covenant* discover native corruption, and direct to its remedy in Christ, as this did? Surely it gave not the least glimpse of any such thing. Did that *covenant* separate and distinguish one person from another, as this did? No, no; it left all under equal and common misery, Eph. ii. 3.

Had Adam's covenant a seal of the righteousness of faith annexed to it, as this had? Rom. iv. 11. "He received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith." The righteousness of faith is evangelical righteousness; and this *circumcision* sealed. Say not it was to Abraham only that it sealed it; for it is an injurious restriction put upon the seal of a *covenant*, which extended to the *fathers* as well as to Abraham, Luke i. 72. But you admit, however, that it sealed evangelical righteousness to Abraham: but I hope you will not say, that a seal of the *covenant of works* ever did, or could, seal evangelical righteousness to any individual person in the world. So then, turn which way you will, this truth still follows you, and will fasten upon you, that the *covenant of circumcision* was not a pure *covenant of works*, but a *gospel-covenant*. Which I thus prove:

Argument I.

If *circumcision* be a part of the *ceremonial law*, and the *ceremonial law* was dedicated by blood, and whatsoever is so dedicated, is by you confessed to be no part of the *covenant of works*; then *circumcision* is no part of the *covenant of works*, even by your own confession. But it is: *ergo*,

That it is a part of the *ceremonial law*, was never doubted, or denied by any man: that it was dedicated by blood, and therefore no part of the *moral law*, you yourself not only acknowledge, but vehemently plead for it, page 148, where you blame Mr. Sedgwick with some sharpness, and unbecoming reflection, for making no distinction betwixt the *ceremonial covenant*, which was dedicated by blood, and the law written in tables of stone; which was not so dedicated, and therefore could not be the same with the *moral law*, which you make the *covenant of works*; telling him, that this dedication by blood ought to distinguish it from the *moral law*, or *Sinai covenant* of works, as you say it doth, and ought to do; how then can *circumcision* be the same with, and yet quite another thing from the *Sinai covenant*? Was the ceremonial law dedicated by blood? Yes, the apostle plainly asserts it, (Heb. ix. 18, 19.) from Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. ‘Moses took the book of the covenant, and read it in the audience of the people; and took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you, concerning these things.’ But what kind of covenant then was this covenant that was sprinkled with blood? You tell us, p. 147, it could not possibly be the law written in stones, (which you make the *covenant of works*;) but was indeed another covenant, delivered at a distinct season, and in a distinct method. What covenant then must this be, seeing it could not possibly (as you say) be the *Sinai covenant* written in stones? It must either be the *covenant of grace*, or none. No, say you, that it was not, neither; for it was of the same nature with, and is no other than a *covenant of works*, p. 151. It was the same, and yet could not possibly be the same.

Mr. Sedgwick, that learned and grave divine, is checked, p. 148. for confounding the *ceremonial law* that was sprinkled with blood, with the *moral law* (which you call the *covenant of works*) that was not sprinkled with blood; and say you, p. 147. *It could not possibly be the same*. And then, p. 151, you say, *It is clear, these two, viz. the moral and ceremonial law, were both of the same nature; that is, no other than a covenant of works*. How doth this hang together? Pray reconcile it if you can. You say, *It is an ungrounded supposition of Mr. Sedgwick's, that that covenant which was so confirmed by blood, must of necessity be confirmed by the blood of Christ also*: p. 148. But, sir, the truth you oppose, viz. That the book of the *ceremonial law* was sprinkled by typical blood, and therefore confirmed by the blood of Christ, for the time it was to continue, shines like a bright sun-beam

in your own eyes, from Heb. ix. 14, 23. Was not the blood that sprinkled this law, the figure or type of Christ's own blood? Whose blood was it then, if not Christ's? How dare you call this an ungrounded supposition? Was not that blood typical blood? And what, I pray you, was the *antitype*, but Christ's blood? And did not the Holy Ghost signify the one by the other? Heb. ix. 8. I stand amazed at these things! You distinguish, and confound all again. You say, it could not possibly be the same with the law written in stone; and you say, it is clear both were of the same nature, no other than a *covenant of works*. At this rate you may say what you please; for I see *contradiction* is no crime in your book.

Argument II.

If *circumcision* was the seal of the righteousness of faith, it did not pertain to the *covenant of works*; for the righteousness of *faith* and *works* are opposites, and belong to the two contrary *covenants*.

But *circumcision* was the seal of the righteousness of faith; Rom. iv. 11. "He (i. e. Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith." Therefore it pertains not to the *covenant of works*, but *grace*.

A man would think it impossible to evade so clear and scriptural an argument as this is. The *major proposition* is even self-evident and undeniable; the *minor*, the plain words of the *apostle*.

And what is your reply to this? Certainly as strange a one as ever I met with; p. 105. you say, *It is true, circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham; but it was so to him only in his extraordinary circumstances; but it was not so to any of his natural seed in its ordinary use.*

I cannot deny but I have met with such an assertion before in Mr. Tombes; and I can tell you too, that Bellarmine invented it before Mr. Tombes was born, and that Dr. Ames fully confuted it in his third tome, p. 27. proving, that there was no extraordinary cause on Abraham's account, why God should justify or seal him more than any other believer; and that Abraham had nothing to glory in before God. But to restrain as you do, the public seal of a covenant, that comprehended and equally concerned the whole *church* and *people* of God, to one single person; so that neither Isaac nor Jacob, who were by name enrolled in that great charter, should have any right to the seal of it, is such a conceit as amazes an intelligent reader. We know Abraham was the first that received it, but utterly deny that he received it only for himself; but he received it as the father of all them that believe, whither Jews or Gentiles, as the very next words tell us, "He received it, that he might be the father of all them that believe;" that is, for himself, and all his spiritual children. One half of this sacrament of *circumcision* you allow, p. 205. to the rest that were under it, viz. to be a *sign of the covenant*; but the other half you cut off, and say, it was only a *seal* to him. What good vouchers have you for this ex-

position of the text? Have you the concurrence of *orthodox expositors*? Or is it the rash and bold adventure of your own head? I am sure it no way agrees with the drift and scope of the apostle's argument, which evidently is to prove, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by faith, as Abraham was; and that the ground of justification and blessedness is common both to the uncircumcised Gentiles, and circumcised Jews; and that Abraham and all other believers, have but one way of justification, and salvation, and that how great soever Abraham was, in this case he hath found nothing whereof to glory, ver. 1, 2. And is not your exposition a notable one, to prove the community of the privilege of justification, because the seal of it was peculiar to Abraham alone? Rectify it, and better consider it.

Argument III.

In the covenant of circumcision, Gen. xvii. God makes over himself to Abraham and his seed to be their God, or give them a special interest in himself.

But in the *covenant of works*, God doth not, since the fall, make over himself to any, to be their God by way of special interest.

Therefore the *covenant of circumcision* cannot be the *covenant of works*.

This is so plain and clear, that none can doubt or deny it, that understands the nature of the two covenants. And now, sir, what course do you take to avoid this argument? Such a one sure as no man that ever I met with took before you, and that is this; you boldly cut Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. into two parts, and make the first to be the pure covenant of grace, which is the promissory part, to the *ninth verse*; and the *restipulation* (as you call it, p. 205.) to be as pure a covenant of works. What hard shift will some men make to maintain their opinion! You say truly, p. 205, that at the *seventh and eighth verses* was their restipulation: why then do you say, p. 224, that at *ver. 7th* he proceeds to speak of another *covenant* than what he had been speaking of before? Does the promise and the restipulation make two *covenants*; or are they just and necessary parts of one and the same *covenant*? You also tell us, that the *covenant*, Gen. xvii. 1, 2, 3, 4. was a plain transcript of several free promises of the gospel under the denomination of a *covenant*. But why then don't you take the restipulation, *ver. 7, 8, 9, 10.* to be a part of it? O no; there is something required on Abraham's and his posterity's part; they must be *circumcised*, and that spoils all. Why but, sir, if the requiring of *circumcision* alters the case so greatly, as to make it a quite contrary *covenant*; how comes it to pass, that in the *covenant* to Abraham, he himself was first required to be *circumcised*? Why, this is the reason; here is somewhat required on their part as a *condition*; and a *condition* quite alters the nature of the *covenant*. Very well; but tell me then why you say, p. 223, and in many other places, that the *covenant* made with Abraham, in Gen. xii. was a *gospel-covenant*; and yet there Abraham is

obliged to walk before God, and be perfect? Does not that also there alter the nature of the *covenant*, as well as here in the *seventeenth* chapter? You also grant, the *covenant* made with Abraham, Gen. xxii. was a pure *gospel-covenant*; or if you deny it, the apostle proves it, Heb. vi. 13. And yet there is more appearance of respect to Abraham's obedience in that *covenant*, than is in submitting to *circumcision*: see Gen. xxii. 16, 17. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, &c. That in blessing, I will bless thee; and in multiplying, I will multiply thee."

I will trouble you, on this head, but with one *query* more: if the four first verses of the xvii. of Genesis contain a pure *gospel-covenant*, as you say, and the restipulation in the following verses make a *covenant* of works, because it thereby becomes conditional; then tell me, if you please, whether what God graciously granted to Abraham in the former verses be not all nulled, and made void again by their restipulation? Does not this seem harsh? Here you have brought Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the believers of Abraham's race, just into the same case you brought Moses and all the Israelites before, under two opposite *covenants*, where one cuts off all that the other granted.

But there is a stronger reason urged than the *conditionality* of the *covenant*, to prove it a *covenant of works*; and that is, *circumcision* is made the *condition* of Abraham's *covenant*; and that is the worst of all *conditions*, for it obliges a man to keep the whole law, Gal. v. 3. it is the yoke of bondage, and to whatsoever *covenant* it be so annexed, it makes it become a *bondage legal covenant*. "If we be circumcised, Christ shall profit us nothing." Thus it was in the *covenant*, Gen. xvii.

Great use is made of this in many parts of your discourse. But, sir, you are greatly mistaken in applying these texts to the purposes you do; for the apostle all along in that epistle to the Galatians, argues against the false teachers, who taught and pressed the necessity of *circumcision*, as a bond obliging them to the strict and perfect obedience of the law, in order to their justification thereby, or at least to join it with the righteousness of Christ, as a *con-cause of justification*; see Gal. ii. 4, 5. and iii. 1. Now against this abuse of *circumcision*, it is that the apostle argues thus, and tells them, that in submitting to it on that account, they made the death of Christ of no effect, and obliged themselves by it to the whole law; for *circumcision* did not simply and absolutely in the nature of the work or action, oblige men to the whole law in the way of justification by it, but it did so from the intention of the worker, and the supposition of such an opinion of it, and design in it; for in itself, and with respect to God's design in the institution of it, it was to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 11. and so it was an excellent, useful, instructive ordinance to all believers, as long as the ceremonial law stood: and even when it was expiring, as the *gospel* began to open more and more clearly, there

was yet some kind of toleration of it to such as were born of Jewish parents: Thus Paul himself circumcised Timothy, his mother being a Jewess, Acts xvi. 1, 3. but Titus, being a Greek, was not circumcised, and that because of these false teachers, that would make an ill use of that their liberty, Gal. ii. 3, 4. This Paul could never have done, in case circumcision, in the nature of the act, had bound Timothy to keep the law for justification. By which it appears, that the action in its own nature did not oblige to the keeping of the whole law, but from the intention of the agent; and therefore, as the apostle rightly argues, if a man be circumcised with a design to be justified by it, he would thereby bind himself to the whole law, and frustrate the death of Christ to himself; but it was now to have its funeral with all other parts of the ceremonial law, which vanished, and were accomplished in the death of Christ; and it falling out that such a vile use was made of it at that time, the apostle thus thunders against it. Had this been observed, as also the like abuse of the *moral law*, you would have known how to have reconciled the apostle's *encomiums* of them both, with his sharp invectives against the one and the other. But being ignorant of these two great and necessary distinctions of the law, according to God's intention in the promulgation of it at Sinai, and the carnal Jews *sense* of it, as a pure *covenant of works*, against which the apostle so sharply inveighs in the places by you cited, all your 23 arguments from page 183, to page 187, fall to the ground at one stroke; your *medius terminus* having one sense in your *major proposition*, and another in your *minor*; and so every argument had four *terms* in it, as will easily be evinced by the particular consideration of the respective places from whence you draw them.

So in like manner, in your arguing here against *circumcision*, as a bond to keep the whole law, and as such vacating the death of Christ, is a stumble at the same stone, not distinguishing as you ought to have done, betwixt an obligation arising out of the nature of the work, and out of the end and intention of the workers; and this every learned and judicious eye will easily discern. But we proceed to

Argument IV.

That which in its direct and primary end teacheth man the corruption of his nature by sin, and the mortification of sin by the Spirit of Christ, cannot be a condition of the *covenant of works*; but so did circumcision in the very direct and primary end of it.

This ordinance supposeth the fall of man, points to the *means* and *instruments* of his sin and misery, and also to the remedy thereof by Christ: (1.) It singles out that *genital part* by which original sin was propagated, Gen. xvii. 11. Ps. li. 1. To this the sign of the covenant is applied in *circumcision*, for the remission of sins past, and the extirpation of sin for the future. (2.) Therefore it was instituted of God, that men might see both the necessity and true way of mortifying

their lusts, in the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, whereof baptism that succeeds it, is a sign now, as *circumcision* was then; as is plain from Col. ii. 11, 12. 'In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who raised him from the dead.' It is clear then that circumcision directed men to the death and resurrection of Christ, as the true and only means of mortifying their lusts; and if it did so, sure it was not the *covenant of works*, for that gives fallen man no hint of a remedy. (3.) It was also a *discriminating sign*, or *token*, betwixt the *church* and the *world*: God's people, and the heathens, who were accordingly denominated from it the *circumcision* and the *uncircumcision*, the *holy seed* and the Gentiles; and now under the New Testament, the children of Abraham by faith, and the children of the *flesh*: This also shews it cannot be the *covenant of works*; for in that covenant all are equally and alike concluded under sin and misery, Eph. ii. 3. and there is no difference made by that covenant betwixt person and person, state and state.

If this be not enough to evince, that the covenant of circumcision is a *covenant of grace*, I promise you many more arguments to prove it, as soon as I shall find these refuted, and your contrary assertion well discharged from the gross absurdities with which it is clogged and loaded. You see how genuine, natural, and congruous to scripture the notion of it as a covenant of grace is, and all the world may see how harsh, alien, and repugnant to scripture your notion of circumcision, as a *covenant of works*, is. You see into what bogs you are again driven in defence of your opinion: *Exemp. gra.*

That circumcision is a part of the *ceremonial law*, which was dedicated with blood, and therefore could be no part of the *moral law* or *ten commandments*, which was (say you) the *covenant of works*; and yet that it is of the same nature, and that it is clear it is no other than a *covenant of works*: do you not there distinguish and confound all again, blame and check Mr. Sedgwick without cause, and commit a greater absurdity presently than you charged him with? Do not you question whether that *covenant* was *typically* sealed by Christ's blood? Pray, sir, consider wherever God commands typical blood to be applied, it relates to Christ's blood spiritually applied; or to nothing.

Are not you forced, in defence of your erroneous *thesis*, to say with Bellarmine, That *circumcision* was extraordinary in its institution, and applied as a seal to none but Abraham himself? It excluded even Isaac, the type of Christ, and Jacob, a prince with God. O what will not men venture upon in defence of their darling opinions!

Are you not forced, for your security from the danger of the *third argument*, to cut one of the same covenants made with Abraham just in two, and of the pure promissory part to make a *covenant of grace*; and of the other part, which you yourself call a *restipulation*, to make

another quite opposite covenant? Do not you magnify the bounty and grace of God to Abraham in the first four verses, and then destroy it all, by putting him at once under a contrary covenant, and so cut off all capacity to enjoy one of those mercies?

Do not you make *circumcision*, in its own nature, without respect to the intention of the person, an obligation to the whole law, and that which frustrates the death of Christ, and yet must grant, that Paul himself took Timothy, and circumcised him, and yet thereby brought him under no such dangerous obligation to the law? In a word,

You reject all those covenants as legal, that have any conditions in them, or respect to any thing that is to be done by us, and allow Gen. xii. and Gen. xxii. to be pure *gospel covenants of grace*; and yet in the first, Abraham is bound to 'walk before God and be perfect;' and in the other God saith, 'For because thou hast done this thing, surely blessing I will bless thee.'

And so much for Abraham's *covenant*.

III. *Of the conditionality of the new covenant.*

Come we next to consider that opinion of yours, which led you into these other gross mistakes and absurdities, and that is this, that the *covenant of grace* is absolute; and whatever covenant is not so, but hath any condition upon our part, must needs for that reason be a *covenant of works*. See page 229. *It is observable (say you) that as the covenants mentioned Gen. ii. Exod. xx. &c. were all conditional, and therefore legal covenants, requiring strict and perfect obedience, as the condition propounded, in order to the enjoyment of the mercies contained in them, which are all therefore done away in Christ; so on the other hand we see, that the covenant God made with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. and Gen. xvii. 2, 3. and Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. was wholly free and absolute, and therefore purely evangelical, &c.* We will review these things anon, and see if you truly represent the matter; but in order to it, let me tell you,

First, What we mean by a gospel-condition.

Secondly, Prove that there are such in the gospel-covenant.

Thirdly, Shew you the absurdity of your opinion against it.

(1.) What we mean by a *condition* in the gospel-covenant. By a condition of the covenant, we do not mean in the strictest rigid sense of the word, such a restipulation to God from man of perfect obedience in his own person, at all times, so as the least failure therein forfeits all the mercies of the covenant; that is rather the condition of Adam's covenant of works, than of the evangelical covenant: nor do we assert any *meritorious condition*, that in the nature of an impulsive cause shall bring man into the covenant and its privileges, or continue him in when brought in. This we renounce as well as you: but our question is about such a condition as is neither in the nature of an act perfect in every degree, nor meritorious in the least of the benefit conferred, nor yet done in our own strength. But plainly and briefly, our question is, *Whether there be not something*

as an act required of us in point of duty, to a blessing consequent by virtue of a promise? Such a thing, whatever it be, hath the nature of a condition, inasmuch as it is antecedent to the benefit of the promise; and the mercy or benefit granted, is suspended until it be performed. The question is not, whether there be any intrinsical worth or value in the thing so required, to oblige the disposer to make or perform the grant or promise, but merely that it be antecedent to the enjoyment of the benefit; and that the disposer of the benefit do suspend the benefit until it be performed? Thus an act or duty of ours, which has nothing at all of merit in it, or answerable value to the benefit it relates to, may be in a proper sense a *condition* of the said benefit. “For what is a *condition* in the true notion of it, but * the suspension of a grant until something future be done?” “Or, † as others to the same purpose, ‘The adding of words to a grant, for the future, of a suspending quality, according to which the disposer will have the benefit he disposeth to be regulated?’” This properly is a *condition*, though there be nothing of equivalent value or merit in the thing required.

And such your brethren, in their narrative, page 14. do acknowledge faith to be, when they assert none can be actually reconciled, justified, or adopted, till they are really implanted into Jesus Christ by faith; and so, by virtue of this their union with him, have these fundamental benefits actually conveyed unto them; which contains the proper notion of the *condition* we contend for.

And such a *condition of salvation* we assert *faith* to be in the new covenant grant; that is to say, the grant of salvation by God in the gospel-covenant is suspended from all men, till they believe, and is due by promise, not merit, to them as soon as they do truly believe. The notes or signs of a condition given by *civilians*, or *moralists*, are such as these, *If, if not, unless, but if, except, only*, and the like. When these are added in the promise of a blessing or benefit for the future, they make that promise conditional; and your *grammar* (according to which you must speak, if you speak properly and strictly) will tell you, that *Si, sin, modo, dum, dummodo*, are all conditional particles; and it is evident, that these conditional particles are frequently inserted in the grants of the blessings and privileges of the New Testament. As for example; Mark ix. 23. εἰ δυνασαι πισευσαι, “If thou canst believe.” Acts viii. 37. εἰ πῆς εὐεις ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας, “If thou believest with thy whole heart thou mayest,” &c. Rom. x. 9. οὔτι εἶπεν, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, and believe with thy heart,” &c. thou shalt be saved.” Mat. xviii. 3. εἰν μὴ, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Mark v. 36. μόνον, “Only believe.” Mark xi. 26. εἰ οὐκ ἔρχ,

* *Conditio est suspensio alicujus dispositionis, tantisper dum aliquid futurum fiat.* Navarr. Enchirid. 482.

† *Est verborum adjectio in futurum suspendentium, secundum quam disponens vult dispositum regulari.*

“But if ye forgive not,” &c. with multitudes more, which are all conditional particles inserted in the grants of benefits.

(2.) Having shewn you what the nature of a *condition* is, I shall, I hope, make it plain to you, that *faith* is such a *condition* in the gospel-grant of our salvation; for we find the benefit suspended till this act of faith be performed; John iii. 36. “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” And most plainly, Rom. x. 9. having shewn before what the *condition* of legal righteousness was, he tells us there what the gospel-condition of salvation is; “The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” I ask you, sir, whether it be possible to put words into a frame more lively expressive of a *condition* than these are? Do but compare Mark xvi. 16. “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned:” Do but compare, I say, that scripture-phrase with the words of Jacob’s *sons*, which all allow to be conditional, Gen. xliii. 4, 5. “If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down;” and judge whether the one be not as conditional as the other: more particularly,

Argument I.

If we cannot be justified or saved till we believe, then faith is the *condition* on which those consequent benefits are suspended.

But we cannot be justified or saved till we believe; *Ergo*.

The sequel of the major is evident; for, as we said before, a *condition* is the suspension of a grant till something future be done. The minor is plain in scripture; Rom. iv. 24. “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that righteousness was imputed to him; but for our sakes also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe.” Οἱς μελλει λογιζεσθαι, *Quibus futurim est ut imputetur*, to whom it shall come to pass, that it shall be imputed, if we believe: And Acts x. 43. “Whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins.” John iii. 36. “He that believeth not, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;” with multitudes more. Now, sir, lay seriously before your eyes such scriptures as these, that promise salvation to believers, and threaten damnation to all unbelievers, as Mark xvi. 16. doth, and then give a plain and clear answer to this question; either the positive part of that text promises salvation absolutely to men, whether they believe or believe not, and consequently unbelievers shall be saved as well as believers; and the negative part threatens damnation absolutely to sinners, as sinners; and consequently all sinners shall be damned, whether they believe or not: or else, if you allow neither to be absolute, but that none can be saved till they believe, nor any damned when they do believe; is not that a conditional promise and threatening?

Argument II.

If God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. and that Gen. xvii. 2, 3. were (as you say) pure gospel-covenants of grace, and yet in both some things are required as duties on Abraham's part, to make him partaker of the benefits of the promises; then the covenant of grace is not absolute, but conditional.

But so it was in both these covenants; *Ergo*.

The minor only requires proof; for which let us have recourse to the places, and see whether it be so or not.

(1.) For the first you instance in as a pure gospel-covenant made with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. I must confess, as you dismember the text, p. 229. by chusing out the second and third verses, and leaving out the first, which was the trial of Abraham's obedience, in forsaking his native country, and his father's house; I say, give me but this liberty to separate and disjoin one part of a covenant from the other, and it is easy to make any conditional covenant in the world to become absolute; for take but the duty required, from the promise that is made, and that which was a conditional, presently becomes an absolute grant. Suppose, sir, that Abraham had refused to leave his dear native country, and dearest relations, as many do; think you that the promised mercies had been his? I must plainly tell you, you assume a strange liberty in this matter, and make a great deal bolder with the scriptures than you ought: and the very same usage the other scriptures hath.

(2.) For when you cite your *second covenant* with Abraham, you only cite Gen. xvii. 2, 3. and then call it an *absolute gospel-covenant*; when indeed you make it so, by leaving out the first verse, which contains the condition or duty required on Abraham's part; for thus run the three first verses; "And when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk thou before me, and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee," &c. Here an upright conversation before God is required of him, at God's entrance into this covenant with him; but that is, and must be omitted, and cut off, to make the covenant look absolute, I am really grieved to see the scriptures thus dealt with to deserve a design!

Argument III.

If all the promises of the gospel be absolute and unconditional, requiring no restipulation from man, then they cannot properly and truly belong to the new covenant.

But they do properly and truly belong to the *new covenant*; therefore they are not all absolute and unconditional.

The sequel of the major is only liable to doubt or denial, namely, That the absoluteness of all the promises of the New Testament cuts off their relation to a covenant; but that it doth so, no man can deny,

that understands the difference between a covenant and an absolute promise. A covenant is a mutual compact or agreement betwixt parties, in which they bind each other to the performance of what they respectively promise; so that there can be no other proper covenant where there is not a restipulation or re-obligation of one part, as well as a promise on the other; but an absolute promise binds only one party and leaves the other wholly free and unobliged to any thing in order to the enjoyment of the good promised. So then, if all the New Testament promises be unconditional and absolute, they are not part of a covenant, nor must that word be applied to them; they are absolute promises, binding no man to whom they are made to any duty, in order to the enjoyment of the mercies promised: But those persons that are under these absolute promises, must and shall enjoy the mercies of pardon and salvation, whether they repent or repent not, believe or believe not, obey or obey not. Now to what licentiousness this doctrine leads men, is obvious to every eye. Yet this absoluteness of the *covenant* (as you improperly call it) is by you asserted, p. 229, 230. There is (say you) no condition at all, it is wholly free and absolute, as the *covenant* with Abraham, Gen. xii. 2, 3. Gen. xvii. 2, 3. Thank you, sir, for making them so; for by cutting off the first verses, where the duty required on Abraham's part is contained, you make them what God never intended them to be. And the same foul play is in Deut. xxx. where you separate the plain condition contained in ver. 1, 2. from the promise, ver. 6. Or if the condition, ver. 1, 2. be not plain enough, but you will make it part of the promise, I hope that after, in ver. 10. is too plain to be denied. As to the other texts, more anon; mean time see how you destroy the nature of a *covenant*.

Object. But say you, pag. 233. To impose new conditions, though never so mild, is a new *covenant of works* with some mercy, but not a *covenant of grace*, properly so called.

Sol. It is true, if those works or acts of ours, which God requires, be understood of meritorious works in our own strength and power to perform, it destroys the free grace of the *covenant*; but this we utterly reject, and speak only of faith wrought in us by the Spirit of God, which receives all from God, and gives the entire glory to God; Eph. ii. 5, 8.

Object. But you will say, If faith be the *condition*, and that faith be not of ourselves, then both the *promise* and the *condition* are on God's part (if you will call faith a *condition*) and so still on our part the *covenant* is absolute.

Sol. This is a mistake, and the mistake in this leads you into all the rest; though faith (which we call the condition on our part) be the gift of God, and the power of believing be derived from God, yet the act of believing is properly our act, though the power by which we believe be of God? else it would follow, when we act any grace, as faith, repentance, or obedience, that God believes, repents, and obeys in us,

and it is not we, but God that doth all these. This, I hope, you will not dare to assert; they are truly our works, though wrought in God's strength? Isa. xxvi. 12. "Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us;" i. e. though they be our works, yet they are wrought in us by thy grace or strength.

As for Dr. Owen, it is plain from the place you cite in the doctrine of justification, p. 156, he only excludes conditions, as we do, in respect of the dignity of the act, as is more plain in his treatise of redemption, p. 103, 104. in which he allows conditions in both the *covenants*, and makes this the difference, That the Old required them, but the New effects them in all the *fœderates*.

I know no othodox divine in the world, that presumes to thrust in any work of man's into the *covenant of grace*, as a *condition*, which, in the Armenian sense, he may or may not perform, according to the power and pleasure of his own free will, without the preventing or determining grace of God; which preventing grace is contained in those promises, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27, &c. Nor yet that there is any meritorious worth, either of *condignity* or *congruity* in the Popish sense, in the very justifying act of faith, for the which God justifies and saves us. But we say, That though God, in the way of preventing grace, works faith in us, and when it is so wrought, we need his assisting grace to act it, yet neither his assisting nor preventing grace makes the act of faith no more to be *our* act; it is we that believe still though in God's strength, and that upon our believing, or not believing, we have or have not the benefits of God's promises; which is the very proper notion of a *condition*.

Argument IV.

If all the promises of the new covenant be absolute and unconditional, having no respect nor relation to any grace wrought in us, nor duty done by us, then the trial of our interest in Christ, by *marks* and *signs* of grace, is not our duty, nor can we take comfort in sanctification, as an evidence of our justification.

But it is a Christian's duty to try his interest in Christ by *marks* and *signs*; and he may take comfort in sanctification, as an evidence of justification. *Ergo*.

The sequel of the *major* is undeniably clear: so that can never be a sign or evidence of an interest in Christ, which that interest may be without; yea, and as * Dr. Crispe asserts, according to his Antinomian principles, 'Christ is ours (saith he) before we have gracious qualifications; every true mark and sign must be inseparable from that it signifies.' Now, if the works of the Spirit in us be not so, but an interest in Christ may be where these are not, then they are no proper marks or signs; and if they are not, it cannot be our duty to

* Dr. Crispe, 2d Vol. of Christ exalted, Sermon, 14.

make use of them as such, and consequently if we should, they can yield us no comfort.

The *minor* is plain in scripture; 1 John ii. 3. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." The meaning is, we perceive and discern ourselves to be sincere believers, and consequently that Christ is our propitiation, when obedience to his commands is become habitual and easy to us; So 1 John iii. 19. "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him;" *i. e.* by our sincere cordial love to Christ and his members, as ver. 18. this shall demonstrate to us, that we are the children of truth; and again, 1 John iii. 14. "We know that we are passed from death to life; because we love the brethren:" With multitudes more to the same purpose, which plainly teach Christians to fetch the evidences of their justification out of their sanctification, and to prove their interest in Christ, by the works of his Spirit found in their own hearts.

And this is not only a Christian's liberty, but his commanded duty to bring his interest in Christ to this touchstone and test; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves, prove yourselves," &c. 2 Pet. i. 10. "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure?" *i. e.* your election by your calling. No man can make his election sure *a priori*, nor can any make it surer than it is *in se*; therefore it is only capable of being made sure to us *a posteriori*; arguing from the work of sanctification in us, to God's eternal choice of us.

And as the saints in all ages have taken this course, so they have taken great and lawful comfort in the use of these marks and signs of grace; 2 Kings xx. 3. 2 Cor. i. 12.

I am sensible how vehemently the Antinomian party, Dr. Crispe, Mr. Eyre, and some others, do oppugn this truth, representing it as legal and impracticable (for they are for the absolute and unconditional nature of the *new covenant*, as well as you); but by your espousing their principle, you have even run Anabaptism into Antinomianism; and must, by this principle of yours, renounce all marks and trials of an interest in Christ, by any work of the Spirit wrought in us. You must only stick to the immediate sealings of the Spirit; which, if such a thing be at all, it is but rare and extraordinary.

I will not deny but there may be an immediate testimony of the Spirit; but sure I am his mediate testimony by his graces in us, is his usual way of sealing believers. We do not affirm any of these his works to be meritorious causes of our justification; or that, considered abstractly from the Spirit, they can of themselves seal, or evidence our interest in Christ; Neither do we affirm, that any of them are complete and perfect works; but this we say, that they being true and sincere, though imperfect graces, they are our usual and standing evidences, to make out our interest in Christ by. And I hope you, and the whole Antinomian *party*, will find it hard, yea, and impossible, to remove the saints from that comfortable and scriptural way of

examining their interest in Christ, by the graces of his Spirit in them; as the saints, who are gone to heaven before them, have done in all generations.

Argument V.

If the *covenant of grace* be altogether absolute and unconditional, requiring nothing to be done on our part, to entitle us to its benefits; then it cannot be man's duty in entering covenant with God, to deliberate the terms, count the cost, or give his consent by word or writing, explicitly to the terms of this covenant.

But it is man's duty in entering covenant with God, to deliberate the terms, and count the cost; Luke xiv. 26, to 34. and explicitly to give his consent thereunto, either by word or writing: *Ergo*.

The sequel of the *major* is self-evident: For where there are no terms or conditions required on our part, there can be none to deliberate, or give our consent to; and so a man may be in a covenant without his own consent.

The *minor* is undeniable in the text cited: If you say, These are *duties*, but not *conditions*; I reply, they are such *duties*, without the performance of which we can have no benefit by Christ and the new covenant, Luke xiv. 33. And such *duties* have the true suspending nature of *conditions* in them. If you say they are only subsequent duties, but not antecedent or concomitant acts, the 28th verse directly opposes you: *Let him first sit down and count the cost*. And for those overt-acts, whereby we explicitly declare our consent to the terms of the *covenant*, at our first entering into the bond of it, I hope you will not say, that it is a *legal covenant* too; Isa. xlv. 3, 4. "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 thine off-spring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses; One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," &c. A plain allusion to soldiers, when they list themselves under a captain, or general.

What remains now to reply to these arguments, but either that the places by me cited and argued upon, do not intend the *new covenant*, under which we are; or that this *new covenant* hath its *conditions*, and is not altogether absolute, as you have asserted it to be.

And thus, sir, you are fairly beaten off (if I mistake not) from the new ground you had chosen and marked out to raise your battery upon, to demolish that strong fort which secures the right of believers infants to *baptism*; and you must return again to the old answers of Mr. Tombes, and others, to our solid and substantial argument from Abraham's covenant, Gen. xvii. which have been baffled over and over by Baxter, Blake, Sydenham, and many other stout champions for *infants baptism*.

All that I am further concerned about, is to examine so many of those scriptures as you have spoken to, which are by us produced in defence of those four grounds or principles mentioned in the beginning of this discourse, whereon we establish the right of *infants baptism*; and to vindicate those scriptures from your strained and injurious interpretations of them: Which being done, they will each of them stand in those eminent places of service, where they have been so long useful to the cause we defend.

As for your pretended solutions of the incomparable Mr. Baxter's, and the learned and accurate Dr. Burthogg's arguments, I admire at your confidence therein; and let me tell you, without breach of charity, it is an high piece of confidence in you, to throw the gantlet, and bid defiance to two such worthies yet alive, and easily able to detect your folly, in the weakness and impertinency of your answers. Alas! my friend, you little know what it is to have such weak and inartificial discourses as yours brought under the strict *examen* of such acute and judicious eyes. But,

—————*Sic dama leonem*
Insequitur, auctque viro concurrere virgo.

Nor will I presume to anticipate either of their answers to your discourse (if they shall think it worthy of an answer); but rather briefly reflect upon what you return to the arguments of those eminent divines that are gone to glory in the faith of that truth you oppose, and are not capable of defending their solid and regular interpretations of scriptures, against the notions you force upon them, contrary both to the grammar and scope of several of them.

And here sir, in the beginning, let me mind you what a learned and judicious person saith, about all interpretations of scriptures: "Four things (*saith he*) commend an interpretation, and establish it as a king upon the throne, against whom there is no rising up."

First, If the letter and grammar of the text fairly bear it.

Secondly, If the scope and argument of the place will close directly with it.

Thirdly, If the interpretation set up against it, cannot stand before both, or either of the former.

Fourthly, If the judgment of learned, wise, and impartial men be found generally agreeable to it.

According to these rules (whereat you can have no just exception) I shall briefly, yet I hope clearly and sufficiently, answer some of the replies you make to the arguments of those deceased worthies: And,

(1.) In page 1. you produce Mr. William Allen's argument, *ad hominem*, against your practice: 'He tells you, your own principle condemns you; for you reject the baptizing of infants, because there is no example in the New Testament of it; and yet baptize persons at age, whose parents were Christians; which is as much without a gospel precedent, or example, as the former. *The sum of your reply is*, That though it should be granted, that there is no express ex-

ample for the baptizing such in scripture, yet there are examples enough concerning the baptism of believers.

Reply. Here you grant all that Mr. Allen objects; viz. 'That you are altogether without example or precedent for your practice; And object to him and us, what he nor we ever scrupled or denied; viz. The baptizing of some adult persons, upon the personal profession of their faith.' I have done it myself, and, in like circumstances, am ready to do it again. Once you clearly yield it, that you have no precedent nor example for your practice in the gospel: That is all that he seeks, and what he seeks, you plainly grant. As to the precept and examples of baptizing adult believers, whose parents were unbelievers, and themselves never baptized in infancy, that is not the point you are now to speak to; nor have we any controversy about it. Certainly you are none of the fittest persons in the world to clamour so loudly against us, for want of express precedents for *infants baptism*, whilst yourself confesses, you want even one precedent in the New Testament to legitimate your own practice; and in the mean time are found in the sinful neglect of a sweet and heavenly gospel-ordinance, viz. the singing of *psalms*, for which you have both precept and precedent in the gospel, Col. iii. 16. Jam. v. 13. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

(2.) It is objected against you, pag. 2. 'That if the commission, Mat. xxviii. excludes none from baptism, but such as are to be excluded by the order therein to be observed; and if baptizing and teaching are to precede, or follow one the other, as there named by Christ, then these two conclusions will follow. (1.) That infants are not there excluded from baptism. (2.) That a person may be baptized, before he be taught; for there we have, *First*, Μαθητευσατι παντα τα εθνη, disciple all nations; make them disciples, or Christians. *Secondly*, We have Βαπτιζοντες και διδασκοντες; which literally to translate, is baptizing and teaching. Now then discipling being a general word, that contains in it the two others that follow, viz. baptizing and teaching; and being the *imperative mood*, whereas the other two are *participles*; it is manifest, that the whole command or commission, is given in that, and the mode of execution in these. And if the mode of executing that general commission be expressed in these, where baptizing is first, and teaching comes after; what is become of the order of the *Antipædobaptists* that have been so long talked of?

The sum of your answer is, 'That if baptizing be first, and teaching comes after; then it will follow, that the apostles understood not their commission aright; for they first preached, and then baptized them that by their preaching believed, Acts viii. Acts x. Acts ii. with many other places you heap up to the same purpose. And therefore infants must be excluded by that commission, because incapable of being taught. And therefore let us criticise as we please upon *imperative moods*, and *participles*, the case is clear, teaching must go before baptizing.'

Reply. It had been more modest to suspect that you understood not the text aright, than that the apostles understood not their commission aright. The order of the words (as this well-fortified objection declares that you cannot deny) puts *teaching* after *baptizing*: And though we should allow you, that they disciplined adult persons by *teaching*, and taught others baptized in infancy, after their baptizing them; in both they followed their order and commission, in discipling the parents by preaching, and teaching their children baptized, by virtue of the promise to them, after their baptism. For he declares, Acts ii. 'the promise is to them, and to their children;' which gives a right to both unto baptism: And so *teaching*, according to the order of this *commission*, may be an antecedent duty to the parent, and a subsequent duty to him and his baptized children. For if Μαθηλευσατε includes teaching before baptizing, why should not Διδασκαλειε, which is put after baptizing, respect the subsequent duty of teaching both the one and the other?

(3.) Mr. Allen's next argument, mentioned by you, pag. 5. is taken from Matth. xix. 14. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Whence he argues against your objection, of the incapacity of *infants* for *baptism*; that if they are capable of interest, or membership in the kingdom of heaven, or church, they are equally capable of the sign or cognizance, which is *baptism*.

To this you reply three things: (1.) 'That it remains to be proved, that these little children were infants, and not grown boys or girls, capable of making an actual profession of their faith in Christ. (2.) It is doubtful, whether they were for the present in the kingdom of God, or were only elected, and so in time should be of his kingdom. And (3.) whatever they were, they were brought unto Christ, who himself baptized not; not to his disciples, who did baptize.'

Reply. Your first exception is vain and groundless: That they were very young, and little ones, appears not only by Christ's taking them in his arms, but from the very notation of the word Παιδια, a diminutive word, signifying a little child, or infant. So John was called, when new born, Luke i. 76. And Christ, when he lay in the manger; and Moses, when among the flags. And if this be not enough, St. Luke gives them another, Luke xvii. 15. Τα βρεφη, infants; a word given to a child in the womb, Luke i. 47. And for what you object out of Piscator, that the same word is used of Timothy, who knew the scriptures from a child; it is an evident mistake or shift; For the word is, απο βρεφους: he knew them, not being an *infant*, but from his *childhood*, or *infancy*; that is, when he had passed his *infant-state*, in which state these were that were brought unto Christ. And, (2.) Whereas you question their present right in the kingdom of God, or whether it were not future, by virtue of their election? The text will not allow your interpretation, Των γαρ τοιςτων εστιν, *Of such is not*: not, εσθαι, *shall be, the kingdom of God.* Their present church-membership, assert-

ed by Christ, is also a known rule, to regulate for the future the disciples carriage towards them; which was too severe, harsh, and therefore highly displeasing to Christ: But by telling them they were members of the church or kingdom of heaven, (they being very probably the *infants* of believing parents, as their bringing them unto Christ with such affection, through the frowns and repulses of the disciples, shews) he gives them a known and plain rule, how to distinguish *infants*, and regulate their carriage towards them; which God's election can never be, that being an unrevealed secret. And, (3.) Whereas you say Christ did not baptize them: I reply we never urged this scripture, to prove he did so; but only to prove their *church-membership*; which, methinks, Christ asserts as plainly as words can assert it, whence he saith, *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*. And though you use to quibble at the word *Τοιςτοις*, *of such*, as though it respected not the present infants, but grown persons, resembling them in humble innocent qualities; Mr. Sydenham hath sufficiently baffled that interpretation, by shewing its inconsistency with the scope and argument of that place, and how ridiculous this sense would be, when reduced to a formal argument.

(4.) The fourth argument you pretend to answer, p. 8. is drawn from 1 Cor. vii. 14. "Else were your children unclean, " but now are they holy." To this you answer two things: (1.) That the holiness here spoken of, is not a fœderal, but a matrimonial holiness, namely, *legitimacy*; and is as much as to say, Your children are no bastards, seeing one of you is a *believer*.

Reply. If this be the true and genuine sense of this text, then all the children in the world, not immediately descended from one, or both believing parents, must of necessity be all bastards; their parents, how solemnly soever married, must live in uncleanness: And what mad work (think you) will this assertion make in the world; and how many millions of persons will it nearly touch, both in point of honour and inheritance?

(2.) You say, though the holiness here spoken of, should be allowed to be a fœderal, or covenant holiness; yet for want of an express institution, it will not warrant our practice.

Reply. The holiness of the *children* being granted to be a covenant holiness, none can deny them to be within the *covenant*: how else come they to be holy by *covenant*; And if within the *covenant*, who can deny them the initiating sign, which is *baptism*? Or how shall they (ordinarily) be visibly admitted into the visible church without it? The connection betwixt their fœderal holiness, and right to baptism, will appear plain enough from Acts ii. 38, which you come next to speak to.

(5.) You attempt to answer Mr. Allen's argument from Acts ii. 38. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

On this text, you know, we lay a very great stress for the proof of *infants baptism*; and deserves a remark, that you wholly suppress our *arguments* drawn from that text, but however return an *answer* to them all, such as it is. You first tell us, 'The promise here spoken of, is not a promise of any external privileges, but the promise of the gospel, or the grace of God in Christ Jesus.'

Secondly, 'That the promise was not to their children, as believers seed, nor to them, or any other uncalled by the Lord; but only a promise of remission of sins, and receiving the Holy Ghost, upon their actual repentance; which infants cannot perform, and therefore cannot here be intended.' This is the true and whole sense of your *answer*.

Reply. Now, because you have wholly omitted our *argument* from this text (for which doubtless there was some reason) I think myself obliged to let the world know, how we expound it, and what we duly infer from that exposition of it; and then let the reader judge, whether by the fore-mentioned rules of a just interpretation, you or we are in the right.

(1.) We observe this famous text to contain the first *argument* used by the apostle, after Christ's ascension, to persuade the Jews to embrace *Christianity*, by repenting, and submitting themselves to *baptism*, the initiating sign of it; and therefore here we justly expect much light about this controverted point: Nor doth the apostle, in this text, deceive our expectation.

(2.) We take it for granted, that the direct and proper scope of this place, is to persuade the Jews (to whom St. Peter preached) to repent, and be baptized. This you allow, when you say, p. 10. 'He uses it as a motive, why they and theirs should actually repent, and be baptized.' In these two then there is no controversy.

(3.) We take it for certain, that the promise here referred to by Peter, is that gracious promise, Gen. xvii. 7. 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.' The adjoining of their *children* to them, saith Calvin, (and with him runs the general current of *expositors*) depends on the words of that promise, Gen. xvii. 6. If you be not satisfied with this, but rather will refer it to Joel ii. 28. you are then obliged to answer Mr. Sydenham's argument *a fortiori*, from that reference. But you make no exception at all to this accommodation of it: And then the sense must be this; the promise shall run as before, 'to you and to your children.'

(4.) We say, that except it had had relation to the *covenant* with Abraham, there had been no occasion, or reason at all, here to have mentioned *children* as well as *parents*: 'The promise is to you, and your children.' It had been enough, if he had only intended the believing parents, exclusive of their infant-seed, to have said, The promise is made to 'as many as the Lord our God shall call.' What reason, or occasion, was there to bring in their *children* at all?

(5.) We find here the *children* both of believing Jews and Gentiles, mentioned in the promise, accompanying the precept of *baptism*; and the precept to them built on the promise, as that which gave them their title to *baptism*; *Υμιν γὰρ ἐπαγγελία*, “For the promise is to you, and to your children.” In the same line that he mentions baptism, he also mentions the promise upon which their right is founded; and in the same breath with which he mentions their children, he also mentions the promise: which he would never have done, had his design been to have excluded their children from both, or either of them; especially seeing their *children* had been so long in the possession of both. These things are obvious, natural, and every way agreeable, both to the grammar and scope of the text. Whence we argue:

Arg. If the *promise* be the same to *believers* under the gospel, that ever it was to Abraham and his natural seed; then the *children of believers*, by virtue thereof, have as good a title to *baptism*, as Abraham's *children* had to *circumcision*.

But the *promise* is the same: *Ergo*, &c.

Next let us consider your *answers*.

(1.) You say, *The promise, here spoken of, is not a promise of any external privilege, but the promise of the gospel.*

Reply. Your distinction is vain and groundless; for it opposeth promises, that contain external privileges, to gospel promises, contrary to 1 Tim. iv. 8. “Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” *Secondly*, Circumcision then, and baptism now, which have both their foundation in that promise, contain privileges in them of both sorts. This no man can deny, but he that thinks it no privilege to be admitted into the visible church, by the external initiating sign, and to be thereby distinguished from the Pagan world. You have no warrant, therefore, to divide those things which God hath united.

(2.) You say, *The promise was not to them as believers seed, nor to any uncalled by the Lord.*

Reply. Your meaning is, that these words [*as many as the Lord shall call*] are a limitation of the promise to them only, whether parents or children, that are actually called. Let this your interpretation be compared with, and examined by the scope of the text, which you confessed before to be a motive to persuade them and theirs to repentance and baptism, and see if it can stand before it, as ours doth. For if this be the meaning, then the apostle's argument must run thus: I exhort you, convinced Jews, to repentance and Christian baptism: for whereas you, and your children, have hitherto been an holy seed, and the promise formerly was to them as well as you: but now the case is altered: if you yourselves repent, and be baptized, you shall have the benefit of the promise; but as for your children they shall be in the self-same case, and state, with the children of Pagans and infidels. Indeed if any of your children shall hereafter *believe*, they

shall have benefit by the promise, but no more than the children of Pagans and infidels, which upon repentance shall be equal with them. "Repent ye therefore, and be baptized: for the promise is unto you, and to your children." This, and no other, must the apostle's motive be, according to your interpretation and limitation of his words.

We make the motive or argument to run thus: 'God hath now remembered his *covenant* to Abraham, in sending that blessed seed, in whom he promised to be the God of him, and his seed; yea, and of all believing Gentiles, as well as Jews and their children: do not you therefore, by your unbelief, deprive both yourselves, and your dear children, of the mercies and privileges of so great a promise? "Repent, therefore, and be baptized; for the promise is unto you, and to your children," &c. Let the impartial reader judge both, and the acknowledged scope of the place determine the matter. And as it cannot stand with the scope of the place, so neither (as Mr. Sydenham* hath plainly evinced) with the grammar of the text, nor rules of logic, by which according to your *exposition*, the word [*children*] must be redundant and superfluous, as being neither comprehended under Jews or Gentiles, those that are near, or far off: into which two classes, or ranks, the text distributes the whole world; but must stand out of the text, as a party by themselves, though expressly mentioned in it, as those to whom the *promise* belongs. But enough of this.

(6.) Having vindicated Acts ii. 38, 39. which confirms our fourth assertion, viz. the identity of the *promise* the Jews were, and we are under; we proceed next to vindicate Col. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, whereby we prove the succession of *baptism* to *circumcision*, and vindicate it from that foreign sense you force upon it, to the great injury of the text, as well as of our *infants*, whom you exclude from any concernment therein.

Without any representation at all of the grounds on which we proceed, to prove the succession of this ordinance to that, you (as rashly as confidently) call it a groundless inference; which, whether it be or no, let the impartial judge, when they shall see the grounds on which we build that assertion.

(1.) It is out of controversy, that the scope of this place is to take off the Colossians from *circumcision*, and other Jewish rites and ceremonies, which the false teachers at that time earnestly endeavoured to reduce them to; as appears ver. 4. to be his plain design: "And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." And he saith it with great concernment of mind, as appears ver. 1.

(2.) It is as plain, that the argument by which he establishes them in the truth of the gospel, and secures them against the danger of returning to those Jewish rites, especially *circumcision*, is drawn from their completeness in Christ without it; ver. 9, and 10. And that whatsoever they had under *circumcision*, they now enjoy in as com-

* Infant Baptism, p. 44, 45.

plete and full a measure and manner, as ever Abraham and his seed did. "And ye are complete in him," i. e. in Christ.

(3.) To evince this, he instanceth in the very case then under debate, viz. circumcision, ver. 11, 12. And first distinguishing of a twofold circumcision, one made with, and the other without hands, which he calls the *circumcision of Christ*: he tells them, as to both of these, (namely, inward circumcision of the heart, and the external sign thereof too) both are fully answered in baptism; "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands; in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism," ver. 11, 12. That is, look, as before inward circumcision of the heart was signified by outward circumcision of the flesh, as the proper, direct, and appointed sign of it; so now, the same inward circumcision, or regeneration of the soul, is as really and fully signified to you, by the new gospel sign of it, which is baptism; and therefore you are as complete, in respect both of outward and inward privileges now, as ever Abraham and his seed were. Do but convert the proposition, and suppose the apostle's design had been to take them off from baptism, and bring them back to circumcision; and in order to it had said, "In whom ye are also baptized with the baptism of Christ, being circumcised with him;" would not the substitution of circumcision in the place of baptism have been clear? And why is not this as clear as that would have been?

(4.) We further say, That except he had intended in these words to have placed baptism as an external ordinance, in place and stead of outward circumcision, he could never have pitched upon a worse instance than that of circumcision, which was so much valued by them: yea, from the very instance he brings, he had put a strong objection into their mouths, against his assertion, ver. 10. That we are every way as complete without it, as the Jews were with it; for then their children enjoyed an ordinance of great value, which ours are deprived of, having none under the gospel in lieu of it. Hence we argue:

Argument. If the ordinance of baptism now be appointed to answer the same ends that the circumcision did to the Jews, and to make us every way as complete in privileges as circumcision did them, then it comes in the place and room of it; and our *children* have the same right to this, as theirs had to that.

But the antecedent is plain, from the scope and argument of the apostle in this text and context: *Ergo*, So is the consequent.

The sum of your answer is, (1.) 'That circumcision in the flesh, is neither expressed nor meant here, but that of Christ in his own person. (2.) That if baptism had been intended to have come in the place of circumcision; then it would follow, that females must be excluded from baptism.'

Reply. Your first *answer* is manifestly false: for if the apostle distinguishes of a twofold circumcision, one made with hands, the other

made without hands; then it is manifest, he means the *circumcision in the flesh*, which is now abolished, and all its ends and uses answered in *gospel baptism*. And whereas you say, The circumcision here spoken of, is no other than the circumcision of Christ in his own person; I would gladly know how the Colossians are said to be circumcised in Christ's personal *circumcision* only? And whether the *baptism* here spoken of, wherewith they are said to be *buried with him*, be not meant of Christ's personal *baptism* too; and, consequently, there is no need of the outward *ordinance* to pass upon them, or us; but especially, it is worth while for you to explain the reason why he calls the Colossians' circumcision, a *circumcision of Christ made without hands*, if he only intends Christ's personal *circumcision*; when we all know, that Christ's personal *circumcision* was a *circumcision made with hands*; and could not possibly be such a *circumcision* as theirs was, consisting in the *putting off* the body of the sins of the flesh, or mortification of their corruptions. Christ had no sin by propagation, to put off or mortify in his own person.

(2.) Your second *answer* is no less absurd; *That, if baptism, according to our argument, succeeds in the place of circumcision, then females must be excluded from baptism*. You had as good have said, that the enlargement of the privilege under the gospel, is no good medium to prove we are as complete now under *baptism* as they were under *circumcision*. Cannot *baptism* stand in the place of *circumcision*, because it answers all its ends with an advantage? This, to me, is a very strange answer; however, it must stand in the place of a better, rather than *baptism* shall stand in the place of *circumcision*.

Object. But if *baptism* succeed in the room of *circumcision*, and there be such an analogy betwixt them, as you pretend; then it will follow, that you are obliged to *baptize* your children on the eighth day as they *circumcised* theirs.

Sol. The objection is frivolous and vain: no man, that I know, doubts, but the *Lord's supper* succeeds in the room and place of the *passover*. Christ was the substance of that, as well as this; and that was abrogated by his institution of this, the very same night: as soon as he and his disciples had celebrated the one, the other was instituted, and immediately succeeded it. And yet Christians are not obliged to the same month, day, or hour, for the celebration of the *Lord's supper*: the analogy is betwixt the substantial parts of both; amongst which, the spiritual mystery, principal ends, and proper subjects, are of principal consideration; not the minuter circumstances of time and place. In the *passover* and the *Lord's supper*, there is a correspondence betwixt the proper subjects of both. No uncircumcised person, or stranger to the *covenant*, might eat of that, Exod. xii. 43, 48. No unbelieving person, uncircumcised in heart, hath a right to this, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28. So in the other; the infants of God's covenanted people were the proper subjects of *circumcision* then, and so they are (say we) of *baptism* now; for the same pro-

nise is still to believers and their children, Acts ii. 38, 39. Here lies the analogy, and not in the variable circumstances of time.

Whereas you say, p. 12. *Baptism* cannot succeed *circumcision*, because it leaves no character or mark upon the body, as that did. This very objection of yours is borrowed in express words from Socinus, that enemy of Christ, in *disp. de bapt.* p. 113. and fully answered by *Maccovius, loc. com.* p. 830, 831.

Object. But it will be further said, That according to our opinion, there can be no analogy, or correspondency, betwixt the very subjects of both ordinances; for *infants*, at eight days old, were the proper subjects of *circumcision*; but the subjects of *baptism* were adult believers, from the time of its first institution: and so the analogy fails in the very subjects.

Sol. This objection is grounded upon a great mistake: it is your opinion, not ours, that destroys it; for with us it lies fairly in these three respects of it. (1.) We find, that at the first institution of *circumcision*, Abraham, the father, at ninety years old, and all the men of his house, were first *circumcised*, Gen. xvii. 25, 26, 27. Answerably, at the first institution of *baptism*, parents, masters of families, &c. being adult believers, were first baptized. (2.) After the *circumcision* of Abraham, and the men of his house, their *infant-seed* were also *circumcised*, the promise belonging to them, as well as their parents. Answerably, under the *gospel*, the whole families of *believers* were baptized; and the promise runs to their *infants* under the *gospel*, as it did before, Acts ii. 39. (3.) As in the days of *circumcision*, if any stranger that had not been *circumcised* in his *infancy*, should afterward become a proselyte, and join himself to the Lord, he was to be *circumcised*, of whatever age he was: so now, if any *infidel* shall be converted, he is to be *baptized*, upon his personal profession of faith: and so much for the analogy. As for your correspondency of *identity*, I cannot understand it.

I meet with little more in your first part, wherein I have any concernment; only there I find four arguments, in mood and figure, against the innovation of *symbolical rites*, by human authority, into the worship of God; which is certainly the best *page* in your book: and of them I have nothing to say, but that they are good ware; and I very well knew the mark and number of that *parcel of goods*, and to whom they properly belong.

But yet before I dismiss your book, I think myself concerned to vindicate one place of scripture more, viz. Rom. xi. 16, 17. which I alleged in the beginning for the confirmation of our first proposition, viz. That God's *covenant* with Abraham, Gen. xvii. is the same *covenant* for substance we Gentile believers are now under, 'If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-

tree, boast not against the branches,' &c. This place is deservedly of great value with us, to prove, that we Gentile *believers*, with our *infant-seed*, are invested under the *gospel* with the same substantial privileges that the Jews and their *infants* formerly enjoyed. Here, without opening one term, you proceed, in your wonted manner, confidently to deny the arguments of our learned divines from this place. I shall therefore open this famous text, and regularly deduce the right of Gentile *believers infants* to *baptism* from it. And here, keeping to the *rules* above ;

(1.) I note, that verses 13, 14, 15. give us the true level and scope of the apostle's argument, which is to prove the calling in again of the Jews, though for the present broken off ; and on this ground to excite himself to all diligence for their conversion, and suppress all *glorying* and *boasting* in the Gentile *believers*, as if they were more worthy than those, because they fill their rooms and places.

(2.) To prove the calling again of the Jews, he argues strongly, ver. 16. from the *federal* holiness derived to the branches from their root or ancestors ; namely, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom the *covenant* was made, Gen. xvii. ' For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy ; and if the root be holy, so are the branches ;' i. e. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, being in covenant with God, a *federal holiness* is from them derived to the branches. And this can be no other than a *federal holiness*, because those their ancestors were utterly incapable to transmit any inherent holiness to them, that being the incommunicable prerogative of God. This *federal holiness* lying still in the root (the *covenant* with Abraham) will recover the branches again to life, though at present many of them be broken off ; as Job speaks in another case, Job xiv. 7, 8, 9. ' There is hope of a tree, though it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease ; though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof dry in the ground ; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.'

(3.) We affirm, by the authority of this text, That all the Jewish nation was not broken off, but only a part of it : So the 17th verse plainly declares ; ' And if some of the branches be broken off,' &c. Not all, but some ; for many of them were converted to Christ ; we read of three thousand at one sermon, Acts ii. and multitudes more at other times. All these converted Jews stood in the apostle's time as branches in the true olive, still enjoying all their privileges ; and that which brake off them that were broken off, was nothing else but their own unbelief : Ver. 20. ' Well then, because of unbelief they were broken off.' For at the promulgation of the *gospel*, a new article was added to their *creed* ; namely, That this same Jesus, whom they had crucified, is the promised and true Messiah. This some believed, and so stood by faith, still enjoying all their ancient privileges of the *covenant* : Others believed not, and their unbelief broke them off.

(4.) We find in this place two sorts of branches growing upon this

root Abraham; some natural branches; namely, Jews by nature, embracing Christ by faith; others wild and foreign branches, viz. Gentiles by nature, but ingrafted by faith, and by their ingrafture growing among the natural branches, and with them partaking of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, verse 17. that is, the rich privileges of the covenant and promise to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed.' This is the sweet juice and fatness of the olive-tree, which both sort of branches live upon, ver. 17. some on the external, others on the internal; some on both.

(5.) These naturally wild, but now ingrafted branches, viz. the *believing Gentiles*, being grafted by faith amongst the natural branches, and with them sucking the fatness of the same root and olive; that is to say, the privileges, ordinances, and franchises of the church; we cannot but judge it to be a natural, clear, and necessary consequent, that the same privileges the natural branches once had, and the remaining branches (amongst whom the *Gentile believers* were ingrafted) then had; the very same the *Gentile believers*, and their children, do now enjoy, by virtue of their interest in the same root; else we cannot understand how we should be said to *partake with them of the root and fatness of the olive*. Certainly the sap is the same which the root sends into all the branches, whether they be natural or ingrafted ones; and is as plentifully communicated to the ingrafted, as to the natural branches: For the watering of this olive with the more rich and plentiful grace of the gospel, must make the olive-tree as fat and flourishing as ever it was, to supply all its branches, and more than ever before.

Seeing then we Gentiles have (1.) the same grafting into the true olive; and (2.) that our present grafting in, is answerable to their present casting out; and (3.) that their re-ingrafting, in the end of the world, shall be the same for substance that ours now is, and their own first was: For when they were first taken in, they, and their children, were taken in together; when they were broken off, they and their children were broken off together; and when they shall be taken in again, they and their children shall be taken in again; And (4.) seeing all these their expected mercies are secured to them by the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which will extend again to them when their *unbelief* shall be taken away; methinks (as was said before) nothing can be clearer than this conclusion, That we Gentile believers are now invested with the same privileges they once enjoyed; and our children have the same *federal holiness* or relation to the covenants theirs had, by being grafted amongst them, and living on the same sap they did, and that by the same promise, Acts ii. 39.

But you will say, There is no mention here made of the grafting in of our children with us. We reply, Neither is there any mention here made of the breaking off of their *children* with them; which yet was so. Nor was there need to say it, seeing both their *infants*

and ours are comprehended in the *parents*, as twigs are comprehended in the branch, or buds in the graft, and the one being holy, so is the other. And this *federal holiness* of the *children* is not only mentioned in this chapter, ver. 16. but also in 1 Cor. vii. 14. *Now are your children holy.* And the very same *promise*, which conveyed the fatness of the olive to Abraham's natural seed, manifestly extends itself to the *Gentile believers* seed, Acts ii. 38, 39. And if men will not shut their eyes, and study evasions, what can be plainer from scripture than this explication and application of this place? We have with us the consent of the generality of orthodox expositors; the sense itself is genuine, easy, and unconstrained, agreeable with the letter and scope of the text. Whether the sense you set up against it, be as probable as this, we come next to examine. And truly, sir, your answer is ambiguous as a Delphic oracle: For (1.) you tell us, p. 8. That the *ingrafting* spoken of in this place, is into the invisible church, by election. We say, it is into the visible church, by profession of faith; for we know not how to understand any breaking off from the invisible church, or falling from election: But it is like, you better considered the consequents of that opinion, drawn upon you by Mr. Sydenham, in his 85th page; and therefore, nauseating those dregs of Arminianism, you speak more orthodoxly to the point, page 27, where you honestly acknowledge, That the church of the Jews and Gentiles, as to the true essence and inward substance of either, is one and the same: In which respect, the believing Gentiles, according to the apostle's *metaphor*, are here said to be grafted in amongst them, and with them, to be made partakers of the root and fatness of the olive-tree: And in reference hereunto, it is rightly added by the apostle, that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance: The inward substance of the church and covenant of grace, whereon it is founded, being invariable, and which shall for ever remain immoveable, though the outward form and administration be not so. Well then, from hence we have gained two things: (1.) That the church of the Jews and Gentiles are essentially and substantially the same church. (2.) That the Jews were not broken off from the invisible church, or from faith and election; for these, you truly say, are invariable and immoveable: And if you had denied it, the apostle assures us, that the foundation of God stands sure; and that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. But what then was their breaking off, and the Gentiles grafting in, which made this great alteration in the church? Can it be any thing else, but our ingrafting into the visible church, by the profession of our faith, from whence the Jews were broken off for their unbelief? For certainly, from the invisible church they were not broken off, and into the invisible church, multitudes of professing Christians are not ingrafted. It is evident, therefore, by grafting us into the olive-tree, he means the visible church; and by the fatness thereof, the ordinances and privileges of that church. Though he deny not but all sincere professors are members of the invisible church

also, and do belong to the election of grace; but that is not the breaking off, or grafting in, here spoken of.

And now, having given up Mr. Tombes' notion of the invisible church, and election, you are again put to your shifts; and must either shuffle, and seek to hide yourself in a heap of strange and unintelligible distinction, or (which had been much fairer) honestly have yielded the cause; and, wherever you meet with them, I find a whole troop of distinctions rallied together for this purpose, page 23, 24.

'This grafting in (say you) may be either into the visible or invisible church; either by faith, profession of faith, or by some outward ordinance. Children may be either grown men, or infants. The ingrafting in may be either certain or probable. Certain, either by reason of election, or their natural birth, being children of believers. Probable, as being likely: either because frequently, or for the most part, it happens so; Though necessary, and so not certain.' The thing to be proved is, That the children of believers are in the covenant of free grace in Christ, and by virtue thereof, to be baptized into the communion of the visible church.

Reply. Words enough, and distinctions enough, to reduce the text to an indivisible point. But whither doth all this tend; I will ask you two or three plain questions, and then make what use you please of your distinctions. (1.) Whether the breaking off of the Jews, and the ingrafting of the Gentiles, here spoken of, have relation to the *invisible church* by election, or to the *visible church* by profession of faith, and some outward ordinance? (2.) Whether, if it were into the visible church by profession of faith that the Gentile believers were grafted in, as doubtless it was (and by relinquishing the former sense, you here seem to yield it, saying, this ingrafture may be certain, upon the account of natural birth, being children of believers;) then I would fain know, why you so state the question, as to make the certainty of believers childrens interest in Christ to be the only ground of their admission into the *communion* of the *visible church*? This (say you) must first be proved, or no baptism for them.

Alas, poor infants! to what hard terms are they here tied up? Very much harder than the terms any of your own society are tied to: And if baptism must be suspended, till this point can be cleared, that the person to be baptized be first in Christ, and in the *covenant of free grace*, as to the saving benefits thereof; then farewell to all baptism, both of infants and adult professors too. For how can you prove, that the persons you baptize, are all, or any of them, really in Christ? May they not deceive you, as Simon Magus did Peter? I did not think you had proceeded in this matter upon a *certainty*, but a *probability*: And if you proceed with yours upon the grounds of *probability*, how come you to tie up the children of believers to a certainty of their interest in Christ as the antecedent suspending condition of

their baptism? We need dispute no more about the proper subjects of baptism, for by this account we have lost the ordinance of baptism itself.

We thought, sir, that our children's title to baptism was derived to them from their believing parents, as the children of the Jews was to circumcision, from their circumcised and professing parents; and that the same promise which conveyed their children's privilege to them, Gen. xvii. had conveyed the right of believers children to baptism unto them also, Acts ii. 38, 39. and that the root being holy, the branches are holy also, that is fœderally holy, Rom. xi. 16. But to this you make such an answer as astonishes me to read, p. 26; where allowing Abraham to be the root, you say, 'The holiness here spoken of, is first in respect of God's election; holiness personal and inherent, in God's intention:' Eph. i. 4. "He hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy." (2.) It is also holiness derivative; but not from any ancestors, but from Abraham only; and that not as a *natural*, but a *spiritual father*; wherein he is a lively image, or figure of Christ, and is derived from the covenant of grace, which passed in his name to him and his seed. And, lastly, it shall be inherent, being actually communicated by the Spirit of God, when they shall be actually called.

Reply. Here we see into what brakes and pits men run themselves, when they depart from the plain and safe path in explications of scripture. Here is such a *tripartite distinction* of holiness, as I never met with before. (1.) *Here is personal holiness inherent in God's intention.* By this you must either mean sanctification decreed for them, and to be bestowed on them at the time of their calling; and then it is coincident with the third member of your distinction. Or else you mean, that it is holiness inherent in the intention of God, as an accident in its subject; and then the simplicity of God's nature resists your incongruous notion. But it would be a less crime, to confound the first with the last member of your vain and self-created distinction, than to speak things so repugnant to the simple and uncompounded nature of God.

Or if your meaning be, That this holiness is in God by way of intention, but in them by way of inhesion; that will not deliver you out of your confusion neither, but run you into greater: For then you confound the *immanent* with the *transient* acts of God, and make the same thing at the same time, to be purely in intention, and in execution; or to be only in God's purpose to bestow hereafter, and yet, at the present, inherent in the persons he intends it for: So that I must leave your strange notion of personal holiness inherent in God's intention, to be cleared by a more *metaphysical head* than mine: or else to stand, among other rare and unintelligible notions, to be admired and applauded by the ignorant reader.

But then, when we come to the second member of your distinction, I am as much at a loss to find your sense as before: For there you

tell us, 'The holiness here spoken of, is derivative holiness also; and that from Abraham only; and from him, not as a natural, but a spiritual father, resembling Christ herein.'

Reply. This word *derivative* is an equivocal word, and may signify either *inherent personal holiness*, or *federal holiness*; for both of them are derived. If you say the former, it looks too black and horrid for me to believe you mean it, though you should say you mean it; for then you make Abraham not only the figure and image of Christ, as you speak, but Christ himself, by attributing to Abraham Christ's incommunicable property and prerogative. Then Abraham may say to all his children, as Christ doth, John xv. 4, 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches, &c.* I am he that sanctifies you. But if you mean the last (as necessarily you must, if you mean any thing that hath orthodox sense in it) then this *derivative holiness* you speak of, is not personal holiness, or internal sanctification, but *federal holiness*, derived from covenanted ancestors, or parents to their children; and therein you come over to us, and to the true sense of the text. But why must this be squeezed from you with so much difficulty? And why did you hide this *federal holiness* under an equivocal term, lest you should seem to yield the controversy with a word? This is not fair.

Object. If you say we are too hasty, and triumph before the victory: For though you do yield it to be a *federal holiness*, yet it is such as can be derived from no other father, or progenitor, but Abraham only.

Sol. Yes, sir, I hope you will allow Isaac and Jacob, at least to be the root and first-fruit, as well as Abraham, seeing the covenant was jointly and expressly made with them all three, and thereby they became the root and first-fruit of that holy nation; and if that people be called the seed of Abraham, they are also called the seed of Jacob; and if father-hood be ascribed to Abraham, it is ascribed to Jacob too, Isa. lviii. 14. And if Abraham be first named in the covenant, so is Jacob: See Lev. xxvii. 42. But if you allow these three patriarchs, perhaps that is all you will allow; for you seem to say, that no *federal holiness* can be derived from any other progenitors. Good sir, whatever your own private opinion be in this matter, allow us to believe otherwise, as long as those scriptures 1 Cor. vii. 14. and Acts ii. 39. stand in our Bibles: For we cannot think but the *federal holiness* of *children* results from the immediate *parent's* faith, or covenant interest, as well as from the remoter *progenitors*; else we cannot understand how the Corinthians' children should be holy, or how the *promise* should belong to the children of them that are afar off, viz. the Gentiles, who could derive no such thing to their children by a lineal descent from Abraham, but only as they became ingrafted branches by faith; and so suck the fatness of the olive to themselves, and to their buds, or children, as the natural branches did. I desire you to consider also, how this *covenant* passed, as you say it did, to

Abraham and his seed, in Christ's name, if it be the same with Adam's *covenant*? Did that pass to Adam in Christ's name too?

I have now dispatched what I at first promised and intended, viz. the confutation of my friend's mistakes about the *covenants*; and the vindication of those *scriptures*, by which our arguments, deduced from one of them, are confirmed. And now I have no farther concernment with Mr. Cary's *solemn call*; save only to note his high confidence, rash, and most unchristian censures, of all his differing friends and brethren, with which he concludes his discourse; wherein he calls *infants baptism*,

(1.) *A great abuse in the divine worship*, page 242, 243. And yet he that so calls it, never looked half way into the controversy; nor is able, without manifest shuffling and contradiction, both to the words of God, and his own words, to answer our arguments; as is here made too evident.

(2.) That it is no other than a change of a divine institution, and making void the *commandment of Christ*, the horrid sin charged by Christ upon those *hypocrites*, the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. xv. 6. With no better than these doth he rank and associate the many thousands of God's choice and dear people, who differ in this circumstantial point from him.

(3.) He compares it with the sin of Nadab and Abihu; and with that of Israel, with respect to the ark; 1 Chron. xv. 13. A sin, which provoked the Lord to execute judgment, by an immediate stroke in fire from heaven upon them. Thus Mr. Cary is ready to *call for fire from heaven upon his brethren*. Alas, poor man! he *knows not what spirit he is of*, as Christ told the disciples in a like case. It is well we are not in his hands, to execute the wrath, as well as charge the guilt upon us. But I hope all this is but rashness in him.

(4.) He affirms it to be no less than a *transgressing of the law, a changing of the ordinances, and a breaking of the everlasting covenant*. If it be a transgressing of the law, he should have shewn us in what scripture that law that forbids it is, or where God hath repealed his former grant to the children of his covenant-people. And for the *changing of the ordinances*, I am of opinion, it is he that is guilty of that sin, and not we: For we have proved, God settled this privilege upon the *infant-seed* of his people; that the *promise*, under the gospel, continues still to them; and if he exclude them from baptism, he changes the ordinance of God. And for breaking the everlasting covenant, for which he cites Isa. xxiv. 5, 6. the Lord make him sensible of the danger he hath put himself under, from that very text he produces against us; for it is manifest, that the covenant there spoken of, is God's covenant with Abraham, renewed with the Israelites at Sinai, which in that text is truly called an everlasting covenant; when mean time, Mr. Cary hath pronounced it to be an Adam's covenant, and now utterly abolished. Who is it, sir, that fights

against, and changes this everlasting covenant, you or we, that are for its continuance to us and our children ?

(5.) He affirms these things to be of highest concernment to us. If so, then sure it must follow, that repentance from dead works, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, must be inferior things to them; for nothing can be higher than the highest, or equal with it. And then by making them the chief fundamentals in religion, as that expression doth (if it be not a vain and sinful hyperbole) the salvation or damnation of men depends upon compliance or non-compliance with them. And then, whether must you send all God's people in the world, that differ from you? Sir, I find your brethren in the appendix to their confession of faith, page 110. placing one of these which you make of highest concernment, among the other circumstances of religion; and doubtless that is in its proper place: Nor do I see how they can free themselves from participation in your sin, till they have admonished you for it, and caused you to expunge it out of your book.

6. That it is a settling of your thresholds by God's threshold: These words you recite from Ezek. xliii. 8. which speak of the *idolatrous kings of Judah and Israel* building temples and altars for their idols, in or near the courts of the temple of God; as the *English annotations* on the text will inform you; an abomination that defiled God's holy name, a wickedness not to be named, and for which the Lord consumed them, and calls it whoredom in the next words. Here sir, you have exceeded all the bounds of society and Christian charity, and made this circumstantial difference about the proper subject of baptism the grossest heathenish idolatry in the world; and consequently dissolved the bonds of Christian charity, and broken off all communion with us; for with such idolaters you ought not to have any communion.

Your more wise and moderate brethren, in the place above-cited, tell us, 'They are loth hereby to alienate their affections or conversations from any that fear the Lord, and are willing to participate of the labours of those whom God hath endowed with abilities above themselves; qualified and called to the ministry of the word; desirous of peace, and not of renewed contests hereabout.' This is a language of another air: And if they be (as I dare not suspect but they are) sincere in that profession, they dare not comprove such a desperate and unchristian censure as yours is: If they do, then we may easily guess what our lot and treatment shall be, whenever Anabaptism gets the ascendant in England; we may expect as civil usage as is due to gross idolaters, and no better: But I hope better things.

(7.) You say, that as these things are of highest concernment, so *they ought to be our most serious practice and endeavour*, page 243. ult. Good Lord! whither hath zeal for an opinion transported you! *Our most serious practice and endeavour!* Sir, I thought the most serious practice of a minister had been to preach Christ and salvation to the souls of men, and not to baptize: I am sure St. Paul reckoned so,

Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach; that is, baptism is not my principal work, or main business. And ver. 14th, he *thanks God he had baptized none of them but Crispus and Gaius*. I believe he never uttered such an expression about his other work of preaching Christ. And for all Christians, I thought the securing of their interest in Christ, living in the duties of communion with him, watching their hearts, and mortifying their corruptions, had been the object matter of their most serious practice, and faithful endeavour; and not the litigations about baptism. But I hope these were only inconsiderate expressions, falling from your pen, whilst you were in a paroxysm of zeal, or a transport in the height of a conceited triumph: But whatever was the cause, I am sure you ought to revoke and repent such words.

(8.) You wish *your testimony rise not up at last as a witness against us*. Sir, we do not apprehend any cause we have to fear your testimony against us, or severest censures of us, whilst we are satisfied, that as you neither have the faculty or commission to be our judge, so neither is there any convincing evidence in your reply to our arguments. But I think you have much more cause to fear, lest those arguments should come at last as a witness against you, who deny and condemn them; when mean time, you are put to most lamentable shifts, even contradictions, and somewhat worse, to escape the point and edge of them.

(9.) To conclude, You tell us, we must not expect the special presence of Christ to be afforded to us, without our compliance in these points with you.

Sir, we never yet deserted the judgment or practice of infants baptism, and yet have had (blessed be Jesus Christ for it) great and manifold, sweet and signal proofs and evidences of his presence with us; He hath owned and blessed our ministry to the conversion of many; and there are some, and those not mean, or few, of our spiritual children, now in your societies in England, who have acknowledged us to be the first instruments of their conversion: The Lord lay it not to their charge, who now desert that ministry in which they first received Christ! But as for the departure of his presence, I assure you, friend, I am more afraid of the rents and divisions you now renew so unseasonably among the churches of Christ, than of any one thing amongst us beside. It grieved my soul to see you, *quieta movere*, awake a sleeping controversy, especially in such a season, when we are little more than half delivered from our enemies and dangers; you *take us by the heel*, as Jacob did his brother, whilst but yet in the birth. Sir, except you return to a more quiet and Christian temper, than you seem here to be in, I am out of hope that ever you and I shall see those blessed days, we have so often with pleasure, comforted ourselves with the hopes of. However, extend your charity (if you have any left) so far, as to believe that I am one, notwithstanding of all this, that am studious of the church's peace, and inquisitive into the rules

of duty, not daring to hold any truth of God in unrighteousness; and yet well satisfied I am, in the path of my duty, wherein, though we cannot walk together, yet I hope to meet you at the end of our way, in our Father's house, where perfect light and peace dwells.

And here I had put an end to this debate, had I not received your return to some of these sheets, whilst the last of them was under my hand; wherein I only find four things in which I am concerned. In general, you tell me, 'You are not convinced of any error, by what I have said.' I am sorry to hear it: But considering the nature of error on one side, and the difficulty of self-denial on the other, you have not much deceived my expectation. More particularly,

(1.) You say, As to your hooking the Sinai covenant into this controversy, I gave you the first occasion of it; for when you shewed me your papers about God's covenant with Abraham, I told you, that you were best first to try if you could prove the covenant at Sinai, to be a covenant of works; forasmuch as our divines are so far from conceiving the covenant with Abraham to be a covenant of works, that they will not allow the Sinai law itself to be so; and to convince you of it, I lent you Mr. Roberts and Mr. Sedgwick on the covenant, to enlighten and satisfy you about it: But little did I think you had confidence enough to enter the lists with two such learned and eminent divines, and make them to follow your triumphant chariot, shackled with the incomparable Baxter and Allen, Sydenham and Borthogg, like three pair of noble prisoners of war. But whatever was the occasion (setting aside your sin) I am not sorry you have given a fit opportunity to enlighten the world in that point also.

(2.) You seem to fancy in your letter, that I once was of your opinion about the moral law, because you find these passages in a sermon of mine, upon John viii. 36. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, then are you free indeed;" viz.

'That the law required perfect working, under pain of that curse; accepted no short endeavours, admitted no repentance, and gave no strength.' But finding me here pleading for the law, you think you find me in a contradiction to that doctrine.

The words I own; the contradiction I positively deny; for I speak not there, and here, *ad idem*; for in that sermon, and in those very words you cite, I speak against the law, not as God intended it, when he added it to the promise; but as the ignorance and infidelity of unregenerate men, make it to themselves a covenant of works, by looking upon it as the very rule and reason of their justification before God: This was the stumbling-stone at which all legal justiciaries then did, and still do stumble, Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33. In this sense the apostle, in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, argues against the law, and so do I in the words you cite; but vindicate the law in the very same sermon you mention, as consistent with, and subservient to Christ, in the former sense; and there tell you, 'The law sends us to Christ to be justified; and Christ sends us back to the law to be re-

gulated. The very same double sense of the law you will find in this discourse; and from the mistaken end and abuse of the law, which the apostle so vehemently opposeth, I here prove against you, that the law in this sense cannot consist with, or be added to the promise; and therefore make it my medium to prove against you, that the true nature and denomination of the Sinai law, can never be found in this sense of it, but it must be estimated and denominated from the purpose and intention of God, which I have proved to be evangelical. Try your skill to fasten a contradiction betwixt my words in that sermon and this discourse.

I know you would be glad to find the shadow of one, to make some small excuse, or atonement for the many faults of that nature you have here committed.

(3.) Your letter also informs me, that you hear you are answered by one hand already; and, for ought you know, many more may be employed against you, and I for one; and so we shall compass you about like bees.

Reply. I have only seen Mr. Whiston's little book against your brother Grantham, wherein he hath baffled two of your principal arguments; but you only come in collaterally there, and must not look upon it as a full answer to your book, but only as a lash for your folly, *en passant*. And for our compassing you about like bees, methinks you seem to be elated in your own fancy, by the supposition, or expectation, of a multitude of opponents. You know as well as I, who it is that glories in this motto, *Unus contra omnes*. Sir, I think your mind may be much at rest in that matter. Of all the six famous adversaries mentioned in your title page, there are but two living: and you know, *Mortui non mordent*; and of the remaining two, one of them, viz. Mr. Baxter, is almost in heaven, living in the daily views, and cheerful expectations of the *saints everlasting rest with GOD*; and is left for a little while among us, as a great example of the life of faith. And it is questionable with me, whether such a great and heavenly soul can find any leisure or disposition to attend such a weak and trivial discourse as this.

And as for myself, you need not much fear me; I have not, neither do I intend to vibrate my sting against you, unless I find you infecting or disturbing that hive to which I belong, and to which I am daily gathering and carrying honey; and then who but a drone would not sting.

(4.) To conclude: in the close of your letter you fall into the former strain of love, assuring me, 'That the ancient friendship of so many years, shall continue on your part.'

Reply. All that I shall return to this, is only to relate a short story out of Plutarch, in the life of Alexander; where he tells us, That whilst he was warring in the Indies, one Taxiles an Indian king, came with his company to meet him; and saluting Alexander, said, 'What need you and I to fight and war one upon another? If thou

comest not to take away our water, and the necessaries of life from us, for which we must needs fight: As for other goods, if I am richer than thee, I am ready to give thee of mine; and if I have less, I will not think scorn to thank thee for thine.' Alexander, highly pleased with his words, made him this reply; 'Thinkest thou, that this meeting of ours can be without fighting; No, no; thou hast won nothing by all thy fair words; for I will fight and contend with thee in honesty and courtesy, and thou shalt not exceed me in bounty and liberality.'

I say with Taxiles, I had never armed against you, had you not come to take away our water, and the necessaries of life; I mean, the covenant of God with Abraham, which contains the rich charter of the Gentile believers children, and make it an abolished Adam's covenant, and told us, that we must come up to the primitive purity in these things; that is, in renouncing it as a covenant of grace, and relinquishing infants baptism, as grounded thereon.

Sir, were my own father alive, I must and would oppose him, should he attempt what here you do. Infant-baptism, with you is not; *singing of psalms*, that plain and heavenly gospel ordinance, with you is not; and will you take away our Benjamin also? What! the covenant of God with Abraham and his children in their generations? *All these things are against us*. No, sir, we cannot part with that covenant, as an abolished Adam's covenant, nor will I give it up for all the friendship in the world.

And yet I will say with Alexander, I will contend with you in friendship and courtesy, even whilst I earnestly contend against you for the truths of GOD, which you have here opposed, and I have endeavoured to vindicate.

One word more before I part with you; I do assure you, and the whole world, that in this controversy with you, I have not, knowingly or advisedly, misrepresented your sense: If you shall say I did so in my second argument, from the words, page 179, I assure you, both myself, and others could understand you no otherwise than I did in the papers I sent you; and when you told me, you meant there was no pardon in either of those covenants, but that it plainly directed to Abraham's covenant, you will find, I have given you as fair a choice as you can desire, either to stand to your words in the first sense, wherein I understand them, or (which will be the same to me) to your own sense, in which you afterwards explained it to me. And whereas I blame you over and over in my epistle and conclusion, for putting the proper subjects of baptism amongst the highest things in religion; let the reader view your conclusion, and see, whether you do, or not. If you say, you speak of the covenant there, as well as of baptism, I allow that you do so; yet I hope it is equally as bad, nay, in deed and truth, a great aggravation of your fault, to make this article, viz. God's covenant with Abraham, Gen. xvii. *an abolished*

Adam's covenant, one of the highest concernments of a Christian, the baptism only of adult believers another. My consequences from your words, are just and regular, how surprising soever they seem to you.

If you think fit to rejoin to this my answer, I desire you will avoid, as much as you can, a tedious harangue of words, and speak strictly and regularly to my arguments, by limiting, distinguishing, or denying, as a disputant ought to do: If so, I promise you a reply; but if I find no such thing, it shall pass with me but for waste paper; nor will I waste time about it. The Lord give us unity in things necessary, liberty in things indifferent, and charity in all things!

SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS

UPON DIVERS SELECT PLACES OF

SCRIPTURE:

WHEREIN

BELIEVERS are assisted in preparing their HEARTS, and exciting their AFFECTIONS and GRACES, when they draw nigh to GOD in that most awful and solemn ORDINANCE of the LORD'S SUPPER.

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

CHRIST may be said to be crucified three ways; by the Jews *actually*, in the sacrament *declaratively*, and by unbelievers at his table *interpretatively*. Among sins, blood-guiltiness is reckoned one of the most heinous; and of all blood-guiltiness, to be guilty of the blood of Christ, is a sin of the deepest guilt, and will be avenged with the most dreadful punishment, 1 Cor. x. 27, 29. If vengeance be taken seven-fold on him that slew Cain, what vengeance shall be taken on him that *crucifies afresh the Lord of glory?*

The heaviest blow of divine justice is still ready to avenge the abuse of the best mercy: what can the heart of man conceive more solemn, more sacred, or more deeply affective, than the representation of the most gracious love of the Father, and the most grievous passion of the Son? What sin can be more provoking to God, than the slight and contempt of those most awful mysteries? And what punishment can be more terrible, than for such a wretched soul to eat and drink dam-

nation to itself? Melancthon records a very dreadful example of God's righteous judgment upon a company of profane wretches, who, in a tragedy, intended to act the death of Christ upon the cross. He that acted the soldier's part, instead of piercing with a spear a bladder full of blood hid under his garment, wounded him to death that was upon the cross, who falling down killed him, who (in a disguise) acted the part of the woman that stood wailing under the cross. His brother, who was first slain slew the murderer, who acted the soldier's part, and for slaying him was hanged by order of justice. Thus did the vengeance of God speedily overtake them, and hanged them up in chains, for a warning, to all that should ever dare to dally with the great and jealous God.

These are terrible strokes, and yet not so terrible as those which are more ordinarily, but less sensibly, inflicted on the inner man for the abuse of this ordinance.

To prevent these judgments, and obtain those blessings which come through this ordinance, great regard must be had to two things, viz. 1. The in-being. 2. The activity of true grace.

First, Examine thyself, reader, whether there be any gracious principle planted in thy soul, whereby thou art alive indeed unto God. It was an ancient abuse of the sacrament (condemned and cast out by the * Carthaginian council) to give it unto dead men. Dead souls can have no communion with the living God, no more benefit from this table than the Emperor's guests had from his table, where loaves of gold were set before them to eat. There is more than a shew of grace in the sacrament: it hath not only the visible sign, but the spiritual grace also, which it represents. See that there be more than a shew and a visible sign of grace also in thy soul, when thou comest nigh to the Lord in that ordinance: see to the exercise and activity, as well as to the truth and sincerity of thy grace.

Even a believer himself doth not eat and drink worthily, unless the grace that is in him be excited and exercised at this ordinance.

It is not faith inhering, but faith, realizing, applying and powerfully working. It is not a disposition to humiliation for sin, but the actual thawing and melting of the heart for sin; 'whilst thou lookest on him whom thou hast pierced, and mournest for him as one that mourneth for his only son, for his first-born:' nor is it a disposition or principle of love to Christ that is only required, but the stirring up of that fire of love, the exciting of it into a vehement flame.

I know the excitations and exercises of grace are attended with great difficulties: they are not things within our command, and at our beck. Oh! it is hard, it is hard indeed, reader, even after God hath taken the heart of stone out of thee, and given thee an heart of flesh, to mourn actually for sin, even when so great an occasion

* Concil. Carthag. Can. 6. *Placuit ut defunctorum corporibus non detur eucharistia, &c.*

and call is given thee to that work at the Lord's table; for the same power is requisite to excite the act that was required to plant the habit. *Gratia gratiam postulat.*

However, the duty is thine, though the power be God's; why else are his people blamed, because they stirred not up themselves to take hold of him? Isa. lxiv. 7.

To assist thee in this work, some help is offered in the following meditations: it is true, it is not the reading of the best meditations another can prepare for thee, that will alter the temper of thy heart, except the Spirit of God concur with these truths, and bless them to thy soul: but yet these helps must not be slighted, because they are not self-sufficient. 'Man lives not by bread alone; but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;' yet it were a fond vanity, and sin, for any man, upon that ground, to cast away bread, and expect to live by a miracle without it. We must lift up our hearts to God for a blessing, and then eat. Do the same here; first pray; then read; and the Lord quicken thee by it for duty.

There are two things of special concernment to thee, reader, when thou art to address thyself to any solemn duty, especially such as this.

1. Prepare for thy duty diligently.

2. Rely not upon thy preparations.

1. Prepare with all diligence for thy duty. Take pains with thy dull heart; cleanse thy polluted heart; compose thy vain heart; remember how great a presence thou art approaching. If *Augustus thus reproved one, that entertained him without suitable preparation, saying, 'I did not think we had been so familiar;' much more may thy God reprove thee, for thy careless neglect of due preparation for him.

2. But yet take heed, on the other side, that thou rely not upon thy best preparation. It is an ingenious, and true note of Luther, † (speaking to this very point of preparation for the sacrament) 'Never are men more unfit, than when they think themselves most fit, and best prepared for their duty; never more fit, than when most humbled and ashamed, in a sense of their own unfitness.'

That the blessing of God, and the breathings of his good Spirit, may accompany these poor labours to thy soul, is the heart's desire of,

Thy servant in Christ,

JOHN FLAVEL.

* *Non putabam me tibi tam familiarem.*

† *Tunc passime dispositus, quando optissime.*

THE FIRST
MEDITATION,

UPON

PSALM lxxxix. 7. *God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him.*

THERE are special seasons; wherein the saints approach near unto God in this life, and wherein the Lord comes near unto them.

It pleaseth the Majesty of heaven, sometimes to admit poor worms of the earth to such sensible and sweet perceptions of himself, as are found above all expression, and seem to be a transient glance upon that glory, which glorified eyes more steadily behold above: 'Believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;' or, *glorified joy; as it is, 1 Pet. i. 8. And yet how sweet and excellent soever these foretastes of heaven are, heaven itself will be an unspeakable surprize to the saints, when they shall come thither.

Now among all those ordinances, wherein the blessed God manifests himself to the children of men, none are found to set forth more of the joy of his presence, than that of the Lord's Supper: at that blessed table, are such sensible embraces betwixt Christ and believers, as do afford delight and solace, beyond the joy of the whole earth.

And where such special manifestations of God are, suitable dispositions and preparations should be found on our part, to meet the Lord.

And, certainly, we shall find reason enough for it, if we will consider the importance of this scripture before us; 'God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.' Wherein we have, 1. The object: 2. The subject: 3. The mode of divine worship.

First, The object of worship, God; God is to be feared. In all divine worship, men and angels have to do with God. "All things (saith the apostle) are open and naked to the eyes of him with whom we have to do," Heb. iv. 14. With whom we have speech, or business; so it may be understood. When we worship, we draw nigh to God; and that about the greatest concerns, and weightiest business in the world.

* *Δγαλλιασε γαρα ανεκλαητω και διδασμενη. Innerrabili, & glorificate. Montanus.*

Secondly, The subject, or the person that approaches unto God in his worship; "His saints, and all that are about him." By saints, many interpreters do (in this place) understand the angels, called saints, from the purity and holiness of their nature; and so make the next clause exegetical of this. Those that before were called saints in respect of their nature, are, in the next words said to be such as are round about him, his satellites, attendants, or those that stand as servants about him, to do his pleasure; where they are described by their office. Both these seem to be grounded upon the precedent verses: "Who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the mighty," (or of God, so the angels are called, Job i. 6.) "can be likened to the Lord?" And though it be true, that the angels worship, and serve the Lord with the greatest reverence and dread (for these are his nigh ones, or such as are round about him;) yet there is no necessity to limit this scripture so narrowly, by excluding the people of God on earth; they also are his saints, and more frequently so stiled, though they be saints of a lower class and order: and they also are round about him as well as the angels; and when they worship him, he is in the midst of them, Mat. xviii. 20. And the place where they assemble to worship, is called the place of his feet, Isa. lx. 13. But if we find not the saints on earth in the direct and immediate sense of this text, yet we must needs meet them in the rebound and consequence. For if creatures so much above us, as the angels, do perform their service, and pay their homage to the highest Majesty with so much fear and reverence; shall not inferior creatures, the poor worms of the earth, tremble at his presence? And this brings us to the third thing; namely,

Thirdly, The mode, or manner, in which the worship of God is to be performed; viz. with great fear and reverence: "God is greatly to be feared." Piscator translates it, *Vehementer formidandus*, to be vehemently feared; and opposes it to that formal, careless, trifling, vain spirit, which too often is found in those that approach the Lord in the duties of his worship. The observation from hence will be this:

Observation. *That the greatest composedness and seriousness of spirit is due to God, from all those that draw nigh unto him in his worship.*

And this is no more than what the Lord expressly requires at our hands; Lev. x. 3. "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me." So Heb. xii. 28, 29. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence, and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire."

And as this disposition and temper of spirit is due to every act and part of God's worship; so (to accommodate this general to our particular occasion) it is especially due to this great and solemn ordinance of the Lord's supper.

It is the observation of the Casuists, that *sacramentum et mortis arti-*

culus aequiparanter : The sacrament of the Lord's supper, and the very point of death, require equal seriousness : a man's spirit should be as deeply solemn and composed at the Lord's table, as upon a death-bed. We should go to that ordinance, as if we were then going into another world.

The primitive Christians used to sit up whole nights in meditation and prayer, before their participation of the Lord's supper; and these nights were called *Vigiliae*, their *watches*. Such was the reverence the saints had for this ordinance (which they usually called *mysterium tremendum*, a tremendous mystery,) that they would not give "sleep to their eyes, or slumber to their eye-lids," when so great and solemn a day drew near. *Chrysost. lib. 3. de sacerdot.*

And that all this solemn preparation is no more than needs, will convincingly appear to us, upon the following grounds and reasons.

Reason 1. From the solemn nature and ends of this ordinance. For what is the express design and use of it, but a lively representation of the Lord's death? 1 Cor. xi. 26. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Jesus Christ is therein set forth crucified before us; and not to make a bare representation of it to us, as a thing wherein we have no personal interest or concernment, but to represent his death lively, and seal our title to it firmly: "This is my body which is broken for you," verse 24.

Now, which of these is to be attended with a dead, careless, and slight spirit? Is it the representation of Christ's death? God forbid! Oh! if there be any subject of meditation in the world, able to drink up the very spirit of a man, this is it!

The sun fainted, the heavens mourned in black, the very rocks rent in pieces, when this tragedy was acted; and shall our hearts be more senseless and obdurate than they, at the representation of it? But, lo! here is more than a representation: Christ is set forth in this ordinance, as crucified for you; as suffering, and enduring all this, in your room and stead. Now,

Suppose, reader, thyself to be justly condemned to the torture of the rack, or strappado; and that thy father, brother, or dearest friend, preferring thy life to his own, would become thy *ANTIPSYXOS*, *ransomers*, by undergoing the torment for thee; and all that is left for thee to suffer, were only by way of sympathy with him: suppose now thyself standing by that engine of torture, and beholding the members of thy dear friend distorted, and all out of joint; hearing his doleful groans, extorted by the extremity of anguish; and under all these torments, still maintaining a constant love to thee; not once repenting his torments for thee; couldst thou stand there with dry eyes? Could thy heart be unaffected, and stupid at such a sight? Write him rather a beast, a stone, than a man, that could do so.

But this is not all; the believer's interest in Christ is sealed, as well as the sufferings of Christ represented, in this ordinance.

And is a sealed interest in Christ so cheap or common a thing, as that it should not engage, yea, swallow up all the powers of thy soul? Oh! what is this? what is this?

The seal of God, set to the soul of a poor sinner, to confirm and ratify its title to the person of Christ, and the inestimable treasures of his blood. Surely, as the sealing up of a man to damnation, is the sum of all misery; and that poor creature that is so sealed, hath cause enough to mourn and wail to eternity; so the sealing up of a soul to salvation, is the sum of all mercy, and happiness; and the soul that is so sealed, hath cause enough to lie at the feet of God, overwhelmed with the sense of so invaluable a mercy.

Reason 2. As the nature and ends of this ordinance call for the greatest composedness of spirit; so the danger of unworthy receiving, should work our hearts to the most serious frame: for if a man be here without his wedding garment, if he eat and drink unworthily it is at the greatest peril of his soul that he doth so; 1 Cor. 11. 27. "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

To profane and undervalue that body and blood of the Lord, is a sin above measure sinful; and the punishments of such sins, will be the most dreadful: for still the more excellent the blessings are that come by any ordinance, the more dreadful the curses are that avenge the abuse of such mercies. How soon may a man draw fearful guilt upon his soul, and dreadful judgments upon his body, by an heedless management of such sacred mysteries? "For this cause many are weak and "sickly among you, and many sleep;" verse 30.

It is a most weighty *note*, that a * worthy pen sets upon this scripture: 'They discerned not the body of his Son Jesus Christ, in his ordinances; but instead of that holy, reverend, and deep-dyed behaviour, which was due to it, both from their inner and outward man, as being a creature of the highest and deepest sanctification, that ever God sanctified; sanctified not only to a more excellent and glorious condition; but also to many ends and purposes, of far higher and dearer concernment, both for the glory of God, and benefit of men themselves, than all other creatures whatsoever, whether in heaven or earth: They handled, and dealt by it in both kinds, as if it had been a common unsanctified thing: Thus they discerned not the Lord's body.'

And as they discerned not his body, so neither did God (in some sense) discern theirs: but in those sore strokes and heavy judgments which he inflicted on them, had them in no other regard or consideration, than as if they had been the bodies of his enemies, the bodies of wicked and sinful men; thus drawing the model and platform of their punishment (as usually he doth) from the structure and proportion of their sin.

* Mr. Thomas Goodwin's epistle to Mr. Fenner's sermons.

Thus the just and righteous God builds up the breaches that we make upon the honour belonging to the body of his Son, with the ruins of that honour which he had given unto ours, in health, strength, life, and many other outward comforts and supports.

O then what need is there of a most awful and composed spirit, when we approach the Lord in this ordinance ?

Reason 3. As the danger of unworthy receiving should compose us to the greatest seriousness, so the remembrance of that frame and temper Christ's Spirit was in, when he actually suffered those things for us, should compose our spirits, into a frame more suitable and agreeable to his. When we see his death, as it were acted over again before our eyes, was his heart roving and wandering in that day ? Did he not regard and mind the work he was going about ? Was his heart, like thine, stupid, and unaffected with these things ? Look but upon that text, Luke xxii. 44. and you shall see whether it were so, or not. It is said (when this tragedy drew nigh, and his enemies were ready to seize him in the garden) That being 'in an agony, he prayed more earnestly ; and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.' And Mat. xxvi. 38. he saith, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' His *soul* was full of sorrow : And is thine full of stupidity ? God forbid !

If thy heart be cold, Christ's was hot : If thou canst not shed a tear, he poured out clods of blood from every part. O, how unsuitable is a dry eye, and hard heart, to such an ordinance as this !

Reason 4. As the frame Christ's Spirit was in at his death, should command the most solemn frame upon our spirits, at the recognizing of it ; so the things here represented, require, and call for the highest exercise of every grace of the Spirit in our souls : For we come not thither as idle spectators, but as active instruments, to glorify God, by exercising every grace upon Christ, as crucified for us. Behold here are, among the rest,

First, The proper object of faith.

Secondly, The flowing spring of repentance.

Thirdly, The powerful attractive of love.

First, The proper object of faith is here. This ordinance, as a glass, represents to thine eye that glorious Person, of whom the Father said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,' Mat. xvii. 5. Of whom he said, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty.' This was he that was made sin for us, who had no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. Who trode the wine-press alone, and is here to be seen in his red garments. Every drop of his precious blood hath a tongue, calling for faith to behold it, poured forth as a sacrifice to God for sin. 'This (saith he) is the cup of the New Testament in my blood, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins.'

And what footing could thy faith find for pardon and salvation any

where else? It is Christ crucified that faith clasps, as the last and only hope and refuge of a poor sinner: Here all believers drop anchor. This is that blessed object, on whom they take the dead gripe, or last grasp, when their eye-strings are breaking. When you see the blood of Christ flowing forth, how can faith be silent in thy soul? When he bids thee, as it were, to put thy finger into his side, shews thee his hands and his feet there; it will cry out in thy soul, *My Lord! and my God!*

Secondly, The flowing spring of repentance is here. If there be any fire that can melt, or hammer that can break a hard heart, here it is; Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced and mourn." Nothing lays a gracious soul lower in itself, than to see how low Christ was laid in his humiliation for it.

Here the evil of sin is also represented in the clearest glass, than ever the eye of man saw it in. The sufferings of the Son of God discover the evil of sin, more than the everlasting torments of the damned can do. So that, if there be but one drop of spiritual sorrow in the heart of a Christian; here, methinks, it should be seen dropping from the eye of faith.

Thirdly, The most attractive object of love is here. Put all created beauties, excellencies, and perfections together; and what are they but blackness and deformity, compared with the lovely Jesus? *My beloved* (saith the enamoured spouse) *is white and ruddy*, Cant. vi. 10. Behold him at the table, in his perfect innocence, and unparalleled sufferings! This is he who was rich, but for our sakes became poor; that we, through his poverty might be rich,' 2 Cor. viii. 9. This is he that parted with his honour first, and his life next; yea, he parted with his honour in his incarnation, that he might be capable to part with his life for our redemption.

Behold here the degrees of his sufferings, and by them measure the degrees of his love. Behold in his death, as in the deluge, all the fountains beneath, and the windows of heaven above, opened; the wrath of God, the cruelty of men, the fury of hell, breaking in together upon him, and his soul surrounded with sorrow; and how can this be represented, and thy soul not astonished at this amazing, matchless love of Christ? Surely one flame doth not more naturally produce another, than the love of Christ, thus represented to a gracious soul, doth produce love to Christ, and that in the most intense degree.

Use 1. How naturally doth this doctrine shame and humble the best hearts, for their sinful discomposures, vanity, and deadness; for the roving and wanderings of their hearts, even when they come near the Lord in such a solemn ordinance as this is?

The holiest man upon earth may lay his hand upon his breast, and say, 'Lord, how unsuitable is this heart of mine, to such an object of faith, as is here presented to me? Doth such a temper of spirit suit thine awful presence? Should the represented agonies and sufferings

of Christ for me, be beheld with a spirit no more concerned, pierced, and wounded for sin? O how can I look upon him whom I have pierced, and not mourn, and be in bitterness for him, as for an only son, a first-born! O the stupifying and benumbing power of sin! O the efficacy of unbelief!

It was charged upon the Israelites, as the great aggravation of their sin, that they “provoked God at the sea, even at the red sea,” Psal. cvi. 7. the place where their miraculous salvation was wrought. But, Lord Jesus! my hard heart provokes thee in an higher degree, even at the *red sea* of thy precious invaluable blood, by which my eternal salvation was wrought. O my God! what a heart have I! Did the blood of Christ run out so freely and abundantly for me? and cannot I shed one tear for my sins, that pierced him! O let me never be friends with my own heart, till it love Christ better, and hate sin more.

Use 2. This scripture hath also an awakening voice, to all that come nigh to God in any of his ordinances, especially in this ordinance. O Christians! bethink yourselves where you are, and what you are doing: Know you not, that the King comes in to see the guests? Yea, you do know, that God is in this place; an awful Majesty beholds you! ‘All the churches shall know, that I am he that searcheth the heart and the reins, and will give to every one as his work shall be,’ Rev. ii. 23.

Thy business, Christian, is not with men, but with God; and the solemnest business that ever thy thoughts were conversant about. Thou art here to recognize the sufferings of thy Redeemer; to take the seals and pledges of thy salvation from the hand of his Spirit: Imagine the same thing, which is now to be done spiritually, and by the ministry of faith, were but to be performed visibly and audibly, by the ministry of thy senses.

Suppose Jesus Christ did personally shew himself at this table, and were pleased to make himself known in the breaking of bread, as once he did to the disciples. Suppose thou sawest him appear at this table as he doth now appear in heaven, *as a Lamb that had been slain*: Imagine thou heardst him say, ‘Believer, this precious blood of mine was shed for thee: There be millions of men and women in the world, naturally as good as thee, that shall have no interest in it, or benefit by it: But for thee, it was shed, and for the remission of thy sins; my blood was the only thing in the world that was equal to the desert of thy sins, and it hath made full satisfaction to God for them all: Thy sins, which are many, are therefore forgiven thee: My blood hath purchased the eternal inheritance of glory for thee; and this day I am come to deliver the seals and pledges thereof into thine hand. Take then the seals of eternal salvation this day, take thine own Christ with all that he is, and hath; in thine arms. Whatever I have suffered, done, or procured for any of my saints; I have suffered, done, and procured the same for thee.’

Why, all this is here to be done as really and truly, though in a more spiritual way, at this table. And shall not such business as this is, fully fix and engage thy heart? What then shall do it?

Awake, faith; awake, repentance; awake, love; yea, let all the powers of my soul be thoroughly awakened this day to attend the Lord.

THE SECOND

MEDITATION,

UPON JEREMIAH xii. 2.

Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

THIS scripture gives us the character and description of an hypocrite: And he is here described two ways; viz.

1. By what he hath.
2. By what he hath not.

First, The hypocrite is described by what he hath: He hath God in his mouth; 'Thou art near in their mouth;' i. e. They profess with a full mouth, that they are thy people, saith Piscator; or, they speak much about the law (as another explains it;) God, and his temple, religion, with its rites, are much talked of among them; they have him in their prayers and duties; and this is all that the hypocrite hath of God; religion only sanctifies his tongue; that seems to be dedicated to God; but it penetrates no further. And therefore,

Secondly, He is described by that he hath not, or by what he wants; *And (or, but) thou art far from their reins:* i. e. They feel not the power and influences of that name, which they so often invoke and talk of, going down to their very reins, and affecting their very hearts. So we must understand this metaphorical expression here, as the opposition directs: For the reins, having so great and sensible a sympathy with the heart, (which is the seat of the affections and passions,) upon that account, it is usual in scripture, to put the reins for those intimate and secret affections, thoughts, and passions of the heart, with which they have so near cognation, and so sensible a sympathy. When the heart is under great consternation, the loins or reins are seized also. As Dan. v. 6. Then the "king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, and the joints of his loins were loosed." On the contrary, when the heart is filled with delight and gladness, the reins are said to rejoice; Prov. xxiii. 16. "Yea,

my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right :” *Totus latitia dissiliam* ; “ I shall even leap for joy.” So then, when the prophet saith, “ God is far from the reins of the hypocrite,” the meaning is, he feels not the heart-affecting influence and power of religion upon his heart and affections, as God’s people do. And hence the note will be,

Doct. *That God comes nearer to the hearts and reins of his people in their duties, than he doth to any hypocritical, or formal professor.*

By God’s nearness, we understand not his omnipresence (that neither comes nor goes) nor his love to his people (that abides ;) but the sensible, sweet manifestations and outlets of it to their souls. So in Psal. cxlv. 18. “ The Lord is nigh unto all that call upon him, unto all that call upon him in truth.”

Note, the restriction and limitation of this glorious privilege ; it is the peculiar enjoyment of sincere and upright-hearted worshippers. Others may have communion with duties, but not with God in them.

But that God comes nigh, very nigh, to upright hearts in their duties, is a truth as sensibly manifest to spiritual persons, as that they are nigh the fire, when they feel the comfortable heat of it refreshing them in a cold season, when they are almost starved and benumbed with cold. Three things make this evident.

First, Sincere souls are sensible of God’s accesses to them in their duties, they feel his approaches to their spirits ; Lam. iii. 57. “ Thou drawest near in the day that I called upon thee ; thou saidst, Fear not.” And what a surprize was that to the church ; Cant. ii. 8. “ It is the voice of my beloved ; behold, he cometh,” &c. Certainly there is a felt presence of God, which no words can make another to understand ; they feel that fountain flowing abundantly into the dry pits, the heart fills apace, the empty thoughts swell with a fulness of spiritual things, which strive for vent.

Secondly, They are sensible of God’s recesses, and withdrawalment from their spirits ; they feel how the ebb follows the flood, and how the waters abate. So you find it in Cant. v. 6. “ I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone ; my soul failed when he spake : I sought him, but I could not find him : I called, but he gave me no answer.” The Hebrew is very pathetic ; *He was gone, he was gone.* A sad change of the frame of her heart quickly followed.

Thirdly, The Lord’s nearness to the hearts and reins of his people in their duties, is evident to them from the effects that it leaves upon their spirits. For look as it is with the earth and plants, with respect to the approach or remove of the sun in the spring and autumn ; so it is here as Christ speaks, Luke xxi. 29. “ When ye see the fig-tree, and all the trees, shoot forth, ye know that summer is nigh at hand.” An approaching sun renews the face of the earth, and makes nature

smile. The trees bud and blossom, the fishes rise, the birds sing; it is a kind of resurrection to nature from the dead. So it is when the Lord comes near the hearts and reins of men in duty: For then they find that,

First, A real taste of the joy of the Lord is here given unto men, the fulness whereof is in heaven, * hence called, 2 Cor. i. 22. "The earnest of his Spirit." And 1 Pet. i. 8. *Glorified joy*, or a short salvation. Oh! what is this! what is this! Certainly it is something that hath no affinity with flesh, or gross corporeal pleasures; but it is of another nature, something which transcends all that ever was felt or tasted in this world, since we were first conversant among sensible objects.

Secondly, A mighty strength and power coming into their souls, and actuating all its faculties and graces. When God comes near, new powers enter the soul; the feeble is as David, Ps. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day that I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." Cant. i. 12. "Whilst the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard," &c. Hope was low, and faith was weak, little strength in any grace, except desires; but when the Lord comes, strength comes with him. Then as it is, Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." O the vigorous sallies of the heart to God! Psal. lxxiii. 8. "O the strength of love!" Cant. viii. 6. Duties are other manner of things than they were wont to be. "Did not our hearts burn within us!" Luke xxiv. 32.

Thirdly, A remarkable transformation and change of spirit follows it.

These things are found to be marvellously assimilating. The sights of God, the felt presence of God, is as fire, which quickly assimilates what is put into it to its own likeness. So 2 Cor. iii. 18. They are said to be "changed from glory to glory." It always leaves the mind more refined and abstracted from gross material things, and changed into the same image. They have a similitude of God upon them, who have God near unto their hearts and reins.

Fourthly, A vigorous working of the heart heaven-ward; a mounting of the soul upward. Now the soul shews that it hath not forgot its way home again. It is with such a soul as sensibly embraces Christ in the arms of faith, as it was with Simon, when he took him bodily into his arms. "Now (saith he) let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." O it would have the wings of a dove, to fly away from this polluted world, this unquiet world, and be at rest.

Infer. 1. *Then certainly there is an heaven, and a state of glory for the saints.* Heaven is no dream or night vision: It is sensibly tasted and felt by thousands of witnesses in this world; they are sure it is no mistake. God is with them of a truth, in the way of their duties: They

• Dr. Preston, when dying, said, I shall change my place, not my company.

do not only read of a glorified eye, but they have something of it, or like it in this world: "The pure in heart do here see God," Mat. v. 8. The saints have not only a witness without them in the word that there is a state of glory prepared for believers, but they have a witness in themselves. These are not the testimonies of crazed brains, but of the wisest and most serious of men; not a few, but a multitude of them; not conjecturally delivered, but upon taste, feeling, and trial. O blessed be God for such sensible confirmations, such sweet prelibations!

Infer. 2. But, oh! what is heaven? And what that state of glory reserved for the saints? Doth a glimpse of God's presence in a duty, go down to the heart and reins? O how unutterable then must that be which is seen and felt above, where God comes as near to man as can be! Rev. xxii. 3, 4. "The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face." And 1 Thess. iv. 17. "And so we shall be ever with the Lord." O what is that! "Ever with the Lord?" Christians, what you feel and taste here by faith, is part of heaven's glory; but yet heaven will be an unspeakable surprizal to you, when you come thither for all that! "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," 1 John iii. 1, 2.

Infer. 3. See hence the necessity of casting these very bodies into a new mold by their resurrection from the dead, according to that, 1 Cor. xv. 41. "It is sown in weakness but raised in power." How else could it be a co-partner with soul in the ineffable joys of that presence above?

The state of this mortality cannot bear the fulness of that joy. Hold, Lord, stay thy hand, said a choice Christian once, thy creature is but a clay vessel, and can hold no more. If a transient glimpse of God here, be felt in the very reins, if it so work upon the very body by sympathy with the soul, O what vigorous spiritual bodies, doth the state of glory require! and such shall they be; Phil. iii. 12. "Like unto Christ's glorious body."

Infer. 4. Is God so near to his people above all others in the world? How good is it to be near to them that are so near to God? O, it would do a man's heart good to be near that person who hath lately had God near to his soul! Well might David say, Psalm xvi. 3. "All my delight is in the saints, and in the excellent of the earth." And again, Psal. cxix. 63. "I am a companion of all such as fear thee." O this is the beauty of Christian fellowship, this is the glory of that society! not the communication of their gifts, but the savour of God on their spirits. If any thing be alluring in this world, this is; 1 John i. 3. "That ye may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus." It is said, Zech. viii. 23. of the Jews, the time shall come, when there shall be such a presence of God among that people, that "ten men out of all languages shall take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew;

saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Christians, if there were more of God upon you, and in you, others would not be tempted to leave your society, and fall in with the men of the world; they would say, we will go with you, for God is with you.

Infer. 5. If God be so near to the heart and reins of his people in their duties, O how assiduous should they be in their duties? "It is good for me to draw nigh to God," Psalm lxxii. 28. Good indeed; the world cannot reward the expence of time at this rate, with all its glory; James iv. 8. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness; those that remember thee in thy ways," Isa. lxiv. 5.

Obj. It would be an encouragement indeed, If I might thus meet God in the way of duty; but that is but seldom I can so meet God there, in sensible powerful outlets of his grace and love! I am most dead and cold there: I feel not communion with God going down to my heart and reins.

Sol. First, You draw nigh to God; but is it in truth, or in mere formality God is only nigh to such as call upon him in truth, Psalm cxlv. 18.

Secondly, If your hearts be sincere, yet are they not sluggish? Do you stir up yourselves to take hold of God? Many there be that do not; Isa. lxiv. 7. and Cant. v. 3, 5.

Thirdly, Have you not grieved the Spirit of God, and caused him to withdraw from you. O remember what pride and vanity hath been in you, after former manifestations; Ephes. iv. 40.

Fourthly, Nevertheless wait for God in his ways; his coming upon our souls is oftentimes, yea, mostly a surprizal to us; Cant. vi. 12. "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me as the chariots of Amminadib."

Infer. 6. What steady Christians should all real Christians be? For lo, what a seal and witness hath religion in the breast of every sincere professor of it? True Christians do not only hear by report, or learn by books, the reality of it; but feel by experience, and have a sensible proof of it in their very hearts and reins; their reins instruct them, as it is Psal. xvi. 7. They learn by spiritual sense and feeling, than which nothing can give greater confirmation in the ways of God.

There are two sorts of knowledge among men; one traditional, the other experimental: this last the apostle calls a "knowing in ourselves;" Heb. x. 34. and opposes it to that traditional knowledge which may be said to be without ourselves, because borrowed from other men.

Now this experience we have of the power of religion in our souls, is that only which fixes a man's spirit in the ways of godliness. It made the Hebrews take joyfully the spoiling of their goods; no arguments or temptations can wrest truth out of the hand of experience,

Non est disputandum de gustu. For want of this, many professors turn aside from truth in the hour of trial. O brethren! labour to feel the influences of religion upon your very hearts and reins! this will settle you better than all the arguments in the world can do; by this, the ways of God are more endeared to men, than by any other way in the world. When your hearts have once felt it, you will never forsake it.

THE THIRD

MEDITATION,

UPON ROM. vii. 21.

I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

THIS chapter is the very anatomy of a Christian's heart, and gives an account of the most secret frames, and inward workings of it, both as to graces and corruptions: and this verse is a compendium of both: for the words are a mournful complaint, uttered with a deep sense of an inward pressure, by reason of sin; wherein we are to consider three things:

1. The person complaining.
2. The matter of complaint.
3. The discovery of that matter.

First, The person complaining: I find, I Paul, though I come not behind the chiefest of all the apostles, though I have been wrapt into the third heaven, and heard things unutterable; yet I, for all that, find in me a law. Never was any mere man more deeply sanctified; never any lived at an higher rate of communion with God; never any did Christ more service in this world; and yet he found a law of sin in himself.

Secondly, The matter of the complaint, which consists in a double evil he groaned under; viz. 1. The presence of sin at all times. 2. The operation of sin, especially at some times.

First, The presence of sin at all times: *Evil* (saith he) *is present with me*, it follows me as my shadow doth. By evil we must understand no other evil but sin, the evil of evils; which, in respect of power and efficacy, he also calls a law; because as laws, by reason of their annexed rewards and punishments, have a mighty power and

efficacy upon the minds of men; so sin, indwelling sin, that root of all our trouble and sorrow, hath a mighty efficacy upon us.

And this is the mournful matter of his complaint: it is not for outward afflictions, though he had many; nor for what he suffered from the hands of men, though he suffered many grievous things: but it is sin, dwelling and working in him, that swallows up all other troubles, as rivers are lost in the sea; this evil was always with him, the constant residence of sin was in his heart and nature.

Secondly, And what further adds to his burthen, as it dwelt in him at all times, so it exerted its efficacy more especially at sometimes, and those the special times, and principal seasons in his whole life: when I would do good (saith he) any spiritual good, and among the rest, when I address myself to any spiritual duty, or heavenly employment; when I design to draw near to God, and promise myself comfort and redress in communion † with him, then is evil present. Oh! if I were but rid of it in those hours, what a mercy should I esteem it, though I were troubled with it at other times! Could I but enjoy my freedom from it in the seasons of duty, and times of communion with God, what a comfort would that be! But then is the special season of its operation: never is sin more active and busy, than at such a time; and this, O this is my misery and my burden!

Thirdly, The next thing to be heeded here, is the discovery of this evil to him, over which he so mourns and laments: I find then a law, saith he, I find it (i. e.) by inward sense, feeling, and sad experience. He knew there was such a thing as original sin in the nature of men, when he was an unregenerated Pharisee; but though he had then the notion of it, he had not the sense and feeling of it as now he had; he now feels what before he traditionally understood and talked of: I find a law, *q. d.* what or how others find, I know not: some may boast of their *gifts*, and some may talk more than becomes them of their graces; they may find excellencies in themselves; and admire themselves too much for them; but, for my part, 'I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present.' I am sure I find a bad heart in the best season, a proud, dead, wandering, hard heart: I find it woefully out of order, God knows, and this is my misery. Hence note,

Doct. That the best Christians do sensibly feel and sadly bewail the workings of their corruptions, and that in the very seasons and opportunities of their communion with God.

Bring thy thoughts, reader, close to this point, and sadly ponder these three things in it:

First, In what special acts Christians use to feel the working of their corruption in the season of their communion.

† When I go about the best exercises of religion, I find within me the law of the flesh rising up, and drawing me from them. *Tolletus.*

Secondly, Why is it that corruption stirs and troubles them more at such a time than at others.

Thirdly, Upon what account this is so great a burden to every gracious heart.

First, As to the first of these, namely, the special actings of corruption in the seasons of communion, they are such as have a natural aptitude and design to destroy all communion betwixt God and the soul; Gal. v. 17. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.' It is contrary to the Spirit; and by reason of that contrariety, a poor Christian cannot do the things that he would.

How many times have some Christians lamented this upon their knees, with bleeding hearts and weeping *eyes*? Lord, I came hither to enjoy thee; I hoped for some light, strength, and refreshment in this duty: I promised myself a good hour; my heart began to warm and melt in duty; I was nigh to the expectation and desire of my soul; but the unbelief, deadness, and vanity of my heart hath separated betwixt me and my God, and with-held good things from me.

Three things are requisite to communion with God in duties:

First, Composedness of thoughts.

Secondly, Activity of faith.

Thirdly, Excitations of affections: and all these are sensibly obstructed by innate corruption; for by in-dwelling sin.

First, The order of the soul is disturbed by sending forth multitudes of vain and impertinent thoughts, to infest and distract the soul in its approaches to God: the sense of this evil gave occasion to that prayer, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. 'Unite my heart to fear thy name.' How much have we to do with our own hearts upon this account every day? Abundance of rules are given to cure this evil, but the corruption of the heart makes them all necessary.

Secondly, The activity of faith is clogged by natural unbelief: O what difficulties is every work of faith carried through! 'Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. It cramps the hand of faith in every part of its work; the soul sensibly feels itself bound and fettered by its own unbelief, so that it cannot assent with that fulness, clearness, and determinateness that it would; it cannot apply with that strength, certainty, and comfort it desires; and thus are the wings of faith pinioned, that when we should soar aloft in the highest acts of sweet communion with God, we can but flutter upon the earth, and make some weak essays and offers heavenward, which oftentimes are frustrated and put by, through the unbelief that is in us.

Thirdly, The excitation of the affections is rendered difficult, by reason of that natural deadness and hardness that is in the heart. Alas! it is naturally an heart of stone, and as easy it is to dissolve or melt the rocks into a sweet syrup, as the heart into spiritual and heavenly affections towards God. There is scarce any one thing in the world that Christians more passionately bewail, and are more sensibly afflicted for, than the deadness and hardness of their own hearts.

Nothing is found sufficient sometimes to affect and raise them; and yet if they be not excited out of their torpor and stupidity, they cannot have communion with God in duties.

Secondly, And if we enquire into the reasons why poor Christians find themselves more infested by natural corruptions in the seasons of duty than at other times; the reasons are obvious to him that considers, 1. That duty irritates it; 2. Satan excites it; 3. God permits it to be so.

First, Corruption is irritated by duty, it is provoked by that which bridles and purges it: Nothing is found more destructive to sin than communion with God is; and therefore nothing makes a fiercer opposition to all fellowship and communion betwixt the soul and its God than sin doth. As waters swell and rage when they are obstructed by a dam, so do our corruptions when obstructed and checked by duty. Sin would fain make men leave praying, and prayer would fain make men leave sinning.

Secondly, As duty irritates it, so Satan excites it, especially in such seasons. When Joshua the high-priest stood before the Lord, Satan was seen standing at his right-hand to resist him, Zech. iii. 1. How hard is it for a Christian then to be dexterous, apt, and ready for spiritual work, whilst Satan stands at his right hand, the working hand, to make resistance.

The devil is aware that one hour of close, spiritual, and hearty converse with God in prayer, is able to pull down what he hath been contriving and building many a year. Now this envious spirit having an easy access to the fancy, that busy and unruly power of the soul, will not be wanting to create such figments and notions in it, as, like a rapid stream, shall carry away the soul and all its thoughts from God in duty. O what ado have most Christians to prevent the sallies and excursions of their hearts from God at such times!

3. As Satan exercises it, so the wise and holy God, for good ends to his people, permits it to be so.

This thorn in the flesh keeps them humble; these lamented distractions and corruptions in their duties destroy their dependence upon them, and glorying in them: For if we be so prone to pride and confidence in our duties, amidst such sensible workings and minglings of corruption with them, what would we be if they were more pure and excellent? These things also make the saints weary of this world, and to groan within themselves after the more perfect state wherein God shall be enjoyed and seen in more perfection and satisfaction. But,

Thirdly, This in the mean time cannot but be a very grievous affliction and pressure to the gracious soul, to be thus clogged and infested by its own corruptions in the very season of its communion with God. For,

First, By this the soul is rendered very unsuitable to that holy presence it approaches; Hab. i. 13. 'Thou art of purer eyes than to

behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity.' Must the great and blessed God wait upon a poor worm till it be at leisure to attend him? Must he be forsaken for every trifle that comes in the way of its fancy? Oh, how provoking an evil is this! 'Surely God heareth not vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it,' Job xxxv. 13. 'This unsuitableness of our spirits to the Lord, cannot do less than cover our faces with shame; as did Ezra, chap. ix. 6. 'O my God, I am ashamed, and even blush to look up unto thee.'

Secondly, By this those benefits and comforts are intercepted which are better than life; there is a sensible presence of God; there are manifestations of pardon, peace and love; there are reviving influences and fresh anointings of the Spirit; there are a thousand mercies of this kind, that in their seasons are communicated to men in the way of duty; and would it not grieve a man to the very heart and soul, to be defeated of those inestimable treasures, by the breaking forth of the unbelief, pride, or vanity of his own heart, when such mercies are almost in his hand? 'Your iniquities, (saith the prophet) have separated betwixt you and your God; and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear,' Isa. lix. 2. O cruel covering! O dismal cloud! that hides the face of God from his people, that they cannot behold it! "Wherefore am I come from Geshur (saith Absalom) if I may not see the king's face?"

What do I here upon my knees, saith a Christian, if I may not see God? Duties are nothing to me without God; the world and all its comforts are dry and tasteless things to me without God; his manifested favour and sealed love are the very life of my life, and from this the corruptions of my own heart have cut me off.

Thirdly, By these things the beauty and excellency of duties are defaced. These dead flies spoil that excellent ointment; for wherein consists the beauty and true excellency of duties, but in that spirituality and heavenly temper of soul with which they are performed? This makes them suitable to their object, John iv. 24. Take away spirituality from duties, and then you may number them among your sins, and the matters of your shame and sorrow. Take away the heart from duty, and what remains but a dead carcase without life or beauty?

Fourthly, By these things gracious souls are greatly puzzled and perplexed about their state and condition; this is the fountain of their fears and doubtings. Oh! when a man feels such deadness in his heart towards God, such stiffness in his will to the will of God, such a listless, careless temper to all that is spiritual, how (thinks he) can this consist with a renewed state and temper? Sure no Christian is troubled with such an heart as mine is, especially when it shall be found in its ordinary course, so free, nimble and indefatigable in its pursuits and entertainments of things sensual and earthly: there it is as the chariots of Amminadib, but here, like Pharaoh's chariots: there it as much needs the curb, as it doth the spur here. *Lord*, saith the

poor soul, *I know not what to do : if I do not look into my heart, I cannot be sincere ; and if I do, I can have no comfort.* This is a sad perplexity indeed !

Fifthly, and lastly, By these things the Spirit of God is grieved ; and that which grieves him cannot but be a grief and burden to us : his motions are quenched by these corruptions, his sanctifying designs (as much as lies in us) obstructed by them ; surely then there is cause enough why a Christian should follow every vain thought with a deep sigh, and every stirring of unbelief with a sad tear.

The usefulness of this point is great and exceeding seasonable, when we are to draw nigh to God, and address ourselves to spiritual duties ; it may to great purpose be improved by way,

1. Of information.
2. Direction.
3. Consolation.

We may greatly improve it for our information, in the following particulars.

1. Hence we may take our measures of the wonderful and astonishing grace and condescension of God to his people, who, notwithstanding all that evil which is at present with them in the good they do, will not reject their persons or duties for all that.

How doth free grace make its own way through swarms of vanity ! How doth it break through all the deadness, infidelity, and hardness of our hearts to do us good ? Though evil be present with us, our gracious God will not be absent from us notwithstanding that.

How greatly was the spouse amazed at the unexpected condescension and grace of Christ in this matter ? Cant. ii. 8. 'It is the voice of my beloved ; behold, he cometh leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills.' *It is the voice of my beloved.* That abrupt broken expression shews a perfect surprize : she saw mountains of guilt and unworthiness betwixt Christ and her soul ; and yet, behold, he comes skipping over all those mountains and hills : O free grace, rich and admirable grace, which with so many notwithstandings and neverthelesses, will save and comfort the poor and unworthy soul !

2. How little reason have any of us to be proud of our best performances, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not,' saith Solomon, Eccl. vii. 20. If there be something supernaturally good in our duties, yet there is abundance of natural evil commixed with that good ; the evil is wholly ours, the good wholly God's : we have no reason then to glory in our best performances.

It hath been a question with some, Whether some short transient act of a regenerate soul may not be free from sin ; but it was never questioned, whether any continual act, much less a course of actions, could be without sin. Evil will be present with us in all we do ; it will be with us in our closets ; present even in the awful presence of the holy God, in the most high and solemn duties of religion, in the

most pure and spiritual actions that pass from us: cease then, as from dependence, so from pride and conceitedness in all you do. Whilst our natures are sanctified but in part, and our principles mixt, our duties and performances can never be pure. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one,’ John xiv. 4.

3. How are we all obliged to bless God for Jesus the Mediator, to make us and our sinful duties acceptable to God? Sad were our case if this high priest did not “bear the iniquity of our holy things,” as it is, Exod. xxviii. 38. It is his oblation and intercession that obtains and continues our pardon for our prayer-sins, our hearing-sins, our sacrament-sins; these alone would eternally damn us, if we had no other, did not free grace make us accepted in the Beloved,” Eph. i. 6. When evil is present with us, then is Christ, our Advocate, present with the Father for us; and thence it is that we are not destroyed upon our knees, and that the jealousy of God breaks not forth as fire, to devour us in our very duties.

4. If evil be present with us, yea, inherent in us, in our best duties, what need had Christians then to watch against the external occasions of sin, and to keep a close guard upon their senses, especially when they have to do with God?

There is danger enough from within; you need not open another door from without. This natural corruption is too active in itself, if there be no irritation by any external occasion; how much more when the eye and ear opened and unguarded, and occasions are offered it from without. Watching is half the work of a Christian whilst he is praying, Eph. vi. 18. The Arabian proverb is as instructive as it is mystical, *Shut the windows, that the house may be light.*

5. If evil be present when we would do good, if it infest us in our best duties, then certainly there is no rest to be expected for any of God’s people in this world. Where shall we go to be free from sin? If any where, let us go to our closets, to our knees, to the ordinances of God; yea, but even there evil is, and will be present with us; if we cannot be free from evil there, it is vain to expect it elsewhere in this world. Only in heaven believers rest from sin. When once they are absent from the body, and present with the Lord, sin shall no more be present with them; which should make all that hate sin, long for heaven, and be “willing to be dissolved and be with Christ.”

2. For *direction*. Let all that experimentally see and feel what the apostle here mourns over, carefully attend such directions as may prevent the spoil of their duties by the working of their corruptions in them.

Though no rules are found sufficient to prevent wholly the influence of our corruptions upon duties, yet own it as a special mercy, if it may in any measure be prevented or restrained: In order whereunto I shall hint briefly these following rules, which the experience of

many Christians hath recommended, as exceedingly useful in this case.

Rule 1. *Be more diligent in preparation for your duties, if you would meet with less interruption in your duties.* The very light of nature teaches solemn preparation to all important and weighty business: And is there more solemn and concerning business in all the world, than that which thou transactest with God in duties? Angels approach not this God with whom thou hast to do, without profound respects to his immense greatness and awful holiness, Isa. vi. 3. When you stretch forth your hands, it is required that you first prepare your hearts, Job xi. 13, 14.

Rule 2. *Realize the presence of God in all your duties, and awe your hearts all that you are able by that consideration.* O think what a piercing holy eye beholds thy heart, and tries thy reins! Wouldst thou not be really ashamed, if thy thoughts were but vocal to men, and the workings and wanderings of thy heart visible to those that join with thee in the same duty? O, if the presence of God were more realized, certainly your hearts would be better secured against the incursions of your corruptions.

Rule 3. *Labour for a deeper measure and degree of sanctification;* many other rules are but spiritual anodynes to give present ease, but this is the way to a real cure. A thousand things may be found helpful to put by a vain thought for the present, but then it returns again, and it may be with more strength: This is the proper method to dry the spring, when others are but attempts to divert the stream: If habits of grace were more deeply radicated, acts of grace would be more easy to us, and flow more freely from us.

Rule 4. Lastly, *Consider what an aggravation it is to your evil, to vent itself in the special presence of God in duties.* See how Paul mourns over it in the text: It is not only a sin, but an affronting of God to his face: This grieving of his Spirit is the spoil of thy duty; it is (as one aptly calls it) *obex infernalis*, an hellish bar or *remora* to all sweet and free intercourse of the soul with God.

3. For *Consolation.* But whilst I am representing the evil of it to some, it may be there are others overwhelmed with the sorrowful sense of it, even to discouragement and despondency: Poor Christian! is this thy case? Are all the afflictions in the world nothing to thee, in comparison with this evil which is present with thee, when thou wouldest do good? Well, though thou canst not do the good thou wouldest, nor free thyself yet from the evil thou wouldest, rather than live, be freed from, there are four things that may give much relief to thy pensive soul.

1. *Though the presence of evil, even in thy best duties, be sad, yet thy grief and affliction for it is sweet:* This is a sad sin, but this is a sweet sign. It is not heart-evils, heart-wanderings in duties, hardness and unbelief, that hypocrites mourn for, but more gross and

external evils. Let this trouble for sin comfort thee when the presence of sin grieves thee.

2. *God accepts, through Jesus Christ, what you do sincerely, though you can do nothing purely and perfectly*, Cant. v. 1. Your sincerity is your evangelical perfection; the evil that is present is not imputed; the good that is present is (notwithstanding that com-mixed evil) accepted, which is stong consolation.

3. *You find your case was the case of blessed Paul, a man of eminent sanctity*. And if you consult all the saints, one by one, you will find them all sick of this disease; so that your case is not singular.

4. *Your justification is perfect, and without spot, though your sanctification be not so*: and the time is coming, when your sanctification shall be as your justification is, and after that no more complaints.



THE FOURTH

MEDITATION,

UPON EPH. i. 13.

In whom also, ye believed, that after ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise.

FROM his doxology and solemn thanksgiving, ver. 3. the apostle enumerates the principal Christian privileges that gave the occasion of that thanksgiving, among which this in the text is not the least, though last named.

In this one verse we have the two noble acts of faith displayed; Its direct act, called trusting; and its reflex act, which in order of nature and time follows it, and is implied in the word sealing.

In the latter clause (to which I shall confine my meditations) four things must be remarked; viz. 1. The subject; 2. Nature; 3. Author; And 4. Quality of assurance.

1. The subject of assurance, which is, and can be no other than a soul that hath closed with Christ by faith: Reflex acts necessarily pre-suppose direct ones. Never was any unbeliever sealed, except to damnation: Assurance is peculiarly the prerogative of believers.

2. The nature of assurance: He calls it sealing; an apt metaphor to express the nature of it; for assurance, like a seal, both confirms, declares, and distinguishes it; it confirms the grant of God, declares

the purpose of God, and distinguishes the person so privileged from other men.

3. The Author of assurance, which is the Spirit, he is the keeper of the great seal of heaven; and it is his office to confirm and seal the believer's right and interest in Christ and heaven, Rom. viii. 16.

4. Lastly, The quality of this Spirit of assurance, or the sealing Spirit: He seals in the quality of an holy Spirit, and of the Spirit of promise; as an holy Spirit, relating to his previous sanctifying work upon the sealed soul; as the Spirit of promise, respecting the *medium* or instrument made use of by him in his sealing work; for he seals by opening and applying the promises to believers from the Spirit's order. The note will be this:

Doct. *That the privilege of sealing follows the duty of believing.*

There is no season more proper to treat of the sealing of the Spirit, than at a sealing ordinance: Nor can I handle the Spirit's sealing-work in a more profitable method, than in satisfying these five queries particularly, and then applying the whole.

1. What is the Spirit's sealing-work, and how performed?
2. Why none are sealed till they believe?
3. Whether all believers are sealed?
4. What is the privilege of being sealed?
5. What are the effects of the Spirit's sealing?

1. *Query.* What is the Spirit's sealing-work? and how is it performed?

Ans. The sealing of the Spirit is, his giving a sure and certain testimony to the reality of that work of grace he hath wrought in our souls, and to our interest in Christ and the promises, thereby satisfying our fears and doubts about our estate and condition.

Every matter of weight and concernment is to be proved by two sufficient witnesses, Deut. xix. 15. Our sincerity and interest in Christ are matters of the deepest concernment to us in all the world, and therefore need a farther witness to confirm and clear them than that of our own Spirits, Rom. viii. 16. Three things concur to the Spirit's sealing work.

He sanctifies the soul; he irradiates and clears that work of sanctification; he enables it thereby to apply promises.

The first is his material or objective seal; the latter his formal sealing. None but the Spirit of God can clear and confirm our title to Christ, for he only searcheth the deep things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. and it is his office, Rom. viii. 16. *συμμαρτυρεῖν*, to witness with our spirits.

The seal or witness of the Spirit must needs be true and certain, because omniscience and truth are his essential properties. He is omniscient, 1 Cor. ii. 10. and therefore cannot be deceived himself. He is the Spirit of truth, John xiv. 17. and therefore cannot deceive us;

so that his testimony is more infallible and satisfactory than a voice from heaven, 2 Pet. i. 19.

If an angel should appear, and tell us, Christ hath said to him, Go and tell such a man, that I love him, that I shed my blood for him, and will save him, it could never give that repose and satisfaction to the mind, as the internal witness or seal of the Spirit doth; for that may be a delusion, but this cannot. The witness of our own heart may amount to a strong probability, but the witness of the Spirit is demonstration, 1 John iv. 24.

So, that as it is the design and work of Satan to cast in doubts and fears into gracious hearts, to perplex and entangle them, so, oppositely, it is the work of the Spirit to clear and settle the sanctified soul, and fill it with peace and joy in believing, John xvi. 7. Rom. xiv. 7.

In sealing, he both attests the *fidem quæ creditur*, the doctrine or object of faith, and the *fidem qua creditur*, the infused habit or grace of faith; of the former he saith, This is my word; of the latter, This is my work: and his seal or testimony is ever more agreeable to the written word, Isa. viii. 20. So that what he speaks in our hearts, and what he saith in the scripture, are evermore concordant and harmonious testimonies.

To conclude: In sealing the believer he doth not make use of an audible voice, nor the ministry of angels, nor immediate and extraordinary revelations, but he makes use of his own graces implanted in our hearts, and his own promises written in the scriptures; and in this method he usually brings the doubting trembling heart of a believer to rest and comfort.

2. *Query.* Why are none sealed till after believing?

Answer. It cannot be denied, but that many persons in a state of nature and unbelief, may have ungrounded confidences, and false comforts built thereupon. This is evident from Matth. vii. 22. 'Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?' And John viii. 54, 55. 'Of whom ye say that he is your God, and yet ye have not known him.' And, beyond all, is that startling scripture, Heb. iv. 4, 5. "Who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away," &c.

But for any, except real believers, to have those witnesses and sealings of the Spirit described above, is utterly impossible, and will evidently appear to be so, whether we consider the author, nature, object, mediums, end and design of this work.

First, Consider the author of this work, the *Spirit of God*, who is an holy Spirit, as the text calls him, and the *Spirit of truth*, as Christ calls him, John xiv. 17. and it cannot be that ever he should give testimony to a lie, or give a false witness, quite cross to the very tenour of the written word, as he must do, should he seal an unbe-

liever. What though they be elect? yet, whilst unregenerate, they have no actual interest in Christ and the promises, and therefore can have none sealed by the Spirit. *Prius est prædicare de esse quam de cognosci*: we must be saints before we can be known to be so.

Secondly, Consider but the nature of this work, and it cannot be that ever an unbeliever should be sealed by the Spirit; for assurance is produced in our souls by the reflexive acts of our faith: the Spirit helps us to reflect upon what hath been done by him formerly upon our hearts; 'hereby we know that we know him,' 1 John ii. 3. To know that we know, is a reflex act; now it is impossible there should be a reflex before there hath been a direct act: no man can have the evidence of his faith, before the habit be infused, and the vital act first performed.

Thirdly, Consider the object-matter, to which he seals, and it will be found to be his own sanctifying operations upon our hearts, and consequently to our privileges in Christ, Rom. viii. 16. 1 John iii. 24. The thing or matter attested is, that Christ abideth in us, and that we are the children of God; but no such thing can be sealed till we believe, for neither our adoption nor sanctification can be before faith.

Fourthly, Consider the mediums or instruments used by the Spirit in his sealing-work: the promises are his sealing instruments, and on that account he is called *the Spirit of promise* in the text; not only because he is the Spirit promised, but as the promises contain the Spirit, so the Spirit uses the promises (i. e.) clears them to our understandings, and helps us to apply them to our souls. But this he never doth, nor can do, till the soul, by faith, have union with Christ; for till then, it hath no right in the promises.

Fifthly, and lastly, Consider the end and design of this work of the Spirit, which is to secure to the soul its peace, pardon, and salvation in Christ, he seals believers to the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30. (i. e.) to their complete salvation; so then it must be equally impossible for an unbeliever to be sealed as to be saved.

3. *Query*. The next inquiry is, Whether all believers are sealed by the Spirit?

Answe. The resolution of this query will depend upon several distinctions that must be made upon this matter.

Distinction 1. We must distinguish the different kinds of the Spirit's sealing; all his sealing-work is not of one kind nor to one and the same use and end.

There is an objective seal, which distinguishes the person; and a formal seal, which clears and ratifies his interest in Christ and salvation; the first he doth in sanctifying us, the second in assuring us.

When he seals objectively, that is, when he sanctifies us really by the infusion of grace, he seals us by way of distinction from other men, which is one end of sealing; for though, in respect of God's decree and purpose, there was a difference betwixt us and others be-

fore time, 2 Tim. ii. 19. and although in regard of Christ's intention in his death, there was a difference betwixt us and others, John xvii. 9. yet all this while there is no personal actual difference betwixt us and others, till sanctification do make one, Eph. ii. 3. and 1 Cor. vi. 11. But the sanctification of the Spirit makes a real difference in the state and temper of the person, 2 Cor. v. 17. and manifests that difference which election put betwixt us and others before time, 1 Thess. i. 4, 5. And yet all this while a man may not be formally sealed, i. e. his sanctification may be very doubtful to himself, and he may labour under great fears about it.

Distinction 2. The seasons of the Spirit's sealing must be distinguished; and these are to some,

1st, Immediately upon the soul's first closing with Christ at conversion, especially when conversion is wrought at a riper age, and is ushered in by a greater degree of the spirit of bondage, and deep inward terrors. Thus the Prodigal (the emblem of a convert so brought home to God) was entertained with the fatted calf and music, but all find not this presently, as some do.

2dly, Times of eminent communion with God are sealing times. There are extraordinary out-lets of peace, joy, and comfort, at some seasons, in duty, which makes the state of the soul very clear, and banishes all scruples and fears from the heart.

3dly, Others are sealed upon some imminent hazard they have been exposed to for Christ, or some extraordinary sufferings they have undergone for Christ, wherein they have carried it with eminent meekness, patience, and self-denial, 2 Cor. i. 4, 5. Thus the martyrs were many times sealed in the depth of their sufferings.

4thly, It is usually found that a sealing-time follows a dark day of desertion, and sore combats of temptations; *post nubila phœbus*. So that text, Rev. ii. 17. is expounded by some, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written.'

5thly, Dying-times prove sealing-times to many souls, if their whole life hath been like that day described by the prophet, Zech. xiv. 17. Neither dark nor light, a life betwixt hopes and fears, yet at evening-time it hath been light.

Distinction 3. Lastly, We must distinguish these several ways and manners of sealing: Some are extraordinary and immediate, vouchsafed only to some persons, at some special times and seasons. Thus Zaccheus was in an extraordinary and immediate way ascertained of his salvation; Luke xix. 9. 'This day is salvation come to this house.' And so the palsy-man; Mark ii. 5. 'Son, (saith Christ) thy sins be forgiven thee.' But these immediate ways are ceased; no man may now expect by any new revelation or sign from heaven, by any voice or extraordinary inspiration, to have his salvation sealed, but must expect that mercy in God's ordinary way and method, searching the

scriptures, examining our own hearts, and waiting on the Lord in prayer.

The learned Gerson gives an instance of one that had been long upon the borders of despair, and at last sweetly assured and settled; and being asked how he attained that assurance, he answered, *non ex nova aliqua revelatione, &c.* Not by any new revelation, but by subjecting my understanding to, and comparing my heart with the written word.

And Mr. Roberts, in his treatise of the covenants, speaks of another that so vehemently panted after the sealings and assurance of the love of God to his soul, that for a long time he earnestly desired some voice from heaven; and sometimes walking in the solitary fields, earnestly desired some miraculous voice from the trees or stones there: This was denied him, but in time a better was afforded, in a scriptural way.

Now to resolve the query out of these distinctions.

First, Though all believers have not the formal sealings of the Spirit, yet they have the objective or material seal; that is, the Spirit is in them as a sanctifying Spirit, putting a real difference betwixt them and others, when he is not with them by way of evidence and assurance of sanctification.

Secondly, Though all believers are not sealed at one and the same time, yet there are few, if any believers, but do meet with one season or other in this life, wherein the Lord doth seal them; if not at their first close with Christ, as many have been sealed, yet in some choice and eminent season of communion with God: Such golden spots of time, such precious seasons most Christians can speak of; though as Bernard speaks, it be *rara hora, brevis mora*, seldom, but sweet: Or if not in the course of their active obedience, it is a thousand to one but they shall meet it in the way of their passive obedience, if God exercise them eminently under the cross, or after a dark cloud of desertion, or in a dying hour.

Thirdly, and *lastly*, though God now seals not men in an extraordinary and immediate way, by revelation, immediate inspiration, or voices from heaven, yet most Christians are sealed in the ordinary way of the Spirit, under one ordinance or other, in one duty or other.

4. Query. *What is the privilege of being sealed by the Spirit?*

Ans. Much every way; words cannot express the riches of this mercy: For let us but consider the four following particulars, and you will admire the mercy.

First, Consider whose act and proper work sealing is. God doth not send angels upon this errand; though, if he did, that would be a great honour to poor dust and ashes, but he sends his Spirit to do it. O the condescension of the great God to men! This is a greater honour than if millions of angels were employed about it.

And then, as to the certainty and satisfaction, it is beyond all other

ways and methods in the world ; for in miraculous voices and inspirations it is possible there may, *subesse falsum*, be found some cheats or impostures of the devil ; but the Spirit's witness in the heart, suitable to his revelation in the scripture, cannot deceive us.

Secondly, The conclusion or truth sealed is ravishing and transporting. All Christians vehemently pant for it, few have the enjoyment of it for any long continuance ; but whilst they do enjoy it, they enjoy heaven upon earth, a joy beyond all the joys of this world. To have this conclusion surely sealed, Christ is mine, my sin is pardoned, I shall be saved from wrath through him ; O what is this ! what is this !

Thirdly, Consider the subject or person sealed, a poor sinful wretch, that has, ten thousand times over grieved the good Spirit of God, by whom, notwithstanding, thou art sealed to the day of redemption : Thou hast by every sin deserved to be sealed up to damnation : Thou hast reason to account and esteem thyself much inferior in graces and duties to many thousands of the saints that are panting after this privilege, and cannot obtain it : O the riches of the goodness of God !

Fourthly, and lastly, Consider the designs and aims of the Spirit in his sealing thy soul, which are,

1. To secure heaven to thee for ever.

2. As intermediate thereunto, to bring very much of heaven into thy soul, in the way to it ; indeed to give thee two heavens, whilst many others must suffer two hells.

5. Query. *Lastly*, we will enquire, *What are the effects of the Spirit's sealing upon our souls, by which we may distinguish and clearly discern it from all delusions of Satan, and all impostures whatsoever.*

Ans. The genuine and proper effects and fruits of sealing are, 1. Inflamed love. 2. Renewed care. 3. Deep abasements. 4. Increase of strength. 5. A desire to be with the Lord. 6. Improved mortification to the world.

Wheresoever these are found consequent to our communion with God, and his manifestations of himself to us therein, they put it beyond all doubt that it was the seal of his own blessed Spirit, and no delusion.

1. The sealings of the Spirit cannot but inflame the love of the soul in a very intense degree towards God ; one flame doth no more naturally beget another, than the love of God doth kindle the love of a gracious soul to him : ' We have known and believed the love that God hath to us,' 1 John iv. 16, 19. When Christ had forgiven much to that poor woman that had sinned much, and manifested pardoning mercy to her soul ; O how much was her love to Christ inflamed thereby ! Luke vii. 47.

2. Renewed care and diligence follows the sealings of the Spirit : Now is the soul at the foot of Christ, as Mary was at the sepulchre, with fear and great joy. He that travels the road with a rich treasure about him, is afraid of a thief in every bush. This is exem-

plified in the spouse, who had endured many a sad day and night in Christ's absence, and sought him sorrowing: But when she had regained his felt and sensible presence, it is said, Cant. iii. 4. "I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him and would not let him go."

She doth not (as Mr. Durham speaks) lay by diligence, as if all were done; but is of-new taken up with as great care to retain and improve this mercy, as before she was solicitous to obtain it. Whether a believer want or have, whether he be seeking or enjoying, there is still matter of exercise for him in his condition.

3. Deep abasements and great humblings used to follow the eminent appearances of God to the souls of men. "Lord, (said that disciple) how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" John xiv. 22. When God sealed the covenant to Abraham, to be a God to him, at this Abraham fell upon his face. Gen. xvii. 1, 2, 3. Never doth a soul lie lower in the dust, and abhor itself, than when the Lord makes the most signal manifestations of his grace and love to it.

4. Increased strength follows the sealings of the Spirit. New powers enter into the soul, and a sensible improvement of its abilities for duty: "Or ever I was aware (saith the spouse) my soul made me as the chariots of Amminadib," Cant vi. 12.

Now the wheels of the soul being oiled with the joy and comfort of the Spirit, run nimbly in the ways of obedience. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

5. Sealings of the Spirit inflame the desires of the soul after heaven, and make it long to go home. Nothing makes death so undesirable to the saints, as the doubts and fears that hang upon their spirits about their condition. Were their evidences for heaven clear, and their doubts resolved, they would, as the apostle speaks, "desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ," Phil. i. 23. If once the great question of our interest in Christ be thoroughly decided, and all be clear betwixt us and our God, we shall find life a matter of patience, and death the object of desire.

Siathly, and lastly, Improved mortification to the world, flows naturally from the sealings and assurances of the love of God to our souls. It is with our souls, after such a view of heaven, and a sealing interest therein, as it is with him that hath been gazing upon that glorious creature the sun, when he comes to cast his eyes again upon the earth, all things seem dark and cloudy to him; he sees no beauty in any of those things, because of that excellent lustre which he lately beheld. "We know (saith the apostle) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There is assurance or sealing. "For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:" There is the natural effect of it, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

Uses. The point speaks to three sorts of persons, viz. 1. To those that have not yet been sealed. 2. To those that once had, but now want this comfort. 3. To those that enjoy the comforts of it.

First, To those that yet want this mercy, who have not been formerly sealed by any assurance of their title to Christ, but all their days have been clogged with fears, and doubt of their condition. To such my counsel is,

I. That you be not quiet under these uncertainties, but pant after the assurance of peace and pardon. Say unto Christ, as the spouse did, Cant. viii. 6. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm :” Pant after it, as David did, Psal. xxxv. 3. “ Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”

How can you look upon such precious promises, and not dare to taste them? How can you hear others speak of their satisfaction, peace, and assurance, and be quiet until you have also attained it? What is it that hinders this mercy, that it cannot come home to your souls! Is it your neglect of duty? O stir up yourselves to take hold of God! Is it want of a thorough search and examination of your state? O let not thine eyes find rest, till that be fully done. Is it some special guilt upon thy soul, that grieves the Spirit of God? Be restless till it be removed. I know this mercy is not at your command, do what you can do; but yet I also know, when God bestows it, he usually doth it in these ways of our duty.

Secondly. To those that once had, but now want this blessing, who say as Job xxix. 2, 3. “ O that it were with me as in days past!” The darkness is the greater to you, because you have walked in the light of the Lord. The sum of Christ’s counsel in this case is given in three words, Rev. ii. 5. *Remember, repent, reform.*

First, Remember, i. e. Ponder, consider, compare time with time, and state with state, how well it once was, how sad it is now.

Secondly, Repent; mourn over these your sinful relapses; sure you may challenge the first place among all the mourners in the world. Your loss is great. O better to have lost the light of your eyes, than this light of God’s countenance. Your sin hath separated betwixt you and your God. O mourn over it.

Thirdly, Reform; Do your first works again. O Christian, consider thy heart is sunk deeper into the world than it was wont to be; thy duties are fewer, and thy zeal and affection to God much abated. Return, return, O backsliding soul, and labour to recover thy first love to Christ whatever pains it cost thee.

Lastly, To those that do enjoy these choice and invaluable mercies, the sealings of the Spirit.

First, Take heed that you grieve not the good Spirit of God, “ by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption,” Eph. iv. 30. He hath comforted you; do not you grieve him: The Spirit is a tender delicate thing, you may quickly deprive yourselves of his joy and peace

Secondly, Be humble under this advancement and dignity. If your hearts once begin to swell look out for humbling dispensations quickly, 2 Cor. xii. 7. This treasure is always kept in the vessel of a contrite and humble heart.

Thirdly, Keep close to duty; yea, tack one duty to another by intermediate ejaculations. If care of duty be once remitted, you are not far from a sad change of your condition.

Fourthly, Improve all ordinances, especially this great sealing ordinance, for your farther confirmation and establishment. Act your faith to the utmost of its ability, upon Christ crucified; and comfort will flow in: The more the direct acts of faith are exercised, the more powerful and sweet its reflex acts are like to be.



THE FIFTH

MEDITATION,

UPON JOHN i. 29.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.

THE scope of this chapter, is to prove the divinity and eternal Godhead of Jesus Christ. One of those arguments by which this great article of faith is confirmed and proved is the testimony of John. This testimony of John is the more remarkable, because it was before prophesied of him, that when the Messiah should come, this messenger should go before his face, to prepare the way for him, Mal. iii. 1.

Now, among all the testimonies that ever John gave of Christ, none ever was, or could be more full and clear than this in the text: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!"

In which words are remarkable, 1. The *preface* to his testimony. 2. The testimony itself.

First, The preface or introduction to John's testimony; Behold! there is a double use in scripture of this word: sometimes it is used by way of indication, and sometimes by way of excitation. In the first, it points out the person; in the last, it raises our affections to him. In this place it hath both these uses.

Behold the Lamb of God! q. d. 'This is the great expectation and hope of all ages. This person whom you behold, is the *desire of all*

nations. Lo, this is *God manifest in the flesh*. This is the great sacrifice, *the Lamb of God*: Never did human eyes behold such an object before.

Secondly, The testimony itself: Which must be considered two ways; as it respects, 1. The truth and reality; 2. The virtue and dignity of Christ its object.

First, John's testimony respects the truth and reality of the object: *This is ο αμνος, the Lamb of God*; the very *antitype* to which all legal sacrifices had respect, and from which they derived all their value and virtue; *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, as he had said before, ver. 17. The paschal lamb and the lamb for daily sacrifice, were but the types and shadows of this *Lamb of God*.

Secondly, His testimony respects the virtue and dignity of Christ and his blood. *He taketh away the sin of the world*. The Greek αἰσεν (as *De Dieu*, a learned critic observes) answers both the Hebrew words, מִבְּרַל et נִשָּׂא Isa. liii. 4. which signify not only to *bear*, but to *bear away*; *Potando expiat, expiando aufert, efficitque ut remittatur*. By bearing sin, he expiates it; by expiating, takes it away, or procures the remission of it. The expression seems to allude to the *scape-goat*, mentioned, Lev. xvi. 22. Thus Christ really and wholly takes away the sin of the world; i. e. the sin of all believers in the world, for whom he was sacrificed, as Drusius well expounds it, concurring with the stream of sound expositors.

So that this is a very full testimony which John gives to Christ, and it is given with great affection and admiration of him: *Behold!* yea, admire in beholding *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!* Behold him with affections suitable to such an object; *Ecce persona a Deo ordinata, in victimam ad expiandum peccata*, Grotius. Behold the person appointed by God, for a sacrifice to expiate sin! Now, though this scripture be very fruitful in practical observations, yet it is not my purpose, at this time, to note or prosecute any of them except this one, which rises from the prefatory particle, or that note of admiration, with which John's testimony of Christ is ushered in: *Behold the Lamb of God!* And the note thence will be this:

Doct. *That Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is to be beheld with admiration and affection suitable to such an object.*

Christ is beheld by men three ways:

First, Carnally with an eye of flesh: so men saw him in the days of his flesh, and despised him, Isa. liii. 2. Carnal eyes saw no beauty in him, that he should be desired.

Secondly, Fiducially, by the eye of faith: believing, is seeing Christ, John vi. 40. Faith is to the saints instead of eyes: By it they make Christ present, though the heavens have received him out of our carnal sight.

Thirdly, Beatifically, by the glorified eye: so *the spirits of just men made perfect* do, by their mental eye, see him in glory; and all

the saints, after the resurrection, shall with these corporeal eyes, see their Redeemer, according to Job xix. 26, 27.

The sight of Christ by faith (which is all the sight of him that any man now hath, or can have in this world) as it is much more excellent than the first; for "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believe," John xx. 29. so it is much inferior to the last; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "For now we see darkly through a glass, but then face to face" But though it be an inferior vision in respect of that which is immediate and perfect; yet the eye of faith is a precious eye, and the visions of Christ by faith, are ravishing visions: and he that beholds Christ, the *Lamb of God*, by a steady fixed eye of faith, cannot but admire, and be deeply affected with such a sight of him. The views of Christ by faith, are ravishing and transporting views, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

It is a disparagement to so glorious an object as Christ, to behold him, and not wonder; to see, and not love him. Certainly the admiration, love, delight, and joy of our hearts, are all at the command of faith: for let us but consider what ravishing excellencies are in Christ, for the eye of the believer to behold and admire.

First, God is in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19. He is *God manifested in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. A God incarnate is the world's wonder! Here is finite and infinite joined in one; eternity matched with time; the Creator and creature making but one person! "The Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth; A woman shall compass a man," Jer. xxxi. 22. It is an argument of weakness to admire little things; and of stupidity, not to admire great things. 'Many miracles (saith one) were wrought by Christ in the flesh; but the greatest of all miracles was his assumption of flesh.'

Secondly, The wisdom of God is in Christ; yea, *in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. Never did the divine wisdom display its glorious beams in the eyes of men and angels, in any work of God since the beginning of time, as it hath done in the designation of Christ to be the Lamb of God, a sacrifice for sin. *Behold the Lamb of God!* and in him behold the unsearchable wisdom of God, in recovering the elect perfectly from all the danger of sin, and yet making sin more dreadful to them, by way of their recovery from it, than ever it could be made by any other consideration.

Infinite wisdom, in suiting the sinner's remedy to the cause of his disease! The disease was the pride of man; the remedy was the humiliation of the Son of God. Man affected to be as God; that ruined him: God comes down, assumes flesh, and will be found in fashion as a man; that saved him.

O profound wisdom! which from the loss and ruin of our primitive glory (which was the undoing of us, soul and body) takes the

occasion of raising us to a far better state, and settles us in it with a much better security than the former.

Who but Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, as he is called, 1 Cor. i. 24. could ever have ordered and over-ruled the worst of evils, so as by occasion of the breach of the law, to raise more glory to God, than ever could have been given to him by the most punctual observation of its commands, or by the most rigorous execution of its penalties? O the astonishing depth of wisdom!

Thirdly, The love of God is in Christ. *Behold the Lamb of God!* and in him behold the love of God, in the highest and most triumphant discovery that ever was, or can be made of it in this world! 1 John iv. 10. 'Herein is love, not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' O here, here is the love of God to sinners! he manifests love to us, in our daily provisions, protections, deliverances, and comforts. That we have health when others groan under pains: therein is love: that we have bread to eat, when others are ready to perish; therein is love. O! but to have Christ to be a propitiation for us, when the angels that fell were left desperate; therein was love indeed! All the love that breaks out in the variety of providences for us in this world, in our healths and estates, in our relations and comforts, is nothing compared with this love: Herein is love indeed!

Fourthly, The tender mercies of God over poor sinners are in Christ. As Christ is the mercy promised, Luke i. 72. the capital mercy; so he is the channel, through which all the streams of God's mercy flow freely to the sons of men, Jude 21. The mercy of God to eternal life, or his saving mercies, are only dispensed to us through Jesus Christ. *Behold the Lamb of God!* a Lamb prepared by the astonishing mercy of God, a sacrifice for us, when no sacrifice was laid out for fallen angels. Mercy alone hath made this difference: mercy opened its tender eye, and looked through Christ upon us, in the depth of our misery: in Christ it is that the milder attribute of mercy is exercised upon us, whilst severe justice punishes them.

Fifthly, All the hopes of poor sinners are in Christ, Col. i. 27. Take away Christ, and where is the hope of our souls? Tim. i. 1. it is by the *blood of the Lamb* that we have hope towards God: in his oblation, and no where else, our hope of salvation finds footing: on him it is the anchor of hope is fixed, and the soul stayed, when the storms of fear and inward trouble do arise, and beat violently upon it.

Sixthly, The salvation of our souls to eternity, is in Christ; Acts i. 12. 'Neither is there any other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.' He is the ark, in whom we are preserved, Jude ver. 1. Look, as the sprinkling of the blood of the Paschal Lamb upon the door-posts of the Israelites, was that which preserved them from the destroying angel; so the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, typified by that blood, saves believers from the wrath to come.

But who can open the unsearchable riches, or recount the ravishing excellencies found in Christ? Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, behold, and admire for evermore, the incomparable excellencies of Christ! Heaven would be no heaven to them, if they could not behold Christ there, Psal. lxxiii. 25.

But my business rather lies in improving this point, than endeavouring farther to unfold it: for new wonders will appear in Christ, if we behold him to eternity.

Use. And all the improvement I shall make of it, shall be in one use of exhortation; beseeching every one of you, whatever your present condition and estate may be, 'to behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:' And,

First, If there be found among you any that are sensible of a stony hard heart, which cannot relent and mourn for all the wrong done to Jesus Christ, by sin, whose affections are benumbed and stupified by sin, so that no considerations they can urge upon their own hearts, are able to thaw them, and cause a relenting pang for sin; to such I would direct the words of this text, as the most effectual means to melt such hearts. Look hither, hard heart; 'Behold the Lamb of God!' Consider, believe, and apply what is here sensibly represented; and thy heart is hard indeed, if it relent not upon such a view of Christ. It is said, Zech. xii. 10. 'They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and mourn.' Behold the Son of God, brought 'as a Lamb to the slaughter' for thee, a vile, polluted sinner! Behold the invaluable blood of this sacrifice, shed for thee! Bring thy thoughts close to this subject; think who it is that was made *a Lamb for sacrifice*; for whom he endured all his unspeakable sufferings; how meekly and willingly he endured all the wrath of God and men, standing in his perfect innocency, to be slain for thee. Behold! he was 'made sin for thee, who had no sin; that thou, who hadst no righteousness, mightest be made the righteousness of God in him.' Oh! whoever loved thee at that rate Christ hath done? Who would endure that misery that Christ did endure for thy sake? Would thy father, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, that is as thy own soul, be content to feel that for thee, (though but one hour) which Christ felt, when 'his sweat was as it had been great drops of blood falling down to the ground?' Nay, thou wouldst never taste such a cup for the saving of thine own child, as Christ drank off, when he cried, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' Behold how he loved thee!

Surely, if the rocks rent asunder at his passion, thy heart is harder than a rock, if it thaw not at such a sight as this. Fix thine eyes a while here, and thine eye will affect thine heart.

Secondly, Is there any among us that make too light of sin, and are easily overcome by every temptation to the commission of it? O come hither, and 'behold the Lamb of God!' and you cannot possibly have slight thoughts of sin after such a sight of Christ. See here the

price of sin ! behold what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ to expiate it. Did he come into the world as a Lamb, bound with the bands of an irreversible decree, to die for sin ? Did he come from the bosom of the Father, to be our ransom, and that at the price of his own life ? Did the hand of severe justice shed the heart-blood of this immaculate Lamb, to satisfy for the wrongs thy sins have done to God ? And yet, canst thou look upon sin as a light matter ! God forbid !

I remember, when the worthies of Israel brake through the host of the Philistines, and brought unto David the waters of the well of Bethlehem, it is said, 2 Sam. xxiii. 17. ‘He would not drink thereof, but poured it out before the Lord, and said, Be it far from me, that I should do this : Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives ?’

He longed for it, and yet would not taste it, how pleasant soever it would have been to him, considering what hazard was run to obtain it.

Ah Christian ! it was but the hazard of their blood that gave check to David’s appetite to the water : And if the water had cost an equal quantity of their blood, yet it had been but a low argument to dissuade him from drinking it, to this consideration that now lies before thee. Thy sin actually cost the blood of Christ ; one drop whereof is more valuable than all human blood ; and yet wilt thou not deny thy lusts, nor resist a temptation for his sake ? ‘Behold the Lamb of God, slain for thy sin !’ and thou canst never have slight thoughts of it any more.

Thirdly, Is there any among you that droop, and are discouraged in their spirits, because of their manifold aggravated iniquities ; who being overweighed with the burthensome sense of sin, despond and sink in their minds ? To such I would apply the words of my text, as a sovereign cordial, to revive their hearts and hopes : ‘Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world !’

If the blood of the Lamb can take away the sin of the world, it can take away thy sin, though there be a world of sin in thee. For do but consider Christ, as designed from eternity to be our propitiation ; John vii. 27. ‘Him hath God the Father sealed ;’ as sacrificed in our room, ‘in the fulness of time.’ 1 Cor. v. 7. ‘Christ our passover is sacrificed for us :’ As accepted by the Father with the greatest content and pleasure, even ‘as a sweet smelling savour ;’ Eph. v. 2. As publicly justified and discharged by God, the Creditor, at his resurrection, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and John xvi. 9. And lastly, Consider him as now in heaven, where he ‘appears before God for us, as a Lamb that had been slain,’ Rev. v. 6. bearing the very marks of his death, and presenting them before God, as the most effectual and moving plea, to procure pardon, and mercy for his people. Let these things, I say, be duly pondered, and nothing will be found more effectual to relieve the despondent minds of poor believers against the sinking sense of their sin.

He that represents himself in the sacrament as wounded for you, shews at the same time, to the Father in heaven, the real body that was wounded; than which nothing more effectually moves mercy, or stays the sliding feet of a poor believer's hope: And that whether we consider,

First, The dignity of that body which was wounded; the most hallowed and deeply sanctified thing that ever was created; Luke i. 35. 'That holy thing.'

Secondly, Or his vicegerency in suffering; 'He was wounded for our transgressions,' Isa. liii. 5. It was for that hard, proud, vain, dead heart, that thou complainest of. Or,

Thirdly, The end and design of those wounds; which was to repair the honour of God, and the violated law: the language of that blood (which is said to 'speak better things than the blood of Abel,' Heb. xii. 24.) is this:

'Father, have these poor souls wounded thy name, thine honour, thy law? Behold the wounds thy justice hath inflicted on me, for reparation of all that wrong they have done thee!' O how sweetly doth the blood of the Lamb settle the conscience of a poor drooping believer!

Fourthly, Is there any among you that are faint-hearted, and ready to shrink away from any sufferings for Christ, as unable to bear and endure any thing for his sake? To such I would say in the words of this text, *Behold the Lamb of God!* Did Christ suffer such grievous things for you! and cannot you suffer small matters for him? Alas! what is the wrath of man to the *wrath of the great and terrible God?* Besides, he was an innocent Lamb, and deserved not to suffer the least degree of penal evil upon his own account; but thou hast deserved hell, and yet shrinkest under the sufferings of a moment. Did he suffer so much for you; and can you suffer nothing for him? Surely he, in suffering for you, hath 'left you an example, that you should follow his steps,' 1 Pet. ii. 21. What! is our blood compared in dignity to the blood of Christ? What! are our sufferings compared in kind, or degree, to the sufferings of Christ! Nothing is found to fortify a man's spirit for sufferings, as the meditation of Christ's suffering for us doth.

Fifthly, Is there any among you that are impatient under your own personal trials and troubles, apt to howl under common afflictions from the hand of God, or swell with revenge under injuries from the hands of men! To such I would say, *Behold the Lamb of God!* Was Christ a Lamb for meekness, and art thou a lion for fierceness? Was he silent, not once opening his mouth, when he suffered most vile things from the hands of sinners, and can you bear nothing? He suffered patiently, and deserved it not; you suffer impatiently, and have deserved infinitely more.

O that you would learn to be more Christ-like in all your trials and afflictions! let it not be said, that Christ carried it as a Lamb when

he was tried, and we like swine, grumbling or howling when we are tried. O get a Christ-like temper!

Sixthly, Is there any among you that stagger at the promises, through unbelief, that cannot rely upon a word of promise, because their own unbelieving hearts fill them with unworthy suspicions of the power, faithfulness, or willingness of God to perform them to them? O that such would *behold the Lamb of God*, as represented in this ordinance! Are not all the promises of God sealed to believers in the blood of the Lamb? Heb. ix. 17, 18, 19, 20. Are not all the promises of God, in Christ, 'Yea, and Amen, to all that are in him?' 2 Cor. i. 20. Or is there any thing put into any promise of greater value than the blood of the Lamb, that was shed to purchase it? Or is not the giving of Christ to die for us the accomplishment of the greatest promise that ever God made to us? And after the fulfilling thereof, what ground remains for any to doubt the fulfilling of lesser promises?

Lastly, Is there any among you that desire to get up your affections at this table, to have your hearts in a melting temper, to awaken and rouse up all the powers of your souls in so great an occasion for it as this? *Behold the Lamb of God!* and this will do it.

Christ calls off your eyes and thoughts from all other objects to himself; Isa. lxx. 11. 'I said, Behold me! behold me!' Fix the eye of faith here, and you will feel a pang quickly coming upon your hearts like that, Cant. ii. 5. "Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples; I am sick with love." Your eyes will affect your hearts; whilst you behold, your hearts will melt within you.



THE SIXTH

MEDITATION,

UPON ROM. viii. 32.

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all things.

THIS scripture contains a most weighty argument to encourage and confirm the faith of Christians in the expectation of all spiritual and temporal mercies. It proceeds from the greater to the less affirmatively: he that delivered his Son for us, what can he deny us after such a gift? Every word hath its weight.

Did not God spare (i. e. abate) any thing which his justice could inflict upon his Son, his own Son, opposed here to his adopted sons, as being infinitely more excellent than they, and most dear to him above and beyond all others? but, on the contrary, delivered him up, how dear soever he was unto him, to humiliation, contradiction of sinners, to all sorrows and temptations, yea, to death, and that of the cross, and all this *for us, for us sinners, for us enemies to God, for us unlovely wretches*; “How shall he not with him freely give us all things?” How is it imaginable that God should withhold, after this, spirituals or temporals, from his people? How shall he not call them effectually, justify them freely, sanctify them thoroughly, and glorify them eternally? How shall he not clothe them, feed them, protect and deliver them?

Surely if he would not spare or abate to his own Son one stroke, one tear, one groan, one sigh, one circumstance of misery, it can never be imagined that ever he should, after this, deny or withhold from his people, for whose sakes all this was suffered, any mercies, any comforts, any privilege, spiritual or temporal, which is good for them, and needful to them. So that in the words we find, 1. A proposition. 2. An inference from it.

The proposition opens the severity of God’s justice to Christ; the inference declares the riches of his mercy to us in Christ.

1. We have here before us a proposition, containing the severity of divine justice towards Christ; and this is expressed two ways, viz.

1st, Negatively, he spared him not.

2dly, Affirmatively, he delivered him up for us.

1st, Negatively; *He spared not his own Son*. There is a threefold mercy of God, viz. Preventing mercy, which steps betwixt us and trouble: delivering mercy, which takes us out of the hand of trouble: and sparing mercy, which though it do not prevent nor deliver, yet it mitigates, allays, and graciously moderates our troubles; and though sparing mercy be desirable and sweet, yet it is the least and lowest sort of mercy that God exercises towards any. Though it be mercy to have the time of sufferings shortened, or one degree of suffering abated, yet these are the lowest and least effects of mercy; and yet these were denied Jesus Christ, when he stood in our room to satisfy for us: God spared not one drop, he abated not one degree of that wrath which Christ was to suffer for us.

2dly, Affirmatively; but on the contrary, *He delivered him up for us all*.

He delivered him, as a judge by sentence of law delivers up the prisoner to be executed. It is true Pilate delivered him up to be crucified, and he also gave himself for us: but betwixt God’s delivering, Pilate’s delivering, and his own, there is this difference to be observed; in God it was an act of highest justice; in Pilate an act of greatest wickedness; in himself, an act of wonderful obedience.

God, as by an act of highest justice, delivered him up *for us*. For

us, notes the vicegerency of his sufferings, not only for our good, as the final cause ; nor only for our sins, as the meritorious cause ; but for us, (i. e.) in our room, place, or stead according to 1 Pet. iii. 18. and 2 Cor. v. 14.

2. We have also here before us a most sweet and comfortable inference and conclusion from this proposition: If God have so delivered him, *how shall he not with him, freely give us all things?* For Christ comprehends all other mercies in himself ; therefore in giving him for us, all other mercies are necessarily with him given to us.

And these mercies the poorest, weakest believer in the world may warrantably expect from God ; for as God delivered him for us all, so the treasures of all spiritual and temporal mercies are thereby freely opened to us all, to the weak, as well as to the strong.

He saith not, Christ was delivered for all absolutely, but for us all ; i. e. all that believe, all that are elected and called ; in whose person it is manifest the apostle here speaks, as Paræus on the place well observes. Hence these two doctrinal conclusions fairly offer themselves.

Doct. 1. *That the rigour and severity of divine justice was executed upon Jesus Christ, when he suffered for us.*

Doct. 2. *That believers may strongly infer the greatest of mercies to themselves, from the severity of God's justice to Jesus Christ.*

I would willingly speak to both these points at this time, each affording such proper matter of meditation to us in such a season as this. To begin therefore with the first observation.

Doct. 1. *That the rigour and severity of divine justice was executed upon Jesus Christ, when he suffered for us ; God did not spare him.*

In Zech. xiii. 7. you have God's commission given to the sword of justice, to smite his own Son, and that without pity ; "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow ; smite the Shepherd," &c. And when this commission came to be executed upon Christ, the text tells us, *God did not spare him ;* all the vials of his wrath were poured out to the last drop.

Two things require our attention in this point : 1. Wherein the severity of justice to Christ appeared. 2. Why must justice be executed on him in such rigour and severity ? Why there could be no abatement, mitigation, or sparing mercy shewn him in that day ?

1. Wherein the severity of divine justice to Christ appeared ? And this will manifest itself in the consideration of the following particulars.

First, Let us consider what Jesus Christ suffered, and we shall see the severity of justice in his sufferings, for he suffered all kinds of miseries, and that in the most intense degree of them : His sufferings were from all hands, from heaven, earth, and hell ; from his enemies, who condemned him, buffeted him, reviled him, scourged, and crucified him ; from his own disciples and followers, one of whom perfidiously be-

trayed him, another openly denied him, and all in the hour of his greatest trouble forsook and abandoned him.

He suffered in his body the most exquisite torments: the cross was a cruel engine of torment, and more so to him than any other, by reason of the excellent *crasis* and *temperament* of his body, and his most acute and delicate sense, for, as the schoolmen truly say, he was *optime complexionatus*, of the most exact and exquisite complexion; and his senses remained acute and vigorous, no way blunted, during the whole time of his sufferings, but full of life and sense to the last gasp, as may be gathered from Mark xv. 39. "When the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God."

He suffered in his soul; yea, the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings; he felt in his inner man the exquisite torments and inexpressible anguish of the wrath of God. Hence was that preternatural bloody sweat in the garden, and hence that heart-rending outcry upon the cross, *My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?*

In all which sufferings from heaven, from earth, from hell, from friends, from enemies, there was no allay or abatement of the least degree of misery. "God spared not his own Son, (saith the text) but delivered him up." Wherein the severity of divine justice to Jesus Christ, is displayed in these five remarkable considerations following.

First, God spared not. If mercy, pity, and forbearance might be expected from any hand, surely it might be God; he is the fountain of mercy; "That the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy," saith the apostle, James v. 11. The most melting and tender compassions of a mother to her sucking child, are but cruelty in comparison with divine tenderness and mercy; Isa. xlix. 15. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb! Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

Can a woman, the more affectionate sex, forget her sucking child, her own child, (and not a nurse child) her only child, whilst it hangs on her breast, and, with the milk from her breast, draws love from her heart? Can such a thing as this be in nature! Possibly it may; some such cruel mothers may be found, but *yet I will not forget thee*, saith God. Though human corrupt nature may be so vitiated, yet from the divine nature, compassion and mercy are inseparable; it flows as waters flow from their fountain, only here it restrained itself, and let not out one drop to Jesus Christ, in the day of his sufferings: God, the God of mercy, spared not.

Secondly, God spared not, saith the text; i. e. he abated not any thing which justice could inflict. Christ was not spared one stroke, one tear, one groan, one drop, one sigh, one shame, one circum-

stance; no, not the least which justice could demand as satisfaction for man's sin.

There be divers kinds of mercy in God; there is in him preventing mercy, delivering mercy, and sparing mercy. Now sparing mercy, (as Mr. Caryl on Job well observes) is the lowest mercy of all the three; it is less mercy to be spared or abated some degree or circumstance of misery, than to have misery prevented by mercy's stepping in betwixt us and it: it is less also than to be wholly delivered out of the hand of misery: Either of these are greater acts of mercy, than to abate a degree, or shorten an hour of our trouble; the least abatement of any one circumstance of misery had been sparing mercy, though it had been but the least and lowest act of mercy; and yet even this was denied to Christ; he was not abated one minute of time, or the least degree of sorrow. God spared not.

Thirdly, He spared not his own Son, *τὸν ἰδίον.* So stiled *signanter*, his own, or his proper Son, in a special and peculiar manner, nearer and dearer to him than the angels, who are his sons by creation, Job i. 6. or any of the saints, who are his sons by grace, in the way of regeneration and adoption, John i. 12, 13. This was his own Son by nature, a Son of an higher rank and order, Psal. ii. 7. begotten in an ineffable manner, from all eternity, in his own divine essence; and so is his Son by nature, having the same essence and nature with the Father, being co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal with the Father.

No relation in nature is so intimate, strict and dear as this: our children, are not so much our own children, our bodies are not so much our own bodies, as Christ was God's own Son; and yet, though he were so dear to him, his other self, his express image, his own dear Son, *He spared him not: God spared not his own Son.*

Fourthly, And that which makes a further discovery of divine severity towards Jesus Christ, is this, that God spared not his own Son in the day of his greatest distress, when he cried to his Father in an agony, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him: For of that day, this scripture is mainly to be understood, the day when he fell to the ground and prayed, "That if it were possible the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee, take away this cup from me," Mark xiv. 35, 36. He beheld his own dear Son sweltering under the heaviest pressure of his wrath, sweating great drops of blood, crying, "If it be possible, let this hour, let this cup pass;" and yet it could not be granted. O the severity of God! he heard the cry of Ahab, and spared him; he heard the Ninevites cry, and spared them; he heard the cries of Hagar and Ishmael, and spared them; yea, he hears the young ravens when they cry, and feeds them; but, when his Son cried with the most vehement cry, that the cup might pass, he cannot be excused, he must drink it up, even the very dregs of the cup of trembling, and that to the last drop. O the justice and severity of God!

Fifthly, and lastly, Consider what the Father of mercies did instead of sparing the Son of his love, and the text will inform you that 'he delivered him up for us all.' So it is noted in Acts ii. 23. 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

There was a concession or permission to those wicked instruments that shed his blood, a loosing of the chain to those bandogs that compassed him about; such a concession as never was given them before; for till then they were tied up from perpetrating their wickedness; but now the restraints of Providence are taken away, and he is delivered unto their will; his own Father delivers him into the hands of cruelty. And thus you see wherein the severity of divine justice to Christ was manifest.

In the last place, let us see the ground and reason of this rigour and severity to Christ. Now, there are, among others, three special reasons why Christ could not be spared.

The honour of divine justice required, that he should suffer the utmost degree of punishment. It was meet that the rights of heaven should be vindicated to the full, and that the justice of God should have the last mite it could demand for satisfaction. And this was the special design and aim of God in the sufferings of Christ, as the apostle speaks, Rom. iii. 25, 26. It was 'to declare his righteousness;' and lest we should lose the emphatical word, it is doubled and repeated, 'to declare I say, at this time his righteousness.' And indeed herein God fully obtained his design; for never was justice so honoured before, to have such a person as the Son of God stand at its bar, and such a sum as his blood paid down at once for our discharge: so that justice triumphs as well as mercy, and one attribute is not robbed to pay another.

As it was necessary to God's satisfaction, so it was necessary to ours also. If the Lord Jesus had not made full payment to the utmost mite, we could never have had full satisfaction in our consciences, about that deep and dear concernment of our souls, the remission of sin. Man is a guilty and a suspicious creature, and hard to be brought to an entire confidence in the pardoning mercy of God. Yea, it is impossible to persuade a convinced conscience, of the possibility of remission, except you can also prove the fulness of divine satisfaction; for conscience requires as much to satisfy it, as God doth to satisfy him. If God be satisfied, then conscience can be satisfied too, and securely rest upon that ground; but if there be any doubt of that, there is no appeasing of an anxious and jealous conscience: greatly therefore hath God consulted our peace in the severity of his justice to Jesus Christ. 'Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,' Heb. xiii. 20. Let the words be weighed; he is stiled the God of peace, when he brought back Christ from

the dead: it was incensed justice that put him to death, and appeased justice that brought him back from the dead; and that which pacified God, is the only thing in the world that is able to satisfy the conscience of a sinner.

3. Therefore did God proceed with such rigour and severity with Jesus Christ, that thereby the demerit and evil of sin might be fully discovered to the world, and an everlasting caution left upon all hearts to beware of contracting new guilt. If justice had descended in a visible form, and hanged up millions of sinners in chains, it had not been such a warning as this against sin. Nay, let me say, the grievous and eternal torment that the damned suffer in hell, is not such a demonstration of the evil of sin as this is; for those torments are much unknown to men till they feel them; and when they begin to feel them, it is too late to be convinced or cautioned against sin then. But to see such a person as Christ exposed to the utmost severity of God's wrath for our sin, to see such things done in the green tree, may well make us cry out, "Lord, what will be done to the dry tree?" O the infinite evil of sin! O the inflexible severity of divine justice! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

4. In a word; hereby Jesus Christ is endeared the more to his people, by suffering such great and hard things in their place and for their sakes. The extremity of his sufferings for us, commands the strength of his affection to us.

And thus you see the reasons of all this severity to Jesus Christ. God intended the sweetest mercies for you, and therefore prepared the bitterest sufferings for Christ: from his deep sufferings you may confidently conclude the best of mercies are designed for you; as you will hear in the prosecuting of the second doctrine, which, for dispatch, I purpose to handle as one use of this point now before me.

O the admirable and astonishing love of God to us poor worms of the earth, to deliver up his own Son into the hands of his enemies, that thirsted for his blood! Long had they been restrained from satisfying their wickedness, and executing their malice, till now; and this was the hour which he often spake of, 'My hour is not yet come.' But, oh! what a dismal hour was it when it did come, when Providence let loose both devils and men upon Christ, delivered him over to the will of his enemies! And this was not all; Christ was not only delivered up into the hands of the worst of men, but, which was much more terrible, into the severe hands of divine justice, to grapple with the pure, unmixed, and unallayed wrath of the great and terrible God.

Lastly, We will improve this point by a double use, by way of information and exhortation.

Use 1. Of information.

First, The severity of God's justice to Jesus Christ informs us what a dreadful evil sin is, which so incenses the wrath of God even

against his own Son, when he bare our sins, and stood before the bar of God as our surety.

Come hither hard hearts (hard indeed if this cannot break them;) you complain, you cannot see the evil of sin, so as to be deeply humbled for it: fix your eyes a while here, and intently consider the point in hand: suppose you saw a tender and pitiful father come into open court with fury in his face, to charge his own, his only, and his most beloved Son, and to prosecute him to death, and nothing able to satisfy him but his blood, and be well pleased when he sees it shed; would you not say, Oh! what horrid evil hath he done! It must be some deep wrong, some heinous crime that he is guilty of, else it could never be that his own father could forget his bowels of pity and mercy. Yet thus did the wrath of God break forth against his dear Son, when he stood before the bar, as our surety, charged with the guilt of our sins.

Secondly, Learn hence what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Well might Luther cry out, *Nolo Deum absolutum, Let me have nothing to do with an absolute God.* Wo to them that stand before God in their own persons, without Christ, how will justice handle them! 'For if these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry tree?' Luke xxiii. 31. Did the Son of God fear, tremble, sweat clots of blood? Did he stand amazed, and fall into such an agony of soul when he drank that cup, which he knew in a few hours he should drink up, and then never taste the bitterness of it more? How sad is their case that must drink of that cup for ever, a cup that hath eternity to the bottom!

Thirdly, How incomprehensible and ravishing is the love of God to men, that would rather be so severe to Jesus Christ, the darling of his soul, than make us the objects of his wrath for ever? Which of you (though there be infinitely less tenderness in your hearts than God's) would lay your hands upon a child, the worst child you have, and put him to death for the sake of the best friend you have in the world? but God with his own hand delivered his Son, his only Son, that from everlasting was the delight of his soul, who never offended him, to death, the most cursed and cruel death, and all this for enemies: how unspeakable is this love, and past finding out!

Fourthly, Did not God spare his own Son? then let none of us spare our own sins. Sin was that sword which pierced Christ: O let sorrow for sin pierce your hearts! If you spare sin, God will not spare you, Deut. xxix. 20. We spare sin when we faintly oppose it, when we excuse, cover and defend it, when we are impatient under just rebukes and reproofs for it; but all kindness to sin is cruelty to our own souls.

Fifthly, and lastly, If God did not spare Christ, certainly he intends to spare believers for his sake.

The surety could not be spared, that the principal might be spared for ever. If God had spared him, he could not have spared us; if

he afflicts his people, it is not for satisfaction to himself, but profit to us, Heb. xii. 10. Should God spare the rod of affliction, it would not be for our advantage; so many sanctified afflictions as are spared or abated, so many mercies and spiritual advantages are withheld from us. But as for those strokes of justice that are the effects of God's vindictive wrath, they shall never be felt by believers for ever. All the wrath, all the curse, all the gall and wormwood was squeezed into Christ's cup, and not one drop left to imbitter ours.

Use 2. Of Exhortation.

Did not God spare his own Son, but give him up to the death for us all! Then possess your hearts fully in the assurance of this great truth, *That the greatest and best of mercies shall not be denied or withheld from you, if you be in Christ*; lay it down as a sure conclusion of faith, and build up your hope and comfort upon it. This takes in the second observation; and surely never was any truth better fortified, never any inference more strongly inferred. Henceforth ye may infer temporal, spiritual, and eternal mercies; all must be yours, if you be Christ's, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. O, make sure that Christ is yours, and never hesitate at any other mercy! For,

First, God hath certainly a value and esteem for his own Son infinitely above all other things: he is his own Son, his dear Son, Col. i. 13. the *Beloved*, Eph. i. 6. the *delight of his soul*, Isa. xlii. 1. Nothing is valued by God at that rate that Christ is valued. If therefore he spare not the most excellent mercy, but parts with the very darling of his soul for us, how shall he deny, or withhold, any lesser inferior mercy? It is not to be imagined, for he is *the mercy*, emphatically so called, Luke i. 72.

Secondly, Jesus Christ is a comprehensive mercy, including all other mercies in himself; he is the tree of life, all other mercies are but the fruits growing on him; he is the *sun of righteousness*; and whatever comfort, spiritual or natural, refreshes your souls or bodies, is but a beam from that sun, a stream from that fountain. If then God part with Christ to you, and for you, he will not withhold other mercies; he will not give the whole tree, and deny an apple; bestow the fountain itself, and deny you the streams. All spiritual mercies are in him, and given with him; Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." All temporals are in him, and given with him, Matth. vi. 33. they are additional to that great mercy.

Thirdly, If God spared not Christ, the best mercy, but delivered him up for us all when we were his enemies, then certainly he will not deny lesser mercies when we are reconciled and made friends to him. And this is the forcible reason of the apostle, which even compels assent; Rom. v. 9. "Much more, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." In a word,

Fourthly, and lastly, If it were the very design and intention of God in not sparing his own Son, to open thereby a door for all mercies to be let in upon us, then it is not imaginable he should withhold them: he will not lose his design, nor lay so many stripes upon Christ in vain: some shall surely have the benefit of it, and none so capable as believers.

When God spared not his own Son, this was the design of it; and could you know the thoughts of his heart, they would appear to be such as these:

I will now manifest the fierceness of my heart to Christ, and the fulness of my love to believers. The pain shall be his, that the ease and rest may be theirs; the stripes his, and the healing balm issuing from them, theirs; the condemnation his, and the justification theirs; the reproach and shame his, and the honour and glory theirs; the curse his, and the blessing theirs; the death his, and the life theirs; the vinegar and gall his, the sweet of it theirs. He shall groan, and they shall triumph; he shall mourn, that they may rejoice; his heart shall be heavy for a time, that theirs may be light and glad for ever; he shall be forsaken, that they may never be forsaken; out of the worst of miseries to him, shall spring the sweetest of mercies to them. O grace! grace beyond conception of the largest mind, the expression of the tongues of angels!

THE SEVENTH
MEDITATION,

UPON MARK ix. 24.

And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

THE occasion of these words is to be gathered from the context: and briefly it was this: A tender father brings a possessed child to Christ to be cured; with *Si potes?* a doubting question, "If thou canst do any thing? have compassion upon us, and help us:" Words importing much natural affection and tender love to his child; "Have compassion [upon us,] and [help us.]" If the child be sick, the parent is not well; what touches the child, is felt by his father.

And as they import his natural affection to his child, so also his own spiritual disease, or the weakness of his faith. His child was

possessed with a dumb devil, and himself with unbelieving doubts and suspicions of Christ's ability to cure his child. The child had a sick body, and the father an infirm soul: Satan afflicted one by a possession, and the other by temptation, ver. 22.

Christ returns his doubtful language upon himself, ver. 23. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth:" q. d. Dost thou doubt of my ability to heal thy child? Question rather thy own ability to believe, for his cure. If he be not healed, the cause will not be in my inability, but in thine own infidelity: Which he speaks not, to insinuate that faith was in his own power, but to convince him of his weakness, and drive him to God for assistance: Which effect it obtained: for immediately he cried out, and said with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

O how good it is for men to be brought into the straits of affliction sometimes! Had not this man fallen into this distress, it is not like that he had (at least not so soon) arrived either to the sense of his grace, or the weakness of it.

In the words we may note these three parts.

First, A profession of his faith; *Lord, I believe.*

Secondly, A sense of the weakness of his faith; *Help thou mine unbelief.*

Thirdly, The affection with which both were uttered; *He cried out and said with tears.* If these tears proceeded from the sense and feeling of divine power, enabling him to believe, as some think, then they were tears of joy, and would inform us of this great truth:

Doct. 1. *That the least and lowest measure of true faith, is matter of joy unspeakable to the possessor of it.*

If they proceeded from the sense of the weakness of his faith, they gave us this note:

Doct. 2. *That the remainders of unbelief in the people of God, do cost them many tears: They are the burdens and sorrows of gracious souls.*

Doct. 1. *That the least and lowest measure of true faith, is matter of joy unspeakable to the possessor of it.*

The apostle, in 2 Pet. i. 1. calls it *precious faith*; and it well deserves that epithet; for the least and lowest degree of saving faith, is of invaluable excellency; as will appear in these particulars:

First, The least degree of saving faith, truly unites the soul to Jesus Christ, and makes it as really a branch and member of him, as Moses, Abraham, or Paul were.

All saving faith receives Christ, John i. 12. Indeed, the strong believer receives him with a stronger and steadier hand than the weak one doth, who staggers, doubts, and trembles, but yet receives him; and consequently is as much interested in the blessed privileges flowing from union, as the greatest believer in the world. Such is Christ's complacency in our persons and duties, his sympathy with us in our troubles and afflictions, and our interest in his person and purchase. And is not this matter of exceeding joy? Is it not enough to melt,

yea, overwhelm the heart of a poor sinner, to discover and feel that in his own heart, which entitles him to such mercies?

Secondly, From the least degree of saving faith, we may infer as plenary a remission of sin, as from the strongest. The weakest believer is as completely pardoned, as the strongest; Acts x. 43. 'By him all that believe are justified from all things.' *All that believe*, without difference of sizes, strength, or degrees; the least as well as the greatest; the believer of a day old, as well as the fathers and worthies of greatest name, and longest standing.

Lo then, the least measure of faith entitles thee as really to the greatest blessing, as the highest acts of faith can do. It is true, the stronger the acting of faith is, the clearer the evidence usually is: but interest in the privilege is the same in both. If then thou canst discern but the weakest act and smallest measure of faith in thy soul, hast thou not reason, with him in the text, to cry out, and say with tears, *Lord, I believe?* Canst thou receive and read this pardon, the pardon of such, and so many sins, and not wet it with thy tears? O, it is matter of joy unspeakable!

Thirdly, The least degree of saving faith infers thy election of God; and if that be not matter of melting and transporting consideration, nothing is. O, it is matter of more joy, that our names *are written in the book of life*, than that the devils are subject to us, Luke x. 20. From hence it may be inferred, that we are chosen of God; Acts xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.'

Fourthly, The least measure of saving faith, is a mercy greater than most men ever partake of.

It is true, God is rich and bountiful in the gifts of providence to others; they have the good things of this life, many of them more than their hearts can wish, Psal. lxxiii. 7. He enricheth many of them also with endowments of the mind, natural and moral knowledge and wisdom; yea, and adorns them with homilical virtues, that render them very desirable and lovely in their converses with men; but there are but few to whom he gives saving faith, Isa. liii. 1. Believers are but a small remnant among men.

Fifthly, and *lastly*, He that hath any, the least degree of saving faith, hath that which will never be taken from him: All other excellencies go away at death, Job iv. 21. but this is a spring that never fails, 'it springs up into everlasting life,' John iv. 14. A man may outlive his friends and familiars, his estate and health, his gifts and natural parts, but not his faith. How great matter of joy and comfort is wrapt up in the least degree of faith!

Use 1. Of trial.

It concerns us then to examine ourselves, whether our faith be true, be it more or less, stronger or weaker; and, until we discern its truth, it will yield but little comfort.

I confess, weak believers are under great disadvantages as to comfort; small and weak things being usually very inevident and undiscernible. But yet, in this example before us, we find weak faith was made evident, though much unbelief was mixed with it. *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* In which words, many very useful signs of true, though weak, faith did appear; and they are very relieving to weak believers, to consider them. O that we might find the like in us!

First, His faith gave him a tender, melting heart. *He cried out, and said with tears.* Doth your faith melt your hearts, either in a sense of your own vileness, or the riches of free grace to such vile creatures?

Secondly, His faith gave him a deep sense of his remaining unbelief, and burdened his heart with it: *Help my unbelief.* And sure so will yours, if it be but as a grain of mustard-seed in you.

Thirdly, His weak faith carried him to Christ, in fervent prayers and cries, for his help to subdue unbelief in him; and so will yours, if your faith be right. O how often do the people of God go to the throne of grace upon that errand! Help, Lord, my heart is dead, vain, and very unbelieving; there is no dealing with it in my own strength: Father, help me!

Fourthly, His weak faith made him hunger and thirst after greater measures of it: *Help my unbelief;* i. e. Lord, cure it, that I may believe with more strong and steady acts of faith; that I may not question thy power any more, or say, *If thou canst do any thing?* Why thus it will be with you, if you be true believers; Luke xvii. 5. 'Lord, (said the disciples) increase our faith.'

Fifthly, There was a conflict in his soul betwixt faith and infidelity, grace and corruption; and this is very sensible to him; faith inclining him one way, and unbelief carrying him another: And hence he speaks like a man greatly distressed, betwixt the working of contrary principles in his own soul (and so you will also find it in yourselves) Gal. v. 17. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

Use 2. Of consolation.

Well then, bless the Lord for the least degree of saving faith; and be not so discouraged at its imperfections, as to overlook and slight the smallest working of faith in your souls. This poor man was deeply sensible of his unbelief, and yet at the same instant truly thankful for a small measure of faith; and so should you, For,

First, the least measure of saving faith, is more than all the creatures power could produce: It is the *faith of the operation of God*, Col. ii. 12. It is *the work of God, that ye believe*, John vi. 29. Yea, it is the *exceeding greatness of his power*, Eph. i. 19, 20. No ministers of Christ, how excellent soever their gifts are, no duties or ordinances, no la-

bour or diligence of your own, without this mighty power of God, can ever bring you to faith.

Secondly, It is the just matter of wonder and astonishment, that ever one spark of faith was kindled in such an heart as thine is; an heart which had no predisposition or inclination in the least to believe: Yea, it was not *Rasa Tabula*, like clean paper, void of any impression of faith, but filled with contrary impressions to it; so that it is marvellous that ever your hearts received the stamp or impression of faith on them.

It was wonderful, that fire should fall from heaven and burn upon the altar, when Elijah had laid the wood in order upon it; but much more when he poured so much water upon it, as not only wet all the wood, but filled the trenches, 1 Kings xviii. 33. Just so was the case of thy soul, reader, when God came to kindle faith there: Thy heart was dark and ignorant, neither acquainted with God, or thy own condition; yea, thy heart was a proud heart, full of self-righteousness, and self-conceitedness, Rev. iii. 17. Rom. x. 3. A heart, that would rather venture eternal damnation, than deny self, and submit to Christ: And yet the light of the Lord must shine into this darkness, and the pride and stiffness of thy heart must be broken, and brought to yield, or there is no believing.

Beside, How many and mighty enemies did oppose the work of faith in thy soul? Among which Satan and thy own carnal reasonings were the principal, 2 Cor. x. 4. By them, what strong-holds and fortifications were raised, to secure thee from the strokes of conviction that make way for faith. Let but the state of thine own heart, as it was by nature, be considered, and thou wilt say, it was the wonderful work of God, that ever thou wast brought in any degree to believe.

Thirdly, Though thy faith be weak, yet it is growing, if it be saving faith. The largest tree was once but a kernel, or acorn; the most famous believer, at first but a weak and doubting one: Be not discouraged therefore, God will fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness in you, and the work of faith with power. It were certainly much better for you to be blessing God for a little faith, praying for the increase of faith, and diligently attending those means by which it may be improved and made flourishing in your souls, than, by a sinful, ungrateful, and prejudicial despondency, at once to dishonour God, and thus wrong yourselves.

Doct. 2. *That the remains of unbelief in gracious hearts do cost them many tears and sorrows.*

There are many things that afflict and grieve the people of God from without; but all their outward troubles are nothing to these troubles that come from within.

There are many inward troubles that make them groan, but none more than this, the unbelief they find in their own hearts. This sin justly costs them more trouble than other sins, because it is the root

from which other sins do spring; a root of bitterness, bearing worm-wood and gall, to the imbittering of their souls. For,

First, The remains of unbelief in the saints, greatly dishonour God; and what is a great dishonour to God, cannot but be a great grief and burden to them: For look, as faith gives God special honour above all other graces, so unbelief, in a special manner, both wrongs and grieves him above all other sins. Unbelief in dominion makes God a liar, 1 John v. 10. And even the relicts thereof in believers, do shake their assent to his truths and promises, and nourish a vile suspicion of them in the heart. And how do those base jealousies reflect upon his honour? Certainly it cannot but be a grief to a gracious heart to see God dishonoured by others. Psal. cxix. 36. and a much greater to dishonour him ourselves. *Hic illac lachrymæ*: Upon this ground, we may justly cry out, and say with tears, *Lord, help our unbelief!*

Secondly, The remains of unbelief in the saints, doth not only dishonour God, but deface and spoil their best duties, in which they at any time approach unto God. Is the face of God clouded from us in prayer, hearing or receiving? Examine the cause and reason, and you will find that cloud raised from your own unbelieving hearts. Are your affections cold, flat, and dead in duty? Dig but to the root, and you will find this sin to lie there. If the word do not work upon you as you desire and pray it might, it is because it is not mingled with faith, Heb. iv. 2. No duties, nor ordinances, no promises, can give down their sweet influences upon your souls, because of this sin. Now communion with the Lord in duties is the life of our life: These things are dearer to the saints, than their eyes. Justly therefore do they bewail and mourn over that sin, which obstructs and intercepts their sweetest enjoyments in this world.

Thirdly, The remains of unbelief give advantage and success to Satan's temptations upon us. Doth he at any time affright and scare us from our duty, or draw and entice us to the commission of sin, or darken and cloud our condition, and fill us with inward fears and horror, without cause? All this he doth, by the meditation of our unbelief. The apostle, in Eph. vi. 16. calls faith the soul's shield against temptation: And 1 John v. 4. it is called *the victory by which we overcome*; i. e. the sword, or weapon, by which we achieve our victories. And if so, then unbelief disarms us both of sword and shield, and leaves us naked of defence in the day of battle, a prey to the next temptation that befalls us.

Fourthly, The remains of unbelief hinder the thriving of all graces; it is a worm at their root: a plant of such malignant quality, that nothing which is spiritual can thrive under the droppings and shadow of it. It is said, Heb. iv. 2. that the gospel was preached to the Israelites, but it did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. No ordinances, nor duties, be they never so excellent, will make that soul to thrive, where unbelief prevails: You pray, you hear, you fast, you meditate; and yet you do not thrive; your spi-

ritual food doth no good: You come from ordinances as dead, careless, and vain, as you went to them. And why is it thus, but because of remaining unbelief?

Use I. Let all the people of God bewail and tenderly mourn over the remainders of infidelity in their own hearts: There, there is the root of the disease. And surely, reader, thy heart is not free of such symptoms of it, as appear in other men's hearts. For do but consider,

Symp. 1. What is our impatience to wait for mercy, and despondency of spirit, if deliverance come not quickly in the outward, or inward straits of soul or body, but a plain symptom of unbelief in our hearts? "He that believes, will not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16. He that can believe, can also wait God's time, Psalm xxvii. 14.

Symp. 2. And what means our readiness to use sinful mediums, to prevent, or extricate ourselves out of trouble, but a great deal of infidelity, lurking still in our hearts? Might but faith be heard to speak, it would say in thy heart, let me rather die ten deaths, than commit one sin. It is sweeter and easier, to die in my integrity, than to live with a defiled, or wounded conscience. It is nothing but our unbelief, that makes us so ready to put forth our hands to iniquity, when the rod of the wicked rests long upon us, or any imminent danger threatens us, Psalm cxxv. 3.

Symp. 3. Doth not the unbelief of your hearts shew itself in your deeper thoughtfulness, and great anxieties about earthly things; Mat. vi. 30. We pretend, we have trusted God with our souls to all eternity, and yet cannot trust him for our daily bread. We bring the evils of to-morrow upon us to-day; and all because we cannot believe more.

O reader! how much better were it to hear such questions as these from thee. How shall I get an heart suitable to the mercies I do enjoy? How shall I duly improve them for God? "What shall I render to the Lord, for all his goodness?" This would better become thee, than to afflict thyself with, "What shall I eat? What shall I drink? Or wherewithal shall I be clothed?"

Symp. 4. What doth the slavish fear of death speak, but remains of unbelief still in our hearts? Are there not many faintings, tremblings, despondencies of mind, under the thoughts of death? Oh! if faith were high, thy spirit could not be so low, 2 Cor. v. 1, 2, 3. The more bondage of fear, the more infidelity.

Symp. 5. To conclude; What is the voice of all those distractions of thy heart in religious duties, but want of faith, weakness in faith, and the actual prevalence of unbelief? You come to God in prayer; and there a thousand vanities beset you: Your heart is carried away: it roves, it wanders to the ends of the earth. Conscience smites for this, and saith, Thou dost but mock God: thy soul will smart for this: Thou feelest neither strength nor sweetness arising out of such duties. You enquire for remedies, and fill the ears of friends with your com-

plaints; and, it may be, see not the root of all this to be in your own unbelief. But there it is; and till that be cured, it will not be better with you.

Use II. Yet let not poor Christians so mourn, as those that have no hope, or ground of comfort, even in this case. For,

First, Though there be remains of unbelief in you, yet you have infinite cause to bless God that they are but remains. You once were in unbelief; 1 Tim. i. 13. i. e. under the full power and dominion of it. Had God cut you off in that state, you must certainly have perished. This is the disease, but that was the death of your souls.

Secondly, Though unbelief be in you, yet it is not in you *per modum quietis*, by way of rest, as it is in all unbelievers: but by way of daily conflict, and as a burden too heavy to be borne. Now though the sin be sad, yet the sorrow for it is sweet; and your conflicts with it bring you under a very comfortable sign of grace, Rom. vii. 12.

Thirdly, This is a disease, under which all Christians do labour more or less. There is not a heart so holy in all the world, but is in some degree tainted and infected with this disease. And this hath been evident, not only in all Christians, of all sizes, but in all the acts of their faith. Job's faith triumphed in chap. xiii. 15. yet had its eclipse and fainting-fit in chap. xix. 20. Abraham was a most renowned believer, a great pattern and example of faith: O how high a pitch did his faith amount to in Gen. xxii. 3. And yet there was a time when it fainted, and failed him, as at Gerar, Gen. xx. 2, 10, 11. David in Psal. xxvii. 1, 23. was not like David in 1 Sam. xxvii. 1. The faith of Peter shone out like the sun, in a glorious confession, Matth. xvi. 16. and yet was not only beclouded, but seemed to be gone down, and quite set, in Matth. xxvi. 69. though it afterwards recovered itself.

Fourthly, It is not this, or that degree of unbelief, that damns a man, but the power and dominion of it, that damns him. Indeed, your comfort depends much upon the strength of your faith; but your salvation depends upon the truth of it. Most Christians come to heaven with a weak and doubting faith; but few, with their sails filled with a direct and fresh wind of assurance.

Fifthly, There is enough in Christ to help thy unbelief; *Lord,* said this poor man, *help my unbelief.* He is an excellent physician, and knows how to relieve and cure thee: Go to him and groan out thy complaint; tell him, thy heart is pained and troubled with this disease; thou shalt find him a faithful, skilful, and merciful Saviour.

Sixthly, It is but a little while, before this, with all other diseases bred by it in thy soul, shall be perfectly healed; sanctification is a cure begun; glorification is a cure performed and completed: The former hath destroyed the dominion, the latter will destroy the existence of it in thy soul: When you come to heaven, and never till then, will you find yourselves well, and at ease in every part.

And thus much of the second point.

There are some general observations arising from both parts of my text considered together, viz. the thankful acknowledgment of his faith, and the sorrowful sense of his unbelief. It shall suffice, for a conclusion to this meditation, only to note them; and they are these;

First, That the deepest sense of sin must not exclude an humble and thankful acknowledgment of the grace of God in his people. It is the fault of most, to hide their sins; and the fault of some to hide their graces.

Secondly, Acceptance of our persons and duties, is a pure act of grace: There is no duty performed in a perfect act of faith; all is mixed with unbelief in some degree, the honey and the comb are mixed together, Cant. ii. 8. No duty as it comes from us is pure.

Thirdly, Justly may we suspect that faith for a false faith, which boasts of its own strength, but never mourns in the sense of unbelief. Where there are no conflicts with sin, there can be no sound evidence of sincerity.

Fourthly, Believers must not wonder to find strange vicissitudes and alterations in the state of their souls: Sometimes a clear, and sometimes a cloudy day: Sometimes they have their songs in the night, and sometimes their bitter lamentations. If you ask, why is it thus? the answer is, there are within you contrary principles struggling in your souls; and it is no wonder at all to find peace and trouble, hope and fear, light and darkness taking their turns, and sharing your time betwixt them.



THE EIGHTH

MEDITATION,

UPON PSALM xl. 8.

I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.

CASTING my eye upon this precious text, I find it perplexed and darkened with variety, yea, contrariety of expositions. The Jews and Socinians generally refer all to David, denying Christ to be the person here spoken of. Others refer the whole Psalm to Christ; but the best expositors refer it partly to David, and partly to Christ. That this paragraph in which my text lies, refers to Christ, is plain from the apostle's allegation of it in Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. In this

and the two former verses there lie three great points of truth, which you may take up in this order.

First, The insufficiency and rejection of all legal sacrifices, as things of no virtue in themselves to satisfy God, or save men, ver. 6. *These thou wouldest not*; i. e. thou never didst appoint them to be the means of salvation, farther than they signified and pointed at me, and now must vanish when I come in a body of flesh; according to that, Col. ii. 17.

Secondly, The introduction of a complete and sufficient means of redemption, ver. 7. *Lo, I come.*

Thirdly, The suitableness and agreeableness of this work of redemption to the heart and will of Jesus Christ, ver. 8. 'I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart;' or, as it is in the Hebrew, *in the midst of my bowels.*

In the words we are to note two things, viz. *1st,* The rise and spring of man's redemption. *2dly,* The acceptableness and suitableness of it to the heart of Christ.

1st, The rise and first spring of man's redemption, the will and pleasure of God. So it pleased the Lord to appoint and order it, that a remnant of poor lost sinners should be saved.

The execution and accomplishment of this good pleasure of God, was that part which by agreement and consent was committed to the Son, and is here called a law, or command laid upon him; and, answerably, the death of Christ is represented as an act of obedience, Phil. ii. 8. and respected God's command for it; John x. 18. 'This commandment have I received from my Father;' referring to the covenant of redemption which was betwixt them from everlasting: And this was the rise and first spring of our redemption by Christ.

2dly, You have here the gratefulness and suitableness of this work to the heart of Christ, *I delight to do it; it is in my heart: Lo, I come.*

The Hebrew words note not simple consent or willingness, but the highest pleasure and complacency that can be; a work which ravishes his soul with the delights of it, *I delight to do thy will*; and that other expression, *Thy law is within my heart*, or bowels, hath as deep a sense and signification as the former; it notes the greatest care, sollicitude, and intention of mind, in keeping the most precious treasure that was committed to him! for so the phrase is used in Prov. iv. 21. and so did our Redeemer esteem and reckon this work, which was by the Father demanded and committed to him. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That the will of God to redeem sinners by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ, was most grateful and pleasing to the very heart of Christ.*

It is said, Prov. viii. 31. When he was solacing himself in the sweetest enjoyment of his Father, whilst he lay in that blessed bosom of delights, yet the very prospect of this work gave him pleasure, *Then were his delights with the sons of men.* And when he was come into the world, and had endured many abuses and injuries, and was

even now come to the most difficult part of the work; yet, *how am I straitened*, or pained, (saith he) *till it be accomplished*, Luke xii. 50.

Two things call our thoughts to stay upon them in this point.

First, The decency of it, why it ought to be so.

Secondly, The reasons of it, whence it came to be so.

First, Why it ought to be a pleasant and grateful thing to Christ to take a body of flesh, and lay it down by death again for the redemption of sinners.

1. It became Christ to go about this work with cheerfulness and delight, that thereby he might give his death the nature and formality of a sacrifice.

In all sacrifices you shall find that God had still a regard, a special respect to the will of the offerer. See Exod. xxxv. 5, 21. and Lev. i. 3. the voluntariness and cheerfulness with which it is given, is of great regard with God.

2. It ought to be so, in regard of the unity of Christ's will, with the Father's. The work of our redemption is called *the pleasure of the Lord*, Isa. liii. 10. and what was the Father's pleasure, could not be displeasing to him who is one with the Father. It is impossible their wills can clash, whose nature is one.

3. This was necessary to magnify and commend the love of Jesus Christ to us, for whom he gave himself. That he came into the world to die for us, is a mercy of the first magnitude, but that he came in love to our souls, and underwent all his sufferings with such willingness for our sakes, this heightens it above all apprehension. O, this is the most taking, the most ravishing, the most astonishing consideration of all: 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. ii. 20. 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,' Rev. i. 5. Here love is in its highest exaltation.

4. It was necessary to be so, for the regulating of all our obedience to God according to this pattern, that seeing and setting this great example of obedience before us, we might never grudge nor grumble at any duty or suffering that God should call us to: 'You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; how, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor,' saith the apostle, when he would press the Corinthians to their duty, 2 Cor. viii. 9. And when he would effectually urge the Philippians to their duty, this is the argument, 'Let this mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus,' Phil. ii. 5. So that it became and behoved Christ thus to undertake this great service.

Secondly, Next let us consider and examine whence it came to be so pleasant and acceptable to Jesus Christ, to come into the world and die for poor sinners.

And we shall find although the sufferings of Christ were exceeding sharp, and the cup of God's wrath unspeakably bitter, yet that which made it pleasant and desirable to Jesus Christ was the prospect he had of the sweet results and issues of his sufferings, Isa. liii. 10, 11.

‘He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied,’ (i. e.) he shall have great content and pleasure from the issues and fruits of his sufferings, as Psal. cxxviii. 2. ‘Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hands,’ (i. e.) the fruit of thy labours. So here, ‘He shall see the travail of his soul,’ (i. e.) the fruit and effects of his travail; and to see this shall be to him the reward and recompence of all his sufferings. Now, among the sweet results of the sufferings of Christ there are especially these three, which he foresaw with singular content and delectation.

First, That in his sufferings there would be made a glorious display and manifestation of the divine attributes; yea, such a glorious display of them, as was never made before to angels or to men, nor ever shall be any more in this world. For though,

1. The wisdom of God had made itself visible to men in the creation of the world, yet there it shone but in a faint and languishing beam, compared with this. Here divine wisdom put itself as it were into a visible form, and represented itself to the life. See 1 Cor. i. 24. and Eph. iii. 10. Behold, in the death of Christ, the wisdom of God in its highest exaltation and glory: O the manifold wisdom of God! O the depth of his unsearchable wisdom! which I touched in some particulars before.

Behold here the wisdom of God, raising more glory to himself by occasion of the breach of the law, than could ever have risen to him from the most punctual observation of its commands, or the most rigorous execution of its threatenings; from the occasion of the fall, which was our undoing, raising us to a far better estate, and with a much better security to enjoy it, than that from which we fell. Yea, behold and wonder, God by the death of Christ recovering his elect from all the danger and mischief of sin, and yet making the way and manner of their recovery the fairest glass to represent the horror and evil of sin to them, that ever was shewn them in this world. Oh, the triumph of divine wisdom.

2. Though the love of God had appeared before in our creation, protection, and provision, yet nothing to what it doth in our redemption by the death of Christ. Lo, here is the love of God in its strength and glory, 1 John iv. 10. ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.’ *Herein is love*, i. e. Here is the highest expression of God’s love to the creature; not only that ever was, but that ever can be made; for in love only God acted to the uttermost; whatever his power hath done, it can do more; but for his love, it can go no higher, he hath no greater thing to give than his Christ. It is true, in giving us a being, and that in the noblest rank and order of creatures on earth, herein was love. In feeding us all our life long by his assiduous tender providence, herein is love. In protecting us under his wings from innumerable dangers and mischiefs, herein is love: much love; and yet set all this by his redeeming love in Christ,

and it seems nothing. When we have said all, ‘herein is the love of God, that he sent his Son,’ &c. This was free love to undeserving, to ill-deserving sinners: preventing love; not that we loved him, but that he loved us. Just as an image in the glass, saith Facinus, that is imprinted there by the face looking into it; the image does not look back upon the face, except the face look forward upon the image; and in that the image doth seem to see the face, it is nothing else but that the face does see the image. O the inexpressible glory of the love of God in Christ!

3. Though God had given several sad marks of his justice before, both upon the angels that fell, clapping upon them the chains of darkness; in the overthrow of Sodom and the neighbouring cities, turning them to ashes, as you may read in Jude, ver. 6, 7. yet never was the exactness and severity of justice so manifested before, nor ever shall be any more, as it was at the death of Christ. Christ did not only satisfy it fully, but he also honoured it highly, making that attribute which was once a bar, now to be a bottom of our peace, Rom. iii. 25. Never did such a person as Christ stand at the bar of justice before: the blood of God was poured out to appease and satisfy it. When Christ suffered, he did both give and take satisfaction; he gave it to the justice of God in dying; he took it, in seeing justice so honoured in his death.

Secondly, Another delightful prospect Christ had of the fruit of his sufferings, was the recovery and salvation of all the elect by his death; and though his sufferings were exceeding bitter, yet such fruit of them as this was exceeding sweet: upon this account he assumed his name Jesus, Mat. i. 21. yea, and his human nature also, Gal. iv. 4, 5. Souls are of great value in his eyes: one soul is of more worth in his account than all the world, Mark viii. 36. What a pleasure then must it be to him, to save so many souls from the everlasting wrath of the great and terrible God! Add to this,

Thirdly, The glory which would redound to him from his redeeming ones to all eternity; for it will be the everlasting pleasant employment of the saints in heaven, to be ascribing glory, praise, and honour, to the Redeemer: “To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever,” Rev. i. 5, 6. The improvement of all this will be in a word or two.

Use 1. for conviction.

This truth then, in the first place, may convince, shame, and humble the very best of Christians, who find so little delight in the most easy, sweet, and spiritual duties of obedience, when Christ undertook and went through the most difficult task for them with such cheerfulness and readiness. “Lo, I come, thy law is in my heart, I delight to do thy will;” and yet the work he so applied himself to, was a work

full of difficulty, attended with reproach and shame, as well as anguish and pain.

Did Christ find pleasure in abasement and torment, in suffering and dying for me, and can I find no pleasure in praying, hearing, meditating, and enjoying the sweet duties of communion with him? Did he come so cheerfully to die for me, and do I go so dead-heartedly to prayers and sacraments, to enjoy fellowship with him? Was it a pleasure to him to shed his blood, and is it none to me to apply it, and reap the benefits of it? Oh, Lord, what an heart have I? How unsuitable is this frame of heart to the nature of God, whose essential excellencies make him the supreme delight, the sweet repose, solace, and rest of souls! Psalm xvi. 11.

How unsuitable to the principles of regeneration and holiness, purposely planted in the soul, to make spiritual performances a pleasure to it!

How unsuitable to the future expected state of glory, which brings the sanctified soul to a sweet complacential rest and satisfaction in God! In a word, how unsuitable is this temper of spirit to the heart of Jesus Christ! O, methinks I hear Christ thus expostulating with me this day:

Is this thy zeal and delight in the duties of obedience? Is it rather the awe of conscience than the pleasure of communion that brings thee to this duty? Doth thy hard heart need so many arguments to persuade it, even to the sweetest, easiest, and most pleasant duties in religion? Well, I did not love thee at that rate; my heart readily echoed to the Father's call, to die for thee, to drink the very dregs of the cup of trembling for thee. "I come, I come, I delight to do thy will, thy law is in the midst of my bowels."

2. Use, of exhortation.

If it be so, how great a motive have the people of God before them, to make them apply themselves with all cheerfulness and readiness of mind to all the duties of active and passive obedience! O, let there be no more grumblings, lazy excuses, shiftings of duty, or dead-hearted and listless performances of them, after such an example as this. Be ready to do the will of God; yea, be ye also ready to suffer it. Let the same mind be in you, which also was in Christ Jesus. The more pleasure and delight you find in doing or suffering the will of God, the more of Christ's spirit is in you, and the more of his image is upon you. Are not all holy duties expressed in scripture by the saints walking with God? Gen. xvii. 1. And is not this an angelical life? Can it be a burden to the ear to hear sweet ravishing strains of melody; or to the eye, to behold variety of pleasant and lively colours; or to the palate, to relish the delicious sweetness of meats and drinks?

Oh, reader, were thy heart more spiritual, more deeply sanctified, and heavenly, it would be no more pain to thee to pray, hear, or meditate on the things of God, than it is to a bird to carry and use his

own wings; or to a man, to eat the most pleasant food when he is an hungry; "I have rejoiced (saith David,) in the way of thy commandments, as much as in all riches," Psal. cxix. 14.

And as to sufferings for Christ, they should not be grievous to Christians, that know how Christ came from the bosom of the Father to die for them. What have we to leave or lose, in comparison with him? What are our sufferings to Christ's? Alas, there is no compare; there was more bitterness in one drop of his sufferings, than in a sea of ours.

To conclude, Your delight and readiness in the paths of obedience, is the very measure of your sanctification.

THE NINTH
MEDITATION,

UPON ZECH. xii. part of ver. 10.

And they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.

THIS promise is confessed to have a special respect to the Jews conversion to Christ: It was in part accomplished in the apostles days, Acts ii. 37. yet that was but a specimen or handsel, of what shall be, when the body of that nation shall be called.

But yet it cannot be denied, that all Christians find the same piercing sorrows, and wounding sense of sin, when God awakens them by convictions, and brings them to see the evil of sin, and the grace of Christ, that is here expressed concerning them at their conversion.

The words present us with three very remarkable particulars in evangelical repentance; viz.

First, The spring and principle of it.

Secondly, The effects and fruits of it.

Thirdly, The depth and measure of it.

First, The spring and principle of repentance, expressed in these words, *They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced.* This looking upon Christ, is an act of faith; for so it is described in scripture, John vi. 40. Isa. xlv. 22. and it respects Christ crucified, as its proper object: Yea, and that by them, not only as their progenitors involved them in that guilt, by entailing it on them, but as their own sins were

the meritorious cause of his *death* and *sufferings*; *they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced.*

Secondly, The effects and fruits of such an aspect of faith upon Christ, is here also noted; *They shall mourn and be in bitterness*: i. e. it shall melt and thaw them into godly sorrow; it shall break their hard and stony hearts in pieces: The eye of faith shall affect their hearts. For indeed, evangelical sorrows are hearty and undissembled tears, dropping out of the eye of faith.

Thirdly, and lastly, The depth and measure of their sorrow is here likewise noted. And it is compared with the greatest and most piercing sorrows men are acquainted with in this world, even the sorrow of a tender-hearted Father, mourning over a dead son, yea, an only son, and his first-born; than which no earthly sorrow is more penetrating and sharp; Jer. vi. 26. Hence the note will be,

Doct. That the sufferings of Christ are exceedingly powerful, to melt believers' hearts into godly sorrow.

The eye of faith is a precious eye; and according to its various aspects upon Christ, it produceth various effects upon the hearts of men. Eyeing Christ as our complete righteousness; so it pacifies and quiets the heart: Eyeing him as our pattern; so it directs and regulates our actions: Eyeing him as a sacrifice offered up to divine justice for our sin; so it powerfully thaws the heart, and melts the affections.

By meltings, I do not only understand tears; as if they only were expressive of all spiritual sorrow: For it is possible, the waters of sorrow may run deep in the heart, when the eye cannot yield a drop.

There be two things in repentance; trouble and tears. The first is essential, the last contingent. The first flows from the influence of faith upon the soul; the last much depends upon the temper and constitution of the body. It is a mercy, when our tears can flow from a heart filled with sorrow for sin, and love to Christ; yet it often falls out, that there is an heavy heart, where the eyes are dry. But that there is efficacy in faith to melt the heart, by looking upon the sufferings of Christ for sin, is undoubted: And how it becomes so powerful an instrument to this end, I will shew you in the following particulars.

First, Faith eyes the dignity of the person of Christ, who was pierced for us; how excellent and glorious a person he is. In the captivity, it was for a lamentation, that "princes were hanged up by the hands, and the faces of elders were not honoured," Lam. v. 12. We read also the lamentation of David, 2 Sam. iii. 38. as he followed Abner's hearse, "A prince, and a great man, is fallen in Israel to-day."

But what was Abner, and what were the princes of Israel to the Son of God? Lo, here, by faith, the believer sees the Prince of the kings of the earth, the only begotten of the Father, equal to God, in nature and dignity, He, whom all the angels worship, hanging dead

upon the cursed tree. Faith sees royal blood, the blood of God poured out by the sword of justice, for satisfaction and reconciliation; and this cannot but deeply affect the believing soul.

Secondly, Faith represents the severity of divine justice to Jesus Christ, and the extremity of his sufferings; and this sight is a melting sight.

The apostle tells us, Gal. iii. 13. he was made *κατάρα*, a curse and execration for us. It relates to the kind and manner of his death upon the cross, which was the death of a slave; *servile supplicium*: A freeman was privileged from that punishment. It looks upon, and well considers the sad plight and condition Christ was in, in the days of his humiliation for us. It is said of him, Matth. xxvi. 28. He was *Περγυπτος*, *undequaque tristis*, surrounded with griefs; exactly answerable to his name, Isa. liii. 3. *a man of sorrows*. Let him look which way he would, outward or inward, upward or downward, to friends or enemies; he could behold nothing but sorrow, and what might increase his misery. Another *evangelist* saith, he was *sore amazed*; Mark xiv. 33. *Ἐθαμβήσασαι*: It notes such a consternation, as makes the hair of the head stand upright; *Horripilatio*. A third tells us, his *soul was troubled*, John xii. 27. *ἡ ψυχὴ μὲν ταρασσάται*, *unde tartarus*, a word from whence hell is derived; and denoting the anguish and troubles of them that are in that place of torment.

And the fourth tells us, he was in an agony; Luke xxiii. 44. all expressing in several emphatical notions and metaphors, the extremity of Christ's anguish and torment. This cannot but greatly affect and break the believer's heart.

Thirdly, But then that which most affects the heart, is Christ's undergoing all this, not only in love to us, but in our room and stead. He suffered not for any evil he had done, for there was no guile found in his mouth, Isa. liiii. 4, 5. But the just suffered for the unjust, 1 Pet. iii. 18. It was for me, a vile, wretched, worthless sinner. It was my pride, my earthliness, the hardness of my heart, the corruption of my nature, the innumerable evils of my life, that brought him down to the dust of death: 'He was made sin for us, who knew no sin,' 2 Cor. v. 21.

Who can believingly eye Christ, as suffering such pains, such wrath, such a curse, in the room of such a sinner, such a rebel, so undeserving, and so ill-deserving a creature, and not mourn as for an only son, and be in bitterness as for a first-born?

Fourthly, Faith melts the heart, by considering the effects and fruits of the sufferings of Christ, what great things he hath purchased by his stripes and blood for poor sinners; a full and final pardon of sin, a well-settled peace with God, a sure title and right to the eternal inheritance; and all this for thee, a law condemned, a self-condemned sinner. Lord, what an I, that such mercies as these should be purchased by such a price for me? For me, when thousands and ten

thousands of sweeter dispositions must burn in hell for ever! Oh, what manner of love is this!

Fifthly, Faith melts the heart, by exerting a threefold act upon Christ crucified:

1st, A realizing act, representing all this in the greatest certainty and evidence that can be. These are no devised fables, but the sure and infallible reports of the gospel.

2dly, An applying act; 'He loved me, and gave himself for me,' Gal. iii. 20. 'He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,' Rev. i. 5.

3dly, and *lastly*, By an inferring or reasoning act. If Christ died for me, then I shall never die: If his blood were paid down for me, then my sins, which are many, are forgiven me: If he was condemned in my room, I am acquitted, and shall be saved from wrath to come, through him. O how weighty do these thoughts prove to believing souls!

1. Use, for information.

Then sure there is but little faith, because there is so much deadness and unaffectedness among professors. A believing sight of Christ will work upon a gracious heart, as a dead son, a beloved and only son, uses to do upon a tender father's heart.

Reader, was it ever thy sad lot to look upon such an heart-rending object? Didst thou ever feel the pangs and commotions in thy bowels that some have felt upon such a sight? Why, so will thy heart work towards Christ, if ever thou believingly lookest on him whom thou hast pierced.

Infer. 2. Then the acting and exercising of faith is the best expedient to get a tender heart, and raise the dead affections.

We are generally full of complaints, how hard, how dead and stupid our hearts are; we are often putting such cases as these, how shall I get a heart broken for sin? How shall I raise my dead heart in duty? Why this is the way, no expedient in all the world like this; look upon him whom thou hast pierced; it is the melting argument.

2. Use, of examination.

But that which I especially aim at in this point, is for the trial and examination of thy heart, reader, in the point of true evangelical repentance, which is thy proper business at this time; and I will go no further than the text for rules to examine and try it by.

Rule 1. All evangelical repentance hath a supernatural spring, 'I will pour out the Spirit of grace, and they shall mourn.' Till the Spirit be poured out upon us, it is as easy to press water out of a rock, as to make our hearts relent and mourn. There are indeed

natural meltings, the effects of an ingenuous temper, but these differ in kind and nature from godly sorrow.

Rule 2. Godly sorrows are real, sincere, and undissembled; they ‘shall mourn, as for an only son.’

Parents need not any natural helps to draw tears on such accounts; O! their very hearts are pierced, they could even die with them; sighs, groans, and tears, are not hanged out as false signs of what is not to be found in their hearts.

Rule 3. Evangelical sorrow is very deep; so much the mourning for an only son, a first-born, must import. These waters, how still soever they be, run deep, very deep, in the bottom channel of the soul. See Acts ii. 37. *They were cut to the heart.*

Rule 4. Faith is the instrument employed in breaking the heart; ‘they shall look, and mourn.’ This is the burning-glass that contracts the beams, and fires the affections.

Rule 5. Lastly, The wrong sin hath done to God, and the sufferings it hath brought Christ under, are the piercing and heart-wounding considerations: ‘They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and mourn.’ The piercing of Christ by our sin, is that which must pierce thy soul with sorrow.



THE TENTH

MEDITATION,

UPON JOHN vi. 55.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

IN the context our Lord Jesus Christ makes a most spiritual and excellent discourse to the Jews, about the nature and necessity of faith in him; taking the occasion thereof from the bread, which a little before he had so miraculously multiplied and fed them with; raising up their minds to more sublime and spiritual things, and letting them know that bread, how sweet soever it was, was but a shadow of himself, infinitely more sweet and necessary.

These words are a proposition, in which are these three things observable:

First, The subject; my flesh and my blood.

Secondly, The predicate; it is meat and drink.

Thirdly, The manner of predication; it is meat indeed, and drink indeed.

First, The subject ; my flesh and blood, i. e. my humanity : this is meat and drink, true spiritual food. If it be demanded, why he had not said, I am meat and drink indeed ; but rather chuses to say, my flesh and blood is so ? The reason is evident, saith learned Camero ; because if you take away flesh and blood from Christ, he cannot be food or life to us : for, in order to his being so, he must satisfy God for us, and obtain the remission of our sins ; but without shedding of blood there is no remission. Now, forasmuch as by the offering up of his body, and shedding of his blood, he hath obtained pardon and life for us ; therefore his flesh and his blood, is called our meat and our drink, that by which our souls live. Which brings us to the second thing :

Secondly, The predicate ; it is meat and drink : i. e. It is to our souls of the same use and necessity, that meat and drink are to our natural life, which cannot be sustained, or continued without them.

The life of our souls as necessarily depends upon the flesh and blood of Christ, as our natural life doth upon meat and drink. Yet beware of a mistake here : the flesh and blood, or the humanity of Christ, is not the fountain of our spiritual life, but the channel rather through which it flows to us from his divinity. By reason of his incarnation and death, righteousness and life came to us.

Thirdly, The manner of predication is very emphatical ; it is ‘meat indeed, and drink indeed.’ Which notes two things :

First, Reality, in opposition to all legal shadows and types.

Secondly, Transcendent excellency, far surpassing all other food, even manna itself, which, for its excellency, is stiled *angels food*. ‘My flesh is meat indeed,’ i. e. true, substantial, and real food to souls, and choice, excellent, and incomparable food. Hence observe,

Doct. That what meat and drink is to our bodies, that, and much more than that, the flesh and blood of Christ is to believing souls.

Two things require explication on this point. *First*, Wherein the resemblance, or agreement lies, betwixt the flesh and blood of Christ, and meat and drink ? *Secondly*, Wherein the former transcends and excels the latter ?

1. *Query*. Wherein lies the resemblance and agreement between the flesh and blood of Christ, and material meat and drink ?

Sol. The agreement is manifest in the following particulars.

First, Meat and drink is necessary to support natural life ; we cannot live without it. Upon this account, bread is called the staff and stay ; i. e. the support of the natural spirits, which do as much lean and depend upon it, as a feeble man doth upon his staff ; Isa. iii. 1. But yet how necessary soever it be, the flesh and blood of Christ is more indispensibly necessary for the life of our souls ; John vi. 53. ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.’ Our souls have more absolute need of peace and

pardon by Christ, than our bodies have of meat and drink. Better our bodies were starved and famished, than our souls damned and lost for ever.

Secondly, Meat and drink are ever most sweet and desirable, to those that are hungry and thirsty. It is hunger and thirst, that gives value and estimation to meat and drink; Prov. xxvii. 7. 'To the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet;' and so it is in our esteem of Christ; John vii. 37. 'If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. When God, by illumination and conviction, makes men deeply sensible of their miserable, lost, and perishing condition; then ten thousand worlds for Christ. All is but dung and dross, in comparison of the excellency of Christ Jesus.

Thirdly, Meat and drink must undergo an alteration, and lose its own form, before it actually nourishes the body. The corn is ground to pieces in the mill, before it be made bread to nourish us. And Christ must be ground betwixt the upper and nether millstone of the wrath of God, and malice of men, to be made bread for our souls. The prophet saith, Isa. lii. 14. *His visage is marred more than any man's*. He did not look like himself, the beauty and glory of heaven; but the reproach of men, and despised of the people. Oh what an alteration did his incarnation and sufferings make upon him! Phil. ii. 6, 7. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!*

Fourthly, Natural food must be received into our bodies, and have a natural union with them; and Christ must be received into our souls, and have a spiritual union with them by faith; or else we can have no nourishment, or benefit by him. An empty profession, a mere talkative religion, nourishes the inner man, just as much as the sight of meat, and our commending of it, doth our outward man. It is Christ's dwelling in our hearts by faith, Eph. iii. 17. our receiving of him, John i. 12. our eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, John vi. 53. i. e. The effectual application of Christ to our souls by faith, that makes us partakers of his benefits.

Fifthly, Meat and drink must be taken every day, or else natural life will languish; and spiritual life will never be comfortably maintained in us, without daily communion with Jesus Christ. If a gracious soul neglect, or be interrupted in its course of duties, and stated times of prayer; it will be quickly discernible by the Christian himself, in the deadness of his own heart; and by others also, in the barrenness of his discourses. And in these things stands the analogy, and agreement of the flesh and blood of Christ, with meat and drink.

2. *Query*. The next thing is to open the transcendent excellency of *Christ's flesh and blood*, above all other food in the world. And this appears in four particulars.

First, This flesh and blood was assumed into the nearest union with the second person in the blessed Trinity, and so is not only dignified above all other created beings, but becomes the first receptacle of all

grace, intended to be communicated through it to the children of men; John i. 14.

Secondly, This flesh and blood of Christ was offered up to God, as the great sacrifice for our sins, and purchase of our peace; Col. i. 20. Eph. v. 2. and so it is of inestimable price and value to believers. The human nature of Christ was the sacrifice, the divine nature was the altar on which it was offered up, and by which it was dignified and sanctified, and made an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God, Eph. v. 2.

Thirdly, This flesh and blood of Christ, is the great *medium* of conveyance of all blessings and mercies to the souls and bodies of believers. It lies as a vast pipe at the fountain-head of blessings, receiving and conveying them from God to men; Col. i. 14, 19.

So then, it being united to the second person, and so become the flesh and blood of God; it being the sacrifice offered up to God for atonement and remission of sins, and the medium of conveying all grace and mercy from God to the fountain, to the souls and bodies of believers: how sweet a relish must it have upon the palate of faith? Here faith may taste the sweetness of a pardon; a full, free, and final pardon of sin; than which nothing in this world can be sweeter to a sin-burning conscience.

Here it tastes the incomparable sweetness of peace with God, *a peace which passeth understanding*: The breach sin made, is by this sacrifice made up for ever; Col. i. 20.

Here it tastes the inexpressible sweetness of acceptation with God, and an interest in his favour; a mercy, which a poor convinced soul would give ten thousand worlds for, were it to be purchased. Yea, here it relisheth all the sweet promises in the covenant of grace, as confirmed and ratified by this sacrifice; Heb. ix. 5. So that well might he say, 'My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed;' the most excellent New Testament food for believers.

I. *Use, of Information.*

First, See here the love of a Saviour, that heavenly *pelican*, who feeds us with his own flesh and blood. You read, Lam. iv. 10. of pitiful women, who eat the flesh of their own children; but where have you read of men or women, that gave their own flesh and blood for meat and drink to their children? Think on this, you that are so loth to cross and deny your flesh for Christ: He suffered his flesh to be rent, and his blood set abroad for you: What love like the love of Christ!

Secondly, Learn hence a ground of content, in the lowest and poorest condition allotted to any believer in this world. It may be some of you live low in the world; you have hard fare, and are abridged of many of those sweet comforts in the creature, which the enemies of God abound in: But still remember you have no cause to envy

their dainties, and be dissatisfied with your own lot and portion; when not many nobles, or mighty in the world, feed as your souls do feed. O what a feast have you! What dainties do your souls taste by faith; whilst others do but feed upon ashes and husks? What is the flesh of lambs and calves out of the stall, to the flesh of Christ? Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. What is wine in bowls, and the chief ointment, to the blood of Christ, and the anointings of his Spirit? O to be satisfied with your outward lot, however God hath cast it, whilst he hath dealt so bountifully with your souls.

Thirdly, Learn hence the necessity of faith, in order to the livelihood and subsistence of our souls. What is a feast to him that cannot taste it? And what is Christ to him that cannot believe? That cannot, by faith, eat his flesh, and drink his blood?

It is not the preparation made for souls in Christ, but the application of him by faith, that gives us the sweetness and benefit of him. Faith is the soul's mouth, or palate: The unbeliever tastes no sweetness in Christ; he can relish more sweetness in money, meat, drink, carnal mirth, or any sensual enjoyment than in Christ.

Fourthly, How excellent are gospel ordinances? What sweetness is there to be found in them by true believers? For there Christ is prepared, and, as it were, served in for them to feed upon. It is your minister's work, to prepare for you all the week long, and to furnish for you *a feast of fat things*. Lo here is a table spread and furnished this day, with the costliest dainties that heaven affords! O prize these mercies: sit not here with flat, or wanton appetites, lest God call to your enemies, and bid them take away.

II. Use of exhortation.

Is the flesh and blood of Christ meat and drink indeed? Then let me exhort you, brethren.

First, To come to this table with sharp and hungry appetites. Have you ever *tasted*, *That the Lord is gracious*? And do you not hunger and thirst, to *taste* it again? Surely, "Where the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered;" Matth. xxiv. 28. There is a twofold appetite; a dainty, and an hungry appetite. Beware of a nice and dainty appetite, that can relish nothing in the most solid and spiritual duties, except the dish be garnished with flowers of rhetoric, or the matter served in with art and elegance. This hath been the great sin of the professors of this generation. O Christians! no more of that I pray you. Were you really an hungered and athirst for Christ, you would come to his ordinances, as famishing men to a feast.

Secondly, To feed heartily upon Christ, in every ordinance, and in every sacrament especially. O that your souls might hear, and answer that invitation this day! Cant. v. 1. 'Eat, O friends: drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.'

For motives, I will only hint these three following.

First, Christ is the matter of the feast. God hath prepared him

for your souls. Is any thing in heaven or earth so sweet, as Christ sacrificed is? Do not the angels and saints in heaven feast upon him? Surely one drop of Christ's blood hath more sweetness and excellency in it, than the whole ocean of all creature-comforts.

Secondly, Do not your graces need it? Have you not a languishing love, a staggering faith, dull and sluggish desires? Look into your hearts, and see what need there is of *strengthening the things that are in you, which are ready to die*. O feed upon Christ, that your graces may be revived and strengthened.

Thirdly, Do you know how many days you are to go in the strength of this meal? How long it may be, ere you sit again at the Lord's table? Surely, even these, as well as your inferior temporal comforts, stand upon terms of greatest uncertainty. Ah Christians! consider well the times you live in, the enemy that stands ready to take away the cloth, and remove your spiritual food from you. It is said of Peter Martyr, that being in Oxford when queen Mary came in, and hearing the first mass-bell ring; he was struck to the heart, and said, *Hæc una notula omnem meam doctrinam evertit*: This one tinkling bell overthrows all the labours of my ministry at once.

God grant that we may hear none of that music in England any more: but it is like to be, according to your estimation and improvement of Christ's precious ordinances.

Thirdly, *Commend the experienced sweetness of Christ to others*. Do not conceal his loveliness and excellency. Thus the fair and enamoured spouse charges, or adjures others; Cant. v. 9. Be not content to feast upon Christ alone, whilst other souls are starving, and perhaps the souls of your dear natural relations. Say to them, as David, Psal. xxxiv. 8. 'O taste and see how good the Lord is.'

Fourthly, and *lastly*, *See that your appetite to Christ be right, and truly spiritual*. Such an hunger and thirst, upon which blessedness is entailed by promise. And you may conclude it so, when,

First, It is a sharp and strong appetite, Psal. xlii. 1. Let your thoughts run upon Christ night and day; even continually.

Secondly, When it is an universal appetite, after every thing in Christ; his holiness, as well as his righteousness; his commands, as well as his promises; for *he is altogether lovely*, Cant. v. 16.

Thirdly, When it is a continued appetite. I mean not, that the pulse of your desires should keep an even stroke at all times, but that there be real and sincere workings of heart after him always; Psal. cxix. 20.

Fourthly, When it is an industrious appetite, awakening the soul to the use of all means, and practice of all duties, in order to satisfaction; Psal. xxvii. 4. 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after.'

Fifthly, and *lastly*, It is then a right, when it is an insatiable appetite, never to be allayed with any thing beside Christ; Psal. lxxiii.

25. no, nor with Christ himself, till thou comest to the full enjoyment of him in heaven. The believer knows, how sweet soever his communion with Christ is in this world, yet that communion he shall have with Christ in heaven, will far excel it: there it will be more intimate and immediate, 1 Cor. xii. 12. more full and perfect, even to satisfaction, Psal. xvii. 15. more constant and continued, not suffering such interruptions as it doth here, Rev. xxi. 25. more pure and unmixed; here our corruptions work with our graces, Rom. vii. 21. but there grace shall work alone: in a word, more durable and perpetual; we shall *be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 7. Long therefore to *drink that new wine in the Father's kingdom*. 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth, say, Come. Even so, come Lord Jesus; come quickly.'



THE ELEVENTH
MEDITATION,

UPON CANT. viii. 6.

Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

THIS book is a sacred allegory: the sense thereof is deep and spiritual. Our unacquaintedness with such schemes and figures of speech, together with the want of spiritual light and experience, makes it difficult to be understood; but the allegory being once unfolded by reason of its affinity with the fancy, truth is more easily and affectingly transmitted, both to the mind and heart.

St. Augustin assigns this reason, why we are so much delighted with metaphors and allegories; because they are so much proportioned to our senses, with which our reason hath contracted an intimacy and familiarity: and therefore God, to accommodate his truth to our capacity, doth, as it were, embody it in earthly expressions; according to that of the ancient Cabbalists, *Lumen supremum nunquam descendit sine idumento*; heavenly truth never descendeth to us without its veil and covering.

The words before us, are the request of the spouse to Jesus Christ; and consists of two parts, viz.

1. Her suit; which is earnest.
2. Her argument; which is weighty.

1. Her earnest suit, or request to Jesus Christ: 'Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm.' The heart of Christ notes his most dear, inward, and tender affection; his arm notes his protecting and preserving care and power. The last naturally follows the first; what men dearly affect, they tenderly and carefully protect.

And by *setting her as a seal upon his heart and arm*, she means a sure and a well-confirmed interest, both in his love and power; this she would have firmly sealed and ratified: and that this is her meaning, will plainly appear from

The argument with which she enforces her request: 'For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave,' &c.

By jealousy, we must understand her fears and suspicions of coming short of Christ and his love; q. d. What if after all I should be deceived? What if Jesus Christ do not love me with a special love? O these fears and suspicions are intolerable torments to her; she cannot bear them: they are cruel as the grave; insufferable as coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame; q. d. Lord, if thou leave me in the midst of these jealousies of thy love, I shall be but a torment to myself; I shall live as one upon the rack, or in the flames. Hence the note is,

Doct. *That there is nothing in this world, which true Christians more earnestly desire, than to be well assured and satisfied of the love of Jesus Christ to their souls.*

In the meditation of this point, two things must be enquired into:

1. Why this assurance is so desirable.

2. How it may be obtained.

1. Why the assurance of the love of Christ is so desirable in the eyes of true Christians. And among others, there are two things that especially make it so: viz.

1. The sweetness of its enjoyment.

2. The difficulty of its attainment.

The sweetness of its enjoyment, which is inexpressible, and inconceivable; for it is a mercy above all estimation. It is,

1. The riches of faith.

2. The rest and ease of the heart.

3. The pleasure of life.

4. A cordial at death.

5. A sweet support in all troubles.

1. It is the very riches of faith, the most pleasant fruit which grows upon the top branches of faith. The scripture tells us of an assurance of understanding, hope, and faith. All these graces are precious in themselves; but the assurance of each of them is the most sweet and pleasant part. Knowledge, above knowledge, is the full assurance of knowledge: hope above hope, is the full assurance of hope: and faith above faith, is the full assurance of faith. The least and lowest act of saving faith is precious, and above all value; what then must the highest and most excellent acts of faith be? Certainly,

there is a sweetness in the assurance of faith, that few men have the privilege to taste; and they that do, can find no words able to express it to another's understanding. The weakest Christian is exalted above all other men; but the assured Christian hath a preference before all other Christians.

2. It is heart's ease; the very sabbath and sweet repose of the soul. Thousands of poor Christians would part with all they possess in this world, to enjoy it; but it flies from them. The life that most of them live, is a life betwixt hopes and fears; their interest in Christ is very doubtful to them. Sometimes they are encouraged, from sensible workings of grace; then all is dashed again, by the contrary stirrings and workings of their own corruptions. Now the sun shines out clear, by and by the heavens are overcast and clouded again: but the assured Christian is at rest, from those tormenting fears and jealousies which my text speaks of, that are as cruel as the grave, and as insufferable as coals of fire in a man's bosom. He can take Christ into the arms of faith, and say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his. Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!'

3. It is the pleasure of life; yea, the most rational, pure, and transporting pleasure. What is life without pleasure? And what pleasure is there in the world, comparable to this pleasure? For let the sealed and assured believer consider, and compare; and he must needs find a joy and pleasure, beyond the joy of the whole earth. If he consider well what he is assured of, it is no common mercy, but Christ himself, and his love; a mercy incomprehensible by men or angels; Eph. iii. 19. Put Christ into the sensible possession of a believer, and joy is no more under his command for that time: he cannot forbear to rejoice; and especially when his thoughts are exercised in comparing states and conditions; either his own with other men's, or his own now, with what it was, and what it shall be. To think with thyself thus, I am assured of Christ, and his love: my interest in him is sealed; but this is a mercy few enjoy besides me. There be millions of souls of equal value with mine by nature, that shall never enjoy such a mercy as this. Yea, the time was, when I myself was far from it, in my unregenerated state. Lord, how is it I had not then been sealed to damnation? O, it is well with me for the present, that I can call Christ my own; and yet it will be better and better: my condition will mend every day. I am now in Christ; and it is but a little while, before I shall be with Christ, and arrive at the full satisfaction of my very heart. O, what pleasure doth every glance, backward or forward, give to the sealed soul.

4. It is a cordial in death; and there is none like it. This will make the soul triumph over the grave, take death cheerfully by the cold hand, welcome its grim messengers, and long to be gone, and be with Christ. Dark and doubting Christians may indeed shrink back from it, and be afraid of the exchange; but the assured soul longs to

be gone, and needs patience to live, as other men do to die. When one was asked, if he were willing to die? his answer was, *Illius est nolle mori, qui nolit ire ad Christum*; Let him be loth to die, that is loth to go to Christ: The sugar of assurance sweetens the bitter cup of death, and makes it delectable to a believer's relish.

5. In a word it is a sweet support, in all the troubles and afflictions on this side the grave. Let the assured soul be cast into what condition the Lord pleases; be it upon a bed of sickness; yet this gives his soul such support and comfort, that he shall not say, I am sick. Sin being forgiven, the soul is well, when the body is in pain, Isa. xxxiii. 24. Let him be cast into a prison, here is that which will turn a prison into a paradise, Acts v. 41. Let him be pinched with outward want; this will supply all: "As having nothing, and yet possessing "all things," 2 Cor. vi. 10. Thus you see how desirable it is for its own excellency.

2. And as it is desirable for the sweetness of its own enjoyment, so also from the difficulty of its attainment. All excellencies are locked up under many difficulties; but none like this. It is indeed easy to presume an interest in Christ, and cheat a man's own soul with a dream and fancy of our own creation; but it is hard to get a sealed clear title to Christ and his benefits. And there be, among others, three things that make it difficult.

(1.) The corruptions that remain, and daily work in the best hearts; these are evermore puzzling and fearing the poor soul, with fears and doubts about its condition. Grace teacheth men due severity to themselves; and fear of their own deceitfulness, makes them think no hearts are like their hearts; especially whilst they compare other men's outside with their own inside, as generally they do. Oh, how do our own corruptions every moment raise mists and clouds that it is a wonder we ever should have one clear beam of assurance shining into such hearts, as our hearts are!

(2.) The multitudes of mistakes and cheats that are frequently committed, and found in this matter, makes upright hearts the more suspicious and doubtful of their own condition. O when they read Mat. vii. 22. that many will say to Christ in that day, *Lord we have prophesied in thy name, &c.* it scares them, lest they also be deceived.

(3.) The grand importance of the matter, makes poor souls fearful of concluding certainly about it. O when a man considers, that the whole weight of his eternal happiness or misery, depends upon the resolution of these questions, Am I in Christ; or am I not! it will make him tremble to determine. In a word, assurance is not in our power, or at our command. There be many holy, humble, diligent, and longing souls, to whom it is denied: it is arbitrarily dispensed by the pleasure of the Spirit, to whom he will: and such favours are rare, even among true believers; the more therefore it is to be valued and desired by all, as the spouse doth in this place. And so much to

the first thing; *Upon what account the assurance of Christ's love is so desirable in the eyes of Christians.*

2. In the last place, let us consider, how this mercy, which is so desirable, may be obtained; And this is our proper work and business at this time.

You are now come to a sealing ordinance, instituted on purpose for this noble end and use. O that we would pray and plead for it, as the spouse here doth! "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave," &c. Now, in order to the attainment of this most desirable mercy, take a few necessary hints of your present work and duty, in the following directions.

Direction I. Would you be well secured of Christ's love to you, and that you are *set as a seal upon his heart*? Then exercise and manifest more love to Christ, and let him be much upon your hearts. If it be clear to you, that you have true love to Jesus Christ, you need not at all to doubt, but you are in his heart, and in his love: *I love them that love me*, Prov. viii. 17. And surely you have now before you the greatest motive in the world, to inflame your love to Jesus Christ. Behold him as he is here represented to you, *wounded for your iniquities*; yea, sacrificed to the wrath of God, for your peace, pardon, and salvation! "O what manner of love is this! Behold how he loved thee!" If Christ's love draw forth thine, it will so far clear thy interest in his love, as it shall engage thy heart in love to him.

Direction II. But seeing the activity of your love will be according to the activity of your faith; therefore, in the next place, I advise you to make it the main work and business of this hour, to exercise your faith upon Jesus Christ. Set yourselves this day to believe: The more strong the direct acts of your faith shall be, the more clear and comfortable its reflex acts are like to be.

There are three distinct offices, or employments for your faith, at this table, viz.

1. To realize.

2. To apply.

3. To infer, from the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

1. To realize the sufferings of Christ for you, and behold them here represented in a true glass to the eye of faith. See you that bread broken, and that wine poured out? As sure as this is so, Jesus Christ endured the cross, suffered the wrath of the great and terrible God, in his soul, and in his body, upon the cursed tree, for, and in the room of poor condemned sinners. Your faith for the one hath as much, yea, more certainty, than your senses hath for the other. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh," &c. 1 Tim. iii. 16.

2. Apply the sufferings of Christ this day to thine own soul: Be-

lieve all this to be done and suffered in thy room, and for thy sake. He offered not this sacrifice for his own sins, but ours: Isa. liii. 9. Heb. vii. 27. He was incarnate for you, Isa. ix. 6. "For us a child is born; to us a son is given." His death was for you, and in your stead, Gal. iii. 13. "He was made a curse for us;" and when he arose from the dead, "he rose for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. And now he is in glory, at the right hand of God, he is there for us, Heb. vii. 25. "He ever lives, to make intercession for us." It was the pride, passion, earthliness, and unbelief of thy heart, which Jesus Christ groaned, bled, and died, to procure a pardon for.

3. Infer from the sufferings of Christ, those conclusions of faith that tend to assurance. As thus: Did Christ die for me, when I was an enemy? Then surely, being reconciled, I shall be saved by his life, Rom. v. 10. Again; If Christ died for me? Then I shall never die eternally. Nothing shall "separate me from the love of God; it is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 34.

Direction III. Mourn over all those sins, that cause the Lord to hide his face from your souls. Have you grieved the Spirit by your sins? O be grieved for it this day at your very hearts; cover the table of the Lord with tears: "Look upon him whom you have pierced, and mourn as for an only son." Though there be no merit, yet there is much mercy in a broken heart for sin; and there is no such advantage to get your hearts broken, as this is, which is now before you. When the shower of repentance is fallen, the heavens over thee may be clear, and the sun shine out in its brightness upon thy soul.

Direction IV. In a word; pour out thy soul to God, in hearty desires, for a sealed and clear interest in his love this day: Tell him, it is mercy thou valuest above life; *thy favour is better than life*, Ps. lxxiii. 3. Tell him, thou art not able to live with the jealousies and suspicions of his love; thou art but a torment to thyself, whilst thy interest in his love abides under a cloud. Beseech him to pity thy poor afflicted soul, which hath lain down and risen so long with these fears and tremblings, and been a stranger to comfort for so many days. Tell him, how weak thy hands have been, and still are, in duties of obedience, for want of this strength and encouragement. Engage thy soul to him this day, to be more active, cheerful, and fruitful in his service; if it will please him now, to free thee from those fears and doubts, that have clogged thee in all thy former duties. O, cry unto him in the words, and with the deep sense of the spouse in this text; "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, (which hath a most vehement heat,) as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire," &c.

THE TWELFTH
MEDITATION,

UPON EPH. iii. 19.

And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

THE knowledge of Christ, and of his love, is deservedly, in this place, set down among the *desiderata Christianorum*, the most desirable enjoyments of believers in this world. This love of Christ had entered the apostle's heart; he was swallowed up in the meditation and admiration of it, and would have all hearts inflamed and affected with it, as his was.

Some think the apostle speaks extatically in this place, and knows not how to make the parts of his discourse consistent with each other, when he puts them upon endeavours to know that love of Christ, which himself confesses to pass knowledge.

But though his heart was ravished with the love of Christ, yet there is no contradiction or inconsistency in his discourse. He doth earnestly desire for the Ephesians, that they may know the love of Christ; i. e. that they may experimentally know his love, which passeth knowledge: That is, as some expound it, all other kinds of knowledge; yea, and all knowledge of Christ, which is not practical and experimental. Or thus: Labour to get the clearest and fullest apprehensive knowledge of Christ and his love, that is attainable in this world, though you cannot arrive to a perfect comprehensive knowledge of either. *Mens humana hoc et capit, et none capit; atque in eo capit, quod rapitur in admirationem*: as others reconcile it.

The note from it is,

Doct. *That the love of Christ surpasses, and transcends, the knowledge of the most illuminated believers.*

The love of Christ is too deep for any created understanding to fathom; it is unsearchable love, and it is so in divers respects.

1. It is unsearchable, in respect of its antiquity; No understanding of man can trace it back to its first spring; it flows from one eternity to another. We receive the fruits and effects of it now; but, O how ancient is that root that bears them! He loved us before this world was made, and will continue so to do, when it shall be reduced into ashes. It is said, Prov. viii. 29, 30, 31. 'When he gave the sea his decree, when he appointed the foundations of the earth; then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him: rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.'

2. The freeness of the love of Christ passes knowledge. No man knows, nor can any words express, how free the love of Christ to his people is: It is said, Isa. lv. 8. *My thoughts are not your thoughts.* The meaning is, *My grace, mercy, and love* to you, is one thing, as it is in my thoughts, and quite another thing when it comes into your thoughts. In my thoughts, it is like itself, free, rich, and unchangeable; but in your thoughts it is limited and narrowed, pinched in within your strait and narrow conceptions; that it is not like itself, but altered according to the model and platform of creatures, according to which you draw it in your minds. Alas! we do but alter and spoil his love, when we think there is any thing in us, or done by us, that can be a motive, inducement, or recompence to it. His love is so free, that it pitched itself upon us, before we had any loveliness in us at all: 'when we were in our blood, he said unto us, live;' and that was the time of love. It did not stay till we had our ornaments upon us; but embraced us in our blood, in our most loathsome state; and of all seasons, that is the season of love, the chosen time of love, Ezek. xvi. 7, 8. Christ loved us, not upon the account of any foreseen excellency in us, or upon any expectation of recompence from us: Nay, he loved us not only without, but against our deserts. Nothing in nature is found so free, as the love of Christ is; our thoughts therefore of this love going beyond all examples and instances that are found amongst men, quickly lose themselves in an immense ocean of free grace, where they can find neither bank nor bottom.

The bounty and liberality of the love of Christ to his people, passeth knowledge. Who can number, or value the fruits of his love? They are more than the sands upon the sea shore. It would weary the arm of an angel, to write down the thousandth part of the effects of his love, which come to the share of any particular Christian in this world. Who can tell how many sins it pardons? 'The free gift is of many offences unto justification;' Rom. v. 16. How many dangers it prevents; or how many wants it supplies? This, we know, that 'of his fulness we all receive grace for grace;' John i. 16. But how full of grace Christ is, and how many mercies have flowed, and shall flow to us out of that fountain of love; this is unknown to men, to the best, wisest, and most observant men. O if the records of the mercies of our lives were, or could be gathered and kept, what vast volumes would they swell to! It is true, indeed, you have the total sum given you in 1 Cor. iii. 22. *All are yours;* but it is such a number, as no man can number.

The constancy of Christ's love to his people passeth knowledge: No length of time, no distance of place, no change of condition, either with him or us, can possibly make any alteration of his affections towards us: 'He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. It is noted also by the evangelist; John xiii. 1. 'That

having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end.' It is true, his condition is altered; he is no more in this world conversing with his people, as he did once in the *days of his flesh*: He is now at the right-hand of God, in the highest glory; but yet his heart is the same that ever it was, for love and tenderness to his people. Our conditions also are often altered in this world; but his love suffers no alteration. Yea, which is much more admirable, we do many things daily, that grieve him, and offend him; yet he takes not away his loving-kindness from us, nor suffers his faithfulness to fail. We pour out so much cold water of unkindness and provocation, as is enough to cool and quench any love in the world, except his love; but notwithstanding all, he continues unchangeable in love to us. This Peter found, notwithstanding that great offence of his: No sooner was the Lord risen from the dead, but he greets him in the stile of his former love and antient respect; *Go tell the disciples, and tell Peter.*

So then the love of Christ is a love transcending all creature-love, and human understanding. We read in Rom. v. 7, 8. that 'peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die;' but we never find where any, beside Jesus Christ, would lay down his life for enemies. It is recorded as an unparalleled instance of love in Damon and Pythias, the two Sicilian philosophers, that each had courage enough to die for his friend. One of them being condemned to die by the tyrant; and desiring to give the last farewell to his family; his friend went into prison for him, as his surety to die for him, if he returned not at the appointed time: But he did not die; yea, he had such a confidence in his friend, that he would not suffer him by default to die for him; and if he had, yet he had died for his friend. But such was the love of Christ, that it did not only put him into danger of death, but put him actually unto death, yea, the worst of deaths, and that for his enemies. O what manner of love was this! We read of the love that Jacob had for Rachel, and how he endured both the cold of winter, and heat of summer, for her sake. But what is this to the love of Jesus, who for us endured the heat of God's wrath? Beside, she was beautiful, but we unlovely. David wished for Absalom his son, *Would God I had died for thee!* But it was but a wish; and had it come to the proof, David would have shrunk from death, for all the affection he bare his beautiful son. But Christ actually gave his life for us, and did not only wish he had done it. O love, transcending the love of creatures; yea, and surmounting all creature-knowledge!

The *uses* follow.

1. *Use.* If the love of Christ pass knowledge, O then admire it! yea, live and die in the wonder and admiration of the love of Christ! As it is a sign of great weakness, to admire small and common things; so it speaks great stupidity not to be affected with great and unusual things. O Christian! if thou be one that conversest with the thoughts

of this love, thou canst not but admire it; and the more thou studi-
est, the more still wilt thou be astonished at it. And among the
many wonders that will appear in the love of Christ, these two will
most of all affect thee, viz.

1. That ever it pitched at first on thee.

2. That it is not, by so many sins, quenched towards thee.

1. It is admirable, that ever the love of Christ pitched at first upon
thee; for are there not millions in the world, of sweeter tempers,
and better constitutions than thyself, whom it hath passed by, and yet
embraced thee? 'Lord, (said the disciples) how is it, that thou wilt
manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?' John xiv. 22.
Surely he did not set his love upon thee, nor choose thee, because
thou wast better than others, but because he loved thee.

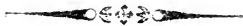
2. It is admirable, that his love to thee is not extinguished by so
many sins as thou hast committed against him. Lay thy hand, Chris-
tian, this day upon thy heart, and bethink thyself, how many have
been the provocations, wrongs, and dishonours thou hast been guilty
of against thy God, and that since he called thee by his grace, and set
his love upon thee. What, and yet love thee still! Yea, notwith-
standing all, he is still thy God, and loves thee with an unchangeable
love. O, with how many notwithstanding is his love continued to
thy soul! All this is just matter of admiration and wonder for ever.

3. Is the love of Christ past knowledge, an unsearchable love?
Then learn, whence and why it is, that the souls of believers never
are, nor can be tired, in beholding and enjoying Jesus Christ. We
use to say, one thing is tiresome; and it is very true, if it be an earth-
ly thing, it will be so, how sweet or excellent soever it seems at first:
And the reason is, because the best creature-enjoyment is but a shal-
low thing, and a few thoughts will sound it to the bottom; and there
being no supply of new matter, to feed the hungry soul upon, it is
quickly sated and cloyed with the repetition of the same thing over
and over. But it is far otherwise in Christ: For though he be but one,
yet in that one thing all things are virtually and eminently contained;
so that every day he seems a new Christ for sweetness, and yet is the
same Christ still. And in heaven the redeemed shall view him with
as much wonder, and love him with as much ardour, after millions
of years, as they did at their first sight of him. O, there is no bot-
tom in the love of Christ; it passeth knowledge.

4. In a word; Bestow your best and chiefest love upon Christ,
whose love to you passeth all knowledge. Let no creature be loved
equally with Christ; but as his love to you passeth all creature-love,
so let yours to him be a matchless love.

Believer; Christ loves thee with an unsearchable love; he loves
thee more than the dearest friend, *that is as thine own soul*, loves thee.
He loves thee more than thou lovest thy child, or the wife of thy bo-
som; more than thy soul loves thy body, with which it is so intimate-
ly united: And wilt thou content thyself with such poor, narrow, re-

miss affections to Jesus Christ? O look upon him this day in his red garments! Behold him in the strength of his love, breaking through the curse of the law, the wrath of God, the agonies of death, to bring home the fruits of his eternal love to thy soul; and whilst thou art beholding, and musing upon it, let thy heart melt, thy eyes drop, and thy very soul cry out, 'Behold how he loved me! Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.'



A FAMILIAR
CONFERENCE

BETWEEN A

MINISTER AND A DOUBTING CHRISTIAN,

CONCERNING THE

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Christian.] **S**IR, if it may be no interruption to your studies, I would be glad to be resolved of several doubts, that arise in my mind, about receiving the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Minister.] 'I shall be very glad to contribute any thing for removing those scruples which may disturb you upon that account; therefore, pray go on.'

Christian.] Sir, I have heard many sermons, and read several discourses, which do much urge and declare the necessity of communicating in this blessed ordinance; and yet I durst never presume to join therein.

Minister.] 'Have you then hitherto lived in the neglect of this important duty.'

Christian.] To speak freely, Sir, I never yet did communicate therein all my life; because I have much questioned, whether I were worthy to receive that blessed and holy seal, to the glory of God, and my own edification and comfort; since I never truly understood the institution, nature, administration, and ends of it, nor the qualifications of those who are to be partakers thereof, according to the appointment of Jesus Christ.

Minister.] ‘Well then, I hope, if these things be plainly opened to you, it may conduce to satisfy your scruples.’

Christian.] Sir, I shall receive your instructions with thankfulness, and if my heart deceive me not, shall rejoice in the light and knowledge that I may gain thereby.

Minister.] ‘Let us then, *first*, enquire into the qualifications of a sincere Christian in general; and, *secondly*, of the qualifications of such Christians as are meet to partake of the Lord’s supper; for they are distinct, and sometimes separate.’

Christian.] I hope, in doing this, you will much help me to judge of my present state and condition God-ward. And now, in the first place, pray inform me, how I may know if I am a sincere Christian.

Minister.] ‘All true believers, among other graces, have such a knowledge of God in Christ, as works by love, and stirs up in them an earnest study of the will of God, and a sincere endeavour to live in the faith, knowledge, and practice of it.’

Christian.] Sir, I cannot boast of my knowledge; yet, by the grace of God shewed to me, those conceptions which I have of God in Christ, have, I hope, so far prevailed upon me, that to live in the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of him, and to have my all devoted to his will and praise, is all the heaven that I desire in this world, and a great part of that which I hope for in the world to come.

Minister.] ‘These are good signs of a real and renewed change in your soul, and so doubtless have wrought good dispositions in you: of which you have had evidence in your heart, and have made it appear in your life and actions.’

Christian.] I would be loth to flatter myself; but yet I hope, that I find some delight in the word of God, both read and preached: and do seriously meditate thereon, that I may ‘grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.’ And though I am sometimes tempted with vile and vain thoughts, yet I endeavour to stifle them, and my heart rises against them. I thank God, I strive to resist the first motions to sin, and avoid all occasions of evil; and I am never more uneasy, than when I happen into the company of profane and ill people, having a hatred to lying, obscene and filthy discourses, swearing, cursing, and all dishonourable reflections upon God and godliness. I make conscience of taking up a slander against my neighbour; and to be just, and to do good to all, according to my ability; and ‘to walk in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless.’

Minister.] ‘If these be the fruits and effects of your faith, it is not a dead faith; yet we must not rest upon our own works, or righteousness, for justification, merit, or satisfaction; because it will be derogatory to the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and dangerous to our own souls.’

Christian.] Sir, I know right well, there is no justification, but by the blood of Jesus; neither dare I trust to my own righteousness, but to his only, for the pardon and remission of my sins. And if by grace

I am enabled to bring forth any fruit meet for a gospel faith, repentance, and love; these I bless God for, as a part of my duty and happiness, and desire to look on them as proofs of faith, (if they are worthy to be such) and no otherwise.

Minister.] ‘This is well. But do you find your soul always in a good frame and temper, without haltings, slips, or excursions?’

Christian.] Sir, I dare not say I do: for I must with sorrow acknowledge, that at sometimes my thoughts are polluted, my words are unsavoury without edification, my actions not adorning the doctrine of the gospel of God my Saviour; but such as I fear may prove a grief and snare to others. My spiritual relish of God’s word is very insipid, and its authority not so sensibly powerful; so that I am unready to any thing that is good, even like a dead man, as if my religion had no life nor soul in it.

Minister.] ‘Well: but when you thus fall into sin, or fail in your duty, what do you think of yourself and ways? How are you affected therewith?’

Christian.] When I am in this deplorable condition, my soul is much disturbed, my joy and peace of conscience are gone: but when I am a little rouzed out of this sinful lethargy, my heart is then melted with sorrow for my folly and miscarriage, and I address myself to God with the greatest fear and shame, humbly imploring him to *renew a right Spirit within me.*

Minister.] ‘Well, friend, if your conscience confirms what your tongue has uttered, you have expressed enough to evidence the sincerity of your obedience to God, and that you are a sound believer, and a sincere convert. And I hope you have faith also in Jesus Christ the mediator; without a due respect to whom our faith and good affections will not deserve the name of being truly evangelical and saving.’

Christian.] Through grace, I desire to acknowledge and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ upon the terms on which he is offered in the gospel; to believe all his doctrines, as my teacher and guide; to trust and depend upon him, as the “High-priest of our profession, who makes atonement by his sacrifice and intercession.” And I desire to submit to his government, as Lord and King of his church.

Minister.] ‘These are very considerable attainments, and include the substance of saving-faith. But are you sensible how you arrived to this good disposition and frame of mind? Do you imagine it was natural to you, or the result of the improvement of your natural reason, powers, or faculties?’

Christian.] Oh, Sir, I dare by no means ascribe that to nature, which is only the effect of divine grace. If I have any measure of sanctification, it is only by the gift and grace of God; for I have had too much experience, that by nature I am alive to vanity and sin; but dead and lifeless to God, and to all real goodness; that I am darkness; folly possesseth my soul; I am at enmity with God, and altogether unable

to will, or to do what is pleasing in his eyes; having a great contrariety in my heart to the way of salvation proposed in the gospel of Christ.

Minister.] ‘And have you taken up strong resolutions, that, by the help of God, and the assistance of his blessed Spirit, you will endeavour to persevere in the faith and practice which you have now declared, to your life’s end?’

Christian.] Sir, there is nothing that I more dread than apostatizing, or relaxing in my duty and profession, and that I should have a backsliding heart from the Lord; and I earnestly watch and pray against every symptom and degree thereof.

Minister.] ‘Do you think, that by your own strength and ability, you have power to preserve and continue in the faith and obedience of the gospel, against the many temptations and corruptions that assault us, and the lamentable miscarriages of those who seemed pillars in the house of God?’

Christian.] I have no confidence in my own ability, Sir, I assure you; but do wholly rely on the *Rock that is higher than I*; even upon him who hath promised, that he will *perfect a good work begun to the day of Christ*. I rest upon him, who is the *author and finisher of our faith*; I beg his holy Spirit, to instruct, guide, assist, and comfort me. And I earnestly desire and purpose, (by the grace of God) to expect those aids, in a constant and universal attendance upon God in his ordinances, with an honest, humble, and believing heart.

Minister.] ‘These are all plain evidences of the saving grace of God: which I beseech the Lord may always continue, and grow in your heart; that so you may have a full assurance of his love, who hath dealt so graciously with you.’

Christian.] The Lord grant, that in the sense of his love to my soul, I may walk worthy of his grace. And now, Sir, by what has been said, do you think I may presume to feed on Jesus Christ at his table, and receive that blessed seal of my Redeemer’s love?

Minister.] ‘You know I told you, that a man may be a true Christian, and yet may not be fit to partake of this holy ordinance: because he may believe unto salvation, and yet be so ignorant of this mystery, as not to be able to make a due application of it to his own soul.’

Christian.] Ah, Sir, I would willingly be informed, what is necessary to be done by a sound believer, in order to the partaking of this blessed ordinance?

Minister.] ‘*First*, He must consider, that the elements and matter of this ordinance, are not common bread and wine after consecration, but set apart to a holy use, and so to be received with an holy understanding and fear. And therefore the Corinthians were blamed by the apostle, for their ignorance and irreverence, 1 Cor. xi. Again, that these elements, so blessed and set apart by Christ’s appointment, do represent a crucified Redeemer; and we are to partake of them

with love, as a memorial of his death; and with faith, as the seal of the promise, and the means appointed by God, to convey the benefits of Christ crucified to the soul.

Christian.] Sir, these considerations raise up my desires to come to the Lord's table, which I hope to be a partaker of, with the same sentiments that you have now laid before me; and that I shall feast mine eyes on that lovely object, which is so full of love; and that my eye will so deeply affect my heart toward my holy Redeemer, that I may meet with my blessed Lord in all the ways of his appointment.

Minister.] 'Again; you ought to set your soul upon self-examination, that so you may be sensible of your wants and defects, and come to Christ for a supply of the graces of his holy Spirit; that you may exercise faith, love, repentance, and all other graces, with such warmth and vigour, that Jesus Christ may delight in you, and you in him; and there may be a mutual and joyful renewing of your covenant of love and obedience to your blessed Saviour.'

Christian.] Sir, we cannot suppose that there should be the actings and exercises of grace, where the habits are wanting, no more than there can be motion without life: but it is usually said, that the holy Sacrament is a quickening, cherishing, comforting, and confirming ordinance.

Minister.] 'No doubt but the worthy prepared receivers of this blessed banquet, have by a due participation found their love inflamed, their faith strengthened, their obedience confirmed, their humility increased; so that they have appeared vile in their own sight, and have had an utter detestation of all sin, and an earnest expectation and desire after the glorious appearance of their blessed Lord and Redeemer.'

Christian.] Sir, since the benefits and blessings are so great, it makes me the more earnestly long to be a communicant in these sacred mysteries.

Minister.] 'It is the duty of all Christ's ministers, to give the sacramental bread of life, and the cup of consolation, to those who hunger and thirst after Jesus Christ, and his righteousness, and kingdom. And now I have told you your duty, I shall be willing to declare to you the nature and the circumstances of this blessed ordinance.'

Christian.] Sir, I must confess I am not so well instructed herein; and if I may not be too troublesome, would be very glad to understand what this holy ordinance is, and why it is called a sacrament.

Minister.] 'It is a seal of the covenant of God in Christ, wherein, by certain outward signs, instituted by our Saviour, Christ and all his benefits are signified, conveyed, and sealed to the worthy receiver. The word sacrament hath been anciently used, both to signify baptism and the supper of the Lord; and was taken up by the ancient fathers, from the oath by which the Roman soldiers were sworn to their duty, and were not admitted to be soldiers, until they

had solemnly taken that oath or sacrament. It is called by several other names in scripture, namely, breaking of bread, Acts ii. 42. the Lord's table, 1 Cor. x. 21. the communion, 1 Cor. x. 16.'

Christian.] Pray, Sir, how many sacraments were instituted under the New Testament, and by whose authority were they appointed?

Minister.] 'There are only two, baptism, and the Lord's supper? and they were ordained by the sole and immediate authority of Jesus Christ; and those other five which the Papists have added, and called by that name, as order, or ordaining of priests, penance, marriage, confirmation, and extreme unction, or anointing at the hour of death; all these were neither immediately instituted by Christ, nor have the proper ends of a sacrament.'

Christian.] What are the elements to be used in the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

Minister.] 'Bread and wine, and no other, Luke xxii. 19, 20. And all communicants are to receive both of them, notwithstanding the bold and sacrilegious practice of the Papists, who give the people the bread, or wafer only, none but the priest receiving both the bread and the wine. And this without any sound reason, or scripture warrant; and they may as well corrupt, totally abolish, or add to any of the ordinances and institutions of Christ Jesus, as presume to do this.'

Christian.] What resemblance or congruity is there between bread and wine, the signs, and what is signified by them in the Lord's supper?

Minister.] 'Bread is so necessary, that it is often put for all kind of food, and necessaries; and the least morsel of it is completely bread. Thus Christ is food, and all necessaries to the soul; and every worthy communicant receives a whole and complete Christ: And as corn is not bread, till it be bruised or ground; so Jesus Christ had not been food for us, if he had not been bruised with wounds and sorrow. And as bread is the common food of all people, so is Jesus Christ of all real Christians. Again, as bread being a solid body, may properly denote the body of Christ; so wine, being liquid, may represent his blood: And as wine is pressed from the grape, so the blood of Jesus was forced out by his agony, and the wounds of the cross.'

Christian.] May not the bread and wine at our common tables signify the same thing?

Minister.] 'No; because this is solemnly set apart, and consecrated to sacramental use by prayer and blessing, and by applying the words of our dear Redeemer used in the institution of this ordinance.'

Christian.] Is not the bread and wine after consecration transubstantiated, or transformed from the substance of bread and wine, into the real substance and essence of the body and blood of our Saviour;

since Christ's own words are, *This is my body, &c. This is my blood, &c.*

Minister.] 'No, by no means; this being a Popish error, attended with many absurdities and idolatrous practices. But it is the body and blood of Christ, in the sense that Christ spake it; but he did not say. This is no longer bread in substance, but the very substance of my body. And such phrases are often used in scripture, and yet not always to be taken in a strict sense, no more than that 'Rock was Christ, and I am the true vine, the door, the shepherd, &c. Moreover, Christ intended it for a sacrament, that is, a sign of what it represents; now it cannot be the real body of Christ, and the sign of it also. Again, our senses of seeing, smelling, and tasting, assure us that it is bread and wine, and no way substantially changed after the words of consecration. And if we must deny our senses in this, we may as well doubt whether these words, *This is my body, &c.* be recorded in holy scripture, though we see them there.'

Christian.] If the bread and wine be not the body and blood of Christ really and substantially, how then doth the true believer, in receiving, eating, and drinking them, receive, eat, and drink the body and blood of Christ?

Minister.] 'By receiving those elements so consecrated, as signs, seals, and conveyances of Christ and his benefits to the soul; and a true Christian hath them conveyed to him thereby, as really as a writing under hand, seal, and witnesses, can convey lands, or other benefits, which are not really in the writings themselves.'

Christian.] What are the actions of the Minister, in administering this ordinance?

Minister.] 'After blessing the bread, he breaks it, and delivers it to the communicants in the words of Jesus Christ, signifying thereby a crucified Jesus, who was wounded for our transgressions. He then pours out the wine in the sight of the congregation, and delivers that to them also, after blessing it in the words of Christ. And hereby is represented to us, our dear Redeemer shedding his blood for us; which is the sacrifice of atonement, whereby we obtain remission of sins. In which action, the minister, standing in Christ's stead, as his minister, (wherein Christ is present, and by his Spirit and authority) doth as really tender and bestow himself and benefits, as if he had spoken the same words in his own visible person.'

Christian.] But say some, since our Saviour restrained this ordinance to the time of his coming; he being come in the Spirit, it is now at an end, and abolished.

Minister.] 'If these enthusiasts mean the coming of the Spirit, in its sanctifying operations; then it seems, that it was appointed only for unbelievers; and that the disciples, who communicated with Christ at the institution thereof, had not the Spirit, but were unbelievers; which is false and absurd. If they mean the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, or the pouring it forth in an extraordinary measure; the

practice of the apostles and the church of God, both at that time, and long after, will abundantly contradict that assertion; Acts ii. 42. 1 Cor. x. 16.'

Christian.] What are the benefits that Christ gives, and we receive in this ordinance?

Minister.] 'The exercise and increase of every grace; the cleansing our souls from the guilt of sin; healing the wounds which sin hath made in our consciences; a confirmation of the truth and promises of God; an humble and holy delight in Christ, and our fellow Christians; and a more earnest longing for, and expectation of, the blessedness of the life to come: And is an ordinance chiefly intended for confirmation of our faith, love, and increase in grace; so that no person ought to come thereunto, but in faith.'

Christian.] What are the necessary preparations for this solemn ordinance?

Minister.] '(1.) That a man have the habit of faith. (2.) That he have an hearty disposition and willingness, to receive Christ as his Lord and Redeemer. (3.) That he be in charity with all men; John i. 7. Mat. xv. 26. We must also exercise renewed acts of repentance, and clear up our interest in Christ, and have our souls full of faith and love toward him.'

Christian.] Sir, there is one scripture that, I believe, discourages many from partaking of the Lord's table; neither do I indeed well understand it: 1 Cor. xi. 27, 28, 29. "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (or judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Minister.] 'I am indeed of the opinion, that the want of right understanding this scripture, has been a stumbling-block to many, and so I shall endeavour briefly to explain it. The apostle here truly represents, and very much aggravates the danger of unworthy receiving this holy sacrament: but he does not deter the Corinthians from it, because they had sometimes come to it without due reverence; but exhorts them to amend what had been amiss, and to come better prepared and disposed for the future. And therefore after that terrible declaration, that "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord," &c. He does not add, therefore let Christians take heed of coming to the Lord's table; but let them come prepared, and with due reverence; not as to a common meal, but to a solemn participation of the body and blood of Christ: "But let him examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." For if this be a good reason to abstain from this ordinance, for fear of performing it in an undue manner; then a wicked man may as well lay aside all other holy duties, as prayer, hearing, and reading the word of God, for fear of the unworthy use of them; since, *The prayer of*

the wicked, (that is, one that resolves to continue so) *is an abomination to the Lord*. And Christ says, *Take heed how you hear*. And the apostle says, that those who will not believe the gospel, *it is the savour of death to them*: That is, it is deadly and damnable to such persons. Now there is as much reason for men to give over praying, or attending the word of God, as not to receive the sacrament; since he that prays unworthily, that is, without spiritual benefit and advantage, is guilty of great contempt of God, and Jesus Christ, and aggravates his own damnation; as well as he, who, by partaking of the Lord's supper unworthily, eats and drinks his own judgment. And when the apostle adds, "But let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup:" It seems clear, by the occasions and circumstances of his discourse, that he does not intend we should examine our state of grace, whether we are true believers or no, and sincerely resolved to continue so; but he speaks of the actual fitness and worthiness of the Corinthians at that time, when they came to receive the Lord's supper. And therefore, ver. 20. he sharply reproveth their irreverent and unsuitable carriage at the Lord's table; they coming thereunto disorderly, one before another. It was the custom of Christians then, to meet at the feast of charity, in which they did communicate with great sobriety and temperance; and when that was ended, they celebrated the Lord's supper. Now, among the Corinthians, this order was broken: The rich met, and excluded the poor from this common feast; and after an irregular feast, (one after another eating his own supper as he came,) they went to the sacrament in great disorder: One was hungry, having eaten nothing at all; others had drunk and eat intemperately; and the poor were despised and neglected. This the apostle condemns as a great profanation of that solemn institution, for behaving themselves with as little reverence, as if it were a common supper, or feast: And this he calls, *not discerning the Lord's body*: making no difference between the sacrament and a common meal; which contemptuous carriage, he calls *eating and drinking unworthily*: for which he pronounceth them *guilty of the body and blood of Christ*; by which he tells them, they did incur the judgment of God, which he calls eating and drinking their own judgment; for so the word signifies in the Greek, and not eternal condemnation. It is meant of some temporal judgment and chastisement, in order to the preventing of eternal damnation: Which is evident from what follows: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." And then he says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." That is, for this irreverence of theirs, God sent among them several diseases, of which many had died. And then he adds, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." That is, if we would censure and examine ourselves, so as to be more careful for the future, we should escape the judgment of God in these temporal punishments. "But when we are judged,

we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." That is, when by neglecting thus to judge ourselves, we provoke God to judge us; he inflicts these temporal judgments upon us, to prevent our eternal damnation.

Christian.] Sir, I am much obliged to you for the satisfaction you have given me in these weighty points, referring to the Lord's supper: And now, though in a deep sense of my great unworthiness, yet with humble confidence in my dear Redeemer, who graciously invites *all that are heavy laden* to come unto him; I do intend, by the blessing of God, to address myself to the Lord's table the next Lord's day; humbly beseeching the assistance of your prayers, that I may not come without the *wedding-garment*; but may be so qualified, as to obtain those glorious privileges and blessings, which are there represented and sealed to every worthy communicant.

A

H Y M N

UPON

ROMANS v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

6. **W**HEN we were destitute of strength,
Ourselves to help or save,
Christ for ungodliness, at length,
His life a ransom gave.
7. For one that's righteous, we would grudge
To lay our life at stake;
And for a good man, it were much
Such an exchange to make.
8. But God his matchless love commends
In that Christ Jesus dies
For us, when we were not his friends,
But wretched enemies.
9. Much more, being justified, and free
Thro' his own blood, from sin;
From wrath to come we sav'd shall be,
Ev'n by the life of him.
10. For if, when enemies, for us
Christ's death did end the strife;
Much more, when reconciled thus,
He'll save us by his life.

11. Yea, more than so, we triumph now
 In God with one accord,
 Having receiv'd atonement through
 Christ Jesus our own Lord.

Wherefore to him, who is the first
 Begotten of the dead,
 Who over earthly princes must
 Be supreme Lord and Head:
 Ev'n unto him who lov'd us so,
 To wash us in his blood,
 And make us kings and priests unto
 His Father and his God:
 To him dominion therefore,
 By us be given, when
 This present world shall be no more;
 To which we say, AMEN.

THE
 REASONABLENESS
 OF
 PERSONAL REFORMATION,
 AND THE
 NECESSITY OF CONVERSION:

The true Methods of making all men happy in this world, and in
 the world to come.

Seasonably discoursed, and earnestly pressed upon this licentious age.

To all such as are most immediately and particularly concerned in the
 following treatise, of what rank or quality soever they be.

GENTLEMEN,

TWO of the greatest, faithfullest, and most intimate friends in
 the world, reason and conscience, command me here, in their names,
 courteously to salute and invite you in.

They earnestly desire three or four hours serious and private conference with you, about some very important personal concerns of yours, which cannot admit of denial, or long delay. And if you make any trifling excuses, they have commanded and instructed me, here to answer them.

In case of absolute and obstinate refusal to hear them, they order me to tell you; if you will not talk with me now, they will talk with you shortly, whether you will or no. If you say, you are not now at leisure, having other business to do; they both desire you to consider, *First*, You can have no business in the world of equal importance with theirs. *Secondly*, That whatever other lawful affairs you are pursuing, their business with you will no way obstruct, but greatly promote it. And, *lastly*, That a greater person than any of you, lost his life, by pocketing up a letter at night, saying, To-morrow is a new day; and it proved to him indeed *dies novissima*, his last day; he losing by that neglect the only opportunity of living longer.

If you demand, how your reason came to be bound up in this little book, and say, that which is reason to this author, may be folly and nonsense to you: I am bid to tell you, you are obliged first to read and compare; else your own reason will presently call it your own folly and nonsense, so to pronounce. Sound reason is uniform, and like itself all the world over. It is true, laws and dictates equally oblige one, as another, in like cases and circumstances.

If you say, there have been some jars and disguests betwixt you and your reasons and consciences; you and they have fallen out so oft, that you have no great fancy to come near them in private, for you expect nothing but harsh and chiding language from them; and therefore are fain, by continual diversions, and quick successions of business, to maintain your peace, by keeping at as great a distance from them as you can.

It is their desire you should here know, *First*, That their debates with you will be as calm and friendly, as they are seasonable and necessary. *Secondly*, That they profess (and you may believe them) they neither do, nor can design any thing but your good. *Thirdly*, That that person is certainly in a very bad case, that cannot endure to converse with himself. *Fourthly*, That you herein deny a civility to your own reasons and consciences, which you daily pay to strangers and inferiors. And, in a word, that they desire a reconciliation with you upon as fair and honourable terms as can well be desired: and that this being done, they will both stick faithfully by you in all the troubles and dangers of your lives, and follow you as your inseparable friends, into any thing but sin.

If you say, this is but a wheedle, to draw you into a book, that will make you melancholy, and perhaps mad.

It is their sense and judgment, that of all men living, you have least reason to pretend the one or the other, in this case: for they are very confident, you are now in the most melancholy circumstances men

can ordinarily be on this side hell. And for madness they desire to know, what you yourselves would call that man, that is running with such poste-haste to hell, as will not admit of two or three hours stop upon the road, to prove himself to be no madman, but in his right mind and wits?

Moreover, they command me to inform you, it is their desire, that seeing their debates with you will neither be tiresome nor impertinent, you will please to hear them out what they have to say to you: and then, if you shall find cause to complain, that your pleas and excuses are not fairly drawn, or that you have new matter to furnish a better apology; they are both content you shall have your liberty to amend, or add what you please; and if they be not able to refute them, they will give you no further trouble or interruption in your course.

This, Gentlemen, is what I have in charge to say to you in the porch; and now, if you please, the door is open: you may be as private as you will. They will attend you to your bed-chamber, or closet; and I heartily wish an happy issue to this friendly debate.

JOHN FLAVEL.



CHAP. I.

The introduction and state of the case.

§ 1. **R**EASON exalts man above all earthly beings; it is his dignity and privilege, that God hath furnished him with abilities of mind, to recollect, animadvert, compare, infer, ponder, and judge his own actions. Hereby he becomes not only capable of moral government by human laws, (which no creature beside him is) but also of spiritual government by divine laws, and the blessed fruition of God in glory, which no other species of creatures (angels only excepted) have a subjected capacity for.

Right reason, by the law of nature, (as an home-born judge) arbitrates and determines all things within its proper province; which province is extended far and wide. All actions, natural, moral, and civil, are weighed at this beam and standard; none are exempted, but matters of supernatural revelation; and yet even these are not wholly and in every respect, exempt from right reason: for though there be some mysteries in religion above the sphere and flight of reason: yet nothing can be found in religion, that is unreasonable.

And though these mysteries be not of natural investigation, but of supernatural revelation; yet reason is convinced, nothing can be more reasonable, than that it takes its place at the feet of faith; which is but to suffer itself to become pupil to an omniscient and infallible

instructor. The resolution of our reason into faith, and of faith into God's veracity, are acts highly becoming reasonable beings in such cases as these.

It may not pry too nicely into unrevealed mysteries, demand the reasons, or examine the causes of them as bold and daring Socinians do; but it feels itself obliged to receive all those things, both as possible and true, which God hath revealed, counting his revelation alone to be reason sufficient. For the veracity of God takes out of reason's mouth all objections against the truth of them; and his almighty power silences all its scruples against the possibility of them.

But in all matters properly under the jurisdiction of reason, every man is obliged to account with himself, as well as others, for the reasonableness of his own actions; and that act which will not endure the test of sound reason, it judges not fit for the entertainment of man. If reason cannot justify it, it is beneath the rank and dignity of a man to do it.

§ 2. The light of reason was at first the bright lamp or candle of the Lord, till sin, like a thief, melted it down to snuff; whereby (comparatively speaking) it becomes a poor glimmering light in the best of men, and almost quite extinguished in some men. Fallen man is become less than himself, and will never act like himself, till he be fully restored to himself.

Sanctification indeed snuffs and trims the lamp of reason; but there being few sanctified persons among men, a double misery consequently befalls a very great part of mankind; whose conversation speaks them not only destitute of religion, which bereaves them of the blessedness of the world to come; but men almost entirely despoiled of the benefits and blessings of their own reason, which makes them unhappy and miserable in this world: beasts, rather than men, as the sacred scriptures stiles them; unreasonable men; men fallen out with their own faculties; who after many a sharp battle with their reason, are now dragging it like a conquered captive, at the chariot wheels of their victorious and triumphant lusts.

§ 3. It is scarce imaginable, that ever sin should prevail so far as it doth, to the very unmaning of men, did they not first delude and bribe their own reason, by close and cunning applications to their bewitched affections; whereby, though they cannot make it a party, yet they make it stand by as a silent spectator, or neuter, whilst they act the beast, yea, the devil, rather than the man.

We little know how far unsanctified reason may (this way) be prevailed upon to quit his throne, and resign its sceptre into the hands of lust and appetite; yea, to engage in the defence of their most absurd laws and dictates. It only serves in some men, to invent excuses, pleas, and specious pretences, to justify or extenuate their beast-like actions; the basest servitude it can be condemned to.

If this will not do, sensual lusts have another way to obtain their

satisfaction, in despite of reason and conscience; even by stopping their ears to the voices of both, and pushing on with a brutish *impetus*, they suffer neither to enjoy the opportunity of a calm debate of these matters with them.

§ 4. But let men do what they will, it is next to an impossibility, they shall so far subdue and destroy those inbred principles of reason and conscience, but that they will, at one time or other, give them some check and oppositions in their profane courses; especially when they shall get the advantage of some eminent distress, or special danger, which disposes them to lend an ear to their voices. And there be few men in the world, but are sometimes providentially cast into such cases and conditions.

So that appeals to the reason of the most profligate wretches, are not altogether vain and useless: for if the case cannot be tried and decided at the bar of reason and conscience at one time, it may with more advantage at another: and haply appeals to reason may produce a reformation in some men, sooner than appeals to the scriptures, or principles of faith, especially when the world is so notoriously drenched in practical atheism, that serious religion becomes the common subject of drollery amongst multitudes of men.

Yet it were hard and uncharitable, to imagine any man sunk so deep into the mire of bestiality and profaneness, as not still to retain some value and veneration for his own reason, and as much as he abuses it, yet to refuse the whole world in exchange for it; and to account it a greater misery to be utterly deprived of it, than to have the hoofs of an horse given him in exchange for his hands and feet.

§ 5. The scriptures therefore do, in many cases, appeal to the reason of sinners, and design their reformation by such appeals: for it being a most shameful thing, for a man to be convicted at the bar of his own reason, of acting like a beast rather than a man, every man is presumed to be afraid, and ashamed of such an indictment. Such miscreants are the shame and reproach of humanity itself; they are branded for brutes throughout the sober world; their company declined and shunned by all wise and good men. He that hath no reason to justify his actions, may yet be supposed to be owner of some stock of natural shame; which cannot but afford a blush, upon such a plain conviction. This therefore was the course which the prophet Isaiah took, by divine direction, to reform the idolatrous Israelites; Isa. xlvi. 8. He states the case at the bar of their own reason, and calls for a verdict upon it. The case was this: *Whether idols, having not power enough to shew themselves gods, those that worship them, must not want wisdom enough to shew themselves men?* "Remember this, and shew yourselves men; and bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors!" q. d. For shame, let not men act like brutes, which have no animadversion.

§ 6. When things therefore are brought to such an exigence, that ruin or reformation is the only choice men have to make, and all re-

ligious impressions so obliterated and worn out, that men pay no reverence to them ; an appeal to the reason of men, seems then to be an hopeful method of prevailing with them, to suffer a reformation rather than a ruin. Not that I imagine the topics of reason able to afford more powerful arguments, than those of religion do ; but that they, who by their ignorance and strong prejudices against religion, have made themselves more incapable of conviction that way, may haply feel the force of reason prevailing so far at least, as to put their outrageous lusts under some restraints.

As for the scriptures, and serious religion begotten by them in the souls of men, they are perfect strangers to all, but the names of these things: And even their very names are grown almost ridiculous with them too. But reason may convince and shame them. What force the reason of man hath, even without saving grace, to produce civility, sobriety, and other moral virtues, is abundantly evident in the very Heathens ; who, by the only light of reason, discovered so much odiousness in vice and immortality, and such an amiable beauty in justice, temperance, and the other moral virtues, that their praises for them are sounded throughout the world.

Now, whatever unthinking men dream, to me it is evident, that when kingdoms and commonwealths are overflowed with unrestrained vice and immoralities ; when cursing and swearing becomes the common language, drunkenness and adultery the common practice of the inhabitants ; God will either sweep away the filth of those nations, by the besom of a general reformation, or he will sweep away their inhabitants out of them, with the besom of destruction. For if we have not excused the notion and belief of a God, and that he animadverts the wickedness of men, (which the very Heathens, by the light of nature, saw and acknowledged,) we may thereby easily be led to this conclusion, that such overflowings of abomination do, and must certainly presage our desolation, except speedy and general reformation do prevent it.

§ 7. Now, the persons, whose reformation I particularly design by this method, being men that exercise more reason than religion, might (methinks) be prevailed with to take up at last, and reform their unreasonable, as well as ungodly courses, could they be once prevailed with to debate these matters with cool, considerative minds, becoming men governed by reason, not wholly swayed like brute-beasts, by lust and appetite.

And is it not highly reasonable, that men should weigh their own actions at the same beam and standard where they weigh other men's actions ; and renounce all that with shame and detestation, which they themselves must censure as utterly beneath, and unworthy of a man ? Wherefore hath God planted a principle of reason and conscience within us ? Is it rational to think, it was planted there for no other end or use, but to scan and censure other men's words or actions by, but not our own ? Or to be wholly useful to other men's

interests, without any benefit to ourselves? Ask thine own reason, silly man, why God placed it in thy soul? and for what use it was intended? And it will tell thee, it was particularly designed and appointed, to regulate and order thine own life and actions; and next, for the benefit and good of the community. It will tell thee, there is not a single act thou dost, of any weight or moment, but thou oughtest to consult with it, and have its pass or licence before thou do it. But when thou enterest into a serious course of actions, thy consultations with it ought to be very frequent and solemn, because these things are of great importance to thee.

Thy reason will tell thee, sinner, that it is a vile affront to it, to be thrust by thee from the council-table, unworthily dismissed from its office, and discharged from any further attendance upon thy life, and concerns thereof, and brutish lust and appetite consulted in its room; and that it needed not at all to have been implanted in thy soul, if the same principles that govern the beasts of the field must also be thy governing principles. It stands ready to offer its service to thee, to save thee from, or to receive thee out of those mischiefs thou hast, or mayest run thyself into; if thou wilt but hear, and obey its advice, it tells thee, it is thy privy-counsellor, by God's appointment; and if thou wilt not find leisure among the heats and hurries of thy lusts, to consult it, and hearken to its counsels now; if thou wilt not forsake the conduct of thine own reason and conscience, which have a right and authority to govern thy words and actions, and follow thy blind and head-strong lusts and passions, thou shalt hear other language from them, when thy lusts have precipitated thee into thine own ruin and destruction; as they speedily and inevitably must, and will do, according to the course they now steer for thee.

§ 8. And there is yet more ground to hope, that reason may prevail with men living under the gospel, to return to sobriety and temperance, when we consider their reason is assisted by some illuminations from the Christian religion. They live in a land of bibles and ministers, where they cannot avoid the light; an advantage far beyond whatever the heathens enjoyed; who yet by their single unassisted reason, arrived to an eminency in moral virtues.

Our reasons and consciences do not only convince us, (as theirs also did them) that there is a God, and a future life of retribution, wherein every man shall be judged according to his works; but also, that the scriptures are the very word of God, and rule of faith and manners. And if there be any among the debauched crew, that question or deny it, we may be confident none of them are able, by plain and sound reason, to overthrow those mighty arguments pleaded for the confirmation of that truth: At least, they find in themselves a strong suspicion and fear, that they may prove to be true; which jealousy and suspicion, working together with their own reason and consciences, are no contemptible helps toward their recovery.

For if what reason, conscience, and scripture, with one mouth, pro-

nounce, be true and certain, (as undoubtedly it will be found to be) ; then it must be plain and obvious to them also, that their brutish lusts have put them into the direct and ready way, both to ruin themselves, and also greatly to hazard the community to which they belong.

§ 9. As for themselves, if they will make a judgment upon their own condition, in the light of reason, conscience, or scripture (and they very well know, they take their measures in perfect darkness, if they take them not by this direction) ; then, continuing the same course they now do, they are a lost generation.

All their lawful and faithful guides tell them, with one mouth, they are certainly in the broad way to damnation ; and that, how irksome and terrible soever the thoughts and apprehensions of hell are to them, yet thither they must certainly come, if they pursue this course. Their reason plainly tells them, he that chuseth the means, and engageth in the way leading to hell, must and ought to make account, that hell is the place he is preparing for.

Conscience is as plain and positive with them, that they must either return, or perish. The scripture confirms the testimonies of both, by telling them plainly, *That the end of these things is death* ; Rom. vi. 21.

It is downright folly and madness, by the vote of the whole rational and sober world, for any man to conclude, or hope he shall be happy in the world to come, whose life is drawn through, and finished in all manner of obscenity, filthiness, and profaneness in the present world.

For let the case be brought into the light of your own reason, as dim as it is, and let it freely judge, when you are belching out your black and horrid blasphemies against God, imprecating damnation from him upon your own souls, wallowing in beastly lusts, vomiting and roaring in taverns and ale-houses : ask, I say, your own reason, conscience, or the scripture, whether all, or either of them, will allow you to say or think, ‘ Now we are in the right way to eternal blessedness ! This is the very course that will bring us to happiness in the world to come ; this pleaseth God better, and is a surer path to glory, than repentance or faith, mortification, prayer, or reformation. No, no, as blind as your reason is, and as seared as your consciences are, you will never bring them to comprobate, or subscribe such absurd and horrid conclusions as these.

But, on the contrary, they will tell you, that if you will have the pleasure, you must have the pain and torment of sin. That it is madness to say, you are afraid to burn, but not afraid to sin ; that you are loth to be damned, and yet challenge the almighty God to his face, to damn you : as much a folly, as to drink a baneful dose of known poison, and think to feel no painful gripes afterwards.

As for the scriptures, they appeal to the reason of men in this case, as a most known and allowed thing, scarce imaginable to lie hid from any man. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. ‘ Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abu-

sers of themselves with mankind ; nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.'

It would make the bowels of a compassionate Christian to roll and yern within him, to behold multitudes of souls of invaluable worth, running greedily on to their eternal ruin, wilfully stopping their ears all the way, to the voices of their own reason and conscience, as well as to the voice of God in his word ; not once making a pause, till they fall into that gulf of eternal and intolerable misery, into which, with great precipitation, they are casting themselves.

§ 10. And then, for the community to which they belong ; how dangerous, yea, how destructive such persons are to it, cannot possibly be hid from any wise and serious observer. For if one sinner destroys much good ; if one Achan trouble the whole camp of Israel ; how much more will whole swarms and droves of drunkards, blasphemers, and adulterers, as now fill every place, pull down the judgments of God upon those states and kingdoms wherein they breathe ? If our fears and dangers were greater than they are, yet reformation might save us, Jer. v. 1. 'Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if you can find a man, (i. e. a public man, a man in authority,) if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.' And if our hopes and confidences were much higher than they are, yet unrestrained sin would undo us. Kingdoms and commonwealths are not so much endangered by the powers and policies of their enemies without them, as they are by the unreformedness of profligate wretches within, and amongst them. Reformation quickly recovers the antient glory of kingdoms, and makes them the terror of their enemies.

For though there will be still too much sin privately committed under the best laws, and the most vigorous and impartial execution of them ; yet abundance of sin would thereby be prevented, and the sins that are committed would not become national, but personal only ; and these would not so much concern and hazard the public weal and tranquillity of the state.

Moreover, states and kingdoms are in no small hazard by the public debauchery, and common profaneness of their subjects ; forasmuch as in this very sink and puddle of their lusts, the manly wisdom, sprightly courage, and true gallantry of their subjects, are quenched and drowned, their spirits softened and effeminated. It is hard to imagine those men will engage far in the cause of reformation, when reformation itself is the only thing they hate and fear.

Nor need we wonder to find men intimidated, and low-spirited, in times and places of imminent danger, who not only carry about them so much guilt, (which is the fountain of fear) but are wholly addicted to sensual pleasures, which they are loth to hazard upon public accounts and considerations, these being the only heaven they

have, or hope for: 'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart,' Hos. iv. 11. It is in the very nature of these sins, to make men sottish, and in the very nature of guilt to make them pusillanimous.

Seneca observes, (and his observation is true) * 'That the conscience of a wicked man is a terrible scourge and torment to him, perpetually lashing him with solicitous thoughts and fears; so that he distrusts all securities, and knows not where to be safe.' Hence it comes to pass, that many men of good extraction, liberal education, and excellent natural endowments, become so useless, yea, so pernicious as they are; who, could they be recovered but to temperance and sobriety, would become both excellently useful, and ornamental to the nation where they had their birth, and to the safety and honour whereof they owe their service.

§ 11. The most desirable recovery and reformation of profane debauched persons, is not simply and absolutely impossible: And if magistrates and ministers were every where exemplary themselves for sobriety and piety, zealous and impartial in the discharge of their respective duties, a general reformation would not be difficult. But when those, whose office it is to suppress wickedness, shall associate themselves with lewd and profligate persons, and vie with them in their profane courses, or discourage more conscientious persons in the discharge of their duties; this makes reformation morally impossible.

If profaneness were once found the general odium of the people, and a bar to all preferments, it might be hoped, things would quickly alter for the better. It was an ancient custom among the heathens, (as learned and excellent Mr. Hale of Eaton, out of Chrysostom observes) That if a man offered himself to contend in the Olympic games, he was not permitted so to do, till proclamation had been first made, *Whether any man knew him to be either a servant, or a man of infamous life?* And if any such imputation were proved against him, it was sufficient to keep him back, let his skill be what it would.

What care was here taken, that their vanities should not be discredited? And will neither reason nor religion convince us, that not only equal, but far greater care ought to be taken, to discourage profaneness among Christians, than the blind heathens ever took, to preserve the reputation of their vain exercises? Let all subordinate ministers of state, and officers in the church, consider how great a part of this blessed reformation is demanded at their hands.

§ 12. Were kingdoms and commonwealths once purged from that spirit of profaneness and debauchery, which thus defiles and overflows them, and the people generally reduced but to civility, sobriety, and temperance; experience would quickly shew them the comfortable effects, and happy fruits thereof.

For though this be much short of what Christianity exacts from

* Seneca, epist. 97.

all its professors, and insufficient to obtain the happiness of the world to come: yet it is greatly conducent to the civil happiness and flourishing of the kingdoms of this world; and, therefore richly worthy the studies and endeavours of all men, to promote and obtain it.

There is no kingdom or commonwealth in the Christian world, which would not by this means breed and send forth multitudes more than they do, with excellent abilities and qualifications, fitting them to sit at the helm of government, and steer a more prosperous course than they do at present. A wise and steady direction of the arduous and important affairs of kingdoms, can only be expected from those that are able to govern themselves, and their own affairs with sobriety and discretion.

If the laws of nations take care for the preservation and growth of timber, fit for the building of houses and ships, and every one sees the usefulness and necessity of such acts; much more ought they to take care for such an education of men, as may render them serviceable members to the state, both in camp and council.

Magistrates are (in a sense) the foundation of kingdoms; the strong shoulders that bear the burden of government; And reason will tell, that so great a weight and stress, as the affairs and concerns of kingdoms, ought not to be laid on their shoulders, whose legs, through debauchery, are too weak to bear their own reeling and staggering bodies.

Seamen and soldiers are the walls of kingdoms, and (under God) their prudence and courage are the people's defence and safeguard. Plutarch tells us, there were two virtues in Hannibal, which made him prosperous and successful: There was in him, *Plurimum audacia ad capienda pericula, et plurimum consilii inter ipsa pericula*: He was bold in attempting, and prudent in managing the most difficult services. The former had signified little without the latter. Courage may throw men into the midst of difficulties; but counsel and wisdom helps them to emerge those difficulties; and I am sure, that cannot be rationally expected from men, that daily dethrone their own reason by debauchery.

But when men, not only sober, just, and temperate, but religiously good, are employed in public trusts and services; we cannot but think the security and prosperity of such a state are abundantly provided for. And our confidence hereof is not only founded upon the maxims of human reason, but of scripture, wisdom, and authority also.

What a renowned, prosperous, and successful captain of the armies of Israel, was good Joshua! No man was able to stand before him all the days of his life, Josh. i. 5. But what bred those brave, gallant, and undaunted spirits in the breast of this hero, and crowned his noble designs with such admirable success? If we look into ver. 8. we shall find it was religion, that gave both the edge and point to his natural courage; "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy

mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Hezekiah, this way, became a nonsuch among the kings of Judah; he "he clave to the Lord, and the Lord was with him; and he prospered, whithersoever he went forth," 2 Kings xviii. 5, 6, 7. And dying David from a whole life of experience, recommended this as the only method of prosperity, unto Solomon his son; "Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways; that thou mayest prosper in all that thou dost, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself," 1 Kings ii. 3, 4.

How great a lustre therefore doth this truth cast about it: that the restraint and reformation of vice, and the due encouragement of virtue and piety, becomes the very civil interest of kingdoms and nations, by the joint votes and suffrages both of human and divine wisdom? Let any kingdom or state make trial of this method, and from that very time they shall date their prosperity. This will make them become the terrors of their enemies round about them: Peace and prosperity shall flourish in the midst of them; which is the true level and design of this most necessary and seasonable attempt.

CHAP. II.

Producing one dictate, or rule of right reason, respecting morality, allowed by mankind; and passing current through the world, without one negative voice, except only from those men, whose reasons are utterly captivated by their lusts.

§ 1. **SUCH** is the degeneracy and deep corruption of some men's natures, by ill education, base company, and long custom in sin; that abandoning and casting away the bonds and restraints of right reason, as well as religion, they give the full scope and liberty to their lusts and passions, reckoning their chief happiness to consist in the gratification and satisfaction of their sensitive appetites. They affect a soft, delicate, sense-pleasing life; reckoning it the only real heaven to be desired and sought by them; and any other heaven beside that to be merely notional and fantastic. This is the element they desire to live and sport in, fitly described, Tit. iii. 3. by *servings divers lusts and pleasures*. Hence it comes to pass, that their bodies serve only to be strainers for meats and drinks, and channels for filthy lusts to stream through. In this stream, their masculine agility melts away, and all public hopes and expectations from them, are totally defeated and disappointed. Appetite is the master, and reason the slave.

These men (if it be fit to call them men) have bid defiance to their

own reason, and denounced a war against their own faculties as if reason had licensed and privileged (which it never did, nor can do) their worse than brutish lusts, to act to the uttermost of their abilities, without any matter of restraint over them.

§ 2. But notwithstanding the present captivity of reason, under usurping and domineering lusts, so long as it hath a permanent and fixed root and principle in their nature, it is possible it may recover its throne and empire over them again; as many an imprisoned king hath done, and probably would do in a very short space, if those prejudices they have conceived against its government, were but once fairly confuted and removed; which certainly is not hard to do.

They are of opinion that the laws of reason are too severe, strict, and rigorous, that they too much abridge them of their pleasures and delights; and that the government of sensuality being more easy, favourable and indulgent, is for that reason, much more eligible and desirable.

Whereas right reason designs not the abandoning of all pleasures, but only the exchange of them, and that exchange every way to our great advantage. The only hurt or loss, (if this must be accounted so) any man can sustain by the exchange of pleasures made by reason and religion is this: that they design for you the rational, ordinate, and congruous delights, both of a man and of a Christian; in lieu of the lower, baser, and filthy pleasures of a beast or a devil.

They propose to you rules about pleasures, far more safe and grateful, without any culpable severity, or austerity in them. Reason would only regulate and legitimate your delights, and religion sanctify them; that you might much more purely and sweetly enjoy them, without either shame arising from their turpitude, or fear from their guilt. The rules of both are large and indulgent enough; and keeping within their lines and limits, men shall find such generous, manly, and agreeable delights, as are no where to be enjoyed without them.

§ 3. To make this evident, I shall postulate and presume but one thing, and that a thing so immediately true and self-evident, that in the first naked proposal of it, it naturally and easily lets itself into every man's understanding, and no sooner asks, but gains the approbation of right reason. And that self-evident principle, which I take for granted, no man of sound intellectuals will quarrel or dispute, is this:

That good which compriseth and involveth the true honour, profit, and pleasure of the whole man, which is more congruous to human nature, and preservative of it, is to be preferred in our estimation and choice, to that which only yields a lower degree of pleasure, without profit or honour, to the basest part of man: and that low and transient pleasure it doth yield, attended and followed with many present and future miseries, destructive to the whole man.

The several parts of this complex proposition, cast such a light and glory round about them, that I cannot imagine, but as soon as it

shall be propounded to the judgment and censure of sound reason, it must immediately gain both its approbation and applause.

But because reason in many men is so beclouded and disturbed by lusts and passions, that it can neither receive things orderly, nor judge of them truly and impartially; I conceive it needful, to demand the censure and judgment of their reason, upon the particulars comprised in this general complex proposition; that so weighing and examining them one by one, we may try, whether sound reason hath any valuable exception against any part, or member thereof.

§ 4. And *first*, I take it for granted, that no man's reason will deny, or demur to this proposition; that *good is to be chosen, and evil to be avoided*: for the will is naturally carried to that which is *good*, as to its proper object, and shuns that which is evil. And that is naturally good, which is convenient and agreeable to nature; and that naturally evil, which is inconvenient and hurtful to nature. So that the choice of good rather than evil is the natural choice of the will; and this choice of the will is founded upon the law of self-preservation, without which the creation would quickly disband, and no particular being could be long preserved.

And not only the will of rational creatures chooseth the good, and refuseth the evil; but every sensitive creature is endowed with a natural faculty, to discern the one from the other, in order to the preservation of their beings. You find it in the smallest and most despicable animals; and therefore cannot deny it unto man, the noblest and most excellent being on earth; except only in his non-age, before he hath lived to the years of discretion. Children, indeed, in their infancy, have no knowledge to discern between good and evil: Deut. i. 39. But men, not discerning good from evil, or choosing evil rather than good, are many degrees beneath babes.

Secondly, Nor will reason hesitate at all upon this particular, That *there are degrees of goodness found among pleasures and delights*; some are better than others. Every life is not alike pleasant and happy. To deny this, is to make the most despicable worm, or fly, equally happy with the most excellent creature upon earth. And beside, for the conviction of such debauched persons as I am here arguing with, it will follow clearly from the denial of that truth, that they really gain nothing to themselves, by all their extravagant and licentious courses; there being altogether as much pleasure and felicity, in a temperate, chaste, and sober life, as there is in that beastly life they live; and their very departure from the way of sobriety, to embrace the ways of debauchery, most clearly evineth to the world, that they do not think all pleasures equal; but that they do confidently expect to find more pleasure and satisfaction in the way that they choose, than they did in the way of sobriety, which they have left and abandoned.

Thirdly, I cannot be so uncharitable to think, but the relicts of reason in the most profligate person, will readily admit and grant, That

wherever the good of pleasure, profit, and honour, meet together, and jointly conspire to make the life of a man more comfortable, and more durable upon earth; that is much rather to be chosen, than a mere transient touch of sensitive pleasure, accompanied with present regret, and followed with the ruin of estate, name, honour, soul, and body. He that thinks otherwise, is more fit for a bedlam, than a rational and sober confutation. These things therefore I take for granted, they being innate and self-evident notions and principles in all men.

§ 5. The wisdom and goodness of God are clearly discernible, in leaving such principles of reason, and common notices of conscience in men after the fall, as prompt them naturally unto justice, chastity, temperance, and sobriety; and do struggle within them, to restrain them from, or recover them out of their immoralities; from which many advantages do result.

For hereby God is acknowledged all the world over; men every where shewing by these things the work of the law written in their hearts; Rom. ii. 15.

Hereby kingdoms and commonwealth are preserved; this being the common bridle, which restrains the outrageous lusts of millions of men, which else would turn the world into confusion; though here and there some have slipt bridle and run into all excess of riot. We justly admire the providence of God, in butting, bounding, and restraining the boisterous ocean, by mountains, rocks, and sands: and as much is he to be admired, in curbing the insatiable lusts of men, by these innate principles of reason and conscience.

Hereby the way to sin is in some measure barred and shut up: and the further progress of sinners, already entered into, stopped and denied. For actions done with regret, cannot be supposed to be done so frequently and furiously, as if they were done without any regret; or that the way to sin was smoothed to them with a full consent and approbation of their whole self. For most sinners find in themselves what Medea did,

—————*Video meliora, proboque,*

Deteriora sequor.—————

‘They both see and approve that which is better, though they follow
‘that which is worse.’

In a word, these relicts of reason and conscience in men, are fit handles to catch hold on, for the turning them about from Satan unto God. When Paul reasoned with Felix, about temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come, his words laid hold upon these handles, and gave him such a shake, that the text saith, Felix trembled. And, O! that this might take hold of the reason and conscience of every profane reader, and produce some more excellent and lasting effect upon his soul.

§ 6. These notices and dictates of reason and conscience in men, being so necessary, and many ways beneficial to themselves, as well as to the whole community; it must therefore be a horrid villany to

war against them; and, by violence, to suppress and enslave them to their own lusts.

This is, as if a company of desperate ruffians, should assault innocent and noble travellers upon the lawful road, bind and gag their guides, whilst they rob and prostitute them. Thus deal brutish lusts, (headed by the devil) with the affections of men, travelling along the lawful road of duty, under the conduct of reason and conscience. For this villany it was, that the apostle tells us, "The wrath of God was revealed from heaven against the Heathens, who held the truth in unrighteousness," Rom. i. 18. They had the light of natural reason and conscience in them, the inbred notions of good and evil; which raised their hopes or fears, according to the nature and quality of their actions.

* *Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra*

Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo. Ovid.

But their headstrong boisterous lust, rudely and violently brake in upon reason and conscience, imprisoned and bound them; as Zedekiah did the faithful prophet Jeremiah, for the discharge of his duty to him. For this, "the wrath of God was revealed from heaven against them." And indeed, we cannot wonder it should be incensed against them, as it will against all that act like them. For into such a sin as this, many direful aggravations fall in together, to make it a monstrous and prodigious sin. Here we find an high and causeless abuse of the noblest natural faculties and powers of a man's own soul. What harm have thy reason and conscience done thee by stimulating and persuading thee to temperance, chastity, and sobriety: or by struggling and striving with thee, to prevent both thy present and future ruin? Do they lay their faithful and loving hands of restraint upon thee, when they see thee running headlong into destruction? And do they deserve for this, and no worse than this, to be thus trampled under foot, and abused? Ask thyself, man, Whether thou thinkest thy very dog deserves to be hanged, for opening at midnight, and taking that thief by the throat, who came to cut thine? And darest thou use those noble powers within thee, worse than thou wouldst use a dog? Humanity would blush at such an action.

These vile abuses of thy reason and conscience carry also in them an horrid contempt of God; whose patent, officers, and delegates, thy reason and conscience are. Those certainly sin with an high hand against the Lord, who make nothing to controul, kick, and lay in irons, his commission-officers, appointed for no other end, but their present and future felicity. Nay,

Such men as these are found in a plain controversy with the devil, and that in a most unnatural and horrid plot against their own souls

* As each man's soul of good or ill is conscious,
So hope for good he feels, but fears for vice.

and bodies. Their light and their lusts are struggling together. Sin and conscience are combating one with another; the one to destroy, the other to save the man. Darest thou join with thy lusts against thy light, and think not to be brought in as a party and confederate with the devil? The stopping of the mouth of thy conscience, fully proves both thy consent and concealment: and if proved consent and concealment make thee not a party and accessory, it will be very strange.

Plutarch, in his book *de Amicitia*, relates a story of a Persian, who scuffling in the dark with a magician, against whom he had a grudge; and not being able to conquer him himself, called upon his friend who stood by him with a naked sword ready to strike, but durst not, for fear of killing his friend: The Persian cries out, ‘Strike, strike, however thy stroke fall; thrust at an adventure. I care not, so thou kill the magician, though thou kill him through mine own body.’

Much so stands the case here, with a little variation. Thou art furiously set upon the enjoyment of thy lusts; nothing will quiet thee, but their satisfaction. Thy reason and conscience will oppose it and struggle hard with thee, to with-hold thee from them. But thou carest not in the rage of thine insatiable appetite, though thy reason and conscience both fall in the combat, rather than thy lusts should not be satisfied. Oh, what brutes! yea, what monsters, can sin turn men into!

§ 7. If men have not quite extinguished both reason and conscience by debauchery, and divested themselves of humanity; one would think, no motion or address can possibly be made to them more fair, rational, and inoffensive, than this, that they would be pleased but to consult themselves, and hearken to the native and unconstrained voice of their own reason and conscience, before they engage themselves in matters of great concernment, upon which both their present and eternal welfare do depend; or, if they are already engaged, yet at least to lend an ear to what they have to offer for their recovery, before it be too late.

You are not here urged and pressed, to hearken to the voices of your enemies that hate you, or to the counsel and advice of mere strangers, who know not your affairs; but to hearken to yourselves, to be your own arbitrators and judges, to draw up the award with your own hand. It is a strange and an hard case indeed, and scarce to be supposed, that men should fall out with themselves at such a rate, that they had rather hear the voice of their mortal enemy the devil, and listen to his advice and counsel, than to the voice of their own reason and conscience.

We all account it madness in Balaam, to beat his innocent ass, and threaten to kill her for shunning the sword of the angel, that opposed his passage in a sinful and dangerous expedition; but how many use both their reason and conscience worse than asses, because they dare not go forward, and desperately carry them into the very midst of

dangers and miseries, which they plainly foresee, and warn them of?

What injuries have thy reason or conscience done thee, man? What affronts have they given thee; that thou wilt not suffer them to speak, or offer one word, though never so pertinent, seasonable and necessary? There is a civility due from us to mere strangers; yea, to strangers of an inferior rank and quality. The least we can do, is to give them a patient hearing; and not interrupt them, whilst they speak nothing but what is rational, pertinent, and necessary, especially if it be to their own good and advantage. It is strange, men should not think themselves as much obliged to pay civility and respect to their own reasons and consciences, as they daily pay to mere strangers and inferiors. Give them but a patient hearing, and they will both tell thee;

‘We are thine appointed guardians, and have our commission from God, to advise, direct, and counsel. We are thy faithful and inward friends; yea, we are thine ownself, and the best and noblest part of thyself too. At our hands God will require thy blood, shouldst thou perish by our silence or treachery. We cannot be both silent and innocent, both are in such hazard. Do not abuse us, and stop our mouths from crying out, stop, stop; when we see thee departing from the paths of honesty, honour, and safety, and taking the direct road to that gulph of misery, in which few (if any) footsteps are found of such as return again, that are far engaged therein.

‘Suffer us but fairly and friendly to expostulate the matter with thee. What design can we have against thy true interest; whilst thine, and ours, cannot possibly be opposite; or disjunct, but one and the same interest?’

Well then, that which thy reason and conscience offers, being so weighty, fair, and just, and what thine own interest plainly lies in; I will not be so uncharitable, as to suppose thou wilt either refuse to hear, or reject what they have to say, in the following cases and debates.



CHAP. III.

Wherein the true censure and judgment of right reason and conscience, are given upon profane swearing, and blaspheming the name of God: As also their replies to several pleas offered in defence or excuse thereof.

§ 1. **G**OD bestowed on man the noble faculty of speech, (a peculiar favour and privilege) for two ends and uses. (1.) That by the use of his tongue, he may glorify his Maker, and sound forth the praises of his Redeemer. (2.) That we might thereby be

able to communicate our minds one to another, in all our necessary and convenient interests and concernments, whether civil or religious. This member, (the tongue) though small in quantity, is found to be mighty in efficacy; and whilst it is kept under the rule and government of grace, the words that drop from it, are as apples of gold in pictures of silver. Gracious words are bread to feed, and water to refresh the souls of others. A sanctified tongue is as a tree of life. Conversion, edification, and consolation, are the delicious fruits of the lips.

But the tongues of some men break loose from under all the laws and rules both of reason and religion, and serve only to vent the froth and filth, which abound in the heart, as in a fountain of pollution: *For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.* The tongue moves lightly, but falls heavily; it strikes soft, but wounds deep. It would not spare men of the highest rank and eminence, did not the fear of capital punishments teach them so much wit, to keep their tongues in prison, that they may keep their bodies out of prison. And though, for this reason, they are afraid of making too bold with the names of men; yet having no fear of God at all, they fall upon his great and dreadful name, tossing it to and fro, without any respect or reverence.

Augustus prohibited the common use of his name, lest it should grow too cheap and vile, by the common and needless using of it. The name of Mercurius Trismegistus was very sparingly used, because of the great reverence the people had for him. The very Heathens were afraid to pronounce the name of their great god, Demogorgon, as fearing the earth would tremble, when his name was mentioned. How doth the reverence of Heathens to their false gods, expose and aggravate the impudence of professed Christians, in their vile indignities and abuses of the great and terrible name of the true God! Yea, they not only take up his name vainly and rashly into their lips, but audaciously insert it by a profane oath into their common talk, as that which gives the grace, lepor, and ornament to their discourses. Some have not been ashamed to say, what pity is it, that swearing should be a sin, which gives so great a grace and ornament to language?

§ 2. Swearing by the name of God in a righteous cause, when called thereto by due authority, is not only a lawful, but a religious act, founded upon, and directed to the honour of God's omniscience; whereunto there is a solemn appeal made, in every assertory and promissory oath, and a religious acknowledgment made him, of his infallible knowledge of the truth or falsehood of our hearts, and all the secrets of them, be they never so involved and inward things.

The lawful use and end of swearing, is to put an end to all strife, and to maintain both equity and charity among men; the two bonds and ligaments of human society. Now, it being the sovereign right and property of God alone, infallibly to *search and try the hearts and reins of men*, he thereby becomes the infallible witness to the

truth or falsehood of what they speak ; so that in every such lawful oath, there is not only a solemn appeal, and in that appeal an ascription of glory to his sovereign omniscience ; but therein (implicitly at least) they put themselves under his wrath and curse, in case they swear falsely ; which makes this action most sacred and solemn.

The deep corruption of human nature by the fall, makes these appeals to God under a curse necessary. For it is supposed, though men be false and deceitful, yet there is some reverence of a Deity, and fear of his wrath and curse, left unextinguished in their fallen nature. So that men will rather speak the truth (though to their own shame and loss) than by invoking so glorious a name in vain, put both soul and body under his wrath and curse. By which it appears what an awful and solemn thing an oath is ; and that every good man, not only takes a lawful oath with holy fear and trembling, because of the solemnity of the action ; but rather ought to chuse death, than to swear profanely, because of the horrid malignity of the action.

§ 3. The contumely and malignity found in profane oaths, appears in that terrible threatening, “ The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain : ” A threatening, altogether as just and righteous, as it is severe and terrible. This sin admits of degrees of guilt. It is highly sinful to swear by the name of God lightly and vainly in our common discourses, though the oath be clipped, and half suppressed, or disguised in the pronunciation of it ; which argues remains of fear and shame in the sinner.

It is yet worse (and indeed not a jot below blasphemy) to swear by any other name, than the name of God : For in so doing, they attribute to a creature the sovereign and incommunicable property of God, set that creature in the very throne of God, and invest it with the regalities of his omniscience, to know our hearts, and almighty power, to avenge the wrong upon us, done to himself, as well as to men, by false-swearing.

But to break in rudely and blasphemously upon the sacred and tremendous name of God, with bold and full-mouthed oaths, striking through his sacred name with direct contumelious blasphemies ; this argues an heart, from which all fear of God is utterly expelled and banished.

Yet some there are, grown up to that prodigious height of impiety, that they dare assault the very heavens, and discharge whole volleys of blasphemies against the glorious majesty which dwells there. They are not afraid to bid defiance to him, and challenge the God that made them, to do his worst. They deck and adorn (as they account it) their common discourse with bloody oaths, and horrid imprecations ; not reckoning them genteel and modish without them. It consists not with the greatness of their spirits, to be wicked at the common rate. They are willing to let the world know, that they are none of those puny, silly fellows, that are afraid of invisible powers, or so much

cowards, as to slip a full-mouthed oath, by suppressing, or whispering the emphatical sounding syllable; but think an horrid blasphemy makes the most sweet and graceful cadency in their hellish rhetoric.

They glory, that they have fully conquered all those troublesome notions of good and evil, virtue and vice, heaven and hell, to that degree, that they can now affront the divine Majesty to his very face, and not fear the worst he threatens in his word against their wickedness.

If there be a God, (which they scarce believe) they are resolved, audaciously to provoke him to give them a convincing evidence of his being. And if he be (as they are told he is) rich in patience and forbearance, they are resolved to try how far his patience will extend, and what load of wickedness it is capable to bear.

If their damnation be not yet sure enough, they will do their utmost to make it sure, by breaking down the only bridge whereby they can escape damnation: I mean, by trampling under their feet the precious blood and wounds of the Son of God, and imprecating the damnation of hell upon their own souls, as if it slumbered too long, and were too slow-paced in its motions towards them. I am of opinion, there are few Christians to be found on earth, crying so often, *Lord, pardon; Lord save me;* as some wretches among us cry, (*I tremble to speak it!*) *God damn me: the devil take me.*

Herein they seem to envy the happiness of the devils, and damned wretches in hell, and endeavour (as one speaks) to snatch damnation out of God's hand before the time; as if they could not be soon enough among their roaring and howling companions in the midst of the everlasting burnings. But, why such haste to be perfectly miserable? The very devils themselves deprecate torments before their time, though you imprecate them. Your misery makes haste enough towards you; you need not quicken it, or thus run to meet it.

I am persuaded, that if the bars of the bottomless pit were broken up, and devils should ascend in human shapes, none among them would be found hastening upon themselves the fulness and completeness of their misery, as you do. It is a truth, though a strange one, that it is much easier to find, than imagine men upon earth professing Christian religion, yet in some respect sunk below the wickedness of the diabolical nature, by making damnation both the subject of their drollery, and the object of their very wishes and desires. Some greater masters of our language, may more lively and emphatically express the horrid nature of this sin; but excuse me, reader, if I believe no words or thoughts can measure the height or depth of this monstrous abomination.

§ 4. Such contumelious language as this (especially when grown modish, or common) cannot but be a most high and dreadful provocation of God, and such an one as will certainly bring down his desolating vengeance, not only upon the heads of blasphemers themselves, but upon the states and kingdoms that connive at, or tolerate them.

We read, Zech. v. 2, 3, 4. of a flying roll full of curses, the length thereof twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits; which shall enter into the house of the swearer, remain in the midst of his house, and consume it with the timber and stones thereof. Blasphemy and profane swearing are like barrels of gunpowder laid under the foundation of many great and noble families, many of which are already blown up, and laid in ruins by this sin, and many more are ready to follow, as soon as the justice of God shall give fire to it.

And (comparatively speaking) it were happy if the mischief ended here; but, alas! it causes God to commence a quarrel with the whole land; Hos. iv. 2, 3. 'And because of oaths, the land mourneth.' You find in Isa. xxxviii. what it was that brought that unparalleled desolation upon that famous and flourishing city of Jerusalem, and the whole land of Judah; 'for Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongues and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.'

But, alas! scripture-threatenings signify scarce so much with these men, as the predictions of the weather in an almanack; and, which is strange to consider, the very execution of scripture-threatenings before their eyes, will not terrify them from this inhuman wickedness; even these also are laughed to scorn, or easily forgotten.

O! that God would set it home with power, upon the spirits of all that are in power, to take some speedy and effectual course to remove this accursed thing, this iniquity to be punished by the judge; one (and a chief one too) of those direful provocations of heaven, to which we owe a special part of our national infelicity at this day. We all acknowledge, that all prosperity and success depends upon God; if so, reason will readily own, that it must be therefore the interest of kingdoms and commonwealths, to prevent and restrain those impieties, which so audaciously provoke and incense his wrath. As much is this their duty and interest, as it is the interest of a courtier to avoid offences of his royal master, the king, upon whose favour his honour and preferment depends: Or as it is the duty of the owner, to keep in that ox which is used to goring, or cover that pit into which some have, and others of his family are like to fall: or carefully and speedily to remove that gunpowder, which his enemies have placed under the foundation of his house, to blow it up. Both reason and experience will inform the rulers of this world, that professed rebels to the God of heaven, are never like to make useful subjects in the kingdom of men.

§ 5. Until public justice lay hold upon such offenders, let us try what close reasoning may effect, for their reformation. It is hard to imagine that men of sense should so generally, and so far engage themselves in this course of profane swearing, and have nothing at all to say for themselves.

If they have no reason at all, to offer in justification or excuse of

what they do, they act the brutes, not the men, and are self-condemned already.

It is a question with me, whether the soul of man, on this side hell, can sink so deep into the nature of a devil, as to sin because he will sin; or to engage himself in a course of sin, without any respect at all to some carnal interest, either of profit, pleasure, or honour?

The thief hath a visible temptation of gain to allure him, or pinching necessity, to induce him. The liar is drawn in, to commit that second sin, to cover the shame and turpitude of a former. The adulterer promiseth himself pleasure in the satisfaction of his lusts. And though men generally stand amazed to think, what that temptation should be, which prevails upon the swearer; yet doubtless, something there is he hath to plead in excuse and extenuation of his fault. Whatsoever it be, let it be produced, and weighed in the balance of right reason; *Valeat quantum valere potest*, Let it have its due value and consideration. And could I imagine any thing more likely to be their inducements, than what I shall here mention, I would not conceal them. There are only four things, that can fall within the compass of my imagination, pleaded by them, when seriously charged with the evil of the fact.

1. Some of them will happily tell us, that they would not swear as they do, if they could gain credit to what they say without it; but the incredulity of others, provokes them to add so many oaths to their single affirmations.

2. Others of them will tell us, they only swear in their passion, when provoked by injuries received from others; and if men did not wrong them, they would not wrong God as they do.

3. Some will plead, that swearing is become modish, the badge and character of a gentleman; that it gives them reputation among men of their own rank and quality; and that they shall be looked upon as speaking fools, unfit for the company of gentlemen, if they could not discourse with them in this dialect.

4. And some will confess the practice is evil; but that they have gotten such an ill habit, and the sin is become so customary with them, that many times they know not whether they swear or no.

I cannot imagine, nor (I think) they themselves, what else is pleadable in excuse, or extenuation of this horrid sin: Let these that are produced, have a fair trial at the bar of reason; and carry yourselves towards this sin for ever hereafter, according to that righteous verdict yourselves shall be forced to pass upon it.

§ 6. To begin with the first plea. You say, you would not swear as you do, could you gain credit to your words without it. Weigh this question in the upright balance of thine own reason, whether any wise or sober man in the world, will find himself ever the more obliged to believe what you say, by the addition of blasphemous oaths and imprecations, to your plain and simple affirmations or negations. I

cannot think, that you yourselves would give the more credit to any man, that should profess his sincerity to you, by finding him, in that his very profession, false and treacherous to his God. Say, reason, dost not thou take this for a sure truth; that he who makes no conscience of being true to God, will never make much conscience of being false to men? For what is that which gives any man's words reputation among wise and sober men, but the supposition of his integrity, and conscientious fear of his deceit and guile? Take away that, and with it you take away the credibility of all his reports and affirmations.

If I look upon the person that speaks, as a man of integrity and conscientious tenderness, I have a sufficient ordinary security of the truth of what he saith. But if I look upon him as a man of a prostitute and seared conscience, that dares venture upon any sin; a man, in whom there is no awe of God, to produce veracity in his words; then my reason presently concludes, that where there is no truth, there ought to be no trust: For truth is the very ground-work and foundation of trust. Now, what truth can we suppose to be left in that man, that sticks not, upon any trivial occasion, to break asunder all the obligations of a creature to his Creator? together with all the bonds of kindness, his great and best benefactor hath bound him withal; and without any the least injury he can pretend his God hath done him, to fly in his very face with the most contumelious language? Can we suppose any truth to be in, or any trust to be due to such a man as this?

Good men and bad are thus contradistinguished, Eccl. ix. 2. 'Him that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath.' A conscientious man is so afraid of an oath, that he would rather chuse to die, than swear some kind of oaths: And though he be satisfied of the lawfulness of an oath in general, and of the matter of an oath he sweareth in particular; yet an holy awe and fear of God fills his heart, when he swears lawfully and necessarily, lest he should fail in the manner of it, by not giving that due reverence to the name of God, which so sacred and solemn an action requires.

But from profane swearing, and blaspheming the name of God, every man's reason may justly and plainly infer this conclusion; that the fear of God, is not in that man's heart. And where there is no fear of God, what truth can be supposed in him; or what trust can be due to his words or oaths? But the more he swears, still the less reason all wise men have to believe him. And I am sure, the credulity of fools adds little reputation to him. This plea therefore, for profane swearing, is altogether shamed, baffled, and cashiered, by the common reason of mankind.

§ 7. Call therefore to the bar of reason the second plea, or apology, for profane swearing. *You say, you swear not, unless provoked by injuries men have done you.*

This is so weak a plea for so great a sin, that I wonder men are not

ashamed to bring it into the court of reason. This is the true sense, and strength of it: My enemy hath abused me; therefore I will avenge the wrong my enemy hath done me, upon my best friend and benefactor. I challenge you to give but the colour, or shadow of sound reason, why, upon any abuse you have received from men, you should fall so injuriously upon the name of God, who never abused or injured you, since he gave you a being, but hath always done you good. Tell me, man, (if thou hast the reason of a man in thee) what wrong hath God done thee? Wherein hath he injured thee, that thou thus wraekest thy revenge upon him? If an enemy have affronted you, reason would tell you, you ought not to take revenge for it, upon your friend, and best benefactor. Have you none but God to abuse, when men abuse and injure you? Can your reason comprobate and allow such an action as this? Satan instigates the corruptions of men to injure you; and you fly in the face of God for it, whose laws severely prohibit such actions, and will avenge the injuries done unto him. Speak no more therefore for ever, in the way of excusing the horrid sinfulness of this fact against God, upon the account of injuries done thee by thy fellow creature. The case is plainly determined, and cast over the bar of reason with contempt and abhorrence.

§ 8. Come we next to your third excuse, or plea; That *swearing is become modish, and gives you a great reputation among men of your own rank and quality; and that you shall be looked upon as sneaking fellows, unfit for the society of gentlemen, if you did not discourse with them in their own dialect.*

This apology for sin is of no late date: Salvian mentions it as far back as his own time: Profane persons then* thus pleaded for themselves, that they were compelled to be evil, lest they should be accounted vile.

Whether there be any weight in this apology for swearing, will quickly appear, now it is to be laid in the balance of true reason.

1. And first of all, let us consider what makes a true gentleman; and whether profane swearing have any place in his true character and description. † A gentleman, is one that springs from famous and renowned ancestors, and degenerates not from their probity and honour.

This is the man, whom the Latins call *generosus*, and we, a gentleman: Because we suppose a man of such an extraction and education, more gentle, affable, and condescending to inferiors, and to keep a stricter government over his tongue and passions, than the rude plebians are wont to do. Upon this account, the poet rightly observes,

* *Mali esse coguntur, ne viles habeantur.*

† *Generosus, nobilis, ex præclaro genere ortus, qui a genere non deflectit.*

*Quo major est quisquis, magis est placabilis ira,
Et facilis motus mens generosa capit.*

Men of genteel extraction and education, are persons, whose passions are supposed to move more gently than other men's: And if at any time they be moved disorderly, yet are they more placable, and sooner reduced, than those of sordid and baser spirits are.

It is virtue which raises and ennobles families at first; for *omnis sanguis concolor*, all human blood is derived from, and equally tainted by Adam. Nobler, and baser blood, is an after-difference, made by virtue and vice among men. And as virtue first ennobled, and raised some families above others, so it will still continue the line of honour in their posterity: And as their virtues shall increase, so will their honour proportionably do.

The case truly and plainly standing thus; it is morally impossible to make debauchery the proper badge and character of gentility. For men of eminency (above the vulgar) are more obliged than they, to shun all base and sordid actions: And as their honour increaseth, so do their obligations to temperance and sobriety increase, and strengthen upon them proportionably.

It was therefore a right and rational observation of Hierome; *I see nothing desirable in nobility*, (saith he) *but this; that such men are bound by a certain kind of necessity, not to degenerate from, or stain the glory and honour of their renowned ancestors.* And the reason is strong and evident: For virtue being that which first differenced their blood from others, they are obliged, by all the value they have for the honour of their blood and families, to shun those vices which stain that honour and dignity. And what vice can dishonour and debase them more than profane swearing? For if the arms of many noble families have been reversed for treason against the king; it is irrational to imagine, that treason against the King of kings, should add a new mark of honour: And what is blasphemy but treason against God? It is plain then, from the true rise and character of a gentleman, profane swearing neither first raised, nor can preserve and continue, but rather blots and exposes their reputation and honour.

2. Though I am most willing to pay a becoming deference to all persons of noble and genteel extraction, yet, in faithfulness to their true honour, I am here obliged to say, (and in saying it, I can offend no man that hath a true sense of honour) that their natural descent can never give them so much honour, as the vices I am here censuring will reflect ignominy and dishonour upon him. To be a slave of Satan, and your own lusts, is such a mark of infamy, as all the honourable and illustrious titles in the world can never cover. It is better to rise by virtue to honour, from contemptible parents, than by vice and profaneness, to grow contemptible from honourable parents. It is your honour to have many servants at your command, obsequiously attending a nod of your head, or a beck of your finger: But ask your own reason, gentlemen, whether it be not a greater dishonour, for you

to attend as obsequiously yourselves upon every beck and nod of Satan and your own lusts?

Were your natural birth once ennobled by the new birth, you would be more than thrice honourable, grace would make you more illustrious than your natural extraction doth, or can do. Or if morality (which is far inferior to that honour, and for which Heathens themselves have been renowned in the Pagan world) did but adorn and beautify your conversations; though it cannot entitle you to heaven, or secure to you the glory of the world to come; yet it would make you shine in the eyes of men in this world, and taking its advantage from your honourable extraction, make you differ from persons of an inferior rank, as stars of greater magnitude and lustre. I hope, gentlemen valuing themselves upon their honour, will not be offended at a sharper invective than this, against those vices that darken and eclipse their honour, both in the eyes of God, as well as in the judgment of all wise and good men.

3. Suppose what you say to be true, that some profane gentlemen should scoff and deride you, for your sober carriage, and decorous language, (things which ought to be inseparable from true gentility) I would in this case appeal to your own reason, why you should not enjoy your own pleasure in as full latitude and liberty, as they do theirs? they delight in the dialect of devils; you, in pure and inoffensive language. If they will drink the puddled waters, and you refuse them for the pure chrystal streams; you have, to be sure, as much reason (and a thousand times more) to assert your liberty to be virtuous, than they have (or can pretend to have) a privilege to be vicious.

And if they will be offended with you for this, their offence is groundless in themselves, and will be greatly advantageous to you. For you need not doubt but you may find better company than theirs any where on this side hell. I remember that rational and excellent apology, which Tertullian made for the Christians in his time against the Gentiles: 'Wherein (saith he) do we offend you, if we will not partake with you in your delights! If we sustain any damage by such our refusal, the injury can only be our own: We reject your pleasures, and you are not delighted with ours.'

You will shew yourselves true and worthy gentlemen, in abandoning and rejecting (upon so noble an account as this) all further unnecessary society with such gentile-men; for so they deserve to be called, rather than gentlemen. They boast, indeed the honour of their blood, whilst they trample the precious and invaluable blood of Christ under their feet: They boast their eminency above the vulgar, whilst mean time they labour vilely to him that set them there.

I am sure there is not a devil in hell, but is by nature of a more honourable and illustrious house, than the proudest blasphemers. They are angels by nature, though devils by practice. They have little reason to boast of their original excellency, which now aggravates their misery. Sin darkened their lustre, degraded them from their

natural dignity; and so it will do theirs also, that imitate devils in their blasphemy and malignity against God.

4. It may as easily be proved as asserted, that to make cursing, swearing, and blaspheming, the badges and characteristic marks of a true gentleman, is the foulest blot and mark of infamy, which the malice of their enemies can devise to put into their escutcheons; and such an affront, as ought to be highly resented by all true gentlemen.

Should the most malicious enemy you have in the world, sue an herald to devise a mark of infamy for your coats of arms, to make you ridiculous, and a by-word among the people; he could never dishonour you at that rate, you this way dishonour yourselves.

For if debauchery be both asserted and allowed to be the true badge of gentility, then your own reason will infer, that all the ancient epithets of gentility ought thereupon to be altered. And would those gentlemen, think you, take it well, to have the titles, and epithets of ingenious, worthy, honourable, and noble, changed into cursing, swearing, damning, blaspheming gentlemen? You cannot but see the inconsistency of both. If, therefore, you will adopt and wear the latter, you must either cashier and renounce the former, or try to make the former consistent with the latter, which I am sure the most ingenious among you will find an hard task to do.

5. I humbly beg leave to propound one plain blunt question to you, gentlemen. The matter of it is too rational to be rejected, and let that make atonement for the blunt manner of its proposal. And the question is this:

Quest. Whether your reason and conscience be fully satisfied, that when you die (as you know you shortly must,) you shall then appear before the judgment-seat of God, in the quality and character of gentlemen? Do you verily think you shall find the more favour there, for the sake of your noble descent, and honourable extraction, or that your gentility shall make an atonement for all your impicty?

I am persuaded, gentlemen, you do not; you cannot think so. You know you must appear before that God, with whom there is no respect of persons; a God that will certainly damn the impenitent blasphemer. The man must assuredly go to hell, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And if the man be damned, certainly the gentleman is in a bad case.

6. In a word, I am past all doubt, and so may you too, that this genteel mode of swearing, drinking, and whoring, which hath spread so far in this present infamous age, into protestant states and kingdoms, is the very spirit and strength of a Popish plot, subtly projected, and industriously managed, for their effectual reduction to Popery.

For nothing in the world can reconcile men to Popery; yea, and even endear them to it, like debauchery. Under Popery, gentlemen may come up to the rates of costly pardons and indulgencies, for their greatest sins. They may give themselves liberty to wallow in profane-

ness all the days of their life. They may give their lusts the utmost scope and liberty, and yet have a plenary pardon when they die. So that they need not abridge themselves of any sinful liberty, or boggle at the loudest blasphemy, whilst they have that in their pocket to still and quiet something that grumbles in their bosom. Do you not see, gentlemen, the natural tendencies of these things? Does not debauchery look like a shoeing-horn to Popery.

Besides, gentlemen, the devil and the Pope are confederates in a farther design upon you; and if their design hit, they hope to win by power, what they may miss by policy; and that by the very same method of corrupting and debauching persons of eminent rank and quality, in Protestant kingdoms and commonwealths. For (as a * learned man in queen Elizabeth's days rightly observed) these are the men especially interested in the public affairs of kingdoms. These represent the people in parliament. These make their laws, administer the government in peace and war. To their hands are committed the great concerns of nations. These are they that fill the seats of public judicature.

If gentlemen, therefore, by this means be generally corrupted and infected by debauchery, their influence and example is likely to infect the greatest part of the body politic, and either make the people easily pliable to the charms and courtships of Popery, for the reason before-mentioned; or so besot their excellent parts, and enervate their masculine courage, that they shall fall an easy prey to their (otherwise) weak and despicable enemies.

And certainly, gentlemen, we have all cause to reckon this plot very far advanced, when we shall see debauchery every where made the badge of gentility; and chastity, temperance, and sobriety, become the marks and notes of infamy. When civility itself shall be hissed with derision out of some gentlemen's company; and the more temperate and sober any man is, by so much the less fit to be a gentleman's companion.

By this time I hope you are convinced, that true gentility is no enemy to sobriety, nor debauchery the character of gentility; and will at last pardon, if not thank me, for endeavouring this way to secure the true honour of some, whilst I rationally argue down the vices and follies of others. This plea for debauchery, you see, hath the same fate the former had, and deserves never to be mentioned more.

* Who manages the reins of government, who is present at, and presides over, both private and public matters, but persons of eminent rank and quality? Who moderates in the Senate, presides in courts, commands at home and abroad? Chief men and nobles surely. Who commands and countermands, acts and overacts, manages and canvasses all affairs, who makes laws, and rescinds them, who governs the state in time of peace, and commands the forces in time of war; but great men and nobles? No wonder that the management of public affairs be committed to him, who by personal merit and renown of his ancestors hath recommended himself to the good report and esteem of mankind. *Humphred on nobility.*

§ 9. There is but one plea more; and that as silly and irrational as any of the former: and that is,

The custom and habit of swearing, which you say is hard to be broken. This sin is become so customary to you, that now you scarce note or observe it in yourselves.

That there may be truth in the matter of this plea, I neither deny nor doubt; but that it is a rational and allowable plea, will never be granted by your own reason. The thing you say may be true; for we sometimes find, that when you are taxed for swearing, you will presently swear that you did not swear; and curse him to his face, that accuses you for cursing.

But pray, gentlemen, make your own reason judge, whether custom be a valid and allowed plea for profane swearing and cursing. Say, reason, wilt thou allow that one of the highest aggravations of sin, is pleadable in thy court for the excuse and extenuation of it? Wilt thou give it under thy hand, that the man is the less guilty, because the more wicked? Darest thou to warrant it that God will take the less notice of the wrongs men do him, because they are used and accustomed so to wrong and abuse him every hour in the day? If your reason can allow and warrant this, I must say it is different, yea, and opposite to the common reason of mankind.

Say not, I make my own reason the rule and standard of yours, or other men's. For I argue here (as I have done all along before) upon the common topics and maxims of reason, generally allowed all the world over by mankind. If a practice be evil, the oftener it is repeated, the more still it is aggravated.

To be plain and faithful with you gentlemen, if it be your custom to blaspheme, it is God's custom to damn blasphemers. If you use to be drunken and unclean, God uses to punish drunkards and adulterers (if impenitent and unreformed) with his everlasting wrath.

And when you are cited (as shortly you must be) before the awful tribunal of the great, the just, and the terrible God, ask but yourselves, whether such a plea as this, be like to excuse in whole, or in part, and take off the heinousness of these horrid impieties? Will your profane oaths, and direful execrations and imprecations, be excused in the least degree, by telling him, Lord, I was so accustomed to blaspheme thy name; cursing, swearing, and damning, were so familiar language in my lips from day to day, that I had quite lost the sense of the action, as well as of the evil thereof; and therefore, Lord, pity, spare and have mercy on me: O damn not my soul to thine everlasting wrath. For though I have imprecated it upon myself, yet frequent custom at length distinguished all my sense and conscience of the evil thereof, till at length I could play with a direful imprecation as an harmless thing; nay, thought it an ornament and grace to my speech, a gallant expression, alamode the times and places I lived in.

Is not this as good a plea, and not a jot better than that of a malefactor upon his trial for life and death, when theft or robbery have been

evidently and substantially proved upon him, and the judge demandeth, What he hath to say for himself, why sentence of death should not pass upon him? Mercy, my Lord, mercy cries he! for I have been so used and accustomed to filching and thieving from my youth up, that for some years before I was apprehended, every one's goods and cattle seemed to me to look like my own; so that I scarce knew when I stole, and when I did not.

And thus, gentlemen, you have heard a fair trial of the sin of profane swearing, and imprecations of damnation; and you have heard the verdict of your own reason and conscience upon the case. The Lord help you to break off and reform that sin, for which there is not one word of apology or excuse now left in your mouths.

Let me close all I have to say upon this head, with one plain question: Do you think you must die, or live here for ever, as you now do? If you are convinced (as all the living are supposed to be) that you must die, do you desire an easy and comfortable, or a painful and terrible death? I presume there is no man living, that is convinced he must die, but desires naturally and rationally an *ἑυθανασίαν*, as easy and comfortable a dissolution as may be. If so, I appeal to your reason, whether profane swearing and blaspheming the name of God, be a proper rational way to obtain peace and comfort at death? With what hope or encouragement can those tongues of yours cry at death, Lord, have mercy upon me, which have profaned that name, and imprecated damnation from him, till you come into your last extremities, which convinced you, you could live no longer.

It is a serious question, and well worth a cool and solemn debate in your own reasons and consciences. Some of you are more immediately exposed to the dangers of death than others, readily to be disbanded by a bullet. If you fall, you must either fall considerately, or inconsiderately. If inconsiderately, and without any sense or conscience of this horrid guilt, you die impenitently, and consequently desperately and miserably. If considerately, and with awakened consciences, I demand, whether such guilt as this will not roar louder than the peals and volleys of those great and small guns do which breathe destruction upon you, and round about you? I have done my message plainly and faithfully to the very face of your reason and conscience; and if for my faithfulness and zeal, both for God's honour and yours, I am rewarded with your curses; yet, if you would forbear to blaspheme and rend in pieces the name of God, I shall not much regard the obloquy and reproach my name shall undergo and suffer upon that account: But I expect from you better fruit than this.

CHAP. IV.

Wherein reason and conscience are again consulted about the practice of drunkenness; and their righteous and impartial censure given upon that case.

§ 1. **T**HOUGH our souls and bodies be of vastly different natures and originals, yet they do clasp and embrace each other with most dear and tender affection. It is marvellous to behold such a spiritual and heavenly creature as the soul in all men, fervently loving, and in most men fondly doting upon a lump of clay, a clod of earth: it sympathizeth tenderly with it. If the meanest member of the body be in pain, the soul is presently concerned for it, and evidences itself to be so, by commanding the eyes both to watch and weep, the tongue to complain and moan, the hands to bind up its wounds with all imaginable tenderness, and carefully defend it from the least injurious touch. But if the whole be in danger, how do its nobler faculties of understanding, memory, and invention, awaken and bestir themselves to the uttermost for its deliverance and safety.

Whilst the soul lives in union with the body, it is filled with assiduous (and too often with exorbitant and distracting) cares, for its necessary support and comfort. And when it must be separated from it by death, what strong aversions to death doth it ordinarily discover? The strong ties and bonds betwixt it and the body, cannot be loosed without much conflict and struggling, evidenced by these emphatical groans it sends forth: groans which other men understand not, nor can be supposed to understand, till they themselves come to feel the parting-pull.

The reason of all which lies in the intimate relation which is betwixt these different natures, which God hath married together in the womb, from which time they have been companions and partners in all the comforts and troubles of life. The body is the soul's house in which it dwells, and still shall dwell, till death dissolve it. It is the soul's garment that clothes and covers it. It hath worn this garment of flesh from the beginning, and is to wear it still, till sickness hath brought it to rags, and death stript it from the soul.

It is the tool and instrument by which it doth all its works, whilst it is in this state of composition; and therefore the soul cannot but love it fervently. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.

§ 2. The case so standing betwixt the soul and body, the wisdom or folly of the soul is plainly discovered in its way and manner of governing the body, as the love and prudence of an husband is in the governing of his wife, or the master in ordering the affairs of his house; or the neat breeding of a man, in the comely wearing of his

garments; or the skill and care of an artificer, in the brightness, keenness, and sharpness of his tools.

Some husbands give evidence to the world of their governing prudence and ability, in such an allowance of liberty to their wives, as the laws of conjugal love require, and their state and incomes will conveniently bear, and no more; and in restraining their extravagancies, as well as by encouraging their virtuous courses, in keeping back no due encouragement to virtue, nor giving the least encouragement unto vice.

A well-bred man, that carries with him a becoming sense of his quality, and the decorum he ought accordingly to observe, will wear his garments decently, and becoming his rank; they shall be sure to be neat and clean, and sit fit and comely upon his body. He abhors to wear a garment tumbled in the mire, and go like a beast, without regard to his reputation.

No prudent owner and governor of an house, will let the rain drop through the roof, nor choak up the passage to his door with a nasty dunghill. His house within shall be neat, and not nasty: the rooms clean and comely: and yet abhors to suffer superfluous ornaments, and costly vanities, to swallow up his estate that should maintain it, and bring bailiffs (more odious than a dunghill) to his very doors.

The curious artificer, neither grinds away the substance of his instruments to make them bright and glittering, and set an edge too fine to hold one minute's use; nor yet suffers them to be thrown aside in some neglected corner, where rust and flaws shall render them utterly useless, or make him blush at the botches such instruments will cause in his work.

The prudent husbandman will neither break the heart of his ground for want of rest and compost, nor yet overload it with dressings which brings forth nothing but rank and useless weeds; he will in a fit season turn in a stream of water to his meadows, like a cordial-draught to fainting spirits; but will not drown it, and rot the very roots of his grass, by letting in too much, or by suffering it to lie under water too long. He will feed his horse high enough to perform his journey, and carry him through the mire; but will not feed him to such a height, that the rider shall neither be able to sit, nor command him.

In all these cases, the common prudence of every man directs him to that just mediocrity, wherein both his honour and profit do apparently lie. And what we say in such common cases and concerns as these, is as true, and much more excellent in the soul's prudent government of its own body, unto which it was espoused in the womb, and is its dear and constant partner, both in the present and future good or evil. It is the garment it wears, the instrument it useth, and the field it cultivates. It must neither deny the body those necessary supports and comforts which God and nature allow it, nor yet surfeit

and overcharge it with more than it is able to bear. In either of these extremes, the extreme folly of the soul is discovered.

§ 3. Now the dethroning of reason, and frequent oppressions of nature, by the practice of drunkenness, is the highest exaltation of folly in the soul of man; plainly manifesting its ignorance and inability to order and govern the body, to which it is married by a vital union.

Here is a foolish soul by misgovernment, dishonouring and destroying its vigorous and comely body, under a pretence of love and kindness to it. We account it one of the greatest outward infelicities in this world, incident to a discreet and virtuous woman, to be headed and governed by a sottish fool, neither able to govern himself, or her, nor give a reason of his own actions or commands. A man whose folly shall make her blush in all sober companies he comes into, and forces her upon such a course of life, as she perfectly abhors, and will bring speedy ruin upon her; all men pity such a case as this. And this is the very case of many a comely, vigorous body.

Only such a woman hath two reliefs under her bondage, which the body of a drunkard wants. She can sometimes withdraw and retire from his company, and enjoy the relief of her solitude, which the wretched body of a drunkard cannot do till death; but is tied day and night to the company of its foolish soul, which is frequently abusing it, and imposing upon it.

Besides, such a woman may haply overlive her vicious abusive husband, and spend many a comfortable year in the world with a more discreet, sober and religious partner of her life, whose sobriety, discretion, piety, and love, shall make full compensation for all those years of misery and slavery she endured before. But the case before us admits no such relief: for as long as ever the body lives and breathes, the soul is, and must be with it, and in it. And though death will for a time separate and divorce them, yet the body's second marriage at the resurrection, can be with no other but the same soul which oppressed and ruined it in this world. And this second marriage will be far worse than the first; for though it were the sottish soul's slave and drudge in this world, and suffered many a sickness, shame, and loss by its folly; yet in the world to come, it must be its partner and companion in hell-torments for evermore, inasmuch as it was the instrument the soul used in most of those sins committed by it in this world. And this is the case of all bodies married to, and governed by souls that have neither reason nor religion enough prudently and soberly to order and govern their own bodies.

§ 4. Sad and doleful, therefore, are the lamentations and complaints of the bodies of drunkards, against the folly and tyranny of their souls; and as just as sad. Let me here therefore act the part of an advocate for your bodies, which is a part of yourselves, and to which, by the law of nature, you owe love, care, and honour; or, rather by a *prosopopœia*, let me bring in the body sighing out its own

complaints in the ears of its own soul, and thus bemoaning itself to it.

“Oh, my soul! I have cause to lament the day that ever I was married to such a sottish fool as thou art, who are destitute both of wisdom and love to rule and govern me. I may justly resume Job’s lamentation upon thy account, and say with him; “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, there is a man-child conceived. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? For now should I have lain still, and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest.”

“I have been a perfect slave and drudge to thy unreasonable lusts and impositions. I was once an active, vigorous, comely body, and hadst thou been wise and sober, I had been happy. But thou hast been a cruel tyrant to me, oppressing and loading me with more than I was able to stand under. Thou hast plunged me many times into those puddles of excess, wherein thou hast drowned thy own reason, and my health. My well-mixed beauty is now turned into the colour of flaming fire; my hands and legs shake, my tongue falters, my natural crasis and temperament is destroyed. Thou hast made me miserable in this world, and intendest to make me more wretched in the world to come.

“Sober nature gave me my stint and measure. I knew when it was enough, and gave thee sufficient items and intimations (amidst thy foolish frolics, that I could neither with honour or safety bear one glass more. But thou wast deaf to all my moans, and shewedst more mercy to thy horse than me. Sick or well, able or unable, live or die, I must take in the full number of cups and bottles thou enjoinedst me to take. Like another Pharaoh, thou hast required of me the full tale, whether I had strength to perform it or no. Yea, like another devil, thou hast sometimes cast me into fiery fevers, and watery dropsies; and will next cast me, if thou continue this course, into hell-fire itself.

“Other souls have set thee a better pattern in their more sober and prudent government of their bodies. They give their bodies the true pleasure of the creature, by keeping them to that happy mediocrity in which it consists. They devote their bodies to the service of God; thou hast devoted me to the immediate service of the devil. A majestic beauty sits upon their faces; sottishness and folly upon mine. Their knees are daily bowed in prayer to God; mine shake and tremble in the service of the devil. They enjoy pure and sanctified pleasures every day; but I am denied the sober pleasures of a beast. Their bodies will be happy with their souls in the world to come; but I must suffer eternally with thee, and for thee. Thou hast both consumed me, and thy estate given to support me; and now I am like to suffer as much by want, as I have done by excess; and all this through thy misgovernment. These feet (if thou hadst plea-

sed to command them) would as readily have carried thee to thy closet, or the assemblies of God's people, as to an ale-house or tavern. These fingers would have served to open and turn the blessed pages, which contain the oracles of God, as to cog a dye, or have shuffled and dealt a pack of cards. This tongue might have been melodiously employed in singing the praises of God among his people, as well as in swearing, roaring, and singing among drunken sots and fools, if thou hadst been endued with governing wisdom.

“Thou knowest I could do nothing without thee. Thou hast a despotical power over all my members. They are at thy beck, and thou at the devil's. Better had it been for me, had I been the body of a contemptible worm or fly, than a body animated and governed by such a sottish fool as thou art.

“And now, my soul, what hast thou to say for thyself? What tolerable account canst thou give to God or me, of these thy vile abuses of both?”

§ 5. Now let us hear what the soul of the drunkard hath to plead, in its own excuse and defence, for all his wrongs against God, mischief to itself, ruin to his health, name, and estate. They have various excuses, though not one sound or rational one among them all. Such as they are, let them be tried by the rule of reason, if any reason be yet left in them, who daily dethrone it by this worse than brutish practice.

That which they say for themselves, is this :

1. That their bodies are strongly constituted, more capacious to receive, and able to bear greater quantities of wine and strong drink, than others are ; and therefore, why should they not drink down, and glory over those that vie with them ?

2. Others say, they would not take the course they do, but that when they are sober and solitary, they are so pressed with the thoughts of their debts and incumbrances in the world, that they are upon a perfect rack, and they find nothing like good fellowship in a tavern or ale-house, so effectually relieving against the cares and anxieties of their minds.

3. Some will tell us, they are drawn into it by the snare of pleasure ; nothing being so grateful to their palate, as their full load of generous wine, or strong drink. And seeing it is so pleasant and delightful to them, why should they deny and abridge themselves of their pleasures ?

4. Others will profess, they had never taken this course, which they find upon many accounts pernicious to them ; but that they are not able in civility to deny their intimate friends and companions, especially such with whom they have concerns in trade and business ; and they must drink as they do, or suffer loss in their trade ; and beside that, be stigmatized for fanatics.

5. They will also say, they are obliged in point of loyalty, to pledge

him that consecrates (as they catechrestically call it) the first glass to the king, or persons of quality and honour.

6. And, lastly, Some will tell us, they have plentiful estates, that will bear such expences; and since their pockets are full, why should not their heads and stomachs be so too?

Besides these six apologies for drunkenness, nothing falls into my imagination, pleadable for this sin. We will weigh these that are pleaded, in the common balance of the reason of mankind, and try the validity of them one by one. And for

Excuse I. And, first, To what you say of the capacities of your bodies, strength and ability of your constitutions, to receive and bear greater quantities of wine and strong drink, than others can; and therefore, why should you not give proof of it, when challenged, and great reputation to yourselves, by drinking down and glorying over such as vie with you?

To this I reply three things, which must be laid in the counter-balance; and let the balance be held in the upright hand of your own reason.

1. A strong and vigorous constitution will be readily acknowledged to be so great an external blessing and mercy, that no man of sound intellects ought to do any thing to destroy it; but is obliged to use all proper methods for the preservation of it. If therefore temperance shall be found to preserve it, and excess to impair and destroy it; let your own reason judge, which of these two courses you are obliged to take. Consult either the best physicians, or your own and other men's experience; and they will tell you, That apoplexies, palsies, gout, and innumerable other diseases are bred by such excesses, in the soundest and strongest constitutions, and death itself hastened by such intemperate courses; whereas temperance and sobriety might have made your lives more comfortable and durable. As strong as you are, frequent drunkenness will bring Cain's curse upon your vigorous bodies, and make you go shaking and trembling (as he did) about the world.

2. Let it be demanded of your own reason, whether it do really judge that God bestowed more strength and vigour upon your bodies, than he hath upon others, to arm a stronger enemy, than others are; to fight more vigorously against him, than others do, or can do? Or, whether it were not designed by him for greater use and service to his glory in the world, than others of his people (how willing soever they be) can do, for want of that strength you have? I am confident, no man of sound intellects will dare to assert the former, or deny the latter.

3. And lastly, For your glorying in drinking down, and conquering others; you will certainly put your own reason to a blush, by offering such a plea as this to it. You are not yet arrived to impudence enough, to deny drunkenness to be a sin; and your reason is yet sound enough, easily and naturally to infer, that by how much the more any

man exceeds and goes beyond others in sin, by so much the greater sinner that man is.

And as for the honour and glory you talk of, in exceeding others in your abilities to drink : your reason will quickly make you ashamed of that glory ; and prove, as well as assert it to be a mark of basest infamy.

Do you think, that Lombard was really honoured, or stigmatized, whom Tiberius Cæsar dubbed a knight, for drinking off three gallons of wine at one draught, and surnamed him Trigongius, that is to say, the three-gallon knight, which story * Pliny, in his Natural History, relates to the perpetual infamy of them both ? Or think you, it added to the glory of Tiberius himself, who knighted this three-gallon (not thrice gallant) knight, to have his name changed among the people, from Tiberius into Biberius ; as afterward they did the name of that monster Nero, into Mero ?

Gentlemen, I appeal to your own reason, if the vast continent you have within you for wine and strong drink, be really your honour ; whether the butt or hogshead, whence you have it, be not, for the same reason, much more honourable than you ? Your reason will plainly give the conclusion.

But, oh ! consider not only what reason saith, but what God, the fountain of that reason, saith in Isa. v. 22. “ Woe to them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.” Methinks it should make you sit in as little ease upon the tavern, or ale-house bench, as that court-parasite sat at a rich banquet furnished with variety of dainties, and all sorts of generous wine ; over whose head, Dionysius caused an heavy sword to be hanged, with the point downward, by a single hair every moment ready to drop perpendicularly upon it.

Excuse II. As for those that throw themselves into these excesses, on purpose to delude those anxious cares and thoughts, which cruciate and oppress them, whenever they are sober and solitary : I shall only propound three plain questions to the small remainders of reason in them, which yet I presume sufficient to determine rightly upon them.

Quest. 1. Whether they think that which greatly increaseth want and poverty, be a rational cure and proper remedy for it ? And whether a jar of oil be not as fit to quench a flame, as tavern and ale-house scores and reckonings are to buoy up a sinking trade, and keep bailiffs from men's doors ? Certainly none but a sottish fool can think it to be otherwise. Your own improvidence, or God's afflictive providence, have brought you into other men's books ; and certainly you cannot think, if you be in your wits, that chamberlains bills for so many bottles of wine, and flaggons of beer, will be accepted by your creditors for good bills, to quit your scores with them. Were you

* Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 22.

sober, frugal, and industrious, you would put yourselves thereby into a better way to obtain a blessing from God, and respects and forbearance from men, than in the course you now take.

Quest. 2. Nor can you, without manifest impudence, propound such a question as this to your own reason, whether the addition of injustice to profaneness, be a rational plea or excuse for it? And is not that the very case here? Whose money is that you so lavishly and prodigally waste out of your consuming estates? It is either your creditors, or the small remains of your own. Whether the one or the other, methinks that wine and drink should not go down very pleasantly, which must be mingled with manifest injustice, or with the tears, and (in a sense) the blood of your wives and children. If your reasons can allow these things for lawful excuses, then you are excused, else self-condemned.

Quest. 3. I shall trouble your reason with the decision but of one question more, and it is briefly and plainly this :

Whether the addition of far greater troubles, or causes of troubles to the inner man, be a proper expedient to alleviate and ease the loads and burdens of your outward troubles already grown almost too heavy for you to bear.

I dare venture all that I am worth, upon sound reason's side, that it will never allow, or comprove such an absurdity, as the affirmative part of this question draws along with it.

Believe it, sirs, all the outward necessities, cares and fears, which now oppress you upon the score of worldly affairs, (which frame not to your minds) are much more tolerable, and comparatively light and easy, to the stings, wounds, and lashes, of a guilty conscience: But when all these inward troubles shall be superadded to your outward troubles, they will, in conjunction, make a burden too heavy for man to bear.

Whatever cares or troubles providence involves any good man in, in the honest and painful pursuit of his civil calling, he may in a great measure relieve his burdened spirit under them, by the comfortable testimony of his own conscience, and his free addresses to God in prayer. These will sweetly support him under his other entanglements and perplexities in the world. But the course you take, does not only strike away these props from under your minds; but doubles and trebles the burden upon them. Were men but once acquainted with that relief and cheerfulness of spirit, which a good conscience, and a spiritual address to God in prayer, afford in the midst of troubles, they would run to their closets, rather than to taverns and ale-houses, to divert and cure their troubles. I leave it therefore before your own reason to consider, what weight and validity there is in this second excuse for drunkenness.

Excuse III. Others plead they are drawn into this sin by pleasure and delight, whose charms are too strong for them to resist.

In this, as in all the former, I resolve to make you your own judges.

Give me leave but to state the questions right, and let your own reason freely determine them. And what fairer dealing can men that exercise reason expect? And let the first question be this:

Quest. 1. Whether the pleasures of temperance do not far excel those of intemperance? If they do, then this your plea is vain and irrational: For you foolishly choose a lesser pleasure, and refuse a greater and sweeter one. And that you do so in this case, no wise man can deny or doubt.

For temperate drinking refreshes the body, and no way burdens it, as excessive drinking doth: And that which burdens nature, can never be equally pleasant with that which yields nothing but due refreshment. Temperance doth not vitiate, but raiseth the pure and ordinate appetite of nature to its just pitch and height; in which temper, and at which height, it is most capable of the sweetest pleasure from the creature. As the strings of a lute give us the sweetest and most delicious notes, when they are not let down too low, but are all fixed at their due height.

Temperance gives us the most pleasing enjoyment of the good things of this life, still leaving the mind free, and fit for the more spiritual and sweet enjoyments of a better and more excellent life; which excess never did or can do.

Moreover, temperance maintains the manly grace and majesty of the countenance, but excess totally disguises it. It draws the lines of drunkards faces into a form much like those ridiculous Dutch pictures, which some set upon their chimney-pieces, to move laughter in those that behold them.

Now, by the vote of universal reason, that pleasure which refresheth the body, but no way burdens it, which raises the ordinate and unvitiated appetites of nature, to its just pitch, and due height, which gives nature the sweetest refreshment, leaving it always fitter and freer for higher and better pleasures, which maintains the manly grace and majesty of the countenance, and makes not a wise man look like a fool or an antic, must needs be better than the lower and flatter pleasures of a burdened body, and vitiated palate, which draw after them so great a train of present mischiefs (which temperance avoids) besides far heavier, and more durable ones in the life to come.

Quest. 2. But if the present pleasures of temperance were in some respect inferior to those of excess,) which I have proved they neither are, nor can be;) I demand, in the second place, whether the loss of your honour and health, your time and estate, your present peace and future hopes, do not make such sensitive pleasures base and inferior, compared with those of temperance and sobriety? Do you, in good earnest, think a glass or two above what satisfies and refreshes nature, can recompense for all that shame, sickness, poverty, and guilt that follows it! If you think so, sin hath turned you into brutes, and made you utterly incapable of all arguments and manly considerations, to reduce and recover you.

Excuse IV. You say, you would not haunt taverns and ale-houses as you do, but that you are drawn in by company and business, which you cannot well resist or avoid, and should you do so, it would be to your loss; and besides that, you should be branded for fanatics.

I deny not, but there is a snare in vain company; yet give me leave to propound a few plain and easy questions to your reason.

Quest. 1. Why must the importunity of good fellows (as you call them) be an irresistible temptation to you, and deprive you of all power to deny them, whilst you discern the snares and mischiefs they draw you into? This seems to be a thing unaccountable to reason. Suppose you were allowed to spend the longest summer's day in the highest gratification of all your senses together, or successively one after another, upon condition that you would endure the torments of the rack till that day twelvemonth came about again; do you think the importunity of all your intimates in the world, would prevail with you to accept the pleasures of a day under such a condition as this? And yet what are the torments of a year upon the rack, to the torments of hell for ever and ever? Or to come lower: Suppose one of those lewd companions not worth a groat, if every man had his own, should request you to lend him an hundred pound upon his own security, could you find no power (think you) to deny him, especially if the loss of that hundred pound would certainly ruin you? If you would deny him (as I doubt not but in such a case you would) tell me then, why you should not find power to deny him, when he asks a far greater matter than an hundred pound, even the peace, purity, and safety of your souls, as well as the health of your bodies, and honour of your names? Why then should you be so easy and flexible when they ask the latter, and so stiff and unpersuadable to the former?

Quest. 2. You say, you have business, and concerns in trade, to dispatch in such places and companies, and this draws you into the snares of excess. I will not deny but men may lawfully transact their business in such places, and there may be a conveniency, and sometimes a necessity for it: But that is not the case. The question referred to the determination of your reason, is this, Why drunkenness must accompany business? And whether a man be not more fit to transact his business, and drive bargains of the greatest value, whilst his body and mind are cool, sober and temperate, than when his reason is beclouded and deposed by drunkenness? How many men have undone themselves, their wives and children, by drunken bargains?

Besides, I must tell you, that in all such drunken meetings, the devil comes to drive his bargain with you, as well as your other customers. He bids for your souls, and offers you such pleasures as you there find in exchange for them, and is content to make your dying day the time of your delivering them into his possession. How do you like such trading as this, gentlemen?

Quest. 3. You say, should you refuse to accompany them, and do as they do, you should be branded for fanatics. I would fain know,

whether such a plea for drunkenness as this, doth not justly cast the greatest reproach of fanaticism upon yourselves, and set a mark of true honour upon those men whom the world unjustly stigmatizes with that title? Gentlemen, I do assure you, the fanatics (as you call them) have reason to thank you for the honour and justice you have done them, in acknowledging them to be none of the members of your hellish society, but persons of a more sober and honourable character. And I appeal to your reason, whether it would not be more for your honour, to wear the unjust title of a fanatic, than the just censure of a drunken sot.

Excuse V. You say, you are obliged in point of loyalty to pledge him that consecrates the first glass to the health of the king or any person of eminency. I leave it still to your reason to be judge,

1. Whether the king have cause to account the manifest breach of the laws by which he governs, to be a signal expression of his subjects loyalty to him? Is not his royal authority, his honour and safety in his laws? And is he not finely honoured, think you, by such drunken loyalty as this? Gentlemen, you have a king over you of sounder intellectuals, and more exemplary temperance and sobriety than to be thus imposed upon.

2. Can you think he reckons his health in the least degree advanced or secured by the ruin and subversion of his subjects health? No, no; did the genteelest drunkards in England enquire, they would quickly find, it would more please him if they would consult their own health better, and pray for his more sincerely and fervently than they do.

Excuse VI. Your last excuse is, that you have plentiful estates that will bear it; and since your pockets are full, why should your heads or stomachs be empty.

Quest. The only question I would here state, and leave your own reason to determine, is this, whether you think the experience of the redundancy and over-plus of your estates in excess and drunkenness, be the very end and design God aimed at, in bestowing those things with such a bountiful hand upon you? And whether the expence of it in this way, will please him as well, as if you clothed the naked, and fed the hungry with it, and brought the blessings of them that are ready to perish, upon you and your families? Ah, gentlemen, you must come to a day of reckoning. Your reasons and consciences can never tell you, you can make up as comfortable an account with God, by setting down so many hundred pounds in wine and strong drink, more than was necessary and beneficial: *Item*, So many thousand pounds lost in play: So much upon whores; as if you set down so much to feed and clothe the naked and hungry. So that all your excuses for this sin are baffled by your own reason; and it was easy to conclude, that such a traitor to reason as drunkenness is, which hath so often dethroned it, could not possibly receive a more favourable judgment and sentence than this now given upon it.

Let all drunkards henceforth consider, what a voluntary madness the sin of drunkenness is, how it unmans them, and sets them below the very brutes. A grave * father calls it rightly,

“A distemper of the head, a subversion of the senses, a tempest in the tongue, the storm of the body, the shipwreck of virtue, the loss of time, a wilful madness, a pleasant evil, a sugared poison, a sweet sin, which he that hath, hath not himself; and he that commits it, doth not only commit sin, but himself is altogether sin.”

It is a sin at which the most sober Heathens blushed. The policy of the Spartans was more commendable than their piety in making men drunk, that their children might gaze upon them as a monster, and be scared for ever from such an horrid practice. He that is mastered by drunkenness, can never be master of his own counsels. Both reason and religion condemn this course. Make a pause therefore where you are, and rather throw that wine or beer upon the ground, which else will cast thy body upon the ground, and thy soul and body into hell.

CHAP. V.

Containing the result and issue of the third consultation with reason, upon the case of uncleanness; and the true report of the determination of every man's reason, with respect thereunto.

§ 1. **T**HE bountiful and indulgent God hath made more abundant provision for the pleasure and delight of rational, than of brutal beings: And his wise and righteous laws order and limit their pleasures to their great advantage; his allowance under those restrictions being large and full enough. Both reason and experience assure us, that the truest pleasures are most freely and honourably to be enjoyed within the pale and boundary of his laws; and that there are none fit for the enjoyment of a man or Christian, to be found without, or beyond them.

That prudent owner provides best for his cattle, who puts them into inclosed fragrant fields, where they have plenty of proper and pleasant food, sweet and pure springs of water, the pleasant covert of shady trees, and all that is either necessary or convenient for them; although those fields be so inclosed within pales or walls, that they cannot stray without these boundaries, into other men's ground, to be by

* *Turbatio capitis, subversio sensus, tempestas linguæ, procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amissio temporis, insania voluntaria, blande dæmon, dulce venenum, suave peccatum, quam qui habet, seipsam non habet, quam qui facit, peccatum non tantum facit, sed ipse totus est peccatum.*

them impounded, and brought back lank, tired, and dirty, to their owner: or by straying into wastes and wildernesses, fall a prey (as stragglers use to do) to wolves and lions.

God envies not any true, rational, and proper pleasure to men or women; when he bounds them in by his command, within the allowance whereof, sufficient provision is made for the benefit and delight of propagation. And though it be all men's duty to tremble at the awful solemnity, yet it would be any man's sin to repine and murmur at the strictness and severity of his command, delivered with thunder and lightning from mount Sinai, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. Man's honourable liberty, and God's wise and just restraint and limitation thereof, are both set together before our eyes, in that one scripture, Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Here is a liberal allowance granted, and a severe punishment threatened for the inordinacies and exorbitancies of boundless and ungovernable lusts. God will judge with temporal judgments in this world; and upon impenitent persistents, with eternal judgments in the world to come.

§ 2. Such is the corruption of man's nature by the fall, that it hates inclosures, restraints, and limitations. These things which were intended to regulate, serve only to sharpen and enrage their sensual appetite. No fruit so sweet to corrupt nature, as forbidden fruit. *Nititur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata*. The very restraint of evil, makes it look like a pleasant and desirable good. Sons of Belial can endure no yoke of restraint. There is a great truth in that observation of the divine Herbert, That if God had laid all common, man himself would have been the incloser. For his reason and experience would have plainly informed him of the great and manifold advantages of distinction and propriety. How many quarrels and barbarous murders have been occasioned by whores! which by keeping within God's bounds and rules, had been both honestly and honourably prevented.

Were men left to that liberty brutes are, to scatter their lusts promiscuously, fathers would not know their own children, nor children their fathers; whereby both their duties and comforts would be pre-scinded together. Such mischiefs as these, would make men glad of that inclosure, which the laws of God have made for them. But behold with admiration the perverse wickedness of corrupt nature manifested in this, that because God hath inclosed and secured their relations to them by his laws, (which inclosure is every way to their advantage;) yet this makes their lusts the more headstrong and outrageous, and they cannot take that comfort in their own, because their own, that they think to find in another's, because another's.

Remarkable to this purpose is that* relation of Mr. Firmin's, which

* Real Christian, p. 60.

he received from his near relation, who was minister to the company of English merchants in Prussia. The consul, or governor of that company, being a married man, and that to a very proper and comely woman, was yet enslaved to others, not to be compared with his own wife for comeliness. This minister dealt with him about it. One argument he urged was this: That of all men he had the least temptation, having a wife so comely, that few women were like her. He answered, yea, were she not my wife, I could love her. Had she been his whore, he could have loved her; he thought none like her; but because she was his wife hedged in by God, he cared not for her. O what hearts have men, that they should ever think that to be best for them which is most cross to God? Why should stolen waters be sweeter than those of our own fountains!

§ 3. God's choice must needs be far better for us, than our own. Ordinate and lawful pleasures and enjoyments, are far better and sweeter, than exorbitant and forbidden ones. And the reason is evident and undeniable: For amongst all the operations of the mind, its reflex acts are the acts that best relish pleasure. And indeed, without self-reflection, a man cannot tell whether he delights or no. All sense of pleasure implies some reflection of the mind: and those pleasures of a man must needs be the sweetest, which afford the sweetest reflections upon them afterward; and those the basest pleasures, which are accompanied and followed with present regret, or the stinging and cutting reflections of the conscience upon them afterwards.

1. Lawful and ordinate enjoyments, are as honey without the sting. Forbidden pleasures, are embittered and extinguished by these regrets and reflections of the conscience. They are like those pleasant fruits, which the Spaniards found in the Indies, which were sweet to the taste, but so environed and armed on every side with dangerous briars and thorns, that they tore not only their clothes off their backs, but the skin off their flesh, to come at them; and therefore they called them *comfits in hell*. And such are all forbidden, and unlawful pleasures.

A merchant (saith the fore-mentioned author *) dining with the friars at Dantzick, his entertainment was very noble. After he had dined, and seen all, the merchant fell to commending their pleasant life. 'Yea, said one of the friars to him, we live gallantly indeed, if we had any body to go to hell for us when we die.' You see what mingles with men's sensual and sinful lusts.

2. Your honour is secured, by keeping within God's bounds and limits: *Marriage is honourable in all*. Here guilt can neither wrong your consciences, nor infamy your reputations. Fornicators and adulterers go up and down the world, as men burnt in the hand: Their conscience lashes them within; and men point at them abroad. They are a terror to themselves, and a scorn to men.

3. The health of the body is secured by chaste and regular enjoy-

* Real Christian, p. 63.

ments, but exposed to destruction the other way. God hath plagued the inordinacy of men's lust, with most strange and horrid diseases. That *Morbus Gallicus*, *Sudor Anglicus*, and *Plica Polonica*, were judgments sent immediately by God's own hand, as the witnesses of his high displeasure, against the bold and daring contemners of his sacred and awful command. Thus, as *Prov. v. 11*. "They mourn at last, when their flesh and body are consumed." Other sins are committed in the body; but this against it, as well as in it.

4. The blast and waste of our estates (which is the usual consequence of uncleanness) is prevented and avoided, by keeping within God's rules. The truth of what the scripture tells us, *Prov. x. 5*. is often exemplified before your eyes; that, "by reason of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a morsel of bread." Adultery gives a man rags for his livery; it lodgeth his substance in the house of strangers, and entails wants and curses on him and his.

5. In a word, continence, or lawful marriage, exposes not the soul to the eternal wrath of God, as uncleanness doth; *1 Cor. vi. 9, 10*. This sin does not only shut a man out of his own house, and the hearts of good men, but out of heaven itself, without thorough repentance and reformation.

§ 4. The case standing thus: it is matter of just admiration, how the sin of uncleanness should grow so epidemical and common as it doth, seeing such as live in this filthy course, must needs counter-act and oppose their own reason and interest together. For they forsake God's way, which gives them as much liberty as can be reasonably desired; and cast themselves into a course of life, clogged with all manner of temporal and eternal miseries, of soul and body, honour and estate.

The plain rule and dictate of common reason, which I laid down before, being applied to this particular case, manifestly condemns it. For seeing honesty and chastity comprize the true pleasure, profit, and honour of the whole man, are more congruous to human nature, and preservative of it, it ought, therefore, to be preferred in the estimation and choice of all men, to unlawful adulterous pleasures, which (for the reasons above) are inferior in themselves to chaste, conjugal enjoyments; and besides that, are attended and followed with such a train of present and future miseries, destructive to the whole man.

And yet for all this, to the amazement of all serious observers, never was any age more infamous for this sin, than the present age is; and that under the clear shining light of the gospel.

What the special causes and inducements, to the overflowing and abounding of this sin, are in the present age, will be well worth the enquiring and sifting at this time.

§ 5. *Inducement 1.*

It is highly probable, the influencing examples of great men, have

had no small hand in the spreading of this abominable and crying sin, amongst all inferior ranks and orders of men.

Great men's ill examples, like a bag of poison in the fountain, corrupt and infect multitudes. The vulgar think they are privileged, or, at the least, very much excused, when they do but follow the precedents and examples of great and eminent persons.

But this will be found a weak and foolish plea, for uncleanness, which will never be able to endure the test of your own reason: For the inbred notions of a God, and of a future life of retribution, being so firmly sealed and engraven upon human nature, they can never be utterly eradicated; your own reason will argue from those inbred notions in this manner, and how you will be able to repel the argument, and escape conviction and self-condemnation, quite surmounts my imagination whatever it do yours. And thus it will dispute, and dilemma you, do what you can.

That God, before whom greater and lesser, honourable and baser sinners shall appear in judgment, will be either partial or impartial, in his judgments upon them. There is, or there is not respect of persons with him. If there be, (which both his nature and word utterly deny;) then those great and honourable adulterers, or fornicators, whose examples you follow, may haply be excused for their eminency and honour's sake; but you, that have no such eminency and honour in the world, as they have, must be condemned, though you ought to escape as well as they.

But if there be no partiality, or respect of persons with God, (as most assuredly there is none,) then both greater and lesser, honourable and baser, adulterers, must be condemned together, to the same common and intolerable misery.

So that to take any (though the least) encouragement to sin, from the precedents and examples of great ones, is a most senseless and irrational thing, utterly unworthy of one that believes there is a just and impartial God; and he is worse than a devil, that believes it not: For the devils themselves believe and tremble.

§ 6. *Inducement 2.*

But others would persuade us, they are drawn into this sin by a kind of inevitable necessity; they being neither able to contain, nor marry.

They are not yet arrived at an estate sufficient to maintain a family with reputation: But when they have gotten enough by trade, or by the fall of their paternal estates, to live in equal reputation with their neighbours; then they design to alter their course of life, and abandon these follies.

But, reader, if this be thy plea for uncleanness, thou shalt have as fair a trial, for a foul fact, as thine own heart can desire: be still thine own judge; and let thine own reason give a fair answer to these three pertinent questions.

Quest. 1. Whether whoredom be as likely and promising a way

to engage God's blessing upon your trades and employments, as continence or conjugal chastity are? That is to say plainly, Whether obedience and disobedience to the law of God, be all one, and please him alike? You know, your success in business is not in your own hand; it is God that giveth thee power to get wealth: *His blessing maketh rich.* And is sin as likely a way to engage his blessing, as duty and obedience is? I am confident your own reason will never give it.

Object. *If you say, such persons prosper in the world as well as others, for ought you see.*

Sol. The contrary is evident in the common observation of mankind: By reason of whoredom, multitudes are brought to a piece of bread. And though God suffer some unclean persons to prosper in the world; yet chastity with poverty, is infinitely preferable to such accursed prosperity.

Quest. 2. Whether the course of sin you are now driving and accustoming yourselves to, will not, in all probability, so infatuate and bewitch you, that when you come into a married estate, you shall still be under the power of this sin; and, so ruin the person you marry, as well as yourself? If the word of God signify any thing with you, it signifieth this; That there is a witchcraft in whoredom; and, comparatively speaking, "None that go to her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life:" Prov. ii. 18, 19.

Object. *If to invalidate this testimony, you shall say that he that spake this, did himself go after strange women.*

Sol. It is true, he did so. But then withal, you must remember, that he hath warned you by his own sad experience, that you never follow him, in those his footsteps: Eccl. vii. 26. "I find (saith he) more bitter than death, the woman whose hearts is snares and nets, and her hands as bands. Whoso pleaseth God, shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her."

Quest. 3. And, lastly, I demand of your reason, whether it can, or will, allow any place to this plea of necessity; before you have tried and used all God's appointed remedies, which are sufficient to prevent that necessity you plead?

There are lawful remedies enough, sufficient, with God's blessing, to keep you from such a necessity to sin; such as temperance, and more abstemiousness in meats and drinks; avoiding lascivious books, play-houses, and filthy company; laborious diligence in your lawful callings, and fervent prayer, for mortifying and preventing grace: And if temptations shall stir amidst all these preventives; then casting yourselves upon the directions and supply of providence, in the honourable estate of marriage. Never plead necessity, whilst all these preventives might, but have not been used.

§ 7. *Inducement 3.*

Others plead the absence of their lawful remedies, and presence of tempting objects. This is the case of our soldiers and seamen. But

though this be the most colourable pretence of all the rest, yet your own reason and conscience will, even in this case, so *dilemma* and *nonplus* you, that if you will adventure upon the sin, you shall never have their leave and consent with you: For they have a special and peculiar consideration of you, as persons more eminently and immediately exposed to the dangers of death than other men. And thus (would you but give them a fair hearing) they would expostulate and reason out the matter with you.

“Either thou shalt escape, or not escape, the hazard of this voyage, or battle. If you fall (as to be sure many will) will this be an honourable, safe, and comfortable close, and winding up of your life? What, from a whore to thy grave! God forbid. From burning lusts, to everlasting burnings! Better thou hadst never been born.”

Or if thou do escape, and return again to thy family; how canst thou look her in the face, with whom thou hast so basely broken thy marriage-vow and covenant? Whatever else thou bring home with thee, to be sure thou shalt bring home guilt with thee, a blot never to be wiped away.

Object. *If you say, you are not such fools to publish your own shame; you will follow Cæsar's advice to the young adulterer, Si non caste, tamen caute, If I act not chastely, I will act cautiously.*

Sol. Your reason and conscience will both deride the weakness and folly of this pretence; For they both very well know, no man sins so secretly, but he sins before two infallible witnesses, viz. God, and his own conscience; and that the last, and least of these, is more than a thousand witnesses. That God usually detects it in this world, carry it as closely as you will; but to be sure, it shall be published as upon the house-top, before men and angels in the great day.

§ 8. *Inducement 4.*

Another inducement to this sin, (and the last I shall mention,) is the commonness of it, which abates the shame of it.

What need they trouble themselves so much, or be so shy of that which is practised by thousands, which is so frequently acted in every place, and little made of it?

But if either your reason or conscience will admit this plea for good and lawful, the devil hath utterly blinded or infatuated the one or other; as will evidently appear by the following reasons. For,

Reason 1. If the thing be evil, (as you cannot deny but it is) then, by how much the commoner, by so much the worse it must needs be. Indeed, if a thing be good, by how much the commoner, so much the better: but to attribute this essential property of good unto evil, is to confound and destroy the difference between them, and make good and evil both alike.

Reason 2. If the commonness of uncleanness will excuse you, it will more excuse all others that shall commit this sin after you: and still by how much more the numbers of adulterers and fornicators are increased, still the less scruple men need make to commit it; and

so the whole community shall in a little time be so infected and defiled, that christian kingdoms shall quickly become like Sodom, and God provoked to deal with them, as he did by that wretched city.

Reason 3. If the commonness of the sin be an excuse and plea for it; suppose the roads should be more infested than they are with highwaymen, so that every month you should see whole cart-loads of them drawn to Tyburn; would your reason infer from thence, that because hanging is grown so common, you need not scruple so much as you were wont to do, to take a purse, or pistol an honest innocent traveller upon the road?

Object. *If you shall say, uncleanness is not so costly a sin as robbery is; there is a great deal of difference between Tyburn, and a whore-house punishment.*

Sol. There is a great difference indeed, even as much as is betwixt Tyburn and hell, or a small mulct in the courts of men, and the eternal wrath of a sin-revenging God: so great will the difference betwixt the punishments of all sins by God, and by men be found.

Thus you see, gentlemen, the common pleas for uncleanness overruled by your own reason and consciences.

We live in a plentiful land, abounding with all the comforts of this life, and with thousands of full-fed wantons: of whom the Lord complains this day, as he did of the Jews, whom that flowing land vomited out, Jer. v. 6. "When I had fed them to the full, they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses. They were as fed horses in the morning; every one neighed after his neighbour's wife." How many fat stallions are thus neighing in the fat pastures of this good land!

Nor do I wonder at all to see the growth of Atheism, in a land swarmed, and overrun with so many thousands of blasphemers, drunkards, and adulterers. It was a grave observation of that gallant moralist, Plutarch: "If Epicurus (saith he) should but grant a God in his full perfections, he must change his life presently, he must be a swine no longer."

The Lord purge out this crying abomination also, with Atheism and drunkenness, the inlets of it, which darken our glory, and threaten to make us desolate.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein reason and conscience are once more consulted, about that bitter and implacable enmity found in thousands this day, against all serious piety, and the strict professors thereof, who differ from them in some external modes and rites of worship; and their determinations, upon that case, impartially reported.

§ 1. **M**AN is naturally a sociable creature, delighting in company and converse. He that affects to live by, and to himself, must be

(saith the philosopher) *η θηριον, η θεος*; either a God that is self-sufficient, and stands in need of none; or a wild beast, so savage and fierce, that it can endure nothing but itself.

This natural quality of sociableness is diversly improved. Sometimes sinfully, in wicked combinations to do mischief; like the herding together of wolves and tygers; such was the consideration of Simeon and Levi, brethren in iniquity; Gen. xlix. 56. Sometimes it is improved civilly, for the more orderly and prosperous management of human affairs. Thus all civilized countries have improved it, for the common security and benefit. And sometimes religiously, for the better promoting of each other's spiritual and eternal good.

Now the more firmly any civil or religious societies are knit together by love, and coalesce in unity, by so much the better they are secured against their common enemies and dangers, and become still the more prosperous and flourishing within and among themselves. For when every man finds his particular interest involved in the public safety and security, (as every private cabin and passenger is in the safety of the ship,) every particular person will then stand ready to contribute his uttermost assistance, for the public interest, both in peace and war. United force, we all know, is more than single; and, in this sense we say, *Unus homo, nullus homo*: one man, is no man, that is, considered disjunctively, and alone; when yet that single person, standing in a proper place of service in the body, may, by his prudence and courage, signify very much to the public weal of his country; as Fabius did to the Roman state, of whom the poet truly observed,

Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem;

That one man, by his prudent delay and conduct, hath saved the whole commonwealth.

§ 2. It is therefore the undoubted interest of Christian states and churches, to make every individual person as useful as may be to the whole, and to enjoy the services of all their subjects and members, one way or other, according to their different capacities; that it may be said of them, (as the historian speaks of the land of Canaan) that there was in it, *Nihil infructuosum, nihil sterile*; not a shrub but bare some fruit.

No prudent kingdom or church, will deprive themselves of the benefit they may enjoy by the services of any considerable number of men, (especially if they be able and good men) without a plain, inevitable necessity. No man, without such a necessity, will part with the use and service of the least finger or toe, much less with a leg or arm: but would reckon himself half undone, if a paralytic disease should strike one half of the body, and render it utterly useless to defend and succour the other part in time of danger.

§ 3. Much so stands the case with churches and kingdoms, when the causeless and cruel enmity of one part prevails so far against the

other, as to deprive that state, or church, of the use and service of multitudes of good and faithful members.

It is folly, in its highest exaltation, for one part of a nation, out of bitter enmity to the other, not only to seek all ways and means to suppress and ruin it, whilst a common danger hangs over the whole; but to rejoice in the miseries of their brethren, as the principal thing which they fancy would contribute to the great advantage of their cause. What but a general punishment, (if that will do it) can work men's hearts into a more general compassion?

The histories of those times sufficiently inform us, that the great feuds and factions in the western church, not only immediately preceded, but opened the way to the terrible inundations of the Goths and Vandals. Whilst the suffering part cries out, cruelty, cruelty; those that inflict it, cry as loud, justice, justice. Whatever rational apologies, or methods of peace, come from the oppressed party, are censured by the other as murmur and mutiny. All men commend unity, and assert it to be the interest of kingdoms and churches. They wish all men were of one mind; but what mind must that be? To be sure, none but their own.

The more cool, prudent, and moderate spirits of each party, may strive to the uttermost, to allay these unnatural feuds and animosities. The wisdom of the governing part, may take the instruments of cruelty out of their hand; but it is God alone that can pluck up the roots of enmity out of their hearts.

And what is the matter, when all is sifted and examined? Why the matter is this: some will be more serious, strict, and conscientious than others think fit or necessary for them to be. They dare not curse, swear, whore, and be drunk, as others do. They scruple to comply with what God hath not commanded, and the very imposers confess to be indifferent, antecedently to their command. They reverently mention the name of God, without an oath, and the solemn matters of religion without a jest in their company. They will assume as much liberty to reprove sin, as others do to commit it. They take more pleasure in heavenly duties, and holy conferences, than in ranting and roaring in taverns and ale-houses. That is, in a word, they live up to the principles of religion, which all pretend to; and this is their unpardonable crime, a fault never to be expiated by any less punishment than their destruction.

And are not people (think you) come to a fine pass; when the strictest obedience to the laws of God shall be accounted more criminal than the most open and profane violation of them? Nay, though they reprove the other party's sin no other way, but by their most serious and religious lives; yet this alone shall be sufficient to make them culpable and obnoxious.

§ 4. If the party thus generally hated and maligned, be (for the generality of them) serious and godly Christians; or if the strictness

and holiness of their lives, and tenderness of their consciences, be the true ground and reason of our hatred of them; such an hatred, when it becomes general, is a direful presage of some common calamity and misery hastening upon such a people: Hos. ix. 7. "The days of visitation are come; the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it. The prophet is a fool; the spiritual man is mad; for the multitude of thine iniquity and the great hatred."

And our own reason will give us this conclusion, as well as scripture: for whatsoever brings sin to its full maturity, must needs hasten judgments. And what can heighten and accent the sins of a people, more than such a cruel hatred of good men, upon the score and account before given? All hatred of godliness hath a tang of devilishness. It is a desperate flying in the very face of God, whose image holiness is. Sin can scarce be graduated a peg higher.

Reason tells the husbandman, it is time to mow and reap his corn, when it is full ripe. And it may convince you, that God's time of reaping down a sinful people is near, when their sins are grown to such full maturity as this: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get ye down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great," Joel iii. 13.

§ 5. The true cause and rise of this great and fixed hatred amongst professed Christians, (whatever may be pretended to salve reputation) is the contrariety and repugnancy of the natures and principles by which the godly and ungodly are governed. There is an enmity betwixt the two seeds, Gen. iii. 25. And this enmity runs down in a blood, more or less, in all ages and places; Gal. iv. 29. "As then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; even so it is now." So it was, and so it is, and so it will be, till conversion changeth the heart and principle. This enmity cannot die, whilst Satan lives, and rules in the hearts of children of disobedience.

And the enmity is mutual: "An unjust man is an abomination to the just! and he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked," Prov. xxix. 27. Only with this difference; the good man hates, *non virum, sed vitium*; not the person, but his sin. The wicked man hates both the person of the godly, and his godliness too; yea, the person for his godliness sake.

This hatred of the godly, secretly and habitually lurks in the nature of a wicked man; as rapaciousness doth in a young wolf, that never saw a lamb. It extends itself universally to the whole kind, and reaches those, whose lives are most obligingly sweet; yea, those that are bound to them in the strictest bonds of nature; as we may see, in that most unnatural instance of Cain's murdering his own brother Abel. It discovers itself, in seeking the destruction of them they hate upon a religious account, and rejoicing at any evil that befalls them. Nothing is more grateful to them, than any occasion to disgrace, and expose them with contempt to the world.

§ 6. But though the strictness and holiness of good men, causing the consciences of wicked men privately to condemn, and inwardly to gaul and grate them for their looseness and profaneness, be the true and real ground and cause of the grudge and hatred; yet they think it fit, for reputation-sake, that this be wholly suppressed and silenced, and something else pretended for the cause and reason of it, else it would look too like the devil himself. And therefore, amongst other plausible pretensions, for their malignity to those that are better than themselves, these three are principally insisted on, and pleaded.

1. That it is not their piety, but their hypocrisy, which they hate not because they have indeed more piety than others, but because they make more vain shew and ostentation of it than themselves do; who, setting aside their ridiculous grimaces, and affected fantastic words and actions, are every whit as good as themselves.

2. Because, under a pretence of greater strictness in religion, they do but hatch and carry on sedition and rebellion; and that the world will never be quiet, whilst such vipers are suffered in the bowels of it.

3. That both the former have been made sufficiently evident and apparent, in several former and more recent instances, of the hypocrisy and seditious designs of as high pretenders to religion and reformation, as those are, whom they truly hate, and would not suffer them to live, if their power were answerable to their hatred.

As to this first plea, viz. their hypocrisy; it will quickly be found to be too thin and weak to endure the test of your own reason and consciences. For how will you answer them, when they shall thus argue and expostulate the matter with you?

‘You that thus censure, and those that are censured for hypocrisy by you, do both profess one and the same religion. Your profane lives are notoriously contrary to all the principles of this religion. You swear, drink, whore, revile, and persecute the others, only because you fancy their tones, gestures, &c. to be some way or other indecent. You cannot deny, but they live soberly and godly: they attend upon all the duties of religion strictly and conscientiously. Your malice against them can find nothing to carp at, but some little trifles, with which the essence of religion is not concerned. Did they run into the same excess of riot with you, greater matters than these would be overlooked, yea, and applauded too.’

Now let reason and conscience say, Who is most likely to be the hypocrite; the man that calls himself a Christian, and under that profession wallows in all profaneness, not once censuring himself for it; or he that lives soberly and godly, against whom malice itself can produce nothing but such inconsiderable trifles as these? Is not this the very case, which Christ hath determined to our hands, and made such censurers, the hypocrites? Matth. vii. 3. “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?” It was but one blemish, and that a very

small one too, but a mote; however this you can quickly spy, and as rashly censure. But mean while there is a beam, an horrid flagitious wickedness in yourselves; but it is too near your own eyes, to be discerned by you. Which of these two (think you) is the hypocrite?

2. But what if this mote that you discern, be but a fancy, a mere imagination of your own; how will that aggravate your sin, and evince both your malice and hypocrisy together? You say, their tones and gestures in religious duties, are ridiculous, and scenical. This you take up lightly against some few of them, and as unjustly apply unto the aspersing of the whole party; which your own reason must, and will immediately condemn. For there are multitudes of that party, whose countenances, tones and gestures, are as decorous, grave, and becoming the presence of that God with whom they have to do, as any men in the world.

4. And as for those few whom you thus blemish for their indecent tones and gestures; what if those tones you speak of, amount to no more but natural defects, and unavoidable infirmities, which they would, but cannot help? Do they for this, and no worse than this, deserve to be censured, and condemned for hypocrites? Or, what if they be insensible actions, occasioned by the greater intention of their spirits in the service of God? May not these very things, which you profanely flout, censure, and scoff at, either not at all be noted as blemishes to their devotion by the eye of God, or noted with approbation and delight, as the effects of spiritual fervency in his service? Certainly, gentlemen, you are no good marksmen, that neither draw the right arrow, nor level at the true mark.

4. And were not this a vain and empty pretence, to cover your own malice against godliness; how comes it to pass, that more scenical habits, words, and gestures, should pass as ornaments in others, whom you affect? Whether this be not partiality unworthy of a man, let reason and conscience freely judge.

In a word; What commission or authority can you produce, thus to ascend the throne of God, and draw your bitterest censures through the very hearts of God's people, for such pitiful trifles as these; first condemning them as hypocrites, which is a most unwarrantable presumption; and then persecute them as far as you can, for their presumed hypocrisy? Have a care what you do; be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong. This is a sin which hastens national desolation; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17. "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his word, and misused his prophets; until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword," &c.

Plea 2. You say, It is not godliness you hate, and would persecute; but they are a sort of persons, who under a pretence of zeal for religion and reformation, design nothing else but sedition and rebellion, that the nation will never be quiet, whilst such vipers are suffered to

lieve in it : And to fortify this plea, you add, that both their hypocrisy and sedition have been made sufficiently evident to the world in many instances.

Zeal for the laws, and security of the government, if rightly tempered and qualified, is highly commendable ; and wherever sincerity animates, and prudence governs it, it ought by no means to be discouraged. But there are too many grounds and causes of suspicion, that both these will be found wholly wanting, or extremely defective, in many high pretenders to it, when it comes to be fitted to its bottom principles, and weighed in the just balance of sound reason.

For if you be inflamed with a pure zeal for the laws and government you live under ; then you will find yourselves obliged, for your own vindication, to satisfy the just expectation of your own and other men's reasons and consciences, in the following particulars :

Expectation 1. First, Reason and conscience, in yourselves and others, will expect it from you, that you, of all men living, should be most precisely and punctually obedient to all those just and good laws you live under ; since your zeal burns so hot against those that comply not punctually with them. For those that make so much conscience, as you seem to do, of other men's offences against the laws must be presumed (if your profession be sincere) to make at least as much conscience of breaking any of them in your own persons ; else neither reason nor conscience will ever admit this plea of yours for sound and good.

Now the laws sometimes appoint punishments for nonconformity to the rites and ceremonies, affixed to the public national worship ; and so they do always for convicted swearing, drunkenness, and adultery. All these laws have the very same sanction, by the authority we live under. They forbid, and punish, the one as well as the other. And if there be any difference, it lies in this, that these latter are expressly forbidden and threatened by God, antecedently to the magistrate's prohibition of them, which hath no small weight in the matter under consideration.

Now, if any man shall pretend zeal and conscience, against dissent in judgment or practice, from the church, but makes no conscience at all to curse and swear, be drunk or unclean ; he will find it a difficult task to persuade his, or other men's reasons or conscience, that this his zeal for the laws and government is sincere and pure. For were it so, it could never allow him to live in the notorious violation of the laws himself, which he is so fierce and bitter against others for.

Expectation 2. Secondly, If your zeal be sincere, it will contain itself within the bounds and limits of the offence, and not lay hold upon the innocent, as well as upon the guilty ; and make you hate and persecute them that were never turbulent and seditious, equally with the greatest criminals. If you will hug this principle as things stand now, reason will tell you, it is as just at all other times, as it is at this.

Would you not think it an unreasonable and most injurious thing,

to be plucked out of your shops, or houses, and hurried away to the gaol; because two or three dissolute fellows in the city or town where you live, have been riotous or seditious, though you possibly know not the men, nor can be so much as justly suspected of any confederacy with them? True zeal for the laws and government, is content to wait, and suspend its revenge, till a fair conviction have passed upon the guilty. And when it falls upon them, it is careful that it touch none besides them: but suffers a man to retain, in the very height of it, due love and honour for all that are innocent.

If Christians be first denominated by general titles and terms of distinction, which they cannot help, and then the crimes of any particular person, that the world pleases to denominate as one of the same party, must be charged and imputed to the whole; what must the consequence of this be, but that the whole community become obnoxious to punishment, and the very government itself thereupon be dissolved?

For I take it to be past denial or doubt, that some of each denomination have been, are, or may be guilty of seditious practices. Some hypocrites will lurk among those vast bodies of people, under the most strict and watchful government; but God forbid their guilt should affect the whole body, under whose names they shelter themselves. God, reason, and conscience, do all command the hottest zeal, to make its pause and just distinction here. Let the guilty be brought to condign punishment, upon fair trial and conviction. This discourse designs no favour for such. But let not those who abhor their wickedness, and are as pure from their crimes as yourselves, suffer with them or for them: For then your reason will tell you, yourselves are as liable to sufferings as they; and that your zeal is not kindled by love to justice, but the hatred of a party.

It is not in the body politic, as in the body natural: If the hand steal, the feet are justly laid in irons, and the neck put into an halter; because all the members of the body natural are animated, and governed but by one soul. But in the body politic, every individual hath a distinct soul of his own; and therefore that member only that offends ought to be punished, and all the rest to enjoy their full liberty and honour as before. Away therefore for ever with this church and state destroying synechdoche.

Expectation 3. Thirdly, If there be a change made upon the laws, and they shall at any time tolerate and protect that party and practice which once they made criminal; then your reason, and every man's else, will expect from you (if your zeal for the laws and government be sincere and unfeigned) that your countenance and carriage to that people be changed and altered, according to the different aspect of the laws and government upon them: That your envy and hatred cease with the offence; and that you be as ready to assist and encourage them, when they act according to law, as you formerly were to inflict and prosecute them, for acting contrary to law: Else, pretend

what you will, it is plain enough, that it was not zeal for the laws and government, but somewhat else, (which every body may guess at) that inflamed your rage against them.

For whensoever the wisdom of the government finds it necessary, by toleration, to take away the crime and offence, it must necessarily take away this very plea for hatred and persecution with it: Otherwise it would be all one, to act for law, and against law; to punish them that are offenders, and them that offend no more than yourselves; to turn the edge of your rage and fury, against those that undermine the government, and those that are as zealous as yourselves, to support and defend it, by their persons and purses.

Expectation 4. Fourthly, Your reason will justly expect it from you, that when, or wheresoever you shall see eminent piety meeting with punctual conformity in one man, that man shall be your very darling; and that both these qualifications should recommend him to your dearest affection, the more strictly godly he is, the more conformable he is to the laws of God; as well as by his punctual compliance with enjoined rules and rites of worship, to the laws of men. If he be a man of catholic charity to all of every persuasion, whom he judges to fear God, and be truly conscientious; if he boldly and impartially reproveth sin, wherever he finds it, though it be in his own patron, or men of his own profession; you will still love him the more for that. For if sincerity and conformity (as you pretend) be the very things which you make such a noise and bustle for in the world, here you have them both in conjunction. This is the man you seem to seek (by these pleas of yours) for a pattern and standard to reduce other men to.

And is it really so, gentlemen, with you? Do you heartily affect and prize a strict and serious conformist, that fears not to expose the odious shameful and wickedness of profane swearing, cursing, drunkenness, and uncleanness, without respect of persons, both in his pulpit and private converses? Do you love him the better, for his plain dealing with your consciences, in detecting the grand cheat of formality in religion; for his close cutting convictions of the insufficiency of mere civility to your salvation, and the indispensable necessity of regeneration? Do you heartily love and honour him, for thundering you out of ale-houses and taverns, unto your family and closet-duties? "For telling you plainly, your love must not be confined to your own party, but extended to all that fear God, however they be externally distinguished among men? Nay, for convincing you plainly, that religion lies not in external modes and rites, in standing, kneeling, or responses? That the name and cry of the church, the church, will as little avail to your salvation, as the cry of the superstitious and profane Jews, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these? That true religion is an inward, serious, spiritual thing, consisting in evidencing itself by the mortification of your sins, and real devotedness of your hearts to the Lord?"

If such a man as this will please, and delight your very hearts; then my reason is bound to conclude, there may be reality in what you pretend. But if you shall hate and loath such a man as this equally with a professed dissenter; you must excuse me, and all the rational world with me, if we shall conclude, that it is not true zeal for the laws, for the church, or for the sincerity and peaceable lives of its professors; but an inward rooted enmity at religion itself, that sets you on work, under the feigned pretence of other things.

Expectation 5. Fifthly, Your reason will expect, and exact it from you, that whensoever you shall be convinced, that all these stirs and bustles that have been in the world, all this fining, imprisoning, and impoverishing your Protestant brethren and neighbours for their conscience sake, hath done the church no good, but given a great and real advantage to our common enemy, to ruin us together; that we may distinguish ourselves how we please in our folly, but they will never distinguish us in their fury; for we are all known to them, by one common name of heretics.

In this case, your reason exacts it from you, and so doth the common reason of mankind, that a sense of common interest, and common danger, now quiet those feuds, and extinguish those fires which our own lusts first kindled, and the devil and our common enemies have incensed, to the great damage and hazard of the whole Protestant cause.

Such a seasonable and becoming sense as this, were in itself sufficient to cool a wise man's heats, if penal laws were left standing in their full force and vigour: But when the wisdom and reason of the state shall plainly discern both the usefulness and necessity of liberty, and thereupon take away (as they have now most prudently and seasonably done) the further occasions of mischiefs to the whole, by relaxing the yoke that bound some (and those a very great body of truly loyal and useful subjects) leaving the rest in the quiet possession of their own liberties and properties; what shall we call that fire, which still continues burning and increasing, not only after, but by all this, but an unquenchable hell-fire.

If chimeras and self-created jealousies, are indulged, that some carnal interests of ours are not so well secured to us under liberty, as they were under persecution and tyranny; this will be the right way to perpetuate dissensions and persecutions to the end of the world.

And now, gentlemen, I hope I may say, without being vain or opinionative, our reason hath plainly disarmed you of these pleas and excuses, by which you have hitherto defended yourselves in your most sinful practices of profane cursing and swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, and bitter enmity against your Protestant brethren, for things that touch not the essence of Christianity.

And believe it, sirs, it is truly genteel and glorious, to suffer yourselves to be subdued and conquered by the plain convictions of your own reason and conscience. It is ten thousand times more ho-

nourable and glorious to lay down your arms at the feet of these, than to lay down both reason and conscience at the feet of Satan and your lusts, and continue fighting obstinately against God, your own souls, bodies, estates, reputations; yea, your very reasons and consciences, your innocent brethren, and the peace of church and state, under Satan's banner.

In all this discourse I have not designed to exasperate, but assuage and restrain your lusts and passions, by laying the loving and gentle hands of your own reasons and consciences upon them. I have not given the least injurious touch to your honour, but all along pleaded for the recovery and security of it. I have exposed no man by any particular mark, or indignation.

But now I have done with you; If your own consciences shall begin to make a rounder and more particular application of these general reasonings and argunients, and say to you, as Nathan to David, thou art the man; I am not accountable to God for that. But be confident of it, you are accountable to God for all those plain convictions, and faithful endeavours used with you, and tried upon you to save you from all those miseries your head-strong lusts, with furious precipitation, are manifestly running you into.

If you can substantially and solidly repel those arguments against, and vindicate those pleas for sin, which reason and conscience have urged and censured above; and can produce stronger and clearer arguments to defend and justify the courses here censured and condemned; or if you can obtain a writ of error, to remove these causes to another lawful court of judicature, where you shall obtain a more favourable verdict, your complaint of severe dealing with you here, will not want some ground or colour; but if you cannot, (as you know you cannot) then never blame your own reasons nor mine, for dealing rigorously or injuriously with you.

I am willing to hope, and persuade myself, that I shall at least obtain a reformation of life from many of you. I have strove hard for it with you here. I will strive harder with God in prayer, to obtain it for you. But yet, gentlemen, I must tell you in the close, that though an external reformation of these evil courses may make your lives more healthy, happy, and durable in this world, and will greatly conduce to the public as well as your personal and private interest; yet if you expect complete and perfect happiness in the world to come, you must advance one step further beyond reformation, unto sound conversion. The first makes you comparatively happy here; but the second will make you perfectly happy and blessed for ever hereafter. The first frees you from many temporal miseries upon earth; but the second, from eternal miseries in hell. And this brings you to the other blessed step, by conversion; which is the second part.

THE
SECOND PART

EVINCING THE
 POSSIBILITY, NECESSITY, AND EXCELLENCY
 OF
 CONVERSION TO GOD;

The only thing that makes men truly happy, and perfectly blessed,
 in the world to come.



§ I. *Conviction supposed, and grace admired.*

REASON and conscience having been shaming men out of their profaneness, in the former part of this discourse, free grace invites them to the life of holiness, and thereby to the life of blessedness, in this second part.

There you see what it is to live like beasts; here you may see what it is to live like Christians.

My charity commands me to suppose, that some readers stand, by this time convicted in their own consciences, both of the extreme wickedness, and the immediate danger of that profane course they have hitherto pursued, and persisted in; and that by this time they begin to interrogate them in the apostle's close and cutting language, Rom. vi. 21. "What fruit had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death." It is hard to imagine, that so many close debates and reasonings, as you have heard in the former part, should not leave many of you under conviction and trouble of spirit. You see, your own reasons and consciences have condemned you; "And if our heart condemn us, (saith the apostle) God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things;" 1 John iii. 20. It is folly to imagine you shall be acquitted at God's immediate bar, who are already cast and condemned at your own privy sessions.

If this be the happy effect, as I hope it is, of all the former close and solemn debates with your consciences, it will naturally and immediately cast thy soul, reader, into great admiration of, and astonishment at, the patience and long-suffering of God, that hath borne with thee, under a life of prodigious and reiterated provocations until this day. And his goodness will be as admirable to thee, as his pa-

tience; in that he hath not only suffered thee to live till this day, but made it the day of thy conviction, the first necessary step towards thy conversion; and the very first things he entertains thy convinced and troubled soul with, to be the possibility and probability of thy conversion to God.

The greatness of his patience shews his almighty power, Rom ix. 22. Nahum i. 3. but his willingness to pass by all the wrongs you have done him, and to be at peace with you, discovers the immense riches of his grace, Tit. iii. 3, 4.

That God should be so quick in the executions of his wrath upon your companions in sin, and so patient and long-suffering towards you, that have out-sinned them all; is such a comparative consideration of his bounty, as should even overwhelm the man that beholds it, Rom. ix. 22. "Behold the goodness and severity of God! on them that fell severity; but towards thee, goodness."

If thou be that very man, who in the past course of thy life hast been a profane swearer, a beastly drunkard, a lascivious person, an hater and persecutor of good men; and after all this, the Lord hath brought an offer of mercy to thy soul, and shall convince thee it is not come too late, but that the door of hope stands yet open to thee; my advice to thee is, that thou cast thyself down at the feet of mercy, and after this manner pour forth thy laments and desires before the Lord.

"And is there yet a possibility of mercy, O Lord God, for such a vile wretch as I have been! can the arms of free grace yet open themselves to embrace such a monster of wickedness as I am? *Who then is a God like unto thee?* And what patience, mercy, and goodness, is like thine? I have far exceeded others in sin; I have lived the life of a beast, yea, of a devil. I have dared thy dreadful, and glorious name, with thousands of horrid blasphemies; trampled all thy glorious attributes under my feet, challenged thee, to thy very face, to do thy worst, even to damn me to the pit of hell: I have yielded up this soul, with all its noble faculties and powers, as instruments of sin unto the devil; and made this body, which should have been the hallowed temple of thy Spirit, to be the noisome sink (or common sewer) for all unclean and abominable lusts to run and settle in. I have hated, reviled, and persecuted those that lived more strictly, soberly, and godly, than myself; because their convincing examples disquieted, checked, and convinced my conscience, in the eager pursuit of my lusts and pleasures.

"I have lived in the profane neglect of prayer, meditation, self-reflection, and all other spiritual Christian duties; thinking to make an atonement for all, by a few hypocritical, external formalities.

"To accommodate my carnal interest in the world, I have come reeking hot out of an ale-house, or whore-house, to the table of the Lord; where, with unhallowed hands, and a more unhallowed heart, I have crucified again the Lord of glory, and given the vilest affront

and despite to that most sacred and precious blood, which now must save me, or I am lost for ever. Thus have I done; and “because thou keepest silent, I thought thee to be altogether such an one as myself: but this day hast thou reprovèd me, and set mine abominations in order before me.”

“I have tempted and seduced many others into the same impieties with me, of whom, some are already gone down to the dead, and others so fixed, and fully engaged in the pursuit of their lusts, that there appear no signs of repentance, or recovery in them.

“Thy wrath, Lord, soon brake forth against the angels that sinned in heaven; yet hitherto hast thou forborne and spared me, who have been highly provoking thee ever since I was born, by a life of unparalleled wickedness upon earth. Vile wretch that I am! I have despised the *riches of thy goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth me to repentance.* And after all, here I am told, that there is yet a possibility of pardon, mercy and salvation for me. The news is so great and so good, that I am zealously concerned to examine the grounds and evidences of it. And if it shall appear to be as true, as it is astonishingly strange, and ravishingly sweet; I hope, it shall effectually lead me to repentance, and dissolve for ever the strongest ties betwixt me and my lusts.”

§ II. *Conversion of the vilest sinner possible.*

THAT it is possible for the greatest and most infamous sinner to be recovered by repentance and conversion, and thereupon to find mercy and forgiveness with God; is a truth as sure and firm as it is sweet and comfortable. Three things will give full evidence of it.

1. That their sins do not exceed the power and sufficiency of the causes of remission.

2. That such sinners are within the calls and invitations of the gospel.

3. That such sinners are found among the instances and examples of pardoning mercy, recorded in the scriptures.

And if the causes of pardon be sufficient, and able to produce it; if the gospel invitations do take them in, and such sinners as these, every way as vile and wicked, have not been shut out, but received to mercy; then it is beyond all doubt that there is (at least) a possibility of mercy for such sinners as you are.

I. It is past rational doubt, that the causes of remission are every way sufficient, and able to produce the forgiveness of such sins as yours are. For consider with yourselves,

The power of	{	1. The impulsive cause.
		2. The meritorious cause.
		3. The applying cause.

1. The sufficiency and ability of the impulsive cause of pardon, which is none other but the free grace of God, the immense riches

and treasures whereof, do infinitely excel the accounts and computations both of angels and men. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Mic. vii. 18, 19. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea." Once more, Rom. v. 20. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." So that whatever thy sins have been, they do not, they cannot exceed the ability and power of the grace of God, the all-sufficient, impulsive cause of remission. That infinite abyss, or sea of mercy, can swallow up, and cover such mountains of guilt, as thine have been.

2. Nor do thy sins exceed the ability and power of the meritorious cause of remission, namely, *the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ*; for that blood is the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. He is the Lamb of God, whose blood is sufficient to take away the sins of the world, John i. 29. There is but one sin in the world exempt from remission by this blood, and if thy heart be now wounded with the sense of sin, (as I here suppose it to be) that is none of thy sin, how heinous soever thy other sins be.

3. Nor do thy sins exceed the ability and power of the applying cause of pardon, namely, the Spirit of God. For though I should suppose thy mind to be clouded, and overshadowed with grossest ignorance, thy heart to be as hard as adamant, or nether-millstone, thy will stiff and obstinate, thy affections enchanted and bewitched with the pleasures of sin; yet this Spirit of God, in a moment, can make a convincing beam of light to dart into thy dark mind, make thy hard heart relent, thy stubborn will to bow, and all the affections of thy soul to comply, and open obediently to Christ, John xvi. 9, 10. "The Spirit when he cometh, he shall convince the world of sin," &c.

Thus you see, whatever your guilt be, it does not exceed the abilities of the causes of remission. O what an encouragement is this?

II. And there is yet further encouragement in this, that if you will open your bibles, you may find yourselves within the calls and invitations of the gospel. And no man can say, that man is without hope, that is within a gospel-invitation. Consider Isa. lv. 7, 8. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; for my thoughts are not your thoughts," &c. Here you have the nature of conversion described negatively and positively, by forsaking your ways and thoughts, and turning to the Lord. The way notes the external course of the conversation; the thoughts denote the internal frame and temper of

the mind; both these must be forsaken. And turning to the Lord, denotes the sincere dedicating of the whole man to God; all which is possible, and easy for the Spirit of God to do; and this being once done, abundant pardon is assured. If you say, you cannot think it; God tells you in the very next words, that his thoughts are not your thoughts; but as far above them, as the heavens are higher than the earth. Read to the same purpose, Isa. i. 18. Rev. iii. 20. John vii. 27.

III. And to make the possibility of remission yet clearer, know, for your encouragement, that as vile, infamous, and prodigious sinners as yourselves, are recorded, and found amongst the instances and examples of forgiven sinners in scripture. Paul was once a fierce and cruel persecutor and blasphemer, yet he obtained mercy, 1 Tim. i. 12, 14. That sinful woman, recorded, Luke vii. 37, 38. was an infamous, and a notorious sinner; yet her sins which were many, were forgiven her, ver. 47. Manasseh was a monster of wickedness, as you may read, 2 Chron. xxxiii. yet found mercy. And if you view that catalogue of sinners, given in 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. you will seem to find among them the very forlorn hope of desperate sinners, advanced nearest to hell of any men upon earth; yet see, ver. 11. what is said of some of them: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are justified."

All these things plainly shew (I say not the certainty that you shall be, but) the possibility that you may be pardoned; which is a mercy and encouragement unspeakable.

§ III. *The conversion of profane ones highly probable.*

AND because Satan labours to discourage them that are gone in sin so far as you are, by cutting off all hopes of mercy from them, and bringing them to this desperate conclusion; damned we know we shall, and must be; and therefore as good be damned for more, as less. If we had lived sober, and civil lives, we might have had some hope; but because we have no hope, it is as good for us to take our full swing in sin, as to think of returning by repentance and conversion, so late in the day as this is.

To obviate this deadly snare of Satan, I shall here further add, That there is not only a possibility of your recovery, but, in some respect, a strong possibility, that such as you may be converted and saved, than there is for those who have led a smoother, and more civil life in the world, and wholly trust to their own civility for their salvation, instead of the imputed righteousness of Christ.

This plainly appears, by that convictive expression of Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. xxi. 31. "Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you." Publicans, the most infamous amongst men; and harlots, the worst of women; yet these are sooner wrought over to Christ by faith and repentance, than the more civil, and self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees.

And indeed, it is far easier to come at the consciences of such sinners by conviction than at the others; they having nothing to ward off the stroke of conviction, it must fall directly, and immediately upon their consciences. The most smooth and civil part of the world, trust to their own righteousness; and this self-confidence, like armour of proof, resists all attempts to bring them to Christ for righteousness. Nothing fixes men in a state of evil, more than a strong conceit that their condition is good.

But such as you are, whose whole lives have been polluted with profaneness, and all impiety, your consciences will more easily receive convictions of your present danger, and of the necessity of a speedy, thorough change. You cannot think, as others do, that you need no repentance, or reformation. In this respect, therefore, you lie nearer the door of hope and mercy, than other sinners do.

If therefore it shall please the Lord, (whose grace is rich and free to the vilest of sinners) to pluck out such as you, as brands out of the burning, by thorough conversion to Christ; you will not only become real Christians, (as all true converts are) but the most excellent, useful, and zealous amongst all Christians. As you will be most eminent instances of his grace, so you will be the most eminent instruments for his glory. As you have gone beyond other sinners in wickedness, so you will strive to exceed them all in your love to Christ. Luke vii. 47. "She loved much for much was forgiven her." You will never think you can do enough for him, who hath done such great things for you.

Who more fierce and vile, before conversion, than Paul, who was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious? 1 Tim. i. 13. and who, among all the servants of Christ, loved or laboured for him more than he? How did he rather fly, than travel up and down the world, in a flame of zeal for Christ? As you have been ring-leaders in sin, so you will not endure to come behind any in zeal and love to the Lord Jesus: Yet not thinking this way to make him a requital for the injuries you have done him; (that would be the most injurious act of all the rest) but to testify this way the deep sense you have of the riches and transcendency of his goodness and mercy to you, above all others.

§ IV. *Conversion frequently and fatally mistaken.*

BUT here I must warn you of some common, but most dangerous mistakes, committed in the world, with respect to conversion unto God: Except these be seasonably prevented, or removed, none of you will ever stir, or move further than you are towards Christ. Amongst others, beware especially of these three following fatal mistakes; that of,

1. Baptismal regeneration.
2. Common profession of Christianity.
3. Formality in religious duties.

1. There is a notion spread among men, and almost every where obtaining, that the scriptures mean nothing else by conversion, but *to be baptized in our infancy into the visible church*; and that this ordinance having passed upon them long ago, they are sufficiently converted already; and that men make but a needless stir and bustle in the world, about any other, or further conversion.

But, sirs, I beseech you, consider how dangerous a thing it is, to take your own shadow for a bridge; and venturing upon it, drown yourselves. If baptism be conversion enough, why doth Christ say, Mark xvi. 16. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned?" Baptism without faith, signifies nothing to salvation; but faith, without baptism, (where it cannot be had) secures salvation. And why doth the apostle say, Gal. vi. 25. "Neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature?" Or what needed Christ to have pressed and inculcated the indispensible necessity of regeneration upon Nicodemus, as he doth, John iii. 3, 5, 7. who had been many years a circumcised Jew? This your dangerous dependence upon your baptismal regeneration, is what hath given such deep offence, and prejudice to many (though without just cause) against that ordinance. I lament it as much as they, that men should turn it into such a deadly snare to their own souls, yet will still honour Christ's abused ordinance.

2. Some think, the common profession of Christianity makes men Christians enough; they are no Heathens, Mahometans, or idolatrous Papists; but Protestants, within the pale of the true church; that is, professed reformed Christians.

But, friends, I beg you to consider that convictive text, 1 Cor. iv. 20. "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Many there be, that in words confess Christ, but in works deny him. And why were the foolish virgins (that is, professed reformed Christians) shut out of the kingdom of God; if the lamp of verbal profession, without the oil of internal godliness, were enough for our salvation? Matth. xxv. 3, 12. Believe it, sirs, many will claim acquaintance with Christ upon this account, and expect favour from him in the great day, of whom he will profess he never knew them, Matth. vii. 22. Christ need not have put men upon striving, as in an agony, to enter in at the strait gate, if baptism in our infancy, or verbal profession of Christianity, were all the difficulties men had to encounter in the way to heaven.

3. Formality in external duties of religion, is another fatal mistake of conversion. Have not these been the inward thoughts of your hearts? As bad as we are, though we take liberty to swear, be drunk, and unclean sometimes; yet we say our prayers, keep our church, and hope for heaven and salvation, as well as those that are more precise.

But tell me, gentlemen, seriously, what do you say, or plead for yourselves more in all this, than those convicted hypocrites did, Isa.

lviii. 2. " Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my way, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God: They ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God." Or to come nearer yet to your case, and cut off, at one stroke, for ever this vain plea of yours, read and ponder God's own censure of it, in Jer. vii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. " Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, &c. and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord; but go ye now to my place, which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel."

§ V. *Of the nature of true conversion.*

YOU have heard, that conversion does not consist in these external things; at your eternal peril be it, if you trust in them: But true conversion is the turning of the whole man to God, Acts xxvi. 18. it is nothing less, than the total change of the inward temper and frame of the heart, and the external course of the life, Isa. lv. 8. It is not the cool confession, but the real forsaking of sin, in which we shall find mercy, Prov. xxviii. 13. Thy heart and will, love and delight, must turn sin out, and take Christ in, or thou art no gospel-convert. A true convert loaths every sin, and himself for sin, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. but general confessions of sin are consistent with the full dominion of sin. Moreover, in all true conversion there is a positive turning unto God, a whole heart-choice of him, for your supreme and ultimate happiness and portion, Psal. lxxiii. 25. and of the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Prince and Saviour, Acts v. 31. And answerably, it will devote your whole life to his service and glory, Phil. i. 21. And thus it brings forth the new man, and the whole frame of your heart and life is marvellously changed and altered, 2 Cor. v. 17. " Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new."

It may be, you will think such a change as this impossible to be made upon you. And so it is indeed, until the day of God's power come, Psal. cx. 3. What! to forsake with loathing your old companions, and courses, which you have so long lived with and delighted in; and to embrace with highest pleasure, strict godliness, which you have so loathed, and ridiculed! This would be a strange alteration indeed: But as strange as it seems to be, it will be effected in a moment, when God fulfils that gracious promise (as I hope he is now doing) to you, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. " A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Operations follow nature: When the heart of a beast was given to that great king Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. v. 21. his dwelling was with the wild asses; they fed him with grass, like oxen. But let the spirit of a man return to

him again, and he will blush to think of his brutish company, and way of life; and so will you of yours also. As marvellous a change as this has passed upon as eminent and notorious sinners as yourselves, Gal. i. 22. the God of the spirits of all flesh can with ease and speed produce all this by that Almighty Power, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

§ VI. *Of the hazards attending conversion.*

IF the Lord shall, in his rich grace and mercy to your souls, stir up in them the thoughts and resolutions of a change of your course; great care ought to be taken, in the time of this change, lest they miscarry in their remove from one state to another; multitudes miscarry betwixt a state of profaneness, and true godliness. To continue in the state of profaneness, is to be certainly lost; and so it is to take up short of Christ, in mere civility and formality in religion. This middle state takes up multitudes by the way, who do but change the open road, for a more private way to hell.

Mere civilized nature is unregenerated nature still; "They return, but not to the most High; they are like a deceitful bow," saith the prophet, Hosea vii. 16. They seem to aim at Christ, and salvation; but, as an arrow from a weak bow, it goes not home; or, as from a deceitful bow, it slants aside, and misses the mark. It is true, they are not openly profane, as they were before; but they take up and settle in an unregenerate state still: Their condition is the same, though their company be not.

This is excellently set forth by our Saviour, Mat. xii. 43, 44, 45. The devil may be cast out as a profane devil, and yet keep his propriety still as a former devil. The sense of that text is well expressed by one, in this note upon it; That a restraint by formality, keeps the devil's propriety, and disposes the soul to final apostasy. You are as far from Christ and salvation, under the power of formality, as you were before. He that is cured of a fever, hath no great cause to rejoice, if his fever has left him under a consumption, which will kill him as surely, though it may be less violently, or speedily.

§ VII. *Of the absolute necessity of a thorough change.*

WHATEVER the difficulties and hazards are, that attend this change by conversion unto God, the change itself is absolutely and indispensably necessary to every man's salvation. The door of salvation can never be opened, without the key of regeneration. Christ assures civil and formal Nicodemus, "That except he be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. Think not conversion to be the attainment of some singular and extraordinary Christians, for it is the very point upon which every man's eternal happiness or misery depends. There is one law for all the world; they must be changed or damned: No restitutions or reformations, no common gifts or abilities, no religious duties or services, can save

any man from hell, without a change by thorough conversion, Rom. viii. 8. "They that are in the flesh, cannot please God."

Satisfy and please not yourselves with this: Though we live in sin, yet God is a merciful God. We will confess our sins to him, say our prayers, keep our church; and no doubt but God will be merciful to us, as well as others. Consider it, man, that this merciful God is also a God of truth; and this God of truth hath plainly assured thee, that all these external things signify nothing to thy salvation, unless thou become a new creature, Gal. vi. 15. and that thou must be born again, John iii. 3. Say not, without this you will hope in God; If you hope in God, you must hope in his word, Psal. cxix. 11. Now where will you find that word in the bible, that warrants the hope of salvation in the unregenerate person? All scriptural hope is of a purifying nature, and evermore productive of an holy life, 1 John iii. 3.

If you say, Christ died for the greatest of sinners, and you trust to be saved through him; it is true, he did so, but conversion is his only method of salvation, Tit. ii. 14. and those that are not washed by sanctification, have no part in him, or in his blood, John xiii. 8. He came not to save men continuing in their sins, but to save his people from their sins, Mat. i. 21. His way is to lead you through sanctification unto salvation, 2 Thes. ii. 13. If you have a mind to see whom, and how he saves; you have it before your eyes, Tit. i. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Those only are saved by him, that "denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, live not only soberly and righteously, but godly in this present world."

And this is the change I am here pressing you to; and until this change be made, you cannot find yourselves within the compass of any covenant-promise, Eph. ii. 12. but if you will turn to Heb. xii. 14. you may, the very next minute, find yourselves barred out of heaven by a scripture threatening. Let no man, therefore, impose so great a cheat upon his own soul, as once to imagine, that any thing short of sound conversion can ever put him out of the danger of damnation.

§ VIII. *Every man might do more than he doth, towards his own conversion.*

IT is not in any man's power to convert himself; but yet because every man might do more towards it than he doth do, and doth it not, he is justly chargeable with his own damnation. We are bid, and bound to strive to enter in at the strait gate, Luke xiii. 24. It is true, a man in his natural state, can do nothing that is spiritually, or supernaturally good; yet he can do, and forbear to do many things, the doing or forbearing of which, have a true (though remoter) tendency to his conversion; and not doing, or forbearing of them, his destruction is of and from himself.

You can, if you will, forbear to swear, and blaspheme the name of

God. Who can, or does compel, or force your tongues to it? The devil can tempt, but not compel them: you can, if you will, stop, when nature is duly refreshed. Your wicked companions can provoke, but not force you. You can, if you please, shun lascivious books, and company, and keep your bodies chaste, at least from the external acts of uncleanness.

And why cannot you (if you please) perform, as well as neglect, the external acts of religious duties? The same feet that carry you to a tavern, can carry you to your closets, if you please to have them do so. Nor do I know any reason why you cannot compose yourselves, when engaged in God's public or private worship, to a close and serious attendance to those duties. The application of the mind to what is spoken is of great concernment to you; and if an unsanctified minister can apply his thoughts to compose a sermon, and preach it: I see no reason why an unsanctified hearer may not also compose, and apply his mind to hear it. And I am past all doubt, that something may be done beyond all this. You have some power certainly to reflect upon, and consider what concernment you have in the things you read or hear; and how they agree, or disagree with your experience.

Now, if men would but do this, (which certainly they have a power to do) though they cannot convert themselves, yet hereby they would lie in the hopeful way of converting grace; which is more than they could ever yet be persuaded to do. And though there be no positive certainty, or assurance, that conversion and salvation shall follow these acts; yet hope and probability are engagements enough. Hope sets all the world on work, without assurance. The ploughman ploughs in hope, and the merchant ventures in hope. Do but as much for your souls, as these do for their bodies.

§ IX. *Temptation and discouragements in the way of conversion.*

BUT here I expect to be encountered by all the policy and power of hell. Satan, and your own lusts, are in confederacy, to turn away your minds from such counsel and persuasions as these. They will tell you, this is no proper season to mind your conversion; it is either too soon, or too late; you have not yet had pleasure enough in sin, or so much as hath put you beyond all hopes of mercy: That religion is a melancholy thing, and if once you look that way, you will never have a merry day, or hour more; with a thousand such damps and discouragements.

But pray, gentlemen, do so much, at least for your souls, before you turn away your ear from the instructions of life, as to hear these matters examined: If they are not worth that, they are worth nothing.

I will suppose you in the flower and vigour of your youth, and this dangerous season now nicked with a more dangerous temptation; that

it is too soon to mind such serious matters now: You have not yet had your full pleasure out of sin.

Need I to spend a word, to refute and baffle such a temptation as this? I doubt not, but you yourselves can easily do it. Ask yourselves, Sirs, if sentence of death were passed upon you by men, (as it is by God, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not, is condemned already,") would you think a pardon could come too soon? Be assured, every bit of bread you eat, is the bread of the condemned; you are in danger of hell every day, and hour: There wants nothing but a sword, a bullet, a shipwreck, or disease, (of which multitudes wait on you every day) to put you beyond mercy, and all hopes of mercy. And can you get too soon (think you) out of this danger and misery? O why do you linger any longer? The danger is too great and imminent, to admit one hour's longer delay.

And it is as strange and strong a delusion on the other side, to fancy it is now too late: The vanity and groundlessness of this, hath been evinced in the second section, to which I refer you for full satisfaction.

And for the loss of your pleasures, by conversion to God, that is the thinnest and silliest pretence of all the rest: That is the same thing, as to imagine it is to a thirsty man's loss, to leave the puddle waters of a broken cistern, to enjoy the crystal streams of a flowing fountain; for the pleasures of an ale-house, play-house, or whore-house, to be sweeter than the light of God's countenance, the comforts of his pardon, or the lively hopes of glory with him in heaven; of which you read, 1 Pet. i. 8.

Poor men! O that you did but once know what the life of holiness, and dedication to God is! what the seals, earnest, and first-fruits of his Spirit are! How willingly and joyfully would you trample all the sordid pleasures of sin under your feet, to enjoy them!

§ X. *Motives and considerations persuading to conversion.*

THIS short discourse shall wind up itself in motives and considerations, to prevail with you, not only to make the first step out of profaneness to civility; but the other necessary and happy step too, for the Lord's sake, gentlemen, that blessed step beyond mere civility, to serious godliness.

O that I knew what words to choose, and what arguments to urge, that might possibly prevail with you! My witness is in heaven, I would do any thing within my power, to procure your temporal and eternal happiness. I beg you, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, as if I were upon my bended knees before your feet, turn not away your eye nor ear from these discourses: Ponder and consider, once and again, what hath been rationally debated in the first part, about your reformation, and what hath, and shall be offered, in this second part.

O my God! thou that hast counted me faithful, and put me into

the ministry ; thou that hast inclined my heart to make this attempt, and encouraged me with hope, that it shall not be in vain to all them that read it, if it must be so to some ; I beseech thee, lay the hand of thy Spirit upon the heart and hand of thy servant ; strengthen and guide him in drawing the bow of the gospel, and directing the arrows, that they may strike the mark he aims at, even the conviction and conversion of lewd and dissolute sinners. Command these considerations to stay and settle in their hearts, till they bring them fully over to thyself in Christ."

Consideration 1. And first, O that you would consider how the whole of your life past hath been cast away in vain, as to the great end and business you came into the world for. You have breathed many years, but not lived one day to God. Your consciences could never yet prevail with you to get out of the noise and hurry of the world, and go along with it into some private retiring-place, to debate the state of your souls, and think close (but for one hour) on such awful subjects as God, soul, Christ, and eternity, heaven, hell, death, and judgment. Do you think, gentlemen, that you came into this world to do nothing else but to eat and drink, sport and play, sleep and die? Ask yourselves, I beseech you, whether the life you have hitherto lived, has looked to your own eyes like an earnest flight from hell, and a serious pursuit of heaven and salvation? How much nearer you are got to Christ now, than you were when in your cradles? The sweetest, and fittest part of your life, is passed away in vanity, and there is no calling one day, or hour of it, back again.

Consideration 2. Consider, gentlemen, for Christ Jesus sake, you have yet an opportunity to be eternally happy, if you will slight and neglect opportunities of salvation no longer; the door of mercy is not yet finally shut up: The Lord Jesus yet waits to be gracious to you. Such is his astonishing grace and mercy, he will pardon and pass by all that you have done against him, if now, after all, you will but come unto him that you may have life. *Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?* Your swearing and blaspheming, your drunkenness, uncleanness, and enmity of godliness, shall never be mentioned, if you will yet repent and return. Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him."

If you say, these are hard and impossible terms to nature, it is true, they are so, and God's end in urging them here upon you, is to convince you of your natural impotence, and drive you to Christ; that by union with him, the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in you.

Consideration 3. Let it be thoroughly considered, it is no less than salvation, and your own salvation too, which depends upon your conversion. How diligent was Christ in purchasing salvation! how neg-

ligent and remiss are we in applying it ! O what compositions of sloth and stupidity are unconverted sinners ! how do they sit with folded arms, as if it were easy to perish ? Is this your running and striving to obtain the palms and crowns of immortal glory ? *Work-out* (saith the apostle, Phil. ii. 12, 13.) *your own salvation with fear and trembling* It is for salvation, and nothing less, you are here pressed to strive : And what care, pains, or solicitude of ours, can be equal and proportionate to so great a thing as salvation ? If every thought of the heart were rescued from all other concerns, and the mind stand continually fixed with utmost intention upon this subject, surely such a subject deserves it all, and much more.

But when you consider it is not another's, but your own salvation you are striving for ; how powerful should the principle of self-preservation awaken and invigorate your utmost endeavours after it ! The law of charity, and bowels of mercy, would compel us to do much to save the body, and much more the soul of another : And will they move us to do nothing for our salvation ?

Say not, If I should be careless and neglective, yet God is good and gracious ; if this season be neglected, there are more to come : Alas ! that is more than you know. It is possible your eternal happiness may depend upon the improvement of this present opportunity ; there is much of time in a short opportunity.

Consideration 4. Do you think your hearts would be in such a dead, careless, and unconcerned frame, about this great and awful matter of your conversion and salvation ; if those things were now before your eyes, which certainly and shortly must be before them !

How rational and necessary is it, for you now to suppose those very things as present before you, which you know to be near you, and a few days or hours will make present ? Here let me make a few suppositions, so rational, because certainly future and near, that no wise man will, or dare to slight them as fictions or chimeras.

Supposition 1. Suppose yourselves now upon your death-beds, your hearts and breaths failing, your eyes and heart-strings breaking, all earthly comforts failing, and shrinking from you ; these things you know, are unavoidable, and must shortly befall you, Eccl. viii. 8. suppose also, in these your last extremities, your consciences should awake (as probably they will, there being now no more charms of pleasure, and sinful companions, to divert or stupify them) what a case will you find yourselves in ! what a cold sweat will then lie upon your panting bosoms ! what a pale horror will appear in your countenances ? Will you not then wish, O that the time I have spent in vanity had been spent in the duties of serious piety ! O that I had been as careful of my soul, as I was of my body ! What are the pains of mortification, which I was so afraid of, to the pains of damnation, which I begin to scent, and apprehend ! I thought it hard to pray, mourn, and deny myself ; but I shall find it harder to grapple with the wrath of an incensed God to all eternity.

Supposition 2. Suppose yourselves now to be at the judgment seat of God, where you know you must be immediately after death; or, that you did behold the process, and awful solemnity of the general judgment of the great day! both which appearances are indisputably sure, and certain, Heb. ix. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. Suppose you saw all Adam's posterity there assembled, and convened, even multitudes, multitudes which no man can number; all these separated into two grand divisions; Christ, the supreme and final Judge, upon the judgment-seat; the Christless and unregenerate world, quivering at the bar; the last sentence pronouncing on them; the executioners standing ready to take them away: Will you not then (think you) be ready to tear yourselves with indignation, for this your supine and sottish carelessness? A voice from the throne, like the voice of a trumpet, sounds a loud alarm to all careless, negligent, and trifling sinners: And this is the voice, if you will not be in the same case with the miserable, condemned world. Put to it heartily, then, in the use of all means with God and men, for converting and regenerating grace now, which is the only thing that differences your state from those miserable wretches then.

Supposition 3. Suppose God did but give you a foresight, or foretaste in the terrors of your consciences, of that damnation you have jested at, and so often imprecated upon yourselves: Did you but lie one night in that plight poor Spira, and many others besides him have done, with the terrors of the Lord upon your spirits, under horror and remorse of conscience, which are the first nibblings and bitings of that worm which shall never die:

— *Tum pallida mens est*

*Criminibus, tacita sudant præcordia culpa.**

Paleness and horror, fear and trembling, upon the outward and inward man, whilst God is making the immediate impressions of his wrath upon the conscience; seeming to want some one to let out that miserable, wretched soul, that is weary to stay any longer in the body, and yet afraid to be dislodged, lest its condition be made worse by the exchange: do you think you would ever imprecate damnation any more? And yet all these terrors and horrors upon the conscience, are but as the sweating of marble-stone before the great rains fall.

But what if God should give you a vision of hell itself, and of the inconceivable and inexpressible misery of those desperate and forlorn wretches, that lie there sweltering, and groaning under the heavy pressures of the wrath of a great and terrible God, immediately and everlastingly transacted upon their souls? Would you ever jest with damnation any more, as with an harmless thing? Nay, would you not strive to the uttermost, to flee from this wrath to come? Do you not seem to hear, in this rational and just opposition, and doleful cry

* The mind now conscious of its guilt,
Feels hell within: the rest's a horrid sight,

coming from hell, and the state of the damned, with this very sound and sense? ‘ Good souls, if ever you expect to be delivered from this state, and place of torments, strive, to the utmost, strive while you have opportunity, strive whilst breath and strength do last, to flee from, and escape, by a sound conversion, this doleful state of eternal damnation.’

Supposition 4. Lastly, and in a word, suppose you had a vision of heaven, as Stephen and Paul had in the body; suppose you saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand, surrounded with the triumphant myriads of palm-bearing saints, singing Hosanna’s and Hallelujahs to God, and the Lamb for ever; and blessing, praising, and admiring him that gave them another spirit, vastly different from that which governs such as you: Blessing the Lord, that enabled them to be praying and praising, whilst others were cursing and swearing; to be sighing and groaning for sin in secret, whilst others were shouting and singing in taverns and ale-houses: to beat down their bodies, and keep them under, whilst others were pleasing and gratifying their lusts; would you still drive that course you do? Well, sirs, if ever you expect to come where these blessed ones are, you must take the course they did. Let this be your endeavour, and it shall be my fervent and hearty prayer.



A

CORONATION-SERMON,

PREACHED AT

DARTMOUTH.

 CANT. iii. 11.

Go forth ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.

A CROWN is the top of earthly glory, the culminating point of human dignity. Psalm xxi. 2, 3. “Thou hast given him his heart’s desire; thou hast set a crown of pure gold upon his head.” The ambition of the many, moves in various spheres below it; the ambition of none aspires above it, except it be that *anomalous monster*, the man of sin, who affects to sit in the very throne of God, and exalts himself above all that is called God, 2 Thess. ii. 4.

When God puts a crown upon the head, and a sceptre into the hand of a man, he engraves upon that man (in a qualified sense) both his name, and the lively characters of his Majesty and authority, Psal. lxxxii. 6. "I have said, ye are gods, and all of you the children of the Most High." But yet, in all the grants and conveyances of Heaven, there is always a reservation and salvo to the divine prerogative, to *displace at pleasure, and set it upon what head he shall please, Ezek. xxi. 26. "Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; This shall not be the same: Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high."

Though dominion be not founded in grace, yet grace both embellishes, and secures the dominion of men. The princes of the earth owe fealty and homage to Jesus Christ; (Psal. ii. 10, 11, 12.) and had some of them been more subject to his laws, their kingdoms had flourished, and their government been more auspicious.

The coronation-day of a king, is, in a sense, the marriage-day betwixt him and his people, and is accordingly solemnized with all the signs and demonstrations of joy and gladness: *For the shout of a king is among them.* Thus when the crown of Israel was set upon the head of Solomon, the scripture represents their exuberant joy, in an elegant and lofty hyperbole: 1 Kings i. 40. "And all the people came up after him; and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them."

Carnal men rejoice carnally, and spiritual men should rejoice spiritually: The most glorious part of the solemnity of such a day consists in,

1. Praises and prayers for him that wears the crown.

2. In a spiritual improvement of the action to ourselves.

1. In praises and prayers for the king, whom God hath set over us. Your prayers and praises reflect more glory upon the crown than all the jewels and sparkling stones with which it shines: And so I am persuaded our king will account it; according to Zech. xii. 5. "The governors of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God."

Praise thy God, O England! for setting thy crown this day upon the head of a Protestant prince; who accounted not his treasures, or blood, dear unto him, to redeem the interest of Christ out of the dangers that were ready to swallow it up.

Pray fervently for your king this day: The concerns of the people of God are so great in him, as that they exact from all the saints the uttermost importunity in prayer.

(1.) That God would cleanse and wash the crown of England from all that guilt and pollution it hath contracted under former governments, that the sins of the crown may not descend with it.

(2.) That the royal head on which it shall be set this day, may be filled with the wisdom of God, and matched with an holy heart, inflamed with love to God, and zeal for his glory.

* The Lord dethrones kings, disposes of kingdoms.

(3.) That as soon as men have set the crown upon his head, he may cheerfully take it off again, and cast it at the feet of Jesus Christ, as the twenty-four elders did, Rev. iv. 10. "And the twenty-four elders fell down before him that sat on the throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne," &c.

(4.) That God would make the crown sit easy, and long upon his royal head. Easy, because crowns are usually lined with thorny cares; and long, for the church's peace and tranquillity.

Secondly, The next thing belonging to the due solemnity of this day, will be the spiritual improvement of the whole scene of actions, to your own instruction and spiritual advantage; and this will be much more glorious, than all the triumphant arches, royal robes, thundering guns, and loud acclamations of the people. To this purpose, I have chosen this text, for the direction, and spiritualizing of the duties of the day. "Go forth ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

This book of the Canticles, is a spiritual *epithalamium*, sung in parts betwixt the heavenly bridegroom and the bride. The matter of it is most spiritual and weighty, the stile of it rapturous and lofty, the intimate union and communion of Christ and the church, is elegantly illustrated in an *allegory* of marriage: But nothing is found here light, or obscene.

— *Procul hinc, procul este profani:*

*Nil hic nisi custum.**

It is a crystal stream of pure spiritual love, sliding sweetly betwixt two pleasant banks, Christ and the church.

In the ninth and tenth verses you have the description of a triumphant chariot, prepared by king Solomon for the daughters of Jerusalem: "The pillars thereof of silver, the bottom of gold, the covering of purple, and the midst thereof paved with love." A chariot is an instrument framed for easy, safe, and honourable conveyance: This chariot is the covenant of grace, fitted by Christ for the safe and honourable transporting of his bride, the church, through this world, to her stately pavilion, or glorious mansion in the highest heavens.

But how stately and magnificent soever this royal chariot be, he that contrived and framed it is much more glorious to behold: And therefore in the next words, which are my text, believers are summoned, and invited to behold and contemplate Christ, that framed it: "Go forth, ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon, with his crown," &c. In which words we have,

1. The *spectators* summoned, or invited.
2. The *spectacle* they are invited to see.

* Hence, far hence what e'er's profane:
There's nought to feed your unchaste flame.

1. The *spectators* invited; the daughters of Zion. By Zion, understand the church; and by the daughters of Zion, the members of the church, or every particular believer: These are here invited, or summoned to go forth, i. e. of their entangling, diverting temptations: and to behold, viz. by the eye of faith, this most glorious, and heart-ravishing object.

2. The *spectacle* they are invited to behold and contemplate; *king Solomon with his crown, &c.* the most illustrious, glorious, and ravishing sight that ever the eyes of men did, or shall behold. By king Solomon, understand Christ; of whom Solomon in this book, is the figure, or shadow; yet one to whom Solomon, in all his glory was but a depainted sun on a sign-post, to the sun in the mid heavens, shining in all his glory.

And by his crown, understand not any material crown, as that of Solomon's was; but the glory and honour that is put upon Christ, the king of Zion; of which glory a crown is the emblem.

What crown is here meant, interpreters are not all agreed about it; some would have it to be understood of our human nature, which he was crowned withal by his mother Mary, of whom he took it: But though this assumption of our nature, put such a crown of glory upon it as it never had before, yet it was rather an obscuring of Christ's glory, than any addition of glory to him.

Others interpret it of the crown of thorns, with which his mother (the Jewish church or synagogue) crowned him in the day of his passion at Jerusalem; but this seems to be as hard and foreign a sense as the former.

The most judicious expositors are agreed in a third sense, viz. That by the crown on Christ's head, we are to understand that glory and honour, which believers give unto, or put upon Christ, when in the day of their espousals to him by faith, renouncing Satan, sin, and all that had exercised dominion over them before, with all trust and dependence on any righteousness of their own, they give their deliberate, full and hearty consent, that Christ alone shall reign over them for ever and ever; saying, "The Lord is our King, the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver." Christ is "the Lord our righteousness," and in all things we will obey him. This Christ esteems as a crown of glory put upon his head, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. There is no such honour, no such pleasure a poor sinner can give to Christ, as to believe in him; this is as the putting of a crown of glory upon his head. It is true, it adds no glory to him, but it is the greatest manifestation of his glory, we are capable to make.

Objection. *But then it will be objected, in what sense believers can be tolerably stiled his mother? For the text tells us, it was the crown his mother put upon him.*

Answer. They may be so stiled in a double respect:

(1.) Because Christ is formed in every believer, he is (in a spiritual

sense) conceived and formed in their souls, as the child is formed in its mother's womb. So the apostle speaks, Gal. iv. 19. "My little children, of whom I travail again in birth, till Christ be formed in you."

(2.) In respect of the dear affection Christ bears to every soul that believeth in him. No man loves his brother, sister, or mother, as Christ esteems and loves believers, Mark iii. 34. when he was told, his mother and brethren were without seeking him; he said, "Behold my mother, and my brethren: For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." The day of a sinner's consent to come under Christ's government, is the day of his espousals, 2 Cor. xi. 2. And the day of a sinner's espousals to Christ, is the day of the gladness of his heart, Luke xv. 32. Thus you have the parts and sense of the text. The point from it is this:

Doct. That the day of a believer's espousals to Christ by faith, is to Christ as the day of a king's coronation is to him, even the day of the gladness of his heart.

It is very remarkable, what we find in Luke x. 21. where the Spirit hath carefully recorded one hour of joy in the life of Christ; for he had not many, being a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit," saith the text: And what hour was that? Why, it was the same hour in which the seventy returned with these joyful tidings to him; "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name," ver. 17. The hour when Christ saw "Satan falling as lightning from heaven," ver. 18. his kingdom tottering, his forces routed by the gospel, his subjects running away to Christ, from under his cruel bondage, and made willing to come under his government: "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in spirit." This was joyful news to Christ, it was the day of the gladness of his heart: He had now got a new throne in the souls of poor sinners, over whom the devil and sin had reigned; this was a crown of glory to Christ.

In opening this point, I shall discourse these three things:

- (1.) In what respect a sinner's espousals to Christ resembles the day of a king's coronation over his subjects.
- (2.) Wherein these two days differ each from other.
- (3.) On what accounts it is the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, as the text calls it.

And then apply it.

Let me shew the resemblances and agreements which are betwixt the day of a king's coronation, and the day of a sinner's espousals to Christ by faith. And this will appear in six respects:

(1.) A king that is duly crowned over his subjects, hath a lawful right to govern them, either by lineal descent, conquest, or compact. Solomon had his right and title to the kingdom, by descent from his royal father David, who, by his last will and testament, constituted

and appointed him to be his immediate successor upon the throne of Israel, 1 Kings i. 35. The Roman Cæsar's title to that kingdom, was by conquest, and this title was legitimated not only by the Jews acknowledgment of it, but also by Christ's express owning it, and submission to it. The people said, "We have no king but Cæsar," John xix. 15. And Christ owned it, Luke xx. 25. when he had paid tribute, saying, "Give unto Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's." But David had his title by compact with, and voluntary election of the people: Abner confers with the elders of Israel about it, and they meet David at Hebron, and there chuse him king, in the room of Saul, 2 Sam. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. and that in consideration of the eminent service he had performed for that kingdom, in delivering them from their mortal enemies the Philistines, enemies to their religion, and civil liberties. And certainly, the crown of Israel was not a reward above the merit of such a performance. "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and said, Behold we are thy bone, and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out, and broughtest in Israel: And the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel; and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron, before the Lord: And they anointed David king over Israel."

But Christ hath right to reign over our souls, by all these titles and claims: The throne of our souls, by his Father's constitution and decree, Psalm ii. 6. "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion;" by conquest, for he wins it by the sword of his Spirit, before he possesseth it, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. he casts down by spiritual weapons all that opposeth, and brings every thought into obedience to him. And he hath right also, by consent and compact, Psalm cx. 3. "The people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Of which more anon.

(2.) On the coronation-day, kings appear in all their royal robes, glittering jewels, and all the lustre that can be put upon them; they shine in the eyes of the people more gloriously than all that are about them. *Velut luna, inter minora sidera*; There is none like him, in the beauty of his ornaments. Much more doth Christ excel all others in beauty and glory, in the eyes of those that chuse him for their Lord and King. 1 Pet. ii. 17. "To you that believe, he is precious." *Ἐτιμὴν*, Honour itself. Col. i. 17. "He is before all things; not only in time, or in order, but real dignity, and solid glory and excellency. So his spouse pronounceth him, Psalm xlv. 2. "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips." And Cant. v. 10. "My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefest among ten thousand." Examine and mark all the creatures in both worlds, angels and men, and they bear no more proportion to Christ in glory, than a glow-worm to the sun.

(3.) On the coronation-day, the consent of the people is demand-

ed, and given. Consent was demanded by Abner, in the behalf of David, 2 Sam. iii 17, 18, and freely given by them, in order to David's coronation, 2 Sam. v. 1, 2, 3, 4. Thus at the coronation of our kings, the consent of the nobles and commonalty is demanded on the public theatre, in these words :

“ **I** HERE present you such an one, (naming the king) the rightful inheritor of the crown of this realm: Are you willing to do your homage, service, and do bounden duty to him?”

And they say,

“ **W**E are willing; or signify they are so, by their loud and joyful acclamations.”

So it is, when Christ is crowned King over the soul; his right is asserted, and their consent demanded by his ambassadors; the believer manifests his hearty consent, Psalm cx. 3. “ Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” And over all that are made truly willing to receive him, he reigns, and invests them with all the privileges of his kingdom, John i. 12. The unbeliever is not willing to come under Christ's government, John v. 4. *You will not come to me, &c.* And the issue of their unwillingness, is their eternal ruin, Luke xix. 27. “ But those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them; bring them hither, and slay them before me.” Now to make a soul truly willing to accept Christ's government, and give his consent to him, four things must be done upon, and by such a soul; (1.) He must be convinced of his sin and misery; no man will be willing to change his Lord, whilst he finds no matter of complaint. (2.) He must know, and deliberate upon the terms of Christ; for an ignorant person cannot be said to consent; *Non consentit, quinon sentit.* Christ will have all the world to know his terms, and will not hide the worst and hardest things from them, whether they like them or not: No man shall say afterwards, I was surprized, or imposed upon; had I known this, I had never consented to be a Christian. Therefore the hardest terms of Christianity are plainly propounded, Luke xiv. 26. and that to cut off all after-pleas and pretences for resiling from Christ, John xvi. 1. “ These things have I spoken to you, that ye should not be offended in me.” (3.) Upon deliberation, there must appear to the soul that chuseth Christ, and consents to his government, a preponderating good; that Christ, with all his reproaches and sufferings, is better than sin, with all its honours and pleasures: No man will change for no advantage, much less to his loss. Thus Moses saw more glory and excellency in the very reproaches of Christ, than in all the treasures of Egypt, or pleasures of sin, Heb. xi. 25, 26. O! saith the soul, though there be hard and bitter sufferings in the way of godliness, yet it is infinitely better for me to endure them for Christ, than to be damned. And upon balancing the gains and losses, the conveniences and inconveniences of Christianity, the odds appear so great, that the soul pronounceth they are not wor-

thy to be compared, Rom. viii. 18. (4.) When all is done, there must be a divine Almighty influence upon the will; without which men will never heartily consent to Christ's terms. "No man (saith Christ) can come unto me, except my Father, which hath sent me, draw him," John vi. 44. This influence of God upon the will is in a way suitable to its nature, Hos. xi. 4. and produceth a consent without co-action. If the Lord shew any man the infinite advantages that come and accrue to his soul by Christ, this very discovery doth as it were, compel that man to come in to Christ; as that expression is used, Luke xiv. 23. a scripture vilely abused in our times. Christ compels none into his kingdom, as the Spaniards did the poor Indians to baptism, or as others have been compelled to the Lord's table: He will reign over a willing people, or not reign at all.

(4.) On the coronation-day, a champion appears on the king's behalf, to challenge any that shall deny his right, or by allurements or threatenings attempt to draw his subjects from their duty and allegiance: He throws down the gantlet, and defies the proudest enemy the king hath.

So when Christ is crowned King over the souls of his people, there is a public defiance bid, a formal challenge given, to all the enemies of Christ and his people; as you may read at large, Rom. viii. 33, 34, 35. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Devils and men are defied to do their worst. Christ must reign, till all his enemies are put under his feet: sin shall not have dominion over his people, for they are not under the law, but under grace. Come, Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek; come Satan, and all his infernal powers; they are all defied in the name of Christ. Believers are his own subjects, and none shall pluck them out of his hand.

(5.) At, or about, the coronation-day, an act of indemnity, pardon and oblivion, is past and published, pardoning the offences the subjects had committed unto that day. Thus it is at the day of Christ's coronation over the believer's soul, and its espousals to him by faith; all his sins are pardoned, new and old, great and small. And of this, proclamation is openly made in the gospel, Acts x. 43. "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sin." O glorious pardon! free without purchase; full without exception, and final without revocation. Now there is a gaol-delivery, the prison-doors are open, liberty proclaimed to the captives, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. The King of Sion is a merciful King, and his subjects shall find him so: they have gladdened his heart, by accepting his government; and he will glad theirs, by his pardons: *The Son hath made them free, and they are free indeed.*

(6.) In a word, a coronation-day is a day of gladness, a day of joy and triumph; joy displays itself in the faces of all loyal subjects; those

only that had rather be under another government, hang the head, and bite the lip.

So it is here; all that are loyal subjects to Jesus Christ, rejoice exceedingly in his government; and it must needs be so, because his kingdom consists in joy in the Holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. When Zaccheus came under this King, he came down joyfully, Luke xix. 6, 9. when the eunuch received him for his Lord and King, he went home rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. when Samaria submitted to his sceptre, there was great joy in that city, Acts viii. 5, 6, 7. and let the joy be what it will, the causes of joy are greater than the joy itself. But those that belong to Satan's kingdom, that love to be under the dominion of sin, and hate the strictness and severities of religion; these are the only malecontents; these fret to see Christ's kingdom enlarged, and secretly plot to destroy it. Thus we see the agreement betwixt the day of a king's coronation over his subjects, and Christ's coronation over believers.

But though they harmonize in these particulars, and divers others that may be named; yet,

2dly, There are as many remarkable differences and disagreements betwixt them, but none to the believer's loss or disadvantage; for they all fall on his side: As, *ex. gr.*

(1.) It is not the privilege of every subject, no, nor of one among many thousands, to see the king who is crowned over them, to hear his voice, or give their explicit consent in his presence; but every subject in Christ's kingdom doth see Christ by the eye of faith. John vi. 40. "He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him." Seeing, and believing, are terms convertible; they do all hear his voice, and give their explicit consent to take him for their King. Union with Christ is not a work to be done by a proxy, or representative; but is the result of a solemn debate betwixt Christ and the soul.

(2.) Kings are crowned over many that love them not, but are filled with prejudice against their persons and government.

But it cannot be so in the kingdom of Christ; *To them that believe he is precious*, 1 Pet. ii. 7. All Christ's subjects love him above father or mother, wife or children, yea, above their own lives; otherwise they cannot be his subjects, Luke xiv. 27. They also delight in his government, and nothing would be more pleasant to their souls, than to find every thought of their heart brought into subjection to him, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. They dare not confederate with his enemies, and will chuse rather to die, than forsake him: They will esteem it a glorious thing, though their right arm should be severed from their shoulder-blade, for their regular endeavours to defend and support the crown upon the head of their royal Master.

(3.) The relation betwixt a king and his subjects, may, and must be dissolved by death: death fears not to arrest the most potent monarch upon his throne, and translate his crown to another head.

But our King, Christ, lives for ever; death hath no dominion over him: his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion that which shall have no end, Dan. vii. 13, 14. Death is so far from separating Christ, and his subjects, that it brings them nearer together than ever they were before; it brings them into his immediate presence, to his facial vision, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. and fixes them there for ever, 1 Thess. iv. 17.

(4.) Kings may degenerate into tyrants, and subjects into rebels; they may undermine the laws, liberties, and religion of their people: they that rule over the people, may make them to howl, Isa. lii. 5. The world is too full of such instances and examples; but Christ can never oppress his subjects. "The sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre," Psal. xlv. 6. "His yoke is easy, and his burden is light," Matth. xi. 29. And his true subjects can never shake off their allegiance to him; they shall rather die, than do it.

(5.) Kings will not permit their greatest favourites to sit in their thrones; it is their peculiar honour, and not communicable to any. Gen. xli. 40. "Only in the throne, I will be greater than thou," said Pharaoh to his Joseph.

But Christ permits, and appoints all his subjects to sit with him upon his throne, Rev. iii. 21. The glory which God gave him, he hath given to them, John xvii. 22. What king is like Christ?

(6.) To conclude: the joy and triumph at the king's coronation, is only among men, in this lower world; but the joy and triumph at Christ's coronation, is among angels in heaven, Luke xv. 7. The city of God holds a solemn triumph at the conversion of a particular sinner; what are the shouts of men, to the jubilations of angels?

Thus you have six particulars wherein they agree, and as many in which they differ.

We come, in the next place to enquire into,

Sdly, The reasons why Christ's coronation over believers, is the day of the gladness of his heart. And it must be so,

(1.) Because it is Christ's marriage-day, at least the day of his espousals; and the day of marriage, or espousals, is a day of joy and gladness. Christ hath now a new spouse, a soul, in which he never dwelt before; and *as a bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth Christ over believers*, Isa. lxii. 5. Here is a new relation entered, and that with the King of kings; the angels of God rejoice exceedingly in it, but much more Christ, the blessed Bridegroom.

(2.) It is Christ's day of conquest and victory over Satan, the day in which he hath deposed him from his throne, Matth. xii. 29. delivered a soul, of invaluable worth in his eyes, out of the power of darkness, and translated it into his own kingdom, Col. 1. 13. and the day of conquest is a day of extraordinary joy and triumph, Isa. ix. 3.

(3.) It is the day in which he receives the fruit and reward of his bloody travels, and bitter agonies: there is now a son, or daughter,

born to God, an heir born to the heavenly inheritance. Now it is most pleasant and joyful to Jesus Christ, to see of the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 11. no satisfaction in this world comparable to it. When a young heir is born to the kingdom and crown of heaven, it deserves a triumph.

(4.) It is the day in which Christ finds a soul that was lost, Luke xv. 5, 6. What joy was it to the father of the prodigal, when he had found his lost son? Luke xv. 20. there was mirth and music, feasting and rejoicing: "This my son was lost, and is found; was dead, and is alive."

Poor sinners are lost creatures by nature, they have lost their God, and therein themselves too. God hath lost, and the devil found, every unregenerate sinner: all strayers from God fall to his share. But this loss is not irrecoverable; the errand and end for which Christ came into the world, was to seek and to save that which was lost, Matth. xviii. 11. and when the sinner that was lost comes home to him by repentance and faith, he obtains the end of his incarnation, life, and death, upon that soul; which cannot but be the day of the gladness of his heart.

If then the day of a king's espousals, or marriage, be a day of joy, and gladness to his soul; if a day of conquest, and dividing the spoils, be a day of joy to the conqueror, after a sharp and bloody fight; if it be a joy to a mother, after long and sore travail, to embrace in her arms, and kiss the child, for whom she endured so many bitter throws; if it be a joy to a father to find and recover a child that was lost, and as dead to him: In a word, if it be high delight and satisfaction to see a great design, on which the heart is intently set, brought at last, by orderly conduct, to the desired happy issue; then let us allow the day of a sinner's coming into Christ by conversion, to be as a coronation-day to a king, the day of his espousals, and the gladness of his heart.

Use I. This point, like a fruitful root, sends forth many branches, and all loaden with diversity of fruits. The first is for information, in several inferences from it.

Inference 1. Be informed from hence, what is the true cause and reason of Satan's rage and spite against the gospel, and the most painful, able, and successful preachers of it in the world. The great design of the gospel, and of all that sincerely preach it, is to win and persuade Satan's subjects to forsake his cruel, unjust, and tyrannical government, and submit to the kingdom and sceptre of the Lord Jesus. What is the preaching of the gospel, but the sounding of a trumpet in the devil's kingdom, to win his subjects from their allegiance to him, to proclaim another king in his territories? Every faithful minister's business, is to gather these wretched vassals of Satan together, and set before them the miserable captivity and bondage they are in, under that tyrant that rules over them, (whose laws, like Draco's, are written in the blood of their souls,) to exaggerate their

sin and misery, and to let them know how willing Christ is to receive and save them, if they will renounce and abandon Satan's government. To set before them the blessed freedom, and glorious privileges of the subjects of Christ; to beseech and persuade them to break away from their old cruel master, and come over to Christ: to answer all their pleas and objections against it, and to denounce the wrath of God against all the refusers of Christ's gracious proclamation. Now Satan is not ignorant of all this; he esteems the loss of one, much more the revolt of many a greater mischief, than a king reckons the loss of a kingdom: and to see them break away from him, and be listed to fight against him; O how it grates that envious spirit, and sharpens his malice against the instruments and agents in this work! 'This, as a * late worthy speaks, torments the foul spirit, to see himself forsaken of his old friends and servants, and this new Lord to come and take away his subjects from him. Hence come persecutions, slanders, &c. in showers, upon Christ's faithful ministers.' He knows his kingdom of darkness must vanish, as the light of the gospel rises, and spreads itself. You read, Rev. xiv. 6, 7. of "an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth." And in ver. 8. you have another angel following him, saying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen! that great city!* No sooner is the two-edged sword of the gospel drawn, but the next voice is, *Victory! victory!* He knows every home-charge made by the gospel, will issue in a rout of his infernal legions. Now ministers coming forth against him as heralds, to proclaim Christ's right, and as captains of the army of Christ, their general; he owes them a particular grudge, and seeks every way to stop their mouths, and destroy their persons. And surely he hath pushed hard at them, and made desperate attempts against them, in our days. No doubt but it was reckoned a great service done him, to shut up the mouths of so many at once; but the time draws nigh, that Babylon must fall, and those that could not lately shew their faces on earth, must fly in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting gospel. The dead witnesses of Christ shall hear shortly a great voice from heaven, saying, *Come up hither;* and they shall ascend in a cloud, their enemies beholding, but not able any more to hinder them.

Inference 2. How causeless, and altogether groundless, are the discouragements and fears of humbled and convinced sinners, that Jesus Christ will reject them, and shut the door of mercy against them, if they should go to him, and cast their poor sinful soul upon him by faith?

Certainly such persons fear, where no fear is. That which is the command of Christ, the earnest desire of his soul, that act which makes his heart glad, as the text speaks; can never meet with such a repulse as you fear. Was ever any king unwilling to have the crown

* Gurnal's first part, p. 59.

set upon his head? Do they use to frown upon their subjects that are upon the knee, tendering their homage and allegiance to them? No, it is the day of the gladness of their hearts. Renounce thy old master Satan, give a bill of divorce to those lusts which have reigned over thy soul, ponder well Christ's terms, and heartily consent to them, and try whether he will not quickly confute these vain fears of thine, and fully make good his gracious, sweet, and most encouraging word, John vi. 37. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." A sweet encouragement to a coming soul! And because sense of guilt and unworthiness usually doubles their fears, Christ hath caused a double negative to be put into that text, on purpose to obviate their fears, and discouragements; *ε μη εκβαλω εγω*: I will not, no, I will not; or, as we render, "I will in no wise cast him out." Acts of delight flow freely, and easily, and so doth this.

Inf. 3. What an high and honourable relation doth faith bring the soul of a sinner into! The day of conversion is the day of that soul's espousals to Christ.

A king from heaven makes suit for a poor sinner's heart, woos for union with sinful creatures, rejoices exceedingly, when he wins their consent, and espouses them for ever to himself, when he obtains it; for *contractus* is nothing else, but *consensus explicatus*; a contract is consent explained, in affirmative plain words, *de presenti*. I do disclaim, and for ever renounce all others; and willingly yield up my heart and life to Jesus Christ. Now, *ex contractu oritur vinculum*, an obligation results from this contract with Christ, and a most honourable mystical union with him. "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. The greatest honour that was ever put upon the human nature, was by its assumption into union with the Son of God, hypostatically; and the greatest honour that can be done to our persons, is by our union with Christ, mystically; hereby we become "Members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. the spouse of Christ. O what a preferment is this! What soul feels not itself lifted up far above all earthly honours, in such a relation to Christ as this? The nobles and barons of the kingdoms, think it a preferment to serve the queen; and the angels of heaven do not think themselves degraded, by performing service to the bride, the Lamb's wife. Well might great Constantine prefer the honour of being a member of the church, to that of being head of an empire.

Let all the saints understand their dignity and privileges, by this their honourable union with Christ; and with it let them balance all the reproaches, scorns, and contempts, this vile world loads them with for his sake.

Inference 4. Be informed hence, of the dreadful and damning nature of the sin of unbelief: a sin that questions, yea, denies, Christ's right to rule over the soul; blinds the mind, hardens the heart, stiffens the will, and makes the soul obstinate and inflexible to all the gracious tenders of Christ in the gospel.

Unbelief is the poisonous breath of Satan, whispering jealousies, surmises, and dangerous prejudices against Christ into the ear of the soul, and all tending to this mischievous design and purpose, viz. to hinder or break the treaty of the spiritual marriage betwixt Christ and the soul. Now it will be digging at the very root and foundation of the assenting act, and thus it whispers, how canst thou be sure of the reality of the things reported in the gospel? Is it not possible they may be devised fables, the cunning artifices of men, to keep the world in awe? Thou never sawest Christ, for whose sake thou art so earnestly solicited to renounce all thy real, sweet, and present comforts and enjoyments. Then it dilates rhetorically upon the severe terms of the gospel, advises the soul to think sadly, how hard, grievous, and unreasonable the demands of Christ are, Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

How likest thou this, soul? Here are all thy principal comforts, thy most dear and desirable things in the world, both personal and relative, to be forsaken, yea, hated for Christ's sake: the terms are set so high, that a man must lose his brains and bowels too, saith unbelief, before he can be wrought up to them. Canst thou endure to see all the labours of thy life to become a prey to thine enemies? That which hath cost thee so much study and toil, scattered and destroyed in a day, when it is yet in the power of thine hand to save all; thy habitation to cast thee out, thy pleasant fields possessed by strangers: *Impius has segetes*; hast thou hardiness enough to encounter beggary? to fight with hunger, thirst, and nakedness? to lie in a nasty gaol, to endure a parting pull with nearest relatives, which are as thine own soul? But yet there are harder trials than these. Canst thou endure a tormenting death, by cruel barbarous enemies; Canst thou stand quietly at a stake, and endure the exquisite torments of the fire, and that in the fulness of thy time, whilst thou art in the flower of thine age, fulness of thy senses, and hast so fair a prospect of many pleasant years before thee; and all this for an unseen glory in another world? These are the feeling arguments urged by infidelity, against embracing Christ's overtures in the gospel, or coming under the sceptre of this new Lord: and with how many do they prevail; thus Satan fixes his subjects, and makes them secure to himself.

But sinner, if God have any intention of saving mercy to thy soul, thou shalt feel the more potent principles of divine faith and love overpowering and subacting these carnal reasonings within thy soul. It is admirable to behold the Almighty influences of grace upon nature; how the drawings of the Spirit, his omnipotent pull at the heart, makes the strongest ties this world hath upon it, to give way, and easily to loose. Mark x. 28. 'Lord, we have left all, and followed thee.' If not, but thou be fixedly resolved not to change Satan's government for Christ's; if thou say in thy heart, and stand to that saying, I will never consent to such hard conditions; then hear

thy sentence, read thy mittimus, Luke xix. 27. ‘But those mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them; bring hither and slay them before me.’ The sentence is dreadful, the execution sure; thy unbelief will as surely damn thee, as a millstone about thy neck, in the midst of the sea, will drown thee, Mark xiv. 16. ‘He that believeth not, shall be damned.’ Thou hast cast the vilest dishonour upon Christ, thou hast rejected the only way of salvation; and what can the issue of thy final unbelief be, but ruin and destruction?

Use II. My next work will be persuasive work, to gain the consent of the souls to come under the sceptre and government of Christ; to make his heart glad, and yourselves happy for ever, by your espousals to him: And O that I could this day so represent this king in his glory, so discover the miserable thralldom you are in under Satan, and your lusts; so clear up the reasonableness and easiness of Christ’s terms and demands, that there might be as cheerful and hearty (though not so loud and audible) an applause, and acclamations returned to my demand of your consent to Christ, as this day are, or ever were at the coronation of any king.

1. And to this end, first consider the glory and dignity of the person of Christ; he is the Son of God by nature, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. “He is the Prince of the kings of the earth,” Rev. i. 5. The most glorious monarch that ever swayed a sceptre over men, is but as a worm of the earth, or as a despicable insect in the air, compared with Solomon in his glory; the most perfect beauty in the creatures, beneath or above, is blackness and deformity, in comparison with Christ: The beauty of roses, lilies, sun, stars, angels, is not worthy to be mentioned in comparison with Christ: “Thou art fairer (saith his spouse) than the sons of men.” None ever saw him savingly by the eye of faith, but were charmed into his bosom by love. The facial vision of Christ is the feast of blessed souls above.

The king of glory makes suit for your hearts this day; he woos for your consent; he passed by apostate angels, not once making them a tender of reconciliation or union, but comes to you in his red garments, glorious in his apparel: he shed his invaluable blood to redeem you to God; he loved you, and gave himself for you: if there be a drop of love in your hearts, methinks the excellency of Christ should extract and engage it. Write that man a beast, a senseless stock, that hath no love for Christ.

2. Consider, What a blessed state, abounding with glorious and invaluable privileges, your consent to be Christ’s is introductive to: it opens to all privileges, mercies, and blessings, desirable in the eyes of men; it opens into freedom and liberty, from the vassalage of Satan, the servitude of sin, the curse of the law, the danger of wrath to come. John viii. 36. “If the Son, therefore, make you free, then are ye free indeed.” It opens the door into rest and peace; peace with God,

peace in your own consciences, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3. The deliciousness of peace you never yet tasted, who are strangers to Christ; nor ever shall, till you consent to be his, Rev. ii. 17. This shall be your support, amidst all the confusions and distractions, hurries and tumults, of this restless and unquiet world, Mic. v. 5. "This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian cometh into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces." Christ hath pitched his standard in the gospel; repair unto it, come under his banner, and list yourselves among his faithful subjects, and the glory of the world to come is yours, if you overcome, and be faithful unto death, Rev. iii. 21. The subjects of Christ, in this kingdom of grace, are shortly to be all translated into the kingdom of glory, Rom. viii. 30.

3. Consider the miserable bondage you are now in, over whom Satan rules, and how your condition still grows worse and worse, till it shall not be capable of any further addition of misery, to make it more absolutely and completely miserable.

You are now without God, without a promise, without peace, without the pardon of one sin, Eph. ii. 12. You have no communion with God, nor title to heaven; slaves to your sordid lusts, Tit. iii. 3. you are under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. condemned already, John iii. 18. and whenever you die out of Christ, you shall die in your sins, John viii. 24. He that was your ruler in the world, is to be both your companion and tormentor in the world to come, Matth. xxv. 41.

Is this a condition to be satisfied in? Can you sleep quietly in your chains? O methinks the poor prisoners of Satan should sigh and cry, through the grates of the prison, especially when they are informed of deliverance at the door.

You have no reason to scare at the terms and conditions propounded to you by Christ; they are equal, necessary, and easy, Matth. xi. 29. "Come unto me; my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. His commands are not grievous," 1 John v. 3. "All his ways are pleasantness, and all his paths are peace," Prov. iii. 17. "The joy of the Lord shall be your strength," Neh. viii. 10. If there be repenting work, believing work, sin-mortifying work, or suffering work for you; there is also a suitable provision of divine assistance, to enable and carry you through it all. 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is sufficient for thee." If men cast you out, God will receive you, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. If any sharp trial befall you, there is a door of escape prepared for your outlet, 1 Cor. x. 13. If you meet with trouble in the world, you shall not fail of peace in Christ, John xvi. 23. If you lose any outward enjoyment for Christ's sake, it shall be recompensed an hundred-fold in this world, besides the reward of heaven hereafter, Matth. xix. 29. If you be cast into prison for Christ, the Comforter shall come from heaven, and rest upon you there, 1 Pet. iv. 13, 14. If you suffer with him, you shall reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12.

What think ye, brethren, of Christ's terms now? What is there

here, for men to scare and fright at? Can you mend yourselves elsewhere? O when shall the match be made? When will you come to Christ, and say, "Lord, I heartily consent to take thee for my King: I am pleased with the hardest condition required in thy word?"

4. *Lastly*, Be convinced of the unreasonableness of all that you can pretend against this great duty. If you say, The pains of mortification are hard, you must in reason yield, that the pains of damnation are harder, and that it is better for you to "enter into life, halt and maimed, than having two eyes or hands, to be cast into hell; where the worm dies not, and where the fire is not quenched," Matth. v. 29. If you say, you have no power to come to Christ, your consciences will presently tell you, that you never yet put forth the uttermost power that you have, in striving for your own salvation: It will also tell you, that you suppose you have such a power; else why have you so long delayed repentance and conversion upon this pretence, that you will seriously perform them hereafter? Besides, though your endeavours do not oblige God to do that for you, you cannot do of yourselves; yet it is more probable he will do so, when you strive to your utmost, than when you carelessly neglect those duties, and give yourselves up to the contrary courses. If you say, you would strive, if you were assured of success, and that you should be received and accepted by Christ, if you came unto him, and did cast your poor souls upon him; you can answer yourselves, if you will, that you daily spend your time, pains, and studies, upon lesser things, having no assurance at all of success. The husbandman toils all day at plough, yet is not assured of a good harvest; his corn may die in the seed, or be blasted in the ear. The mariner ventures his estate on the sea, yet hath no assurance of a good return; the ship may miscarry. The miner will dig into the bowels of the earth, and try here and there; yet hath no assurance he shall find that rich vein of ore, that shall recompence his cost and pains. Now if men will labour so hard, and adventure so much upon uncertainties, for a little of the world; doth not your own reason conclude, you ought to do more, and adventure further than any of them, to obtain Christ, and eternal salvation? O strive, strive to make your escape out of Satan's kingdom, to Christ: Sit not with folded hands on the seats of sloth, saying, It is to no purpose.

Suppose yourselves now upon your death-bed, all earthly comforts insipid things to you, conscience presaging the wrath to come, time and hope ending together; would you not then wish, O that we had been ruled and governed by Christ's laws and Spirit, and not by Satan, and our own lusts! Had we been the servants of Christ, we had now been going to Christ; had he governed, he would have saved us: but his servants we are to whom we obey: We have served our lusts, and *the wages of sin is death*.

Or suppose you saw the glory of heaven, or the horrors of hell;

that you heard the hallelujahs of the palm-bearing multitude, or the shrieks of damned cast-aways; would it be so indifferent a thing to you, whether you obey Christ's call, or no? Believe it, these are no devised fables, but do really exist, whether you mind them or not. And why should you not suppose, and forethink things so sure, and so nigh? A sweet voice comes from heaven this day, saying, let all that expect to enjoy the glory that is here, see that they submit heartily to Christ's sceptre: for he saves no more than he rules: And the whole number of the glorified in heaven is made up of such as heartily closed with Christ's terms on earth. A dreadful voice comes up from hell, crying, (as it were) in your ears; as ever you expect to escape the miseries and torments that are here, do not reject Christ's yoke and government as we did: Our yielding up of ourselves to the sway and government of our lusts, was our ruin.

Use III. To conclude: Let all men try their own estates, and examine to what king they do indeed belong, and whose subjects in truth they are, Christ's or Satan's; for these two kingdoms divide the whole world. God hath furnished us with self-reflecting powers; we are able to retire out of the confused noises of the world, and sit retired in the innermost closet of our own souls, where none but God and our consciences shall be privy to our debates; and there solemnly demand of our conscience, and charge it to make plain and faithful answers to such questions and enquiries as these:

Quest. 1. To whom do I yield the most prompt, cheerful and constant obedience? To the commands of Christ, or to the solicitations of Satan and my own lusts? He that hath my obedience, the same is my Lord and King, Rom. vi. 16. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." When God and conscience calls me to pray, and the world calls me off to attend its ensnaring pleasures, and unnecessary employments; which of these calls do I pay obedience to?

Quest. 2. Who governs the secret and unseen part of my life? That every man is, in the account of God, which he is in secret, Rom. ii. 28, 29. Now who is king in the closet? And what rules do my thoughts move by? If Christ bring my thoughts into obedience, so that I dare not indulge to myself a sinful liberty to enjoy the speculative pleasure of the sins I have acted, or would act, had I opportunity for it: And if I am in the fear of God when alone, and make conscience of my secret, as well as public duties; then I am under Christ's government, and he is king of my soul, 2 Cor. x. 5. Mat. vi. 6. But if I make an external shew of obedience to Christ, and secretly obey my lusts; I am really the servant of sin, and belong to another king. O my conscience! what sayest thou to these things?

Quest. 3. Whom do I follow, or heartily resolve to follow, when it comes to a parting-point betwixt Christ and the world; when I must cleave to the one, and forsake the other? Matth. vi. 24. Do I with full purpose of heart cleave to the Lord? Acts xi. 23. Is it my

sincere resolution to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? Rev. xiv. 4. Or have I secret reserves to quit Christ's service, and give religion the slip, when it comes to real distress and difficulty? These are sounding questions, and will discover whose government we are under.

THE CONCLUSION.

Thus I have endeavoured to spiritualize and improve the great and solemn actions of this good day; a day for which (I hope) the children yet unborn shall praise the Lord. How happy will our king and queen be, if they reign over a people that Christ reigneth over; and will conscientiously pay them obedience in, and for the Lord! I believe it will be a greater joy to their souls, to see you set the crown upon Christ's head, in your subjection to his laws, than to see the imperial crown of England set upon their own heads. Religion breeds the best subjects.

Let England praise the Lord for such a day as this! how many sad years are run out, since it saw the crown upon the heads of a Protestant king and queen at once! Let faithful magistrates rejoice they shall never more be put upon the odious and dangerous drudgery of persecuting good men, under such a government as this.

Let ministers rejoice, yea, let them rejoice with double joy to others! they shall no more be driven into corners, nor put to silence, (a silence as bitter as death) whilst the royal sceptre is swayed by such hands, wherein God hath now placed it.

Let all the people rejoice, for these their rulers shall be to them as the light of the morning, and as the clear shining after rain, 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4. And let us all say, Isa. xxv. 9. "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: This is the Lord, we have waited for him; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

THE
CHARACTER
 OF A COMPLETE
EVANGELICAL PASTOR,
 DRAWN BY CHRIST.

MATTH. xxiv. 45, 46, 47.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom the Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

THIS great and solemn assembly, (met upon a greater and more solemn account,) brings to my mind those words, and with the words, a very sensible touch of the same affection, with which the church uttered them, Isa. xlix. 20, 21. ‘Children, which thou shalt have after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: Give place to me, that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and I am desolate; a captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone: these, where had they been?’

Words, big with holy admiration and wonder, at her strange and sudden increase and multiplication, after such a wasting time as these seventy sad years had been to her. This was a miraculous and surprizing work of God, in their eyes.

We have had our wasting time, as well as they; multitudes of faithful and prudent ministers have been swept into their graves by ejections, banishments, imprisonments, and heart-breaking silencings. Whence then are all these which our eyes behold this day! Who hath begotten us, and brought up these? These, where had they been; and out of what secret recesses are they come?

Many thought the days of our prosperity, and opportunities of our service, had been numbered and finished, and that God had no more work (except suffering work) for us; when lo, above and beyond the desponding thoughts, and unbelieving fears of our hearts, we are here this day in a numerous assembly, with peace and liberty, to consult the affairs of Christ’s kingdom.

Yea, to the joy of our souls, we see the plummets and lines, once

more in the hands of our Zerubbabels; Zech. iv. 10. ‘Who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.’ Our prudent repairers, co-working with the divine providence, expressed emblematically by the seven eyes, will bring weak and contemptible beginnings, to happy and blessed results and issues. What shall one now answer the messengers of the churches? That God hath founded Sion; and the power of his people shall trust in it.

We are met this day in all hearty loyalty to the government, and peaceableness to the national church-establishment, to review and consider the cases of our respective congregations; which I doubt we shall find too like that description, Prov. xxiv. 31. all over-grown with thorns and nettles, and the stone-wall broke down.

Thus ignorance and error have overspread the people, and the wall of discipline greatly decayed. Our business is to cleanse our churches, and repair their walls; that so they may become gardens of delight, and beds of spices, for Christ to walk and take pleasure in.

You have ordered this meeting to be opened with a sermon, and demanded that work to my hand, by your earnest and unanimous call. I wish the work may not suffer by your choice.

When I considered the quality and occasion of this assembly, my thoughts quickly centered themselves in those words of our Lord, which I have read unto you: ‘Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?’ &c.

Here we find ourselves in a parable. A parable is the veil of some divine truth: whilst we are embodied and veiled with flesh, truth must embody and veil herself too, in order to our freer converses with it. There is much truth and reason in that observation of the ancient cabbalists: “* The supreme light never descends without a covering.” Yea, saith Dionysius, the supposed Areopagate, “† It is impossible that a divine beam should otherwise shine to us, except it be covered with variety of sacred veils, and umbrages.”

Not to spend much time about the order and relation of the text; Christ had been solemnly warning the disciples, and all the Christian world, of his most certain (though secret) coming to judgment; and therefore to beware of luxury, idleness, and security, the sins of the world; and that all be found at his coming, watchful and diligent in their proper places of duty. This exhortation he infers, from what common prudence would teach any servant, especially any steward of an house to do, to whom his Lord hath committed the care of his

* *Lumen supremum nunquam descendit sine indumento.*

† *Impossibile est nobis aliter lucere radium divinum, nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum.* Cœlest. Hier. cap. 1.

family. It is agreed by all, that the words have a special and immediate respect to gospel-ministers, the stewards of Christ's house, or church, to whom Christ, the Οικονομότης, or Lord of the family, hath trusted the care and dispensation of the affairs thereof. And in them we find,

I. An evangelical pastor described.

II. The reward of such as answer that description, propounded.

1. Christ's description of an evangelical pastor, ver. 45. which he doth by two excellent and essential properties, or qualifications, Πιστος, και φρονιμος, *faithful* and *wise*; both which make up the character of a complete gospel-minister: for if he be *faithful*, he deceives not others; and if *wise*, or *prudent*, he is not apt to be deceived himself: his *prudence* suffers not deceivers easily to impose upon him; and his *faithfulness* will not suffer him knowingly to impose upon his people. His *prudence* will enable him to discern, and his *faithfulness* oblige him to distribute wholesome food to his flock. These two therefore meeting together, make a pastor *after God's own heart*, according to Jer. iii. 15.

Both these are found in an interrogative form of speech in the text, but it is agreed, that τις is put conditionally for ει τις, and is rather hypothetical, than interrogatory: but in this form of speech it insinuates the rarity and difficulty of finding such a servant. He is Σπάνιο και δευσευετος, as Theophylact glosseth it. And Chrysostom, by way of admiration, *Quam rari, et præstantes essent tales!* i. e. 'How rare and excellent would such servants be?' These are their properties.

2. The *reward* of those that answer these characters, is propounded,

1. In proper,

2. In metaphorical terms.

1. In *proper terms*; *Blessed is that servant*, ver. 46. he is certainly blessed of God, whatever his usage be from men. If he be *faithful*, all his *prudence* will not secure him from the hatred and persecution of men, but it is enough that Christ calls and counts him blessed; and those whom he blesseth, are truly and eternally blessed.

2. In *metaphorical terms*; ver. 47. "Verily, I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods." In allusion to the custom of great kings and generals, who use to prefer and advance discreet and faithful servants to places of eminent trust, profit, and honour; as Daniel and Joseph were. The sense thus cleared, runs naturally and easily into this,

Doct. *That our Lord Jesus Christ will amply reward the faithful and prudent stewards of his house, in the day of their account.*

This point will open itself to you in these three doctrinal branches.

1. That ministers, in a special sense, are the stewards of Christ's house.

2. *Faithfulness* and *prudence* are the necessary qualifications of Christ's stewards.

3. Wherever these are found, Christ will abundantly reward them.

1. *Ministers, in a special sense, are the stewards, or chief servants of Christ's house.* So speaks the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." To them he hath committed the dispensation of the word and sacraments, which contain the great mysteries of the kingdom of God.

Every private person, who hath received any talent from God, (and to be sure the meanest among us hath one talent at least,) is a steward, and will be called to an account for the employment, or non-employment of that talent in the audit-day. But ministers are stewards in the strict and special sense: Christ distinguishes them from the others, as porters from the rest of the servants, Mark xiii. 34. Nor may any assume that office, but by order from Christ the Master of the family. But this is too obvious to stay longer upon it.

2. We will therefore immediately take into consideration, the *properties or qualification* of the *stewards* of Christ: which are,

1. Faithfulness.

2. Prudence.

And consider them,

1. Distinctly.

2. Conjunctly.

1. *Faithfulness* is an essential requisite to a *steward*, 1 Cor. iv. 2. *It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.* What ground is there for *trust*, where there is no *truth*? Hence is that solemn charge, 2 Tim. ii. 2. to commit that great trust of the ministry to *faithful* men. And Paul blesseth God, 1 Tim. i. 11, 12. who had accounted him *faithful*, and put him into the ministry. This *faithfulness*, as it respects God, ourselves, and the flocks committed to us, includes,

1. Pure and spiritual aims and intentions.

2. Sincerity and integrity of heart.

3. Diligence in the discharge of duty.

4. Impartiality in the administration of Christ's house.

5. And unshaken constancy and perseverance to the end.

1. *Ministerial faithfulness* includes *pure and spiritual aims and intentions for God.* A servant is ΟΛΩΣ ΕΝΕΙΝ8; it is not his own, but his master's honour, and interest, he must design and aim at. *Fidelity* will not endure self-ends, disguised with a pretence of zeal for Christ. It is said of the master workmen of the temple, 2 Kings xxii. 7. that there was no reckoning made with them of the money collected for that use, *because they dealt faithfully*, i. e. they had given sufficient proof that they appropriated not a farthing to themselves, but truly applied it to the public, sacred end and use, to which it was given. O let us be all such *faithful master-builders* of the house of our God! Let us say, not *our* interest, but Christ's, not *our* glory, but *his*. Pure *ends* in our service, will give abundant comfort *at the end* of our service.

a care, brethren, of all artifices and designs to accommodate carnal interests, under a shew of devotion to God.

Timothy is our pattern in this, of whom Paul saith, Phil. ii. 20, 21. "I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." Where the word *naturally* is not opposed to *spiritually*, but to *artificially*. Others had the art to cloak self-ends under Christ's honour; but Timothy was ignorant of such unfaithful tricks and artifices.

2. *Ministerial faithfulness* imports *personal sincerity*. So the word signifies, where it is said of Abraham, that God found his heart *faithful*; that is, *sincere* before him. (Neh. ix. 8.) A faithful minister is a *sincere-hearted* minister. And herein, brethren, O herein, or in nothing, let us approve ourselves the ministers of Christ: Let this be our "rejoicing, that in all sincerity, and godly simplicity, we have had our conversations in this world," 2 Cor. i. 12. And the rather let us be careful in this, because no sin is more apt to insinuate itself into our hearts, and duties, than hypocrisy. We, of all men, are most in danger to be deceived by it: For our employment lying in, and about spiritual things, we are, on that account, stiled *spiritual men*, Hos. ix. 7. But it is plain, from that very place, that a man may be *objectively a spiritual*, and all the while *subjectively a carnal* man. Believe it, brethren, it is easier to declaim, like an *orator*, against a thousand sins of others, than it is to mortify one sin, like *Christians*, in ourselves; to be more industrious in our *pulpits*, than in our *closets*; to preach twenty sermons to our people, than one to our own hearts.

Believe it, sirs, all our reading, studying, and preaching, is but trifling hypocrisy, till the things read, studied, and preached, be felt in some degree upon our own hearts. We tell our people (the Lord help us to tell the same to our own hearts) that there are similar, as well as saving works of the Spirit, by which their (and why not our own) souls may be lost?

3. *Ministerial faithfulness* includes *ministerial diligence*. A *slothful* cannot be a *faithful servant*. Matth. xxv. 21. "His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant," &c. And ver. 26. "His Lord answered, and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, &c. I may say to him that snatched at the ministry, as Henry IV. did to his son, that hastily snatched at the crown, *He little knows what an heap of cares and toils he snatcheth at.*" * 'The labours of the ministry will exhaust the very marrow from your bones, hasten old age and death.' They are fitly compared to the toil of men in harvest, to the labours of a woman in travail, and to the agonies of soldiers in the extremity of a battle. We must watch when others sleep.

And indeed it is not so much the expence of our labours, as the

* *Labores ecclesiastici succum exhauriunt ab imis medullis, senium, mortemque accelerant.* Luther.

loss of them, that kills us. It is not with us, as with other labourers: They find their work as they leave it, so do not we. Sin and Satan unravel almost all we do, the impressions we make on our people's souls in one sermon, vanish before the next. How many truths have we to study! how many wiles of Satan, and mysteries of corruption, to detect! how many cases of conscience to resolve! Yea, we must fight in defence of the truths we preach, as well as study them to paleness, and preach them unto faintness: but well-spent head, heart, lungs, and all; welcome pained breasts, aching backs, and trembling legs; if we can by all but approve ourselves Christ's faithful servants, and hear that joyful voice from his mouth, 'Well done, good and faithful servants.'

4. Ministerial faithfulness includes our *impartiality in all the administrations of Christ's house*. He that is partial, cannot be faithful. O with what extraordinary solemnity doth Paul set on this exhortation upon Timothy! 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality,' 1 Tim. v. 21.

Brethren, you will shortly appear before an *impartial God*, see that ye be *impartial stewards*; take the same care, manifest the same love, attend with the same diligence, the poorest and weakest souls that are committed to your care, as you do the rich, the great, and honourable.

Remember all souls are rated at one value in your Master's book, and your Redeemer paid as much for the one as for the other. Civil differences must be civilly acknowledged, but these have no place in our spiritual administrations.

5. Lastly, Ministerial faithfulness includes constancy and stedfastness: Not a backsliding, or flinching servant, Rev. ii. 10. 'Be thou faithful, (i. e. fixed and constant) to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' We look for happiness, as long as God is in heaven; and he expects constancy, as long as we are on earth.

Many of us have cause to bless the Lord, and greatly to rejoice in his goodness this day, who enabled us to be stedfast and unmoveable in the trials that have passed over us; and when the great earthquake shook down our liberties, our estates, and made our hearts to shake, yet our resolutions for God and his truth, stood firm and unshaken: Our hearts turned not back, nor did our steps decline, though we were broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. This we wholly owe to him that holds the stars in his right-hand, but our warfare is not yet ended. Our faithfulness is not yet faithfulness to the death; we hope it will shortly be called so, whilst it thus involves our self-denial, sincerity, diligence, impartiality, and constancy.

These are the principal things included in the first qualification of ministerial faithfulness. In the next place let us weigh and value,

2. The second qualification in the text, viz. *ministerial prudence*.

The Lord's servant must not only be πιστος, *faithful*; but φρονημος, *prudent, discreet, and wise*. Fidelity and honesty make a good Christian; but the addition of *prudence* to fidelity, makes a good *steward*. *Faithfulness* will fix the eye upon the right end; but it is *prudence* must direct to the proper means of attaining it.

If we look into Rev. iv. 6, 7. we shall there find a stately emblem of true gospel ministers. They are Ανδρωποι πολυομματοι, *Men full of eyes*. They have eyes looking before them to God for direction, behind them to the flocks they lead, and within them to their own hearts; lest after they have preached to others, themselves become cast-aways. They have also *six wings*; with two they cover their faces, manifesting their deep reverence of God; with two their feet, manifesting the humble sense of their infirmities; and with two they fly with cheerful expedition in the service of God. They have not only the courage of the *lion*, the strength of the *ox*, the loftiness of the *eagle*, but the face of a *man*, i. e. *prudence and discretion*.

The use of *prudence* to a minister of Christ is unspeakably great; It not only gives clearness and perspicacity to the mind, by freeing it from passions and corporeal impressions, enabling it thereby to apprehend what is best to be done; but enables it in its deliberations, about the means, to make choice of the most apt and proper; and directs the application of them in the fittest season, without precipitation, by too much haste; or hazard, by too tedious delay. And judge you, brethren, by this, what an interest the affairs of Christ's kingdom have in this second qualification.

I know there is a carnal policy, an unworthy pusillanimity, that often shrewd themselves under the name of *prudence*; I have nothing to do with mock graces here: My business is to shew you, in what particulars true *ministerial prudence* is highly serviceable to the affairs of Christ's house, or kingdom. And this I will briefly discourse in two respects.

The *eye of prudence* must look,

1. To our own personal work, to see that be well done.

2. To others who work,

1. With us as friends, that we may have assistance from them.

2. Or against us as enemies, that our work be not ruined by them.

1. *Prudence* will direct the servants of Christ, *in their own proper ministerial work, that it be well done*. And in order thereto, it will guide them in their deliberations to the six following proper means, and excellent expedients.

1. *Prudential expedient*.

And 1st, *prudence* will direct us, *to lay a good foundation of know-*

ledge in our people's souls, by catechizing and instructing them in the principles of Christianity, without which we labour in vain.

Except you have a knowing people, you are not like to have a gracious people. St. Paul's prudentials lay much in this, 1 Cor. iii. 10. 'As a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation.' And indeed this is the *master-piece* of a *master-builder*. All your excellent sermons will be dashed to pieces, upon the rock of your people's ignorance. You can never pitch upon a better project, to promote and secure the success of your labours, than catechizing.

What age of Christianity ever produced more lively and stedfast Christians, than the first ages? And then the care of this duty most eminently flourished in the churches. Clemens Alexandrianus, Origen, Optatus, Basil, Austin, and Ambrose, were all catechists: And it is the opinion, both of Chemnitius and Zanchy, that that exercise, which Christ honoured with his presence in his youth, was a *catechetical* exercise.

We that live in this age, have as much obligation as they, and God hath furnished to our hands the best help for it, that ever any age since Christ enjoyed. As chymists extract the spirits of herbs and minerals into some rare elixir, so have our venerable assembly (lately sitting at Westminster, now in glory) composed for us the most judicious and compendious system, that ever blessed this age. And to make it yet more useful, divers worthy hands have been employed, some in one method, some in another, to make those compendious answers more intelligible to the people. And yet I am of opinion, somewhat may be further done to advance that great design, in a third method, that shall not only make those points more intelligible, than in answering by *yea* and *no*: or drawing out the subservient answers to such a length, as too much charges the people's memory, but withal to intermix the most useful practical matter with what is doctrinal. If such a course might obtain in all our congregations, I think it would greatly discover our prudence, and turn richly to the account of our people's profit.

2. *Prudential expedient.*

Ministerial *prudence* discovers itself *in the choice of such subjects, as the needs of our people's souls do most require, and call for.*

A prudent minister will study the souls of his people, more than the best human books in his library; and not chuse what is easiest for him, but what is most necessary for them. Ministers that are acquainted with the state of their flocks, as they ought to be, will be seldom at a loss in the choice of the next subject: Their people's wants will chuse their text, from time to time, for them.

The greatest part of our congregations are poor, ignorant, and unregenerated people that know neither their misery nor their remedy. This will direct us to the great doctrines of *conviction*, *regeneration*, and *faith*; and make us to sit with solicitous minds in our studies, pondering thus in our hearts: 'Lord, what course shall we take, and

what words shall we chuse, that may best convey the sense of their sin and danger, with the fulness and necessity of Christ, into their hearts.'

Others are withering and decaying in their affections, or staggering and floating in their judgments: Prudence will enable the man of God to give to every one his proper food, or physic, in due season. This will make us spend more hours in our studies, and set to it with all our might and skill, that thereby we may both save ourselves, and them that hear us.

3. *Prudential expedient.*

This *ministerial wisdom* will not only direct us thus in the choice of our subjects, but of the language too, in which we dress and deliver them to our people.

It will tell you, a crucified stile best suits the preachers of a crucified Christ. A grave and proper stile becomes the lips of Christ's ambassadors. *Prudence* will neither allow us to be rude, nor affectedly gaudy, in our expressions. * "Tertullian checks those preachers, whose sermons dress up Christianity in philosophical, rather than evangelical terms." *Prudence* will chuse words that are solid, rather than florid: As a merchant will a ship by a sound bottom, and capacious hold, rather than a gilded head and stern. Words are but servants to matter. An iron key, fitted to the wards of the lock, is more useful than a golden one, that will not open the door to the treasure.

Some of Christ's ministers excel in a neat and pleasing plainness of language. From this Austin was so affected with the stile of Ambrose: † 'With his sweet words, which I loved, came into my mind the duties which I neglected.' And Zanchy saith of Viret, ‡ 'I admired his eloquence, and the force it had in moving the affections.'

Prudence will cast away a thousand fine words, for one that is apt to penetrate the conscience, and reach the heart. This made Basil look upon the famed allegories of his time, with a compassionate smile, saying, || 'We take them for pretty witticisms, but things of little use or value in the ministry.' Who, in the last age, was ever honoured with more success in his ministry, than blessed Mr. Burroughs? And who ever excelled him in skill, to bring down the sublime mysteries of the gospel to the meanest capacity?

4. *Prudential expedient.*

Ministerial *prudence* will shew us, of what great use our own affections are, for the moving of others; and will therefore advise us, That, as ever we expect the truths we preach should operate upon

* *Qui Platonicum Christianissimum procedunt Christianis.*

† *Veniebant in animum meum simul cum verbis, quæ diligebam, etiam res; quas neglegebam.*

‡ *Singularem eloquentiam, et in commovendis effectibus efficacitatem admirabar.*

|| Ω κελουμ Δευμενον μεν τον λογον απαιδ χουμειθ.

the hearts of others, we first labour to work them in upon our own hearts. Such a preacher was St. Paul; he preached with tears accompanying his words, Phil. iii. 18. An hot iron, though blunt, will pierce sooner than a cold one, though sharper.

And why, my brethren, do we think, God hath commissioned us, rather than angels, to be his ambassadors? Was it not, among other reasons, for this? Because we having been under the same condemnation and misery ourselves, and felt both the terrors and consolations of the Spirit, (which angels experimentally know not), might thereby be enabled to treat with sinners more feelingly, and affectionately, in a way more accommodate to them, and therefore more apt to move and win them.

5. *Prudential expedient.*

Ministerial *prudence* will direct the servants of Christ (who highly value, and earnestly long for the success of their labours) *to be careful, by the strictness and gravity of their deportment, to maintain their esteem in the consciences of their people.*

In your pulpits, you are carrying on a treaty of peace betwixt God and them; and therefore it will not allow you to do any thing out of your pulpits, to make the breach wider, or hinder the happy close between him and them. The fowler that spreads his net to take the birds, will not leave a feather, or make the least noise, to scare the bird he intends to take. Let not them who aim no higher than a bird, be more prudent and cautious, than you that are set to catch immortal souls. Remember that of Solomon, Prov. xi. 30. 'He that winneth souls is wise.' Prudence will not allow the ministers of Christ to intermix themselves with vain company, and take the same liberty they do in vain jests, and idle stories. Nor will it allow, on the other side, a morose reservedness, and discouraging austerity; but temper gravity with condescending affability.

To you that are juniors and candidates for the ministry, I will assume the boldness to address you with one seasonable word of advice; and it is this: Have a care of that light and airy spirit, which so much obtains every where in this unserious age. It was the charge of God against some ministers of old, that they were light persons, Rev. iii. 4. and yet I cannot but think, comparatively speaking, with some of our times, they might pass for grave and serious. The people have eyes to see how we walk, as well as ears to hear what we say. It will be our wisdom and great advantage, to be able to say, as St. Paul did, Phil. iv. 9. "The things which you have both heard and seen in me, do."

6. *Prudential expedient.*

Ministerial prudence will send you often to your knees, to seek a blessing from God upon your studies and labours, as knowing all your ministerial success entirely depends thereupon, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

Those are the best sermons, that are obtained by prayer. Blessed Bradford studied upon his knees. Luther obtained more this way,

than by all his studies. If an honest husbandman could tell his neighbour, that the reason why his corn prospered better than his, was, because he steeped the seed in prayer, before he sowed it in the field; we may blush to think, how much more precious seed we have sown dry, and unsteeped in prayer, and by this neglect have frustrated our own expectation. Thus *laying our foundations in the knowledge of principles, chusing our subjects by the people's necessities; handling them in apt language; working them first upon your own affections, enforcing them by strict conversation, and steeping this holy seed in prayer;* we shall approve ourselves the prudent ministers of Christ.

2dly, Having said thus much of *prudence*, with respect to our single personal concernment in the work of the ministry; I come next to shew its great usefulness with respect to others, who are concerned either,

1. With us, as friendly assistants in our work.

2. Or against us, as enemies, who labour to obstruct and frustrate our work.

1. As to our brethren and fellow-workers in the Lord, prudence will dictate and enjoin it upon us, that by the firmest union with them, we make their gifts and graces as useful as is possible, for the furtherance and advancement of our great and difficult work. We cannot be ignorant how much Satan hath gained, and Christ's interest hath sensibly lost, by those unhappy divisions and alienations amongst brethren, and fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord. Christ hath shed down variety of glorious ascension-gifts upon them, which are not capable of a full improvement, but in union and conjunction with each other. Gifts are improved in us by prayer and study, but the benefits of those gifts are shared among us by love and unity. Love and union bring every man's gifts and graces into the common bank, and instead of monopolies, they drive a free and open trade, to the great enriching of the church.

There is not a greater, or more pleasant variety of qualities, smells, and colours, among the herbs and flowers with which the earth is variegated and decked, for the delight and service of men, than there is in the gifts and abilities of ministers, for the use and service of the church. One hath quickness of parts, but not so deep and solid a judgment: Another is grave and solid, but not so ready and presential. One is wary and reserved, another open and plain: One is melancholy and timorous, another cheerful and courageous. When these different gifts and qualities shine together in the church, heavens, what a glorious constellation do they make! and what sweet benign influences do they shed down upon the Lord's heritage! All these ministerial gifts and graces are improveable for Christ,

1. More privately,

2. More publicly, by brotherly union.

1. *More privately.* When God casts the lot of two, or more, fellow-labourers in the gospel, upon the same city, town, or neighbour-

hood; what a blessed advantage have they beyond solitary ministers, to carry on the work of the Lord cheerfully, vigorously, and successfully! Whilst love causes their hearts to clasp and close, how must their work be facilitated, sweetened, and prospered in their hands? But if once jars and jealousies get in amongst them; if pride, envy, or carnal interest dissolve the bond of brotherly love; if instead of planting for Christ, they once begin to supplant one another; no words are able to shew what a train of mischief and sins will now break in amongst them, to the great dishonour of Christ, and obstruction of the gospel.

I do therefore in the name of Christ, as upon my bended knees, earnestly entreat and beseech my brethren, by all the regard they have to the honour of Christ, the souls of their people, their own comfort, or the success of their labours; that no envyings, or strifes, no supplantings, or detractions, be once admitted, or named among them. Methinks it is scarce imaginable, that those who have so lately and severely smarted, should fall again into the same follies, for which God hath chastised them.

1. And as *prudence* directs us into the way of our profit and comfort, by this more private improvement of our gifts and graces, so into a more excellent way, by a *general union* and coalition with all our brethren, farther distant in place from us. It calls upon us to bury, and forget henceforth the factious names of distinction, growing out of our different apprehensions about smaller disciplinary points. How many fervent prayers have been poured out! how many excellent *irenics* have been written by those excellent ministers, that are now at perfect unity in heaven! Though *they* did not, yet I hope *we* and *our children*, shall reap the blessed fruits of those pious endeavours. God hath spoken with a strong hand to our pious and prudent brethren, in and about the great city of this kingdom: They have most wisely and seasonably projected this great and glorious design: They have followed it close with unwearied diligence, admirable patience, Christian humility and condescension; and, by the good hand of the Lord with them, have brought it at last to a comfortable issue.

The happy result of their fervent prayers, and frequent brotherly consults, (all praise to the God of love and peace for it!) are now in our hands, in those blessed sheets, called *Heads of agreement*: Wherein God hath signally helped them to evidence their wisdom in the choice of words, and their humility and charity, in mutual and necessary concessions. They have, by the mouth of an *eminent brother*, (whose praise is in the gospel, and whose hand hath eminently assisted in this service,) cheerfully offered up their praises to Jehovah-Shalom, for making the two sticks of Judah and Ephraim to become *one stick in his own hand*.

And now, brethren, they wait, yea, give me leave to say, Christ waits as well as they, for our explicit consent, and cheerful suffrages. We have heard the joyful sound of our brethren's praises: Shall we

not echo to it, and say, Hallelujah, and again Hallelujah? Ephraim shall no more envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim: Our swords are turned into plow-shares, and our spears into pruning hooks: The Lord hath this day rolled away our reproach. Thus prudence will direct us to carry it with love and unity towards our brethren, that labour in the work with us.

2. Let us next see, what direction it gives us, *with respect to our enemies, who endeavour to obstruct and hinder the work of the Lord in our hands.* If we be heartily engaged in the service of Christ, we must expect many adversaries, and strong oppositions; men that will raise clouds of reproaches, to darken our reputation among the people; men that will represent us to them as ignorant and unlearned, factious and seditious, erroneous and enthusiastical. Prudence, in this case, will restrain us from rendering reproach for reproach; and propound to us the best project in the world, for the vindication of our names, and success of our labours; and that is, that we so *preach the gospel*, that the people may feel the power of Christ in our *doctrine*; and so *live*, that they may see the beauty of Christ in our conversation; and so preaching and living, we shall bear down all the prejudices of the world before us. Such doctrine, seconded with such a conversation, like the sun in the heavens, will not only break up and scatter all clouds of reproach, but shed down their enlightening and enlivening influences upon the hearts of the people.

I neither do, nor dare suggest and insinuate any thing in this discourse, against any party or body of men; being convinced, that amongst those who differ from us, there are many learned, pious, and peaceable men, who can heartily rejoice to see the work of Christ carried on by those that follow not them. But some there are, almost in every place, who are more concerned for a ceremony, than for the substance of religion; for a tile upon the roof, than a stone in the foundation: Whose envy, if it cannot reach others by imitation, will be restless till it meet them by calumny. In this case, ministerial prudence will carefully shun all occasions of exasperation; and if that care be not sufficient to avoid them, it will furnish us with that patience and constancy which will be sufficient to bear them.

Thus we see the necessity and excellency of *ministerial faithfulness* and *prudence*, distinctly considered. Let us, next,

3. View them conjunctly in some special parts of our work, whereinto they shed down their joint and commixed influences. And these, among some others, are the duties of,

1. Defending truth against error.
2. Reproving offenders.
3. Dealing with distressed consciences.

1. There is great need of *faithfulness and prudence, in defending the truths of Christ, against the errors of the times.* Our *faithfulness* indeed will oblige us to do it; but prudence must direct us how to do it. The establishment of our people in the truth, is one special end of

the institution of the ministry, Eph. iv. 11. But without the assistance of both these graces, that end is never like to be attained. A faithful minister dares not be silent, where the souls of his people are concerned; yet all his endeavours to secure them, will be to little purpose, if *prudence* be wanting in the management of that design. *Prudence* must both time our contentions, and regulate the manner of them. It will never suffer us to appear too soon, nor too late: Not too soon, because errors are sometimes best cured by neglect, and in a little time grow weary of themselves; not too late, lest they get head, and be past retrieve: Hasty contenders, like young falconers, let fly the hawk with her hood on. Upon the other side, if friendship, or relation to seducers, stop our mouths too long, we may in a few days be entertained by them, (as Thyestes was by his brother Atreus) with the limbs of our own (spiritual) children. *Prudence* will not suffer our pulpits to ring with invectives against seducers, till the more private and gentle methods have been tried in vain; and then neither *prudence* nor *faithfulness* will admit of longer delay. But yet when they both advise us to engage, *prudence* must regulate the manner of the contention, and commands us to urge *hard arguments*, with *mild and soft language*.

Errorists are usually hot and passionate, proud and daring persons. Most true is that of Nazianzen, *Ψυσεις θερμαι και μεγαλαι ταυτης της ταιρχης αλλιαι*, hot and haughty spirits are the causes of troubles and distractions in the church: Hot to hot will never do well. These heights and heats are best taken down, and cooled by strong and mild reasonings: "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

2. The joint commixed influences of both these graces, must be found in all our *ministerial reproofs*. Reprove we must, or we cannot be faithful; and prudently too, or we cannot be successful. He that is silent, cannot be innocent; and yet it is a measuring cast, whether cowardly silence be more prejudicial to the reprover, than indiscreet zeal may be to the reprov'd. Faithfulness is loth to lose the soul of another for want of reproof: Prudence is jealous of losing it by the ill management of the reproof. Faithfulness saith, it is better to lose the smiles, than the souls of men: Prudence saith, to save both is best. Reprehension is *χειρουργια των παθων*, the chirurgery of the passions; and cutting-work is no easy or pleasant work. Sick and pained men are wayward, and pettish; but prudence will cast fetters upon their passions, and make them lie quiet, whilst faithfulness probes and searches their wounds to the bottom. Prudence can sometimes convey a reproof so effectually and inoffensively, that the conscience of the reprov'd shall sensibly feel it; and yet his passions not be awakened by the least injurious touch. Faithfulness considers, and urges the necessity of the duty; prudence considers the quality of the person, time, and manner of application. It will reach the sin, and yet (if possible) avoid the offence of the sinner. It sometime directs us to convict an

offender, by transferring the offence by way of supposition to ourselves; sometimes by relating a suitable history, or folding down a remarkable scripture threatening or example, as it were accidentally, to meet them. How prudently did Nathan prepare David, before he came to touch the quick, with, *Thou art the man?* Above all, prudence adviseth us to keep ourselves pure from those sins we reprove in others; and when we must apply the precious oil of reproof to them, that we work it in with the warm, soft, gentle hand of love and compassion; and then the reproof is like to do good, and the reprover receive thanks for his kindness. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: Let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break mine head," Psal. cxli. 5.

3. Once more; their joint influences must also *meet in all our dealings with distressed consciences.*

Conscience is a very tender thing, and when sick and distressed, needs to be handled both judiciously and tenderly. The wound must be searched, saith faithfulness; it must be searched skilfully, saith prudence: He that can so search and cure it, deserves that excellent encomium, *One among a thousand*, Job xxxiii. 23. What expert and dexterous persons at this work, were our Greenham, Crook, Dod, Ball, and Borroughs! Every empiric can skin over a wound, but a faithful minister will search it thoroughly, and a prudent minister will heal it warily;

Ne vulnus in antiquum redeat, male firma cicatrix;

Lest it fester at the bottom, and break out again with greater danger. It requires a great measure of both these graces, to bring general confused troubles to settle upon the right bottom; to direct a sin-sick soul to Christ, in the true gospel method; to furnish the tempted Christian with proper weapons against Satan's assaults, and teach him how to manage them; to dissolve the doubts, and remove the scruples which arise almost in every step of his way to Christ; and so to settle the fluctuating soul in a sweet and sure dependence upon him by faith. These things, I say, require much faithful prudence, and prudent faithfulness.

And thus we see the manifold usefulness of both these graces in the servants and stewards of Christ. Of such I may say, as Christ in the text, *Who then is a faithful and wise servant!* *Hic nuncii (inquit Piscator) rari sunt, ita ut ex mille hominibus vix unus reperiat, qui munere illo recte fungi possit, i. e.* These servants (saith Piscator) are so rare, that out of a thousand scarce one man may be found that discharges that office aright. Christ hath not many such servants, yet, blessed be God, some such there are. And,

3. *Whoever, or wherever such faithful and wise servants are, Christ will abundantly reward them in the day of their account.* Which casts me upon the third and last doctrinal head I promised to speak to. The glory prepared for, and promised to such servants of Christ, is elegantly laid out, in shining terms, by the prophet Daniel, Dan. xii. 3.

“ And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.” A promise which points directly to faithful and wise ministers. What a beautiful sight is the azure canopy of heaven, when it is about to shut its beautiful eye-lids in a serene evening! and much more, when it is about to open them with a smile or blush, in the dawning of the ruddy morning! And how is that beauty again outvied by the glory of the stars, where the pleasing light sports and twinkles! how doth one star excel another in glory! Yet thus, and more than thus, even above the brightness of the sun itself, shall the servants of Christ shine: who by their *faithfulness and prudence*, have *instrumentally turned many into righteousness!*

The question about degrees of glory in heaven is not necessary, but problematical. We reject with abhorrence the popish doctrine of diversity of glories, as founded in the diversity of merits: Nor is it questioned, among the orthodox, whether there be an equality of glory, as to the essentials; but only in respect to the accidentals, and concomitants: Amongst which, they place the additional glory and joy of such ministers, whose faithful and prudent labours God hath blessed, and crowned with the conversion and edification of many souls. And of this the apostle speaks, 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. “ For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.” Where we find a very remarkable gradation. He calls his Thessalonian converts, “ his hope, his joy, nay, his crown of rejoicing.” *His hope*, that is, the matter of his hope, that they should be saved. *His joy*, as they had already given him abundant cause of joy, in their conversion to Christ by his ministry. And the “ crown of his rejoicing in the presence of Christ, at his coming.” This is an high strain indeed! The meaning, I suppose, is that the fruit and success of his ministry among them, would add to his crown, and redound to his glory in the day of Christ.

O brethren! who would not study and pray, spend and be spent, in the service of such a bountiful Master! Is it not worth all our labours and sufferings, to come with all those souls we instrumentally beget to Christ: and all that we edified, reduced, confirmed, and comforted in the way to heaven; and say, *Lord, here am I, and the children thou hast given me?* To hear one spiritual child say, *Lord, this is the minister, by whom I believed:* Another, *this is he, by whom I was edified, established, and comforted.* This is the man that resolved my doubts, quickened my dying affections, reduced my soul, when wandering from the truth! O blessed be thy name, that I ever saw his face, and heard his voice! What think we of this, brethren? But far beyond this: what will it be to hear Christ, the prince of pastors, say in that day. “ Well done good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” Mat. xxv. 21. O -irs!

we serve a good Master, who is not unrighteous to forget our work, and labour of love for his name-sake. He keeps an exact account of all your fervent prayers, of all your instructive and persuasive sermons; and all your sighs, groans, and pantings, with every tear and drop of sweat, are placed like marginal notes against your labours in his book, in order to a full reward.

But I have far out-run my own intention, and (I doubt) your patience too, in the doctrinal part. I consider to whom I speak, and shall be the shorter in the application; which I shall dispatch apace, in three uses.

1. For Information.
2. For Reprehension.
3. For Exhortation.

Use I. And first for our information, briefly, in two or three consecutaries.

Consecutary 1. By this it appears, *Christ hath established an order and government in his house, which none must violate.* The church is a well ordered family, or household, whereof Christ is the Head, Christians members, ministers stewards, the ordinances food to be dispensed by them in season. Every one is to keep his own place and station. Pastors must faithfully feed and govern the flocks of Christ, Acts xx. 28. People must know, honour, and obey those that are over them in the Lord, 1 Thess. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 17. the one must not impose, nor the other usurp! but each walk according to the rule of Christ, with a right foot, ordinally and comely.

This order is the church's beauty, Col. ii. 5. and truly we may expect so much of Christ's presence, as we have of his rule and order amongst us, and no more. O that the rules and orders of his house were better known, and observed! then ministers and people would clearly understand, what they are to expect from each other in the way of duty, and each person keep his proper station. Ministers would not invade the civil callings of the people, nor the people the sacred calling of the ministry; but all things would move ordinally *secundum, sub et supra.* The pleasure of such a sight, would as much transport gracious souls with joy and pleasure, as the order of Solomon's house did the queen of the *South.*

Consecutary 2. *In the light of this truth, we may also read our duty, how we ought to govern ourselves in the ordination of men to the ministerial office.* This office is to be committed unto faithful and able men, 2 Tim. ii. 2. not to novices, 1 Tim. iii. 6. I know the necessities of the churches are great, but no more haste (I beseech you) to supply their wants, than good speed. *Satis celeriter fiet, quicquid commode geritur:* That is soon enough, that is well enough. It is a less hazard, to put an ignorant rustic into an apothecary's shop, to compound and prepare medicines for men's bodies, than to trust a man, destitute both of faithfulness and prudence, with the dispensation of Christ's ordinances to men's souls.

Some men are moved by pitiful low ends. 1 Sam. ii. 36. "Put me into the priest's office, that I may eat a piece of bread." Some by ambition, conceiting themselves as able and holy as the best, Numb. xvi. 3. What men's secret ends are, we cannot know; but their qualifications for that work we may, and ought to know. We are solemnly charged, to 'lay hands suddenly upon no man,' 1 Tim. v. 22. In Solomon's time, the Jews were exceeding careful and wary in admitting proselytes, because they were then a flourishing and prosperous state; not so cautelous in time of adversity, as Josephus observes. I would discourage none that appear to have pious inclinations, matched with competent qualifications. Many be useful, that cannot be excellent. Weaker gifts, rooted in a gracious heart, will grow by using; but nothing grows without a root. I think the plainest men have done the greatest service in the church of Christ: as tender-eyed Leah brought forth more children than beautiful Rachel. But still fidelity and prudence are indispensable qualifications.

Consecratory 3. If there be such rewards, in the hand of Christ, for all his faithful and wise servants; *Then we have no just cause or reason to repent of our choice of this office, whatever sufferings and reproaches it hath or yet may expose us to.* I believe none of us ever yet felt such straits, endured such miseries, or sustained such labours, as the apostle mentions to have befallen him, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. and yet he heartily thanks the Lord Jesus Christ, (for all that) who had counted him faithful, and put him into the ministry.

Brethren, we have served a good Master, and have cause to admire his care over us, and bounty to us; and whatever we have suffered, we may say to them that shall succeed us, as Tossanus did to his children and kindred, in his last will and testament: * 'I charge you my dear children and relations, That ye never be ashamed of the evangelical truth, either for the sake of offences arising from within the church, or of persecutions from without it. Truth may labour, but cannot be suppressed: And I have often found by experience, the Lord to be wonderfully present with them, that walk before him diligently and uprightly.' O he hath been a good God to us! he hath covered us in days of danger, made provision for us and ours, and yet his best rewards are behind. Let none scare at the reproaches and persecutions that attend the gospel.

Use II. This point casts an ireful countenance upon all unfaithful and imprudent ministers, who give their people the chaff for the wheat, and stones for bread; who glory in the title, and live upon the profits, but neither feed the flock, nor mind the account. They

* *Obtestor vos, liberos et generos charissimos, ne illius veritatis evangelicæ unquam vos pudeat, vel propter scandala domi, vel propter persecuciones. quæ foris excitantur. Potest enim laborare, sed non vinci veritas. Et nonsemel expertus sum Dominum Deum mirabiliter addesse tuis qui choram ipso ambulant, et in sua vocatione sedulo et integre versantur, &c.* Melch. Adam in vita Tossani, p. 720.

preach, they pray, because they must do so; but none are the better for their prayers, or preaching. They seem to labour an hour or two in a week, but their labours turn to no account; nor can be expected to turn to any good account, whilst they are neither animated by faithfulness, nor guided by prudence.

Agricola, writing *de animantibus subterraneis*, tells us of a certain kind of spirits that converse with minerals, and much infest those that work in them. They seem to busy themselves according to the custom of workmen; they will dig and cleanse, melt and sever the metals, yet when they are gone, the workmen do not find that there is any thing done. I came not hither (I confess) to deal with this sort of men; and therefore shall leave them to consider the words immediately following my text, which, like a thunder-clap from the mouth of Christ, discharges woes and threatenings upon them; ver. 48. to the end: "If that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: The Lord of that servant shall come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with hypocrites. There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth." Who can aggravate their misery more, than these words of Christ have done?

But I am principally concerned at this time about our own defects, both in faithfulness, and in prudence; though neither of these (I hope) to be totally wanting in us, yet our defects and short-comings may, and must greatly humble us. Our vain expence of much precious time, our shuffling haste in so weighty a study as the salvation of our people is; our sinful silence, when conscience saith, *reprove*; our coldness and dead-heartedness; our unserious and unprofitable converses; our pride and ostentation of gifts; our neglect and personal conferences: all these evidently discover, that both our brains and bowels need more strength and tenderness. I will not insist here upon these particulars, (let us do that in our studies) but hasten to the exhortation, and therein to the close of this discourse.

USE III.

Are faithfulness and prudence the essential requisites of the servants and stewards of Christ's house? And will he so amply reward them in whomsoever he finds them? *Then let it be our care and study to approve ourselves to him, such as he here describes and encourages.*

But who am I, to manage such a work as this, among men every way above me! However, you have called me to this service, and Christ hath directed me to this subject: And should I now silently pass over this part of my work, how shall I approve myself, either a faithful, or a wise servant to him that sent me?

I despair of ever having such another opportunity; I see many faces in this assembly, whom I shall never see any more in this world.

I speak to the ministers of Christ, the guides and pastors of so many flocks. May I be in the least instrumental to quicken them in their duties, their respective numerous congregations will reap the benefit of it.

My brethren, this is the day I have often wished for, when in the sad and silent years that are past, I have been searching my own heart, and enquiring into the causes of God's indignation (as I doubt not you also have done;) I have bewailed the forementioned defects before the Lord, and engaged my soul by solemn promise to him, that if he would once more open the door of liberty, I would (through his grace) labour to reform, and do my utmost to persuade all my brethren to exercise more ministerial faithfulness and prudence.

And now I am where my soul hath long desired to be, and the vows of God are upon me; suffer therefore (dear brethren) yea, suffer from unworthy me, *This word of exhortation: Take heed to your ministry that you fulfil it: Take heed to yourselves, and to the flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.* Let us so study and preach, let us so pray and converse among our people, that we may both save ourselves, and them that hear us; let us frugally and industriously husband our time and talents for Christ; let us prudently contrive, zealously and unanimously execute our holy contrivances, for the advancement of his kingdom and interest in the world: These are plotting times, wicked men are every where plotting to disturb the civil peace; let us have our plot too, an honest plot, how to advance the interest of Christ in the souls of our people; wherein we shall also promote and secure the civil peace of that happy government we live under. Let us learn prudence from our past follies, and constancy from our past experiences. I look upon you that are aged ministers, as seasoned timber, that hath lain out near thirty years in the weather, yet neither warped, rained, nor rotten. I confess, in all this time, the sun hath not much tried the force of his influence upon us, though the storms have. I suspect our greatest danger will be in the sunshine of liberty. If we hold it now, and manage this trial by liberty, with eminent faithfulness and prudence, humility and peaceableness, zeal and diligence; Christ may account us fit materials to build his house. Let us now redeem our many silent Sabbaths, by double and tripple improvements of those we enjoy: Let none of us dare to bring our old sins into our new pulpits. Then will the Prince of pastors delight in us here, and crown our prudent faithfulness with a full reward hereafter. In order whereunto, give me leave to hint (for I can do no more than hint) these three things by way of motive, which are worth thinking on:

We have a solemn charge given us by Christ.

We have a solemn account to pass shortly with Christ.

We have now a great opportunity to improve for Christ.

1. *We have a solemn charge given us by Christ,* 2 *Tim. iv. 1, 2.*
 "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ,

who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." It must be a powerful opiate indeed, that can so benumb and stupify the conscience of a minister, as that he shall not feel the awful authority of such a charge.

The precious and immortal souls of men are committed to us; souls, about which God hath concerned his thoughts from eternity; for the purchase of which Christ hath shed his own blood; for the winning and espousing of which to himself, he hath put you into this office; at whose hands he will also require an account of them in the great day.

2. *We have a solemn account at that day to pass with Christ.* Heb. xiii. 17. "We watch for their souls, as those that must give account." And what can more powerfully excite to faithful diligence in the discharge of duty, than the consideration of that day! Which the apostle had mentioned, in 2 Cor. v. 10. this awful appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ; he immediately infers, verse 11. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

O brethren! let us beware of committing, or of neglecting any thing, that may bring us within the compass of the terrors of that day. Let our painfulness and faithfulness, our constancy and seriousness, compel a testimony from our congregations, as the apostle did from his, Acts xxviii. 26. "That we are pure from the blood of all men."

3. *We have a great opportunity to improve for Christ;* which if we do, we shall fulfil his charge, and escape the terrors of his judgment in that great day.

We have now (if I mistake not) the fairest season we ever enjoyed, since we first preached Christ; if this be lost, I question whether we may ever expect the like. There is great odds betwixt our present circumstances at our return to our flocks, and our past circumstances when we left them, and that both upon our own account, and upon theirs.

1. *Upon our own account:* We were then young, and (comparatively) unexperienced ministers to what we are now. Though we have too many defects and weaknesses still to lament, yet I am persuaded we have not spent so many years among trials, fears, and sufferings in vain. These things, I am persuaded, have greatly improved our acquaintance with God, and our own hearts. It will be as sad as strange, if they have not. God hath been training us up in faith, humility, patience, and self-denial in this school of affliction. When we could not preach the doctrine of faith, we were reduced, by a blessed necessity, to live the life of faith. The rules of patience, humility, and satisfaction in the will of God, we were wont to prescribe from our pulpits to the people, we were necessitated to practise and apply to ourselves in our sad solitudes, and various distresses,

through which the Lord hath led us. So that now we come better furnished to the work, than ever before. And I hope I have ground for you, brethren, to say, as the apostle, of his coming to the Romans, that you come among them “in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.”

3. *There is great odds upon the people's account*: Many of them were full-fed, and wanton, when we left them; they are hungry, and sharp set, at our return to them. An hungry appetite appears in the people in many places, not without great cause and reason. They are willing to take any pains: your words now drop upon them as the clouds upon the clefted earth. O what an opportunity doth this give to accomplish the great ends of our ministry among them!

Lift up your eyes, and behold the fields, are they not even white unto the harvest? Let husbandmen rather lose their seed-time and harvest, than we lose so precious a season, so great, so rich an opportunity as this.

I have finished what concerneth you, my reverend and dear brethren, and fellow-labourers in the Lord's harvest: A word or two remains to be spoken to the people, and I have done.

You have heard what a variety of duty lies upon us, and what difficulty in every part thereof; yet all our labours would be light, and our pains pleasant, might we see more fruits, and success of them amongst you.

Your barrenness and unpersuadableness, your divisions and instability cost us more, than all our other pains in our studies and pulpits. How easily and sweetly would the plough go, would you but set both your hands of prayer and obedience to assist us in that work.

You have now as blessed an opportunity as your souls can desire, yea, that very season of mercy some of you have a long time anxiously desired. You have confessed to God, that you once sinned us out of our pulpits; God forbid you should next sin us into our graves.

If you be wanton children at a full table, our enemies are not so far off, but God can quickly call them in to cure your wantonness, by taking away the cloth.

The stewards of Christ provide choice dishes for you, even feasts of fat things full of marrow; and serve it into your souls upon the knee of prayer in due season: have a care of despising it, if at any time the dishes be not garnished as you expect, with curious figures, and flowers of rhetoric.

The Lord give you hungry appetites, sound digestions, and thriving souls; then shall ye be our *crown of rejoicing*, and we yours in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ: To the word of whose grace I commend you all, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified

A DOUBLE SCHEME, OR TABLE;

CONTAINING, IN THE FIRST COLUMN,

The SINS most incident to the Members of particular Churches, plainly forbidden in the Word, and for which God sets Marks of his Displeasure on them.

AND, IN THE SECOND,

The DUTIES enjoined on them in the Scripture, in the conscientious Discharge whereof, they receive signal Fruits of his Favour.



I. *Sin.* **T**HE first, and more general sin of church members, is, a defect in their care and circumspection, to prevent all just offences to them that are without: forbidden, Col. iv. 5. "Walk in wisdom towards them which are without." By a careless disregard of this rule, we harden the wicked in their sins, bring guilt upon ourselves, and reproach upon the *name and ways of God.*

II. *Sin.* The second, and more particular sin of some church-members, is idleness, and neglect of their civil callings; against the express rule, 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. "There are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all: Such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." This brings poverty on themselves, and scandal on religion.

III. *Sin.* The third sin is tale-bearing, and revealing the secrets of families, and persons; whence many strifes arise, to the cooling and quenching of mutual love;

I. *Duty.* **T**HEIR first duty is, to be often together in acts of Christian communion. Mal. iii. 16. "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another," &c. Such meetings for prayers, repetition of sermons, and Christian conference, greatly conduce to mutual edification; which is the principal intention of Christian fellowship, Eph. iv. 16.

II. *Duty.* Their second duty is, to follow and back the great design of the gospel in the world, and therein assist the public ministry, by their private and prudent helping on the conversion of the carnal and careless world, Phil. iv. 3. "Help those women that laboured with me in the gospel, &c. For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, strive together with me," Rom. xv. 30.

III. *Duty.* Their third duty is humble condescension to the infirmities of their weaker brethren, and denying themselves in what they can, without sin,

expressly forbidden, Lev. xix. 16. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people." And 1 Tim. v. 13. Not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not."

IV. Sin. The fourth sin is an easy credulity of private whispers, and rash censures thereupon. This we ought not to do against the meanest member. 2 Cor. xii. 20. "Lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings," &c. Much less against church-officers; 1 Tim. v. 19. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." This strikes at the bond of peace.

V. Sin. Their fifth sin is in their neglect of God's ordinances upon slight diversions, when they are neither disabled by works of necessity, or mercy, contrary to Heb. x. 25. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." Trivial occasions should divert no Christian from attending upon God's ordinances.

VI. Sin. The sixth sin is a defect in zeal for God's ordinances, manifested in their dilatory attendance; contrary to Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." And unsuitable to their first practice, Gal. iv. 5. "Where is then the blessedness?" &c.

VII. Sin. The seventh sin is irreverence, and want of seriousness under ordinances: contrary to Psal. lxxxix. 7. "God is great-

that they give them no offence. Rom. xv. 1. "We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." And ver. 2. "Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good to edification."

IV. Duty. Their fourth duty is to be exceeding tender of the church's unity, both in judgment, love, and practice; avoiding (as much as may be, and as far as the gospel rule allows) all causes and occasions of division and separation. Rom. xvi. 17. "Mark them which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them." And Phil. ii. 1, 2. "If there be any consolation in Christ, &c. be ye like minded."

V. Duty. Their fifth duty is a respectful carriage towards the meanest Christian, and to have higher esteem of others than themselves. External things make no difference with Christ; Rom. xii. 10. "In honour preferring one another." Gal. iii. 28. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Yet a decorum is to be kept suitable to civil differences; Eph. v. 21. "Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God."

VI. Duty. Their sixth duty is, meekly to receive reproofs from each other for their sins, especially when the matter is just, and the manner of delivering it regular; Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness: And let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil," &c.

VII. Duty. Their seventh duty is, to communicate their spiritual stock of gifts, graces, and experiences, not interfering with

ly to be feared in the assembly of the saints; and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him." And this is manifest in vain attires; 1 Cor. xi. 10. "The woman ought to have power on her head, because of the angels." And unseemly postures and gestures; Eccl. v. 1. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools."

VIII. *Sin.* The eighth sin reproveable in them, is, the neglect of giving and taking due reproofs from each other; contrary to Lev. xix. 17. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." And Christ's own rule, Matth. xviii. 15. "Go, and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." And so for taking reproofs, see Psal. cxli. 5. "Let the righteous smite me," &c.

IX. *Sin.* The ninth sin is, mutual strifes and animosities, not seasonably and prudently composed among themselves, but scandalously exposed to the view of the world; contrary to the apostle's rule, 1 Cor. vi. 5, 6. "Is there not a wise man among you, &c. But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers? Now therefore, there is utterly a fault among you."

X. *Sin.* The tenth sin is, the privateness of their spirits, centering too much in their own concerns; expressly condemned, Phil.

public officers, nor by sinful partiality including some, and excluding others (to whom it is as due, and who may have more need) from the benefit thereof; 1 Pet. iv. 10. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another." 1 Tim. v. 21. "Observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

VIII. *Duty.* Their eighth duty is, cheerfully to communicate their outward good things for the relief of their brethren; Heb. xiii. 16. "To do good, and to communicate, forget not." And the better to enable them hereunto, to be diligent in their callings; Eph. iv. 28. "Working with his hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth." And especially to make comfortable provision for their ministers, not by way of courtesy, but duty; 1 Cor. ix. 14. "Even so hath God ordained, That they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel."

IX. *Duty.* Their ninth duty is, not only to relieve the distressed members of Christ, but to seek out, and visit them; to know their spiritual and temporal wants, in order to a full discharge of that duty; Jam. i. 27. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is This, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," &c.

X. *Duty.* Their tenth duty is, to put charitable constructions upon doubtful words and actions; and if either will admit a double

ii. 21. "All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." And contrary to scripture example, 2 Cor. xi. 29. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

sense always to take it in the fairest, according to the law of charity; 1 Cor. xiii. 7. "Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." And such a charity will defend and maintain church peace and unity.

Six BENEFITS of walking by these RULES.

I. *Benefit.* **S**TRICT and heedful attendance to these rules, will put a lustre upon religion before the world, and make it glorious in the eyes of such as now despise it. Tit. ii. 10. "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." Which he here speaks, to encourage all to ordinate walking.

II. *Benefit.* This will allure and win the world over to Christ, and wonderfully prosper and further the design of the gospel. Phil. ii. 15, 16. "That ye may be blameless and harmless the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, &c. That I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

III. *Benefit.* This will effectually stop the mouths of all detracting and blaspheming enemies of religion. 1 Pet. ii. 15. "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing, ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

IV. *Benefit.* This will eminently glorify God, which is the ultimate end of our beings. Matth. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

V. *Benefit.* This will fill the people of God (by way of evidence) with much inward peace. Gal. vi. 16. "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy upon the Israel of God."

VI. *Benefit.* This will secure the presence of God with, and among us; whence results both the efficacy of ordinances, and the stability and glory of the churches: For Christ walks among the golden candlesticks, and threatens the churches, in case of defection from gospel rules, "to remove the candlestick out of his place, except they repent," Rev. ii. 1, 5.



AN

ALPHABETICAL TABLE

Of the principal Matters contained in the whole.

VOLUME I.

A

Page

<i>ABASEMENT</i> of Christ, several instances of it in his incarnation	223
Vid. <i>Humiliation</i> .	
<i>Abilities</i> of men to use the means of grace, how to be improved	140
<i>Adoption</i> , wherein that which is sacred agrees with, and differs from that which is civil	
<i>Adrian</i> (the emperor,) his lamentable cry when dying	401
<i>Affections</i> , the melting of them, from a sense of Christ's sufferings, is no infallible sign of grace	226
What care we should take of being deceived by the workings of them	263
A believing meditation on Christ's sufferings, is of great force to melt them	265
<i>Agony</i> (of Christ) in the garden described	277
Useful inferences from the consideration of it	279
<i>Amyntas</i> , a remarkable story of his interceding for his brother	169
<i>Anathema Maranatha</i> , the meaning of this expression	50
<i>Antinomians</i> , some of their vile opinions detected	439
<i>Apology</i> ; Final rejecters of gospel-grace can make none for themselves	70
<i>Apostasy</i> of Christ's disciples in his sufferings	346
Vid. <i>Disciples</i> .	285
<i>Assumption</i> of our nature by the Son of God	72
Vid. <i>Incarnation</i> .	
<i>Articles</i> of peace with God, what they are, 477. Vid. <i>Peace</i> .	
<i>Ascension</i> of Christ proved, and several circumstances of it explained	503
The remarkable manner of it shewn in several particulars	505
A sixfold proof of the necessity of it	508
Several useful inferences concerning it	509

B

	Page
B <i>ELIEVERS</i> , the safety of their condition in Christ	116
Ought when dying to commit their souls to God	444
What things are implied in their committing their departing spirits to God	<i>ibid.</i>
Their encouragement to commend their spirits into God's hands	<i>ibid.</i>
Should commit all their concerns into God's hand	452
<i>Bernard</i> , (saint) an observable remark of his concerning Christ's incarnation	231
<i>Blindness</i> of mind, The terribleness of this judgment	138
<i>Blood</i> of Christ, one drop of it not sufficient to redeem the world	157
Whence the preciousness of it rises	329
<i>Body of Christ</i> , was extraordinarily fitted for being sensible of pain	421
<i>Bosom</i> of God, what is signified by Christ's being there	44
<i>Βραβειον</i> , The meaning of this word (in Col. iii. 15.)	363
<i>Breach</i> , what a woeful one sin has made between God and us	110
<i>Buried</i> , The reasons of Christ being buried	456
Vid. <i>Funeral</i> .	
<i>Benefits</i> of Christ, how well they are suited to the case of sinners	483
<i>Blood of Christ</i> , The principal ends of shedding it	468
Vid. <i>Death</i> .	
<i>Body of Christ</i> , How it was raised from the dead, shewn in several particulars	489
<i>Bodies of believers</i> , How joyful the resurrection of them will be to their souls	494
How they should be governed and employed	497, &c.

C

C <i>HILDREN</i> , Their duty to their parents shewn in six particulars	385
How Christ's example enforces their duties upon them	388
Their disobedience to their parents, a sign of their being without Christ	<i>ibid.</i>
Serious queries proposed to them	<i>ibid.</i>
The danger of their undutifulness to their parents, shewn in six things	290
Directions for their carriage towards either godly or ungodly parents	391
<i>Christ</i> , How said to be the only object of St. Paul's knowledge	32

	Page
<i>Christ</i> , Several excellent properties of the knowledge of him, as crucified	34
The sufficiency of his doctrine to make men wise to salvation	37
His excellency to believers	38
His glory and pleasure with the Father before his incarnation	43
The nature of his delight in his pre-existent state, shewn several ways	44
The wonderfulness of his love in our redemption	48
The great danger of rejecting him	50
What encouragement his dearness to the Father gives Christians	52
His work and reward described	<i>ibid.</i>
How wonderfully the love of God shines forth in giving him	63
What is implied in God's giving him	65
How the gift of him yields us hope for all good things	69
The horrible wickedness of despising him	70
The necessity of our union with him	80
What his being <i>sealed</i> implies, 85. <i>Vide Sealed.</i>	
What obligations we are under to devote ourselves to him	101
The great evil of using his blood as a common thing	103
The nature of his mediation explained	107
<i>Vide Mediator.</i>	
The necessity of our being interested in him as Mediator	110
The danger of joining other mediators with him	115
What reason Christians have to be thankful to him	116
The safety of believers in him	<i>ibid.</i>
His prophetic office explained, 118. <i>Vide Prophet.</i>	
The nature and necessity of his priesthood	145
<i>Vide Priesthood.</i>	
How he obtains the throne in the hearts of men	200
Six ways of his ruling in the souls of men	203
The privileges of the subjects of his spiritual kingdom	206
His providential kingdom explained, 211. <i>Vide Providence</i>	
How we should honour him in conderation of his abase-ment	233
How many ways he was humbled in his life	235
How he prepared himself for his death	246
His fatherly care discovered in his last prayer	248
<i>Vide Prayer.</i>	
The mercies he requested for his disciples when dying	249
The special arguments pleaded in his last prayer	250
The last reasons of his praying for his disciples at his death	254
How his love and care was manifested in instituting his sup- per	259
His dignity was proclaimed by his enemies	334

	Page
<i>Christ</i> , Remarks on the title put upon his cross, 334. Vide <i>Title</i> .	
How he is called God's fellow	344
His silence in his sufferings, how it is to be understood	357
The greatness of his burdens, and his patience under them	359
His last words to be most seriously considered	369
His tender care of his mother when he was dying	382
Vide <i>Mother</i> .	
His doleful complaint upon the cross explained and applied	406
How he breathed out his spirit to his Father	443
<i>Christian religion</i> , the excellency of it above all others	149
<i>Christians</i> , whence it is they sometimes differ from themselves at other times	353
<i>Circumcision</i> of Christ, how he was humbled in it	235
<i>City of God</i> , the excellency of its place and company	195
<i>Committing</i> our souls to God at death, several things implied in it 444. Vide <i>Soul</i> , vide <i>Death</i> .	
<i>Condemnation of Christ</i> , the great injustice of it shewn in six particulars	297
Useful lessons to be learned from it	304
The wickedness of Pilate in giving it against him	302
Several useful inferences concerning it	304
<i>Covenant of Redemption</i> , the general nature of it shewn	53
The persons transacting, the business transacted, and the man- ner of transacting it	54
The promises made to our Saviour therein	55
What the Redeemer restipulated in it	57
How punctually the articles of it were performed on both parts	<i>ibid.</i>
The eternity and security of it	58
Useful inferences from it	59
<i>Cross</i> , the death upon it shewn to be of the worst kind	322, &c.
Why Christ died upon it, rather than any other death	326
Useful inferences from our Saviour's enduring it	327, &c.
What encouragement believers have to bear theirs for Christ	329
<i>Crucifixion</i> , the worst kind of death, 321. Vide <i>Cross</i> .	
<i>Cup</i> , a portion of sufferings so called	274
How Christ prayed that his might pass from him	273
<i>Christ</i> , his sitting at the right hand of God explained and ap- plied, 545. Vide <i>Right-hand</i> .	
<i>Christ</i> , The reverence due to him from Christians	522
It is honourable to suffer reproach for him	<i>ibid.</i>

D

Darius (king of Persia) declared filthy waters was sweet to him, in his great thirst, 120. Vide *Thirst*.

	Page
<i>Death</i> ; Christ prepared himself for it, by praying for his disciples, 247. By instituting his last supper, 259. And, by praying for himself	271
It immediately brings believers into a state of happiness	398
Useful inferences concerning the immediate consequence of it to believers	400
Preparations for it not ordinarily to be expected at the time of it	404
How much all, and particularly young people, are concerned to prepare for it	405
How believers are encouraged therein, to commit their souls to God	447
Useful deductions from the encouragement of believers in it	450
That of Christ was, in general, designed for four excellent ends	456
<i>Debauchery</i> , vide <i>Profaneness</i> .	
<i>Delight</i> , how Christ was such to his Father before his incarnation	43
The nature of that of Christ in the Father described	44
<i>Desertion</i> , Christ's complaint of it upon the cross	407
The nature of that which Christ endured, explained negatively and positively	408, &c.
The ends for which Christ was exposed to it by the Father	411
It is the greatest misery of God's children	413
Comfort to sincere Christians when under it	414
Rules to be observed by believers when exercised with it	417
<i>Devils</i> , their sin not so much aggravated as ours in rejecting Christ	83
<i>Dignity</i> of Christ was proclaimed by his judge	334
<i>Disciples</i> (of Christ,) how they left their Lord in his sufferings. Vide <i>Sheep</i> .	
<i>Doctrines</i> , how to make a right judgment of them	128
<i>Drop</i> of Christ's blood; how unreasonable it is to say, one only was sufficient to redeem the whole world	157
<i>Death</i> , That of Christ was, in general, designed for four excellent ends	468

E

<i>ETERNITY</i> , how eminently a gentlewoman was affected with seeing this word	535
What abundant comfort it yields to sincere Christians	488
The several steps of it at large considered and improved	503

F

	Page
<i>F</i> AITH in Christ, the necessity of it to salvation	150
How useful it is to God's people both living and dying	444
<i>F</i> ellow to God, How Christ is said to be so, 344. Vide <i>Christ</i> .	
<i>F</i> inished, (It is) The comprehensiveness of these words, as used by our Saviour	430
How Christ finished the work of redemption on the cross	434
What assurance we have of the work of redemption being so	435
Several useful inferences concerning this	436, &c.
How we should imitate our Saviour herein	439
How much it concerns us to have our work so, when death comes	441
<i>F</i> lavel, (Mr. John) his life and epistles	1—32
<i>F</i> lesh, put for the whole human nature	73
How the word was said to be made flesh	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>F</i> orgiveness (a privilege) the greatness of this mercy	369
<i>F</i> orgiveness, The nature of it opened	374
What ground ignorant opposers of Christ have to expect it	375
<i>F</i> orgiveness (a duty) the nature of it shewn, negatively and positively	378
The excellency of it, and our obligation to it	379
Several useful inferences concerning it	381
<i>F</i> uneral, several remarkable things in that of Christ	454
Four reasons why our Saviour had one, notwithstanding the small time of his death	456
The impossibility of making an oration on that of Christ, worthy of him	459
Peculiar properties of that of our Lord	454
To have a decent one, is laudable among Christians	461
How that of our Saviour encourages believers against fearing the grave	463
How that of sincere Christians is rendered comfortable by their union with Christ	564
Future state, the reality of one after this life proved	394
Souls pass immediately into it at the time of death	398
God may, but seldom does, prepare men for it at the hour of death	402

G

<i>G</i> ARDEN, That where Christ was in his agony described	272
<i>G</i> ospel, seems to be epitomized (in Isa. liii.)	52
The inexcusableness of those who perish under it	231

	Page
<i>Gospel</i> , How it makes the best husbands and wives, parents and children, &c.	382
<i>Gospel-ordinances</i> , the great efficacy of them when duly administered	194
<i>Grave</i> , How it is rendered a place of rest to believers	463
How sincere Christians are encouraged against the fears of it by Christ's funeral	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Grecians</i> , How strangely they were affected with the deliverance from bondage	233
<i>Gifts</i> , the valuable ones which Christ gave at his ascension	506
What care we should take not to abuse them	510

H

<i>HAPPINESS</i> (of saints) explained, as objective, subjective, and formal	84
<i>Honour</i> , In what instances we should give it to Christ	233
<i>Human nature</i> wonderfully advanced in the person of Christ	76
<i>Humiliation of Christ</i> , several instances of it in his life	235
Several very useful inferences from it	241, &c.
<i>Hypostatical union</i> in Christ, the nature and effects of it	75
Vide <i>Incarnation</i> .	
<i>Holiness</i> is the glory of God, and the beauty of souls	479
Vide <i>Sanctification</i> .	
It is the great scope of the doctrine of redemption	536
The strong obligations Christians are laid under to it by the Father, 538; and by the Son, 541; and by the Spirit	532
What strong engagements Christians are under to it from themselves	544
We are strongly obliged to it, upon the account of others	547
Christians have far greater advantage for practising of it than others	550
It is exceeding useful to win souls, honour religion, and encourage ministers	556, & 558
The serious practice of it awes sinners now, and will convince them in the judgment	559
<i>Holy Spirit</i> , Reasons why we should take heed of grieving him	510
<i>Honour</i> , How great that of Christ is in heaven	515
That which will be conferred upon the saints above	520

I

<i>IGNORANCE of the gospel</i> , the misery of being under the power of it	183
— Of the Jews concerning Christ, the nature and causes of it	185

	Page
<i>Ignorance of the Gospel</i> , Of Christ, how it occasions enmity against him	371
There is forgiveness with God for such as labour under it	374
<i>Imaginations</i> , what is meant by them, (2 Cor. x. 5.)	199
How the gospel casts them down	201
<i>Incarnation</i> of Christ explained in five particulars	76
Several effects resulting from it	79
Some designs of it mentioned	80
How the love of the Father and of the Son shines forth in it	81
Several useful inferences concerning it	82
Christ's wonderful abasement in it, shewn in six things	226
Several improvements we should make of the doctrine of it	230, &c.
<i>Infidelity</i> , the unreasonableness of it	61
<i>Inheritance</i> of believers, comprehends temporal, spiritual, and eternal good things	191
How much we are concerned to clear up our interest in it	197
<i>Inscription</i> put upon the cross of Christ, explained	333
<i>Vide Title.</i>	
<i>Intercession</i> of Christ, the nature of it opened in several things	167
The efficacy of it with the Father	171
Profitable inferences from the doctrine of it	172
It gives manifold encouragement to sincere Christians	173
<i>Judas</i> (the traitor) his eminency among the apostles	285
The aggravations of sin in betraying his Lord	286
The motives and issue of his wickedness	283
Warnings to professors, from his dismal example	290, &c.
<i>Justice</i> of God, the inflexible severity of it	162
<i>Interest</i> of Christ, the security of it	521
<i>Judgment</i> (the last) the subject, object, and fountain of it	524
The certainty of it proved from scripture and reason	526
The awfulness, and other properties of it	528
How it will make for the honour of Christ	531
What ground believers have to hope for an absolution in it	532
The miserable case of Christless souls in it	533
What sins are especially to be avoided, from the consideration of it	535

K

<i>KING</i> , The necessity of Christ's being so, as well as prophet and priest	198
Signs of Christ being our King	208
<i>Kingdom</i> of Christ, spiritual and providential	199
How Christ obtains it, and manages it in men's hearts	201
The privileges of the subjects thereof	206
<i>Kingdom</i> of Christ. Five characters of the subjects of it	209

	Page
<i>Kingdom of Christ</i> , An explication of it, as providentially executed, 210. Vid. <i>Providence</i> .	
<i>Knowledge</i> , Wherein that of Christ crucified excels all other	32
Of Christ, greatly wanting among men	37
What encouragement we have to apply to Christ for saving knowledge	131
Means for attaining that which is saving	140
Differences between common and saving knowledge	169

L

<i>LEAST</i> word, syllable, or letter, sometimes of great force in divinity	74
<i>Light</i> , the excellent nature of that which Christ gives	173
<i>Λογος</i> , (or word) why Christ is so called	72
<i>Lord's-supper</i> , when instituted by our Lord	260
How fitly bread and wine are made the symbols in it	<i>ibid.</i>
How Christ is to be remembered in it, and what is included in remembering him	263
What aptitude there is in it to bring Christ to remembrance	265
How Christ's love and care appears in instituting it	266
The advantages of rightly attending it	269
<i>Love to saints</i> . The strong obligations we have to it	93
<i>Love of Christ</i> , clearly manifested in his satisfaction	180
<i>Love of God</i> , how manifested by giving Christ for our redemption	62
How wonderfully that of the Father and Son appears in Christ's incarnation	81
How it is displayed in Christ's being sealed by the Father	195
How it shines forth in our Saviour's extreme sufferings	152

M

<i>MEANS of grace</i> , the insufficiency of them without the Spirit's agency	134
What ability men have to use them	142
<i>Mediator</i> , What this word signifies	108
How Christ performs this office	109
Five things implied in Christ's being Mediator	110
How it appears that Christ only is so between God and man	112
In what capacity our Saviour performs this office	114
Several useful inferences from the doctrine of Christ's being the only one	114—118
<i>Meritorious</i> , Whence Christ's death came to be so	189
How the purchase made by our Saviour was so	191
<i>Ministers</i> , By what we should judge of their excellency	38

	Page
<i>Ministers</i> , How they should preach Christ	39
How people should improve under their ministry	41
The great evil of despising them	92
In what things Christ was a pattern to them	128
<i>Ministry</i> , The great evil of intruding into it without a due call	94
The necessity of a standing one in Christ's church	125
<i>Mother</i> (of Christ) how our Saviour's tender care of her was exemplary to us	382

O

<i>OBLATION</i> (of Christ) how the excellency of it appears	154
Vid. <i>Offering</i> .	
<i>Offering</i> (of Christ) the nature and excellency of it shewn in several things	156
The persons for whom, and the end for which it was offered	159
The comfort flowing to believers from it	194
How the inflexible severity of divine justice appears in it	162
How our hearts should be affected with it	164
<i>Old sinners</i> , their case exceeding dangerous	402
<i>Ordinances</i> of the gospel, whence the efficacy of them proceeds	94

P

<i>PATIENCE</i> , (of Christ) the nature and eminency of it	359
The grounds and reasons of it	361
Directions for our imitation of Christ in it	364
<i>Paul</i> , (the apostle) the plainness of his preaching vindicated	312
How he made Christ, as crucified, his principal subject	313
<i>Peace</i> (of kingdoms) the Christian religion the best friend to it	381
<i>Philanthropos</i> , (a lover of man) God so called; but never	
<i>Philangelos</i> , (a lover of angels)	614
<i>Pilate</i> , his great injustice in condemning our Saviour	299
<i>Prayer</i> , (Christ's last) how Christ evinced the care of his disciples in it	247
How the saints perseverance is secured by it	249
Argumentative prayer recommended by it	250
How dying parents, &c. are directed by it	257
<i>Prayer</i> , (of Christ in the garden) Christ's last preparative for his death	271
How we should imitate our Saviour in it	273
The matter about which he pleads with his Father in it	<i>ibid.</i>
The manner of it noted in four particulars	276
Useful inferences from the consideration of it	279
<i>rice</i> , how Christ was such in his death	184
<i>riesthood</i> , (of Christ) what is implied in it	145

	Page
<i>Priesthood</i> , The necessity of it proved and vindicated	147
Useful inferences from the doctrine of it	149
The virtue and fruits of it, how exprest by divines	195
<i>Prophet</i> , Christ described in this office	118
What things are implied in Christ's being so to the church	121
How excellently our Saviour executed this office on earth	123
The great usefulness of the doctrine of this office of Christ	125
<i>Providence</i> , How Christ rules and orders the kingdom of it	212
The instruments whereby our Lord exercises it	216
Excellent properties of it as exercised by our Saviour	217
Several profitable inferences from the doctrine of it	218
Vid. <i>Kingdom</i> .	
<i>Purchase</i> , How Christ's death is to be considered as such	191
Vid. <i>Meritorious</i> .	
<i>Peace</i> , (with God) the articles or terms of it	477
The excellency of it, and deplorableness of being without it	<i>ibid.</i>

R

<i>REDEMPTION</i> , the wonderful love of God and Christ therein	52
What things are implied in it	178
<i>Revelation</i> , of God's will, how excellently Christ hath discovered it, 124. Vid. <i>Prophet</i> .	
<i>Roman senator</i> , a courageous answer of one to Vespasian	353
<i>Reconciliation</i> , (with God) what it signifies	474
Why, and how it is obtained by the death of Christ	476
The conditions upon which it is offered in the gospel	477
The excellency of it, and usefulness of the doctrine concerning it	480
<i>Rest</i> , that of saints is chiefly reserved for heaven	523
<i>Resurrection</i> , of Christ, the certainty and necessity of it	488
Five excellent properties, shewing the manner of it	489
How it secures the resurrection of saints	492
How it was the pattern of that of believers	494
How death is overcome by it	496
<i>Resurrection</i> , that of the saints will be very joyful on several accounts	494
How we may ensure to ourselves a blessed one	499
<i>Right-hand</i> , of God, what it signifies in scripture	515
What things are implied in Christ's sitting at it	515
Several useful inferences from our Saviour's session there	520

S

	Page
<i>SACRIFICE</i> , the excellency and efficacy of Christ	155
<i>Vid. offering</i>	
<i>Sanctification</i> , how necessary it is for Christians	101
<i>Sanctify myself</i> , how, and why Christ did this	96
Seven things implied in Christ's doing this	97
How Christ did it <i>for our sakes</i>	100
Several useful inferences from our Saviour's doing it	101
<i>Satisfaction</i> of Christ, what it signifies	178
The truth of it proved and vindicated	183
Useful inferences from the doctrine of it	184
The impossibility of our making it for ourselves	186
Whence a surplusage of merit in it arises	187
<i>Saviour</i> , How the Grecians were affected with the mention of a temporal one	233
<i>Scattered</i> , how Christ's disciples were so, 345. <i>Vid. Sheep.</i>	
<i>Sealed</i> , why God's committing authority to Christ is expressed by it	86
The office to which Christ was sealed by the Father	87
Four things implied in our Saviour's being so	88
How God the Father sealed Jesus Christ	89
The necessity of Christ's being so	91
Several useful inferences from our Lord's being so	<i>ibid.</i>
How we should endeavour to have the comfort of Christ's being thus	95
<i>Self-confidence</i> , the best are in danger of it	350
<i>Self-denial</i> , Christ the most eminent pattern of it	230
<i>Sentence</i> , (against Christ) the great evil of it, shewn in six particulars	302
With what meekness our Saviour received his unjust one	304
Useful inferences concerning it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Sheep</i> of Christ, who of them were scattered from him	345
Eight arguments of their forsaking Christ in his sufferings	346
The occasions of their being scattered from Christ	348
The tenderness of their shepherd toward them	350
Several useful instructions from their forsaking Christ	355
<i>Sin</i> , How the exceeding evil of it is discovered	184
<i>Solitude</i> of Christ in his sufferings, considered and improved, 370. <i>Vid. Sheep.</i>	
<i>Soul</i> , (of man) the preciousness of it appears from the price of its redemption	70
How Christ commended his to his Father when dying	433
What is implied in a believer's commending it to God at death	444
The encouragements believers have to commend theirs to God	445

	Page
<i>Soul</i> , Useful inferences from the encouragements of commend- ing it to God	450
<i>Spirit of man</i> , to be commended to God at death	444
Vid. <i>Soul</i>	
<i>Sufferings</i> of Christ, the greatness of those in his body	421
The peculiar extremity of those he endured in his soul	422
<i>Superscription</i> on Christ's cross, explained and applied	333, &c.
Vid. <i>Title</i> .	
<i>Sweetness</i> of the Christian religion inferred from Christ's incar- nation	82
<i>Sword</i> , (of God's justice) how said to be awakened against Christ	344
What we learn from its being drawn against Christ alone	354
<i>Sanctification</i> , it was one end of Christ's death	478
Four excellent properties of this benefit	479
<i>Sufferings</i> of Christ, how vastly they exceed what any suffer for him	467

T

TEACHER , Christ is so to the church in the most supreme sense	118
How Christ performs this office, 123. Vid. <i>Prophet</i> .	
<i>Thirst</i> , The afflictiveness of it when violent	419
How that of Christ was occasioned by his extreme sufferings	421
Several useful inferences from that of our Saviour	425, &c.
<i>Throne</i> , How Christ obtains one in men's hearts	200
<i>Time</i> , The preciousness of that which is present	428
<i>Title</i> , (on the cross of Christ) the nature of it explained	333, &c.
How divine providence appeared in it	336
Useful inferences from the circumstances attending it	338
<i>Trial</i> of Christ, The injustice of it manifested	297
<i>Testament</i> of Christ, confirmed by his blood	480
What he bequeaths therein to his friends	481
The probat of it; or, how we may prove our interest in it	482
<i>Touch</i> , In what sense Christ prohibited Mary to touch him	501
<i>Travail of Christ's soul</i> , Why his sufferings are express by it	479
The fruits of it are deliverance from wrath to come, 15; Peace with God, 475; sanctification, 479; and confirma- tion of the gospel-covenant	480

U

UNBELIEVERS , How dismal their state is at death	397
<i>Understanding</i> , How Christ is said to open it	131
What things are implied in Christ's opening it	133
In what way our Saviour opens it	163
Useful lessons from the doctrine of Christ's opening it	138, &c.

W

	Page
<i>WEEPING</i> , How Christ forbid it upon his own account	308
Why our Saviour required it of the Jews for themselves	309
<i>Wisdom</i> , The different notions of it in the book of Proverbs	42
<i>Wisdom</i> of God, How it shines forth in Christ's incarnation	82
<i>Wonderful</i> , How fitly Christ is so called	99
<i>Word</i> , Why Christ is so called	72
<i>World</i> , How little regard is to be had of its esteem or contempt	245
<i>Work of Christ</i> , how it was finished on the cross	428
Vid. <i>Finished</i> .	
<i>Working</i> , The necessity of it in religion	438
We should imitate Christ therein	439
<i>Wrath</i> , in what sense it is said to be <i>to come</i>	469
How eminently Christ delivered us from it by his death	<i>ibid.</i>
Good evidence of being delivered from it	471

Z

<i>ZALEUCUS</i> , A noted instance of his tempering justice with mercy	185
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 VOLUME II.

A

	Page
<i>ACCEPTANCE</i> with God, how believers have it through Christ	260
How Christ procures it for believers	265
How the consideration of it should be improved	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Admiral</i> , vid. <i>Lord High-Admiral</i>	
<i>Advocate</i> , what an excellent one Christ is	221
<i>Ambassadors</i> , (of Christ) ministers so called	50
What God's treating with sinners by them implies	51
The great concern about which they treat with sinners	53
What qualifications they should be endowed with	13
<i>Annihilation</i> , not the worst of evils	252
<i>Application</i> , (of Christ's benefits) the general nature of it explained	17
The nature and necessity of it more particularly expressed in eight propositions	19—25
Several useful inferences concerning it	26
<i>Assent</i> of faith, doubts concerning it answered	124

B

	Page
BRIDEGROOM , What an incomparable one Christ is	219
<i>Bringing us to God</i> , What this phrase imports	281
The happiness of being interested in it	282
What influence Christ's sufferings have upon it	283
Useful deductions from Christ's being the author of it	284
<i>Burden of sin</i> , The greatness of it discovered	157
Whence a soul is supported under it	163
Why God causes it to press hard upon some sinners	164
Useful inferences from the consideration of it	166
Proper advices to them who are under the weight of it	169
Vid. <i>Heavy laden</i>	
<i>Blindness of mind</i> , Wherein it consists, shewn	454
That many are under it proved	455
The policies which Satan uses to procure and promote it	458
The dreadfulness of this judgment set forth in divers particulars	464
Several very useful inferences concerning it	467
<i>Body of man</i> , The soul is strongly inclined to it	589
Wherein the soul discovers her love to it	590
Reasons of the soul's love to it	594
Wherein our love to it may be defective	602
Wherein the soul's love to it may be excessive	604
How we should rightly express our love to it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Breath</i> (of our nostrils) This feeble band ties the soul and body together	542
Several useful inferences concerning it	545

C

CHRIST , How believers have communion with him	143
Vid. <i>Communion</i> .	
What it is to come to him, 172.	Vid. <i>Come</i> .
What an excellent physician he is, 177.	Vid. <i>Physician</i> .
How he is called the promised mercy, 203.	Vid. <i>Mercy</i> .
How he is <i>altogether lovely</i> , 214.	Vid. <i>Lovely</i> .
How he is the <i>desire of all nations</i> , 225.	Vid. <i>Desire</i> .
How he is the <i>Lord of glory</i> , 236.	Vid. <i>Lord</i> .
How he is the <i>Consolation of Israel</i> , 243.	Vid. <i>Consolation</i> .
<i>Coming to Christ</i> , what is implied and included therein	172
How Christ invites sinners to it	175
Why only sin-burdened souls are invited to it	176
Discouragements from it recited and answered	178
It is the immediate duty and happiness of heavy laden sinners	181

	Page
<i>Communion</i> , how all believers have it with Christ	143
The things wherein Christians have it not with Christ	145
Those things wherein Christ and believers have it	146
By what means Christians come to have it with our Saviour	148
The great dignity of our having it, shewn in six particulars	150
Several useful inferences from the doctrine of it	152, &c.
Signs of having communion with Christ	155
<i>Consolation</i> (of Israel) Christ is so called	243
The nature of consolation opened	244
How Christ only is so to believers	245
None but believers are interested in it, and why	248
Whence believers themselves are sometimes without it	249
Several useful inferences from Christ's being so	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Crucifixion</i> (of the flesh) what it is, shewn negatively and positively	370
Why the mortification of sin is expressed by it	373
The necessity of it to evidence our being in Christ	375
The sanctifying spirit is the only principle of it	377
How it evinces a soul's interest in Christ	379
<i>Christ</i> , Two sermons concerning our imitation of him	397—421
Vid. <i>Imitation</i> .	
<i>Christ</i> , What abundant reason we have to esteem him precious	584
<i>Crucifixion of the flesh</i> , several useful inferences concerning it	380

D

<i>DEAD</i> , how all unregenerate sinners are not, and how they are so	100
<i>Dead</i> , The deplorableness of being so, in a spiritual sense	101
Vid. <i>Death spiritual</i> .	
<i>Death spiritual</i> , the nature of it described in several particulars	85
The certainty of Christless souls being under it, proved	575
<i>Desire of all nations</i> , how Christ is so called	225
Five things implied in Christ's being thus stiled	226
The reasons of Christ's being esteemed as such	229
Several useful improvements of Christ's being so	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Desires after Christ</i> , Characters of the truth of them	230
The blessedness of them	231
Directions for kindling and increasing of them	234
<i>Diseases</i> , the spiritual ones which Christ cures	179
Vid. <i>Physician</i> .	
<i>Drawing</i> , (of sinners to Christ) what implied in the Father's doing it	69
The wonderful way wherein God does it	71
The impossibility of coming to Christ without it	75
Useful inferences from the consideration of it	79

<i>Death spiritual</i> , several useful inferences concerning it	Page 380
--	-------------

E

<i>EMBASSADORS</i> , Ministers so called in scripture	49
Vid. <i>Ambassadors</i> .	
<i>Exaltation</i> of Christ, the necessity of it to our salvation	50

F

<i>FAITH</i> , the saving act of it expressed by receiving Christ	103
Arguments against its being the matter of justification	113
Arguments against the imputation of it for righteousness	118
Its justifying, as a condition, argued against	119
Many sound believers doubt their want of it, upon undue grounds	123
The least degree of that which is saving, a very valuable mercy	126
The danger of being without the means of it	127
<i>Fellowship</i> , (with Christ) explained at large, and applied	141
Vid. <i>Communion</i> .	
<i>Flesh</i> , A discourse concerning the crucifying of it. Vid. <i>Mortification</i> .	375
<i>Freedom</i> of Christians; the nature and excellency of it opened and applied, 269. Vid. <i>Liberty</i> .	
<i>Friend</i> , what an incomparable one Christ is	222

H

<i>HEAVY laden</i> , How some are so with the burdensome sense of sin	159
The difficulty of bearing up under it	161
Whence any souls are kept from sinking under it	163
Why God suffers sinners to be so	164
Useful inferences concerning it	166
Several advices to them that are in this case	169
Why such only are invited by our Saviour to come to him	176
<i>Hope</i> , how groundless that of unregenerate sinners is	294

I

<i>IMITATION</i> of Christ, what is supposed and included in it	398
It denotes our conformity to him in holiness	402
How it consists in being like him in obedience	404

	Page
It comprehends our resembling him in delighting in God, and inoffensiveness toward men	409
The necessity of it evinced in two things	414
Several useful inferences concerning it	415
<i>Immortality</i> (of man's soul) proved from its nature	559
Argued from the promises and threatenings of God's word	562
It is attested by all nations in all ages	563
Proved from the soul's eternal habits	565
It appears from the consideration of man's dignity	567
It is evidenced by the soul's desire of immortality	568
Proved from its sometimes returning into the body after death	570
<i>Immortality</i> , Denying it, subverts the whole Christian religion	<i>ibid.</i>
Objections against it answered	575
Useful inferences from the consideration of it	579
Vid <i>Soul</i> .	

K

<i>KNOWLEDGE</i> , How much that which is experimental excels all other	124
---	-----

L

<i>LAW</i> (moral) The use of it not to justify but convince	288
<i>Liberty</i> of believers, wherein it does not consist	269
Wherein it does consist	273
The different kinds and properties of it	274
Several useful inferences concerning it	276
<i>Life</i> (spiritual) The nature and properties of it	88
In what manner it is wrought in the soul	92
God's end in giving it	94
Arguments to prove the production of it wholly supernatural	95
The previous necessity of it to saving faith in Christ	97
Symptoms of its being in the soul	101
<i>Life of the unregenerate</i> , wherein it consists	289
What maintains the groundless security of it	290
Signs of its being too common in the world	291
The danger of the false hope thereof	292
Useful inferences from the groundless security of it	293
<i>Lord of Glory</i> , That, and how Christ is so	236
Profitable improvements of Christ's being such a one	238
<i>Lovely</i> , How Christ is said to be altogether so	214
Christ is so, both in his person and offices	218
Several useful inferences from Christ's being so	223
<i>Light</i> , how it aggravates sin, shewn in six particulars	445

	Page
<i>Light</i> , Why sins against it have the greater condemnation	464
Several useful inferences concerning it	467

M

<i>MERCY</i> (the promised) Christ emphatically so called	203
Why Christ is so stiled	<i>ibid.</i>
Twelve properties of Christ considered as such	204
How God performed it in Christ	207
None that is saving to be obtained out of Christ	209
We should not satisfy ourselves with any without Christ	211
What encouragement humbled sinners have to hope for	212
<i>Mortification</i> , the nature of it explained in several particulars	370
Why it is expressed by crucifying the flesh	375
The necessity of it proved by seven arguments	375
How the Spirit of God is the only principle of it	378
How it evidences the soul's interest in Christ	379
The necessity of it shews the difficulty of the Christian life	
Several useful inferences from the doctrine of it	381
Evidences of the truth, and of the strength of it	395
Five comforting considerations flowing from it	396

N

<i>NEW Creature</i> , why the regenerating work of the Spirit is expressed by it	347
In what respects every one in Christ is made so	349
The properties of it shewn in ten particulars	351
The necessity of our becoming such	355
How being so, is an infallible proof of being interested in Christ	357
The miserable state of those who are not so	359
The happiness of being, and the hope of becoming such	<i>ibid.</i>
The greatness of the change wrought in those who are so	361
How people may be deceived in thinking themselves such	362
Signs for trial of ourselves, whether we are so or not	364
What reason such have to be cheerful and thankful	367

P

<i>PHYSICIAN</i> , (of souls) how Christ was constituted by the Father	190
How he cures the diseases of sin	191

	Page
<i>Physician</i> , How he heals the diseases of sorrow	196
Nine things wherein Christ is the only physician of souls	<i>ibid.</i>
Several useful instructions from Christ's being so	197
<i>Prayers</i> , the force of them when united	265

Q

QUICKENING , (spiritual) is the peculiar work of God's Spirit	84
Is previously necessary to union with Christ	87
It is partly in, and partly subsequent to regeneration	<i>ibid.</i>
Its previous necessity to union with Christ vindicated	92
<i>Vide Life.</i>	

R

RECEIVING of Christ , necessary to salvation	103
The several things included and applied in it	105
How this answers the offers of the gospel, shewn in several particulars	110
Arguments to prove this is the saving act of faith	113
What excellency this act puts upon faith	115
Motives to persuade sinners to it	135
Directions for doing it aright	139
Making it, is the design of preaching the gospel	50
The wonderfulness of it set forth in several particulars	54
Whence preaching the gospel is an effectual means of it	56
Useful inferences from preaching, being the means of it	59
Evidences of not being interested in it	61
How ministers should prosecute this great work	63
Exhortations to sinners who are not, and to such as are interested in it	66
Remission of sin , the nature of it explained	252
It is the privilege of believers only	254
It is the purchase of Christ's blood, and the fruit of rich grace	<i>ibid.</i>
Five useful inferences from the doctrine of it	256
Rest , It is promised to those that come to Christ	181
Three cautions premised for preventing mistakes about it	182
How it results from coming to Christ	183
Five useful inferences from its being in Christ	186
Rogers , (Mr. Daniel) a remark concerning his natural temper	100

S

SPIRIT of God , how he is given to believers	328
How the gift of him proves an interest in Christ	330

	Page
<i>Spirit</i> , Rules for understanding the nature of his workings	333
Evidences of his dwelling in the soul	336
Of God, Doubts answered, in reference to his working	340
<i>Seal</i> , the first five apocalyptic seals briefly described	555
<i>Soul</i> , The essence of it unknown by philosophers	488
The nature and original of it, learned from scripture	489
Proved to be a vital and spiritual substance	495
Shewn to be an immortal and understanding substance	501
It is endued with liberty and dominion	506
It is furnished with various affections and passions	509
It is naturally inclined to the body	510
Various opinions concerning its original	512
Proved to be created of God	514
Objections against its immediate infusion answered	518
The nature of it more clearly explained	522
It makes the death of man very different from that of other creatures	521
It is capable of blessedness when separated from the body	526
How that of any man is naturally of equal dignity with all others	527
Whence one excels another	528
How the evil of sin appears, by considering the excellency of it	537
How the consideration of it should influence parents	531
Necessity of its being quickened with a spiritual principle	533
No acceptable service can be performed to God without it	534
Useful inferences concerning it	545
It is knit to the body by the breath of our nostrils	541
Vide <i>Breath</i> .	
Its immortality proved from the very nature of it	559
Vide <i>Immortality</i> .	
It is tenderly affected towards the body wherein it dwells	589
Several ways whereby it expresses its love to the body	590

T

T EACHING, (of God) how it is not to be understood	308
It consists in the holy Spirit's sanctifying impressions, and gracious assistances	309
Twelve lessons peculiarly taught by this divine teacher	310
Eight excellent properties of it	318
What influence it has in bringing souls to Christ	320
The impossibility of coming to Christ without it	322
Several useful inferences concerning it	323
Signs, whereby it is distinguished from all other teachings	324
<i>Trouble</i> of mind, how intolerable a burden it is	192

U

	Page
<i>UNBELIEF</i> , deprives of all the benefits purchased by Christ	137
The nature of it opened	433
The misery and danger of it	436
Several useful inferences concerning it	437
The aggravation of it, when against light	440
<i>Union</i> between Christ and believers, shadowed forth by four similitudes	34
Its reality proved by several things	35
The nature of it opened	37
Useful inferences from the consideration of it	42
The bands of it are the Spirit and faith	84
It is assuredly known by the in-dwelling of the Spirit	328
Our interest in it is proved by our being new-creatures	345
Between the two natures in Christ. Vid. <i>Hypostatical</i> .	
<i>Upton</i> , (John esq.) The author's epistle to him	2

W

<i>WORD of God</i> , shewn to have a mighty efficacy on men's souls	295
Wherein the efficacy of it consists	296
Whence the efficacy of it flows	298
Useful inferences from the efficacy of it	300
Considerations to promote the efficacy of it	302
Advices to those who feel the power of it	304

Y

<i>YOUNG People</i> , How much it concerns them to be seriously religious betimes	59
---	----

 VOLUME III.

A

	Page
<i>ANGELS</i> , employed in transferring the souls of the righteous to blessedness	31

	Page
<i>Angels</i> , Whence we are now terrified at them	33
<i>Atheism</i> , an unusual cause of eternal destruction	204
Vide <i>Unbelief</i> .	
<i>Abraham</i> , The covenant made with him, not that of innocency made with Adam	497
<i>Theses</i> to prove the warrantableness of infant baptism, from the covenant made with him	541
<i>Antinomianism</i> , abundantly fenced against in the scripture	551
The probable occasions of the rise of it	<i>ibid.</i>
Several of the chief doctrines of it enumerated	555
A general confutation of the principal errors of it	558
The error about justification from eternity confuted	559
The false notion of it about justifying faith detected	564
That we ought not to question our faith, shewn to be a dangerous error in it	568
The notion that men ought not confess their sins, refuted	569
The error, that God sees no sin in his people, detected	572
The notion, that God smites not his people for their sins, disproved	574
That Christ was as sinful as we, and believers as righteous as Christ, another gross error of it, confuted	578
That sin cannot hurt the elect, another dangerous notion of it	584
That saints must do no duty for their own good, shewn to be a corrupt branch of it	586
The error, that the covenant of grace is not made with us, but with Christ, refuted	587
Denying sanctification to be an evidence of justification, another error of it, disproved	590

B

<i>BODY of man</i> , Why it is called a tabernacle	3
It is necessary for the soul to be separated from it by death	5
The reasons of its dissolution	7
<i>Baptism</i> of infants, grounded on the Abrahamatical covenant	496
<i>Theses</i> to prove the validity of it from the covenant of circumcision	541

C

<i>CARES of this world</i> , bereave many of salvation	197
Five considerations to prevent our being destroyed by them	198
<i>Civility</i> , How dependence upon it is destructive to souls	216

	Page
<i>Civility</i> , Considerations to prevent a soul-ruin dependence upon it	217
<i>Custom</i> in sin, is a very useful cause in ruin	193
Means to prevent the danger of a wicked one	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Care of God</i> towards his people, proved from scripture-emblems, 344. From scripture promises, 349. And from scripture instances	350
How and why, it is exercised peculiarly in calamitous times	356
How variously this is expressed in scripture	384
Six reasons of it	385
It extends to the bodies, the souls, and all the concerns of believers	387
Several excellent properties of it enumerated	388
How it is engaged by the divine promises	390
How it is exercised in the divine providence	390
<i>Cary</i> (Philip) a refutation of his notion concerning the covenants	495
A smart rebuke to him, 493. Vide <i>Covenant</i> .	
<i>Chambers</i> of security for God's people, what is meant by them	323
The divine power is one of them in the most distressing times	353
How God's wisdom is represented under this notion	355
How the divine faithfulness is another chamber of refuge	363
The unchangeableness of God opened, as another chamber of rest	373
The divine care opened, as another chamber for securing God's people	384
The love of God represented to us under this figure	392
None but God's people are admitted into them, and why	397
Of security for God's people, The misery of being excluded from them	400
What grounds Christians have to take comfort in them	402
Satan's projects to keep believers out of them	405
How we should get into them, and keep in them	406
Signs of our being in them	411
<i>Circumcision</i> , The covenant of it not the same with that of innocency, 507. Vide <i>Covenant</i> .	
<i>Committing ourselves to God</i> , what is included in it	292
What encouragement believers have to it	294
A remarkable instance of a mother's doing it in reference to her child	293
<i>Conditional</i> , how the covenant of grace is so explained	524
Five arguments proving the covenant of grace to be so	535
Vide <i>Covenant</i> .	
<i>Covenant of circumcision</i> , four arguments to prove it not the same with Adam's covenant of works	513
<i>Covenant of grace</i> , the question stated about its conditionality	524
The nature of its condition explained	526

	Page
<i>Covenant of grace</i> , The conditionality of it proved and vindicated	535
Seven <i>Theses</i> concerning the interest of infants in it	541
<i>Covenant of Sinai</i> , the absurdity of making this the same with that of innocency	499
Wherein it differed from that made with Adam before the fall	<i>ibid.</i>
How it is said not to be of faith	515
<i>Courage</i> , some eminent examples of it	298
<i>Creature</i> , <i>Vide new Creature.</i>	
<i>Crisp</i> (Dr.) the author's preface concerning his works	413

D

<i>DEATH</i> , How we may sweeten it to ourselves	11
Signs of being prepared for it	12
Holy persons should not be terrified at the approach of it	96
The necessity of union with Christ before it comes	98
How prejudicial it is to be distracted about earthly things in it	<i>ibid.</i>
How good Christians may argue themselves into a desire of it	102
The great and happy change it makes in the state of believers	96
Why Christians are so often unwilling to submit to it	107
What poor comfort a great estate yields a guilty sinner in it	177
The terrible change it makes in the state of wicked people	179
How much better than life it is to a good Christian, especially if suffered for Christ	302
<i>Doors</i> , what shutting them means, in (Isa. xxvi. 20.)	326

E

<i>EDUCATION</i> , a bad one is the high-way to destruction	98
Three directions to prevent the mischief of a wicked one	184
<i>Examples</i> , following those which are bad, an usual cause of perdition	190
Three considerations to prevent the malignity of evil ones	191
<i>Excuse</i> , <i>Vid. Apology.</i>	
<i>Errors</i> , (mental) several Hebrew words explained, by which they are expressed	424
They bind the conscience, as well as truth	429
The exceeding danger of the mind's being affected with them	532
The specious pretences often made for defending them	433

	Page
<i>Errors</i> , Providence has in every age prepared some to oppose them	434
One usually draws into another	436
They commonly spring up, and thrive most in a time of liberty	437
A weak defence of truth tends to increase them	438
Not to be cured by force, but rational conviction	439
When pertinaciously held by Christians, they prove a great stumbling-block	440
They always, in the end, bring loss and shame to their authors and abettors	441
Means to prevent God's permitting us to fall into them	443
Five rules to prevent them, under pretence of the obscurity of scripture	445
Abuse of Christian liberty, an occasion of them	446
Means to prevent them, by a right use of Christian liberty	448
Slothfulness an usual cause of them	449
How to prevent them by a diligent search of scripture	452
Instability of mind, a frequent cause of them	454
Four rules to prevent them, by fixing the mind	455
An over eager desire of peace of conscience sometimes occasions them	457
Means to prevent them, by a right method of peace	459
Rules to prevent their springing from over great credulity	460
A prevention of them from vain curiosity	462
Remedies against them, when springing from the arrogance of human reason	465
Defensatives against them, when rising from rash zeal	467
The principal impulsive cause of them is Satan	469
Four rules to prevent Satan's leading us into them	471
False teachers, the devil's instruments in propagating of them	472
Means to secure us from being led into them by false teachers	474
Means to prevent their springing from the abuse of ordinances	477
Rules to prevent their arising from an irregular liberty of prophesying	480
Means to prevent their promotion by enthusiasm. Directions to secure young Christians from being infected with them	486
Over hasty determinations about disputable matters an occasion of them	487
Five remedies against their springing from hasty resolutions	488
Six usual consecutaries concerning them	490

F

<i>FORMAL</i> hypocrisy, a great ruin to souls	214
Means to prevent the destructive effects of it	215

	Page
<i>Faithfulness</i> of God, what it is, considered absolutely	363
Five evidences of it	364
The assured grounds we have to believe it	365
A view of it, as it relates to the divine promises	366
A short view of it, as exerted in God's providences	367
This is one chamber of security, in which believers should enter	370
<i>Fear</i> , that which is natural is common to all men	245
Several things which render it useful	248
A description of that which is holy	252
The usefulness of natural fear	253
The good use which God makes of sinful fear	254
Three excellent uses of religious fear	256
<i>Fear</i> , (sinful) springs from ignorance, 258. From guilt upon the conscience, 260. From unbelief, 263. From observing the promiscuousness of providence, 266. And from an immoderate love of life	268
It causes distractions in duty, 271. Occasions hypocrisy, 273. Strengthens temptations, 274. Produces cowardliness, 276. Is the root of apostasy, <i>ibid.</i> And puts under great bondage of spirit	277
None but good Christians may in this life be released from it, nor they perfectly	281
Remedies against it, are studying the covenant of grace	<i>ibid.</i>
Considering the mischiefs of it, 285. Being prepared for sufferings, 288. Trust in God, 291. Having our affections mortified to the world, 295. Observing the examples of eminent sufferers, 298. A comfortable sense of pardoning mercy, 301. A good conscience, 304. Recorded experiences of God's care and faithfulness, 306. Consideration of Christ's providential kingdom, 308. Subjecting our reasonings to faith, 309. The fear of God ruling in the heart, 310. Vide <i>Slavish fear</i> .	
<i>Flavel</i> (Mr. John) His preface concerning Adam's and Abraham's covenants	419
<i>Flood</i> of sin, a presage of an inundation of sufferings	339

G

<i>God</i> , the various ways of seeing him	46
<i>Guilt</i> , for sinners to be secure under it, is a deplorable case	201

H

	Page
<i>H</i> ABITATION, who are prepared for the heavenly one	18
<i>H</i> eaven, There are comparatively but few in the way to it	219
Striving is necessary to obtain it	222
What foretastes of it have been enjoyed	57
<i>H</i> ell, the dreadfulfulness of it	129
Several names of it, with the reason of them	131
Why it is called a prison	<i>ibid.</i>
The terribleness of it shown in six propositions	133
Twelve ways to it discovered, and methods proposed for escaping them	183
A bad education, one usual way to it barred up	184
Affected ignorance leads to it, 186. This way shut up	188
Means to prevent evil examples from leading to it	190
Preservatives from being brought to it by ill customs	193
The way to it, by sinful pleasures, shut up	196
The passage to it, by distracting cares, barred up	198
The way to it, by groundless presumption, shut up	202
The way to it, by principles of atheism, barred	205
The way of profaneness leading to it, barred up	208
The way to it, by prejudices against godliness, closed up	211
The passage to it, by formal hypocrisy, barred up	214
The way of depending upon moral honesty, barred by three considerations	217

I

<i>I</i> GNORANCE, of the evil and danger of sin, one of the causes of men's not coming to Christ	216
When affected it is the high-way to destruction	217
Means to prevent the dangerous effects of it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>I</i> ndignation of God, why sometimes poured out upon the world	328
God's own people are concerned in the time of it	330
How we should be affected when it breaks forth	331
God usually gives warning before he pours it out	339
Signs of its likelihood to break forth	340
<i>I</i> nfants, the baptizing of them vindicated	495
<i>Vide Baptism</i>	
<i>J</i> udgments, Why God usually gives warning before he inflicts them	339
Unsensibleness of their approach, to be lamented	334
<i>Vide Indignation.</i>	

M

	Page
<i>MORAL honesty</i> , how it comes short of saving grace	216
Vid. <i>Civility</i> .	

N

<i>N<small>AME</small></i> (of God) compared to several things	327
<i>Neck</i> , what is meant by reaching to it, (Isa. viii. 8.)	242

P

<i>P<small>ARDON</small></i> , what an invaluable mercy it is	143
Vid. <i>Remission</i> .	
<i>P<small>LEASURES</small></i> , Those of sin are very dear bought	141
Multitudes perish through the bait of sensual ones	195
Considerations to prevent the danger of sinful ones	196
<i>P<small>REJUDICES</small></i> , against religion, a great cause of damnation	210
Vid. <i>Professors</i> .	
<i>P<small>RISON</small></i> , why hell is so called	131
The wide difference between that of God, and that of men	131
Vide <i>Hell</i> .	
<i>P<small>RESUMPTION</small></i> , how it is a great cause of losing the soul	201
Five considerations to awaken from it	202
<i>P<small>ROFANENESS</small></i> , a most notorious and assured way to hell	208
Considerations to prevent the ruin of those who are guilty of it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>P<small>ROFESSORS</small></i> , Scandals given by them, one cause of souls being lost	211
Considerations to prevent the danger of being scandalized by ill ones	212
<i>P<small>EOPLE OF GOD</small></i> , a negative and positive description of them	398
Why none but these have a hiding-place in the time of trouble	399
The shiftless condition of those who are not so	400
They ought not to droop like others under trouble	402
Their safety, by having their refuge in God	404
<i>P<small>OWER OF GOD</small></i> , a security to the saints in trouble	344
It is omnipotent, sovereign, and everlasting	<i>ibid.</i>
It works beyond creature-power, creature-expectation, and human probability	347
Considered in relation to his promises, 349, and providences	350
Encouragements to trust in it under difficulties	351

<i>Preservation</i> , (in danger) not extended to all saints, nor to them only	337
Why it is usually granted to some good men	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Promises</i> , several kinds of them enumerated	368

R

<i>REDEEMING the time</i> , what this means	25
<i>Redemption</i> , the application of the benefits of it largely considered, 452. Vid. <i>Application</i> .	
<i>Refuge</i> , the folly of making any thing so, short of God	403
<i>Regeneration</i> , how it differs from vocation, sanctification, and conversion, (Prop. 1.)	455
<i>Reward</i> , an ignorant mistake of this word noted	448
<i>Resignation</i> of God, the nature of it shewn in several particulars	408
What encouragement God's people have to it	409
<i>Ruin</i> , (of a people) tokens of its approach	339

S

<i>SEASONS</i> (of salvation) are of two sorts	225
What things are necessary to render any time so	227
Five special ones instanced in	228
Several arguments to engage our improvement of them	230
Ten considerations to awaken us to take hold of the present one	235
<i>Self-tormentors</i> , that, and how the souls of wicked men are so in hell	138
<i>Sin</i> , the pleasures of it are very dear bought	141
The evil and danger of it argued from its punishment	<i>ibid.</i>
It is wisdom to endure any thing, rather than commit it	149
<i>Soul</i> , How fitly it is called a spirit, after its separation from the body	21
Its separation from the body mental or real	24
Its actual separation considered, <i>in fieri</i> , and <i>in facto esse</i>	26
The wonderful change made by its separation from the body	28
That of the godly received at death by the angels	31
It thinks and acts out of the body	34
After death, that of the righteous is complete in holiness, 35.	
Is advanced into heaven, 38. And filled with delight	40
It then easily advances in knowledge	45
And is in a more excellent way of communion with God	48
Here we may conceive of it when separate from the body	60
Its value above the whole world, proved in twelve particulars	155

	Page
<i>Soul</i> , How grossly it is abused by serving fleshly lusts	168
<i>Salvation</i> , securing it, is the greatest business of life	170
It is the special care of heaven	271
How valuable are the means of its salvation	173
Why it cannot live upon earthly things	177
It is wisdom to venture the loss of all things for preserving it	178
How great and irreparable the eternal loss of it is	181
Twelve ways of losing it, with means to prevent it, Vid.	
<i>Hell</i>	
<i>Souls</i> , (of men) in how different a manner they are separated from the body	63
What notices some have had, before-hand, of their separation	67
Arguments to prove their not desiring re-union with their bodies	89
Arguments to prove their desire of being re-united	91
The excellency of them inferred from their large capacity	121
How reasonable it is they should be heavenly while in the body	125
What duty lies upon them who have charge of them	407
<i>Spirits in prison</i> , what this expression means in St. Peter	130
<i>Striving</i> is necessary to obtain salvation	226
<i>Slavish fear</i> , (of sufferings) a plea for it, from the strangeness of suffering for religion, answered	312
What is pleaded for it from the weakness of constitution answered	314
A plea from experience of fainting under former trials answered	316
Replies to the plea for it from a melancholy temper	<i>ibid.</i>
That which springs from a dread of God's hiding his face encouraged against	318
The plea from the length and sharpness of religion replied to	319

T

<i>TIME</i> , Five considerations against the presuming upon that which is to come	202
What reasons we have diligently to improve it	12
The shortness of it should wean us from the world	16
What St. Paul means by it, and redeeming of it	226
<i>Truth</i> is the proper object of the understanding	426
Things less, and more necessary to the knowledge of it	428
Error, under the appearance of it, binds the conscience	429

V

	Page
<i>V</i> ISION, Several excellent properties of the beatific one	119
<i>U</i> nbelief, It is a sure way to hell	204
Six weighty considerations to prevent the danger of it	205
<i>U</i> nregenerate, How little reason such have to boast of their thriving in the world	220
<i>U</i> nchangeableness, of God discovered, and confirmed three ways	374
Several things wherein this attribute is ascribed to God	375
A view of it, as displayed in the divine promises and providences	378
How we should shut ourselves into this as a chamber of refuge	380
<i>U</i> nity (Gospel) A sermon recommending it to Christians	592
The nature of it opened	<i>ibid.</i>
The necessity and desirableness of it evinced	596
Six motives exciting to press after it	599
Seven directions for attaining and promoting of it	603

W

<i>W</i> ISDOM, It may be called the council-chamber of heaven	355
The general nature, and excellent properties of it	356
How it is displayed with reference to the divine promises	357
How it is exerted in the providence of God	358
Instances of its exercise in the troubles of his people	359
How believers should repose themselves in it	367

Z

<i>Z</i> EAL, When about externals in religion, is hurtful to souls, 215. Vid. <i>Formal hypocrisy.</i>	
---	--



VOLUME IV.

B

	Page
<i>B</i> ARS, those which shut up the hearts of sinners against Christ	44

	Page
<i>Bars</i> , The strength of those which bar up sinners' hearts	45
How gloriously grace appears in removing them from the heart	50
<i>Bedford</i> , (William duke of) the author's epistle to him	336
<i>Believing in Christ</i> , a wonderful work of grace	193
<i>Birth</i> , how providence appears in the place and time of it	365
<i>Britain</i> , the excellency of it beyond other nations	<i>ibid.</i>
What reasons we have to bless God for being born in it	366

C

<i>CONVERSION</i> , a glorious work of grace	50
The necessity of it to salvation shewn	51
What sinners themselves may do towards it	53
<i>Callings</i> , (civil) how the wisdom of providence appears in ordering them	387
<i>Children</i> , how much it concerns them to improve a religious education	375
<i>Christ</i> , his earnestness in suing to sinners, 113. Vid. <i>Earnestness</i> .	
The wonderful condescension of his grace towards sinners	126
The great advantages gained by receiving him	131
Directions for closing with him in the gospel-way	137
What is implied and included in a willingness to receive him	144
His willingness to receive the vilest sinners demonstrated	148
How his voice opens the hearts of sinners, 169. Vid. <i>Voicc</i> .	
His coming in, not hindered by the unworthiness of penitent sinners	211
What blessings he brings with him into the soul	214
Why he brings his entertainment with him	223
<i>Church</i> , the prosperity of it very desirable	311
The best saints may be denied a sight of its outward glory	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Civilized</i> people, a serious application to them	166
<i>Comfort</i> , none that is real to be had without serious religion	226
Directions for continuing and increasing of it	232
<i>Commandments</i> , vid. <i>Ten Commandments</i> .	
<i>Coming in</i> (of Christ) what was intended by it	212
Believers' unworthiness is no hindrance to it	213
The blessings which are consequent upon it	214
<i>Communion</i> (with Christ) the reality of it asserted	236
Several kinds of it enumerated	237
What it is not	238
What is presupposed in it	239

	Page
<i>Communion</i> , (With God) consists in contemplating his attributes	240
And in exercising of grace under divine providences	245
Ten evidences proving the reality of it	246
Twenty several excellencies of it enumerated	250
Several useful inferences from the doctrine of it	260
Directions for attaining the highest degree of it	263
<i>Conscience</i> , the nature of it explained	271
What the light of it is	272
How it urgeth the soul to obedience	274
How it is hindered in its work by men's corruptions	275
Shame and pride are great restraints upon it	276
How its convictions of ungodliness are imprisoned	279
How its convictions of unrighteousness are restrained	<i>ibid.</i>
How its convictions of uncleanness are sometimes silenced	281
How its convictions of sin for not reproofing others are rendered ineffectual	286
How its convictions of uncharitableness are restrained	<i>ibid.</i>
How its convictions of mis-spending time are too often mastered	287
Why stifling its convictions are highly provoking to God	288
The valuableness of a tender one	291
Improvements of the doctrine concerning it	290
Motives to close in with convictions	294
Serious questions propounded for the awakening of it	298
Directions for making it our friend	300
<i>Contentment</i> , arguments to persuade both the unregenerate, and the regenerate to it, under all providences	431
<i>Conversion</i> , How God's providence appears in ordering the means of it	384
<i>Conviction</i> of sin, how to be improved	279
General ones concerning men's estate	280
More particular ones concerning ungodliness and unrighteousness	282
Of conscience, the danger of stifling them	292
Vide <i>Conscience</i> .	

D

<i>DELIVERANCE</i> , what things render it truly great	313
What sense it becomes us to have it	317
Useful instructions from ours at the revolution	321
The beginnings of one, yield arguments in prayer for completing it	323
What further mercies it gives ground to hope for	326
How it encourages the prayers of God's people	327
The wickedness of those who murmur at it	330

	Page
<i>Deliverance</i> , Directions for the due improvement of it	332
<i>Deliverances</i> , a relation of some remarkable ones at sea	497—515
<i>Despair</i> , a remarkable providence towards one in it	382
<i>Difficulties</i> of religion are usually greatest at the beginning	227
<i>Doubtful providences</i> , how we may know our way in them	428

E

<i>EARNEST</i> of the Spirit, the nature and excellency of it opened	221
<i>Earnestness</i> of Christ, in desiring the salvation of sinners, evidenced	113
Several useful inferences drawn from it	128
<i>England</i> , the danger of Popery prevailing in it	557—586
<i>Enjoyment</i> of the gospel, a great mercy, 155.	Vid. <i>Gospel</i> .
<i>Eye</i> , the many guards it has to secure it	402

F

<i>F</i> AITH (in Christ) a wonderful work of grace	194
Three things which evidence the difficulty of it	196
The excellent properties of it, when true	205
<i>False worship</i> , the evil and danger of it	521
Vid. <i>Idolatry</i> . vid. <i>Superstition</i> .	
<i>Family</i> , what a special mercy it is to be brought forth in a religious one	370
How we should endeavour to promote religion in our own	537

G

<i>G</i> OSPEL , it is too much wanting in many sermons	16
The tenors of it are recorded, and will be witnessed in the great day	20
The enjoyment of it is an invaluable mercy	155
The removal of it is a terrible judgment	189
<i>Grace</i> , the wonderful effects of it in conversion	50
Vid. <i>Conversion</i> .	
<i>Goodly mountain</i> , what Moses meant by it in his prayer	310

H

<i>H</i> EARTS of men are naturally barred up against Christ	41
Several bars which hinder Christ's entrance into them	44
God's special grace necessary to open them	50

	Page
<i>Harts</i> , What sinners may do towards opening them to Christ	52
Signs of their being opened to the Lord Jesus	54
The great advantages of opening them to Christ	58
Six motives to open them to the Lord Jesus	108
Of men, the great benefits of Christ's coming into them	148
Their not opening to Christ, an argument of their woful hardness	205
<i>Hearing</i> the Scribes and Pharisees, in what sense it was lawful	537
<i>Heavenly-mindedness</i> , is a duty under all providences	486
<i>Honeywood</i> (Mrs.) a remarkable providence concerning her	385

I

<i>IGNORANCE</i> , how it is a great hinderance to conversion	44
<i>Judgment</i> , (the last) witnesses for or against sinners in it	20
Several things which will be attested therein	22
Reasons why God will have witnesses produced in it	23
Several useful inferences concerning it	24
How much it concerns people to prepare for it	26
<i>Idolatry</i> , an earnest dissuasive from it	521
The nature, and several kinds of it	522
Arguments to engage our care for avoiding it	528
<i>Joy in God</i> , why, and how, this should be maintained under the saddest providences	439
<i>Joys in heaven</i> , how much they exceed the greatest joys of religion here	228

K

<i>KNOCK</i> , at what doors Christ is said to do this	88
What is implied in our Saviour's doing it	90
By what instruments Christ performs this work	94
In what manner our Lord does it, shewn in ten particulars	98
Several useful inferences from Christ's doing it	104

L

<i>LIBERTY</i> , of Protestant dissenters, how to be improved by them, shewn in an epistle	6
A good improvement of it the best way to have it continued	12
<i>Locks</i> , enumeration of several which fasten up the heart against Christ, 438. Vid. <i>Bars</i>	
<i>Life</i> , (spiritual) six signs by which it is discovered in the souls of men	192

M

	Page
<i>MINISTERS</i> , some evident providences relating to them	378
Things necessary to the call of them	533
How those of our nation are called and ordained	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Ministry</i> , a faithful one is a great blessing	518
The danger of attending that which leads to superstition and idolatry	527
<i>Mortification</i> of sin, how it is helped forward by divine providence	405
<i>Moses</i> , his earnest prayer for admission into Canaan	308
How his prayer, for what God had before refused to give, is to be understood	310
<i>Mystery</i> , what is imported in this word being written on the whore's forehead	521

N

<i>NEIGHBOURHOOD</i> , how, and when, we should especially endeavour to promote religion in it	540
--	-----

O

<i>OPENING</i> the heart to Christ, marks whereby it may be known	44
The difficulty of this work	196
The principal and subordinate instruments of it	198
It is the great design carried on in the gospel	199
What men too often erroneously mistake for it	202
Motives to persuade people to it	229
Advices to those who have experienced it	232
<i>Ordinances</i> of the gospel, evidences and advantages of Christ's presence in them	31
The necessity of Christ's presence in them	34
Useful inferences concerning our Saviour's presence in them	36
Of the gospel, the great dignity of them	188

P

<i>PATIENCE</i> of God, the nature of it explained	63
The glorious manifestations of it towards sinners	65
Several reasons of its being exercised	69
Divers useful inferences concerning it	71
What obligations we have to imitate it	77

	Page
<i>Patience</i> of God, The great danger of abusing it	79
The happiness of rightly improving it	86
<i>Prejudices</i> against holiness, a great hinderance to conversion	47
<i>Presence</i> of Christ, the various kinds of it	31
The advantage and necessity of it in gospel-ordinances	34
Vide <i>Ordinances</i> .	
<i>Presumption</i> , how it resists Christ's entrance into the soul	47
<i>Pride</i> , how it hinders sinners from receiving Christ	45
<i>Pardon</i> , shewn to be the sweetest of all mercies	214
<i>Parents</i> , what a mercy it is to be born of good ones	370
How much it concerns them to take care of their children's souls	374
<i>Peace</i> with God, the excellency of it shewn in three things	216
<i>Perseverance</i> of saints, an earnest persuasion to it under greatest trials	517
<i>Peter Martyr</i> , his remarkable saying upon hearing a bell ring to mass	531
<i>Pharisees</i> , in what sense Christ allowed his disciples to hear them	535
<i>Popery</i> , something of the danger of it in England	558
Predictions of an inundation of it	<i>ibid.</i>
Advances made towards the introduction of it	559
The ceremonies of its being used, a token of its prevailing	564
The persecutions and divisions of Protestants, give advantage to it	565
Abuse of mercies, lays us open to it	567
Addresses to the king, the parliament, &c. concerning the danger of it	569
Arguments of proving it to be a false religion	574
It is a bloody, a blasphemous, an uncomfortable, and a damnable religion	573
Means to secure the nation against it	581
<i>Preservation</i> from dangers, how eminently providence sometimes appears in it	402
<i>Providence</i> of God, best viewed, as the fulfilling of God's word	339
The contemplation of it very pleasant	346
Good men, especially in straits, should recollect the workings of it	347
The difference between the views of it now and in heaven	348
The affairs of saints are conducted by a special one	349
Why the Epicureans denied it	350
Eight demands to convince the government of it	351
How it works in our formation and protection in the womb	362
How it orders the time and place of our birth	365
How it determines the stock we spring from	370
Remarkable instances of it in the conversion of sinners	376

	Page
<i>Providence</i> , In carrying on the work of conversion	378
How the wisdom of it shines forth in men's civil callings	387
Eminent appearances of it sometimes in our relations	391
Remarkable instances of it in providing for persons and families	395
How we should depend upon it for provision	397
Eminent displays of it in preserving from sin	398
How it appears in outward preservations	402
The aid it gives to God's people, in the work of mortification	405
What reason we have to admire God's condescension in it	410
How we are obliged to observe it, especially in times of trouble	413
As thorough a knowledge of it as possible, should be endeavoured after	416
We should consider how the scripture is fulfilled in it	419
How we should eye God's perfection in it	406
Wherein we should endeavour to suit our minds to it	428
Why both sinners and saints should be content with its disposals	431
We should not despond under the seeming delays of it	433
We must not pry too curiously into the secrets of it	435
We may maintain sweet communion with God in it	436
The pleasures of life must consist in observing it	439
Observing it is an excellent antidote against atheism	442
Remembering the gracious workings of it, supports faith in future exigencies	445
The recognition of it, yields continual matter of praise to God	448
The due observance of it endears Christ to our souls	450
Observing it tends to melt the heart before God	453
Remembering it will settle the heart under changes	455
The due observance of it conduces much to holiness	458
The study of it will be of singular use in a dying hour	461
It should be acknowledged in every thing that befalls us	464
Six useful corollaries concerning it	465
How we may discover our duty under the darkness of it	467
It sometimes delays to give mercies prayed for	472
Whence the spirits of good men are apt to sink under the delays of it	473
Considerations to support under the delays of it	474
How we may know when an afflicting one is sanctified	478
Signs that a prosperous one is not sanctified	479
Symptoms of a favourable one being sanctified to us	480
Its contrary aspects on good men, usually cause disorder in their spirits	481
How the mind may be kept, even under the contrary workings of it	485
Helps to resign our wills to God, when a sad one is approaching	486

	Page
<i>Providences</i> , should be recorded, when peculiarly remarkable	347
It is very useful to keep a written journal of them	397
Two narratives of eminently favourable ones at sea	498
<i>Provisions</i> , how divine providence sometimes appears in making them	395

R

<i>RECORDS</i> are kept of the offers of grace made to us	22
What things are registered in those of heaven	<i>ibid.</i>
Reasons of them, and inferences from the consideration of them	23
Serious reflections concerning them	27
<i>Relations</i> , eminent providences of God in reference to them	395
<i>Revolution</i> , a sermon on the happy one (in 1688)	308
<i>Rome</i> , a remark upon its being called Babylon and Egypt	516

S

<i>SECURITY</i> of sinners, some causes of that which is groundless	104
<i>Sleep</i> , sin has cast the souls of sinners into a deep one	<i>ibid.</i>
Vid. <i>Security</i> .	
<i>Satan</i> , why he makes great opposition to the gospel	204
<i>Scribes</i> and <i>Pharisees</i> , in what sense it was lawful to hear them	535
<i>Scripture</i> , its truth appears from the effects of it	187
<i>Sea</i> , an account of remarkable preservations on it	498
<i>Sealing of the Spirit</i> , the excellency of it	219
<i>Sins</i> , the heinousness of them should not hinder believing in Christ	156
Several sorts and aggravations of them	162
<i>Sinners</i> , the more heinous encouraged, and the more civilized excited to come to Christ	143
<i>Sion</i> , how we should be affected with the miseries of it	51
<i>Southerland</i> , (George earl of) Mr. Flavel's epistle to him	307
<i>Superstition</i> , the nature of it opened	522
Five arguments to dissuade from it	528

T

<i>TRUTH</i> is the proper object of the understanding	426
How many ways it is held in unrighteousness	282
<i>Temptations</i> , how eminently providence sometimes appears in preventing them	398

U

	Page
UNBELIEF , whence the damning nature of it springs	203
<i>Voice</i> of Christ, the nature and several kinds of it	170
The properties of it	172
The most usual objects of it	178
The remarkable effects of it	181
That many hear it not, who hear the word, is matter of lamentation	186
Having heard it, is a great encouragement to come to Christ	187
Several sorts of people exhorted to hear it	191

W

<i>WITNESS</i> for or against sinners in the last judgment	20
<i>Will-worship</i> , is a kind of idolatry	522
<i>Womb</i> , how providence appears in our formation and protection therein	361
<i>Works</i> of God, what renders them truly great Vid. <i>Deliverance</i> .	311
<i>World</i> , how we may keep ourselves pure from its corruptions	544

Y

<i>YOUNG people</i> , a serious address to them concerning their danger	191
---	-----

VOLUME V.

A

	Page
ADULTERY , the great evil and danger of it Vid. <i>Uncleanness</i> .	315
<i>Afar-off</i> , how God understands our thoughts so	336
<i>Arable-ground</i> , soul-improving meditations upon it	41
<i>Autumn</i> , soul-profiting meditations upon gathering fruits in it Vid. <i>Fruits</i> .	150
<i>Assurance</i> of salvation, on what grounds a sincere Christian builds it	583

B

	Page
<i>BAD-ground</i> , edifying meditations upon the improvement of it	48
The improvement of it spiritualized in a poem	53
An awakening meditation on the incurableness of some such	55
<i>Barren-ground</i> , a soul-awakening meditation concerning it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Barrenness</i> , (spiritual) the dreadfulness of this judgment	56
<i>Beasts</i> , meditations upon clogging of them when they go astray	191
<i>Believers</i> , how far true grace may prevail in them	48
<i>Birds</i> , meditations upon the early singing of them	190
Meditation on their being caught with an hair	191
<i>Bird-nests</i> , a useful meditation on the curious frame of some	189

C

<i>CALLINGS</i> , God sometimes blasts men's greatest industry in them	396
Why providence frequently disappoints people in them	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Canute</i> , (king of England) a remarkable story of him	265
<i>Cattle</i> , a meditation on the husbandman's care of them	158
Thoughts on the hard labour and cruel usage of some of them	181
Meditation upon seeking them when lost	167
Observations and reflections on fattening them	170
A poem on preparing them for slaughter	173
<i>Chaff</i> , how the wicked are compared to it	136
<i>Compass</i> , the necessity of it in navigation spiritualized	255
Vide <i>Mariner's Compass</i> .	
<i>Concealment</i> , many encourage themselves in sin, by the hope of it	373
The vanity of hoping for it, in sinning against God	375
Vide <i>Secresy</i> .	
<i>Conscience</i> , how it is represented by the helm of a ship	231
<i>Contentment</i> , Why good men have it	41
Queries to excite good men to abound in it	46
<i>Corn</i> , the danger of it between sowing and harvest spiritualized	100
<i>Corn-land</i> , meditations upon the plowing of it	61
<i>Covenant</i> , (of grace) the comfort it yields under trouble	634

D

<i>DEARTH</i> , (through want of rain) the terribleness of this judgment	81
Meditation, and a poem upon the dreadfulness of it, in a spiritual sense. Vide <i>Famine</i> .	86—88

	Page
<i>Decays</i> of faithfulness, may be great in a Christian	48
Encouragements to endeavour a recovery from them	52
<i>Deeds</i> , (written) meditations upon men's care to prove and preserve them. <i>Vide Husbandmen.</i>	178
<i>Deer</i> , a meditation on the hunting of one	195
<i>Delays</i> , the danger of making them in religion <i>Vid. Repentance.</i>	337
<i>Delight</i> , (in spiritual duties) when it is of the right kind	37
It is very reasonable, and the want of it to be lamented	39
<i>Disappointments</i> , (in men's callings) several causes of them mentioned and explained	396
Divers sins which sometimes are the procuring cause of them	398
Several considerations to quiet our minds under them	402
We should especially take heed of eternal ones	405
<i>Discontent</i> , considerations to fortify the mind against it	45
<i>Dog</i> , meditation on his love to his master	193
<i>Drunkenness</i> , an elegant description of it from St. Austin	297
It was too odious to many of the heathens	<i>ibid.</i>
The exceeding evil and danger of it shewn in ten particulars	299, &c.
<i>Death</i> , considerations to raise a Christian above the fear of it	490
A supposed mistake about means to prevent it should not cause excessive grief	658
<i>Deceivers</i> , (of themselves) the danger of being such	517
There are too many such among professors	518
Four causes of men's being such	513
Cautions in reference to the abounding of such	524
Warnings to professors to take heed of being such	525
Directions to those who are satisfied they are not so	527
<i>Doubtful seasons</i> , how we should keep our hearts in them	480
<i>Vid. Heart.</i>	
<i>Duties</i> of religion, how sincerity is discovered by the performance of them	566

E

<i>ESTATE</i> , Meditation on men's care for securing their temporal one	178
Trouble for want of heirs to enjoy it, considered	661
<i>Examination</i> of ourselves, several motives to it	592
Rules to prevent Christians from being over severe in it	596
Rules to prevent hypocrites from deceiving themselves in it	599
Several useful advices in relation to it. <i>Vid. Trial.</i>	601

F

	Page
<i>F</i> LAMINE, of God's word, the nature and dreadfulness of it	82
<i>F</i> inch, a meditation upon the singing of a blind one	189
<i>F</i> inches, meditation on shooting two of them when fighting in the air	188
<i>F</i> ishes, God's providence to be observed in the plenty and variety of them	267
The greater devouring the lesser, is an emblem of oppressors	273
<i>F</i> ishermen, their art is an emblem of Satan's subtilities	269
<i>F</i> lavel, (the author) his epistle to Robert and William Savary, esqrs.	2
Poems to him on his <i>Husbandry Spiritualized</i>	10—13
His epistle to the country reader	13
His poem to the reader	15
<i>F</i> lowers, a meditation on the sudden withering of them	202
Meditation on the tenderness of some choice ones	203
<i>F</i> ornication, the great evil and danger of it	315
Vid. <i>Uncleanness</i> .	
<i>F</i> rederick (Sir John) the author's epistle to him, &c.	293
<i>F</i> ruit-trees, a meditation on the ingrafting of them	141
Vid. <i>Ingrafting</i> .	
<i>F</i> ruits, a meditation on gathering them in	150

G

<i>G</i> ARDEN, meditation on the new modelling of one	199
A meditation on a heedless tread in a curious one	200
<i>G</i> oldfinches and sparrows, a meditation on their mixing together	186
<i>G</i> raff, a spiritual improvement of its union with the stock	145
<i>G</i> old, true grace fitly compared to it for its excellency	528
Vid. <i>Grace</i> .	
<i>G</i> race, Wherein it excels the most excellent gifts	528
The preciousness of that which is true, set forth in several particulars	530
Useful inferences concerning the preciousness of it	532
How the trial of it is compared to that of gold	533
A discourse of its trial, is attended with various difficulties	535
Divers ways enumerated, by which the sincerity of it is tried	537
Prosperity is a great trial of the truth of it	538
What probation adversity makes of it	543
How indwelling sin discovers the soundness or unsoundness of it	550
How it is tried by the performance of religious duties	566
How the sincerity of it is tried by sufferings for religion	574
Why God exposes his people to so many trials of it	575

	Page
<i>Grace</i> , That which is inherent, is not preserved by its own strength	585
Want of trying it, is the ruin of many professors	587

H

<i>HARVEST</i> , a meditation on the patient expectation of it	104
The season of it spiritualized in several instances	105
Meditation on the joy occasioned by it	126
<i>Helm</i> of a ship, an emblem of conscience. <i>Vid. Ship.</i>	231
<i>Hind</i> , the hunting of it, an emblem of Christ's suffering	195
<i>Horse</i> , a meditation concerning one in a fat pasture	194
<i>Husbandman</i> , his industry, a lively emblem of the Christian life	27
The advantages of his diligence is an encouragement to a Christian's hope	32
His cheerfulness, how teachable to a Christian	37
His patient waiting for harvest spiritualized. <i>Vid. Harvest.</i>	104
A meditation upon his care for posterity	174
His diligence in proving and preserving his deeds, spiritually improved	178
<i>Husbandry</i> , how fitly the church is called God's, shewn in twenty-six propositions	17
Useful inferences from God's church being his husbandry	24
How we may spiritualize the several parts of it	26
<i>Heart</i> , a general account of the keeping of it	425
Six things included in the keeping of it	426
What kind of work keeping it is	428
How keeping it conduces to the honour of God	429
<i>Vid. Keeping.</i>	
How it may be kept humble in prosperity	437
How it may be kept from desponding in adversity	441
Means of settling it in the time of Sion's troubles	445
How it may be preserved from distracting fears in public dangers	451
Helps to its trusting God in a time of want	457
How it may be kept from vain thoughts in religious duties	463
Eight remedies against its revengeful motions under injuries	469
How it may be kept meek and patient under great provocations	474
Means of securing it under strong temptations	477
How it may be kept from desponding under desertion and doubts	480
Means of keeping it stedfast in sufferings for religion	487
How it may be reconciled to death in a time of sickness	490
The keeping of it hindered by fruitless controversies and earthly thoughts	496
Ten motives to engage our diligence in keeping it	498
A sixfold means for keeping it rightly	504

	Page
<i>Hcart</i> , Encouragements to those who diligently keep it	507
How much the keeping and searching of it excels all other studies	509
<i>Hypocrisy</i> , the vanity of thinking to hide it	573
Six things thought, without ground, necessary signs of it	580
Queries for discovering of it	598
Six false tokens of being clear from it	599
Seven directions to preserve the soul from it	601
<i>Hypocrites</i> , How far they may be like sincere Christians	430
All their pains in religion are lost labour	450

I

<i>IDLE words</i> , the evil of indulging ourselves in using them	307
Rules for avoiding them	316
<i>Impotency</i> , the unreasonableness of pleading it for the neglect of duty	340
<i>Ingrafting</i> of fruit-trees, a spiritual improvement of it	141
<i>Indwelling sin</i> , how it discovers the soundness or unsoundness of our hearts	550
How far a hypocrite may be restrained from it	551
How God's children are kept from closing with it	553
How differently the regenerate and unregenerate hate it	554
How differently bad and good men are troubled for it	556
Difference between sinners and saints, in reference to the dominion of it	560
How differently God's children and others oppose it	563

K

<i>KNOWLEDGE</i> of God, proved to extend to all secrets	371
Several useful inferences from the perfection of it	378
<i>Keeping the heart</i> , several things included in it	423
Several properties of this work	426
How it conduces to the honour of God, and the sincerity of our religion	430
It puts a beauty to our profession, and yields comfort to our souls	432
The improvement of our graces depends upon it	435
It is necessary to the stability of our souls	436
Special seasons which call for our utmost diligence	437
Vide <i>Heart</i> .	

L

<i>LABOURERS</i> , God sometimes blasts those men in their callings	396
---	-----

	Page
<i>Launching</i> of a ship, an emblem both of the natural and spiritual birth	217
<i>Leek</i> , meditation on the pulling up of one	200
<i>Lusts</i> , of men, are represented by the monstrous things in the sea	224
<i>Laodicea</i> , its woful diseases, and remedies for curing them	514
<i>Loveliness</i> of relations, no sufficient ground of excessive sorrow for their death	654

M

<i>MAGNANIMITY</i> , the necessity and nature of it shewn	265
<i>Vide Fortitude.</i>	
<i>Manton</i> (Dr.) a remarkable citation from him	288
<i>Mariner's Compass</i> , how it is an emblem of God's word	255
<i>Maturity</i> of grace, three signs of it mentioned	112
Of sin, six tokens which give evidence of it	113
Useful reflections upon that of grace and sin	114
<i>Mediocrity</i> , is the most desirable state, in reference to worldly things	41
<i>Mirth</i> , excess in it represented by too much sail in a storm	275
<i>Miry-ground</i> , represents the incurable state of many souls	54
<i>Mother</i> , the mournful state of one mentioned in the gospel	608
Christ's compassionate counsel to a mourning one	610
<i>Mourning</i> , (for dead relations) ought to be moderated	612
How far it should be allowed of	614
When it is excessive and sinful	616
What comfort may be given unregenerate sinners under it	624
Twenty considerations for comforting God's children under it	626
Several pleas for excess in it answered	654
Seven rules prescribed for moderating of it	663
<i>Mourners</i> , a discourse called a token for them	607
For the death of godly friends, comforted by the covenant of grace	634
Comforts by the hope of the resurrection	638
Solaced by the present happy state of their piously departed friends	640
Quieted by God's ability to make up their losses	643
Comforted by considering that God has better things to bestow	644
Their grief allayed by considering the good which may be got by losses, 649. And how much more others as good as ourselves, have lost	650
Comforted by their relation to God, and the nearness of eternal joy	651

N

	Page
<i>N</i> AVIGATION, the excellency of that which is spiritual	209
Motives pressing to the serious study of that which is spiritual	213
Trading by it is an emblem of Christian communion	241

O

<i>O</i> ATHS, the evil and danger of profane ones	219
Have an imprecation expressed or implied in them	308
Vide <i>Swearing</i> .	
<i>O</i> cean, how it is an emblem of God's mercy and eternity	221
The monstrous things in it, render it an emblem of man's corrupt heart	224
Rocks in it are an emblem of God's church	244
The multitude of creatures fed therein, should encourage our faith	248
The sweet waters drained from it, are an emblem of the saints afflictions	25
God's limiting bounds of it spiritually improved	253
The ebbing and flowing of it, is an emblem of the world's uncertainty	258
The depth of it an emblem of God's judgment	283
The multitude of men buried in it, shall certainly be raised again, 285. Vide <i>Sea</i> .	
<i>O</i> ppressors, represented by the greater fish devouring the lesser	273
<i>O</i> nly Son, Advices to parents lamenting the death of one	607
The death of such a one no sufficient ground of excessive sorrow	656

P

<i>P</i> ILOT, his skill most peculiarly discovered in a storm	281
How the wisdom of God is shadowed forth by his skill	284
<i>P</i> leasures of sin, considerations to prevent the power of them	299
<i>P</i> lowing, represents the convincing of sinners	61
Reflections, and a poem on the spiritual sense of it	66
<i>P</i> osy, a meditation upon a withered one	201
<i>P</i> osterity, a spiritual improvement of the husbandman's care for it	174
<i>P</i> rayer, what influences it has in the obtaining of mercies	350
How that of others conduces to our benefit	351
The great evil of neglecting it, or performing it slightly	553

	Page
<i>Prayer</i> , Strong motives to be frequent and earnest in it	355
How it may be answered, though the mercies prayed for be withheld, or taken away	554
<i>Presence</i> of God, what is included in it	371
<i>Prosperity</i> not to be ascribed to our own abilities, but God's blessings	362
Five things necessarily included in it	363
The several ingredients in it depend upon God's providence	364
Useful inferences from its dependence on God's blessing	365
<i>Providence</i> , the evil of those who depend upon means in the neglecting of it	<i>ibid.</i>

R

<i>RAIN</i> , the necessity of it to the earth	74
Eight things wherein the gospel is compared to it	75
Reflections upon it as an emblem of God's word	79
<i>Rams</i> , how professors are resembled by two fighting	193
<i>Reaping</i> , the same we sow, how to be spiritually improved	122
Reflections upon it profitable for sinners and saints	124 & 125
<i>Resurrection</i> of the dead, how represented by the springing of seed	89
How the hope of it supports those who mourn the death of godly friends	638
Serious reflections on the certainty of it	92
<i>Ripeness</i> of corn, a useful meditation upon it	110
Vide <i>Maturity</i> .	
<i>Rocks</i> in the sea, how an emblem of the church in this world	244
<i>Rose</i> , how an emblem of creature-enjoyments	203
<i>Relations</i> , doubting about their state when dead considered	659
Trouble for over-pitying, or undervaluing them, considered	660
Saints shall probably know one another after it	640

S

<i>SAILS</i> , too much spread, how an emblem of carnal mirth	275
<i>Salvian</i> , a remarkable expression of this ancient writer	315
<i>Satan</i> , how the fisherman's skill is an emblem of his subtilty	269
<i>Sea</i> , its purging itself, an emblem of the regenerate	209
The ebbing and flowing of it represents the world's uncertainty	258
The waves of it should awaken sinners to repentance	261
How Christ's filling its waves is a comfortable consideration	265

	Page
<i>Sea</i> , The riches gained from it, call for great thankfulness	267
Vide <i>Ocean</i> .	
<i>Scamen</i> , two serious epistles to them	206, 209
Their watchfulness teachable to us	229
Their dangers discover God's power and goodness	234
Their prudence in shifting their sails teachable	237
Their care not to lose their wind, spiritually improved	239
How the dangers they run are instructive to us	246
Their chief danger near land considered and improved	287
Their coming safe to shore, an emblem of saints getting to heaven	290
A catechism for them	333
A serious address to them	342
What mercies they should chiefly pray for when going a voyage	286
Reproved for neglecting prayer at their going to sea	352
Especially rebuked for their oaths and blasphemies	354
Motives exciting them to begin their voyages with prayer	355
Their preservation in storms a wonderful providence	359
Sharply reproved for forgetting and neglecting God's wonderful mercies	365
Useful instructions to them	368
Some account of their privilege and duty	334, &c.
When and how they are peculiarly obliged to be thankful to God	369
<i>Secresy</i> , People often induced to sin from the hope of it	373
The vanity of hoping for it, in sinning	375
The non-expectation of it improved against temptations	378
The wickedness of those who sin without regarding it	380
<i>Security</i> , The vanity of hoping for it in sinning against God	371
<i>Seed-corn</i> , principles of grace compared to it	67
Reflection, a poem concerning it	73
Its corruption and springing, an emblem of the death and resurrection of saints	89
<i>Seed-time</i> , meditations on springing-weather after it	75
Vide <i>Rain</i> .	
<i>Seeth</i> the sins of men, how God does it	37
Vide <i>Knowledge</i> .	
<i>Ship</i> , launching of it an emblem of the first and second birth	217
The helm of it an emblem of conscience	231
Meditation upon the means used to preserve it in a storm	263
Spreading its sails unseasonably, an emblem of carnal mirth	275
A neglected leak in it represents the danger of indulged sin	277
<i>Shore</i> , the danger of a ship near it spiritually improved	287
Joy of making it, represents that of the saints coming to heaven	290

	Page
<i>Shore</i> , It was usual for the ancient Christians to pray there	344
<i>Sin</i> , the nature and evil of it explained and improved	381
<i>Sins</i> , indulged ones represented by leaks in a ship	377
<i>Sinners</i> , the vanity of those who hope to conceal themselves	378
The impudence of open ones	380
<i>Sparrows</i> , meditation on their mixing with goldfinches	186
<i>Storms</i> at sea, an emblem of worldly troubles	282
How God's power and goodness is manifested in them	234
Are sometimes executioners of God's threatenings	261
The principal and instrumental causes of them	360
How God's wonderful providence appears in them	362
Lessons to be learned from them, and from preservation in them	368
<i>Success</i> in our affairs, to be ascribed to God's blessing	386
Vide <i>Prosperity</i> .	
<i>Swearing</i> profanely, the great evil and danger of it	308
<i>Scandals</i> of professors, the sight of them matter of grief	417
The unreasonableness of stumbling at them	418
Discourse of <i>keeping the heart</i> designed to prevent them	419
<i>Self-deceit</i> , the danger of it, 517. Vide <i>Deceivers</i> .	
<i>Sincerity</i> , some of the most assuring marks of it	595
Care, in keeping the heart, a good evidence of it	430
The touchstone of it discovered and applied	513
How much it concerns us to try and discover it	590
Six motives to a diligent trial of it	592
Rules for the discovery of it	595
Seven counsels for maintaining and increasing it	601
<i>Sorrow</i> , for the death of relations, when it is sinful	616
Vide <i>Mourning</i> .	
Excess of that which is worldly, gives the advantage to Satan	646
When exorbitant it is dishonourable to God	647
Excess of it when God hides his face considered	662
Rules for moderating it on the death of relations	663, &c.
Vide <i>Godly sorrow</i> .	
<i>Suddenness</i> of relations dying, no sufficient ground of excessive sorrow	657
<i>Sufferings</i> for religion, how sincerity is tried by them	573
How sincerity establishes the soul under them	574
T	
<i>TARES</i> , their likeness to wheat considered and improved	95
<i>Thankfulness</i> due to God for recovery from dangerous sickness	325
For preservation of life in dangers	327
Motives to it	370
What things are included in this duty	408

	Page
<i>Thankfulness</i> , The reasonableness of it	411
Five arguments to excite it	415
<i>Threshing</i> of corn, how an emblem of God's afflicting his people	132
<i>Tongue</i> , a serious caution against the sins of it	305
An observable remark concerning the numerous sins of it	306
It is compared in scripture to a tree	<i>ibid.</i>
Rules to prevent the sins of it	313
<i>Trade</i> , the badness of it chiefly caused by sin	271
By sea how it is an emblem of communion	241
Sins which peculiarly blast the success of it	271
Vide <i>Calling</i> .	
<i>Trade-wind</i> , how the saints always have it in their way to heaven	279
<i>Trees</i> , how barren ones represent useless professors	154
Serious reflections upon cutting them down	155
Occasional meditations on several sorts of them	196, &c.
<i>Temptation</i> , arguments by which the devil backs it answered	477
<i>Trial of grace</i> , various ways by which it is done	535
Useful inferences concerning it	588
Christians should be diligent in doing it	591

U

<i>VEGETABLES</i> , meditations upon the strange means of preserving them	204
<i>Uncleanness</i> , directions for avoiding it	322
<i>Unthankfulness</i> to God, the exceeding evil and danger of it	412
<i>Vows</i> , the nature of them	330
The great evil and danger of breaking them	331

W

<i>WHEAT</i> , a spiritual improvement of its being represented by tares, 95. Vide <i>Tares</i> .	
How good men are compared to it	132
<i>Will of God</i> , a remarkable example of submission to it	105
<i>Winds</i> , the mariner's skill in improving them, spiritualized	237
The danger of losing them spiritually improved	239
The principal cause of them is God's will	360
<i>Wings of the morning</i> , what is signified by this phrase	371
<i>Winnowing</i> of corn, how it represents God's judgments	136
Serious reflections upon it	139
<i>Winter</i> , the husbandman's care to provide for it, spiritually improved	117
Various reflections upon it	119
<i>Worm</i> , a meditation on one caught by a Robin Red-breast	187

Y

<i>YOUTHFULNESS</i> of dead relations, no sufficient ground of excessive sorrow for them	672
--	-----

VOLUME VI.

A

	Page
<i>ADAM</i> how all men fell in him, explained and improved	171
<i>Afflictions</i> , are sometimes very heavy	90
How far we may complain under them	132
The great evil of murmuring under them	133
Vide <i>Sufferings</i> .	
<i>Assembly's-Catechism</i> , the several things in it explained and applied	141, &c
<i>Adoption</i> , the nature and properties of it opened and improved	197
<i>Appetite</i> , signs of our spiritual one being right	449
<i>Application</i> , (of Christ,) explained and improved	190
<i>Assurance</i> , of God's love, several questions and answers for explaining and improving it	200
Of Christ's love, most desirable to believers	451
Directions for obtaining and securing it	454
Vide <i>Love of Christ</i> .	

B

<i>BIBLES</i> , what a blessing it is to enjoy them	111
<i>Bradford</i> , a remarkable expression of his before his martyrdom	4
<i>Baptism</i> , questions and answers concerning the nature of it	281
The several kinds of subjects on whom it is to be administered	283
Of infants, vindicated against Mr. Philip Cary	361, &c.
<i>Blessedness</i> , the perfection of it explained and improved	215
<i>Bread</i> , what is meant by it in the Lord's prayer	305
Our praying for daily bread explained and improved	<i>ibid.</i>

C

<i>CANDLE</i> , what is meant by the phrase of God's <i>lighting it</i>	5
<i>Conversion</i> , the nature of the change wrought by it	30
It is a real change in the whole man	55
How it prepares for choice services and sufferings	34
The evidencing of it a necessary preparative for sufferings	37
Vide <i>Evidence</i> .	
<i>Covenant</i> , (of grace) several excellent properties of it explained	89
Those who are interested in it may be exposed to great afflictions	90
It is able to remove all the grounds of a believer's trouble	96
It disarms afflictions of their sting, and turns them into a blessing	98
It makes calamities work for the Christian's salvation	100

	Page
<i>Covenant</i> , (of grace) it secures God's presence to believers in their distress	101
It secures the believer's happiness from all hazards	103
It assures God's people that their afflictions are the strokes of love	105
It is everlasting, and yields everlasting comfort	108
It is sure to those who are interested in it	109
Their condition deplorable who have no title to it	112
Believers should study it much	113
How our interest in it must be known	115
An explication and improvement of it	117
The conditionality of it explained and confirmed	348
<i>Covenant</i> , (of works) the nature of it explained, with improvements	330, &c.
That of Sinai not the same with it	333
How it differed from that of circumcision	340
<i>Courage</i> , the necessity of it to prepare for sufferings	47
Vide <i>Fortitude</i> .	
<i>Creation</i> , the nature of it considered and improved	162
That of man more particularly explained and improved	163
<i>Cary</i> , (Mr. Philip) Mr. Flavel's defence of infant baptism against him	327, 328
His three positions concerning the covenant of Sinai, &c. considered	330, &c.
<i>Christ</i> , his offices explained and improved, 181. Vide <i>Offices</i> .	
His humiliation explained and improved	186
How a sinner's espousals to him, is represented by the coronation of a king	551
Why he rejoices in sinners yielding to his government	554
Motives to a submission to his government	559
<i>Condition</i> , the nature of an evangelical one	348, &c.
Faith is that of the gospel-covenant, 349. Vide <i>Covenant</i> .	
<i>Conscience</i> , a preface persuading to hearken to it	470
<i>Contentment</i> , the nature, possibility, and necessity of it	251, &c.
<i>Conversion</i> , the possibility of it in the vilest sinners	532
That of profane sinners highly probable	534
<i>Conversion</i> , how it is frequently and fatally mistaken	533
The nature of that which is real	537
The hazards which attend it, and the absolute necessity of it	538
All might do more than they do towards it	539
Temptations and discouragements in the way of it	540
Several weighty considerations persuading to it	541
<i>Coronation</i> , a sermon on the occasion of that of king William	545
How a soul's espousal to Christ is represented by it	549
Why that of Christ is joyful to him	554
Several useful inferences concerning that of Christ	555, &c.
<i>Corruption</i> , (sinful) work in the best Christians	394
Why it works most in religious duties	396

	Page
<i>Corruption</i> , Reasons why its working in duties is very grievous to good mne.	397
Instructions resulting from the working of it in holy duties	398
Rules to prevent its totally spoiling our religious services	400
Comforts to those who lament it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Covetousness</i> , the nature and mischief of it	251
<i>Crucified</i> , Christ may be said to be so three ways	420

D

<i>DEATH</i> , How that of good men is not, and how it is to be lamented	122
<i>Decrees</i> of God, the properties of them explained and improved	160
<i>Dependence</i> on Christ, necessary to fit us for sufferings	67
<i>Domestic evils</i> , the best men are liable to them	87
How the covenant of grace relieves under them	88
Vid. <i>Covenant</i> .	
How believers are perfected by it	207
<i>Delight</i> , that of Christ in our redemption confirmed, explained, and improved	434
<i>Drunkness</i> , how it is condemned by natural reason and conscience	501
<i>Duty</i> of man to God, wherein it consists	217
Vid. <i>Obedience</i> .	
<i>Duties</i> of religion, what seriousness is required in them	381
Signs of drawing near to God in them	388
How corruptions work in the saints performance of them	393
Four rules to prevent their being spoiled by corruptions	400
Encouragements to them, notwithstanding the workings of corruptions	401
<i>Duties and sins</i> of professors, a double scheme of them	586

E

<i>ELECTION</i> to eternal life, several questions and answers for explaining it	174
<i>End of man</i> , questions and answers concerning his chief and inferior end	141
<i>External</i> , questions and answers about God's being so	148
<i>Evidence</i> of conversion, six things shewing the nature of it	37
The necessity of it to prepare us for sufferings	38
Several rules for attaining it, and preventing mistakes about it	39
<i>Effectual calling</i> , questions and answers for explaining and improving it	193
What are the concomitants of it	194
<i>Enjoyment</i> of God, the fulness of it explained and improved	215

	Page
<i>Enmity</i> to godliness, condemned by natural reason and conscience	517
<i>Exaltation</i> of Christ explained and improved	187
F	
<i>Faith</i> , the necessity of strengthening it, to prepare for sufferings	42
How it strengthens the believer for difficulties	43
Several means whereby it is strengthened	45
God governs his people by it	110
Questions and answers concerning this and obedience	144
<i>Fall</i> of man, confirmed, illustrated, and improved	167
<i>Faith</i> , several instructive queries and replies concerning that which is saving	262
The least measure of that which is saving highly valuable	441
The weakness of it costs believers many tears and sorrows	443
Vid. <i>Saving faith</i> .	
<i>Faithfulness</i> of God, the nature and properties of it	401
Vid. <i>Truth</i> .	
How it is to be exercised by ministers in their work	566
How this, and prudence should be mingled together in the ministerial work	570
<i>Flavel</i> , (the author) his reply to Mr. Philip Cary, concerning infant-baptism	318
<i>Forgiveness</i> , the petition for it in the Lord's prayer, explained and improved	308
<i>Family</i> , a declining one lamented as a great affliction	91
<i>Fortitude</i> , The necessity of it to prepare for sufferings	47
The nature of it opened in several particulars	49
Ten rules for attaining and increasing of it	<i>ibid.</i>
G	
<i>God</i> , his nature and attributes explained and improved	145—159
He is present with his people in their afflictions two ways	102
<i>Good men</i> , how their death should not be lamented	123
Several reasons why their death should be lamented	<i>ibid.</i>
A reproof for not lamenting their death, or not doing it aright	126
Useful advices to those who are mourning for the death of such	130
<i>Goodness</i> of God, the properties and evidences of it explained	155
The necessity of it in the heart to prepare it for sufferings	25
Wherein the nature of that which is saving consists	30
How it prepares for doing and sufferings	34
Clear evidences of it are necessary to prepare for sufferings	36
Rules prescribed for attaining the evidences of it	39
<i>Glorification</i> , of believers, at death, confirmed and improved	208

	Page
<i>God</i> , the full enjoyment of him explained and improved	215
<i>Godly-sorrow</i> , how the contemplation of Christ's sufferings produces it	440
The truth of it discovered by several rules	443
<i>Good-name</i> , our duty in reverence to that of others, or our own	248
<i>Grace</i> , the growth and increase of it explained and improved	204

H

<i>HOLINESS</i> , of God, the nature of it explained and improved	152
<i>Humiliation</i> , of Christ, explained and improved	186

I

<i>INCARNATION</i> of Christ explained and improved	180
<i>Infinite</i> , questions and answers about God's being so	147
<i>Josiah</i> , (king of Judah) his excellent character	120
The lamentation made for him expounded	122
<i>Justice</i> of God, the properties and evidences of it explained	153
<i>Infants</i> , arguments for baptizing of them proposed and vindicated, 350, &c. Vid. <i>Baptism</i> .	
<i>Joy in the Holy Ghost</i> , the nature and properties of it, with useful inferences	203
<i>Justification</i> , the doctrine of it explained and improved	196

K

<i>KING</i> , how Christ is so, explained and improved	185
<i>Kingdom</i> of God, what meant by praying it may come	300

L

<i>LAMENTATIONS</i> , why to be made at the funerals of good men	123
<i>Lamb</i> of God, Christ so called	410
Why to be beheld with admiration	412
The grent usefulness of beholding him by faith	414
<i>Law</i> of God, our disability perfectly to keep it in this life	253
Useful inferences from our inability to yield perfect obedience to it	255
<i>Lord's prayer</i> , whether to be used as a form or not	293
The preface to it explained and improved	296
The first petition therein opened with improvements	297
Its second petition considered	300
An exposition and application of the third petition	302
The fourth petition of it opened and improved	305
An explication and application of the fifth petition in it	308
The sixth petition of it expounded and improved	312
An exposition of its conclusion, with improvements	314
<i>Lord's supper</i> , questions and answers concerning the nature and ends of it	285

	Page
<i>Lord's supper</i> , The elements, actions, and subjects of it shewn	287
The qualifications and duties of those who receive it	289
A discourse concerning that seriousness which is required in it	381
A meditation on God's nearness to his people in it	388
How Christ is to be beheld in it	411
What we may behold of Christ therein	412
The advantages of beholding Christ in it by faith	414
<i>Love of Christ</i> , what renders the assurance of it most desirable	449
The difficulty of obtaining the assurance of it	453
Directions for attaining an assurance thereof	454
How it is said to pass knowledge	456
Wherein it appears to be wonderful	458
<i>Love</i> , (to God and man) the properties of it, with improvements	221

M

<i>MIND</i> of man cannot bear afflictions without being supported	93
<i>Mortification</i> , to earthly interest necessary to prepare for sufferings	52
Several things wherein it is chiefly to be exercised	54
<i>Mourners</i> , four considerations to support them	118
Seasonable advices to such	130
<i>Meat and drink</i> , how Christ's flesh and blood is so to believers	443
The transcendent excellency of that which Christ gives	446
Profitable inferences concerning that our Saviour gives	447
Motives to feed upon that which flows from Christ	448
<i>Members</i> of the church, several of their usual sins and duties enumerated	586
<i>Moral-law</i> , the nature and obligation of it considered and improved	218

N

<i>NATION</i> , what sins are tokens of its approaching misery	12
<i>Name of God</i> , the sanctifying of it explained and improved	297

O

<i>ONE</i> , God's being so, explained and improved	159
<i>Original sin</i> , the nature of it explained with improvements	172
Some accounts of man's misery flowing from it	173
<i>Obedience</i> to God, the nature and rules of it explained and improved. Vid. <i>Ten commandments</i> .	221
<i>Offices</i> of Christ explained and improved	181
Vid. the words <i>King, Priest, and Prophet</i> .	
<i>Omniscieny</i> of God, vid. <i>Knowledge</i> .	
<i>Ordinances</i> of the gospel, questions and answers concerning the nature and saving efficacy of them	268

P

	Page
<i>PAUL</i> , (the apostle) how he was ready to suffer	4
<i>Power</i> of God, the nature of it explained, with inferences	151
<i>Preparation</i> for sufferings gives rest in them	16
It is an evidence of sincerity	18
Prevents the scandal of the cross	19
Tends to awaken the drowsy world	20
It is highly commended by the Spirit of God	21
Conduces to stability in a day of trial	23
It evidences love to Jesus Christ, and submission to the divine will	<i>ibid.</i>
Is very pleasing to God, and alleviates a fall under them	24
The necessity of a real conversion in order to it, shewn in six particulars	26, &c.
It is woefully wanting among professors	72
Several motives persuading to it	76, &c.
Divers encouragements to those who strive for it	79, &c.
<i>Presence</i> of God, instances of three kinds of it	110
<i>Providence</i> , a conformation, explication, and improvement of it	164
<i>Pastor</i> , an evangelical one described by our Saviour	560
What is included in his ministerial faithfulness	567
The nature and eminent use of ministerial prudence to him	570
The glorious reward which a good one may expect	579
Several improvements which ministers should make of Christ's description of him	580
<i>Peace</i> , of conscience, this privilege explained and improved	202
<i>Perfection</i> of believers at death, explained and improved	207
<i>Perserverance</i> of saints, the grounds of its security explained, with improvements	533
<i>Prayer</i> , How the due performance of it prepares for sufferings	64
Means of improving in it	66
Questions and answers concerning the nature and properties of it	291
The Lord's prayer our peculiar directory for performing it.	
<i>Vide Lord's prayer</i>	
To reason with God in it, is not only lawful, but our duty	298
<i>Priest</i> , how Christ executes the office of one explained and improved	183
<i>Prophet</i> , how Christ is one shewn with improvements	181
<i>Prudence</i> , wherein ministers should exercise it with respect to themselves	573
Of ministers, in reference to their assisters and opposers	574

Q

	Page
QUALIFICATIONS , what are necessary for those who come to the Lord's table	289

R

REDEMPTION , that wrought by our Saviour explained and improved	177
<i>Rest</i> in the day of evil, is either of deliverance, or of contentation	16
<i>Reason</i> , arguments persuading to hearken to it	472
It convinces sinners they must choose reformation or ruin	473
Appeals to it for promoting reformation	475
The wickedness of warring against its dictates	482
Its censures of profane swearing and blasphemy	487
It severely condemns drunkenness	501
The determination of it against uncleanness	512
Its condemnation of enmity against godliness	519
<i>Reformation</i> of manners, necessary to prevent ruin	473
The possibility and advantage of it	475
Appeals to reason for promoting it	<i>ibid.</i>
<i>Repentance</i> , The nature and necessity of that which is saving	266
The spring, the effect, and measure of the sorrow of it	267
<i>Rest</i> , that of believers, in death, explained and improved	210
<i>Resurrection</i> , the doctrine of it confirmed, explained, and improved	211
How Christ will acknowledge and acquit believers after it	212

S

SCRIPTURE , the divine authority of it confirmed and improved	143
<i>Spirit</i> , God's being so explained with useful inferences	145
How St. Paul was ready for them	4
God suffers the most grievous sometimes to befall his best servants	91
They redound to God's glory, and the good of his people	9—10
Seven tokens of their approach	13
Why God usually gives warning of them before-hand	15
Ten excellencies of being prepared for them	16
Vide <i>Preparation</i> .	
<i>Sabbath</i> , reasons of God's requiring a weekly one	232
How it ought to be kept	235
<i>Sacraments</i> , what the word primarily signifies	275
Questions and answers concerning the efficacy of the gospel ones	276
The nature of them opened and applied	277
The number of them determined	289
<i>Sacramental-meditations</i> , &c. 285. Vide <i>Lord's supper</i> .	

	Page
<i>Sanctification</i> , the nature of it explained	199
<i>Saving-faith</i> , the preciousness of the least degree of it	262
Characters of its being true, though weak	264
It is exceeding comfortable to have it, though in the lowest measure	427
<i>Scripture</i> , rules fit to be observed in the interpretation of it	356
<i>Seal</i> , upon the heart and arm, what it means	450
<i>Sealing of the Spirit</i> , the nature of it, and how it is performed	402
Why none have it till they believe	403
How all believers have it, and have it not	405
How great a privilege it is	406
The distinguishing effects of it	407
Directions for getting, recovering, and securing it	409
<i>Severity of God</i> , how exercised towards Christ	419
Reasons of God's exercising it upon our Saviour	422
Inferences from Christ's enduring of it	423
<i>Sins</i> , the inequality of them evinced and improved	256
The exceeding evil and danger of them considered and improved	258
How we may escape God's wrath and curse due for them	260
Some too usually found in church-members	415
<i>Son of God</i> , why Christ is called God's own Son	417
How God spared him not	420
Reasons of God's severity towards him	422
Several useful lessons from God's not sparing him	423
How the divine severity to him encourages the hope of Christians	425
<i>Swearing</i> , it is condemned by natural reason and conscience	487
T	
<i>TEMPESTS</i> , represents worldly troubles, 432. Vid. <i>Storms</i> .	
<i>Temptations</i> , the usual methods wherein they prevail	121
Acquaintance with them necessary to prepare for sufferings	58
Several kinds of them	60
The policy which Satan discovers in them	61
The chief danger of them lies in our own corruptions	62
Rules to prevent being overcome by them, in a suffering hour	63
<i>Trinity of persons in the God-head</i> , confirmed and improved	159
<i>Troubles</i> , how they are represented by storms at sea	118
<i>Truth of God</i> , the nature and properties of it explained and improved	156
<i>Tears</i> , whence they may be wanting where there is much trouble	440
<i>Temptation</i> , the petition against it in the Lord's prayer explained	312
<i>Ten commandments</i> , the sum of them explained and improved	221
The preface to them opened, with inferences from it	223
The first of them explained and applied	224

	Page
<i>Ten commandments</i> , The second expounded, with useful inferences	227
The third opened and improved	230
The fourth explained, with improvements	232
The fifth opened and applied	237
The sixth expounded and improved	241
The seventh explained and applied	244
The eighth explained and applied	246
The ninth opened, with improvements of it	248
The tenth explained and improved	251
The impossibility of perfectly keeping them in this life	253
<i>Thankfulness</i> for supplies in necessities	185
<i>Transubstantiation</i> , the popish doctrine concerning it refuted	287

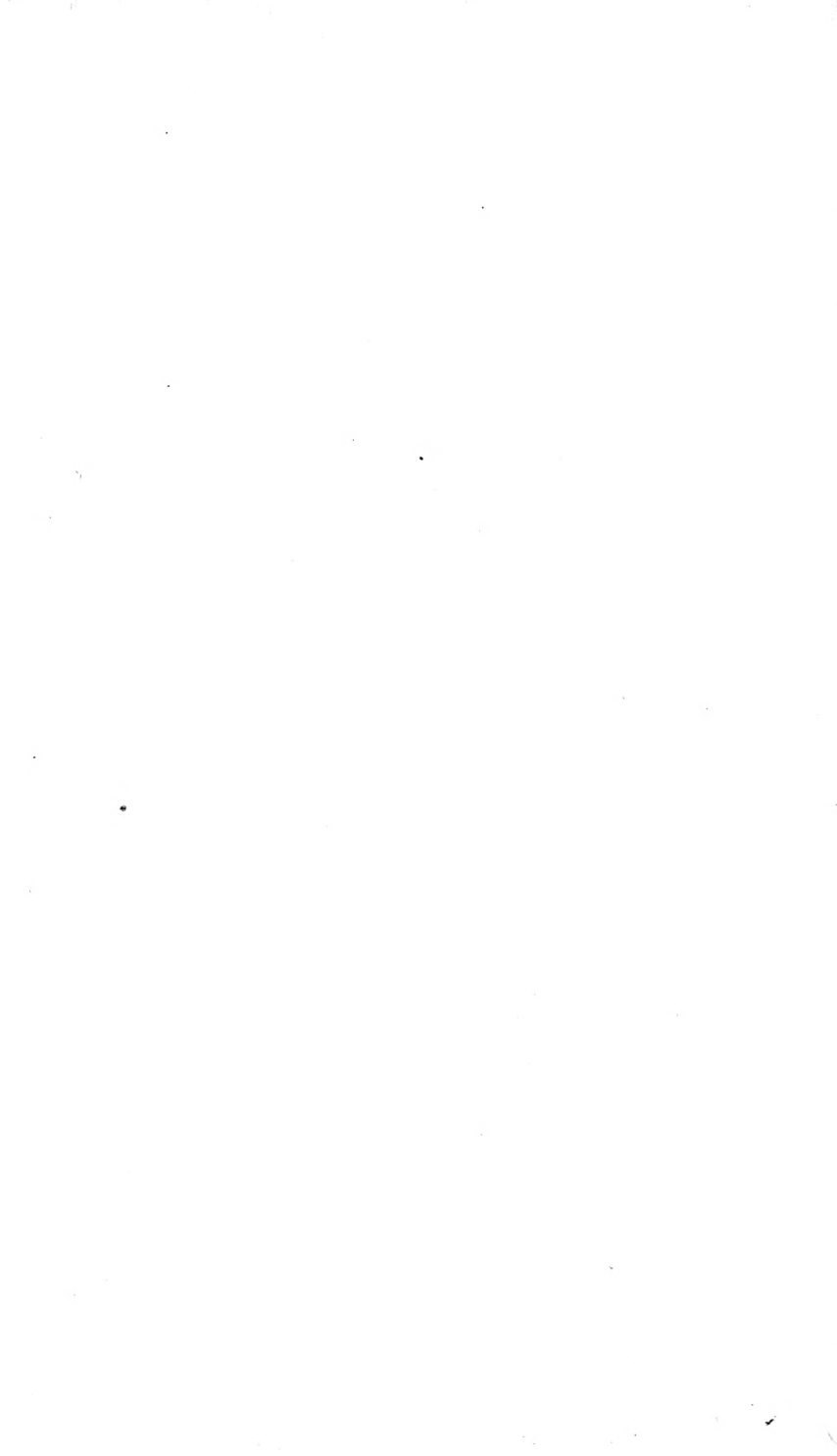
U

<i>UNCHANGEABLENESS</i> of God, the nature of it, with improvements	149
<i>Upton</i> , (John, Esq.) a funeral sermon on his death	120
Some account of his excellent character	127
<i>Unbelief</i> , Christians have good reason to weep for the remains of it	427
Signs of the remainder of it in good people	429
Comfort for Christians under the lamented remains of it	429
<i>Uncleanness</i> , the great evil and danger of it	244
<i>Union</i> , with Christ, explication and improvement of it	191
<i>Vocation</i> , the concomitants of it, 194. Vide <i>Effectual calling</i> .	

W

<i>WISDOM</i> of God, the nature of it shewn, with improvements	150
<i>Will of God</i> , what is meant by it in the Lord's prayer	302
How we should do it on earth, as it is done in heaven	<i>ibid.</i>
For redeeming sinners was most pleasing to Christ	434
<i>Word of God</i> , how reading and hearing it conduce to salvation	270
The manner of reading and hearing it aright	272
<i>Worship of God</i> , reasons for a composed serious spirit in it	383
God's peculiar presence in it, explained and improved	389
The best Christians find the workings of sinful corruptions therein	392

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